

# Dungeons & Dragons

Official Game Adventure

## Knight of Newts

by Slade Henson



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# Introduction

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*The Knight of Newts* is one of a series of 16-page adventures for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. It is designed to be played with two to four players, with or without a Dungeon Master.

## Playing Without A DUNGEON MASTER™

If *The Knight of Newts* is played without a DM™, the players will need one player (*the caller*) to read the boxed text on the inside cover whenever a player enters a room or a hallway. *The caller should ignore all text that begins with the phrase DM Information.* This material is used only when a Dungeon Master is present to oversee the game.

The players should begin the adventure at the castle's courtyard (Location #1 on page 5), with the caller reading the text for that location. Ignore *Getting Started* on page 4.

As soon as the boxed text has been read, each player should decide what his character is going to do in the location—fighting any encountered monsters is assumed. Once those decisions are made, the caller can flip through the book to find the complete details for that room. If the action taken is shown on the room listing, there will be complete details on what happens next and how to resolve the situation. If the action is not listed, it is assumed to have had no important result. Only one action can be attempted per room per player, when role-playing without a DM.

When a monster is encountered, players roll attacks for their characters in the usual way. When it is the monsters' turn to fight, the players roll the attacks for monsters against other players. Players should not roll attacks for monsters that are fighting their own characters. This helps to keep the players honest.

## Playing With a DUNGEON MASTER

If you have a Dungeon Master, it should be the DM who reads the boxed text on the inside cover. The DM is also responsible for playing the NPCs and monsters that the characters encounter.

## What's Needed to Play?

This adventure is intended for use with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS boxed game. It can be used with many other TSR products, such as the *D&D® Rules Cyclopedia*, or even the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® 2nd Edition Game with only a little effort on the part of a Dungeon Master. Although it is part of a series of adventure modules, it is a complete and self-contained adventure story.

This adventure is set in the southern edge of the valley of Thunder Rift. Full information about this amazing place can be found in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game accessory titled *Thunder Rift*. It is not necessary to have that accessory to play this adventure; it merely gives background information and campaign details that the DM, or the players, may find useful. This module can also be used in any campaign setting with ease. The only things needed to enjoy this adventure are the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game itself, some paper and pencils, dice, and a few good friends.

## Adventure Setting

For years, adventurers seeking the ultimate challenge have sought their fortunes in the Ruins of Kraal, deep in the Black Swamp. It is believed by many that great riches lie rotting in this keep, protected by vile men who are said to look like reptiles. Since no one has ever returned from any expedition to this brooding place to say otherwise, no one really knows. The player characters can now can try their hand at cracking the legendary ruins of Kraal.

## Monster Statistics

Throughout this adventure, players will be called upon to have their heroes battle various enemies. Whenever these encounters occur, information about the enemy will be presented in the following format:

<p><b>Monster Name</b>(quantity encountered): AC (Armor Class); HD (Hit Dice); hp (Hit Points); MV (Movement Rate); #AT (Number of Attacks); THAC0 (See below); Dmg (Damage inflicted per attack); Save as (type of character the monster's saving throws are made as); ML (Morale); AL (Alignment); XP (Experience Points earned for defeating the monster); Treasure (Any valuables carried by the monster).</p>
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One of these notations, *THAC0*, may be unfamiliar to new players or Dungeon Masters. THAC0 is simply an acronym for "To Hit Armor Class 0." To determine the roll that must be made on 1d20 for a monster to hit an enemy in combat; simply subtract the target's Armor Class from this number. Thus, if a monster with a THAC0 of 15 is attacking a heroine who has an Armor Class of 7, the Dungeon Master must roll an 8 (15-7 = 8) or better for the monster to hit her.

Nearly an elven lifetime ago, the Horned Hills were overrun with ogres, orcs, goblins, and their vassals the kobolds. These corrupt beasts, not content to remain in their own lands, raided human, elven, and dwarven communities throughout Thunder Rift. For years, ogres led their troops into battle, stealing whatever goods they were too lazy to produce for themselves. In response to their constant attacks the humans and dwarves proposed a plan to build a large castle in the Lower Great Grasslands, near the Horned Hills.

For years the ogres and their cohorts frustrated any building attempts by constant attacks which destroyed all such endeavors. The humans and dwarves had almost given up, when an elf suggested that they use the ogres' own fear of water against them. The Black Swamps, just north of the Lower Great Grasslands, held great promise for a keep—if a method could be found to hold back the water. Two months and three ogre attacks passed and then a smith named Kraal conceived a plan. A portion of the Black Swamps was to be raised above the water table, and the castle would be built upon the rise. The project was completed in two years. Unfortunately, over 300 of the folk of Thunder Rift died in the process, either in the attacks of the ogres, or in the claws and talons of the natural and hungry creatures of the swamp. One of the folk who died during the construction of the castle was the smith, Kraal. After its completion, the fortress was christened Kraal Castle.

To garrison the keep in a state of constant readiness, 1,000 fighting men and 100 spell casters were recruited to man the fortress. Whenever a threat of assault developed, these valiant warriors would ride out, on the dangerous journey through the Black Swamps, to greet the raiding savages with whetted steel and mystical compositions.

Originally considered to be an unattractive assignment, Castle Kraal soon became the one most sought. Great war heroes and leaders emerged from its aging walls by the scores. The civilians sought the Kraal heroes to marry, and to become teachers, leaders, mayors, and guards. Their exploits became the rhymed tales in children's songs.

After nearly a century of service to the people of Thunder Rift, a rumor of degeneracy began to reach the ears of the folk there, and the honor of Castle Kraal dipped severely. It was whispered that the success of an ogre raid against a small populace in the Lower Great Grasslands was due to a bribe given to the commandant of Kraal. No amount of talking, even with the use of magical divinations, could convince the people otherwise. The commandant

was discharged and expelled to the south. Thereafter, every commandant of Castle Kraal promised to clean up the evil deeds of the previous administration. And a once proud leadership position became a circus act.

During this period the effectiveness of Castle Kraal was severely impaired. Raiding parties from the Horned Hills grew more bold with each foray, and the morale of the castle's warriors and spell casters plummeted. They were increasingly inept at combating the marauding bands. Soon morale became so low that a period of service at Castle Kraal was viewed as a punishment. And often, it was.

After seven years of bad conditions, dreadful morale, and an extraordinarily high desertion rate, a bright, talented, and young, commandant took command. Things did not change overnight, but feelings of quiet hope, subtle relief, and real expectation came over the Castle. The commandant ordered a salary increase for all personal staff and gave each a substantial bonus for every year they had served before her installment.

She expanded the training available to warriors and spell casters and initiated free instruction for careers and occupations outside the militia. This enabled the garrison's defenders to prepare themselves for civilian work. All her planning and initiatives began to bear fruit. Morale increased sharply, requests for transfers from Castle Kraal decreased, and outside requests for transfers to the stronghold were on the rise.

It is unknown if the commandant's plans would have been successful in raising castle Kraal to a station of respect and admiration again—the castle and all its inhabitants were destroyed shortly after her inauguration. Castle Kraal sank into the Black Swamps, taking everyone with it. No one came to report its destruction and a month later a scout was sent to investigate the silence.

Rumors abound concerning the castle's demise. Some believe that the Ogres hired powerful spell casters from outside Thunder Rift, others that the inhabitants of the swamp somehow caused its fall. Regardless of the reason, the Ruins of Kraal, rotting in the Black Swamps, are universally shunned by the inhabitants of Thunder Rift—for their fear is stronger than their curiosity.

## Getting Started

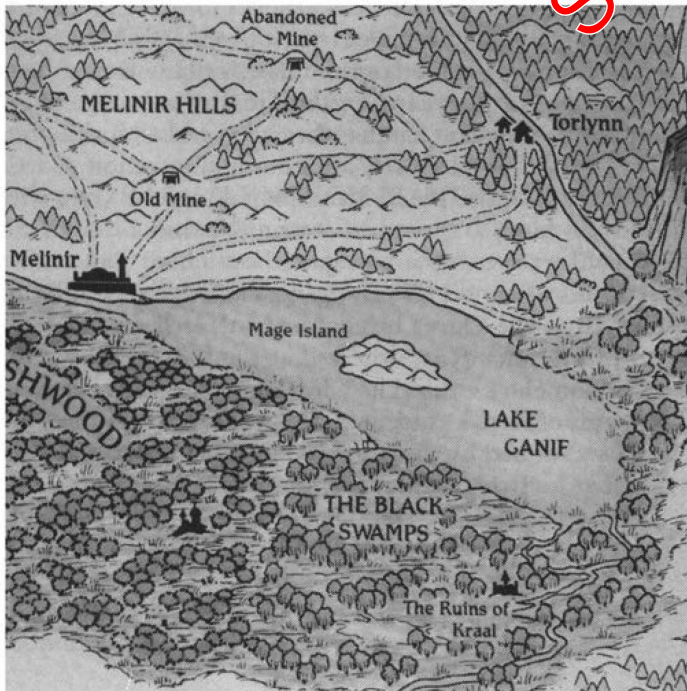
### DM™ Reference Map

In addition to the large poster map, on which players can position and move their figures, a detailed map of the Kraal Ruins is shown on the inside cover of this booklet. This map, *for the DUNGEON MASTER™ only*, shows the positions of monsters, traps, and other important features. The DM should be sure to keep this map secret from the players during the game.

If the DUNGEON MASTER™ is using the D&D® boxed set and the *Thunder Rift* accessory, begin *The Knight of Newts* adventure in the town of Melinir. It is suggested that the player characters begin at the Sarcastic Goat Inn. This is a very fine, three-story log building that comfortably houses up to 50 people. They could be recovering after completing their last adventure or they may simply be visiting the area. The inn is managed by a dwarven male named Bediah Bulon.

**Bediah Bulon (Dwarf 3):** AC 7; hp 27; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; THAC0 18; Dmg 1d6 + 3; ML 9; AL Neutral; XP 80; Treasure *war hammer* + 3.

Bediah Bulon is a dwarf with unkempt hair and beard. He named the inn after a comment a friend made about him. While he is caustic with his friends and employees, he makes sure his customers are as comfortable as they can be. Bediah keeps a strong box hidden under the bar



(holding 500 gp) as well as his *war hammer* + 3 that he uses to deal with unpleasant customers.

When the players are ready to begin, read the following text aloud:

It's a sparkling morning. The sun's reflections off Lake Ganif, glimmer on every building in the town. The curtains of your open window flutter in the chilly breeze and the odors of fresh water fish and breakfast fires fill your room.

Down in the lobby, people of many races sit eating breakfast in silence—all but one. Bespectacled and greying, he puzzles over a number of charts, scrolls, tomes, and a primer on sanskrit. An occasional idea causes his head to nod, and he scratches his hair and mumbles patiently. As you walk into the room, he looks over his spectacles and smiles at you. Standing, he grabs chairs and places them around his table, waving you to join him.

"I'm Pickman and I heard you were here, yes I did. Here, sit at my table and let me talk to you. I have some things to say to you; yes I do. You've all heard of the Ruins of Kraal, Castle Kraal, but no one knows what caused its destruction. It's destroyed, you know. I've been hired by the mayor to find out why, but I don't know why and neither do these volumes and memoirs. I would like for you to find out for me, yes, I would."

**Pickman (Wizard 2):** AC 9; hp 6; MV 120'(40'); #AT 1; THAC0 20; Dmg 1d6 (staff); ML 8; AL Lawful; XP 10; Treasure Books, tomes, and other non-magical publications.

The characters are free to take a few minutes to discuss Pickman's request among themselves. If they prefer privacy, they're welcome to adjourn to one of their rooms. Pickman will wait as long as necessary for their reply.

**If the players agree to help Pickman** find the answers he needs, he mumbles something about a sunken treasure. Proceed to the next chapter of this adventure.

**If the players ask how much Pickman will pay**, he offers them 10gp each, but can increase the wage to 50gp if requested. He cannot afford more than that, however.

**If the players turn down Pickman's request**, or refuse the wage he offers, he becomes melancholy and asks the characters to reconsider because he can pay for their services. If his plea is enough to make the characters reconsider their position, the adventure can continue. If

they continue to reject the offer, the adventure is at an end. If you have one, the DM™ should remind the players that their characters have a reputation to uphold and a duty to people like Pickman.

Once the adventurers agree to help Pickman in his quest; he gives them a map (identical to the one on page 4). He points to their starting point, the city of Melinir, the passes over the Ganif River, through the Marshwood, and into the Black Swamps. His finger stops at the Ruins of Kraal. Pickman announces that this is where their journey will take them.

## The Journey to Kraal

If you have the *Thunder Rift* accessory, the DM™ may role-play the three day outdoor journey to the Ruins of Kraal. There are reasons to do this; it makes the adventure more cohesive and allows players to see a constant progression in their characters' lives. If they go straight from the city to the ruins, the flow of the adventure may be lost. Then too, the DUNGEON MASTER™ may feel that the characters are too powerful for the adventure. If this is the case, an occasional encounter with wandering monsters should weaken the characters enough to make the adventure more dangerous and more fun.

On page 16 of this module, the section entitled *Wandering Monsters* has a random table for the DM's use. When you decide that a wandering monster is discovered, roll a d20 die and check the table to come up with a random monster. The statistics for these monsters are given at the top of page 16. Note that Newts should not be encountered on the journey to the Ruins of Kraal.

The Dungeon Master can use any method to determine the occurrence of wandering monsters. Some use a die roll, looking for a specific result (i.e., a 10 on a d10 die roll, or a 1 on a d6 die roll). Others arbitrarily decide when a monster will arrive. The monster may be selected as the one best suited for the specific encounter.

Once the characters enter the domain of the devastated keep, they may wander the Ruins of Kraal and visit any room they wish. Allow the players to place their figures anywhere in the courtyard (Location #1), as this is the starting point. The DM should watch the players pilot their characters on the map. As they pass over important areas don't be afraid to stop their movement until the encounter is dealt with.

## Location #1: The Courtyard

This area is lined on two sides by moss and vine-covered stone walls. A doorway, leading south, is in the center of one wall. The floor, once bright, patterned stone, now lies under the sludge and muck of the Black Swamps. Your footsteps make sopping noises as your feet sink and lift in the mud. What do you want to do?

- **If the characters inspect the walls:** Along the south wall, a silver flag holder clings to the wall. It is worth 10 gp. It takes three rounds to pull it off of the wall.

- **If the characters inspect the mud:** A banner lies buried in the filth. The banner has since long deteriorated, but its mast and the mast head still exist. The mast head is worth 15 gp, but it has an intrinsic value of over 100 gp. An inscription on the side states: *In memory of Kraal. Your labor inspires—for all time.*

**DM Information:** Location 1 is free of large creatures. Several birds roost in holes in the rocks. They flutter and squawk their disdain at the characters' presence. In the watery mud leeches swim, looking for warm flesh for their lamprey mouths. While walking in the mud, each PC has a 75% chance of having 2d4 leeches on their feet and calves (this is rolled once for each character). These tiny, grey, repugnant leeches are from 1 to 3 inches long and cause no real damage to the characters. They just allow the DM to set the stage for the rest of the adventure. Characters wearing armor can be attacked by them, but they will not learn of it until they remove their armor. (For every AC bonus the armor gives a PC, it takes one round to remove or replace the armor.) Those not wearing armor know they are invested by simply looking at their legs. The bloodsuckers may be removed by pulling the leeches off the skin. This will leave a small, round, bleeding wound.

## Location #2: Foyer

This large hallway leads from the west to east. Moldy lanterns and torches hang from rusty holders along the walls. The passageway, covered with mud and slime, slants to the shadowy east, dipping into the murky water of the swamp. A hallway near the courtyard door leads south and another large corridor, also leading south, may be seen in the deep water to the east. The passageway is very dark, and you light a torch. To the east, just in your torch light, you see the body of a skeleton slumped near the water line. What do you do?

## The Ruins of Kraal

- **If the characters attack the skeleton:** The bones of the dead human and his scant belongings spread through the water and the mud. You killed a dead skeleton.

- **If the characters inspect the skeleton:** A metal belt still wraps the skeleton's hips and spine. On metal pinings hangs a metal, bastard sword scabbard. The sword is missing. A small, undamaged cloth bag depends from the left side of the belt, dangling in the turbid swamp water. It is a *bag of holding*.

- **If the characters light the torches on the wall:** The lit torches yield more light, making the keep less gloomy.

**DM Information:** The hallway is coated in a fine layer of sludge that makes every step unsure and precarious. If a PC makes a sudden move like running, lunging for an attack, or any other quick motion; a Dexterity ability check must be made to stay upright. An ability check (in this case Dexterity) is made by rolling a d20 and comparing it to the ability score. If the die roll is greater than the ability score, the check failed. If the die roll is less than or equal to the ability score, the character succeeded. A PC who fails takes no damage, but splashes about in the sludge, feet flailing in the air. If the PC was wearing metal armor, a loud clank of metal meeting stone can be heard as well as a bedlam of echoes bouncing off the far walls. A faint splash is heard in the distance.

### Location #3: Weapon Store

The door here has long fallen from its brass hinges. Inside, cabinets and empty shelves line the walls. The room appears to have been a weapons store, since the floor is littered with broken arrows and crossbow bolts, and a couple of useless swords. What do you do?

There is nothing of use for the characters in this dark, damp room. The room is void of all life; even the cobwebs near the ceiling look deserted.

### Location #4: Commandant's Chamber

The door opens into a huge room with a large window. In the southeast corner a bed, moved from its canopy near the window, rests partially in water. Three dressers, cabinets, and some chests are scattered about the floor—most still closed, even after all these years.

Large footprints cover the floor, making a triangular path from the bed, to the door, to the window. The bed and furniture are stained by the same muddy footprints. Somewhere near the window, possibly behind

the canopy and the cabinets, you think you hear a faint stirring. What do you do?

- **If the characters inspect the bed:** Under a pillow on the bed the PCs will find a platinum piece with three deep scratches on its face. Next to it, a crushed and holed human skull stares blankly.

- **If the characters inspect the chests:** They are empty.

- **If the characters inspect the dressers:** The three dressers are filled with feminine undergarments, shirts, blouses, skirts, and stockings. (The last commandant was a woman.) In the first dresser, combs, brushes, and perfumes fill one of the drawers. The perfumes are still good, but the bottles are difficult to open. In the second dresser, a number of books, placed edgewise, makes the drawer unusually heavy. The titles are worn due to humidity, but when inspected the titles can be read. Some of the titles include, *Castle Kraal—the First Commandants*, *Castle Kraal—the Millennium Commandants*, *A Military History of the Rift*, *Orc Strategy*, and *Ogre Tribal Markings and Tactics*. The third dresser is filled with clothes, there is nothing unusual in it.

