

INTRODUCTION

This conversion updates to the fifth edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* the AD&D Second Edition *Merchant House of Amketch* adventure.

This adventure is suitable for characters from 4th to 7th level. This conversion assumes a four 5th level characters party, but can be easily adapted for lower or higher level characters.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Merchant House of Amketch is the second flip-book module in the *Black Flames* module series. You can play this adventure as part of the series, or you can play it as a stand-alone adventure. The player characters are approached by the Veiled Alliance and asked to help put an end to the illegal trade of shaqat beetles, rare parasites used by unscrupulous templars and slavers to control people with psionic powers. The heroes soon find themselves entangled in a web of deceit, treachery, and violence as they experience first-hand the trade wars of this world.

The events of *Merchant House of Amketch* all take place in the south-central area of the Tyr region, from the city of Balic to the ruined city of Kalidnay. However, this is not necessarily where the adventure has to be. If you don't mind doing a little map work, you can change the setting of the adventure while keeping the plot and sequence of events intact.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To manage the adventure using this conversion, you need the main rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* fifth edition (*Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*) and the original *Boxed Set* (AD&D 2nd Edition). Non-player characters and monsters that are not present in these sources are presented in this conversion.

You may want to read the *Prism Pentad* novels before beginning play. Reading the *Prism Pentad* will better prepare you to describe the scenes and people of this world.

CHARACTERS' PROGRESSION

The character begin the adventure at 5th level, they level up during the adventure with an event-based progression as follows:

- Characters get to 6th level at the end of Chapter Two.
- Characters level up to 7th level at the end of the adventure.



CONVERSION

This section describes the necessary updates to play the adventure with the rules of *Dungeons & Dragons* 5th Edition. The updates follow the same order and have the same title as the parts in the original adventure. If a reference to a part of the adventure is absent, then it means that it does not require any modification and can be used in its original form.

The text appearing in this way is intended to be read or paraphrased to the characters when they arrive at a certain place or certain events occur, as described in the text.

The text that appears in these boxes contains additions to the adventure and game recommendations for the DM.

VARIANT RULES

In the lifeless wastes of this world, life is hard, death is commonplace, and honour is rarer than water. To represent the unique features of the setting, some rules need to be modified.

Some of these additional rules are pointed out as optional rules, leaving to you the choice of how many of them employ in your campaign, other are mandatory and are meant to give the players a fair fighting chance against the horrors and the villains of this broken world.

These rules are meant to translate the spirit of the setting to 5th edition rules, it's not meant to be a complete new set of rules.

BREAKING WEAPONS (OPTIONAL)

Metal is a rare commodity on this world. Weapons are usually made of wood, bone, stone, or obsidian. Non-metal weapons are prone to breaking.

Whenever a creature using a non-metal weapon rolls a natural 1 or 20 on its Attack roll, its weapon has a chance of breaking. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity Saving Throw, or its weapon will break.

Iron or steel weapons, ranged weapons (not thrown weapons), and magical weapons are not subjected to this rule.

CHARACTER CREATION

Characters in a campaign in this setting are of a particularly resilient lot. This is an unforgiving world and the weak die easily. During the character's creation process, after having determined your character's ability scores, add **+2 to three different Ability Scores**.

Further, your character starts play at **3rd level**.

DEFILING (OPTIONAL)

Magic is a treacherous power on this world. When a wizard casts a spell in the setting, the spellcaster taps into the surrounding plant life force. Preservers are wizards who employ this life energy sparingly, aware to do not kill the surrounding plant life, while Defilers have no scruple in destroying plant life to fuel their spells.

Wizards in this world have the option to use plant life force to fuel their spells. A wizard can employ defiling to cast a spell using a slot that is of a higher level than the spell without expending that spell slot at a price: the destruction of plant life around them.

Defiling leaves the terrain barren and kills plant life in a radius based on the surrounding terrain type and the final enhanced level of the spell. Multiple defiling spells cast in a defiled area expands the defiled radius beyond the boundaries of the precedent, as the defiler drains magic energy from living plants at increasing distances. For example, a defiler casting a level 3 *Magic Missile* in a lush forest will destroy plant life in a 3 ft. radius. If the same defiler casts a level 2 *Charm Person* in the same spot, the radius will be 2 ft., extending the defiled radius to 5 ft. in total.

Defiling Table

Terrain	Radius Defiled
Lush (forest, garden)	1 ft. per spell level
Abundant (farm, grassland, mud flat)	5 ft. per spell level
Fertile (oasis, inactive farm, scrub plain)	10 ft. per spell level
Infertile (rocky badlands, mountains)	20 ft. per spell level
Barren (boulder field, sandy wastes, salt flat)	30 ft. per spell level

EXTINCT SPECIES

In this setting, dragonborn, gnomes, orcs, and tieflings are not available as playable species. These peoples once walked the world in ages past, but are now considered extinct. A brutal campaign of extermination led to the systematic eradication of several iconic fantasy species. Even among those who narrowly escaped extinction, many were driven into hiding, their numbers decimated and their cultures reduced to scattered, barbaric remnants.

MISSING CLASSES

Certain classes are unknown or lost to history in this setting. Paladins, Sorcerers, and Warlocks do not exist. Bards, too, are not a formal class. Those who call themselves bards in this world are often Rogues, blending the Entertainer background with the Assassin archetype. They are spies, poisoners, and performers in equal measure.

PART ONE

Part One of *Merchant House of Amketch* begins as the player characters are contacted by the Veiled Alliance of the city of Balic. The Veiled Alliance desperately wants to find out where the shaqat beetles are coming from and how they can put an end to the illicit trade. The Veiled Alliance has observed the influx of beetles into the black markets, and managed to correlate the beetles' appearances with the arrivals of caravans of the house of Amketch. The heroes can help solve the puzzle by infiltrating the Amketch caravans.

HIRING ON

The heroes hire on with a caravan of House Amketch in this encounter.

Encounter. Marius Amketch is looking for adventurers.

Statistics. **Marius Amketch** is the master of House Amketch. If the characters decide to pick a fight here, there are 6 **mul guards** and 16 house employees (**commoners**) within earshot.

MUL GUARD

Medium Humanoid (Mul), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 16 **Initiative** +2 (12)
Hit Points 76 (9d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE			
STR 18	+4	+4	DEX 14	+2	+2	CON 18	+4	+4
INT 10	+0	+0	WIS 11	+0	+0	CHA 10	+0	+0

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +2, Perception +2
Gear Scale Mail, Stone Maul
Senses darkvision 30 ft., Passive Perception 12
Languages Common plus one other language
Challenge 3 (700 XP, PB +2)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Mul Guard makes two Maul attacks.

Maul. *Melee Attack Roll:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) Bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Medium or smaller creature, it has the Prone condition.

REACTIONS

Parry. *Trigger:* The mul is hit by a melee attack roll while holding a weapon. *Response:* The mul adds 2 to its AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

MARIUS AMKETCH

Medium Humanoid (Human), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 16 **Initiative** +1 (11)
Hit Points 117 (18d8+36)
Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE			
STR 13	+1	+3	DEX 13	+1	+1	CON 14	+2	+4
INT 15	+2	+2	WIS 16	+3	+3	CHA 15	+2	+2

Skills Acrobatics +3, Deception +4, Insight +5, Nature +4, Persuasion +6, Survival +5
Gear Scale Mail +2, Steel Longsword +1
Senses Passive Perception 13
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 4 (1,100 XP, PB +2)

ACTIONS

Marius makes two Longsword attacks.

Steel Longsword +1. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8+2) Slashing damage, or 13 (2d10+2) slashing damage if used with two hands.

REACTIONS

Parry. *Trigger:* Marius is hit by a melee attack roll while holding a weapon. *Response:* Marius adds 2 to his AC against that attack, possibly causing it to miss.

THE MERCHANT HOUSE OF AMKETCH

Some players may insist on checking out House Amketch.

Routes. Amketch is still a small house. Amketch does regularly transport grain from Balic to Altaruk, and returns to carry copper from South Ledopolus to Balic. Livestock, particularly kanks, and livestock products such as chitin, honey and leather, are often herded to Altaruk.

Assets. The Balic post consists of four large warehouses, offices, barracks, and livestock enclosures. House Amketch employs 15 to 20 agents (**commoners**), a dozen or so animal handlers (**commoners**), about 20 **Amketch guards**, and 20 to 30 slaves (**commoners**) at the Balic post. These numbers can double or even triple when one of the major caravans passes through.

The smaller trading posts are staffed by about 10 employees, including animal handlers and guards.

AMKETCH GUARD

Medium or Small Humanoid (Human), Neutral

Armor Class 15 **Initiative** +1 (11)

Hit Points 16 (3d8+3)

Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE			
STR 14	+2	+2	DEX 12	+1	+1	CON 12	+1	+1
INT 10	+0	+0	WIS 11	+0	+0	CHA 10	+0	+0

Skills Perception +2

Gear Bone Shortsword, Light Crossbow, Shield, Studded Leather Armor

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP, PB +2)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Attack Roll:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) Piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Attack Roll:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) Piercing damage.

Defenses. At least 10 **Amketch guards** are on watch at all times. Marius often hires on as many as 15 extra sellswords (**warrior infantry**). Marius also employs **Ushandra Kellt**.

House Amketch

House Amketch was founded eight years ago by the human trader Marius Amketch. Marius was an employee of House Inika, and served skillfully and loyally. He also was an adventurer of some note, and rumors persist that the capital he started his business with was recovered from some ancient ruin in the Tablelands. Marius speaks little of his days with Inika.

Early in Amketch's history, Marius was hard-pressed by House Inika and House Shom. Inika was angry with him for leaving to start his own house, and set up competitive routes against him. House Shom also tried to keep Amketch weak and small. Fortunately, Marius struck a deal with House Wavir and convinced the merchant house of the city of Balic to finance him in a masterful venture where he cornered the market on grain for a brief time. Inika and Shom both took heavy losses and backed off, while Marius returned Wavir's investment with interest.

Since that time, Inika has let its rivalry drop and Wavir has been a staunch supporter and ally. Marius is careful to stay on Wavir's good side, and often rents space on his caravans to the larger house at excellent rates. However, House Shom never forgave Amketch, and has been an enemy ever since.

USHANDRA KELLT

Medium Humanoid (Human, Preserver, Wizard), Lawful Neutral

Armor Class 15 **Initiative** +2 (12)

Hit Points 81 (18d8)

Speed 30 ft.

	MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE		MOD SAVE			
STR 11	+0	+0	DEX 14	+2	+2	CON 11	+0	+0
INT 17	+3	+3	WIS 12	+1	+1	CHA 16	+3	+3

Skills Arcana +6, History +6, Perception +4

Gear Wand

Senses Passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Gith

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP, PB +3)

ACTIONS

Ushandra makes three Arcane Burst attacks.

Arcane Burst. *Melee or Ranged Attack Roll:* +6, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) Force damage.

Spellcasting. Ushandra casts one of the following spells, using Intelligence as the spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14):

At Will: *Detect Magic, Light, Mage Armor* (included in AC), *Mage Hand, Prestidigitation*

2/Day Each: *Fireball* (level 4 version), *Invisibility*

1/Day Each: *Cone of Cold, Fly*

BONUS ACTIONS

Misty Step (3/Day). Ushandra casts *Misty Step*, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

REACTIONS

Protective Magic (3/Day). Ushandra casts *Counterspell* or *Shield* in response to the spell's trigger, using the same spellcasting ability as Spellcasting.

