

# The Mad King's Banquet

WAR OF THE  
BURNING SKY  
4E™

ADVENTURE FOUR



*For Character Levels 10–12*

Original Design by **SHANE O'CONNOR**  
Updated and Edited by **STEVE MUCHOW**





WAR OF THE BURNING SKY  
ADVENTURE FOUR

# The Mad King's Banquet

AN ADVENTURE FOR 10TH- TO  
12TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

**Original Design**  
Shane O'Connor

**Updated Design and Additional Material**  
Steve Muchow

**Cover Art**  
V Shane

**Interior Art**  
Claudio Pozas  
Todd Schumacher  
Joe Slucher  
V Shane  
Shannon White  
and artists of history\*

**Cartography**  
Sean Macdonald  
Steve Muchow

**Layout**  
Eric Life-Putnam

*Special Thanks to Johnathan Jacobs, Michael Brewer, and Quinn Murphy for their "Skill Challenges of War" series. See <http://www.thecoremechanic.com> for more information.*

*\* Uncredited images in the public domain appear courtesy of "Public Domain Images from Karen's Whimsy," <http://karenswhimsy.com/public-domain-images>.*

## EN PUBLISHING

7 Rutland Court, Balaclava Road  
Southampton, Hampshire  
England SO18 6RX



EN Publishing is an  
imprint of EN World.

Please visit  
<http://www.enworld.org>

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Compatibility Logo, D&D, PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 2, DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, MONSTER MANUAL, MONSTER MANUAL 2, and ADVENTURER'S VAULT are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries and are used with permission. Certain materials, including 4E References in this publication, D&D core rules mechanics, and all D&D characters and their distinctive likenesses, are property of Wizards of the Coast, and are used with permission under the Dungeons & Dragons 4th Edition Game System License. All 4E References are listed in the 4E System Reference Document, available at [www.wizards.com/d20](http://www.wizards.com/d20).

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS 4th Edition PLAYER'S HANDBOOK, written by Rob Heinsoo, Andy Collins, and James Wyatt; DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE, written by James Wyatt; and MONSTER MANUAL, written by Mike Mearls,

Stephen Schubert and James Wyatt; PLAYER'S HANDBOOK 2, written by Jeremy Crawford, Mike Mearls, and James Wyatt; MONSTER MANUAL 2, written by Rob Heinsoo, and Chris Sims; ADVENTURER'S VAULT, written by Logan Bonner, Eytan Bernstein, and Chris Sims. © 2008, 2009 Wizards of the Coast. All rights reserved.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>	<b>ACT THREE: SECURING AID</b> .....	<b>26</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>48</b>
Adventure Overview .....	1	The Shield of the Kingdom of Dassen.....	26	Succession .....	48
Prior Events.....	1	Duke Gallo .....	27	Reward .....	48
The Heroes' Role.....	1	Around Gallo's Fend.....	27	Return Trip.....	49
Background .....	1	War Recon.....	28	Vidor.....	49
Requirements.....	1	Hoofing It .....	29	Spring Dawn .....	49
Character Motivation.....	2	Alydi Gap Outpost.....	29	<b>APPENDIX A: NEW ALLIES</b> .....	<b>50</b>
The Dungeon Master's Toolkit.....	2	<i>Timeline of Steppengard's Assault</i> .....	29	<b>APPENDIX B: DIANOEM PUZZLE</b> .....	<b>51</b>
The Paragon Tier.....	2	<i>Other Solutions</i> .....	30	Object of the Puzzle .....	51
Experience Tracking and Treasure.....	2	Ragesian Forces.....	30	<b>APPENDIX C: NEW ITEMS AND RITUALS</b> .....	<b>52</b>
<i>Adapting the Adventure</i> .....	3	Two Missions.....	30	New Items .....	52
The Battle for Gallo's Fend.....	4	Path through Pitchwood .....	31	New Rituals.....	52
A Word about Skill Challenges .....	4	Scaling the Glaskheel Cliffs.....	33	New Artifact.....	53
Other Resources .....	4	War Plans.....	33	<b>APPENDIX D: DISEASES AND POISONS</b> ...	<b>54</b>
Following the Script? .....	4	Steppengard's Forces.....	33	Red Madness.....	54
The Kingdom of Dassen.....	5	War-Mage Kelkin .....	34	Mindhaunt .....	54
The Council of Nine.....	5	Gallo's Forces.....	34	<b>APPENDIX E: PLAYER HANDOUTS</b> .....	<b>55</b>
<i>Enemies on the Fly</i> .....	5	The Heroes' Role.....	34	<b>APPENDIX F: DREAM SEEDS</b> .....	<b>56</b>
The Capital of Bresk .....	7	<b>ACT FOUR: THE BATTLE FOR GALLO'S</b>		Designing Visions and Premonitions .....	56
<b>ACT ONE: THE CALM</b> .....	<b>8</b>	<b>FEND</b> .....	<b>35</b>	Using Dream Seeds.....	56
War News.....	8	Siege Sabotage .....	35	Dream Elemental .....	56
Dougan.....	8	Mage Assassination .....	36	Taking Multiple Seeds.....	56
The Heroes Participate in the Test.....	8	<i>Why is Kelkin a Threat?</i> .....	36	<b>APPENDIX G: TACTICAL ENCOUNTERS</b> ...	<b>57</b>
<i>History of the Dianoem Mark IV</i> .....	9	The Line at Otharil Vale.....	36	Dianoem .....	57
The Heroes Do Not Help Dougan.....	10	Otharil Vale Opening Volley .....	37	Monkeying Around .....	59
Torrent's Vengeance.....	10	<i>Otharil Vale Tactical Options</i> .....	37	White Wyrms Wipeout .....	61
Meeting at Lyceum.....	10	Otharil Vale First Wave.....	37	Ragesian Rout.....	63
<i>Other Seaquen Missions</i> .....	12	Otharil Vale Second Wave.....	38	The Last Legion.....	65
Letter Home.....	12	War-Mage Artillery.....	38	Refugees.....	67
<b>ACT TWO: MESSAGE FOR THE KING</b> .....	<b>13</b>	After the Second Wave .....	38	Police Brutality.....	69
The Trip to Bresk.....	13	Strike at the Head .....	39	Sewer Pump Room.....	71
Vidor.....	13	Wrapping up the Fourth Act.....	39	Pixis .....	72
From Vidor to Bresk.....	13	<b>ACT FIVE: SERVED COLD</b> .....	<b>40</b>	Arrest, First Wave .....	73
Journey.....	14	The Poisoning Plot.....	40	Arrest, Second Wave .....	75
Refugees .....	14	<i>Aren't We Done?</i> .....	40	Southern Patrol .....	77
Bodies in the Water .....	14	Proclamation of Peace.....	40	Northern Pursuit.....	79
Grim Tidings .....	15	Parade of the Victors .....	40	Guard Room .....	81
Entering Bresk .....	16	Tournament of Unity .....	41	Jutras.....	82
Checkpoint .....	16	<i>Notoriety and Taunting</i> .....	41	Zombie Pit .....	83
The Sewers.....	17	The Tournament Grounds .....	42	Approach .....	84
Into the City.....	18	Dasseni Idol .....	42	<i>New Item: Dragonslayer Ballista</i> .....	84
The Task at Hand.....	18	Freshness Guaranteed.....	42	Shooting Gallery .....	86
The Golden Griffon.....	18	Informant .....	43	Gauntlet .....	87
Group Diplomacy.....	18	Jousting.....	43	Barracks.....	89
Audience with the King.....	19	Ring Tossing .....	44	Pitchwood .....	91
<i>The Book of Eight Lands</i> .....	20	Shell Game .....	44	Steppengard Blockade .....	92
The Appeal .....	21	Spell Dueling .....	44	Scaling the Cliffs .....	94
Outside the Throne Room.....	22	Test of Strength .....	44	Mage Assassination .....	95
<i>Curing the King</i> .....	22	The Magic is Gone .....	45	Hold the Line, First Wave.....	98
<i>Balan's Illness</i> .....	23	Tournament's End .....	45	Hold the Line, Second Wave .....	100
The First Rule of Assassination .....	23	Banquet of Madness .....	45	War-Mage Artillery.....	101
Mysterious Warning.....	23	The Graveyard .....	45	Get Malkan! .....	103
Silencing Balan.....	23	Breaking into Prison.....	46	Tragedy.....	106
Under Arrest!.....	23	The Dinner .....	46	Torrax and Serrimus .....	107
Castle Steppengard Prison.....	24	The Race .....	46	Guard Gauntlet .....	109
Escaping.....	25			The King's Madness .....	110
The Road to Gallo's Fend.....	25				



# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

In the wake of assassination, war has erupted between the mighty Ragesian Empire and its eastern neighbor, the Shining Land of Shahalesti. Caught in the middle, a small band of heroes has escaped from the besieged neutral city of Gate Pass carrying stolen war intelligence and a plea for help. Their path passed through the perilous Fire Forest of Innenotdar, where a wraith-like entity calling itself Indomitability demanded their aid in freeing it from a prison of enforced flesh. Beyond the borders of the fire forest, the heroes traveled through the countryside of the nation of Dassen, following bands of refugees fleeing the war to a distant safe haven called Seaquen.

Seaquen is rallying the other nations in the region in an effort to stand against the fiery might of the Ragesian Empire, and more urgently to stop *The Scourge*, a drive by the new Ragesian empress Leska to capture or kill all arcane magic-users hostile to her rule. The heroes have already saved Seaquen from one destructive plot that would have used a magically conjured hurricane to annihilate the fledgling resistance. Now they face a more conventional threat: as winter's end nears, the mountain passes will thaw and Ragesia will be able to march an army to destroy Seaquen.

Lying between Seaquen and Ragesia is the Kingdom of Dassen, currently neutral in the war.

Ragesia has pledged to respect that neutrality if the nation's ruler, King Steppengard, gives one of Ragesia's armies safe passage to Seaquen in order to destroy it. The leaders of Seaquen know they cannot stand against the Ragesians yet, so they must convince Steppengard not to agree to the Ragesians' terms. Time is short, and in this perilous moment, Seaquen looks to its most recent heroes to sway the conscience of the king.

Welcome to the fourth adventure in the War of the Burning Sky campaign saga. In *The Mad King's Banquet*, the heroes are tasked with winning Dassen's pledge to resist the advance of Ragesia. They travel to an audience with the king, only to learn that the king's family has been murdered, and that Dassen is on the brink of civil war.

Accused of being enemies of the state and harried from the capital, the heroes' best hope of accomplishing their mission is to ally with Duke Gallo, himself framed for ordering the murder of the royal family. The king, mad with grief, sends his armies to destroy Gallo and, in so doing, cripple Dassen's defenses.

The heroes will have an opportunity to turn the tide in a battle between armies and may shape the fate of an entire country.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

### PRIOR EVENTS

One week ago, Lee Sidoneth called forth a hurricane to destroy the town of Seaquen and the nascent resistance movement against Ragesian aggression. This adventure assumes the heroes foiled the attempt and Seaquen, though smarting, is unified in its opposition to Ragesia.

Seaquen is a large town on Dassen's southern border that holds itself apart from its neighboring kingdom. Until recently, this has not been a problem: the Sour Lake Swamp significantly separates Seaquen from the mainland, making it effectively an island city that flourishes by sea trade. Diplomatic relations with Dassen are generally cordial, but the influx of thousands of refugees from Ragesia has strained Dassen's resources, and the kingdom has come to blame Seaquen's resistance for its problems.

### THE HEROES' ROLE

The heroes' main goal in *The Mad King's Banquet* is to acquire military help for Seaquen either from Dassen's King Steppengard or from one or more of the Council of Nine, a legislative body made up of the highest-ranking nobles in the kingdom. Unbeknownst to them, Steppengard's advisor has been replaced by a trillith named Madness who has been confusing the king's mind, driving him to acts that will destroy his nation from within. Madness, in the person of the king's advisor, has contacted Ragesia about the king's problem, hinting that the Ragesians might arrive to find only weak and disorganized opposition. (The dream born trillith made their first appearance in Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*, and more information about them can be found in the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide*.)

### ACT ONE

The day the heroes are honored at Enchanted Draughts, King Steppengard of Dassen receives a Ragesian emissary and agrees to let the Third Ragesian Army march through his lands under escort, with the intent of destroying Seaquen.



## REQUIREMENTS

This adventure makes use of the rules from the D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK®, the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE®, and the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL®. Additionally, the D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK® 2, the D&D 4E ADVENTURER'S VAULT™, and the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL® 2 provide useful expansions to provide even richer immersion into the world.

The adventure is designed to be played with a party size of five player characters (PCs) and a Dungeon Master (DM). The encounters and experience awards assume a party of 10th-level characters. If the adventure is run with a different party size or higher levels, the encounters will have to be adjusted to provide enough experience to advance the characters to 13th level and slightly beyond.



Seaquen's diplomat in Bresk is placed under house arrest and uses a Sending ritual to inform Lorb Vortberd (Seaquen's magistrate) of the situation. Ragesia cannot march until the northern passes thaw, but time is growing short and Seaquen's council decides to send emissaries to change the king's mind. The heroes become the obvious choice for the mission.

The heroes prepare for their task, discovering some secrets of an artifact they received in their first adventure. They also obtain political information and a link to a potential ally through a relationship with the son of a Dasseni noble.

## ACT TWO

The heroes travel to the capital of Bresk, seeing along the way signs of political unrest and perhaps conflicting with Steppengard's military.

During their journey, a large-scale assassination attempt uses a combination of poison and mysterious magic to kill the queen and each of the king's eighteen children. Steppengard alone survives, and his most trusted advisor, a gnome wizard named Nina Glibglammer, has uncovered evidence that a member of the landed nobility was behind the plot. It is still unclear which noble was responsible, but many suspect that a civil war looms in the near future. Coupled with the recent aggression of Ragesia, there is a sense the kingdom is in danger of destruction.

The heroes arrive in Bresk as paranoia and a vengeful hunger grips the populace. A very paranoid King Steppengard is orchestrating a series of kangaroo court trials to root out the source of the treachery, and as a result, he is entirely unwilling to listen to the heroes' request for aide. Others are willing to listen however; in particular, the representatives of the three nobles who are most at risk if Ragesia invades — Duke Gallo, Lord Dashgoban, and Lady Timor. They present an avenue for winning support.

Before they can act on this opportunity, the king's advisor Nina Glibglammer, actually the trillith Madness frames them as being part of the conspiracy to destroy the royal family. She sends an assassin to kill them and soldiers to capture them, or at the least drive them to flee north to the lands of Duke Gallo. While doing so holds the best chance for the heroes to accomplish their mission, it also plays into the Ragesians' plans, since it implicates Gallo

as the one behind the conspiracy and paints the heroes as his paid assassins.

## ACT THREE

Duke Gallo receives the heroes as a mixed blessing, while King Steppengard musters his army to march on Gallo's Fend. The duke wishes to ally with Seaquen but must first survive the wrath of his king over a crime he did not commit. Facing a two-fronted battle, Duke Gallo seeks the aid of the heroes to find proof that Ragesia's intentions are not neutral and sends them to investigate the mountain outposts that are the first defense against Ragesia. Only by retrieving evidence that the Ragesians are planning to invade can Duke Gallo secure the aid of his two neighbors, Timor and Dashgoban, in battling the king's forces. Time is short, and if the heroes do not cut through dangerous terrain to deliver the evidence or find a way to slow the advancing army, help cannot possibly reach Gallo's Fend in time. When the Battle of Gallo's Fend begins, if the heroes have not secured Timor and Dashgoban's aid, they face a grueling struggle against an overwhelming force.

## ACT FOUR

The Battle of Gallo's Fend begins and if the heroes have not secured Timor and Dashgoban's aid, they face a grueling struggle against an overwhelming force seeking to bring Gallo to "justice." The heroes have the opportunity to skirmish, sabotage, and make a desperate attempt to kill the king's commander while the larger forces clash on the plain.

## ACT FIVE

The battle's resolution is not the end of the adventure, however. If Steppengard is victorious, he claims he was given new evidence exonerating Duke Gallo, and says all must put aside their differences and decide how to deal with the Ragesians. If he is defeated, he calls the same gathering, but in this case to negotiate peace. Either way, after the battle the Lords of the Eight Lands return to Bresk for a peace banquet and a festival celebrating the aversion of civil war. Duke Gallo cautiously agrees, asking the heroes to accompany him as bodyguards and an extra set of eyes. In truth, however, Steppengard no longer cares for his kingdom, and all he desires is to see his enemies destroyed as his family was destroyed. The king plans to poison all his nobles with a

toxin that will drive them to kill each other in a fit of insane frenzy. If the heroes do not find the clues and stop the trillith's scheme, Dassen will dissolve in madness.

## CHARACTER MOTIVATION

If the heroes saved the day in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*, Seaquen (in the person of Lorb Vortberd or Simeon Gohanach) comes to them with this mission. Otherwise, the heroes can be representatives of any group with interests in the war. In addition to seeking an alliance to protect Seaquen (or whichever place they represent), the heroes might want to try to get support for an eventual push to liberate Gate Pass from Ragesia.

The heroes almost certainly need to be involved with a group that can arrange an audience with the king; perhaps they represent of one of Dassen's own nobles, or they might be looking for a way to win land for themselves, to fight their way into the nobility.

## THE DUNGEON MASTER'S TOOLKIT

### THE PARAGON TIER

This adventure sees the heroes crossing the threshold from the Heroic to the Paragon tier when they reach 11th level. The city of Bresk, even in its current state, is cosmopolitan enough to offer plausible storylines as the heroes choose their Paragon Paths. Before Nina Glibglammer sets the assassination events into motion, make sure the heroes are at 11th level.

### EXPERIENCE TRACKING AND TREASURE

Use the XP tables on pages 3 and 4 to track the total amount of XP the heroes gain. As encounters and skill challenges are completed, this provides a concise collection for you to track awards. The chart on page 3 shows skill challenges, tactical encounters, and reward parcels by act. At the conclusion of the adventure, the heroes should reach 13th level.

This adventure awards treasure using the parcel system described in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE. No specific treasure parcels are detailed in this adventure. The Dungeon Master should consult with his players about their wish list items and make them available during play. Suggested parcel award locations are presented in the table below.



### KEY TO THE TABLES

The encounters and rewards are listed by act; quests are listed by type (MQ is major quest and mQ is minor quest). Notice that more than three levels worth of experience can be awarded.

A parcel is listed next to the encounter where it is most likely to be found. The number is the level of the parcel and the number of parcels is equal to the count of numbers for the encounter. For example, “The Last Legion” suggests awarding a total of four 10th-level treasure parcels. As DM, you should not feel required to slavishly follow these guidelines.

### ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

*The Mad King's Banquet* fills a unique role in the campaign saga. It can serve as the climax of an abridged campaign, wherein the heroes secure the safety of Seaquen in a time of war. You might shuffle the events of Acts Two and Three, so that the heroes cope with the king's madness first and then fight the battle at Gallo's Fend against an advancing Ragesian army. For the adventure's conclusion, you can have whoever ends up ruling Dassen pledge to fight for the liberation of Gate Pass, and so resolve the conflict that began the campaign saga.

If you are choosing this point of the story to begin the campaign, *The Mad King's Banquet* throws the heroes immediately into a struggle of politics and warfare. The heroes might still be representatives of Seaquen, though they would not be famed for any heroic deeds yet, or they could be a contingent from Gate Pass, trying to arrange an alliance with Dassen to liberate their city from the Ragesians.

Finally, you might use the adventure as a stand-alone for a party of 10th-level characters, transporting the events to your own setting. Dassen can be replaced with any small country, as long as it has enemies at its border and that border has a natural barrier that Duke Gallo can defend.

If you are picking up the campaign at this point, you will want to make yourself familiar with the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide* and *Player's Guide*, which are available freely through E.N. Publishing. The *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide* contains additional information for working the events of the game into your existing campaign setting and suggestions for getting the characters involved. It will also give you an overview of events from this point on.

☑	Encounters	Level	XP	Parcels
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dianoem	11	3,500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monkeying Around	11	3,500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Wyrms Wipeout	10	2,500	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ragesian Rout	11	3,000	10
<input type="checkbox"/>	The Last Legion	12	3,500	10, 10, 10, 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheap Transportation (Skill Challenge)	10	500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nasham River (Skill Challenge)	11	2,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugees	10	2,500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stray Horses (Skill Challenge)	10	500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Repairs (Skill Challenge)	10	500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Police Brutality	11	3,050	10, 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Checkpoint (Skill Challenge)	11	600	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sewer Pump Room	11	3,000	10, 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gathering Information (Skill Challenge)	12	3,500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sympathetic Appeal (Skill Challenge)	12	800	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Uncertain Appeal (Skill Challenge)	12	1,200	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hostile Delegation (Skill Challenge)	12	1,700	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pixis	14	5,000	10, 10
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrest, First Wave	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Arrest, Second Wave	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Southern Patrol	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Pursuit	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guard Room	12	3,500	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jutras	12	4,000	11, 11, 11
<input type="checkbox"/>	Zombie Pit	11	3,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prison Treasure Parcels (Reward)	—	—	11, 11, 11
<input type="checkbox"/>	Through the Alydi Gap (Skill Challenge)	11	1,800	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approach	9	2,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shooting Gallery	11	3,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gauntlet	12	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Barracks	13	5,000	12, 12, 12, 12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pitchwood	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pitchling Help (Skill Challenge)	12	700	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pitchling Contest (Skill Challenge)	12	700	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Convince Dashgoban (Skill Challenge)	12	700	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Convince Father Albert (Skill Challenge)	12	1,400	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Steppengard Blockade	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scaling the Cliffs	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gallo Treasure Parcels (Reward)	—	—	11, 11, 11 (11)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Destroy the Siege Engines (Skill Challenge)	12	3,600	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mage Assassination	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Otharil Vale, First Wave (Skill Challenge)	12	2,100	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Otharil Vale, Second Wave (Skill Challenge)	12	1,400	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold the Line, First Wave	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold the Line, Second Wave	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	War-Mage Artillery	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Get Malkan!	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tragedy	14	5,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Torrax and Serrimus	15	6,000	12, 12, 12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guard Gauntlet	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Guard Passage (Skill Challenge)	11	700	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The King's Madness	13	4,000	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Treasure Parcels I (Reward)	—	—	12, 12, 12
<input type="checkbox"/>	Final Treasure Parcels II (Reward)	—	—	any missing parcels



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quests	Level	XP
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-1: Jineer's Letter	11	3,000
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-2: Escape from Bresk	13	4,000
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-1: Dasseni Idol (per participant)	10	500
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-2: Jousting (per participant)	10	500
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-3: Horseshoes (per participant)	10	500
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-4: Shell Game (per participant)	10	500
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-5: Spell Duel (per participant)	10	500
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-6: Bang a Gong (per participant)	10	500
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-7: Dashgoban's Aid	14	1,000
<input type="checkbox"/> MQ-8: Delay Steppengard	14	1,000

## THE BATTLE FOR GALLO'S FEND

Act Four culminates in a battle between Steppengard and Gallo as the mad king attempts to root out what he perceives to be the attempt of a traitor to usurp his reign. This section keeps track of the key activities of the conflict that help determine Gallo's success against the misguided monarch.

Each of the following conditions is worth a number of Victory Points (see table above). If the heroes earn Duke Gallo 30 Victory Points, he wins a decisive victory over Steppengard. If Gallo has at least 20 Victory Points, Duke Gallo wins a truce; if he has fewer, he is defeated.

The specifics of victory, truce, or defeat are detailed in the section "Wrapping up the Fourth Act" (see page 39).

## A WORD ABOUT SKILL CHALLENGES

### A DEPARTURE FROM TACTICS

Though filled with tactical opportunities, this adventure deals with events that transcend ordinary skirmish-type combat and thrusts the

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objective	Victory Points	Earned
<input type="checkbox"/> Secure the aid of Lord Dashgoban	8	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Secure the aid of Lady Timor	8	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Kill Kelkin Thravanvost before the battle	4	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold the line after the first wave at Otharil Vale	2	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Hold the line after the second wave at Otharil Vale	2	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Capture or Kill Konigsmarshal Malkan	8	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Defeat Madness	4	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Each siege engine destroyed before the battle (12 max)	1 per engine	_____

heroes full-on into the dangers of the battlefield. When thousands of combatants are involved in a clash, this adventure employs the skill challenge system described in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE. Turning large tactical situations into skill challenges gives everyone an opportunity to participate in charting the progress of the war. This may require a refresher in how skill challenges work.

In order to make Skill Challenges simpler to read, the adventures in the War of the Burning Sky saga use standardized "shortcuts" to explain the results of using a skill. A skill line takes the form:

**Skill DC xx** (result of successful check, number of checks allowed, cost of failure)

For example:

**Athletics DC 10** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

This means that if a hero make a DC 10 Athletics check, it counts as one success towards the skill challenge. In addition, Athletics checks can be made any number of times; a failed check counts as a failure against the challenge, and the hero making the check loses a healing surge.

**Primary Skills** are listed together in a group; **Secondary Skills** follow in a second group.

The "cost of failure" portion of the skill line may look different for different challenges. In particular, if failing a skill check does not add a failure to the skill challenge, this is noted. The table below explains the most common "cost of failure" entries.

"Cost of Failure" Text	Explanation
fail/healing surge	The check counts as a failure and the hero loses a healing surge.
fail/group healing surge	The check counts as a failure and all heroes in the party lose a healing surge.
fail	A failure with no healing surge loss.
—/healing surge	Not a skill challenge failure, but the hero loses a healing surge. This is applied to secondary skills.
—	Not a skill challenge failure. This is applied to secondary skills.
fail/healing surge* - Skill	The check counts as a failure and the hero loses a healing surge, but there is a secondary skill use that changes the consequence. The secondary skill that helps will be marked with an "*" as well.

## OTHER RESOURCES

The *War of the Burning Sky Player's Guide* and *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide* are free resources that contain rules and descriptions to help you and your players see more of the world than what is described in this module. Rules systems, new feats, spells, and more can be found that help to immerse the players in the unfolding saga. Running this adventure will be simplified if you take advantage of what they have to offer, especially the Attitude Change Skill Challenge system detailed in the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide*. Look for it (and the *War of the Burning Sky Player's Guide*) at the EN World website.

## SKILL CHALLENGES TO CHANGE ATTITUDES

Many encounters deal with intelligent creatures that have a level of communication and reason. Creatures may have the following attitudes towards the party at the start: Hostile, Unfriendly, Wary, Indifferent, Friendly, and Helpful.

Though skill challenges can be created individually for the many social encounters within, this adventure uses the system described in the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide*. This resource has many other helpful suggestions to make the Dungeon Master's job a little easier.

## FOLLOWING THE SCRIPT?

The provided encounters are not the only way to run this adventure. The heroes may do unexpected things during play that no specific encounter is designed to handle. They may actually ally with the king or side with another noble than Duke Gallo. A party may decide to substitute the king with a double or start a rebellion to dethrone him.

The important things in this adventure are its main themes. As long as the heroes encounter King Steppengard and the trillith Madness, discover the treachery of the early Ragesian



incursion, and participate in the battle of Gallo's Fend (on whichever side for whatever reason), almost everything else can change.

The adventures in this campaign saga are modular, so if Dassen falls, further adventures are still playable because they take place in different locales. A certain level of improvisation would be needed in case the heroes return to Dassen, but the rest of the saga would be unaffected.

## THE KINGDOM OF DASSEN

Dassen lies to the south of Ragesia, and the southwest of Shahalesti, its borders defined by craggy mountains defended by hundreds of small dwarven strongholds. Dassen's people, a swarthy assortment of humans and dwarves, cherish their land, to the point that superstitious cavalymen even put dirt in their boots so they always touch the soil of their homeland.

Originally known as the Eight Lands, Dassen was unified fifteen years ago and a ninth region was carved out, which became the holding of King Steppengard. King Steppengard rules over the eight feudal lords and ladies, as well as dozens of minor dwarven nobles who govern their own small holdings in the mountains.

There are no mighty cities in Dassen, only thousands of farms and towns growing out from the nine castles of the king and his dukes. The largest city, Bresk, is a hilly community built both above and below ground, a sprawling walled fortress on the banks of the Nasham River. It is home to King Steppengard's castle. The second most prominent settlement is Gallo's Fend, a fortress city on the northern border, hundreds of years old, which long served to keep enemies from entering the nation.

### ENEMIES ON THE FLY

Using the stat blocks in Appendix G, you can easily mix things up and generate new tactical encounters for the heroes should they set off on a path the adventure does not prepare for.

For instance, if the heroes attempt to abduct King Steppengard and replace him with a double, you could have a mage very similar to Kelkin Thravanost protecting the king's chamber, Madness lurking in the room and manipulating his thoughts through horrible dreams, and numerous guards stationed outside who are identical to Steppengard knights (qq.v.).



## THE COUNCIL OF NINE

As a country, Dassen has had trouble remaining unified. Originally an alliance of eight kings, for three centuries the nation was bound by the rule of the Book of Eight Lands, a lesser artifact that traced the lineage of each of the nobles in charge of the different lands, and kept clear who was the rightful ruler of the overall nation, by bloodlines. The book, heavily guarded by whoever was the current king, also provided magical protection to those nobles, to ensure that each ruler was free of compulsions and deceptions.

Five decades ago the then-current king was slain by the then-next in line, setting off a civil war that purged many noble bloodlines, as the the book became a sort of to-do list of whom to kill to gain power. Twice Dassen stabilized, but twice more it fell again into civil war. While it was a chaotic time, it kept the Ragesians from conquering the land, since keeping control of it

would not have been worth the effort.

Fifteen years ago, a new king, Steppengard, came to power. He had no siblings, and so formed internal alliances to stabilize the nation, establishing the Council of Nine to ensure that there would be no more wars. Now, all major matters of policy must be voted upon in council (often by proxy) at Steppengard's castle in Bresk. Each Lord and Lady has one vote, and the King's vote counts as three. Cooperation is ensured by an agreement that the rest of the Lords will combine forces to march on a Lord who breaks faith with the Council.

The Book of Eight Lands still grants its boon to the current rulers of each of the old kingdoms, and to the king of Dassen himself, but it no longer officially dictates the line of royal ascension. Steppengard had a large family, with eighteen children as of the new year, to ensure that he would be able to pass down his throne without further wars.



In the character sketches following, some interests of each council member are mentioned to help the heroes negotiate support for Seaquen. As they roleplay events that take place in Bresk, these snippets of information can be revealed by you as they gather information before the audience with King Steppengard. When entreating for each noble's support, the information can help direct which skill checks would be most useful for each faction.

#### **KING STEPPENGARD**

The ruler of the nation, Steppengard is an old, experienced warrior who has a reputation for preferring negotiation to combat. Steppengard would likely have been willing to listen to Seaquen's offer, had it not been for the death of his family leaving him unhinged.

#### **LORD GALLO**

Gallo was named Duke by Steppengard as a reward for his land's service in protecting Dassen from invasion. Across the Nasham River that defines the northern border of Gallo's lands is a mountain pass called the Alydi Gap, the only easy passage between Ragesia and Dassen. Most other routes through the northern mountains are protected by the dozens of dwarven strongholds, though none is as smooth a trip as Alydi Gap is, so it has fallen to Gallo's family throughout the centuries to hold back invaders.

Gallo does not want to let the Ragesians through his land, and so will be the most receptive ally for Seaquen.

#### **LADY TIMOR**

Timor is a wizard of modest power. Her lands are protected from invasion by the Glaskeel Cliffs, a strange icy landform half a mile high that separates her territory's plateau from the lowlands of Gallo's lands. Other routes into her demense are circuitous and easily defended. Her army is instructed to allow refugees access to her lands if they brave the hardships of the treacherous passes in the Hettkonn Mountains, and the influx is considerable.

Lady Timor is very frightened of the Ragesian Scourge, and so she is willing to ally with Seaquen if she thinks the resistance movement has a chance of succeeding. Lady Timor and her ambassadors are also partial to offers of magical training and assistance, which Seaquen can provide. She also has a fondness for mountain climbing and studying the wildlife of the region.

If the heroes ended the forest fire in Innenotdar (see Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*), her proxy in Bresk will mention the danger her lands face from Ragesian invasion. The proxy will use veiled references to it if Inquisitor Torrax is nearby.

#### **LORD DASHGOBAN**

Dashgoban is the only dwarf among the eight lords, and he was one of the three nobles who had to sacrifice part of his family's lands to create Steppengard's holding (the other two were Lady Dene and Lord Iz). He thinks of Steppengard as a weak man, and would like to see him replaced, but he himself has no interest in ruling the whole kingdom.

Dashgoban loves history and genealogy and research on him will indicate that knowledge of those things will be helpful in gaining his support. In typical dwarven fashion, Lord Dashgoban loves good spirits and has acquired a taste for Shahalesti dandelion ale. His proxy will be interested in a trade agreement with Herlan, the proprietor of the Enchanted Draughts in Seaquen, who can supply the ale at a discount.

#### **LADY DENE**

The beautiful Lady Dene profits greatly from traffic passing through her lands to and from Seaquen, though she is nervous because she has only a weak army of her own and sees Seaquen's burgeoning population as a border threat if they become an army. Her loyalty to the king is unswerving.

Lady Dene is concerned about keeping her lands beautiful and any discussion about preserving Nature will ease her fears regarding Seaquen. Normal diplomatic arguments about a non-aggression pact and increased trade agreements will help.

#### **LORD IZ**

The lands of Iz are rocky and inhospitable, home to strong warriors. However, Iz is loyal to the Council of Nine, and will obey his king.

If the heroes met with Lord Iz during their flight from Gate Pass, Iz's proxy will be known to them, and garnering support will be much easier. Lord Iz's interests lie in physical and military prowess, so any discussions that offer Xavious Foebane's expertise and training will be well regarded.

#### **LORD MEGADON**

Lord Megadon is the council's richest noble, controlling both the coastline and access to the Nasham River. He is also next in the line of succession should King Steppengard be dethroned. He flaunts his standing in court and his proxy responds well to any special deference given to Megadon. He does not believe Ragesia is a threat to him.

Much of the friction between Megadon and Seaquen is related to fishing rights. Both sides have had a long-standing feud over control of the northern portion of Gradis Reef, which is rich with tuna and grouper. Another sore point is Seaquen's refusal to deal with a colony of sahuagin in the area that are clearly in Seaquen's territorial waters, but are causing trouble with Megadon's fleet. Seaquen's boats are all equipped with spells infused into their keels that give the watery menaces vertigo and Megadon wants the magic for his boats or the sahuagin to be destroyed. A diplomatic concession from Seaquen to resolve these issues would help garner some new support.

#### **LADY NAMIN**

Namin has ties to the Shahalesti, whose nation her lands border. She has heard rumors that agents of Lyceum attempted to kill the princess of Shahalesti and destroyed part of the Shahalesti fleet, so she is hostile to Seaquen.

When the king's wife was killed, Lady Namin was already in the capital city, and she quickly begins maneuvering to become the new queen. Lady Namin is vain, and appeals to her vanity are the easiest way to garner her support. Lord Megadon's and Lord Rego's proxies will tend to follow Lady Namin's lead if the heroes can manage to flatter her enough to obtain her support.



When rolling Diplomacy checks during the skill challenge, the heroes can further impress Lady Namin by wearing or showing the Badge of the Solei Palancis they received in Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Inmenotdar*. The heroes can also ease her mind about Seaquen by revealing the real story of Ragesian treachery to her. Finally, flattery during the skill challenge (Bluff checks) will help her view the proceedings in a positive light.

### LORD REGO

A terrible manager of resources, Rego, the poorest of the noble lords, has suffered the most from refugees passing through his lands. Most use the Prince's Way in the open plain just south of the Churnett River and nearly all Rego's towns and villages have suffered from the depletion of the local resources.

In an effort to mask his own shortcomings, Rego loudly blames the openness of Seaquen for his troubles. He is actively hostile to Seaquen, and wants to see it destroyed as a way to shift the focus of his duchy's problems elsewhere. Because of his animosity, he will only be interested in a generous trade agreement with Seaquen and some form of subsidy to offset damage done to his dwindling wealth.

## THE CAPITAL OF BRESK

### BRESK (SMALL CITY)

**Population** 10,000 — Mixed race distribution (65% human, 28% dwarf, 5% orc, 1% half-orc, 1% other);

**Government** Dassen is a monarchy, and King Steppengard sits on the throne, but the town of Bresk has a mayor appointed by the King's advisors. Political aspirants often stoop to bribery and graft to secure a position as mayor.

**Defense** Walled castle with an active complement of 300 armed troops available on call. At this moment, the town has over 1,500 troops on duty to protect the king.

**Inns** There are around 30 inns in Bresk. The Golden Griffon, the one the heroes use in this adventure, is one of the higher-end establishments, catering to minor nobles and highly placed bureaucrats.

**Taverns** There are at least 80 taverns and taprooms of differing quality and price range around town. At this time, every location is charging double for drinks because of the winter, the assassinations, and dwindling supplies.

**Supplies** Anything the players want that does not require a lengthy construction process is available. Prices are elevated about 20% from the norm.

**Temples** There are no temples in the city, though shrines abound. Religion is important and highly respected, but the influence it has in the city is secondary to the king's court. Because the Eight Lands Boon provides great protection from gullibility, the religious clergy must honestly treat the nobles as equals.

The walled city of Bresk rises above the hills around it, with the castle perched on a rocky protrusion called the Great Hill. It overlooks the wide river and the Toraest Steppes to the east. Much of the castle lies underground, as do many parts of the city, which is home to several thousand humans, dwarves, and others.

The city itself is generally unfriendly to outsiders, and most of the real culture of Bresk thrives in tunnels excavated by dwarves over the centuries. Most foreigners never delve below the surface to see the bustling markets and solemn temples, illuminated by clever skylights and mighty braziers tens of feet tall.

Breskan architecture is stout and broad and features various great cats, gem patterns, and sphinx statues. People dress in multiple layers of drab clothes; Breskans are unaccustomed to long-lasting chill weather, and the tunnels underground are much warmer.

Where the traditional religions of the troubled Dassen of old were devoted mostly to strength, battle, and warfare, the unification of the nation brought a sect of the goddess Donhofreya (whose portfolio includes the land, healing, and war) that has devoted itself to healing the nation. The prelates of Donhofreya have gained much respect, and many of them serve in the army, eagerly contributing a mixture of militarism and medicine. The Order of the Aquiline Cross (detailed in the *War of the Burning Sky Player's Guide*) is on good terms with the Donhofreya prelacy.



# ACT ONE: THE CALM

In this act, the heroes learn secrets and embark on a mission to seek help for the budding resistance. This act sets the stage for the rest of the adventure and provides some moments for past companions to reappear before their paths diverge from the heroes'.

## WAR NEWS

Gate Pass is still a battleground, with the Second Ragesian Army now controlling several districts, and Shahalesti forces working to aid the city's defense. Shahalesti and Ragesia are also battling in the northern reaches of Shahalesti, as the Fourth Ragesian Army heads for Nacaan, capital of the northern Shahalesti state. The Ragesians apparently plan to join up their two armies after conquering Gate Pass, in order to drive for Calanis, the Shahalesti capital.

The Ragesian fleet is blockading Turinn, the capital of Sindaire, while General Magdus of the First Ragesian Army marches to take the city from inland. His forces are split, and he makes slow progress as he tries to return them to the main body. There is also word that Ostalin prepares to invade Sindaire from the south, though news out of Ostalin is sparse right now.

## DOUGAN

This encounter takes place a couple of days after the hurricane. Dougan Rambausen, a Lyceum wizard, has been studying an artifact the heroes delivered to him in the previous adventure (*Adventure Three, Shelter from the Storm*). During an evening where the heroes are being honored for their help in defending the town, he has a meeting with them.

The dinner in your honor at the Enchanted Draughts tavern has been amazing. After four months of wet weather, everyone seems glad to see the stars again. They normally would not be visible in the formal dining room on the tavern's third floor, but the hurricane destroyed the roof and repairs have not begun. The tavern's owner, Herlan Forsht, sits next to you; Katrina, Simeon Gohanach, Xavious Foebane, Dougan Rambausen, and several officials from the town council are also present. The Shahalesti prisoner Faquaniel that you rescued from the Fire Tomb is also present,



looking uncomfortable in the assembly.

The evening started with a simple ceremony of thanks for your efforts and Herlan's private reserve of Sindairian brandy was merely a prelude to the coming meal: crabcakes and swordfish meal with an oyster bisque, and an ample supply of Shahalesti dandelion ale (with a slight toffee infusion) warming in the slightly chill air. When dessert, a warm tapioca with a caramelized rum sauce, is served, Guildmistress Sheena Larkins and your friend Tiljann (who has never seemed happier) begin a rousing retelling of Lee Sidoneth's defeat by your hands. The music wafts out to the street below, and, at the end of the performance, a cheer rises from a crowd of at least fifty standing below. Tiljann flies up and laughs at the sight of the throng and rushes down to meet them.

With the dinner and entertainment concluded, the participants give a final cheer and begin to leave. Soon, only you, Dougan,

and Simeon remain. The dwarf is bright-eyed and is clearly enjoying a bottle of arrowroot ale brewed by the Flinthorn clan in the Toraest Steppes of Dassen. "My friends," he says without any of the gruffness you normally hear, "I have news of the object you delivered to me."

Dougan then proceeds to tell the history of the artifact (see the sidebar on the next page). He plans to conduct an experiment in the morning with a few apes as test subjects and invites the heroes to join him.

## THE HEROES PARTICIPATE IN THE TEST

If the heroes agree to the idea, Dougan is pleased and takes a final draught before racing out of the tavern to prepare for the next morning. Simeon chuckles at Dougan's excitement and then leaves.

This encounter is not meant to be deadly, but more comical in nature. The important

## HISTORY OF THE DIANOEM MARK IV

The Dianoem first appeared in the early history of the dwarves as a mental enhancer. Rather than rely on books and scrolls for knowledge when away on deep mining expeditions, the device magically stored dozens of tomes that could be accessed while connected to it. It performed its task well for a hundred years or more and went through numerous upgrades as the dwarf magicians and device-makers found new ways to tap into the dwarven mind. Unfortunately, later versions of the device also modified the mind with each successive use, and the users slowly went insane.

The fourth model attempted to fix the mind-altering effects, and seemed to succeed, but a new side effect appeared, allowing a dwarf to charm nearby creatures for days at a time. Within a month after the Dianoem Mark IV was released, a disenchanting dwarf named Fraster Hammerfane created an army of charmed kobolds that attacked the Diamondheart clan in the caverns underneath Gate Pass. The battle was fierce and Fraster nearly overwhelmed the surprised dwarves. It was only through a bold plan that filled the clan's stronghold with methane gas and then ignited, did the Diamondheart clan prevail. The gaseous explosion sparked by the desperate dwarves killed the rebellious dwarf and his army and turned the stronghold into a massive diamond crystal that seeps blood.

Until now, it was believed that Fraster's Dianoem Mark IV and eleven others had been destroyed and their history erased from the general dwarven population. Dougan is one of three or four dwarves who even know of the strange device and finding one underneath Gate Pass is troubling and exciting; troubling because some dwarves clearly doctored the records regarding their destruction, and exciting because of the promise that a Dianoem used in the proper hands could influence enemies and avoid a war.

detail in the tactical event is learning how to reverse the charm effect. Feel free to let your imagination wander during the combat and let the monkeys do crazy things. The apes will also "play," but they will be a bit more rough about it.

Dougan's lab is empty when you arrive, save for an elf wearing a fiery red and yellow robe adjusting odd-shaped glassware items on a nearby desk. As you enter, he looks up and smiles. "Greetings! My name is Ivellios. I'm one of Master Dougan's students. It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance and your deeds are an inspiration! I've been tasked with leading you to the menagerie where today's tests will be performed. Please follow me!"

With a quick wave of his arm, Ivellios points to the door and surprisingly teleports past you into the hallway behind. He laughs when he reappears with flames that flicker around his ears from the strange fiery phenomenon and then speaks, "After nearly dying from the hurricane, I decided that shackling my magic is worse than feeling a little pain! Now! Let's continue!" The elf nearly leaps as he guides you to Lyceum's menagerie. You finally make it into the monkey house where Dougan is. Ivellios ushers you in and then says goodbye.

Inside, Dougan is busy preparing the Dianoem. Inserted into a small hole on the box's rear is a length of wire wrapped in rubber. At the end of the wire is a palm-sized circular device that looks like paper stretched over a cross stitch hoop. The dwarf has placed it close to his ear and is humming a dwarven chant. When he sees you, he smiles, presses a few buttons on the machine to turn it off and picks up a key on a lanyard and places it around his neck.

He takes a moment to distractedly mutter greetings and offer small talk but soon points to a large caged atrium where monkeys and two apes can be seen. The monkeys flit around the bars as if they are tree limbs and the two apes sit quietly, watching you intently.

Dougan returns to the Dianoem and tells you to stand somewhere in the aisle between the atrium area and the individual cages. "I'm going to try the charm on the monkeys. If this works, they should be able to follow my instructions and do some tricks they have learned without the need for any rewards."

He turns on the blue device by pressing a few of the buttons and light appears in the glass window. Dwarven language spills out of the hoop next to Dougan's ear and he stares intently at the monkeys. The creatures watch Dougan carefully while moving around in the cage, but then slow their climbing pace until they stop and stare at the dwarf. A minute later, Dougan makes another pattern of

button presses and the dwarf speech stops; the monkeys remain immobile.

The dwarf says, "Now for the test! Sophie: handstand!" One of the monkeys places its hands on the ground and lifts its feet above its head in a handstand. Dougan, smiling, barks out, "Tito, Juniper, Freda, Dolly: dance!" The remaining monkeys grab a partner and mimic a simple waltz step. Dougan laughs and dances around like a kid, paying no heed to your presence. "I did it! The blasted thing works!" He then turns around to the performing creatures and tells them all, "Good job!" and the simians immediately stop their performance and begin to play.

Giddy from the experiment, Dougan explains how the device amplifies the mind's suggestive capability and charms the recipient for up to a week. Once charmed, the creature will attempt to please its charmer until the effect wears off or a particular key sequence is entered to cancel the effect. The mage shows the heroes four lights in the glass area that glow two different colors. The four buttons pressed in sequence cause the lights to illuminate based on the order of button presses and if any of the sequence was matched. He speculates the puzzle is designed to keep normal creatures from using it.

Dougan plays around with the animals for a while longer while the heroes watch. At one point, he acts like a monkey himself and tells the simians, "Do like me!" and all the monkeys start to mimic Dougan's actions. The dwarf starts the Dianoem again, with Freda intently watching his actions, and concentrates on the two apes. Soon, they too are following instructions, lightly slapping each other on the head and beating their chests at the dwarf's prompting.

Dougan's joy spills over everywhere and he dances around with the Dianoem in his grasp. At one point though, he gets close to the bars and one of the apes is within range to slap the dwarf on the head. (Dougan will later observe, sagely, "Never dance within arms' reach of an ape at play.") Dougan goes slack on the blow and the Dianoem tumbles out of his hands and between the bars of the cage. Freda quickly snatches it up and starts to press the artifact's buttons.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Dianoem (page 57)





### AFTERMATH

If the heroes disable the Dianoem, Dougan wakes up and is mortified at the mistake he made. He asks for the device and quickly unplugs the wiring. If the heroes did not kill any creatures, he is pleased, commenting that Banahman Vett will be happy with their care of his pets.

Dougan pleads with the heroes not to tell Simeon because he does not want to feel the headmaster's wrath. The dwarf promises to be more careful during his test.

If the heroes fail to stop the device, they wake up in Lyceum's infirmary with a very agitated Simeon checking on their condition. Dougan is next to the headmaster, looking like a puppy that chewed his master's shoes and was caught. The dwarf mage receives a stare from Simeon and the mage comes forward to give an apology. His eyes are red and it is clear he has been crying. If anyone asks about the artifact, Simeon snaps back, "Where it won't tempt anyone! I've delivered it to storehouse thirteen, where it will stay under Tika Shayam's watchful eye until we better understand how to deal with it."

### THE HEROES DO NOT HELP DOUGAN

If the heroes pass up on the test, they become embroiled in the aftermath as the test subjects escape.

---

A young elf wearing a fiery red and yellow robe runs your way and stops before you. Out of breath from hard running and gesturing wildly as he talks, you hear, "Oh, thank goodness! Quickly! Dougan... Dougan needs you... there has... been an... accident!"

---

The elf, named Ivellios, is one of Dougan's students. Tasked with finding the heroes if something untoward happens, Ivellios will answer questions as long as the heroes are moving to help the dwarf. The elf leads the heroes to the Lyceum, but travels to the northern side to a fence that he quickly climbs over. Once secretly inside the academy's perimeter, the heroes are led to the monkey house where Banahman Vett keeps many of his exotic primates.

---

You don't even need to put your ear to the door to hear the hoots and screeches of monkeys going crazy. Ivellios breathlessly tells

you that they are all in the caged atrium, but Dougan came too close to the cage while running his experiment and was knocked out by one of the apes. The dwarf dropped the Dianoem and one of the monkeys was able to pull it into the cage. Dougan appears to have a concussion, and Ivellios does not want Simeon to know what has happened. The primates now have the artifact and it needs to be deactivated.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Monkeying Around (page 59)



### AFTERMATH

If the heroes disable the Dianoem, the remaining animals are quickly captured and a very agitated Simeon demands the artifact be given to him. If the heroes did not kill any creatures, Banahman Vett is pleased over his pets' care.

If the heroes fail to stop the device, they wake up in Lyceum's infirmary with events occurring as if they had helped Dougan.

### TORRENT'S VENGEANCE

On the day of the ill-fated Dianoem experiment, Torrent approaches the heroes in the afternoon and asks them to help with fixing Laurabec's old tent so that Crystin can occupy it. She will start in the morning and hopes they will pitch in with the work. The heroes are free to accept or pass on the request, but both women will be disappointed if they decline.

---

It has been a productive morning of work helping Crystin piece together the wreckage of Laurabec Adelsburg's former tent. The fledgling wizardess is still reeling from her friend's death and she is determined to carry on in Laurabec's stead. Though not versed in all aspects of religion, Crystin has begun learning from the other temple leaders, and she rallied them to start work on the new temple. The building project is now seen as a uniting force for the ravaged town and already the foundation has been started.

As you raise the last pole to the tent's interior, Torrent, who has been working beside you along with a ranger named Eril, mentions that some Ragesian spies have revealed the names and locations of a few remaining White Wyrms cells. "I am making a raid this afternoon with Eril and was hoping you could help out.

I don't want any Ragesian scum to get any traction during our rebuilding. Are you game for a little fun?"

---

If the heroes go along with the idea, Torrent is pleased and tells them to meet at Lorb Vortberd's office in an hour.

The magistrate is pleased to see the party and is quick to detail the situation. After searching through Inquisitor Damius' effects in the Fire Tomb, some steam tunnels under the northeast hills were identified as a larger hideout for the White Wyrms and a few Ragesians. Spies have confirmed they are still there and Lorb wants to root them out before they can cause any more trouble. A map of the hideout was also found in the tomb, but there may be traps and areas not shown.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

White Wyrms Wipeout (page 61)



### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Ragesian Rout (page 63)



### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

The Last Legion (page 65)



### AFTERMATH

With the remaining cells routed, Torrent and Eril host a celebration at Hemingway's. While there, it is clear that the ranger and the cleric have begun a relationship and both are bemoaning separate assignments that begin the next day. Eril will be traveling to Ostalin, and Torrent has been selected to pursue the Shahalesti alliance. She mentions that Simeon and Lorb have been considering a task for the heroes as well, and she hints that they should be prepared for a meeting in the near future.

### MEETING AT LYCEUM

This encounter introduces the heroes to a diplomat that can help navigate the tricky political situation in Bresk if needed. If none of the heroes has a good Diplomacy skill, Balan will be invaluable in King Steppengard's court. Otherwise, a hero with enough Diplomacy skill should be preferred over the NPC. Feel free to kill the diplomat during the journey to Bresk. Assume that Balan spent most of his time with the hero who will entreat the king, carefully explaining the political hazards while the diplomat rehearsed his arguments during the party's travel.

On the second day after the party at Enchanted Draughts, the heroes are summoned to a council meeting at Lyceum.

You find yourself at the Lyceum's gate after receiving a summons for an emergency council. For the first time, the gatehouse gleams in the sun and the once-muddy grounds are dry. Hestion greets you immediately, with none of the imperious air he exhibited on your first meeting. He smiles warmly and then motions to a scrawny young man, no older than sixteen, with straw-colored hair and expensive clothes, who quickly leaves the group he is with to meet you. "This is young Jineer Bremman, one of Pristina Whitehair's students," Hestion says. "The council apparently decided to let Simeon handle things instead and he is waiting for you in his office. This young lad is exceptional and considers it an honor to escort you."

With a deepening blush, Jineer silently turns towards the main tower and begins to move. Hestion "harrumphs" towards the young mage and Jineer stops a moment, becoming even redder from embarrassment, and stammers, "P... Plea... Please sirs, if y... you will follow m... me."

You follow Jineer to Simeon's office on the fifth floor. Its door is guarded by four soldiers and four mages. One of the guards knocks once and opens the door and you enter into the Headmaster's office. Occupying a quarter of the floor, Simeon's office is furnished with several comfortable couches set up to serve as a conference area, plus a desk and numerous bookshelves. Maps, sculptures, and weapons adorn the walls, and a broad window looks out westward over the still-devastated Seaquen harbor. Simeon sits on one of the couches and Kiernan Stekart, the head of the War Department, stands next to him.

On another couch is seated Katrina and standing behind her is an uncharacteristically heavy-set half-elf dressed in fine nobleman's dress whom you have not seen before. He holds an exotic leather-bound case against his breast, stitched with a coat of arms. Simeon smiles at you and says, "Hello my friends! Thanks for coming! There is someone I'd like you to meet. He certainly wants to meet you." Simeon looks over to the stranger and nods.

"Come on and sit down," says the half-elf stranger. "I'm Balan Bastom, distantly related to the Bastom house of Ostalin. Pleasure to meet you. Simeon and I were just trying to figure out how long it had been since we'd seen a storm



anywhere near as big as the one we had last week. The best we can figure was twenty-two years ago. Good job on that, by the way."

Katrina smirks and remarks to Balan, "We only owe them our lives." She turns to you and says, "And we have a mission for you. I've promised them that you won't disappoint us."

After Katrina speaks, Simeon takes a few orders and gets everyone drinks of their choice from a well-stocked cabinet.

At the DM's discretion, some small talk begins at this point. Balan is originally from Ostalin, where he was officially a noble, though he has no actual political power. Now he serves as an advisor to Seaquen, and is the chosen diplomat to represent the town's interests in Dassen. The diplomat is intensely interested in the heroes' story and asks, "What is the most surprising adventure you have experienced on your journey to Seaquen?"

Finally, Simeon steers the conversation towards business.

The large-bodied Balan sips delicately at his ale and casts a wan smile in your direction. "I suppose you are wondering what this is all about," he says, "and I can't say I blame you. Have you heard the recent news out of Ragesia? They're dispatching an army to come take care

of us. As soon as the mountain passes thaw on the border between Ragesia and Dassen, we'll have forty thousand or more soldiers headed our way. The downside of notoriety, I fear.

"Regardless, with the damage to the town, even if the entire refugee population mustered, Seaquen can't hope to defend itself on its own against the Ragesian army. Normally it would be a simple matter of requesting help from King Steppengard, since officially Seaquen is part of Dassen. Not like we actually pay taxes, though." He grins.

"But the Ragesians have gone and made a non-aggression pact with the King," Balan frowns. "We just got word this morning. An envoy from Ragesia promised that Empress Leska will not attack Dassen if their army is allowed to march through unmolested. Depending on how the weather goes, it looks like we have a month or two before our resistance is cut short.

"That's where I, and hopefully we, come in. Simeon here has asked me to journey to Bresk and use my humble persuasive skills to convince the King to change his mind. We've already sent ahead a courier requesting an audience for us, so hopefully they'll be expecting us. Now, we're not particularly keen on officially allying with Dassen, but if we pledge our magical support to King Steppengard in this war, and play to his ego, needling him a bit about how he's letting the Ragesians bully him, I think we have a shot."

At this point, Simeon interrupts. "Try not to give away the town, Balan. Remember, we want to 'offer our assistance at the king's pleasure,' not 'pledge loyalty.' We're not joining his country, and we're sure as hell not going to pay him taxes. We —"

Balan shakes his head. "I'll try, but let's not get too full of ourselves. We're not a sovereign nation here. I'll say and do whatever is necessary to make sure that all the people here are safe from the Scourge. If Steppengard won't listen, maybe one of the other nobles will.

"Anyway," Balan continues, "back to you. As you can probably see, I am not a great warrior, nor am I an experienced traveler. The Ragesians already have an envoy in Bresk, so we should expect some trouble. Simeon has vouched for you fully, and Katrina here also recommends you highly. The long and the short of it is we need your help. I shudder to think what would happen to Lyceum if the Ragesian Scourge were to reach us."



The conversation turns to practical considerations. Simeon can provide maps and Balan can explain the political nature of Dassen. The heroes may have observations from their initial travel through Dassen as well. Kiernan says little unless asked about military matters, which he has been actively researching for the past few weeks. Surprisingly, Katrina has as much information about the Ragesian army as Kiernan does, which she explains by saying she had a few friends in the Gate Pass resistance over the years.

They all encourage the heroes to ask questions and get a clear sense of how their mission will play out.

**Travel:** While Seaquen was being struck by a bizarre winter hurricane, weather in Dassen and further north has been terribly cold. The temperature is already taking a downward turn in Seaquen, and it looks like it will snow within a week, even though winter should be ending soon.

The Nasham River that runs north through most of Dassen has frozen, whereas the King's Road, while normally an easy highway, is currently buried under snow and would be difficult passage. After a bit of overland travel to get out of the swamps near Seaquen, the heroes could buy a few sleds and dogs, reindeer, or horses to pull them. Balan would cover the cost of these, at Seaquen's expense.

The heroes might mention hiring the Wayfarers to teleport them, but experiments of how to survive the "Burning Sky" effect, wherein teleportation causes fatal burns, have not yet been successful.

**Getting Ready to Go:** Simeon expects the heroes to be ready to leave the next morning. He encourages them to purchase whatever they suspect they will need for the mission, seeming pleased that a strong war economy is keeping people busy in the city. He promises

to make sure any of their belongings they must leave behind are taken care of, and wishes them luck. Before they leave, he gives them a scroll of sending if anyone in the party can use it, telling them to use this to alert Kiernan if anything goes horribly awry. Good news can wait. Bad news will refuse to.

## LETTER HOME

As soon as the heroes leave the meeting, they encounter Jineer on the first floor.

Just before you leave the tower, your earlier escort, Jineer comes out of a nearby hall. You meet the eyes of the skinny teenage boy cursed with a mop of unruly blond hair. He's red-faced and almost out of breath and holding an envelope in his hand. "I ... I'm sorry for following you. I, uh, wanted to ask, well, I mean, if you're going to Bresk, that is, could you, maybe, take this letter to my father? His name's, um, Jinis, and he's Lord Gallo's proxy to the royal court. You ... are going, aren't you? Please, I — I'm afraid something bad is going to happen to him. I ... um ... can offer, you know, a few coins if — if you'll get this to him. You know. If you're going to Bresk. At all."

The heroes will probably be surprised that Jineer knows what went on in Simeon's office. If pressed for an answer, the lad guides them into a janitorial closet that has many pipes reaching into the upper floors. Greywater flows down from sinks in many of the offices to a single drain in the room. Jineer directs one of the heroes to place his ear on one pipe and Simeon can be heard speaking with Katrina and Kiernan. In the brief snippet, the hero discovers that Xavious Foebane has sent a number of adventurers to Castle Korstull in Sindaire to find Emperor Coaltongue's missing Torch. It is left to the party to determine

## OTHER SEAQUEN MISSIONS

While the heroes are busy securing the safety of Seaquen against an army, four other groups of agents are on missions of their own.

One group (including Eiril the ranger) is headed for the Monastery of Two Winds, on the border of Ostalin and Sindaire, following clues that suggest the monastery might have been involved in the hurricane plot.

Another group, recruited by General Xavious, has been sent to find any evidence about the fate of the Torch of the Burning Sky. They are all paragon-tier adventurers and are in daily contact with Simeon.

The other two groups have been sent to Shahalesti and Ostalin, respectively, following other leads Simeon and Kiernan are not talking about right now.

The fates of these other groups will be discovered in future modules.

whether they want to mention the security weakness to Simeon or not.

Jineer has not heard from his father for a few weeks, which is normal, since letters are not delivered often during winter. He has, however, heard news that Ragesia is going to march through Dassen and has become convinced that the heroes must speak with Duke Gallo if they are to succeed in convincing Dassen to refuse Ragesia's demands. In this, his father can help them. The letter is unsealed, and it eloquently states how brave the heroes were during the hurricane and how they saved Seaquen. It goes on to express Jineer's concerns about the Ragesian advance and exhort Jinis to trust the heroes. Jineer is willing to pay the heroes 10 gp to deliver the letter. Despite his issues with verbal communication, he writes beautifully.

**Major Quest:** If the letter is successfully delivered, it is worth a Level 11 major quest award: MQ-1, Jineer's Letter (3,000 XP).

## ACT TWO: MESSAGE FOR THE KING

In this act, the heroes travel to Bresk and have an audience with the king. They can gain the favor of other nobles, but they attract the ire of the trillith Madness, who is posing as the king's advisor. By the end of the act, the heroes will likely be fleeing from Bresk, perhaps after escaping prison.

### THE TRIP TO BRESK

The journey from Seaquen to the western edge of the Sour Lake swamp will take about three days, after which the heroes can reach the Nasham River, purchase a sleigh and animals to pull it, and begin traveling the 120 miles to Bresk, at a rate of (at most) thirty miles a day. The terrain is coated with snow, and anyone the heroes speak to along the way expresses that such cold is unnatural this close to spring. While the river has frozen during the occasional rare cold snap in the past, it has never done so this far south.

A number of encounters will occur in the week's travel. It has been at least three weeks since the heroes passed through Dassen to reach Seaquen and the kingdom is changed from what the heroes remember. The following encounters highlight some of these changes.

### VIDOR

It is surprising how much the temperature has changed in the swamp in such a short time. The cooler air seems to have forced a retreat of the wildlife that you encountered previously, and the trip back to Vidor at the swamp's western edge has been uneventful. Now, as you approach the small village, you see the once sprawled-out refugee camp clustered tightly around the roadway and a few men with shortbows and swords patrolling the perimeter. At least twenty men stand near the fence surrounding the garden behind Grimfran's Goods. It appears a meeting is in progress.

The heroes can ask about what is happening or listen in. Now that the weather is getting colder, a new menace has popped out of the swamp. No one is exactly sure what is happening, but three people have been killed

in the past week. They have been torn apart by some creature, leaving little but massive bloodstains on the ground and chewed limbs ripped from each victim's bodies. The meeting is about setting up a defense for the village.

There is little the heroes can do at this time other than make suggestions and comment on the village's readiness. If they brought any companions with them, or a guard of some sort, all of them stay behind to find the underlying cause of the issue.

The events in Vidor will become important in upcoming adventures, so the tension here sets the stage for further development. Until recently, the three witches H'Andrea, whom the heroes may have encountered in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*, provided a buffer between Vidor and a small band of swamp trolls living in the northern part of the swamp. Now that they are gone (if the heroes didn't defeat them, they left of their own accord), the troll king Yrestrik is increasing his territory and his troll kin have found Vidor.

At the start of Adventure Five, *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds*, the heroes will encounter the trolls and their troll mound, a place reminiscent of the pyramid the attercops infested in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*. The inside of the pyramid will provide clues to help decipher the writings of a madman in Adventure Six, *Tears of the Burning Sky*, and clues to finding a lost city in Adventure Seven, *Trial of Echoed Souls*.

### FROM VIDOR TO BRESK

When the heroes are ready to travel north, one of the refugees, a half-elf named Aregal, has two sleighs and some horses that can be purchased. When the heroes find him, he is taking care of his four horses, Deedee, a white Percheron mare, Doc, a dapple-gray Percheron gelding, and Dolly and Joyce, two Grade horses. He will sell everything for 750 gp, though he may be talked down to 400 gp if the heroes want to haggle.

As the challenge is run, Aregal may reveal an intriguing fact about the dragonborn sorcerer, Khadral, whom the heroes encountered in Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Inennotdar*.

### Cheap Transportation

#### Level 10 Skill Challenge • XP 500

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes barter for some horses and sleighs.*

**Primary Skills** Diplomacy, Insight, Nature, Religion. Only Diplomacy and Insight are available initially.

**Victory** Aregal is successfully negotiated down to a 400 gp sale price for the horses and sleighs.

**Defeat** The heroes must pay the 750 gp asking price for their transportation.

**Diplomacy** DC 21 (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero attempts to negotiate a price using normal salesmanship. Aregal is a bit hesitant to haggle in this way and whenever an offer is made, takes a step back for a moment and whispers a faint prayer to his god for guidance. This opens the Religion skill for use.

**Insight** DC 21 (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero recognizes Aregal's superstitious nature and his affinity for his horses. On the first success with this, the Religion skill is opened for use and the hero gains a +2 bonus to the next Nature check made in the challenge.

**Nature** DC 16 (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero recognizes that Aregal is very concerned about his horses. A successful check by a character helps to put the half-elf's reservations about selling his team to the party at ease.

**Religion** DC 12 (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

Aregal's religious leaning is towards a strange religion that worships a gold dragon named Syana. The half-elf was raised by his elven mother after she fled the land of Taranesti. If this skill is used, Aregal is pleased that the heroes are interested in spiritual matters and is more disposed to reducing his price. While in negotiations, Aregal mentions odd dreams he has been having for the past month. In them, he is in a dream-like plane of existence where Syana's child, another gold dragon, searches for a sliver of her soul, but she is trapped and in a slumber from which she is unable to awake. However, there is a champion that is fighting the strange creatures that keep the child dragon captive. A dragonborn that burns with an undying fire is slaying the dragon's captors



in the ethereal expanse. He has called to Aregal to fight for things greater than the world and the half-elf has decided to answer the call. As a result, Aregal has obtained a dragonborn's Dragonbreath racial power (with the fire keyword). If pressed further, Aregal says the dragonborn goes by the name Khadral and that he has been taught that sacrifice for the greater good is a path to immortality.

Once the heroes have enough sleighs and horses, they may begin their trip north. The journey is fraught with environmental danger as well as a number of pre-planned encounters. The following skill challenge covers the trek.

## JOURNEY

### Nasham River

**Level 11 Skill Challenge • XP 2,000**

Complexity 3 (8 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes must navigate their way over the Nasham river to Bresk through bitter winter cold and snow.*

**Primary Skills** Endurance

**Time** Each roll represents about a half day of travel time.

**Partial Victory** After the first success is rolled, the encounter "Refugees" takes place (see below.) After the fourth success is rolled, the encounter "Bodies in the Water" takes place (see below). After the sixth success is rolled, the encounter "Grim Tidings" takes place (see page 15).

**Victory** The heroes make it to Bresk just before the Talon begins to guard all the city gates. (See "Into the City" on page 18.) The full XP award is given, even if the party suffered a few failures along the way.

**Defeat** The heroes make it to Bresk, but they will have to bypass the Talon in order to gain entrance (see the skill challenge **Checkpoint**). For each failure gained in this skill challenge, reduce the XP award by 250 XP. For example, a party that suffers 4 failures before making 8 successes is awarded only 1,000 XP.

**Special** This challenge ends when a total of 8 successes are made, regardless of the number of failures. Any failures are counted as normal up to the third. Any further failures extend the travel time to reach Bresk, with every three failures adding one day to the journey.

**Endurance DC 21** (1 success, all must attempt each turn, fail/healing surge)

Every hero must perform an Endurance check

every turn to resist frostbite, catching a cold or fever, a twisted ankle, or other inconvenience. Anyone protected by the Endure Elements ritual automatically succeeds this roll. Only one failure is applied to the challenge per set of rolls. Healing surges lost in this challenge (and not because of encounters the heroes resolve) cannot be regained until the heroes take an extended rest in Bresk.

## REFUGEES

This encounter occurs after the first success of the **Nasham River** skill challenge.

Far away from the natural warming effect of the sea and closer to the Toreast Steppes to your Northeast, it becomes noticeably colder as you travel north towards the Prince's Way. In fact, as you approach the ferry you used in your flight from Gate Pass, you see it is no longer serviceable, as a large ice flow has migrated downriver from the north. The whole river appears to be completely ice-covered now. You have seen only a few people since you passed the eastern edge of the Idemmer Wood and the King's Road to Bresk is nearly empty as the hills of Toreast begin to rise before you.

The heroes encounter a group of refugees running along the river's eastern bank and being chased by two young remorhaz. The elemental creatures are picking up stragglers and feasting on them. The forty-odd refugees decided to travel to Seaquen after being summarily banished from Lord Rego's lands, but they were attacked and pursued by the ravenous remorhaz as they tried to find a way to cross the river from the Prince's Way.

## TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Refugees (page 67)



## AFTERMATH

The refugees are orcs, half-orcs, and humans who were once skilled tradesmen in Ragesia. All are suffering from mild frostbite and various other injuries related to hard travel. If the heroes make an effort to heal them, the grateful group offers to adjust the heroes' sleighs a bit to allow for faster travel. If the heroes agree, several craftsmen adjust the sleighs' runners, granting one automatic success and negating one failure from the skill challenge. The heroes can also use this time as an extended rest if they

wish, though they do not regain any healing surges lost to the environment.

The refugees are bitter about their treatment at the hands of Lord Rego and the position he has consequently placed them in. The group has lost a dozen men on the journey and will not forget Rego's complete lack of hospitality. At the end of their rest, the refugees begin the long march to Seaquen.

When the heroes eventually return to Seaquen, they will find that the refugees they saved have told the tale of their rescue, for which the heroes are greatly lauded.

## BODIES IN THE WATER

This encounter occurs after the fourth success of the **Nasham River** skill challenge.

At about the halfway point of your journey, the hilly road has become more difficult to use with the limited traction the sleighs have. For the last few miles, you have been using the river to travel. The ice is thick enough to support at least three times your weight and the way is clear. A southward icy wind blows snow across the icy path making your vision a bit obscured.

Suddenly, your sledge lurches to a halt and throws you violently forward, with Balan flipping over and onto the carriage in front. The tongue separates and the horses whinny as they continue forward, dragging their harness, tack, and traces with them. Balan lies very still, and a pool of blood begins to spread from his head.

Balan's head injury is superficial, and he is in no danger of dying, but the blow he received will leave him unconscious until the heroes enter Bresk or a Remove Affliction ritual is used on him.

This encounter consists of two skill challenges: the heroes need to retrieve the horses (Dolly and Deedee) and make repairs to the vehicle. As they complete the task, they discover something troubling.

### Stray Horses

**Level 10 Skill Challenge • XP 500**

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes try to recover Dolly and Deedee.*

**Primary Skills** Acrobatics, Athletics, Nature

**Victory** Dolly and Deedee are retrieved with no injuries.

**Defeat** One of the horses stumbles upon the ice

and comes up lame. This increases the number of successes needed by one in the Nasham River skill challenge (and thus the time it takes to complete it).

**Special** It is possible to use magic to calm the horses down or slow them. If the heroes consider using one of their spells, assume they are in a tactical encounter and can get within 8 squares of a horse before running a combat round. A tactical map is not necessary, just roll the dice to see if the spell succeeds. If the spell fails, then treat the activity as a failure.

**Acrobatics DC 23** (2 successes, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

Both horses are spooked by the wagon's failure and are running around. A hero can use his Acrobatics skill to attempt to grab the horse and restrain it. This counts as 2 successes.

**Athletics DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

A hero can choose to grab at the traces dangling behind the horses. This involves running and grabbing in order to slow the beasts down. It takes 2 successes to stop one of the horses in this fashion.

**Nature DC 16** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

The hero can use calming techniques and a bit of herding to get a horse into a place where it can be calmed. The hero's knowledge of how horses can be calmed is used here. Two successes can be applied to each horse. A failure in this check means the horse escaped from the herding or is too spooked to be calmed.

### Repairs

#### Level 10 Skill Challenge • XP 500

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes try to repair their sleigh.*

**Primary Skills** Dungeoneering, Insight, Nature, Thievery

**Victory** The sleigh is repaired.

**Defeat** The sleigh is only partially repaired. This increases the number of successes needed by one in the Nasham River skill challenge (and thus the time to complete it).

**Special:** It is possible to use magic such as a Make Whole ritual to fix the vehicle. This counts as an automatic victory.

**Dungeoneering DC 19** (1 successes, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero uses his understanding of materials and design to apply makeshift repairs from the materials around the area (tree

limbs, reworked metal items in the heroes' possession, extra rope, etc).

**Insight DC 21** (2 successes, 2 maximum, fail/—)

A novel approach to fixing the wagon helps get it back to workable shape a little faster.

**Nature DC 22** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero's familiarity with animals on a farm has acquainted him with how such vehicles are designed. His knowledge helps in repairing the broken parts.

**Thievery DC 16** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero knows how things work and finds or jury-rigs the broken parts to make the vehicle serviceable.

As they investigate the vehicle, the heroes find one of its runners was caught on an ornate loop of leather that is protruding from the ice, and now it is stuck fast.

Further investigation reveals that the loop of leather is actually a belt belonging to a corpse frozen in the ice. There are, in fact, three bodies frozen in the ice, all men, their features distorted. It takes only about a minute of hacking to free the bodies, since the ice here is thinner than normal.

If they free the bodies from the ice, the heroes notice that all have the same device somewhere on their clothing — a leopard and a serpent dancing under a sunburst. A **DC 18 History** or **Diplomacy** check reveals that it is Lady Dene's royal device. Two of the men were killed by crossbow bolts in the back, while the third looks to have been hanged. A **DC 16 Perception** check shows the ice around where the bodies lie does not match the rest of the river surface. It appears to have been melted with fire, and is covered with notably less snow.

What happened was that an envoy serving Lord Dashgoban was headed to Lady Dene's lands to deliver news of the recent assassination and to ask for Lady Dene's presence at the court. But Steppengard's newly formed Talon police force suspected them as conspirators, so they chased them down and killed them.

A **DC 16 Nature** check locates the tracks of a group of at least five men on horseback who left a few hours ago, their tracks still visible despite recent snow. There is a tree on the bank of the river nearby, where the one man who surrendered was hanged. The men on horseback headed upstream on the King's Road, and so will be traveling more slowly than the heroes will.

## GRIM TIDINGS

This encounter occurs twenty miles upstream of the previous encounter. The heroes are likely the only ones on the river, but there is a lot of traffic on the King's Road.

For once, the King's Road traces along the river's shoreline and you see the occasional traveler on the road. You are now about forty miles from Bresk and King Steppengard's domain seems more populous than Lady Dene's. Ahead in the distance, a number of military horses with their riders block the road before three brightly colored wagons that appear to be driven by halflings. Coming closer, but out of earshot, you see three of the horsemen dismount and begin rifling through the wagons. The men are clearly throwing items out and about, and the halflings are starting to wave frantically at one of the horsemen who might be an officer.

*(If Balan is conscious)* Balan stiffens and his eyes narrow at the sight. He hisses, "Something's wrong. The King's Road has rules. Who are those men? We need to find out."

The heroes are on the river and are not yet noticed by the soldiers. They have a small amount of time to examine the situation more closely from the riverbank before one of the guards glances their way and sees the sleighs. Allow the players to plan their actions, which could range from a simple reconnaissance, a distraction, clever skill or magic use, an overt announcement of their presence, or some other combination. Whatever the heroes decide to do, if Balan is conscious, he will prefer to stay with the vehicles but may hide along the riverbank.

A **DC 15 Diplomacy** or **History** check identifies the soldiers are wearing King Steppengard's crest: a male sphinx rearing, surrounded by eight small triangles.

Before the tactical encounter begins, the heroes should be able to position themselves on the map, starting out at their sleighs. Allow 1 round of initial actions and then roll a 1d6: on a 5 or 6, a terrified female scream comes from one of the wagons. Anyone looking will see a guard pulling out a human woman from a crawlspace under one of the wagons. While the woman is being pulled out, the officer dismounts, draws his sword, and takes two steps towards her. He says to one of the halflings, "Looks like your cargo includes assassins, Brekli. I don't like your lies and you will face the consequence!"



What happens next depends on the heroes.

**If the heroes continue to watch and do nothing**, the officer hears a horse snorting from the river and turns his head. While the struggling woman is being extracted, the officer points to two other soldiers and they dismount and climb down to the riverbank. The officer shouts out, "You on the river, in the name and by authority of his majesty, King Steppengard, you are ordered to show yourselves! Refusal brands you as the spies you are!" The commander will wait for 1 extra round to see what the heroes do before moving to 3 squares away from the woman. Once there, he will strike her down on his next turn and order the halflings killed.

**If the heroes approach or announce their presence**, the officer shouts as above but moves closer to the screaming woman as he speaks. He ends his move within 3 squares of her; he intends to strike her down in the next round and will order the halflings killed.

**If the heroes attack**, the officer sizes up the situation and moves towards the screaming human woman. He will spend his next turn murdering her and will direct the soldiers to attack the heroes.

In the following rounds, there are additional possibilities.

**If the officer attacks his prisoner**, roll death saving throws for her as if she were a player character. The officer orders his men to kill the halflings, then deal with the heroes.

**If the heroes comply with the officer's demands**, he orders his men to search the heroes' sleighs, then the heroes, telling his men that they are seeking "orders" — letters or other communications. The last character searched is the one who holds Jineer's letter.

**If the guards find Jineer's letter** (guard's +8 Perception vs. the holder's Stealth), the commander confiscates it, reads it, and immediately convinces himself that the letter is a coded message for sympathizers of Duke Gallo, whose name is being whispered as someone with kingly ambitions that might amount to treason. He confidently declares that the heroes are up to no good and need to be dispatched at once. The officer and his men attack the heroes, forgetting about the halflings and the human woman for now.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Police Brutality (page 69)



### AFTERMATH

If the heroes talk to the survivors (either the soldiers or the halflings), they find out two things: the soldiers just encountered are members of King Steppengard's new secret police force, the Talon, and just three days earlier the king's entire family was slaughtered. His five eldest children, ranging in ages from twelve to seventeen, were at a party in which everyone was slaughtered, cut to pieces, with no sign of the assassins. Within minutes of their deaths, the King's wife and his thirteen younger children were killed by poison at dinner, a fate that Steppengard only managed to escape because one of his nobles came to him complaining about the Ragesian ambassador.

As the bodies of the slain were taken away for safekeeping, their hearts were extracted and burned, eliminating any possibility of saving them. The enraged king ordered his soldiers to begin searching anyone who appeared at all suspicious, and set his advisor, Nina Glibglammer, to find the perpetrators by any means. The Talon was instituted immediately to satisfy the king's command. Steppengard has

spent the past two days in mourning, and the massive royal funeral occurred earlier today.

Many people, like the halflings, are trying to flee Bresk and Dassen, and the Talon's bullying tactics are causing panic. The halflings are simple merchants from Ostalin who have just left Bresk and are heading home, but the soldiers suspected that they were spies. The human woman, Hethal Bekoff, is a minor aristocrat who was romantically involved with one of the people the Talon suspected as an assassin. She begged the halfling merchants to help her escape before she too could be captured and killed.

The Talon is officially tasked with protecting the crown, but they are not above harassing foreigners to line their own pockets. They do truly believe that there are assassins trying to flee the country, so they show no mercy.

If one of the soldiers escaped, he reaches the city, and the heroes face a more difficult time trying to enter the city (see the skill challenge "Checkpoint" on page 17).

## ENTERING BRESK

### CHECKPOINT

This encounter happens if the heroes failed in the environmental challenge or at least one soldier escaped during the "Grim Tidings" encounter. Before the heroes enter the city, a squad of Talon soldiers and a Talon commander challenge the party.

You come to the gate of the city. More guards like those you encountered earlier are questioning anyone going in or out. About a dozen people on the right side wait before a lieutenant and three other guards. The officer interrogates while the guards search through personal effects. It seems clear that you will have to subject yourself to the same.

*(If Balan is conscious)* Balan examines his diplomatic credentials and mutters something incomprehensible, then tells you, "These guards may not consider papers from Seaquen to be very convincing. We may need to come up with some kind of story."

This challenge starts while the heroes stand in line, giving them time to observe the Talon's tactics. After the second success, it takes on a more normal approach. If Balan is conscious, the challenge will automatically succeed after he presents his credentials. Otherwise, the skill challenge must be run to its conclusion.

The officer's general approach to his questioning is simple: identify the leader of the group and verify his credentials, ask a few questions for each hero in the party, and then separate those with unsatisfactory answers and have them searched. Balan's diplomatic papers will help avoid a search, but if Balan is still unconscious, the heroes will have to win the skill challenge or be turned away.

**Checkpoint**

**Level 11 Skill Challenge • XP 600**

**Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)**

*The heroes try to convince the Talon of their right to enter Bresk.*

**Primary Skills** Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate, Thievery

**Secondary Skills** Insight, Perception, Streetwise

**Victory** The heroes are allowed into the city with little fanfare.

**Defeat** The heroes are turned back at the gate. If this happens, they will have to find another way in. Luckily, a friend of Balan notices the heroes' troubles and approaches them afterward.

**Special** The heroes start this challenge while waiting in line. The only skills open initially are Insight, Perception, and Streetwise. After the second success is made, the party meets with the lieutenant. All skills are open thereafter.

**Bluff DC 18** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero makes up a story to gain entrance. The lieutenant believes the hero's story and moves on to another character. A failure by 10 or more raises the lieutenant's suspicions and he decides to separate and interrogate the hero for an hour. If the hero attempts a bribe, the Bluff check increases to **DC 23** (because the lieutenant is suspicious). A large enough offer has sway. A 15 gp bribe earns a +2 bonus to the check and a 30 gp one is an automatic success.

**Diplomacy DC 16** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero explains the situation and the lieutenant believes him.

**History DC 21** (1 success, 2 maximum, fail/—)

The hero's knowledge of Dassen's laws and protocols and its dedication to the rule of law appeals to the officer's sense of duty, and he is disposed to letting the party pass through.

**Intimidate DC 25** (0 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The lieutenant is suspicious of the heroes. All successes are completely wiped out, and any future skill checks are made at a -2 penalty.

**Thievery DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero attempts to offer a secret bribe. A large enough offer has sway. A 15 gp bribe earns a +2 bonus to the check and a 30 gp one is an automatic success.

**Insight DC 16** (1 success, 2 maximum, —/—)

This can only be done before the meeting the lieutenant. The hero notices how the lieutenant questions people and gains insight into how to deal with him. This earns a +2 bonus to the next Bluff, Diplomacy, or History check. A second use of Insight can be attempted against a **DC 21** check. If successful, the hero believes a sufficient bribe will help the situation. He gains a +2 bonus to the next Bluff or Thievery check that involves a bribe.

**Perception DC 12** (1 success, 1 maximum, —/—)

The hero overhears the guards talking about the lieutenant and what irritates him. This knowledge adds a +2 bonus to the hero's next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

**Streetwise DC 16** (1 success, no maximum, —/—)

While waiting in line, the hero gathers information from others that are waiting, and learns what the guards are looking for. This knowledge adds a +2 bonus to the hero's next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

**THE SEWERS**

If the heroes decide to enter the city clandestinely or they have been rebuffed at the gate, there is a way through the sewers. If Balan is conscious, he is mortally offended by the mere suggestion; he will have nothing to do with the plan and will leave the heroes to their own devices, angry at their idiocy. He goes further yet, declaring his work for Seaquen finished, because it is clear Seaquen has a hidden agenda, and he will have no part in working for such duplicitous and evil people. Despite his friendship with Simeon, he will actively begin lobbying for the Ragesian cause. If the heroes do not reverse their course immediately, Balan will seek out the Ragesian envoy and participate in negotiations with them.

If Balan is unconscious, the heroes are free to enter into the city in secret. If they were turned away at the gate, a dwarf bumps into one of the characters and shoves a note into his hand (at right). The note is written in common and says to meet at a bar called the Toreast Aerie at nightfall. If they decide to do this on their own, three **DC 16 Streetwise** checks directs the heroes to the bar instead.

Once there, the heroes are met by a dwarf.

The Aerie is a smarmy dive that caters to the lowest of society. As directed, you have ordered obsidian ale and sit around the only three-legged table in the establishment. A nearby fire does little to warm the room because most of the windows are boarded or covered in cloth. The place reeks of drunken overindulgence and the ale is bitter to the point of generating nausea. The dwarf with a scraggly beard, shabby clothing and jet-black hair who sits with you is describing a tunnel system under the city that extends beyond the south walls. The dwarf says he will guide you to the entrance and provide a map that leads to the inner part of the dwarven warrens underground. From there, you can climb a forty-foot shaft and exit through the basement of an abandoned store.

The fee is 800 gold pieces. The dwarf stares at you expectantly.

The heroes may try to haggle, but the dwarf will refuse to take them through the tunnels for less than 800 gp. The sewers are large enough past the initial part for easy passage and the warren is largely forgotten. The dwarf, who refuses to mention his name, says the area is mostly safe, but a few creatures have found their way in over the past five months, which is when it was used last. He is right, and the map is clear and detailed enough to navigate the system successfully, with the exception of the pump room. Here the heroes will have an encounter.

**TACTICAL ENCOUNTER**

Sewer Pump Room (page 71)





## AFTERMATH

After the encounter, the heroes climb the shaft and eventually make it out into the streets of Bresk. Balan still has rooms reserved at the Golden Griffon; if he has regained consciousness since exiting the sewers, he suggests hastening there.

## INTO THE CITY

This will happen if the heroes succeeded in the environmental skill challenge.

The south gate of Bresk is open to a long snaking column of people and beasts of burden trying to enter the city, and a smaller, more daring line of those trying to get out. Dozens of guards watch the gate and question people as they pass, searching belongings and lending suspicious eyes on foreigners. Balan's diplomatic papers gain you all entrance into the city easily, but as you finish going through the gate, a contingent of soldiers dressed like those you encountered along the river march by. The lieutenant in charge orders the guards you just met to lock down the entrance. He explains the Talon will handle all future gate-keeping activities.

Once inside Bresk, if he is conscious, Balan leads the party to the Golden Griffon; otherwise, the heroes need only ask around to find it. Balan will not entertain any discussion about the state of the city or their mission until they are safely out of earshot of Talon agents.

## THE TASK AT HAND

### THE GOLDEN GRIFFON

The Golden Griffon is an inn near the castle on the westward face of the great hill. The heroes have a large suite on the second floor, with a main common room and a bedroom for each of them. If Balan is still unconscious, the proprietor's son, a cleric, will revive the stricken diplomat. Once hale, Balan eats a huge meal, congratulates the heroes for making it this far, and thanking them for seeing to his safety. If the heroes have not heard about the assassinations yet, conversation in the Golden Griffon inevitably turns to the recent funerals, which should lead the heroes to the topic of the assassinations in short order.

The heroes have a few hours to rest as Balan gets in touch with the right people, verifying that their audience is scheduled for several days

later (or the next afternoon, depending on how quickly the heroes traveled). In the meanwhile, Balan wants their help planning their argument. "Considering the assassinations," he says, "It is imperative we do not make a misstep when speaking to the king."

Before they begin, Balan hangs a *chime of awakening* on the doorknob, which he says will wake him and the heroes if anyone else tries to enter the suite. "It helps me sleep a little easier at night," he says.

## GROUP DIPLOMACY

Balan, representing Seaquen, will be speaking to the King and the proxies of the Council of Nine, except for Lord Gallo's proxy — who has been arrested for treason under suspicion of having a hand in the assassination — and Lady Namin's proxy — since Lady Namin is there in person. The diplomat needs information to increase the chances of a better outcome and the heroes will aid him in preparation. What the party does not know is that Balan's head injury has made him unusually susceptible to Nina Glibglammer's abilities, and he will fall unconscious while speaking. One of the heroes will have to take over!

This skill challenge allows the heroes to tour the city a bit while they gather information. Depending on how your players roleplay, you can make this very succinct and quick or have an extended play period where the roleplaying of the information gathering takes priority over the implementation.

The political landscape created by the assassinations puts outsiders at a disadvantage. Alliances and personal goals are certain to have shifted and each council member must be re-evaluated. Bresk is rife with rumors of the Ragesian alliance, the mental state of the king, and more. If you are to obtain the help that Seaquen needs, you must prepare your arguments carefully...

### Gathering Information

Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 3,500

Complexity 5 (12 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes must help the Balan gather the appropriate information about the political state of the court.*

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate, Stealth, Streetwise, Thievery

**Partial Victory** The successes reveal all the

information given up to that level. Though not necessarily useful in resolving the negotiation per se, these items provide backstory for the adventure.

**3 or fewer successes** The heroes have failed the skill challenge completely, as described below.

**4 or 5 successes** The heroes discover the King's advisor, Nina Glibglammer is hostile to Seaquen. The heroes provide a +1 bonus to Diplomacy checks. XP 700

**6 or 7 successes** The heroes learn the leanings of the various nobles, as detailed in the Council of Nine (page 5). The heroes provide a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks. XP 1,400

**8 or 9 successes** The heroes discover Lady Namin's desire to be queen in order to influence Steppengard's order of succession. The heroes provide a +3 bonus to Diplomacy checks. XP 2,100

**10 or 11 successes** The heroes learn enough of the personal attitudes of the nobles to help the diplomat tailor individual arguments for each. The heroes provide a +4 bonus to Diplomacy checks. XP 2,800

**Victory** The heroes provide the diplomat with a significant advantage in the council negotiations, conferring a +5 to Diplomacy checks for each faction.

**Defeat** The heroes gain no advantage for the diplomat.

**Special** If the players request specific information that overlaps any items detailed above, then award an automatic success for that item, conferring a +1 bonus for each one.

**Arcana DC 16** (1 success, 2 maximum, fail/—)

The hero gathers information about the magical history of the kingdom, discovering the role of the Book of Eight Lands and the magic artifact's special abilities. A success against **DC 25** counts as a success, removes 1 failure and reveals the passphrase needed to see the book. This extra success level can occur only once in this challenge.

**Bluff DC 14** (1 success, 6 maximum, fail/—)

With charm and wit, the hero gains the confidence of reticent bureaucrats and learns about expenditures, taxes, and treaties that reveal the attitudes of the nobles.

**Diplomacy DC 16** (1 success, 6 maximum, fail/—)

With sound reason and sly political rhetoric, the hero earns the trust of the nobles' retainers and proxies, and tailors Seaquen's arguments to be a winning proposition in their eyes. A success against **DC 25** counts as a success and

removes 1 failure. This extra level of success can occur only twice in this challenge.

**History DC 21** (1 success, 3 maximum, fail/—)

Drawing upon Dassen's history, the hero gains valuable insight into the social, economic, and political influence that shapes each kingdom's view of Seaquen and Ragesia.

**Intimidate DC 21** (1 success, 3 maximum, fail/—)

The hero threatens lesser members of the nobles' retinue and extracts information regarding their attitudes towards Seaquen and its need. Failure of this check confers a -1 penalty (stackable) against the diplomat's check.

**Stealth DC 16** (1 success, 6 maximum, fail/—)

The hero infiltrates the noble's compound or suite and eavesdrops on the conversations within, or the hero may shadow a representative and discover pertinent information through the surveillance.

**Streetwise DC 16** (1 success, 6 maximum, fail/—)

The hero learns of the nobles' plans through rumor and conversation with the service staff that attend them.

**Thievery DC 19** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

The hero infiltrates the nobles' compounds and suites and obtains journals, notes, and other evidence that reveals their attitudes toward Seaquen. A success against **DC 25** yields a success and reveals circumstantial evidence of Nina Glibglammer's intense interest in alchemy in recent months. A failure of this check confers a -2 penalty (stackable) against the diplomat's check and the loss of a healing surge until the next act (Gallo's Fend).



## AUDIENCE WITH THE KING

This encounter is designed as a story point, where the heroes are more observers than active participants.

---

Refreshed and ready for the audience with Steppengard, you head towards the castle. Though set for an audience at ten in the morning, you end up waiting in the grand hall until noon. The wait was continually peppered with mock arguments from Balan. The page leads you through a dizzying warren of corridors and hallways that delve deeper into the hillside. Dwarf-inspired architecture seems to close in on you, and you feel a twinge of claustrophobia until you are ushered into the throne room. The chamber is wide and

high ceilinged, its wood veneer walls studded with small shaded windows. A single skylight centered over twin thrones illuminates them and the surrounding dais in a pale cool light. A crowd of dozens of people—proxies for nobles, their assistants, ambassadors, and servants—all linger in the shadows, watching what appears to be a trial.

---

The heroes are directed to the right side of the room, to stand beside the entourage of Lady Namin, slender, platinum-haired, and dressed in mourning black. She is the only noblewoman personally in attendance; all the other nobles are represented by their proxies.

---

A pair of lavish thrones sit on the dais, the

left empty and covered with a black shroud. In the right-hand throne sits an aging but still vital-looking man who can only be King Steppengard. His brown beard unkempt, his clothes wrinkled, and his crown askew, it looks like he has not slept well in days.

In front of him is a slim man in manacles, being harangued by a gnome woman with curly hair that seems to shift between black and purple as she moves. She holds a book in her hand and stalks around the man in a circle, her voice shrill.

The woman leans close to the man and says, "You do realize that the king is offering you a chance to recant, to confess, to admit your role in this tragedy, and to ask for his mercy? You do realize that, don't you?"



"It is no secret that Gallo has—"

The man interrupts, "My liege lord, the Duke Gallo. His family has defended our nation since its birth...and you should pay him the respect he has earned!"

"Gallo," the woman says. "He stood to gain the most advantage had the king been killed. This was clearly some attempt to frame the Ragesians."

She gestures to the audience gathered in the darkened edges of the room, to a space opposite where you stand. You spot a man dressed in rich Ragesian red clothes, marked with symbols of a torch. He is guarded by an Inquisitor in a heavy cloak, the white of his bear-skull mask darkened by etched runes.

"The Ragesians," the gnome continues, "who have offered to protect us in this time of unrest. But no! No. Gallo is too arrogant to accept that. Gallo must have his war, and if Gallo cannot make war on Ragesia, Gallo will make war on his own king! Can you not admit the truth of this?"

The man starts to reply, but stammers, looking confused.

The woman laughs, then turns mock sympathy on the prisoner. "Your lies have begun to confuse even you. Poor man. Please, all you need to do is answer my questions: explain to us how steadfast, forthright, loyal Duke Gallo got himself involved in perfidy... treachery...treason. Tell us how Gallo intended to tear mighty Dassen to pieces."

Any of the other spectators can tell the heroes that the gnome is Nina Glibglammer, the King's top advisor and the head of his newly commissioned police, the Talon. They can also tell them that the man in the manacles, named Relder, is the clerk to Duke Gallo's proxy, a man named Jinis, who is currently in jail for treason. The duke himself is not in Bresk.

The questioning continues for several minutes, Glibglammer interrogating Proxy Jinis as to where Relder the clerk was on the evening King Steppengard's family was killed, where and when Jinis saw Relder over the week previous, and how Duke Gallo was involved in the poisoning of Steppengard's family. The man seems confused often, as if he is struggling to tell two stories. One paints him and Duke Gallo as innocent, whereas the other is fervent and irrational, babbling about poison and meetings late at night.

What has actually happened is that Nina (in



reality the trillith Madness) senses that people are being swayed by Jinis's sincerity, so she is using her powers to confuse Jinis and implant a suggestion.

Spectators mutter that it looks like the clerk is hiding something, but that at the same time there are elements of truth in his insistence upon Duke Gallo's innocence, and Nina's questions would probably confuse practically anybody. Just then, Nina breaks off her questioning, shakes her head, and turns to the king.

"I'm convinced, my King, that this man before you harbors secrets telling of even greater conspiracy, and the evidence will surely come to light through more persuasive means. His evasion of the truth makes clear his complicity."

Finally King Steppengard moves, straightening in his chair, looking somewhat ghoulish in the overhead light.

"Nina, thank you for your service. It worries me that someone who is hiding so much could be yet secreted in the seat of my nation's rule.

## THE BOOK OF EIGHT LANDS

In addition to History checks, the heroes can discover information about this vital artifact with Streetwise (–2 penalty to rolls) and Diplomacy checks.

**DC 14** The Book of Eight Lands magically records the lineage of all the rulers of the lands of Dassen, and its text automatically records any births, marriages, deaths, or other changes in succession.

**DC 17** The book is so named because the nation once consisted of eight kingdoms, though fifteen years ago Steppengard united the region and added a ninth region for himself. In the past, the Book served almost as a checklist of whom to kill in order to move closer to the throne, so it inspired much civil conflict. It is no longer used to determine succession, however, by mutual agreement of the nobles.

**DC 20** The Book grants special magical defenses to those who rule each of the lands of Dassen, and to their immediate families, intended to let them rule through reason and law. Those of noble blood are awarded a +10 bonus to Insight and Will defenses against bluffs and intimidations. The same applies to charm effects in combat.

**DC 25** The book is protected in the vault of King Steppengard's castle. Any human, dwarf, or half-human may request to view the book by addressing the guards in Dwarven, stating, "I pray that my blood is worthy of Dassen."

Though I wish for nothing other than to execute this man for his part in," he draws a breath, "my family's murders, I must serve justice...not passion. Take him back to the prison. Until such time as other evidence comes to light, I will not pass sentence on him."

Three guards come up and drag the manacled man away. The gnome woman steps to stand before the king, just beside his throne.

"I tire of trials and of sitting in judgment," King Steppengard says. He waves wearily. "I will take audiences now."

## THE APPEAL

The darkness seems to coalesce into a real thing just before it vanishes when the window blinds are raised. A pale but comfortable glow reveals the faces of all those gathered within. The nobles' proxies are in attendance, except for the physically present Lady Namin, and Lord Gallo's, currently under arrest for treason.

The clerk pulls out a large ledger and calls out the first audience, "The delegation and ambassador for the free city of Seaquen seeks audience with the royal crown of Dassen. By the pleasure of His Majesty Steppengard, and by the assent of his council, the crown extends its grace to the lowly state that dares call itself free, and is granted audience before the might of Dassen. Come forth."

As you come forward to speak, the gathered crowd whispers excitedly. The Ragesian Inquisitor's heavy gaze seems to penetrate your soul as Balan steps onto a large mosaic that takes the place of a dais. Balan stands for a moment as if composing himself but then abruptly turns your way. A thin trickle of blood runs from his nose and his eyes glaze over just before he falls forward with a sigh.

Your representative hits the floor hard and the rest of the chamber recoils in shock.

Balan's collapse, of course, renders him unable to continue. The heroes will probably race to his aid as the hall erupts into gasps and whispers.

While you assess Balan's situation, Nina Glibglammer smiles wickedly and speaks out with a wealth of irony in her voice, "Silence, everyone! I cannot hear the ambassador speak!" The crowd instantly quiets and a long silence begins, punctuated after about thirty seconds by Nina. "Hum. It seems that Seaquen has lost its voice in the light of glorious Dassen! Is there no one to speak for the poor town whose men can't fish and whose women look like beached whales? Is there no one to help them?"

The heroes must decide quickly who will step up and take Balan's place. If none of the heroes comes forward, Nina orders the nearby guard to "throw out the fish, before they stink up the place." The heroes are surrounded and ushered out of the throne room and into a

waiting room just outside. Guards drag Balan from the throne room and drop him in the waiting room as well. He is still breathing, but shallowly and slowly.

If a hero chooses to continue Balan's presentation, Nina's smile continues as she speaks. "All right then," she says. "We shall listen to what you have to say." In this case, Balan is taken from the throne room with a bit more dignity and propped up in a chair in the waiting room.

The audience consists of three skill challenges that combine to make the complete encounter. Each faction (sympathetic Dashgoban and Timor, neutral Iz and Dene, and hostile Rego, Megadon, and Namin) will need convincing in different ways if the skill challenges are to succeed. Refer to pages 6–7 for a summary of the different nobles' motivations.

Minor quest awards are embedded in each skill challenge as a participation reward.

### Sympathetic Appeal

**Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 800**

**Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)**

*The heroes attempt to gain Lord Dashgoban and Lady Timor's support.*

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Diplomacy, History

**Victory** The heroes gain Lord Dashgoban's and Lady Timor's support for Seaquen. If the skill challenge has no failures against it, any future Diplomacy and History checks with Dashgoban and Timor or their representatives gain a +2 bonus, and the heroes are treated with the respect of a Baron or Baroness and the nobles will be helpful them.

**Failure** Neither Lord Dashgoban nor Lady Timor are willing to support Seaquen at this time.

**Special** Each Diplomacy check is modified by the Diplomacy check modifier gained in the skill challenge **Gathering Information**.

**Arcana DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero appeals to Lady Timor offering magical assistance.

**Diplomacy DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero explains Seaquen's plight in a way that makes Lord Dashgoban and Lady Timor look on Seaquen with sympathy. If the hero's check result beats DC 26, the check also removes one failure.

**History DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero recalls some fact that is relevant to Dashgoban or Timor that is triggered while talking with the proxies.

### Uncertain Appeal

**Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 1,100**

**Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)**

*The heroes attempt to gain Lord Iz's and Lady Dene's support.*

**Primary Skills** Athletics, Diplomacy, Nature

**Victory** The heroes gain Lord Iz's and Lady Dene's support for Seaquen.

**Complete Victory** If the skill challenge is completed with no failures, the heroes are treated with the respect due a Baron or Baroness of Dassen, and the nobles will be helpful.

**Failure** Neither Lord Iz nor Lady Dene are willing to support for Seaquen at this time.

**Special** Each Diplomacy check is modified by the Diplomacy check modifier gained in the skill challenge **Gathering Information**.

**Athletics DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero appeals to Lord Iz's emphasis on strength and athletic ability by offering training from Xavious Foebane.

**Diplomacy DC 22** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero makes a solid case for Lord Iz and Lady Dene to offer support to Seaquen. If the hero's check result beats DC 27 it is counted as 2 successes.

**Nature DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero assures Lady Dene that Seaquen will offer help to maintain the beauty of her lands.

### Hostile Delegation

**Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 1,700**

**Complexity 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)**

*The heroes attempt to gain Lord Rego's, Lord Megadon's, and Lady Namin's support.*

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight

**Victory** The heroes gain the nobles' support for Seaquen.

**Complete Victory** If the skill challenge is completed with no failures, the heroes are treated with the respect due a Baron or Baroness of Dassen, and the nobles will be helpful.

**Failure** Lord Rego, Lord Megadon, and Lady Namin are not willing to support Seaquen at this time.

**Special** Each Diplomacy check is modified by the Diplomacy check modifier gained in the skill challenge **Gathering Information**.

**Arcana DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

Offering Megadon some magical assistance with his sahuagin problem is well-received.



**Bluff DC 21** (1 success, 2 maximum, fail/—)

The hero can flatter Lady Namin and garner some support.

**Diplomacy DC 23** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero negotiates trade agreements with Rego, sorts out fishing rights and trade with Megadon, and quells suspicion about Lyceum's role in the Shahalesti fleet's destruction. If the hero's check result beats DC 28, count it as 2 successes.

**Insight DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero notices that Lord Megadon's proxy responds better to a negotiation if Megadon is given greater respect than the others.

Aside from helping secure aid from Timor and Dashgoban in Act Three, the results of these skill challenges have little effect on actual play, but they determine the heroes' overall success at the adventure's conclusion through victory points gained. In addition, if the heroes manage to obtain a noble's respect, they should learn as much, realizing that they have supporters on the Council of Nine.

If the heroes achieve significant victories in the skill challenges, you might reward the heroes during the Battle of Gallo's Fend, such as by having some of the soldiers serving alongside Steppengard's forces hesitate, retreat, or even switch sides at a pivotal moment.

After a hero has completed the skill challenges and presented Seaquen's case, the crowd is murmuring with a bevy of responses, and Steppengard is leaning low to listen to the advice of Nina Glibglammer. After a moment, Steppengard raises a hand for silence. No matter how well the heroes did with the three skill challenges, the king's bitterness and paranoia rule his response. He points to one of the heroes who has not been speaking, preferably a warrior.

---

"You," Steppengard says. "You do not have the silver, honeyed tongue of your companion. Tell me plainly. How many friends have you lost in this war? How many family?"

(Regardless of the hero's response) The king scoffs, "I have lost nineteen. My wife. My children. I would have gladly lost my own life instead. I have suffered...enough for my entire country. No more shall lose an entire family in this fight that is not our fight. If you were my subjects, I would have you executed for treason for even suggesting such a thing."

He stands, scans the crowd, and declares, "None shall offer aid to this nest of serpents, these tricksome mages of Seaquen and their deluded...or equally deceptive...allies."

He looks back to the party, glancing briefly to the Ragesian envoy. "I allow you to remain three days in my city. Perhaps in that time you can use your poet's tongue to persuade Ragesia to show your little fishing village mercy. Perhaps none of you will ever feel the sting of loss as keenly as I. But by leaping into war you are inviting wounds, death, and suffering down upon your house...your kin...your very selves."

The king pauses for a moment, then sits with finality. "Who next wishes to address their king?"

## OUTSIDE THE THRONE ROOM

The heroes' audience is clearly over at this point. As the heroes exit the throne room, Steppengard goes on to listen to requests that are more mundane. They may also notice Advisor Glibglammer watching them intently (**Perception DC 12**).

As soon as the doors close, Balan, who is propped up on pillows in a seat just outside the throne room, begins to shudder, and he suddenly sits bolts upright and takes a deep breath. If asked about what happened, he says he is not sure and maybe it should be discussed somewhere more private; he then asks about what happened in the throne room.

The proxies of Timor and Dashgoban leave the throne room soon after the heroes and seek them out, encouraging them to go ahead and stay in Bresk for the three days granted by the king, to see if he might reconsider.

They suggest that, when the heroes do leave, they head north to speak to Duke Gallo in person. The proxies, at least, flatly disbelieve the rumors of treason that surround him, and they suspect he might be able to convince other nobles to support Seaquen. After all, by the charter of the Council of Nine, if a majority of the council — six nobles, because the king has three votes — disagree with the king, their decision stands. However, at this time no one is willing to speak out against the king.

The proxies promise to contact their Lord and Lady, and to offer what support they can, regardless of how the skill challenges went — they themselves are personally moved

## CURING THE KING

The King's madness is not the result of a curse, per se, but rather a unique magical poison that has altered his very mind. Capitalizing on Steppengard's trust of his advisor and his fragile mental state after his family's death, the trillith, Madness, used her *mindhaunt* power to lower the King's resistance to trickery (granted him by the Book of Eight Lands).

Sensing an opening, Madness offered the king solace in illusions and enchantments, unreal balms that can take away his grief for a time while subtly twisting his thoughts. At the beginning of the adventure, His Majesty is only slightly unstable, but by the climax, he practically has a second personality, one that desires only the destruction of those things he once loved.

The Remove Affliction ritual is unable to eliminate the poison's effects fully, because part of its magic exists in the dream world of the trillith. As the ritual proceeds, the caster will be made aware of this. If the ritual is completed, use the Heal check result as the number of days during which the progression of the madness is halted at its current stage. If the ritual fails, subsequent attempts may be made, but the Heal check suffers a –5 penalty for each previous failure, shortening the efficacy of the ritual.

The complete restoration of the King can only be managed by performing an ancient ritual, detailed in the Book of Eight Lands, that removes all traces of the disease called *mindhaunt* affliction. Gathering the necessary components is an adventure in itself, as outlined in Appendix D.

Should the heroes somehow manage to cure the king early in the adventure, Madness will flee; the heroes can turn to tracking down Madness and taking revenge on her, and then fighting back the armies of the Ragesian Empire at Gallo's Fend.

by Seaquen's plight and distrustful of Ragesia and Nina, though they will not admit to distrusting anyone.

Before the heroes leave, the Ragesian ambassador, Serrimus, a cunning middle-aged diplomat with an almost militaristic presence, and his bodyguard, Torrax, a highly experienced Inquisitor who flaunts his apparent savagery, wearing little but furs and leather straps amid all the nobles, step into the hall.

### BALAN'S ILLNESS

When Balan was injured during the journey to Bresk, his mind became susceptible to Nina's presence. Any time he is within 5 squares of her, his mind is affected by hers. He sees strange dreams and visions that the trillith have, but this strange mind-sharing takes its toll on his body and he instantly becomes bloodied and unconscious from the effect of the aura.

This will likely be the heroes' first opportunity to speak to a Ragesian of any great standing, so be sure to present them as haughty and cruel. They are fanatics, loyal to the glorious destiny of their great homeland, and view mages such as those in Seaquen as mental inferiors who use the savage, sorcerous tools of elves and heretic gods, rather than the pure might of civilized Ragesia.

Serrimus gladly offers anyone who looks receptive an opportunity to surrender themselves to Ragesia, gaining merely exile instead of death, if they are willing to betray Seaquen. He will also make the offer if he thinks it will just anger them, because he likes toying with inferior foreigners. Torrax is generally silent and menacing, though if anyone begins to get belligerent with them he will grab the person under their jaw with his clawed right hand, sneering from behind his rune-etched skull mask.

Even the Ragesians know not to start a fight; any violence here is quickly put down.

After the Ragesians have their say and swagger away, Balan suggests they leave, return to the inn, and come up with a new plan.

### THE FIRST RULE OF ASSASSINATION

If the heroes seem interested in leaving the next day, these events happen the evening of the audience. Otherwise, they occur the next evening. If the heroes leave Bresk immediately, they can avoid these events, though Madness will still seek to direct them northward to Gallo.

Madness wants to silence Balan and the hero who took his place. She realizes that both are too convincing and pose a threat to the control she has over the Council of Nine. Madness also wants to make the heroes look complicit in the assassination of the royal family, and she wants to connect the heroes with Duke Gallo, creating the appearance of a conspiracy. To get the heroes ready to move in the direction

she desires, she first compels one of the king's minstrels to bring the group a warning. Then later that evening she sends the assassin Pixis to kill Balan and the hero who spoke, assuming this will frighten the rest of the heroes. She arranges for soldiers to go arrest the heroes a few minutes after Pixis strikes, expecting them to either flee on their own or be captured. She will then arrange for them to escape prison if needed and be guided to Gallo, guaranteeing that Steppengard will strike out at one of his loyal nobles.

### MYSTERIOUS WARNING

While the heroes are getting dinner or otherwise relaxing, a tall gangly man approaches them. He looks nervously over his shoulder before leaning over and whispers, "You must leave! You are in danger!"

This is Hrumbrand, a troubadour for the court. The heroes may recognize him from their audience with the king, though there was no music that day. If the heroes think to question his story, a **DC 21 Insight** check reveals that the man is behaving oddly, at which point a **DC 26 Nature** or **Arcana** check suggests that his mind is under some unknown compulsion or suggestion.

The man avoids questions, saying that he cannot be seen with them, but that people will try to kill them. If pressed he explains that the king is insane, and that has sworn out an arrest warrant for the heroes, which amounts to an order of execution in these times. Their only chance of escape is to flee north to the lands of Duke Gallo — Gallo can help them, he is not really a traitor, it is urgent, and if they leave tonight, Hrumbrand says, he will have someone waiting at the north gate to let them out.

After delivering his message, Hrumbrand flees into the night. Careful pursuit of him reveals that he returns to the castle, hands himself over to the guards, and is taken to the castle prison.

### SILENCING BALAN

If the heroes do not leave town immediately — for example, if they disbelieve Hrumbrand or feel confident in their ability to repel threats — an assassin named Pixis enters the Golden Griffon, cases the joint, and sneaks into the heroes' suite in whatever way is most efficient. She does not use the front door, perhaps instead coming in by cutting a hole

in a window. Preparing for a fight, she applies *unguent of darkvision* on her eyes, gaining darkvision for 1 hour, so she can still sneak attack in the darkness.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Pixis (page 72)



### UNDER ARREST!

A few minutes after the heroes defeat Pixis, or when they attempt to leave the tavern, members of the Talon police force confront them, come to arrest the heroes for conspiracy. If the heroes do not come quietly, a fight breaks out in the street.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Arrest, First Wave (page 73)



### DEVELOPMENT

If the heroes win the fight but do not immediately try to flee Bresk (as Madness wants), Madness has arranged for a second wave of overwhelming force to take them down.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Arrest, Second Wave (page 75)



### DEVELOPMENT

If the heroes try to head south, Madness has another group of soldiers ready to persuade them otherwise.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Southern Patrol (page 77)



### DEVELOPMENT

If instead the party heads north as Madness intends, they find the gate open, saddled light warhorses coincidentally waiting idly nearby, and an eager-looking sergeant who waves them through and shouts good luck to them as they ride past. The horses have special cleated shoes for taking the icy river. It is 70 miles to the border of Gallo's land, a two-day trip along the river, and then another 50 miles to Gallo's Fend. On the morning of the day after the heroes leave Bresk, they spot riders to the south, visible from three miles away as a dark blight on the snow. A large patrol pursues them with orders to drive them northward but not to catch up until they cross into Gallo's lands.

If the heroes try to intercept the patrol, the soldiers' horses will likely be near death, having



been pushed for several hours each day, and the heroes face a dangerous battle. However, a patrol from either Gallo or Dashgoban will join up with the heroes before they get close enough to engage Steppengard's forces.

**TACTICAL ENCOUNTER**

Northern Pursuit (page 79)



**AFTERMATH**

If the heroes end up anywhere other than with Duke Gallo, they will be encouraged to seek his aid. Do not push this, however, if the players want to pursue a different goal. When they do reach Duke Gallo's lands, they are given an escort by a mounted patrol. News of the assassinations has of course reached the Duke, as well as rumors that Steppengard thinks Gallo was somehow responsible. A homing pigeon delivered word about the heroes to the Duke, and he wants to speak with them, to see if they might be able to help each other.

If the heroes turn themselves over to the authorities, or if they are defeated in their escape attempt, they are taken to prison.

**Major Quest Award:** If the heroes leave Bresk, award them MQ-2, Escape Bresk (4,000 XP).

**CASTLE STEPPENGARD PRISON**

Unless the heroes manage to pull something amazing off, it should become apparent quickly that they are not here to await a fair trial, just an execution.

If captured, the heroes are rendered unconscious, and then divested of their gear. They are strip-searched and branded with a small mark near their left wrist, shaped like an "X." All are dressed in baggy gray shirts and pants and are restrained.

Any hero capable of casting spells is locked into a strange set of manacles, which keep a prisoner's hands closed like a fist, and is gagged with a device similar to a boxer's bit, which distorts speech enough to prevent verbal spellcasting, though the character can still speak clearly enough to be understood. Either device can be removed with a **DC 30 Thievery** check, or pulled apart with brute force (**Strength DC 25**).

The party is dragged into Cell F of Area 1 on the Castle Steppengard Prison map. The floors are covered in thick straw, and

some sort of heating apparatus warms parts of the floor, but the temperature of the prison stays around 50 degrees Fahrenheit at all times. Balan, if he lives, is not imprisoned with the heroes; he is instead taken to Area 5 to be tortured for information by Inquisitor Torrax. As the heroes regain consciousness, they hear what sound like faint screams coming from the floor, mixed with soft hisses, but the noises are gone by the time they are fully conscious.

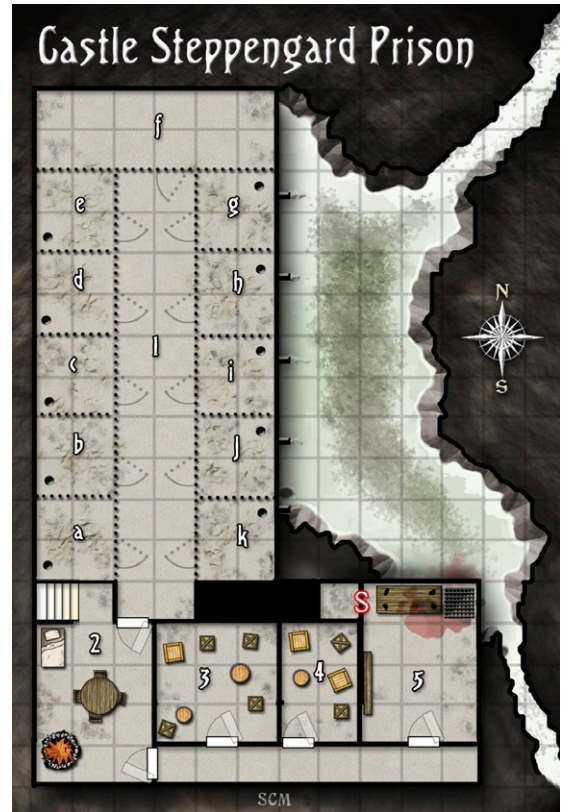
If the heroes do not attempt to escape on their own, have strong, prepared guards carry one of them off, chosen randomly, for torture by Torrax. Guards drag the hero into the torture chamber, pull Balan's body off the table, do something near the grate in the northeast corner, then open it and throw Balan's body down the pit. They close the grate, drag the hero to the torture table, and strap him down.

Torrax asks some questions, and when he thinks the hero is holding out he surgically removes a ligament from the prisoner's left knee, then closes the incision and heals the victim with a *cure light wounds* prayer. This halves the hero's speed until he receives a Remove Affliction ritual (or similar). Treat the surgery as a level 5 effect for purposes of the ritual. After a few more questions, Torrax has the hero dragged back to his cell, hoping the sight of their crippled comrade will convince the other heroes to be more cooperative. See if the heroes do not change their minds about engineering an escape then.

**AREA 1: PRISON CELLS**

Area 1 has 11 cells. The heroes are all together in cell F. Proxy Jinis is in cell E. The king's minstrel Hrumband is in cell G, gibbering madly, as if he has lost his mind. The other cells are empty, though only recently. The area is well lit, however, by three continual light rituals cast along the ceiling of the central aisle.

The guards in Area 2 come by once every hour to check on them. The guards work in four-hour shifts, before being replaced by an identical group, including a prelate with fresh spells. Meals are brought by twice a day. Holes



in the floor serve as latrines, and the intense stench suggests they do not go very deep. Things appear bleak.

Proxy Jinis engages the heroes in conversation once they awaken. He explains that he was fingered almost immediately as being involved in the assassination plot, and that from time to time, he felt himself actually believing it, against his own free will, but he knows it is a lie. He suspects Nina is responsible, or perhaps the Ragesians, or both in concert. Indeed, he has many, somewhat wild conspiracy theories of his own.

However, he recognizes the heroes as an avenue of escape, and he does his best to help them. He says that the only way to set things right is to get word to his lord, Duke Gallo, who can hopefully sway the other nobles to get King Steppengard away from his advisor long enough to cure him.

Jinis knows that the heroes' gear is likely being kept on this level, beyond the guard's room, in Area 3. He knows that the latrine empties into the river, and that there is a grate to the latrine in the nearby torture chamber, though he would not be surprised if some sort of trap keeps people from sneaking in or out. Perhaps most importantly, he has a pair of knives and a fork, which he managed to keep

from previous meals. These can serve as pitiful weapons, or as improvised lockpicks.

If the heroes mention his son Jineer, or manage to get him the letter (which would still be among their possessions in Area 3), Jinis thanks them deeply and excuses himself for a moment as he cries, happy to know that his son is safe. From that point on, he will be a loyal companion to the heroes.

Jinis will gladly participate in any plan that seems to have a chance of success, even being willing to confess in order to get out of his cell, or to sacrifice his life. He is a patriot, and is willing to die to restore his country.

### AREA 2: GUARD ROOM

Three Steppengard soldiers and a Steppengard prelate guard at area 2 all times, though usually three of them play cards while the other naps.

This room is much warmer, lit by a large open fire pit. The stairs lead up to barracks, but a heavy door at the top of the stairs will block the sound of combat.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Guard Room (page 81)



### AREA 3: STORAGE

This room holds gear that belongs to prisoners, an old practice from times when most prisoners were nobles who were expecting to be released. Their gear is locked up in chests, the keys to which are carried by the prelate. Any animal companions of Medium size or smaller are kept here in cages (**Thievery DC 25** to free). Larger creatures are kept elsewhere, and the heroes will not likely get a chance to retrieve them until Act Five.

**Treasure:** In addition to their gear, the heroes find three 11th-level treasure parcels.

### AREA 4: SUPPLY

This room holds supplies: blankets, pillows, food trays, firewood, and so on.

### AREA 5: TORTURE CHAMBER

This classic torture chamber is somewhat small and poorly stocked. The shelves have numerous small hooks, implements of pain, and a 20-foot-long rope ladder, but the focus of the room is the table that serves as a stretching rack. Numerous bloodstains lead from the table to the grate in the corner, from which an ominous chill radiates.

When the heroes reach this room, they find a horrifying sight. Balan's corpse is strapped to the rack and covered in tiny puncture wounds. On his open torso lies a notebook, written in Giant, detailing the various procedures used to extract which bits of information about Seaquen's population and defenses. The front inside cover of the book is signed — a gift to Torrax from another Inquisitor named Guthwulf. The inscription reads, "The road of education is painful. Enjoy it." A thorough reading of the book grants the reader a **+5 bonus to Intimidate** checks whenever he uses torture on a subject.

It appears that Balan gave up a great deal of information when tortured, though some of it appears to be fabricated. Torrax is nowhere to be seen now, however.

Escaping the room seems a simple matter of moving the grate in the northeast corner, but forcing it requires a **DC 23 Strength** check. More likely, the heroes will notice a blood-rusted latch, which can be pried open with a little effort, allowing the grate to be lifted more easily (**DC 20 Strength** check). However, unless the heroes succeed a **DC 23 Perception** check, they overlook that this latch is connected to the secret door in the northwest corner. If this connection is not overridden (either with a key the prelate carries, or with a **DC 23 Thievery** check), lifting the grate opens the secret door.

Behind this door (which can be noticed itself with a **DC 23 Perception** check) lurks the castle's oldest prisoner, a terrible mass murderer named Jutras, who had sought to be king of Dassen fifty years ago. For his crimes, he rose as a mohrg after being hung, and the malicious executioner decided to take advantage of the monstrosity, rather than destroy him.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Jutras (page 82)



### AREA 6: ZOMBIE PIT

This is a mass zombie pit.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Zombie Pit (page 83)



## ESCAPING

A steel grate, the lock of which has rusted away, blocks the tunnel leading northeast out of the zombie pit. All that is required is breaking

the ice to get out. Then, after three hundred feet of tunnel, the frozen stream emerges at the edge of a graveyard, a place long-abandoned outside the walls of Bresk.

Observant heroes might notice (**Perception DC 20**) a concealed tower hidden among trees, brush, and tall obelisk-like tombstones. The 20-foot high, 20-foot diameter tower looks abandoned from the outside, but if the heroes get inside (**Thievery DC 25**), the place is well furnished with winter clothes, and looks like it has been in use recently. The windows of the tower provide good line of sight to the stream that leads out of the castle. Normally there would be guards here, but Madness had them dismissed for the evening.

Less than a half mile away from the graveyard is the main body of the Nasham River, still frozen, and on the far bank is a small village named Macon where the heroes might acquire mounts for a journey. If they escaped with Proxy Jinis, he recommends they head north to Duke Gallo.

## THE ROAD TO GALLO'S FEND

Once the heroes reach Gallo's lands they are safe, and an escort of knights will lead them to Gallo's Fend. All along the way the towns the group stops at for the night are quiet, their citizens nervous, having heard rumors that Steppengard believes Duke Gallo a traitor. In addition to protecting the heroes, the knights, led by a dwarf commander named Commander Hertiage, speak to the towns' leaders and priests, telling them to prepare their people for war, and to be ready to send troops to aid Gallo's Fend.

Commander Hertiage is a sturdy dwarf who has survived many battles after being laid low, such that he is purported by his men to be the luckiest dwarf alive. He is an outspoken supporter of Gallo and of the cause of Seaquen, and he pretends that his men have asked to hear their stories, when in truth he is the curious one. He suspects the heroes are the sort of tough survivors he could get along with, and in the two or three days it takes to ride to Gallo's Fend, Hertiage will likely become fast friends with any warriors among the heroes.

For his part, Hertiage has many stories to tell about fighting savages and the occasional Ragesian incursion over the past few decades. He has a feeling that a good fight is coming, and he is glad to know the heroes are on his side.



# ACT THREE: SECURING AID

In this act, the heroes join forces with Duke Gallo, a Dasseni noble who agrees with Seaquen that the Ragesians must be stopped. Aware that Steppengard will send his armies to overthrow him, Gallo needs to call upon the aid of his fellow nobles. At Gallo's behest, the heroes set out to find evidence that the Ragesians are truly marching for war, and not simply to destroy Seaquen. Once they have such proof, the heroes must bypass roadblocks set up by Steppengard in order to reach Gallo's two neighboring nobles, Lord Dashgoban and Lady Timor. As the act closes, Steppengard's army stands poised to attack Gallo's Fend.

## THE SHIELD OF THE KINGDOM OF DASSEN

### GALLO'S FEND (SMALL CITY)

**Population** 7,000 — Mixed race distribution (55% human, 38% dwarf, 5% orc, 1% orc-blooded, 1% other);

**Government** The city is directly run by Duke Gallo, who controls the military as well.

**Defense** Walled castle with an active complement of 400 armed troops available on call. At this moment, the town has over 800 troops on duty.

**Inns** There are 10 inns in Gallo's Fend.

**Taverns** There are 40 taverns and inns in the city, but Gallo's Fend is a sober location and drunkenness is socially unacceptable, so most establishments are very tame.

**Supplies** Anything the players want that does not require a lengthy construction process is available. Prices are normal, but selling arms and equipment is at 30% instead of 20%.

**Temples** Similar to Bresk. The city has many shrines and no temples.

Like Bresk, the city of Gallo's Fend is walled, built into a rocky rise of land with a river on one side. However, the defenses here are much more substantial, since this is the most obvious route of approach into Dassen from the north. Duke Gallo and his ancestors have defended against the Ragesians and others before them for hundreds of years, watching the Alydi Gap, a low pass through the Otdar Mountains broad enough for an army to march in force. Other

routes through the mountains are narrower, more easily defended by the numerous independent dwarven lords who serve Dassen faithfully, but the Alydi Gap is Dassen's most vulnerable point, so Gallo's Fend acts as a sturdy shield.

The Nasham River here is roughly 500 feet wide, normally fed by many mountain streams, though in the fierce clutch of this late winter it remains frozen. An enemy army that reaches the bank of the river, however, will be bombarded by catapults and trebuchet fired from Gallo's castle, which is built on a 200-foot-high rise across the river. Rough cliffs prevent a direct assault. During normal weather, small fleets of ships loaded with archers patrol the river, based in Stratendoch, the heavily defended waterfront of Gallo's Fend. During the winter, the docks are perhaps the weakest point in the fortress city's defenses.

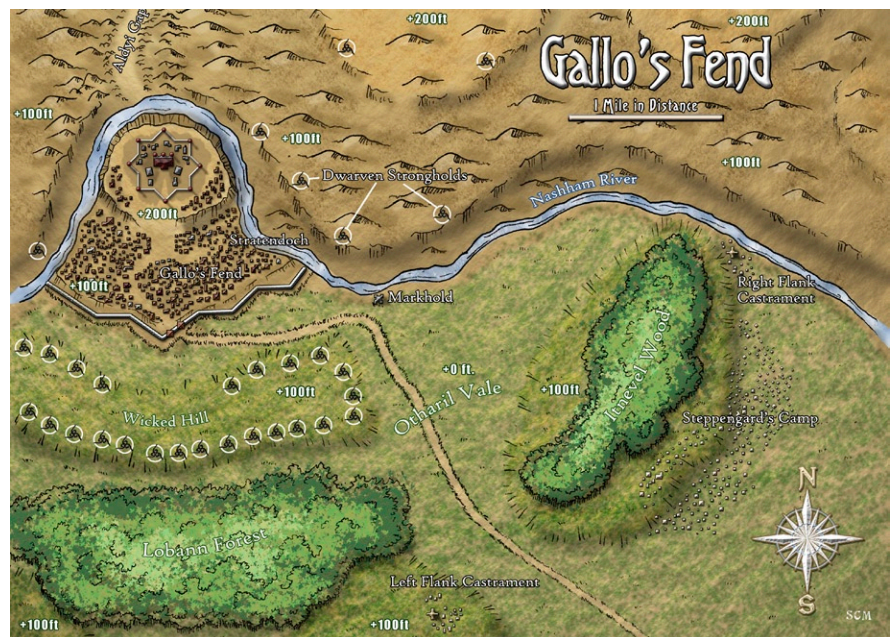
Cliffs 100 feet high protect the city along the line of the river, while sturdy walls 40 feet high guard from a land assault. As impregnable as Gallo's Fend is, it would be useless if it could not actually threaten an enemy army passing through. Dwarven strongholds dot the northern cliffs along the Nasham River, as well as in the surrounding hills, many of them connected by masterfully hidden tunnels, which can be collapsed if compromised by an

enemy force. Likewise, just south of Gallo's Fend is Wicked Hill, which hides two dozen underground outposts beneath what appears to be simple farmland. Soldiers can pass between Gallo's Fend and these outposts using a network of tunnels, riding out to harry enemy forces or piercing any army foolish enough to try to lay siege to the city.

Though vast underground storehouses hold enough food to support Gallo's Fend against prolonged sieges, the Otharil Vale is nevertheless the breadbasket of the area. Home to many retired soldiers turned farmers, these plains have been the site of four major battles in the past two hundred years.

The last major outpost in the Fend's defenses is Markhold, a squat fortress overlooking the river. It is large enough to serve as a fallback position for the farmers of Otharil Vale, and is manned by several hundred soldiers. An army that wants to cross the river would first have to get past Markhold, passing through the line of fire of its ranged weapons.

The armies of Gallo are as skilled with large field formations as they are in defending against sieges, and have never failed to stop an army that has managed to cross the Nasham River. Invaders cannot easily run past the defenses of Gallo's Fend, and attempting to sack the city itself is suicide.



Now, however, Gallo's Fend faces an assault from behind. Enraged at new "evidence" his advisor Nina Glibglammer has uncovered, King Steppengard intends to rally his nation's armies to destroy Duke Gallo, claiming that he is a traitor who threatens the safety of their entire nation.

Duke Gallo knows that he could hold out against a siege, even one launched by his own king, but he knows that he would then be unable to deploy his forces in enough strength to keep the Ragesians from entering Dassen. His plan, then, is to meet his king on the field of battle, hoping for a swift victory. His own forces are likely not enough for this, but if he called upon his two nearest neighbors, Lord Dashgoban and Lady Timor, he would have enough men to rebuke the king, at which point he could demand surrender or peace talks. He can only pray the weather holds this unnatural chill a bit longer, or else a thaw will bring the Ragesians upon them when the Dasseni forces are already wounded and exhausted.

## DUKE GALLO

As the heroes ride to Gallo's Fend they pass a small cavalry unit practicing near the road in Otharil Vale, but most of the soldiers are on foot, evenly split between humans and dwarves. Guards recognize Commander Herriage and let the heroes in, at which point they are hurried toward the main castle. The city is bustling, everyone doing their best to prepare for coming battles.

Duke Gallo and his retinue meet the heroes at the entrance of the castle.

Before the heavily fortified main gate of Gallo's castle waits a group of a dozen people. Soldiers and menservants flank a tall nobleman with blonde hair turning gray. He nods to you as you approach, then steps forward to shake your hands.

"I am Michael Gallo. If what the rumors say about you are true, you are welcome in my city. It's good to know there are people out there who aren't crazy enough to actually trust the Ragesians."

He waits for introductions, making sure to point out a manservant named Rodger who he will assign to answer their questions about Gallo's Fend, and to tend to their needs. If the heroes have arrived with Proxy Jinis, Gallo is overjoyed to see his friend and servant.



"Follow me inside, please," Duke Gallo says. "Your mounts will be tended to, and we'll get you rooms soon enough — outside the castle, sadly. We're already pretty filled up here, but I and my commanders will want to hear everything. As you can guess, it's hard to get reliable information out of Bresk right now."

The duke and his retinue turn to head into the castle, and Gallo waves for you to follow close. He pulls out a small metal case lined with cigarettes, takes one for himself, and offers the rest of you one if you'd like.

"The one thing we have heard — and maybe it's rumor, but I'm not going to risk not believing it — is that Steppengard is preparing to march his army here to take me down. He's still my king, even if he wants me dead, but he's making a major strategic mistake.

"I've read up on how this new Ragesian empress thinks, Leska? The bitch is a tricky one. Coaltongue, you could rely on him to come in and conquer by force if he wanted your land, and if he made a treaty, well, he was an honorable man, even if he was a megalomaniac. But this 'Supreme Inquisitor'? She created a whole group of followers who wear masks. I think the only thing we can trust of her is that she lies.

"I tell you, by the dirt between my toes, the Ragesians aren't planning to just destroy your sweet little swamp town. They're here for Dassen too. I hope you're all ready for a war."

Gallo leads the heroes to a small dining suite, where he serves drinks and fine food, and asks for the whole story until now. He says that he needs some time to think of his next move, so he asks that they let Rodger escort them to a small manor house down by the docks where they are welcome to stay for as long as needed. He expects to send for them tomorrow morning, after he has had a chance to plan with his advisors.

He thanks them for coming, and promises that they can trust him. None of them wants the Ragesians to get their way.

## AROUND GALLO'S FEND

The heroes have an evening to explore the city, though for now Rodger recommends they just get some rest, since they will have time tomorrow to prepare for whatever lies ahead.

Gallo's Fend has little in the way of entertainment this evening, though the heroes could enjoy a selling spree if they have spare equipment. Due to the immediate need for weapons and armor, such items can be sold for 30% of their normal value, instead of the usual 20% for resales.

Gallo's Fend is clearly built to be a fortress. Even normal household windows are narrow, like arrow slits, and every child above the age of ten carries a sword or dagger. Most houses have guests these days, many of them recent refugees. Indeed, the manor house where the heroes stay is also home to five other foreigners, as well as a large staff that Gallo and Rodger both vouch for. Feel free to give some of these foreigners a connection to the heroes' interests. Perhaps they are from Gate Pass, or are affiliated with some group the heroes are interested in.

The mood starts grim, but the food is full of strong cheese and juicy meat, and at the moment the locals still serve heroically large portions. If the heroes make an impression this evening, perhaps by being encouraging to the frightened refugees, or by performing masterful music or acting, or simply with tales of their own adventures, word spreads, and within a few days people around Gallo's Fend begin to recognize the heroes.



## WAR RECON

It is early, the dawn is not yet breaking. You were called out of bed, dressed in about ten minutes, and brought through the warrens of the Duke's castle to the war room. The large chamber is like a child's playroom sporting a large table in the center with a scale model of Dassen and its surroundings. Miniature figures are arrayed on shelves and within cabinets and hook-ended poles stand against the walls to help position figures beyond the strategists reach. A scaffold and catwalk is centered above the model and a gallery on the north and south walls allows an overview of the landscape from various angles. Duke Gallo stands on the northern side of the table, in front of a replica Gallo's Fend. He is in a discussion with one of the many advisers surrounding him and glances back and forth from a miniature he holds in his hand to the diorama nearby. He then notices you have arrived and he mentions to the others that it is probably time to introduce some new friends over a quick breakfast.

At the duke's announcement, a servant steps out of the room and returns a moment later with five others carrying trays of food for a working-style breakfast.

**Treasure:** If the heroes rescued Proxy Jinis, Gallo formally thanks the heroes before his advisers, and gives them a note of mark worth three 11th-level treasure parcels, which he suggests they use to prepare for their next mission. If the heroes delivered Jineer's letter to Proxy Jinis, the grateful father instead convinces Gallo to add one more 11th-level treasure parcel to their reward.

While nibbling on a rather large muffin, the duke ushers the heroes over to the diorama.

"Here's where we stand. Steppengard is marching an army of ten thousand, taking the frozen river northward so he can avoid the normal defenses along my border. Now, ten thousand men is a laughable number, really. I have nearly that many here in the city and in the various outposts in the area, and, as I'm sure you know, you need an attacking force three times as large as the defenders to hope to take an entrenched foe. Steppengard can't expect to actually take the city that size of force.

"The problem is, the only thing holding back the Ragesians is that the mountain passes

haven't thawed yet. If Steppengard decides to lay siege to me, or even try to do a frontal assault, he won't win, but he'll weaken my defenses, making it easier for the Ragesians to get in. And by last count, the Third Ragesian Army numbers something like forty thousand.

"We need to resolve this quickly. My commanders suggest that we face Steppengard's forces in open battle. If we can win a decisive victory, we can force surrender, and then I would accompany the king back to Bresk, summon the other nobles, and convince them that we have to defend against the Ragesians.

"Steppengard will be here in a little more than a week. After that, I assume we have two weeks, three at most before the Ragesians arrive. That should be enough time to sway the Council of Nine and get the necessary reinforcements here. Even if I lose a quarter of my men defeating Steppengard, with the aid of the rest of the kingdom we could easily hold the Gap.

"If we lose against the king, however, I suspect that whoever had tricked him into believing I am responsible for the assassinations will also trick him into leaving the Gap undefended. So I can't risk losing this fight. Steppengard's force has the aid of units from three other nobles — Iz, Namin, and Megadon — and outnumbers my own by enough that, even though I like to think of my soldiers as the best in the land, I can't be certain we'll win without great losses.

"This is where you come in. I need to convince my neighbors, Lord Dashgoban and Lady Timor, to join forces with me. I sent carrier pigeons requesting aid, but, though I suspect both of them agree with me, it's likely they won't be ready to fight their own king simply because I ask them to. I need proof that the Ragesians have hostile intentions, and not much time to find it in.

"Just across the river is the Alydi Gap, the only pass to the north. The Ragesians must come down that way if they plan to attack us but they have to silence the watchposts I maintain to keep their movements secret.

"I think an expeditionary force has already invaded, because our Sending rituals to the north-most outpost have failed. All my spies and special forces are engaged with Steppengard's advance and sending troops to confirm my suspicions will alert the Ragesians. You however, are a small enough group and cunning enough to avoid their notice. I think

you can infiltrate the outpost, bring back the proof and then travel to Dashgoban and Timor to present the findings. I humbly request that you help me in this task.

"Can I count on you?"

If the heroes agree to go to the mountain outpost, Gallo shows its location on the great diorama and provides a map to take on the journey. He tells his ostlers to provide sturdy and fast warhorses and a supply of *oats of fortitude* to keep the horses alive and running longer than normally be possible.

The duke expects the heroes to leave immediately and brings in servants to purchase anything they need for the trip while his advisers brief them on the mission (the heroes are of course expected to provide the purchase price of any items bought in this way). Gallo recommends they bring along Commander Herriage, whom the outpost soldiers will recognize.

The players may wonder if Gallo used a View Location ritual to see into the outpost. The Duke answers a bit ruefully.

"That is a good question. During Coaltongue's first campaign, we infused our lookout posts with Forbiddance wards at great cost. This kept him from casually scrying into our activities, but the side effect was reduced communication with our folk. That's why we placed outposts every four miles apart — a fast horse could make it to the next outpost in about thirty minutes, but this winter weather has made quick travel near impossible. If the Ragesians have taken the one outpost, I need all the others to stay alert right now."

Once everything is ready, Duke Gallo gives the heroes a few parting words.

"You'll need to ride fast and hard, get any news there is to be had, and return. If we're lucky, the Ragesians will not be as alert because we appear to be focusing on Steppengard. You need to bring back two of the forward lookouts if any are alive, because Timor and Dashgoban will want to talk to them personally before committing to civil war. If my men are dead, then bring back two Ragesians instead. I am sending a few extra horses and men to the next to last outpost so you can get back here quickly with the proof. Then we'll work on contacting Dashgoban and Timor.

## HOOFING IT

If the heroes do not dally, they will be across the frozen Nasham River by 10 a.m. There is an outpost every four miles up the Alydi Gap, the last one being a little over thirty miles away, and near the border of Ragesia. The snowy mountain terrain slows their speed to 2 miles an hour but the heroes can push their mounts to 4 miles per hour, reaching the final outpost in about 8 hours. Pushing the horses this way exacts a physical toll on them and they may succumb to the rigorous travel.

### Through the Alydi Gap

**Level 11 Skill Challenge • XP 1,800**

Complexity 3 (8 successes before 3 failures).

*The heroes navigate the treacherous landscape of the Alydi Gap to Duke Gallo's outposts.*

**Primary Skills** Endurance

**Secondary Skills** Heal, Insight, Nature, Perception

**Time** Each roll represents about an hour of time.

A failure delays the heroes travel by one hour.

The challenge ends when the heroes make a total of 8 successes, even if the number of failures is more than 3.

**Victory** If the heroes achieve 8 successes before 3 failures, they arrive at the last outpost in excellent time, just before evening begins to fall.

**Defeat** If the heroes acquire 3 failures before 8 successes, the hazards of the journey have bested them and the heroes arrive after darkfall. The horses will require two successive extended rests before they can return.

**Endurance DC 19** (1 successes, group check must be attempted each turn, fail/mount damage)

The heroes and their mounts must endure the terrain and elements as they travel through the gap. This is a group check. One character is assigned the leader and the others make checks to aid him. Each ally with a check result of 10 or higher provides a +2 to the leader's check. Any hero with the Mounted Combat feat automatically provides aid. If the leader's check fails, it counts as a failure for the skill challenge and all the horses take 2d6 damage. Roll this damage for each horse individually.

**Heal DC 16** (0 successes, no maximum, —/—)

At the cost of 1 hour of time, the heroes can heal each horse's bloodied value in hp.

**Insight DC 23** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge and mount damage)

The hero notices a way to avoid the path's dangers and shaves a considerable chunk of time off their journey. A successful check

allows the Endurance check to automatically succeed. A failure of this check causes all the heroes to lose a healing surge, each horse suffers 1d6 damage, and the Endurance check must be rolled.

**Nature DC 19** (0 success, no maximum, —/—)

The hero searches for a safe path through the ice and snow to avoid pitfalls such as falling rocks, steep slopes, and sinkholes. Successful use of this skill adds a +2 bonus to the group Endurance check.

**Perception DC 23** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge and mount damage)

The hero notices a way to avoid the path's dangers and shaves a considerable chunk of time off their journey. A successful check allows the Endurance check to automatically succeed. A failure of this check causes all the heroes to lose a healing surge, each horse suffers 1d6 damage, and the Endurance check must be rolled.

At each outpost, the soldiers are concerned over what is happening in their homeland, but none of them has seen any signs of Ragesians. Each fort has roughly the same garrison — a Gallo chaplain and eight Gallo regulars. The chaplains always have a Sending ritual, so they can alert Duke Gallo with just ten minutes' notice.

They do not have much in the way of provisions, but the soldiers offer the heroes food and warm drink to keep them strong for their mission. Time after time, the heroes push their horses, spot the next outpost, ascend warily, learn that there is no danger, and then must quickly turn back to the deep snow, the deathly cold, and the perilous paths of the frozen Alydi Gap.

## ALYDI GAP OUTPOST

As the heroes approach the eighth outpost, nothing looks out of place. At this point, the heroes are barely ten miles from the border of Ragesia, and if they were to ride much further, they would come upon the vast camp of the Third Ragesian Army, commanded by General Revulus, sprawled across the craglands of Chathus.

First, however, is the furthest outpost of the Kingdom of Dassen. Situated on a rocky spur one hundred feet high, the fortress is concealed from northern approach by a rolling ridge that rises even higher. On the southern side of the spur, switchbacks lead up a 45-degree slope

## TIMELINE OF STEPPENGARD'S ASSAULT

The heroes arrive at Gallo's Fend on Day 0. Steppengard's army is ready to march on Day 1. The army passes Pitchwood on Day 4. They reach the outskirts of Gallo's Fend on Day 8. The first attack occurs around noon on Day 9.

Delay the march of Steppengard's army by 1 day for every proxy or noble among Iz, Megadon, and Namin whom the heroes made Friendly, and by 2 days for each they made Helpful.

The heroes set out to the Alydi Gap Outpost on Day 1. If they hurry, they can return by the evening of Day 2.

It is 100 miles from Gallo's Fend to Dashgoban's capital if they take the road, or 60 miles if they either go through Pitchwood or risk traveling on the river, which is patrolled. It is 80 miles from Gallo's Fend to Timor's capital if they take the road, or 40 miles if they scale the Glaskeel Cliffs. It is 120 miles from Dashgoban's capital to Timor's capital if they take the road, or 80 miles if they go through Pitchwood and up the Glaskeel Cliffs.

It takes Dashgoban's forces 5 days to muster and reach Gallo's Fend. It takes Timor's forces 3 days to muster and reach Gallo's Fend.

If the heroes come up with a plan to delay Steppengard's forces, such as by burning pitch on the river, this delays the arrival at Gallo's Fend by 2 days.

Assuming that the heroes use warhorses and travel 40 miles a day (by pushing their mounts a little, and using modest healing magic to keep them going), the heroes could easily travel 60 miles from Gallo's Fend to Dashgoban through Pitchwood, arriving around noon on Day 4. This allows Dashgoban's forces to reach Gallo's Fend just in time to join the battle. If the heroes then travel 80 miles up the Glaskeel Cliffs to Timor, they could arrive in the afternoon of Day 6. This is not quite fast enough for Timor's forces to reach Gallo's Fend before the battle begins. However, the heroes could still travel the 40 miles back to Gallo's Fend in time to be ready.

Time is short, but if the heroes are competent and managed to sway a few opposing proxies at Steppengard's court, or if they have the presence of mind to slow the army's advance up the river, they should get back to Gallo's Fend, with reinforcements, with time to spare.



before reaching the plateau upon which the stone fort is constructed.

From the bottom of the mountain pass, it is impossible to see the condition of the fort, so the heroes will likely have to ascend the switchbacks to the plateau.

An advance party for Ragesia has already occupied the fortress. General Revulus is not certain Leska's ploy to destabilize Dassen will work, so he has dispatched small units of infiltrators to take over the garrisons along the path. They know that the garrisons are only relieved every month or two, and that relief is even more unlikely in winter, so the infiltrators intend to simply stay put until the army is ready to march. Then they will advance ahead of the army, discreetly seizing outposts one by one, with the aim of letting the Third Ragesian Army reach the southern edge of the Alydi Gap before the Dassen forces at Gallo's Fend are so much as alerted to them.

### RAGESIAN FORCES

In total, the forces at the outpost consist of two Ragesian infiltrators, eight Ragesian soldiers, the Inquisitor Crona, and infiltration leader Commander Jass, plus the occasional presence of Wyvern Knight Stonum and his mount Dractyl.

If the heroes traveled at the expected pace, they likely arrive just before sunset. Stonum and Dractyl have been responsible for delivering supplies to the infiltrators, and they only fly at night, to avoid being spotted by random travelers. If the heroes wait until midnight, the knight and his wyvern depart.

The outdoor trails are covered in light snow, which does not impede movement. Off the trail, the ground has thick snow, which counts as difficult terrain. A few scattered trees offer an option for a stealthy approach, though the climb is difficult because of the snow (DC 23 Athletics check to climb).

### AREAS A, B, C, AND D

The switchback road is watched carefully by an infiltrator on the roof in area D. The outpost is similar to the others in design, but the torches in Area B are not common. They have been placed to help a wyvern rider find his way to the fort at night. The heroes' goal is to reach the door at location C.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Approach (page 84)



### AREA E

#### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Shooting Gallery (page 86)



### AREA F

#### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Gauntlet (page 87)



### AREAS G, H, AND I

#### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Barracks (page 89)



### AFTERMATH

The orders for Commander Jass are more than enough evidence to convince Timor and Dashgoban that the Ragesians are planning an invasion. The heroes should hurry back to Gallo's Fend to prepare for the next stage of their mission.

## TWO MISSIONS

When the heroes return with evidence that a Ragesian invasion is imminent, they are ushered into a conference chamber at the castle. Chaplains tend to their wounds, and they are assured that grooms are at work making sure their horses are ready for another trip, if necessary.

Inside the conference chamber are Duke Gallo and an assortment of commanders and advisors, looking at a table map depicting Gallo's lands as a topographical model. They are discussing ways to slow down Steppengard's advance. A

## OTHER SOLUTIONS

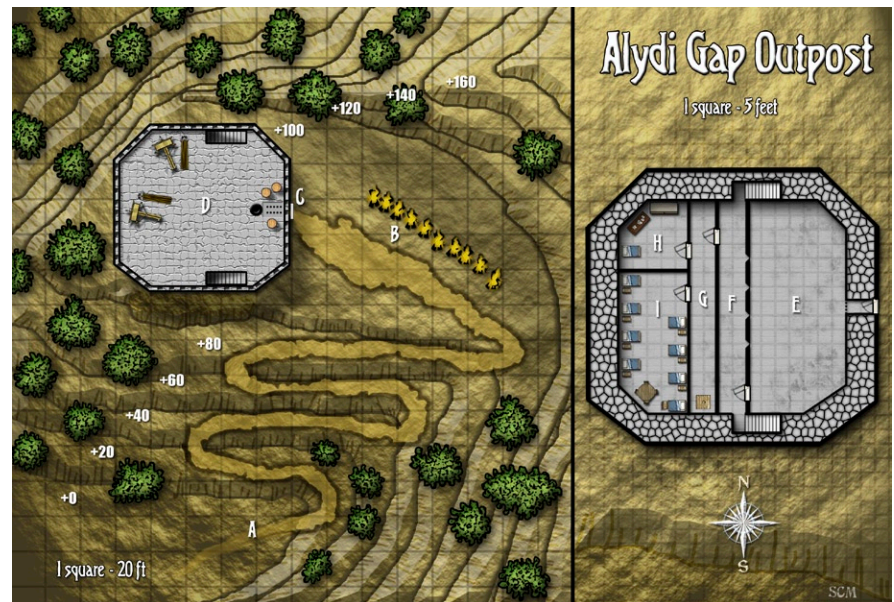
If the heroes limit themselves to conventional methods, they must race time in order to get the word to Dashgoban and Timor. However, a little creativity or magic can quickly skip over a large portion of this act.

It should still be necessary to explore the Alydi Gap Outposts. The two nobles are canny enough to see through bald lies, and will not appreciate attempts to trick them. They each have good Insight skills, and with the aid of their advisors, it is unlikely the heroes can deceive everyone.

Once they verify that the Ragesians are there, the heroes could split up, delivering the message to the two nobles more swiftly, but increasing the dangers on the road. They might use a Sending ritual to contact the nobles, though this alone will not convince anyone to commit force unless the heroes managed to make their proxies in Bresk helpful through Diplomacy. It is, after all, hard to be persuasive with only 25 words; attempting to do this imposes a -10 penalty on any applicable Diplomacy check.

Of course, the focus of this act is the battle at Gallo's Fend, so if the heroes find a clever way to circumvent traveling and delivering messages, reward them for overcoming the challenges, and move on.

human advisor is in favor of ordering Pitchwood Burg — a small town in Dashgoban's territory on the banks of the Nasham River — to spread this year's harvest of pitch over a large section of the river and ignite it, thereby melting the river.



This would slow Steppengard's forces, but would be financially devastating for the people of Pitchwood, even if Gallo could convince them to do it. At this point Gallo turns his attention to the heroes and asks them what their news is.

Once Gallo hears the news and sees their evidence, he quickly works with the heroes to come up with a course of action on how to activate the mutual defense pacts he has with Lord Dashgoban and Lady Timor. He sees the best chance of success if the heroes can escort his proxy (Jinis if the heroes escaped with him; otherwise a man named Makhesson) first to Lord Dashgoban, then to Lady Timor, stopping along the way to convince the people of Pitchwood to melt the river. However, he will accept any plan that sounds like it will work, and his advisors can quickly calculate how long it should take the heroes to take a given path. If the heroes do take along Gallo's proxy, assume he has a +17 bonus to Diplomacy checks.

Gallo is reluctant to send traditional couriers, because Steppengard likely has his new police, the Talon, watching the roads near the borders, to make sure Gallo cannot get any aid against the invasion. Instead, to assure swift contact with Dashgoban, the heroes could ride through Pitchwood, shaving a day off their trip, though they would have to face the dangers of the fey pitchlings. Likewise, Lady Timor can be quickly reached if the heroes scale the half-mile high Glaskeel Cliffs rather than take the long winding roads that will surely be blockaded.

If the heroes do not volunteer, Gallo will ask them. If they refuse, it is very likely no aid will reach Gallo's Fend.

## PATH THROUGH PITCHWOOD

Pitchwood is a dense forest of pitch pines that stretches between the Otdar Mountains and the Nasham River, along the border between Lord Gallo and Lord Dashgoban's lands. Normal traffic goes around its edges, because of a tribe of fey called pitchlings who harass travelers through their woods.

A **DC 15 History** or **Nature** check lets the heroes know that the pitchlings are immune to fire damage, are competitive by nature, and that they only speak Elven, not Common.

A **DC 20 History** check alerts the heroes to a trick they can use to avoid being surprised by a pitchling ambush. If the heroes hold unlit torches as they ride through the woods, as soon as a pitchling gets within 100 feet the torches will spontaneously light. Pitchlings like to stage

ambushes, so if the heroes use this torch trick, they have an opportunity to call out and speak to the fey before a fight begins.

The straightest path through Pitchwood is a 15-mile road, where various unfriendly ne'er-dowells lurk and rob, harass, or kill interlopers. The trees are thick, the road narrow and overgrown, and the shadows of the woods abuzz with eerie noises, like a mixture between giggles and thick, greasy dripping sounds. When the heroes are about 5 miles into the woods, a group of ten pitchlings comes in for an ambush. If they get within 30 feet without being seen, they attack the intruders, intending to take any "pretties" the party has. If they are spotted, or if the heroes use the torches trick, the pitchlings hesitate for a minute, waiting to see if the heroes talk to them before they attack.

If the heroes attack, begin the tactical encounter.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Pitchwood (page 91)



### DEVELOPMENT

If the heroes try to talk to the pitchlings, and speak to them in Elven, the pitchlings will listen patiently. Clever heroes can use the pitchlings as a weapon against Steppengard. While the majority of Steppengard's forces are traveling along the frozen Nasham River, the ice is not strong enough to support his siege weapons, so they will have to travel through Pitchwood.

Because the pitchlings hate outsiders, they might be convinced to harass Steppengard's forces and destroy the siege weapons as they are moved through their forest. The heroes will have to work slightly harder to convince the pitchlings to use their pitch to melt the river and delay the army. The competitive pitchlings will propose a contest that involves hurling a glob of burning pitch at a target.

#### Pitchling Help

**Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 2,100**

**Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)**

*The heroes try to convince the pitchlings to delay Steppengard's army and destroy his its siege weapons.*

**Primary Skills** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidation, Nature

**Victory** The pitchlings will attack Steppengard's forces and destroy many siege weapons.

**Defeat** The pitchlings are too frightened to rebuff Steppengard's advance.

**Bluff DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero exaggerates the size of Steppengard's army and its rapacious nature.

**Diplomacy DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero explains how the pitchlings will be affected if Steppengard's army marches through.

**Intimidate DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero stirs up the pitchlings' anger with tales of Steppengard's army's destructive might.

**Nature DC 18** (1 success, 1 maximum, —/—)

The hero explains the damage that will be done to the forest if Steppengard's army marches through.

### Pitchling Contest

**Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 2,100**

**Complexity N/A**

*One hero competes with a pitchling to hit a target with a burning glob of pitch at successively longer distances. The first one to miss the target loses the challenge.*

**Primary Skills** None. The hero accepting the challenge must make attacks with an improvised weapon.

**Victory** The pitchlings will melt the river to delay Steppengard's advance.

**Defeat** The pitchlings won't venture from the forest and risk Steppengard's anger.

**Burning Pitch** An improvised one-handed weapon. Range 5/10; damage 1d4 fire damage to the wielder.

**The Challenge** The target is **AC 20** and placed 5 squares away. Throwing the pitch at the target is a STR vs. **AC** attack. If both contestants succeed in hitting the target, it is moved one square further out and they throw again. The first one to miss loses the match.

## CASTLE DASHGOBAN

Once through the Pitchwood, only twenty miles separate the heroes from the home of Lord Dashgoban. Dashgoban's castle is built into a stone outcropping streaked with old erosion from rain so that it looks like a great monster clawed rents in the side of the rock. There is no surrounding city, just scattered farms and villages.

Dashgoban's cavalry are practicing exercises as the heroes arrive, and if they stop to talk, the heroes learn that the soldiers are relieved Gallo's messengers have finally arrived. The



warriors of Dashgoban apparently are eager for a fight, but their lord will not let them march until he receives a formal request.

Lord Dashgoban is a pale-haired, aging dwarf with a soft beard. He styles himself a great commander, though he admits he lacks Duke Gallo's experience. He does not like King Steppengard's rule, but he is not a fool, and will not send his men to war unless convinced it benefits him.

If the heroes gained the respect of Dashgoban's proxy at the royal court, all the heroes have to do is reveal the Alydi Gap outpost evidence, ask for Dashgoban's aid, and share a drink with him. The proud lord will immediately order the one thousand cavalry and two thousand foot soldiers he has mustered to march to join the forces at Gallo's Fend. He will also go over the plans that Gallo has considered and notices that Steppengard will probably cross by Pitchwood burg. Father Albert might be convinced to spread pitch over the river ice and burn it to delay the advance. Lord Dashgoban writes a letter to Father Albert to help convince him to go along with the plan.

If Dashgoban's proxy was not impressed, the heroes will have to do some more explaining to convince Dashgoban to join the fight. If the heroes won the skill challenge in Bresk, a simple **DC 21 Diplomacy** check is all that is needed to secure the aid. Otherwise, run the following skill challenge.

### Convince Dashgoban

Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 700

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes try to convince Lord Dashgoban to support Duke Gallo against King Steppengard.*

**Primary Skills** Bluff, Diplomacy, History

**Victory** The heroes gain Lord Dashgoban's support for Duke Gallo. The dwarf goes over the plans and suggests getting help from Pitchwood Burg.

**Complete Victory** If the heroes win the skill challenge with no failures, Dashgoban writes a note to Father Albert recommending he follow the plan. Otherwise, have the heroes make a DC 25 Insight check to suggest that the duke write such a letter.

**Failure** Lord Dashgoban decides not to help Duke Gallo.

**Bluff DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)  
Dashgoban likes bluff and bravado and will respond favorably to some embellishment.

**Diplomacy DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

Good solid arguments sway the dwarf. If the hero's check result beats DC 26, the check also removes one failure.

**History DC 21** (1 success, 1 maximum, fail/—)

The hero recalls some fact that is relevant to Dashgoban, such as the Ragesian army will see to destroy the dwarven citadels as well.

**Minor Quest Award:** Reward the heroes MQ-7, Dashgoban's Aid (1,000 XP) if they secure Lord Dashgoban's aid early enough for his forces to reach Gallo's Fend before the battle. Lord Dashgoban's aid is worth 8 Victory Points to the heroes' side in the Battle for Gallo's Fend (see page 4).

## DELAYING STEPPENGARD

The town of Pitchwood Burg lies squeezed between the southern border of the forest and the Nasham River. It is one of several towns that harvest pitch from the forest, having made loose mutual nonviolence agreements with the pitchlings.

### PITCHWOOD BURG (HAMLET)

**Population** 300 — Mixed race distribution (96% human, 2% dwarf, 1% halfling, 1% other);

**Government** Pitchwood Burg is run by a mayor, but only in a marginal sense.

**Defense** None, except for a small militia (20–40 men who can be called upon).

**Inns** The town has one inn: The Flame Eternal.

**Taverns** Pitchwood Burg's only tavern, the Thirsty Eye, is connected to the Flame Eternal.

**Supplies** Limited to basics only.

**Temples** None.

If the heroes pass through the town, they might try to convince the townsfolk to spread their harvest of pitch on the river and ignite it when Steppengard's army is less than a day away. This will melt the ice and leave it weak for days, delaying Steppengard's arrival in Gallo's Fend by two days. However, to do so, the heroes would have to sway the head of the town, Father Albert. Conversely, if the pitchlings have agreed to melt the river instead, the only thing the heroes need to talk to Father Albert about is staying out of their way. Father Albert's overarching goal is caring for his "flock," so if an idea seems as though it will mostly benefit or protect Pitchwood Burg and its citizens, he will view it favorably.



### Convince Father Albert

Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 2,500

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures).

*The heroes try to talk the leader of Pitchwood Burg into sacrificing the town's harvest of pitch for the good of Dassen.*

**Primary Skills** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidation, Religion.

**Special** A payment of 300 gp secures +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks. A payment of 1,000 gp is worth 2 automatic successes. If Lord Dashgoban wrote a letter, it is worth 2 automatic successes.

**Partial Victory** If the heroes get 4 successes before 3 failures, Father Albert suggests that the pitchlings could melt the river ice instead. He suggests the heroes attempt to make it a competition, such as "fire hurling" or archery, to get them to do it.

**Victory** The town will melt the ice to delay Steppengard

**Defeat** Father Albert refuses to risk both crippling the town's economy and incurring Steppengard's wrath.

**Bluff DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes attempt to persuade Father Albert by shading the truth.

**Diplomacy DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes attempt to persuade Father Albert by making it clear how he and Pitchwood Burg stand to benefit from cooperating.

**Intimidate DC 24** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes bully Father Albert or make much of the danger Pitchwood Burg faces if he doesn't cooperate.

**Religion DC 18** (1 success, 1 maximum, —/—)

The heroes appeal to Father Albert's faith and his responsibilities to his "flock."

**Minor Quest Award:** If the heroes manage to melt the river and delay Steppengard's march, reward them MQ–8, Delay Steppengard (1,000 XP).

## SCALING THE GLASKEEL CLIFFS

The heroes' journey to recruit Lady Timor to aid Lord Gallo's forces has two main options. They could take the main road, in which case they would run into a blockade of Steppengard forces, or they could attempt to scale the Glaskeel Cliffs, avoiding the road entirely and heading straight to the plateau upon which Timor's castle is built.

### STEPPENGARD BLOCKADE

A contingent of Talon soldiers watches the roads. This group has specific orders to stop couriers from traveling out of Gallo's lands. If the heroes take the road, this encounter begins when they reach a bridge across one of the many gorges on the border of Lady Timor's land. The stone bridge is twenty feet wide and sixty feet long, and as the heroes reach the middle of the bridge, several soldiers ride out from a copse of trees on the far end, demanding the heroes stop and identify themselves. Meanwhile, a troll mercenary who has been lurking under the bridge climbs up and blocks off the heroes' path of retreat.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Steppengard Blockade (page 92)



### SCALING THE CLIFFS

The Glaskeel Cliffs form a natural border between Lady Timor's lands and Lord Gallo's. The cliffs are almost a half-mile tall, with few trustworthy ledges, and sharp, shearing winds. Caves pock the cliffs, but these do not provide a route through or past the the cliffs.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Scaling the Cliffs (page 94)



**Quest Award:** If the heroes succeed in traveling over the Glaskeel Cliffs (even if they use magic), reward them 1,500 XP.

## CASTLE TIMOR

Lady Timor's castle is just a mile from the edge of the Glaskeel Cliffs, an easy walk on foot. Consisting of a cluster of over a dozen towers, surrounded by moats and connected by bridges, rooftops patrolled by mages trained for war, the castle of Lady Timor is easily the most magically gifted in Dassen. She styles herself as a young archmage, and lives in a tower of her own. She receives the heroes on a seventh-floor balcony, magically warmed, overlooking the snowy Glaskeel Cliffs.

Like Dashgoban, Lady Timor's attitude matches her proxy's at Bresk. Even if she does want to help, she takes her time reviewing the heroes' stories; if they provide her with the written orders of the Ragesian commander, she has a diviner verify they are legitimate.

Additionally, she has heard rumors about the heroes, and wants some of her questions answered. Depending on how the heroes resolved Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*, Lady Timor may be somewhat irritated with them. If the forest's fires were ended because of the heroes' actions, she asks about their passage through the fire forest, and then laments the fact that now there is a second opening through which the Ragesians can invade Dassen. Once the Second Ragesian Army conquers Gate Pass, they will be able to simply march through the now burnt-out Innenotdar valley and emerge in the northern reaches of Timor's lands. This does not incur any penalty to Diplomacy with Timor, but she wants them to know that their actions may have jeopardized her land and her people.

If the heroes make her Helpful, she commits a division of fifty mages, an escort of eight hundred foot soldiers and two hundred cavalry, and a particularly precious elemental ally to the defense of Gallo's Fend. Additionally, to ensure that the heroes can get back to Gallo swiftly, she has several of her mages escort them to the edge of the cliffs and cast *feather fall* on them, which allows them to descend to the bottom of the cliffs in one great leap.

**Quest Award:** If the heroes secure Lady Timor's aid, reward them 1,500 XP. Lady Timor's aid is also worth 8 Victory Points to the heroes' side at the Battle for Gallo's Fend (see page 4).

## WAR PLANS

When the heroes return to Gallo's Fend, the armies of King Steppengard might already be preparing to assault the city, or might still be several days away. Regardless, most of the villagers in Otharil Vale have abandoned their homes, retreating to a tent city between Markhold and Wicked Hill. Duke Gallo welcomes any news that aid is on its way, and thanks the heroes deeply for the assistance they have lent, promising to defend Seaquen against the Ragesians in return for their success.

However, there is still a battle to be won. Gallo half-jokingly says that if the heroes leave now, they will regret not being the ones who save the day. Instead, he suggests, they should fight alongside his forces, and, if they agreed to lend aid, those of Dashgoban and Timor.

Gallo is still the ruler of his land, and while he will consider suggestions by the heroes, he already has his overall battle plan drawn up. He will, however, offer the heroes a choice of allies to serve with them in the coming battle.

## STEPPENGARD'S FORCES

Steppengard's army is commanded by Konigsmarshal Malkan, under the supervision of Advisor Nina Glibglammer. The king's war wizard Kelkin Thravanvost, trained in Gabal's combat techniques, will be directing the army's magical forces. King Steppengard himself remains at his castle in Bresk.

Malkan commands roughly ten thousand soldiers, drawn from the lands of Steppengard, Iz, Megadon, and Namin. He also fields a variety of monstrous mercenaries.

The Steppengard army is camped behind Itnevel Hill, with various lookouts watching from the woods. Malkan's command tent lies in the center of the camp, and not far away is the tent of Nina Glibglammer. A representative of each of the three assisting nobles — Iz, Megadon, and Namin — stays in their own section of the camp, near their own forces.

Two clusters of castraments, temporary dirt forts Malkin ordered dug on site, overlook the camp's flanks. Each castrament is less than 100 feet square, with 10-foot-high walls surrounded by a 10-foot-deep ditch and set with sharpened wooden spikes. These forts help ensure that Gallo's forces will not flank around the hill.

Only about a quarter of Steppengard's forces can be effectively fielded at a time due to terrain limitations, so during major combat the majority of the soldiers will stay in reserve.



## WAR-MAGE KELKIN

The war-mage Kelkin likes his isolation, so his tent is at the edge of the main camp, atop Itnevel hill, near the woods. Malkan was only able to convince the mage to have a small force of guards, which worries the Konigsmarshal, because Kelkin's presence is critical to maintaining the allegiance of some of the Steppengard units.

Kelkin also has under his control a beautiful charmed lion-headed sphinx named Nashara, and the dozens of ram-headed sphinxes who serve with the army do so primarily to win the female sphinx's favor. If Kelkin loses control of Nashara, there is a good chance the ram-headed sphinxes would abandon the fight, severely hampering Malkan's capabilities.

## GALLO'S FORCES

Duke Gallo commands ten thousand soldiers, spread throughout Gallo's Fend, many of them stationed in the hidden forts on Wicked Hill or in similar bunkers throughout Otharil Vale.

If the heroes earned the aid of Lord Dashgoban, one thousand cavalry and two thousand traditional soldiers bolster Gallo. If Lady Timor is sending aid as well, this adds fifty war-mages, eight hundred foot soldiers, and two hundred cavalry, plus the elder xorn Tupof Dzequifs.

Gallo has a wide variety of siege weapons in place, allowing him to control the distance at which the battle begins. He plans to strand Steppengard's lines out in the fields of Otharil Vale, where they will be vulnerable to mass archery from Gallo's reserve units. The Duke intends to keep only a minimal number of troops behind in the city, choosing instead to deploy the majority of his forces along a line stretching roughly a mile, just southeast of Markhold and Wicked Hill. Since his forces will be close to safe havens, it will be easy for him to swap units in and out, keeping fresh soldiers busy putting pressure on Steppengard's lines.

## THE HEROES' ROLE

Gallo's forces are under the control of various high commanders, with individual commanders in charge of groups of between twenty and fifty soldiers. Gallo wants the heroes to be part of one of these groups, though he will only offer to let them command one if they possess the proper demeanor for command.

Commander Hertiage will serve alongside the heroes, and if they do not want to be in charge of the unit, he will. The heroes' division has two main responsibilities. First, they are to ensure that none of Steppengard's forces get past the roughly 150-foot-wide stretch of land that has been assigned to them (each division is assigned its own patch of land, forming a long line). Second, they are to defeat all the forces that come at them.

If the heroes acquired no aid, their unit consists of themselves, Commander Hertiage, two Gallo chaplains, and thirty-two Gallo soldiers.

If the heroes secured the aid of Lord Dashgoban, they can choose instead to serve with cavalry, so their unit consists of themselves, Commander Hertiage, a Gallo chaplain, and sixteen Dashgoban knights, plus Woody Rust-Wrangler and his rust monster minion, Granule (advanced large rust monster).

If the heroes secured the aid of Lady Timor, the general make-up of their unit does not change, but they can add two Timor war-mages to their forces. Additionally, they can call upon Tupof Dzequifs, an elder xorn who has served the Timor family for many decades. Tupof spends the battle earth-gliding wherever he is needed. The heroes are given a "thumper," a one-use magic item that emits a rhythmic thrum for several rounds when struck against a solid surface. When they throw the thumper, 1d4 rounds later (roll in secret) Tupof arrives at the spot of the thumper, rises up from the ground and simply begins fighting the nearest or most imposing enemies unless he is given orders that are more specific. As long as he is enjoying himself and is not getting too hurt, Tupof will fight for a minute, before someone else's call pulls him away. Of course, Tupof can be an ace in the hole for if you need to get the heroes out of a dangerous situation.

# ACT FOUR: THE BATTLE FOR GALLO'S FEND

While the focus of Gallo's plans is to hold the Line at Otharil Vale, certain other missions can make a major difference in the battle. The heroes do not have to participate in all these missions, and indeed, if the party has no stealth skills they would be ill suited for some of them. However, Duke Gallo will ask them to participate in any suitable missions.

- ◆ **Siege Sabotage:** The heroes destroy Steppengard's siege weapons, which spares them some bombardment at the beginning of the battle of the line.
- ◆ **Mage Assassination:** The evening before the battle, the heroes attack the tent of war-mage Kelkin Thravanost, who is almost more dangerous than a battery of siege weapons.
- ◆ **The Line at Otharil Vale:** The heroes and their fellow soldiers face wave after wave of Steppengard forces.
- ◆ **Strike at the Head:** After the first wave of the battle of the line, Steppengard's commanders will send reinforcements out, leaving their camp only weakly defended. The heroes will sneak in through dwarven tunnels and attempt to capture or kill the enemy commanders.

To aid their missions, Duke Gallo can provide them with uniforms matching the tabards of Steppengard, Iz, Megadon, or Namin forces, and he lets the heroes requisition five 12th-level treasure parcels.

If the heroes are defeated during any of these missions, their foes do their best not to kill them, instead preferring to take captives, which they can ransom back to the losers.

## SIEGE SABOTAGE

The evening before the battle, under the cover of darkness, Steppengard's siege weapons are lined up on Otharil Vale, just beyond two thousand feet from Gallo's battle lines. They are safely out of range of archers and opposing catapults, but close enough that a group of stealthy heroes might be able to sneak in and sabotage them. While simply running up to the siege weapons across a snow-covered open field would be suicidal, a group of dwarven sappers can excavate a tunnel that gets within 60 feet of the siege weapons. Four sappers can

lead the heroes to the exit, and wait behind for the heroes' return. Once the heroes get back in the tunnels, or when it becomes apparent that the heroes will not be getting away, the sappers collapse the exit so they cannot be followed.

The catapults are arrayed in a line, each about 40 feet from the next, surrounded by a 5-foot ditch and a 5-foot dirt wall set with a fraise of wooden spears. The ballistae are mounted on wagons pulled by heavy warhorses, so they can be wheeled close to the battle to take out flying threats if necessary.

Each of the heavy catapults has a squad of four siege engineers, who are non-combatants. Eight Steppengard soldiers and a Steppengard commander patrol the nearby grounds. Additionally, Nikkhuar, a wyrmling red dragon, flying in erratic ellipses and scanning the line of siege weapons with his 60-foot blindsense every few rounds, patrols above. Use this information to add drama to the Skill Challenge rather than set up a complex battle.

### DESTROYING AND DISABLING

If the heroes did not secure the aid of the pitchlings, the full complement of ten heavy catapults and eight ballista wagons are here. If the pitchlings agreed to harass Steppengard's forces, there are only four heavy catapults and two ballista wagons and the pitchling aid counts as an automatic 6 successes to the skill challenge.

#### Destroy the Siege Engines

Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 3,500

Complexity 5 (12 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes go forth to take out the enemy's catapults and ballistae.*

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Bluff, Stealth, Thievery

**Secondary Skills** Endurance, Insight, Nature, Perception

**Special** Brazen Assault (used as a primary skill)

**Partial Victory** 4–5 successes: 7 catapults and 4 ballistae remain. +4 Victory Points.

6–7 successes: 4 catapults and 2 ballistae remain. +6 Victory Points.

8–9 successes: 2 catapults and 1 ballista remain. +8 Victory Points.

10–11 successes: 1 catapult remains. +10 Victory Points.

**Victory** All the siege engines are destroyed. +12 victory points.

**Defeat** Not enough siege engines are destroyed. 0 victory points.

**Special** If the heroes secured the pitchlings' aid from **Pitchling Help** (page 31), it counts as 6 automatic successes.

**Arcana DC 16** (1 success; 4 maximum; fail/healing surge)

A clever use of magic disables the siege engine. A failure costs the hero and any allies using Aid Another a healing surge.

**Bluff DC 21** (1 success; 4 maximum; fail/healing surge)

The hero creates a distraction nearby and is free to sabotage the engines. A failure costs the hero and any allies using Aid Another a healing surge.

**Stealth DC 21** (2 successes, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes sneak behind the guard line and gain access to the siege engine. A failure of this check forces a Brazen Assault to be made immediately.

**Thievery DC 16** (1 success; 4 maximum; fail/healing surge)

A critical component to maintain the weapon mysteriously vanishes or is rendered useless. A failure costs the hero and any aiding allies a healing surge.

**Brazen Assault DC 23** (2 successes; no maximum, fail/2 group healing surges)

Treat this as a melee basic attack, with an AC equal to the check DC. The heroes assault the guards in order to sabotage the weapon. If this check fails, everyone loses 2 healing surges.

**Endurance DC 21** (0 success; 4 maximum; —/—)

The hero lets patience and fortitude outlast the enemy's attention, improving the odds of success. Adds a +2 to the next Bluff or Stealth check.

**Insight DC 16** (0 success; 4 maximum; —/—)

The hero identifies weaknesses in the guard routine or a weakness in the siege engine being sabotaged. Adds a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check.

**Nature DC 11** (0 success; 4 maximum; —/—)

The hero's knowledge of terrain enables him to easily chart the best routes to reach each siege engine. Adds a +2 bonus to the next Stealth or Arcana check.



**Perception DC 16** (0 success; 4 maximum; —/—)

The hero identifies weaknesses in the guard routine or a weakness in the siege engine being sabotaged. Adds a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check.

**MAGE ASSASSINATION**

Kelkin Thravanvost, a dwarven war-mage who helped the famed Gabal of Gate Pass develop some of his techniques, now serves as chief wizard of war for King Steppengard. During battle he will be a holy terror, so Gallo wants the heroes to kill him the evening before.

Uncomfortable around the gnome Nina Glibglammer (because she is actually the trillith Madness), Kelkin stays in a tent at the edge of the Steppengard camp, so the heroes have an opportunity to infiltrate the camp without bringing the whole army down on them.

**TACTICAL ENCOUNTER**

Mage Assassination (page 95)

**THE LINE AT OTHARIL VALE**

Because armies are involved, this encounter is treated as a skill challenge rather than a straight

tactical encounter. The challenges themselves have combat activities for the heroes to use in lieu of actual combat. In this way, both force and skill can work together to achieve the goal.

Early in the morning, drums and horns sound the approach of battle. A warm breeze blows from the south, snapping banners in a militaristic cadence, and by an hour after sunrise, the armies of Gallo and Steppengard are assembled and ready for battle.

Steppengard's forces will need to march through Otharil Vale to reach Gallo's Fend. Rather than ceding that land to him, Gallo intends to confront him in a straight-up fight. Thousands of foot soldiers and cavalry, hundreds of magic-users, and scattered monstrous forces line up two thousand feet apart, awaiting the order to attack.

The heroes will have to defeat several waves to be victorious. If they are being defeated they can retreat, and fresh forces will relieve them, but for the purpose of this encounter, they will have suffered a defeat.

Commander Herriage, who either is in charge of the unit or is assisting the heroes,

**WHY IS KELKIN A THREAT?**

While a 17th-level wizard is nothing to sneeze at, he lacks enough spells to be a threat to an entire army. The answer to this mystery is that Konigsmarshal Malkan has several large chests of scrolls, potions, and wands that Kelkin will use during the battle. While Malkan is willing to let Kelkin gamble with his own life by sleeping at the edge of camp, he isn't about to risk tens of thousands of Dasseni gold octets, so he keeps the chests secure at his command tent.

suggests the heroes take the center of the line of forces. Whether they have foot soldiers or cavalry, their unit is just large enough to fill a 150-foot-wide line with some to spare.

If the unit consists of foot soldiers, Herriage says the line should have two gaps, dividing it into three roughly equal parts, with archers set up behind a fraise (a ring of outward-pointing spears) in the gaps. The majority of the soldiers will fight in melee, but the archers will be protected and able to target particularly dangerous foes or aerial enemies. Any heroes with good ranged attacks should also be set up in these fraises.



The heroes' section of the battlefield is 150 feet wide and 2,000 feet long (catapult range). The opposing forces will approach in a steady line. Heritage suggests the chaplains remain behind the battle line, preferably mounted so they can reach the injured quickly. Duke Gallo can provide warhorses for the chaplains (and for any heroes who can provide significant healing, if they ask).

## OTHARIL VALE OPENING VOLLEY

Steppengard's army blares its horns, and the vast line of soldiers advances at a hustle. If the heroes stay put to take advantage of stationary defenses, the enemy forces hustle from 2,000 feet out and then pick up to a run about 600 feet from the defensive positions. The skill challenge can be started when the enemy is about 30 squares away.

If the catapults were not all destroyed, the catapults also advance a hundred feet over ten rounds, being slowly pushed into position. A bit of spying by Madness has determined where the heroes are deployed, so she has directed one catapult to focus its efforts specifically on them. This is treated as a hazard while the skill challenge is conducted.

### Catapult Boulder Level 11 Blaster • XP 600 Hazard

*A large boulder and other debris flies through the air threatening you with a crushing blow unless you avoid it.*

**Hazard** A single boulder thrown from a distant catapult attacks. Its accuracy is poor so it may not strike precisely.

#### ► Perception

- ◆ **DC 22** The hero detects the approach of the missile and gains a +5 bonus to his Reflex defense.
- ◆ **DC 27** Any hero detecting the approach against this DC is able to warn his allies. This gives each ally within 10 squares of the character a +5 bonus to their Reflex defenses.

#### ► Trigger

Roll a 1d6 at the start of each turn. On a 5 or 6, the catapult fires a boulder centered on a single target.

#### ► Attack

Opportunity Action Close Burst 3

**Targets** All creatures in burst

**Attack** +13 vs. Reflex

**Hit** 6d6 damage and ongoing 5 damage and the target is knocked prone and stunned (save ends all).

**Miss** Half damage and the target is knocked prone.

#### ► Special

- ◆ If this hazard is used during a skill challenge, any damage and conditions are applied to the character as listed rather than through healing surges.

#### ► Countermeasures

- ◆ A character in the burst can minimize the damage with a DC 25 Acrobatics check made as an immediate interrupt before the catapult boulder's attack. On a successful Acrobatics check, a boulder that hits is treated as a miss and a missed attack does no damage.
- ◆ If used in a tactical encounter, a character that succeeded against a DC 22 Perception check may spend an action point as an immediate interrupt before the attack is made but after the boulder's landing location square is determined.
- ◆ If used in a skill challenge, a character with a minor power that shifts or moves him can be used to avoid the attack. The attack automatically fails and does no damage. This counts as a success towards the skill challenge.

## OTHARIL VALE FIRST WAVE

The skill challenge below represents the arrival of the enemy's first wave.

### Otharil Vale, First Wave Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 2,100 Complexity 3 (8 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes must prevent Steppengard's forces from breaking the line on the first wave.*

**Time** Each skill check is treated like a combat turn and follows a similar format. The catapult hazard continues to be checked each round until this skill challenge acquires its first failure. Characters with conditions are allowed saving throws at the end of each turn. The timing of a round is not rigid based on the circumstances, but should represent no more than a minute.

**Primary Skills** Athletics, Bluff, Endurance, Heal, Intimidate

**Secondary Skills** Perception

**Special** Band of Brothers, Heroic Leverage, Melee Basic Attack

**Victory** The wave is repelled until reinforcements arrive. +2 Victory Points.

**Defeat** The line is broken and the heroes and their allies must retreat to a safer position.

## OTHARIL VALE TACTICAL OPTIONS

At your discretion, any element of the challenge can be turned into a small tactical event of your design. It is recommended that the action be restricted to the party alone with all the other activity occurring around them. The approach is similar to a movie that focuses on two or three individuals while the rest of the battle rages in the background.

Two Tactical Encounters are provided in Appendix G to help with running such impromptu combats. Allow the heroes to set up some hazards on the battlemat. They can do the following in an eight hour period before the battle.

- ◆ **Create Difficult Terrain.** Each hero may create 1d6 + Strength modifier (not including level) squares of difficult terrain. These squares may be placed anywhere on the battlemat and generally consist of trenches and piles of rocks or shrubs to slow and direct travel.
- ◆ **Build Fraises.** Two fraises (8-square walls of outward-pointing spears) may be placed on the battlemat automatically.
- ◆ **Create Damaging Terrain.** Each hero is allowed to place four squares of damaging terrain such as caltrops, a pit, broken glass, etc. Damaging terrain is difficult terrain that causes 1d6 of damage when entered; any creature crossing through damaging terrain is slowed until the end of its next turn.

### Tactical Encounters

Hold the Line, First Wave (page 98)



Hold the Line, Second Wave (page 100)



**Athletics DC 21** (1 success; 1 maximum; fail/—)

The heroes and defending allies hustle quickly to gain an ideal defensive position. A success provides a +2 bonus to the next skill check.

**Bluff DC 21** (2 successes, no maximum; fail/group healing surge)

The heroes lure the enemy into a false sense of advantage and spring a surprise counter-attack. A failure costs each hero a healing surge.

**Endurance DC 10** (1 success; 1 maximum; fail/—)

The heroes gather their strength to continue repelling the enemy.



**Heal DC 16** (1 success; no maximum; fail/closes Heal skill use)

An unexpected lull in the battle provides an opportunity to tend to the wounded. Each time this is successful, it adds to the challenge's success and the heroes recover a healing surge. If the check fails, it counts as a failure and cannot be used in the skill challenge again.

**Intimidate DC 21** (1 success; no maximum; fail/closes Intimidate skill use)

An impressive show of skill and force strikes fear in the enemy. They retreat in an attempt to regroup. A failure of this check prevents its use in the skill challenge again. A check that succeeds against DC 26 counts as 2 successes.

**Melee Basic Attack vs. AC 23** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

Any heroes desiring melee with the enemy roll a melee basic attack vs. AC 23. The heroes and their allies maintain hold of the line.

**Perception DC 16** (0 success; no maximum; —/—)

The heroes become aware of enemy weaknesses in terrain use and fighting ability. Success adds a +2 bonus to the next check.

**Band of Brothers** (0 success, no maximum, —/—)

At the cost in hp equal to a hero's healing surge, each hero lends a +2 bonus on a skill check. This can be done more than once for any skill check and can be chosen after the die is thrown but before the check is resolved.

**Heroic Leverage** (0 success, no maximum, —/—)

A hero uses a power to gain an advantage against the enemy. This power is expended as if used in a tactical situation. When using Heroic Leverage, the hero must describe how the power is applied. At-will powers confer a +0 to the skill check, Encounter powers add a +2 bonus and Daily powers add +4.

## OTHARIL VALE SECOND WAVE

After the end of the first wave, the heroes are beset by a second wave. Before the skill challenge begins, the heroes are subjected to a frightful roar attack (see below). Any hero that fails the save loses a healing surge.

### ✓ Frightful Roar ◆ Fear

+21 vs. Will; the target is stunned through the target's next turn. If the roll defeats the defense by 5 or more, the target is helpless (save ends). *Aftersave:* The target takes a –2 penalty to attack and skill rolls (save ends).

### Otharil Vale, Second Wave

**Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 1,400**

**Complexity 2** (6 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes must prevent Steppengard's second wave from breaking the line and withstand a surprise attack.*

**Time** Each skill check is treated like a combat turn and follows a similar format. Characters with conditions are allowed saving throws at the end of each turn. The timing of a round is not rigid based on the circumstances, but should represent no more than a minute.

**Primary Skills** Athletics, Bluff, Endurance, Heal, Intimidate

**Secondary Skills** Perception

**Special** Band of Brothers, Heroic Leverage, Melee Basic Attack

**Victory** The wave is repelled until reinforcements arrive. +2 Victory Points.

**Defeat** The line is broken and the heroes and their allies retreat to a safer position.

**Athletics DC 21** (1 success; 1 maximum; fail/—)  
The heroes and defending allies hustle quickly to gain an ideal defensive position. A success provides a +2 bonus to the next skill check.

**Bluff DC 21** (2 successes, no maximum; fail/group healing surge)

The heroes lure the enemy into a false sense of advantage and spring a surprise counter-attack. A failure costs each hero a healing surge.

**Endurance DC 10** (1 success; 1 maximum; fail/—)

The heroes gather their strength to continue repelling the enemy.

**Heal DC 16** (1 success; no maximum; fail/closes Heal skill use)

An unexpected lull in the battle provides an opportunity to attend to the wounded. Each time this is successful; it adds to the challenge's success and the heroes recover a healing surge. If the check fails, it counts as a failure and cannot be used in the skill challenge again.

**Intimidate DC 21** (1 success; no maximum; fail/closes Intimidate skill use)

An impressive show of skill and force strikes fear in the enemy. They retreat in an attempt to regroup. A failure of this check prevents its use in the skill challenge again. A check that succeeds against DC 26 counts as 2 successes.

**Melee Basic Attack vs. AC 23** (1 success, no maximum, fail/healing surge)

Any heroes desiring melee with the enemy roll a melee basic attack vs. AC 23. The heroes and their allies maintain hold of the line.

**Perception DC 16** (0 success; no maximum; —/—)

The heroes become aware of the enemy's weaknesses in both terrain use and fighting ability. Success with this skill adds a +2 bonus to the next skill check.

**Band of Brothers** (0 success, no maximum, —/—)

At the cost in hp equal to a hero's healing surge, each character in the party sacrifices to lend a +2 bonus on a skill check. This action can be taken more than once for any skill check and can be applied after the roll is thrown, but before the check is resolved.

**Heroic Leverage** (0 success, no maximum, —/—)

A hero uses a power to gain an advantage against the enemy. This power is expended as if used in a tactical situation. When using Heroic Leverage, the hero must describe how the power is applied. At-will powers confer a +0 to the skill check, Encounter powers add a +2 bonus and Dailies add +4.

## WAR-MAGE ARTILLERY

If the heroes have not killed Kelkin Thravanost, once or twice during the battle, he and his retinue ride by and he sends off a fiery bolt from a wand. As he continues on, a **DC 16 Perception** check detects that he takes the wand he just used and puts it into a satchel. He then pulls another wand from a different satchel and fires again. He is riding his warhorse, escorted by six Steppengard knights, a commander, and a prelate, as well as Nashara the lion-headed sphinx. He never comes within range for melee combat, and does not linger long, preferring to strafe the battle lines. Should the heroes make an effort to ride him down and face him, they will find Kelkin and his bodyguards relatively alone in the wasteland between the two enemy lines. This encounter is deadly, so it is best to have the heroes recruit some help (**DC 19 Diplomacy**; the heroes may bring 5 knights).

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

War-Mage Artillery (page 101)



## AFTER THE SECOND WAVE

Once the heroes have defeated the second wave, it looks like there will be a lull of a few minutes before the next wave comes in. What happens next depends on how well the heroes are doing. By this point, the battle has lasted perhaps ten minutes, and before the heroes

get far in preparing for the next stage, a courier bearing Duke Gallo's banner rides up, waving for the heroes to come to him. He says that the heroes' unit is being relieved by fresh forces, and asks that they follow him to Markhold, where they will meet with Duke Gallo.

When the heroes reach Markhold, they pass the medical tents where the injured are being carted in, though the amount of healing available means almost as many soldiers are heading out of the tents to rejoin the battle. Gallo is just inside the fortress of Markhold, examining a detailed map of the battle, which is still unfolding.

If the heroes have earned Gallo enough Victory Points to ensure a truce, Gallo thanks them for their services and tells them that the battle will take a while to peter out, but the result has already been determined. It looks like they will win, or at least force a retreat by Steppengard's forces. Gallo wants to make sure the heroes are safe, so he asks that they let his own forces handle the rest of the battle.

If, however, Gallo does not have enough Victory Points to earn even a truce, he explains that things look grim. He has a desperate plan that might turn the tide, but it could be suicidal. The mining unit he was originally counting on to perform this mission were killed by an overwhelming rush, and he suspects that the enemy somehow divined what he was planning and knew how to cripple his plan.

The plan called for the mining unit — expert dwarf tunnel fighters — to take a tunnel that passes under the Steppengard camp, near the command bunker. The mining unit was to breach the surface and either kill or capture Konigsmarshal Malkan, a coup that would bring the battle to a sudden halt. Now, however, Gallo has a nearly complete tunnel, but no one to lead the mission.

If the heroes agree, they will cross the frozen Nasham River, enter one of the hidden forts on the northern shore, and then take a 2-mile long tunnel to the breach point. If the heroes leave now and hurry, they could reach the command bunker in half an hour. Ten soldiers will accompany the heroes on this mission.

## STRIKE AT THE HEAD

Note that this mission is very dangerous and you should likely avoid it unless the heroes have otherwise lost the Battle for Gallo's Fend. This is a desperation effort to capture Malkan. As a bonus, the trillith Madness is discovered during the fight.



### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Get Malkan! (page 103)



### AFTERMATH

If the heroes manage to seize Malkan, they can retreat down the tunnels, their dwarven allies holding off pursuit and detonating the charges to make good their escape. If the heroes are losing, the dwarven sappers shout for the heroes to retreat.

In either case, at some point while the heroes are making their way through the tunnels, Madness suddenly appears before them in a flash of heat and flame in Nina's form. Still flaming, she giggles, applauds lightly, and thanks them for the good show. She is quite pleased that they and Duke Gallo have done such a good job killing soldiers of Dassen, and suggests that with their experience, they might make good recruits for the Ragesians. She tells them, "Sleep well," and vanishes into the wall (becoming insubstantial) or, if someone is singing the Song of Forms, teleports away in a flash of light and flame bright enough to suggest a very long travel distance.

Should the heroes manage to force Nina into her true form but not defeat her, rumors spread quickly among Steppengard's soldiers, and everyone becomes very wary around the gnome woman, suspicious that she is some sort of demon. If the heroes manage to discredit "Nina," instead of her it will be the Ragesian ambassador who endorses Steppengard's suicidal plan in Act Five, though Madness will still linger in the shadows.

## WRAPPING UP THE FOURTH ACT

If the heroes are defeated, they are taken captive and will be reunited with Duke Gallo early in Act Five, during the "peace conference," until which time their gear will be temporarily confiscated. The duke will not offer the heroes knighthoods, as below, though he will be grateful to them for risking their lives.

Unless the heroes managed to capture or kill Konigsmarshal Malkan, the battle of the Line at Otharil Vale continues for several more hours, before the losers retreat (or both sides call a truce). Steppengard's forces take no more hostile actions, and then two days later a courier rides out from Steppengard's camp with a message for Duke Gallo.

The precise wording depends on whether Gallo won, lost, or called a truce, but the message is that King Steppengard is through fighting. He is recalling his army, and requests (or demands, if he is victorious) that Gallo attend a peace conference in Bresk. All of the nobles will be required to attend and hear how their king plans to avert civil war and protect his nation. Steppengard claims that new evidence has been revealed to him, and he wants to present it publicly to all his nobles, and simultaneously establish a plan to hold off the expansionist threat of the Ragesians.

To help quell hostilities and restore kingdom-wide peace and brotherhood, the king is throwing a two-day festival at Bresk, and Lord Gallo and his servants are all invited. The first day will be an opportunity for recent enemies to compete casually in tournament games and reestablish friendly bonds, while the second day will be filled with parades and parties for the commoners, while the nobles discuss how to save the nation.

This is a very suspicious announcement, and Lord Gallo knows it. However, despite what the heroes may say, he has no choice but to accept. If he does not, the king will be able to call Gallo's patriotism into doubt and could use it to marshal the other nobles against him. Besides, if there is any chance the country can be united to stand against Ragesia's imminent invasion, they must take it.

Still, Gallo is no fool: he fully expects to be betrayed. As a great show of trust, he offers a knighthood to each the heroes, and asks that they accompany him as bodyguards. If the heroes accept, they leave the next day.



## ACT FIVE: SERVED COLD

In this act, the heroes attend a peace conference called by King Steppengard to reunite his kingdom after the recent battle, with the supposed intent of planning a defense against the Ragesians. However, Steppengard has completely lost his mind, and he has decided to destroy his kingdom and himself with it. He plans for all the nobles to be poisoned with a toxin developed by Madness, which will drive them all into a murderous madness.

The day before the banquet, Steppengard throws a festival and tournament to distract everyone's attention while he prepares his scheme. Informants contact the heroes and alert them to suspicious goings-on at the castle, prompting them to sneak into the castle to gather evidence of a possible assassination attempt. Taking a hidden path into the castle's prison, the heroes discover the Ragesian Inquisitor Torrax has just delivered a madness-inducing poison to agents who will dose all the food at the banquet. The heroes rush to stop the plot, and ultimately confront King Steppengard and his trillith advisor in the throne room, in a battle for the king's sanity.

If the heroes do not piece together the clues and stop the king's scheme, sometime between the soup and the pork, the nobles of Dassen will tear each other to pieces and leave their nation leaderless.

### THE POISONING PLOT

Steppengard is now unbalanced enough to listen seriously when Nina suggests that he should take revenge on all those responsible for the slaof his family, and he is particularly happy that the poison being used will cause the nobles to murder each other. However, the toxin has a magical mind-affecting component, which means that before it can take effect, the Eight Lands Boon must be revoked.

The Eight Lands Boon, granted by the Dasseni artifact the Book of Eight Lands, protects all the nobles and their families from mind-affecting magic and divination, and removing someone's name requires the approval of the Council of Nine. Destroying the book is difficult, and removing it from the castle vault is practically impossible because of various old wards, even for the king. However,

the book is not powerful enough to function in this way from another plane.

Madness's simple plan is for the Ragesian Ambassador Serrimus to enter the vault — this right is accorded to any human or dwarf — ostensibly so that he may check up on his Dasseni ancestry. Once inside, the ambassador hides the book inside a Planar Hideout ritual (see Appendix C) and leaves an illusionary replica behind. The ambassador will concentrate on the illusion for about an hour or so, by which time the poison plot will be complete, the effect of the Planar Hideout ritual will end, and the book will appear simply to have fallen off its stand.

While the book is hidden in the extradimensional space created by the ritual, the entirety of the Dasseni nobility will be vulnerable to the effects of the Red Madness poison. Every dish of the multi-course banquet will have several doses of the sweet poison, enough to ensure that everyone eventually succumbs.

### PROCLAMATION OF PEACE

If the battle was a victory for the heroes and Duke Gallo, he leaves retainers to see to the Fend in the aftermath and brings along the heroes and forty men as an armed escort. They follow a half day behind Steppengard's retreating army and reach Bresk in three days.

If Duke Gallo and the heroes lost the battle at Gallo's Fend, Gallo is escorted to Bresk, though he is allowed to have the heroes with him as bodyguards, as this is a political arrest intended mostly to keep Gallo from running.

Either way, the three-day trip back to Bresk is calm and uneventful. Unless the heroes talk to someone else first, no one in Steppengard's army does anything more than give them a glance every now and then.

### PARADE OF THE VICTORS

When Duke Gallo and the heroes reach Bresk, they are part of a parade. Banners fly from rooftops, drums beat out a military cadence, and fresh soil has been spread along the army's path to reward their return by letting them walk proudly upon the earth of their homeland.

### AREN'T WE DONE?

After saving Gallo's Fend, the heroes may think they are done, that they have secured Dassen's aid. If they are planning to return to Seaquen, emphasize that a few things need to be finalized. You might even present Act Five as just denouement, implying that nothing dramatic will happen, but that the heroes are expected to go along to represent Seaquen, and to get their fair rewards.

As with all parts of the adventure, however, if the heroes decide to leave, it is their choice. They can learn a few days later that all the nobles of Dassen slaughtered each other, and that the nation has descended into civil war. The chaos, at least, should slow the Ragesian advance for a little while, but there is nothing else to be done in Dassen. The Lyceum mages will seem a bit more desperate in their search for alternate solutions, which will include sending the heroes on the trail for the Torch of the Burning Sky, which is the focus of Adventures Five through Seven.

If the heroes successfully defended Gallo's Fend, Gallo's troops enter the city first, greeted by nervous but hopeful citizens lining the streets. Word has spread that Gallo will force the king to end his witch-hunts, and that peace will be returning to Dassen.

If the heroes lost, instead they are paraded along in the middle of Steppengard's forces, shown off as prisoners of war. The crowd is still nervous, but they cheer because they expect Duke Gallo will be executed, and that things will quiet down afterward.

If the two sides called a truce, Steppengard's forces march first, and then Gallo's. Both are treated by cautious cheers, since people really have no idea what this means, but they know they are supposed to cheer armies returning from war.

Regardless of the circumstances, Gallo reminds the heroes to maintain proper decorum. After an hour-long march, the parade reaches the courtyard of Castle Steppengard. Trumpeters blare victorious tunes and children throw flowers, and a line of the other seven nobles stand ready to greet Gallo's arrival. Various retainers and guards surround the

courtyard, and in a shadowed corner stand the Ragesian ambassador and Inquisitor Torrax. King Steppengard (possibly with Nina) stands in front of the nobles, and he steps forward as Gallo and the heroes approach.

King Steppengard looks healthier than you last saw him, more restrained perhaps, as if he is contrite over a great mistake. He offers a hand to Gallo, then turns to address the gathered crowd. The music ends.

"My people," begins Steppengard, "recent times have been dark for our country. From the tragedy that befell my own house to the recent rumors of sedition, no one can say that these have been good days. However, I am here to tell you, better days are ahead! I have invited all of Dassen's Lords and Ladies here to Bresk, so that the petty squabbling may be brought to an end, and that we may forge a new, brighter future together.

"Duke Gallo, long-respected defender of the gates of Dassen, I commend you for your brave and steady heart. Though we disagreed, and though our swords crossed because of it, I know now that you acted with only love for your homeland. I have called you and your fellow Lords and Ladies here to bring an end to our struggle. There is information, both to relieve our heavy shoulders and to chill our marrow, but because of heroes like you, Duke Gallo, and your brave warriors who attend you, our nation will survive this.

"I welcome you into my house, and offer you, as I have with all the other nobles, a chance to have your champions compete in the Tournament of Unity. Tomorrow there will be games to cheer the heart of our subjects, and in the evening, we shall speak of unpleasant but necessary matters. Thieves and tricksters lurk at our borders, I now know, and it will fall to all of us, not as Eight Lands but allied as one nation, to defeat them."

The crowd applauds, and Gallo, still shaking his king's hand, leans forward and speaks so that you can barely hear him.

"You are talking about the Ragesians, right?"

Steppengard simply maintains his smile as if he has not heard.

Attempts to detect lies fail because Steppengard's Eight Lands Boon renders him immune to divination (Ambassador Serrimus has not yet consigned the Book of Eight Lands to an extradimensional space), and it takes a

**DC 25 Insight** check to see through his bluff, because the king made sure to quaff an *elixir of glibness* (+5 to **Bluff** checks for one hour). Even if the characters should succeed on this check, they learn only that the king is hiding something, and they detect no immediate hostile intent.

If the heroes were captured in Act Four, they are present for the arrival of Duke Gallo, and they and their items are handed over to his custody after the king's speech. In this event, Duke Gallo reminds the heroes not to start any trouble; his country is at stake, after all, and he doesn't want any rash acts to imperil the peace.

All the Lords and Ladies and their envoys are welcome to stay in any inn, tavern, or manor in the city, at no charge. If the heroes want, they could try to speak to the castellan in order to get lodging in the castle itself (**DC 20 Diplomacy**). Otherwise, Gallo contacts a friend of his: a minor dwarf aristocrat who lends him his manor for a few days. The manor is a lavishly furnished house with twenty rooms, all equipped with warm, running water.

Lady Timor and Lord Dashgoban visit Duke Gallo the same evening he and the heroes arrive, and they discuss the situation, share their misgivings, and either commiserate on their failure or celebrate their victory at Gallo's Fend.

## TOURNAMENT OF UNITY

The schedule for the next day is filled with tournament games from sunrise to sunset followed by an evening banquet. All the visiting nobles are expected to attend the tournament and are welcome to bring aides to the banquet. Duke Gallo wants the heroes to circulate, but stay near him during the games and then accompany him to the banquet. The heroes have become celebrities in Bresk (famous or infamous, depending on the outcome of the battle), and if they do well in the tournament it will bolster support for Duke Gallo when he negotiates with Steppengard and the other nobles. Additionally, Gallo wants the heroes close by in case someone tries something treacherous.

If the heroes were not captured in Act Two (and thus did not have a chance to rescue Proxy Jinis), Duke Gallo has a special request. He knows that his proxy was arrested for suspected treason, and when he made an inquiry, he was simply told that Jinis would be returned to him after the banquet. The duke suspects Jinis knows something important, and he wants the heroes to try to locate his proxy.



## NOTORIETY AND TAUNTING

One way to motivate the heroes to participate in the festival games is to play on their pride. Several times during the day, various hecklers loyal to the "lovely and patriotic Lady Namin" pick the heroes out of the crowd and begin verbally taunting them, citing their support of the "treacherous cur Gallo." The hecklers suggest that the heroes are cowards if they do not participate in a particular competition.

While the heroes may initially think that Lady Namin is trying to harass them or ruin their names, the truth is far less insidious. Lady Namin knows the heroes are popular with the commoners, and she wants to increase her own name by having her subjects triumph over them. Every little bit helps toward her goal of convincing the king to marry her.

Duke Gallo hopes that he has some allies among Steppengard's staff and specifically someone at the tournament that has news of Proxy Jinis. The duke realizes he will be too closely watched for any of Steppengard's retainers to approach him, but the heroes might be more approachable.

The heroes therefore have a day to do mostly as they please, as long as they are periodically seen with Duke Gallo. The duke reminds them that whatever happens, they must be at the castle by sunset so they can attend the banquet.

While there are some people at the games that can help the heroes figure out what Steppengard is planning, for the sake of drama they should not manage to speak to the heroes until nearly sunset. While it is perfectly fine for the heroes to find out about the plan and avert it well in advance, the climax will be much more dramatic if they find out at the last possible moment, and have to hurry to save the day.



## THE TOURNAMENT GROUNDS

A broad field outside the walls of Bresk has been set up with warm tents, scattered stages, and broad wooden bleachers, and dozens of games and tournaments have been announced. Servants of the various nobles are competing, as are a scattering of locals, desperate refugees who were too poor to finish the trip to Seaquen, and would-be heroes who want to claim glory in the coming battles. Because of the short time span and inhospitable weather, less than a thousand people actually attend the festival, and only two score are actually competing, but for Bresk this is quite an event.

There are several major competitions with a single prize awarded to each overall winner, plus various minor festival games. In addition to the games, the heroes might view a mock sword fight between a pair of masochistic dwarves, watch a short play put on by a Wayfarer with no hands named Budger and his one-thumbed goblin assistant Lucky, sample various festival food and drinks, dance on a public stage with half-elf exotic dancers from Ostalin, or listen to a musician playing an accordion. This last event takes on a sinister air if Steppengard's men killed the heroes' associate Balan, since the performer purchased Balan's old accordion.

If the heroes cause any trouble, the local guards are not equipped to stop them easily, so they simply threaten to get Steppengard's royal guards (a Blade of the Kingsguard, detailed in Appendix G, and several prelates), and try to talk down the heroes, saying that fighting will reflect extremely poorly on their liege, Duke Gallo.

**Quest Awards:** For each participation in an event, give out a Quest Award of 500 XP. The heroes should be close to reaching level 13, and these events will help to move them into the next level with a minimum of danger — the lull before the storm!

## DASSENI IDOL

"Do you sing?" asks a dwarf with a curled blonde beard. "Perform at all? Can you make a fool of yourself? The nobles need entertainment, and the king's coffers are open to pay you to show off your talents."



A dwarf named Bleur Himage wanders the festival with a thick shoulder bag full of certificates providing people with permission to perform for the nobles during the intermissions between jousts. All he asks is for a brief demonstration of some talent—any talent at all (Charisma DC 15)—upon which he pushes a certificate into the person's hand and tells them when and where to be.

This is an easy opportunity for characters to use their Charisma to make some money, earning 5 gp per point of success above DC 15 for a given Charisma check. A player may make a DC 18 check against his Bluff, History, Religion, or Streetwise skill to add a +2 bonus to the check. Additionally, any performer beating a DC 25 gets called back to perform before the final joust. With a huge crowd in attendance, each performer has a chance to earn some favor.

Other than the heroes, the best performance is a stirring oratory by Konigsmarshal Malkan about the first eight kings of the Eight Lands (his Charisma check results in a 25). If Malkan is not present, instead Duke Gallo is the leader, demonstrating his surprising skill at comedy. He talks to random people in the audience and various competitors in the joust, making sarcastic and satirical jabs at himself and his

fellow nobles, while mostly focusing his insults toward the Ragesians (Gallo's Charisma check result is 27).

If any of the heroes beat those checks, they win the cheers of the audience, and King Steppengard stands, as does Lady Dene, and together they reward the winner with a deed to a 20-acre plot of land, located in the woods of Lady Dene's lands. Lady Dene personally thanks the hero for his performance, and whispers discreetly that she is glad to know that Seaquen has been safeguarded against the Ragesians.

**Minor Quest Award:** Participants gain a minor quest award MQ-1, Dasseni Idol, (500 XP).

## FRESHNESS GUARANTEED

Walking through the crowded streets, you notice that the festival workers are not the only ones making a profit during the celebrations. A number of food vendors line the streets, hawking exotic and tasty treats to the delight of the people, who likely only get such fare rarely.

One such food cart does not seem to be doing so well, however. You notice one man holding a plate with an exquisite-looking cut of steak on it, talking to the cook, a halfling standing on a stepladder, who grows more and more upset as the conversation continues. Finally, in a rage the cook knocks the food out of the man's hands, dashing the finely prepared meal to the ground.

"Bah!" he roars, "As though you, an eater of gruel, would understand the finer aspects of the culinary arts! Take your money and begone!"

Throwing a few coins in the man's face, the cook sends the man running, shouting curses at him until he is gone. With his victim out of sight, the unhappy chef returns to his cart and looks around grumpily.

The moment he spots you, the halfling cook glares at you and demands, "What?"

The angry halfling chef is, in fact, the head cook for King Steppengard, Randas Slabovalles. He had just begun to prepare for the banquet when he was rudely informed by several guards that the king would be bringing in several "specialists" instead, and that the head cook and his staff were to work the festival. Naturally,

Randas is deeply insulted over being ousted from his kitchen before an important state dinner, and he has been taking his displeasure out on any customers he receives.

Randas' food cart is ridiculously over-equipped, with ingredients for gourmet meals, not simple festival fare. The cheapest meal he will cook costs 5 gp per person: a black bean tortilla soup that may be the tastiest thing the heroes have ever eaten. If the heroes are willing to wait ten minutes while Randas cooks gourmet fare for them, he will angrily mutter about how unfairly he is being treated, and how he was not meant to serve food to swine.

The heroes can try to calm him down, and though he is snappy, all he really wants is some validation and respect. If the heroes are kind to him, he starts a conversation with them, mentioning that he regularly cooks for His Majesty! The King! but that for some reason he has been temporarily suspended, replaced by incompetent rubes who barely know their way around a kitchen.

Soon after the heroes get the chef to open up, however, a man dressed as one of King Steppengard's royal guards approaches and tells them to move along. He has been ordered to make sure the chef does not talk too much, and if it comes to it, he will attempt to drag the halfling away forcibly. Even if the heroes do not provoke a fight, eventually some of the other lesser cooks, who have also been assigned to the tournament, hear what happened, and they come to the heroes to complain. None of them suspects the truth, however.

Even if the heroes do not cause a scene, the next time they walk past this stall, a pair of city guards is closing it down, and Randas is nowhere to be seen. The guards were simply told to report here and take the cart away, and do not know what is going on.

## INFORMANT

A crowd of festivalgoers is passing by when suddenly one of their number steps from his crowd into the middle of your group. A dark-haired dwarf in nondescript clothes, the stranger keeps his head down and hisses, "Try not to look at me. I've got to warn you about tonight. If any of the king's guards see me, it will ruin everything."

"I'm a guard at the castle. Strange things are going on, people being reassigned and moved, and I think it's so we don't see what the king is

planning. I normally watch a weak point in the castle's backside. There's a hidden watchpost in an old graveyard on the shores of the Nasham, because the castle's sewers let out there. Normally the outflow is gated off, but we've got to make sure people don't sneak in.

"A couple of weeks ago I got reassigned to the royal vault. I checked around, and nobody has replaced me. So last night I snuck back to see what was up. I mean, the ass end of the castle is exposed to the world now, and if anyone thought to they could just up and sneak in.

"What I saw there makes no sense. A group of priests were waiting at the entrance of the sewer, and they met up with bunch of men who unloaded a sleigh filled with casks, like they were delivering wine or something. The priests took the casks, paid the men, and then, damndest thing, the priests went into the sewers. They weren't picking up drinks for the banquet, I'll bet you that.

"There is something foul, and not just the frozen filth in the sewer. I told you where I was reassigned—the royal vault? Well I was relieved tonight, told to take the day off and enjoy the festival. Far as I can tell, nobody's replacing me tonight either.

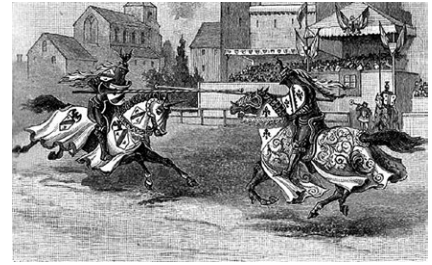
"Now maybe I'm crazy, but I know you don't stand well with the king, so I thought you might want to know this. Don't tell anyone we talked."

Another group of revelers are coming close, and the dwarf slips away, not looking back.

The informant is Burnomn Valder, one of the guards for Steppengard's castle. If the heroes try to talk to him, he does his best to get away before anyone sees him. He does not have much else to say, and most things the heroes could ask him they could find out from other people just as easily.

What Burnomn witnessed was a trio of prelates purchasing some of the ingredients for the poison that will be used at the banquet tonight. The prelates then entered the sewers, used some sort of ritual (Burnomn has no idea what), and brought the casks to Inquisitor Torrax, who completed the poison recipe.

If the heroes do cause a scene, Burnomn tries to run, which may attract Steppengard's guards. If Burnomn is caught or the heroes mention what he said to Steppengard's people, the entrance to the prison is much more heavily guarded, and visibly so, to discourage investigation.



## JOUSTING

The biggest attraction of the festival is a field the length of a city block, surrounded by bleachers and wooden guardrails, near which numerous warriors in plate armor wait beside horses. Magic-users wait at ready to ensure the lances these jousters wield will only inflict nonlethal blows, and healers stand ready just in case something goes awry. Nearby, a parallel area caters to more casual jousters. Men in leather armor, with flexible wooden poles mount up on nags, and do not have the benefit of magical protection.

Both sets of jousts seem to be attracting a great deal of betting, and one entire section of the bleachers has been cordoned off so the nobles can watch comfortably. Duke Gallo spots you and nods his head toward the registration booth.

If the heroes would be interested in jousting, they should visit the joust early in the day to be placed in the tournament bracket. The commoners joust has five rounds, with none of the jousters any more skilled than a 4th-level soldier. The entry fee is 5 gp, and the prize is 100 gp and a seat at the king's banquet this evening. If the heroes do not get involved, the winner is Ben Roots.

The main joust has four rounds with sixteen contestants (including any heroes). The fan favorite is Silvia Cossala, a knight jousting on behalf of Lady Namin. Should one or more heroes compete, they must face the following foes. Most of these use the "typical joust" stats in the appendix. The entry fee is 100 gp.

Magic items are allowed, but no jouster may receive any spells to enhance his prowess, except those he casts himself. Each round takes one hour, and clerics are present to heal any wounds, so jousters have some time to heal up on their own between bouts.

**1. 1st round** — Quincy Fellthuf, from the lands of Lord Rego (typical joust).

If there are two heroes competing, the second hero faces Wodbart Erfis, from Bresk (typical joust).



2. **2nd round** — Grim Morgensen, a refugee from Ragesia (unique NPC). If there are two heroes competing, the second hero faces Zwergenkarsh Hectonoff (Dashgoban Knight).
3. **3rd round** — Jereth Buchaven, a soldier of Steppengard (Steppengard Knight). If a second hero is competing, he faces Silvia Cossala (unique NPC) in this round.
4. **4th round** — Silvia Cossala (or the hero who beat her).

When the gamekeeper calls for both opponents to charge, both will ride forward and attack on the same initiative. All jousting in this competition are skilled enough to charge and attempt to bull rush their foes. Silvia uses her *jousting blow* power, and with a spirited charge, she has a very good chance of knocking her opponent unconscious even if she fails to dehorse him.

If the initial pass does not dehorse a rider, the jousting take additional passes at each other. If both are dehorsed simultaneously, the knights roll for initiative and fight on foot until one yields or is knocked unconscious. If both are knocked unconscious simultaneously, the riders are restored to consciousness and then try again.

The winner of the joust receives as a prize the Eowhisperer Charm, a purse of 500 gp, and any one suit of standard barding (light or heavy).

**Minor Quest Award:** Every participating hero gains minor quest award MQ-2, Jousting (500 XP).

## RING TOSSING

As you pass through the crowded streets, you notice one of the impromptu games that has sprung up during the festival. Off in an alley, several people have pounded a small iron rod into the road. Two men stand over a dozen feet away from it, and take turns throwing metal horseshoes at it, trying to land them around the rod. As the last horseshoes are thrown, one person looks up as they notice you.

Characters playing the game stand 15 feet from the pole and make a ranged attack as an improvised weapon against AC 15. A horseshoe is an improvised weapon with a Range of 10/25. Players get three horseshoes each.

There is no prize for this game, but the man who owns the horseshoes offers to buy drinks

for people who play with him, with the result that eventually everyone's skill goes down, but their fun goes up.

**Minor Quest Award:** Every participating hero gains minor quest award MQ-3, Horseshoes (500 XP).

## SHELL GAME

You cannot help but notice part of the crowd that is unusually silent, huddled around a booth. Stepping closer, you notice that they are observing the man behind the booth slide three upside-down drinking cups around the booth counter in a dizzying array, before finally sliding them into a row. He looks at a young man across from him expectantly, and after a moment's notice, the youth picks the center cup. Clucking his tongue, the man raises it, revealing that it has nothing underneath. Cursing, the young man walks away as the people around him laugh good-naturedly.

"Who's next?" calls the man behind the counter. "Place a coin on the counter, and if you can find it after I'm done hiding it, you'll win double your money back! I tell you this game is so easy I once lost a week's winnings to a blind man. You, sir, you have both your eyes. Why not try your luck?"

If the heroes take up the challenge, they must make a DC 21 Perception check to locate the coin. Failure by 4 or less means the hero loses track of the coin, whereas a worse result means he is tricked into picking the wrong one. The worker lets the heroes play twice, taking it easy at first, and then decides to cheat if they play a third time and agree to go for double or nothing.

This time he palms the coin as he moves the cups, removing it from the counter entirely. A DC 26 Perception check sees through the ruse, but if caught the worker plays off his cheating with a smile, producing the coin behind the ear of a beautiful woman he keeps nearby, joking that he was just giving them a hard time.

**Minor Quest Award:** Participants gain minor quest award MQ-4, Shell Game (500 XP).

## SPELL DUELING

While magic-users do not have the same tradition of magical duels as the students at Lyceum, because of the heroes' presence, a group of eight mages announce a small

competition to see if any of them can stand up against the "famous spell duelists of Lyceum." A crowd of interested townsfolk and awed children assemble to watch the magic at work.

More information on spell dueling is presented in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*.

**Minor Quest Award:** Every participating hero gains minor quest award MQ-5, Spell Duel (500 XP).

## TEST OF STRENGTH

As you walk through the crowd, you notice several people crowded around a man with a large hammer over his shoulder. Standing by him is a large vertical board with a groove running up the center, with a mallet connected to a hinged paddle that strikes a gong perched at the top. At the bottom of the contraption is a small metal weight at the bottom of the groove, sitting on a small platform, laid lopsided over a level, making the other end of the platform stick upward.

Twirling the hammer, the man calls out, "Come one, come all, and test your might in this competition of strength and prowess! Who among you has the muscular fortitude necessary to swing this mighty mallet hard enough to ring the gong? Provide pure proof of your power to your friends and lady friends for only one gold piece!"

Heroes who take up this challenge make an attack roll against the target with an AC 13. The amount of damage the hero inflicts determines how high the weight rises. The hammer counts as a warhammer (1d10 damage). A blow that deals 25 points of damage rings the bell. (This damage does not actually harm the device.)

A representative of Lady Namin is here to challenge the party. Sting Watchall (Attack +18, Strength 22 (+6 modifier)) is a burly man who has served in Lady Namin's military for years, though has seldom seen combat. He enjoys heckling the heroes, but could just as easily end up like them, since he is both a little envious of the fact that they have seen actual combat and a little eager to be associated with them.

If Sting and a hero both ring the bell, the game's director suggests they try swinging one handed instead.

**Minor Quest Award:** Every participating hero gains minor quest award MQ-6, Bang a Gong (500 XP).

## THE MAGIC IS GONE

Wandering through the crowded streets of the festival, you suddenly notice several flashes of light accompanied by loud crackles. Turning, you see a collection of parents and children gasping happily over a series of small fireworks that just finished putting on a show for them. A man in a fake beard and rather gaudy wizard's robes, complete with pointy hat, takes a bow as the show apparently comes to an end.

"Thank you, thank you," he lisps. "Whizbang's Fwabulous Fi'awo'ks will have another showing tonight. Please tell your friends all about it!" Smiling as the crowd begins to disperse, Whizbang gathers his supplies as they depart. Once they're gone he sighs and shakes his head, then looks to you.

"Pardon me, folks," he says without a lisp, "do you know some place to get a nice drink?"

If the heroes get to talking with Whizbang, actually Zacharr Fillip, he complains that he might have to cancel the rest of his shows for the day. All five of the alchemists from whom he normally buys his supplies have closed down shop for the past three days. Apparently, they are all working on something at the king's castle. "Whizbang" just used up the last of his fun incendiaries.

Fizbang needs smokesticks, thunderstones, and tindertwigs for his show later. If the heroes happen to have any, he has 20 gp to spend for them, but he promises to pay them back for anything they can provide.

"And besides," he says, "think of the children!"

If the heroes agree, he thanks them profusely, saying they are his saviors. Just as they are about to part ways, Whizbang spins and asks if the heroes happen to have any vials of antitoxin. He always buys some before major festivals because, he says, they prevent hangovers.

Whether the heroes help him or not, Whizbang says he hopes they have a fun evening, and tells them not to drink and play with explosives at the same time.

## TOURNAMENT'S END

The final joust takes place at three in the afternoon, after which the winner is expected to ride at the front of a parade through the streets of Bresk. The parade will end after an hour, and the sun will set at six in the evening. If one of the heroes wins, Duke Gallo approaches in the few minutes it takes for the parade to assemble.

Duke Gallo says that Steppengard is not acting suspiciously at all, and he's starting to wonder if he was just being paranoid himself. He asks what, if anything, the heroes have learned. If they warn the duke that the castle's head chef has been replaced and that alchemists have been called in, the duke suspects that the king might be trying to poison him, or someone else. At this, he smiles.

"It's an old tradition," Duke Gallo says. "When I was growing up my father always had the family exchange plates after we were served but before we ate. It's sort of like when you toast and try to slosh some of your mead into your enemy's cup, so any poison gets shared. I'll ask to do that. If my King is trying to kill me, he'll hesitate.

"Just in case, I'll get one of my chaplains to ward me against poison. They won't have enough magic to completely protect you as well, but I think they can delay the onset of any poison, just in case you're targets too."

As to the Book of Eight Lands, the duke muses that it could signal that Steppengard is planning some sort of coup, and wants to destroy the book so that no one will be able to back a claim to the throne to oppose him.

However, right now they have only innuendo, rumors, and theories. Circumstantial evidence is not enough for Duke Gallo, so rather than wait for Steppengard to make a mistake, the duke asks the heroes to sneak into the castle and find out for sure what is going on, looking particularly for hints of some sort of poisoning plot and anything to do with the Book of Eight Lands. Also, if the fate of Proxy Jinis is still unknown, he wants them to try to rescue him.

Duke Gallo can provide a rough castle map, though it will be up to the heroes on how to get inside. The castle's normal entrances will of course be watched, and decades of defenses have been developed to ruin normal magical attempts at stealth (such as hallow spells, mists that reveal the presence of invisible creatures, alarms set to sound at random archways if the person passing through isn't visibly displaying an appropriate badge, and so on). However, the informant who approached the heroes has given them a hint on how to get inside. The graveyard watch post he mentioned is the same place that the heroes would have emerged from in Act Two if they escaped from prison. The heroes can take that route into the castle's prison, and



if their informant was not trying to trick them, they should be able to get in without being seen.

Assuming the heroes report all this to Duke Gallo, he is warded against poison with an Immunize ritual (see Appendix C) during the banquet, and if the heroes want, they could be protected by one as well before they set off to check out the secret entrance to the castle.

If the heroes are oblivious to the clues, you can skip directly to The Dinner (page 46).

## BANQUET OF MADNESS

### THE GRAVEYARD

Bresk has several graveyards. The one you seek is old and seldom used, lying a short distance outside the city walls on the banks of the Nasham River. Surrounded with a rusted iron fence, the place is clearly in a state of disrepair. Lichen grows unchecked over gravestones, some of which have toppled over in their neglect. Dead trees sway slowly, covered in a glaze of snow and ice. The sky is thick with clouds, and the air on the ground is thick with the cold, subtle stench of frozen excrement: yet another type of death.

The entrance is the same one the heroes encountered when escaping to Gallo's Fend. They easily locate the icy ditch that flows out of the sewer tunnel. The tunnel goes in 300 feet before reaching a steel grate, the lock to which has rusted away. Beyond the grate, low groans and hisses sound (unless the heroes already



destroyed the frozen zombies in this area when they first escaped from the prison).

Before the heroes reach the grate, however, they hear a horrified voice wailing behind them. Gliding out of the wall is a spectral figure shrouded in ashen gray robes, its face flickering between the silent horrified screams of a half dozen different people. If any of the heroes' allies have been captured and not rescued by this point, such as Balan, they see the ally's face here, wailing mutely.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Tragedy (page 106)



## BREAKING INTO PRISON

This is the same prison the heroes may have encountered in Act Two (map, page 24).

Ambassador Serrimus and Inquisitor Torrax lounge in Area 2, enjoying a job well done and waiting for news that the nobility of Dassen has destroyed itself. They plan to retreat through the sewer if something goes amiss, or destroy the evidence with fire if they are successful.

Serrimus drums his fingers idly on the side of his chair while he composes a 25-word message for a Sending ritual to their contact, Inquisitor Guthwulf. So far he has two options:

- ♦ "Guthwulf, Serrimus here. Plan successful. Dasseni nobility (almost) annihilated (except x, y, z). Lyceum agents dead/escaped. Check Innenotdar valley. Rumors of new safe passage. Please reply with retrieval location."
- ♦ "Guthwulf, bad news in Dassen. Plan stopped by (x). (We are suspected./No one suspects us.) Further instructions? Also, check Innenotdar valley. Rumors of new safe passage."

Meanwhile, Torrax smokes a pipe under his Inquisitor mask and reads a hand-bound book of humorous prisoner confessions coerced through torture. If caught off guard he is chuckling when the door is opened to this chamber, and his pipe drops out of his mouth as he realizes he is about to be attacked.

If the heroes tipped off Steppengard's men, Torrax instead waits pensively beside the stairs, while four Steppengard knights wait to attack intruders. Serrimus is waiting outside the door at the top of the stairs, and will flee if the fight sounds bad.

If the heroes make it past the zombies in the ice pit, they can get to Area 2 through a grate in the floor.

### TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Torrax and Serrimus (page 107)



### AFTERMATH

If the heroes interrogate any of the prisoners, the knights suspect someone is getting poisoned, but they haven't asked any questions. They also heard Torrax speaking with the king's gnomish advisor about the Book of Eight Lands, about which they likewise asked no questions. Torrax is hard to break if captured, but he carries his own undoing. The scroll of Speak with Dead he carries will get the heroes any answers they seek.

**Treasure:** If the knights are not animated, two 25 gp onyx gems can be retrieved from each of their mouths. A **DC 18 Arcana** check identifies this as the material component for a Ragesian Animate Dead ritual.

## THE DINNER

Events at dinner unfold as follows unless the heroes interrupt.

Before dinner, drinks are served, mostly wine and mead, and Duke Gallo invokes an old tradition wherein everyone exchanges dishes with a neighbor of their choice. Steppengard smiles cunningly at this, but obliges. People drink, and a ten-minute comedy play lightens the diners' moods.

After the play, the actors file out as the soup course is served, and again everyone shuffles dishes around, with some bemusement. Idle conversation passes for a few minutes, and then servants bring in boar's head and other pork dishes, which again are shuffled around, to no small degree of amusement. People continue to eat.

After this, King Steppengard stands, asks that the doors be closed, and then toasts. He suggests that Duke Gallo start the discussion, since he seems to know the most of what is going on with Ragesia.

Gallo says that his king had mentioned he would present new evidence, since as of right now Gallo is officially charged with assassination. He is about to go on when he notices that some of his fellow nobles are staring off into space blankly and giggling. Just then, for no apparent reason, Lady Timor grabs a steak knife and stabs Lord Dashgoban sitting next to her. At this moment, madness breaks out.

Steppengard and Madness, already insane, are unaffected by the poison, as is Duke Gallo,



because he had a cleric cast an Immunize ritual (see Appendix C) on him. Neither are the Blade of the Kingsguard or Gallo's chaplain affected, since they are not eating, but all the other twenty-five people dining around the room begin to fall under the effects of the poison. Most are simply disoriented or panicked, but some attack randomly. Because confused persons always counterattack, the banquet hall is quickly embroiled in a massive brawl.

Steppengard begins to laugh, and he pulls out his flail from behind his chair, then attacks Duke Gallo. Once he has killed Gallo, he and his bodyguard retreat to the restroom and take the secret door to the throne room, leaving the nobles behind to kill each other. Steppengard sits on his throne, and does not move, even when his horrified castle guards find him and kill him.

## THE RACE

The timeline of this encounter depends on how swiftly the heroes break into the castle (see the map on page 48), but unless the players are keeping close track of time, assume that by the time they defeat Torrax they are only minutes away from the beginning of the banquet.

The door to the rest of the castle is unlocked, but getting where they need to be to stop the

plot will be difficult. The majority of the castle is amazingly unguarded, but a secure ring of checkpoints surrounds the king wherever he goes. The banquet hall and throne room are only three flights of stairs above the prison and less than fifty feet down the hall, but guards watch the stairs, and it would be nearly impossible to even get within shouting distance of the king and other nobles. If the heroes decide to fight, the guards run.

**TACTICAL ENCOUNTER**

Guard Gauntlet (page 109)



Of course, fighting through is not the only option. If the heroes explain that they are part of Duke Gallo's retinue and can come up with a convincing story of why they are some place they should not be, the guards may let them through. Simply telling the truth, elaborate and contrived though it sounds, is worrying enough that some of the guards will rush into the banquet to keep anyone from eating, just to be safe. The guards are loyal to the king and have an officious air about them during the challenge.

**Guard Passage**

Level 12 Skill Challenge • XP 700

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The heroes attempt to bypass the guard to save Steppengard.*

**Primary Skills** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate

**Victory** The guards are convinced something is afoot and escort the heroes into the banquet hall.

**Defeat** The guards scoff at the idea that something can go wrong.

**Bluff DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes try to bluster their way past the guards with a fabricated story.

**Diplomacy DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes try to reason with the guards.

**Intimidate DC —** (0 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The heroes try to bully the guards. This automatically fails.

**OTHER OPTIONS**

- ♦ Invisibility spells could work to bypass the guards, though the paths are crowded.
- ♦ Teleportation, though painful, will bypass the checkpoints, though the sound of the fiery explosion when the characters reappear will alert the guards, forcing the heroes to rush to the hall before they are taken down.
- ♦ Reaching the royal vault to check on the safety of the Book of Eight Lands is much simpler, requiring going up one flight of stairs, proceeding down a long hallway filled with busy castle servants, and passing through the vault doors, which currently have only one guard, who has been ordered to let people inside after only a cursory look-over. If the heroes present evidence to the guard

that the Book has been tampered with, he convinces the guards to let the heroes into the banquet, though under scrutiny.

- ♦ The heroes simply find the Planar Hideout ritual's rope and get the Book. Its protections again extend to the nobility, who will then be safe from the poison. Their retinues will still be poisoned, however, which results in some deaths, but provides clear evidence of a plot.
- ♦ Finally, if the heroes can get to the kitchen they can check the food for poison. Only a few of the cooks, who have fallen prey to Madness's suggestions, are responsible for the unknowing application of the poison. Getting to the kitchen still requires getting past the guards.

**REACTIONS**

If the heroes are stopped before they are within earshot of the banquet hall, the insane brawl breaks out while they're not present. The guards do their best to avoid killing any nobles, but Madness uses her magic to turn the guards into more victims. In this event the best the heroes can do is defeat Madness and then try to knock out the crazed nobles in order to mitigate the damage.

If the heroes cause a commotion and can't get into the banquet hall, a cautious Duke Gallo hears something going on outside and asks to find out what has happened; he gets outside the banquet hall and demands the guards stop attacking his bodyguards. Likewise, if the heroes do get into the banquet hall, the nobles demand to know what is going on before they are comfortable enough to eat.



**TACTICAL ENCOUNTER**

The King's Madness (page 110)





# CONCLUSION

Events have finally come to a close and the fate of the kingdom is decided. The heroes reward in this adventure is based on the final outcome of the last supper.

**Steppengard Lives:** After a few minutes, the king's subjects gather around him. He screams in a madness-induced rage, but his words are direct quotes from the pages of the Book of Eight Lands that deal specifically with curing madness — one being a Remove Affliction ritual, which the other nobles demand be performed immediately. Once the ritual is performed, Steppengard's reaction (see the read-aloud text, below) is horrified, but he knows the sanity is temporary. If Madness was permanently destroyed at some earlier point, his mindhaunt affliction can thereafter be cured with a Remove Affliction ritual, but no one will realize this until after a year has passed. Until then, Steppengard still insists that Lord Iz continue ruling as Prime Minister.

**The King Is Dead:** If the king was killed but his body is in such a state that he could be brought back with a Raise Dead ritual, this scene happens in the castle's Chapel of the Aquiline Cross. He will also need a Remove Affliction ritual to mitigate the effects of the mindhaunt affliction he still has. If the heroes

do not mention this, he will be raised with the madness still raging and he will start reciting from the Book of Eight Lands.

Slowly climbing to his feet, Steppengard looks around at the shocked faces of his wounded and frightened subjects. His face is sunken with horror and disbelief. One of his aides hands him his crown, which was knocked away in the battle. He does not put it on, but instead holds it before him like he doesn't know what he's looking at.

"What have I done?" he whispers softly. "I let that ... that creature control me, tie me into a knot with my own grief."

The king holds his face in both hands, and seems about to give in to despair. For a long moment everyone is still, waiting to see what will happen next. Then slowly, as though bearing an enormous weight, the king straightens up and looks at you and Duke Gallo.

"I fear I wronged you most of all. I nearly destroyed our nation, but you saved it."

He looks to his crown, and then raises his hand to throw it away.

If the heroes move to stop Steppengard, their simple action convinces the king to have the strength to plan an orderly succession if his madness cannot be eliminated.

## SUCCESSION

**Steppengard Lives:** While he holds on to his temporary sanity, Steppengard appoints Lord Iz to be his prime minister. The elderly duke and will be the voice of Steppengard until the king is cured or dead. The Book of Eight Lands discusses mental madness in one of its chapters and the heroes can pursue the cure, but until then, Lord Iz controls the kingdom (see Succession, page 48).

**Steppengard Is Dead:** In the aftermath of the battle, while all the king's subjects are calming down, one of the surviving nobles (Lady Namin, preferably) picks up the king's crown and offers it to Duke Gallo. The Duke takes it, and then considers throwing it away unless the heroes stop him. He is convinced eventually to take it.

## REWARD

The surviving Dasseni nobles owe the party a great debt. A simple **DC 15 Diplomacy** check will remind the heroes that asking for compensation is unbecoming and will hurt the war effort, but if they insist, the royal coffers can provide three 12th-level treasure parcels to them, but any missed parcels from earlier in the adventure are not available.

If the heroes do not ask for a reward, Lord Megadon surprises everyone by suggesting



1 square = 5 ft.  
SCM

they be offered minor land holdings, which he is willing to cede some of his own acreage to accomplish. He explains that the heroes placed Dassen before Seaquen by deed and believes Dassen's best hope may be to ally with the 'troublesome fishermen'. As an act of good faith, Megadon will take the disputed fishing grounds off the table in any diplomatic negotiations until after the war. The king or the prime minister, pleased with Megadon's tempering, grants the holdings to be placed along the Nasham River in Megadon's territory but the other nobles must either transfer some of their land to Megadon or pay a fee to him as if the land was sold. Later in the campaign saga, the heroes might marry or succeed their way into position as one of the Council of Nine. Finally, the heroes are also awarded enough Treasure Parcels to make up for any missed during the adventure.

If all of the nobles are slain, the heroes have failed, and they likely end up dead, though some of them may have escaped. Dassen is a lost cause, and in future adventures the safety of Seaquen will not be a foregone conclusion.

## RETURN TRIP

Whether the heroes have saved Dassen or failed it, the Third Ragesian Army will be arriving within two weeks, barely enough time for the survivors to arrange a defense.

However, whatever state the Council of Nine is in, it seems clear that Ragesia was responsible for the attempt to destroy Dassen, and so now officially their nation is at war with the Ragesian Empire.

If the heroes were successful in their mission, their allies in Seaquen decide there's little more they can help with, calling them back to prepare for a new mission. If instead they failed, their superiors decide to send other agents who might fare better, and likewise recall the heroes for some other mission.

The trip back to Seaquen is an easier affair than the original travel. An escort, friendly or at least formal, leads the heroes back to Vidor from Bresk. Once in sight of the village, the escort turns back leaving the heroes alone.

## VIDOR

In the weeks since leaving the village, Vidor has undergone some change. Aregal sees you and runs quickly your way and, after a few minutes of conversation, you begin to understand Vidor's mood. A small fencing project has begun and the refugees now work alongside the original inhabitants with a vigor borne from a need to survive. There is worry and suspicion everywhere and questions about garnering Seaquen's support are becoming more than idle chatter. Two more

inhabitants have met grisly ends and the level of fear is high and palpable. Your presence has a calming effect, but it is clearly temporary.

Leto Moore has become the mayor of the village in the heroes' absence and formally requests aid from Seaquen. The boat maker's attitude is more pleading than the cocky bravado he exhibited when the heroes first met him. Rather than offer free kegs, a few thousand gold is suggested instead.

Depending on the players' choices, they may choose to take on this task by themselves or relay the request to Lorb Vortberd in Seaquen. Either way, they will have an opportunity in Adventure Five, *Monastery of the Two Winds*, to help the threatened villagers survive.

If the heroes decide to track down the threat immediately, then feel free to let them and end this adventure in Vidor. Otherwise, they return to Seaquen and will surely be sent back to solve the village's problems.

## SPRING DAWN

The weather is growing warmer, and spring is arriving quickly. The Nasham River thaws, though snow still covers the ground. If nothing else, the actual land of Dassen, the soil that is most sacred to its people, is visible again. This is an omen that life still has a chance to prosper. ☺



# APPENDIX A: NEW ALLIES

## Balan Bastom (B)

Level 11 Controller • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-elf)

**Initiative** +4; **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision

**HP** 108; **Bloodied** 54

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 28

**Speed** 6

✓ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ♦ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage (crit 8 + 2d6).

✓ **Ostalin Insult** (std; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Charm, Implement, Psychic

Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will; 1d6+7 psychic damage (crit 13 + 2d6 thunder), and the target suffers a -2 penalty to its attacks until the end of Balan's next turn.

✓ **Healing Song** (minor; 2/enc) ♦ Arcane, Healing

The target may use a healing surge and heals an extra 2d6 damage.

✓ **Bardic Inspiration** (imm reac, when an ally within range dislikes a failed roll result; rchg ☞☞☞) ♦ Arcane

Ranged 5; the target spends a healing surge and rerolls the failed attack roll, skill check, ability check, or saving throw with a +1 power bonus to the new roll. The target must use the result of the second roll.

☞ **Deep Slumber** (std; rchg ☞☞☞) ♦ Arcane, Implement, Sleep

Close Burst 5; +15 vs. Will; the target falls asleep (save ends or ends if the target receives damage).

▶ **Accordion Implement**

*Effect:* +2 attack bonus and +2 damage bonus.  
*Critical:* + 2d6 thunder damage.

▶ **Glib Tongue** (minor; enc) ♦ Arcane

Balan gains a +5 bonus on the next Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate check.

▶ **Group Diplomacy**

An ally within 10 squares of Balan gains a +1 racial bonus to their Diplomacy checks.

▶ **Power Conduit** (imm reac; enc) ♦ Arcane

If a beneficial power from an ally is within range of Balan, the power can be made to originate from Balan instead, allowing a single target to gain the power's boon even if the target is beyond the range of the original caster.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant

**Skills** Arcana +13, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, History +13, Insight +13

**Str** 10 (+5)   **Dex** 11 (+5)   **Wis** 16 (+8)

**Con** 12 (+6)   **Int** 16 (+8)   **Cha** 20 (+10)

**Equipment** accordion +2, short sword +2

**Description** An Ostalin man nearing middle age with a thick sandy brown muttonchop beard, Balan dresses in nobleman's finery, and always situates himself to be as comfortable as possible without looking improper. He keeps an exotic leather-bound case beside him, stitched with his family's coat of arms.



# APPENDIX B: DIANOEM PUZZLE

## OBJECT OF THE PUZZLE

The Dianoem controls are sequences of 4 numbers from 1 to 4. The user must use the clues from the lights on the object to obtain the correct sequence. The Dianoem gives feedback regarding exact and partial matches.

1. The sequence can contain a combination of the numbers 1 to 4.
2. A number can be used any number of times in the sequence.
3. Each guess must consist of 4 numbers — no blanks.

For each of the numbers in the guess that is the correct number and in the correct position, the Dianoem displays one green light. Four green lights indicates the correct sequence has been obtained.

For each of the numbers in the guess that is correct but in an incorrect position, the Dianoem displays one yellow light. Together, there will be no more than four green and yellow lights for each guess.

If none of the numbers in the guess is correct, no lights display.

## SAMPLE PUZZLE

If the code the heroes need to find is 2241, solving the puzzle might progress as follows:

- ◆ Guess 1: 1234  
Result: 1 green light (from the 2); 2 yellow lights (from the 4 and 1)
- ◆ Guess 2: 3123  
Result: 0 green lights; 2 yellow lights (from the 1 and 2)
- ◆ Guess 3: 4121  
Result: 0 green lights; 3 yellow lights (from the 1, 2, and 4)
- ◆ Guess 4: 4122  
Result: 0 green lights; 4 yellow lights (all the numbers are in the code)
- ◆ Guess 5: 2241  
Result: 4 green lights (the sequence is solved)

In this case, the puzzle is completed faster than the skill challenge.





# APPENDIX C: NEW ITEMS AND RITUALS

## NEW ITEMS

### Tindertwig

A small wooden stick ignites and burns when struck against a rough surface.

**Lvl 1** 1 gp

Alchemical Item

**Power (Consumable)** Standard Action. Light one torch or one lantern.

**Power (Consumable)** 1d4 Standard Actions. Light one campfire or a flammable item.

### Oats of Fortitude

This small bar made of fey oats and molasses increases the stamina of your mount.

**Lvl 6** 360 gp

Potion

**Power (Consumable)** Standard Action. A mount that eats the *oats of fortitude* before an Endurance check treats the check as though a natural 20 is rolled. The mount also gains a +2 power bonus to Fortitude for 8 hours. *Oats of fortitude* has no effect on a creature that is not a mount.

### Smokestick

This object about the size of a rod releases a haze of obscuring smoke.

**Lvl 6** 150 gp

Alchemical Item

**Power (Consumable + Zone)** Standard Action. Area Burst 1 within 5 squares; A zone of lightly obscuring smoke lasts until the end of your next turn.

### Pitchling Fire Bomb

These wooden flasks of alchemist fire are only created by pitchlings, though an alchemist with access to freshly-harvested pitch from the skin of a pitchling could create such items.

**Lvl 1** 20 gp      **Lvl 16** 1,800 gp

**Lvl 6** 75 gp      **Lvl 21** 9,000 gp

**Lvl 11** 350 gp      **Lvl 26** 45,000 gp

Alchemical Item

**Power (Consumable + Fire)** Standard Action.

Area Burst 1 in 10; +4 vs. Reflex; *Hit*: 1d6 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Miss*: Half damage.

**Lvl 6** +9 vs. Reflex; 1d6 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage.

**Lvl 11** +14 vs. Reflex; 2d6 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage.

**Lvl 16** +19 vs. Reflex; 2d6 fire damage and ongoing 10 fire damage.

**Lvl 21** +24 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage and ongoing 10 fire damage.

**Lvl 26** +29 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage and ongoing 10 fire damage.

### Elixir of Glibness

Allows a bonus to Bluff checks.

**Lvl 5** 50 gp      **Lvl 15** 1,000 gp

**Lvl 10** 200 gp

Elixir

**Power (Consumable)** Minor Action. Drink the elixir and gain a +2 bonus to Bluff and Streetwise checks for 1 hour.

**Lvl 10** +5 bonus.

**Lvl 15** +8 bonus.

### Eowhisperer Charm

This magic item, an ornate shawl that fits over the horse's mane and ears, allows a creature with an Intelligence of 1 or 2 to understand the Common tongue, and it eventually begins to exhibit signs of an uncanny intelligence.

**Lvl 8** 4,200 gp

**Item Slot** Mount

**Property** The mount is able to hear and understand the Common language. In addition, it adds a +1 power bonus to all defenses when the owner is mounted.

## NEW RITUALS

### HALLOWED GROUND

Except as noted, this ritual is identical to the Forbiddance ritual (see D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK). The effects are as follows:

- ◆ Attackers gain a +2 bonus to all defenses.
- ◆ Evil creatures cannot teleport in the burst area.
- ◆ Charm attacks by evil creatures automatically fail.
- ◆ Divine casters gain a +4 Wisdom bonus to their channel divinity: turn undead roll.
- ◆ Creatures inside the burst cannot be turned into undead.

### IMMUNIZE

**Level 6**

**Category** Warding

**Time** 10 minutes

**Duration** 24 hours

**Component Cost** 140 gp

**Market Price** 360 gp

**Key Skill** Heal

Adds a +10 bonus to all saving throws versus effects with the Poison keyword.

### PLANAR HIDEOUT

**Level 12**

**Category** Exploration

**Time** 10 minutes

**Duration** 7 hours

**Component Cost** 1,000 gp, plus a focus worth 2,000 gp

**Market Price** 2,500 gp

**Key Skill** Arcana

The ritual's focus drops a slender silvery cord through a 1 square portal that opens into a temporary 8×8×2 square temporary demiplane.

The entrance shimmers subtly and can be detected with a DC+½ caster's level Perception check. The portal entrance can be locked with an Arcane Lock ritual.

Any items in the hideout at the end of the ritual reappear in the nearest square to the portal entrance. The focus appears in the square where the portal was formed.

**Focus** A silver cord worth at least 2,000 gp.

## NEW ARTIFACT

### THE BOOK OF EIGHT LANDS

An aged book lies in the vaults of Steppengard's castle in Bresk that magically tracks the complete genealogy of the king and the lords of the Eight Lands of Dassen. This minor artifact records who is the current King of Dassen and Lord or Lady of each of the Eight Lands. The book provides a boon to each of those people, as well as their spouses and their children with those spouses: as long as they are touching soil from Dassen, all affected persons are immune to all attempts to detect, influence, or read their emotions or thoughts. The beneficiaries of this boon can choose to lower it willingly.

After the deaths of Steppengard's wife and children, the Book of Eight Lands records no royal line of succession. Changing the book manually requires the unanimous approval of all of the current lords of the Eight Lands.

If one reads the last pages of the text, a new entry has been added that describes a strange condition called "mindhaunt affliction" and a ritual required to free an afflicted person from the disease.

An artifact called the Brightstaff must be used as a focus, and the caster must enter a dream state by ingesting a dream seed. While in the dream state, the ritual caster will be forced to fight King Steppengard's mind in the form of a dream elemental, using the Brightstaff as the



weapon to deliver the killing blow.

The Brightstaff is currently buried in the treasure pile of an adult red dragon named Cinder who lairs in the Tundra Mountains that border the eastern edge of Dassen. If the heroes traveled through the Fire Forest of Innenotdar, they may have found dream seeds in the river fort. If they missed gathering the seeds, they will be encountered again in Adventure Five,

*Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds.*

The quest for the Brightstaff is left to the Dungeon Master to design, but it should be of sufficient level to challenge the heroes. A delve-style adventure of three encounters should be enough to defeat the dragon and retrieve the Brightstaff.

Details of the dream seeds can be found in Appendix F.



# APPENDIX D: DISEASES AND POISONS

## RED MADNESS

Red Madness is an ingested poison that creates the Red Madness disease. The poison causes confusion followed by an unnatural rage as the toxin invades deeper into the brain. The recipe can be found in Inquisitor Torrax's book.

**Red Madness** Level 13 Poison

*Your mind whirls in a storm of confusion.*

**Poison** 3,400 gp

**Attack** +16 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed (save ends)

*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is infected with the disease Red Madness.

**Red Madness** Level 13 Disease

*Your mind whirls in a hurricane of rage.*

**Attack** +17 vs. Fortitude

**Endurance** Check every 5 minutes. Improve DC 23, maintain DC 18, worsen DC 17 or lower

- ▲ The target is cured.
- ▲▼ **Initial** The target is dazed (no saving throw).
- ▲▼ The target becomes enraged and treats everyone as hostile, attacking on sight. In this state, the target is no longer dazed and gains an extra standard action at the beginning of his turn if he makes a successful saving throw.
- ▼ **Final** The target dies.

## MINDHAUNT

Mindhaunt is a poison that creates the mindhaunt affliction disease. The poison causes distracting hallucinations and a marked inability to think or reason clearly, which can make the victim extremely suggestible. A victim who contracts mindhaunt affliction loses substantial mental acuity and acts as though stupefied.

**Mindhaunt Poison** Level 15 Poison

*Your mind is assaulted all at once with every thought you've ever had, and some you haven't.*

**Poison** 6,250 gp

**Attack** +18 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed (save ends).

*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is dominated by the caster.

*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target falls unconscious and is infected with mindhaunt affliction.

**Mindhaunt Affliction** Level 20 Disease

*You are overwhelmed with a sense of disorientation and can barely sort out your thoughts from the confused cacophony in your mind.*

**Attack** +24 vs. Fortitude

**Endurance** Check every day. Improve DC 28, maintain DC 23, worsen DC 22 or lower

▲ The target is cured if the special cure explained in the Book of Eight Lands has been applied.

Otherwise, continue checking Endurance every day.

- ▲▼ **Initial** the target suffers a –5 penalty to Intelligence checks and a –10 penalty to Will.
- ▲▼ The target is dazed (no saving throw).
- ▼ **Final** The target suffers a –15 to Intelligence checks, and the target's Will defense drops to 1. Also, the target may regain expended encounter powers only after an extended rest.

## CURING MINDHAUNT AFFLICTION

The cure for mindhaunt affliction requires special components revealed in the Book of Eight Lands. See the entry for the book in Appendix C.

## APPENDIX E: PLAYER HANDOUTS

Find ye the  
 Torcast Aerie  
 Order ye one round  
 of Obsidian Ale and  
 an extra mug for me  
 Sit ye at the  
 Three-Legs Table  
 Wait ye for me  
 Have ye plenty of  
 gold with ye

Guthwulf, Ferrimus here. Plan successful.  
 Dasseni nobility (almost) annihilated  
 (except x, y, z). Lyceum agents dead/  
 escaped. Check Innenotdar valley.  
 Rumors of new safe passage. Please  
 reply with retrieval location."

Guthwulf, bad news in Dassen. Plan  
 stopped by (x). (We are suspected./  
 No one suspects us.) Further instructions?  
 Also, check Innenotdar valley. Rumors  
 of new safe passage."



# APPENDIX F: DREAM SEEDS

Dream seeds are create prophetic visions of a “dream realm” through the use of a sleep-inducing hallucinogen that, when taken in areas of strong psychic energy, induce incredibly vivid dreams. Elves and eladrin are immune to their effects.

Using the seeds draws nearby telepathic creatures to the user, such as the one inhabiting King Steppengard. Whenever a creature falls asleep under a seed's power, it begins to dream and have visions, and every telepathic creature within several miles feels a mild draw toward the sleeper.

## DESIGNING VISIONS AND PREMONITIONS

When the dream seeds are used, they provide visions and premonitions that could be used to convey information about the activities of the Ragesian war, develop new adventure seeds, or add insight or corrections to misunderstood elements of an adventure plot. The level of detail is usually visual and not aural, so conversations may sound muddled or confused but images of the participants are not distorted. If two or more characters both sleep because of these seeds, they see the same dreams, which may provide unwanted insight into each other's secrets.

## USING DREAM SEEDS

The seeds act like a mild poison (level +2 vs. Fortitude; the target falls asleep, elves are immune). A non-elf character can choose to voluntarily lower his defenses and fall asleep. Any character who falls asleep from a seed experiences wild dreams, seeing a highly impressionistic version of the surrounding area for a moment, before his perception begins to fly to places of interest, seeing, for example, visions of family members or old friends or sweeping and horrifying flashes of blood and swords in Gate Pass. Throughout the dream, the sleeping character hears a distant song in distorted Sylvan, and feels a persistent sense of someone hiding in shadows at the edge of his vision.

If allowed to take a normal course, the sleep wears off after ten minutes, after which the eater still experiences a faint sense of foresight, gaining a +1 insight bonus to AC for one hour.

However, a few moments after falling asleep a dream elemental appears. The character sees a silvery blue serpent appear in the dream realm. It flies toward the character and lashes with a whip-like tail, delivering its *ego whip* attack. The target cries out in the waking world, though he remains asleep. The coiled, draconic serpent — the physical manifestation of the dream elemental — appears in the real world and takes on a solid form, drawn to the psychic energy of the dream seeds. It begins to attack non-sleeping characters.

## DREAM ELEMENTAL

### Dream Elemental

Level (Afflicted Creature Level–1) Elite  
Skirmisher • XP Variable

Medium elemental magical beast

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +(½ level+3)

**HP** level×9+CON; **Bloodied** ½(level×9+CON)

**AC** level+14; **Fortitude** level+12, **Reflex** level+12,

**Will** level+12

**Immune** sleep; **Vulnerable** 10 fire, 10 necrotic

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** fly 12

**Action Points** 1

☞ **Icy Slam** (std; at-will) ♦ Cold

+Level+5 vs. AC; 1d8+5 cold damage.

✓ **Ego Whip** (std; at-will) ♦ Cold

Range 3; +(Level+3) vs. Will; target is dazed (save ends).

☞ **Freezing Ray** (std; rchg ☞☞) ♦ Cold

Close Blast 3; +(Level+3) vs. Fortitude; 3d10+5 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

☞ **Sleep** (std; rchg ☞) ♦ Sleep

Close Burst 2; +(Level+3) vs. Will; and the target is dazed (save ends). First failed save: the target falls unconscious (no save).

▶ **Warp Reality** (imm int, when the dream elemental is hit by an attack that does damage; enc)

+(Level+3) vs. the attacker's Fortitude, damage applied by the triggering attack affects the attacker instead.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Telepathy 20

**Skills** Arcana +11

**Str** 17 (+6) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)

**Con** 19 (+7) **Int** 16 (+6) **Cha** 16 (+6)

**Description** A silvery dragon appears in the center of the room, whirling and spinning like a demented wind.

**Tactics** The dream elemental targets waking creatures, blasting them with its *freezing ray*. If any mind-affecting spells are cast on it, it retaliates with *ego whip*. It then engages in melee, trying to render waking characters unconscious. It uses its *warp reality* ability liberally. If all sleeping characters in the room are awakened, the dream elemental becomes frantic, then vanishes one round later, banished back to the ‘dream realm.’

The elemental is not aware of the dangers of teleporting, and so will still use *teleport* one time and then use it again only if it needs to flee. It suffers damage when it teleports.

**Lore** A hero knows the following information with a successful Arcana check.

**DC 20** A dream elemental can warp reality to prevent it from being damaged. It transfers the damage back to the attacker.

**DC 25** Dream elementals are vulnerable to necrotic and fire spells.

## TAKING MULTIPLE SEEDS

If a character has two or more seeds within an hour, the poison becomes far worse and acts as a systemic disease.

### Dreaming Sickness

Level 6 Disease

*Your spirit desires to remain within a pleasing dreamworld.*

**Attack** +15 vs. Will

**Endurance** Improve DC 15, maintain DC 10, worsen DC 9 or lower

▲ The target is cured.

▲▼ **Initial** The target falls unconscious and cannot be awakened.

▲▼ The target suffers 10 psychic damage per day.

▼ **Final** The target dies.

# APPENDIX G: TACTICAL ENCOUNTERS

## DIANOEM

Encounter Level 11 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

After Dougan falls, the Dianoem tumbles between the bars and is snatched up by Freda. She starts banging on the buttons in a fashion similar to Dougan and a strange hum invades your minds. Freda drops the device and skitters into the trees further back as you realize the artifact is active and beginning to affect you. If you do not turn it off quickly, you may be forever dominated by a bunch of monkeys!

The key to open the atrium is around Dougan's neck and can be retrieved easily as a minor action. The Dianoem deactivation sequence is treated as a hazard to be overcome while keeping the monkeys away. Alternatively, the deactivation sequence can be played as a puzzle (see Appendix B). If it is played as a puzzle, each attempt is a minor action in a combat round and only one attempt per character can be made in a round. In any case, if the hazard is not defeated, or the sequence is not solved in eight rounds, the artifact dominates the heroes.

- ◆ 5 Adult Monkeys (M)
- ◆ 2 Primal Apes (A)



PAGE 9

### Adult Monkey (M)

Level 10 Skirmisher • XP 500

Small natural beast

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

**HP** 100; **Bloodied** 50

**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

**Speed** 6, Climb 8

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Get Off My Back** (std; at-will)

+15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the adult monkey grabs the target. The target is marked and has a –5 penalty to break the grab.

✓ **Wrap and Slap** (std; at-will; only against a target the adult monkey has grabbed)

+15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is blinded until the start of the adult monkey's next turn.

✓ **Monkey Chips** (minor; rchg ☑☑☑☑)

Ranged 5/10; +13 vs. Reflex; the target is dazed until the end of the adult monkey's next turn.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Athletics +10, Stealth +12

**Str** 11 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+7)

**Con** 12 (+6) **Int** 16 (+8) **Cha** 10 (+5)

### Primal Ape (A)

Level 10 Brute • XP 500

Large natural beast

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 127; **Bloodied** 63

**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20

**Speed** 6

☑ **Fist** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage

✓ **Savage Swing** (std; rchg ☑☑☑)

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 3d8+5 damage

☑ **Furious Frenzy** (std; rchg ☑☑☑)

Close Burst 1; targets enemies; +14 vs. AC; 2d8+7 damage.

▶ **Ferocious Charge**

When the primal ape charges, its fist deals an extra 5 damage, slides the target 2 squares, and knocks the target prone on a hit.

▶ **Ferocity** (when first bloodied and when reduced to 0 hp)

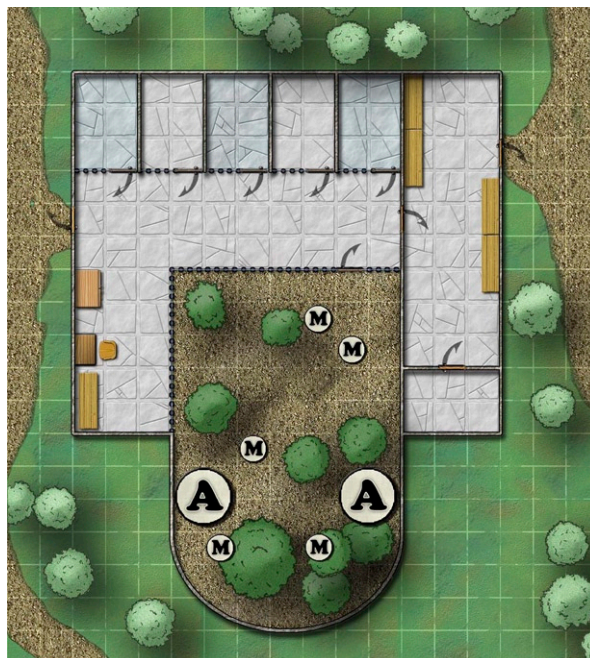
The primal ape makes a fist attack.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Skills** Athletics +15, Intimidate +10

**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+5)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+5)





**Dianoem - Mk IV (D)****Level 10 Skill Challenge • XP 500**

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The hero uses experience and insight to determine the correct shutoff sequence.*

**Time** Each check is a minor action. A character can make only one check in a combat round. Up to two characters may attempt a sequence each round.

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Insight, Thievery

**Partial Victory** Each success identifies one step of a correct button sequence. A total of four button presses in the correct sequence turns off the device.

**Victory** The correct sequence of button presses is made and the Dianoem is deactivated. The final sequence is 2241.

**Defeat** Each creature in a Close Burst 15 is subject to a +25 vs. Will attack. If the attack hits, the target is dominated for a number of 8-hour periods equal to the difference between the attacking roll result and the target's Will defense. For example, a roll of 42 against a 21 Will beats the defense by 21. The target will be dominated for 21 8-hour periods (equivalent to 7 days).

**Arcana DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero's understanding of rituals and formulae helps to decipher the sequence from the pattern of lights displayed. Each success turns one more light from yellow to green.

**Insight DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero makes an intuitive leap and presses a button; a light changes from yellow to green.

**Thievery DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero approaches the problem as a combination lock and uses his training to select the next button in the sequence.

**TACTICS**

The monkeys do not concentrate their attacks, but strike for a round or two and then jump back into the trees, using *monkey chips* while in the branches. Their behavior is more playful (though damaging) and is meant to be a distraction to the heroes trying to solve the puzzle.

The primal apes continue to emulate Dougan's chest-beating and head bashing, preferring to stay concentrated on one character. An ape retreats if reduced to 30 hp or below.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Cage Bars:** The bars are lightly obscuring and can only be broken with a DC 30 Strength check.

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

# MONKEYING AROUND

Encounter Level 11 (3,500 XP)

## SETUP

Once the door is open, you see the large caged atrium ahead. Dougan is slumped over a desk to your right, moaning in pain and rubbing his head. You see that one of the monkeys is at the bars, punching buttons on the Dianoem.

Dougan is coherent enough to recognize the heroes. He gives them the key to open the atrium, but reels under the pain and gives the heroes enough information about the lights and the code to be able to deactivate it. As he finishes, the monkey (Freda) finally bangs out the right starting combination and the artifact is activated. The heroes have eight rounds to get to the device and turn it off before all the heroes are dominated. The Dianoem deactivation sequence is treated as a hazard to overcome while keeping the monkeys away. Alternatively, the deactivation sequence can be played as a game of logic (see Appendix B). If it is played as a puzzle, each attempt is a minor action in a combat round and only one attempt per character can be made in a round.

- ◆ 5 Adult Monkeys (M)
- ◆ 2 Primal Apes (A)

### Adult Monkey (M)

Level 10 Skirmisher • XP 500

Small natural beast

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

**HP** 100; **Bloodied** 50

**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

**Speed** 6, Climb 8

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Get Off My Back** (std; at-will)

+15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the adult monkey grabs the target. The target is marked and has a -5 penalty to break the grab.

✓ **Wrap and Slap** (std; at-will; only against a target the adult monkey has grabbed)

+15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is blinded until the start of the adult monkey's next turn.

✓ **Monkey Chips** (minor; rchg ☑☑☑☑)

Ranged 5/10; +13 vs. Reflex; the target is dazed until the end of the adult monkey's next turn.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Athletics +10, Stealth +12

**Str** 11 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+7)

**Con** 12 (+6) **Int** 16 (+8) **Cha** 10 (+5)

### Primal Ape (A)

Level 10 Brute • XP 500

Large natural beast

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 127; **Bloodied** 63

**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 20

**Speed** 6

☑ **Fist** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage

✓ **Savage Swing** (std; rchg ☑☑☑)

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 3d8+5 damage

☑ **Furious Frenzy** (std; rchg ☑☑☑)

Close Burst 1; targets enemies; +14 vs. AC; 2d8+7 damage.

▶ **Ferocious Charge**

When the primal ape charges, its fist deals an extra 5 damage, slides the target 2 squares, and knocks the target prone on a hit.

▶ **Ferocity** (when first bloodied and when reduced to 0 hp)

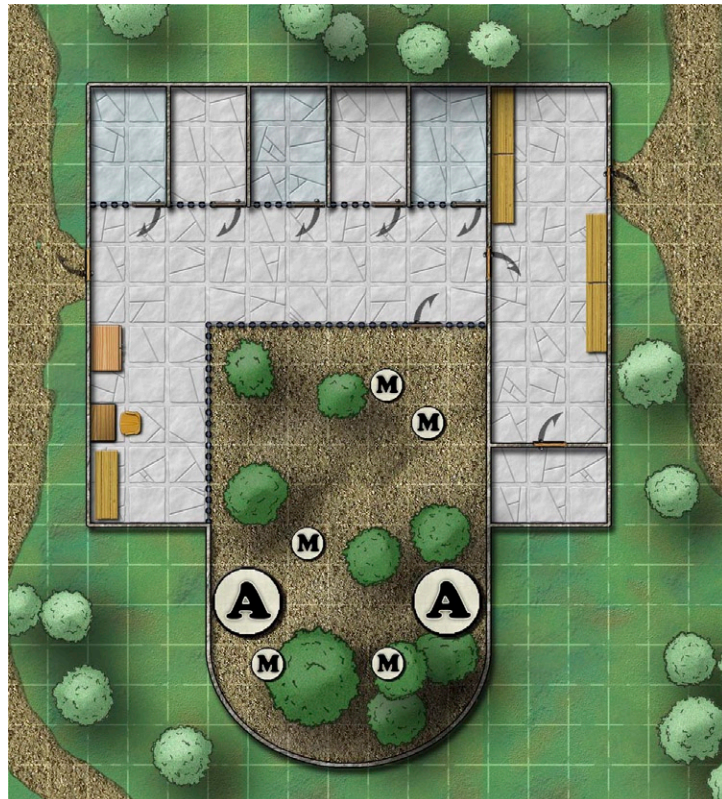
The primal ape makes a *fist* attack.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Skills** Athletics +15, Intimidate +10

**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+5)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+5)





**Dianoem - Mk IV (D)****Level 10 Skill Challenge • XP 500**

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The hero uses experience and insight to determine the correct shutoff sequence.*

**Time** Each check is a minor action. A character can make only one check in a combat round. Up to two characters may attempt a sequence each round.

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Insight, Thievery

**Partial Victory** Each success identifies one step of a correct button sequence. A total of four button presses in the correct sequence turns off the device.

**Victory** The correct sequence of button presses is made and the Dianoem is deactivated. The final sequence is 2241.

**Defeat** Each character in a close burst 15 is subject to a +25 vs. Will attack. If the attack hits, the target is dominated for a number of 8-hour periods equal to the difference between the attacking roll result and the target's Will defense. For example, a roll of 42 against a 21 Will beats the defense by 21. The target will be dominated for 21 8-hour periods (equivalent to 7 days).

**Arcana DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero's understanding of rituals and formulae helps to decipher the sequence from the pattern of lights displayed. Each success turns one more light from yellow to green.

**Insight DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero makes an intuitive leap and presses a button; the light changes from yellow to green.

**Thievery DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero approaches the problem as a combination lock and uses his training to select the next button in the sequence.

**TACTICS**

The monkeys do not concentrate their attacks, but strike for a round or two and then jump back into the trees, using *monkey chips* while in the branches. Their behavior is more playful (though damaging) and is meant to be a distraction to the heroes trying to solve the puzzle.

The primal apes continue to emulate Dougan's chest-beating and head bashing, preferring to stay concentrated on one character. An ape retreats if brought to 30 hp or below.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Cage Bars:** The bars are lightly obscuring and can only be broken with a DC 30 Strength check.

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

## WHITE WYRMS WIPEOUT

Encounter Level 11 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

The clues lead you to a series of ruins in the northeastern part of town. Similar to the fire tomb area, the old city has many entrances leading down to caverns and vents below and you find yourself at a ladder that goes down into a hole. Hot air blows upward from the opening and a faint light punctuated with the trace of humanoid shadows can be seen about fifteen feet below.

The ladder drops down into the section depicted on the map. There are three guards on duty that can be avoided with an understanding of their patrol pattern. A DC 23 Perception check identifies the best time to descend. If the heroes fail by 5 or more, they face an ambush by 2 infiltrators and 1 blade. If they fail by four or less, the guards enter into the room as the heroes reach the bottom of the ladder. If the check succeeds, the heroes have two rounds to plan for an ambush before the patrol returns.

- ◆ 4 Ragesian Infiltrators (I)
- ◆ 3 White Wyrms Blades (B)

### Ragesian Infiltrator (I)

Level 9 Lurker • XP 400

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

**HP** 74; **Bloodied** 37

**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 18

**Speed** 6

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage.

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage.

✓ **Walking Wounded** (std; daily) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+3 damage, and the target is knocked prone. The target continues to fall prone any time it moves more than half its speed in a single action until the end of the encounter. *Miss:* Half damage.

▶ **Creeping Slide** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian infiltrator shifts 3 squares and selects a single target within 6 squares; the designated target grants the Ragesian infiltrator combat advantage until the end of the Ragesian infiltrator's next turn.

▶ **Evasive Reaction** (imm int, when an attack succeeds against the infiltrator; enc)

The attacker rerolls the attack and applies the second result.

▶ **Sneak Attack** (when the infiltrator has combat advantage; 1/rd)

The Ragesian infiltrator can choose to add +2d6 damage when an attack hits.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Intimidate +8, Stealth +12, Thievery +12

**Str** 16 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+4)

**Con** 14 (+6) **Int** 9 (+3) **Cha** 9 (+3)

**Equipment** dagger, kit, leather armor, light shield, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows



PAGE 10

### White Wyrms Blade (B)

Level 9 Skirmisher • XP 400

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +3; **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 95; **Bloodied** 47

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22

**Speed** 6

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage.

✓ **Swirling Slash** (std; enc) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+2 damage, and each enemy adjacent to the White Wyrms blade takes 6 damage. The White Wyrms blade shifts up to 2 squares.

✓ **Blademark** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+2 damage, and the target is marked. *Miss:* The target takes 1d6+2 damage.

✓ **Flat of the Blade** (std; rchg ☑☑) ◆ Weapon

+12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 damage and the target is dazed (save ends).

▶ **Combat Advantage**

The White Wyrms blade deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

The White Wyrms blade takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +11, Intimidate +10, Streetwise +10

**Str** 15 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** leather armor, light shield, short sword

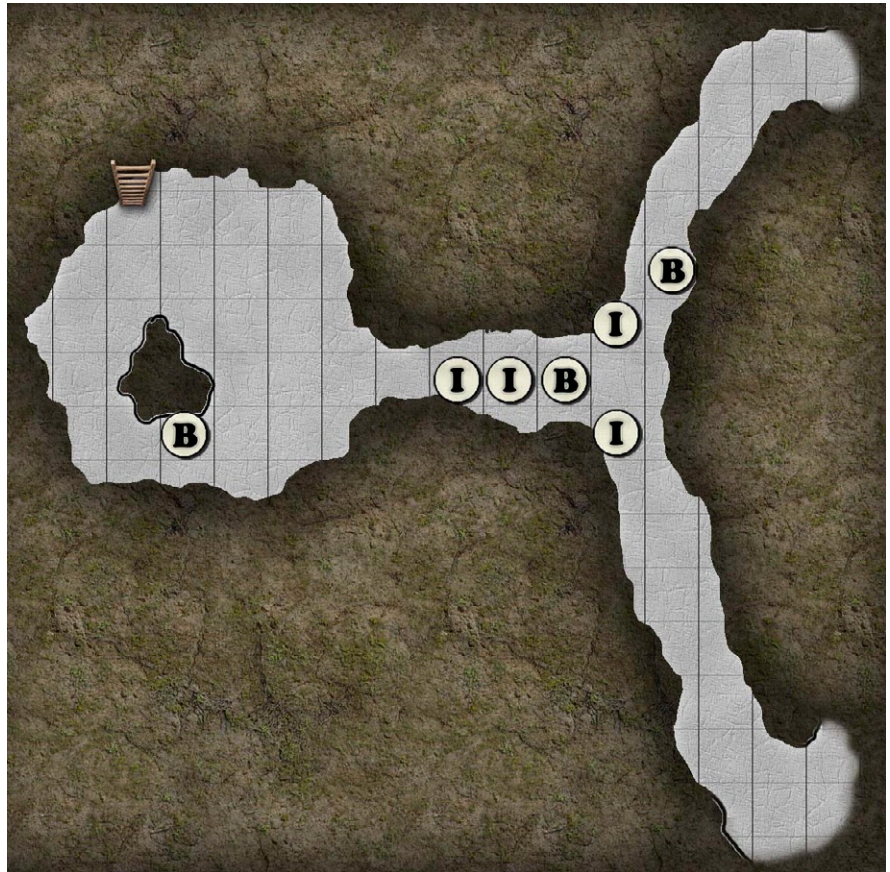


**TACTICS**

The guards engage the heroes, spreading out to avoid area attacks, and sound the alarm to bring the other guards in. The infiltrators will try to use *creeping slide* and flanking maneuvers in order to add their *sneak attack*. The blades will use *blademark* to draw targets to them so the infiltrators can maximize their *sneak attack* options.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Mist:** At the beginning of each round roll 2d6. On a roll of 9 or greater, a 4×4 zone of steamy mist rises that is heavily obscuring.



## RAGESIAN ROUT

Encounter Level 11 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

You enter a room that is the barracks. Two tables are overturned to create a wall where a number soldiers with shortbows wait to attack. Passageways break off where the soldiers are staging their defense.

This is a more traditional battle, where the Ragesians stand their ground. If you desire, you can have one or two soldiers run back into the tunnels with a plan to ambush the party from behind, but that is the intent of the next encounter, so plan accordingly.

- ◆ 2 Human Storm Mages (M)
- ◆ 3 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)
- ◆ 7 Typical Ragesian Soldiers (S)

#### Human Storm Mage (M)

Level 10 Artillery • XP 500

Medium natural humanoid

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +9

**HP** 79; **Bloodied** 39

**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 24

**Speed** 6

☑ **Quarterstaff** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon  
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.

☑ **Magic Missile** (std; at-will) ◆ Arcane, Force, Implement  
Ranged 20; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d4+5 force damage.

✓ **Trinary Bolt** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Implement, Lightning  
Make 3 attacks, each one against a unique target: ranged 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 lightning damage.

✳ **Thunderclap** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Implement, Thunder  
Area Burst 1 within 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Arcana +15

**Str** 11 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 19 (+9)

**Con** 13 (+6) **Int** 20 (+10) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** quarterstaff, robes, wand

#### Veteran Ragesian Soldier (V)

Level 10 Soldier • XP 500

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 104; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☑ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d8+8 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +12 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Iron Torrent** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
Must be using a shield; +18 vs. AC; 1d8+8 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square if it is a large sized creature or less. The veteran can shift into the unoccupied space.

↶ **Screen of Steel** (std; daily) ◆ Martial, Reliable, Weapon  
Close Burst 1; +18 vs. AC; 2d8+8 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

▶ **Combat Advantage**  
The Ragesian veteran soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Combat Challenge** (free, whenever the veteran Ragesian soldier attacks)  
Marks the target of the attack. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the Ragesian veteran soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target as an immediate interrupt.

▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)  
The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

▶ **Shatterproof** (imm int; enc) ◆ Martial  
Reduce damage from an attack by 8.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 20 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

**Equipment** heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow w/ 30 arrows

#### Typical Ragesian Soldier (S)

Level 9 Minion • XP 100

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +3; **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

▶ **Combat Advantage**  
The typical Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)  
The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +7, Streetwise +10, Thievery +7

**Str** 17 (+7) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 13 (+5) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow w/ 20 arrows

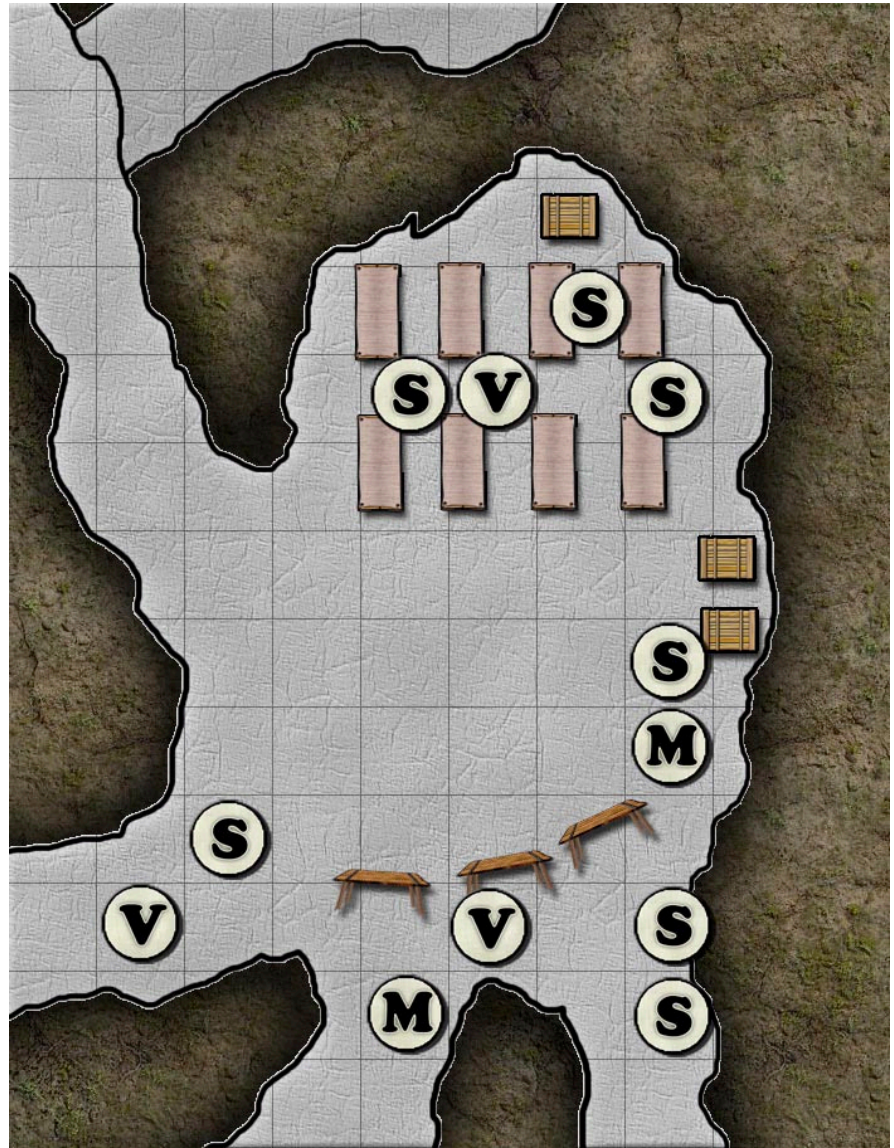


**TACTICS**

The guards engage the heroes, spreading out to avoid area attacks and sound the alarm to bring the other guards in. The infiltrators will try to use creeping slide and flanking maneuvers in order to add their sneak attack. The blades will blademark in order to draw the targets to them so the infiltrators can maximize their sneak attack options.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Mist:** At the beginning of each round roll 2d6. On a roll of 9 or greater, a 4x4 zone of steamy mist rises that is heavily obscuring.



## THE LAST LEGION

Encounter Level 12 (3,900 XP)

### SETUP

A maze of warrens and alcoves drives deeper into the bowels of the earth. The last remaining men hide here in the steam and darkness.

The maze of tunnels holds the last band of Ragesian soldiers smuggled in to destabilize the town. This encounter acts more like a series of traps and obstacles where small numbers of minions harry the heroes rather than make a last stand en masse. Additionally, the whole warren is set with tripwires and small trenches that hinder movement (see Terrain Hazards below).

- ◆ 12 Typical Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 3 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Shadow Knight (K)

#### Typical Ragesian Soldier (S)

Level 9 Minion • XP 100

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +3; **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision  
**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.  
**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☉ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

► **Combat Advantage**

The typical Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

► **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +7, Streetwise +10, Thievery +7

**Str** 17 (+7) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 13 (+5) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow w/ 20 arrows

#### Veteran Ragesian Soldier (V)

Level 10 Soldier • XP 500

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 104; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☑ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 1d8+8 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☉ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +12 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✂ **Iron Torrent** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +18 vs. AC; 1d8+8 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square if it is a large sized creature or less. The veteran can shift into the unoccupied space.

◀ **Screen of Steel** (std; daily) ◆ Martial, Reliable, Weapon

Close Burst 1; +18 vs. AC; 2d8+8 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

► **Combat Advantage**

The Ragesian veteran soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

► **Combat Challenge** (free, whenever the veteran Ragesian soldier attacks)

Marks the target of the attack. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the Ragesian veteran soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target as an immediate interrupt.

► **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

► **Shatterproof** (imm int; enc) ◆ Martial

Reduce damage from an attack by 8.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 20 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

**Equipment** heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow w/ 30 arrows

#### Ragesian Shadow Knight (K)

Level 11 Elite Skirmisher (Leader) • XP 1,200

Medium shadow humanoid

**Initiative** +13; **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision  
**Knightly Gloom** aura 10; light-producing effects within the aura output only dim light.

**HP** 228; **Bloodied** 114

Regeneration 10 (unless the knights suffered radiant damage in the previous round)

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 5

**Action Points** 1

☑ **Bastard Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☉ **Shadow Boomerang** (std; at-will) ◆ Force

Ranged 5; +14 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 force damage.

✂ **Dual Swing** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

The Ragesian shadow knight makes a basic melee attack, shifts 1 square, and makes a second basic melee attack.

✂ **Shadow Slash** (std; rchg ☹) ◆ Force, Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 3d10+6 damage (+1 damage when used 2H) plus ongoing 5 force damage (save ends).

► **Darkness Shroud**

If the Ragesian shadow knight moves 3 or more squares by any means other than teleportation, he is cloaked with supernatural darkness, gaining total concealment.

► **Shadowed Step** (move; rchg ☹☹) ◆ Teleportation

The Ragesian shadow knight can teleport 20 squares, but must end his move in dim light or darkness. The Ragesian shadow knight takes 20 fire damage and adds 1d6 fire damage to all melee attacks until the end of the Ragesian shadow knight's next turn.

► **Victory Shout** (free, when the knight scores a critical hit or reduces an enemy to 0 hp; at-will)

The Ragesian shadow knight or one ally within 20 squares makes a melee or ranged attack.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Insight +12, Intimidate +15, Stealth +14

**Str** 23 (+11) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+7)

**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 21 (+10)

**Equipment** bastard sword



### TACTICS

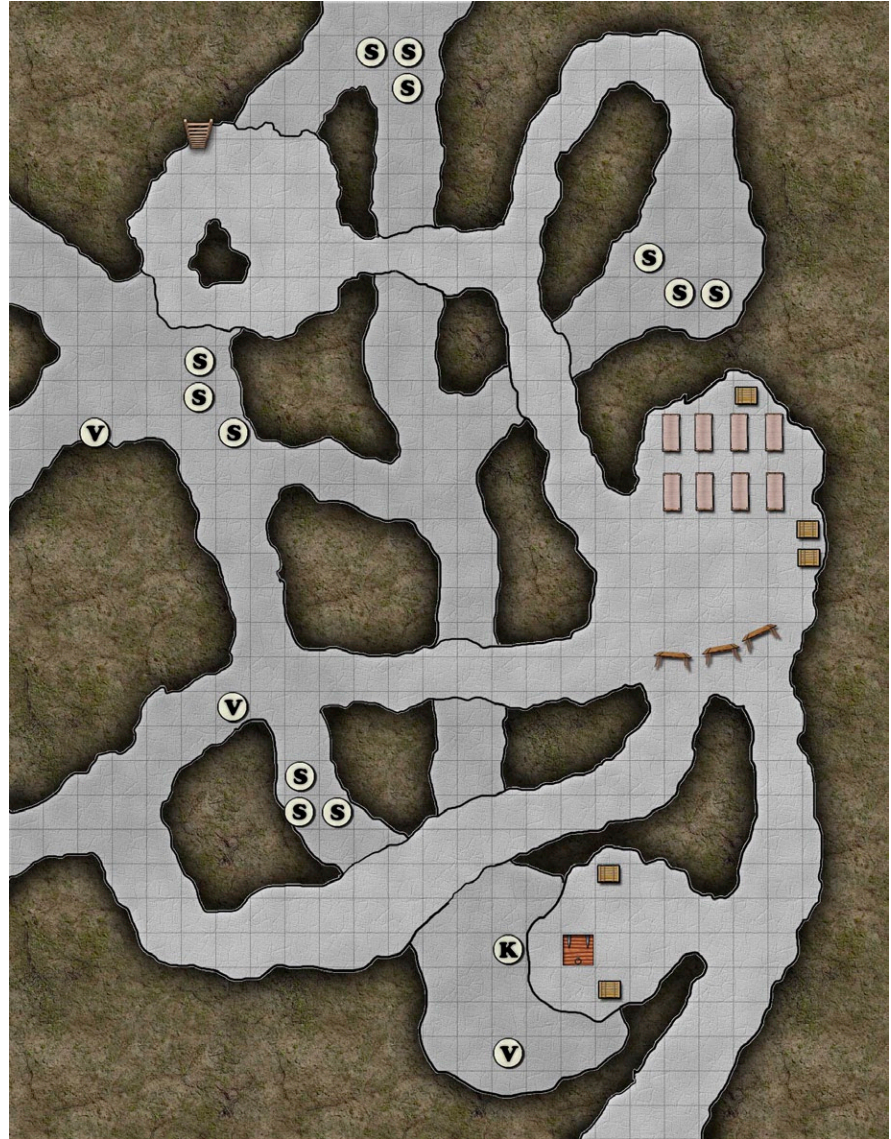
At certain areas marked on the map, 3 or 4 enemies attack in a skirmish. The enemies hide behind rock outcroppings and bends in the corridors and are prepared for an ambush. The heroes gain a +4 initiative bonus if they succeed on a DC 20 Perception check when entering any marked area. The soldiers will attack for a round or two and then try to scatter and divide the heroes. If cornered for more than two rounds, there is a chance that the Ragesian shadow knight will enter the fray. At the start of each round after the second, roll a 2d6. On a roll of 7 or more, the shadow knight enters into the combat with a luck bonus to his initiative roll equal to the roll result minus 7.

The Ragesian shadow knight will use his *shadowed step* ability if he takes damage in any particular skirmish.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Mist:** At the beginning of each round roll 2d6. On a roll of 9 or greater, a 4×4 zone of steamy mist rises that is heavily obscuring.

**Terrain Hazards:** The mists on the ground are lightly obscuring and hide an occasional trench or trip wire placed by the Ragesians. These do not injure, but may cause someone to stumble and fall prone. Moving at half speed avoids the pitfalls, but a hero can move at full speed if he succeeds on a DC 20 Acrobatics check. The check is made at the halfway point of a move action and the target falls prone if he fails the check. Once a hero falls prone, any others acting after him in the round can move at full speed with no check or penalty. A hero can spend a minor action each round to make a DC 20 Perception check and point out the traps to all following heroes and allow unhindered movement. Any hero making three successful attempts on his Perception checks finds the markers on the walls that identify where the obstacles are placed and can avoid them automatically for the rest of the encounter.



## REFUGEES

Encounter Level 10 (2,500 XP)

## SETUP

You hear muffled shouts and screams from behind a rise on the eastern bank. Five heads pop up above the snowline and become full bodies as they bound over the hill and slide down the frozen bank. More people appear behind the first, twenty or more, and they too slide down the slope to the Nasham. All are screaming and scrambling to gain purchase on the slick surface as two large serpentine heads rise above the hill. From one creature's mouth dangles a leg that disappears behind rows of teeth as the beast whips its head back. It lets out a roar accompanied by an exhalation of smoke before it starts towards the terrified crowd.

The remorhaz are only fifty feet behind their prey. If the creatures make it to the center of the river, their weight and heat will shatter the ice, stranding or drowning most of the terrified refugees as they cross. If the heroes can kill them or delay them for a few rounds, the refugees will be able to get to safety on the far side of the river. If attacked, the remorhaz will turn their attention from food to enemies.

- ◆ 2 Stragglers (allies) (S)
- ◆ 2 Young Remorhaz (R)

**Straggler (S)****Level 1 Minion • XP 0**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +0; **Senses** Perception +0**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 13; **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11**Speed** 6☞ **Fist** (std; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —**Skills** Intimidate +5**Str** 10 (+0)   **Dex** 10 (+0)   **Wis** 10 (+0)**Con** 10 (+0)   **Int** 10 (+0)   **Cha** 10 (+0)**Young Remorhaz (R)****Level 11 Elite Brute • XP 1,200**

Huge elemental magical beast

**Initiative** +16; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision; tremorsense 10**Enraged Heat (Fire)** aura 2; Only when the remorhaz is bloodied; any creature starting its turn in the aura takes an additional 5 fire damage.**HP** 280; **Bloodied** 140; see also enraged heat**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6, climb 4 (tunneling)**Action Points** 1☞ **Bite** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is grabbed. While the young remorhaz is grabbing, it cannot use its bite attack.

☞ **Charge** (std; at-will)

The young remorhaz moves at least 2 squares and makes a bull rush; +15 vs. AC; 1d8+11 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. The young remorhaz shifts into the vacated square.

☞ **Swallow Whole** (minor; at-will; grabbed target only) ◆ Fire

A grabbed target is swallowed by the young remorhaz on a +12 vs. Fortitude attack. The target is restrained, takes 10 damage plus ongoing 10 fire damage at the start of the young remorhaz's next turn. The target can only make close or melee attacks against the young remorhaz and has line of sight and line of effect only to the young remorhaz. Any swallowed creature can escape as a move action when the young remorhaz dies.

☞ **Stinging Smoke** (std; rchg ☞☞☞)

The young remorhaz releases a cloud of acrid smoke from its fins. Close Blast 3; +10 vs. Fortitude; 3d8+5 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

▶ **Tremorsense**

If the young remorhaz has line of sight and is within range, it can perceive creatures on the ground without needing to make a Perception check.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —**Skills** Stealth +16**Str** 22 (+11)   **Dex** 22 (+11)   **Wis** 18 (+9)**Con** 20 (+10)   **Int** 5 (+2)   **Cha** 10 (+5)

## TACTICS

The refugees run onto the ice, except one or two that try to get up. The remorhaz will pause to pick up the stragglers, giving the heroes some time to move to engage. The remorhaz will follow the heroes onto the ice.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

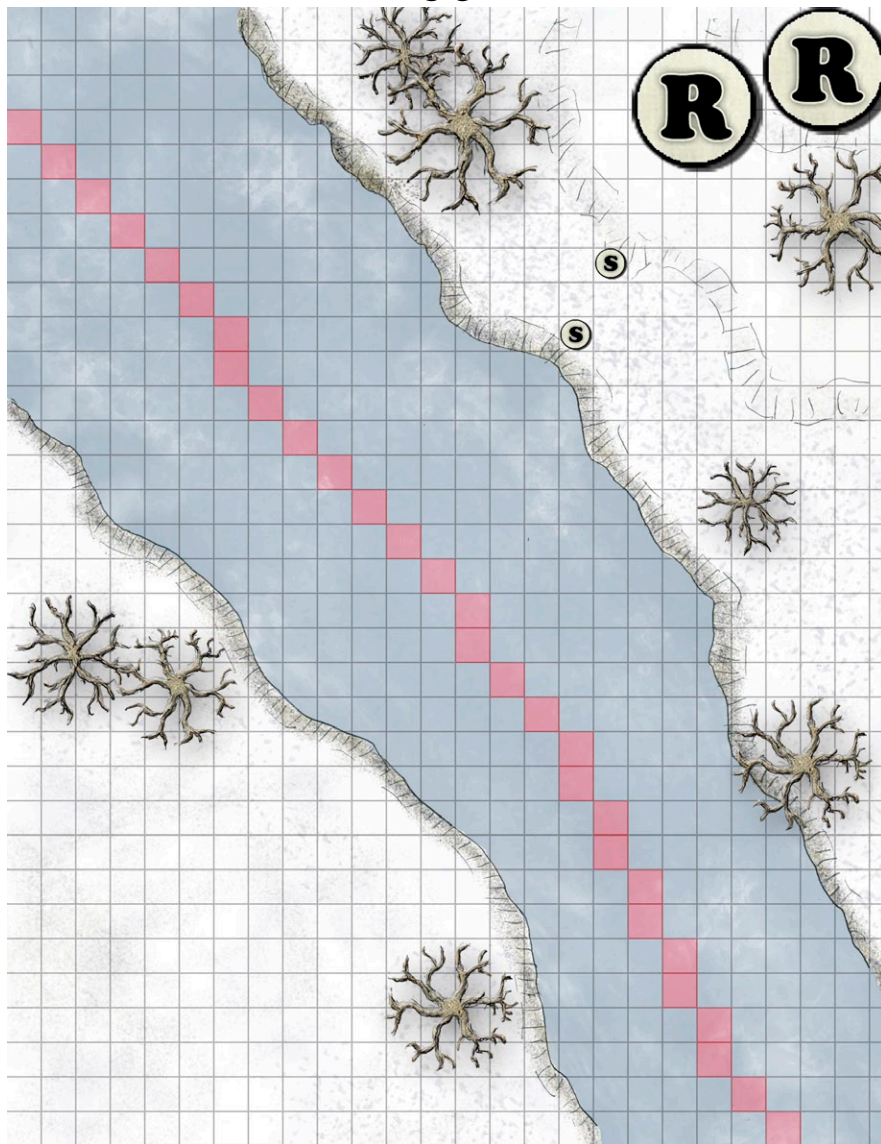
**Ice:** At the start of a character's move on the ice, make a DC 15 Agility check. On a failure, the ice is difficult terrain. Each time a remorhaz ends its turn completely on the ice, roll 3d6 per creature at the start of the combat round: on a roll of 3, the ice cracks and will break at the end of the combat round. Add 1 to the trigger number each round a roll is required; this increases the chance the ice will break as the combat continues.

**Breaking Ice:** The ice breaks in an area equivalent to a Close Blast 4 emanating from the creature. At the end of each subsequent round, roll 1d6: on a 4 or less, the break lengthens by 2 squares; on a 5 or 6, the break stops expanding. Any character caught in the blast must make a DC 20 Athletics or Acrobatics check to grasp onto an ice chunk and avoid plunging beneath the surface. A square of ice may be broken by delivering 30 hp of damage to it from an axe, flail, hammer, mace, or pick. A power with the fire or acid keyword will melt the ice as well.

**Under the Ice:** The water current has a speed of 3. A character under the ice must succeed a DC 15 Perception check at the start of his turn or lose a move action trying to find the opening. A failure by 4 or more allows the Dungeon Master to shift the character 2 squares randomly (roll 1d8 for each shift to determine which squares to move into).

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.





## POLICE BRUTALITY

Encounter Level 11 (3,050 XP)

### SETUP

The soldiers will attack the heroes according to the commander's orders.

- ◆ 7 Steppengard Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C)

#### Steppengard Soldier (S)

Level 8 Soldier • XP 350

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44

**AC** 24, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 23,

**Reflex** 21, **Will** 20

**Speed** 5

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +15 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☉ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +15 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard soldier may shift into the vacated space.

✗ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

#### ► Hold the Line

The Steppengard soldier and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +10, Intimidate +9

**Str** 16 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 16 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+4)

**Equipment** crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✗ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✗ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↩ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↩ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and all allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor

### TACTICS

Two soldiers will use their crossbows for cover and will prefer to attack any strikers. The remaining soldiers will cluster together to take advantage of *hold the line*. The commander will select the most dangerous defender to rush first and then move over to any leaders.

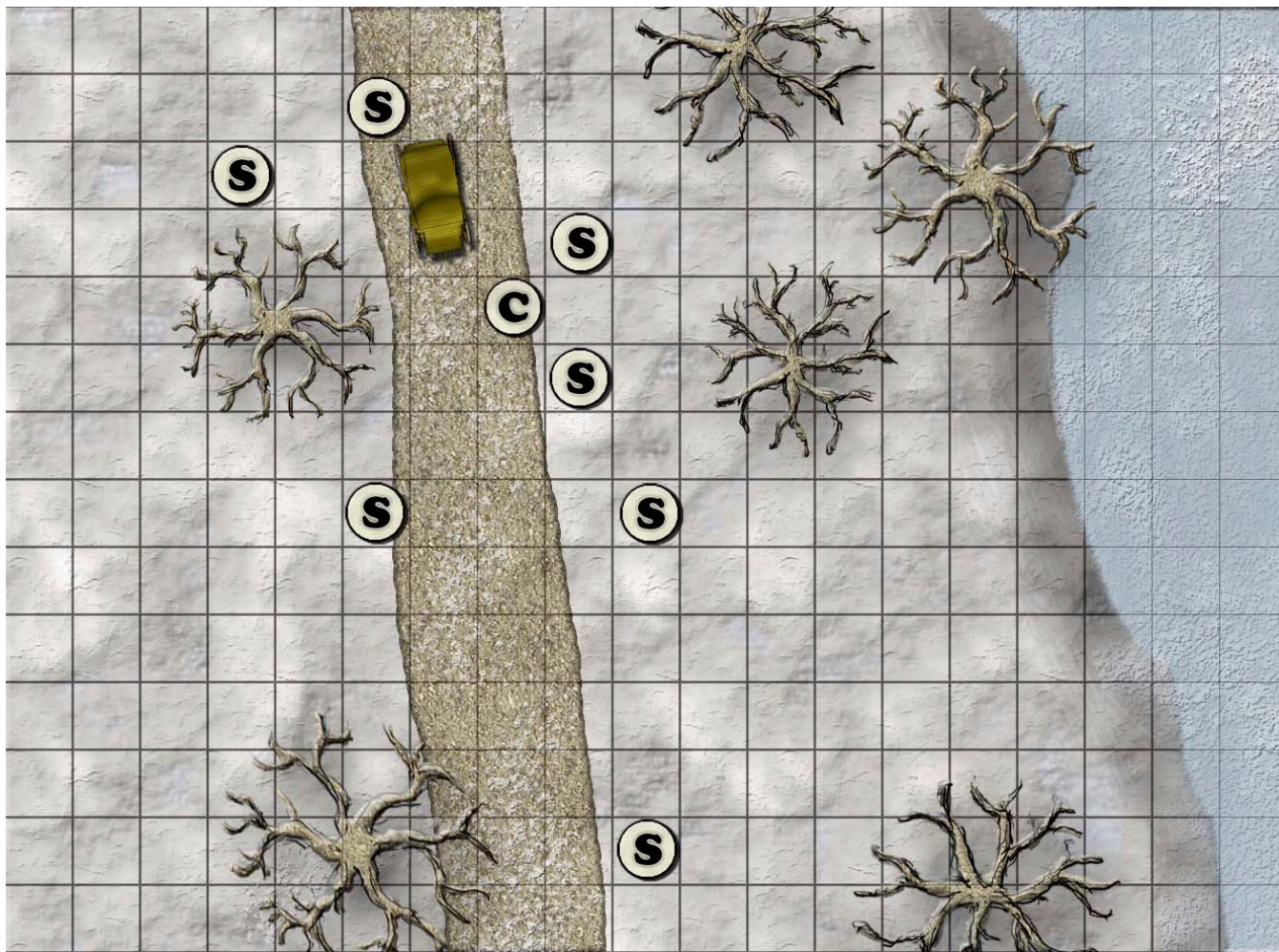
### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Ice:** At the start of a character's move on the ice, make a DC 15 Agility check. On a failure, the ice is difficult terrain.

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

**Wagon:** A small character can hide under a wagon. He gains cover and concealment. Any character adjacent to the wagon grants combat advantage to a character underneath it.





## SEWER PUMP ROOM

Encounter Level 11 (3,050 XP)

PAGE 17

### SETUP

The tunnel system is typically dwarven in its influence, but tall enough to make easy passage through the warren of pipes and passages that carry the effluent of the city above. You find yourselves presently in a large room that has multiple valves that manage the discharge from other areas of the city. Your map indicates you must cross to the far side in order to continue, but the valves spray the room with their contents at odd intervals.

The sewer prawn hide on the ledges above. Characters must make a successful DC 25 Perception check to notice them, otherwise, the creatures will surprise anyone within a 5 square range.

- ◆ 4 Sewer Prawn (P)
- ◆ Sewer Valves Hazard

**Sewer Prawn (P)**  
Level 10 Lurker • XP 500  
Medium natural beast

**Initiative** +14; **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision  
**HP** 83; **Bloodied** 41  
**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25  
**Speed** 8

#### ☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+15 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

#### ✓ **Clack and Snap** (std; at-will)

Grabbed target only; the sewer prawn makes 2 claw attacks; +15 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

#### ✓ **Sticky Silk** (minor; at-will)

Ranged 5; +13 vs. Reflex and the target is pulled adjacent to the sewer prawn and grabbed (until escape).

#### ▶ **Body Shield** (imm int, when targeted by a melee or ranged attack against Reflex or AC, rchg when the sewer prawn makes a successful *sticky silk* attack)

The grabbed victim becomes the the target of the attack. The sewer prawn cannot use this power against its grabbed target.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Stealth +15

**Str** 16 (+8) **Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+8)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Description** Overly large claws menacingly clack and snap as this unusually large crawfish-like creature suspends itself from the wall with a sticky silk line.

**Lore** The following Nature checks reveal information about sewer prawn.

**DC 15** Sewer prawn are aggressive lurkers that are like a combined spider and crawfish.

**DC 20** A favorite tactic of a sewer prawn is to cast a sticky web to grab a target and draw it into range of its crushing claws.

**DC 25** The sticky silk of sewer prawn dissolves readily in acholol and is often used as a key component in liquid gles.

### Sewer Valves

Level 11 Blaster • XP 350

Hazard

*A harsh sound of metal grating on metal is followed by a blast of foul liquid as the pipe releases its contents into the larger drain.*

#### ▶ **Perception**

The pipes are always noticed.

#### ▶ **Trigger**

This is a continuously running hazard. Roll Initiative for the valves. On the hazard's turn, roll 1d8 to determine which pipe will open.

**Initiative** +0

#### ▶ **Attack**

Standard Action; Close Blast 3 with the blast centered at the pipe's opening.

**Targets:** Creatures in blast

**Attack:** +17 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 2d6 poison damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares, knocked prone, and stunned until the end of the target's next turn.

#### ▶ **Countermeasures**

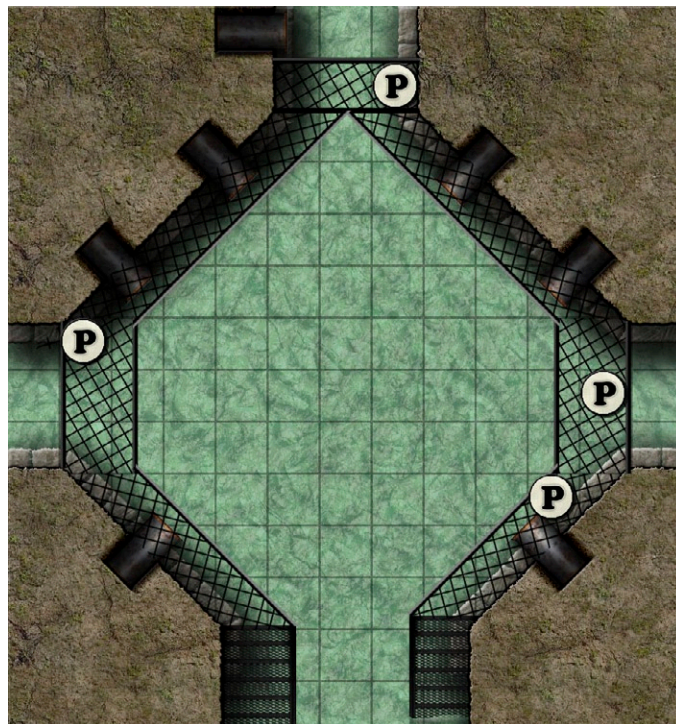
- ◆ A valve can be jammed closed by an adjacent character for one of its attacks with a DC 20 Thievery check. The next attack from that pipe breaks the jam and adds +2 bonus to its attack roll.
- ◆ As a minor action, a character can predict which pipe will open on the next turn with a successful DC 15 Dungeoneering or DC 20 Perception check.

### TACTICS

The sewer prawn will stay hidden until a character gets within range or is knocked prone by one of the valves. Otherwise, they do not engage.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Ledge:** The ledge can be climbed using the ladders. When the character makes it to the top of the ledge, he may make another DC 20 Perception check to notice the sewer spawn. Any combat on the ledge requires the character to make a DC 15 Acrobatics check at the start of each round or he loses the ability to make a move action in the round.





## PIXIS

Encounter Level 12 (3,500 XP)

### SETUP

Pixis sneaks in, uses Stealth, and opens doors one by one until she locates Balan or is detected. The heroes' passive Perception takes a -5 penalty if they are asleep, and a further -3 if their door is closed. The heroes receive a new check each time Pixis opens another door.

Once Pixis locates Balan, she tries to render him unconscious with her *unarmed fury* and *swift strike*, trying to trigger her *sneak attack*. If she can knock Balan unconscious before he calls for help, she drags him out of the room and hands him over to waiting soldiers who carry him off to prison. Then she departs, her job done, though you can feel free to bring her back for later missions. She leaves the door cracked open, so the innkeeper eventually enters and sets off Balan's *stone of alarm* or otherwise awakens the heroes.

- ◆ Pixis the Assassin (P)

### Pixis the Assassin (P)

Level 12 Solo Skirmisher • XP 3,500

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision (from ointment)

**HP** 610; **Bloodied** 305

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 25

**Saving Throws** +5

**Speed** 8 (see *boots of striding and springing*)

**Action Points** 2

☑ **Unarmed Attack** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+17 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage.

☑ **Shuriken** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
Ranged 6/12; +17 vs. AC; 1d4+6 damage.

✓ **Unarmed Fury** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon  
Target 1 or 2 creatures; Make 2 attacks +17 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage. If both attacks hit, Pixis gains combat advantage until the end of her next turn.



✓ **Knockout** (std; enc) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. Fortitude; 2d6+6 damage, and the target is knocked unconscious (save ends).  
*Miss*: Half damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Pixis' next turn.

✓ **Assassin's Diversion** (minor; rchg ☑☑☑)

Close Burst 1; +15 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of Pixis' next turn.

✓ **Swift Strike** (minor; rchg ☑☑☑)

Deliver an armed or unarmed melee blow to the target; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 damage. Effects on Pixis enabling her to deal extra or bonus damage do not increase the damage dealt by this power.

▶ **Sneak Attack** (when Pixis has combat advantage; 1/rd)

Pixis can choose to add +3d6 damage when an attack hits.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Dwarven  
**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Athletics +14, Stealth +17, Thievery +17

**Str** 16 (+9)   **Dex** 22 (+12)   **Wis** 17 (+9)

**Con** 18 (+10)   **Int** 17 (+9)   **Cha** 12 (+7)

**Equipment** *boots of striding and springing*,  
*ointment of darkvision* ×2, shuriken ×10

### TACTICS

If at any point Pixis is detected, she fights viciously, using *unarmed fury* and *swift strike* to deliver damage and gain combat advantage so she can use *sneak attack* or knock out the heroes before they can swarm her. When things start to look bad, she flees as best she can, squeezing through a window if necessary.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Doors:** Each door is standard (break DC 16), but can be barred (break DC 20) and has a lock (DC 25 Thievery).

**Windows:** A window provides line of sight and grants cover. Opening a window is a minor action, and a medium creature can squeeze through it.

## ARREST, FIRST WAVE

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

Madness is using the newly formed Talon to apprehend the heroes or force them to flee northward to Gallo. The guard will use its skills and knowledge to capture the party, but will also protect the southern route in an effort to force them north.

- ◆ 8 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C)
- ◆ 2 Steppengard Prelates (P)

#### Steppengard Infantry (I)

Level 7 Soldier • XP 300

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22,

**Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard infantry may shift into the vacated space.

✗ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

✦ **Acid Splash** (std; 5/enc)

Area Burst 2 in 6; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage.

► **Hold the Line**

The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** acid flask ×5, crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. (Add +1 damage when used 2H.)

✗ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✗ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↶ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↶ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor

#### Steppengard Prelate (P)

Level 10 Controller • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

**HP** 105; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+2 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Guiding Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant

Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 radiant damage (crit 13 + 2d6 radiant), and one ally within sight of the Steppengard prelate gains a +2 power bonus on its next attack against the target.

✗ **Awe and Dread** (std; enc) ◆ Divine, Fear, Weapon

+14 vs. Will; 1d10+2 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

✓ **Spiritual Weapon** (std; daily; sustain minor) ◆ Divine, Healing

Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. A weapon appears in the target's square and attacks. The conjuration grants combat advantage to allies attacking the target. The weapon can be moved up to 10 squares as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

► **Stand Firm** (imm int, when the Steppengard prelate is pushed or slid)

The Steppengard prelate's move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks the Steppengard prelate prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Heal +14, Religion +10

**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 7 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, light shield, plate armor



**TACTICS**

The police guard attempts to corral the heroes into a dead-end. They will freely enter in through doors of businesses and apartments to shortcut through the street maze and cut off the heroes' escape. None of the guards are suicidal, and they will retreat when they become bloodied, relying on the backup second wave to complete the task.

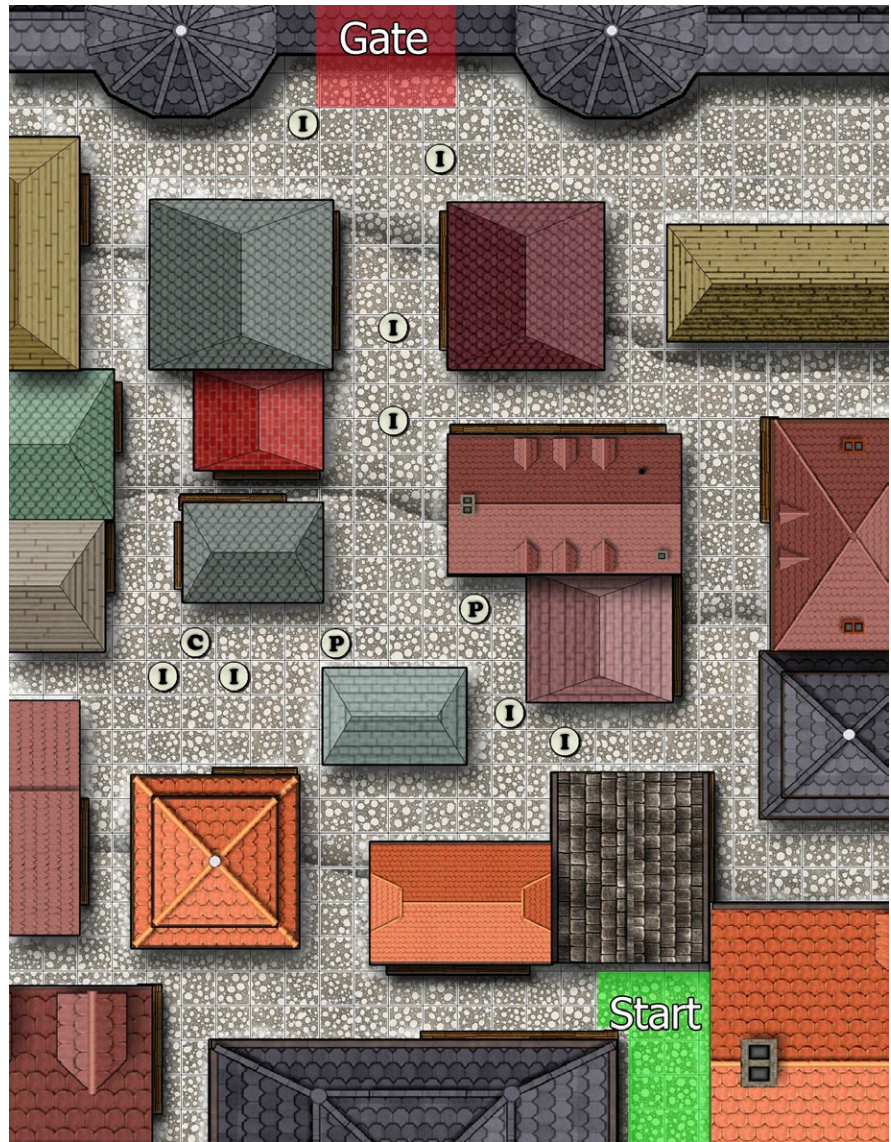
**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Doors:** Doors to businesses and homes can be entered using a minor action. Each door is standard (break DC 20), but may be barred (break DC 26) and has a lock (DC 25 Thievery).

**Windows:** Windows on the ground floor provide line of sight and grant cover. Windows can be smashed with a break DC 20. All windows are locked (DC 25 Thievery). Opening a window is a minor action, and a medium creature can squeeze through it.

**Balconies:** A balcony is ten feet above the ground and can be climbed onto by anyone trained in Athletics. This is a DC 20 check. Falling from a balcony deals 1d10 damage.

**Market Stalls, Crates, and Other Obstacles:** Obstacles are all difficult terrain.



## ARREST, SECOND WAVE

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

Madness is using the newly formed Talon to apprehend the heroes or force them to flee northward to Gallo. The second wave uses its skills and knowledge to capture the party, but splits its forces to block off a southern escape.

- ◆ 8 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 2 Steppengard Commander (C)
- ◆ 2 Steppengard Prelates (P)
- ◆ 2 Ram-Headed Sphinxes (S)

#### Steppengard Infantry (I)

Level 7 Soldier • XP 300

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22,

**Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard infantry may shift into the vacated space.

✗ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

✦ **Acid Splash** (std; 5/enc)

Area Burst 2 in 6; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage.

► **Hold the Line**

The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** acid flask ×5, crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✗ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✗ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↶ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↶ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor

#### Steppengard Prelate (P)

Level 10 Controller • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

**HP** 105; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+2 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Guiding Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant

Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 radiant damage (crit 13 + 2d6 radiant), and one ally within sight of the Steppengard prelate gains a +2 power bonus on its next attack against the target.

✗ **Awe and Dread** (std; enc) ◆ Divine, Fear, Weapon

+14 vs. Will; 1d10+2 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

✓ **Spiritual Weapon** (std; daily; sustain minor) ◆ Divine, Healing

Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. A weapon appears in the target's square and attacks. The conjuration grants combat advantage to allies attacking the target. The weapon can be moved up to 10 squares as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

► **Stand Firm** (imm int, when the Steppengard prelate is pushed or slid)

The Steppengard prelate's move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks the Steppengard prelate prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Heal +14, Religion +10

**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 7 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, light shield, plate armor



**Ram-Headed Sphinx (S)**

Level 9 Skirmisher • XP 400

Large immortal magical beast

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision

**HP** 97; **Bloodied** 48

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 10

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☑ **Pounce** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx moves up to 6 squares and makes a claw attack. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

☑ **Claw Swipe** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and an enemy adjacent to the target and the ram-headed sphinx receives 5 damage.

☑ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when the ram-headed sphinx moves away.

☑ **Goring Charge** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx makes a charge attack, moving at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of the target; +12 vs. AC; 3d10+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

☑ **Rake** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage (until escape).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Supernal

**Str** 19 (+8)   **Dex** 14 (+6)   **Wis** 16 (+7)

**Con** 17 (+7)   **Int** 16 (+7)   **Cha** 15 (+6)

**TACTICS**

The second wave will also attempt to corral the heroes into a dead-end. They will freely enter in through doors of businesses and apartments to shortcut through the street maze and cut off the heroes' escape. None of the guards are suicidal, and they will retreat when they become bloodied.

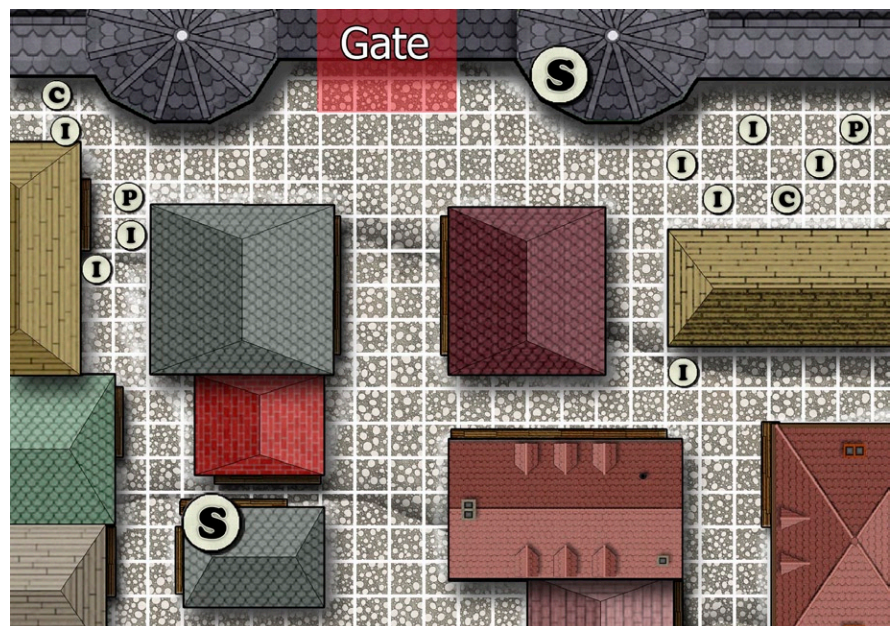
**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Doors:** Doors to businesses and homes can be entered using a minor action. Each door is standard (break DC 20), but may be barred (break DC 26) and has a lock (DC 25 Thievery).

**Windows:** Windows on the ground floor provide line of sight and grant cover. Windows can be smashed with a break DC 20. All windows are locked (DC 25 Thievery). Opening a window is a minor action, and a medium creature can squeeze through it.

**Balconies:** A balcony is 10 feet above the ground and can be climbed onto by anyone trained in Athletics. This is a DC 20 check. Falling from a balcony deals 1d10 damage.

**Market Stalls, Crates, and Other Obstacles:** Obstacles are all difficult terrain.



## SOUTHERN PATROL

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

Madness has alerted the guards outside the city to detain anyone leaving from the south matching the party's description. This is a last-ditch effort to capture the party. If the heroes escape the patrol, they successfully avoid prison.

- ◆ 8 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 3 Steppengard Commander (C)
- ◆ 3 Ram-Headed Sphinxes (S)
- ◆ various Bresk Villagers (V)

#### Steppengard Infantry (I)

Level 7 Soldier • XP 300

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22,

**Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard infantry may shift into the vacated space.

✗ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

✦ **Acid Splash** (std; 5/enc)

Area Burst 2 in 6; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage.

#### ► Hold the Line

The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** acid flask ×5, crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✗ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✗ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↶ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↶ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor

#### Ram-Headed Sphinx (S)

Level 9 Skirmisher • XP 600

Large immortal magical beast

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision

**HP** 97; **Bloodied** 48

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 10

☞ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☞ **Pounce** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx moves up to 6 squares and makes a claw attack. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

✗ **Claw Swipe** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and an enemy adjacent to the target and the ram-headed sphinx receives 5 damage.

✗ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when the ram-headed sphinx moves away.

✗ **Goring Charge** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx makes a charge attack, moving at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of the target; +12 vs. AC; 3d10+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

✗ **Rake** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage (until escape).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Supernal

**Str** 19 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+7)

**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 16 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+6)

#### Bresk Villager (V)

Level 8 Minion • XP 88

Medium natural humanoid

**Initiative** +4; **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

**AC** 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16

**Speed** 6

☞ **Improvised Weapon** (std; at-will) ◆

Weapon

+13 vs. AC; 1d6 damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Str** 10 (+4) **Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+4)

**Con** 10 (+4) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)



**TACTICS**

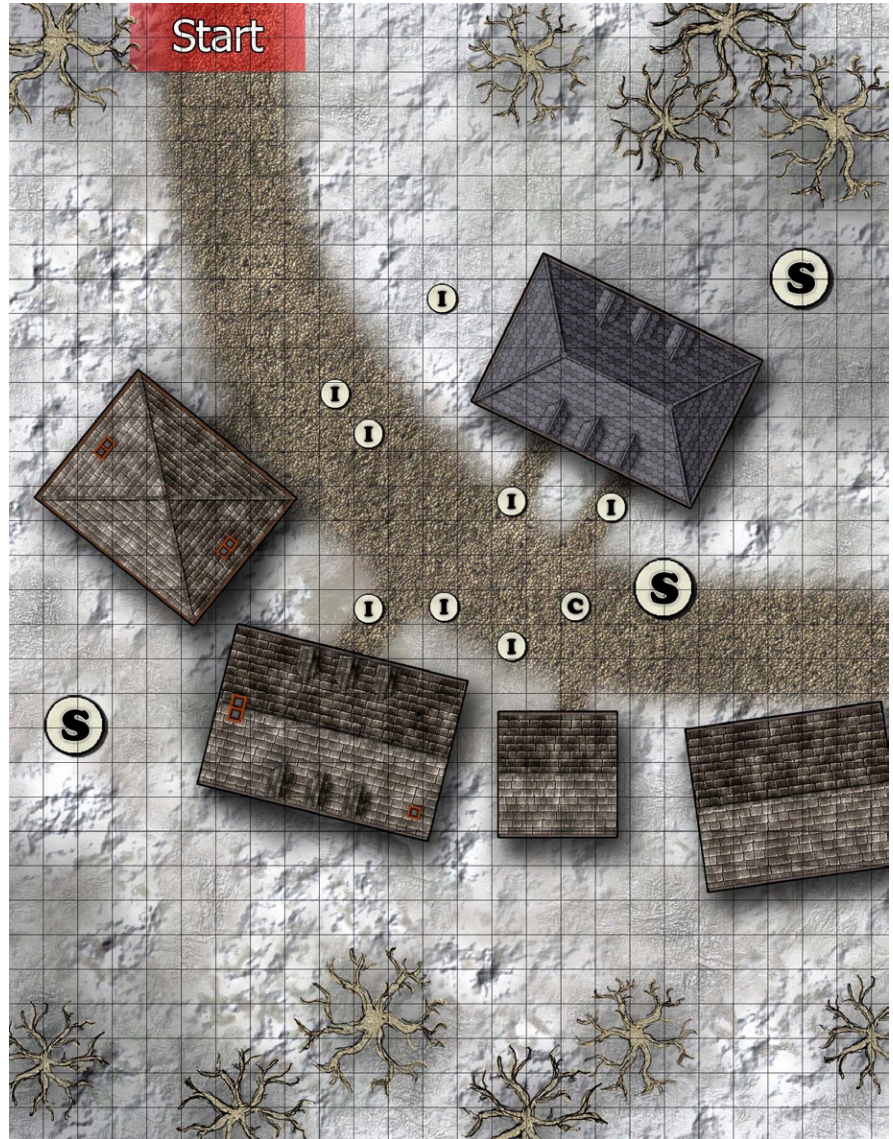
The sphinxes will fly and claw swipe to keep the party scattered while the infantry and the commanders isolate and concentrate on one member at a time. They have orders to knock out and detain, so a final blow will always be non-lethal. If a character enters a house, the guard will block all possible exits and sound a horn, calling all villagers to arms. Each round, 2d6 Bresk villagers with improvised or simple weapons appear to help the guard (start them 10 squares away from the house).

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Doors:** Doors to businesses and homes can be entered using a minor action. Each door is barred (**Break DC 26**) and has a lock (**Thievery DC 25**). Entering into houses outside the gate is dangerous. Roll a 1d6, on a 3–6, a character is engaged by an angry homeowner willing to defend his/her property with an improvised or simple weapon and gains an Opportunity Attack against the invading character (see Bresk Villager).

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

**Embankment:** The embankment is 5 feet tall on both sides of the road. It is icy and slick and requires 4 squares of movement to scale. If one jumps up, the top is icy and the hero must succeed on a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall back down and is prone.



## NORTHERN PURSUIT

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

Even though the heroes have made it into Duke Gallo's lands, Madness oversteps protocol and allows the Talon to pursue into Gallo's Duchy. This appears slated to be a last stand, but Gallo's patrols see the oncoming conflict and sweep in to rout Madness' force.

- ◆ 8 Steppengard Soldiers (I) on heavy warhorses
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C) on heavy warhorse
- ◆ 1 Ram-Headed Sphinx (S)
- ◆ 4 Gallo Knights (allies) (K)

#### Steppengard Soldier (S)

Level 8 Soldier • XP 350

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44

**AC** 24, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20

**Speed** 5

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +15 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☉ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Minor, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +15 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage.

✓ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard soldier may shift into the vacated space.

✓ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

#### ► Hold the Line

The Steppengard soldier and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +10, Intimidate +9

**Str** 16 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 16 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+4)

**Equipment** crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✓ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✓ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↶ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↶ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor



PAGE 24

#### Ram-Headed Sphinx (S)

Level 9 Skirmisher • XP 400

Large immortal magical beast

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision

**HP** 97; **Bloodied** 48

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 10

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☑ **Pounce** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx moves up to 6 squares and makes a claw attack. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

✓ **Claw Swipe** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and an enemy adjacent to the target and the ram-headed sphinx receives 5 damage.

✓ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when the ram-headed sphinx moves away.

✓ **Goring Charge** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx makes a charge attack, moving at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of the target; +12 vs. AC; 3d10+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

✓ **Rake** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage (until escape).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Supernal

**Str** 19 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+7)

**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 16 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+6)



**Gallo Knight (K)**

Level 10 Soldier • XP 500

Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +7; Senses Perception +6

HP 105; Bloodied 52

AC 24; Fortitude 25, Reflex 22, Will 21

Speed 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the targeted is marked until the end of the Gallo knight's next turn. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Minor, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +17 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage.

✓ **Devastating Charge** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

Must be mounted; move at least 2 squares up to the Gallo knight's speed to the target's nearest square and attack; +17 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

▶ **Mounted Strafe**

Must be mounted; at any point during a move, the Gallo knight may perform a standard action. When attacking a target, the Gallo knight's movement away from the target does not provoke an opportunity attack.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +11, Intimidate +10

**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 10 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, crossbow, heavy shield, plate armor

**TACTICS**

The Talon guard is instructed to kill any hero once they have stepped into Gallo's lands, since it is clear they are traitors. They will stay mounted as long as possible, using the warhorses' charger and trample powers to ride the heroes down. When all the heroes are bloodied, the Gallo Knights appear from the forest's edge and attack the enemies.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Ice:** At the start of a character's move on the ice, make a DC 15 Agility check. On a failure, the ice is difficult terrain.

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

**Heavy Warhorse (W)**

Level 5 Brute • XP 200

Large natural beast (mount)

Initiative +8; Senses Perception +9; low-light vision, +13 smell

HP 79; Bloodied 39

AC 17; Fortitude 19, Reflex 15, Will 15

Speed 8

☑ **Kick** (std; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage

✓ **Trample** (std; at-will)

The warhorse moves up to its speed through

an enemy's space and ends in an unoccupied one. The heavy warhorse makes a trample attack; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6+6 damage, and the target is knocked prone. This provokes an opportunity attack.

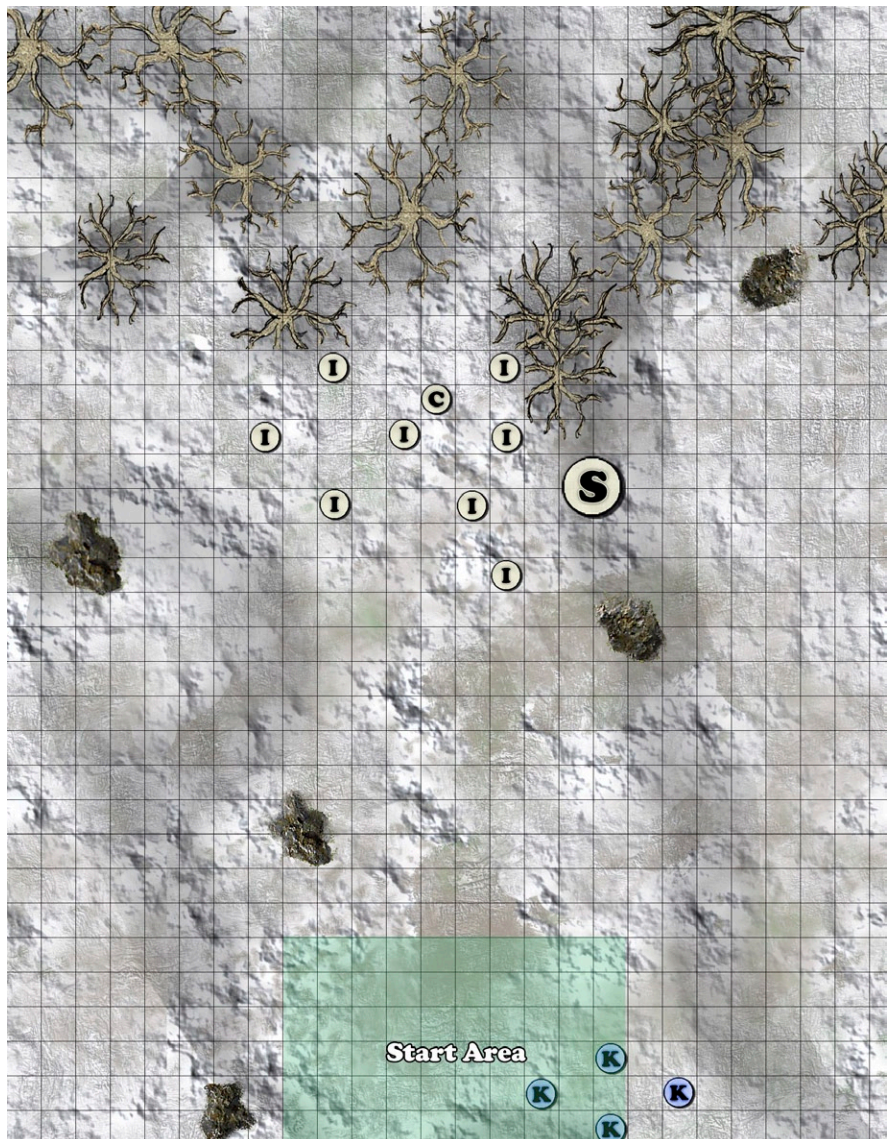
▶ **Charger** (while mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ◆ Mount

The heavy warhorse grants its rider a +6 bonus to damage during a charge.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Str** 22 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+4)

**Con** 19 (+6) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 10 (+2)



## GUARD ROOM

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

You peer through the door's small window to see three men engaging in some game at the table, their weapons within easy reach.

The heroes can surprise the guard if they successfully break down the door in a single attack (DC 26 Strength check. Aid Another can be used to improve the odds). If the lock is successfully picked with an improvised lockpick (DC 28 Thievery check), they can surprise the guard with a rush into the room. If the Thievery check fails by 5 or more, one of the guards hears the attempt to jimmy the door and everyone arms themselves and prepares to rush into the cell room.

- ◆ 3 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C)

### Steppengard Infantry (I)

Level 7 Soldier • XP 300

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 19, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22,

**Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✓ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

#### ► Hold the Line

The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** dagger, flail, chain armor

### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✓ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✓ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

◀ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

◀ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, chain armor

### TACTICS

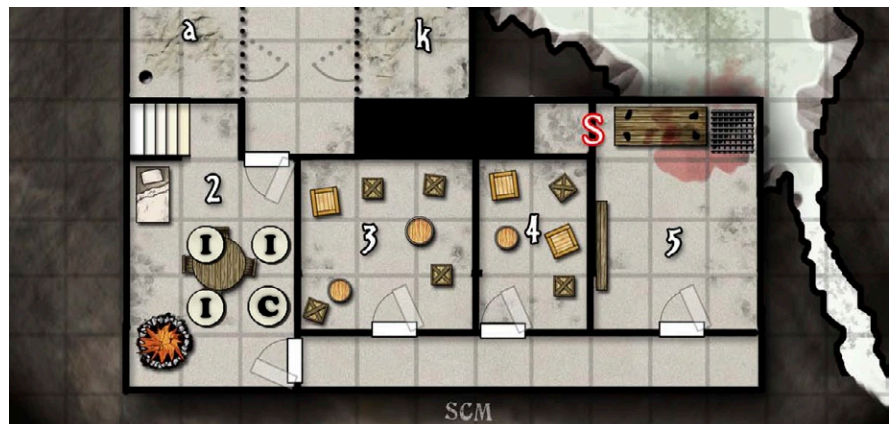
The guards are gullible, and will fall for various "classic" escape tricks. If a fight does break out they do not immediately run for help, assuming they can handle the situation themselves. They would rather not let their superiors know they had failed, and will not flee until one of their number is dropped. Even at this point, the door at the top of the stairs is mysteriously locked, as Madness wants to make sure the rest of the castle guards are not alerted.

Unarmed, escaping here could prove rather difficult. Improvised weapons, such as pried out brick, or a rusted bar as a makeshift club can be suggested if anyone makes a DC 12 Perception or Insight check.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Table:** The table can be upturned and used to push the guards (standard action). Using the table as a shield gives a +4 bonus to AC and a -2 penalty to Reflex defense. One character can push one target up to 2 squares with a successful melee basic attack as an improvised weapon. Two characters can use the table in this way.

**Fire Pit:** Anyone stepping into the fire takes 2d6 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).





# JUTRAS

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

## SETUP

Jutras serves as a unique tool of torture, since many prisoners who do not fear for their lives fear for their souls when threatened with becoming one of the undead. Jutras has come to enjoy his role of causing pain, and does not try to escape. If his private chamber is opened, Jutras expects to feed. Typically, he will terrorize a prisoner and then finish him off, dumping the body into the septic tunnel where it eventually becomes a zombie.

If the heroes succeed on the DC 25 History check and claim to be here on behalf of Ineluki, Jutras desperately wants to believe his deliverance is here, so he immediately breaks off hostilities and asks what he needs to do. He is somewhat gullible, but will eventually realize if he is being tricked.

If the heroes create an illusion of a chicken, Jutras is surprised (save ends).

- ◆ Jutras (J)

## Jutras (J)

Level 13 Elite Controller • XP 1,600

Medium natural humanoid (undead, mohrg)

Initiative +11; Senses Perception +8; darkvision

HP 262; Bloodied 131

AC 25; Fortitude 25, Reflex 26, Will 23

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant, illusions of chickens

Speed 8, Climb 8

Action Points 1

☞ Claws (std; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage, and the target is marked. Jutras can maintain up to 2 marked targets at one time.

☞ Slam (std; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage.

☑ Hunger Rush (std; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 2d8+6 damage, and the target is marked. Jutras can maintain up to 2 marked targets at one time.

☑ Tongue Lash (minor; at-will)

Only usable on a marked target; +17 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+2 necrotic damage.

☑ Immobilizing Bite (std; rchg ☞☞)

+18 vs. AC; 4d8+6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

☑ Necrotic Spit (std; enc) ◆ Necrotic

Ranged 10; +17 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+6 damage, and target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses through Jutras' next turn.

☞ Blood Burst (when reduced to 0 hp) ◆

Necrotic

Close Burst 1; all creatures in the burst take 2d6 + 10 necrotic damage.

▶ Zombie Spawn

Creatures killed by Jutras rise after 1d4 days as zombies under Jutras's control. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Alignment Chaotic Evil; Languages Abyssal,

Common, Dwarven, Giant

Skills Stealth +16

Str 18 (+10) Dex 21 (+11) Wis 14 (+8)

Con 19 (+10) Int 15 (+8) Cha 7 (+4)

**Description** An emaciated ghoul with a long barbed tongue crawls from the shadows with eerie swiftness, wearing noble regalia from hundreds of years ago.

**Lore** A hero learns the following information with a successful skill check.

**DC 15 History or Religion:** Jutras is a mohrg, a ghoul-like creature that is the undead creation of an unrepentant mass murderer.

**DC 20 Religion:** Mohrgs have an insatiable hunger and their mouths have adapted to feeding with elongated tongues, vicious bites, and a vile spit that weakens those it hits. They explode in a burst of rotting flesh and gore when killed.

**DC 20 History:** There's a crest on Jutras's rotted noble's outfit, a serpent coiling around a spear, which identifies him as having once been a Dasseni noble.

**DC 25 History:** Jutras was disgraced and executed for his obsession with the occult; he believed up until his execution that the bat-winged demon Ineluki was going to rescue him and reward him for his service to evil. Jutras is horribly afraid of chickens, due to a prophecy he was once given by a drunken seer.

## TACTICS

When released, Jutras squeezes into the main room and strikes targets one by one, hoping to mark each so he can feed. If he immobilizes a foe, he will take advantage of his position, attempting to drag the victim over to the grate and drop him into the septic tunnel.

During normal weather, the refuse-filled tunnel under the prison is filled with dozens of hungry zombies, kept in check by steel grates on either end of the chamber. The fierce winter, however, froze them in their muck, so now only their arms and heads can reach out. The pit drops twenty feet to the surface of the ice, and the ceilings are ten feet high.



## ZOMBIE PIT

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

PAGE 25

### SETUP

Nearly every square of the cave under the prison is filled with two or three zombies (treated as a single creature), frozen in place, waiting quietly until something they might be able to eat walks by. The squares are difficult terrain, and a creature that passes through one of these squares is attacked by bites, gorges, and slams. When frozen zombies are annihilated, their bodies shatter like ice struck with a hammer.

- ◆ 8 Frozen Zombie Hordes (Z)

### Frozen Zombie Horde (Z)

Level 12 Hazard • XP 350

#### Hazard

*The smacking of hungry mouths and the unholy moans of the undead assault your ears as you see a throng of zombies frozen in place from the waist down.*

#### ► Perception

No check is needed

#### ► Trigger

A frozen zombie horde attacks any creature that enters its square or a square adjacent to it.

#### ► Attack

Free Action; Melee 1

**Targets:** A creature that starts its turn or enters a square adjacent to or within the frozen zombies.

**Attack:** +15 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d8+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

#### ► Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can attack the zombies. Each horde has AC 20, Fortitude 21, Reflex 15, and 80 hp. For every 20 points of damage it takes, one of the horde's corners (4 squares) becomes clear terrain.

#### ► Special

- ◆ Moving through a frozen zombie horde is difficult terrain.
- ◆ A creature that begins its turn prone adjacent to or in the same square as a frozen zombie horde takes 5 and is slowed.





## APPROACH

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

If the heroes succeed at a DC 18 Stealth check they avoid being discovered by the guard at the fort's top (the guard has low-light vision). If they fail by 4 or less, the scout thinks he sees movement and becomes more alert. The heroes must succeed a DC 23 Stealth for subsequent turns until they reach the entrance or they fail by 5 or more.

If any check fails by 5 or more, the guard sets off the alarm. Stonum takes 6 rounds to get to the wyvern and become airborne, and another infiltrator and soldier appear at the roof 3 rounds after the alarm (take them from the next encounters).

- ◆ 1 Ragesian Soldier (S)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Infiltrator (I)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Wyvern (Dractyl) (W)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Wyvern Knight (Stonum) (K)
- ◆ 1 Murder Hole Trap (M)

#### Ragesian Soldier (S)

Level 9 Soldier • XP 400

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

**HP** 95; **Bloodied** 47

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

#### ► **Combat Advantage**

The Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

#### ► **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

#### ► **Warrior's Refresh** (std; enc) ◆ Healing

The Ragesian soldier makes a melee basic attack and regains 23 hp.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +7, Streetwise +10, Thievery +7

**Str** 18 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)

**Con** 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow w/ 20 arrows

#### Ragesian Infiltrator (I)

Level 11 Lurker • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +10; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 21

**Speed** 6

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage. Thrown 5/10; +16 vs. AC; 1d4+5 damage.

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Walking Wounded** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone. The target continues to fall prone any time it moves more than half its speed in a single action until the end of the encounter. *Miss:* Half damage.

#### ► **Creeping Slide** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian infiltrator shifts 3 squares and selects a single target within 6 squares; the designated target grants the Ragesian infiltrator combat advantage until the end of the Ragesian infiltrator's next turn.

#### ► **Evasive Reaction** (imm int, when an attack succeeds against the Ragesian; enc)

The attacker rerolls the attack and applies the second result.

#### ► **Sneak Attack** (when the infiltrator has combat advantage; 1/rd)

The Ragesian infiltrator can choose to add +3d6 damage when an attack hits.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Intimidate +10, Thievery +15

**Str** 18 (+9) **Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Equipment** dagger, kit, leather armor, light shield, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows

#### Ragesian Wyvern (Dractyl) (W)

Level 11 Skirmisher • XP 600

Large natural beast (mount, reptile)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

**HP** 114; **Bloodied** 57

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23

**Speed** 4, fly 8 (hover); see also flyby attack

☑ **Bite** (std; at-will)  
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

☑ **Claws** (std; at-will)  
Can be used while flying; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

☑ **Sting** (std; at-will) ◆ Poison  
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the Ragesian wyvern makes a second attack against the same target. Second attack: +14 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

#### ✓ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian wyvern flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when Ragesian wyvern moves away.

#### ✓ **Cherry Pick** (std; enc)

Only while flying; the Ragesian wyvern emulates a charge but picks up the target and hurls him a distance up to 8 squares. Reach 2; +14 vs. Reflex; the target is picked up into the air and thrown a number of squares equal to the straight line distance traveled by the Ragesian wyvern before the grab. The target suffers 1d6 damage per square thrown, is knocked prone, and is dazed (save ends). Hitting an obstacle (such as a wall) adds 1d6 of damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Str** 22 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 15 (+7)

**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+4)

### NEW ITEM: DRAGONSLAYER BALLISTA

**Attack:** Ranged 25/50; +18 vs. AC; damage 4d6+5 (crit 29+1d6) and the target is stunned until the end of the target's next turn.

**Special:** Reloading a dragonslayer ballista requires the operator to expend 2 standard actions. This can be reduced to 1 standard action until the end of the encounter with a successful DC 20 Dungeoneering check.

**Ragesian Wyvern Knight (Stonum) (K)**

**Level 12 Soldier • XP 700**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +10; **Senses** Perception +6

**HP** 122; **Bloodied** 61

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 22

**Speed** 5, Ride 12

☞ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+19 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage.

☞ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +19 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✂ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+19 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage and another adjacent enemy takes 6 damage.

✂ **Wyvern Bloodstrike** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+19 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage damage, and target suffers ongoing 5 damage and –2 penalty to AC (save ends both).

☞ **Raesian Dragonbomb** (std; at-will)  
Close Burst 3; targets all creatures; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 fire damage, and target suffers ongoing 5 damage and is stunned (save ends both).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +16, History +13, Intimidate +11

**Str** 22 (+12) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+6)

**Con** 18 (+10) **Int** 14 (+8) **Cha** 11 (+6)

**Equipment** *chainmail armor* +1, crossbow, light shield, Ragesian dragonbomb, short sword

**Murder Hole**

**Level 8 Blaster • XP 350**

Trap

*Iron balls drop from the ceiling, pelting you as you pass beneath.*

► **Perception**

- ◆ DC 15: The character notices lever .
- ◆ DC 18: The character notices a trapdoor in the ceiling.

► **Trigger**

Passing over the square triggers the trap if an alerted guard is on top of the roof and on a square adjacent to the murder hole.

► **Attack**

Immediate Reaction; Close Burst 2

**Targets:** Creatures in burst

**Attack:** +15 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 4d6 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the target's next turn.

**Miss:** Half damage

► **Countermeasures**

- ◆ A character can avoid being stunned if he has an equipped shield and succeeds making a DC 15 Strength check.
- ◆ A character can leap back to the outside and halve any damage dealt with a DC 22 Acrobatics check. For each character in the way of the escaping character, the DC increases by 2.

► **Special**

The trap is reset every other round after the first attack.

**TACTICS**

If the alarm is sounded: Stonum and Dractyl take flight from the roof of the fort, circling over the plateau and switchbacks. Stonum spends two rounds softening his foes with crossbow fire, and then has Dractyl swoop in to use *cherry pick*. If his foes are ever in a nice cluster, he will drop his dragonbomb.

Any guards on the roof use their missile attacks as the heroes approach.

Once the front door is breached, the heroes will be assaulted by archers behind the arrow slits in hallway F as well as subjected to the murder hole trap in the entrance hallway. The portcullis will be down.

If the alarm is not sounded: If the heroes make it to the main door and successfully enter the fort before being detected, they avoid the murder hole trap and the portcullis is raised.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Area A:** The switchback trail is gentle slope, but is 560 feet long from the base of the cliff to the plateau. Because of the hill's slope, characters on the switchbacks have no cover against attacks made by enemies at the top of the plateau or atop the fortress.

**Area B:** Alongside the trail on the plateau is a line of torches, laid out 10 feet apart. They have all burned out at this point, but every other night the Ragesian soldiers light fresh torches to let the wyvern rider who delivers their supplies spot the outpost from the air. There is no cover here, making sneaking up a near impossibility during daylight.

**Area C:** The fort entrance is a single iron door (DC 28 Break; DC 30 Thievery) that opens to a 10-foot-long narrow hallway. An iron portcullis (DC 25 Strength; DC 20 Thievery) may be blocking entrance into area E, the shooting gallery. A murder hole trap drops iron balls from the roof if the guard is alerted.

**Area D:** One infiltrator and one soldier are stationed on the roof at any given time. Additionally, Dractyl the wyvern lounges here.

The roof of the outpost has two dragonslayer ballistae, intended to shoot down dragons, wyverns, and similar aerial creatures. A single creature can operate the gears to aim the siege weapon. There are twenty ballista bolts for each of the weapons. The ballistae cannot fire below the level of the roof.

A **DC 25 History** or a **DC 20 Dungeoneering** check reminds a character that this ballista is well-designed for shooting dragons out of the sky.





## SHOOTING GALLERY

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

Area E, the largest room of the fortress, is a shooting gallery. Four arrow slits face into the room and provide total cover.

If the guards have been alerted, Crona and Jass (see the next encounter) are behind the soldiers in hallway F and direct the fight when the heroes enter the hallway, rather than staying in their original positions. Each arrow slit will be manned for attack and 8 Ragesian soldiers will be in the room when the heroes enter (after lifting the portcullis).

- ◆ 12 Ragesian Soldiers (S)

**Ragesian Soldier (S)**  
**Level 9 Soldier • XP 400**  
 Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision  
**HP** 95; **Bloodied** 47  
**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23  
**Speed** 5

◆ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**  
 +16 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

◆ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
 Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

▶ **Combat Advantage**  
 The Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)  
 The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

▶ **Warrior's Refresh** (std; enc) ◆ **Healing**  
 The Ragesian soldier makes a melee basic attack and regains 23 hp.

---

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +7, Streetwise +10, Thievery +7  
**Str** 18 (+8)   **Dex** 15 (+6)   **Wis** 14 (+6)  
**Con** 15 (+6)   **Int** 10 (+4)   **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow w/ 20 arrows

### TACTICS

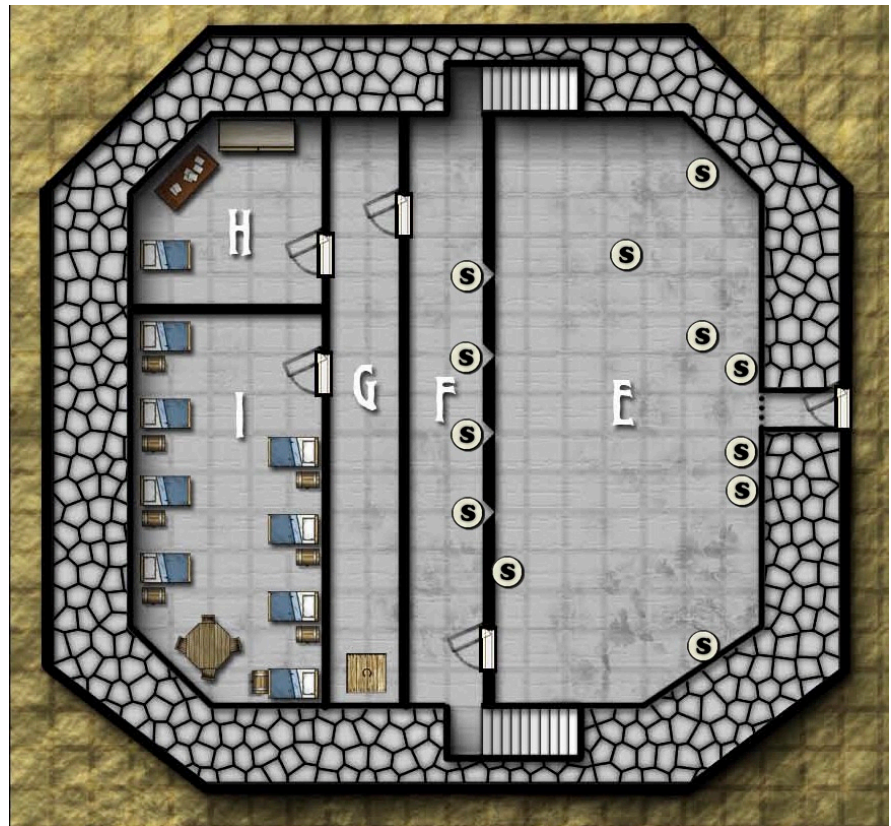
If the alarm is sounded: Once the portcullis is lifted, the 8 soldiers will begin their attack, with 2 soldiers firing shortbows into the melee and the others attempting to overrun the heroes.

If the alarm is not sounded: A single archer in Hallway F walks from arrow slit to arrow slit and peering into the room. The archer covers one slit per turn and has a +8 Perception skill. Each slit he looks through covers a 4×7 zone area from the slit he is currently at to the far wall. The heroes have an increased bonus to avoid detection by moving beyond the zone when the guard looks out (+5 bonus to Stealth check).

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Murder Balls:** Each murder hole ball can be thrown at an enemy as a standard action. Picking one up is a minor action. +15 vs. Reflex; 1d6+3 damage and the target is pushed 1 square. There are 20 balls, but a ball can be reused.

**Poor Ventilation:** All smoke or mist effects increase their size by 2 squares for a burst or blast or double the number of squares for a wall. Heroes can determine that this condition exists with a DC 15 Dungeoneering check.



## GAUNTLET

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

If the guards have been alerted, 4 soldiers plus Crona and Jass occupy this hallway, Area F. Otherwise, a lone soldier patrols the hall. If alerted, the soldiers have readied shields and drawn axes.

- ◆ 4 Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ Inquisitor Crona (C)
- ◆ Infiltration Leader Jass (J)
- ◆ 2 Ragesian Soldiers (from roof) (S)
- ◆ 2 Ragesian Infiltrators (from roof) (I)

#### Ragesian Soldier (S)

Level 9 Soldier • XP 400

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

**HP** 95; **Bloodied** 47

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☉ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

#### ▶ **Combat Advantage**

The Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

#### ▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

#### ▶ **Warrior's Refresh** (std; enc) ◆ Healing

The Ragesian soldier makes a melee basic attack and regains 23 hp.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +7, Streetwise +10, Thievery +7

**Str** 18 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)

**Con** 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow w/ 20 arrows

#### Ragesian Infiltrator (I)

Level 11 Lurker • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +10; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 21

**Speed** 6

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage. Thrown 5/10; +16 vs. AC; 1d4+5 damage.

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.

☉ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon  
Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Walking Wounded** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon  
+16 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage and the target is knocked prone. The target continues to fall prone any time it moves more than half its speed in a single action until the end of the encounter. *Miss*: Half damage.

#### ▶ **Creeping Slide** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian infiltrator shifts 3 squares and selects a single target within 6 squares; the designated target grants the Ragesian infiltrator combat advantage until the end of the Ragesian infiltrator's next turn.

#### ▶ **Evasive Reaction** (imm int, when an attack succeeds against the infiltrator; enc)

The attacker rerolls the attack and applies the second result.

#### ▶ **Sneak Attack** (when the infiltrator has combat advantage; 1/rd)

The Ragesian infiltrator can choose to add +3d6 damage when an attack hits.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Intimidate +10, Thievery +15

**Str** 18 (+9) **Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Equipment** dagger, kit, leather armor, light shield, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows

#### Infiltration Leader Jass (J)

Level 12 Soldier (Leader) • XP 700

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +9; **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

**HP** 122; **Bloodied** 61

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+19 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage (crit 16 + 1d6). Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
+19 vs. AC; 1d6+5 damage.

✓ **Commander's Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

An ally makes a melee basic attack against a target and adds an extra 3 points of damage.

✓ **Surprise Attack** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage (+1 damage when used 2H), and an ally within 5 squares of Jass makes a basic attack with combat advantage and a +3 attack roll bonus against any valid target.

✓ **Guide the Charge** (imm int, when an ally charges; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial

Add 3 to the ally's damage roll, and the ally's target is pushed 2 extra squares. The ally can shift 2 squares to remain adjacent.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +12, Intimidate +11

**Str** 20 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+6)

**Con** 18 (+10) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 10 (+6)

**Equipment** battleaxe +1, heavy shield, plate armor, short sword





**Inquisitor Crona (C)**

Level 14 Controller • XP 1,000

Medium natural humanoid (orc)

**Initiative** +13; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

**HP** 136; **Bloodied** 68

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 29

**Speed** 6

☞ **Hand Claw** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage (crit 2d6+24).

✓ **Rebuke Lesser Arcane Magic** (std; 2/enc)

Ranged 10, targets a conjuration or zone made by an arcane power; +18 vs. Will of originating caster; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, including any of its effects, even those normally lasting until a target saves.

☞ **Oath-Mark** (minor; enc [special])

Close Burst 10; targets one enemy Crona can see. *Effect:* If the oath-marked target is the only enemy adjacent to Crona, she makes two attack rolls and takes either result. The effect lasts until the target drops to 0 hp or the encounter ends. The power is then regained. Effects on Crona that allow rerolling an attack roll allow both attack rolls to be rerolled.

☞ **Searing Sanction** (imm reac, when an enemy scores a critical hit against Crona; daily) ◆ Divine, Radiant

Close Burst 10; *Effect:* Crona's oath-marked target takes radiant damage equal to the critical hit's damage.

✦ **Leska's Expurgation** (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Divine, Fire, Implement

Area Burst 1 within 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d6+6 fire damage (crit 12 + 1d6 fire) and ongoing 10 fire damage.

✦ **Thunder Call** (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Thunder

Area Burst 2 in 10; +18 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+5 thunder damage, and any target in the area is knocked prone. Miss: half damage, and the target is not knocked prone.

▶ **Dogged Pursuit**

If Crona's oath-marked target moves away willingly from her, Crona gains +5 to damage rolls against that target until the end of her next turn.

▶ **Reactive Counterspell** (imm reac. optional, when struck by an arcane spell)

The attacker rerolls his attack using the new roll as his attack roll. If the new attack fails, the spell fails. Crona loses her standard action through her next turn.

▶ **Rebuke Magic** (std; 3/enc)

Dispels a magical effect that has a time component. If the effect is supported by a sustain action, roll a Will vs. Will opposed check to dispel.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Arcana +14, Religion +14

**Str** 18 (+11) **Dex** 13 (+8) **Wis** 21 (+12)

**Con** 16 (+10) **Int** 14 (+9) **Cha** 13 (+8)

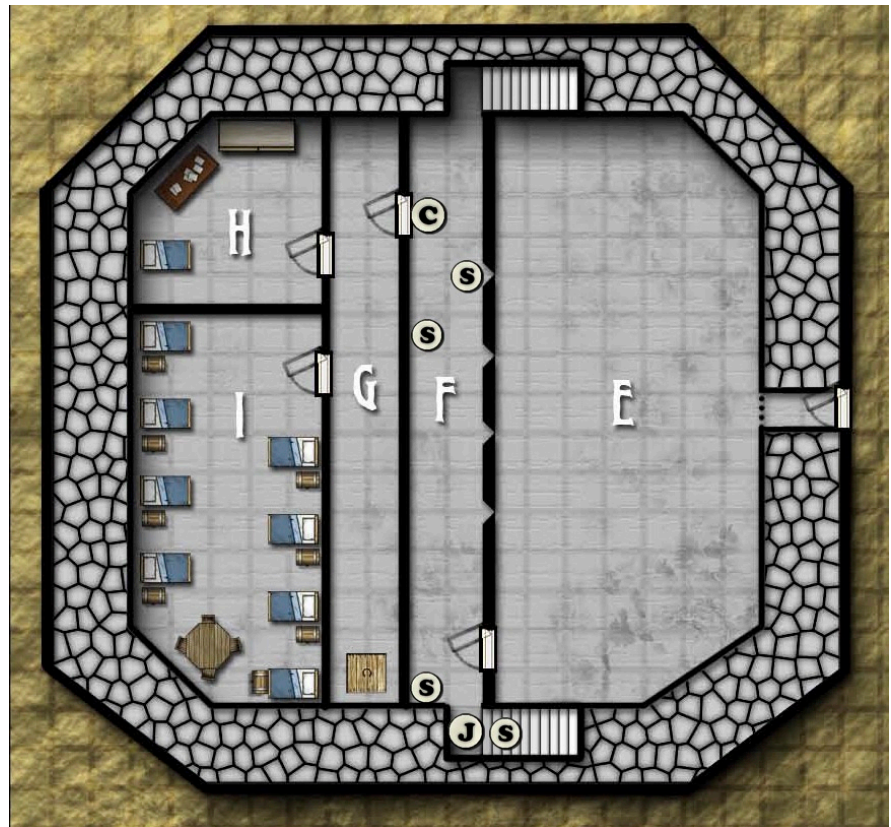
**Equipment** hand claw +2

**TACTICS**

If the guards have not been alerted, the lone guard on patrol will attempt to reach the door to Area G and pound on it to alert the others in

the barracks. Roll a 1d6 each round he does so: on a 3, 4, 5, or 6, the pounding alerts the guards in Area I and Inquisitor Crona in room H; they will know that the fort is compromised and will be prepared to ambush anyone entering Area G.

If the Ragesians have been alerted, Inquisitor Crona lends her modest antimagic abilities to try to thwart area-attack spells, and Jass shouts up the northern staircase for the warriors on the roof to come down the southern staircase to flank the intruders. The infiltrators will come at the heroes from behind, even being willing to leap off the roof and come in through the front entrance.



## BARRACKS

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

The Ragesians will be prepared and will draw the battle into the barracks.

- ◆ 8 Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ Inquisitor Crona (C)
- ◆ Infiltration Leader Jass (J)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Infiltrator (I)

#### Ragesian Soldier (S)

Level 9 Soldier • XP 400

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

**HP** 95; **Bloodied** 47

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 23

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage.

#### ▶ **Combat Advantage**

The Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

#### ▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

The soldier takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

#### ▶ **Warrior's Refresh** (std; enc) ◆ Healing

The Ragesian soldier makes a melee basic attack and regains 23 hp.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +7, Streetwise +10, Thievery +7

**Str** 18 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)

**Con** 15 (+6) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow w/ 20 arrows

#### Ragesian Infiltrator (I)

Level 11 Lurker • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +10; **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision

**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 21

**Speed** 6

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 1d4+4 damage. Thrown 5/10; +16 vs. AC; 1d4+5 damage.

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage.

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Free, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Walking Wounded** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆

Martial, Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage and the target is knocked prone. The target continues to fall prone any time it moves more than half its speed in a single action until the end of the encounter. *Miss:* Half damage.

#### ▶ **Creeping Slide** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian infiltrator shifts 3 squares and selects a single target within 6 squares; the designated target grants the Ragesian infiltrator combat advantage until the end of the Ragesian infiltrator's next turn.

#### ▶ **Evasive Reaction** (imm int, when an attack succeeds against the infiltrator; enc)

The attacker rerolls the attack and applies the second result.

#### ▶ **Sneak Attack** (when the infiltrator has combat advantage; 1/rd)

The Ragesian infiltrator can choose to add +3d6 damage when an attack hits.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Intimidate +10, Thievery +15

**Str** 18 (+9) **Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Equipment** dagger, kit, leather armor, light shield, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows

#### Infiltration Leader Jass (J)

Level 12 Soldier (Leader) • XP 700

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +9; **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

**HP** 122; **Bloodied** 61

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

**Speed** 5

☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage (crit 16 + 1d6). Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d6+5 damage.

✓ **Commander's Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

An ally makes a melee basic attack against a target and adds an extra 3 points of damage.

✓ **Surprise Attack** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage (+1 damage when used 2H), and an ally within 5 squares of Jass makes a basic attack with combat advantage and a +3 attack roll bonus against any valid target.

✓ **Guide the Charge** (imm int, when an ally charges; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial

Add 3 to the ally's damage roll, and the ally's target is pushed 2 extra squares. The ally can shift 2 squares to remain adjacent.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +12, Intimidate +11

**Str** 20 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 10 (+6)

**Con** 18 (+10) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 10 (+6)

**Equipment** battleaxe +1, heavy shield, plate armor, short sword



**Inquisitor Crona (C)**

Level 14 Controller • XP 1,000

Medium natural humanoid (orc)

**Initiative** +13; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

**HP** 136; **Bloodied** 68

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 29

**Speed** 6

☞ **Hand Claw** +2 (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage (crit 2d6+24).

✓ **Rebuke Lesser Arcane Magic** (std; 2/enc)

Ranged 10, targets a conjuration or zone made by an arcane power; +18 vs. Will of originating caster; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, including any of its effects, even those normally lasting until a target saves.

☞ **Oath-Mark** (minor; enc [special])

Close Burst 10; targets one enemy Crona can see. *Effect:* If the oath-marked target is the only enemy adjacent to Crona, she makes two attack rolls and takes either result. The effect lasts until the target drops to 0 hp or the encounter ends. The power is then regained. Effects on Crona that allow rerolling an attack roll allow both attack rolls to be rerolled.

☞ **Searing Sanction** (imm reac, when an enemy scores a critical hit against Crona; daily) ◆ Divine, Radiant

Close Burst 10; *Effect:* Crona's oath-marked target takes radiant damage equal to the critical hit's damage.

✳ **Leska's Expurgation** (std; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆ Divine, Fire, Implement

Area Burst 1 within 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d6+6 fire damage (crit 12 + 1d6 fire) and ongoing 10 fire damage.

✳ **Thunder Call** (std; rchg ☐☐) ◆ Thunder

Area Burst 2 in 10; +18 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+5 thunder damage, and any target in the area is knocked prone. Miss: half damage, and the target is not knocked prone.

▶ **Dogged Pursuit**

If Crona's oath-marked target moves away willingly from her, Crona gains +5 to damage rolls against that target until the end of her next turn.

▶ **Reactive Counterspell** (imm reac. optional, when struck by an arcane spell)

The attacker rerolls his attack using the new roll as his attack roll. If the new attack fails, the spell fails. Crona loses her standard action through her next turn.

▶ **Rebuke Magic** (std; 3/enc)

Dispels a magical effect that has a time component. If the effect is supported by a sustain action, roll a Will vs. Will opposed check to dispel.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Arcana +14, Religion +14

**Str** 18 (+11) **Dex** 13 (+8) **Wis** 21 (+12)

**Con** 16 (+10) **Int** 14 (+9) **Cha** 13 (+8)

**Equipment** hand claw +2

**TACTICS**

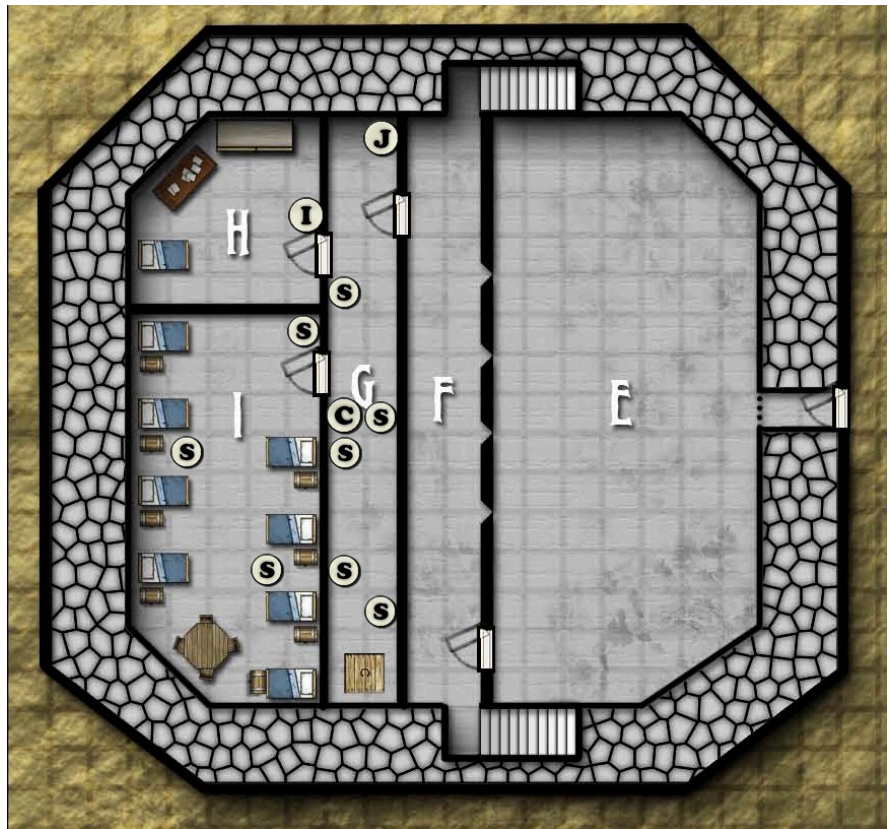
The soldiers attempt to swarm their targets and let the infiltrator move from target to target to apply walking wounded to the enemies. Crona will oath mark a target and pursue until the target is dropped. She will use her thunder call as a last resort. Jass will direct the fight, allowing other soldiers an extra attack by using his commander's strike power. If an opportunity to make a surprise attack occurs, he will do that instead.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Area G.** A wooden trap door that leads to the basement. The basement is too crowded for fighting, and only has mundane supplies.

**Area H.** Once the chaplain's room, the Inquisitor Crona lives here now. She has a dufflebag beside her bed with more "normal-looking" clothes than what she wears when she is trying to play the role of intimidating Inquisitor. On the dresser next to the bed is a printed book, propaganda published by the Ragesian Empire denouncing the various other nations and aggrandizing the destiny of Ragesia.

**Area I.** The normal soldiers sleep here. In the pack of Infiltration Commander Jass is a series of orders. These simply amount to: "Take the first outpost, then stay put, receiving supply drops every other day. When we learn of the success or failure of Madness, our weather mage associates will break the winter over the Alydi Gap. When the thaw begins, prepare to take additional outposts."



## PITCHWOOD

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

PAGE 31

### SETUP

- ◆ 8 Pitchlings (P)

#### Pitchling (P)

Level 9 Controller • XP 400

Medium fey humanoid (Fire)

**Initiative** +9; **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision

**Spontaneous Ignition (Fire)** aura 20; Any unlit torch held by a creature within the aura will spontaneously ignite.

**HP** 94; **Bloodied** 47

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23

Immune Fire; Vulnerable Cold 10

**Speed** 6

#### ☞ Spike Attack (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Use the spiked longbow as a melee weapon; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage. 2H.

#### ☞ Spiked Longbow (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage. 2H, Load Free

#### ✓ Distracting Sound (minor; at-will) ◆

Arcane, Illusion

Ranged 10; +13 vs. Reflex; The pitchling creates a sound which emanates from the target. The sound may be a vocal or nonvocal and can range in volume from a whisper to a yell.

#### ✧ Entangling Influence (std; rchg ☞☞)

Area Burst 1 in 5; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).

#### ✧ Fey Dreams (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Arcane, Sleep

Area Burst 2 in 20; +13 vs. Reflex; the target is slowed (save ends). A failed saving throw against this power renders the target unconscious (save ends). *Miss*: target is slowed (save ends).

#### ✧ Pitchling Firebomb (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Fire, Weapon

Area Burst 1 in 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). *Miss*: half damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Elven

**Skills** Nature +13, Stealth +15

**Str** 12 (+5) **Dex** 23 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+8)

**Con** 14 (+6) **Int** 14 (+6) **Cha** 17 (+7)

**Equipment** spiked longbow

**Description** These slender fey step nimbly through the forest, naked except for a coating of black pitch smeared across their bodies. They carry jagged longbows, but no arrows, though rows of long, sharp spines stick out from their backs. As one trains its bow on you, it snaps a spine off from its shoulder and nocks it like an arrow.

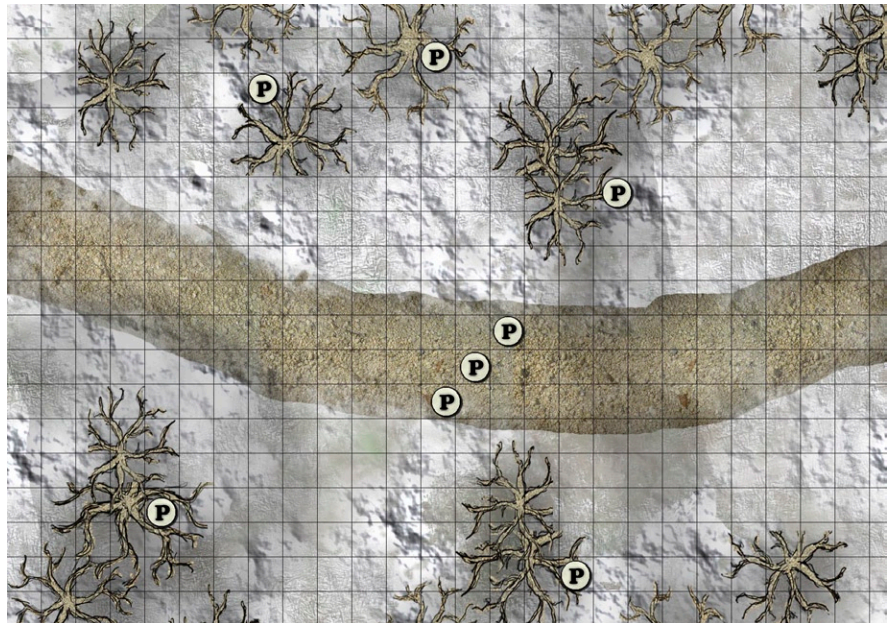
### TACTICS

If the pitchlings manage to sneak up on the heroes, they start by using *entangling influence* and *fey dreams*, targeting horses rather than heroes. Each hero is also targeted with *distracting sound* that buzzes next to the hero's

ear, which says in broken Common, "Leave money and stuff! You go or we burn you!" Any pitchlings that do not target the heroes with *distracting sound*, target any remaining horses with other *distracting sounds* in an attempt to spook them. The pitchlings begin this encounter Hostile, but if made Unfriendly they'll back off and not fight.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Brush:** Any fire damage ignites the plants in a target's square, which does 1d6 fire damage to a creature passing through it or starting its turn in it and burns for 1d6 rounds before smoldering out.





## STEPPENGARD BLOCKADE

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

This is a standard combat with the soldiers relying heavily on their commander's direction for the encounter.

- ◆ 6 Steppengard Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C)
- ◆ 1 Troll Mercenary (Rip) (R)

#### Steppengard Soldier (S)

Level 8 Soldier • XP 350

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44

**AC** 24, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 23,

**Reflex** 21, **Will** 20

**Speed** 5

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +15 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H.

☉ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Load Minor, Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +15 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage.

✓ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard soldier may shift into the vacated space.

✓ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

#### ► Hold the Line

The Steppengard soldier and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +10, Intimidate +9

**Str** 16 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 16 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+4)

**Equipment** crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✓ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✓ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↶ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↶ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor



#### Troll Mercenary (Rip) (T)

Level 11 Brute • XP 600

Large natural humanoid (troll)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +12

**HP** 138; **Bloodied** 69; see also *troll healing*

**Regeneration** 10 (acid or fire damage stops regeneration through the troll's next turn)

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23

**Resist** 10 acid, 10 fire

**Speed** 8

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage; see also bloody claw.

✓ **Rending Strike** (std; rchg ☑☑)

The troll makes 2 claw attacks against a single target. If both hit, the target takes another 2d6+5 damage.

#### ► Blood Rage

The troll gains a +1 attack bonus and a +2 damage bonus against bloodied enemies.

► **Bloody Claw** (free; when the troll bloodies an enemy; at-will)

The troll makes a *claw* attack.

#### ► Troll Healing ◆ Healing

If the troll is defeated by an attack that does not stop its regeneration, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hp.

**Alignment** Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +15, Endurance +14

**Str** 20 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+7)

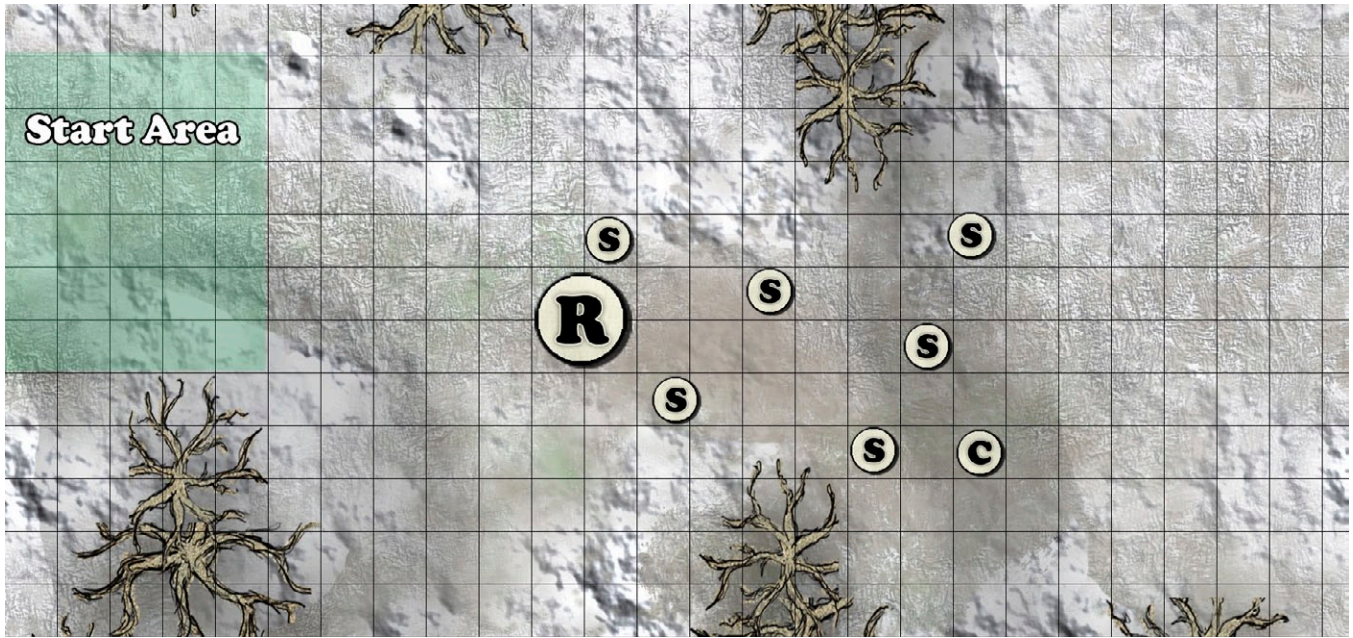
**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+5)

**TACTICS**

The soldiers will divide into crossbowmen and infantry and allow the troll to engage the heroes. The infantry will help the troll flank and use their hold the line exploit to keep their defenses strong. The commander will stay behind the line to help direct the battle. If the commander is felled, the troll will begin a retreat and the rest of the guard will begin to surrender when bloodied.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.





## SCALING THE CLIFFS

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

Climbing the cliffs requires 5 successful DC 21 Athletics checks. Each check successfully moves the heroes 500 feet along the 2,500 foot facade. If the heroes fail 3 checks before reaching the top, or any one check fails by 5 or more, they encounter a band of cliff harpies intent on knocking them off the face. In order to climb, heavy armor and shields must be stowed away, resulting in a reduction of Armor Class defense.

The heroes can make handholds from picks and axe attacks into the surface. Making handholds slows the heroes down and doubles the number of checks to be made, but the checks change to DC 15 Athletics checks.

- ◆ 5 Cliff Harpies (H)

#### Cliff Harpy (H)

Level 9 Soldier • XP 400

Medium fey humanoid

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +6

**HP** 95; **Bloodied** 47

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 23

**Resist** 10 thunder

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

☞ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

☞ **Alluring Song** (std, sustain minor; at-will) ◆

Charm

Close Burst 10; hearing creatures only; +14 vs. Will; the target is pulled 3 squares and immobilized (save ends). When sustaining the power, any remaining influenced targets are pulled 3 squares and immobilized (save ends).

☞ **Deadly Screech** (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Thunder

Close Burst 4; +14 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Elven

**Skills** Stealth +11

**Str** 15 (+6)    **Dex** 15 (+6)    **Wis** 14 (+6)

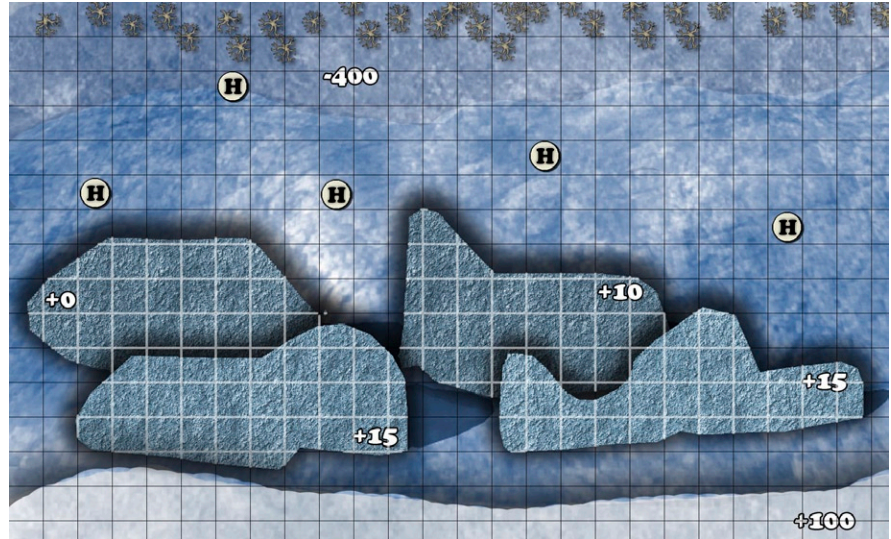
**Con** 15 (+6)    **Int** 10 (+4)    **Cha** 19 (+8)

### TACTICS

The harpies will attempt to use *alluring song* to draw the heroes to the cliff edge. They will “play” with the charmed targets by reducing them to a bloodied state with their claws and then pull them off the ledge in whatever way they can.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Boulders:** The boulders provide cover from the harpies. Anyone hiding behind a boulder can only be pulled one square from an alluring song.



## MAGE ASSASSINATION

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

The tent area is guarded by four soldiers who pace around a perimeter about 100 feet in diameter. They seem almost drugged as they pace, similar to how you saw the monkeys react back in Seaquen. Though alert, you are certain they are under Kelkin's control. Next to the tent is a large lion-headed sphinx that appears to be sleeping.

The guards spend most of their effort peering out beyond the perimeter and not in. A hero can get within the perimeter with a successful DC 23 Stealth check and make it to the far edge of the tent. Kelkin is sleeping inside with the Dianoem in his hand. If a character gets to the tent's entrance, he must make a Stealth vs. Nashara's Perception +9 check (sleeping) to avoid awaking her. If Kelkin is surprised, he will shoot a magic missile through the tent to alert the guard. He will then attempt to escape outside and fight there.

- ◆ Kelkin Thravanost (K)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C)
- ◆ 4 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 1 Lion-Headed Sphinx (Nashara) (N)
- ◆ Dianoem Mark IV (hazard) (D)

### Kelkin Thravanost (K)

Level 17 Elite Artillery • XP 3,200

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +13; **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision

**HP** 244; **Bloodied** 122

**AC** 27; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 29

**Resist** 5 fire (from robes)

**Saving Throws** +2, +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

**Action Points** 1

☉ **Magic Missile** (std; at-will) ◆ Arcane, Force, Implement

Ranged 20; +24 vs. Reflex; 2d4+8 force damage (crit 16 + 2d6).

✓ **Fiery Bolt** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Fire, Implement

Ranged 10; +24 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 fire damage (crit 22 + 2d6), and adjacent creatures to the target take 1d6+4 fire damage (crit 10 + 2d6).

✦ **Fire Burst** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Fire, Implement

Area Burst 3 within 20; +22 vs. Reflex; 3d6+8 fire damage (crit 26 + 2d6). Miss: Half damage.

▶ **Stand Firm** (imm int, when subjected to a forced move)

Effects that force Kelkin to move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks Kelkin prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

▶ **Warmage Strike** (minor; enc)

Kelkin spends a healing surge. For the rest of the encounter, he gains a +5 damage bonus on his magic missile attack.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Supernal

**Skills** Arcana +19, Dungeoneering +15, History +19, Religion +19

**Str** 11 (+8) **Dex** 13 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+10)

**Con** 14 (+10) **Int** 23 (+14) **Cha** 8 (+7)

**Equipment** robes of fire resistance +2, skullcap of intellect +1, wand of fiery bolt +2

**Description** A magnificent silver mantle hangs over this middle-aged dwarf's shoulders, and a gleaming silver skullcap rests on his head. His black beard is woven with coins bearing the faces of seven generations of kings. His silver-trimmed black cloak looks stiff, like it is made of stone.

### Nashara (N)

Level 12 Elite Skirmisher • XP 1,400

Large immortal magical beast (sphinx)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

**HP** 242; **Bloodied** 121

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 10

**Action Points** 1

☉ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☉ **Pounce** (std; at-will)

Nashara moves up to 6 squares and makes a claw attack. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

✓ **Diving Overrun** (std, only while flying; at-will)

Nashara makes a charge attack, moving at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of the target; +14 vs. AC; 4d8+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone. Nashara lands in an unoccupied space adjacent to the target.

✓ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

Nashara flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when Nashara moves away.

☞ **Frightful Roar** (minor; rchg 3) ◆ Fear

Close Burst 10; +13 vs. Will; the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Supernal

**Skills** Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +13

**Str** 19 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 15 (+8)



**Steppengard Commander (C)**

**Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✗ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✗ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↩ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↩ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor

**Steppengard Infantry (I)**

**Level 7 Soldier • XP 300**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22,

**Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard infantry may shift into the vacated space.

✗ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

▶ **Hold the Line**

The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

**Dianoem - Mk IV (D)**

**Level 10 Skill Challenge • XP 500**

Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

*The hero uses experience and insight to determine the correct shutoff sequence.*

**Time** Each check is a minor action. A character can make only one check in a combat round. Up to two characters may attempt a sequence each round.

**Primary Skills** Arcana, Insight, Thievery

**Partial Victory** Each success identifies one step of a correct button sequence. A total of four button presses in the correct sequence turns off the device.

**Victory** The correct sequence of button presses is made and the Dianoem is deactivated. The final sequence is 2241.

**Defeat** Each character in a close burst 15 is subject to a +25 vs. Will attack. If the attack hits, the target is dominated for a number of 8-hour periods equal to the difference between the attacking roll result and the target's Will defense. For example, a roll of 42 against a 21 Will beats the defense by 21. The target will be dominated for 21 8-hour periods (equivalent to 7 days).

**Arcana DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero's understanding of rituals and formulae helps to decipher the sequence from the pattern of lights displayed. Each success turns one more light from yellow to green.

**Insight DC 21** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero makes an intuitive leap and presses the next button. The light changes from yellow to green.

**Thievery DC 18** (1 success, no maximum, fail/—)

The hero approaches the problem like it is a combination lock and uses his training to correctly select the next button in the sequence.

**TACTICS**

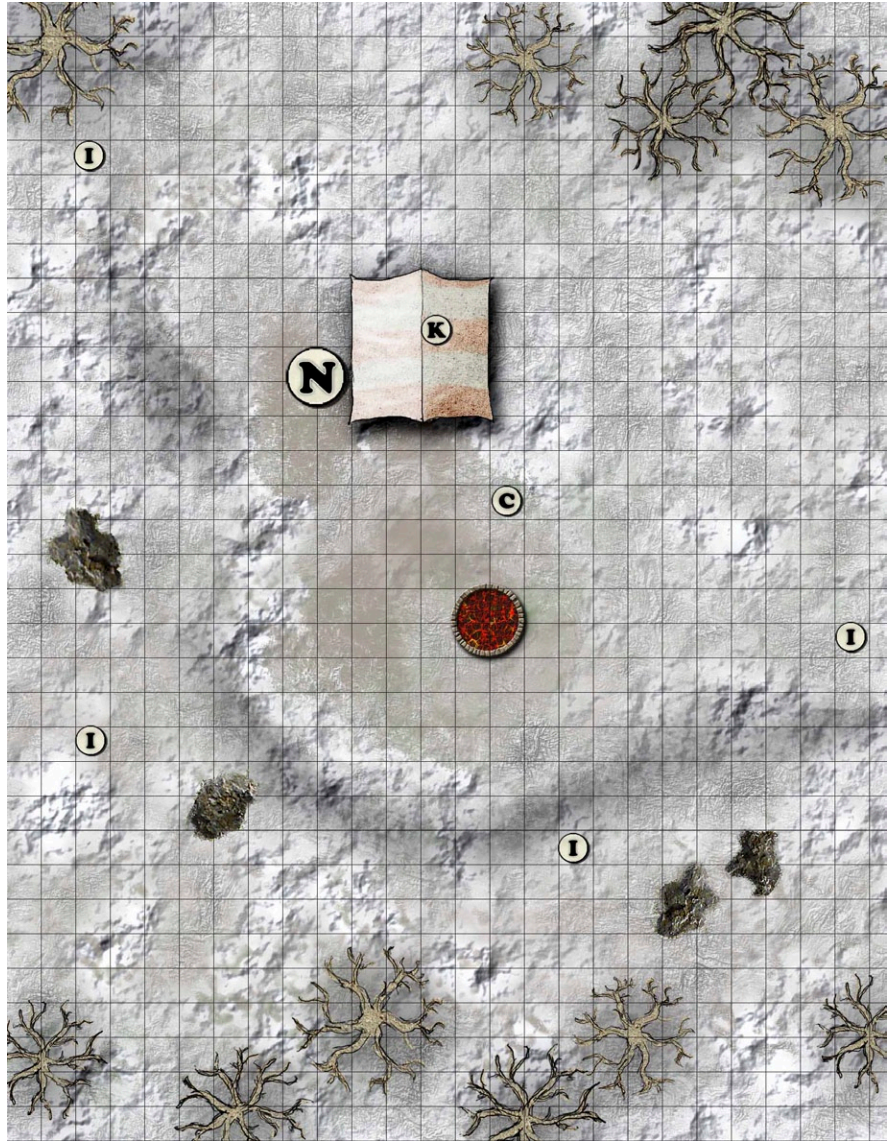
The commander and infantry are half-hearted in their defense and will rout when bloodied. Kelkin is overconfident and will resort to magic missile almost exclusively, using fireburst only when bloodied. Nashara will take wing and strike at anyone engaging Kelkin in melee combat. The Dianoem is held by Kelkin initially, but it can be wrested from him with a successful grab. If it is deactivated during the fight, Nashara will become an ally for the heroes and start attacking Kelkin.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Boulders:** The boulders provide cover.

**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

**Fire Pit:** Anyone stepping into the fire takes 2d6 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).





## HOLD THE LINE, FIRST WAVE

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)



PAGE 37

### SETUP

- ◆ 12 Steppengard Green Infantry (I)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Commander (C)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Prelate (P)
- ◆ 2 Ram-Headed Sphinx (R)
- ◆ Brakken the Blitzer (B)

#### Steppengard Green Infantry (I)

Level 7 Minion • XP 75

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+12 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✓ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +12 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard green infantry may shift into the vacated space.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Commander (C)

Level 11 Soldier (Leader) • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +5

**Leadership Performance** aura 5; All allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls. They also receive a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 110; **Bloodied** 55

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

✓ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage, and an ally adjacent to the Steppengard commander or the Steppengard commander's target shifts 1 square.

✓ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+18 vs. AC; 2d10+4 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of the Steppengard commander and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; the Steppengard commander or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↩ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst regain 11 hp.

↩ **Scatter Shout** (minor; daily) ◆ Martial

Close Burst 5; the Steppengard commander and his allies within the burst may shift up to 2 squares as an immediate interrupt.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +10, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +11

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 14 (+7) **Wis** 11 (+5)

**Con** 14 (+7) **Int** 13 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, plate armor

#### Steppengard Prelate (P)

Level 10 Controller • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

**HP** 105; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+2 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Guiding Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant

Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 radiant damage (crit 13 + 2d6 radiant), and one ally within sight of the Steppengard prelate gains a +2 power bonus on its next attack against the target.

✓ **Awe and Dread** (std; enc) ◆ Divine, Fear, Weapon

+14 vs. Will; 1d10+2 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

✓ **Spiritual Weapon** (std; daily; sustain minor) ◆ Divine, Healing

Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. A weapon appears in the target's square and attacks. The conjuration grants combat advantage to allies attacking the target. The weapon can be moved up to 10 squares as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

▶ **Stand Firm** (imm int, when the Steppengard prelate is pushed or slid)

The Steppengard prelate's move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks the Steppengard prelate prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Heal +14, Religion +10

**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 7 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, light shield, plate armor

**Ram-Headed Sphinx (S)**

Level 9 Skirmisher • XP 400

Large immortal magical beast

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision  
**HP** 97; **Bloodied** 48

**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 24

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 10

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☑ **Pounce** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx moves up to 6 squares and makes a claw attack. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

✓ **Claw Swipe** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and an enemy adjacent to the target and the ram-headed sphinx receives 5 damage.

✓ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when the ram-headed sphinx moves away.

✓ **Goring Charge** (std; at-will)

The ram-headed sphinx makes a charge attack, moving at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of the target; +12 vs. AC; 3d10+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

✓ **Rake** (std; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is grabbed and takes ongoing 10 damage (until escape).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Supernal

**Str** 19 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 16 (+7)

**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 16 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+6)

**Brakken the Blitzer (B)**

Level 12 Soldier • XP 700

Medium natural humanoid (minotaur)

**Initiative** +6; **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision  
**HP** 121; **Bloodied** 60

**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 26

**Speed** 7

☑ **Greatsword** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d10+10 damage, and the target is marked through Brakken's next turn.

✓ **Goring Charge** (std; at-will)

Brakken moves at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of a target and attacks; +15 vs. AC; 1d8+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

▶ **Bloodied Rage** (while bloodied)

Brakken gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 5 damage per attack.

▶ **Ferocity** (imm reac, when reduced to 0 hp)

Brakken makes a melee basic attack before falling unconscious.

▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

Brakken takes a -2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +14, Intimidate +12

**Str** 20 (+11) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+8)

**Con** 17 (+9) **Int** 9 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+7)

**Equipment** greatsword, heavy shield, scale armor

**TACTICS**

Brakken arrives first, engaging the closest defender with *goring charge*. The ram-headed sphinxes leap into the air and fly behind the heroes' lines, to attack strikers and controllers. The prelate stays behind with 3 green infantry and directs his attacks towards anyone the rest of the infantry attack.

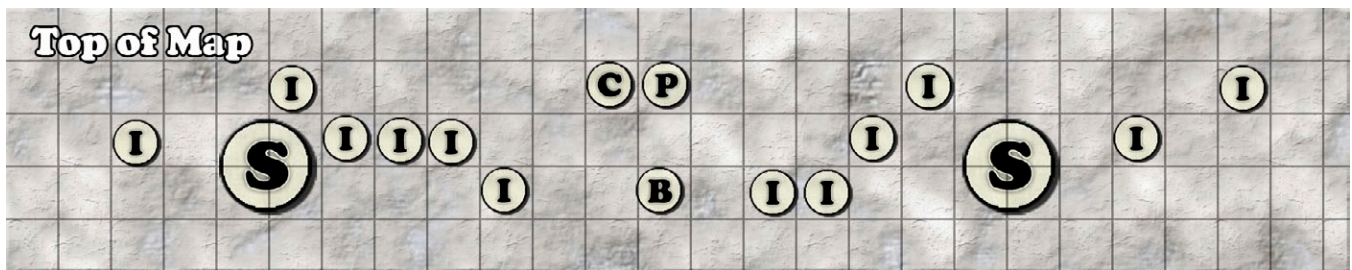
The Steppengard commander has decent intelligence about the heroes' powers, so if one of the heroes is renowned for using area attack spells, once combat begins the commander always readies an action so he can use *scatter shout* to protect his soldiers (granting them an immediate shift action), getting them out of formation before the attack hits.

The first wave does not retreat, though if things look bad a few soldiers may throw down their arms and surrender.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Fraises:** A fraise makes 1 attack against any creature passing through it, or 2 attacks against large creatures (+15 vs AC, 2d6+5 damage). A DC 30 Athletics check with a running start (at least 2 squares of movement) allows a character to jump over the fraise.

**Damaging Terrain:** Difficult to cross and causes 1d6 of damage when entered and the target is slowed until the end of the target's next turn.





# HOLD THE LINE, SECOND WAVE

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

## SETUP

- ◆ 2 Troll Mercenaries (T)
- ◆ 4 Steppengard Knights (K)
- ◆ 4 Heavy Warhorses (W)

### Troll Mercenaries (Gut and Beulah) (T)

Level 11 Brute • XP 600

Large natural humanoid (troll)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +12

**HP** 138; **Bloodied** 69; see also *troll healing*

**Regeneration** 10 (acid or fire damage stops regeneration through the troll's next turn)

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23

**Resist** 10 acid, 10 fire

**Speed** 8

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +14 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage; see also bloody claw.

✓ **Rending Strike** (std; rchg ☑☑)

The troll makes 2 claw attacks against a single target. If both hit, the target takes another 2d6+5 damage.

▶ **Blood Rage**

The troll gains a +1 attack bonus and a +2 damage bonus against bloodied enemies.

▶ **Bloody Claw** (free; when the troll bloodies an enemy; at-will)

The troll makes a claw attack

▶ **Troll Healing** ◆ Healing

If the troll is defeated by an attack that does not stop its regeneration, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hp.

**Alignment** Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Athletics +15, Endurance +14

**Str** 20 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 14 (+7)

**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 6 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+5)

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Fraises:** A fraise makes 1 attack against any creature passing through it, or 2 attacks against large creatures (+15 vs AC, 2d6+5 damage). A DC 30 Athletics check with a running start (at

### Steppengard Knight (K)

Level 10 Soldier • XP 500

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +7

**HP** 104; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Heavy flail** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.

☑ **Heavy Crossbow** (std; at-will; load minor) ◆

Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +17 vs. AC; 1d10+1 damage.

✓ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and another enemy adjacent to the Steppengard knight takes 4 damage.

✓ **Lance** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d8+4 damage (crit 2d8+20).

✓ **Precision Flail** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage

✓ **Shield Smash** (imm reac, on a successful hit against the target; rchg ☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+15 vs. Fortitude; The target is dazed until the end of the Steppengard knight's next turn

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +12, Bluff +10, Intimidate +10

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Equipment** heavy crossbow, heavy flail, lance, plate armor

least 2 squares of movement) allows a character to jump over the fraise.

**Damaging Terrain:** Difficult terrain; causes 1d6 of damage when entered and the target is slowed until the end of the target's next turn.

### Heavy Warhorse (W)

Level 5 Brute • XP 200

Large natural beast (mount)

**Initiative** +8; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision, +13 smell

**HP** 79; **Bloodied** 39

**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

**Speed** 8

☑ **Kick** (std; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage

✓ **Trample** (std; at-will)

The heavy warhorse moves up to its speed through an enemy's space and ends in an unoccupied one. The heavy warhorse makes a trample attack; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6+6 damage, and the target is knocked prone. This provokes an opportunity attack.

▶ **Charger** (while mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ◆ Mount

The heavy warhorse grants its rider a +6 bonus to damage dealt during a charge.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** —

**Str** 22 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+4)

**Con** 19 (+6) **Int** 2 (–2) **Cha** 10 (+2)

## TACTICS

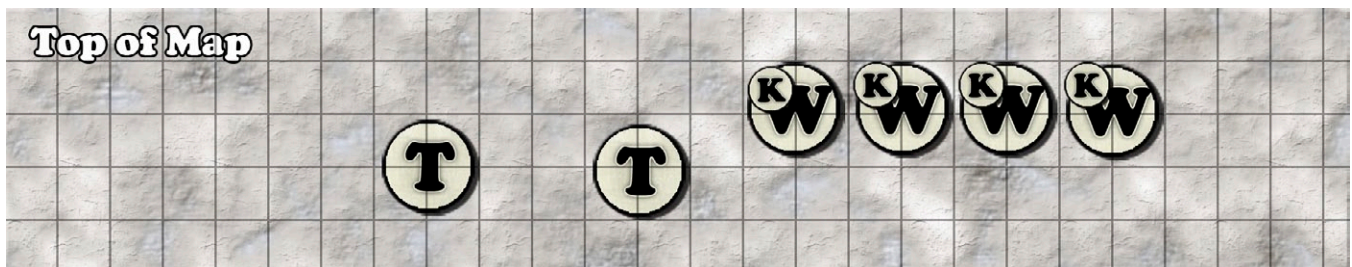
The trolls create a defensive line while the knights try to flank the heroes.

At the beginning of each combat round, roll 2d6. On a 9+ result, a fear-inducing roar is heard as another sphinx flies by overhead. This event happens only once.

✓ **Frightful Roar** ◆ Fear

+21 vs. Will; the target is stunned through the target's next turn. If the roll defeats the defense by 5 or more, the target is helpless (save ends).

*Aftereffect:* The target takes a –2 penalty to attack and skill rolls (save ends).



## WAR-MAGE ARTILLERY

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

- ◆ 4 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 1 Steppengard Prelate (P)
- ◆ Kelkin Thravanost (T)
- ◆ 1 Lion-Headed Sphinx (Nashara) (N)

#### Steppengard Infantry (I)

Level 7 Soldier • XP 300

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22,

**Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

#### ☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

#### ☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

#### ☉ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor

#### ✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard infantry may shift into the vacated space.

#### ✗ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

#### ▶ **Hold the Line**

The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor

#### Steppengard Prelate (P)

Level 10 Controller • XP 500

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

**HP** 105; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

#### ☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+2 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

#### ☉ **Guiding Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant

Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 radiant damage (crit 13 + 2d6 radiant), and one ally within sight of the Steppengard prelate gains a +2 power bonus on its next attack against the target.

#### ✗ **Awe and Dread** (std; enc) ◆ Divine, Fear, Weapon

+14 vs. Will; 1d10+2 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

#### ☞ **Spiritual Weapon** (std; daily; sustain minor) ◆ Divine, Healing

Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. A weapon appears in the target's square and attacks. The conjuration grants combat advantage to allies attacking the target. The weapon can be moved up to 10 squares as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

#### ▶ **Stand Firm** (imm int, when the Steppengard prelate is pushed or slid)

The Steppengard prelate's move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks the Steppengard prelate prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Heal +14, Religion +10

**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 7 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, light shield, plate armor

#### Kelkin Thravanost (K)

Level 17 Elite Artillery • XP 3,200

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +13; **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision

**HP** 244; **Bloodied** 122

**AC** 27; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 29

**Resist** 5 fire (from robes)

**Saving Throws** +2, +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

**Action Points** 1

#### ☉ **Magic Missile** (std; at-will) ◆ Arcane, Force, Implement

Ranged 20; +24 vs. Reflex; 2d4+8 force damage (crit 16 + 2d6).

#### ☞ **Fiery Bolt** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Fire, Implement

Ranged 10; +24 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 fire damage (crit 22 + 2d6), and adjacent creatures to the target take 1d6+4 fire damage (crit 10 + 2d6).

#### ✗ **Fire Burst** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Fire, Implement

Area Burst 3 within 20; +22 vs. Reflex; 3d6+8 fire damage (crit 26 + 2d6). Miss: Half damage.

#### ▶ **Stand Firm** (imm int, when subjected to a forced move)

Effects that force Kelkin to move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks Kelkin prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

#### ▶ **Warmage Strike** (minor; enc)

Kelkin spends a healing surge. For the rest of the encounter, he gains a +5 damage bonus on his magic missile attack.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Supernal

**Skills** Arcana +19, Dungeoneering +15, History +19, Religion +19

**Str** 11 (+8) **Dex** 13 (+9) **Wis** 14 (+10)

**Con** 14 (+10) **Int** 23 (+14) **Cha** 8 (+7)

**Equipment** robes of fire resistance +2, skullcap of intellect +1, wand of fiery bolt +2

**Description** A magnificent silver mantle hangs over this middle-aged dwarf's shoulders, a gleaming silver skullcap on his head. His black beard is woven with coins bearing the faces of seven generations of kings. His silver-trimmed black cloak looks stiff, like it is made of stone.



**Nashara (N)**

**Level 12 Elite Skirmisher • XP 1,400**

Large immortal magical beast (sphinx)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

**HP** 242; **Bloodied** 121

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 27

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6, fly 8 (clumsy), overland flight 10

**Action Points** 1

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☑ **Pounce** (std; at-will)

Nashara moves up to 6 squares and makes a claw attack. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

✓ **Diving Overrun** (std, only while flying; at-will)

Nashara makes a charge attack, moving at least 2 squares directly towards the nearest square of the target; +14 vs. AC; 4d8+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone. Nashara lands in an unoccupied space adjacent to the target.

✓ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

Nashara flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when Nashara moves away.

↩ **Frightful Roar** (minor; rchg 10) ◆ Fear

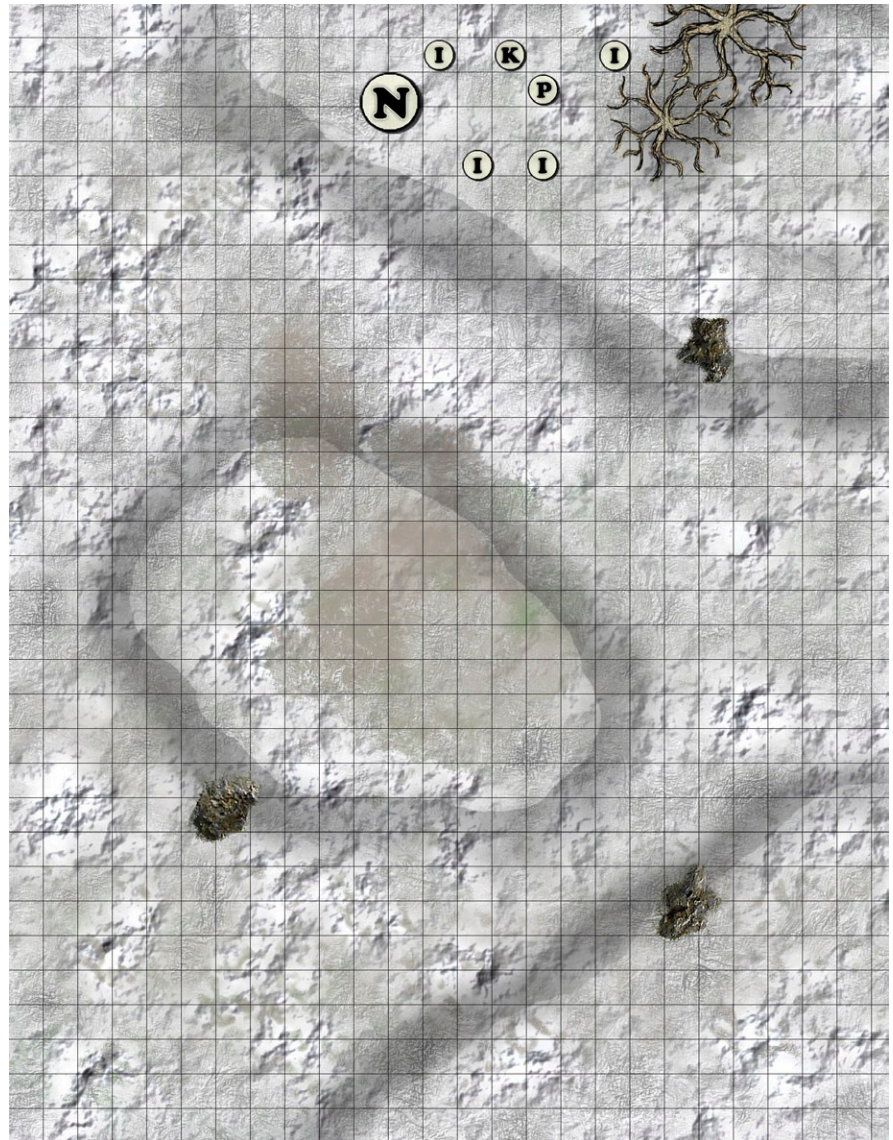
Close Burst 10; +13 vs. Will; the target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Supernal

**Skills** Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +13

**Str** 19 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 15 (+8)



**TACTICS**

Kelkin and Nashara fight from afar while the infantry rush to engage the enemy. The prelate identifies any strikers and goes after them first. Nashara will make a flyby attack against bloodied foes.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Fraises:** A fraise makes 1 attack against any creature passing through it, or 2 attacks against large creatures (+15 vs AC, 2d6+5 damage). A DC 30 Athletics check with a running start (at least 2 squares of movement) allows a character to jump over the fraise.

**Damaging Terrain:** Difficult to cross and causes 1d6 of damage when entered and the target is slowed until the end of the target's next turn.

## GET MALKAN!

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

The tunnel is old, part of a decades-old defense, and is wide enough for two to walk abreast. At one point in the tunnel, the miners set explosive charges that will collapse the floor above. A stairstep contraption off to one side is intended to be moved into place as soon as the dust settles. About seventy feet away, another set of charges will be blown to collapse the staircase leading into the bunker from above and barring Malkan from retreat. The dwarves remind you to come back down through the hole once Malkan is killed so the tunnel can be collapsed behind them as they escape.

Two dwarves with short ladders wait just outside the breach point, and when the heroes give the signal, they shout the command word to detonate the charges. A deafening crack shakes the tunnel, and blinding brown dust fills the air. The dwarves then rush in and place the ladders against the walls, holding them steady so the heroes can get in in a hurry. Moving up the ladders into the bunker takes just 2 squares feet of movement.

- ◆ Konigmarshal Malkan (M)
- ◆ Madness (Nina) (N)
- ◆ 2 Steppengard Prelates (P)
- ◆ variable Steppengard Knights (K)

#### Konigmarshal Malkan (M)

Level 12 Elite Soldier (Leader) • XP 1,400

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +8; **Senses** Perception +7

**Improved Initiative** aura 10; all allies within the aura gain a +3 initiative bonus.

**Leadership Performance** aura 10; all allies within the aura receive a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls and a +1 bonus against fear and charm effects.

**HP** 228; **Bloodied** 114

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 28

**Resist** 5 from all ranged attacks (from *light shield of deflection*)

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 5

**Action Points** 1

☑ **Golden Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage (crit 13 + 1d10). Add +1 damage when used 2H

☑ **Repeating Crossbow of Frost** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon, 2H, Load Free

Ranged 10/20; +21 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage (crit 13 + 2d6 cold).

✓ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of Malkan and capable of hearing, makes an immediate saving throw.

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; enc) ◆ Martial

Ranged 10; Malkan or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

↩ **Battle Cry** (free; enc) ◆ Charm, Martial

Close Burst 10; Malkan shouts an iconic battle cry (such as "What king do you serve?" to which his men reply in unison "Steppengard"). Each ally gets a free standard and move action to be taken immediately.

↩ **Fortifying Word** (minor; daily) ◆ Healing, Martial

Close Burst 5; Malkan and his allies within the burst regain 16 hp.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Insight +12, Intimidate +17, Streetwise +17

**Str** 15 (+8) **Dex** 15 (+8) **Wis** 12 (+7)

**Con** 10 (+6) **Int** 14 (+8) **Cha** 22 (+12)

**Equipment** *chainmail armor* +2, *golden flail* +1, *light shield of deflection*, *repeating crossbow of frost*+2

#### Madness (N)

Level 12 Solo Soldier • XP 3,500

Huge aberrant beast (trillith, insubstantial)

**Initiative** +9; **Senses** Perception +4; **darkvision**

**Aura of Confusion (Psychic)** aura 3; a creature starting its turn in the aura must succeed a DC 20 Wisdom check or take 5 psychic damage and is dazed until the start of its next turn.

**HP** 620; **Bloodied** 310

**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26

**Immune** Psychic; **Resist** Insubstantial;

**Vulnerable** Song of Forms (becomes substantial)

**Saving Throws** +5

**Speed** 6, Fly 6 (perfect)

**Action Points** 2

☑ **Serpentine Strike** (std; at-will)

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+5 poison damage.

☑ **Tail Whip** (std; at-will)

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

✓ **Serpent Lash** (std; at-will)

Only when substantial; Madness makes 2 *serpentine strike* attacks.

✓ **Mindhaunt** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Psychic

Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will, 2d6+5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Madness' next turn (save ends). *Aftereffect*: The target is infected with mindhaunt affliction.

↩ **Death Boon** (imm reac; when Indomitability is reduced to 0 hp or less)

Close Burst 10 (ignore concealment and cover); targets all creatures; +17 vs. Will; 1d10 psychic damage, and Madness' boon is given to the target until it is used or until the end of the next extended rest.

▶ **Amorphous Form** (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Madness can shift size between Huge and Large. She cannot be flanked.

▶ **Body Shift** (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Cannot be used if affected by the Song of Forms. Madness becomes insubstantial and assumes her serpentine appearance.

▶ **Embody** (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Creates a substantial body out of nearby debris or furniture equal to her size. The form resembles a giant serpent with multiple heads surrounding one larger one. If insubstantial and affected by the Fey Song of Forms, she spontaneously embodies.

► **Engulf** (move; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Madness occupies a target's square. Moving into a target's square provokes an opportunity attack. Madness may make a Serpentine Strike against the target as a free action.

► **Maddening Spirit** (imm int, when targeted by Charm, Divination or Scrying spells; at-will) ◆ Psychic

The caster is struck with a psychic backlash; +17 vs. Will, and the caster is dazed (save ends).

► **Psychic Slip** (minor; at-will) ◆ Psychic

Madness gains an extra save against charm and fear effects each round.

► **Rejuvenation** (imm reac, upon the death of Madness) ◆ Healing

Cannot be used if affected by the Song of Forms. If Madness is destroyed by anything other than psychic damage, she does not die, but instead reforms 1d6 days later.

► **Serpentine Shift** (move; rchg ☞☞)

Only when substantial; Madness may shift up to 5 squares.

► **Suggestion** (std; at-will) ◆ Psychic

Only against those infected with mindhaunt affliction; +17 vs. Will, and the target is dominated (save ends). At the end of the domination, the target sees Madness smile a wide grin, and then her body dissolves into tiny illusory serpents that writhe on the ground and flee, though her smile remains in place for a round.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** telepathy 20

**Skills** Arcana +13, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +13

**Str** 19 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 6 (+4)

**Con** 20 (+11) **Int** 15 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+8)

**Description** The body of the grinning gnome woman slowly fades away as a massive coiling form materializes where she once stood. Her smile is the last part of her to vanish, just as the monstrous form snaps its multiple viper jaws. Before you slithers a roiling swarm of serpents, each bigger around than a man's torso. Venom glistens on their fangs, and light reflects squamously across their scales, like the interior of the swarm is impossibly deep. You look upon it, and you know its name is Madness.

**Steppengard Prelate (P)**

**Level 10 Controller • XP 500**

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

**HP** 105; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24

**Saving Throws** +5 against poison

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 1d10+2 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Guiding Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant

Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 radiant damage (crit 13 + 2d6 radiant), and one ally within sight of the Steppengard prelate gains a +2 power bonus on its next attack against the target.

✓ **Awe and Dread** (std; enc) ◆ Divine, Fear, Weapon

+14 vs. Will; 1d10+2 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

✓ **Spiritual Weapon** (std; daily; sustain minor) ◆ Divine, Healing

Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. A weapon appears in the target's square and attacks. The conjuration grants combat advantage to allies attacking the target. The weapon can be moved up to 10 squares as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

► **Stand Firm** (imm int, when the Steppengard prelate is pushed or slid)

The Steppengard prelate's move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks the Steppengard prelate prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Heal +14, Religion +10

**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)

**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 7 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, light shield, plate armor

**Steppengard Knight (K)**

**Level 10 Soldier • XP 500**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +7

**HP** 104; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☞ **Heavy Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.

☞ **Heavy Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon, 2H, Load Minor

Ranged 20/40; +17 vs. AC; 1d10+1 damage.

✓ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and another enemy adjacent to the Steppengard knight takes 4 damage.

✓ **Lance** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d8+4 damage (crit 2d8+20).

✓ **Precision Flail** (std; rchg ☞☞☞) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage

✓ **Shield Smash** (imm reac, on a successful hit against the target; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+15 vs. Fortitude; The target is dazed until the end of the Steppengard knight's next turn.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +12, Bluff +10, Intimidate +10

**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Equipment** heavy crossbow, heavy flail, lance, plate armor



### TACTICS

When the ambush is sprung, Konigsmarshal Malkan and Madness (still masquerading as Nina Glibglammer) are dazed; the prelates are knocked prone. The prelates stand as soon as they can and do their best to keep the heroes from reaching Malkan. The Konigsmarshal responds quickly, taking cover behind the nearest furniture, crouching, and attacking intruders with his repeating crossbow.

Madness, a little shaken but not actually dazed (since right now she is insubstantial), simply moves to hide and take cover, watching from behind a bed or couch. If she is attacked, she giggles, shakes her head in disapproval, and begins using her *mindhaunt* attack. She does not take on a substantial form, and if the heroes think to sing the Song of Forms she flees in a panic, terrifying the guards in the tent above as her monstrous serpentine form squeezes its way out of the bunker. She is willing to let Malkan be captured, and will not put herself in harm's way for his sake.

After a few rounds of combat she grows bored and simply glides into the wall insubstantially, preferring to leave rather than reveal her true form.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

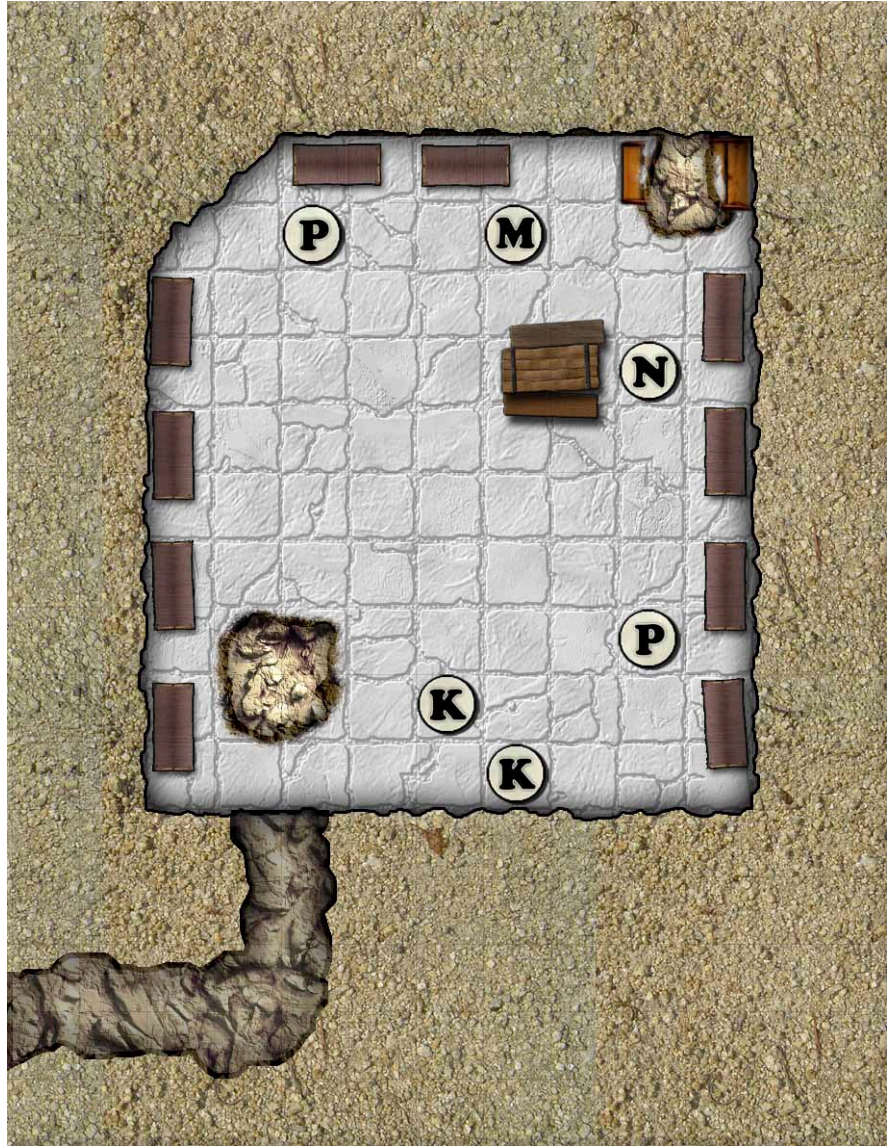
**Breach Tunnel:** The tunnel runs east-west under the bunker, with two side passages that lead to the staircase and the breachpoint. The tunnel under the staircase will be completely filled with debris when the charges go off. The breach tunnel counts as difficult terrain.

**Bunker Stairs:** The stairs leading up out of the bunker will be useless, so getting out will require a DC 30 Athletics check.

**Dust:** The dust from the explosion is lightly obscuring for the first four combat rounds, then dissipates.

**Debris:** A 1 square ring around the blast hole counts as difficult terrain.

**Reinforcements:** At the start of the 4th round and each one thereafter, on a roll of 2-6 on a 1d6, a Steppengard knight drops into the room. This continues until the end of the encounter.



## TRAGEDY

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

The tragedies are undead monsters created by Inquisitor Torrax in a dark ritual by sacrificing the many people whom Steppengard had arrested on suspicion of treason. One tragedy blocks the heroes' retreat out of the tunnel, and it tries to drive them into the zombie-filled latrine. A second and third tragedy lurk on the far side of the latrine, waiting until after the anticipated clerical undead turning before they attack.

- ◆ 3 Tragedies (T)
- ◆ 8 Frozen Zombie Hordes (Z) (less any destroyed previously)

### Tragedy (T)

Level 11 Controller • XP 600

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

**Initiative** +8; **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision  
**HP** 112; **Bloodied** 56

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24

**Resist** insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6

☑ **Suffocating Slam** (std; at-will) ◆ Necrotic  
+16 vs. AC; 2d6+5 necrotic damage.

✓ **Surge Drain** (std; at-will) ◆ Necrotic  
+15 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+5 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge and is dazed until the end of the tragedy's next turn.

✓ **Remorseful Fear** (std; rchg ☹☹☹) ◆ Fear  
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+5 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the tragedy's next turn.

↩ **Enfeebling Wail** (std; rchg ☹☹) ◆ Psychic, Sleep  
Close Burst 3; +15 vs. Will; 3d6+5 psychic damage, and the target falls unconscious (save ends).

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** History +12, Intimidate +12, Stealth +13

**Str** 13 (+6) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 17 (+8)

**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 14 (+7) **Cha** 15 (+7)

**Description** A shadowy insubstantial form, mostly humanoid in form with swirling images of arms and legs and heads sliding around its surfaces moves towards you. A sound like many people moaning in sorrow and pain emanates from it. (If Balan is dead) For a moment, you spot Balan's face swirling in the mass.

### Frozen Zombie Horde

Level 12 Hazard • XP 350

Hazard

*The smacking of hungry mouths and the unholy moans of the undead assault your ears as you see a throng of zombies frozen in place from the waist down.*

#### ► Perception

- ◆ No check is needed

#### ► Trigger

A frozen zombie horde attacks any creature that enters its square or a square adjacent to it.

#### ► Attack

Free Action; Melee 1

**Targets:** A creature that starts its turn or enters a square adjacent to or within the frozen zombies.

**Attack:** +15 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d8+4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

#### ► Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can attack the zombies. Each horde has AC 20, Fortitude 21, Reflex 15, and 80 hp. For every 20 points of damage it takes, one of the horde's corners (4 squares) becomes clear terrain.

#### ► Special

- ◆ Moving through a frozen zombie horde is difficult terrain.
- ◆ A creature that begins its turn prone adjacent to or in the same square as a frozen zombie horde takes 5 and is slowed.

### TACTICS

One tragedy blocks the heroes' retreat out of the tunnel, and it tries to drive them into the zombie-filled latrine. A second and third tragedy lurk on the far side of the latrine, waiting until after the anticipated clerical turning before they attack.





## TORRAX AND SERRIMUS

Encounter Level 13 or 9 (3,675 or 2,075 XP)

### SETUP

- ◆ Jutras (J) (unless killed previously)
- ◆ Inquisitor Torrax (T)
- ◆ Ambassabor Serrimus (S)
- ◆ 3 Steppengard Knights (K)

#### Jutras (J)

**Level 13 Elite Controller • XP 1,600**

Medium natural humanoid (undead, mohrg)

**Initiative** +11; **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

**HP** 262; **Bloodied** 131

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 23

**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

**Vulnerable** 5 radiant, illusions of chickens

**Speed** 8, Climb 8

**Action Points** 1

#### ☞ Claws (std; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage, and the target is marked. Jutras can maintain up to 2 marked targets at one time.

#### ☞ Slam (std; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage.

#### ☞ Hunger Rush (std; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 2d8+6 damage, and the target is marked. Jutras can maintain up to 2 marked targets at one time.

#### ☞ Tongue Lash (minor; at-will)

Only usable on a marked target; +17 vs. Fortitude; 1d6+2 necrotic damage.

#### ☞ Immobilizing Bite (std; rchg ☞☞)

+18 vs. AC; 4d8+6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

#### ☞ Necrotic Spit (std; enc) ◆ Necrotic

Ranged 10; +17 vs. Fortitude; 1d10+6 damage, and target takes a –2 penalty to all defenses through Jutras' next turn.

#### ☞ Blood Burst (when reduced to 0 hp) ◆ Necrotic

Close Burst 1; all creatures in the burst take 2d6 + 10 necrotic damage.

#### ▶ Zombie Spawn

Creatures killed by Jutras rise after 1d4 days as zombies under Jutras's control. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

**Alignment** Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +16

**Str** 18 (+10) **Dex** 21 (+11) **Wis** 14 (+8)

**Con** 19 (+10) **Int** 15 (+8) **Cha** 7 (+4)

#### Inquisitor Torrax (T)

**Level 12 Elite Controller • XP 1,400**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

**Initiative** +3; **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision

**HP** 242; **Bloodied** 121

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 29

**Resist** 5 Fire

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6

**Action Points** 1

#### ☞ Inquisitor's Claw (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage (crit 2d6+20).

#### ☞ Searing Light (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant

+18 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage (crit 2d6+18 + 1d6 fire), and each ally adjacent to the target heals 60 hp.

#### ☞ Animate Dead (minor; 2/enc) ◆ Necrotic

Ranged 10; affects a dead creature of Torrax's level + 2 or less; the target stands as a free action with one-half its bloodied value in hp.

#### ☞ Rebuke Lesser Arcane Magic (std; 2/enc)

Ranged 10, targets a conjuration or zone made by an arcane power; +16 vs. Will of originating caster; the conjuration or zone is destroyed, including any of its effects, even those normally lasting until a target saves.

#### ☞ Hold Person (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Divine

Ranged 20; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

#### ☞ Oath-Mark (minor; enc [special])

Close Burst 10; targets one enemy Torrax can see. *Effect:* If the oath-marked target is the only enemy adjacent to Torrax, Torrax makes two attack rolls and takes either result. The effect lasts until the target drops to 0 hp or the encounter ends. The power is then regained. Effects on Torrax that allow rerolling an attack roll allow both attack rolls to be rerolled.

#### ☞ Searing Sanction (imm reac, when an enemy scores a critical hit against Torrax; daily) ◆ Divine, Radiant

Close Burst 10; *Effect:* Torrax's oath-marked target takes radiant damage equal to the critical hit's damage.

#### ☞ Flame Strike (std; daily) ◆ Divine, Fire, Implement

Area Burst 2 within 10; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d10+5 fire damage (crit 25 + 1d6 fire) and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

#### ☞ Wall of Fire (std, sustain minor; daily) ◆ Conjunction, Divine, Fire, Implement

Wall 8 within 10 squares. *Effect:* Conjures a wall of contiguous squares filled with divine fire. It can be up to 8 squares long and 4 squares high. The wall last until the end of your next turn. Any creature starting its turn in the wall or moving through the wall takes 3d6+1 fire damage (crit 19 + 1d6 fire). Any creature starting its turn adjacent to the wall takes 1d6+1 fire damage (crit 7 + 1d6 fire). Entering a wall square costs 3 squares of movement. The wall blocks line of sight. *Sustain Minor:* The wall persists.

#### ☞ Leska's Expurgation (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Divine, Fire, Implement

Area Burst 1 within 10; +17 vs. Reflex; 1d6+5 fire damage (crit 11 + 1d6 fire) and ongoing 10 fire damage.

#### ▶ Dogged Pursuit

If Torrax's oath-marked target moves away willingly from Torrax, Torrax gains +3 to damage rolls against that target until the end of Torrax's next turn.

#### ▶ Reactive Counterspell (imm reac. optional, when struck by an arcane spell)

The attacker rerolls his attack using the new roll as his attack roll. If the new attack fails, the spell fails. Torrax loses his standard action through his next turn.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

**Skills** Arcana +11, Heal +15, Intimidate +11, Religion +11

**Str** 14 (+8) **Dex** 9 (+5) **Wis** 18 (+10)

**Con** 17 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+6)

**Equipment** *hide armor* +2, *Inquisitor's claw* +2



**Ambassador Serrimus (S)**

**Level 2 Artillery • XP 125**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +0; **Senses** Perception +2

**HP** 27; **Bloodied** 13

**AC** 14; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15

**Speed** 6

☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 1d4-1 damage. Thrown 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.

☑ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 1d6-1 damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Arcana +6, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +7, History +6, Insight +7

**Str** 8 (+0)    **Dex** 10 (+1)    **Wis** 12 (+2)

**Con** 9 (+0)    **Int** 11 (+1)    **Cha** 13 (+2)

**Equipment** dagger, noble's outfit, scroll of Planar Hideout, short sword

**Steppengard Knight (K)**

**Level 10 Soldier • XP 500**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +7

**HP** 104; **Bloodied** 52

**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24

**Speed** 5

☑ **Heavy Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.

☑ **Heavy Crossbow** (std; at-will; load minor) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +17 vs. AC; 1d10+1 damage.

☑ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and another enemy adjacent to the Steppengard knight takes 4 damage.

☑ **Lance** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d8+4 damage (crit 2d8+20).

☑ **Precision Flail** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage

☑ **Shield Smash** (imm reac, on a successful hit against the target; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon

+15 vs. Fortitude; The target is dazed until the end of the Steppengard knight's next turn

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +12, Bluff +10, Intimidate +10

**Str** 19 (+9)    **Dex** 13 (+6)    **Wis** 15 (+7)

**Con** 16 (+8)    **Int** 15 (+7)    **Cha** 11 (+5)

**Equipment** heavy crossbow, heavy flail, lance, plate armor

**TACTICS**

The knights are loyal to Torrax, having betrayed their country for Ragesian coin. They follow the Inquisitor's orders, which in this case were somewhat strange. He asked them each to hold a pair of onyx gems in their mouths, and to be certain not to stray more than arm's length from him. Thus the knights form a phalanx in front of the Inquisitor, and they do not speak.

If three or more of the knights are dead or dying, Torrax uses his spells to finish off any still clinging to life, then casts animate dead on two of them. To give himself time to do this, Torrax may use his wall of fire to blockade the heroes from coming to his side of the room.

Serrimus is not a fighter and will attempt to flee if the fight appears to be unwinnable.

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

**Area 5:** Getting into this room requires a DC 23 Strength check to lift the grate, which unleashes the mohrg Jutras from its hidden chamber, unless the heroes defeated Jutras earlier. Alternately, the heroes can disable this trigger (DC 23 Thievery), which also allows them to more easily lift the grate (DC 20 Strength). If the heroes tipped off Steppengard's guards that they might be trying to approach, an alarm spell fills this room, and the door to the hallway is open, so that the guards in Area 2 are ready to respond. Otherwise, the door is locked.

If the heroes were not already prisoners, they find either Balan or Proxy Jinis here, pinned up

and tortured, as detailed in Act Two, and now quite dead.

**Area 4:** This room's contents have been pushed to the wall, and alchemy tables have been set up. Torrax crafted the poison here, and a notebook on a counter has a bookmark set to the recipe for Red Madness. The effects, as described, are confusion, leading to eventual rage and murderous violence. A DC 23 Arcana check lets heroes realize that this poison would not have any effect on nobles protected by the Book of Eight Lands.

**Area 3:** This room is still simply a storage chamber.

**Area 2:** The knights, Torrax, and Serrimus are here.

**Area 1:** The cells are empty save one. The single imprisoned man is barely recognizable for having been beaten so badly, but as his eyes widen in shock, the heroes realize it is Randas, the chef from the festival. Randas explains he was dragged here by the king's guards shortly after the heroes met him. Torrax interrogated and tortured him briefly, but mentioned something about turning him into an undead, but "not having enough ingredients to be worth the spell."

In classic villain fashion, the Inquisitor made a point to taunt the halfling that the people he would normally be serving were going to be poisoned this evening. Having no combat ability, Randas just asks to be let free. If pressed, he is willing to go try to warn someone.



# GUARD GAUNTLET

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

## SETUP

- ◆ 2 Steppengard Knights (K)
- ◆ 6 Steppengard Infantry (I)
- ◆ 2 Steppengard Prelates (P)

**Steppengard Knight (K)**  
**Level 10 Soldier • XP 500**  
 Medium natural humanoid (human)

- Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +7  
**HP** 104; **Bloodied** 52  
**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24  
**Speed** 5
- ☑ **Heavy Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon  
 +17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage.
  - ☑ **Heavy Crossbow** (std; at-will; load minor) ◆ Weapon  
 Ranged 20/40; +17 vs. AC; 1d10+1 damage.
  - ✓ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ Martial, Weapon  
 +17 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage, and another enemy adjacent to the Steppengard knight takes 4 damage.
  - ✓ **Lance** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
 Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d8+4 damage (crit 2d8+20).
  - ✓ **Precision Flail** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Weapon  
 +19 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage
  - ✓ **Shield Smash** (imm reac, on a successful hit against the target; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Martial, Weapon  
 +15 vs. Fortitude; The target is dazed until the end of the Steppengard knight's next turn

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven  
**Skills** Athletics +12, Bluff +10, Intimidate +10  
**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)  
**Con** 16 (+8) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+5)  
**Equipment** heavy crossbow, heavy flail, lance, plate armor

**Steppengard Prelate (P)**  
**Level 10 Controller • XP 500**  
 Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

- Initiative** +5; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision  
**HP** 105; **Bloodied** 52  
**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 24  
**Saving Throws** +5 against poison  
**Speed** 5
- ☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
 +15 vs. AC; 1d10+2 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H
  - ☑ **Guiding Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Divine, Implement, Radiant  
 Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; 1d8+5 radiant damage (crit 13 + 2d6 radiant), and one ally within sight of the Steppengard prelate gains a +2 power bonus on its next attack against the target.
  - ✓ **Awe and Dread** (std; enc) ◆ Divine, Fear, Weapon  
 +14 vs. Will; 1d10+2 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

- ✓ **Spiritual Weapon** (std; daily; sustain minor) ◆ Divine, Healing  
 Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage. A weapon appears in the target's square and attacks. The conjuration grants combat advantage to allies attacking the target. The weapon can be moved up to 10 squares as a move action. The weapon lasts until the end of the Steppengard prelate's next turn.

- ▶ **Stand Firm** (imm int, when the Steppengard prelate is pushed or slid)  
 The Steppengard prelate's move can optionally be reduced by 1 square. In addition, any attack that knocks the Steppengard prelate prone is granted an immediate saving throw to avoid the effect.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Heal +14, Religion +10  
**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+9)  
**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 11 (+5) **Cha** 7 (+3)  
**Equipment** flail, light shield, plate armor

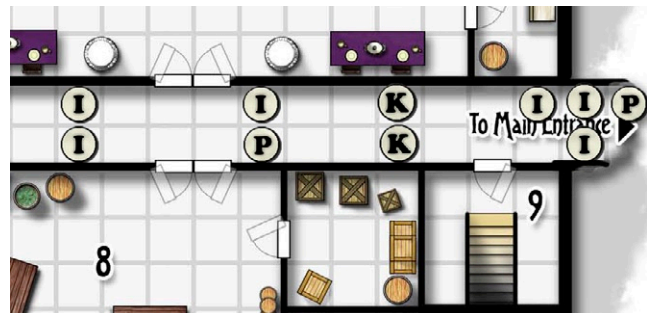
**Steppengard Infantry (I)**  
**Level 7 Soldier • XP 300**  
 Medium natural humanoid (human)

- Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3  
**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40  
**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19  
**Speed** 5
- ☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
 +14 vs. AC; 1d4+3 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.
  - ☑ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
 +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H.
  - ☑ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon  
 Ranged 15/30; +14 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage. 2H, Load Minor.
  - ✓ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon  
 Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The Steppengard infantry may shift into the vacated space.

- ✓ **Protective Attack** (std; enc) ◆ Martial, Weapon  
 +14 vs. AC; 2d10+3 damage, and an adjacent ally can shift up to 2 squares.

- ▶ **Hold the Line**  
 The Steppengard infantry and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common  
**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8  
**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+3)  
**Con** 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+3)  
**Equipment** crossbow, dagger, flail, heavy shield, scale armor



## THE KING'S MADNESS

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

### SETUP

When Steppengard hears your accusations, he snaps. In a tirade born of hatred, he screams: "I, poison? True vile is the poison clutching my heart day and night, damning my blood. And know, all you, my blood is Dassen's blood. You slew my wife, my bright children. You cut my line of blood, and so your king, and so too your homeland, should die as well. This land I created. This land I kill!"

At this, Steppengard grabs a heavy flail from behind his chair and knocks over the table, angling to attack you. His bodyguards, two Blades of the Kingsguard, slavishly follow behind, and Nina applauds, giggles wildly, and shifts into a monstrous, serpentine form. The king laughs at the transformation as the creature slithers your way.

- ◆ 6 Dasseni Nobles (N)
- ◆ King Steppengard (S)
- ◆ 2 Blades of the Kingsguard (B)
- ◆ Duke Gallo (G)
- ◆ Lady Timor (T)
- ◆ Lord Dashgoban (D)
- ◆ Madness (M)
- ◆ 10 Royal Bodyguards (R)

**Dasseni Noble (N)**  
Level 5 Controller • XP 200  
Medium natural humanoid

**Initiative** +1; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 58; **Bloodied** 29

**AC** 14; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15

Immune Divination, Charm

**Speed** 6

☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+6 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage. Thrown 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d4+2 damage.

☞ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+6 vs. AC; 1d6+1 damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, History +7, Religion +7

**Str** 10 (+2) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+3)

**Con** 10 (+2) **Int** 11 (+2) **Cha** 14 (+4)

**Equipment** dagger, Eight Lands boon, noble's outfit, short sword

**King Steppengard (S)**

Level 9 Elite Soldier (Leader) • XP 800

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +7; **Senses** Perception +7

**HP** 184; **Bloodied** 92

**AC** 27; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20

Immune psychic

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 5

**Action Points** 1

☞ **Heavy Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 2d6+9 damage (crit 21 + 1d6).

✓ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Martial, Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 2d10+9 damage, and another target adjacent to King Steppengard receives 5 damage.

✓ **Friend-Shielding** (minor; enc)

Ranged 5; Provides the target with a +2 power bonus to all defenses through King Steppengard's next turn.

▶ **Into the Fray** (minor; enc) ◆ Martial

King Steppengard moves up to 3 squares to end adjacent to an enemy.

▶ **Iron Vanguard** (std; daily) ◆ 2H, Martial, Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 2d10+9 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square. If King Steppengard occupies the vacated space, all allies within 2 squares can shift 1 square.

▶ **Victorious Surge** (std; daily) ◆ 2H, Healing, Martial, Reliable, Weapon

+16 vs. AC; 3d10+9 damage, and King Steppengard regains 60 hp.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Primordial

**Skills** Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Endurance +8, History +11, Insight +12, Intimidate +10

**Str** 21 (+9) **Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+7)

**Con** 12 (+5) **Int** 15 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+5)

**Equipment** *amulet of natural armor* +1, *heavy flail* +1, *plate armor* +2

**Description** Though no longer the young warrior who united eight kingdoms into a single country, King Steppengard still has a lion's strength. Tall, brown-haired, with a short-cropped beard, the ruler of Dassen stands tense with restrained scorn. Weakness, however, seems to grip the king's mind, and his eyes look uncertain, his gaze unfocused.

**Blade of the Kingsguard (B)**

Level 9 Elite Soldier • XP 800

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +4; **Senses** Perception +4

**HP** 202; **Bloodied** 101

**AC** 23, see also *hold the line*; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17; see also *friend-shielding the King*

**Speed** 5

**Action Points** 1

☞ **Greatsword of the Kingsguard** (std; at-will) ◆ 2H, Weapon

+13 vs. AC; 1d10+7 damage (crit 17 + 1d6).

✓ **Friend-Shielding the King** (minor; enc)

Ranged 5; Provides the target with a +2 power bonus to all defenses through the blade of the Kingsguard's next turn.

▶ **Kingsguard Healing** (free, daily) ◆ Healing

Must be wielding *sword of the Kingsguard*. The blade of the Kingsguard regains hit points as if it had spent a healing surge.

▶ **Hold the Line**

The blade of the Kingsguard and any allies adjacent to it gain a +2 bonus to AC.

▶ **Stand Still** (imm int, when a target moves out of a threatened square)

Use in place of an opportunity attack; +10 vs. Reflex. *Hit*: The target's move is stopped, and its movement action is wasted.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common

**Skills** Intimidate +8

**Str** 17 (+7) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 21 (+9) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+3)

**Equipment** *greatsword of the Kingsguard* +1, *ring of friend shielding*



### Madness (N)

**Level 12 Solo Soldier • XP 3,500**

Huge aberrant beast (trillith, insubstantial)

**Initiative** +9; **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

**Aura of Confusion (Psychic)** aura 3; A creature starting its turn in the aura must succeed a DC 20 Wisdom check or take 5 psychic damage and is dazed until the start of its next turn.

**HP** 620; **Bloodied** 310

**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26

**Immune** Psychic; **Resist** Insubstantial;

**Vulnerable** Song of Forms (becomes substantial)

**Saving Throws** +5

**Speed** 6, Fly 6 (perfect)

**Action Points** 2

☞ **Serpentine Strike** (std; at-will)

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+5 poison damage.

☞ **Tail Whip** (std; at-will)

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+5 damage.

☑ **Serpent Lash** (std; at-will)

Only when substantial; Madness makes 2 *serpentine strike* attacks.

☑ **Mindhaunt** (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Psychic

Ranged 10; +17 vs. Will, 2d6+5 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Madness' next turn (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target is infected with mindhaunt affliction.

☞ **Death Boon** (imm reac; when

Indomitability is reduced to 0 hp or less)

Close Burst 10 (ignore concealment and cover); targets all creatures; +17 vs. Will; 1d10 psychic damage, and Madness' boon is given to the target until it is used or until the end of the next extended rest.

▶ **Amorphous Form** (minor; at-will) ◆

Polymorph

Madness can shift size between huge and large. She cannot be flanked.

▶ **Body Shift** (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Cannot be used if affected by the Song of Forms. Madness becomes insubstantial and assumes her serpentine appearance.

▶ **Embody** (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Creates a substantial body out of nearby debris or furniture equal to her size. The form resembles a giant serpent with multiple heads surrounding one larger one. If insubstantial and affected by the Fey Song of Forms, she spontaneously embodies.

▶ **Engulf** (move; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Madness occupies a target's square. Moving into a target's square provokes an opportunity attack. Madness may make a Serpentine Strike against the target as a free action.

▶ **Maddening Spirit** (imm int, when targeted by Charm, Divination or Scrying spells; at-will) ◆ Psychic

The caster is struck with a psychic backlash; +17 vs. Will, and the caster is dazed (save ends).

▶ **Psychic Slip** (minor; at-will) ◆ Psychic

Madness gains an extra save against charm and fear effects each round.

▶ **Rejuvenation** (imm reac, upon the death of Madness) ◆ Healing

Cannot be used if affected by the Song of Forms. If Madness is destroyed by anything other than psychic damage, she does not die, but instead reforms 1d6 days later.

▶ **Serpentine Shift** (move; rchg ☞☞)

Only when substantial; Madness may shift up to 5 squares.

▶ **Suggestion** (std; at-will) ◆ Psychic

Only against those infected with mindhaunt affliction; +17 vs. Will, and the target is dominated (save ends). At the end of the domination, the target sees Madness smile a wide grin, and then her body dissolves into tiny illusory serpents that writhe on the ground and flee, though her smile remains in place for a round.

**Alignment** Evil; **Languages** telepathy 20

**Skills** Arcana +13, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +13, Intimidate +13

**Str** 19 (+10) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 6 (+4)

**Con** 20 (+11) **Int** 15 (+8) **Cha** 15 (+8)

**Description** The body of the grinning gnome woman slowly fades away as a massive coiling form materializes where she once stood. Her smile is the last part of her to vanish, just as the monstrous form snaps its multiple viper jaws. Before you slithers a roiling swarm of serpents, each bigger around than a man's torso. Venom glistens on their fangs, and light reflects squamously across their scales, like the interior of the swarm is impossibly deep. You look upon it, and you know its name is Madness.

### Duke Gallo (G)

**Level 9 Controller • XP 400**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +1; **Senses** Perception +5

**HP** 90; **Bloodied** 45

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 23

**Immune** Divination, Charm

**Speed** 6

☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d4 damage. Thrown 5/10; +14 vs. AC; 1d4+1 damage.

☞ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d6 damage.

✓ **Friend-Shielding** (minor; enc)

Ranged 5; Provides the target with a +2 power bonus to all defenses until the end of Gallo's next turn.

▶ **Power Melee** (when using melee attack)

Duke Gallo takes a –2 penalty to his attack roll and adds +2 damage (+3 if used 2H)..

**Alignment** Good; **Languages** Common,

Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Bluff +11, Diplomacy +11, History +9,

Insight +10, Religion +9

**Str** 10 (+4) **Dex** 12 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+5)

**Con** 10 (+4) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 14 (+6)

**Equipment** dagger, noble's outfit, short sword

### Lady Timor (T)

**Level 9 Controller • XP 400**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +4; **Senses** Perception +9

**HP** 92; **Bloodied** 46

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18

**Speed** 6

☞ **Magic Snowball** (std; at-will) ◆ Arcane,

Force, Implement

Ranged 20; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d4+7 force damage (crit 15 + 2d6).

☞ **Coldburning Hands** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane,

Fire, Implement

Close Blast 5; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d6+7 fire damage (crit 19 + 2d6).

✦ **Coldfire Ball** (std; enc) ◆ Arcane, Fire,

Implement

Area Burst 3 within 20; +11 vs. Reflex; 3d6+7 fire damage (crit 25 + 2d6). *Miss:* Half damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common,

Dwarven

**Skills** Arcana +12, Dungeoneering +9, Endurance

+10, History +12, Insight +9, Religion +12

**Str** 9 (+3) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+4)

**Con** 12 (+5) **Int** 17 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+5)

**Equipment** noble's outfit, wand +2

**Lord Dashgoban (D)**

**Level 9 Controller • XP 400**

Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)

**Initiative** +1; **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision

**HP** 92; **Bloodied** 46

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18

**Immune** Divination, Charm

**Speed** 5

☞ **Mace** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+8 vs. AC; 1d8+2 damage, and the target is marked until the start of Dashgoban's next turn. Add +1 damage when used 2H

☞ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+9 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage.

▶ **Watchful Eye** (imm int, when a marked enemy leaves an adjacent square; at-will)

Dashgoban makes a mace attack against the marked target even if the target is shifting.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, History +11, Insight +9, Religion +11

**Str** 9 (+3)    **Dex** 7 (+2)    **Wis** 11 (+4)

**Con** 12 (+5)    **Int** 14 (+6)    **Cha** 12 (+5)

**Equipment** mace, noble's outfit, short sword

**Royal Bodyguard (R)**

**Level 7 Soldier • XP 300**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

**Initiative** +2; **Senses** Perception +3

**HP** 80; **Bloodied** 40

**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

**Speed** 5

☞ **Flail** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage. Add +1 damage when used 2H.

✗ **Shield Rush** (std; at-will; only usable on creatures up to one size category larger) ◆ Weapon

Must be using a shield; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+3 damage, and the target is pushed back 1 square. The royal bodyguard may shift into the vacated space.

**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Dwarven

**Skills** Athletics +9, Intimidate +8

**Str** 16 (+6)    **Dex** 12 (+4)    **Wis** 11 (+3)

**Con** 16 (+6)    **Int** 12 (+4)    **Cha** 10 (+3)

**Equipment** flail, heavy shield, scale armor

**TACTICS**

Madness plays for keeps, holding nothing back as she attempts to salvage what is left of her plan. She blocks the doorway with her body, relying on her *aura of confusion* to keep defenders away from her and starts using *mindhaunt* against obvious strikers and controllers. If she manages to daze most of the heroes, she uses her *amorphous form* and *engulf* abilities to trap as many heroes as she can and use her free *serpentine strikes* to attack many at once. She hopes to engulf them and focus their attacks on her as the rest of the room kills each other. If a hero starts to sing the Song of Forms, she will move next to him and let her aura keep him out of the fight as long as he sings.

Nobles not affected by Madness flee as best they can, ordering their bodyguards to protect them. Most of the bodyguards balk, however, at the presence of Madness.

King Steppengard screams orders to his soldiers in the hall to kill anyone who leaves the banquet room, and they reluctantly obey. If Gallo makes it into the hallway, he orders them to attack Madness, and to try to subdue the king. The guards will spend one round doing nothing as they mull over their options, but in the following round they side with Duke Gallo because he orders only the death of the creature.

Steppengard and two bodyguards stride around the room, chasing after nobles with a lion's ferocity. He is in no rush, and he savors each kill, particularly those of Lady Namin, who thought she could replace his wife, and Duke Gallo, who he still believes responsible for his family's death. While the king is not an immediate threat to the heroes, if he manages to kill all the nobles, Dassen will fall into chaos.

If Steppengard is dropped, Madness laughs in celebration, and then tries to engulf the king to make sure he is torn apart and cannot be raised from the dead. Madness will not retreat, even if the heroes use the Song of Forms.

If Madness is defeated but is not trapped by the Song of Forms, her body collapses and she screams from her many mouths, then vanishes, a wave of maddening images washing across all

present but fading just as quickly. If Madness is truly slain, the heroes and others assisting in her defeat receive her boon.

With Madness's defeat, the king wavers, his insane determination shaken. He is stunned for a 6 rounds, during which time his guards knock him down, disarm him, and tie him up. At the end of this time, he begins to weep, realizing what he has done. (If Madness was defeated previously in the adventure, the king fights until dropped.)

**FEATURES OF THE AREA**

The castle floor is laid out as follows:

**Area 1.** The banquet hall has three tables for the nobles and six for their entourages. The central table seats Steppengard, Lady Namin, and Duke Gallo. The two tables flanking him each seat three nobles. A Gallo chaplain and the king's chief defender, the Blade of the Kingsguard, stand behind the king. The rest of the tables are crowded with assistants and bodyguards. Advisor Nina Glibglammer lurks in the northeast corner.

The walls are covered in elaborate tapestries depicting the eight lands of Dassen, four on the east wall, four on the west. The north wall is devoted to King Steppengard and the great battles he fought to unite the kingdom.

**Area 2.** A group of actors perform on this stage, and leave before dinner.

**Area 3.** The actor's dressing rooms. The desks here are full of make-up and costumes hang on racks, but the actors are already gone by the time the meal is served.

**Area 4.** Men's bathroom. A secret door (DC 23 Perception) can be opened by standing on the toilet seat and pressing a button in the ceiling. The secret passage leads into the throne room.

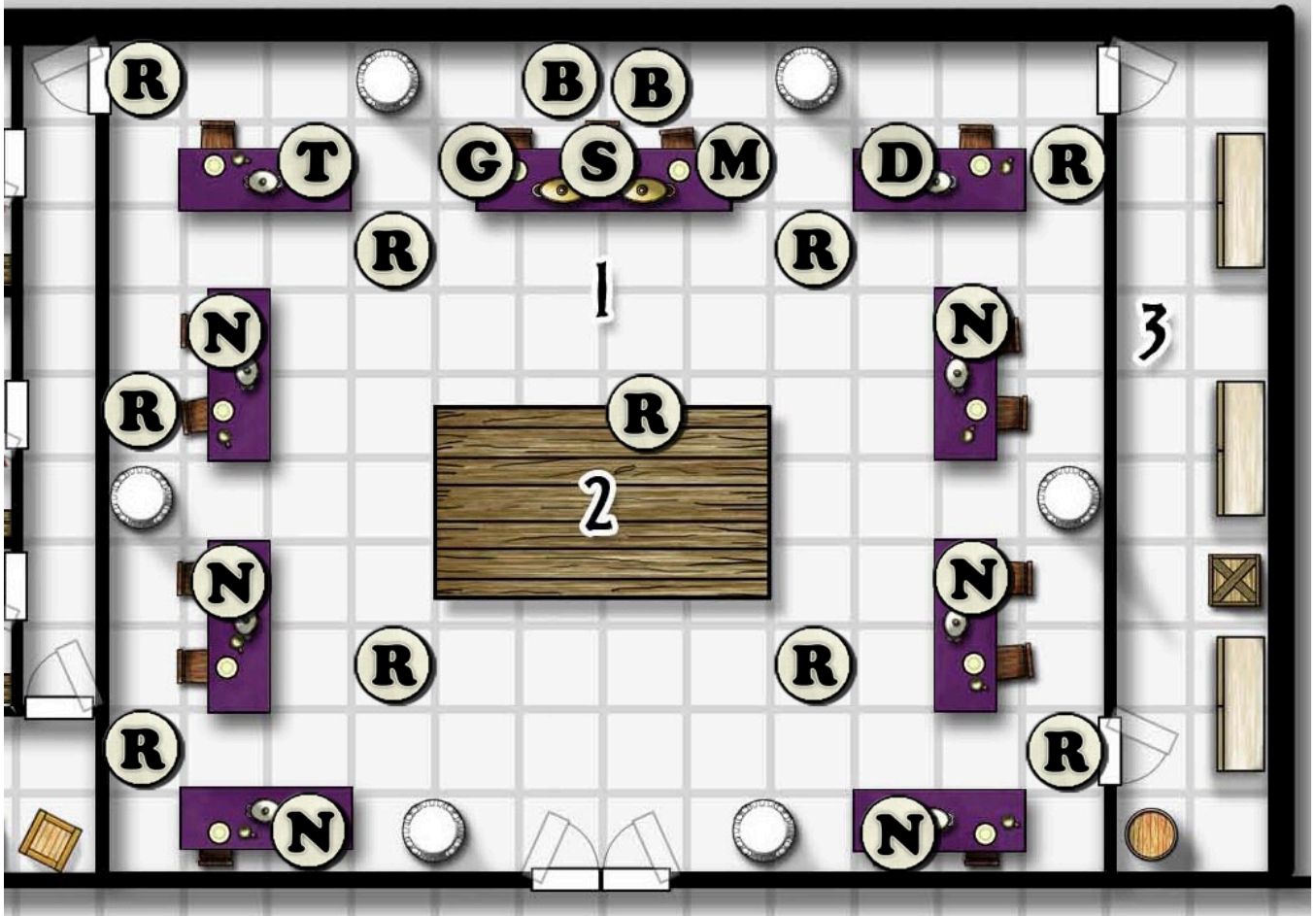
**Area 5.** Women's restroom.

**Area 6.** Servants' restroom.

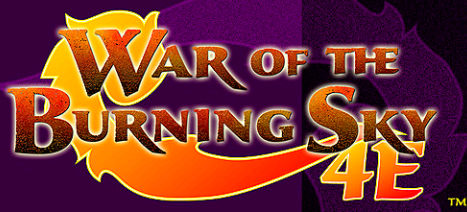
**Area 7.** Steppengard's throne room. The room is affected by a Hallowed Ground ritual (see Appendix C) centered on the throne.

**Area 8.** Kitchen.

**Area 9.** Stairs to barracks, servants quarters, and prison.







# The Mad King's Banquet

While Seaquen recovers from an unnatural natural disaster, the heroes undertake a quest to find allies in the nearby nation of Dassen before Ragesia's army arrives.

But the heroes discover strange tidings surrounding Dassen's King Steppengard. What afflicts the king, and is steadfast Duke Gallo truly conspiring against him? Seaquen's survival depends on unraveling a multilayered mystery.

Just what kind of feast can the heroes expect when they sit down to the mad king's banquet?

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 Vault™ core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, LLC

*For Character Levels 10–12*

Original Design by SHANE O'CONNOR

Updated and Edited by STEVE MUCHOW

