

Example of Play

A party of six 3rd-level characters — Joe Platemail III, a Paladin, Biffo the Halfling, Grog the Dwarf, Minster El the Magic-User, Selena the Ranger, and Bob the Bard — are ready to head off to a deep dungeon to which Bob has acquired a map. The map says that a long-lost evil temple of the god Set contains ancient magic and vast riches.

Running a little short on payment for the tavern and inn they reside in, Bob decides to use his **SING FOR HIS SUPPER** ability to avoid having his group sleeping on the streets for the night before their expedition. Bob has a 13 Charisma and rolls a d20, trying to get below a 14 (13 plus his Charisma bonus). Bob rolls an 11, three less than the number required. Bob has now raised 3 gold pieces. The party owes the innkeeper only 2 gold and gets free lodging for the night, and thus Bob pockets 1 gp and gains 1 experience point. Hurray! The party gets to sleep inside this night.

After this stellar performance, Bob decides to poke around with the tavern keeper and other patrons to see if he can find out anything about the dungeon before they leave. He spends his gold piece buying rounds for the house and asking if anyone knows anything. His **LORE** ability has a 2-in-6 chance of success (to which he adds one due to his Charisma of 13+). Bob rolls a 2 and succeeds by 1. (Note the GM might further increase the threshold if Bob had spent a prodigious amount of gold.)

The GM decides that Bob starts a conversation with a grizzled old town guardsman who would have been an adventurer if he had not taken an arrow to the knee. The guard tells him that 20 years ago, the priests of Set were ambushed and slain near the dungeon entrance, and that the local witch who lives in the woods may know more.

The next morning, the party leaves to seek out the witch and see if she knows anything useful. They have limited knowledge of the witch's location (a drunken conversation) and thus need to make wilderness travel checks each day to find her and avoid becoming lost. Luckily, Selena is skilled at this, with her **LORE** ability having a 2-in-6 chance of success. The GM rules this **LORE** check is Wisdom-based; Selena's Wisdom is 11, so the threshold is unmodified, but she can still add 1 for being a Ranger, as this is their specialty. If she makes her rolls, she can perhaps locate the destination, which is said to be two days' travel (10 miles, with five miles per day travel for unencumbered characters in the woods) into the wooded hills.

On Day 1, Selena rolls a 5 on a d6. She needed a 3 to succeed, so the party moves randomly. "But wait," says Bob. As a Bard, Bob has a 2-in-6 **LORE** ability for all skills and may roll 1d6 (but his threshold is reduced by 1 because of his Wisdom of 6). Bob rolls a 1 and succeeds, so the party moves as intended.

The GM then rolls for a random encounter (getting a 1 on the d6) with the 1 d1000 roll of 735 indicating wolves (rolling 4d6 gives 8 wolves), with a check to see if they are in their lair (20%) indicating they are wandering. As they travel to the witch's grove, they are approached by eight large wolves. Biffo, of course, has been using his **HIDE** ability. Joe rolls for **SURPRISE** for the party, and the GM rolls for the wolves. A roll of 1–2 indicates surprise (with Selena being surprised only on a 1). Both rolls are a 3 on 1d6, so neither side is surprised. However, Biffo was using **HIDE** and rolls a 4 on a 1d6. His **HIDE** ability has a 5-in-6 chance of success, so the wolves do not see him (and he therefore has surprise). It is time now to move into tactical rounds, declare actions, and determine **INITIATIVE**.

“Wait!” cries Bob and declares that he will cast *Speak with Animals* and attempt to **PARLEY**. Biffo declares he will remain hidden and grabs a stone. Joe, Grog, Selena, and Minster El also declare they will simply move into a defensive position and not act that round, giving Bob a chance to get them out of the fight. The GM decides that the wolves attack. The two sides roll 1d6 for **INITIATIVE** (Grog rolls for the party and she gets a 6), and the GM rolls a 4 for the wolves. The party goes first.

Bob casts his spell and tries to calm the wolves using the **PARLEY** action, promising food from his pack and explaining that while the wolves are hungry, the party is no easy meat. Bob then rolls 1d20 (roll high) and adds 4 (for his *Speak with Animals* spell), 2 for being a bard, and 1 for his 13 Charisma to the die. Bob rolls a 13 and adds 7 for his bonuses for a modified 20! This means that the wolves are friendly, and that they may even aid or ask for help with something. Further, it means that if the group encounters any of these wolves again, all parley checks are made with an additional +3 on the die.

The wolves dance around Bob gleefully, begging for treats and licking his hands. They explain (as much as a wolf can explain) that a bad thing lives in a cave nearby, and that it has frightened off most of the local game. They ask Bob if he and his friends will help them get rid of the bad thing. Bob thinks quickly and decides to ask the wolves about the dungeon (they have no knowledge, the GM rules) and the witch. The wolves explain (again, the GM uses their judgment about what wolves may or may not know) and decides that they do know about the witch. The wolves explain that the witch is kindly, and while they do not know her well, she does feed them periodically, and they avoid killing her pigs and chickens, as she got angry once when they did, and fire jumped out of the ground! Strangely, the fire did not harm them, and the next day they found food left for them outside her cave (really a hut). If the party helps them get rid of the bad thing, they would happily escort them to the witch’s “cave.”

They agree to seek out the witch first and then go and deal with the “bad thing,” as perhaps the witch has knowledge of what the bad thing is.

As it is nearing the end of the day, the party (and the wolves) decide to rest for the night. The GM once again checks for random encounters, rolling a 4 on 1d6, indicating nothing happens. The night is uneventful, and the group wakes in the morning ready to go. Once again, Selena (and Bob) roll 1d6 on a **LORE** check to determine if they get lost (the GM assigns a bonus of +2 to the threshold as the wolves are helping, giving Selena a 5-in-6 chance of success and Bob a 3-in-6 chance of guiding the group. Selena rolls a 1 and succeeds by 3 or more, indicating a critical success! The GM rules that the group finds a game trail leading right to the witch’s hut, saving a half day’s travel and avoiding the need for a random encounter check.

The group reaches the witch’s hut and sees numerous chickens, goats, and pigs roaming about, as well as a crude stone and straw house with a bramble and branch fence. An old woman is tending her garden. Once again, the party and the GM each roll a **SURPRISE** check (and Biffo is hiding, of course). The GM rolls a 1 on a d6, and the party rolls a 5 (the wolves are considered part of the party in this case), indicating that the group has surprised the witch. As they have **SURPRISE**, the entire group gets one free round of action before **INITIATIVE** is determined. Then each entity declares actions.

Joe declares he will move up and **PARLEY**, as does Bob. Biffo stays hidden and moves to get a clear shot if the witch attacks them, as does Selena. The wolves simply delay and wait to see what happens, sniffing about for a tasty snack (the witch usually leaves them something). Grog moves in

front of Minster El to shield her. The Magic-User declares she is preparing a *charm person* spell (but does not yet cast it).

As Joe and Bob approach, the witch stands up and looks at them, but she may not otherwise act, as she is surprised. As this is potentially a tactical situation, **INITIATIVE** for the round is determined. Actions are declared (the GM does not tell the party what the witch is doing), and the group indicates they are repeating last round's actions. The GM rolls a 5 on a d6 for the witch, and the party rolls a 3, so the witch goes first. Luckily for the party, the witch also chooses to **PARLEY**.

The GM decides to allow a **LORE** check for the Paladin and Bard, and declares it is a Wisdom-based check. Joe has terrible **LORE** checks (he prays and practices fighting) with a 1-in-6 chance modified by his 14 Wisdom, which gives him a 2-in-6 chance of success. Bob has a 2-in-6 chance of success, but his low Wisdom lowers his threshold by one; he thus needs a 1 to succeed. Bob rolls a 4 (no information is given), but Joe rolls a 2, and the GM explains that he sees a holy symbol of the Lawful goddess Freya around the witch's neck. What the GM knew (and the group did not) is that the witch is really a Lawful priestess! Had they failed to notice, or had they simply attacked her on their surprise round, they might never have found out. Had that occurred, Joe might have lost his Paladinhood.

The priestess is 7th level and has a 3-in-6 base chance of a successful **LORE** check, with a +1 applied to the threshold due to her Wisdom being 13+, to recognize that Joe is a Paladin. She rolls a 2, and before any other actions occur, she greets him as a kindred spirit, thus ending tactical rounds and resuming roleplaying. The GM rules that the priestess is automatically friendly (because of Joe's presence), and she invites them for a meal, offers them a chance to rest, and feeds the wolves some scraps.

The GM and the players then have a discussion regarding the temple of Set as well as the bad thing in the cave. The GM rolls **LORE** checks for the priestess (again, adding a Wisdom modifier) and gets a 3 for the questions about the Temple of Set (success) and a 6 (automatically failing) for her knowledge of the bad thing. She explains that she has no knowledge of any "bad thing" in the nearby caves, but she knows that years ago, an evil sect of priests had a temple that was sacked by adventurers. A chaotic gemstone known as the *Serpent's Eye* is said to remain in the ruined temple.

If the stone exists, it should be taken and destroyed. The GM could have just ruled that she had knowledge of either or both things rather than have her roll **LORE** checks if this was intended as part of the adventure.

The priestess explains that she is too old for traveling to dungeons and fighting monsters but offers a boon of three flasks of holy water if the party attempts to destroy the gem or return it to her to destroy if they are incapable of doing so. The group stays the night (the GM rules that no encounter checks are warranted) and the next day prepares to help the wolves investigate and get rid of the "bad thing."

The group travels to the area where the wolves say the bad thing's cave is located. The GM once again checks for random encounters, rolling a 2 on a d6, indicating none. Selena (and Bob) roll 1d6 on a **LORE** check to determine if they get lost (the GM assigns a bonus of +2 on the threshold as the wolves are helping, giving Selena a 5-in-6 chance and Bob a 3-in-6 chance of guiding the group. Selena rolls a 4, indicating a success. They reach the cave.

The GM describes the cave entrance as being 40 feet wide and 20 feet high. The afternoon sun only allows vision into the cave entrance, and no movement or “bad things” are visible. Selena (and Bob) ask if any tracks can be seen near the cave entrance. The GM rules this is a Wisdom-based **LORE-LORE** check (Selena needs a 3 [2-in-6 chance with a +1 bonus] and Bob a 1 [2-in-6 chance with a -1 penalty] on the d6 to note anything). Bob fails, but Selena rolls a 3 and notices two-foot-long human-like footprints in the sand outside the cave.

Grog asks about the integrity of the stone and rock associated with the cave entrance and the GM has her roll a **LORE** check (again Wisdom-based) with a +2 bonus on the roll due to Grog’s racial affinity with stone and no modifier due to her 9 Wisdom.

Grog rolls a 1 (needing a 4 or less), indicating a critical success (success by 3 or more). Bob also rolls, needing a 1 on the d6 roll again (curse that low Wisdom). Grog notes that a significant number of loose rocks are stabilized by a log above the cave mouth. Perhaps this could be made into a trap?

The GM checks to see if the group has made enough noise to rouse the “bad thing” (a hill giant) by rolling a **SURPRISE** check for the giant (the group still does not know what they face). The d6 roll is a 2, so the giant stays in the cave, unaware of the group. The party remains out of tactical play. Selena takes up a sniper position while Biffo **HIDES** near the entrance. Grog climbs up the hill and begins crafting a rockfall trap. Joe stands bravely in front of Bob and Minster El while they prepare spells (Bob a *magic missile* and Minster El a *sleep* spell). After a few minutes, the GM again rolls a check on a d6 for the giant and rolls a 5. It comes out of the cave and tactical combat begins!

As the party had initial surprise, the GM allows them to act for one round (it makes sense, as they were all prepped to go and expecting a “bad thing” to appear). Biffo tries to stay hidden but rolls a 6 and is noticed by the giant. Minster El drops her *sleep* spell on the giant. It has too many hit dice to be affected, but she accidentally catches Biffo in the area of effect and the poor halfling falls into a magical slumber.

Bob’s *magic missile* launches at the giant, automatically hitting and doing 2d6 damage (as a 3rd-level caster Bob has sent two missiles at the giant) for 11 damage! Selena shoots her arrow and adds her base attack bonus of +3 and Dexterity bonus of +1 (for her 13 Dexterity) to her roll of 12, getting a 16. She needs a 10 to hit armor class 9, so she needs a 15 to hit the giant’s armor class of 4; the arrow hits. She rolls a 4 on the d6 and has no bonus for her 11 Strength. But since she has the **Giant Slayer** ability as a Ranger, she adds her +3 base attack bonus to damage against giants, doing 7 damage. The giant has taken 18 total damage.

Joe charges the giant (single move) and attacks with his sword, rolling a 6. Joe has +3 base attack bonus plus 1 for having a 13 Strength for a total of 10. Joe needed a 15 to hit AC 4 and misses. The wolves need to make a morale check on 1d20, because giants are scary. One rolls a 5 and flees. The second rolls a 10 and stands fast next to Bob, guarding him. The third rolls a 20 and goes berserk! The wolf charges at the giant and attacks, rolling a 1 on its d20 attack, automatically missing.

Finally, Grog triggers her trap. The GM rules that this requires a **LORE** check, and that the trap will do 1d6 damage for each point it is made by. Grog needs a 4 (2 base threshold +2 for being a dwarf) and rolls a 1, meaning the trap does 3d6 damage to the giant (and sadly to Biffo who is asleep next to the giant, and Joe and one wolf that charged the giant). Grog rolls 10 damage, and the giant, Joe, and Biffo all take 10. The wolf had 7 hit points and dies. Biffo wakes up to a cascade of painful rocks

and logs landing on him. Biffo is down to 6 hit points and Joe to 12. The giant has taken 28 points of damage.

This is the end of the **SURPRISE** round, and **INITIATIVE** begins. Bob declares he begins singing using his **INSPIRING PERFORMER**, giving the group +1 to all attacks, damage, and saving throw rolls. Grog would like to shoot her crossbow at the giant, but as the giant is engaged in combat with Joe, she has a 50% chance of hitting him. She instead plans to climb down to join the melee next round (using a double move to descend). Biffo gets up and declares he is using a **FLEE** action as he is almost dead. Selena is a Ranger and can fire into combat without risk of hitting friendly targets using her **PRECISE SHOT** ability. Minster El readies a *magic missile* spell, and Joe declares he will attack in melee, being happy no more rocks will fall on him. The giant just attacks. **INITIATIVE** is rolled, with the giant rolling a 5 and Biffo rolling a 3. The giant goes first.

The giant attacks Biffo and rolls a 12 on 1d20, adding 10 for his base attack bonus for a total of 22. This easily hits Biffo's armor class of 5. As the giant is, well, giant, he rolls 2d6 damage, getting 9 total. Biffo is **VERY SMALL**, and as a halfling, takes only half damage from giant-sized creatures; he takes 4 damage and survives with 2 hit points! As Joe is within melee range of the giant and Biffo, he decides to use his **PROTECT THE WEAK** ability to take half of Biffo's damage and takes 2 (Biffo takes 2 as well). Joe is down to 10 hit points and Biffo is at 4.

The party now gets to act. Bob sings, Grog climbs down, and Biffo **FLEES** (double move away). The **FLEE** action does not allow a parting blow, so he escapes. Selena shoots into the melee, rolling a 17 with a +5 bonus (+1 for **INSPIRING PERFORMER**, +3 for base attack bonus, and +1 for Dexterity), for a total of 22, easily hitting armor class 4 (needing a modified 15 to hit). She rolls a 3 on the damage die (d6) and adds 4 total to the roll (+1 for **INSPIRING PERFORMER**, +3 for **GIANT SLAYER**) for a total of 7 damage. The giant has taken 35 hit points and is looking bad.

Minster El shoots her *magic missile* spell, doing 2d6 damage (+1 for **INSPIRING PERFORMER**), doing 6 more. Finally, Joe swings his two-handed sword, rolling a natural 20 and getting a **CRITICAL HIT**. Joe rolls his 1d6 damage and gets a 5, modified by his Strength (+1), **INSPIRING PERFORMER** (+1), using a two-handed weapon (+1), and the **CRITICAL HIT** (+1), for a total of 9 damage. The giant has taken 50 damage. It only had 49 hit points, so it dies.

Tactical rounds end, and Bob casts his last 1st-level spell on Biffo (*cure light wounds*), healing him for 1d6 + 1; he rolls a 6 (modified to 7). Joe heals himself using his **LAY ON HANDS** ability for 6 hit points. The group searches the giant's cave.

They find a strange bright green box roughly the size of two small dogs standing side by side (4 gp.) The box is made of wood, plated with sheets of copper, which have oxidized to a striking green color. The lid of the box has no hinges, and it lifts off with a sharp squeak. Inside, the wood has swelled slightly and smells damp; a moldering cloth covers the box's contents. Moving the cloth aside, coins from several nations (632 gp, 1,020 sp, 900 cp) are mixed in with a number of other items: an ivory swan the size of a gnome's hand, which is missing the tip of one of its wings (70 gp); a glass perfume vial the size of an elf's finger, which smells strongly of hyacinths (20 gp); a pale wooden mask, sized for a human and carved to look like a medusa's head (27 gp); and a slim wooden case (16 gp.) Inside the case, closed with a delicate silver hasp, is an ivory scepter as long as a man's forearm (122 gp.) The scepter has a tooled leather grip on one end while the other is shaped like a dragon's skull complete with ivory teeth. One of the dragon's eye sockets is empty, but the other holds a chunk of bloodstone. Total value of the treasure is 1,002 gp.

They return to the witch's house (civilization), and the GM awards experience points (XP). The GM decides that the following points are awarded to the group (as divided over six characters):

- 100 XP each for attending the game session
- 167 XP each for treasure (1,002 XP for gold pieces recovered, divided by six player characters)
- 30 XP each for three Wilderness Hex's explored
- 50 XP each for the goal of "Defeating the Bad Thing" for the witch
- 10 XP each for exploring the town
- 10 XP each for 1 dungeon room (the giant's cave)
- 27 XP each for parleying with the wolves (160 XP total, divided by the six player characters, as wolves have 2 hit dice and there are 8)
- 17 XP each for killing the giant (10 hit dice, 100 XP divided by the six player characters)

Each player character earns 411 XP and pockets 167 gold pieces!

After this, the adventures continue!