

The Trouble with Birds

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Introduction

A Dungeons and Dragons 5e adventure for a party of level 1 characters.

The town of Cherpa sits on the banks of a large lake that is connected to the Mungari River. The town is a sleepy place where it's mainly called home by fishermen and foragers and because as such it is generally left alone. No real items or things of value draw attention to the town as barter for other goods is primarily used instead of currency. That is except for their hens.

However despite this the town of Cherpa is quite famous. The Town of Cherpa is famous for a few things but its lake was probably the most primary reason for its fame. The large lake to the north of the village provides all that the city requires. Fresh water, food and a mode of transportation away from the dangerous roads. But what makes this lake most famous is the unique bird that nests on its shore line, the aptly named Cherpa hen.

The cherpa hen is a large bird that is big enough to carry a moderately weighted human in its webbed feet. It has a small secondary pair of wings growing from just above and behind its primary wings which make it not only a strong flyer but a strong diver. The people of Cherpa, named after these great birds, bond from the chicks from a young age and train them to fly and fish with them. The large size of these birds means that they can reach the bottom of the deep lake to feed on the lake grass roots which is where the second most valuable commodity of Cherpa lies. The iron-shelled fish.

However, it's the time of the year where a festival marking a great competition is held for the Cherpa handlers where their partners are tested to retrieve these shellfish. But there is a small problem.

The hens have disappeared from the roosts and the village lies quiet except for the calls of their handlers trying to find their partners. The call for aid has gone out to help find these beloved birds and to save the festival. The reward is substantial but time is running out. Are there any heroes that will answer the call?

The Town of Cherpa



Entrance

As the party arrived into town the colours of the bunting, poles and decorations spoke of the celebrations that were yet to happen. People were rushing to get their work done quickly as the Cherpa Hen festival was only a day away. Looking at the note clutched in their hands the party was meant to look for Gerald, the halfling.

This was more trouble than it appeared to be originally as the streets were full of halflings. A large group started to cause a ruckus near a fenced in pen nearby and the party were drawn to the conflict.

"You can't put that there. That's for the Hens!" a voice called out.

"Not that we have any bloody hens at the moment. They have all gone up and took off haven't they?" a second, intoxicated man said from nearby. 'What are we going to do huh? What is Gerald going to do 'bout this?'

'I have sent for aid. The finest adventurers will be arriving any moment now to relieve..' the short man stopped as he spied the party. 'Make way! Make way!' he called as he pushed through the gathering of halflings and a few humans. 'You got my advert! Here you go, fine people-adventurers in fact!. All is well!' he called as he shooed the party into a nearby general store.

'I do hope that you can help...' he muttered to himself as he sat on a nearby stool. The noise from

outside seemed to have quietened down by now.
'Our hens have gone missing'.

NPC's:

- Gerald Plumton
- Doris Tender

Searching for the Hens

After having the hens described and the lay of the lands drawn up on a hand-sketched map. The old halfling Gerald is interrupted by a halfling woman, Doris, his lifelong friend, who appears next to him.

'Why'd you put that old mill on the map? That place is cursed if you ask me.' she said as she gave Gerald a shove.

'We don't know where they have gone Doris. Cursed, haunted, unholy. Whatever that place is, it may hold some clues.' Gerald replied to Doris with a snap. 'But she is right. It could be dangerous that old mill. Best start at the water's edge. The sherpa hen is a sporting good swimmer and they hate to be away from the water too long.

At this point a tall, well compared to the halflings, young human girl appeared. 'If you need any provisions before you start searching either Doris or myself, Casey, can help you for a fair price.' she said with a smile and curtsey.

'Shouldn't you be out Casey? It's your day off. Besides, it may be best if you look after your brother Corey and prevent him from getting into any more mischief.' Doris said with a broad smile.

NPC's:

- Gerald Plumton
- Doris Tender
- Casey Murlay

Encounter: Exploring nearby:

Random Encounters

Map - None

Whilst near the lake they can find footprints from many locals, a few humans and some

recent, 1 day old at most, prints of a very large webbed-toed bird.

In the fields they find, but it's quite difficult to, evidence of a large clawed mammal nearby. Potentially a fox or canine - but it's hard to determine. (If there is a ranger or druid in the party they may make a **survival or nature check vs DC 16**. 12-15 gives them the above, 16+ reveals that it's a large weasel's footprint.)

The Mill during the day has a few lamps hung up. If it's morning when they get to the mill one is warm to touch.

There are hen feathers here, some new, some very old. But it looks like whatever was here moved out very early in the morning. But they left their torches.

The Mill

With haste.

Two figures scurried through the darkness whilst the town of Cherpa lay quiet behind them. Pushing through the tall grass and reed they made their way towards the old mill, a place that was thought as haunted and cursed by the townsfolk of Cherpa. As they approached the large, old double doors that lead to the interior of the mill they skipped with glee. They were about to pull off the greatest prank in the history of the sleepy little town. Pushing on the door they snuck inwards, the bags they were carrying bursting with grain, lake weed and vegetables.

'Now don't fret. Stop it. Calm down!' the two humans shouted as dozens of large birds fluttered and called out as the mill was suddenly invaded. 'Come get it!' the other called as the bags were upended and the food within was scattered amongst the room. The birds calmed down some degree and waddled forward to pick at the food scraps. However they were on edge, alarmed and spooked easily.

This wasn't like the birds they knew. Each bird was intelligent beyond normal birds. In fact the birds had followed them to the mill at the promise of

mischievous. But their feathers were puffed out and their large flat beaks were bent down threateningly. Normally these beaks were used at snapping and severing plants at the bottom of the lake as these birds were peaceful.

However now they were waving threateningly in front of the youngsters.

'I don't know what's wrong with them. They aren't acting normal. Daisy isn't even eating!' called the younger of the two who was trying to coax a particularly large cherpa hen to eat. The hen suddenly rushed forward, the smaller wings on its back beating in an effort to gain speed as it crashed into the boy. The beak darted forward and snapped several times, the boy cried out before the bird landed down on the boy.

'Help me sister! It bit me. There's blood, soo much blood!' a panicked voice cried out from under the feathers of the hissing bird. The opening and rapid closing of the mill door were the answer to his cries as Casey rushed from the mill back towards Cherpa. 'The adventurers. The ones old Gerald was talking to. They can help, I am sure of it.' she said to herself under strained breath as she raced down the road. Meanwhile in the mill the lifeless body of a furred predator lay metres away from the hissing hen as the large birds moved around the one called Daisy.

Their large bodies covered with dense plumage created a barrier between the youngster and the other predators that had dug their way into the mill. Concealed under their feathers of the large bird the boy wept and promised any of the gods that would listen that his days of trickery were over.

NPC's:

- Casey Murlay
- Corey Murlay
- Gerald Plumton
- Doris Tender

Encounter: Encounter in the mill:

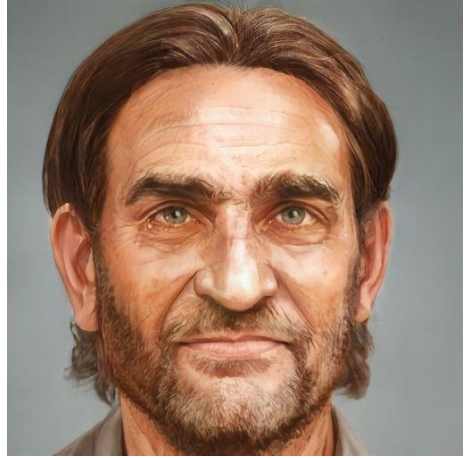
Giant Weasel x 5 initially. 2 more with Dire Weasel.

Dire Weasel x 1 (after the giant Weasels have died)

Map - 301ThTChMi

Lore & NPCs

Gerald Plumton



Short, strong and friendly are all words that would describe Gerald Plumton, one of the oldest halfings in Cherpa. Despite his age he is an extremely social and active member in the community and is charged with running the fairs and events for the people of Cherpa.

Gerald is the one that is actively seeking help and offering a reward for anyone who can assist the town in finding the cherpa hens.

Doris Tender



The halfling Doris Tender is the long time friend, sometimes more, of Gerald. Doris has been a successful handler of her cherpa hen partners for many years and is the only townsfolk to have more than one bird bonded with her. She owns the local general store that provides equipment and goods to travellers but is known for her charitable nature.

Casey Murlay



Casey is the older sister of Corey Murlay and despite being generally quick witted, kind and caring she is prone to pranks and mischief.

During her short time within Cherpa she established herself as the assistant for many of the sales people in the town. Her parents were shop owners before her father went to war and the time helping her parents in the shop left a mark. Despite the war unfortunately leading to the the closure of the shop she began to help with the shops in Cherpa. However, after some time her mother found work elsewhere and in order to cope with her grief she left the children in care of the town and left for work elsewhere.

It is primarily Casey and her little brother Corey now, but just because they are young they are the cause of both mischief and joy.

Corey Murlay



Corey Murlay is the younger brother of Corey and is of the age that he is too young to be reliable to complete tasks and too old to get away with the pranks he is prone to pulling. More mischief than her sister, he readily causes issues and pranks without his big sister's help and tends to get into trouble more often than not. Despite his ability to get into trouble his sister generally soothes the townsfolk before his pranks get out of hand.

Unlike his big sister he doesn't have the mind or attention span for shop tasks, and isn't strong enough for manual labour. This leaves him to his own devices which always ends up with him being bored and causing strife.

This led to him causing the biggest prank of the town's history.

Maps

301ThTChMi

As the cold mist of the evening starts to settle down upon the long grass, flickering pinpoints of light can be seen from the large, old window of the Mill. As fireflies flutter through the sprint night sky the unmistakable apprehension of the outcome of the little boy in the mill starts to weigh on the party.

The mill is old with many of the boards and planks of wood having come loose and fallen down over the years. The tattered vanes of the windmill lay motionless as their damage renders them unable to move. But despite this there is a soft noise coming from inside the mill which draws the party in closer.

Broken barrels and crates surround the walls of the mill and a broken stairway leads to a second story where goods would have once been stored. However both the goods, the flooring and the stairs are broken and unreliable making passage across them dangerous at best.



Bigger image can be found here: <https://brazenwolftabletop.com/2023/01/05/the-cherpa-mill/>

Monsters

Adventure Encounters

These stat blocks relate directly to the progression of the adventure (and will likely be encountered in order of them laid out below).

Giant Weasel

The Giant weasel is a four legged mammal that are active predators, with long and slender bodies and short legs.

Despite the size of an average dog they are extremely dexterous, sleek and nimble. They prefer to ambush their prey by launching themselves at their target's throats.

GIANT WEASEL

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The weasel has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Dire Weasel

The size of a grown man, the Dire weasel is much bigger than a Giant weasel. These creatures prefer to hunt in packs where the weight of numbers will overburden their prey. They have thick hide, sharp dagger-like teeth and claws and are very aggressive.

DIRE WEASEL

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The weasel has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 4) piercing damage.

Random Encounters

Encounters for where the occasion calls for it..

Wolf.

WOLF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The wolf has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

Pack Tactics. The wolf has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the wolf's allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d4 + 2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Poisonous Snake.

POISONOUS SNAKE

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Giant Frog.

GIANT FROG

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 18 (4d8)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Skills Perception +2, Stealth +3

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Amphibious. The frog can breathe air and water

Standing Leap. The frog's long jump is up to 20 ft. and its high jump is up to 10 ft., with or without a running start.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 11). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the frog can't bite another target.

Swallow. The frog makes one bite attack against a Small or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the frog, and it takes 5 (2d4) acid damage at the start of each of the frog's turns. The frog can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the frog dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 ft. of movement, exiting prone.