

MIDNIGHT CHRONICLES™

THE HEART OF ERENLAND

AN ADVENTURE FOR FOUR CHARACTERS OF FIRST LEVEL



For use with the 4th Edition
**DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS**
ROLEPLAYING GAME
Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, and
Dungeon Master's Guide, Player's Handbook 2, Monster Manual 2, Adventurer's Handbook, and
core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, LLC.

MIDNIGHT

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Introduction

“The Heart of Erenland” is an adventure set in the world of **MIDNIGHT** that uses the 4th Edition **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS** rules. This adventure has been designed as an exciting introduction to the **MIDNIGHT** setting, the same setting depicted in the pilot film *Midnight Chronicles*, produced by Fantasy Flight Studios. To learn more about *Midnight Chronicles*, please visit the website www.midnight-chronicles.com.

“The Heart of Erenland” is written for a Dungeon Master (DM) and four heroic 1st level player characters (PCs). To help get players right into the action, the appendix of this adventure includes four pre-generated characters, which have been designed to help reinforce some of the essential themes to the **MIDNIGHT** setting, particularly the rarity of magic.

A Prequel to *Midnight Chronicles*

“The Heart of Erenland” takes place in a region of Eredane known as the Westlands, approximately ten years before the events in *Midnight Chronicles*. Players already familiar with the pilot film may recognize several characters and locations in this adventure, including Loren Landring and his young son Gaelen, the scheming Leshier, the wise and secretive Grimnor, and the town of Blackweir.

The Midnight Setting

In the world of **MIDNIGHT**, evil rules, and the last brave heroes struggle against overwhelming odds. A century ago, the free peoples of Eredane fought the final battles in a desperate war of survival against the Shadow, the dark god Izrador...and lost. The lands of men were crushed by Izrador’s armies, or succumbed to his insidious corruption. The shattered remnants of the once-great elves and dwarves retreated to the hearts of their homelands to vainly resist their inevitable defeats. Many of the gentler races were simply enslaved or reduced to hopeless refugees.

One hundred years have passed since the Shadow fell. The elder races—particularly those of fey ancestry who have battled Izrador for millenia—are being systematically hunted down and exterminated. Their great forest kingdom has become an island of light in a darkening world, its elven keepers fighting losing battles against hordes of shadow orcs and other servants of the dark god. The surviving dwarven clans have locked themselves in their mountain holdfasts, and the streets of their subterranean cities have become meat grinders for the endless waves of foes sent to root them out.

The lands of men are ruled with an iron fist by the minions of the Shadow. Once great cities lie in ruins, and nearly every isolated town and village now exists to serve the needs of the Shadow first, and local populace a distant second. Literacy, magic, and weapons are illegal, and even long-distance travel draws suspicion. With each new human generation grows general ignorance and complacency. Soon, none alive will remember the days before the Shadow fell.



The Veil

Aeons ago the dark god, Izrador, was cast out of the heavens and banished to the surface of the mortal world. The forces behind this banishment intended to seal Izrador forever within a material plane where his power would be weak. But the barrier, known only as the Veil, that prevents Izrador from returning to the heavens to spread his corruption also prevents all other gods from answering the prayers of mortals.

The impenetrable Veil between the mortal and celestial realms has other far-reaching effects, for now the spirits of the dead have no final resting place. Many who die are now doomed to remain bound to their bodies, rising from death in a hideous mockery of their former selves, tainted by madness and an insatiable hunger for the flesh of the living. Most refer to these walking undead simply as the Fell. Other beings, perhaps those of stronger will, escape that horrific fate upon their mortal deaths only to realize an alternate eternity of roaming the world as bodiless spirits, beings known as the Lost.

Geography for the Adventure

This adventure takes place in the Westlands region of Erenland, one of the old kingdoms of men that was long-ago conquered by Izrador's armies. Because of its close proximity to elven territory, the Westlands remains a war zone, and most of the land's resources are devoted to supporting the Shadow's considerable military presence in the region.

The Laws of the Shadow

As the Shadow's army spread across Erenland, a series of edicts were issued designed to deny the Shadow's new subjects the ability or will to resist. These edicts have been enforced by whip and vardatch. There are no appeals, no mercies; judgements are swift and brutal, with innocents suffering as often as the truly guilty.

The Shadow imposes hundreds of written laws upon its subjects (see sidebar for examples), as well as countless unwritten laws that can change on the whim of a local legate or garrison commander. Many officials also routinely post new or amended laws without notice simply so they can have an excuse to punish the ignorant—a particularly cruel act since most commoners are illiterate.

Three laws of particular interest to adventures are the prohibition of bearing martial arms and armor, the prohibition of bearing any item with magical properties, and the forbiddance of all acts of magic, including the casting of spells. Many people find acceptable ways to get around the first of those laws by possessing weapons and armor the Shadow considers not to be military grade, such as leather and hide armor, knives, hunting spears, bows, and most tools. Of course there are groups of wandering adventurers who routinely violate all the above laws, but they know this makes them fugitives. As a result, most adventures adopt clever ways of hiding their most valued equipment in order to minimize the attention they draw to themselves.

A few Laws of the Shadow

Dunishable by Death

- Being of fey blood
- Collaboration with fey
- Aiding a fugitive of the Shadow
- Assaulting a legate or senior agent of Izrador
- Possession of an enchanted item
- Casting spells or other uses of magic
- All acts of direct rebellion against the Shadow's rule

Dunishable by the Lash

- Hoarding food
- Being late or short on tithes to the Shadow
- Not averting ones eyes or making way for a legate
- Unauthorized use of a forge

Dunishable by Enslavement or Imprisonment

- Possession of martial weapons or armor
- Assaulting a soldier of Izrador
- Unauthorized presence in a restricted area
- Resisting arrest
- Worship of any deity but Izrador
- Smuggling
- Theft or withholding items designated for the Shadow
- Unauthorized travel beyond settlement borders
- Possession of nonmagical written material
- Teaching others to read
- Failure to report a violation of the law



New Heroic Tier feats

The pre-generated characters included with this adventure have new feats that are representative of their homelands, lineage, and backgrounds.

Last Stand

Benefit: Once per day, you can use your Second Wind an additional time in the same encounter, but only once per round.

Luck of Erenland

Prerequisite: Human, Erenlander

Benefit: When you spend an action point in combat, make a saving throw. On a success, you gain the benefit of spending the action point without losing it.

Retributive Rage

Benefit: While bloodied, if you spend an action point to make an attack and that attack hits, you inflict damage as if you rolled a critical hit.

Steeled Blood of the North

Prerequisite: Human, Dorn

Benefit: You gain a +1 feat bonus to AC while wearing light or no armor.

New Equipment

Some characters and creatures in this adventure have new equipment.

Military Melee Weapon

Vardatch: This brutal orc weapon features a heavy curved blade that is wickedly serrated on the inside.

Adventuring Gear

Drop Sheath: This style of custom sheath is widely used by travelers to conceal daggers and similar weapons from prying eyes. The sheath is worn on the inside of the forearm and can only house light blades of one pound or less. By angling the arm down and twisting the wrist, the wearer can release the weapon into an empty hand as a free action.

MILITARY MELEE WEAPON

One-Handed

| Weapon | Prof. | Damage | Range | Weight | Group | Properties |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-------------|------------|
| Vardatch | +2 | 1d12 | — | 6 lbs. | Heavy blade | Versatile |

Adventure Summary

In this adventure, the player characters (PCs) are tasked with uncovering a mystery surrounding the disappearance of a man named Loren Landring. The story begins with the PCs arriving in the village of Fernglade, a small farming community outside of the town of Blackweir. There they learn that Loren led a large group of men from the village into the wilderness a few nights before and they haven't yet come back.

The PCs soon learn that Loren and his men are secretly a group of rebel fighters who work by night to harass the Shadow's armies any way they can. Most recently, the group was tipped off by their secret contacts in Blackweir to the presence of a large caravan transporting weapons south. Deciding it was too good an opportunity to pass up, Loren and his men set off in the night to attack the caravan.

By the time the PCs catch up with Loren and his men, they learn that a terrible battle has taken place. The men were attacked by shadow orc soldiers, many were killed, and Loren was taken prisoner. Afterward, the caravan apparently split up. Unable to determine where exactly Loren was taken, and having no time or resources to pursue every lead at once, the PCs next best bet is to travel to Blackweir. There, they hope to learn where the caravan was originally headed, and possibly find Loren's secret contacts who may be able to help.

The most important information the PCs gather in Blackweir are that Loren was taken prisoner to the city of Eisin, and that there were a few other survivors of the battle. Those other survivors are led by Harwen, one of Loren's oldest friends, and they have apparently gone into hiding in the south near the Ardune. The PCs depart Blackweir to search for Harwen.

After meeting with Harwen and a few other survivors, the PCs agree to assist Harwen with Loren's rescue. Harwen devises a bold plan that will take them straight into the heart of Eisin. There, they will infiltrate the most likely place Loren would be held captive: The Tower of Tender Mercies, home to a certain legate order specializing in the fine art of interrogation.

A Note About NPC Dialogue

Throughout this adventure, the player characters will meet non-player characters (NPCs) who will be able to offer clues and other information about the setting. Sample dialogue for each of these NPCs is provided in the form of bullet point phrases. The GM can use these phrases verbatim, or he can simply use them as a starting point for his own dialogue. In either case, the GM should try to engage the players in a verbal exchange, which is more interesting for everyone than just having the GM read aloud a full paragraph of text.



Chapter One: The Missing Men

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling toward the town of Blackweir to seek out new opportunities for business, or adventure. Along the way, they pass through the small village of Fernglade.

Fernglade

Village, Population 53

A cluster of tiny wooden buildings, seldom included on any map, the village of Fernglade is a quiet agricultural settlement located a few leagues outside of Blackweir. After two days of stormy weather, the rain has finally stopped, and you are cold and weary from travel. You are hoping to find a hot meal and dry beds, but as you get closer to the center of the village you can't help but notice a few oddities.

Trouble Afoot

As the PCs casually observe the villagers going about their evening chores, it doesn't take them long to realize that there are almost no men in the village. Women and children are everywhere, and here and there an elderly man, but there

isn't a young man in sight. The PCs also soon realize that everyone is watching them closely. Then a young boy runs up to them.

Gaelen Landring: This eight-year-old boy appears eager to get the attention of the PCs. He will follow them wherever they go and it will only take the slightest prompt for him to start peppering the PCs with questions:

- *Who are you? What brings you to Fernglade? Where you coming from?*
- *Hey, you look pretty strong! I bet you've fought orcs before! Will you tell me about it?*
- *Are you going to Blackweir? Can I come with you?! I need to find my father! His name is Loren, and he's missing!*

Eventually Gaelen's mother, Sandra, will appear to collect her son.

Sandra Landring: A stout, but attractive woman in her forties, Sandra Landring is the mother of Gaelen and the wife of Loren. She has a sharp wit and a bold manner of speech.

Sandra will scold Gaelen for talking to strangers and apologize to the PCs for bothering them. But Gaelen will persist and keep mentioning that he needs to find his father. This will be overheard by other villagers who try to intervene and shut Gaelen up, say he talks too much and that strangers can't be trusted. This will in turn spark Sandra's anger. Soon,



a dozen villagers will be arguing in the center of the village about Gaelen's missing father, but their attention will quickly shift to the PCs:

- *Who is this lot anyway? What's your business here?*
- *If you think this village is an easy mark just because our men are gone, you'll be very sorry!*
- *Tell them nothing! They're probably working for the Shadow.*
- *Maybe they could help us?*
- *They look suspicious to me. Best not trust 'em.*

Eventually, the PCs should start asking questions. Whether they choose to diffuse the situation with a little careful diplomacy or try to intimidate everyone into shutting up, they will eventually hear the following from the villagers:

- *Yes, Gaelen's father isn't here. He and a bunch of other men in the village left three nights ago and haven't come back. The fools!*
- *Loren lead them into the wilderness in the middle of the night. Harwen didn't even say goodbye!*
- *They usually aren't gone this long...*
- *This isn't the first time they've disappeared. They'll be back.*
- *It's the first time they've ALL disappeared at the same time.*

Sandra Landring will have more concrete information for the PCs and will invite them to her home for a meal. Gaelen will be thrilled at this suggestion and beg the PCs to not turn down his mother's offer.

Inside the Landring Home

Sandra and Gaelen Landring welcome you into their home and offer thick barley stew, bread, and mulled wine. You can't help but notice an old battered shield hanging on the wall at the back of the house—a rare heirloom from the old kingdom.

As the PCs eat their supper and converse with Sandra and Gaelen they will learn the following:

- *Loren is a good man. He's a farmer, yes. Most of the men in the village are, but they are also more. They are resisters. The Shadow calls them outlaws, but they're real heroes. They work the fields by day, but at night they do what they can to fight the Shadow.*
- *Loren is the leader of the group. He's always been the type that men follow.*

- *Two nights ago, he and Harwen took 30 men east into the wilderness. They had received some information about a Shadow army caravan traveling south with a load of weapons.*
- *Harwen is Loren's oldest friend, and the best hunter in Fernglade.*
- *The caravan was traveling overland—not using the Kingsway—it was using the secondary roads through the woodlands.*
- *Loren has contacts in Blackweir. That's where he gets his information. He went to Blackweir a few days before he took the men to go after the caravan.*
- *Please, will you look for him? The others are right, they weren't planning on being gone this long. ONE night Loren said. And it's already been THREE! I know something terrible has happened.*

The Talk Around Town

While in Fernglade, the PCs may hear additional information about Loren and his men, about Blackweir and the surrounding region, or simply idle gossip:

- *Blackweir was destroyed during the last war, but rebuilding began almost immediately. Both the great keep and the Shadow temple are currently under construction.*
- *The new legate in Blackweir just arrived last summer. I saw him once. If I'm lucky, that won't happen again.*
- *I guess there aren't a LOT of orcs hanging around Blackweir, but then again, one orc is too many, eh? I hear Eisin is MUCH worse, heh.*
- *Loren is an idealistic fool and that Harwen friend of his is even worse. I wish they'd just give it up already. We don't need no so-called heroes. Those boys are outlaws, plain and simple. They're gonna get this whole village burned to the ground when the Shadow catches up with them.*
- *You ever see what an orc can do to a scrawny neck like yours? Best go home, kid. We got enough trouble around here.*
- *Loren is the bravest man I've ever known! He saved my boy's life more than once. Please find him!*
- *They've been gone this long—good chance they're dead by now. If you're lucky, you'll never find them. If you're unlucky, they'll find you. Know what I mean?*

following in Loren's footsteps

After the PCs have gathered as much information as they wish in Fernglade, they should set out to find Loren and his men. The villagers will have some basic information about the direction they should start.

Eventually, Gaelen will reveal that on the night the Fernglade men left, he snuck out of the house and followed them for a little while. He didn't want to say anything before because he was afraid of getting into trouble from his mother. Gaelen didn't get far however before he was caught by Harwen. The two agreed to keep the little incident a secret, provided Gaelen hurried back home.

Though the past days' rains have likely washed away any tracks, with Gaelen's help, the PCs will be able to get started in the right direction.

The Outlaws' Ambush

Encounter Level 2 (500 XP)

Setup

Important! Do not reveal the encounter map to the players or set up any miniatures right away. Doing so will tip off the players that this is a hostile encounter. Give the PCs a chance to first do a little investigating if they want.

After hours of overland travel through soggy, wooded country, you come across one of the many small, muddy roads that wind throughout this area of the Westlands. A little further on, you see what can only be the aftermath of a battle. A broken wagon lies by the side of the road, not far from a smoldering pile of burnt corpses. Near the wagon, you hear moans and quiet pleas of "Water... water..."

Checking the Survivors

Lying on the ground, or propped against trees, are five men who look badly wounded. One looks up at you with sunken eyes, reaches out with a limp hand and says "Please... help us... water..."

These are some of the men from Fernglade. Though they look like badly wounded survivors of a battle, they were in fact killed in that battle and have returned an undead Fell.

If a PC approaches the men, allow the PC to make a DC 15 Nature or Heal check. On a success, the PC realizes that the wounds some of men are showing appear far too grievous for them to still be alive.

They Speak

If the PCs wish, they can converse with the Fell. But, if the PCs get too close, the Fell will be overcome by their need to consume living flesh and will leap up and attack.

Some of the fragments of speech the Fell can say are as follows:

Common Knowledge About Death in Eredane

In the **MIDNIGHT** setting, everyone has heard horror stories about the dead returning to life. But that doesn't necessarily mean everyone has actually encountered undead. Still, it should be common knowledge amongst the PCs that if dead bodies are not burned or otherwise destroyed, there is a chance they will rise as undead creatures, called Fell. These walking terrors have an insatiable hunger for living flesh. Newly risen Fell still look human and retain most of their intelligence and skills they had in life, including the ability to speak. Some Fell don't even fully understand they are dead, and are slowly being driven mad by their hunger and the progressive decay of their physical bodies.

- *Give me water...food...so hungry...*
- *A trap...orcs...fifty at least...a slaughter...*
- *They took Loren...prisoner...*

The fell Attack

Eventually, the Fell will rise up and attack the PCs. Use the layout shown, and set up the PCs' miniatures depending on how close each of them got to the Fell just before they attacked.

Roll initiative and proceed with combat.

features of the Area

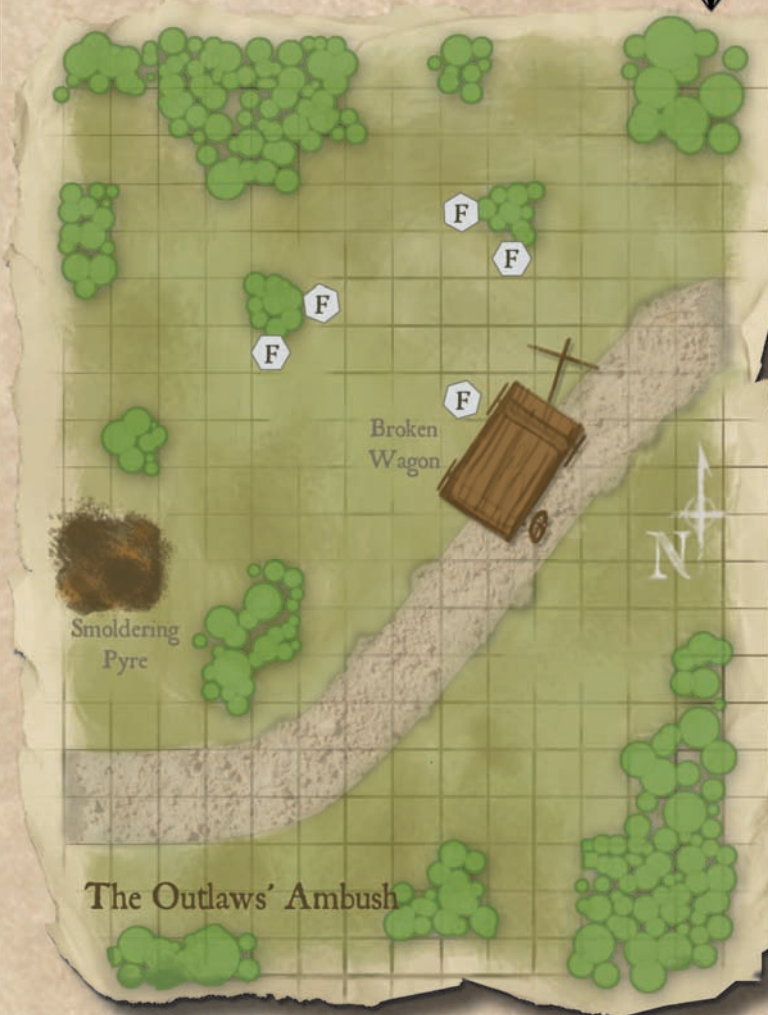
Illumination: Bright light, unless the PCs are traveling by night (then dim light).

Road and Grass: Squares of road and grass do not hamper movement or affect visibility.

Foliage: Tall trees and thick foliage grow throughout this area. These areas provide lightly obscured concealment and cover for those who attack from or into the area. Areas covered by foliage also count as difficult terrain.

Broken Wagon: A character adjacent to the broken wagon can climb onto it to gain a better vantage point of the surrounding area. Treat this as moving into a square of difficult terrain. A character atop the broken wagon has combat advantage against targets on the ground.

Burn Pile: A closer examination of the smoldering pile of burnt corpses reveals that they are all orc remains. Apparently the orcs took the time to burn their own dead but didn't bother to do the same for the humans. These squares count as difficult terrain but do not provide cover or hinder visibility.



Tactics

Once the Fell are overcome by their extreme hunger for living flesh, they will each simply rush at the nearest PC and attack.

Investigating the Ambush Site

After the PCs destroy the Fell, they will have a chance to more thoroughly investigate the site. They will discover the following facts:

- There are remains of 17 human bodies, counting the five who became Fell. All are apparently men from Fernglade. None match Loren's or Harwen's descriptions.
- In the smoldering burn pile, there appears to be the remains of five or six orcs.
- There were obviously multiple wagons in the caravan, and possibly men or orcs on horseback as well. The rain has made it impossible to know for certain where the caravan went after the battle, and there is a chance it split up and headed in multiple directions.
- There are no items of value in the area, just a few broken weapons. Apparently, the orcs took everything with them.
- The PCs find a small square of cloth near one of the human bodies that appears to be inked with a crude map. The map seems to show a walled town with a single gate facing southwest. Due west of the town, in what looks like a patch of trees, is a "X" mark. While the map doesn't have any writing, it's a good bet the town depicted is Blackweir.

5 Fell Fernglade Outlaws (F) Level 1 Brute

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 100

Initiative +2 **Senses** Perception +5

HP 32 **Bloodied** 16

AC 13; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6

⊕ **Ravenous Bite** (standard; at-will)

+4 vs. AC; 2d6+3 damage

⊖ **Frenzied Bite** (standard; encounter)

+4 vs. AC; 3d8+3 damage

Regenerative Hunger • Healing

When a Fell inflicts a critical hit against a living target with one of its bite attacks, the Fell regains 8 hitpoints.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Erenlander

Skills Athletics +7, Endurance +5, Nature +5, Perception +5, Stealth +8

Str 16 (+3)

Dex 14 (+2)

Wis 10 (+0)

Con 14 (+2)

Int 8 (-1)

Cha 8 (-1)

Description These Fell are the reanimated corpses of recently killed Fernglade Outlaws. They retain most of the knowledge and skills they had in life, including language. They don't fully understand they are dead, and their insatiable hunger is slowly driving them insane.

Next Steps

After investigating Fernglade and discovering the site of the caravan ambush, it should be clear that Loren's attempt to ambush the caravan failed. Since neither Loren nor Harwen were among the dead, they must have either been taken prisoner by the orcs, or escaped into the woods. Either way, finding them won't be easy. The PCs best bet is to try to learn where the caravan was headed, and to do that, they will need to go to Blackweir.



Chapter Two: Blackweir

Blackweir

Town, Population 525

In the remote heart of the Westlands, a rocky tor rises high above a countryside of rolling fields and light woodlands. On the grassy slopes at the base of the tor is the town of Blackweir. The town is surrounded by a tall wooden wall with only a single gate that faces southeast. The tor is crested by the ruins of an old keep, destroyed more than a century ago by Izrador's armies, but the most prominent structure by far in Blackweir is the still-unfinished Shadow Temple, which clings to the side of the rock face like a blight on the landscape.

Leadership: Blackweir's current mayor is a pudgy, nervous man named Fergus Beyla. He was appointed to the office five years ago by the Shadow army's local general staff and has adequately served their needs ever since. Many will argue Blackweir's true leader is the temple legate, Ralt Cereth, who took his post only last year after the previous legate went missing.

Demographics: The population of Blackweir is roughly three-quarters human, one-quarter orc, and a smattering of other races including halflings, gnomes, and goblin-kin. As with all settlements under the Shadow's rule, the only legal religion is the worship of Izrador.

Economics: Most people who live in and around Blackweir work the surrounding fields and scrawny orchards to produce food for the Shadow's armies. The town is too far from major roads to serve as a trade hub, so most local merchants sell goods and services that meet the town's immediate needs: food, drink, textiles, seeds, livestock, tools, and construction materials. Blackweir is also home to dozens of craftsmen and general laborers who, on legate Ralt Cereth's order, toil day and night to finish the construction of the town's huge Shadow Temple.

Guards: Like most settlements occupied by the Shadow, the town of Blackweir has a large number of both human and shadow orc guards. The GM should feel free to insert a pair of patrolling guards anywhere throughout Blackweir he deems appropriate. Most of the time, the guards will simply ignore the PCs (assuming they aren't acting too suspicious!). But if the PCs stir up too much trouble, pick a fight, or are caught breaking any laws, the guards will respond accordingly. Shadow Orc Guard stats can be found in Chapter Three of this adventure. For stats on human guards, see the **4E MONSTER MANUAL**.



Beneath Blackweir

Blackweir is more than just a rural town. Though most stories of old have been repressed by the Shadow, the keep on top of Blackweir's tor was once a strongpoint of defense for the old human kingdom of Erenland during the war against the Shadow. Some say the king of Erenland retreated there after the Last Battle and used the tunnels below the keep to hide the remnants of his army. From there, it is said they held for weeks against the Shadow until one of Izrador's dreaded Night Kings came and finished off the resistance once and for all.

The tunnels below Blackweir exist to this day—an open secret known by many, but spoken of by few. The tunnels are generally regarded as haunted by the spirits of the king's loyal guardians and best avoided at all costs. Many locals are even fearful of drawing water from the town's wells at night.

GMs are encouraged to use these tunnels as a starting point for their own adventures. Who knows what secrets may be found in the darkness below Blackweir?

Getting Into Blackweir

There are two primary ways for the PCs to get into the town of Blackweir. One is to just go through the main gate like everyone else, but this may be difficult if the PCs are unwilling to leave their weapons behind.

The other option is to use one of the secret tunnels that snake below Blackweir, which eventually connect to one or more of the town's wells. The entrances to these tunnels are well hidden in the wilderness around Blackweir, and even if found, it could take someone days to find an exit. Nevertheless, with the right information, the PCs should be able to find a tunnel entrance that will allow them to enter Blackweir secretly.

Remember, if the PCs defeated the Fell at the outlaws' ambush site, they will have found a map. A successful DC 10 knowledge Nature check will allow them to use the map to find a hidden tunnel entrance that leads into the city.

Skill Challenge: Sussing Out the Town

The primary reason for the PCs to go to Blackweir is to seek information about Loren's capture, and hopefully find some help in securing his rescue. This process of exploration and investigation is represented by a skill challenge, which can begin as soon as the PCs have entered Blackweir. This skill challenge can be combined with various locations and NPCs found throughout the town. See the next section, **Key Areas and NPCs in Blackweir** for details.

Setup: To discover where Loren got his information, what he was told, and where he may have been taken after his capture, the PCs will need to use their wits to track down likely sources of information and their skills of persuasion and negotiation to earn the trust or fear of those sources in order to get the answers they seek.

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 6 failures)

DC: 5 (easy), 10 (moderate), or 15 (hard)

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, Stealth, Streetwise

Bluff (moderate DC): *You try to persuade an NPC that you are an agent for the Shadow Order, or that you are a purveyor of "specialty goods" and are looking for a partner or a buyer, or that you are an old friend of another NPC who sent you here for help.*

One failed Bluff check increases the DC of further Bluff and Diplomacy checks to hard, as word of the PC's deceit

Table 1: Information Gained from Susing Out the Town

| Successful Skill Challenge (PCs receive all of the below) | Failed Skill Challenge (PCs receive all of the below) | False Information (One per failed Insight check) |
|---|--|--|
| <i>Grimnor is the wisest man in town. If anybody knows something about your friend, he does. Just don't get me involved.</i> | <i>I know your type. The person you need to talk to is Madame Leshar, heh. She'll have what you want. Just don't expect her to be as courteous as me.</i> | <i>Before the war, Eisin used to be a great city, but these days its just a pile of ruins where a bunch of orcs squat.</i> |
| <i>That legate, he's only been here since last summer. The bosses of their order sent him up from Eisin to oversee the completion of the temple. It's the only thing he seems to care about. I think he wants the job done quickly so he can get reassigned somewhere else. That's bad news for the poor fellows who have to slave away at the construction site day and night, but good news for the rest of us who just want to be ignored.</i> | <i>There was a caravan the other day, traveling south from Erenhead, bringing all sorts of weapons and supplies to Eisin. I heard they weren't using the Kingsway, they were using the small woodland roads instead. Not exactly unheard of, I guess, but that sort of route is a bit unusual for a caravan.</i> | <i>You ever wonder why that Shadow Temple has taken so long to build? It's because the Shadow don't actually want to see it finished. Blackweir is the dumping ground for legates who cause too much trouble.</i> |
| <i>You're looking for Loren, aren't you? Yeah, I know him. He lives in Fernglade, but you probably already know that. Probably know all about his non-farming activities too, eh? That's what I thought. Know what you're really looking for? Trouble. And I want none of it. Talk to that old geezer Grimnor, that's who Loren always talks to when he comes here.</i> | <i>That legate, he's only been here since last summer. The bosses of their order sent him up from Eisin to oversee the completion of the temple. It's the only thing he seems to care about. I think he wants the job done quickly so he can get reassigned somewhere else. That's bad news for the poor fellows who have slave away at the construction site day and night, but good news for the rest of us who just want to be ignored.</i> | <i>So you heard about that caravan, eh? I'll let you in on a little secret. It was just a decoy. There was nothing in those wagons. The Shadow does it all the time—it protects the real shipments and draws out anyone who thinks he's got a clever idea about exploiting the Shadow. It never works I tell ya.</i> |

spreads. Two failed Bluff checks closes off this approach and may draw unwanted attention from the guards.

Diplomacy (moderate DC): *You try to negotiate with the NPC, explaining how an agreement would be mutually beneficial, or you try to reason with the NPC by convincing them there is no harm in sharing a little anonymous information, or you try to win the trust of someone you expect is secretly an enemy of the Shadow by revealing something of your true purpose.*

Insight (moderate DC): *You try to eavesdrop on a conversation to gain some inside information, or you carefully observe a nearby NPC to get a sense of her disposition before approaching, or you weigh an NPC's words in an effort to separate truth from fiction.*

Each failed Insight check gives the PCs a piece of incorrect information at the end of the skill challenge (see Success and Failure, below).

Intimidate (moderate DC): *You use physical force to extract information from an NPC, or you use veiled threats to coerce him into helping you in order to save his own skin.*

One failed Intimidate check increases the DC of further Intimidate and Diplomacy checks to hard as word of your unsavory tactics spreads. Two failed Intimidate checks closes off this approach and may draw unwanted attention from the guards.

Stealth (moderate DC): *You try to follow an NPC to discover more about his activities, who he interacts with, or where he lives.*

Streetwise (moderate DC): *You try get a feel for the latest news and gossip, find a new contact, or discover a tip that may lead to additional information.*

Success (400 XP): If the PCs succeed at the skill challenge, they learn all of the true information in the the success column of Table 1. For each failed Insight check made during the skills challenge, they also receive one piece of false information from the appropriate column in Table 1. Additionally, proceed to the encounter **Grimnor's House**.

Failure (100 XP): If the PCs fail the skill challenge, they learn the true information in the failure column of Table 1. For each failed Insight check made during the skills challenge, they also receive one piece of false information from the appropriate column in Table 1. Additionally, proceed to the encounter **Madame Leshar Intervenes**.

Key Areas and NPCs in Blackweir

Some of the key areas in Blackweir are detailed below. The GM should also feel free to add his own additional areas of interest as he sees fit.

1. Main Gate

Blackweir is completely surrounded by a high wooden wall, and it's only gate faces to the southeast. Like most occupied settlements, people can't simply pass through the gate at will. Every person, even servants of the Shadow, wishing to enter Blackweir is expected to identify himself to the guards and state his business. Everyone is of course also expected to abide by the laws of the Shadow.

Guards Two Blackweir Guards and two Shadow Orc Guards watch Blackweir's gate day and night. The Shadow Orc Guards are content to let the human Blackweir Guards do all the talking.

2. Town Square

Blackweir's town square is the central area for business, and several local merchants maintain permanent stalls there offering a variety of local produce and other basic necessities. Since most of the best food is exported for the Shadow's armies in the south, merchants' supplies are perpetually low and prices are subsequently very high.

3. Stables

Blackweir's livery stables are quite modest since most of the town's inhabitants are too poor to afford a horse and travels are uncommon. The few horses kept here are owned by either the Shadow Temple or rich merchants, and none are for sale.

Young Pete, Stableboy The stables are operated by a ten-year-old boy called Young Pete. His father is the owner, but Old Pete, as he's called, spends most of his time at the Cracked Mug. Young Pete is used to poor treatment by high-ranking adults, and he won't be forthcoming with the PCs in the way of information. If the PCs mention they know Gaelen, whom Young Pete considers a friend, he'll be more trusting.

4. The Cracked Mug

The Cracked Mug is Blackweir's largest and most popular tavern. It is a simple, two-story, wood and stone building that is always crowded with a variety of patrons eager to drown their sorrows.

"Big Red" Randolph Grolsey, Proprietor The owner of the Cracked Mug is a hulking man with a thick ruddy beard whom everyone calls Big Red. He can be boisterous and jovial if his patrons show respect and have loose purse strings, but he won't take kindly to anyone he suspects of stirring up trouble. He has no love for the Shadow, but he's no fool either. He has an ear for local gossip and can be a good source

of information for the PCs if they approach him the right way.

Old Pete The Cracked Mug's best customer is Old Pete, the owner of Blackweir's livery stables. These days he tends to leave the business operations to his young boy, preferring to pass most of his time passed out in a puddle of ale. He knows just about everyone in Blackweir, and if caught at the right time of day, he can be a valuable source of information.

5. The Shadow Temple

Blackweir's Shadow Temple is a large, imposing stone building that is still partially under construction. Work on the Shadow Temple has progressed slowly in fits and starts over the years, much to the annoyance of regional legate officials. The temple grounds are closed to all except craftsman, laborers, guards, and the temple legate himself, Ralt Cereth.

If the PCs attempt to visit the Shadow Temple, they will be swiftly warned by locals, and eventually guards, that their presence will not be welcomed. If the PCs insist on trespassing, they will almost certainly find themselves in a violent encounter with Shadow Orc Guards that will result in their imprisonment or deaths.

Ralt Cereth, Temple Legate Ralt Cereth is stocky, grey-haired man with a serious demeanor. His flowing black and red vestments over black chainmail immediately mark him as a senior legate. He resents being tasked to serve in such an unimportant settlement and will be unwilling to grant the PCs an audience. Even if he did, he has no real information for them. He would also be a deadly foe to face in combat. The PCs are best off trying avoid Ralt Cereth while in Blackweir. They should have no reason to want to attract his attention.

Guards At least 10 Shadow Orc Guards are on duty at the Shadow Temple day and night.

6. The Great Keep Ruins

The highest point in Blackweir is the top of the rocky tor at the north end of town. The tor is crowned by the ruins of an old keep, built by men before Izrador's rise in the north and subsequently destroyed by his armies. The keep is in the process of being rebuilt—an especially slow process due to most labor and materials going to the completion of the Shadow Temple. Nevertheless, there are several habitable chambers with intact or rebuilt roofs that serve as the mayor's residence.

Mayor Fergus Beyla The mayor of Blackweir is an ancient, sickly man named Fergus Beyla. He spends nearly all of his time huddled near the fireplace of his inner chamber signing whatever documents his assistants place in front of him. His only real responsibility is to ensure that Blackweir does its part to provide whatever the Shadow needs, and mayor Beyla has no interest in anything that may upset the status quo. He could be persuaded to grant an audience to the PCs, but he will have no real information for them. He will

admit to knowing both Ralt Cereth and Madame Leshar, but he will refuse to discuss any details of their relationships.

Guards A rotation of 10 Blackweir Guards can be found in and around the keep day a night.

7. Lucile's Salves and Charms

In the middle of a dimly lit street, far from Blackweir's main market, is a small shop owned by Lucile Harth. She is well-known around town as Old Lady Lucile, and her shop offers dozens of different herbs, gnaw roots, infused oils, salves, and charms. Most of her wares have questionable value and bear names such as "Tranquil Tea" and "Lovers' Leaf." Nothing she offers is a true magic item, but at least two do provide useful, if minor, effects:

Fireweed Salve: This small wooden box contains a single dose of a pink, creamy salve. It stings terribly when applied to a wound, but the person being treated may spend a healing surge and regain an additional three hitpoints. Applying the salve takes a full minute, making it impractical to use in combat. Old Lady Lucile has five doses of fireweed salve available for trade.

Ort Bone Charm: Three small beads, made from plaster and the pulverized bones of an ort, are strung together on a short leather thong. If one of the beads is broken just before a heal check is made, the user receives a +2 item bonus to that heal check. Old Lady Lucile has two ort bone charms available for trade.

Old Lady Lucile This wizened old woman sits hunched behind a large table littered with tiny boxes, glass bottles, bundles of herbs, bowls of powder, and the like. Like most merchants in Erenland, she isn't interested in coin, but her items are available for trade.

8. Town Wells

Round stone wells can be found throughout Blackweir. In addition to their primary function, several also serve as entry points to a vast network of tunnels and sewers far below the town.

Grimnor's House

This encounter should only take place if the PCs succeed at the Sussing Out the Town skill challenge.

After a good deal of careful exploration, you find the house described as belonging to an old man named Grimnor. It's a small, unassuming building in the middle of a narrow street on the northwest side of Blackweir. A warm glow of light from within the house is visible through the cracks of the ancient wooden door.

Grimnor This tall, thin man is dressed in simple robes and carries a crude walking stick. At first glance, he appears very old, but his agile movements and sharp mind make his true age difficult to judge. He will welcome the PCs into his home, almost as if they were old friends whose arrival was expected.



Grimnor needs little persuasion to tell the PCs about Loren, provided he can be assured the PCs intend to help secure Loren's rescue. If the PCs intentions are good, he will reveal the following:

- *Greetings friends, I am Grimnor. I'm an old friend of Loren's. We've worked together for many years.*
- *Like you, I've been trying to find out what happened to Loren and his men for the past few days. Almost immediately after Loren set out, I suspected something went wrong.*
- *Loren was supposed to ambush a caravan transporting weapons for the Shadow's armies in the south, but instead it was Loren and his men who were ambushed by shadow orc soldiers.*
- *Loren survived, but he was taken prisoner to the Tower of Tender Mercies in the city of Eisin. How I know this I won't explain—I apologize for that, but some secrets must be kept even from those with good intentions. Let's just say I have an unusual sense of perception about these sorts of things.*
- *The Tower of Tender Mercies is where the legates keep prisoners of special value. The Sisterhood there are experts at extracting information. I fear even Loren won't be able to resist their methods for long.*
- *Eisin is the largest city in the Westlands. Its a strongpoint of Shadow operations in this area and it's filled with shadow orc soldiers and legates as well. It's not a place you can just walk into. You'll need help.*
- *You must find Harwen. He also survived the ambush, and so did a few other men. They retreated deep into the wilderness just after the battle. By now, they'll be at the caves.*
- *There are many caves along the north shore of the Ardune. Loren and his men sometimes use them as safe holds after a raid. Some of our other allies are also meeting him there very soon, so you shouldn't delay too long. This map will show you where to find them.*
- *Once you've met up with Harwen and the others, all of you may be able to find a way to sneak into Eisin and rescue Loren. Of course it won't be easy, but few things are these days.*

Grimnor will hand the PCs a simple map showing the location of a hidden cave on the north bank of the Ardune. He can also provide the PCs with detailed information about how to get in and out of Blackweir using the underground tunnels, if they haven't already discovered this information. Grimnor can also help them determine if they have unknowingly gathered any false information along the way.

Finally, Grimnor will give the PCs a small pouch of what appears to be fine ash from a fire. Grimnor explains it is an enchanted compound that will aid them in their rescue of Loren. He will also take care to remind them that if the Shadow catches them in possession of such an item, it is a crime punishable by death.

Night Ash

Level 1

This small pouch contains a mixture of fine ash enchanted with elven magic.

Wondrous Item 72 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Throw the ash into the air (close burst 1). Each character in the area is dusted with a thin coat of ash and receives a +10 item bonus to stealth checks in dim light and darkness for the next hour. This item provides no benefit in bright light conditions.

Madame Leshher Intervenes

This encounter should only take place if the PCs fail the Sussing Out the Town skill challenge.

As your group reconvenes in a side-street in Blackweir, discouraged and frustrated at your apparent lack of progress, you realize you're not alone. A hugely fat, yet richly dressed woman approaches you, escorted by a group of tough-looking men and a pair of Blackweir guards.

Madame Leshher One of Blackweir's most successful and influential merchants. She is a wealthy land owner and maintains a vast network of contacts and special business interests throughout the Westlands. She is not pleased to hear that strangers have arrived in Blackweir and are stirring up trouble.

Personal Guard Through a special arrangement with the mayor, Madame Leshher is always accompanied by a pair of Blackweir guards. Additionally, she employs a variety of thugs, brigands, and other low-life scum to do her dirty work (treat as Human Rabble, see 4E **MONSTER MANUAL**).

Madame Leshher is greatly annoyed by the string of complications brought about by the PCs' bumbling efforts to dig up information, and she is willing to tell them what they want to know in order to get rid of them.

- *Seekers of information, I beg you rest your weary selves a moment and indulge an old woman's curiosity. I am Madame Leshher, and Blackweir is my town.*
- *You are new here, and perhaps that can account for your impertinent methods. I imagine your solution to a hive of bees above the door of your home would be to beat it with a stick. So typical. Now, what will it take for Blackweir to be rid of you?*
- *Of course you want to find Loren. The fool went and got himself captured by shadow orc soldiers. They took him to Eisin. That's the large city filled with orcs to the south. Far away from here I might add. They probably*

took Loren to the Tower of Tender Mercies. It's where the legates keep prisoners of special value. It's a nasty place, despite its name. That's called irony, by the way.

- *One last thing. Loren wasn't the only survivor of that bungled caravan attack. One of my informants recently confirmed Loren's man Harwen escaped. Harwen was heading south at the time, probably to the caves on the north shore of the Ardune.*
- *Loren trusted me more than most, which I find both foolish and strangely admirable. This map will show you the location of the cave near the Ardune that he and Harwen used from time to time. Don't say I'm not a friend.*
- *Now be good and get out of Blackweir.*

Leshar will hand the PCs a simple map showing the location of a hidden cave on the north bank of the Ardune.

Leshar won't have patience for further questions. If the PCs don't take the hint that they are no longer welcome in Blackweir, she will have the town guards escort them out.

Next Steps

Regardless of how the PCs found their information in Blackweir, their next task should be clear. First, they need to find Harwen, then they can attempt to rescue Loren from the Tower of Tender Mercies in Eisin.

The PCs will have a simple map showing them the location of the cave on the north shore of the Ardune that Loren and his men use as a hideout. They should have little trouble getting there.

Allies Gather at the Cave

The markings on your map prove true, and after a brief survey of the land, you find the entrance to a small cave on the north shore of the Ardune. As soon as you step inside the dimly lit cave, you are greeted by drawn blades at your necks and a whispered voice from the shadows demanding to know who you are.

Harwen is here, along with three Fernglade Outlaws. Assuming the PCs are truthful about their good intentions, Harwen will welcome them inside. The cave is well-stocked with provisions and equipment (standard weapons, a few pieces of armor, and so forth). At the back of the cave, there are even a few chickens, a cart, an old draft horse, and a cage with four messenger pigeons. This is a safe place for the PCs to take an extended rest if they need it.

Harwen A strong, stern-faced man with leathery skin and greying hair, Harwen is an experienced ranger who has seen a lot of battles. He wears well-crafted leathers over simple, weathered clothing and carries a fine bow and a pair of short swords. He speaks with a quiet, deep voice that can be both captivating and unnerving.

Harwen can explain the following information:

- *It was me who convinced Loren to go after the caravan. He and Grimnor thought it was too dangerous to make such a bold attack so close to Blackweir, but I thought it was a chance we couldn't pass up.*
- *Leshar gave us the information, but what's the difference? Loren knew he shouldn't trust her. But I have my doubts. Leshar is a business woman, and taking out Loren would do her operation a lot of long-term harm, even if it did bring temporary favor with the Shadow.*
- *The caravan was large—lots of wagons—and appeared only lightly escorted, just like our information said it would be. We easily picked off the lead drivers and guards from the trees and rushed in for a quick finish. That was when they sprung the trap.*
- *It was a massacre. Seventeen men were cut down just like that.*
- *Loren was taken captive. He didn't try to hide the fact he was in command—that's his way. He was barking orders like an old general and they spotted it quick.*
- *I was lucky. I gathered as many men as I could, these three here, and we ran. I'm not proud of that, but I'm no fool either. We had no chance against them.*
- *They took Loren to Eisin. Our elf friends have confirmed that. You know Eisin used to be an elven city, before the war? Today it's just another sprawling orc settlement, but the old elven crypts still exist far below ground. That's how we're going to get inside.*

Harwen's Plan

Harwen's plan is a bold one. Using maps provided by elven allies, he will lead the PCs to the outskirts of Eisin to a hidden crypt entrance built centuries before Eisin's first elven settlers. There are many such crypts below the city, and they are all connected by a series of tunnels, which the elves used to facilitate the evacuation of Eisin just before Izrador's armies leveled the city. Some people believe these underground tunnels below Eisin inspired the humans who built Blackweir.

Once in the tunnels, the PCs should be able to follow them all the way to their target: the Tower of Tender Mercies in the heart of the city. According to the elven maps, there is a side tunnel that connects to the well room in the lower level of that structure. It is the mostly likely place Loren is being kept.

Meanwhile, Harwen and his men will enter the city through the east gate. They will use the cart and horse to disguise themselves as provisioners there to deliver a load of food for the army. Once inside, they will also make their way to the Tower of Tender Mercies.



Chapter Three: Eisín

A century ago, when the Shadow's hordes crossed the Sea of Pelluria and routed the remnants of the High King's army, their first major inland target was the elven trading city of Eisín. Today, nothing of that ancient city remains. The once graceful spires and tranquil elven gardens have been replaced by squat stone warehouses, smithies, fortified towers, slave pens, prisoner stockades, and in the heart of the old elven city, a towering temple dedicated to the dark god Izrador.

Eisín

City, Population 3,000 (mostly shadow orcs and goblin-kin) plus 500 slaves (mostly human)

Leadership: Eisín is the semi-permanent home of several shadow orc warbands whose chiefs, including Hurok and the infamous Grial the Fey Killer, serve as the closest thing to a political structure outside of the legates of Shadow Order. The chief legate in Eisín is Darman Mordsin.

Demographics: Thousands of shadow orcs call Eisín home. Hundreds of slaves and an untold number of prisoners are also kept here. Legate Darman Mordsin, dozens of aco-

lytes, and a hundred support staff for the Shadow Order reside in and around the city's shadow temple.

Economics: Eisín is the administrative center of the Westlands and its only true city. Most of the work in the city goes toward training, feeding, and equipping shadow orc troops. Its location on the Felthera River and at the intersection of four major roads also makes it an important distribution center for food, lumber, slaves, and other resources throughout the region.

Guards: Eisín is filled with armed shadow orc troops. Each of the city's gates maintains a full garrison of orc troops, and the river is patrolled by a dozen swift longboats filled with archers.

Getting into Eisín

Following Harwen's plan, the PCs can enter Eisín by journeying through the expansive elven crypts that lie far below the city. The map provided by Harwen's elven friends proves accurate, and the PCs eventually find a tunnel that leads them to the well room in the lower level of the Tower of Tender Mercies.

If the GM wishes, this is another opportunity to create areas of his own for the PCs to explore.

The Elven Crypts

As one of the oldest elven cities, Eisin was built on the site of an ancient elthedar settlement. The first elves adopted the elthedar practice of burying their dead in chambers below the roots of the sacred Homewood trees. When the city was evacuated shortly before falling to the Shadow's armies, its defenders did not have time to remove the artifacts buried with these first elves; all they could do was destroy or disguise the entrances to the burial chambers. These chambers have remained undiscovered by the Shadow for the past 100 years.

Eisin



1. Shadow Temple
2. North Gate
3. East Gate
4. River Gate
5. West Gate
6. General Stockade
7. River Stockade
8. Tower of Tender Mercies

The Tower of Tender Mercies Tactics

Encounter Level 3 (650 XP)

Setup

This encounter area uses the layout shown in the Tower of Tender Mercies map. If the PCs can defeat the Novitiate of Pain and her shadow orcs, they will be able to rescue Loren Landring. Have the PCs place their figures in the well room. At the start of this encounter, none of the creatures in this area are aware of the PCs.

This encounter includes the following creatures:

- Cyla Van, Novitiate of Pain (N)
- 2 Shadow Orc Guards (G)
- 4 Shadow Orc Minions (M)

The moment any of the shadow orcs becomes aware of the PCs, it will begin shouting to alert its allies. The Shadow Orc Guards will move to protect Cyla Van and focus on the most immediate threats to her, using their Check the Advance encounter powers as soon as possible.

The Shadow Orc Minions will attempt to attack the PCs from the rear, or the side, either by moving through the southern hallway to the interrogation room, or by raising the gates that separate the interrogation room from the cell block.

As a legate and a member of the Sisterhood of the Tender Mercies, Cyla Van has been granted a number of powers by her patron, the dark god Izrador. She will immediately use her Under the Shadow power to establish a favorable battle zone for her shadow orc allies. She will then use her Sanction of the Temple and Shadow Bolt powers to keep control of the battlefield from a distance. Her No Hope encounter power should be saved for late in the battle if she becomes surrounded (spending her Action Point if necessary).



Shadow Orc Recruit (M)**Level 1 Minion**

Medium natural humanoid

XP 25

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +0; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion
AC 16; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11
Speed 5

⊕ **Vardatch** (standard; at-will; minion attack) • **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 5 damage

⊙ **Javelin** (standard; at-will; minion attack) • **Weapon**

Ranged 10/20; +4 vs. AC; 4 damage

Driven to Kill

If there is a bloodied enemy within 5 squares, a shadow orc takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls for any attack that does not include a bloodied enemy.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Black Tongue, Orcish

Skills Athletics +8, Endurance +7, Intimidate +4

Str 17 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 10 (+0)

Con 15 (+2) **Int** 8 (–1) **Cha** 8 (–1)

Equipment Hide armor over filthy rags of clothing, small wooden shield, vardatch, javelin

Shadow Orc Guard (G)**Level 2 Soldier**

Medium natural humanoid

XP 125

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 40 **Bloodied** 20
AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 5

⊕ **Vardatch** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d12+3 damage and the target is marked until the end of the Shadow Orc Guard's next turn.

⊙ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage

⊥ **Check the Advance** (immediate interrupt, an enemy moves adjacent to an ally within 2 squares; encounter) • **Weapon**

The Shadow Orc Guard shifts up to 2 squares toward the target before attacking; +7 vs. AC; 1d12+3 damage and the target is marked until the end of the Shadow Orc Guard's next turn.

Driven to Kill

If there is a bloodied enemy within 5 squares, a shadow orc takes a –2 penalty to attack rolls for any attack that does not include a bloodied enemy.

Blood Mother Tribe

This shadow orc receives +1 to all attack rolls while it is bloodied.

Alignment Chaotic Evil **Languages** Black Tongue, Erenlander, Orcish

Skills Athletics +10, Endurance +9, Intimidate +5

Str 18 (+5) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+2)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 9 (+0)

Equipment Black scale armor over filthy rags of clothing, small wooden shield, vardatch, javelin

Cyla Van, Novitiate of Pain (N)**Level 3 Elite Controller (Leader)**

Medium natural humanoid

XP 300

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5
HP 120 **Bloodied** 60
AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 20
Speed 6
Action Points 1

⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage

⊙ **Shadow Bolt** (standard; at-will) • **Necrotic**

Ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6+3 necrotic damage and the target is dazed until the end of Cyla Van's next turn.

✱ **Sanction of the Temple** (standard; at-will) • **Fear**

Area burst 1 within 10; +7 vs. Will; The target is pushed 3 squares and slowed until the end of the Cyla Van's next turn

✱ **Under the Shadow** (standard; encounter; sustain minor) • **Zone**

Area burst 5 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone are weakened until the end of Cyla Van's next turn.

Secondary effect: Cyla Van and all allies within the zone receive a +2 power bonus to all damage rolls. Cyla Van can sustain this zone's secondary effect as a minor action.

↩ **No Hope** (standard; encounter) • **Fear**

Close burst 1; +7 vs. Will; 2d10+3 psychic damage and the target is pushed 3 squares and slowed (save ends)

↩ **Blessing of Izrador** (minor; encounter)

Close burst 5; Cyla Van and each ally in burst regains hit points equal to half its bloodied value

Apportion the Pain (immediate interrupt, when damaged by an attack; at-will)

Cyla Van redirects half of the damage suffered from the attack to an adjacent ally of her level or lower.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Black Tongue, High Elven, Erenlander, Orcish

Skills Arcana +11, Intimidate +9, Religion +11

Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 17 (+5)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 15 (+4) **Cha** 13 (+3)

Equipment Black leather armor, flail, holy symbol of Izrador

Description Cyla Van is a legate priestess of the dark god Izrador, and a Novitiate of Pain, an interrogation and torture specialist in the temple order known as the Sisterhood of the Tender Mercies. She wears black leather armor over black and red robes and wields a spiked flail.

features of the Area

Illumination: The interrogation room is filled with bright light. The rest of the area is filled with dim light.

Gates: There are many gates made of heavy iron bars in this area, all of which start closed. The lever controls for the two gates that separate the interrogation room and the cell block are located in the guard room on the squares marked “X”. Activating one of these gate levers is a standard action. The cell gates are opened with keys, which are on a table in the guard room.

Well Room: The well in the southeast corner of the area is where the PCs begin this encounter. The well itself is about five feet in diameter and goes down about 20 feet before splashing into cold, deep water. At the bottom of the well is a tunnel entrance that leads to old elven crypts.

Guard Room: Four Shadow Orc Minions are on duty in this room. In the northwest and northeast corners of the room are levers that open the gates separating the cell block from the interrogation room (see above). There is a ring of keys on one of the tables that opens the cells.

Interrogation Room: Wooden racks filled with various tools and torture devices line the walls of this room, and four thick stone pillars support the high ceiling. There is a burning brazier near each pillar that is filled with hot coals. These braziers do not hinder movement and can be tipped over as a minor action. There are two heavy wooden tables on the east half of the room. A character adjacent to a table can climb onto it as if he were moving into a space of difficult terrain. A character standing on a table has combat advantage against a target on the ground. In the center of the room is a large fire pit filled with red-hot coals. A creature entering a fire pit square immediately suffers 1d10 fire damage and 5 ongoing fire damage (save ends).

Novitiate’s Chambers: This is Cyla Van’s private room. There is a small shrine to Izrador in the northwest corner and nearby is a smoldering brazier. At the south end of the room is a bed, desk, chair, a small bookcase, and a weapon rack. At the foot of the bed is a small, locked chest. Inside the chest are two Potions of Healing and a Ritual Book (375 gp value) with the following rituals: Comprehend Languages, Detect Secret Doors, Endure Elements, Gentle Repose, and Secret Page.

Stairs: The stairs lead up to the ground level of the Tower of Tender Mercies.

Loren Landring: Loren is lying on a table at the north end of the interrogation room. He is alive, but has suffered much physical trauma. His eyes have been burned out and several of his toes have been hacked off. Treat Loren as being blinded, slowed, and weakened for the duration of the adventure.

Prisoners: Ten other prisoners occupy cells in this area of the tower. They are all physically weak and mentally traumatized. They will beg for release, and if given the chance, will immediately try to flee up the stairs.

Harwen Reappears

The following should not occur until the PCs have finished off Cyla Van and her orcs.

The PCs will only have a few minutes to help Loren and explore the rest of the area (and possibly deal with the other prisoners) before Harwen and two of his men burst into the area from the ground level. They will rush down the stairs and immediately find the PCs. Battered, bloodied, and out of breath from fighting orcs above, they will be delighted that Loren is still alive, but desperate to make their escape. Harwen will have another one of his ideas:

- *Thank the gods we’ve found you! How is Loren?*
- *There are still a lot of orcs up there, and they are headed this way.*
- *I’ll get Loren out of here. We’ll go back through the well—the way you came.*
- *I need you to stay back and hold off the orcs! You need to buy us some time!*
- *With a bit of luck, we’ll all meet again in Fernglade.*

If the PCs agree to this plan, Harwen and his two men will take Loren and leap down the well. After that, give the PCs a minute to prepare themselves to fight off several waves of orcs to give the others time to make good their escape. Proceed to the next encounter and follow the setup normally.

If the PCs disagree with this plan, or try to argue with Harwen, simply begin the next encounter, but don’t allow the PCs to reposition their miniatures. As the waves of orcs flood into the area, have them focus on the PCs (they are the bigger threat after all) and allow Harwen and his men to slip away with Loren out through the well.

holding Off the Orcs

Encounter level 4 (750 XP)

Setup

This encounter takes place in the same area of the Tower of Tender Mercies. Unless the encounter begins early (because the PCs disagreed with Harwen’s plan, for example), allow the PCs to place their miniatures anywhere they choose. As soon as the PCs are set, the first wave of shadow orcs will burst through the door from the ground level and rush down the stairs.

This encounter includes the following:

- 3 Shadow Orc Guards
- 15 Shadow Orc Minions

Tactics

The shadow orcs will come down the stairs in three waves, with each wave consisting of one Shadow Orc Guard and five Shadow Orc Minions. The first wave rushes down the stairs on the first round of combat, the second wave enters the area on the second round of combat and the third wave enters the area on the third round of combat.

When a new wave arrives (including the first wave), have each orc begin its turn on one of the two stairs squares nearest the door to the ground level. Each orc will then either run down the stairs (see the run action of the 4E Players Handbook) or jump directly down into the southern hallway.

If the PCs are not faring well, the GM should adjust the timing of the waves of shadow orcs by making the intervals between each wave longer. On the other hand, if the PCs are having little trouble, the GM should feel free to add additional waves. The goal should be to keep the tension high for multiple combat rounds without completely overwhelming the PCs.

Epilogue

Jon Socar sheathed his sword and saluted the Queen of Erenland. Even at these depths, far below Blackweir, he could feel the rumble of the Shadow's twenty thousand troops assaulting the great keep. "My queen, it is time to leave."

Without a word, the queen picked up the youngest of her three daughters and followed Socar down the tunnel. Four other knights followed behind with the queen's other two daughters. After more than an hour of walking, the nine of them emerged into the dark wilderness of Erenland. With the battle of Blackweir still raging in the distance, the group headed southwest toward the small farming community of Fernglade, where Socar hoped they would find refuge.

Many years later, Jon Socar was still living in Fernglade as a peasant farmer. His weapons and armor safely stowed beneath the floorboards of an old barn. Tragically, the queen and her middle daughter had died of a pox in years past, and the oldest daughter, Minha, had run off with a traveling merchant. Only the youngest daughter, Lisha remained, whom Socar cared for like a daughter.

When Lisha came of age, she married Daren Landring, a young man from another nearby village. Together, they cared for the farm and the aging Jon Socar. Soon, the young couple gave birth to a son, whom they named Loren. Shortly after Loren's twelfth birthday, Jon Socar died peacefully in his sleep. As a memento of the brave knight who had escorted her to safety so many years before, Lisha hung Socar's shield on the wall of their farmhouse.



Appendix: Pre-Generated Characters

Jerol Remar

Level 1 human male warlord from Erenland of good alignment

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|------------------|----|---------------------------|--------|--------------------|----|-------------------------------|----|
| STR | 16 | +3 | AC | 16 | Initiative | +1 | Hit Points | 25 | Bloodied | 12 |
| CON | 13 | +1 | Fortitude | 15 | Speed | 6 | Surge Value | 6 | Healing Surges per Day | 8 |
| DEX | 8 | -1 | Reflex | 13 | Passive Insight | 10 | | | | |
| INT | 16 | +3 | Will | 15 | Passive Perception | 10 | | | | |
| WIS | 10 | +0 | | | Size | Medium | | | | |
| CHA | 16 | +3 | | | | | | | | |

Skills Acrobatics (Dex) -2†, Arcana (Int) +0, Athletics (Str) +7*†, Bluff (Cha) +3, Diplomacy (Cha)* +8, Dungeoneering (Wis) +0, Endurance (Con) +5*†, Heal (Wis) +5*, History (Int) +7*, Insight (Wis) +0, Intimidate (Cha) +3, Nature (Wis) +0, Perception (Wis) +0, Religion (Int) +2, Stealth (Dex) -2†, Streetwise (Cha) +3, Thievery (Dex) -2†

*Trained skill †Armor check penalty (-1) applied

Feats Action Surge, Luck of Erenland **Languages** Erenlander

Role Leader **Power Source** Martial **Build Option** Inspiring Warlord

Warlord Class Features Combat Leader, Inspiring Presence, Inspiring Word

Armor Proficiencies Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail, light shield **Weapon Proficiencies** Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged

At-Will Exploits Commander's Strike, Furious Smash, Wolf Pack Tactics

Encounter Exploit Guarding Attack

Daily Exploit Bastion of Defense

Basic Melee Attack Modifier +6 (Longsword or Dagger) **Basic Ranged Attack Modifier** +2 (Dagger)

Equipment Longsword (1d8 dmg, versatile), Dagger (1d4 dmg, 5/10 rng) (concealed in drop sheath strapped to forearm under clothing), hide armor, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, trail rations (3 days), waterskin, 50 ft. of hempen rope, lantern with oil, bundle of animal hides (weapons hidden within)

Angus Kerwin

Level 1 human male fighter from Dorn of good alignment

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|------------------|----|---------------------------|--------|--------------------|----|-------------------------------|----|
| STR | 18 | +4 | AC | 17 | Initiative | +3 | Hit Points | 30 | Bloodied | 15 |
| CON | 15 | +2 | Fortitude | 18 | Speed | 6 | Surge Value | 7 | Healing Surges per Day | 10 |
| DEX | 16 | +3 | Reflex | 14 | Passive Insight | 10 | | | | |
| INT | 8 | -1 | Will | 11 | Passive Perception | 10 | | | | |
| WIS | 10 | +0 | | | Size | Medium | | | | |
| CHA | 8 | -1 | | | | | | | | |

Skills Acrobatics (Dex) +2†, Arcana (Int) -1, Athletics (Str) +8*†, Bluff (Cha) -1, Diplomacy (Cha) -1, Dungeoneering (Wis) +0, Endurance (Con) +5*†, Heal (Wis) +5*, History (Int) -1, Insight (Wis) +0, Intimidate (Cha) +4*, Nature (Wis) +0, Perception (Wis) +0, Religion (Int) -1, Stealth (Dex) +2†, Streetwise (Cha) -1, Thievery (Dex) +2†

*Trained skill †Armor check penalty (-1) applied

Feats Last Stand, Steeled Blood of the North **Languages** Erenlander, Norther

Role Defender **Power Source** Martial **Build Option** Great Weapon Fighter

Fighter Class Features Combat Challenge, Combat Superiority, Fighter Weapon Talent (Two-handed weapons)

Armor Proficiencies Cloth, leather, hide, chainmail, scale, light shield, heavy shield

Weapon Proficiencies Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged, military ranged

At-Will Exploits Cleave, Reaping Strike, Sure Strike

Encounter Exploit Covering Attack

Daily Exploit Comeback Strike

Basic Melee Attack Modifier +8 (Greatsword)

Basic Ranged Attack Modifier +5 (Shortbow)

Equipment Greatsword (1d10 dmg), shortbow with 12 arrows (1d8 dmg, 15/30 rng), dagger (1d4 dmg, 5/10 rng) (concealed in drop sheath strapped to forearm under clothing), hide armor, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, trail rations (3 days), waterskin, 50 ft. of hempen rope, bundle of animal hides (weapons hidden within)

Gilroy Evenshale

Level 1 human male ranger from Erenland of good alignment

| | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| STR | 10 | +0 | AC 16 | Initiative +4 | Hit Points 24 | Bloodied 12 |
| CON | 12 | +1 | Fortitude 13 | Speed 6 | Surge Value 6 | Healing Surges per Day 7 |
| DEX | 18 | +4 | Reflex 16 | Passive Insight 12 | | |
| INT | 10 | +0 | Will 13 | Passive Perception 17 | | |
| WIS | 14 | +2 | | Size Medium | | |
| CHA | 10 | +0 | | | | |

Skills Acrobatics (Dex) +4, Arcana (Int) +0, Athletics (Str) +0, Bluff (Cha) +0, Diplomacy (Cha) +0, Dungeoneering (Wis)* +7, Endurance (Con)* +6, Heal (Wis)* +7, History (Int) +0, Insight (Wis) +2, Intimidate (Cha) +0, Nature (Wis)* +7, Perception (Wis)* +7, Religion (Int) +0, Stealth (Dex)* +9, Streetwise (Cha) +0, Thievery (Dex) +4

*Trained skill

Feats Action Surge, Defensive Mobility, Luck of Erenland **Languages** Erenlander, Norther

Role Striker **Power Source** Martial **Build Option** Archer
Ranger Class Features Archer Fighting Style, Hunter's Quarry, Prime Shot
Armor Proficiencies Cloth, leather, hide **Weapon Proficiencies** Simple melee, military melee, simple ranged, military ranged

At-Will Exploits Careful Attack, Nimble Strike, Twin Strike
Encounter Exploit Evasive Strike
Daily Exploit Split the Tree

Basic Melee Attack Modifier +2 (Dagger)
Basic Ranged Attack Modifier +6 (Longbow or Dagger)

Equipment Longbow with 20 arrows (1d10 dmg, 20/40 rng) dagger (1d4 dmg, 5/10 rng) (concealed in drop sheath strapped to forearm under clothing), leather armor, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, trail rations (3 days), waterskin, 50 ft. of hempen rope, 4 small animal traps

Corris the Lucky

Level 1 halfling male rogue from Erenland of good alignment

| | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| STR | 10 | +0 | AC 17 | Initiative +5 | Hit Points 24 | Bloodied 12 |
| CON | 12 | +1 | Fortitude 11 | Speed 6 | Surge Value 6 | Healing Surges per Day 7 |
| DEX | 20 | +5 | Reflex 17 | Passive Insight 14 | | |
| INT | 9 | -1 | Will 13 | Passive Perception 14 | | |
| WIS | 8 | -1 | | Size Small | | |
| CHA | 16 | +3 | | | | |

Skills Acrobatics (Dex) +7, Arcana (Int) +0, Athletics (Str) +0, Bluff (Cha)* +8, Diplomacy (Cha) +3, Dungeoneering (Wis) -1, Endurance (Con) +0, Heal (Wis) -1, History (Int) -1, Insight (Wis)* +4, Intimidate (Cha) +3, Nature (Wis) -1, Perception (Wis)* +4, Religion (Int) -1, Stealth (Dex)* +10, Streetwise (Cha)* +8, Thievery (Dex)* +12

*Trained skill

Feats Retributive Rage **Languages** Erenlander

Role Striker **Power Source** Martial **Build Option** Trickster Rogue
Halfling Features Bold, Nimble Reaction, Second Chance
Rogue Class Features Artful Dodger, First Strike, Rogue Weapon Talent, Sneak Attack
Armor Proficiencies Cloth, leather **Weapon Proficiencies** Dagger, hand crossbow, shuriken, sling, short sword

At-Will Exploits Deft Strike, Sly Flourish
Encounter Exploits Positioning Strike
Daily Exploits Trick Strike

Basic Melee Attack Modifier +9 (Dagger)
Basic Ranged Attack Modifier +9 (Dagger) or +7 (Sling)

Equipment 2 daggers (1d4 dmg, 5/10 rng) (each concealed in a drop sheath, one strapped to each forearm under clothing), sling with 20 bullets (1d6 dmg, 10/20 rng), leather armor, backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, trail rations (3 days), waterskin, lantern with oil, 50 ft. of silk rope with grappling hook, thieves' tools