

# EYES IN THE FOREST

A Chaos Scar Adventure

By Robert J. Schwalb

illustrations by Kieran Yanner ♦ cartography by Jason A. Engle

“Eyes in the Forest” is a single combat encounter set in the Chaos Scar for five 1st-level characters. The Chaos Scar lures the bold and foolhardy alike to test their mettle against the perils it presents. While some find success, many fall victim to the monsters and traps that lie in wait. While the characters embark on their own expedition, they stumble onto a trail left by other would-be heroes. Should the characters follow it, they discover what waits for anyone without the strength and courage needed to survive the menacing valley.

For details on the Chaos Scar and its environs, read the Chaos Scar introduction and check out the map of the entire valley.

## BACKGROUND

An adventuring party ventured into the Chaos Scar about a week ago. Not far into their journey, goblins ambushed them. Although the heroes gave as good as they got, they fell beneath the enemies’ black arrows and notched blades. The goblins were victorious, but

they were much depleted and so withdrew to a ruin in the woods to pick over the dead.

## INVOLVING THE CHARACTERS

“Eyes in the Forest” is an incidental encounter, best used to add a complication for heroes bound for one of the dungeons found in the Chaos Scar, or returning from one. Use the following hook to draw the heroes to the encounter.

## LONE HORSE

*A white mare crops grass in an empty field. She limps when she moves. You make out blood flecking her flanks and oozing from an arrow wound in her leg.*

While traveling through the valley and its environs, the adventurers come upon an injured horse. The saddle, bags, and supplies suggest the steed belonged to someone. You can let the adventurers follow the horse's tracks back to the battlefield and ruin without trouble or you might require a skill challenge. Consider a complexity 1 skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures) involving DC 10 Athletics (overcome obstacles), Nature (find clues, sense disturbances), and Perception (follow tracks) skill

### MINOR QUESTS

Consider a minor quest from the following to strengthen the encounter hook.

**Missing Companion:** A character's relative might be an adventurer who has gone missing during an expedition into the Chaos Scar (100 XP).

**Stolen Goods:** The characters were robbed in a village and have tracked the thieves to the Chaos Scar, where it becomes clear the thieves were dealt with by goblins (125 XP).

**Vanquished Heroes:** If the players lost a party during an expedition into the Chaos Scar, their replacement characters might head into the valley to recover the bodies of their lost adventurers only to find they were taken by opportunistic goblins (150 XP).

checks. If the characters succeed on the challenge, they begin the encounter below with a surprise round against the goblins. If the characters fail, the goblins gain the advantage of the surprise round.

## TREASURE PREPARATION

"Eyes in the Forest" rewards a party with two parcels, #4 and #6 (see "Treasure Parcels" in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). These parcels consist of equipment and a magic item (chosen from the characters' wish lists) salvaged from the adventuring party killed by the goblins. If the characters missed treasure from a previous adventure, this encounter is also a good way to put it in their hands.

## CONCLUSION

Defeating the goblins doesn't have to be the end of the adventure. The goblins might be scouts for a larger goblin tribe moving into the area. Boontah could also be the son of an important goblin chief who comes looking for his heir and, on finding him dead, seeks revenge. Player characters might also use Gentle Repose to preserve the dead adventurers until they can be raised. When they succeed, the adventurers might be grateful or angry. Also, the adventurers might not be what they seem: They could be terrible villains who reward the heroes for their efforts by wreaking havoc in the countryside and beyond.

## BOONTAH'S REDOUBT

Encounter Level 1 (593 XP)

### SETUP

Boontah the goblin champion (G)

1 goblin acolyte of Maglubiyet (A)

1 goblin blackblade (B)

2 goblin thorns (T)

3 goblin crazies (C)

The goblins hunker down in a ruin tucked away in the small wood. The original occupants abandoned this outpost decades ago and now much of it has fallen in or collapsed.

The goblin thorns watch the surrounding woods, so characters moving into their line of sight will need to make DC 11 Stealth checks if they would remain hidden.

#### When the PCs can see the ruin, read:

*A ruined keep rises from the grassy clearing, looking much like a rotting tooth. Moss, creepers, and lichen cling to the walls. Rubble-strewn cavities lead inside to a gloomy interior.*

#### Perception

DC 5: *You hear soft voices coming from within the ruin.*

Characters who speak Goblin can make out nonsense punctuated with the following phrases:

*"Boontah itches. Cream not work."*

*"I take eyes. Elf eyes best."*

*"I hate Boontah."*

*"Good fight, eh?"*

Boontah the Goblin Champion (G)	Level 2 Elite Brute	
Small natural humanoid	XP 250	
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +0; low-light vision	
HP 90; Bloodied 45; see also <i>wild goblin frenzy</i>		
AC 14; Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Flail (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage, and the target slides 1 square.		
⚡ Slashing Chain (standard; requires flail; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Close blast 2; one or two creatures; +5 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and Boontah shifts 3 squares to any unoccupied square within or adjacent to the blast.		
⚡ Dizzy Goblin Strike (standard; recharge [2]) ♦ Weapon		
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +5 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square. <i>Effect:</i> Boontah shifts 1d4 squares and makes the following melee secondary attack, but cannot use <i>goblin tactics</i> (save ends). <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +5 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of Boontah's next turn.		
Wild Goblin Frenzy (while bloodied)		
Boontah automatically recharges <i>dizzy goblin strike</i> at the start of each of his turns, but gains a -1 penalty to attack rolls and a +1 bonus to damage rolls. This penalty and bonus are cumulative.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when Boontah is messed by a melee attack; at-will)		
Boontah shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 13 (+2)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 8 (+0)	Cha 10 (+1)
Equipment hide armor, flail		

1 Goblin Acolyte of Maglubiyet (A)	Level 1 Controller	
Small natural humanoid	XP 100	
Initiative +0	Senses Perception +3; low-light vision	
Life Scourge aura 2; each creature within the aura cannot regain hit points.		
HP 29; Bloodied 14		
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 12, Will 14		
Speed 6		
⊕ Slashing Shroud (standard; at-will) ♦ Illusion, Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the goblin acolyte of Maglubiyet becomes invisible to the target until the end of the acolyte's next turn.		
⚡ Hand of Maglubiyet (standard; at-will) ♦ Force		
Ranged 10; +5 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 force damage, and the goblin acolyte of Maglubiyet chooses either to slide the target 3 squares or to immobilize the target until the end of the acolyte's next turn.		
⚡ Maglubiyet's Fists (standard; recharge [2][2])		
The goblin acolyte of Maglubiyet makes two <i>hand of Maglubiyet</i> attacks, each against a different target.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when the goblin acolyte of Maglubiyet is missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The acolyte shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +6		
Str 11 (+0)	Dex 10 (+0)	Wis 16 (+3)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 13 (+1)	Cha 13 (+1)
Equipment battleaxe		

1 Goblin Blackblade (B)	Level 1 Lurker
Small natural humanoid	XP 100
<b>Initiative</b> +7	<b>Senses</b> Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 25; Bloodied 12	
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 11	
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>	
⚔ <b>Short Sword</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b>	
The goblin blackblade deals 1d6 extra damage to any target it has combat advantage against.	
<b>Goblin Tactics</b> (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	
The goblin shifts 1 square.	
<b>Sneaky</b>	
When shifting, a goblin blackblade can move into a space occupied by an ally of its level or lower. The ally shifts into the blackblade's previous space as a free action.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Goblin
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
<b>Str</b> 14 (+2)	<b>Dex</b> 17 (+3) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 13 (+1)	<b>Int</b> 8 (-1) <b>Cha</b> 8 (-1)
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, short sword	

2 Goblin Thorns (T)	Level 1 Minion Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP 25 each
<b>Initiative</b> +2	<b>Senses</b> Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13	
Speed 6	
⚔ <b>Dagger</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+6 vs. AC; 3 damage.	
🏹 <b>Shortbow</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
Ranged 15/30; +8 vs. Reflex; 4 damage.	
<b>Skittering Goblin</b> (free, when the goblin thorn hits with a ranged attack; at-will)	
The goblin shifts 1 square.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Goblin
<b>Str</b> 10 (+0)	<b>Dex</b> 15 (+2) <b>Wis</b> 12 (+1)
<b>Con</b> 11 (+0)	<b>Int</b> 8 (-1) <b>Cha</b> 8 (-1)
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, dagger, shortbow, quiver with 15 arrows	

3 Goblin Crazies (C)	Level 2 Minion Brute
Small natural humanoid	XP 31 each
<b>Initiative</b> +3	<b>Senses</b> Perception +0; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Speed 6	
⚔ <b>Battleaxe</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Weapon</b>	
+5 vs. AC; 5 damage.	
⚡ <b>Crazed Charge</b> (standard; at-will)	
The goblin crazy charges and makes the following attack in place of a melee basic attack: +6 vs. AC; 6 damage, and the target is immobilized and grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn. The goblin crazy drops to 0 hit points.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Goblin
<b>Str</b> 16 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+3) <b>Wis</b> 8 (+0)
<b>Con</b> 14 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 7 (-1) <b>Cha</b> 6 (-1)
<b>Equipment</b> leather armor, spiked helmet, battleaxe	

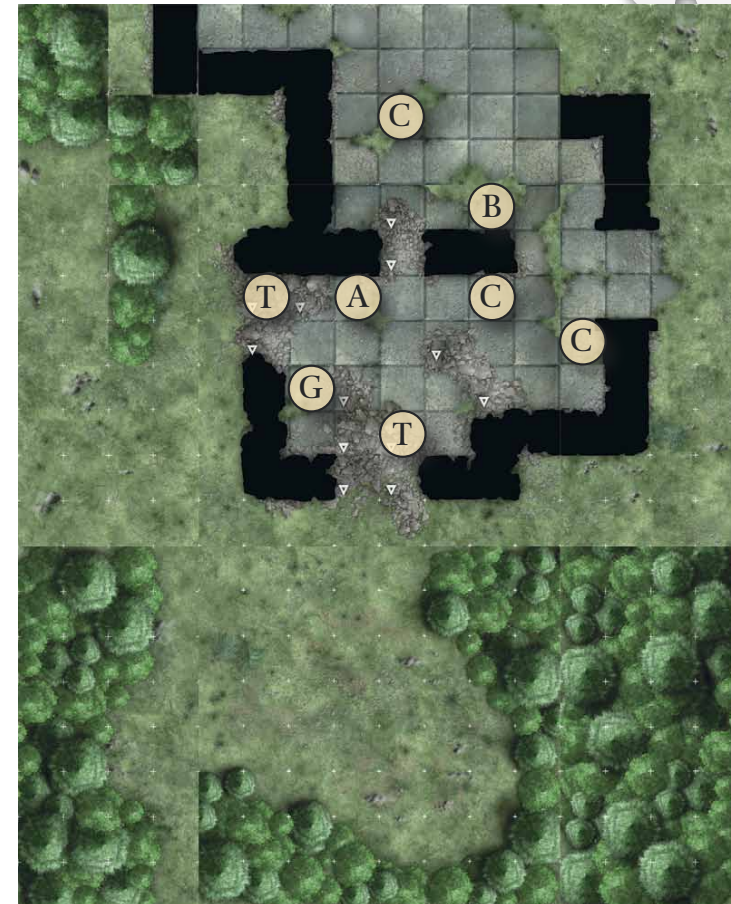
## TACTICS

The goblins might be diminished by their encounter with the fallen adventuring party, but they are also heady from their victory.

The goblin thorns send arrows into characters they can see, shifting after each hit to adjust their positions to benefit from cover if possible. The acolyte supports the thorns with *hand of Maglubiyet* to pin down a character or drag him or her out from cover. The thorns and acolyte switch tactics if engaged. If pressed into melee, the thorns withdraw to resume their barrage from deeper in the complex, while the acolyte uses *slashing shroud* to cover its retreat.

The crazies are less cautious. They lower their heads and charge out from the ruin to impale the closest enemy they can reach. If a crazy fails to kill itself (with a hit), it eases its disappointment by hacking at its target.

Boontah follows a crazy, charging the closest enemy. On his next turn, he uses *dizzy goblin strike* to



give himself some room, and then directs his flail at his nearest enemies with *slashing chain*.

Finally, the goblin blackblade hides in the ruins, surveying the battlefield from his position. He then sneaks around to hit a soft PC—a controller or ranged striker—from behind. Once engaged, the lurker works with its allies to use *sneaky* and get combat advantage where possible.

All goblins here fight to the death.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Trees:** Squares containing trees grant cover. The canopy is heavily obscured and characters can climb into it, up to 4 squares above the ground, with a successful DC 10 Athletics check.

**Rubble:** Squares containing rubble count as difficult terrain.

**Corpses and Flies:** The adventurers' bodies are heaped in a pile. Squares containing the corpses count as difficult terrain and any creature entering the square causes black flies to erupt in a burst 1. The burst creates a zone of buzzing insects that lasts until the end of the encounter. Squares inside the zone are lightly obscured and living creatures in the zone take a -1 penalty to attack rolls.

**Treasure:** The goblins stripped any valuables they could find on corpses. Boontah carries a level 2 magic item (preferably hide armor or a magic weapon), a bronze nose ring worth 40 gp, and a small pouch containing 5 gp and 14 rotting teeth (his own). The acolyte of Maglubiyet carries a *potion of healing*, and 5 gp and 34 sp in a leather pouch. The goblin cutter has a pouch filled with 30 sp, 18 cp, an *augmenting whetstone* (level 6, *Adventurer's Vault*, page 190). Scattered between the remaining goblins are 112 cp. If the characters keep the horse (a riding horse), remove the *augmenting whetstone*. 🌀

### About the Author

**Robert J. Schwalb** is an award-winning game designer whose more recent work can be found in *Martial Power™ 2*, *Draconomicon™ 2*, and *Primal Power™*. Robert lives in Tennessee.