

QUARTERSHOTS

“ORCHARD AMBUSH”

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ART: BEEKAKKE CARTOGRAPHY: DYSON LOGOS

how to use this adventure

QuarterShots adventures are designed to be short, concise, and open ended. There are details sprinkled throughout, to inspire, but not overwhelm. These adventures are story frameworks that you, the Game Master (GM), will fill out with improvisation.

There is no reason to prep, or even read the whole adventure before you start. Information is presented as needed, in straight-forward bite sized boxes.

iconography

ARROW

► This information is either immediately or eventually apparent to your players, regardless of their actions or abilities.

magnifying glass

🔍 This is information hidden from the players. PCs trying to investigate, having specific abilities or asking the right questions might earn this.

question mark

? This is information that might be true depending on how the adventure progresses, or that you can choose to make true.

Since these adventures are compatible with virtually any TTRPG and any level of play, I don't give “stat blocks” or other system specific character attributes. It is up to you to come up with the non-player character (NPC) information that best fits your game and the player experience level.

Likewise, I may suggest a difficulty for an encounter, such as “medium” or “deadly.” How you build those encounters will depend on the rule-set you use and the “experience level” of the PCs.

Since D&D is a common reference point for most GMs, when an adventure discusses spells or other mechanics, I sometimes use D&D terms, such as “Detect Magic-like spell” or “Polymorph-like ability.” You are the best judge on what equivalent spell or effect mechanics you will use from your game system.

That's all you need to know!

ORCHARD ambush



BOY TRIES TO LURE THE PARTY INTO AN AMBUSH. WHEN THEY SEE THROUGH IT, HE REVEALS HIS MUM IS HELD HOSTAGE AND HE NEEDS THEM TO WALK INTO THE TRAP ANYWAY. THAT'S A LIE TOO, SETTING THEM UP FOR A TRUE AMBUSH.

the crying child

- ▶ **Aerdin**, a young boy in threadbare peasant's clothes, cries on the side of the road. His face and hands are covered in a week's worth of dirt. He is holding a long strip of leather tightly.
- ▶ Between *dry sobs*, he timidly asks "*Will you please, please, help me? My pup is gone. He ran that way.*" He points through a dark outcropping shaded by low hanging trees.
- It should be pretty clear to the PCs that this is a trap. They can easily determine he is lying.



- ? If the PCs turn down his requests, he begs them for a while, and then finally admits in a whisper "*It is a trap.*" He looks to the outcropping and back at the PCs. "*Help me, please!*"
- ▶ Between sobs he explains, "*Me poor mum is back at their cottage!*" and "*They are making me trick you fellas to follow me into their trap. I don't know what will happen if I can't do it.*"
- He does not know how to get to the cottage.
- While he and his mother aren't in danger, he is careful to use words that are technically true, so as not be detected as a lying.
- ? If the PCs still don't want to help, he explains his mother is part of a royal line, and there would be a huge reward if she is brought back safely to their family. **This is a lie.**
- The child's mother is the Orc Leader's girlfriend. Aerdin is supposed to tell these things to people to let them to try to turn the tables on the fake ambushers. The plan is to get them to drop their guard for a real ambush.

the fake ambush and the real ambush

- ▶ Aerdin will tell the PCs "*There are only two orcs holding us hostage. They are farmers and have weak homemade weapons.*" He will seem to be very helpful.
- ▶ The boy will ask the PCs if they have a plan. He will follow along with just about anything, "*...as long as the orcs think I'm leading you into the trap.*" and "*They are watching now.*"
- Two Orc "Farmers" are hiding behind a ruined wall in the shade of two trees (see cover of this book). They have weapons fashioned from farming tools and act foolish and weak.
- This is the fake ambush.
- Whether or not their "trap" is sprung, they will quickly surrender, acting overpowered and afraid. They will beg to just be let go. They tell the PCs "*you can have the damned child!*"

- ? If the PCs make other demands, such as releasing the boy's mother, the orcs put up token resistance and then relent and lead them through an apricot orchard, "*back to the cottage.*"
- The real ambush is the Orc Leader and Orc Archers hiding in the orchard. All are very skilled in stealth and will not engage in melee.
- ▶ When they are deep in the orchard, Aerdin and the Orc Farmers fling themselves to the ground, as arrows rain down on the PCs from all sides.
- Ambushers will stay on the move, with half of them moving and hiding each turn while the other half are attacking with bows from hidden locations. They are not foolhardy and will run away if forced to into melee or if the battle turns against them.
- During combat Aerdin and Orc Farmers should escape. They will run away and not be found again.

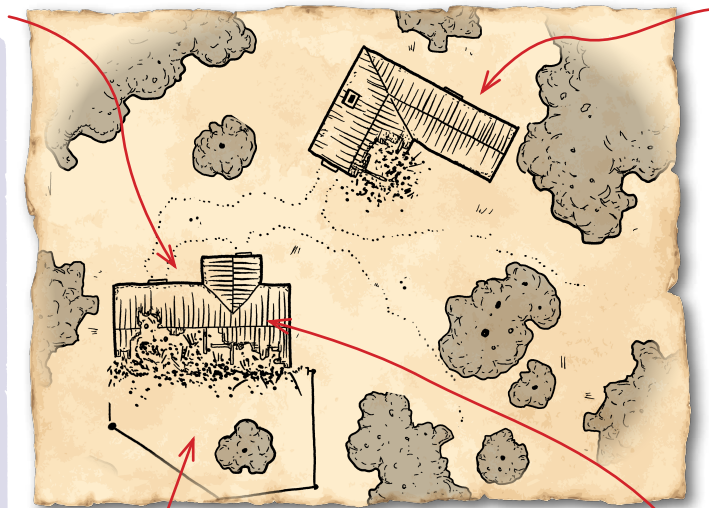


the farm

- ⦿ It's unlikely the PCs will find the farm without intimidating a captured ambusher to tell them.
- ⦿ A quarter mile away in, the opposite direction, is a farm house, a stable and a garden, all of which are rundown and overrun with weeds.
- ⦿ Aerdin's mother has fled. There are no living people here (or optionally, see The Hostage below).

farm house

- ▶ The back roof has **collapsed** into the garden. The lead ambusher has been living here with his girlfriend & Aerdin.
- ⦿ A locked chest has fine clothing, several **non-magical rings** and **gold and silver coins**.
- ⦿ A wool rug covers a trap door leading to a dug out basement, with **The Hostage**.



stable

- ▶ The northern building is an old stable with **rusted plow equipment** and the **skeletons of two horses**.
- ▶ The stable smells of urine and unwashed orcs.
- ⦿ Here are ambusher's bedrolls, some fancy male and female clothing and a few **silver and copper coins**.

garden

- ▶ From the sides, the garden **appears to consist** completely of **thorny weeds**, the occasional dried gourd and a lone tree.
- ⦿ Against the side of the house are **two shovels**.
- ⦿ The shovels look to have been **recently used**.
- ? PCs who want to search the garden should be reminded that the weeds are very thorny. PCs must **make a check** to avoid the thorns every 10 foot square, or take small amount of **damage**. **If they continue**, they will find the center is **freshly turned soil**.
- ⦿ Buried there are the bodies of a dozen ambush victims. All valuables are missing, except a **small ruby** that a victim swallowed before being killed and a **scroll case**.
- ? The **scroll case** is a good place for treasure maps, spells, the deed to a property, or any clues you've planned for the PCs.
- ⦿ One victim also cradles a **broken potion bottle**. A PC skilled in nature may notice **6 colorful mushrooms** growing near. The potion seeped into the earth and the mushrooms have absorbed its power. Eating one has the same effect as 1/6th of that potion. The potion type is up to you. Healing, Invisibility or Poison are fun options.

the hostage

- ? This location is an opportunity to introduce an NPC to your campaign, to either impart clues, start a new quest, or help round out the party. *Otherwise you can ignore this section.*
- ⦿ The hostage has been tricked into trying to escape several times before. They have been beaten for it, so are now very **unlikely to call for help** from the basement unless the PCs have proven they are not the orcs.
- ⦿ The hostage is being held for a possible ransom because they wore expensive clothing.
- ⦿ The hostage knows about the buried bodies in the garden.

non-player characters

Name	Race	Description	5e Equivalent
Aerdin	Human	7 year old human boy, peasant's clothes, carrying a leash	Commoner, MM p345
Orc Farmer	Orc	Peasant's clothes, muscular, weapons made from farm tools	Orc, MM p246
Orc Leader	Orc	Hair in pony-tail, silk shirt, scar on nose, long bow	Orog, MM p347
Orc Archer	Orc	Dark green shirt, soft leather boots, long bow	Orog, MM p347



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