

# DGD23 The Ooze Patron

By Dan Hass



First, demons rampaged through the roads. Now bodies are dissolving into oozes that further threaten the populace. Can heroes end this horror? A Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition Adventure for 1-8 3<sup>rd</sup> level characters. An additional chapter in *Patron War*.

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## Adventure Summary

*DGD23 The Ooze Patron* is a Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition adventure designed for 1-8 3rd level characters. It requires a *Player's Handbook*® (PHB), a *Monster Manual*® (MM), a *Volo's Guide to Monsters*® (VGM), a *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*® (XGE), and a *Dungeon Master's Guide*® (DMG). It also uses selections from *Unearthed Arcana* ([here](#)).

While the encounters include scaling for 1-8 characters, parties of 1 or 2 PCs and 7 or 8 PCs are fringe circumstances that may play oddly. Specifically, parties of 1-2 are highly susceptible to a single bad die roll, and 7-8 can slow play dramatically. Ideally a party will be 3-6 PCs.

The Digital copies of the encounter maps are available [here](#).

## Campaign Choice

While *DGD23 The Ooze Patron* is designed to fit within almost any setting according to Dimgaard principles (**low prep time, strong themes, smooth presentation, highly scalable**), it was written using the Dimgaard campaign as its primary influence, and is indicative of the themes in Dimgaard. The Dimgaard campaign guide can be found at [www.dimgaard.com](http://www.dimgaard.com).

## Preparing the Adventure

It is always a good idea for the DM to read through an adventure before running it.

*DGD23 The Ooze Patron* is no different.

There are some rather complex encounters that will benefit if the DM spends a few minutes deciding how she will play them.

*DGD23 The Ooze Patron* can be run with a lot of interaction between the PCs and NPCs depending on the inclinations of the players and DM. The module deliberately gives **just enough** information about NPCs to move the plot along, leaving a lot of room for a DM to individualize these to her campaign. In the encounters, the module deliberately gives **just enough** information about NPCs to move the plot along, leaving a lot of room for a DM to individualize these to her campaign, while Appendix 2 has more detailed information about prominent NPCs. It makes things smoother if the DM spends a few minutes deciding how she will deliver the NPCs' interactions. Some DMs revel in the opportunity to assume the personas of multiple NPCs over the course of a session while others prefer a summary

approach. The decision is a matter of style and showmanship. Similarly, many players look forward to opportunities to interact "in character" while others prefer to summarize. Neither approach is "correct"; both are valid ways to collaboratively build a story, but the DM should try to anticipate her players' preferences (and decide her own) and prepare accordingly. To aid in this process Appendix 2 contains entries for the NPCs in this adventure (taken from the DGN series available on [www.dmsguild.com](http://www.dmsguild.com)).

A battlemat or dungeon tiles may be helpful, but not necessary.

## Items for Review

- Creatures. acolyte, ape, baboon, black bear, bloodhawk, cat, dretch, flying snake, giant wolf spider, gray ooze, owl, scorpion, thug
- Magic Items. ring of free action, stone of good luck, sword of wounding, vicious weapon
- Spells. *armor of Agathys*, *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *guidance*, *mage hand*, *message*, *minor illusion*, *mirror image*, *prestidigitation*, *protection from evil and good*, *thaumaturgy*, *unseen servant*
- PHB. book of ancient secrets, devil's sight
- DMG. green slime, razorvine

## Dimgaard Philosophy

Dimgaard's primary principle is that D&D should be an entertaining experience. In particular, it should be fun and interesting. The "best" D&D is a collaborative storytelling event where the DM provides the framework and supporting details, while the players contribute by roleplaying the heroes (their characters) that results in epic tales.

"Epic" implies that the heroes be challenged and that success is a question to be decided by the heroes' deeds and choices. *The Lord of the Rings* is only an epic because the reader doesn't know until the final pages if Frodo, Aragorn and the rest will achieve their objectives or die, fruitless, in their efforts.

A great Dimgaard session (and really any D&D session) is where there is the finest line between success and failure and the heroes **just** manage to win (occasionally, just surviving is "winning"). But for those narrowest of victories to have true meaning, they cannot be foregone conclusions, and likely there will be times when the PCs fail – Boromir comes to mind or Gandalf's expedition to Isengard where he was captured.

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## Running the Adventure

*DGD23 The Ooze Patron* is made up of 6 events arranged into 3 encounters. Some are hazards that can be applied in only a few minutes but encounters with NPCs and other creatures that involve combat or roleplaying will take longer. But since the action occurs in a single adventuring day, it should use a single game session.

Often the PCs' actions determine the type of interaction. A combat encounter may evolve into a roleplaying encounter when mistaken identities, misunderstandings, or action based on false assumptions are corrected, thus ending the violence. Other times conversations, interrogations, or negotiations can become heated and erupt in violence changing a roleplaying encounter into a combat encounter.

Dimgaard adventures give the DM opportunities to reward good roleplaying. Good roleplaying can garner an easier path to achieving the desired outcomes.

However, it takes stellar roleplaying to completely avoid combat. The world is a dark and violent place where opponents with short tempers often find violence the most direct route to achieving their goals.

The encounters in *DGD23 The Ooze Patron* challenge PCs in different ways. The combat encounters are expected to meet the definition of **hard** (DMG p.81), but additionally there are encounters to test the PCs' ability to deal with diplomatic situations and pose difficult questions about their characters' morals.

### *Modification "Exploits"*

Technically each encounter uses a **medium** XP budget per the encounter building guidelines. And for many parties a **medium** encounter may turn out to meet the definition of hard as PCs may be built for roleplaying and the party may not have optimized their tactics.

Modifications have been made to the creatures that do not increase the calculated CR of the creature but do increase the challenge of the creature. These are denoted with a <sup>1</sup>. These are not intended to be used with all parties, nor does a DM need to use every suggested modification. The DM should gauge the effectiveness of the party and decide which of these to use (keeping in mind the definition of **hard** encounters).

## *The Blood War & Dimgaard*

The Blood War is the eternal violent war between the devils (lawful evil) of the Nine Hells and the demons (chaotic evil) of the Abyss. Previous implementations of Dimgaard had very little extra-planar activity, and thus no participation in the Blood War. However, the 5<sup>th</sup> edition incarnation of Dimgaard has seen much more extra-planar involvement, including several significant storylines wholly in the Abyss.

## Adventure Background

In the past, Dimgaard has experienced a level of ooze activity that cannot be attributed solely to innocuous occurrences. There has long been suspicions of individuals or a collective that is actively spreading oozes.

A few days ago, the River Styx shifted. It breached the Lower Planes and merged into the Peka River upstream of the village of Farjvad. It then separated from the river downstream to return to the Lower Planes.

This proximity to the Abyss has allowed demons to cross into the Material Plane. It is also a beacon, drawing elements with fiendish ties from across Dimgaard.

Among those drawn to the area are members of a nihilistic cult dedicated to Juiblex, the lord of oozes. They have begun to kill residents of Farjvad and dissolve them into oozes.

Juiblex is an elusive adversary. Various opponents of chaos have tried to eliminate him, but he has managed to survive. The followers of Asmodeus see this exposure of his cult as an opportunity to obtain valuable details about the Faceless Lord.

### *Parties of a Different Level*

While the adventure is optimized for a party of 3rd level characters, the DM can present the module to PCs of a different level. The DM must calculate **Party Strength** by summing the PCs' levels and then dividing by 3. The encounter and hazard scaling should be based on the Party Strength rather than the actual number of party members.

## Adventure Outline

The PCs are enlisted to investigate reports that a cult of Juiblex has moved into the forest near Farjvad.

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While searching, the PCs are exposed to the dangers of the jungle.

After finding the cult compound the PCs must deal with the oozes and slimes associated with the warlocks of Juiblex as well as summoned creatures that protect the sanctum.

Finally, the heroes may address the warlock(s) of Juiblex.

### *Rests*

The PCs are expected to complete 6+ medium or hard combat encounters without taking a long rest. Even short rests should be cautiously allowed since many PCs' resources recharge on a short rest. The PCs begin the adventure having just completed a long rest and they can benefit from only one long rest in a 24-hour period (*PHB* 168).

Once the action starts, the PCs can't take a long rest. If they insist, Dante Shadowsoul finds other adventurers to capture the warlocks.

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## Starting the Adventure

### *Downtime in Farjvad*

Farjvad is a well-organized town. Until the influx of demons a few days ago, Farjvad enjoyed a robust river trade. There are enough resources to sustain the village for some time – including adequately resupplying the PCs. Additionally, the DM can justify unusual resources such as magic items from the influx of refugees.

The amount of downtime available depends on when the DM is presenting *DGD23 The Ooze Patron*. If it is a part of the (related) 21-chapter *Patron Wars* adventure, the chapters around it will govern downtime.

If the DM is presenting *DGD23 The Ooze Patron* as a stand-alone adventure, the DM should make sure that as a part of downtime, the party has a united backstory with a strong reason to cooperate. Parties with divisions often fail to succeed in Dimgaard adventures, which expect a high degree of collaboration.

The *PHB* 187, *DMG* 127, *XGE* 123, and the *Dimgaard Campaign Guide* all have suggestions for downtime activities and the DM may develop some of her own. There are also several (playtest) options available through the *Unearthed Arcana* ([here](#)).

### *PCs' Resources*

Managing the PCs' access to extraordinary equipment is another tool to modulate the difficulty of the encounters. If PCs are underpowered, downtime can contribute resources (potions, scrolls, etc.) to increase their effectiveness. Stronger parties may not need this type of support.

Players may want to discuss the characters or the situation prior to play. The DM can facilitate this by reading or paraphrasing:

Farjvad is a community under constant attack. The river that formed the basis of the community's prosperity since inception is now a conduit for monsters from the Lower Planes. It has been cordoned off and the once safe and peaceful town is now a site of constant violence.

In this maelstrom, you have found a group of resourceful people to share the experience with. This morning you share a hearty breakfast in the Farjvad inn.

When the initial discussion is complete the DM can launch the action of the adventure by reading or paraphrasing:

The most prevalent topic currently is a disturbing trend over the past couple of days. The violence that was thought to be contained to the riverfront has manifested well into the village. Several villagers have simply vanished – with no remains found. In the current environment, this leads many to believe sinister forces must be at work.

As the breakfast remains are cleared, a human with very light skin tones enters. He wears leather armor with an emblem of a red pentagram – the holy symbol of Asmodeus. He is well known in Farjvad: Dante Shadowsoul. In the recent confrontation with demons, he has emerged as a reservoir of knowledge and has become an important figure in Farjvad.

He approaches and begins. "Good day. I hope you are in good spirits and ready for a difficult, but important, mission. The fate of not just Farjvad but much of Dimgaard could rest on your results."

Dante has determined that the missing citizens have been turned into oozes. He is quite sure that cultists of Juiblex have infiltrated Farjvad. The Order of Asmodeus has long suspected that Juiblex had an active cult working throughout Dimgaard, and at least some have been drawn to Farjvad.

Dante sees an opportunity. If the cultists can be captured, the Order of Asmodeus has unusual tactics and resources they can use to extract details that could reveal and undermine the cult. However, these tactics are secrets that the Asmodeans won't reveal beyond their order – even Dante doesn't know the intricacies, although he is sure that they involve torture and arcane procedures that would not be acceptable by the One True Faith.

To that end, Dante would encourage the heroes to root out the cultists and secretly deliver them to him – subdued, but not dead. In return, the heroes will have the gratitude of the Order of Asmodeus. Dante does have a treasure to draw on for expenses and a reward. (The recommendation is 150 gp per PC.)

Dante's investigation has revealed the vicinity of the cult base, and he can direct the PCs to it if they agree to his terms. The cult compound is only a few miles north of Farjvad. The PCs may only take a short time to prepare.

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## Encounter 1: The Temperate Jungle

**Map.** Forest Near Farjvad

### Random Encounters

The *DMG* p.85 has a section on random encounters. In Dimgaard adventures, the first encounter is often isolated from the storyline, and heavily skewed towards combat. This serves multiple purposes.

The DM can use these to gauge the PCs' combat effectiveness to modulate the subsequent encounters. However, if the encounter goes badly, the PCs can still successfully complete the adventure.

The random encounters also present the DM with an opportunity to tailor the adventure. She can substitute an encounter she has designed for the particular PCs in her campaign and still complete the storyline of the adventure.

Finally, there may simply be a different encounter that the DM believes would be more interesting to present to the players.

Presented here is a random encounter table for the dense forest north of Farjvad. Note that the skills challenge could yield several random encounters.

The trip to the vicinity of the cult hideout only takes about two hours. However, pinpointing it is difficult, and requires a combined effort.

### Locating the Hideout (225 XP per PC)

#### Skills challenge

It requires 4 successes to find the hideout. The party scores a success by scoring a 15+ on a group ability check. Each check represents about an hour of activity. The players describe the PCs' actions and the DM decides what skill the PCs use for the group check. The most obvious skills would be Intelligence (Investigation) to put together clues or Wisdom (Survival) to find signs of traffic, but players may have different strategies the DM can consider. For each 5+ that the PCs exceed 15, they score an additional success. If the PCs are acting in cooperation with Dante Shadowsoul, they begin with one success. At the end of each hour (when the PCs make the group check) the DM should roll 1d6, with a 1-3 indicating the party has a random encounter using the map **Forest Near Farjvad**.

### Encounters in Forest Near Farjvad

1d6+1d4	For each PC:
2	Razorvine ( <i>DMG</i> 110)
3	1d6+1 <b>baboons</b> ( <i>MM</i> 318)
4	1d4+1 <b>blood hawks</b> ( <i>MM</i> 319)
5	1d4 <b>dretch</b> ( <i>MM</i> 57)
6	1 <b>ape</b> ( <i>MM</i> 317)
7	1d4 <b>giant wolf spider</b> ( <i>MM</i> 330)
8	1d4+1 <b>flying snake</b> ( <i>MM</i> 322)
9	1d6+1 <b>scorpions</b> ( <i>MM</i> 337)
10	1d6+1 feral <b>cats</b> ( <i>MM</i> 320)

**Setup & Tactics.** Generally, the creatures from the random encounter table will try to sneak up on the party or lay an ambush. Note that when seriously injured, most beasts flee rather than fight to the death.

### Skills Usage & Treasure

It is desirable to deviate from random loot as treasure at times. One way is using skills to extract valuable components from the carcasses of defeated creatures. Harvesting poison (*DMG* 258) is the precedent for this: it requires a DC20 skill check to successfully extract loot from the carcass; the carcass can yield only one item and a failure destroys the carcass without any loot being extracted.

In this case, many of the creatures can be the source of valuable hides or poison. If captured, some may have value as pets, animal companions, or other domesticated uses.

**Map.** Cult Compound: Stagnant forest pool

**Background.** As the PCs near the pool, oozes attack.

The signs clearly indicate a stagnant pool – one of several in the area – is at the center of the activity. The water is quite clear and there is an opening visible at the bottom of the pool.

**Running the encounter.** When the PCs approach the pool, the oozes rise up from the wet forest floor and attack.

**Scaling the encounter.** There is one **Farjvad Grey Ooze** per PC.

### (Farjvad) Gray Ooze. *MM* 244.

<sup>1</sup>**Saving Throws** Dex +0, Wis +0

<sup>1</sup>**Burst of Speed (1/day).** The ooze dashes as a bonus action.

<sup>1</sup>**Mindless Resistance (2/day).** If the ooze fails an Intelligence or Charisma saving throw it instead succeeds.

**Concluding the encounter.** The PCs need to traverse the submerged passage, which may require extra attention by PCs with heavy armor.