

DQMAJ EE_3

The Groundling

The third of a series of 'Extended Encounters' for Dragonquest Majesty. There are not quite long enough to be even a mini-scenario, but should take longer to play than a single encounter.

Setting: Any important but remote trade road in rolling hills and scattered woods

Location This will fit in any area of Arдания.

Synopsis The party must stop a rampaging minotaur.

Background

In ages past during the six winter war the gods created many beings to fight in their names. With the assistance of Krolm, his mighty lord, Adravanus a mighty adept of sacrificial earth took the blood of the slain dragon Xianshair, and mixed it with the great bull lord, Mataur master of plains and caverns, and created the minotaur with the bulls strength and dragons cunning. They proved most useful but as the war ended they fled deep into the caverns of the world and were seemingly forgotten.

In the time of the great conflict that ravaged Arдания the minotaurs were controlled by demons of the deep and their great strength used to lay waste to The city of Lormidia in the year SA 1412 (this is an old elven dating system and in current time it is now TA 2192). After proving their strength they again retreated deep underground.

The gods returned as did their influence over their creations. Krolm sets each minotaur a challenge as punishment from turning from him and fleeing deep in the earth, an honour they had not earned. The minotaurs now have an occasional pull to the surface world, a time in their lives they called the groundling. For a full calendar month from new moon to new moon, they must walk upon the paths and roads of the surface world challenging all who would walk down Krolms highways. Those they challenge must pay in silver and gems and gold or else defeat the minotaur in combat. If the minotaur is slain his revenant will then lead his conquerors to the shallow cave where he is storing his booty and pay them to release his spirit, so it can be reborn. If they take his riches but don't release him he can place a major curse upon them at up to rank 7.

After a successful months of brawling and gaining riches the successful minotaurs return deep underground, with no individual ever returning. There they offer up their booty to Krolm, to regain his favour and they will live long lives in the caverns of the deep.

Any troubadour of rank 2 or courtier of rank 3 will have heard of occasional minotaurs blocking roads. Any troubadour of rank 4 or courtier of rank 5 will know of the tales of the 'groundling' and why the minotaurs do it.

This is an event with one such Time of Groundling, with the minotaur known as Stormfoot.

Introduction.

The party can either

- Have this encounter as purely random when they are perhaps returning from another adventure
- Run into a caravan that has just paid a tithe for safety to the minotaur

- Find a party of 3 dead ‘adventurers’ or ‘militia’ stripped of all gear and a bloody trail to follow
- Hear a tale from a local bard about the riches the minotaurs accumulate and for a small fee he will tell them of such a beast, not 5 days from here.
- Be commissioned by a guild to rid a road of the minotaur. This will be for a flat rate fee of 800sp and the party must give all booty up to the guild, who will sort and return it and give the party 20% of any goods that cant be handed back.

A Walk in the Park

Encounters roll at +5% on wood or plains.

The major road the Minotaur plagues is a rather important one regard trade, and about mid-way between two at least moderate sized settlements. It has no more than gentle hills and scattered tree copses. In ancient times it was a hunting area for the gentry, after game animals and birds. It has a number of streams filled with ‘coarse’ fish. If it weren’t for a higher than average incidence of ‘monsters’ in the area it would make good farmland.

If you have random encounters on the day you plan the party to meet the minotaur no intelligent creature encounters will be had, as they know to stay clear!!

The Meeting

Stormfoot will step out of the woods were he hides and demand, in gruff common all the parties shields, gems and coins. If they comply he lets them go, making chicken noises as they leave, as he has heard this is quite derogatory to surface folk.

If combat occurs he uses tactics as discussed in his background. He will fight to the death once combat is joined.

Epilogue

Track back to where he sleeps. He is currently carrying all his wealth with him. He is bunking in a great hollow in the base of a big tree.

No way to find the cave entrance he exited the underworld from. If by some fluke the party find it, several miles away, it is a small cavern with a huge boulder blocking exit down. Takes PS x 1 to move (or x2 if a decent lever is found, this is what Stormfoot will do)..

Stormfoot The Minotaur.

Aged 137 so a little old for the groundling. He is lazy, and slightly fat but still rather strong for his race. He is the oldest of a number of other brothers who have successfully returned from there 'groundling'. He also has younger sisters, none of whom have ventured yet. As 1 of 7 children his family unit is rather small. On very rare occasions a whole family unit will venture to the surface and shed much blood in Krolms name. This will consist of a raiding party moving in something of a circle over a period of a few weeks and then returning to below. If at all possible they carry their dead with them. A full 6 to 15 family members may take part.

The deep caverns of the minotaurs are at least 4 days solid hard walking down into the depths of the world.

He is slightly more intelligent than an average minotaur. His aim to earn a powerful shield, all shiny and strong and heavily decorated. He sort of saw one in a dream and has set himself on finding one to give up to Krolm. Like many of his race he is aware that his skin can turn most blades and he is high resilience to magic. The tales of his people tell him how to fight the upworlders, those who have left the 'stomach' of Krolms world by walking on the surface. He knows that the best way to avoid missile fire is to hide in deep woods, that in a stand up fight his strength and constitution will carry him through the battle. Throwing a spear at enemy spell-users can often take them out the combat.

Like many of his race he received a 'birth-blessing' from Krolm. His is to resist stun and recover from stun as though he had 21 in each of END and WP.

The hair on his hide is a slightly dusty orange-red and he has red eyes, which make him stand out somewhat from other minotaurs. He also carries spears, not the normal axes his kind favour.

If approached reasonably and Stormfoot can resist his battle lust and urge (WP x 1.5) he may talk to the party and tell of his quest for a shiny shield. He will swap his fire opals for it.

STATS

Natural Habitat: Caverns, Woods, Rough, Paths.

Frequency: Very Rare **Number:** 6-15 (1)

Description: Minotaurs are humanoid, with the head of a bull and a very hairy hide. They have a tail, just like that of a bull.

Talents, Skills, and Magic: The minotaur has no special magical abilities or talents. They are tool users and will sometimes use simple weapons.

He is a caverns ranger, rank 2. He can make a new spear in around 1 days work.

Movement Rates: Running: 300

PS: 25 **MD:** 18 **AG:** 14 **MA:** None

EN: 15* **FT:** 22 **WP:** 15* **PC:** 20 **MR:** 35%

PB: 6 **TMR:** 6 **NA:** Hide absorbs 6 DP **Stuns on:** 7 effective damage.

Recovers from stun at (42+current fatigue).

Weapons: A minotaur can attack by butting with his horns, biting, or attacking with a weapon.

Butt: IV:34 SC:68% D+4 damage

Bite, melee IV:34 SC:48%, D damage.

Bite, close IV:34 SC:68% D damage

Spear, rank 3 IV:37 SC:77% D+5 damage, breaks on a 87+

The minotaur can use any combination of two of these attacks in any one pulse without penalty.

Carries with him

- 6 purses containing 5d sp each and D cf each from travellers.
- Large backpack made of slain bear hide
- 2 spears
- A silvered short sword from a dead adventurer
- Bag of bear claws
- 3 wolf ears
- broken antlers of a small stag
- 2 potions of healing, rank 3 alchemical.
- A copper bracelet worth 8sp, of a unicorn motif.
- 4 turnips.
- A wolf leg, now a bit 'tender'.
- 3 yellow gems he brought with him from under-caverns, fire opals of 120sp each.