Morrigan's Practical

Adventure Keys



The Bridge of Death

Critical Hit Publishing

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Using this Book

The purpose of these books is to help DMs put together an interesting encounter in a short time. Each Adventure Keys release does this by starting with a unique location that can be inserted seamlessly into an existing world with little or no modification. They are modular, with many options and variants available so that the DM can customize it to suit their needs.

There are six sections that include the *Location*, *Hooks & Goals*, *Characters*, *Trappings*, *Threats,* and *Changes*. All but the first have multiple options each, and since the DM isn't limited to using only one option, the variations available are quite numerous. Sections can be used or ignored at the DM's discretion, or even modified based on the situation or to scale its Challenge Rating.

The options are deliberately non-specific for ease of use. The DM can include them as they are, combine them, or use them for inspiration to create an entirely new options.

Location. This section will give an overall description of the location and its immediate surroundings. Parts of this are left deliberately vague so the it can be inserted into a setting more seamlessly. This may also include notes regarding some of the other sections, a brief history, and/or suggestions for adapting it to various environs.

Hooks & Goals. While *Hooks* and *Goals* may seem like the same thing, there are some slight differences. Hooks are essentially intended to get the characters "hooked" into a new plot or adventure, while Goals describe why the PCs have come to this particular location. Their reason for being here can be as simple as just passing through the area, or they might have been sent to perform a specific task of some kind.

It's also possible that their reason for coming to the location is that it has something that the PCs need. This could be an object, information, or perhaps it offers some strategic advantage. The DM should be able to easily insert their own hooks and goals or modify the available options as needed.

Characters. The character options in this section are relatively benign in nature. They are intended to ad flavor or interest to the location, impart information to the player characters (PCs), or provide an opportunity for roleplay.

These characters can be neutrally aligned intelligent beings or other noteworthy creatures. Though they may start off as neutral or friendly, the PCs' actions can change that if they treat them poorly or make any hostile moves against them.

Trappings. This includes options for other things that the PCs might find at this location. These things could be significant, minor, or simply a curiosity. Trappings can help flesh out a world by making it feel more lived in, provide resources, impart clues to the PCs, foreshadow future events, or even provide a cache of minor loot if the DM is feeling particularly generous.

Threats. These include monsters, enemies, traps, natural hazards, and so on. These may be specific, but should be adjustable enough to challenge almost any party of adventurers.

For example, if the option says that there are six bugbears, but it doesn't seem like enough, then make it twelve. If the trap is too easy to find, increase the Difficulty Class (DC).

Whenever possible, stat block will be provided for non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters, but occasionally the option may reference a core book. In these latter cases, the book and page number will be provided.

Changes. In order to shake things up (sometimes literally), the DM can use these options to add a bit of extra excitement the location. These will include all manner of changing conditions from weather events to a change in the location itself. For example, a dilapidated stone structure might become destabilized by the PCs actions, causing a crumbling wall to drop on them.

Changes could also include outside events, such as two groups choosing that moment to start fighting over that location, caring little for anyone caught in the middle.

The important thing to remember is that these Adventure Keys are intended to be a kind of toolbox for a DM to use as they see fit. They can be used individually or even combined with other locations to create something all together different.

It is even possible to scavenge bits of these to add to the DM's own locations, making the utility of these books nearly limitless. Think of them not as keys to a single door, but countless doors.

The Bridge of Death

This narrow rope bridge crosses a deep ravine that extends for more than a mile in each direction. The rope is fashioned from heavy twisted fibers and coarse animal hair. Rough hewn planks of dark, oiled wood form the walkway suspended between the two lower ropes while the two upper ropes act as hand holds. Each end in anchored to sturdy six foot tall posts that have been driven deep into the ground, with several support ropes radiating out from each post.

Even a cursory glance will reveal that the bridge is extremely old, but despite its age, it's very solid. It is approximately 300 feet from one side to the other and about six feet wide. It can be crossed by the average human in about a minute (10 rounds) if moving at a normal rate, and twice that if dashing. The bridge can accommodate a horse, but not most wagons or carts.

The bridge's capacity is 2,000 pounds. It is up to the DM if they wish to count weight or not based on whether it's interesting or not.

While the bridge is sturdy, it is not invulnerable to damage. The easiest way to bring it down is by cutting all four main support lines. This can be done by inflicting 20 hit points of either slashing or fire damage to each rope.

If anyone is on the bridge when the ropes are severed, they will have to make Dexterity checks to stay on the bridge and/or move. If a hand-hold rope is cut, the DC is 10, but if two hand-holds are cut or one of the walkway ropes, the DC is 20. Once the bridge is down to a single rope, any characters still hanging on will have to make climb checks every 30 feet.

If anyone his hanging on the remains of the bridge when it lets go, they will have to make a Strength check (DC 25) to avoid falling to their deaths. Even if they manage to hang on, they are going to slam into the cliff wall, suffering 4d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

Falling from the bridge is almost certainly lethal, inflicting 4d6 points of Constitution damage upon impact 30 seconds after losing their grip. If they do miraculously survive, they will have severe injuries, including many broken bones, damaged organs, possible paralysis, and coma.

Hooks & Goals

Defend! The characters have been hired or ordered to defend this bridge from enemy forces. There are foes approaching that would like nothing more than to see the bridge destroyed. The PCs have been sent ahead to protect it until the official soldiers arrives, which will occur 12 hours after they do. Shortly after they get to the bridge, the enemy contingent shows up.

Messenger. As the characters are approaching the bridge, someone is running across from the other side. A mob of bandits stops on the far side and shouts for the characters to mind their own business. The man in the middle of the bridge claims to be a messenger on an important mission, and he begs the characters for help.

Tracking. The characters have tracked their quarry to this bridge. The problem is that while out in the middle of the bridge, they would be vulnerable to ambush. The DM can decide if their quarry is waiting for them or not.

Traveling. The characters need to cross this bridge to reach their destination. They can certainly get around it, though doing so could take them hours out of their way. The DM can use this as a way to apply pressure, particularly if time is an issue.

Treasure Map. The characters have acquired a supposed treasure map, and after a bit of research, they believe that this bridge is the starting point. A carving in one of the boards of the bridge gives a further clue. On the far side the map leads them well off the trail and underground. The treasure is located in a shrine to some forgotten god of the underworld.

Characters

Beso. A tiefling male is loitering near one end of the bridge. He is adorned with multiple religious symbols to a variety of gods. He warns travelers that the bridge is cursed, but offers to bless them in exchange for a silver coin. The bridge isn't cursed and the blessing is a scam. An Insight or Religion check (DC 15) can find holes in his story.

Tim the Enchanter. The bridge is guarded by an eccentric human called only Tim. He is a mad hermit who feels compelled to ask people three questions to allow passage across the bridge. He will ask their name, their quest, and their favorite color. If they answer correctly, the person may cross without a problem. If they answer incorrectly or slay Tim, they will have to make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 15) or feel compelled to hurl themselves into the chasm. Companions will have 1 round to stop them. They will not resist being restrained.

Tired Traveler. A young man is resting against on of the bridge's support posts. He looks extremely hungry and on the brink of exhaustion. Next to him is a large leather pack.

He is traveling to visit relatives some distance away, and he's nervous about crossing the bridge with such a heavy pack. If the characters offer to help in any way, he will pay them ten silver pieces, which is clearly a lot for him. Something small is alive inside the pack, and will squirm while a PC is carrying it.

Trappings

Toll Box. A small wooden box sits on either side of the bridge. In the top is a small slit just big enough to insert a coin. The boxes are secured to the right post (from the point-of-view of approaching the bridge) and seem to have no way to open them.

Written in several languages on the front of the box are the words: "One Crossing, One Piece of Silver". If a character places a silver piece in the box before crossing, nothing happens. If anyone crosses without paying the toll, they will have bad luck for 24 hours.

All Charisma checks are at *Disadvantage*, and the DM should throw in a sprinkling of minor bad luck events. These events should be enough to let them know that their luck is off, but not enough to cause any real harm. For example, a drunk tavern patron throws up on them or they step in a pile of cow dung.

Dropped Pouch. In the middle of the bridge, a large pouch dangles from the bottom by its drawstring, as if someone dropped it while crossing. It's slightly hard to reach, and will require a Dexterity check (DC 10) to get the pouch. Failure means the bag drops to its fate in the ravine below.

The pouch contains 23 silver pieces, 18 copper pieces, a waxed block of cheese, half a loaf of hard tack, flint, and small bit of wood carved into the shape of a sitting cat.

Pile of Stuff. Although the bridge is safe, there are many travelers who simply don't want to take a chance. So they end up leaving the less needed and heavy items behind in a pile near the bridge. It contains everything from foodstuff to bedrolls. The DM can give the characters a chance to find something useful with an Investigation check using the chart below:

Roll	Result
1	The character cuts their hand on a broken shard of something and suffer 1 point of slashing damage.
2	A 300 pound anvil.
3	A 10 pound box of salt.
4	A bag of animal pelts. They are not extremely valuable, but in fair condition.
5	A cask of dark ale labeled as "Henk's Finest".
6	There is a great sword that can become functional after an hour of cleaning. It will break on a natural 1 in combat.
7	A heavy chest containing 20 bars of steel, each weighing 12 pounds (for a total of 240 pounds).
8	A dented steel shield with a broken strap. Anyone who can work with leather or armor can repair it in about an hour.
9	A great helm with a dent in it. It is still functional, and bears the crest of a copper sparrow on the brow.
10	Fifteen empty water skins.
11	A roll of waxed rope (300 feet)
12	Three rolled wool blankets.
13	A box containing individual jars of various exotic spices.
14	A bag of tools including a sledgehammer, shovel, pickax, and 150 feet of rope. There is also a map for a small mine with no indication of where it's located.
15	A bundle of firewood. It's enough to burn for 4 hours.
16	A bag with 30, individually wrapped trail rations.
17	Two casks of dwarven ale.
18	Several empty bottles of fine elven wine, and a full one.
19	A sack of copper coins (213 cp).
20	A unique trinket (DM's discretion).

Threats

Winged Troll! Living on the side of the cliff is a winged troll. Normally it hunts at night, but if there is enough noise from the bridge, the troll will fly up out of the chasm and attack the characters. This is a lighter version of their brutish cousins, but still quite dangerous.

Winged Troll

Medium aberration, neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)
Hit Points 50 (9d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)

Skills Climb +10, Perception +3
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Giant
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Flyby. The troll doesn't provoke an opportunity attack when it flies out of an enemy's reach.

Keen Smell. The troll has *Advantage* on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Regeneration. The troll regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the troll takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The troll dies only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The troll makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

The DM can scale this encounter easily by adding an additional troll that could be brought in during combat. If this option is used, there can be some fun banter between the trolls like "I saw them first!" and "Yeah, but they was closest to my side of the bridge!"

The troll or trolls will do almost anything to avoid damaging the bridge since it lures many tasty travelers to this place. They like the "tiny peoples" who always have lots of "shiny things".

The DM could expand this encounter to include a small treasure horde in a cave on the side of the cliff, making for an exciting and dangerous climb.

Bandits! When the characters are crossing the bridge, and preferably when they are in the middle, a group of bandits will emerge from the brush with bows. They will demand a "toll" of 10 gold pieces from each traveler. They may settle for less if the characters can convince the bandit leader that they don't have the money (even if they do).

Bandit

Medium humanoid, any chaotic

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses Climb +4, passive Perception 10
Languages Common, one other local (DM's discretion)
Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Short Sword. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Short Bow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Bear! There is a massive cave bear that has been snared by the bridge. His rear paw is hopelessly tangled in the loose ropes near the character's side. It is tired, but extremely hungry and in a foul mood. The PCs can kill it of course (with *Advantage* on their attacks since it's trapped), but releasing it could make a friend.

The bear used to be a wizard's familiar and so is unusually intelligent. It will remember the character's kindness, and will follow them for some miles, helping out if they get into trouble. It could even become a regular NPC (DM's discretion).

Cave Bear

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12 (natural armor)
Hit Points 42 (5d10 + 15)
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13
Languages None
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Smell. The cave bear has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Actions

Multiattack. The cave bear makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claw.

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage.

Changes

Precipitation. Just before the characters reach the bridge, the weather turns for the worst. It begins to rain or snow (depending on the climate and time of year), making the crossing more treacherous. They can wait for the precipitation to pass or they can risk the slippery surface.

High Winds. The wind is in excess of 50 miles per hour when the characters arrive, causing the bridge to sway and creak dramatically.

A cautious crossing will require Dexterity checks (DC 10) to hang on. Failure doesn't automatically mean falling to their death of course, and the DM should decide on how many chances they get to catch themselves based on the grittiness of the setting.

Additionally, each character crossing the bridge must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 10) or vomit from motion sickness. Anyone who throws up will move at half speed until they reach the far side.

Loose Board. While the bridge is sturdy in general, there has been no maintenance for some time. There is a loose board on the bridge that gives way under one of the characters (roll randomly). The person unfortunate enough to have the board break will fall most of the way through the bridge, and have to make a Dexterity saving throw (DC 10) to catch themselves with their arms. If a companion is behind them, they can have *Advantage* on their save. If they are tethered by a safety line of some kind, congratulate them on their foresight.



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The Story of Morrigan

Morrigan is a sorceress of great power and wisdom, and has been collecting stories about unusual locations for nearly sixty years. This series of books is the culmination of that work.

While the details of her research methods are closely guarded secrets, there are rumors that she uses a powerful artifact known as the Eye of Eternity. This extraordinary object is said to have been fashioned from the actual eye of a long forgotten god, and it is able to see through the veil between the worlds. With it one can scry the inner and outer planes, demi-planes, other material planes, and even into the heart of the great wheel itself.

The location of Morrigan's tower is also something of a mystery, and is not likely to be found any time soon. Those who wish to contact her can do so through Critical Hit Publishing, c/o Captain Gothnog Dragonheart.

