

OBLIQUE
ADVENTURES
presents



THE BUGBLATTER BEAST

A 5e Compatible One-Shot Adventure
FOR HIGH LEVEL CHARACTERS

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Dedication

In memory of the much missed, never forgotten Douglas Adams.

Overview

This one-shot adventure is designed for parties of 8th level or higher. Possibly much higher. In this adventure, the players will be contending with a truly unspeakable creature known as the Bugblatter Beast:

THE BUGBLATTER BEAST

Gargantuan monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 330 (20d20 + 120)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	10 (+0)	23 (+6)	4 (-3)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +13

Skills Intimidation +12

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, cold, fire, force, lightning, piercing, slashing, thunder

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The Bugblatter is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Absorption. When the Bugblatter reduces a creature to 0 hit points with Swallow Whole, it recovers hit points equal to the ingested creature's Constitution.

Gullible. The Bugblatter has disadvantage on any check or saving throw against being tricked or deceived, except for any trick that involves convincing it that it is not hungry or hostile.

Legendary Resistance (3/day). If the Bugblatter fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead. Note that this does not apply to any saving throw affected by its Gullible trait.



ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Bugblatter makes two Vast-Pain Claw attacks, and one Swivel-Shear Bite attack.

Vast-Pain Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 20 (3d8 + 7) slashing damage. On hit, the target is grappled (escape DC 18) if it is Huge or smaller. Until the grapple ends, The Bugblatter cannot use this claw on another target. It has two claws.

Swivel-Shear Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 26 (3d12 + 7) piercing damage. On hit, target is grappled (escape DC 20) if it is Huge or smaller. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the Bugblatter can't bite another target.

Bound. The Bugblatter leaps up to 40 feet in any direction. Any creatures occupying the space where it lands must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 27 (6d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. All creatures in the landing space will be moved to the nearest adjacent space within 5' of the Bugblatter.

Swallow Whole. The Bugblatter swallows a Huge or smaller creature grappled by it. The swallowed target is blinded, restrained, and unable to breathe, and it must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of the Bugblatter's turns or take 19 (3d8 + 6) acid damage. The Bugblatter can have one Huge, two Large, four Medium, or 8 Small/Tiny creatures swallowed at a time.

Ravenous Roar (Recharge 5-6). The Bugblatter exhales thunder in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The monster can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The monster regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Bound. The Bugblatter uses its Bound action. (1 Action)

Attack. The Bugblatter uses 1 Vast-Pain Claw or Swivel-Shear Bite attack. (2 actions)

Chunderbolt. The Bugblatter uses a version of its Ravenous Roar ability (if available), projected in a line 10' wide x 120' long. If it has any creature grappled or swallowed, it can propel that creature as a missile, hitting a target within the roar's area of effect. Both the target and projected creature take additional bludgeoning damage depending on the size of the projected creature: 20 (8d4) for small, 28 (8d6) for medium, 36 (8d8) for large, and 44 (8d10) for huge; with DC 15 Dexterity save to take half damage. (3 actions)

The Bugblatter Beast is an extremely dangerous foe, and is probably too much to handle head-on for parties of levels 8-12. Fortunately, this scenario does not require the heroes to take the direct approach. You'll be presenting several possible approaches that will allow your players to take advantage of the Bugblatter's greatest weakness: its phenomenal stupidity.

If your players are creative and clever, they may not even have to fight the creature at all.

This adventure was inspired by The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy series by Douglas Adams, who created not only the original Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal, but also provided us with many of the strange and whimsical elements we've incorporated into the scenario. Our primary goal with this adventure is to share the delight we've taken in Adams's works through the medium of role-playing. And if our *homage* makes you want to read (or revisit) the brilliant works of Douglas Adams... well, we could hardly ask for more.

Introduction & Setting

Adventurers are an odd bunch. To take but one example of the oddness so notable amongst adventurers, consider what reaction most people have to the terrifying spectacle of a large meteor falling to earth.

Consider the scene. The night sky trembles with the roar of something inconceivably louder than thunder. Darkness yields to fierce orange light as a projectile very like a chunk of the sun streaks from the heavens, until it smashes into the earth with the force of a thunder god finally getting a clean shot at the mosquito that's been keeping him from a good night's sleep.

Most common folk look upon such an event and pray for mercy, or pack their bags, or otherwise cower in awe and terror against such an unexpected and irresistible calamity.

But adventurers? When you see a meteor strike the earth some miles away, you naturally leap to the conclusion: "We've got to check that out!"

This adventure can be set anywhere on the border of an unsettled, magical wilderness. Civilized folk in towns or cities on the edge of this wild land are close enough to see a meteor strike somewhere within the largely uncharted territory, and to feel the earth tremble in the aftermath of the impact. One feature you might include in your depiction of the starting town or city is that there is a robust and thriving trade in the finest mattresses in all the land.

Once your group is set up to trek in to the wild lands, allow the adventurers to find their way after a day or so of travel to a small clearing. The sylvan beauty of the trees and the picturesque waterfall is only slightly marred by the dust that is still settling from the recent meteor impact. In this setting, they discover a most peculiar being:

The creature before you at first seems to be a humanoid sitting on a log, mostly hidden by an enormous kasa hat made not of straw, but of some wobbly translucent substance. As the diffuse sunlight affords you a better look, you realize that the being is not a humanoid at all, nor is it even wearing a hat. Rather, it is something quite like a jellyfish that would, if standing, be as tall as an average person.

It is not standing, however. It is slumped over in an attitude that decisively projects a mood of dejection, in spite of its alien physique. One eyestalk peels itself from the creature's dome-like head and swivels to regard you as you approach.

Inside your mind, you hear a musical, echoing voice, overlaid with dirge-like musical chimes. “Oh,” it says. “If you’ve come about the fluff, I’m afraid you are too late.”

This creature is **Frazelon the Fifth, Flumph of Fluff**. It is no ordinary Flumph (if such a thing even exists), but is instead a Flumph of the highest order, with powers and abilities far beyond those of normal Flumphs. Owing to Frazelon’s exceptional abilities, it has been made the guardian of the majestic Oglaroon tree—the primary source of benevolent and mystical fluff on this plane of existence.

The players have never heard of this mystical fluff.

Frazelon will assure them that fluff plays a critical role in life as we know it across the cosmos, and that without it, the world would be a dull, unenchanted place. Fluff, in its supernatural context, is an essential ingredient for the life-sustaining magic that sustains celestials, fey, and many other noble and glorious beings.

Normally, Frazelon’s powers are sufficient for it to serve as protector of the mighty Oglaroon tree, a fantastically vast tree that is home to a species of lemur-like beings who spend their entire lives in its branches. These Oglaroonians tend to the tree, subsisting on its nuts, and wafting the fluff that springs from the tree’s blossoms into the cosmic currents that carry it across the multiverse. Frazelon protects both the tree and its inhabitants from harm, largely by psychically concealing the existence of the tree from anyone who might consider harming it.

Unfortunately, this virtuous micro-ecology has recently come under a threat that even Frazelon could not withstand. For the thing that fell from the sky was not a meteorite in the conventional sense—instead, it was a fearsome beast hailing from the darkest reaches of the galaxy, arriving on this world after a journey across unfathomable distances of space.

This beast arrived with a terrible, ghastly noise.

And with a terrible, ghastly hunger.

The Bugblatter Beast

From its brief and one-sided encounter with the Bugblatter, Frazelon can provide the party with the following information:

1. “The creature stands some 25’ tall at the shoulder, and is just about as broad.”
2. “If you want some idea about how tough it is, consider the fact that it plummeted from space, burning with the heat of re-entry, and slammed into a mountainside near the Oglaroon tree. This arrival seemed to annoy it somewhat.”
3. “The truly fearsome roar of the Bugblatter is capable of pulverizing stone and eardrums alike. Also, to my great regret, it is handy for knocking poor defenseless Oglaroonians out of the safety of the branches so they can be devoured.”

4. “My telepathic powers allowed me to determine that the Bugblatter is a staggeringly stupid creature. Perhaps you can use this stupidity to your advantage.”
5. “Understand what I mean by stupidity. We are not talking about a simple animal, such as a shark. The Bugblatter is a reasoning creature. It possessed language. It even mentioned its irritation that its book of crossword puzzles had burned up in re-entry. The Bugblatter is obtuse, foolish, and daft in the way only an intelligent species is capable of being.”
6. “Here is an example. I witnessed one poor Oglaroonian who had fallen from the tree and was about to be devoured by the Bugblatter. In despair, she covered her head with her towel so she would not have to see her end coming. I sensed the Bugblatter’s thought: *If she couldn’t see it, then it couldn’t see her.* The Bugblatter ignored her, and she was able to climb to safety.”
7. “Mind you, my attempts to psychically influence the Bugblatter met with utter and complete failure. Its single-minded hostility and hunger seemed to repel my attempts to manipulate it, much to my sorrow. Trickery might work on such a creature, but psychic dominance will not avail you.”
8. “The more the Bugblatter ate, the stronger it became. I had no choice but to flee once it had consumed the many Oglaroonians who had failed to escape into the higher branches of the tree.”

Though Frazelon can sense that the party is indeed a group of puissant and accomplished adventurers, he does not think much of their chances in a straight fight with the Bugblatter.

Furthermore, Frazelon will discourage the party from squaring off against the Bugblatter while it’s in the vicinity of the Oglaroon tree. He is deeply concerned for the delicate balance of the local ecosystem, and how a knock-down battle on such a titanic scale might cause irreparable harm to the tree.

If the players need a more practical reason for taking the battle elsewhere, Frazelon will mention that not only will the Bugblatter have a ready supply of curious Oglaroonians to eat in order to recover its stamina, he saw it swallowing leaves, nuts, and fluff from the Oglaroon tree itself. Ingesting the potent magic of the tree would, he warns, make the Bugblatter nigh-unstoppable.

The situation does seem dire indeed. However, Frazelon has been pondering the situation since he was driven from the Oglaroon tree, and he has conceived several ways that might allow the players to even the odds.

OVERCONFIDENT PLAYERS

If your players decide to ignore Frazelon’s advice, you can provide the Bugblatter with the following absurdly overpowered Lair Actions in a battle near the Oglaroon Tree:

On initiative count 20 (losing ties), the Bugblatter takes a lair action to cause one of the following; it can’t use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The Bugblatter lets out an earthshattering roar that rattles the branches of the Oglaroon Tree. A cascade of stunned Oglaroonians tumbles from the tree, to be immediately slurped up by the ravenous beast. It recovers all lost hit points, and is considered to have 1d4 small-sized creatures in its gullet, which can be used for its Chunderbolt ability.
- The Bugblatter leaps into the air and engulfs a low-hanging branch of the Oglaroon tree, replete with nourishing Oglanuts. It recovers 6d12 hit points, and may use 1d4 extra Legendary Action points during this combat round. It also moves up 5 places in the initiative count.
- The Bugblatter inhales an enormous lungful of air, vacuuming up great quantities of enchanted fluff. It gains 10d10 temporary hit points, and has advantage on all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws until the end of the combat round. For the remainder of the battle, the roll required for it to make a critical hit reduces by 1 point.

If your party is very high level and you think they might overcome the Bugblatter without resorting to some clever ploy, feel free to amplify its powers as you see fit. We suggest increasing its hit points, armor class, damage output, and resistances or immunities to damage or spell effects. The idea of this campaign is that the party will need to be imaginative and devious in order to successfully deal with the Bugblatter.

Strategies for Overcoming the Bugblatter Beast

The common element in all the strategies that Frazelon suggests is that the party must lure the Bugblatter away from the Oglaroon tree and lead it to a battleground that favors the party. He offers the following possibilities:

- The Improbability Vortex
A mere two hours walking distance away from the Oglaroon tree is an area of ongoing wild magic. This area is constantly shifting, mutating, and even exploding with chaotic power that emanates from a golden, heart-shaped object known as the Improbability Vortex. Frazelon says he knows a trick for tilting improbability in one's favor. This might give the party the edge they need against the Bugblatter.
- The Swamps of Squornshellous
A four-hour walk will allow the players to reach the enchanted Swamps of Squornshellous. This place is known as the breeding ground for the finest, most comfortable mattresses in all of existence. The swamp itself is bathed in a relaxing mist that will soften the defenses of anyone who enters. Doing so would render the Bugblatter more vulnerable to attacks by the heroes.
- The Mountain of Brequinda
If the party can lure the Bugblatter on a six-hour hike, they can reach the mountain of Brequinda, home of an ancient red dragon named Fuolornis. Though Fuolornis was once a terrifying scourge herself, she has entered a mellower phase of her life, and spends most of her time sleeping. If she could be convinced or coerced into pitting her own might against the Bugblatter, she could turn the tide in their favor.

You may allow Frazelon to provide more details (see below), but we encourage you to let the players decide how they might use each of these locations. Or if your players come up with cunning plans of their own, encourage them in whatever way you prefer. In any event, they will receive detailed instructions from Frazelon, who will send them on the secret trail that leads to the Oglaroon tree... and the Bugblatter beast itself.

If the players ask Frazelon why he is staying behind, he will frankly admit that he considers the chances of their success to be "very, very improbable." He wants to be in position to recruit other aid should the players find themselves unceremoniously eaten by the Bugblatter.

With this cheerful thought, they set off to find the Oglaroon tree... and the Bugblatter beast itself.

OTHER STRATEGIES

You may even decide to dream up other locations and features of the region that they might exploit for their benefit.

If you do so, we highly suggest turning to the works of Douglas Adams as your primary resource for ideas. Might there be poetry-spouting militant bureaucrats that the party can pit against the Bugblatter? An easily-enraged thunder god who could be invoked in some fashion? A super-intelligent shade of the color blue that could provide cheerful moral support?

The choices are as limitless as life, the universe, and everything.

Luring the Bugblatter

You have traveled a labyrinthine path through inhospitable mountains, which you would surely have never been able to follow without Frazelon's helpful instruction. Upon squeezing through a narrow gap between two great stone slabs, you emerge suddenly into a clearing of jaw-dropping wonder.

In the soft light emitting from countless tiny motes of fluff that drift through the air, you witness a tree more massive than your mind can comfortably conceive arising from the verdant earth. Though the vast branches and lush leaves obscure its true height, from what you can see of it the tree must be hundreds of feet tall at the very least.

You've known robust towns that could nestle in the Oglaroon tree's shade and never see the sun.

Small, lemur-like beings with wide orange eyes scurry and hop amongst the branches of the tree. As you look more closely, you can see they have built many small dwellings in the crooks between its mammoth branches and twigs. These must be the peaceful and sadly helpless Oglaroonians. Though you are unfamiliar with their body language, you can tell they are frightened.

At the base of the Oglaroon tree, the reason for their fear crouches on four pillar-like legs.

Of the life forms present in this clearing, the largest by far is the tree. Yet in spite of the tree's objective scale, the Bugblatter Beast's living, breathing presence gives it a sense of dreadful enormity that no placid plant of any size could ever match. The Bugblatter is a coiled mass of earthcrushing muscle, coated with a hide so thick and durable that it makes a castle wall seem like unbaked clay.

Its vorpal-sharp claws are coated with a dense red-amber sap. From the rents on the tree's trunk, you can see that it has been trying to climb its way to the higher branches, only to be foiled by the tree's bark that has slipped away in great slabs beneath the monster's claws. The savage wounds on the tree make you wonder how long even such a titanic plant could stand up under the attentions of such a relentless, savage assault.

The Bugblatter gnaws fitfully on a strip of bark, its glaring eyes shifting from green to blue to a sort of mauve pink as it stares up at the Oglaroonians huddling out of reach. Then, as if catching your scent on the breeze, it swivels its gaze to you. The sense of its unspeakable hunger, aggression, and stupidity hits you like a battering ram.

Drool begins to bubble and froth over its countless rows of deadly teeth. The Bugblatter calls out in a voice that would impress a thunder god: "Ah! YOU look much tastier than this drab wood."

Make note of the Bugblatter's "Gullibility" trait on its stat block. If the players do not simply leap into battle, give them an opportunity to engage the Bugblatter in dialogue. Though the creature will intend to eat them at first glance, it does enjoy a bit of conversation to whet its appetite. This will give the players an opportunity to execute whatever ploy they've come up with to lure it away from the Oglaroon tree.

The simplest way to lure the beast away is to antagonize it and then run like hell. This dangerous strategy might well suit your party's abilities and approach. Refer to the chase rules

found in Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide (2014)* or Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide (2024)* for managing this outcome.

The players may temporarily elude the Bugblatter, but allow it to pick up their trail again every hour they travel (it does so through a combination of instinct, vindictiveness, and sheer bloody-mindedness). The players will need to elude it or fight it again.

If the players try to convince the Bugblatter to follow them willingly to some other location, this has a good chance of working. Here are some of the strategies players might employ:

- Convincing the Bugblatter that there is something extremely tasty elsewhere.
- Tricking it into believing a powerful enemy has challenged it.
- Presenting a ruse in which the players say they want to be eaten at a special spot.
- Fooling it into thinking that it has a grudge against someone or something elsewhere.

Keep in mind that hunger and hostility are the driving motivations for the Bugblatter. It has a good chance of falling for any subterfuge that plays on these desires.

However, also consider that the Bugblatter will become increasingly hungry and aggressive the longer the players spend in its company. For each hour of travel in company with the Bugblatter, have the creature consider whether it should just devour the party instead of doing all this traipsing around for some reason it can barely remember. Allow the players a chance to trick it again every time it does this.

We suggest encouraging creativity by lowering the DC for deceiving the Bugblatter with new tricks or variations on the ploy the players originally used to lure it away from the Oglaroon tree, and to penalize repetition by making the DC for social checks higher if the players simply evoke the same tactics each time the Bugblatter threatens to turn hostile.

If the Bugblatter does turn on the party before they reach a destination, the encounter can turn into a fight (without any particular advantages for the players) or a chase.

Eventually, the players and the Bugblatter may arrive at any one of the three suggested locations for a showdown.

IF YOU CAN'T SEE IT...

The classic way to elude a Bugblatter is to blind oneself, triggering its deeply-held conviction that if you can't see it, it can't see you.

Allow your players to use this tactic, but don't make it *too* easy. Even a tremendously thick being like the Bugblatter will start to get wise to a trick if it's overused. Here are some guidelines:

- The Bugblatter must know another creature is blinded before it becomes convinced that it can no longer see that creature. Merely closing one's eyes is not enough—the Bugblatter doesn't take much notice of whether its prey has its open or closed. Similarly, measures like the blindness spell won't offer any visual signs the Bugblatter can notice that a creature is blind, so that won't do the trick.
- The Bugblatter may be convinced it can't see an obviously blinded creature, but that doesn't mean it doesn't know said creature is there. You can treat its self-imposed inability to see a creature as that creature has the invisibility condition... including the bit about that condition wearing off if the creature attacks or casts a spell.
- The more often the blindness gimmick is used, the less susceptible the Bugblatter will become to its effects. It may be dumb, but it knows its own abilities—for instance, it knows that its Thunderous Roar attack is a great way to hurt something it can't see.

Encounter Area: The Improbability Vortex

Though you have had many strange experiences in your career, nothing quite matches the sheer peculiarity of your approach to the Improbability Vortex. Incomprehensible sights, sounds, and sensations spring forth and vanish as you venture closer to the heart of this unstable region. You find yourself waddling along as a large and well-to-do penguin, passing a shoreline where the sea holds perfectly still while the rocks slosh to and fro, hiking over a mountain of merengue as countless tiny gods snowboard past you, and experiencing other weird shifts that your mind cannot properly slot into memory.

When you finally reach the area at the center of this mayhem, you witness the Improbability Vortex itself: a golden, vaguely heart-shaped object that floats within a brilliant white gazebo-like structure. To look into the pandemonium of the Vortex is to court madness. To look away from its beauty is to know immeasurable grief. Here, in this most bewildering of places, anything can truly happen.

Since the territory around the Improbability Vortex is constantly in flux, choose whatever battle map you desire for a confrontation at the Improbability Vortex. If you wish, consider a map that mingles wildly disparate terrain types and features. Give the players fun and interesting terrain to play with—sheer cliffs, bodies of water, zones of energy or gas that have different beneficial or detrimental effects, etc. Go as crazy as you wish.

At the center of the battleground is the Improbability Vortex. Any creature within 300 feet of the Improbability Vortex must roll an **Improbability Effect** at the beginning of its turn (see sidebar for details).

The trick that Frazelon will teach the players is this: if a creature is carrying some sort of Brownian motion generator, they will have advantage on any roll for an Improbability Effect. Frazelon suggests that container of good, hot tea is ideal for such a purpose.

The Bugblatter will not know this trick, and wouldn't know what to make of it if it did. Further, it has no notion of spellcasting or any abilities other than its own. Any time it triggers an Improbability Effect that causes a targeted spell or phenomenon, the Bugblatter will automatically target itself with the resulting effect—whether it is harmful or helpful.

Furthermore the Bugblatter's Immutability trait will not protect it from being transformed by Improbability Effects.

If anyone touches the Improbability Vortex, they will be subjected to 1d4 Improbability Effects, and will be transported to a random spot on the battlefield. If a creature decides to eat the Improbability Vortex (for instance, a properly hoodwinked Bugblatter), that creature will rapidly undergo a series of bewildering changes too fast for the eye to follow, until it finally transforms permanently into a pot of petunias.

The result of all this improbability will likely be a bizarre and unpredictable fight—and, if the dice are in a foul mood, the players may sorely regret choosing this particular battleground.

IMPROBABILITY EFFECTS

As a basis for generating Improbability Effects, we suggest the following official resources:

- The Wild Magic Surge tables listed in entry for the Wild Magic Sorcerer subclass (*Player's Handbook, 2014 and 2024*)
- The Wand of Wonder magic item (*Dungeon Master's Guide, 2014 and 2024*)
- The Deck of Many Things magic item (*Dungeon Master's Guide, 2014 and 2024*)

Unofficially, there are many other homebrewed resources for generating random magic effects that you can easily find online. Or you could even make your own Improbability Effects table, if you are inspired.

Encounter Area: The Swamps of Squornshellous

As experienced adventurers, you've slogged through many swamps over the course of your storied careers. But this is, without question, the most pleasant swamp you've ever encountered.

The various lilies floating gently upon the still waters generate a comforting mist that transports your senses to a cool and crisp day, evoking the feeling of freshly-washed linens wafting softly in the breeze. Frogs and insects sing a relaxing ambient melody, as if their hums and buzzes are part of some vast lullaby. Even the squishiness of the mud beneath your feet feels like a warm and comforting embrace.

And then there are the mattresses.

These curious beings come in all shapes and sizes—from tiny mats suitable for a tired pixie to immense, pillowy giants that could accommodate a tyrannosaurus for a long, rejuvenating snooze. They make a variety of noises that have no equivalent in any other life form—willomies, globbers, flurs, and glurries. They make their floopy way between trees and through tranquil waters, occasionally vulluing to one another with dim-witted, friendly greetings.

Judging by these calls, they all appear to be named "Zem."

If the players decide to initiate a fight with the Bugblatter within the Swamps of Squornshellous, the following effects will occur:

- The area generates an effect similar to the *calm emotions* spell at all times, with a DC 10 DC. This only uses the effect of suppressing the charmed or frightened condition, not the indifference effect.
- All creatures in this area experience a softening effect. Any resistances to damage types are negated.
- [OPTIONAL] The Bugblatter must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw in order to use any of its Legendary Actions.

Any fight will also be witnessed by a number of mattresses. These creatures are harmless and have no stat blocks. Fortunately for the players, they also have no nutritional value, even for a Bugblatter. If the Bugblatter eats a mattress, it cannot gain the benefit of its Absorption or Chunderbolt abilities from that mattress.

The Bugblatter might be tricked into eating mattresses, though if the players use this as a means to escape its attention, it will rapidly grow tired of such unappetizing fare and pick up its pursuit of the party.

If the Bugblatter falls below 50% of its hit point total, it might be persuaded to take a nap on a particularly large mattress named Zem. If it can no longer see any of its opponents, you also might allow it to lay down for such a snooze. Zem will be exceptionally pleased with this outcome, and will happily inform the players that naps in the swamp can last for years, even decades.

This may not resolve the menace of the Bugblatter permanently, but when it awakens, it will be somebody else's problem.

Encounter Area: The Mountain of Brequinda

The mountain in the distance has the uniquely pleasing shape and symmetry that only certain very clever volcanoes can pull off. It is a near perfect cone towering high above the forested canopy of the nearby foothills, its peak adorned with a fresh coating of pristine snow.

A geologically inclined observer might be able to tell you that this absurdly gorgeous mountain is most likely inert, and is in no danger of spewing forth smoke and lava to devastate the surrounding countryside. A historically informed observer could definitely tell you that this mountain occasionally spews forth a tremendous red dragon, which is every bit as dangerous in its own way.

This is not a mountain to be approached in a casual way, unless one is keen on a particularly dramatic form of suicide. In your case, you are not approaching casually, so at least there's that. Whether this is suicide or not remains to be seen.

As Frazelon has informed the party, Mount Brequinda is the home of an **ancient red dragon, Fuolornis**. Here are some other details about Fuolornis, which you may choose to share or withhold from your players as you see fit.

For nearly two hundred years, Fuolornis was the very archetype of a tyrannical red dragon. She terrorized the surrounding countryside at her pleasure, demanded tributes of treasure and sacrifice under threat of her wrath, and devoured the well-roasted remains of any foolhardy adventurers who dared to challenge her might.

But at some point roughly half a century ago, she became a bit jaded by the whole routine. Perhaps, she thought, there was more to life than burning, plundering, and gorging oneself. One mountainous pile of gold began to look the same as the others, and she even began to lose count of the number of sumptuously bejeweled chalices in her possession. She had reached the stage of a dragon's life when the wild unpredictability of dreams becomes more alluring than the repetitive pleasures of the waking world.

A canny and educated gnome from the nearest great city in Fuolornis's territory, observing the droop of her wings as she soared across the sideline and her suppressed sigh as she poked listlessly through the chests of valuables set out for her in tribute, concluded that there might be an opportunity to finally end, or at least mitigate, the red scourge of the ages.

This gnome gathered a crew of sturdy helpers and set forth into the Swamps of Squomshellous, hunting for days and nights until they finally located the greatest and most majestic mattress ever recorded. They harvested this immense mattress, dried it out, then spent several grueling months ornamenting its copious surface with precious jewels, delicate golden filigree, and intricately worked runes of comfort and relaxation.

When they presented this masterwork to Fuolornis on her next round of tribute collection, the great dragon squealed in a manner she had not done since she was a hatchling.

Since that day, Fuolornis has been a much better neighbor to the various peoples who inhabit her territory. She sleeps for years at a time, only occasionally waking to check on her lair and, for form's sake, to fly a long circuit around the lands she calls her own. She doesn't even demand tribute, or not much, and she hasn't burned down a neighborhood since she got her

precious mattress. In fact, when she flies overhead with her Frightful Presence emanating around her, the locals now find the experience not so much terrifying as erotic, and every nine months after Fuolornis's visits, there is a noticeable uptick in the local birth rate.

The combination of Fuolornis's newfound quiescence and her dreadful reputation has led most of the area's population to strenuously discourage any adventurers from venturing out to Mount Brequinda. After all, things are pretty good now. Who would want to stir up trouble?

As it happens, our heroes are just the sort of people who might want to do just that.

Waking the Dragon

If the adventurers choose to try to employ Fuolornis in some capacity, here are several ways they might go about it.

- **Persuasion:** In the event that they reach Fuolornis before the Bugblatter arrives on the scene and can engage her in conversation, she will not be thrilled at seeing them simply because she was just getting really comfortable after three years of sleeping. She might be swayed by the arguments they devise to enlist her in their cause. Fuolornis might be willing to accept bribes of truly exceptional treasure—she is a quality-over-quantity sort of collector these days. She is also not insensible to arguments that the Bugblatter's presence in her territory represents some sort of threat she should help deal with.
Should the dragon agree to join the fight, she will demand a heavy price. This might come in the form of a favor, since she is longing to get back to sleep, and might welcome the chance for someone else to handle some matter she would rather not bother with herself. Could be a campaign hook for the party's next adventure.
- **Threats:** If the party could really pose a threat to Fuolornis, they probably would not need her help in dealing with the Bugblatter. Unless your players come up with something especially cunning, this avenue is probably a dead end. Literally.
- **Subterfuge:** Unlike the Bugblatter, an ancient dragon like Fuolornis is not easily fooled. That does not make it impossible, though. If your players come up with a gambit that really impresses you, impose disadvantage on Fuolornis's Insight checks to detect their deceptions. For all her years, she has not accrued much experience in reading the micro-expressions of tiny mortal beings... in fact, to her, pretty much all their expressions are micro.
- **Let Them Fight:** It's entirely possible that your players will trick the Bugblatter into barging into Fuolornis's lair to pick a fight. If rudely awakened in this disagreeable manner, the dragon will definitely defend herself and her home to the best of her considerable ability. The players

FUOLORNIS'S ABILITIES

As a starting point, use the standard stat block for an ancient red dragon from the *Monster Manual*.

Fuolornis is a particularly powerful and venerable dragon, even by the standards of her kind. She may end up being an ally to the party, or a threat, or both. As such, you may wish to equip her with any or all of these optional traits:

- **Damage Absorption.** When Fuolornis is subjected to fire damage, she takes no damage and instead regains a number of hit points equal to the fire damage dealt. This does mean she can heal herself with her own breath weapon.
- **Flyby.** The dragon doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when she flies out of an enemy's reach.
- **Special Senses.** Truesight at 60'.
- **Spellcasting.** Fuolornis can cast the following spells requiring no material components, using Charisma as her spellcasting score, as a 17th level spellcaster. She can use these once per day unless otherwise indicated.
 - unseen servant* (at will)
 - detect thoughts* (3/day)
 - glyph of warding*
 - wall of force*
 - stone shape*
 - dimension door*

would then have the opportunity to join in the fight, hang around and see who wins, or call it a good day's work and run like hell while the two mighty beings slug it out. Should Fuolornis emerge victorious (probable, especially if the party stays and help) or escape with her life against a triumphant Bugblatter, she will be in a truly foul temper afterward. If the party is around for the aftermath, they will need to present a *very* good reason for Fuolornis not to turn her wrath against them. If the party fled to leave Fuolornis to fight the Bugblatter alone, they will have made an insanely dangerous enemy, who will dedicate herself to finding who was responsible for such a grotesque violation of her home.

Running the Battle

The lair of the dragon is a relatively simple one. The main entrance is a tastefully-carved gate at the base of the mountain, leading into a long tunnel. This tunnel emerges into the massive caldera of Mount Brequinda, where Fuolornis has all her treasure arranged neatly on shelves, pedestals, and platforms she has shaped into the walls of the volcano. At the center is her lovely mattress, which she has accessorized with jewel-encrusted throw pillows.

She also has a secret exit near the top of the great cave of her lair. This is concealed by an illusion, and blocked by a permanent *wall of force* that she can activate or deactivate at will with a bonus action. She will only use this to escape danger if she falls below 100 hp—and she will be vexed to a degree few mortals could hope to comprehend if she is forced to flee her lair.

Fuolornis has dispensed with all the tedious mucking about with worshippers, attendants, kobolds, and the like in favor of a lair pristine and organized by a standing platoon of *unseen servants*. For defenses, she has *glyphs of warding* festooning the entrance and the long tunnel. These trigger if anyone seeking to harm her or take her treasure enters the cave, inflicting 5d8 thunder damage (half on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw) and, more importantly, producing enough noise to wake her up to deal with any unwelcome guests.

Place as many of these as you like—and, also if you like, grant the Bugblatter advantage or even automatic success on any saving throws against the thunder damage. This, coupled with its damage resistance, would allow it to pass relatively or completely unharmed through the glyphs, if you don't want it to be softened up by such footling defenses before a big battle.

Fuolornis herself would much prefer to fight outside her lair, if given the choice. If she is attacked in her lair, she will first make every effort to lure any foes outside, where she can make best use of her mobility, and also prevent her beloved horde from being damaged.

Once she is engaged in battle, she will fight intelligently, and quickly adapt to the Bugblatter's attack style. She will use her mobility to best advantage. If the party is openly engaged against the Bugblatter, the dragon will allow them to do the majority of the fighting, observing when it would be most prudent for her to weigh in.

Fuolornis's attitude toward the party will very much depend on how they enlisted her into the fight. If she is ill-disposed toward them, she may be indifferent to whether they are caught in her breath weapon or other attacks. Even if she is a willing participant, she will act in her best interests first, with the party's interests a very distant second priority.

If you wish to give the Bugblatter an edge in the fight, consider scattering a number of slow-moving and hapless creatures around the area for it to consume in order to recover its HP and use its Chunderbolt power. In a pinch, it can even consume trees and other plants.

Aftermath

Whatever course the players choose to contend with the Bugblatter, if they emerge alive and have removed it from the vicinity of the Oglaroon tree, Frazelon the Flumph will soon find them and express his eternal gratitude. This gratitude may take the form of one or more gifts, at your discretion. The details of each of these items can be found below.

1. Wondrous Item—Visionary Fluff: Frazelon will produce a piece of exceptionally potent mystical fluff that will grant potent divinatory visions to the character who receives it.
2. Wondrous Item—Babel Fish: This tiny fish can enable the user to understand all spoken languages, and thus be aware when any creature is muttering about them under its breath.
3. Wondrous Item—Eldritch Thumb: A device for hitching a ride in many unusual circumstances.
4. Wondrous Item—Towel of the Hitchhiker: A must-have accessory for any committed traveler.
5. Wondrous Item—Wand of M'arvin: Allows the wielder to summon a powerful, intelligent, but chronically depressed construct.
6. Feat—The Knack of Flying: Frazelon will telepathically grant a character this feat that allows one to fly, provided one can execute the mental gymnastics involved.

Visionary Fluff

Wondrous item, legendary

A small ball of potent mystical fluff harvested from the magnificent Oglaroon tree. When rubbed voluptuously against the skin, the fluff activates and grants the benefits of one of the following: *arcane eye, commune, contact other plane, dream, find the path, legend lore, or scrying*. No material components are required, and spells that would normally demand ability checks or saving throws automatically succeed. The fluff dissipates once used.

Babel Fish

Wondrous item, very rare

When inserted into the ear of a creature with more than 3 Intelligence, this tiny fish grants that creature the ability to understand any spoken language. The Babel Fish will survive indefinitely so long as it receives a fairly regular diet of audible speech.

Any theological implications arising from the existence of such a phenomenally useful creature are left entirely up to the user.

Eldritch Thumb

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

This squat device fits easily into the palm of one's hand, and sports a rune-inscribed gem on the top which activates its power. While you are holding it, you can activate it as a reaction when any creature you can see within 120 feet uses a spell or magical ability that grants a movement-

based effect, such as the spells *flight*, *misty step*, *dimension door*, and so forth.

The Eldritch Thumb allows you to “hitch a ride” on that creature’s spell or ability. In movement-based cases such as *flight* or *spider climb*, you are instantly moved to any space within 10’ of your target and are drawn along in its movement path for the duration of its turn. For teleportation abilities such as *misty step* and *dimension door*, you materialize in an unoccupied space of your choice within 10 feet of the targeted creature’s destination.

The Eldritch Thumb has 3 charges and expends 1 charge per use. It recovers one spent charge every 8 hours.

Towel of the Hitchhiker

Wondrous item, uncommon (+1), rare (+2), or very rare (+3) (requires attunement)

This fabulous flannel can be employed for any of the helpful purposes served by a normal towel. In addition, it grants the following:

- You receive a bonus determined by the towel’s rarity on checks for one of the following skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Animal Handling, Medicine, Nature, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, or Survival. The skill that the towel boosts can be changed at the end of any short or long rest.
 - Possession of this towel confers a sense that you are a capable, level headed, and generally hoopy person who has their act together. You gain advantage on any Charisma-based skill check that involves impressing someone with your worldly wisdom and competence, at the DM’s discretion.
 - Each time you take a short rest while holding or covering some part of yourself with the towel, roll a d20. On a 20, you gain the benefit of a long rest.
-

Wand of M’arvin

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This wand allows you to summon a special version of one of the following constructs, determined by your DM when you attune to the item:

1. Helmed Horror
2. Shield Guardian
3. Clay Golem
4. Iron Golem

In addition to its normal abilities, the construct has an Intelligence score of 30, and can understand, speak, or read any language. Unfortunately, this super-intelligent construct also has an incurably grim outlook on life.

When you summon the construct, it will appear in a place determined by the DM. It may trudge through the nearest door as if it had been waiting there all the time, haul itself up or down a staircase, stomp into view from around a corner, or plummet unexpectedly from the sky and land flat on its face.

You may attempt to issue a command to the construct using an action. Any time you do so, you must make a contested check against the construct’s Intelligence, using your choice of Arcana

(Intelligence), Insight (Wisdom), or Persuasion (Charisma). If you succeed, the construct obeys your command as uttered, albeit with resentful and sullen muttering.

If you fail this check, the construct spends its action glaring with contempt at you, complaining about the menial chore you have assigned to someone with “a brain the size of a planet,” groaning about its chronic pain or depression, or commenting darkly on what it thinks of your intellect.

On any round it is not given a command, the construct will plod aimlessly about doing whatever suits its fancy—solving fiendishly difficult quadratic equations, composing melancholy poetry, soaking its head in a bucket, and so forth. It is completely indifferent to being attacked or taking damage.

The construct will remain summoned for up to 1 hour, but will disappear in much the way it came if you move more than 150 feet away from it. Once it is gone, you cannot summon it again until you finish a long rest.

FEAT – Knack of Flying

You gain the ability to fly by throwing yourself at the ground and missing. This requires distracting yourself at just the right moment before you hit the ground. You gain:

- Increase your Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- After falling at least 10', you may make a DC 18 saving throw on the ability you chose to raise when taking the feat. If you succeed, you gain flight speed equal to your walking speed +10 feet, and are able to hover. You may stay remain flying for 1 round per point of your proficiency bonus before requiring another ability check. Once you successfully fly, you cannot do so again until after a short or long rest.
- If you fail your saving throw to activate flight, you fall prone, and take falling damage as appropriate. If you are under the effect of any spell or magical effect that would cause you not to hit the ground and take damage (such as *feather fall* or *levitate*), you are unable to use the feat.
- Every time you succeed in your saving throw to activate flight, the DC required to make the saving throw reduces permanently by 1 point, to a minimum of 8. Additionally, the number of rounds you may stay aloft increases by 1. Once you reach the ability to sustain flight for more than 10 rounds, you may remain flying indefinitely until you land. You must land in order to take a short or long rest.
- Your flight is governed by all the normal rules of concentration spells.

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*So long, and thanks.
May you always roll with advantage, in your game and your life.*

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The Bugblatter is a homebrew creature freely inspired by the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal, created by Douglas Adams in his book series, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

