

4TH LEVEL



THE DM TOOL CHEST

# THE BANDIT & THE BRIDE



FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE

A newlywed bride has been kidnapped by a band of marauding bandits



# THE BANDIT & THE BRIDE

**T**he Bandit & The Bride is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for **three to five characters of 3rd to 5th level** and is optimized for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 4**. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach one-third of the way to level

5. A local ranch was attacked by a band of marauding bandits and the rancher's wife was taken hostage. Tracking the bandits leads to a manor home that has been converted into a makeshift fort with the captive inside. This adventure takes place in the Omeria campaign setting but is designed to easily be used as a stand-alone or fit into an existing campaign with only a few modifications. The party should be prepared for some difficult battles with the bandits inside the fort.

## BACKGROUND

A gang of bandit marauders, the Ruby Riders, recently attacked the Arabarn Ranch just outside of the town of Steeproost. The half-Anorian owner of the ranch, Taznar Arabarn, was viciously assaulted in the attack, and Violeta, his Pressonian wife of only a few weeks, was abducted. The Riders have left the local area, headed back to their fort with their captive in tow.

Unbeknownst to Taznar, Violeta and the bandit leader, Minoas, were once young lovers many years ago. Minoas sought his fortune outside of Steeproost, intending to come back and wed Violeta. However, the years passed, and he never returned. Eventually, Violeta's family lost most of their livelihood when the Gretsard Iron Mine shut down years ago and she was pushed into marrying Taznar to save her family from destitution.

Violeta does not want to be rescued and she is quite happy to be with Minoas. She is an eager and willing participant to his plans and the flames of their love are burning bright.

## ABOUT THE RUBY RIDERS

Minoas Vassiadis left Steeproost as a young man with a heart full of hope and love. After arriving in Greatwell and joining the town guard, he slowly became disillusioned with life and he stopped reaching out to Violeta back home. Constant struggles with the criminal elements in town eventually led him and other guards to accept bribes and overlook illegal activities. After their corruption was discovered, Minoas and the other guards were forced to flee the city just ahead of the hangman's noose.

Forced into a life of banditry to make ends meet, Minoas formed the Ruby Riders with his trusted circle of former guardsmen by his side. After a few years and picking up a handful of others, Minoas led them north to Vaskill Valley where they happened upon a small, fortified manor home used by some noble family as a summer hunting lodge. After killing and disposing of the former inhabitants, Minoas eventually decided to head home to Steeproost and seek out his former love.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

**The Wounded Rancher.** A young half-Anorian boy rushes up to the adventurers, begging them to come quickly, because his uncle's ranch was attacked by bandits last night! After reaching the ranch, they find the home smoldering from recently extinguished flames and the owner, Taznar Arabarn, wounded and being tended to. He will beg them to please follow the bandit's trail and rescue his wife.

**Wanted: The Ruby Riders.** Sheriff Mona Mèyor pulls the adventurers aside after they arrive in Steeproost. She's heard of their exploits around town and has a request for them if they are interested. The Ruby Riders, a notorious bandit gang, have recently struck a ranch outside of town and kidnapped the rancher's wife and there is a reward for her rescue

# TRACKING THE BANDITS

The tracks made by the Ruby Riders after they raided the Arabarn Ranch are very clear and head south into the valley. The further out from the town they get, the fainter they become and require a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to follow the tracks with a failure resulting in an additional 1d4 hours of travel time added.

The bandit hideout is two days' travel to the south near Lake Avondover. One random encounter from the Vaskil Valley Random Encounter Table (see Appendix A) will occur per day. Eventually, they will follow the tracks all the way to a large stone manor home just off the shore of the nearby lake.

## THE BRENOVALE MANOR

The Manor is a small stone castle built of granite stone blocks quarried from the nearby mountains. The Pressonian family built this manor with their ill-gotten gains from smuggling illegal goods in Greatwell. It was built as a secluded hideaway and a hunting lodge where they could worship the god Vapul in secret. Its remote location and sturdy walls make it an extremely defensible position for the Ruby Riders.

### GENERAL FEATURES

The manor has the following general features unless otherwise noted:

**Ceilings.** The manor's ceilings are all 10 feet high and constructed of treated oaken planks.

**Floors and Walls.** The two-foot-thick walls of the manor are made of worked stone and mortar. The floors are smooth stone tile, carpet, or oaken planks. The carpeted areas will grant advantage to any Stealth checks.

**Doors.** The doors of the manor are made of heavy oak banded in iron and hung on iron hinges. Unless otherwise noted, they have an AC of 15 and 20 hp. Any mechanically locked doors will require a successful DC 15 Strength check to force open or a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves' tools to unlock.

**Illumination.** The manor is well lit by both torches and sunlight through windows in the second and third stories.

**The Ruby Riders.** While no longer guardsmen, the Ruby Riders still carry themselves with a militia's bearing while they operate. This includes a common uniform of red-dyed wool and leather that gives them their name. Ruby Rider Scouts replaced their standard-issue bows with pistols. Pistols deal 5 (1d10) piercing damage with a range of 30 ft. and must be reloaded after every shot by taking a bonus action. The scouts carry 20 rounds of ammunition each.



### 1 - FORT ENTRANCE

When the characters approach the entrance read the following aloud:

Standing just off the shores of a glistening blue-green lake sits a tall stone manor overlooking the waters. A lone structure standing amongst a few trees, the walls look to be fortified with thick granite. Just up a short flight of stone steps is a large set of heavy double doors on a small landing. A trio of guards are playing dice, lounging in the sun, and are otherwise completely oblivious to their surroundings.

**Encounter: Little Red Riders.** There are two **thugs** and a **scout** stationed at the front of the manor that are not paying attention to their duties. If approached directly, they are overly confident in their skills and will confront the party, asking them their business before deciding to just kill them and take their "nice-looking gear". Once one of them is killed, the others will bolt into the manor to get assistance. One will head towards the kitchen and the other to the mess hall.

### 2 - ENTRANCE HALL

The main doors to the Hall are unlocked and swing open easily and quietly. A small fireplace casts a warm and welcoming light into a large room filled with tables and seating. Oddly empty of people, this room is full of tapestries and paintings depicting various hunting scenes, and a large ornate rug sits on the floor. There is an extremely faint foul odor in the air, barely noticeable by most people. Any creature with a more acute sense of smell than human or half-elf can make a DC 15 Perception (Wisdom) check; on a success, they clearly recognize the smell of rotting corpses.

**Trap: Murder Hole.** The slight discoloration on the stone tiles from where the rug in this room was originally moved can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Anyone walking over the rug will fall 10 feet into a basement through an open trapdoor, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and landing prone. They also will be hit with the stench of the half dozen corpses shoved into a corner of the otherwise empty 10-by-10-foot room.

There was a cleverly hidden trap door leading to a small underground panic room. When the Ruby Riders first came to the manor, the staff hid here in fear until the Riders broke through the hidden door and slaughtered them all. Leaving their bodies below, the Riders hastily covered the hole with the ornate rug that decorated the room.

### 3 - STORAGE ROOM

Read aloud when the room is entered:

Crates and barrels stuffed full of supplies of all sorts line the walls and shelves of this room. There appear to be enough victuals stored here to last an entire year or more for a large group if rationed properly.

**Secret: A Noble Clue.** A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal a common noble crest stamped on the side of every barrel and crate. The crest can be determined with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History) check to belong to the Brenovale family who reside in Imfe Caan Asaari.

## 4 - KITCHEN

Read aloud when the room is entered:

The sweet smells of cooked meat and spices slip through the cracks of the kitchen door. The clang of banging pots and pans mix with the voices of two people who are arguing in hushed tones.

A wave of heat from the large metal stove will pour out of the doorway once opened. There are two Riders here cooking and arguing with each other.

**Encounter: Not Just a Chef.** The **bandit captain** and **bandit** in this room are unarmored (AC 13 and AC 11, respectively) but they still have their weapons readily at hand.

**Treasure: Not Just a Knife.** A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will show that one of the cooking knives has a more ornately carved handle than the others and is a *+1 dagger*. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover two \*potions of healing\* buried in the back of a cupboard.

## 5 - LOUNGE

Two luxurious and comfortably cushioned couches sit on either side of this small area. More tapestries depicting hunting scenes are on the walls above the lounging couches.

**Treasure: History Book.** A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover a leatherbound book tucked behind one of the couches entitled "A History of the Brenovale Family." This rare edition would be worth at least 10 gp to a collector.

## 6 - MESS HALL

Lining the walls are the stuffed heads and rigid snarls of wolves, bears, a mountain lion, and even an ankheg. Tables and benches have been pushed along each of the far walls to create an opening in the center of the room upon which a large bearskin lies spread across the floor, its fur matted from dirty boots repeatedly walking across it.

**Encounter: A Dog & His Riders.** A **mastiff** lounges next to the **veteran** and **bandit** who are eating here. Unless the party is moving stealthily, the mastiff will warn the two Riders of the strange-smelling adventurers entering the room.

## 7 - LOWER STAIRWELL

The wooden staircase spiraling up the tower is just wide enough for a single person to walk up at a time, forcing anyone going up and down at the same time to shift to allow the other to pass. This will force the party to move in single file when moving up or down the stairs.



## 8 - MIDDLE STAIRWELL

The central part of the staircase opens onto a broad wooden platform before leading further upwards. There are two doors at the corners of the platform.

Inset in the door to area 11 is a barred window, through which stacks of weapons can be seen. The door is secured by an iron padlock. The door to area 9 stands slightly ajar with sunlight pouring through the open crack from the other side.

## 9 - HALLWAY

**Trap: Bucket.** The door to this area is unlocked but there is a bucket of soapy water set up on the top of the door that is ready to fall upon whoever opens it. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check will catch sight of the edge of the bucket on the top of the door. On a successful DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, a character can open the door and remove the bucket. A failed check results in the bucket falling on the character. They take 1 bludgeoning damage and become blinded for one minute from the soapy water. If the bucket falls, the noise alerts the creatures in area 12.

When the characters enter the hallway, read the following:

This hallway is accented by a thick and luxurious yellow carpet, with a long black rug ovetop running the length of the hall. Sunlight streams through a pair of clear glass windows, filling the hall with light. Decorative suits of plate mail armor sit on stands in two corners of the room.

## 10 - CHAPEL

The locked door to this room is made of solid iron and can be unlocked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check by someone proficient using thieves' tools. The key to the door is held by Minoas in area 15.

Sunlight pours through a large stain-glass window casting multi-colored streams into every corner of this small room. A few wooden pews sit in neat rows before a stone altar bearing engraved runes and sigils. A bright red runner lies across the altar bearing symbols stitched in gold thread.

**Altar.** A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check will reveal that this altar is dedicated to the god Vapul, whom it is illegal to worship.

**Charm of the Hunter.** Anyone who touches the altar will feel a wind pick up around them, hear the pounding of hoofbeats on earth, and smell the verdant humidity of a forest after rainfall. They will gain the ability to cast *locate animals* or *plants* as an action and can do this twice before the charm fades away.

No one else will hear, feel, or smell anything and the ability can only be given once per charge of the altar. The altar can be charged by sacrificing a kill from a recent hunt upon it to Vapul. The altar weighs 2000 pounds and if removed from the chapel, loses its powers.

## 11 - ARMORY

The door to this room is locked (see "General Features") and the key to the padlock is held by Minoas in area 15. Racks of common armor and martial weaponry line the walls and tables of this room, all with the Ruby Riders marks and colors.

**Trapped Treasure: Barbaric Armor.** There is a large ironbound chest that is locked and protected by a poison needle trap. The modified lock holding the needle can be discovered with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check and disarmed by someone proficient with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity Check. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap. The victim takes 1 piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage and must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

Inside the chest is a set of *grim leather armor* (see Sidebar) adorned with teeth and dried bits of leathery flesh hanging from leather straps. Parts of the armor are covered in stretched human skin stitched onto the armor like a covering.

### GRIM LEATHER ARMOR

*Armor (leather armor), uncommon (requires attunement)*

You gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks while wearing this armor if it can be seen by the creature you are attempting to influence.



## 12 - BARRACKS

A series of bunk beds and personal lockers line the walls of this room. The furniture here is plainer than the rest of the manor's appointments. The walls of the barracks are bare and undecorated.

**Encounter: You Got Punk'd.** The two Ruby Rider **thugs** in this room placed the heavy bucket of water as a prank in area 9 for one of the other Riders and if it is triggered, they will jump out into the hallway and gain surprise on the adventurers. When they realize there are intruders, they will shout the alarm to the two **scouts** also in this room.

**Treasure: Personal Effects.** Searching through the lockers will net a total of 23 gp, 42 sp, 78 cp, and a small garnet (10 gp). A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover a false bottom in one chest containing a gem-encrusted silver locket (25 gp) with a miniature portrait of a woman inside.

## 13 - UPPER STAIRWELL

The upper stairwell ends on a wooden platform with a wooden door and an iron door. Sunlight can be seen coming through the cracks of the wooden door and there is a blue rune glowing brightly on the center of the iron door.

## 14 - OFFICE

The iron door to this room is engraved with a permanent *arcane lock* spell. It can be suppressed with the spoken password "Jager" or with the key held by the Ruby Rider in area 16. Otherwise, it will take a successful DC 25 Dexterity check by someone proficient with thieves' tools to open.

A luxurious black plush rug edged with elaborate gold trim covers this room from wall to wall. Bookshelves full of leather-bound tomes sit against the walls along with a mahogany desk topped with paperwork and scrolls. At the far end of the room are a pair of clay pots with small purple flowers planted in them, their simplicity very out of place in comparison to the rest of the room.

**Trap: Alarm Wire.** A thin wire is tied between the edges of the opposing bookshelves. It can be detected with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Triggering or cutting the wire will cause an alarm bell to ring, alerting Minoas in area 15.

**Treasure: Wyvern King Missive.** Searching the desk will uncover a series of missives between Minoas and a mysterious benefactor discussing an alliance; trading weapons and gold in exchange for personnel and support in destabilizing the region.

## 15 - LEADER'S QUARTERS

Sunlight streams through the high windows of this bedroom, filling it with light. The lush green carpet and dark wood furniture give the impression of being deep in a forest. A large black bearskin decorates the floor next to a very large and impressive bed.

**Encounter: The Bandit & The Bride.** If Minoas (NE, human **gladiator**) hears the alarm from area 14, he will rush there while Violeta hides in the room. Otherwise, they will both be

found here together, and she rushes into a closet while he prepares for battle. Throughout the course of the fight, he will growl that they will "never take his love away from him".

Once Minoas reaches 20 hp or below, Violeta will either rush from the room or spring from the closet in tears and beg them to stop fighting. She stands between the adventurers and Minoas arms spread wide and begs them to please spare her love.

Violeta will tell their story: she only married Taznar for the promise of comfort for her family, but Minoas was her one true love. The adventurers will need to decide how they wish to proceed.

**Treasure: Keys.** The keys to area 10 and area 11 can be found on Minoas.

## 16 - AERIE

The battlements on top of the manor home are open to the blue skies, giving a spectacular view over the nearby lake and the surrounding rolling hills. There is a large pile of straw shaped into a massive nest at the far end of the battlements with some scaffolding to the side.

**Encounter: High Flyer.** A **veteran** is here with the Riders' trained **ewoska** (see Appendix).

**Treasure: Arcane Key.** The veteran has an engraved key that will unlock the door to area 14.

## AFTERMATH

Violeta will become inconsolable if Minoas is killed. She will morosely leave with the party back to Steeproost. Taznar will thank the adventurers profusely but his reunion with Violeta is tepid at best. Sheriff Mona Mèyor will gladly pay the reward of 400 gp. Later, adventurers may discover that Violeta abandons Taznar and leaves Steeproost with the declared intention of rebuilding the Ruby Riders and seeks revenge on those who killed her true love. If Violeta meets the adventurers again, she will treat them as hated enemies.

If they let Minoas live and spare his life or the adventurers fail to defeat him, he will work to rebuild the Ruby Riders and continue Minoas' dream of gaining wealth and power. He and his men continue to ravage the countryside, Violeta by his side. If they survived, the adventurers may even come up against him sometime in the future. They will not receive any of the promised rewards and there is only disappointment waiting for them back in Steeproost.



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# APPENDIX

## EWOSKA

*Large beast, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 19 (3d10 + 3)

**Speed** 10 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +3

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** Auran, Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Keen Sight.** The ewoska has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The ewoska makes two attacks: one with its beak and one with its talons.

**Beak. Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**Talons. Melee Weapon Attack:** +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage. If the target is a Small or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 13).

**Shrinking Shriek (1/Day).** The ewoska shrieks, targeting a creature that it can see within 60 feet of it that can hear it. The target must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or it magically shrinks. A shrunk target's size is halved in all dimensions, and its weight is reduced to one-eighth of normal. This reduction decreases its size by one category—from Medium to Small, for example. Until the target returns to its normal size, the target also has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. The target's weapons also shrink to match its new size. While these weapons are reduced, the target's attacks with them deal 1d4 less damage (this can't reduce the damage below 1). The creature remains shrunk for 1 hour or until a greater restoration spell or similar magic is cast upon it

# CREDITS

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# A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL MY PATRONS, YOU ROCK!