Dungeons & Dragons
FANTASY ROLEPLAYING GAME

KILL THE MESSENGERS
A Special Encounter for 2nd-Level Characters
Introduction

**Kill the Messengers** is a 1-hour DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® encounter intended for 4–6 characters of 2nd level. It serves as an entertaining dénouement to “The Twisting Halls,” an adventure in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game box, but feel free to plunder it for your home campaign!

This is the encounter written for the Celebrity D&D Game event at Gen Con 2010, featuring R.A. Salvatore (creator of Drizzt Do’Urden), Ed Greenwood (creator of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® world), and Larry Elmore (fantasy illustrator extraordinaire) as players.

In addition to the actual encounter, this booklet includes four pregenerated characters created using the rules and guidelines in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game: a human cleric, a dwarf fighter, a halfling rogue, and an elf wizard. Permission is granted to photocopy these character sheets for home game use only.

The Red Box

If you’re new to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game or played the game years ago but stopped for whatever reason, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game (affectionately known as “the Red Box”) is for you. An updated version of the Red Box hits store shelves in September 2010. It’s designed to appeal to new players as well as lapsed players who remember fondly the original 1980 Red Box and who might be thinking about starting up a game with their kids or a group of friends.

Intended for players ages 12 and up, the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game was modeled after the original Red Box and includes the following components:

✦ A set of polyhedral dice

✦ 4 blank character sheets (which can be photocopied for home game use)

✦ A 32-page *Player’s Book* containing an introductory solo-play adventure.

✦ A 64-page *Dungeon Master’s Book* containing a group adventure for 1st-level characters, as well as basic rules for advancing characters to 2nd level, combat rules, encounter design guidelines, and monster statistics.

✦ A foldout full-color battle map

✦ Die-cut character tokens, monster tokens, power cards, and magic item cards

Using This Encounter

The easiest way to use this encounter is to attach it to the end of “The Twisting Halls.” In that adventure, the heroes fight their way into a goblin lair to retrieve a box belonging to a dwarf merchant named Traevus. An evil necromancer named Malareth stole the box in order to get at the human skull locked inside. The skull is a focus for necromantic rituals. More likely than not, the heroes will slay Malareth in the course of completing their quest. Assuming they survive, all that remains is for them to deliver the box and its contents safely to Traevus.

*Kill the Messengers* takes place as the heroes leave the Twisting Halls dungeon. It assumes they have advanced to 2nd level and have Traevus’s box in their custody. During the celebrity game, D&D® miniatures were used to represent heroes and monsters because they’re easier for spectators to see, but feel free to substitute hero and monster tokens from the Red Box as needed for your home game.

Encounter Synopsis

Though haughty and ambitious, Malareth is merely the puppet or underling of a greater evil lurking in the Nentir Vale. The exact nature of this evil isn’t revealed here, although Orcus (the demon prince of the undead) might be involved.

Malareth’s assignment was to acquire the skull. After stealing the merchant’s box, he needed to verify that its contents were genuine. He opened the box and began studying the skull. Meanwhile, messengers were sent to fetch the skull and dispose of Malareth. Apparently the necromancer had outlived his usefulness! Either that, or his vile master just doesn’t like loose ends.

The dark messengers arrive just as the heroes are leaving the goblin lair. The ground outside the lair is littered with goblin carcasses (the heroes’ handiwork), so the adventurers aren’t likely to convince the dark messengers that they’re anything other than unwanted troublemakers who should be destroyed.

The leader of the dark messengers is one of Malareth’s peers and rivals, a cruel and ambitious necromancer named Nynga Murdergrave. A wererat bodyguard named Klyde accompanies Nynga, as well as several animated orc skeletons and the undead remains of a Nerathi cavalier killed in battle long ago—all in all, a wretched lot.
Kill the Messengers
Encounter Level 3 (755 XP)

Setup

Nynga Murdergrave, tiefling necromancer (N)
Klyde, wererat (K)
1 skeletal rider (R)
5 decrepit orc skeletons (S)

This encounter uses the “Monster Lair” portion of the foldout battle map in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game box. Fold the map so that only the relevant area is showing.

The encounter is higher than the adventurers’ level because it’s meant to be challenging. If the heroes are down healing surges or daily powers, you can hold the skeletal rider in reserve and put it in play only if they’re having too easy a time.

Read the following to begin the encounter:
You were sent on a quest by a dwarf merchant named Traevus to retrieve some stolen property of his—a strongbox taken by goblin marauders. You tracked the goblins to their cave and slaughtered every last one of them, but deep within their lair you found a secret dungeon complex. Therein you fought an evil necromancer and recovered the merchant’s box, inside which was a human skull.

As you leave the goblins’ lair, you hear the distant peal of thunder and the fall of heavy rain.

Ask the players to decide which of their characters is carrying the box, the skull, or both. Then have them each make a DC 13 Perception check.

If one or more of the characters succeed on the check, read the following:
Approaching the entrance, you spot a number of hunched figures standing over the corpses of the slain goblins. The closest shape looks like the animated skeleton of an orc. Getting the strongbox back to Traevus might be harder than you thought!

If no one in the adventuring party spots the villains outside, place the heroes’ tokens or miniatures near the cave entrance instead of the back of the cave, and have both sides roll initiative.

If one or more heroes succeed on the Perception check, the villains outside don’t notice them immediately, affording the characters an opportunity to conduct some stealthy reconnaissance. Characters can move about the caves unseen with a successful Stealth check (opposed by the nearest enemy’s Perception check). The heroes gain a +2 bonus to their checks because the caves contain plenty of shadows.

Characters who can get to the mouth of a cave without being detected can see all of the villains.

When the characters see the Nynga and her retinue, read:
Undaunted by the rain, five orc skeletons use their rusty swords to poke the corpses of the slain goblins. Crouched behind some nearby boulders are two cloaked figures: a rat-faced humanoid with a sword and a woman with horns protruding from her cowl. Farther back, in the mist, stands a skeletal horse and rider.

Once Nynga becomes aware of the heroes, read the following:
A female voice rises above the rain. “You don’t work for Malareth,” she says. “I take it you have the skull?”

Nynga’s task is simple: Fetch the skull and deliver it safely to her dark masters. Failure is not an option, lest she end up worse off than her skeletal orc minions. The heroes can converse with the dark messengers, attack them, or surrender the skull. Getting past the dark messengers unseen is not an option.

If the heroes converse with Nynga, see “Roleplaying Nynga” below. If they attack, have both sides roll initiative. If they offer Nynga the skull, she orders Klyde to collect it. Once the skull is in her possession, she and her forces withdraw. If the heroes give up the skull, they are unable to complete their quest.

Creative players might try to convince Nynga that they don’t have the skull, or they might surrender a facsimile of the skull while keeping the real one hidden. To fool Nynga, the heroes must each make a Bluff check opposed by her Insight check; if half or more of them succeed, Nynga is fooled. A successful ruse is enough to give the heroes a head start, but Nynga eventually realizes she’s been duped. The dark messengers catch up to the party by nightfall. The battle plays out more or less the same, but use the “Crossroads” portion of the battle map instead.

Roleplaying Nynga
Here are some questions the heroes might ask Nynga Murdergrave, along with her answers.

Who are you? “Nynga Murdergrave. This is Klyde, my henchman.”

Whom do you serve? “Orcus, demon prince of undeath! Maybe you’ve heard of him.”

Why do you want the skull? “The skull holds a small measure of necromantic power, but when combined with others like it, its power is formidable.”

What do you intend to do with the skull? “I am merely a messenger. What my masters intend to do with the skull is their business and none of your concern—yet.”

Have you ever danced with the devil under the pale moonlight? “Your questions tire me. Klyde! Slay these imbeciles!”
Nynga Murdergrave, Necromancer (N)  Level 3 Controller
Medium natural, tiefling  XP 150
HP 42; Bloodied 21 Initiative +2
AC 17, Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 15 Perception +6
Speed 6 Low-light vision
Resist 6 fire

TRAITs
✦ Aura of Dread ✦ Aura 1
Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty on attack rolls.

STANDARD ACTIONS
1. Staff (necrotic, weapon) ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC (+9 if the target is bloodied)
Hit: 1d8 + 2 damage plus 5 necrotic damage.

✦ Grasp of the Earthen Grave (necrotic) ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature standing on the ground); +7 vs. Reflex (+8 if the target is bloodied)
Hit: The target is immobilized (save ends).
Failed Saving Throw: The target takes 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS
Arise! ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An allied undead minion within 5 squares of Nynga drops to 0 hit points. The undead minion cannot be higher level than Nynga.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The undead minion rises to its feet at the start of its next turn (as a free action) with 1 hit point.

Infernal Wrath (fire) ✦ Encounter
Trigger: An enemy within 10 squares of Nynga hits her.
Effect (Free Action): The triggering enemy takes 1d6 + 5 fire damage.

Skills Arcana +10, Bluff +11, Insight +6, Stealth +9
Str 12 (+2)  Dex 13 (+2)  Wis 11 (+1)
Con 10 (+1)  Int 18 (+5)  Cha 16 (+4)

Alignment evil  Languages Common
Equipment short sword

Klyde, Wererat (W)  Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)  XP 150
HP 37; Bloodied 18 Initiative +7
AC 17, Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 12 Perception +7
Speed 6, climb 4 (rat or hybrid form only) Low-light vision

TRAITS
Regeneration
The wererat regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. If the wererat takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS
1. Short Sword (weapon) ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The wererat must be in human or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage (or 2d6 + 6 if the wererat has combat advantage against the target).

1. Bite  ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat or hybrid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 6 damage, and if the wererat has combat advantage against the target, the target takes ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS
Rat Scurry  ✦ At-Will
Requirement: The wererat must be in rat form.
Effect: The wererat shifts its speed.

MINOR ACTIONS
Change Shape (polymorph)  ✦ At-Will

Effect: The wererat alters its physical form to appear as a rat, a unique human, or a hybrid creature. The form lasts until it uses change shape again or until it drops to 0 hit points (whereupon it assumes human form). The creature retains its statistics in its new form. Its clothing, armor, and possessions do not change.

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10
Str 10 (+1)  Dex 18 (+5)  Wis 12 (+2)
Con 15 (+3)  Int 13 (+2)  Cha 11 (+1)

Alignment evil  Languages Common
Equipment short sword

Skeletal Rider (R)  Level 3 Elite Soldier
Large natural animate (undead)  XP 300
HP 94; Bloodied 47 Initiative +6
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14 Perception +3
Speed 8 Darkvision

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

TRAITS
Brittle
Whenever the skeletal rider is knocked prone, it takes 5 damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS
1. Hooves  ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target falls prone. If the target is already prone, it takes 5 extra damage.

1. Death’s Charge  ✦ At-Will
Effect: The skeletal rider charges and makes the following attack instead of a basic attack.
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone and is dazed (save ends).

MOVE ACTIONS
1. Ride-By Attack  ✦ Recharge ✦ II
Effect: The skeletal rider moves its speed and can make the following attack at any point during its move.
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 10 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeletal rider’s next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS
Mark of Nerath  ✦ At-Will (1/round)
Effect: An enemy within 5 squares of the skeletal rider is marked (save ends).
Str 18 (+5)  Dex 17 (+4)  Wis 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3)  Int 5 (-2)  Cha 5 (-2)

Alignment unaligned  Languages – Equipment longspear, light shield

5 Decrepit Orc Skeletons (S)  Level 2 Minion Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)  XP 31 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +3
AC 14, Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 11 Perception +3
Speed 6 Darkvision

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic

STANDARD ACTIONS
1. Dead Man’s Sword (weapon)  ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 6 damage, or 9 damage if the target has one or more of the skeleton’s allies adjacent to it.
Str 17 (+4)  Dex 15 (+3)  Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)  Int 3 (-3)  Cha 3 (-3)

Alignment unaligned  Languages – Equipment rusted sword
**Tactics**

Nynga takes cover behind the boulders and uses *grasp of the earthen grave* to root enemies to the spot. She tries to stay within 5 squares of her minions so that when one of them drops to 0 hit points, she can use *arise!* She uses *infernal wrath* on the first enemy to wound her.

Klyde prefers to remain in hybrid form. He tries to flank enemies and reap the benefits of combat advantage.

The skeletal rider and its mount are considered one creature. When it drops to 0 hit points, both rider and mount collapse into a heap of bones. The rider cannot be dismounted. Its goal is to draw fire from the other dark messengers using *ride-by attack* and *mark of Nerath*.

The orc skeletons deal more damage when they cluster around a common enemy. An orc skeleton will stupidly provoke an opportunity attack running away from one enemy in order to deal more damage to another. When a minion falls in battle, do not remove its token or miniature from the map. As soon as she is able, Nynga scurries out of hiding and restores the minion using *arise!* The heroes do not gain extra XP for killing the same minion over and over.

**Features of the Area**

**Illumination:** Bright light.

**Heavy Rain:** Creatures standing outside the caves gain concealment against enemies more than 5 squares away from them.

**Blocked Tunnel:** A large boulder seals off the northern exit, but gaps allow a nimble character to squeeze through with a DC 10 Acrobatics check.

**Boulders:** The boulders outside are 10 feet high and provide cover. Climbing over them requires a DC 10 Athletics check. The boulders provide cover.

**Bushes:** The bushes create difficult terrain.

**Creek:** The creek is shallow and considered normal terrain. The wider section is deeper and treated as difficult terrain.

**Ending the Encounter**

If the heroes defeat the dark messengers, they can search the bodies. Nynga carries three 100-gp pearls and a *bag of holding* (for carrying the skull), and Klyde has a pouch containing 90 gp. After looting the dead, the heroes can continue on their way, return the skull to Traevus, and collect their quest reward.
### ABILITIES AND SKILLS

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<th>Ability</th>
<th>Modifier</th>
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### COMBAT STATISTICS

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<tr>
<th>Stat</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<td>Attack Bonus</td>
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<td>Surges Per Day</td>
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### DEFENSES

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### CURRENT HIT POINTS

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Temporary Hit Points</th>
<th>Surges Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### POWERS AND FEATS

- storm hammer (at-will)
- blessing of wrath (at-will)
- healing word (2/encounter)
- echoes of thunder (1/encounter)
- storm surge (1/encounter)
- levy of judgment (1/day)
- Defensive Mobility (feat)
- Durable (feat)

### Racial Traits:

- Human versatility

### EQUIPMENT AND MAGIC ITEMS

- chainmail armor
- heavy shield
- mace
- holy symbol of Kord (implement)
- potion of healing
- bedroll
- belt pouch
- backpack

### ACTIONS IN COMBAT

On your turn in combat, you can take three actions:

- A standard action, which is usually an attack
- A move action, which involves movement
- A minor action, which is simple and quick

You can give up an action to take another action from lower on the list, so you can take a move or a minor action instead of a standard action or a minor action instead of a move action.

### EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

- 1,000 XP for next level: 2,250

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**ABILITIES AND SKILLS**

18 **Strength**
Strength measures your physical power.
- Modified: +5
- Athletics: Trained

14 **Constitution**
Constitution represents health, stamina, and vital force.
- Modified: +3
- Endurance: Trained

13 **Dexterity**
Dexterity measures coordination, agility, and balance.
- Modified: +2
- Acrobatics: Trained
- Stealth: Trained
- Thievery: Trained

10 **Intelligence**
Intelligence describes how well you learn and reason.
- Modified: +1
- Arcana: Trained
- History: Trained
- Religion: Trained

12 **Wisdom**
Wisdom measures common sense, self-discipline, and empathy.
- Modified: +2
- Dungeoneering: Trained
- Heal: Trained
- Insight: Trained
- Nature: Trained
- Perception: Trained

11 **Charisma**
Charisma measures force of personality and leadership.
- Modified: +1
- Bluff: Trained
- Diplomacy: Trained
- Intimidate: Trained
- Streetwise: Trained

**POWERS AND FEATS**
- Poisoned Assault (stance)
- Battle Fury (stance)
- Power Strike (1/encounter)
- Minor Resurgence (1/encounter)
- Toughness (feat)

**DEFENSES**

18 **Armor Class (AC)**
AC measures how hard it is to physically land an attack on you.

17 **Fortitude**
Fortitude measures your toughness and resilience.

12 **Will**
Will measures your strength of will, self-discipline, and devotion.

**COMBAT STATISTICS**

+2 **Initiative**
Roll initiative to determine the turn order in combat.

5 **Speed**
Your speed is the number of squares you can move with a move action.

**ATTACK BONUSES**
- **Attack Bonus**
  - Great axe: +8
  - Weapon:
    - Damage:

**TEMPORARY HIT POINTS**

40 **Hit Points**

**CURRENT HIT POINTS**

Bloodied:
- 20
- Healing Surge Value: 10
- Surges Per Day: 11

**WEALTH**

180 gp

**EQUIPMENT AND MAGIC ITEMS**

- Scale armor
- +1 lifedrinker great axe
- Backpack
- 50-foot rope
- Bedroll
- Belt pouch
- 2 sunrods
- Waterskin

**CHARACTER NOTES**

Class: **Fighter**
Level: **2**
Race: **Dwarf**
Gender: 
Alignment: 
Languages: **Common, Dwarven**

**PERMISSION**
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**CLASS: Rogue**  Level: 2
**RACE:** Halfling  Gender:

**ALIGNMENT:**

**LANGUAGES:** Common, Goblin

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**POWERs AND FEATS**
- Defensive strike (at-will)
- Deft strike (at-will)
- Acrobatic maneuver (at-will)
- Nimble positioning (at-will)
- Backstab (1/encounter)
- Tumble (1/encounter)
- Sneak attack (+2d6 damage)
- Improved Initiative (feat)
- Racial Traits:
  - Nimble reaction
  - Second chance

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**WEALTH**
- 80 gp
- Turquoise gem worth 100 gp

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**EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)**
- 1,000

**XP for next level:** 2,250

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- A minor action, which is simple and quick
- You can give up an action to take another action from lower on the list, so you can take a move or a minor action in addition to a standard action or a minor action instead of a move action.

### EQUIPMENT AND MAGIC ITEMS

- cloth armor
- +1 magic staff
- backpack
- bedroll
- 50-foot rope
- belt pouch
- 2 sunrods
- waterskin

### EXPERIENCE POINTS (XP)

1,000 XP for next level: 2,250