ENCOUNTER T2: LIGHTS IN THE NIGHT

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 11 (3,000 XP)

3 chuuls (C)
3 will-o’wisps (W)

SETUP

If the adventurers fail to locate the Great Warren using the skill challenge of exploring the wilderness, they find themselves in a dangerous stretch of swampland as twilight begins to fall. Even if the adventurers successfully complete the skill challenge, you can use this as an additional encounter as they move closer to the Great Warren.

As the adventurers approach this stretch of swamp, read:

The footpath here meanders through bogs and thickets until it eventually draws close to deeper bodies of dark, still water. Lights bounce in the darkness ahead, as though three torches or lanterns are being carried through the bog.

The will-o’wisps start out on the map as shown, visible as the adventurers approach. The chuul start this encounter hidden beneath the lake. They don’t emerge until the adventurers move close to investigate the lights or a battle begins.

Perception Check

DC 21: You notice ripples in the dark water, as though something large is moving beneath the otherwise still surface.

The will-o’wisps start out on the map as shown, visible as the adventurers approach. The chuul start this encounter hidden beneath the lake. They don’t emerge until the adventurers move close to investigate the lights or a battle begins.

TACTICS

The will-o’wisps start the encounter hovering in the darkness, hoping that the adventurers will move closer to investigate their fey light. At the first opportunity, each one uses luring glow to target a different adventurer and pull that adventurer closer. They sustain this effect each round until they gather the adventurers near them. After that, they flank with the chuul when possible, saving the closest bloodied creature (even one of the chuuls). They employ blink out when an attack misses them so that they can gain combat advantage.

If a wisp is reduced to 16 hit points or fewer but the character it fights is not bloodied, it breaks off to life drain the closest bloodied creature (even one of the chuuls).

The chuuls are unsophisticated combatants, bursting from the water to attack the nearest targets. They wait until the will-o’wisps pull opponents close before emerging from hiding, then use their double attack as often as possible. The chuuls prefer to focus on different targets, but they flank a single character if he or she is the only foe they can reach.

The chuuls, used to working in conjunction with the will-o’wisps, know how to take advantage of the terrain and the powers of their strange allies. Because of the success they have known in the past, the chuuls have no concept of defeat. They fight to the death.
Development

If the adventurers failed to locate the Great Warren in the previous skill challenge (Encounter T1: Into the Trollhaunt), a search of the surrounding bogs reveals the body of a troll scout lured to its death by the will-o’-wisps. The creature carried a crude map showing the route to the Great Warren. The map notes a secret knock (three long, three short) to gain admission through the main door. However, this signal is long out of date. If it is used in the Trollmaw (Encounter W1: The Trollmaw, page 10), the guards there pretend to admit the adventurers as allies, then attack at once.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Twilight (dim light).

Bogs: These areas of marsh and mud are difficult terrain (requiring 1 extra square of movement to enter).

Thickets: These areas of dense undergrowth provide concealment and are difficult terrain.

Trees: Squares containing trees are difficult terrain and provide concealment to anyone standing in them. A tree’s trunk provides cover (-2 to attack rolls) to anyone standing adjacent to it.

Shallow Water: The shallow water adjacent to the shore is 5 feet deep and is difficult terrain. Characters in the water gain cover except against attacks from submerged enemies. Fighting in the water imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows.

Deep Water: Beyond the shallow shoreline, the water varies from 10 to 15 feet deep. Creatures in deep water must use the Athletics skill to move. Creatures in deep water gain cover except against attacks from submerged enemies. Fighting in the water imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows, and powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

A creature that moves from an area of shallow water into a square of deep water hits a drop-off, ending its movement in that square unless it is already swimming.

Treasure: The body of the troll includes the map to the Great Warren, as well as a pouch containing three small gems worth a total of 500 gp.