

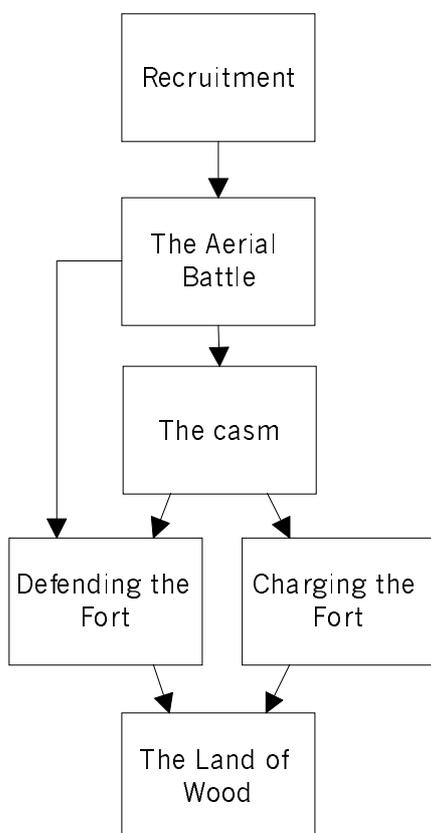
OA 8 - Red Sun Rising

Summary

The troops of the Red Gloved Daimyo have started marching on their neighbours. The PCs are ordered to recover the scroll of wood before the armies of the dark take control of it. In order to do this they have to find the witch hunter Wang Feng who is to meet them at a border fort that is likely to come under attack by the troops of the Red-Gloved Daimyo.

Adventure Stages

The adventure has several stages which are more or less linearly connected. They are shown in the diagram below.



Recruitment

Some old patron of the PCs (possibly the Blue Hunter) approaches the group and seems to be in dire need of help. He offers them 4 magical treasures should they first escort him to the border fort in order to speak with Wang Feng and then recover the *scroll of wood* for him.

The first treasure is a **red sword**, a +2 longsword that is bone white but seems to suck in the blood of those it kills, turning red for 1d4 days after inflicting a wound. The second reward is an **arrow of spirit slaying**. It is a single piece carved from human bone and looks like the sting of some evil animal. Also included in the offer is a **wand of animate water** which is caster level 6 and has 25 charges. The conjured creature looks like a fish with reptile legs made of water. The last item is a **horn of fog**.

The Blue Hunter will travel with the PCs to the fortress near the border to the province of the red-gloved daimyo and wait there until they return with the scroll. He will then give them the magical items and return to the city of butterflies. He constantly hurries them in order to make them move faster since he feels the fort will come under attack.

The Aerial Battle

The PCs are almost killed when a flying disk bereft of its rider crashes into the ground right next to them. When looking up, they see that a battle between 6 disk riders (see *NPCs of the Shattered Empire*) and a strange floating ship manned by 5 dretches (demons) and commanded by a 4 HD leader is in progress. The disk riders seem to be loosing and the dretches are heading straight for the lands of the Blademaster. If the PCs intervene on the side of the disk riders they will earn their gratitude and will have friends should they ever go



into their home lands. Helping the dretches will earn them another combat as soon as the disk riders are down. The PCs can use the ship (a strange construct made of slimy wood, decaying corpses, and rusty iron) to continue their travels but will be plagued by nightmares and subject to sudden anger while staying on the vessel.

Dretch Leader: small outsider (chaotic, evil) 4d8 (18 hp), ini +0, speed 20 ft., AC 16 (+1 size, +5 natural), 2 claws +5 (1d4), bite +3 (1d4), SA: darkness, scare, telekinesis at will, stinking cloud 1/day, summon dretch (35%), SQ: damage reduction 5/silver, SR 5, immune to poison & electricity, cold/fire/acid resistance 20, telepathy, fort +4, ref +4, will +4, str 10, dex 10, con 10, int 5, wis 11, cha 11, skills: -, feats: multiattack, AL: ce

Normal Dretch: small outsider (chaotic, evil) 2d8 (9 hp), ini +0, speed 20 ft., AC 16 (+1 size, +5 natural), 2 claws +3 (1d4), bite +1 (1d4), SA: darkness, scare, telekinesis at will, stinking cloud 1/day, summon dretch (35%), SQ: damage reduction 5/silver, SR 5, immune to poison & electricity, cold/fire/acid resistance 20, telepathy, fort +3, ref +3, will +3, str 10, dex 10, con 10, int 5, wis 11, cha 11, skills: -, feats: multiattack, AL: ce

The Chasm

After some travel the PCs come upon a huge chasm, that was created by the staff of a god according to legend. There is only one way across - a slippery tree that serves as a bridge. A shaman with a high wood affinity called Gengolai Woodweaver has chosen this site for his robberies. He has taken control over spirits and uses them to ambush travellers. His servants are a tongue lasher (Guixian) and 4 pebble spirits. The latter will be melded with the road and charge the PCs once they have passed



them. The tongue lasher hides in the chasm and will harass the PCs by first casting obscuring mist and then harassing them from the sides. The shaman will have shield of faith, endure elements (most likely fire), and protection from spirits active as soon as he has seen the PCs from his hideout in the thick undergrowth on the opposite side of the bridge. He will fire his crossbow at them and use his spells, preferably from a distance. Unlike him, the PCs are probably not able to cross the undergrowth and will have to walk around it. The DC to spot him is 18, a roll of 22 will also spot the tongue lasher.

Defending the Fort

Should the PCs arrive in time, they will be able to enter the fort before the enemies arrive. The PCs can identify themselves with a letter from their patron and are easily admitted into the fort.

The defenders consist of mercenaries paid by the Jade Emperor who have been charged with watching the Daimyo's movements. There are 30 Tigers of Pan Lang under their dread leader Ara Rupa. They will listen to any suggestions made by the PCs.

The attackers are undead hordes under the command of Dong Fei. There are 50 skeletons and 35 zombies. The tigers will handle about 45 skeletons and 20 zombies, leaving the rest and their special units to the PCs. The force concentrates around an undead dire tiger (stats as a huge zombie) that is used to batter down the gate. One of the zombies who stays near Dong Fei wields a terrible banner made of human flesh that is in fact magical. It increases the speed of all zombies within 500 feet as if they are hasted, i.e. they act normally.

After the battle is won, the PCs are informed that Wang Feng will arrive in a

day, as he was delayed by important business.

Skeletons: medium sized undead, 1d12 (6 hp), ini +5, speed 30 ft., AC 13 (+1 dex, +2 natural), att: 2 claws +0 (1d4), SQ: undead, immune to cold, half damage through piercing or slashing, fort +0, ref +1, will +2, str 10, dex 12, con -, int -, wis 10, cha 11, feats: improved initiative

Zombies: medium sized undead, 2d12+3 (16 hp), ini -1, speed 30 ft., AC 11 (-1 dex, +2 natural), att: slam +2 (1d6+1), SQ: undead, partial actions only (unless in radius of banner), fort+0, ref-1, will+3, str 13, dex 8, con -, int -, wis 10, cha 1, feat: toughness

Undead Dire Tiger: huge undead, 8d12+3 (55 hp), ini -1, speed: 40 ft., AC: 11 (-1 dex, -4 size, +6 natural), att: slam+15 (2d8+10), face/reach: 20x20/20ft., undead, partial actions only (unless within range of banner), fort +8, ref+7, will+14, str 25, dex 8, con -, int -, wis 10, cha 1, feats: toughness, improved critical (slam)

Charging the Fort

This scenario occurs if the PCs were somewhat slow (i.e. did not take the flying ship, rested a lot etc.) Shortly before the PCs arrive at the Fort, they will encounter retreating Tigers of Pan Lang (about 10 at half hit points) along with their leader who is enraged and lusting for blood. They will join the party to take revenge.

The fort is heavily damaged - the gates are broken down and one of the towers looks like it will topple over soon. There is no one to be seen but should the PCs enter the fort, they are attacked from all sides by undead and once they seem battered, the fire lord will show himself and be eager to eradicate the PCs.

The Land of Wood

The land of wood is also called the "Eternal Forest" (see the gazetteer). To get there the PCs must enter the shadow plane through a gate that lies beneath a sacrificial altar. They will arrive on the shadow plane and have to find the wooden cube that is the gate to the Eternal Forest. Give the PCs the handout with the map and the advice from the Blue Hunter since they will want to keep away from the Shadow Dragon.

Atmosphere in the Cave of the Shadow Dragon

The altar in front of the cave looks exactly as the one in the real world, only in black and white. However, the souls of the people killed drift slowly and aimlessly around, ignoring everybody and moaning loudly. There are two statues of foul spirits here that did not exist in the real world and that seem to watch the PCs.

Inside of the cave there is total darkness and complete silence, save for the odd hissing sound. The tunnels have walls of dark and cool stone and look as if they have been dug with claws. Bones of shadow creatures are strewn around everywhere.

The Preparations

Before the PCs go into the World of Shadow Wang Feng gives them a short sermon about the importance of virtue and casts a spell to see how is not good. These characters will get a stern look and comments on their lack of compassion. Then he will ask all non-evil PCs to swear the following things to him:

- They will not steal anything from the dragon
- They will return with the scroll if they were able to get it

During the oath, he will have *discern lies* active (will save DC 18 to fool him).

All *good* characters are granted magical support for the mission in the form of the



following spells which they have to divide among themselves: *invisibility to spirits* (90 minutes), *magic circle against evil* (90 minutes), *2x protection from elements (cold)* (90 minutes or 108 points of damage), and *delay poison* (9 hours). gives them a couple of hints as summarised on the handout map. If others argue that the mission will be endangered if they do not get any spells, he offers them to convert to good alignment, checking their sincerity with another *discern* lies.

After another short lecture on the advantages of good alignment, he will provide them with 4 *chameleon* scrolls and arrange for them to be fully healed. He also stresses how important quick action as well as avoiding the dragon is.

Interesting Features

The most interesting feature of the cave is probably the shadow dragon (a slightly altered juvenile white dragon with the shadow template slapped on). It is very violent and hungry for flesh but will be out hunting at night. The shadow dragon looks like a jet-black non-reflecting snake with 2 front claws. It rarely moves on ground and while flying looks like it's swimming through the air, sometimes stopping in the middle of a motion to hang in the air in a spiral. It is a unintelligent and bloodthirsty creature with a keen sense of tracking.

Shadow Dragon: large dragon (spirit, shadow), 12d12+24 (102 hp), ini +4 (feat), speed: 10 ft, fly 40 ft. (perfect), burrow 30 ft., AC: 21 (-0 size, +11 natural), att: bite+15 (1d8+3), 2 claws+10 (1d6+1), face/reach: 5x10/5ft., SQ: immune to sleep, paralysis, and cold, shadow blend (90% concealment), blindsight 120 feet, darkvision 400 ft., SA: breath weapon every 1d4 rounds (cone 30 ft., 4d6, DC: 18), *cause fear* (1/day), evasion, fast healing 2, +2 luck on all saves (incorporated), fort +12, ref+10, will+10, str 17, dex 10, con 15,



int 6, wis 11, cha 6, feats: flyby attack, power attack, cleave, sunder, improved initiative, skills: listen +12, spot +12, search +10, Spellcraft +10, CR: 7 (EL 8 on home plane probably)

The following locations are of interest in the cave of the Shadow Dragon.

1. The Fake Door: The dead end contains a fake iron door that is locked with seven powerful padlocks and a huge iron bar. The padlocks are actually traps and will explode if somebody tries to pick them. Actually, they do not even contain any mechanism that allows them to open - the only way to get rid of them is to break them (hardness: 10 hp: 8).

Exploding Padlock: CR 3; 1d4 fire damage within 5 feet (Ref negates) and 2d6 sonic damage within 50 feet (fort negates). Search (DC 25), Disable Device (DC 26), recognise as fake lock requires a Search (DC 20). The explosion will also alert the Shadow Swimmers in room 2

2. Guard Room: The shadow dragon has forced two shadow swimmers into his service. Since they get enough food, they stay with the dragon. However, they will not fight to the death and are likely to flee if odds turn against them. Since the room is pitch black, they are likely to achieve surprise, should the PCs enter without a light source.

3. Sleeping Chamber: This terrible smelling place is the sleeping chamber of the Shadow Swimmers where they rest while their master is in his lair. Their personal belonging are kept here but there is nothing of worth and in fact little else.

4. Prison Cell: This cell is only accessible through a heavy iron door that has an elaborate padlock (open lock DC: 23). Behind the door is a large empty room that seems to be even chillier than the rest. The room

contains a shadow (that is not incorporeal on this plane and therefore only CR 2) that is so starved it will practically rush the door as soon as it opens and attack until slain.

5. **The Locksmith's Chamber:** This room is locked with a highly complex mechanism that requires special attention. The open lock DC is 25, however if the roll is failed by more than 7 points, the lock will be damaged and cannot be opened any more, even with the correct key. Any would-be thief will realise this on an open lock roll of 15 or an appropriate craft (locksmith) check vs. DC 12.

The room behind the door is much warmer than the rest of the cave and even though everything is still black and white, the room has a luxurious appearance. The walls are covered with fine silk paintings (worth about 2500 gp) and everything looks clean and organised.

The room to the left is a living room with a sleeping mat and spartan utensils. To the right is a locksmith's workshop that houses a grizzled old human (expert lvl 5, lg) that has been a prisoner of the dragon for ages. Freeing him will have the same effect as stealing from the dragon, however, a fact that the locksmith will understand if it is thoroughly explained to him.

6. **The Hoard:** This is where the dragon normally resides. His treasure lies around seemingly at random. When the dragon is not in, he freezes over his hoard to avoid people stealing from it. It requires great skill not to leave traces in the frost covering the floor (spot DC 16 to notice this, tumble DC 19 or jump DC 23 to avoid hitting the floor).

The hoard contains the following items:

- about 10'000 silver coins
- about 1500 gold coins
- 4 frozen shadow goblins hung from the ceiling
- a wand of magic missiles
- a scroll of lightning blade
- a dark gem worth 150 gp
- a small wooden cube covered with tiles of different patterns



Stealing from the Dragon

Stealing from the dragon's horde is a bad idea, as is attacking his minions. The best idea is to distract them in some way to be undiscovered. If the guards assume that somebody has been present but nothing is missing, they will not report their blunder to their master.

If anything (including the locksmith) is missing, however, the Dargon will be furious and will not rest until he has a clue about who was in his lair. It might take him some time but most likely he will eventually venture to the real world and start randomly killing people.

Entering the land of wood

Entering the land of wood requires the one willing to enter to arrange the sides of the cube in such a way that the patterns are aligned correctly. This requires a spellcraft check DC 15. Each try takes ten minutes. As soon as the last tile is in place the user will be transported to the land of wood. He will arrive near a small shrine, where the scroll lies on a wooden altar. While this situation smells of a trap, the scroll is theirs to take and the mission is complete. After taking the scroll, the PC can return through a small gate (he has to crawl and will reappear groweling in front of his friends). After a swift escape the PCs should be back at the fort and most likely be headed towards the City of Butterflies.