

Redemption Draconis

Stage 1: Recruitment

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Adventure for four Character levels 6 – 8

Background for the DM

This is part one of a scenario that could pose certain moral complications for the player characters, particularly if they are of good alignments. The story hinges upon the machinations of one Aurak draconian, Porakath, who has become psychopathically determined to return himself to his genetically original form, that of a gold dragon.

Porakath is evil, and the fact that gold dragons are some of the purest souls upon Krynn does not seem to pose any sort of dilemma for him. He claims to be seeking redemption for himself and his people for all the wrong they have inflicted upon the world. He also feels that draconians may very well be the unnatural abominations that many claim them to be and he hopes to purify himself by finding a way to undo the magic that spawned him. He is willing to go to *any* length to accomplish his task.

Porakath is a powerful sorcerer. Over the years he has collected much magical knowledge and skill enhancing his natural shape changing abilities. He has even gone so far as to experiment on other races by manipulating their physical and genetic states in his search for a ways to change himself. He has come to the conclusion that he needs to gather together all the other Aurak draconians that were created from the same egg that he was spawned from. He claims to have the power to call forth the essence of any of his egg-kin that have been slain and that when he has all of his siblings together, he can fuse them back into one glorious being, the gold dragon that they were meant to be!

Before the War of Souls, Porakath was nearly ready to enact his plan until his magic started to fade. He has worked for many people in his life, but most recently he and his underlings were in secret employ of Lord Ariakan and then Lord Targonne who used them to spy on his Knights of Neraka. With the return of his magic and the fall of Lord Targonne, Porakath has sent his three prize henchmen out to recruit some manpower to help track down his siblings as quickly as possible. The PCs are approached to “help” Porakath. His henchmen have decided to use press gang tactics to recruit the help their master desires.

When the PCs finally meet Porakath, they must decide whether or not to help an agent of evil go about accomplishing a task that seems to have such good intentions and possibly a very positive outcome. Of course, Porakath is willing to do whatever it takes to round up his siblings and some of the things he must do to access the power he needs to complete the transformation might require some very shady, if not hideous, methodology.

This adventure, Stage One, covers the PCs initial encounter with Porakath’s “press gang” and their first meeting with the Aurak draconian himself wherein the plan is pitched to the PCs and they must decide whether or not to help.

Synopsis

The PCs are resting in one of Sanction's busiest taverns. What brings them to the city that was nearly leveled by Takhisis' attempts to re-enter the world is up to the DM. This adventure can easily be run as a tangent to your current plotline or can be the start of a whole new one.

Should your party be of levels less than 6th or greater than 8th please refer to the sidebar *Scaling This Adventure* for how to make it level appropriate. The PCs are not meant to defeat or even kill the three main henchmen or Porakath himself. They are to meet them and discover what insidious plot the draconian has in store.

The three henchmen are to approach the PCs, offer them a job that pays "very well" and coerce them, by force if necessary, to go with them to meet their new employer, Porakath. This encounter could make for some very interesting role-playing. If the PCs do not agree to go with or are not captured, they will encounter the trio later on the streets as they are pressing some other people into service.

Once the PCs meet the draconian, whether it is in tow by the trio or on their own, the draconian reveals his plan and asks for their help in tracking down his lost siblings.

The Press Gang

Porakath's three underlings represent some of the best (if you can call it that) results from his years of genetic tampering. Rarely did the subjects of his magical experiments survive and if they did it was not for long. The torment they suffered at the hands of the Aurak's desperate delving into matters of transformation was unspeakable.

His three "prize" results are named Grunt, Grab and Grovel. None of them remembers who or what they were before Porakath got a hold of them nor do they recollect the process that made them what they currently are, and that may very well be a blessing.

Scaling This Adventure

If the party is of lower levels remove the Knightly class levels from the "Press Gang" first and the assassin levels from Grovel.

If the party is of higher levels, then add class levels of the "Press Gang's" primary classes, not the knightly classes (which means add assassin levels for Grovel).

Porakath can be left alone, as the PCs are not meant to fight him. If they do insist on attacking him, he will not kill them outright, but will instead cripple them with his spells and then make his getaway.

Grunt is a half-ogre. Porakath captured him as a youth and worked magic on him trying to turn the poor child into a purebred ogre. Physically, he had no success. Mentally, he did somehow manage to pull some additional intelligence out of the boy, probably some latent genes from his human mother. Grunt became a very astute individual and quite aware of the world around him. Grunt worked as a laborer for the Knights of Neraka where he was positioned to spy on the Knights for the Lord of the Night. He soon turned to the newfound mystic explorations coming from the Knights of Takhisis who emerged from the Citadel of Light having stolen knowledge from Goldmoon.

Grunt is skilled at playing the role of the big dumb ox. He got his name from the monosyllabic conversations he has with people other than his two fellows and Porakath. He dresses shabbily though his outfits carefully conceal his specially crafted scale mail that is made to look like well-used hide armor. Despite the stereotype, Grunt is not a very good hand-to-hand combatant. He is, however, a very skilled caster of divine magic and his favorite tactics in combat are to employ his *inflict wound*, *searing light* and *sound burst* spells. He'll resort to bashing people with his greatclub, though he has strange and random muscle spasms that significantly decrease his ability to hit things.

Roleplaying Suggestions: Grunt puts on a good show of being stupid. People expect him to be dense so he does not disabuse them of their preconceptions. He will keep to the periphery of a fight using his spells and is not afraid to retreat if things go against him.

Spells Per Day: 6/7/7/5

0 level: *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

1st: *command*, *cure light wounds*, *doom*, *inflict light wounds*, *shield of faith*, *true strike*

2nd: *augury*, *cure & inflict moderate wounds*, *sound burst*

3rd: *inflict serious wounds*, *locate object*, *searing light*

Name: Grunt	Race: Half-Ogre
Class: Mystic 6/Skull Knight 2	
Align: LE Size: M Gender: Male	
STATS:	HP: 76
STR 18 (+4)	AC: 18
DEX 12 (+1)	(+1 Dex, +1 Natural, +6 armor)
CON 17 (+3)	Initiative: +1 (Dex)
INT 13 (+1)	Speed: 20 feet
WIS 17 (+3)	
CHA 10 (+0)	
Saving Throws	
Fortitude +11 Reflex +3 Will +8	
Base Attack	
+10 melee melee or +7 ranged (35% miss chance per attack due to spasms)	
Feats: Alertness, Still Spell, Persuasive.	
Skills: Bluff +8, Concentration +9, Heal +10, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (religion) +9, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5, Search +1, Listen +5, Hide +1, Move Silently +1.	
Half-Ogre Abilites: Low-light vision	
Armor:	
Scale Mail +2 (+ 6 AC, Max Dex bonus +3, armor check penalty -4)	
Weapons:	
Greatclub +1: +11 hit, 1d10+5 damage, critical 19-20/x2..	
Special: <i>Detect Good</i> (at will), smite good (1/day), aura of evil, Dark Blessing (n/a)	

Grasp is a half-elf of indeterminate parentage who thinks he is a Kender. Porakath's genetic tampering was meant to turn Grasp into a purebred human but only succeeded in leaving him stunted in size so that he very closely resembles a Kender. Something happened to his mind during the experiments that left him delusional. Not only does Grasp heartily believe that he is a Kender but he also operates under the misconception that he is an exceptional pickpocket.

At first glance most people take Grasp to be a Kender. If they happen to look more closely there is "something a bit odd about him" but people usually can't put their finger on what it is that makes them think so. Grasp frequently walks up to people and very openly and blatantly starts rifling through their pouches and pocket all the while thinking he is being very discreet. This usually gets him slapped or belted, though some people just stare down at him in amazement wondering what in the world he is doing.

Grasp worked as a messenger for the Knights of Neraka as his cover for spying on them on behalf of the Lord of the Night. Mostly he serviced the Knights of the Thorn and soon picked up training as one of their order. He is a skillful sorcerer which is the only thing that has kept him from getting killed by those he tries to "pickpocket".

Roleplaying notes: Grasp is a friendly little fellow and will quickly start up a conversation with most anyone. He will then proceed to go through their belongings and their pockets not seeming to notice or care that they are aware of what he is doing. In combat, Grasp tends to dance about nimbly keeping out of the way while tossing off spells and nonsensical remarks.

Spells Per Day: 6/7/7/6/3

0 level: *detect magic, read magic, flare, light, mage hand, open/close, dancing lights, flare.*

1st: *shield, magic missile, hold portal, feather fall, reduce person*

2nd: *crackling sphere, blur, elemental dart*

3rd: *suggestion, lightning bolt*

4th: *wall of ice*

Name: Grasp	Race: Half-Elf
Class: Sorcerer 6/Thorn Knight 2	
Align: N Size: S Gender: Male	
STATS:	HP: 49
STR 10 (+0)	AC: 20
DEX 18 (+4)	(+4 Dex, +1 Size, +5 armor)
CON 14 (+2)	Initiative: +4 (Dex)
INT 10 (+0)	Speed: 20 feet
WIS 8 (-1)	
CHA 17 (+3)	
Saving Throws	
Fortitude +4 Reflex +6 Will +7	
Base Attack	
+4 melee melee or +8 ranged	
Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack	
Skills: Bluff +7, Concentration +2, Diplomacy +9, Gather Info +5, Knowledge (religion) +4, Knowledge (arcane) +4, Pickpocket -7 , Spellcraft +8, Spot +0 , Search +1 , Listen +0 , Hide +8 , Move Silently +4 .	
Half-Elf Abilities: Low-light vision	
Armor:	
Studded Leather +2 (+ 5 AC, Max Dex bonus +5, armor check penalty -1, arcane spell failure 10%)	
Weapons:	
Hoopak +1: +6 hit, 1d6+1 damage, critical 19-20/x2.	
Hoopak Sling +1: +9 hit, 1d4+1 damage, critical 19-20/x2.	
Special: <i>Diviner, read omens, armored spellcasting (-5%)</i>	

Grovel is a Gully Dwarf of exceeding intelligence and cunning. He is a masterful actor and takes advantage of the fact that people expect him to be servile, smelly and dumb. He is the smartest of the three “Press Gang” members and is their leader, though he rarely exhibits any leadership in public and lets it appear as if Grasp is in charge.

Porakath’s intent with his experiments on Gully Dwarfs was to see if he could turn them into “real dwarfs”. He soon learned that Gully Dwarfs *are* pure dwarfs in their own right. With Grovel he did succeed in creating a smart Aghar. Grovel’s one hindrance to normalcy is his severe *Obsessive/Compulsive disorder*. He wears gloves and shoes all the time for he cannot stand to have his hands and feet get dirty. His filthy appearance is all a ruse using makeup.

While he was working as a spy for the Lord of the Night, Grovel never actually trained as a Knight of the Lily, but he did pose as one of their servants.

Roleplaying suggestions: Grovel will look and act like a typical Gully Dwarf. His armor and weapons have been ensorcelled to appear dirty, battered and rusty. He is a deadly and devious combatant and takes full advantage of his opponent’s disdain of his race and their overconfidence in their abilities to deal with him. He will cower and hide he can utilize his sneak attack abilities.

Note: Once Grovel takes more than 30 HP pf damage, he must make a Will Save (DC 15) every round. If he fails, he will break away from the fight to go clean the blood off himself and his clothing.

Name: Grovel	Race: Gully Dwarf
Class: Rogue 4/Assassin 4	
Align: NE Size: S Gender: Male	
STATS:	HP: 66
STR 12 (+1)	AC: 20
DEX 18 (+4)	(+4 Dex, +1 Size, +5 armor)
CON 16 (+3)	Initiative: +4 (Dex)
INT 14 (+2)	Speed: 20 feet
WIS 10 (+0)	
CHA 8 (-1)	
Saving Throws	
Fortitude +7 Reflex +12 Will +2	
Base Attack	
+7 melee melee or +10 ranged	
Feats: Evasion, Mobility, Spring Attack, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Combat Reflexes.	
Skills: Bluff +7, Diplomacy +3, Survival +2, Spot +0, Search +1, Listen +0, Hide +10, Move Silently +6.	
Armor:	
Studded Leather +2 (+ 5 AC, Max Dex bonus +5, armor check penalty -1)	
Weapons:	
Poison Dagger +3: +6 hit, 1d4+3 damage , critical 19-20/x2, poison Fort save DC 17 or lose 1 Str point per minute until cured by magic or antidote.	
Special: <i>trapfinding, sneak attack +4d6, trapsense +1, death attack, poison use, +2 save vs. poison.</i>	

Encounter 1

The PCs are to be relaxing at a tavern in Sanction, let’s call it *The Randy Goat*. Read the following to the players and pick one of them at random to be the target of Grasp’s pickpocket attempt:

The *Randy Goat* is bustling this evening. It would seem that nearly every day laborer and sailor has decided to come here for their evening recreation. The room is hazy with pipe smoke and the fumes coming from the kitchen. You hear the shattering of glass as one of the few lanterns hanging from the rafters is knocked to the floor by a stumbling minotaur.

The food at this tavern is not to be recommended, except, perhaps, to the starving. The drink is another matter. This tavern is known for some of the best prices on ale and the brew is homemade and about the finest in the region. Hence the crowd. You got here early enough to claim a table and already tossed down a couple drinks each.

One of you feels a harsh tug at your belt pouch and notices a small figure kneeling at your side. It appears to be

a Kender rifling through your things. If it is, he is surely the worst pickpocket you have ever encountered. His elbow jabs harshly into your side and the sheer heaviness of his tugging at your belt would alert the dead to this Kender's fumbling attempts. He seems to be having trouble with the knot. He finally sighs, stands up and tries to straddle your belt pouch to get a better angle on it. His backside is now pressing heavily into your side and he is bent over working the knot with his teeth, grunting with effort.

All any of you can do is sit and stare in amazement at the audacity the little fellow has to be doing this in public. Eventually, after much effort he throws his hands up in the air and turns to you with a sincere expression on his little face.

"Do you think you could do me a big favor and open that pouch? I'd really like to see what's inside."

There is something a bit odd about the Kender's appearance. He looks a bit stockier than is usual for his kind and his face isn't quite right either. You can't put your finger on it, but he is an odd-looking little scamp.

If the PCs react with violence, Grunt and Grovel appear out of the crowd immediately to defend their friend.

If the PCs engage in conversation, Grasp will regale them with a story of how he once found a singing sword in the forest outside of Silvanost that made all the elf maidens fall in love with him. He'll ask to see what they have in their pockets and pouches. All the while that he is talking he secretly casts *suggestion* on one or more of the party members (Grasp's Bluff vs. player's Spot) with a Will save DC 16 to get them to come work for his boss. Hopefully, he pulls this off with at least one PC.

Eventually, you should have Grunt and Grovel appear. Grunt will tell his little "Kender" buddy that it's time to go and if his new friends are going to come to work (in one syllable words, of course). If any of the PCs have succumbed to the *suggestion* they will readily agree to accompany them and should encourage the other PCs to do the same. If the PCs are inquisitive about what the work is, none of the Press Gang will say anything more than it is "top secret and for a very important person". Grovel will offer to carry *everyone's* packs. If the PCs agree to follow them, proceed to Encounter 2.

If the PCs end up attacking the Press Gang they will fight for long enough to make good their escape. You should then have the PCs encounter the Press Gang the next day just as they are forcing three teenage noble lads (treat as 1st level fighters) into service for their master. They should slip down an alley with their "new recruits" and lead the PCs through the city to Encounter 2 with Porakath.

Encounter 2

Whether they have come willingly or are following the Press Gang to Porakath's house, the PCs arrive at a nice manor home in one of the better parts of Sanction. Obviously the Press Gang's boss has a good source of income.

Read the following IF AND WHEN the PCs are gathered WILLINGLY in Porakath's "audience chamber" (a 40' x 75' room):

Sitting on a large cushioned chair (that might be meant as a throne) at one end of the chamber is a robed and hooded figure. His clawed hand rests on a reptilian chin. Your boots ring loudly on the marble floor and the sound reverberates off the vaulted stone ceiling. There is a strong odor of incense or some other exotic herb concoction in the chamber.

The draconian looks up as his three henchmen enter leading you and your friends. (If the PCs have encountered Aurak draconians before, they will identify their host as such.)

“Welcome, my new friends, to the home of Porakath,” he says with his sibilant accent. “I am glad that my compatriots have found you. I am recruiting able people to help me in a very noble endeavor. I have at my disposal, the knowledge and power to right a great wrong.

“Many of the natural races to this world consider my people to be abominations. I happen to agree with that assessment. I have spent many years, more money than you can comprehend and extreme magical effort to learn how to reverse this error created by the followers of our late goddess, Queen Takhisis. If I can gather together all my egg-siblings, the other Aurak draconians that were hatched from the same egg as I, then it is possible to return us to our rightful form, that of a gold dragon.

“I need your help tracking them down, for I know that all three of them are alive. It must be done quickly for the propitious time to perform the rejoining ritual is fast approaching. We have but four weeks to do so. Will you help me? This act will begin to rid the world of the foul contagion my species has instilled. Once done, I can then, in my rightful and natural form, help all other draconians to follow in the same process.”

If the PCs agree, Porakath offers to pay each of them 1,500 steel pieces for every egg-sibling they bring to him. Proceed to Stage Two: Aquirement (not included in this printing).

If questioned further about the ritual, he will become evasive and will only add that the ceremony will also require something “pure and untamed”.

If the PCs are not at his house willingly, perhaps they can overhear the same conversation but delivered to the three captured noble lads.

If, for any reason, the PCs attack Porakath, his Press Gang defends him to the death. Porakath himself, who is not meant to be fought at this stage, is a 16th level sorcerer. He will toss off a couple *chain lightning* spells at the PCs and then will escape through a *dimension door*. The PCs will have to find a means of tracking him. Regardless of what they do, Porakath WILL get away, though his Press Gang may not.

Conclusion

Here ends Stage One of *Redemption Draconis*. If the PCs end up cooperating with the draconian, you can continue on to Stage 2. If they fight Porakath, they will either have to hunt him down or forget about it. Either encounter in Stage One can wind up being a role-playing one or a combat, depending on what the PCs do.

The dilemma lies in the decision to help a known evil creature redeem himself, though at what cost is not clear at this point, or to rid the world of him in some other way...say...kill him before he perpetrates more wrong on the world?