

Dungeons & Lairs #90: Bandit Hideout

Bandit Hideout is a Fifth Edition plug-in adventure for four characters with an average party level (APL) of 1, 3, 5, or 8. The characters must venture into sparse Titan foothills in search of a camp of outlaws, brigands, and bandits, where they must rescue a group of hostages.

For the Gamemaster

Nestled in the rugged foothills of the Titans, Stormholme is a hardy village that sits on the banks of the Ecliptic Flow, a river known for its icy currents. The landscape is a picturesque mix of towering mountains, evergreen forests, and rocky terrain, offering a stark but captivating backdrop to daily life. Wooden cabins and stone structures dot the landscape, and despite the harsh conditions, there are signs of life and commerce—a smithy billowing smoke, a local tavern emitting warm light, and fishermen trying their luck in the cold river. The somber beauty of the area is occasionally disrupted by the construction of makeshift barricades and patrols of local militia, telling signs of the village's ongoing struggles.

Stormholme is a community on the edge, both literally and figuratively. Physically isolated from the other settlements in the nation of Veramar, its remoteness adds layers of complications to its existing problems, and a band of cutthroats have seized the opportunity to make some easy gold. The adventurers must deal with these brigands and rid the settlement of the looming threat.

Backstory

A week before the party arrived, the Stormcloaks, a band of outlaws -led by the half-elf Adran “the Scar” Dunderdragon- captured five Stormholme residents whom they are ransoming back to the settlement.

The bandits are held up in an old fortified copper mining camp that was abandoned years before when a more bountiful source was discovered. The bandits have repaired much of the damage and used the goods and equipment they’ve raided to bolster the defenses, making an attack problematic.

Four of the five hostages are members of Stormholme’s wealthiest households, so the ransom set was staggering enough to bankrupt the town. The town has refused to pay, and the adventure begins just as the bandits arrive to set an example and demand they’re paid.

Adventure Hook

As the adventurers arrive in Stormholme, they find the outlying buildings and fields empty, but even from a distance, they can see a large crowd gathered in the town center. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher can make out a small group of armed figures lined up in front of the townfolk. Should the characters wish to sneak closure for a better look, the scattered buildings offer excellent cover, and they can make Dexterity (Stealth) checks with advantage.

Whether they choose to approach stealthily or not, when they get to within earshot, read or paraphrase the following:

The townfolk are bunched together in front of a large stone building in the center of town. Fanned out before them are three figures wearing leather armor, hooded blue cloaks, and carrying an assortment of weapons.

“You were given a chance to pay up but refused. Adran returns one of the hostages as a sign of goodwill.” Says the woman at the center of the group, her voice the gruff tone of an orc.

With a wicked sneer cut clear across her face, she nods to the figure to her left, who tosses a hessian sack at the townfolk, and it lands with a wet smack. A woman steps out of the crowd and gingerly opens the sack, only to stumble back with a shriek, her foot kicking the sack as she does so.

The crowd lets a collective gasp as a bloody, severed head rolls out of the sack. “You have three days.” Says the woman as she and the other figures back away.

The head is that of Merrick Fond, the son of a local farmhand and not one of the wealthier residents. Adran decapitated the young man himself in his rage, sending the head as a warning.

Encounter: Bandits. The townfolk are in a state of shock, but adventurers may choose to attack the bandits at this point. The nature of this battle depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Stormholme Ransom table.

STORMHOLME RANSOM

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	3 BANDITS
3rd	3 THUGS
5th	3 VETERANS
8th	3 VETERANS

Interrogating the Bandits

The adventurers may take one or more of the bandits captive and interrogate them. All three know the location of the bandit hideout, but only the group leader, a half-orc named Volen, knows anything more. A tough nut to crack, Volen will only speak if she is forced to do so with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check or by magical means. Volen knows the following useful information:

The bandit's leader, Adran the Scar, is a half-elf whose true motive is making Stormholme weak enough to conquer.

A small section of the outer defenses is in a state of poor repair and may offer a means of sneaking into the camp.

Most of the bandits are humans and thus cannot see in the dark. Torches are lit on the tops of the lookout towers, but they are little help.

Treasure. The bandits all wear the same foul-smelling, dark blue cloaks.

Please Help Us

The remaining hostages are the relations of four of Stormholme's most prominent citizens.

- Maylees is Elysia Thorne's daughter.
- Marvolo is Mariah Greenbriar's son.
- Amber is Gorin Ironfoot's wife.
- Andraste is the ward of Lydia the Overseer.

Elysia Thorne, mayor of Stormholme, begs the adventurers to rescue the captives and drive out the bandits, offering half the value of the ransom as payment. The nature of the reward depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Stormholme Reward Treasure table.

STORMHOLME REWARD TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st	200 gp
3rd	400 gp
5th	1,000 gp
8th	2,000 gp

Bandit Hideout

Hidden within the foothills of the Titans, the bandit's camp is an abandoned mining camp, known locally at Talon's Grip. A simple wooden palisade surrounds the camp. Built to stave off monster attacks, it now offers an excellent defense for the bandits. The bandits found the camp mostly intact and have made some simple repairs, but weaknesses remain.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the Bandit Camp has the following features.

Alarm Horns. In each lookout tower is a hunting horn, which they will blow at any sign of something approaching.

Lookout Towers. These 25-foot-tall towers are manned at all times and offer an excellent field of view. They are described in more detail in area 2.

Hunting Party. At levels 3, 5, and 8, a small group of bandits are out hunting game and could return at any time. You can choose for this group to return whenever is most dramatic. The nature of this group depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Hunting Party Encounter table.

HUNTING PARTY ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	—
3rd	2 THUGS and 2 WOLVES
5th	2 VETERANS and 2 GIANT BOARS
8th	2 VETERANS and 2 WINTER WOLVES

Palisade Wall. This 10-foot-tall wall is old but stout. Each 5-foot section of wall has AC 15, 18 hp, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. Climbing over the wall requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

Stormcloaks. The bandits all wear the same dark blue cloaks. These cloaks are dyed in a filthy, foul-smelling vat that gives them a distinctive smell. Unless attacked, the hunting beasts within the camp do not attack anyone wearing one of these cloaks.

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the Bandit Camp map on page 3.

1 – MAIN GATE

The main gate is unmanned but is watched over by the nearest lookout. Should the adventurers approach in broad view, the lookout shouts for them to stop and

BANDIT CAMP

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



ABANDONED MINE

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



calls for Fodel (area 6), who arrives two rounds later. Fodel then climbs the tower rather than opening the gate. If the adventurers are caught approaching stealthily, the lookout sounds the alarm and attacks.

Main Gate. The gate is barred shut from the inside with a heavy iron bar. The bar weighs 15 pounds and is impossible to maneuver from outside the gate. Each gate has the same statistics as a section of wall.

Battle Royale. If the alarm is sounded while the characters are outside, take two rounds to organize. A fight here puts the party at a significant disadvantage and may require the adventurers to retreat. Fodel and the lookouts will fight from atop the towers, shooting at the party and then ducking down for full cover. Meanwhile, Mamma Seeta (area 7) will lead the hunting beasts (area 3) through the main gate to drive off the attackers. If the bandits are driven into the camp, they will retreat into area 5—avoiding the pit trap—and attempt to trick the characters into falling in. The nature of the encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Battle Royale Encounter table.

BATTLE ROYALE ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	Fodel (SCOUT), Mamma Seeta (ORC), 3 BANDITS, and 3 MASTIFFS
3rd	Fodel (BANDIT CAPTAIN), Mamma Seeta (OGRE), 3 THUGS, and 3 WOLVES
5th	Fodel (HALF-RED DRAGON VETERAN), Mamma Seeta (WEREBOAR), 3 VETERANS, and 2 GIANT BOARS
8th	Fodel (MAGE), Mamma Seeta (WEREBEAR), 3 VETERANS with 90 hp, and 3 WINTER WOLVES

2 – LOOKOUT TOWERS

These 25-foot-tall towers are manned at all times and offer an excellent field of view. A creature in a lookout tower has advantage on any Wisdom (Perception) check to see something within or near the camp. Additionally, a creature's passive Wisdom (Perception) score is increased by 5 when using the tower. The nature of the lookouts depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Lookout Encounter table.

Alarm Horns. In each lookout tower is a hunting horn. As an action, a lookout can sound the horn. Doing so alerts all the occupants of the camp but not those in the mine. All creatures in the camp react upon hearing the horn, as described in the Battle Royale section above.

LOOKOUT ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter (per Tower)
1st	1 bandit
3rd	1 thug
5th	1 veteran
8th	1 veteran with 90 hp

3 – COURTYARD

This wide open space is littered with the detritus of the bandit's hunting expeditions and is home to some of their hunting beasts.

Encounter. Unless they have been drawn elsewhere, several hunting beasts, trained to obey the bandits and Mamma Seeta, are here and will attack anyone not wearing one of the bandits' blue cloaks. The nature of this battle depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 3 Encounter table.

AREA 3 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	3 MASTIFFS
3rd	3 WOLVES
5th	2 GIANT BOARS
8th	2 WINTER WOLVES

4 – BARRACKS

The bandits use this small lodge as a barracks, but it is currently empty.

5 – INNER COURTYARD

This smaller courtyard is divided from the main compound by a palisade wall.

Trap: Hidden Pit. When they arrived, the bandits found a large hole in the ground (marked with an X). Rather than make repairs, the bandits covered the hole with a tarp and concealed it.

If a Small or larger creature steps onto the marked area, it must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall through the hole, landing prone 20 feet below in area 11 and taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. Noticing the trap requires a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of at least 15. Once noticed, it can be easily avoided by stepping around it.

Mine Entrance. Tucked under a slight overhang of rock is a large wooden door. This door is unlocked and leads into area 9 of the mine.

6 – FODEL’S QUARTERS

Fodel, Adran’s lieutenant and the second-in-command of the Stormcloaks, has his quarters here in the camp. Fodel dislikes Adran and seeks leadership of the Stormcloaks for himself. If encountered alone, he will avoid raising the alarm or a fight and will instead offer the adventurers his help in killing Adran. In exchange, Fodel asks for half of the loot kept in area 15.

Encounter. If he is forced to fight, Fodel will call for help. If any forces remain within the camp, they arrive within two rounds. The nature of this battle depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 6 Encounter table.

AREA 6 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	3 SCOUT
3rd	3 BANDIT CAPTAIN
5th	2 HALF-RED DRAGON VETERAN
8th	2 MAGE

Treasure. Fodel carries a magic item stolen during a raid. This item's nature depends on the adventure level, as shown in the Area 6 Treasure table.

AREA 6 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st	+1 <i>dagger</i>
3rd	+1 <i>scimitar</i>
5th	+1 <i>longsword</i>
8th	<i>pearl of power</i>

7 – CAMP KITCHENS

The bandits are looked after by the affectionately named Mamma Seeta. The bandits treat this strange figure as the camp mum, going to her with injuries and ailments. Mamma is also a sublime cook and keeps the bandits well-fed.

Encounter. Mamma is devoted to Adran, knows every bandit by face and name, and will attack anyone she doesn't recognize who enters her kitchen. The nature of this battle depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 7 Encounter table.

Mamma’s Stew. Mamma Seeta’s cooking is so good that eating it heals a creature’s ailments. Eating a bowlful of the delicious-smelling stew takes 10 minutes but provides the benefit of a short rest.

AREA 7 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	1 ORC
3rd	1 OGRE
5th	1 WEREBOAR (in hybrid form)
8th	1 WEREBEAR (in hybrid form)

8 – DAMAGED WALL

A recent monster attack has damaged a small section of the wall. The bandits have made repairs, but none have any particular skill in carpentry, and so have made a poor job of it. Noticing this damage requires no check, but forcing or breaking it open requires a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or at least 5 damage. Once successful, the opening is large enough for a Medium or smaller creature.

Abandoned Mine

Once a copper mine, the caverns have been repurposed by Adran as a hidden staging ground for his plans of conquest.

General Features

Unless stated otherwise, the Abandoned Mine has the following features.

Illumination. The bandits carry torches, so areas are dark, and any read-aloud text assumes the characters have darkvision or a light source.

Walls and Floors. The tunneled passages are natural caverns and are roughly 10 feet tall. The chambers are domed and reach up to 20 feet tall.

Keyed Locations

The following locations are keyed to the Abandoned Mine map on page 3.

9 – HUNTER’S BUTCHERY

The bandits are proficient hunters, and much of their diet consists of meat cooked up by Mamma Seeta. The bandits butcher and clean their kills down in this area.

Encounter. Several of the bandit’s hunting beasts are present, gnawing the marrow from freshly butchered bones. The nature of this battle depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 9 Encounter table (page 6).

AREA 9 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	2 MASTIFFS and 1 WOLF
3rd	2 WOLVES and 1 DIRE WOLF
5th	2 GIANT BOARS
8th	2 WINTER WOLVES

10 – PRISONER CAGES

Several captives are being kept in the cages here. Alongside Marvolo, Amber, and Andraste are two young halfling men, both residents of the area. All four are commoners with 2 remaining hit points. The final Stormholme hostage was taken away by Adran (area 14). The captives cannot fight and simply wish to escape back to the safety of Stormholme.

Locked Cages. The cages are locked with rusty iron padlocks. The only key is carried by Adran, but the locks can be picked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check made with proficiency in thief's tools.

Thin Wall. The wall at the back of this cave (leading into area 11) is thin and loose and can be broken through with a suitable tool in 1 minute. It requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the wall appears weak.

11 – TRAP PIT

When the bandits discovered the hole in area 5, they found the remains of two adventurers at the base of the pit. Rather than remove them, they simply covered the hole. Trapped in the pit, these adventurers had attempted to tunnel their way out but died before succeeding. Time and nature have eroded the walls further, leaving them barely inches thick.

Thin Wall. The walls at the north and south of this cave (leading into areas 10 and 12) are thin and loose and can be broken through with a suitable tool in 1 minute. It requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice the wall appears weak. Alternatively, if a creature attempts to climb these walls, they instead fall through.

Treasure. None of the bandits wanted to climb into the pit, so the adventurers were left undisturbed. This item's nature depends on the adventure level, as shown in the area 11 Treasure table.

12 – BARBARIAN CAMP

Adran's plan far exceed a little hostage-taking. Instead, the bandit leader intends to raise an army to take control of the entire region. Camping here is the leaders of several barbarian tribes, whose allegiance Adran is hoping to win through the gold he's

AREA 11 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Treasure
1st	51 gp
3rd	151 gp
5th	251 gp
8th	51 pp

ransoming from Stormholme. A small campfire keeps this area warm and well-lit.

Encounter. The tribal leaders are here. The tribesmen don't know one bandit from another and will not attack the adventurers unless attacked first. If they learn that Adran has been slain, they will return to their tribes. The nature of this encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 12 Encounter table.

AREA 12 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	3 TRIBAL WARRIORS
3rd	3 SCOUTS
5th	3 BERSERKERS
8th	3 BERSERKERS

13 – RICKETY BRIDGE

A short bridge leads over a stake-lined pit. The bridge is old, worn, and damaged in several places. Noticing this, the bandits placed fire-hardened stakes into the bottom.

Trap: Weakened Plank. The bandits have weakened the middle two planks to create a simple trap.

If a Small or larger creature steps onto these planks, they snap, and the creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall through the gap, landing on the spikes 10 feet below and taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and 3 (1d6) piercing damage. Noticing the trap requires a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of at least 15. Once noticed, it can be easily avoided by stepping over the damaged planks.

At levels 5 and 8, the spikes are covered in poison, and a creature takes an additional 7 (2d6) poison damage.

14 – LARGE CAVERN

Preferring the darkness, Adran uses this space to train and scheme. When the adventurers arrive, Adran is present, interrogating one of the hostages, Maylees, the daughter of Elysia Thorne (a commoner with 2 hp).

Adran wants to learn everything he can about Stormholme's defenses and militia.

Encounter. Adran knows all of the bandits and that they would know better than to enter his lair unannounced, so he will immediately kill Maylees and then leap onto his beast mount and attack any intruders. Both Adran and his mount will fight to the death. The nature of this encounter depends on the level of the adventure, as shown in the Area 14 Encounter table. The **BANDIT LORD** is a new creature featured at the end of this adventure.

AREA 14 ENCOUNTER

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	1 SCOUT mounted on a DIRE WOLF
3rd	1 BANDIT CAPTAIN mounted on a WINTER WOLF
5th	1 BANDIT LORD mounted on a GORGON
8th	1 ASSASSIN mounted on a GORGON

15 –ADRAN'S QUARTERS

Adran keeps his quarters comfortable with stolen goods. Hidden within this room is the entrance to the Stormcloak's treasury.

Secret Door. Hidden behind two rickety shelves is an entrance to the treasury. Finding this door requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Treasure. The treasury holds the treasure stolen from dozens of small settlements, homesteads, and raids. This treasure's nature depends on the adventure level, as shown in the Area 15 Treasure table.

AREA 15 TREASURE

Adventure Level	Encounter
1st	Assorted goods worth 489 gp and two <i>potions of healing</i>
3rd	Assorted goods worth 889 gp, a +1 <i>battleaxe</i> , and two <i>potions of healing</i>
5th	Assorted goods worth 1489 gp, a +1 <i>battleaxe</i> , and two <i>potions of greater healing</i>
8th	Assorted goods worth 2489 gp, a +2 <i>battleaxe</i> , and two <i>potions of greater healing</i>

Aftermath

If the adventurers manage to return with all four hostages alive, there will be great celebrations, and they will find a warm welcome in Stormholme forever more. Should any of the hostages have been killed, the settlement will instead conduct a funeral, and while the adventurers are always welcome, their arrival will always bring with it the bittersweet memory of the Stormcloaks.

If the characters tell the people of Stormholme about Adran's plans, the settlement begins building defenses and sending requests for aid from their allies. Ω

Credits

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Bandit Lord

Not just the leader of a simple gang, the bandit lord has gathered a small army of outlaws and brigands together through force of personality, wit, and strength of arms. To keep those followers in line, the bandit leader must rely on loyal captains whom the bandit lord rewards for their successes and brutally punishes for their failures.

Unlike those captains, who crave coin and maybe fame, the bandit lord is building an empire. So the bandit lord is always on the lookout for ways to expand at the expense of various rivals and plans contingencies for every occasion, realizing that nothing lasts forever. The bandit lord is ruthless when that's beneficial and magnanimous when it costs nothing.

Bandit Lord

Medium humanoid (any), any non-lawful alignment

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +4, Wis +2

Skills Athletics +5, Deception +4, Intimidation +4

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any two languages

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Special Traits

Pack Tactics. The bandit lord has advantage on attack rolls against a creature if at least one of the bandit lord's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Actions

Multiattack. A bandit lord makes three melee or ranged attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges After A Short Or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the bandit lord can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the bandit lord. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the bandit lord is incapacitated.

Reactions

Parry. The bandit lord adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the bandit lord must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Redirect Attack. When a creature the bandit lord can see targets it with an attack, the bandit lord chooses an ally within 5 feet of it. The bandit lord and the ally swap places, and the chosen ally becomes the target instead.