

Heroic

4

MOLTEN MISCHIEF

5 Difficulty

2 Complexity

A standalone encounter for five adventurers

By Corwin Riddle

Molten Mischief is a standalone encounter designed for five adventurers of 3rd to 5th level. Settled on the edge of a forest with ties to the Feywild, the town of Yaviras has become accustomed to the harmless trickery of gnomes and faeries. But when a practical joke goes awry and a portal to the elemental chaos is created and fiery elementals begin to cross over, a living inferno threatens to consume the forest, town, and anything else in its path.

BACKGROUND

The town of Yaviras is no stranger to practical jokes. Surrounded by Thornthatch forest, a verdant area known for its connections with the Feywild, interacting with the mischievous fey creatures is commonplace, and the elves and eladrin have grown to tolerate the innocuous pranks and tricks of their planar kin. It has become routine to accept the unpredictable hoaxes and games of the gnomes and faeries, adapting to floating furniture, curiously animate objects, and a need to verify the authenticity of every rumor or story.

Most of the japes are harmlessly gentle, but the gnomes have a competitive nature and have sometimes caused trouble when vying for the attention and admiration of other fey creatures. Escalating the scale in an attempt to create the cleverest, most memorable prank that Yaviras has ever seen, the town has been subjected to brief periods of panic and danger. Once, the town was pushed through a fey passage into the Feywild itself, where it was beset upon by monsters. Another time, a forest dragon was summoned and released within the town square, destroying most of the buildings and poisoning many residents.

Most recently, a gnome named Pim attempted to prank a notoriously intolerant elven wizard named Mivith, best-known for a powerful interest in elemental beings and an equally powerful dislike of practical jokes. Sneaking into his house one night, Pim enchanted a painting made of the elemental chaos, creating a portal linking the two planes. The other gnomes and faeries praised his crafty audacity, but shortly after the deed, fire and lava elementals began cross-

ing over, drawn to the magical presence of Thornthatch forest. The wizard's house was soon engulfed in flames and lava, but the painting was undamaged, allowing more elementals to pass through. As the fires and lava spread throughout Yaviras and Thornthatch, the residents desperately try to control the elementals and save themselves from the aftermath of a practical joke—one that has become no laughing matter.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

Molten Mischief can be used as a standalone encounter, or as the basis of an entire adventure. The players can stumble upon the elementals of Yaviras, follow a scorched trail to the town, or be sent there with one of the following hooks:

Hook 1: DOWN IN FLAMES

Through the combined efforts of the residents of Yaviras, the elementals causing the fires have been contained within a crater of scorched earth, but it is only a temporary solution; as long as the portal to the elemental chaos remains active, the elementals will continue to cross over. The elven wizard Mivith has been tasked with finding a solution to the problem, and is excited to do so. Although the painting could simply be destroyed, Mivith is hesitant to lose such a potent connection to the plane of elements; he would rather the enchantment was disabled, so he could inspect the painting and uncover any remaining magical properties. But as long as the dangerous elementals surround the painting, it's impossible for Mivith to do anything at all—that's the first step to solving the problem.

Mivith asks the PCs to head into the crater and disable (or, if they choose, destroy) the painting to close the portal. He advises the PCs that disabling the painting's enchantment might weaken the elemental's link to their native plane.

Quest XP: 500 XP and 250 gp for disabling the enchantment on the painting, or 125 XP for destroying it.

HOOK 2: MAKING AMENDS

Pim is slightly remorseful for the damage he's caused, and has decided to make up for his mistake by regrowing the trees of Yaviras and Thornthatch forest. Many of the biggest trees have already been reduced to ash, but Pim knows how to extract the essence of life from the remains necessary to bring the area back to life. To accelerate the growth, Pim needs several fiery cores—magical essences left behind by destroyed elementals—to combine with the ash and kindle the spark of life within new trees.

Pim asks the PCs to destroy the elementals, bringing back at least 3 of the fiery cores left behind. He tells the PCs that only the larger elementals have cores powerful enough for his purposes.

Quest XP: 175 XP for bringing back at least 3 fiery cores.

SPECIAL FEATURES

THE ENCHANTED PAINTING

Near the center of the crater is the enchanted painting. Here are its properties:

- At the end of each round, a Fiery Spurt will appear adjacent to the painting and enter the initiative order at that spot, immediately moving toward the weakest Lava Surge or Blazing Ravager.
- The players can attempt to destroy the painting, which has 50 hit points and defenses of 14. If destroyed, no more Fiery Spurts will emerge from the painting.
- The players can attempt to disable the enchantment with five successful **DC 14 Arcana** skill checks while standing adjacent to the painting (made as standard actions if performed during the encounter). If they are successful, no more Fiery Spurts will emerge, and every elemental takes an immediate 1d6 damage.

EXTINGUISHING ELIXIR

Before the PCs enter the crater, they will be approached by a resident looking to assist, who will either sell or donate 1 of the following potion to each player:

Extinguishing Elixir Level 1

An enormous black and white cloth, hard as stone, flows into the air and creates a nearly indestructible barrier.

Potion

Power (Consumable ♦ Healing): Minor Action. Drink this potion and spend a healing surge. Instead of the hit points you would normally regain, you regain 8 hit points, remove any ongoing fire damage, and gain resist 5 fire until the end of your next turn

Lava Surge		Level 3 Artillery
Medium elemental magical beast (fire)		XP 150
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +2	
HP 40; Bloodied 20		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 12		
Immune petrification; Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 5 cold		
Speed 4		
Ⓢ Lava Claw (standard; at-will) • Fire		
+7 vs AC; 1d6 +3 damage		
➤ Magma Splash (standard; at-will) • Fire		
Ranged 15; +6 vs Reflex; 1d8 + 5 fire damage and an ongoing 5 fire damage. Miss: creatures adjacent to the target take 1d6 fire damage.		
⬅ Molten Blast (standard; recharge [☞][☞]) • Fire		
Close blast 3; +6 vs Will; 1d6 fire damage and any enemy in the blast is pushed 2 squares.		
Absorb (minor; at-will)		
The lava surge absorbs a nearby fiery spurt, destroying it and regaining 10 hit points.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial	
Str 17	Dex 17	Wis 10
Con 7	Int 1	Cha 5

Blazing Ravager		Level 3 Brute
Large elemental magical beast (fire)		XP 150
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +1	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 15; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Immune petrification; Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 5 cold		
Speed 6		
Ⓢ Fiery Slash (standard; at-will) • Fire		
Reach 2; +6 vs AC; 1d6 +3 damage and 1d6 additional fire damage		
Ⓡ Burning Strike (standard; recharge [☞][☞]) • Fire		
Reach 2; +7 vs AC; 2d6 + 5 fire damage and an ongoing 5 fire damage. Any creature damaged by this attack is pushed 2 squares.		
Combustion • Fire		
When the blazing ravager is reduced to 0 hit points, every creature within 2 squares takes 1d6 fire damage and is pushed 3 squares.		
Absorb (minor; at-will)		
The blazing ravager absorbs a nearby fiery spurt, destroying it and regaining 10 hit points.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial	
Str 12	Dex 11	Wis 10
Con 19	Int 1	Cha 6

Fiery Spurt		Level 2 Minion
Small elemental magical beast (fire)		XP 31
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +1	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 11; Fortitude 11, Reflex 10, Will 10		
Immune petrification; Resist 10 fire; Vulnerable 5 cold		
Speed 5		
Ⓢ Scorch (standard; at-will) • Fire		
+6 vs AC; 3 fire damage		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial	
Str 8	Dex 8	Wis 9
Con 7	Int 1	Cha 5

GETTING STARTED

Regardless of why the PCs decide to enter Yaviras, read this when they arrive:

A pillar of smoke rises above the buildings ahead, guiding you toward the crater. Many elves and eladrin have come outside to watch the spectacle, mumbling to themselves about possible causes and solutions to the blaze.

Others, covered in soot, carry buckets of water along the trail to the crater. As you near the crater, you spot several elves draped in robes, frantically trying to seal in the crater with walls of ice—which melt almost as soon as they are erected.

AREA: THE SCORCHED CRATER

SETUP

- 3 Lava Surges (L)
- 2 Blazing Ravagers (R)
- 15 Fiery Spurts (F)

Read this when the PCs enter the crater:

As soon as you enter the crater, you are overcome with acrid smoke and a stench of sulfur. The heat is almost unbearable, as if you were actually walking among the fires of the elemental chaos. Lying near the middle of the crater is the painting, floating in the air, revolving slowly as fire and lava spew out from within. The ground is uneven—seared and burnt—piles of molten rock smolder underfoot as you climb down the steep incline.

Perception (DC 10): Depicting an elegant image of creatures perched on rocks above fire and lava, the painting is enchanted with a strong magical seal. You believe it can be disabled and removed by those skilled in the Arcane.

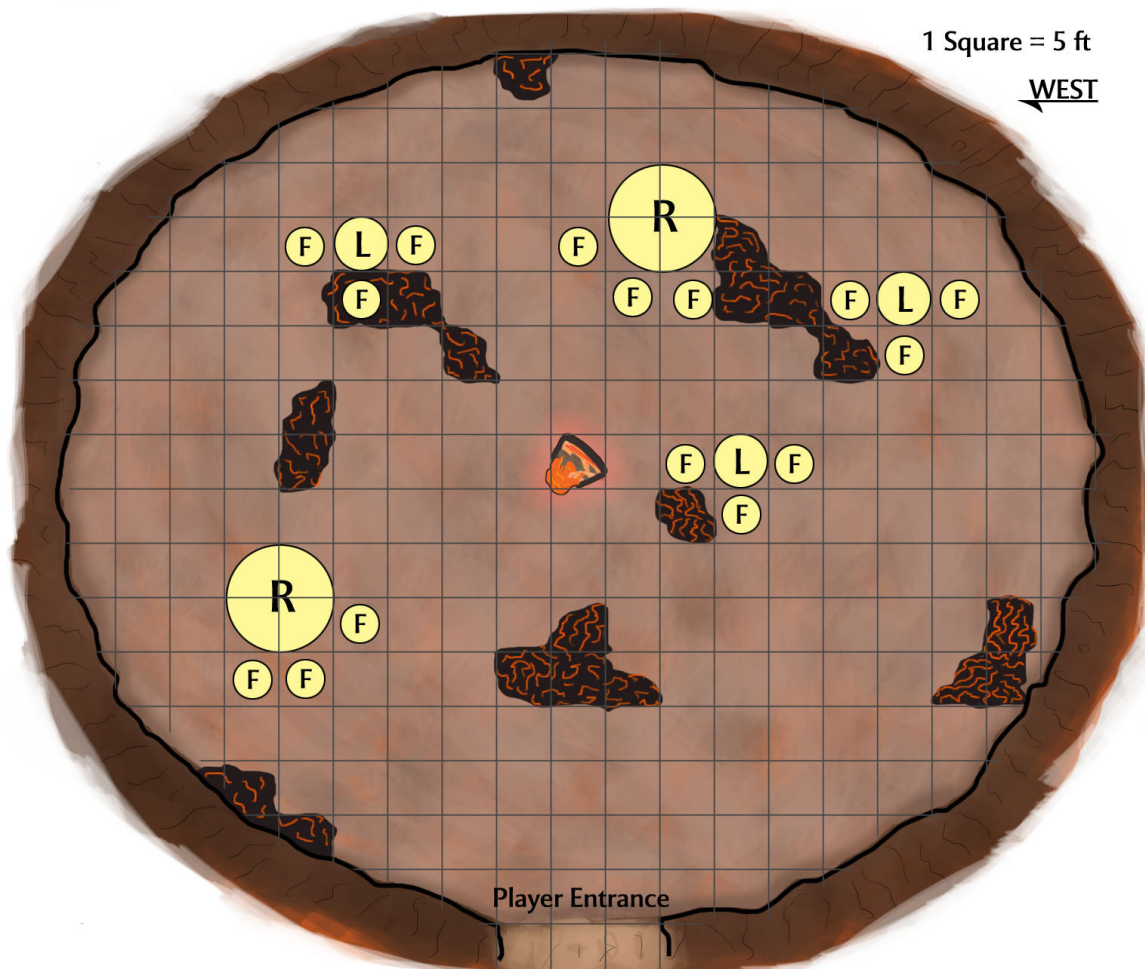
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Height: The crater is recessed 30' into the ground.

Illumination: The area is well-lit thanks to all the cozy fire.

Enchanted Painting: Marked as a mirror in the center of the crater. See *Special Features* on how to interact with it.

Molten Rock: Marked as piles of black and red rock on the ground. Counts as difficult terrain for PCs, and deals 1d4 fire damage to any PC that enters or starts its turn in a square.



TACTICS

- A fiery spurt that is protecting a ravager or surge will take its movement and turn as part of the ravager or surge it is adjacent to, moving as the larger elemental moves.
- The fiery spurts act as a shield for the lava surges and blazing ravagers, and will surround them and mirror their movement to attempt and block them from the PC attacks. They will only attack a PC if the PC moves adjacent to them, they will never move away from the larger elemental they are protecting.
- The lava surges will attempt to stay at range, using *Magma Splash* while hiding behind fiery spurts. If surrounded, it will use *Molten Blast* to create some distance.
- The blazing ravagers will move into melee range, hiding behind a wall of fiery spurts and using the reach of *Fiery Slash* and *Burning Strike*.
- As long as there are at least two fiery spurts defending it, the lava surges and blazing ravagers will use *Absorb* each round if not close to full hit points. After that, they will only use *Absorb* if low on hit points and in danger of dying.

PLAYER STRATEGY

- The PCs can either stay close and take down each elemental and its fiery spurts one by one, or use area attacks to remove all of the spurts and spread out.
- Disabling the painting is a simple skill challenge, and can be completed during combat or after the elementals are defeated. If disabled during the encounter, the fiery spurts will stop appearing and each elemental will take 1d6 damage. If destroyed, the fiery spurts will stop appearing, but the other elementals are unaffected.
- Many of the elemental attacks push the PCs around, so they will need to stay aware of nearby difficult and damaging terrain.

COMBAT FLAVOR

If you dislike reading powers and effects to your players, give them hints with the following flavor text.

When a Blazing Ravager uses *Combustion*, read:

The elemental begins to glow brightly and shake, as the energy within erupts as a fiery explosion.

When any elemental uses *Absorb* on a Fiery Spurt:

The elemental reaches out and pulls one of the smaller elementals into itself, regaining strength and vitality.

When a Fiery Spurt emerges from the painting:

A small, fiery elemental, similar to others you see before you, emerges from the painting.

If the painting is disenchanting:

The floating painting pauses for a second before clattering to the ground. The paint seems to melt, dripping off the canvas and disappearing, revealing a subtle illustration depicting fires of the elemental chaos, though charred and blackened.

CONCLUSION

When the painting is disabled or destroyed and the remaining elementals are defeated, the temperature begins to drop and many elves, eladrin, gnomes, and faeries enter the crater and immediately start burying various plants and seeds. The PCs are free to collect the fiery cores and further inspect the painting. Pim is nearby and takes the cores to start planting.

When finished, Mivith approaches the PCs, handing out the quest reward and saying:

“Thanks to Pim and his kin, it shouldn’t be a problem to replant the trees and forest damaged by the fires. My house, on the other hand, is completely gone, but I suppose it was worth it to learn so much about those creatures.”

He pauses, and looks around to make sure no one else is near before continuing. “Besides,” he says, “not that I would ever tell Pim or the others, but the whole situation was a little funny, I have to admit.”

ADJUSTMENTS

If you like this encounter but aren’t sure how to fit it into your campaign, here is some advice:

It’s too easy:

Increase the number of fiery spurts that spawn each time, or increase their damage, or increase the number of successes needed to disenchant the painting.

It’s too hard:

There is no limit to the number of attempts for disenchanting the mirror, and doing so will immediately destroy every fiery surge in the encounter—hint this to your players if they are having trouble.

We want to play a full adventure:

Open up a monster manual and start picking any fiery creatures, most are around 4th or 5th level and should do nicely.

