

1.04 – Into the Hornet’s Nest

Level 3 Encounter (150 EXP/character)

Plot Points

- The PCs find a strange obsidian object that radiates power

If the PCs decide not to seek the Atal-Ashi, you can have the worship stone found in the loot from any encounter.

Read the following:

Knowing that the Atal-Ashi like to bask in the sun, you creep up to the hive at noon. The adolescents sit atop rocks, seemingly asleep. There are small holes near them which you assume lead to their nest. A large tunnel mouth can be seen across the clearing. You assume that the adults are down below, guarding the eggs.

Setup

Monster	4	5	6
Rage Drake	M	M	M
Guard Drake	B, C	B, C	B, C, D
Spitting Drake	E	E, F	E, F

A DC 10 Stealth check allows the party to get within 5 squares of the sleeping drakes and grants surprise. Any failure puts the party in the marked start area (non-stealthy characters may skip the roll and place themselves there without spoiling surprise.)

The Rage Drake starts the encounter underground. At the end of each round it makes a DC 15 Perception check. If successful, place it at the cave mouth (marked [M]). It will act on the following round.

A drake larger than a horse lumbers out of the tunnel and prepares to charge.

The encounter can be made easier by replacing some or all of the Guard Drakes with Spiretop Drakes. This is especially true of the 4-character version, where a damage spike can drop the party.

Tactics

All of the drakes will fight to the death defending their nest. (Alternatively, if the party is in danger of being overwhelmed, the Guard and Spitting Drakes withdraw when they become injured.)

Resolution

The last drake falls and you stand there for a long moment, capable of nothing more than ragged breaths. You look at each other grimly as you realize how close you were to death and set about binding your wounds.

The cave is dry and surprisingly deep. You are concerned that the other adult might be lurking here until you come across the nest itself. Eight eggs sit in a shallow wallow. Off to one side is a pile of bones – some animal, some Human – picked clean by the drakes. Amongst the bones is the ruined gear of several adventurers. You sift through it [finding the treasure listed below]. At the bottom of a backpack, you discover a strange piece of carved obsidian. It is a four-sided pyramid with a square base, strange characters etched into one of the faces.

A DC 10 History check reveals that the writing is an archaic form of Common and reads, “*In the darkness, all secrets are known.*” A DC 10 Arcana or Religion check reveals that it has a very faint aura, not strong enough to be truly magical, more like a residue. (More information about the stone is found from the NPC Marol in Encounter 1.05)

The eggs cannot be easily sold, as Atal’Ashi drakes cannot be domesticated. The characters are more than welcome to eat them, however. Meat cut from the drakes should be enough to get them to the next town.

Loot

130gp for drake heads

1 Potion of Healing
Obsidian Worship Stone (*Plot Item*)
Level 3 Magic Item – Player 1 (Armor)
Level 3 Magic Item – Player 3 (Neck)

Encounter Map

Monster Stat Blocks

Rage Drake		Level 5 Brute
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)		XP 200
HP 77; Bloodied 39		Initiative +3
AC 17; Fortitude 17; Reflex 15; Will 15		Perception +3
Speed 8		
Immune fear (while bloodied only)		
Traits		
Raging Mount (mount)		
The rage drake must be bloodied and mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher.		
Standard Actions		
⊕ Bite • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage, or 1d10 + 9 damage while bloodied.		
† Claw • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage, or 1d6 + 9 damage while bloodied.		
† Raking Charge • At-Will		
Effect: The rage drake charges and uses claw twice against a single target, in place of a melee basic attack.		
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 3 (-2)	Cha 12 (+3)
Alignment unaligned Languages —		
Monster found in Monster Manual 1 and Compendium		

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Guard Drake		Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)		XP 125
HP 48; Bloodied 24		Initiative +3
AC 15; Fortitude 15; Reflex 13; Will 12		Perception +7
Speed 6		
Immune fear (while within 2 squares of an ally)		
Standard Actions		
⊕ Bite • At-Will		
Attack: +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 9 damage while within 2 squares of an ally.		
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages —		
Monster found in Monster Manual 1 and Compendium		

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Spitting Drake		Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural beast (reptile)		XP 150
HP 38; Bloodied 19		Initiative +5
AC 17; Fortitude 14; Reflex 16; Will 14		Perception +3
Speed 7		
Resist 10 acid		
Standard Actions		
⊕ Bite • At-Will		
Attack: +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d6 + 2 damage.		
↻ Caustic Spit (acid) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 1d10 + 4 acid damage.		
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment unaligned Languages —		
Monster found in Monster Manual 1 and Compendium		

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