

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

DOOM OF THE SAVAGE KINGS

#66.5: A LEVEL 1 ADVENTURE
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Dedicated to Rusty Jones, the original Hound of Hiro.

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

This adventure is designed for 6 to 12 1st-level characters. The adventure presents a variety of environs and challenges, ensuring that each class has the opportunity to shine; however, this scenario should not be attempted without at least one of each of the four core human classes.

The adventure can also be attempted by 0-level characters, but players should anticipate a grim, lethal game, and judges should provide opportunities to introduce new 0-level characters as needed. PCs that survive key areas should advance to level 1.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

High above the windswept moors and darksome woods, the village of Hirot is under siege. Each night, as the sun sinks beneath the western mountains and the candles burn low, a devil-hound stalks the village streets, unleashing its savage fury on the living. From warlord to pauper, crone to child, no one is safe. Even the Jarl, master of Hirot, and his loyal warrior thegns are helpless to stop the beast.

On the advice of Sylle Ru, the Jarl's wicked seer, the people have taken to sacrificing one of their own every third day. In a grim ritual, the entire community draws lots; the loser is marched to the ancient standing stones to await his doom. This grisly practice has slowed the hound's predations, but it is only a matter of time before Hirot meets its ruin—at the maw of the devil-hound or through the incompetence of its own leaders.

The adventure typically unfolds in three acts, though PCs are free to explore, revisiting old locales in search of new clues, questioning NPCs for leads, and tracking down rumors as they see fit.

Act I: The Village of Hirot, where the mystery begins. Here the PCs can learn rumors of the legendary hound over pots of ale, encounter key NPCs, and seek out clues to ancient relics that can be used to battle the beast.

Act II: The Tomb of the Ulfheonar, wherein, armed with knowledge gleaned from Hirot, the PCs delve into the catacombs beneath the haunted serpent mound, emerging with mythic weapons and armor of antiquity.

Act III: The Sunken Fens, wherein the PCs take the battle to the hound, challenging it in its lair and slaying it before the inky black pool that births the hound anew.

THE HOUND OF HIROT

The remnant of an ancient chaos spirit once worshipped by the savage tribes of the Trolltooth Mountains, the beast takes the form of an enormous demonic hound. Until six months ago the hound was confined within the tomb of the Ulfheonar, the last of the savage kings. But when a trio of rogues broke into the tomb, they unwittingly set the spirit free. Craving the bloody sacrifices of its glorious past, the hound has set upon the village of Hirot. Now, each night, black mists issue from its well (area D-1), coalescing into the hound that stalks the high moors and lonely vales. Unlike predatory animals, the hound doesn't consume its prey. Rather, the hellish being delights in the slaughter, leaving horribly mutilated corpses in its wake.

The hound continues its attacks on Hirot throughout the adventure. At first it is every three days; if a sacrifice is left at the altar stones, the hound accepts the offering. However, if the PCs succeed in denying the hound its sacrifice, the predations increase in frequency to every night. (The cowardly Jarl uses this against the PCs, declaring they have brought doom to Hirot.)

Contrary to the beliefs of the Jarl and his thegns, the hound can be hurt (though not slain) by normal weapons. If the hound is reduced to 0 hp, it dissolves into oily black mists and returns to its lair, emerging the following night at full hp. In order to slay the hound, it must first be bound and then brought to 0 hp (or less). There are three principle ways of binding the hound, though PCs are sure to come up with others. Judges are free to adjudicate proposed solutions as they see fit, erring on the side of dramatic heroics.

- **The Wolf-Spear of the Ulfheonar:** Hidden in area C-10, the legendary wolf-spear can be used to pin the hound, before delivering the death blow.
- **Shackles of the Mad Widow:** Woven from the hair of seven corpses, the shackles of the Mad Widow Ymae can bind any supernatural beast. Acquiring the hair, though, and cinching the bonds is heroes' work.
- **Mortal Strength:** In the tradition of Beowulf, extraordinary PCs can wrestle the hound, making contested Strength checks against the hound to hold it in place. (The hound receives +4 to Strength checks.) Mundane restraints (ropes, nets, manacles, or the like) are insufficient to the task; a PC must physically restrain the hound.

The Hound of Hirot: Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d8) or claw +3 melee (1d4); AC 15; HD 4d12; hp 20; MV 30' or fly 30'; Act 3d20; SP gaseous form, immune to *charm* effects, immortal; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +0; AL C.



