



Background

The castle of **Eichenstein** has been towering over **Oak Hill** for centuries, protecting and ruling the valley below. But now, long after the last of the **von Eichensteins** passed away and the castle fell into ruins. Lately it has been occupied by bandits who use it to raid the villages around. Even worse, the famous chapel in the castle has been desecrated and used for dark rites of some sort. At least that's what the priests of the town have been told in their dreams for two weeks now. And now something started killing the peasants' cattle. Someone has to go up there and stop this madness! Unfortunately the castle is known to be impenetrable. Nobody ever managed to capture it. So far...

Luckily there may be some old folks in the villages around who know something that might help.

Rumors (1d6):

1. The bandits have been a scourge on the lands around for months now, they must have been hoarding a lot of goods somewhere. The castle must be packed with loot (partially true)
2. Once Barus the Ogre lived under that hill, his slayer build the castle. The ogre's cave might still be around (partially true)
3. The old lords of the castle were good friends with a tribe of dwarves living under the hill, their spirits are still haunting the castle (true)
4. There are bad things going on in the castle (obviously true)
5. The bandits are not human but demons from the underworld/living corpses/half-orcs/etc. (false)
6. There is a secret passage from the castle to outside (true)

Outside The Castle

Only one path leads to the castle, on all the other sides steep cliffs surround it (90 feet). The bandits are aware that they are hated by everyone around and will shoot anybody coming close. If the PCs manage to even get to the gates they will be greeted by a rain of boiling hot oil and excrements, to the laughter of the bandits above.

The Caves

Might be found by searching the woods and hillside around the castle (10% chance per hour searching)

Inside: Constant dripping and darkness,, stalactites and stalagmites lace the walls, floors and ceilings

Wandering Monster (1d6):

- 1-2. 1d6 rats
- 3-4. 1d4 bats
5. benign dwarven ghost, mourning, looking sad
6. undead cavebear

1. Entrance: once a dwarven armor smithy once, some broken tools and an anvil. Now it houses a family of bears (3 cave bears)

2. Old Living quarters: a heap of moldy, decaying wood; exit S is barred by a grate

3. Cave Hall: former bedroom, now cold and small, not even 3 feet high, one of the tunnels is wet, one big spider lives in the SE part but will do nothing if not disturbed

4. Muddy Waters: something golden shines on the ground of this waterhole, but any try to get it will attract of a giant leech living in the mud, 3 rings can be found in there as well, all cursed

5. Sanctuary: after some yards of winding tunnel it ends in a small room, walls painted with unknown symbols, rests of candles and a small idol made of bone here (lighting a candle will make the paintings glow and create a sanctuary zone in this room)

6. Ancient Bear Lair: littered with old bear bones, due to warlock's rituals above 33% chance of 1d3 of them becoming alive

7. The Bonehall: bones of hundreds litter the ground, victims of an ogre slain hundreds of years ago. Also the ogre, undead; any hour spent: 5% chance of more skeletons coming alive; exits can after climbing a steep, slippery ascension

8. The Ogre's Cave: the exit to outside collapsed centuries ago, nothing here but and old stinky ogre lair, 1 rusty dagger in the mud

9. Twisty Little Passages, All Alike: some

obviously man-made and contains a stone that can be moved (check on secret doors), leads to room 11

10. Empty, dark room: darker than usual. Light seems to be swallowed by darkness, strange voices can nearly be heard, if resting here dark dreams occur

11. The Castle's Cellar: lots of food and goods in the W, at any time 1d6 bandits sleeping or cooking in fireplace; well in the NW; stairs lead to **12**; the bandits' gold is hidden in well: **700gp**

In The Castle

(11 inhabitants: 9 bandits, 1 captain, 1 warlock)

12. The Castle's Court: The walls are still standing, the rest is broken, ruined and full of ivy. No wonder the bandits seem to live in the cellar. There are always 3 guards with bows on the walls, 1 at the gate.

13. Desecrated Chapel: The former lords of Eichenstein were pious people, now there is a horse's head on the altar, a big pentagram on the floor, the smell of sulphur around, **Bruno** the captain of the bandits and **Marr** the warlock are planning their next move, he can call on one supernatural familiar (imp) to aid him