

# Five Days In **BOGHALLOW**



A solo dungeon crawl



# Introduction

This guy. What a mess.

His name is Firebeetle. He's probably an elf. He's certainly clueless! Here's a guy who stumbles through adventures with a ridiculous grin on his face collecting people and things on the off-chance he might need them.

He shouldn't be able to cast these spells and he probably isn't doing anything right. He's far luckier than he ought to be.

But it works. Somehow.

Firebeetle had taken a job to clear out the abandoned town of Boghallow from its deathtraps and monsters. A village had once sprouted there from the ruins of a pirate king's palace, and remnants of masonry columns and stolen sculptures were still visible. Mostly, it was a few cottages and a footbridge crossing a rushing stream, and things looking to kill. Whatever treasures the pirate king had stolen overran the place with their bloody curses and left the whole site darkly enchanted. You mustn't think anybody had the idea he'd succeed at this. It was a matter of who would even try, payment upon accomplishment. Be sure they were laughing as the left them to gather his gear.

As was his custom, Firebeetle had collected someone – this time, an undead armored archer and swordsman who only called himself "Bereft". Bereft smelled terrible, something like onions, sweat and mud. He also chattered all night long, telling long-winded stories. But he was good with a longbow.

They'd been warned not only of the monsters and traps though. Enchanted skeletons still hung from spikes in town, and could speak. If you solved their riddles, they could apparently offer a spell or secret to help clear the village.

Or spring terrifying traps. One or the other.



## FIREBEETLE

*Wandering elf: a little thief, a little magic*

Armor Class 17

Hit Points 11 (1d10)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Senses passive perception 11  
Languages Draconic, Common

*Short sword.* Attack bonus; +3 damage 1d6+3.

*Dart.* Attack bonus; +3 damage 1d4+3.

### Spells

Cure wounds; Guiding Bolt





# Chapter 1

“Come on. It’ll be fine!” Firebeetle chuckled as he entered the first cottage on the east side of the bridge. He didn’t check for anything or even draw his sword, but just slammed open the door and triggered poison darts.



The first arrow sank right into Firebeetle and hurt tremendously, while the second bored into Bereft’s armor and did nothing with him already being dead (or undead, or whatever). The third stuck Firebeetle again, all but killing him on the spot. Thankfully the final arrow whizzed by harmlessly. The wounds and poison were brutal, and he bled a shocking amount on the cottage floor.

“You’re an idiot”, said Bereft as Firebeetle lay choking on his own vomit. “An absolute idiot. I can’t believe I’m the dead one.”

They lost hours resting in the dusty cottage as Firebeetle overcame the poison and nursed his wounds, “I think I’ll be done in if we see any more action, big guy. Let’s try one of those spooky skewered skeletons. If we really want to get this done, we need to switch things up a bit.”

“I’m not good with riddles.” Bereft only followed, unsure about virtually everything Firebeetle said.

“Ahh...I won the riddle medal twice back home when I was a kid. I’m great at these! It’s all bad puns and looking exactly where they don’t want you to...like watching a magic trick. This is where I’ll really shine.”

Bereft’s armor squeaked as he twisted to look at Firebeetle, “Your hometown had a riddle medal?”

Already licking his lips as they approached one of the contorting skeletons, Firebeetle was lost in thought,

“Huh?”

“I’ve never heard of a riddle medal.”

Firebeetle rumped his forehead, “A riddle medal? What’s that?”

Of course, Bereft shook his head and let it pass. What else could anybody do with someone who changed his thoughts and opinions as quickly as this elf?





Firebeetle patted the right-hand skeleton on the bony shoulder, "Talk to me, bone-sie. I'm looking for a good one." The enchanted skeleton writhed against its chains and raged to break from the oak spike and snap at Firebeetle. It was stuck solid, and had been for what could have been hundreds of years. A ghoulish, blue-green-flame danced in its eye sockets.

At last it spoke, in a voice that sounded like rushing water, "What is the point of you, little fool? You're a suicide, walking as a pointy-eared elf."

Bereft chuckled.

Firebeetle glared, "Cut the chatter, funny guy. I was told you could help us if we answer your riddles."

"Any spells you gain from me will vanish from your minds should you leave Boghallow, little clown elf. Do you still wish for a dalliance with games that would chew your very soul?"

Firebeetle rolled his eyes, "We're pretty shrewd, right 'Refty? This whole thing's a shooting gallery and an afternoon stroll for guys like us."

The skeleton's blue-green fire almost narrowed to form slits for its eyes, "How did your first cottage go?" And it laughed and laughed, sounding like a choking old man.

"At least I don't have an oak spike running up my outdoor. Your riddle then?"

Hissing, "No matter how terrible things get for the people of the Arctic, they will never eat penguins. Why?"

"What's a penguin?" Firebeetle bared his teeth curiously, glancing at Bereft. "What the cherry is a penguin?"

Bereft leaned his helmet into the skeleton's sizzling, popping eye sockets, "Because there aren't any in the Arctic."

The skeleton roared in anger, ramming forward against the spike and snapping its chipped, ragged teeth.

Firebeetle grinned, "You have layers, 'Refty. Layers. How do you know anything at all about the Arctic?"

The undead knight shrugged, "Frost giant had me stuck in its teeth once."

Firebeetle beheld his comrade in puzzlement, wondering why Bereft felt the



question had been answered with that, “Well, anyway, teach us the spell please.”

The skeleton quite reluctantly taught some words and hand motions to Bereft, who couldn't remember any of it or get it right until the unquiet skeleton breathed on him. It was a spell to detect the presence of magic.

Afterwards, the two of them left the spikes for the second cottage, Firebeetle mumbling something about useless spells. And immediately, a rotting gray zombie came charging out the doorway.

“Use your magic! Kill this thing!” Bereft screamed as he took a swing with his longsword and tore a gash in the creature. It didn't slow the beast at all, despite chunks of flesh and gore collapsing from the wound.

Firebeetle knew a Guiding Bolt spell he'd learned from a carnival trickster, though he'd been warned that the elemental who'd written the spell would one day come calling should he continue to use it. It was a thought he'd grown increasingly concerned over in recent days, worrying his luck was running out each time he tapped into it. Just this past harvest moon after using the spell as fireworks to impress an especially plump and giggling noblewoman in the zinc tower city on the Scarecrow Plains, he'd jumped like a scared cat at the sound of her husband's voice, thinking it a witchy, angry elemental.

But back to that zombie though...

Firebeetle pulled his shortsword and jammed it into the zombie's neck, thinking surely that would do it. A chunky bit of gray flesh and goo slid out and down the blade, though the beast hissed and raged on. It slammed into Firebeetle, knocking the wind from him. Firebeetle bled from rips in his chest where the zombie's claws had sunk in.

With Firebeetle stumbling back, the zombie tore at Bereft and missed. Bereft jammed his longsword forward, tearing a wide gash into the zombie. It slowed the beast, for sure, though it quickly snarled its fury and came charging again. Firebeetle made one last desperate swing, barely aiming for the blood and





sweat in his eyes and from his own exhaustion, and manage to all but sever the hissing, wheezing zombie's head from its rotting shoulders. It fell to the ground, the head twisted and hanging by a strand of blackened and filthy flesh.

Firebeetle fell to the dust and rolled to his back, gasping for air, "Cheese and crackers, man! This is a dirty job! No wonder they abandoned this freaking place!"

Bereft slid his sword back into the scabbard and bent over with his huge gauntleted hands on his knees, "What's with your flaming spell thing? What were you waiting on?"

"Yeah, about that...you know what? You have an arrow sticking out of your chest."

Bereft glanced down to see it, left from their first encounter. Like he was curious only, he yanked the arrow by its fletching and dropped it straight onto Firebeetle's face.

"Hey!"

"Oh, sorry. What are you doing?"

Bleeding and miserable, in utter agony from his wounds and scarred for life, Firebeetle only grimaced and bit his lip.

Bereft stared at him, still leaning forward, "I know what you're thinking."

Even Firebeetle's breaths hurt, "Yeah?"

"Yes."

Opening, yet squinting his eyes in the sun and baring his teeth, "Well? What am I thinking?"

"If I'm dead already, can I die? That's what you're thinking."

Firebeetle closed his eyes again, shutting out the pain, "And?"

"Sure, I can. If they mess me up enough. You kind of still need some meat to hang onto. Otherwise, the other side sucks pretty hard at you. Isn't that interesting?"

After some rest and bandaging of wounds, Firebeetle clumsily cast a spell to cure some of his wounds, eventually popping up from the ground all spry and grinning, "So there's another skeleton over there on the spikes. Care to try that guy, or check under the bridge? And I'll warn you about me and bridges."



Bereft tilted his helmet, “Yeah?”

“Yeah. It’ll be dark down there, and there will likely be something nasty. And hungry.”

“How does that warn me about you?”

“What?”

Bereft pulled back his skirt of chain mail and scratched his backside, “How does your telling me about a nasty something in the dark under a bridge warn me about you?”

The elf side-eyed Bereft, entirely puzzled at an undead knight having an itch on his backside. It took him a minute to get off that and respond to the question. “Well, I’m just saying you’re going first.”

Bereft pointed with a massive, gloved finger at the spikes and the second skeleton, “If you’re gonna chicken out about your spell, and if you think mine is stupid, let’s try that again. And this time, maybe try and participate.”

The cursed skeleton with whom they’d conversed before sounded quite like he was trying to spit on them, rattling himself hard enough for a rib to snap off, “Finish them, Mirabel. Tear them into juicy nibblers for the hounds.”

The second skeleton’s eye sockets were bathed in blue-green light, its skull and clavicle stained with rotted leaves and dirt, overgrown with moss. It was quieter though than the first, and slowly turned its head to watch them approach.

Firebeetle’s eyes were wide as he stepped up cautiously, scanning the dirt and thickets for signs of traps, “Mirabel? Please don’t tell me you married this guy over here! Why is there a ‘Mirabel’ stuck like a pig to torture spikes in a pirate’s palace?”

But Mirabel only stared on, silently.

“Right. Well, you’ll owe us a riddle then...” Leaning to his right to mock the first skeleton, “...and a better spell this time, please.”





It whispered something inaudibly, such that Firebeetle moved in closer. Another whisper, and closer still.

“Umm...” Bereft raised a finger in caution.

“Something about a ring?” Firebeetle shook his head, “No rings! Absolutely no rings! Speak up, Mirabel.”

At that, the sinister skeleton rammed forward, snapping its teeth and narrowly missed seizing his ear. Firebeetle kicked its hip with his boot, which only drove it into fits of wild laughter.

Bereft froze, “That’s the scariest laugh I’ve ever heard.” Glancing at the first skeleton and thumbing towards Mirabel, “Man, I’m sorry! Did she always sound like that?!” The first skeleton only snapped back at him, raging.

“What ring is square?” Mirabel’s voice was a nightmare, both rushing water and cackling, malicious witch all at once.

“A boxing ring. A freaking boxing ring. Wow, that was super easy. You snappy little ragamuffins will have to try harder than that.”

That’s when the trapdoor below them fell open, dropping them both into a spiked pit. Long, sharpened spikes shot through Firebeetle’s legs, arms and back all but killing him. He completely blacked out to the sound of undead fiends hissing and laughing above them.

