

A Hacktastic D/20 Fantasy Adventure “Aerie of the Slaughter Hawks”

BY ERIC THOMAS

A Jumpstart Rules Pack Mini Module / Hack Rating 8

“Requires the use of the Jumpstart Rules Pack”

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It was only a week ago you were sipping ale at the Sign of the Green Sprite, now the spring mountain wind is cutting through your cloak like an icy knife. You had grand dreams of adventure, but now you are on a quest for eggs. It didn't take much coaxing by the crafty merchant to get you to take this job. Where else are you going to get paid 50 Blue Coins each for bringing back six Slaughter Hawk eggs. Sure they say these birds are meat eaters, but your sure that's just a rumor.

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THE
“GRAND HIGH EXALTED FRATERNAL ORDER OF THE BLACK PIGEON”**

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Aerie of the Slaughter Hawks

A H/20 adventure

For use with the Jump-start Rules Pack

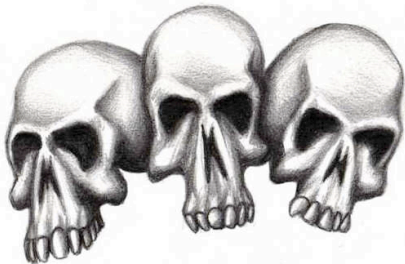
(Hack Rating 8)

Plot

The PCs are hired to journey high into the *Battlefield Mountains* retrieve some Slaughter Hawk eggs for a Merchant. The PCs must climb through a steep cave system, all the while keeping the angry Slaughter Hawks at bay while they rob their nest and retrieve the six eggs they have been contracted to bring back.

Background

Telgus of MoonShadow is a Merchant of some high regard, he is most know for suppling exotic foodstuffs to many of the noble families from many kingdoms. Right now Telgus is trying to put together a list of rare delicacies for a high ranking noble's wedding day celebration, the last thing on his list is Slaughter Hawk Eggs. Telgus through several hefty bribes has acquired the location of a Slaughter Hawk roost high in the *Battlefield Mountains*. He hires the PCs to go into the mountains and retrieve 6 Slaughter Hawk eggs. He will pay them 50 EP for each egg they bring back, but must have 6, if the PCs bring back less than six they will not be paid. The PCs are free to bring back more than 6 eggs and Telgus will pay them 50 EP each for theses as well.



Getting Things Started

It was only a week ago you were sipping ale in at the Sign of Green Sprite, now the spring mountain wind is cutting through your cloak like an icy knife. You had grand dreams of adventure, but now you are on a quest for eggs. It didn't take much coaxing by the crafty merchant to get you to take this job. Where else are you going to get paid 50 Blue Coins each for bringing back six Slaughter Hawk eggs. Sure they say these birds are meat eaters, but your sure that's just a rumor.

You're already thinking about how your going to spend your easy money when you get your first glimpse of Mount Bone, where the crude map the merchant gave you marks as the nesting place of the Slaughter hawks. A rough narrow, winding trail leads up the short rugged peak that seems to end it what appears to be a small cave. Up near the pinnacle you can just make out another cave that opens onto one of the few narrow outcroppings that dot the face of the mound. Your eyes spy a mountain goat near the lower ends of the rocky trail and an instant later a red streak shoots arrow-like from the upper cave and descends on it. In mere seconds the goat is turned into a bloody mess and you see a blood-red hawk near the size of a man take the goat carcass back to its lofty perch. Perhaps this is going to be tougher than you thought.

(GM)

Have all the PCs make an Taxing (+15) Observe Test (**Jump-start rules use PCs MRSB +1d20 opposed by 15 +1d20 if you do not have the Observe Skill**), Any PCs that rolls higher can see 3 Slaughter Hawks on Ledge #1 and 2 Slaughter Hawk on Ledge #2.

At this point the PCs are near the lower end of the trail on the Mound map (See end of adventure). It is 120 feet (24") to the mouth of the lower cave entrance.

Any PC who wishes to try and cautiously make his way to the Cave 1, may make a Stealth Test opposed by the Slaughter Hawks Observe of +10 to make it unnoticed (Remember you may not double move while trying to use Stealth).

(Jump-start rules use PCs PRSB +1d20 opposed by 10 +1d20 for the hawks, if you do not have the Stealth Skill. You may only move a single move each round while using Stealth)

PCs must test for each round they are moving along the trail. If the make it without the hawks

Observing them then GO TO Encounter 1 **Bottom of the Chute**

If Any of the PCs fail or if they decide to either just head up the trail or attack the hawks on the ledges Go to Encounter 0 **Death from Above**

(Note: The Hawks on the ledges get a Hard Cover Bonus of +10 (1/2 Hard Cover) to their Defense vs ranged attacks from the trail)

(0) **Death from Above**

A Blood curdling screech is followed by blurry red shapes streaking towards you arrow-like as the Slaughter Hawks descend upon you with gleaming talons and knife-edged beaks.

(GM)

The Mountain Trail is only 5ft (1") wide, so most PCs will have to travel in single file.

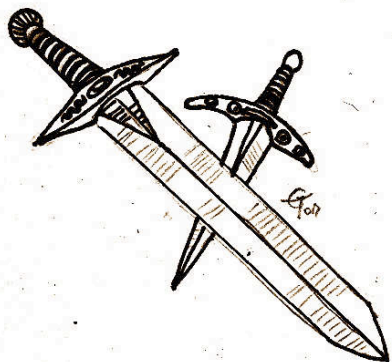
Ledge #1 is around 80' high (16"), 3 Slaughter Hawks roost here. These 3 will be the first to attack once combat has started.

Ledge #2 is about 120' high (24"), 2 Slaughter Hawks roost here. They will join combat 1 round after the first three hawks from ledge #1 attack.

Battle Tactics: All the Slaughter Hawks will use their Mobile Combatant Talent by using hit and run tactics, this also gives them their Darting Defender bonus to defense. The hawks will use this tactic until they outnumber the PCs 2 to 1 or only two Hawks remain, then they will try to Rake and Gang-up.

Hawks always try to attack the two closest PC to the cave entrance.

Creatures: (5) Slaughter Hawks
Loot: None



(1) **Bottom Of the Chute**

Just inside the cave entrance, several piles of bones from various creatures are piled along the cavern walls. Just beyond the last pile of bones the rough floor slopes upwards as the cavern spirals into darkness.

(GM)

Should any of the 5 Slaughter Hawks from the ledges still be alive they will try and pursue the PCs into the caves. There are no other threats at this end of the cave.

The cave slopes upwards steeply and requires the PCs to make Climb Test vs 10+1d20 (Listed on the Cavern Map) to keep their footing. You will notice it increases to +15 in some spots in the cavern. Remember all climb movement is at half movement and each rounds movement requires a Climb Test. the climb is not sheer so, a failed climb test means the PC may not move. Only on a natural '1' does a PC slip and slides 10ft (2") down and must make an Agility Test opposed by 10 + 1d20, failing this test results in another 10ft slide downwards. The PC must continue to try and pass Agility test until he succeeds or ends up back Area 1. The fall is not enough to cause injury, just annoyance.

(Refer to these rules for the rest of the Climb in the Tunnel)

(Jump-start PCs without the Climb Skill use PRSB +1d20 to make the tests)

The cave is roughly 10ft wide (2"), 15" high ceilings (3") and the tunnel slide is 160 ft (32") from the lower cave to the upper.

(Note: without ranks in Acrobatics, all combat on the slopes suffers a -5 modifier on all combat rolls except Vigor for the PCs)

Creatures: None

Loot: 10EP in a neck Purse (Hidden in one of the bone Piles, Observe Test opposed by 15 +1d20 to find them)

(2) The Lower Nests

A wide alcove opens along the right side of the chute-like tunnel. A great conglomeration of stark, white bones mixed with the rotting remains of various animal pelts and soiled cloth. Two of the piles appear to be dug out into makeshift nests.

(GM)

There are (2) Slaughter Hawks in this area they will attack when the first PC comes into view. The hawks will fight to the death and pursue fleeing PCs even out of the cavern.

This alcove is fairly flat, so there is no penalty for fighting on a slope, IF the fight happens in the alcove and not the tunnel.

Creatures: 2 Slaughter Hawks

Loot: (Nest A): 2 Slaughter hawk eggs. **(Nest B):** 3 Slaughter hawk eggs and a +10 *Enchanted Dagger* (This weapon counts as *Magical* and grants a +10 bonus on all melee combat attack and injury rolls made with it)

(Also In the bone piles)

There is also a brace (2) of *Throwing Knives* (Light, Ranged Weapon with a 18" range) **(Observe Test Opposed by +15 to find them amongst the bone piles)**

Potion of Instant Rest (Effect is as the 1st Circle Exalted Spell of the same name, (S) action required to drink)

(Observe Test opposed by +10 to find amongst the bone piles)

(3) The Stinky Alcove

Even before you can see this small, level alcove, you can smell it. The stench of death and excrement is almost overwhelming. Huddled on a small shelf of rock is the body of a dead mountain orc. The orc carcass is covered in thick layers of bird droppings.

(GM)

There are no threats in this area, though it would be good place to fall back to take advantage of the level fighting ground. A thorough search of the

dead orc (Observe Test opposed by 20+1d20) reveals a 100EP *Bloodtear* gemstone clutched in his left hand.

Loot: 100EP Bloodtear gemstone

(4) The Upper Nests

The tunnel finally levels out, though it is choked with piles of bones. Four massive birds of prey with feathers the color of fresh blood. The Slaughter Hawks screech in unison, take wing and attack!

(GM)

The (4) Slaughter Hawks Attack immediately when the PCs reach the first bone pile. They will fight to the death and pursue the PCs to any length.

Creatures: 4 Slaughter Hawks

Loot: (Nest C): 3 Slaughter Hawk eggs

(Nest D): 4 Slaughter Hawk eggs, A pouch containing 20EP.

Ending the Adventure

(If the PCs have obtained 6 or more eggs)

You make your way back down the mountain, a week later you find yourself again in the *Sign of the Green Sprite*. Telgus the merchant is pleased to see you he pays you the agreed upon 50EP per egg, including any extra eggs you have found. Telgus then buys you a celebratory round of ale. Drink to a job well done!

(If the PCs have less than 6 eggs)

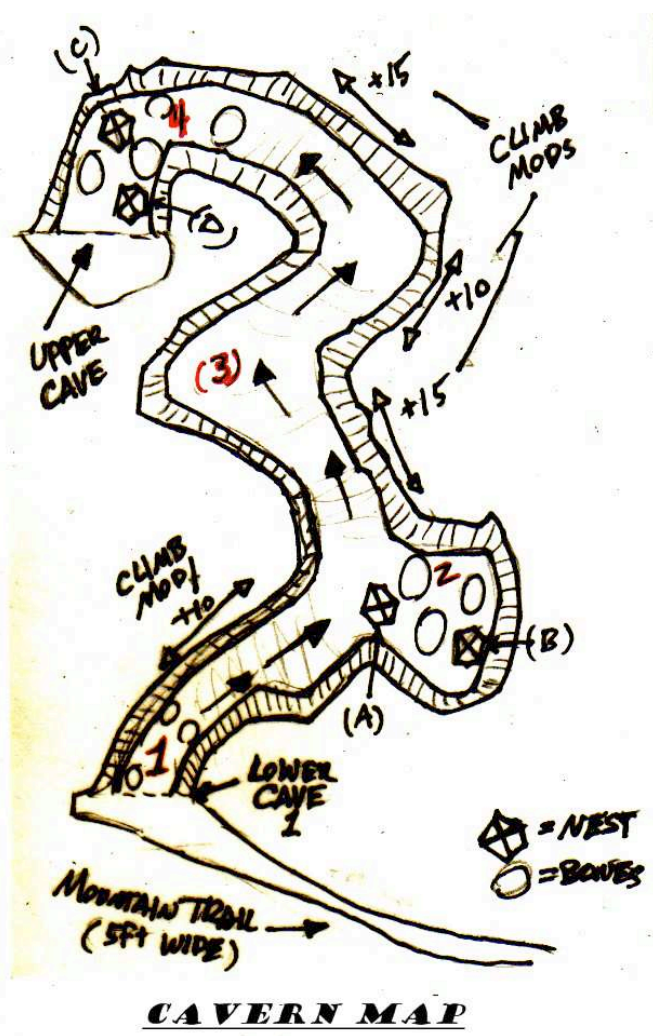
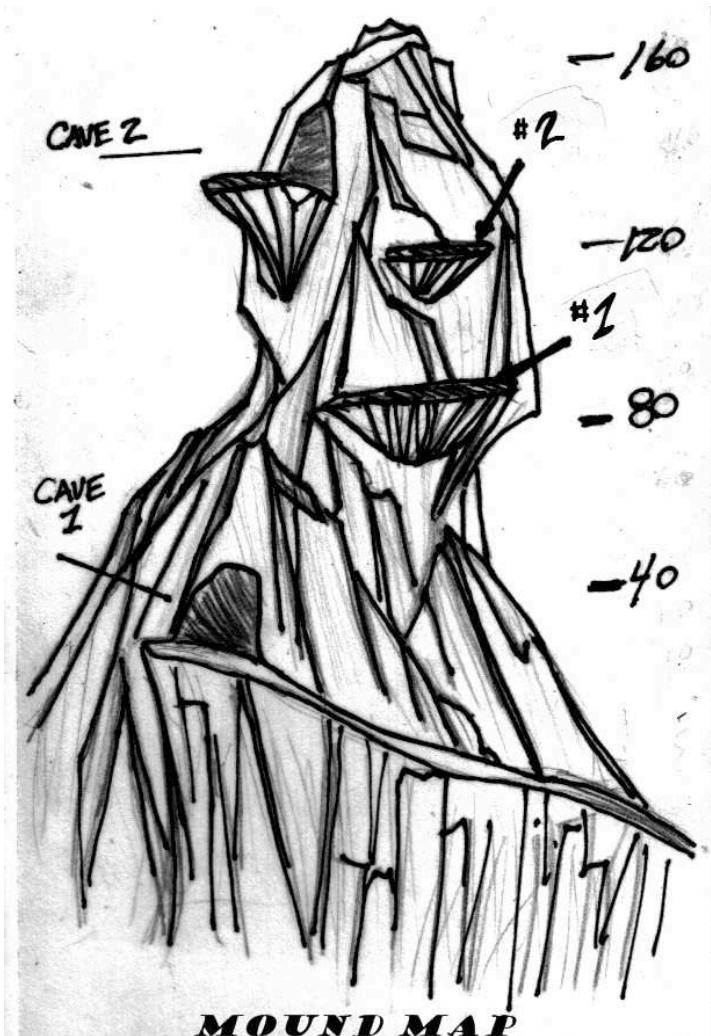
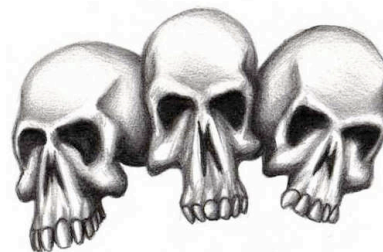
You return again to the *Sign of the Green Sprite*. After a long and silent trek through the mountains. Telgus is less than pleased when you tell him of your failure. He will pay 10EP each for the any eggs you managed to make it back with. He suggests that perhaps you should rethink your line of work. Telgus also points out that the Horse Trader in town is looking for someone to muck out the stalls, a job more worthy of your talents. Sometimes being a hero is not as easy as it

Experience and Rewards

If the PCs that survive are rewarded 8 experience points. These are build points that you use just like the points you used to build your character.

Jump-start rules (you may use these 8 points to add to your skills (up to the max of 30), or add them to your abilities (Humans have a Max Core Ability Cap of 20),
 (Dwarves have a Max Core Ability Cap: Brawn: 20, Agility 20, Endurance 25, Mind 20, Savvy 20, Charm 20, Luck 20)

If they bring back 6 or more eggs rewards each PC an additional 2 points.



New Creatures



Slaughter Hawk (Animal)

(65 pts)/ Size: M/ Move: 12" (Fly)/ 2" (land speed)

Vigor Bonus + 10

B 15, A 15, E 10, M 1, S 5, C 1, L 1

PRSB + 4

MRSB +0

Skills: Observe +10

Talents: **Improved natural Attack 1 (talons)**

(Adds bonus to attack and defense with natural weapon), **Rake 5** (As a Stand& Deliver action adds an additional +5 to attack with natural weapons), **Mobile Combatant Talent** (You may move before and after an attack, up to your movement. You may do this even on a Charge Action), **Darting Defender Talent** (Adds +5 to your defense modifier if you moved at least 2" on your last turn prior to the attack) **Night Eyes Talent** (range 12" night vision)

Templates: none

Gear: none

DefB (18); MCB (+18)/ RCB (+15)/ IM + 15

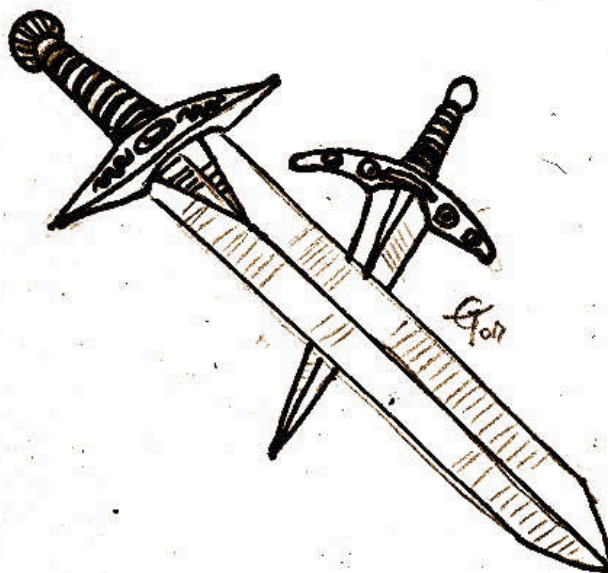
Description: These viscous birds of prey are nearly the size of a human. Their feathers are blood-red in color with rust colored markings. Slaughter Hawks have black razor sharp claws

and beaks. They have a strict diet of flesh, preferably fresh meat.

Slaughter Hawks naturally live in rugged hills or mountainous terrain, using caves and high cliffs as roosts. It is common for Slaughter Hawks to gather in coveys that number 8-16 hawks.

Slaughter hawks usually have a hunting territory that ranges 15-20 miles.

Slaughter Hawks live for 30 to 35 years.



E.

Magic Item Certificate

“+10 Enchanted Dagger”

This certificate entitles:

to a **+10 Enchanted
Dagger**, this weapon
counts as Magical and
grants a +10 bonus on all
melee combat attack and

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Magic Item Certificate

“Potion of Instant Rest”

This certificate entitles:

to a **Potion of Instant
Rest**, Effect is as the 1st
Circle Exalted Spell of the
same name, (S) action re-
quired to drink. Must

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**“Aerie of the Slaughter
Hawks”**

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