

The Giant of Taloncrest



Introduction

A TTRPG adventure compatible with Dungeons and Dragons 5e adventure for a party of level 4+ characters.

After a long time on the road the party are relieved to not be travelling for another week. The City of Wurbek lays south west of the Taloncrest mountains, home to some of the oldest monuments this side of the great divide. However no human, elf or dwarf has ever seen their ancestors' craftsmanship as they are fiercely guarded by the warrior-tribe of Aarakocra that guard the peaks from all threats.

This uneasy peace with Taloncrest and the southern villages only exists as, embarrassingly, there is no finer warrior in the southlands as the Aarakocra. With them guarding the mountains and their passes the cities and towns live in peace.

However, the Aarakocra seem to be laxing in their watch as some of the towns south of the mountain range have come under attack of goblinkin and a rumours of a monstrous shadow amongst them, bellowing our war cries and stoking the fires of war spread through the cities population.

Wurbek and Taloncrest

The City of Wurbek



A mercantile capital of the southlands, heavily fortified and defended, it is seen as a neutral citadel and beacon for humanity. However the acceptance of all races is only skin deep and there broils a hate of uncommon races here. Elves, Dwarves and even Halflings are barely tolerated let alone Gnomes, half-breeds and even more miscellaneous races may find it hard to come across good, honest and fair trade in the city known as Wurbek.

As the party looks around the lively streets and brightly coloured fabrics of the market stalls they enjoy the first break they have had in a while. Not having to adventure or fight off goblins, ghouls or gnolls is a relief and the food here beats anything they could cook while on the road. But like all good things the moment of peace comes to an end.

A commotion coming from a few streets down saw townsfolk moving away and guardsmen moving towards it. Mention of "wings" and phrases like "did you see all that gold" could be heard from people passing by. The party moved towards the commotion and came across the central fountain. A large noticeboard stood next to the fountain adorned with adverts for work, rewards for missing people or pets and items and other such trivialities. But today it had something very different being nailed into the wooden board. A tall Aarakocra, an avian humanoid race was putting up a large advert for work next to the others. Carefully and meticulously the figure hammered it in. Ensuring that the advert was placed in a space by itself so that it wouldn't overlap someone's else's request.

The guardsmen watched in peace from a distance whilst some of the townsfolk nearby yelled offence from the side-lines. However none dared approach as a huge eagle stood next to the Aarakocra and its men. After a moment the humanoid turned around to reveal a series of golden chains and thread was holding up golden plates and jewels. The Townsfolk went silent for a moment as the regal looking birdman looked around the gathering. 'I am Sashik,' it said in a male voice with a very chirp heavy tone. 'I come with a formal offer of work with ample reward. Those who complete this task for me will be made wealthy enough to not need to work for several years.' he stopped as he looked around the gathering. 'As a show of good faith, each and everyone who agrees to provide

assistance will receive twenty gold pieces after they arrive at our village. A chest of gold will be provided for the ones who can complete the task.'

An uproar of approval and amazement came from the crowd. Even some of the guards started to move forward with the promise of a year worth of their salary on offer. 'What do we need to do?' a voice spoke from the crowd, a shred looking man.

'We need your assistance to kill a giant...' the Aarakocra dignitary declared. The crowd was plunged into silence. In fact several of them stepped back as if they had been slapped across their face. 'In fact, we need heroes to fight with us against a giant and its men' it added.

NPC's:

- (Prince) Sashik of Taloncrest
- Assorted Random NPCs

Encounter: Social Encounters - mercantile.

As mentioned previously Wurbek isn't a friendly place for most races to visit.

Humans barely tolerate the most common of races such as Elves, Dwarves and Halflins. These races will have to persuade any merchant to get a fair deal.

All other races Have disadvantage on all charisma/social checks (except intimidation, they have advantage on it - but it will quickly lead into the city guard being called.)

Discussion with Sashik

If the party moves off without approaching Sashik he will appear in the next building with them and ask them directly for aid.

He will try to persuade the party as he senses that they are different from the other villagers, outsiders and adventurers. He pleads with them to help rescue his peoples chicks and he fears that the unhatched eggs are next. He explains that after the Aarakocra fall then there is nothing to stop the Giant and his warriors in sweeping through the southlands and pillaging, killing and destroying everything to the south of Taloncrest.

NPC's:

- (Prince) Sashik of Taloncrest

Encounter: Social encounter with Sashik

If the party agrees (let's hope so) then they are able to be transported by the huge eagle and a purpose built basket for carrying goods and humanoids.

They then land in Taloncrest.

TalonCrest

Entering the Mountain



Taloncrest mountains shares its name with Aarakocra city that's been built into its rocky formation. A large series of wide caves and extremely well lit caverns house the Avian race who call these mountains home. Each entrance serves as a way deeper into the city and is guarded by ferocious beasts and warriors.

A large deposit of crystal lies at the centre of each cavern, hoisted into the ceiling and fixed there so that when the sun hits the mountain a complex series of mirrors of fine polished metals reflects the light into the many crystal lit caverns. The crystal itself isn't rare but its size and craftsmanship is something of wonder.

The party is led to an audience with the queen who despite disagreeing with her son, Sashik (who only now reveals he is the prince), welcomes you to Taloncrest as she explains the predicament. They are unable to launch a full scale attack on the Giants as half their warriors are nesting. The other

half aren't strong enough to deal with the warriors and the giant.

She asks that you help in any way you see fit as he calls for warriors to escort you to some guest chambers.

The prince walks with you and explains he has a plan. He will order the guards to retreat from the entrance to lay a trap for the giant and his men to fall into - he requests the party go to the giants camp whilst they are distracted and rescue the prisoners, destroy the camp if possible and flee to safety.

NPC's:

- Prince Sashik of Taloncrest
- Queen Pektal of Taloncrest

Assault on the Giants Camp

NPC's:

- King Grut

Encounter: Gruts Camp

Creature: Mixed

1-2 Orcs Per player OR, 1 - Bugbear. (mixed)

1 -Grut

Map - 307ThTLaOTa-1

A mix of Orc and bugbear is probably ideal.

When there is only one or two remaining they will call for aid from their king who will stomp forward.

Lore & NPCs

Prince Sashik



Sashik is the first in line for the crown in Taloncrest. More civilised than other Aarakocra in the mountains nearby he has approached the city of Wurbek to look for adventurers and warriors who can assist. Despite his lack of crown he still is entrusted with the wealth of his people and they are excellent craftsmen and a proud people.

With the current turmoil of his people a great time of change is upon them. A once quiet people are now pushed to war as a Giant and his army of goblinkin attack and steal the chicks from his peoples nests. The only answer he has to protect his people is to do something his ancestors forbade, reach out to the humans and grounded folk for help.

Queen Pektal

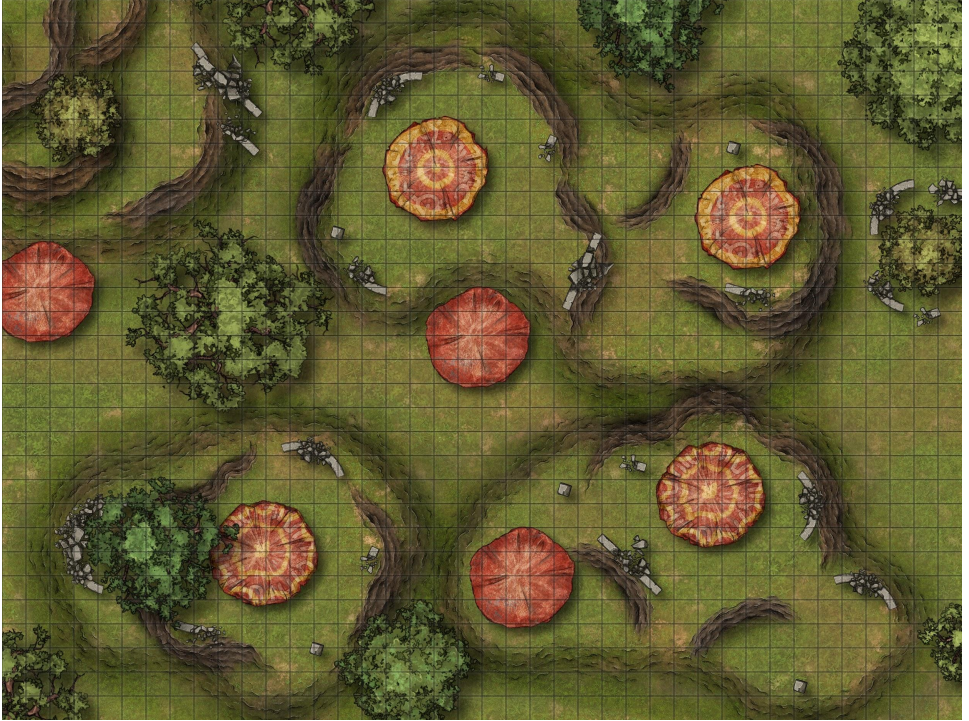
Born into life as a warrior she has defended the nests of Taloncrest for many generations. Once she ascended to Royalty her first clutch of eggs bore a single chick which the shamans had a vision that he would unite the lands around Taloncrest and that he would be king one day. It also foretold that he would be the oathbreaker that destroys tradition and introduces a new era for the Aarakocra. Queen Pektal did not believe in the prophecy and instead strove to disprove them. But she failed in this as her son, Sashik, fulfilled the prophecy and started to go against traditions that had kept them safe for centuries.

King Grut



Maps

307ThTLaOTa-1



Hills, rocks and ruins await those who live or enter these hills. Fabric tents, not more than a scrap of cloth on posts provide some shade for the giant and his kin. The ruins from a long lost age tell him that there was once something more here, but that's lost to time.

The hills provide an interesting challenge of height, being lower provides shadows for blending in and sneaking, but having a height advantage gives those with dark vision, like the giant and his followers, an advantage as well. This won't be easy unless there is a surprise install for those investigating the lands of Taloncrest.

307ThTLaOTa-2



The city to the bottom left of the map is where our adventure begins as we encounter the young prince Aarakocra and continue onwards. To the north of that we have a lake and a mountainous ridge, known as Taloncrest as within the cave systems and a sacred site to the Aarakocra lies Taloncrest itself.

To the southeast of this, across a lake lies the hills where the king sits. This set of ruins amongst the hills speaks of an ill-fated human settlement that tried to conquer the area. After the land literally ate their settlement alive they headed further south out of the hills and colonised from there. Trading with the Aarakocra where it suited the avian folk.

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).

Bugbear

Now the backbone of Grut's Warriors is the bugbear. Hulking medium sized humanoids they are ferocious and don't underhanded tactics despite their strength. A volley of javelins will whistle through the air before the sickening thud of them plunging into allies marks the charge of the bugbear. Despite being larger cousins of the Goblin and Orc this particular breed of Bugbear shares some resemblance to giants.

Orc

ORC

Medium humanoid (orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (hide armor)

Hit Points 15 (2d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	7 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Orc

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Aggressive. As a bonus action, the orc can move up to its speed toward a hostile creature that it can see.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

BUGBEAR

Medium humanoid (goblinoid), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (hide armor, shield)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	11 (+0)	9 (-1)

Skills Stealth +6, Survival +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Brute. A melee weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the bugbear hits with it (included in the attack).

Surprise Attack. If the bugbear surprises a creature and hits it with an attack during the first round of combat, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) damage from the attack.

ACTIONS

Morningstar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8 + 2) piercing damage.

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) piercing damage in melee or 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage at range.

King Grut

No matter what Grut's warriors say he is paranoid. Being misled and tricked by his own kind he has vowed to let no-one trick him again. This has led his mind to become fractured with an ultra paranoid inner voice driving his decisions and siding against good, solid Giant logic. Perhaps this was the Hags doing, perhaps not.

A big meaty foot and a large club greet any who encounter Grut. Ferocious and fearless in battle he isn't afraid to lead the charge and his bolstered armour and constitution provided by the mutated hide he carries is a badge of honour more than a curse to him now.

GRUT 'THE GIANT KING'

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 85 (9d10 + 36)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (-1)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Athletics +6, Insight +2

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Paranoia. Grut has advantage on Wisdom (Perception and Insight) checks and on saving throws against being charmed.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Grut makes two attacks: one with its Greatclub and one with its stomp.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Stomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

The Giant and his followers hadn't constructed a mighty fort. With the threat of the Aarakocra kept in check, none dare to go against the will of the king. Instead they had several large tents, a pit for fighting and cages for prisoners lined with humans and the hatched chicks of the Aarakocra.

When we said the King feared nothing we omitted a single detail. The King however did fear the wrath of his own people. Scorned as a young warrior and humiliated in a trial by combat he had been exiled. Alone in the world he had vowed for revenge. Upon uttering his quest for revenge a hag appeared and showed him a glimmer of a vision, his future.

The vision showed the hatching season for Aarakocra, their defences and a way in for the cunning to snatch a crown. All the King needed to do to cement his crown was wait for a golden moon and the hag would reappear, claim her prize and he would rule.

The golden moon was close, approaching too fast for the wannabe King. He needed to retrieve the eggs now but the Aarakocra were on high alert now. A final push while their people lay trapped in cages would see the eggs, and his crown become his.

Grut's Lore:

There was one amongst the goblin kin horde, an outcast who feared nothing or no one. This being called himself the King under the crest and with his direction this giant had rallied the bugbears to raid the hatcheries of the Aarakocra. With their young being captured the Aarakocra were powerless to stop the giant and his followers as they ravaged the land, spreading chaos and destruction. Prince Sashik had flown out to remedy this.