

# LEGENDARY BEGINNINGS



## Crisis at Falling Spring Station



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# Welcome to Legendary Beginnings

This supplement is the latest adventure in a series of family-friendly supplements from Legendary Games for 5th Edition! These can be played with the standard 5E rules or with the simplified rules in the starter set. The themes and style of these adventures are suitable for all ages, though they've been crafted with a particular eye toward younger gamers and those who are relatively new to tabletop roleplaying. Each one is packed with action, adventure, and danger, with opportunities to work as a team whether you're straight-up fighting the bad guys or finding more creative solutions to the challenges those villains put in your path.

Roleplaying is a fantastic hobby, and whether the people sitting down at your table are your own kids, neighbors, youth groups, scout troops, or just friends who've never sat down to roll the dice before. This product line gives you the material to create a fun-filled experience that sidesteps the more mature subject matter sometimes found in roleplaying products but without sacrificing the fun and excitement. Anytime you sit down with one of these adventures, you and your group are sure to have a *Legendary Beginning!*

## Special Electronic Features

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with references to the official System Reference Document (SRD) and 5eSRD. If it is in the core 5E rules, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.

## About Legendary Games

Legendary Games is an all star team of authors and designers, founded by Clark Peterson of Necromancer Games, Inc. and managed by Jason Nelson, Legendary Games uses a cooperative, team-based approach to bring you the best expansion material for your game. We are gamers and storytellers first, and we believe that passion shows in our products. So check us out, and Make Your Game Legendary!

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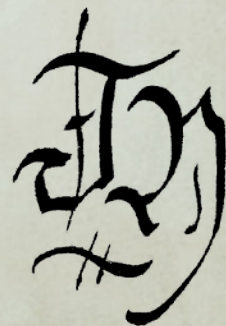


# What You Will Find Inside Crisis at Falling Spring Station

*Crisis at Falling Spring Station* takes your heroes into a world of adventure! In the mountains protecting the western border of the peaceful kingdom of Threll, a mysterious illness has infected the soldiers manning a critical outpost. The Threllish army needs someone to deliver medicines to help combat the illness. Upon arrival at the fort, it becomes clear that there are sinister forces at work. Can the heroes uncover the mystery in time, or will the forces of evil gain a foothold that could give them access to the heart of Threllish lands? This 2nd- to 3rd-level adventure is suitable for all ages using the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (5E) rules.

The **Legendary Beginnings** series from Legendary Games is designed to creating exciting adventures suitable for all ages, but specially designed for those new to roleplaying and those on the younger side. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none, allowing you to enliven and enrich your campaign in amazing and exciting ways. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

- Jason Nelson





## INTRODUCTION

*Crisis at Falling Spring Station* is a short adventure designed for new players and Game Masters using the 5th Edition (5E) rules. The adventure is written for a party of four to six 2nd-level player characters (PCs).

The encounters in this adventure are grouped into three parts, and each part is designed to be run within a few hours. At the end of the adventure, the player characters should earn enough experience to reach 3rd level and find treasure appropriate for that level.

*Crisis at Falling Spring Station* was created in response to votes cast by backers of the *Trail of the Apprentice* mini-campaign Kickstarter project. Game Masters can use this adventure as a stand-alone adventure, as an interlude during the *Trail of the Apprentice* campaign, or as part of their own campaigns.

The story is mostly set in the Westwatch Mountains in the *Legendary Beginnings* assumed setting of Terrallien. The Westwatch Mountains form the western border of the kingdom of Threll, located on the Terrallien continent of the planet Aeva. This module provides enough information to run the entire adventure, but is designed to be portable. As the GM, you can use it “as is” or place it in a mountainous border region within any setting you choose.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

On the other side of the Westwatch Mountains from Threll is a stretch of wilderness wedged between the mountain peaks and the Darkvale forest. Known as the Westerlands, this long and narrow badlands features rolling hills, dense woodlands, and strange rock formations. It is also home to an ogrekin named Carl.

As a half-breed child in the foothills of the Black Spine mountain range, Carl was the runt of his mother’s people and the target of many torments from the children and adults of the tribe. However, compared to the other ogres, Carl possessed a keen intellect and something else that marked him for greatness. Carl was a sorcerer whose power came

## FAMILY GAME NIGHT

One design goal for *Legendary Beginnings* adventures is to provide modules that an adult can quickly and easily prepare for use in a “family game night.” The adventures are designed to be appropriate for younger audiences, and our hope is that families will use these games to run at home, just as they would play board games or card games.

The adventures contain more straightforward plots with clear objectives. Killing monsters and fighting “the bad guys” is a big part of most fantasy RPGs, so we didn’t take that out, but we’ve kept the themes lighter and presented situations in which the player characters are heroes facing enemies who are obviously bad guys. We have also worked to create opportunities for the player characters to solve problems without violence in many situations. Also, the adventures’ challenges present opportunities for teamwork and for individual players to shine.

In many *Legendary Beginnings* products, sidebars like this will give advice on running this adventure and on how to use the ideas presented here to build adventures of your own. Together with the presented combat maps and simplified stat blocks, this advice should make it quick and easy for the Game Master to prepare and start running each *Legendary Beginnings* adventure.

from the icy winds of frozen lands. By the time Carl became an adult, he had traveled far to the north of Darkvale Forest and subjugated a sept of the Icepelt gnolls before turning south into the Westerlands. There he and his gnolls seized control of the Sharpknee goblin tribe. With these forces behind him, Carl crowned himself as the Warlord of the North.



Soon after, Carl first encountered explorers from east of the Westwatch and learned about Threll. Enamored with the idea of kings, kingdoms, and rulership, Carl decided that kingship was his destiny. He would be Carl, Warlord of the North and ruler of the Kingdom of Westwatch. The first step was to get a place to serve as his capital, a strong fortress from which to begin his conquering march to greatness. So he turned his sights on the closest “fortress” he knew, the border fort of Falling Spring Station.

However, Carl knew the human soldiers safe in their fort would be too strong for his goblins and gnolls to conquer directly. So, he thought and thought and thought. Unfortunately, he came up with a plan. In order to weaken the humans, he would use one of his most loyal henchmen, the goblin druid Groultooth, to convince a local clan of fey to infect the fort with a virulent disease. Once the humans were weak enough, the Warlord could attack with ease.

Groultooth contacted the fey of the Highgrove Court pretending to be a friendly druid in need of aid. After gaining their trust, he was able to place a collar on the daughter of the fey Queen Latharna. The foul creature convinced Latharna that the collar was an evil artifact and only his spells kept the girl alive. He used a *wand of contagion* to infect the princess with mindfire, passing off the symptoms as evidence of the artifact’s power. He even made them believe that if any fey touched the collar, the girl would die. Forced to aid the goblin, Queen Latharna sent sprites invisibly to cause mischief in Falling Spring Station while pixies spread Groultooth’s potions of crumbling sickness. That was a week ago.

As the story opens, most of the soldiers of the fort are already infected with crumbling sickness and, under Groultooth’s direction, the Highgrove sprites and pixies have again invisibly attacked the fort, sabotaging the well, burning the healer’s garden of medicinal herbs, releasing the garrison mage’s pet and even setting fire to one of the barracks. This is the final measure to weaken the fort before the Warlord of the North arrives.

Everything goes according to Carl’s plan, except for the arrival of help from Threll.

## CRUMBLING SICKNESS

This disease at first appears to be a particularly strong variety of devil chills that also strikes its victims with effects similar to the spell *confusion*. Crumbling sickness is a lingering disease; no number of saves actually cures it. It can only be cured by a particularly rare elixir made from a medicinal liquid called *aqua benedetta*, a special alchemical healing salve, and various herbs and other ingredients.

### CRUMBLING SICKNESS

Anyone who is injured by an infected creature or who eats or drinks something contaminated by crumbling sickness must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw each day or become infected. It takes 1d4 days for the victim to show symptoms, which include severe fatigue and confusion. The infected creature suffers one level of exhaustion, and it regains only half the normal number of hit points from spending Hit Dice and no hit points from finishing a long rest. At the end of each long rest, an infected creature must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the character gains one level of exhaustion. On a successful save, the character’s exhaustion level decreases by one level. As a lingering disease, only a specific medicine can remove the final level of exhaustion and cure the illness.

Victims of crumbling sickness also suffer from muddled thinking and delusions. Twice each day, an infected creature must make a DC 15 Wisdom save. On a successful save, the character can act normally. On a failed save, roll percentile dice and consult the table below to determine what the creature does for the next 12 hours.

D%	BEHAVIOR
01–25	Act normally.
26–50	Be still and babble nonsensical words and sounds. (Everything is fascinating and you say whatever silly thoughts enter your head.)
51–75	Believe you are a famous, powerful, or otherwise noteworthy person from history or fiction. (You attempt to use powers and influence you do not possess.)
76–100	Believe that those around you are dangerous or threatening. (You need not automatically attack your allies, but you do not trust them, either.)





## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

When the soldiers began to fall ill, the garrison healer believed that the illness was a bout of devil chills and sent a frantic messenger bird to Solitude begging for medicinal aid. Sent by Colonel Rorke of the Threllish Army, the PCs carry a padded satchel full of bottles of *aqua benedetta* into the mountain pass leading to Falling Spring Station. When they arrive they find the gates of the fort locked and the barracks on fire. After the characters handle the emergency, they are the only ones healthy enough to aid the fort. Tasked by Healer Reynolds and the acting commander of the fort, Sergeant Bromhead, they set about trying to get the fort back on its feet. Along the way, the PCs can investigate the true

nature of the illness, gather ingredients for its cure, find a missing patrol, drive a monster from the local source of fresh water, and uncover that the fey might have caused all of these issues.

Ordered to confront the fey, the PCs venture into the wilds of the Westwatch mountains. An encounter with a few fey guards leads to a meeting with Queen Latharna herself. The fey ruler offers the PCs a bargain: if they rescue her daughter from the goblin Groultooth, she will provide a better medicine and owe them a favor. After confronting the druid, the adventurers learn of the Warlord of the North and his designs on Falling Spring Station. If successful at their rescue mission, the PCs can earn the aid of the fey in the fight against the goblins and gnolls.



Upon returning to Falling Spring Station, the heroes must quickly prepare the limited defenses and prop up the sick soldiers to fool the approaching horde. When the assault on the fort begins, the adventurers must stop incursions into the fort while shoring up the flagging defenders. Their efforts culminate in a climactic encounter with Carl, Warlord of the North, and a fight to the death.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS

The specifics of how the heroes get the assignment to bring medicine to the fort are not provided in detail so that GMs can tailor this adventure to fit their own campaigns. The simplest method is for all of the PCs to be members of Threll's Zekerian Order and have their mission assigned to them by the Order's leaders. (For more information about the Zekerian Order, check out the *Into the Feyweald*, *A Feast of Flavor*, and the *Trail of the Apprentice* adventures from the *Legendary Beginnings* line.)

Alternatively, the PCs can be working directly for Colonel Rorke, who leads a garrison of Threllish soldiers. Rorke is officially stationed in Queenspoint, but you can place the garrison in any large town or city that suits your campaign. You can use one of the suggestions below to explain why the PCs are taking orders from Colonel Rorke:

- Hearing of their past accomplishments, Colonel Rorke summons the heroes to ask for their aid.
- As punishment for some transgression, the heroes are handed over to Colonel Rorke to fulfill whatever task he deems appropriate.
- The PCs are an elite unit of the army placed under Rorke's command.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

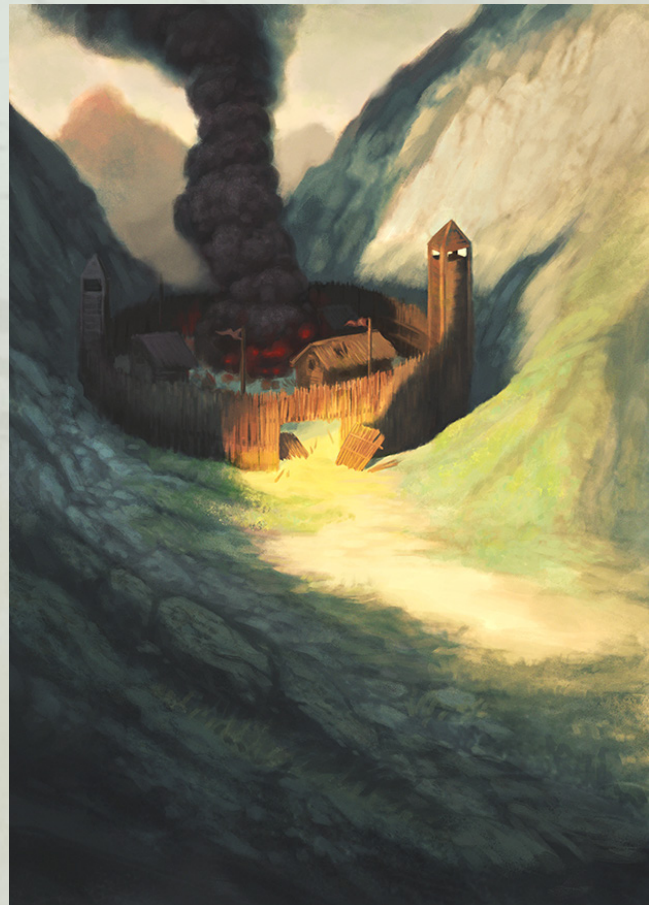
No matter how the PCs end up there, when they meet with Colonel Rorke, read or paraphrase the following:

*"Listen, we've got a situation up at Falling Spring Station, one of our forts along the Westwatch keeping things that go bump in the night out of civilized lands. The Station*

*lies west from the head of the Artissus Rivers. The healer up there sent word that they have a sickness affecting most of the soldiers, and he needs a specific medicine called aqua benedetta. My usual scouts and troops are busy, so I need to help from freelancers. I can offer you each 1,000 gold pieces to take the elixir to Falling Spring Station, stay to help out however you can, and then report back to me. Interested?"*

Assuming the PCs agree, Rorke gives them a map or directions to the fort, loans horses to those who need one and provides traveling supplies, such as food and water. Finally, he hands them the satchel of *aqua benedetta* and urges them to hurry.

**Reward:** Colonel Rorke promises each PC a sum of 1,000 gp to bring the medicine to Falling Spring Station.





## PART ONE: TROUBLE AT THE STATION

Though it is beyond the scope of this adventure, GMs could fill the 3-day journey from Queenspoint to the fort with random encounters and other side-adventures. The PCs may even choose to pay their own way on barge going up the Artissus River, rather than riding the whole way. This takes a day off the overall trip, but doesn't change any other events of the adventure. When the PCs arrive at Falling Spring Station they find a fort beleaguered by sickness and the influence of the fey.

### 1. ARRIVING AT THE FORT

As the PCs near the fort they see that all is not well in Falling Spring Station.

*Rounding the bend in the road you behold the wooden walls and towers of Falling Spring Station. Right away, you notice that the gates are closed and unmanned. You see no one patrolling the tops of the walls. Even worse, you see billowing clouds of dark smoke rising up from inside the walls of the fort. Falling Spring Station is on fire!*

After infecting the occupants of the fort and getting into a variety of mischief, the fey of the Highgrove Court barred the gates and placed a pit trap just outside to catch anyone fleeing the burning fort.

**Trap:** A 10-foot deep pit lined with spikes occupies the entire 10 ft. x 10 ft. area in front of the gates. The opening is a wooden cover cleverly concealed by an illusion to look like regular ground. A DC 14 **Intelligence (Investigation)** skill check detects the illusion and reveal the trap. The weight of 2 or more PCs is enough to trigger the trap. Each PC that falls in suffers 1d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d4+2 piercing damage from the spikes at the bottom. The trap doesn't reset unless someone resets it.

**Faerie Clues:** Perceptive and clever characters may find the following clues here:

**Unnatural Pit:** Characters who succeed on a DC 12 **Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception),**

### LOOKING FOR FAERIES

The group may investigate what happened around the fort. While investigating an area, if they find a faerie clue, they may attempt checks to learn the additional details mentioned in the Faerie Clue section of the encounter. If they succeed, they may make a second check to learn the secondary clue.

**Intelligence (Arcana), or Wisdom (Survival)** check know that this pit is far too smooth to have been dug with tools, and there is no spare dirt nearby. It must have been dug by magic.

**Fey Suspects:** A DC 12 **Intelligence (Investigation or Nature)** check reveals that here are faeries in the wilds who might play a trick like this, but they normally wouldn't come so close to a settlement.

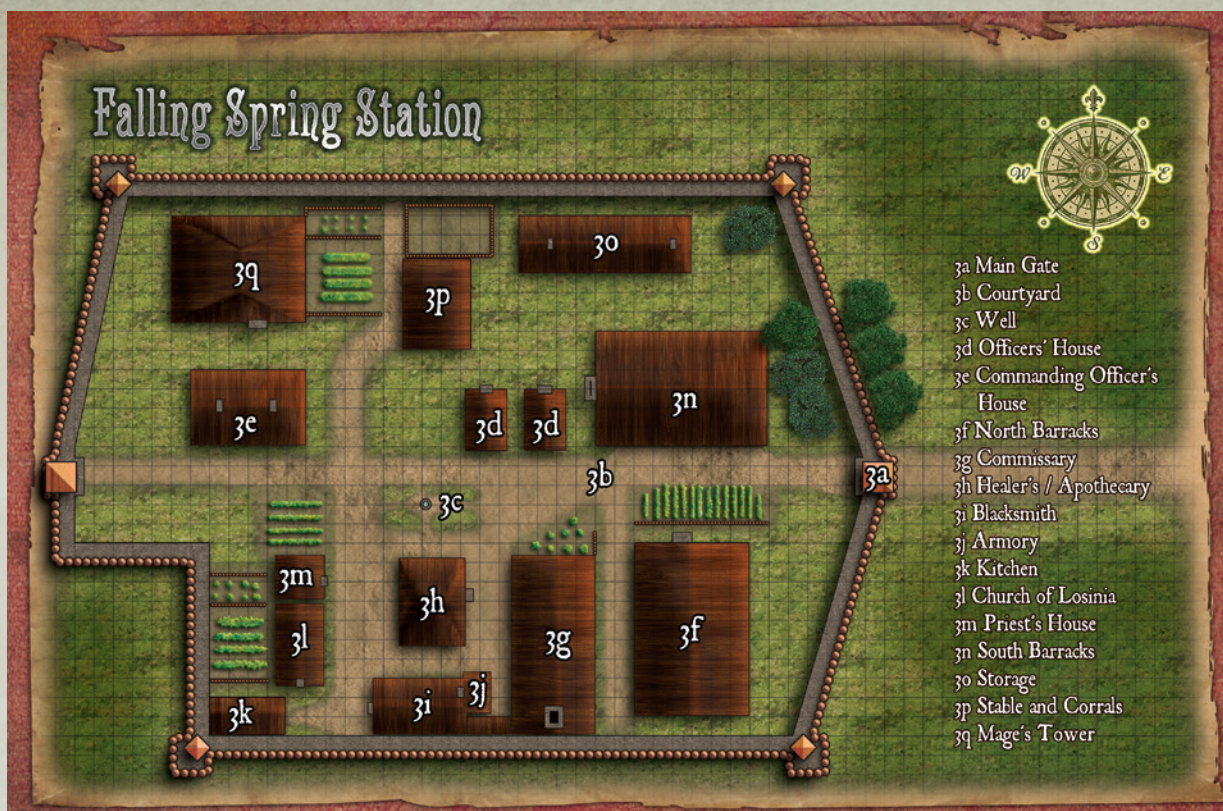
**Mysterious Glyph:** Searching the bottom of the pit with a successful DC 12 **Intelligence (Perception)** check uncovers a small scrap of leather with a magical glyph burned into it. A DC 16 **Intelligence (Arcana)** check reveals the symbol to be a magical version of the word "illusionary earth" in Sylvan (language of the fey). PCs who speak Sylvan gain a +2 bonus on their skill check to identify the symbol. PCs can learn this same information without a check by looking up this symbol in some of the books in the Mage's Quarters (Area 3q).

**Gates:** Before they left, the fey closed the gates and slid the bar down to secure the heavy wooden doors.

The PCs must make a DC 20 **Strength** check to break open the barred doors. Using a crowbar or battering ram of some sort grants a +2 bonus to this check. A **Wisdom (Perception)** check (DC 12) reveals a pile of discarded building materials in the tall grass beside the wall. The pile contains several hefty, 10-foot long posts.

PCs may also try climbing the outer wall. The wooden wall is 20 feet high and a DC 12 **Strength**





(Athletics) check is required to scale it. Unbarring and opening the gates from the inside does not require a check.

**Reward:** 100 XP for surviving the trap and getting into the fort.

## 2. FIRE!

Once inside the fort, the PCs see what the fey have wrought. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Falling Spring Station is a scene of chaos. No one appears well enough to give any orders. A few sick soldiers are scattered around the courtyard, lying where they fell. A pile of rubble blocks the well. More alarmingly, smoke streams out of the windows of the large barracks to the south of the gate and from a garden just outside it. Two soldiers crawl out of the barrack's doorway, too weak to do anything about the fire. From inside you hear weak voices crying for help.*

PCs entering the barracks (Area 3f), either to fight the fire or to rescue those inside, must hold their breath or contend with the thick, heavy smoke filling the building.

PCs who breathe heavy smoke must make

a **Constitution** save each round (DC 12, +1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who fails 2 consecutive must leave the building or begin suffocating. The thick smoke also obscures vision.

**Rescue:** Six soldiers, too weak to escape from the burning building, lie scattered around the building.

Assume it takes a full round to locate and pick up one of the stricken soldiers and another full round to haul someone out of the burning building. Each round, a PC attempting to find a soldier (or the exit) must succeed on a DC 10 **Wisdom (Perception)** check or lose their way for the remainder of their turn. Carrying one of the soldiers requires a successful DC 12 **Strength** check.

**Faerie Clues:** The PCs can discover the following clues:

**Strange Noises:** Talking with the soldiers later, the PCs can make a DC 12 **Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion)** or **Intelligence (Nature)** check to learn that the soldiers heard laughter and tiny bells just before this started, which they have learned to associate with sprites and pixies.



*Fey Suspects:* A DC 12 **Intelligence (History or Nature)** check reveals that there are faeries in the wilds who might play a trick like this, but they normally wouldn't come so close to a settlement.

**Fire:** Dousing the fire requires a large amount of water or other non-flammable material like dirt or sand. Luckily, 8 barrels of sand rest just outside the commissary (Area 3g).

It requires a **Strength** check (DC 16) to lift and carry one of the barrels. PCs carrying a barrel by themselves can only move at 1/2 speed. Two PCs working together need only surpass a DC 8 check and can move at normal speed.

Outside the barracks, the small garden has been burned to the ground and is not a threat.

Inside the barracks, however, three spots actively burn. Each spot requires two barrels worth of sand to extinguish. PCs doing this must make a ranged attack against an AC 10 to deliver their payload to the intended square.

After 6 rounds, the flames consume in the inside of the building, forcing the PCs to leave or risk being burned alive. Each fire spot extinguished adds 2 to the number of rounds until the building is consumed.

**Development:** Once the fire is out, the PCs have time to explore the fort. The sick soldiers they encounter in the courtyard direct them to the Healer's House (Area 3h).

### 3. FALLING SPRING STATION

The station is a large fort, roughly 200 feet wide and 300 feet long. Its structures are detailed as follows.

#### 3A. MAIN GATE

*The 20-foot high wooden wall around Falling Spring Station has 15-foot square towers on each corner and a wide gate building midway along the eastern side. Large double doors provide enough room for two wagons to pass each other and can be secured from the inside with a long wooden bar.*

PCs who investigate this area can discover some signs of the sprite's mischief.

**Faerie Clue:** A successful DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check reveals a tiny rope, as thin as

a thread, tied around the locking bar. A DC 12 **Intelligence (Nature)** check indicates that this rope was made by tiny fey hands.

#### 3B. COURTYARD

*Judging from the boot marks, this courtyard sees daily use as a place to train the soldiers. To the south, smoke rises from the smoldering barracks. Northward are more barracks, stables and other buildings. Several gardens bordered by low fences line the roads. One of these is nothing more than a charred ruin of burnt plants. At the center of the courtyard a jumble of rocks marks the location of the Fort's well.*

This wide area of compacted dirt mainly consists of the paths between buildings and offers room for weapons drills and exercise space for the soldiers of the fort.

#### 3C. WELL

*The remnants of a wooden wagon rest among the stone debris of this well; its stone walls now completely blocking the opening to the well itself.*

Stones and dirt fill in the collapsed well. PCs with skill proficiency in **Investigation** can conclude that it will take a few days of heavy labor to clear the well before anyone can draw water from it. Unfortunately, no soldier is currently well enough to do the work.

Sergeant Bromhead in Area 3e can tell how Private Hughes drove a cart into the fort's well, destroying the stone wall around it and filling the well with debris. What the sergeant does not know is that the fey caused Hughes to crash.

**Faerie Clues:** If asked, the soldier only remembers feeling dizzy and not seeing the well until it was too late. A DC 12 **Wisdom (Medicine)** or **Intelligence (Arcana)** check determines that the description of his symptoms doesn't match the illness, and sounds more like a *daze* spell effect. If the PCs are able to converse with the horse, it explains that something bit it on the hindquarters before it leapt over the well and crashed the cart. A check of its tail with a DC 8 **Wisdom (Medicine or Perception)** uncovers a pixie arrow.



### 3D. OFFICER'S QUARTERS

*These small wooden houses are modest buildings with slate-shingled rooftops and shuttered windows. Each holds two bed chambers containing a bed, footlocker, a small desk and chair, and a weapon rack.*

Delirious and weak, the four lieutenants assigned to the fort currently occupy the beds in these two buildings with a soldier assigned to each house to see to their needs.

**Treasure:** Each bedchamber contains the officer's personal weapons (longsword, breastplate, heavy steel shield) as well as 3d20 gp in mixed coins. Stealing these items may have consequences.

### 3E. COMMANDER'S QUARTERS

*This large, timber structure has a wide porch on the western side with an unobstructed view of the courtyard. Inside, there are two chambers: a large common room decorated with maps and charts of the area, a paper festooned desk and chairs for meetings, and a small, plainly decorated bedroom.*

Normally, this is the private residence of **Commander Argus Chelmsford** (NG Male Human Fighter 6), but stricken by the crumbling sickness, the officer drifts in and out of consciousness.

Instead, **Sergeant Stanley Bromhead** (NG Male Human Fighter 3), the Commander's aide, occupies the outer room of the building alternating between caring for Chelmsford and handling the business of the fort.

If the PCs haven't finished helping the Healer, yet, Sergeant Bromhead tells them to do that first.

When the PCs arrive here after helping the Healer, read or paraphrase the following:

*An older man with thick sideburns and a drooping mustache looks you over.*

*"Well...I suppose you'll do. Right, I'm Sergeant Bromhead. With Commander Chelmsford and all four lieutenants indisposed, I'm all we've got for leadership. I've six men on guard duty, and two in the barracks caring for*

*the sick. But almost all the rest are down with this gods-blasted sickness.*

*"We can't get water from the well, and there's some beast driving my men away from the spring so we are running short on fresh water. Something strange is going on over in the Mage's Quarters, and one of my patrols is missing. You're the only ones with any strength left to handle things. We are the only thing standing between Threll and the wildlands."*

Once the PCs agree, the sergeant has one more thing to say:

*"I can't help but feel that these incidents are connected. As you go about, try to dig up what's causing all of this."*

As he mentioned, Sergeant Bromhead has three tasks for the PCs. These can be handled in any order the PCs wish. If necessary, Bromhead offers each of the PCs a reward of 100gp for their help.





### #1 Fresh Water

**Location:** Falling Spring

*“Private Hughes drove a blasted wagon into the well and knocked the entire stone wall around it into the hole. Now the thing is good and plugged up. The boy wasn’t even sick. He claimed a ghost made him do it. Probably got lost daydreaming again. That boy never pays attention. I’ve got Hughes pulling weeds in the kitchen garden as punishment.”*

*“Anyway, with the well out of commission, we have to draw fresh water from Falling Spring. But now some beast keeps running off all of the soldiers I’ve sent down there. Go take care of it.”*

**Task:** The PCs need to go to Falling Spring (Area 4a) and deal with the beast keeping the soldiers from gathering water.

**Reward:** As indicated in the description of Area 4a.

### #2 Mischief in the Mage’s Quarters

**Location:** Mage’s Quarters

*“Our mage, Owen Schiess, was one of the first to fall sick. Collapsed in his doorway, he did. We set him up in the Healer’s quarters and there he remains. But since this morning, I’ve gotten reports of strange sounds and lights coming from the mage’s house. I need you to investigate.”*

**Task:** The PCs must enter the Mage’s Quarters (Area 3q) and find out what is causing the disturbance.

**Reward:** As indicated in the description of Area 3q.

### #3 The Missing Patrol

**Location:** Deadfall Valley

*“One of my scouting patrols is overdue. Corporal Josef Adendorff led four soldiers out three days ago. They should have been back yesterday. I’m worried that they might have been sick before they left. They were supposed to head north along the pass through the valley and then back. Go track them down and bring them home.”*

**Task:** The PCs need to follow the trail of the missing patrol and either find the missing men or discover what happened to them.

**Reward:** As indicated in the description of Area 4d.

**Treasure:** If a PC searches the Commander’s quarters unnoticed, they can make a DC 16 **Wisdom (Perception)** check to find the Commander’s personal gear. A +1 *bastard sword*, +1 *shield*, and 500gp in gems. If a PC carries any of these items openly, any soldier in the Falling Spring company easily identifies them as belonging to the Commander and accuses the PC of theft.

### 3F. SOUTH BARRACKS

*Smelling of woodsmoke, sweat, and dirt, the interior of the building consists of a main hall lined with bunks separated by curtain walls for privacy. A chest sits at the end of each bunk and a few tables and chairs provide some space to gather. Three areas are badly charred by the recent fire.*

The soldiers assigned to this building have been moved to the North Barracks (Area 3n).

PCs wishing to investigate the fire can make a DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check. Success reveals that the fire began in three locations: the Southeastern corner, the very center of the building and the north wall. Strangely, there does not seem to be any indication that the flames spread from one location to another, suggesting that three blazes erupted at the same time in different spots.

The garden area outside the barracks also caught fire but there are no windows or doors in the northern wall to allow for the fire to spread into or out of the building in that direction.

The Highgrove fey did not intend to leave any evidence to suggest this was anything but a natural fire. The interference of the PCs prevented this. Thus the PCs may find the fire very suspicious. If the players do not express curiosity about the evidence, the GM can prompt them to make a simple DC 10 **Intelligence** check to conclude that someone set these fires intentionally.

**Treasure:** Digging through the charred remains of the soldier’s footlockers uncovers 150 gp in mixed coins and a masterwork dagger. These items probably go unnoticed by the soldiers if a PC decides to pocket them.



### 3G. COMMISSARY

*This large, open building is thick with the smell of onions and soap. Rows of wooden tables and benches line the walls, and colorful banners hang from the high rafters.*

This dining hall doubles as a meeting hall for the Fort's contingent of soldiers. With the sickness sweeping the Station, the commissary is usually deserted. Meals are still served three times a day by the blacksmith-turned-cook, Louis Bryne (Area 3k).

**Treasure:** The pantry in this building is well-stocked with 100 standard rations. These are freely available to anyone who needs them.

### 3H. HEALER'S QUARTERS

*Constructed of loose river stones and mortar in wooden frames, this house sports small windows caged with wrought iron bars. Planter boxes on the windowsills grow sweet smelling herbs. Inside, most of the single room house is occupied by a large collection of alchemical equipment set up against one wall and a towering case of books on the other. A curtained-off area of beds provides privacy for the Healer's patients.*

This is the domain of **Eduard Reynolds** (LN Male Human commoner [Investigation +5, Medicine +6]), apothecary and healer. A career military doctor, he is a balding man with a perpetual scowl and a brusque bedside manner. Eduard has no trouble dealing with the usual ailments and complaints of the soldiers stationed at Falling Spring. However, since the crumbling sickness struck, he has been able to do nothing but try to ease the suffering of the men. Luckily, Eduard only caught a mild case and, though weak, is out of immediate danger.

Among the patients currently unconscious in the Healer's Quarters is the company's mage, **Owen Schiess** (CN Male Human Wizard 6)

When the PCs first arrive, Eduard weakly greets them with a profound sigh of relief. Read or paraphrase the following:

*"At last! I was afraid my messages hadn't gotten through. Not that it matters now. That fire may have doomed us all more than the sickness. I'm the surgeon, Doctor*

*Reynolds. Luckily, I was only ill for a short while, but I'm still too weak to be of much help. Commander Stilbert and the officers are bedridden and either unconscious or delirious. You, though, you are still strong and can certainly help get the Station back on its feet, if you are willing."*

If the PCs don't automatically agree, the healer offers them a reward of 25 gp each. Once the PCs agree, Eduard describes three tasks that he needs done quickly and specifies that he needs them done in that order. The tasks are listed below, each with a note about the location or locations that the PCs must visit.

#### #1 Diagnosis

**Location:** Healer's Quarters

*"Until I determine what variety of disease is plaguing us, I cannot formulate a remedy. Now, I find myself too weak to even rise and open my books."*

**Task:** The PCs need to help the healer figure out what's making the soldiers sick. He has a list of symptoms (fever, coughing, weakness in the arms and legs, paralysis, and then death).

The PCs must make three successful DC 12 **Intelligence (Nature)** or **Wisdom (Medicine)** checks while comparing information from the healer's books to the list of symptoms to reveal the illness to be Crumbling sickness.

When he is informed of their results, Eduard slaps his head.

*"Of course! I thought it was just devil chills, but I should have known. They are very similar. While the common remedy for devil chills will save lives, crumbling sickness will still leave the entire garrison weak and helpless for days if not weeks. Still that's better than dying I suppose."*

**Reward:** 50 XP

#### #2 Prevention

**Location:** Barracks, Commissary, Officer's Quarters

*"Most diseases spread due to poor conditions. The men are too weak to even get themselves into bed, let alone clean anything. I fear the illness will continue to spread if something isn't done about it."*



**Task:** The PCs must help the Station in making sure the disease doesn't spread. They have to get soldiers into their barracks, clean the bed chambers, sanitize the kitchen, and make sure everyone is washing their hands.

**Reward:** 50 XP

### #3 Missing Ingredients

**Location:** Kitchen Garden, Snallygaster Nest, Ancient Oak

*"When I sent the call for help all I needed was the aqua benedetta serum. That's the base most medicines are made from. But that dratted fire burned up most of my healing herbs. I simply cannot brew the medicine without those herbs. So I need you to get your hands on three ingredients: elf leaf, gaster's feather, and blood wool."*

**Task:** Gather three ingredients necessary for an herbal remedy. The Healer can direct the PCs toward the elf leaf (rosemary). He believes there might be some in the kitchen garden. If asked, the Healer will tell the PCs that the gaster's feather is an actual feather from a beast, and blood wool is a moss that only grows on ancient oak trees.

A successful DC 12 **Intelligence (Investigation or Nature)** reveals that the Station hunter, Langley Dalton, (Stables Area 3p) may have information on local beasts and one of the scouts, Robart Maxwell (Church, Area 3l), may know about local plants.

When the PCs return with the ingredients, the Healer is pleased.

*"Excellent! Now I can brew up the medicine. Here, take these potions. Adventurers always like potions. While I'm working, go talk to Sergeant Bromhead in the commander's house. He'll need your help getting the Station back on its feet."*

**Reward:** Four potions of healing (as well as XP listed in the individual areas)

**GM Note:** It will take the Healer some time to brew

his medicine for the crumbling sickness (at least until the PCs return from Act 2. Even then, the soldiers who are treated with the medicine will be weak for another four days.

The Healer has some supplies that he will sell at standard prices. Ordinarily, the supplies wouldn't be for sale at all, but given how helpful the party has been, he's willing to make an exception. He can sell a healer's kit for 50 gp and has 5 more healing potions to sell for 50 gp each.

### 3I. BLACKSMITHY

*The western side of this structure has no walls, just the overhanging roof to protect from the elements. Forges, anvils, bellows and other smithing tools are arranged in neat rows. The smith's bedchamber and storage lay within the remainder of the structure.*

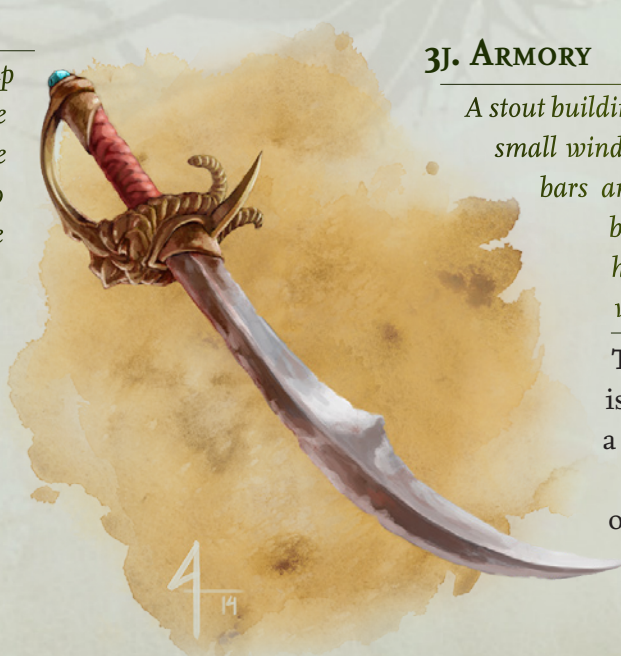
Under normal circumstances, Louis Bryne operates this smithy, repairing the gear of the soldiers, forging horseshoes and crafting the occasional blade or piece of armor for the officers. Now, however, Bryne has been pressed into acting as cook for the fort so the forge is cold.

**Treasure:** Searching the smithy with a DC 10 **Wisdom (Perception)** check uncovers a masterwork longsword, a suit of chainmail, and a breastplate half-etched with the garrison's company symbol. PCs who take these items will certainly be called out as thieves by Bryne or one of the other soldiers.

### 3J. ARMORY

*A stout building of cut stone, this structure has small windows covered with wrought-iron bars and the door is bound in thick, black iron bands. Inside, racks hold row upon row of armor, weapons and ammunition.*

**Trap:** The door to the armory is locked and trapped with a poison needle. Currently Sergeant Bromhead has the only key. Opening the chest without the proper key





causes the needle to spring out, delivering a dose of poison. The creature attempting to open the lock takes 1 piercing damage and 11 (2d10) poison damage, and must succeed on a DC 15 **Constitution** saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. A successful DC 20 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check allows a character to deduce the trap's presence from alterations made to the lock to accommodate the needle. A successful DC 15 **Dexterity** check using thieves' tools disarms the trap. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap.

**Treasure:** The armory contains 1d10 of each simple weapon, one of every martial weapon, and 1d6 of every common type of light and medium armor. There are also 2 full suits of plate mail.

### 3K. KITCHEN

*The fire in the compact hearth in the north wall heats a steaming pot hanging from a chain above it. Herbs, onions, cords of sausage and preserved haunches of boar and venison hang from beams overhead. Jars of spices, bottles of oils, knives, cleavers and other cooking implements litter the tables against the eastern and southern and crates of supplies are stacked in the corners.*

Before the sickness swept through, Corporal Dennis Folborge operated the fort's kitchen. Unfortunately, he is one of those struck down and is currently in the South Barracks.

Much to his disgust, **Louis Bryne** (CG Male Human **commoner**) now runs this kitchen. Bryne is not a soldier. He was hired by the Commander to man the forges. His father was a chef in the capital city of Solaerin, but Bryne hates cooking. However, he fears Sergeant Bromhead more. So now he cooks and unloads his frustration and simmering anger on anyone he comes across.

PCs arriving to ask for elf leaf must succeed at a DC 12 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check to get Bryne's help. If successful, Bryne refers to elf leaf by its other name (rosemary) and accompanies the PCs to the garden.

North of the Kitchen is a garden where Folborge grew herbs and vegetables. **Private Hughes** (NG Male Human **guard**) currently plucks weeds and

tends to the garden as punishment for wrecking the well. A successful DC 10 **Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals that there are no elf leaf plants in the garden but a few dug up holes are littered with elf leaf needles.

Hughes does not really know anything about gardening and accidentally tore up all of the elf leaf and threw the plants into a compost heap along the western wall. If Bryne is helping the PCs, he flies into a rage at this and berates Hughes.

Digging through the pile with a DC 10 **Wisdom (Perception)** check uncovers several stalks of elf leaf, enough for the Healer's purposes.

**Reward:** 50 XP for finding the elf leaf

### 3L. CHURCH OF LOSINIA

*The front of this long building displays the serene moon and face symbol of the goddess Losinia. Beyond the varnished doors is a long, high-peaked chamber. Colorful banners illustrated with woven religious scenes hang from the walls above a bare wooden floor. At the far end of the temple, an altar rests below the silvery disc of the moon, representing Losinia.*

This plain but serviceable church serves the spiritual needs of the soldiers. Services are usually held every four days but have been suspended due to the sickness in the fort. The resident priestess, Margareta Witt, can currently be found in her quarters (Area 3m)

One of the fort's scouts, **Robart Maxwell** (CN Male Halfling Rogue 1) sweeps the floor in the church. Maxwell is sweet on Priestess Witt, so is helping out however he can.

If the PCs ask about blood wool, Maxwell can tell them that he recently spotted some of the moss in a small valley of old oaks about 3 miles south-east of Falling Spring Station. He can sketch a quick map to guide the PCs there, if asked.

**Treasure:** The church has gold and silver altar ornaments worth about 500gp. But stealing them would surely be noticed and would earn them the ire of both the soldiers and the Church of Losinia.



### 3M. PRIEST'S QUARTERS

*This is a simple but well-kept home near the western wall. Inside there is a bed, a yellow quilt along one wall and a table and chairs set in the middle of the room upon a bright green rug. Opposite the bed, a neatly organized kitchen is tucked into one corner.*

The fort's priestess, **Margareta Witt** (LG Female **acolYTE**) rests in the bed. Young for her position, Witt is a good judge of character but is easily distracted. She is currently bedridden and weakened by the sickness. However, once per day, she can cast one of her spells if the need is great.

**Treasure:** Under Margareta's bed is her +1 mace.

### 3N. NORTH BARRACKS

*Smelling of sweat, dirt, and weapon oil, the interior of the building consists of a main hall lined with bunks separated by curtain walls for privacy. A chest sits at the end of each bunk and a few tables and chairs provide some space to gather.*

This hall is filled with around 40 sick soldiers both on bunks and in bedrolls on the floor. **Privates Cole, Graham, and Baneman** (Human **guards**) care for their fellow soldiers.

### 3O. STORAGE

*This long building has half a dozen sets of double doors opening on the Northern side. Inside, crates and bales of all sizes line the walls.*

The door to this building is secured with a simple lock (**Dexterity** DC 15). The goods and gear inside are sealed in crates, increasing the difficulty of finding specific items. PCs who search the storage building can find most common equipment with a 1d6 hour search.

### 3P. STABLE AND CORRALS

*A large stable and hayloft stands to just one side of a fenced corral where a half-dozen unhitched horses crop grass.*

A pair of siblings, **Ivora and Ulla Gympson** (CN Female Dwarf **commoners**), care for the horses. They wear scraps of cloth over their mouths and noses to protect themselves from the sickness and have no desire to interact with anyone until the illness has passed. If the PCs ask about the horses or wish to take some, the sisters back away, holding their breath, and gesture for them to take what they wish.





The hunter **Langley Dalton** (CG Male Half-Elf **scout**) can be found in the corral training his horse. If asked about gaster feathers, he refuses to help and tries to warn the PCs away from tangling with the beast:

*“It’s a one-eyed half-bird, half-lizard with tentacles and razor-sharp teeth! Their shrill whistle means death! Stay away from it! I ain’t gonna lead you to your own grave!”*

A successful DC 10 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check convinces Dalton to impart some more helpful information. He reveals the location of a Snallygaster nest on a high cliff ledge about 2 hours northeast of the fort.

A PC who succeeds at the Persuasion check by more than 5 (or later succeeds at a DC 12 **Intelligence [Investigation]** check) also learns from Dalton that, while Snallygasters are blood drinkers they have a weakness for alcohol. Even the smell of alcohol can act as a lure. However, upon consuming alcohol, Snallygasters become enraged and violent.

### 3Q. MAGE’S QUARTERS

*A large two-story house with no windows on the ground floor and only a heavily reinforced door on the south wall. The second floor slightly overhangs the first but the windows on that floor are secured with heavy shutters.*

The inside of the home is dusty and cluttered. The ground floor contains a wizard’s laboratory, but the instruments have been smashed and strewn about. A single flight of stairs along the north wall leads up to a second-floor loft bedroom. This second floor covers half the area of the first and is open and overlooks the ground floor past a wooden guardrail.

When the fort’s mage, Owen Schiess, contracted the crumbling sickness, he resisted going to the Healer’s Quarters for a long time, trying to find a magical cure. Far too late, he admitted defeat. Dizzy and confused he made it to his own doorway before collapsing. The mage was taken to the Healers but no one thought to check his house.

**Creatures:** Unfortunately, Schiess failed to secure his magical apparatuses before the sickness

overcame him. When the fey launched their spree of fire and sabotage they released Mister Fibs, the mage’s captive dust mephit. Unable to leave the house due to the magical collar around his neck, Mister Fibs is trapped and now rages around the dwelling.

When the PCs enter, he is perched on the second floor railing and attacks anyone who enters. Enraged past reason, Mister Fibs fights to the death.

### **MISTER FIBS (DUST MEPHIT)**

*Small elemental, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 17 (5d6)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5 (-3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +2, Stealth +4

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Auran, Terran

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

#### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Death Burst.** When the mephit dies, it explodes in a burst of dust. Each creature within 5 feet of it must then succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. A blinded creature can repeat the saving throw on each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Binding Collar.** Mister Fibs wears a magical collar that inhibits his spell-like abilities and prevents him from leaving the house. It is also supposed to suppress his blinding breath, but Mister Fibs has damaged the device enough that this aspect is not functioning.



## ACTIONS

**Alchemical Items** The dust mephit has found the mage's *handy haversack* and it is filled with a variety of alchemical concoctions that Mister Fibs throws as weapons. He has access to 1d4 of the following items:

- *Alchemist's Fire*
- *Acid* (Works like alchemist's fire, but deals acid damage.)
- *Tanglefoot Bag* (The bag is thrown as a ranged attack. Targets struck by the bag are stuck in rapidly-hardening resin and cannot move for 2d4 rounds. A DC 14 Strength check or 15 points of damage to the resin with a slashing weapon frees the target.)
- *Thunderstone* (These stones can be thrown at or near creatures. Targets within 10 feet must make a DC 11 Constitution save or be deafened for one hour).
- *Smokestick* (This alchemically treated wooden stick instantly creates thick, opaque smoke when burned. The smoke fills a 10-foot cube that heavily obscures vision. The stick is consumed after 1 round. The smoke dissipates naturally after 1 minute, but can be cleared in 1d3 rounds by a strong breeze.)

GMs may include other alchemical items at their discretion.

**Blinding Breath (Recharge 6):** The mephit exhales a 15-foot cone of blinding dust. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

After they deal with Mister Fibs, the PCs can investigate the mage's home. A DC 10 Perception check locates the mephit's cage. It is obvious that someone broke the cage from from the outside.

**Faerie Clue:** Searching the area around the cage, a DC 20 **Wisdom (Perception)** check allows a PC to

find a tiny hammer that the sprite's used to smash the lock. A DC 12 **Intelligence** or **Intelligence (Nature)** check reveals that it was not made by normal, humanoid hands.

Schiess' personal library is also located on the second floor. These reference tomes grant a +2 bonus on any **Intelligence (Arcana)** check. They also allow the PCs to identify the Sylvan symbol found by the Fort's gates without needing to make a skill check.

**Treasure:** *Handy Haversack* (assuming the PCs defeated Mister Fibs), as well as three arcane scrolls (*endure elements*, *identify*, and *mount*)

**Reward:** 100 XP for defeating the mephit plus 100 XP for uncovering the clues

## 4. NEARBY LOCATIONS

The area around Falling Spring Station is mountainous and wild, full of high peaks, winding narrow valleys, and patches of ancient forests.

**Random Encounters:** Many wild beasts and creatures inhabit the Westwatch mountains. GMs who want to add additional challenges for their players can use the following monsters from the **5E System Reference Document (SRD)** or encounters of a similar challenge rating.

D6	ENCOUNTER
1	1 death dog (Challenge 1)
2	3 goblins (Challenge 1)
3	1 bat swarm (Challenge 1/4)
4	2d3 diseased giant rats (1/4-CR 1)
5	3 orcs (Challenge 1)
6	1d4 giant wolf spiders (Challenge 1/4-2)

**Travel:** While the exact time it takes to travel between adventure locations is not crucial to this adventure, PCs who travel along the mountain pass move at a normal rate but off-road travel does take longer due to the twisting, uneven terrain. GMs who require precise measurements should consider any travel away from the pass to take an additional 1 1/2 times as long.



#### 4A. CLEARING OUT FALLING SPRING

Only a half-mile to the east is the bubbling spring that gave Falling Spring Station its name. Located in a clearing in a small but thick grove of trees at the base of a cliff, the spring burbles out of a crack in the rock and falls 25 feet down into a pool. At the center of the pool is a 10-foot wide, rocky island, bare except for a pale glowing stone.

Uttering shrill cries, a big cat-like creature with glowing eyes and a powerfully muscled tail that ends in a bony club paces back and forth in front of the pool.

In order to further weaken the human fort, sprites from the Highgrove Court lured a female ball-tailed wampus to the spring and tricked her with their spells to make her believe that her cub is marooned on the island in the middle of the pond. The “cub” is actually an enspelled rock. Unfortunately for the poor mother wampus cannot swim, so she can only pace back and forth, wailing pitifully.

**Creatures:** Fixated on her “cub”, the ball-tailed wampus does not immediately notice the PCs when they arrive. Once they move within 100 feet however she may detect them with **Perception** and her keen smell.

The following are several skill checks that the PCs may find useful during this encounter:

- DC 10 **Wisdom (Insight):** Notice the wampus’ fixation on the rock
- DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception):** Notice the glow emanating from the rock matches the wampus’ eyes.
- DC 12 **Intelligence (Arcana):** Along with *detect* magic, recognize the illusion and compulsion effects on the rock.
- DC 16 **Intelligence (Arcana):** recognize the spell on the rock has hallmarks of fey magic
- DC 16 **Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Insight):** Identify the maternal behavior of the creature
- DC 15 **Intelligence (Arcana):** Identify the creature as a wampus.

- DC 16 **Intelligence (Arcana or Nature):** Recall that fey spells are sometimes vulnerable to immersion in water.

The wampus attacks anyone who she thinks is coming near the spring. But if the PCs knock the rock into the water, they can break the spell. As soon as the rock is submerged, the wampus realizes that her baby is not in trouble here and flees.

#### **BALL-TAILED WAMPUS**

*Medium beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 30 (5d8+8)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +7

**Senses** passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

#### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Keen Smell:** The wampus has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.





**Pounce:** If the wampus moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a bite attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the wampus can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

**Running Leap:** With a 10-foot running start, the wampus can long jump up to 25 feet.

**Whomp:** The wampus' tail can deliver a powerful, disorienting blow. A creature struck by this attack must make a DC 14 Constitution save or be incapacitated for 1 round. If the strike is a critical hit and the target fails its save, it is instead incapacitated for 1d4 rounds.

#### **ACTIONS**

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage.

**Ball-tail:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

**Reward:** 250 XP for breaking the spell and freeing the wampus OR 200 XP for defeating the wampus in combat.

### **4B. FINDING BLOOD WOOL MOSS**

The closest source of blood wool moss is a small grove of oaks in a valley three miles south of Falling Spring Station. Locating the valley is not a difficult task.

If the PCs followed the directions given to them by Maxwell, the halfling scout, they quickly find the valley. If they did not talk to Maxwell, a successful DC 10 **Intelligence (Nature)** combined with a successful DC 12 **Survival** check allows the PCs to find the valley. If the check fails, PCs can try again with a +1 DC penalty for each subsequent attempt. If they fail three times, the PCs don't find the valley until nightfall and must face the grove's resident in the dark.

When the PCs reach the valley, read or paraphrase the following:

---

*A strand of towering oaks fills a small valley bordered by sharp peaked mountains. Growing close together, these ancient trees have stood for hundreds of years and will probably stand for a hundred more, if left alone. A reddish moss coats the uppermost branches of some of the tallest oaks.*

---

The PCs could attempt to climb up the 100 foot tall trees. This requires a DC 12 **Strength (Athletics)** check to move up at one-quarter normal speed. Climbing down only requires a successful DC 10 **Strength (Athletics)** check. However, failing a check by more than 5 results in the PC falling and possibly taking serious damage. Allow the PCs to attempt a DC 10 **Intelligence (Nature)**, **Wisdom (Perception)**, or **Wisdom (Survival)** check to locate a clearing caused by a recently fallen tree.

**Creature:** While the PCs work to gather some of the Blood Wool moss, their presence disturbs one of the residents of the valley, a moss troll named **Oakrip** (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3).

The troll travels by leaping from tree to tree, hardly ever touching the ground except to feed. To notice the approach of the troll, the PCs must succeed at a DC 14 **Wisdom (Perception)** check.

When he first attacks, Oakrip plunges from above, striking at the character farthest from the group. He then leaps back into the trees to strike with his long reach. Oakrip always tries to attack from above, climbing up trees and clawing at his foe's heads. He prefers to strike at the weakest looking foes first. If faced with a large fire or if he is reduced to 6 hp or lower, Oakrip flees, moving out of sight of his foes and using his *tree shape* ability to disguise himself.

---

*With a howl of glee, a large and lanky moss-colored humanoid leaps down from a nearby tree its elongated, toothy snout grinning.*

---

### **OAKRIP THE MOSS TROLL**

*Large giant (shapechanger), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 85 (10d10+30)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 10 ft.



**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

16 (+3) 17 (+3) 16 (+3) 9 (-1) 12 (+1) 7 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +5 (+7 while in vegetation)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Giant

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**False Appearance (Tree Form Only).** While in tree from the moss troll is indistinguishable from a normal tree.

**Fear of Fire.** The moss troll becomes frightened as long as it is within 30 feet of a visible fire or an open flame at least the size of a torch.

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

**Regeneration.** The moss troll regains 5 hit points at the start of its turn. If the moss troll takes fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the troll's next turn. The moss troll only dies if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

**Tree Climber.** While climbing in trees the moss troll's climb speed increases to 30 ft., and it gains advantage on initiative checks.

**Tree Shape.** The moss troll can use its action to polymorph into a moss-covered tree. In tree form it gains resistance to bludgeoning and piercing damage, its speed becomes 0 and it can't benefit from increases to its speed.

### ACTIONS

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

**Claw Attack:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) slashing damage.

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

### REACTIONS

**Slow Fall:** When the moss troll falls while climbing trees, it can reduce the effective

distance it falls by 30 feet for determining fall damage. If this reduces the fall damage to 0, the moss troll lands on its feet.

**Treasure:** Oakrip keeps a few trinkets in a hollow tree a few hundred feet away from the battle. A DC 9 **Wisdom (Survival)** check allows the PCs to track the troll back to his hoard:

- A straw basket containing various gemstones - agate (10 gp), azurite (10 gp), freshwater pearl (15 gp), milky quartz (55 gp), deep blue spinel (110 gp).
- An old sock filled with 59 gp, 300 sp, 1100 cp
- A masterwork warhammer (312 gp)

**Reward:** In addition to the XP for defeating Oakrip, award each of the PCs an extra 25 XP for finding the Blood Wool moss.

## 4C. GATHERING A GASTER'S FEATHER

Finding the gaster's feather means venturing out into the wilds of the Westwatch Mountains. If the PCs spoke to Langley Dalton they learned of a snallygaster nest about 2 hours northeast of the fort. If they did not speak to the hunter, a successful DC 10 **Intelligence (Nature)** combined with a successful DC 12 **Wisdom (Survival)** check allows the PCs to track down the beast. If the check fails, PCs can try again with a +1 DC penalty for each subsequent attempt. If they fail three times, the snallygaster will attack them on the trail up the cliff, no matter what they do.

Once the PCs arrive at the cliff, read or paraphrase the following:

*A few hours northeast of Falling Spring Station the terrain becomes jagged with high cliffs, twisting mountain paths and steep drops into dark crevasses. As you approach one such trail, a shrill whistle pierces the air. Gazing upward you can just make out a nest of branches, bones and rotting flesh perched on a ledge midway up the side of the high cliff face. A narrow trail winds back and forth up the side of the cliff but the trail is very exposed and something in that horrid nest is moving.*

**Hazard:** Climbing the 200-foot high cliff face is easy but the trail upward is so narrow that the PCs



must go on foot and walk single file. Those who fall off the trail in one point, plummet 30 feet to the switchback below, suffering 3d6 points of damage.

**Creatures:** If they choose to follow this path, the snallygaster (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 4) attacks while they are part way up the trail. Any creature standing on the narrow trail who is hit by an attack must make a DC 10 **Dexterity** save or be knocked off the trail.

PCs can use alcohol as a lure, causing it to attack immediately rather than waiting for the PCs to climb onto the narrow trail. Just opening a bottle is enough to attract the snallygaster's attention. If the PCs failed their wilderness checks too many times, however, this trick won't work.

When combat begins, read or paraphrase the following:

*With a terrible whistling cry, a lean, lizard-like beast soars down from the sky on great dark wings. Its single eye stares out from a cruel face and tentacles flash out from inside its sharp, toothy beak.*

## SNALLYGASTER

*Medium aberration, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 30 (4d10+12)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

17 (+3) 15 (+2) 16 (+3) 5 (-3) 14 (+2) 9 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Aerial Charge** The snallygaster can hurl itself downward through the air at tremendous speed, using the force to inflict terrible wounds with its lance-like beak. When the snallygaster moves 20 feet downward at an angle of 45 degrees or more, it deals double damage with its beak attack.

**Multiattack** The snallygaster makes three attacks: one with its beak and two with its claws or one with its tentacles and two with its claws.

**Beak:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

**Claw:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

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

**Grab** A target struck by the snallygaster's tentacle attack must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained. The grabbed creature can make a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw each round to escape. Failure to make the save means the target is restrained until the snallygaster releases it or dies.

**Sucking Tentacles** A snallygaster uses its retractable tentacles to suck blood from its victim's already open wounds. Any creature that took damage from the snallygaster's beak attack that the snallygaster successfully restrains with its grab ability takes 4 points of damage at the beginning of its next turn. A snallygaster cannot make attacks with its beak in any round that it uses its tentacles in this way.

**Treasure:** The greasy feathers of the snallygaster can be taken from the dead creature or from among the bones in the nest. Additionally, the nest contains a collection of items, all that remains of a dwarven tinker snatched up by the snallygaster a week or so ago. The tinker's pouch contains a matched pair of masterwork cold iron daggers (322 gp each) and a pouch containing a 100gp emerald and 56 gold pieces).

**Reward:** 200 XP for defeating the snallygaster. Award each PC 25 XP for gathering the gaster feathers.

## 4D. SEARCH FOR THE MISSING PATROL

According Sergeant Bromhead, Corporal Adendorff's missing patrol headed north-northwest toward the end of the pass about 25



miles away. Unfortunately, the patrol only covered 12 miles before they succumbed to the effects of the crumbling sickness and turned off the main road.

The PCs locate where the patrol left the main road and entered rougher terrain. From this point, following the three-day old trail of the patrol requires a DC 14 **Wisdom (Survival)** check. (**GM Note:** For ease of play, it may be best to only require two checks once off the road.) If they fail, have them face a random encounter before they are able to locate the patrol.

Adendorff's patrol found its way into a small dell, blocked at one end by an old rock slide. The dell is about 200 feet long and 100 feet wide with a crude, half-built shelter constructed into the rock side with branches, mud and stones. The soldiers' trail leads right to this strange "fort".

When the PCs reach the dell, read or paraphrase the following:

---

*Following the trail of the missing patrol, you descend into a small valley or dell littered with boulders with an old rock slide blocking the far end. Oddly, there is... something...built into the side of the rock slide. Of very recent construction, the structure of mud, branches, and stones appears to be a crude, walled dwelling of some sort. Someone has planted a long pole in front of it and a pair of underpants flies from it like a flag.*

---

Confused and deluded by their illness, the human soldiers believe they are a band of heroic adventurers who must defend the dell and their "fort".

The Band of Five (and their real names)

- Great Aden, the Wizard (Corporal Josef Adendorff)
- Gert the Rogue, stealthy thief (Private Gert)
- Bordan the Barbarian Queen (Private Bordan)
- Hawk O'the Jug, Chronicler and Bard (Private Hawkins)
- Her Holiness, High Priest Greeneva (Private Green)

Once any PC gets within 60 feet from the fort, read or paraphrase the following:



Suddenly, a rock flies out from behind the wall of the crude fort and clatters to the ground perhaps 20 feet away.

"Hold villains!" Says a nasally voice with an overly dramatic flair. "That was but a taste of my power!"

There is a pause, during which you look at the rock for a moment. It is just a rock.

A man appears at the top of the fort. He still wears a dirty, torn soldier's uniform but has a bedroll with a hole cut in it and badly painted with squiggles and shapes draped over his shoulders like a mantle. "Behold!" He says. "I am the Great Aden, Wizard and leader of the Band of Five! And you are surrounded!"

Four other people stride out of the "fort" and fan out and as they strike dramatic poses, the Great Aden makes introductions.

Dressed in a private's uniform coated with black mud and tar, an overweight young man holds a short stick like a dagger. "The stealthy thief, Gert the Rogue," says the Great Aden. "You will never see his blade coming!"

A woman with sticks and feathers tied into her hair and uniform swings a tree branch and growls at you.



"The ground trembles," *The Great Aden* cries out. "At the coming of *Bordan the Barbarian Queen!*"

Holding a mace made from sticks and bones, a woman wearing a dirty white blanket like a poncho and battered cookpot as a crown chants something under her breath. "Bow!" intones *The Great Aden*. "Bow your heads before Her Holiness, High Priest *Greeneva!*"

Finally, a man wearing a pair of tight leggings over his uniform and carrying a large clay jug blows a few notes on the jug before grinning at you with unwashed teeth. "Yes!" *the Great Aden* yells. "Your defeat shall be sung of by our personal bard and chronicler, *Hawk O'the Jug!*"

Luckily for the PCs, the Band of Five doesn't actually have them surrounded. Additionally, the soldiers managed to lose their weapons along the way and have made makeshift replacements suitable to their new roles. Unfortunately, they believe that the PCs are enemies and, in fact, are the ones who have infected the fort with the sickness.

While it is possible to talk the Band of the Five out of combat, their illness makes this difficult. PCs attempting a parlay must succeed at two consecutive DC 16 **Charisma (Persuasion)** checks. In addition, on the way back to the fort, the Five continue to be suspicious, so any stray comments from the PCs require a new DC 16 **Charisma (Persuasion)** check. Failing any of these checks (or not attempting to be friendly to them in the first place) results in combat.

During combat, the soldiers make comments and take actions that are appropriate for their roles:

**The Great Aden:** Engages at range by yelling "Magic Missile!" and hurling his "magic missiles" (aka rocks) at the nearest party members while calling out tactical commands to the rest of the Band of Five.

**Gert:** Yells "Can't see me!" and tries to flank, whereupon he screams "backstab" before attacking with his dagger

**Bordan:** Howling about all the things she hates (rocks, mellon, Gert...etc), she attacks the nearest foe.

**Greeneva:** Throws mud "spells" while calling out the spells name (bless, command,...etc.). If one

of her party is injured she throws mud at them and yells "Cure Wounds" (roll attack and damage normally)

**Hawk:** Blows a beat into his jug while singing about how inspired the rest of his team must be. If attacked he will poke with his spear while singing for help.

The Band of Five is invincible (they think) so they never retreat.

## THE GREAT ADEN

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

11 (+0) 14 (+2) 12 (+1) 11 (+0) 13 (+1) 11 (+0)

**Skills** Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

**Senses** passive Perception 15

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

**Keen Hearing and Sight:** Corporal Adendorff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack:** Corporal Adendorf makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

"Wizard's Staff" (stick) *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) bludgeoning damage.

"Magic Missiles" (rocks) *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (2d4+1) bludgeoning damage.

### ITEMS

**Equipment** *potion of healing*, rocks, crude "wizard's staff," breastplate

For conciseness, one stat block has been used for all four of the remaining members of the Band of Five. They have similar stats with the main difference being their gear and their tactics. These differences are reflected in the text below.



## MEMBERS OF THE BAND OF FIVE (4)

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

**Armor Class** 16 (chain shirt, shield)

**Hit Points** 11 (2d8 + 2)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

13 (+1) 12 (+1) 12 (+1) 10 (+0) 11 (+0) 10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception +2

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Makeshift Weapons** *Melee or Ranged Weapon*

*Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:*

Gert the Rogue: stick dagger 2 (1d2 + 1) piercing damage

Bordan the Barbarian Queen: club 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage

High Priest Greeneva: light mace 6 (1d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage or thrown mud "holy spells" (1d2, incapacitated for 1 round on a critical hit)

Hawk O'the Jug: sharpened stick shortspear 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage

To succeed at this encounter the PCs must defeat the Band of Five, hopefully without killing them, and bring them back to Falling Spring Station to be healed. How the heroes do this is up to them.

Characters can deal nonlethal damage with a normal weapon if they take a -4 penalty to attack rolls. Also when the amount of nonlethal damage equals a foe's current hit points they become staggered and when it exceeds the current hit points they fall unconscious.

**Treasure:** The Band of Five have hidden their "party pool" in a leather bag beneath a pile of rubble within the fort (DC 12 **Wisdom [Perception]** check). The pool contains 10gp, 32sp and two *potions of healing*.

## TONE OF FIGHTING THE FIVE

This is intended to be a humorous encounter so GMs are encouraged to play up the absurdity of the entire situation. Have the Band of the Five shout meta-gaming comments like "That's a +1 to hit!" or "Their Saving Throws are too high!" Have the foes pull out other strange items, claiming they are magical artifacts and then are confused as to why they won't work. Since the Band of the Five don't pose a huge threat to the PCs, GMs can fudge their hit points to prolong the encounter - just make sure the players are having fun.

Also in the bag is Adendorff's journal. The last several pages contain raving diatribes about the merits of wizardry over soldiery as the soldier's brain began to succumb to his illness. However, a few lines stand out:

*"Small flying people. Laughing at me. Always laughing. I run after them but they flee toward the setting sun. Does the sun create them? Or do I?"*

*"Goblin scouts. I detect them with my eyes far across the valley. Magic of my mind blasts them. Seem resistant. Or too far away. They move up the pass from the North. Who are they scouting for? Who?!?!"*

**Rewards:** 25 XP for locating the patrol; 200 XP for "defeating" the Band of Five. Deduct 50 XP for each patrol member killed by the PCs.

## 5. ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE (CONCLUSION OF ACT ONE)

After the PCs return to the fort, the GM may allow the PCs to help Healer Reynolds concoct and administer his healing draught to the sick soldiers. By the time the PCs leave the fort to go chase down the fey in Act Two there will be at least 10 soldiers in the fort on their feet. They are weak but can do things like man the gates and walls.

**Analyzing the Evidence:** By the end of this part,



the PCs should have gathered enough information to realize that a local band of fey are responsible for the issues at the Station. If the PCs do not make the connection, then have Healer Reynolds or Sergeant Bromstead bring the possibility to their attention.

Once they guess the fey are somehow responsible, the only thing to do is go out and confront them. Speaking to Bromstead about this makes the old sergeant nod slowly.

---

*“There is a tribe of fey some distance to the West. We’ve not had much contact with them. But if they’ve brought this disease upon us, then someone—and by ‘someone’ I mean you—needs to go out there and find out if this is an attack or something else entirely. Should you decide that these fey are hostile, then teach them the consequences of messing with us!”*

---

**Reward:** 100 XP if the PCs put the evidence together on their own.

## PART TWO: CONFRONTING THE FEY

Tracking down the fey based on the information gathered in Act One is not an easy task. If the PCs spoke to Sergeant Bromstead they know a fey tribe lives off to the West and if they read Corporal Adendorff’s journal they know “small flying people” fled from him in that same direction. Some of the other clues may provide additional information. This is enough to get the PCs pointed in the right direction.

After traveling at least 15 miles from the fort, the PCs reach the highest point of the pass. From there, they can spot the top of the unnaturally tall oak tree that forms the heart of the Highgrove (DC 12 **Perception** check). It is still almost another 20 miles to the first encounter, A Scout and a Jack.

The GM can adjust the exact distance the PCs travel to reach the Highgrove fey to include random encounters or add their own design elements into the game.

### 6. A SCOUT AND A JACK

After traveling for a time, the PCs reach the edge of the lands claimed by the Highgrove Court and encounter one of their scouts.

Read or paraphrase the following:

---

*Twisting mountain trails, high cliffs and stone-choked passes give way to a wide wooded valley. Entering the forest is much like stepping into another world. The trees tower overhead. Animals abound and seem unconcerned or unafraid of your presence. There are few weeds on the ground, instead flowers and sweet smelling plants line the trails between the oak, yew and rowan trees.*

---

Have the PCs roll **Wisdom (Perception)** checks. Anyone who surpasses a DC 12 can hear faint music coming from a clearing up ahead. PCs who have visited the Verdant Court in the Feyweald, east of Solaerin, or who succeed on a DC 16 **Intelligence (Nature)** check recognize the signs around them and know they are probably entering lands claimed by the fey.

When they reach the edge of the clearing read or paraphrase the following:

---

*Sitting on a rock in the middle of a small 20-foot wide and 15-foot long clearing is a tiny creature with the upper body of an elven woman and the lower legs of a cricket. With her eyes closed and her gossamer wings slowly waving back and forth, she rubs her legs together producing beautiful fiddle-like music. The tiny fey is so caught up in her music that she seems unaware that she is not alone.*

*Dressed in a tattered vest, trousers, and a red cape, a small roguish-looking man with horns, ink-black skin, and a beard slowly creeps toward the tiny musician. He fingers a bloody knife at his belt and grins a wicked grin as he moves ever closer.*

---

Playing her music and basically not paying attention to much else, **Jili** the grig perches on a half-buried boulder in the middle of the forest clearing. She is supposed to be scouting for the Queen but has gotten distracted. She notices any PCs who enters the clearing without making an effort to be stealthy, however, she is at a disadvantage on her Perception checks otherwise.







Also in this clearing is **Spring-Heeled-Jack**, another agent of the Queen, who has been slowly sneaking up on the grig all morning. Jack doesn't really mean to hurt the grig. His intention is only to catch her, make her play her music for him for a day or two, and then release her. However, the PCs don't know that.

If the PCs wait and watch, they witness Jack grab the screaming Jili and leap away with her into the trees toward the west.

If they call out a warning or enter the clearing to interfere, Jack immediately yells at Jili in Sylvan, "Run! Warn the Queen!" He then attacks the PCs to give the grig a chance to flee. During combat, Jack uses his frightening gaze to panic his foes. Then he uses his vault ability to gain the high ground in a nearby tree before leaping down to stab at any fleeing enemies. If reduced to 10 hit points or lower, Jack leaps away, moving west to sound the alarm.

## **SPRING-HEELED JACK**

*Small fey, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 32 (5d8+12)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

15 (+2) 21 (+5) 14 (+2) 10 (+0) 10 (+0) 13 (+1)

**Skills** Athletics +7, Stealth +7

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Innate Spellcasting:** Spring-Heeled Jack's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. He can innately cast *passwall* once per day, requiring no material components. Additionally, he is constantly under the effects of *feather fall* and *pass without trace*.

### **ACTIONS**

**Fiery Breath (Recharge 6):** Spring-Heeled Jack can breathe a 15-foot cone of fire once every 6

rounds as a standard action. This attack deals 2d4 fire damage. A successful DC 12 Dexterity save halves the damage.

**Frightening Gaze** When a creature that can see Spring-Heeled Jack's eyes starts its turn within 10 feet of him, he can force it to make a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw if Spring-Heeled Jack isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. A creature that fails the save is frightened. The frightened creature must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn, becoming incapacitated for 1d6 rounds on a failure or ending the effect on a success. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Spring-Heeled Jack until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Spring-Heeled Jack in the meantime, it must immediately make the save.

**Masterwork Dagger:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon*

*Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Vault** Spring-Heeled Jack is capable of leaping great heights and distances. In addition to having an advantage for Athletics checks made for jumping, Spring-Heeled Jack possesses the ability to spring up to 20 feet vertically as part of its movement. Spring-Heeled Jack can move horizontally during this leap as long as the cumulative distance moved is equal to or less than 20 feet. This ability cannot be used again until Spring-Heeled Jack lands on a stable surface, but may be used twice in the same round if he lands between vaults.

### **ITEMS**

*bird feather token, tree feather token*

## **JILI THE GRIG**

*Tiny fey, neutral good*

**Armor Class** 14

**Hit Points** 3 (1d4+1)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft.



**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

5 (-3) 18 (+5) 13 (+1) 10 (+0) 13 (+1) 14 (+2)

**Skills** Performance +4, Stealth +7

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Innate Spellcasting:** The grig's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The grig can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**3/day each:** *disguise self, entangle, invisibility* (self only)

**Magic Resistance:** The grig has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Fiddle** Grigs can rub their legs together like a cricket to create a pleasant sound like that of a tiny fiddle. Agrig can create a catchy tune that compels any creature within a 20-foot spread to dance and caper, unless they succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom save. Creatures that fail are compelled to dance and shuffle their feet, and are effectively incapacitated as long as the grig continues to fiddle. Affected creatures can attempt a new DC 12 Wisdom save to overcome the effect. A grig can maintain this effect for up to 10 rounds per day by concentrating.

**Longbow:** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

**Short Sword:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* -1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 slashing damage.

**Development:** If Jili escapes, she flies away screaming. PCs can follow the sound of her cries for help with a DC 12 **Wisdom (Survival)** check.

If the PCs capture either Jili or Jack, either fey can be questioned rather easily. They owe the Queen their service but not their silence.

- The fey nearby are of the Highgrove Court. They dwell several miles to the west around an ancient Skyfather Oak.
- Queen Latharna rules the fey along with her daughter, Azora
- A goblin named Groultooth has bound Azora with a dark enchantment and is forcing the Queen to play tricks on the humans.
- The Queen dares not move against Groultooth.

Either captive gives directions to the Highgrove lands in exchange for their freedom.

**Reward:** 225 XP for defeating Spring-Heeled Jack and following the grig or questioning fey prisoners.

## 7. THE GARRULOUS GROVE

Either by following the fleeing grig or by making use of the directions provided by the captured fey, the PCs enter the territory of the Highgrove Court and soon blunder into an area of the woods altered by the mischievous fey. This is the Garrulous Grove.

*The gently rolling, forested hills become even more beautiful the deeper you go. Ahead is a grove of slender yew trees with a carved stone block rising up in the center. As you approach, flowers appear more and more frequently until blossoms blanket the path in a dazzling variety of colors and the air grows thick with their heady aroma.*

**Hazard:** For their own amusement, the fey have cultivated strange flowers here, bred and cross-bred with magical varieties until they achieved three unique forms: babbling blossoms, foxglove flares, and dazies.

**Babbling Blossoms** (CR 0 or CR 1/8 for many blossoms): These round, azure flowers have been enchanted to begin talking as soon as they detect movement within a 5-foot radius. The loud, obnoxious voices they use can vary in terms of gender, pitch, and other vocal qualities. Babbling blossoms tend to babble about what attracted their attention. For example, "Hey look at this guy!" or "Nice sword!" or "Where you going, huh?" A *sleep* spell renders the blossoms mute for the duration of the spell.





If many babbling blossoms grow in proximity to each other, their combined babbling produces a resonant effect. When one blossom begins speaking, any other blossoms within its range also begins speaking and so on. A field of babbling blossoms can deafen creatures within 30 feet (**Constitution** save DC 11 to negate). A successful save renders a target immune to babbling blossoms for 24 hours.

*Foxglove Flares* (CR 1/8): When a living creature comes within 5 feet of this bright purple, bell-shaped flower, the plant emits a blinding light. Any creature within the 5-foot radius of the flower must make a DC 11 **Constitution** save or be blinded for 1 round. Sightless creatures are immune to the effects of a foxglove flare.

*Dazies* (CR 1/8): This pinwheel shaped white and yellow flower reacts to the presence of any moving, living creature within 5 feet by rapidly spinning its petals around and around. The person who sets off

the flower must succeed at a DC 13 **Will** save or be incapacitated for 1 round.

The grove itself covers a 60-foot by 120-foot area that is completely covered by flowers (though only some of them are of the three types referenced above). Every 5-foot space has at least 1 babbling blossom in it. For every 10 feet of distance the PCs cover, they have a percentage chance of encountering the other two types of flowers as indicated in the table below.

#### FLOWER ENCOUNTERS IN THE GARRULOUS GROVE

%	TYPE OF FLOWER ENCOUNTERED
1-50	Normal flowers and 1 babbling blossom
51-80	Normal flowers, 1 babbling blossom, 1 foxglove flare
81-100	Normal flowers, 1 babbling blossom, 1 dazie



**Creatures:** If the grig from Area 6 sounded the alarm, four atomies wait here in ambush along with their Fey Giant Toad. It is unlikely that the PCs can spot the tiny atomie but since the toad is Large sized, GMs should allow **Wisdom (Perception)** checks (DC 13) to spot the ambush.

If the alarm has not been sounded, 2 atomies and the fey giant toad arrive 1 round after the babbling blossoms react to the PCs' presence, and another 2 atomies arrive in the round after that.

When combat begins, read or paraphrase the following:

*The sound of a tiny horn rises above the din of the babbling blossoms and soaring toward you through the air is...a toad. An enormous toad. A toad with graceful green wings, purple and pink skin, and bright shining eyes. This is so surprising that you almost don't notice the tiny green-skinned humanoids with dragonfly wings and needle-thin rapiers who direct the massive amphibian toward you.*

The atomies attack from the air, so as not to run afoul of the flowers in the Garrulous Grove. The toad has been bred to be immune to the flower's effects, which means it is also immune to any spells cast by the PCs that have similar effects. As a reminder, the deafening effect of the Grove is probably still in effect as well as the percentage chance of running into foxglove flares or dazies when the atomies attack.

During combat, the atomies use their invisibility and speed to dart in, attack, and retreat. They work together or with the toad to set up situations that allow them to use their sneak attack. While fighting, the atomies shout, whoop, and cheer, showing obvious enjoyment in the battle. Pledged to defend the Highgrove, the atomies fight to the end. If any remain when the Courier arrives, they obey her orders to stop fighting (see Development below).

### **ATOMIE (4)**

*Diminutive fey, chaotic neutral*

**Hit Points** 4 (1d3+2)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

6 (-2) 17 (+3) 13 (+1) 11 (+0) 14 (+2) 18 (+4)

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Innate Spellcasting:** The atomie's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The atomie is under the constant effects of *Speak with Animals* and can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**At will:** *dancing lights*, *true strike*

**3/day each:** *invisibility* (self only)

**Sneak Attack (1/turn).** The atomie does an extra 3 (1d6) damage with a weapon attack when it has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the atomie that isn't incapacitated and the atomie doesn't have disadvantage on the roll.

### **ACTIONS**

**Rapier:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage.

### **VARIANT FEY GIANT TOAD**

*Large fey, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 22 (3d10+9)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 45 ft., swim 15 ft.

**STR DEX CON INT WIS CHA**

17 (+3) 17 (+3) 16 (+3) 3 (-4) 8 (-1) 8 (-1)

**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Perception +1

**Damage Resistances** cold, electricity

**Condition Immunities** blinded, deafened, incapacitated, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

**Languages** Sylvan



## Challenge 1 (200 XP)

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Flower Resistance** This toad has been bred to be immune to the effects of the flowers that grow in the Garrulous Grove, but the breeding resulting in the loss of some of these creatures' usual spell-like abilities.

**Innate Spellcasting:** The toads innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 9). The toad can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**3/day each:** *dancing lights*

**1/day each:** *entangle*

**Poison Skin** Each time creature that strikes a fey giant toad with an unarmed strike or natural weapon, it exposes itself to the toad's poisonous skin and must make a DC 13 Constitution save or become poisoned for 1d4 hours.

### ACTIONS

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d10) poison damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 13). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the toad can't bite another target.

**Swallow:** The toad makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the toad, and it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage at the start of each of the toad's turns. The toad can have only one target swallowed at a time. If the toad dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone. **TACTICS**

**Vanish:** A fey giant toad can vanish for 1 round as if affected by *invisibility*. It can use this ability for 3 times per day.

In Round 4 (or later if GM wishes), a dryad named Themis steps out of a nearby tree to call a halt to the combat. At the beginning of Round 4, read or paraphrase the following:

*A strange-looking girl steps out of a nearby tree. If she were human she would seem to be around 12 years old but with vibrant hair resembling leaves and blossoms and skin seemingly made from wood, she most certainly does not look human. Actually she looks annoyed as she stamps her foot and yells a strange command. Instantly, the babbling blossoms stop babbling.*

**GM's Note:** Themis' command disables all of the special flowers in the grove so PCs no longer have to make percentage checks while moving.

The fey stop fighting when they hear the dryad's call and, on their respective turns, try to retreat out of the PCs' reach. If combat is still going on, allow the PCs their turns as normal; their reactions could be funny. Themis looks mournfully at any slain fey but she doesn't fault the PCs. She even comments that such things seem inevitable, since atomies like to do nothing more than fight.

If the PCs do not stop fighting or attempt to attack the dryad, Themis uses her *suggestion* and *charm person* spell-like abilities to bring combat to an end. The statistics for a dryad are included below, in the event the PCs decide to fight Themis.

When the combatants lower their weapons, Themis speak to them.

*"I bring greetings from Her Highness Queen Latharna of the Highgrove. She bids you welcome to her realm and offers safe passage so that you might come and speak with her about the recent troubles. I am Themis and will bring you to Her Highness. Will you come with me?"*

Assuming the PCs agree, Themis guides them deeper into the Highgrove. She happily points out various natural wonders they pass by but is not permitted to discuss anything involving the attack on the Fort or the suffering of the Highgrove fey. If the PCs ask her how she is able to travel so far from her bonded tree, Themis shows them the token she wears from the Queen. The magical



amulet contains a small bud from her tree, giving her the ability to move many miles from it, as well as granting her other powers. The amulet works only for her, so stealing it would do nothing but put the dryad's life at risk, since she is far from her bonded tree.

Themis shyly asks occasional questions about the human realms such as "Is it true that you build houses out of cut wood?" or "Why would you eat meat? Why don't you just get nourishment from the sunlight?"

## DRYAD

*Medium fey, neutral*

**Armor Class** 11 (16 with barkskin)

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

10 (+0)   12 (+1)   11 (+0)   14 (+2)   15 (+2)   18 (+4)

**Skills** Perception +4, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Innate Spellcasting:** The dryad's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14). The dryad can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

**At will:** *druidcraft*

**3/day each:** *entangle*, *goodberry*

**1/day each:** *barkskin*, *pass without trace*, *shillelagh*

**Magic Resistance:** The dryad has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Speak with Beasts and Plants:** The dryad can communicate with beasts and plants as if they shared a language.

**Tree Stride:** Once on her turn, the dryad can use 10 feet of her movement to step magically into

one living tree within her reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 feet of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second tree. Both trees must be Large or bigger.

### ACTIONS

**Club:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+6 to hit with shillelagh), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage, or 8 (1d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh.

**Fey Charm:** The dryad targets one humanoid or beast that she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see the dryad, it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards the dryad as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under the dryad's control, it takes the dryad's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. Each time the dryad or its allies do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until the dryad dies, is on a different plane of existence from the target, or ends the effect as a bonus action. If a target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to the dryad's Fey Charm for the next 24 hours. The dryad can have no more than one humanoid and up to three beasts charmed at a time.

**Development:** If the PCs refuse to go with her, Themis uses her Fey Charm to subdue them. As the Queen's Emissary, Themis is a powerful member of the Highgrove Court and can use her amulet to call in additional fey as needed. The fey take captured PCs to meet with the Queen in Area 8. The PCs should go along with Themis to meet the Queen. Choosing to fight the entire Highgrove is beyond the scope of this adventure.

**Reward:** 400 XP for withstanding the flowers and defeating the fey (or at least holding them off until Themis arrives).



## 8. QUEEN OF THE HIGHGROVE

The Highgrove Court fey live in and around a massive Skyfather oak towering above the surrounding trees and rising from a small hill beside a tranquil lake. The fey do not dwell in buildings, instead living freely in nature, though they do have hidden troves where they keep their personal possessions. Ignoring the fey who gather to gawk, Themis leads the PCs to the oak.

*Fawns, pixies, sprites and other marvelous creatures peer out at you from behind leaves or around branches as you follow Themis by the shore of a wide lake toward an immense oak tree rising from a small hill. At the base of the 500 foot tall tree, a door-sized archway formed from two huge roots leads about a foot into the oak before stopping. Themis places her hand on one of the roots and a shimmering field of energy forms for a moment in the doorway. When it clears, you behold that the passage now leads into a magnificent throne room.*

Allow the PCs a chance to react or ask questions and when they enter, read or paraphrase the following:

*Polished stone floors, inlaid with moving patterns of flowering vines, spread beneath a vaulted ceiling held up by columns formed from thick, wooden roots. Enchanted globes of light hover overhead and hints of music drift on the faint, sweet-scented breeze. A massive skylight in the ceiling opens to the sky despite the fact that you must be deep within the bole of a huge oak.*

*As you watch, a white swan majestically soars through the skylight. The bird circles the chamber once before descending toward the simple stone bench set in the center of the room. Just before it lands, the swan transforms into a tall, regal woman clad in a long cloak of pristine white swan feathers. The fey queen, for this swan*

*maiden could be no other, sits gracefully upon the bench.*

*“Queen Latharna of the Highgrove,” Themis says and bows to the woman.*

Themis encourages the PCs to introduce themselves to the Queen. Latharna is reserved but welcoming. She does her best to hide how desperately she needs help, not wishing to reveal any weakness.

After the introductions have been made, Latharna speaks.

*“Brave visitors. I can surmise why you have sought us out. Please know that in ordinary times my people would never have trespassed into human lands let alone spread sickness among your kind. Similarly, I would not have invited you into these halls and would have had my people drive you away. However, matters are far from ordinary.*





*I had no choice but to order the attack upon your fortress, but perhaps your presence here can help me atone for that injustice.*

*I said I had no choice because I did not. A cruel goblin named Groultooth holds my daughter, Azora, with the power a foul enchanted collar. It sickens her near to dying and the goblin has promised that if any fey touches it, Azora will die.*

*It was Groultooth who forced me to order my people to play their tricks on your fort and it was he who gave us the potions of sickness to spread disease. Why he wishes misfortune upon your people is unknown to me.*

*Please, I beg for your aid. None of my people can rescue Azora and remove the collar that sickens her. But you do not have fey blood, and the goblin would never believe that humans would help us after our attack upon you. Please, rescue Azora."*

The PCs can talk to the Queen and ask questions. Though she (or rather Themis) insists that she be treated with the courtesy due to a Queen, Larthana always responds kindly.

Though it is beyond the scope of this adventure to address every question the PCs might have, below are the most likely questions and their answers.

**Who is Groultooth?** He is a miserable little goblin from north of our lands who claims to be a druid. If he is, it is surely some corruption of their ways.

**What happened to your daughter?** When Groultooth came to us he pretended we were suspicious. Usually we do not allow creatures like goblins in the Highgrove. But he claimed to be a messenger from a wise and learned Archdruid and animals flocked to him. It was a mistake. The first night he arrived he crept to where my daughter slept and clamped his foul collar upon her. She became sick immediately. We were going to slay the goblin but he has some sort of cat creature that protected him. It was invisible until it killed one of my guards. He told me about the magic trapping my daughter and promised that if we harrassed your fort while spreading his potions of sickness he would free her. I could not allow my daughter to die, so I gave in to his demands. But he did not

keep his word. He has not released Azora. So now I will act, or rather, you will, if you agree.

**Why not rescue Azora yourself?** Groultooth told us that the collar is an ancient artifact that slowly drains my daughter of her life. He says his spells are the only thing keeping Azora alive so if we kill him she will die. He also told us that the collar is guarded against the fey so if anyone with fey blood so much as touches the collar, Azora will die.

**Where is Azora now?** Groultooth does not enjoy the presence of so many fey, so he is keeping my daughter in a dark place at the far side of the lake called Gowrow Hollow. There is an old building there that he uses for shelter.

**Does Groultooth have guards?** I have pixie scouts keeping an eye on Growrow Hollow from a safe distance. He has his cat beast that can turn invisible but we haven't seen anyone with him besides my daughter.

**What do we get if we help you?** Once she is returned, be assured, we will no longer aid the goblin in his attacks on your fort. Our healers can also provide a faster cure to the sickness plaguing your people. Finally, I would pledge to you a favor and the favor of a Queen of the Fey is something not often granted to your kind.

If the PCs choose not to help, the Queen tries to convince them. As a last resort, Queen Larthana tells the PCs about the growing army of goblins, gnolls, and other foul creatures preparing to march on the fort and offer an alliance with her people to protect Falling Spring Station.

Once the PCs agree to help the Queen, she offers them a place to sleep and refreshments of food and wine. Enjoying these gifts grants the PCs the effects of a modified *heroes' feast*. (Be cured of all diseases and poisons, make all Wisdom saving throws with advantage, hit point maximum increases by 1d10 and gain the same number of hit points, and become immune to poison and being frightened. The benefits last for 12 hours.) These bonuses take effect the next morning.



## 9. GOWROW HOLLOW

*At the center of a field of old stone rubble, a crumbling ruin occupies the edge of the western side of the lake. Perhaps it was once a tower or some other sort of multi-level building. Now, however, only a single floor remains, open to the elements on two sides. Tattered blankets cover the arched windows on the remaining pair of walls and several crude wooden planks cover missing sections of roof. Despite this, a thin tendril of smoke rises from a makeshift chimney. Someone is home.*

Now more of a stone portico than an actual building, this ancient ruin on the far side of the lake serves as Groultooth's shelter. The field of stones encircling the building hints that this was once a much bigger building. The rubble is uneven and treacherous, marking the area 60 feet around the ruin as difficult terrain.

Groultooth has chained Azora to the inside corner, where the two solid walls meet. Next to the captive fey is a stone table covered with a portable suite of alchemical devices. The rest of the sheltered area is taken up by the goblin's sleeping area and supply cache.

Though deeply involved in brewing up another batch of his crumbling sickness potion, Groultooth has a potent guardian. His animal companion, One-ear, is a snarly yow, a magical cat-like creature who has the ability to become invisible. One-ear prowls the stony field outside the ruin, leaping from stone to stone.

As the PCs approach, One-ear notices them unless they actively try to be stealthy. Even so, they must succeed at a **Dexterity (Stealth)** check vs the snarly yow's passive Perception.

Some may decide to sneak toward the ruin from the water, either by swimming or on some manner of raft. This is one approach that neither the goblin nor his pet expect. PCs approaching in this manner can get just within 30 feet of the ruin before having to make opposed checks to avoid detection.

During combat, Groultooth commands One-ear to charge the most threatening looking foe while he quickly uses his *silver raven* to send a token of warning to Carl. Then, he casts *entangle* to inhibit

foes and either casts aggressive thundercloud or uses his flame blade to finish them off. The goblin is brave—up to a point. The snarly yow will stay invisible until she strikes, then use her speed and nimble paws to strikes rapidly until her invisibility ability recharges. If his hit points drop below 10, he surrenders and offers to give information about the upcoming attack on the fort in exchange for his life. One-Ear loves her goblin master and fights to the death for him.

### GROULTOOTH, GOBLIN DRUID 3

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 32 (2d6 + 3d8 + 10)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

8 (–1)   16 (+3)   14 (+2)   9 (–1)   14 (+2)   13 (+1)

**Saving Throws** Int +2, Wis +5

**Skills** Animal Handling +4, Nature +1, Stealth +5

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Druidic, Goblin

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

#### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Nimble Escape:** Goblins can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

**Spellcasting.** Groultooth is a 2nd-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). Groultooth has the following druid spells prepared:

**Cantrips (at will):** *druidcraft*, *poison spray*, *produce flame*

**1st level (3 slots):** *cure wounds*, *entangle*, *fog cloud*

**2nd level (2 slots):** *animal messenger*, *flame blade*

#### ACTIONS

**Flame Blade:** *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (3d6) fire damage.

**Produce Flame:** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, range



30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) fire damage.

**Sling:** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

**Spear:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 – 1) piercing damage or 3 (1d8 – 1) piercing damage.

**Wild Shape:** Groultooth can magically assume the form of a beast he has seen before. He can transform into a beast with a CR 1/4 or less that doesn't have a fly or a swim speed.

### ITEMS

**Equipment** *elixir of speak with animals* (2), *potion of greater healing*, *wand of contagion* (5 charges), leather armor, *ring of protection*, spear, sling

## ONE-EAR, THE SNARLY YOW

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 16 (2d8+8)

**Speed** 50 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

16 (+3) 19 (+4) 15 (+2) 2 (–4) 12 (+1) 6 (–2)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision, 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/2 (50 XP)

### SPECIAL TRAITS

**Keen Hearing and Smell:** A snarly yow has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

**Nimble Paws:** Whenever a snarly yow moves through difficult terrain, it counts up to 15 feet of movement as if it were normal terrain.

### ACTIONS

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Invisibility (Recharge 5–6):** As a bonus action, a snarly yow can become invisible. This ability is constant but ends when it attacks and cannot be used again until it recharges. The yow can also suppress its invisibility as a bonus action.

**Development:** Once Groultooth surrenders, he bargains for his life with information on the sick princess and the imminent attack on Falling Spring Station. The canny goblin quickly identifies a cleric or paladin among the PCs (or whichever character seems the most oriented toward goodness) and bargains with them for his life. He tries his best to make sure that the PCs won't double cross him.

*The Princess:* The PCs must first free the obviously sick girl and then discern the connection between the collar around her neck and her illness. This should be easy if they listened to Queen Latharna's story.

**Intelligence (Arcana)** checks, or spells such as *detect magic*, reveal that the collar has a powerful magical aura. *Identify* spells cast on the collar trigger a DC 12 **Wisdom** save. Success reveals that the collar is not magical at all (it has a false magic aura placed upon it).

To remove the collar, the PCs must succeed at a DC 12 **Dexterity** check or force Groultooth to do it himself (DC 16 **Charisma [Intimidate]**).

Azora suffers Intelligence damage from the effects of mindfire (inflicted upon her by the goblin's *wand of contagion*). Disoriented, she has a high fever, and has frequent bouts of confused behavior. A DC 12 **Wisdom (Medicine)** check correctly identifies the mindfire symptoms.

If he is made to talk (DC 16 **Charisma [Diplomacy or Intimidate]**), Groultooth confesses that the collar is a massive bluff. It never reacted to the touch of the fey, and it never made Azora sick. The goblin's *wand of contagion* inflicted the girl with mindfire and now that Groultooth can't use it to infect her again, she can finally be cured by her mother's healers.

*The Attack on the Fort:* Groultooth's biggest bargaining chip concerns the monstrous army approaching Falling Spring Station.



Before giving out his information, Groultooth will repeat whatever bargain he has made with the PCs, just to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Then read or paraphrase the following:

*The goblin sighs. "It was fool plan. Warlord of the North. Big'un ogrekin. Has mighty spells, he does. He rules my tribe, the Sharpknees, and the gnolls of the Icepelt sept. Warlord of the North say, 'Go, Groultooth! Go use pixie-fey to make humans sick with your potions. Then we gonna march down and take that fort for ourselves! We make our own kingdom in Westwatch!" That what Warlord said. I sent message bird so he already know humans is sick and fort is ready to be taken. He probably already marching that away."*

Groultooth does not hold anything back so no rolls are necessary to coax more out of him. But if the PCs do so anyway, they automatically succeed on any Diplomacy or Intimidation check against him.

Listed below is the information that Groultooth knows:

- Groultooth was sent by the Warlord of the North.
- Groultooth's mission was to force the fey to infect Falling Spring Station with a sickness.
- Once the fort is weak, the Warlord is going to attack.
- The Warlord of the North is a powerful warrior but also has strong magic powers.
- He is an ogrekin (someone who is half-human, half-ogre).
- He rules an area just on the other side of the Westwatch mountains.
- He controls both a tribe of goblins and a tribe of gnolls.
- There are around 70 warriors in the Warlord's horde.
- The Warlord wants to establish a kingdom of his own in the mountains with Falling Spring Station as its capital.

**GM's Note:** If Groultooth perishes during the battle (or if the PCs dispatch him before questioning him), add a leather-bound journal to the treasure section below. Goblins do not have a written language, but Groultooth has managed to draw crude pictures showing images of a large figure leading an army of monsters to attack a human fort that looks suspiciously like Falling Spring Station. The stick-figure army takes over the fort, and there is a final picture of the large figure sitting in a chair with a bunch of monsters kneeling before him. A character who speaks Goblin or succeeds at a DC 12 **Intelligence** check can use the pictures and their understanding of the goblins' language to learn the same information as presented above.

**Treasure:** The alchemical lab contains three *potions of healing* and two jars of alchemist's fire. The set of glass beakers and other alchemical devices is worth 500gp to the right collector.

If the PCs are especially clever and catch Groultooth and One-ear completely off guard, they may defeat the goblin before he can send the *silver raven* to warn Carl. If so, that item becomes treasure here, and should be removed from Carl's equipment in Act Three.

The goblin's supply cache is mostly food, but a DC 12 **Wisdom (Perception)** check of the bags and bins leads to a small pouch holding 300 gold pieces in loose, uncut gemstones.

A DC 18 **Wisdom (Perception)** check uncovers a long, wooden box hidden beneath a stone in the floor. Left over from previous occupants of this ruin, the box contains a *+1 longsword*.

**Reward:** Reward: 450 XP for defeating Groultooth, plus 25 XP for freeing the Princess from her collar and 25 XP for learning about the Warlord of the North.

## 10. A BANQUET AND AN APPROACHING THREAT

The PCs return with Azora to the jubilant cheers of the Highgrove Fey. The Queen, herself, meets them at the base of the oak to hear the PCs tell what transpired with Groultooth, while the princess is promptly rushed away by fey healers.



The Queen promises to send her fastest scouts to find out the location of the Warlord of the North and his army. In the meantime she insists on throwing the characters a celebratory banquet.

**GM's Note:** The banquet scene offers the PCs a chance to gain valuable allies and aid, but GMs should remind the PCs that the threat of the Warlord of the North is looming. This casts a shadow over the celebrations and should encourage them to hurry back to the fort when they can politely do so.

## PREPARATION

The PCs are quickly brought to guest chambers where they can refresh themselves and change into clothes provided by the Queen (these are noble outfits of the highest quality, which the PCs can keep). If any of the PCs continue to suffer injuries or afflictions, healers arrive to treat them with spells or potions. Before they depart, the PCs are asked to place any metal weapons or armor in the trunks in their chambers because the fey dislike the presence of iron. Brass locks and keys are provided to reassure the PCs.

## FEASTING

When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

*The banquet is a sumptuous affair held at the base of the Skyfather oak under the night sky. Long tables groan beneath the piles of food and drink of every description while magical globes of light drift overhead. While pixie musicians dance in the air playing lively tunes on fiddles, horns, and flutes, fey of every shape, size and sort mingle, laugh, and make merry.*

Allow the PCs to mingle and interact with the Fey. For the most part the PCs are considered to be honored guest, though some fey may not be able to resist playing tricks. Eventually the Queen calls for silence and speaks.

*"My dear ones. These outsiders, these humans and others whom we have shunned for so long, have delivered our beloved Azora from the dark clutches of the goblin!"*

*The fey cheer, hoot, yell, and clap their hands. The Queen holds up a hand and all grow quiet again. "I tell*

*you now that Azora rests under the hands of our best healers and she will be as right as the morning dew."*

*There is more cheering before the Queen speaks on. "To these mortals I grant the Feymark, a sign of our eternal friendship for the deeds they have done this day."*

*The Queen raises one of her hands and a bracelet on her wrist glows with a silver light. Instantly, you feel a warmth emanating from the inside of your wrist where the image of a silver leaf briefly appears before fading from view.*

*"However," the Queen says to you, her voice becoming serious. "Our scouts return with word that this so-called Warlord of the North does indeed march against your Falling Spring Station with a force of goblins and gnolls. They number six or seven 10s and will be before the next rising of the moon.*

*Mighty heroes, you have proven yourselves in deeds of bravery and skill but this force seems unstoppable, if you face it alone. Oh, if only the rules that bind the fey did not keep me from just choosing to give you aid. Indeed, it is most unfortunate that I cannot simply 'give' that assistance. Our laws are quite clear. Only one who is owed a favor by the fey could even 'ask' for our aid against such a force of goblins and gnolls...."*

*A hush falls over the crowd as every fey eye turns toward you as if waiting, expecting, hoping that you will say what they silently want you to say.*

Hopefully, the players will realize that this is moment they should use the favor promised to them by the Queen to ask for her people's help in fighting the Warlord of the North. Bound by age-old magics, the Queen must be asked for aid, she cannot give it unbidden.

If the PCs do not pick up on this, an exasperated sigh echoes around the crowd and the Queen tries again. She repeats the same words (repeat the last paragraph of the Queen's speech from above but really emphasize the "asking" part).

When the PCs finally ask for help read or paraphrase the following:

*The crowd cheers and even the Queen claps her hands in delight. "Excellent! Now that the law has been satisfied, I accept your request and by the favor I owe you for the rescue of my darling daughter, Azora, the Highgrove fey*



*will marshal our forces and join you in battle. Before dawn, our giant eagles will carry you and our fey medicines back to the fort so that you might prepare your defenses. When the enemy moves to attack your Falling Spring Station we shall fall upon him from the rear and between us we will crush this Warlord of the North!"*

The PCs can continue to enjoy the banquet but in the early morning they are flown back to the fort, landing just out of sight of Falling Spring Station.

**Reward:** 100 XP for securing the help of the Highgrove Court.

### ADVANCEMENT?

It is possible that the PCs have earned enough experience to reach level 3 by the end of Act 2. If so, you may wish to let the PCs level up their characters before beginning Act 3. The GM can simply explain that any training or other activities that would normally mark such a change in a character have magically occurred during the night spend in the fey folk's domain.

However, leveling up characters can take time that may not be practical in the middle of a gaming session. If you wish to wait until the end of the adventure to advance the characters to the next level, simply proceed to Act 3 with the fully rested and restored PCs at 2nd level. The final encounters of the adventure are challenging for level 2 characters, but not insurmountable.

## PART THREE: ATTACK ON FALLING SPRING STATION

With the Warlord of the North's plan revealed, the characters return to Falling Spring Station, and ready the defenses there. This involves a couple of deceptions and at least one battle against the coming vanguard.

To build tension during Parts 11 and 12, consider asking the players for occasional **Wisdom (Survival)** or **Intelligence (Nature)** checks. Don't offer a DC, don't explain the results of these checks, but shake your head and make a couple of tick marks as you page through the adventure. This is a good technique to make the players wonder what they will be facing.

### 11. DELIVERING THE BAD NEWS

Arriving in the early dawn, breathless after their thrilling flight on eagle back, the PCs must prepare the badly weakened fort for battle. As mentioned, the characters have one day to prepare before the Warlord and his warband arrive this evening.

As the PCs approach the Fort, read or paraphrase the following:

*You're let inside Falling Spring by a guard who looks ready to fall asleep standing up. His eyes have dark circles beneath them, and he's barely able to open or close the gate.*

*"Welcome back," he weakly musters. "Sergeant is at the Commander's Quarters. He asked for you to see him when you got in."*

*The man barely looks at you after delivering the message, sitting down on a stool near the gate. The spear in his hand trembles slightly.*

If asked how he feels, the man smiles weakly and says, "Alright, goodfolk. I'm one of the strongest. That's why I volunteered for the gate." Otherwise, he leans back against the gate and closes his eyes while he sits.

If the party doesn't immediately go to the Sergeant, give them a few minutes, let them complete a small task, like getting a drink of fresh water or dropping off the fey medicine, before another very ill guard, barely able to move or talk, approaches them to repeat the Sergeant's request for them to come talk at the barracks.

This happens twice, and then they are left to their own devices, but this failure to respond will impact DCs in later encounters.

When the party goes to see the Sergeant, read or paraphrase the following:



Sergeant Bromhead sits at the table where you first spoke with him, and where he seems to have only occupied more completely. He looks up at you and offers a guarded half-smile through his walrus moustache. "Tell me you've got some good news for me."

The Sergeant listens to the situation while the characters speak, and his face grows more grim. He doesn't respond until the PCs finish.

*"This doesn't leave us much time to prepare." He sighs and claps his hands, "Well, then. Even with the fey medicine, not enough of my men will be well enough to fight. We'll need to make it look like we're in better shape than we are and put up the best fight possible until the faeries arrive. Without you, we'd be lost, but you're healthy, and clearly capable. If you're willing to help, I think we can save the fort. What do you say?"*

### WHAT IF THEY GIVE UP?

If the party actually refuses to assist, Sergeant Bromhead looks at them stunned, and asks them to leave the fort. "You're dooming us," he says, "I can't force you to stay, but our deaths will be on your heads."

As the sun sets after they march away, a plume of black smoke can be seen rising out of the mountains behind them. Should they return to seek out the fort, they are driven away by a strong force of monsters under the ogre-kin's command. A few survivors from the fort may return to civilization, and they spread stories about the characters' cowardice. King Ambrose I must gather his troops to retake the fort, which will cost the kingdom coin and many soldiers' lives.

Presuming the PCs agree to help, Bromhead continues:

*"If we can make it look like the fort is at full strength, and that we've got the men at the walls, then I think there's a*

*chance we can save us all. I've got some ideas on how to pull it off, but I'll be hard pressed to keep the men moving. I'll need you to do much of the work."*

If the PCs think they can meet the horde head-on, he says: "Are you mad?" He laughs, "You're brave and capable, but on the open ground, you'd be surrounded and killed. No, no, we need you here, keeping the sick and wounded safe. We'll win this with our brains, and not brute force!"

**The Task:** The Sergeant needs the Party to help prepare the defenses before the Warlord of the North's forces arrive. The party has only one day to complete the tasks, which include:

- Prop up dummies or decoys on the lookout posts lookout post on the walls to make the garrison look larger than expected from a distance.
- Help motivate and inspire the troops who are well enough to fight while getting them organized and positioned on the walls.

**Development:** The players may have other ideas for how to improve the fortifications and increase their chances for success. Let them suggest any ideas that might work and, if possible, allow these tasks to contribute to the defense of the fort. Once the group has their plans firmly in mind, proceed to **Prepare the Fort!**

### 12. PREPARE THE FORT!

Even with Healer Reynolds administering his medicine, not many healthy soldiers are available. Still, a good number of the sick can pull a crossbow trigger or tip a basket of rubble. There are 24 individuals who can assist the party, the others are either bedridden or treating the sick. The characters must rally these 24 people and prepare the best possible defense.

In terms of game mechanics, the easiest way to run this scene is to perform a series of eight skill checks, ideally one or two per character. The skill checks are each tied to different ideas for defending the fort.

The group needs to complete 5 successes. This encounter should be presented as a montage



of actions, describing each task as the group completes them. Have the group attempt all 8 checks, even if they do not achieve all 5 successes, to represent their attempts to prepare. If they fail, the consequences are detailed in the showdown, Battle for the Fort.

Below are suggestions for the defense of the fort. The PCs may come up with their own ideas for how these NPCs should contribute and GMs should entertain any logical suggestions. If the group has any, spells with sufficient duration can be used to aid particular checks, like stone shape or something similar. Depending on the effect, this might provide an automatic success or grant a bonus to a check, at the GM's discretion.

Suggestions for defensive ideas for this situation and their associated skill checks include:

**Archers to the Walls!** Set up a number of fixed positions, tied in place, allowing one person to quickly fire several crossbows at once, and then replace the group without too much effort. (**Dexterity [Acrobatics]** or **Intelligence [Investigation]** [DC 14]; Up to two successes possible.)

**Deceive the Enemy!** Set up mannequins and decoys around fires and at guard posts, allowing them to be shifted easily by a couple of people. At a distance, these look like a fully populated fort. (**Charisma [Deception]** or **Performance** [DC 14]; Up to two successes possible.)

**Get Organized!** Provide solid instructions, either through leadership or from experience, helping the civilians and soldiers complete their tasks better, like preparing materials at each site, then constructing the sites, or resolving disagreements which might delay work. (**Charisma [Persuasion]** or **Intelligence** [DC 14]; One success possible.)

**Hold 'Em Off!** Set rubble dump points so many baskets of debris can be quickly dumped from central positions and defend several points at once. Barricade and sabotage common routes through the fort compound, making dead ends and choke points to delay invaders. (**Dexterity** or **Intelligence [Investigation]** [DC 14]; Up to two successes possible.)

**Get 'Em on Their Feet!** Help tend to some of the sick, getting them healthy enough to add a few more defenders to the walls. (**Wisdom [Medicine]** [DC 16]; Up to two successes possible.)

**We Can Prevail!** Help boost morale and balance assignments with each soldier's health and capabilities to optimize the defenses. (**Charisma [Persuasion]** or **Intelligence** [DC 14]; One success possible.)

**A Few Surprises for 'Em!** Set several snares, deadfalls, and other traps to delay and disable attackers moving through the fort compound. (**Intelligence, Dexterity, or Wisdom [Survival]** [DC 14]; Up to three successes possible.)

**Reward:** 50 XP plus an additional 10 XP for each successfully-completed task

**Development:** With the defenses complete, it's time to proceed to the showdown, Battle for the Fort.

### 13. BATTLE FOR THE FORT

Several encounters comprise this scene, as the characters race around the fort, dealing with incursions. These are referenced as Part 13a, 13b... etc but these notations do not necessarily refer to specific locations. Refer to the Falling Spring Station Map for reference.

As the PCs finish their tasks near the end of the second day, read or paraphrase the following:

---

*The Sergeant approaches as you finish your tasks, "Looks good. You've done good work."*

*He sighs, his resignation obvious, "But you know, there's no way twenty-four men can hold the entire wall. That puts about four on every wall. Some enemies are bound to get through. You folks are in the best shape; it's going to be up to you to run around and deal with any forces that slip through. You think you can manage it?"*

*He smiles, "I think you can. Besides, we don't have any other choice. Get a biscuit in you, and get ready. We don't have long."*

*He heads back to the Commander's Quarters and leaves you to your short meal and thoughts. This does seem grim. Who would have thought this was where you'd be after just seeing a faerie queen's celebration?*

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Allow the PCs time to make any additional preparations they care to make but be sure to emphasize the growing fear and tension that fills the fort as the sun sinks lower in the sky.

When the players are ready, continue with the following:

*As the sun sets and the dim glow of twilight settles on the Fort, the sound of a horn rises up from outside the western gates! Everyone freezes to listen. A booming chorus of weapons hammering onto shields echoes alongside bestial howls. It is the Warlord and his band, arrived to destroy Falling Spring and kill you all. Soldiers rush to man their positions and the first arrows begin to rain down on the fort. The time for preparations is over, battle is here!*

The GM can begin with either the encounter **For a Horse** or **Medic**. The PCs must face an additional encounter for each failure in the previous

encounter, Prepare the Fort. These are detailed in Secondary encounters below and explained further in Development.

### 13A. FOR A HORSE (STABLES [AREA 3P])

*Just up ahead, at the stables, there comes a lone shout followed by a cacophony of animal screams! Something has gotten past the walls!*

A short run brings you to the corral. Ivora Gympson, the dwarven stable master lies in front of the stable doors, mauled and knocked into some crates. Her blood stains the ground but she lifts a trembling hand to point at the corral where a pair of goblins and two hideous goblin dogs advance on her sister Ulla and the fort's precious horses!

Ivora is wounded, bleeding, and falls unconscious after signaling the PCs (-1 hp). Without assistance, she will die in 11 rounds.



The corral is closed with a heavy rope knot. If it were opened, a DC 5 **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** check for each horse might be possible to urge a horse to flee. A character needs a **Dexterity (Sleight of Hand)** check (DC 12) to open the gate. Alternatively, the rope could be cut:

*Corral rope knot:* 4 in. thick; AC 11; hp 5; Burst DC 19 (Increased burst DC due to the strong, complicated knot.)

Ulla is not a fighter and does her best to keep the goblins away from the horses but her efforts are mostly ignored. The horses aren't trained for war, but instinctively hate goblins, so they scream and stomp wildly while pressing uselessly against the wall of the corral.

**Creatures:** These goblins scouts and their goblin dogs (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*) were sent to decimate the fort's mounts. The goblins laugh and fire arrows at the horses. They continue to attack horses until a character kills a goblin or a goblin dog, then turn on the PCs. The goblin dogs focus their attacks on a single opponent at a time. They flank and harass a single horse, moving on to the next one after they have killed the first. The goblins and their "pets" each flee if they are reduced to half of their maximum hit points.

### **GOBLIN GRUNT (2)**

*Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (leather armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 7 (2d6) piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

8 (-1)   14 (+2)   10 (+0)   10 (+0)   8 (-1)   8 (-1)

**Skills** Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Goblin

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

#### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Nimble Escape:** The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

#### **ACTIONS**

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

**Shortbow:** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

#### **ITEMS**

**Equipment** rusty scimitar, leather armor, shield, shortbow with 20 arrows

### **GOBLIN DOG (2)**

*Medium Beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 6 (1d8+2)

**Speed** 50 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

15 (+2)   14 (+2)   15 (+2)   2 (-4)   12 (+1)   8 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +3, Stealth +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 14

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

#### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Allergic Reaction** The dander from a goblin dog's disgusting, mangy hide is highly irritating to all creatures except goblins and other goblinoids. A non-goblinoid creature damaged by a goblin dog's bite, who deals damage to a goblin dog with a natural weapon or unarmed attack, or who otherwise comes into contact with a goblin dog (including attempts to grapple or ride the creature) must make a DC 12 Constitution save or break out in an itching rash. A creature affected by this rash has disadvantage on ranged and other Dexterity-based attack rolls and saves, and both Dexterity and Charisma skill checks for 1 day (multiple allergic reactions do not stack). *Remove disease* or any magical healing removes the rash (and the associated penalties) instantly.



## ACTIONS

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

## RIDING HORSES (6)

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 10

**Hit Points** 13 (2d10 + 2)

**Speed** 60 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

16 (+3) 10 (+0) 12 (+1) 2 (-4) 11 (+0) 7 (-2)

**Senses:** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

## ACTIONS

**Hooves:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

## ITEMS

**Equipment** military saddle, tack and harness

**Development:** Without the horses, the fort has a difficult time with crops and delivering messages. Their survival is important. After the end of this encounter, 5 to 8 (1d4+4) rounds pass until the next encounter.

If the party failed any of the skill checks in **Prepare the Fort**, they experience one of the Secondary encounters per failed check. These should be handled next; go to 13c. If they did not, they should proceed to **Medic (13b)**.

If they have already completed all required secondary encounters and **Medic**, proceed to **encounter 14, Monsters at the Gates**.

**Reward:** 150 XP for defeating the monsters, plus 400 XP for saving each of the two dwarves.

## 13B. MEDIC! (SOUTH BARRACKS [3N])

*From just up ahead, in the northern barracks, there comes a scream! There's nothing but wounded and disabled soldiers there; you've got to help them!*

The barracks are about 70 feet away, through the clutter of soldiers running here and there and the hiss of falling arrows.

When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

*Your short run brings you before the large barracks hall. The guard appears to have been overrun by a couple of dog-headed humanoids, who are now ducking inside; the last one carries a wicked looking battleaxe. They don't seem to have noticed your approach and appear bent on awful business within! You've got to stop them before they do something terrible!*

A DC 12 **Intelligence (Investigation)** check identifies the creatures as gnolls. One gnoll is at the front door. The other is at the eastern end of the room, preparing to attack the bedridden soldiers. The wounded and sick are delirious, unaware of the situation. The 35 soldiers are considered prone and helpless, and a gnoll may easily administer a *coup de grace* or other attack. The party needs to keep at least 20 of the patients alive in order to succeed in this encounter.

**Creatures:** These gnoll scouts were sent to attack anyone they could find.

## GNOLL RAIDERS (2)

*Medium humanoid (gnoll), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 15 (hide armor, shield)

**Hit Points** 22 (5d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

**STR** **DEX** **CON** **INT** **WIS** **CHA**

14 (+2) 12 (+1) 11 (+0) 6 (-2) 10 (+0) 7 (-2)

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Gnoll

**Challenge** 1/2 (100 XP)

## SPECIAL TRAITS

**Rampage:** When the gnoll reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, the gnoll can take a bonus action to move up to half its speed and make a bite attack.



## ACTIONS

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Spear:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

**Longbow:** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

## ITEMS

**Equipment** spear, longbow with 20 arrows, hide armor, shield

## SICK SOLDIERS (35)

**Armor Class** 5; **Hit Points** 6 each

**Development:** Failure to save at least eighteen soldiers destroys morale and leaves the fort in a precarious position going forward. Their survival is important. After this encounter ends, 5 to 8 (1d4+4) rounds pass until the next encounter.

If the party failed any of the skill checks in **Prepare the Fort**, they experience one of the Secondary encounters per failed check. These should be handled next; go to 13c. If they did not, they should proceed to **For a Horse (13a)**.

If they have already completed all required secondary encounters and **For a Horse**, proceed to **encounter 14, Monsters at the Gates**.

**Reward:** 200 XP for defeating the gnolls, plus 10 XP for each soldier saved above the minimum 20.

## 13C. SECONDARY ENCOUNTERS

These encounters result from insufficient preparations from **A Show of Strength** or **Man the Palisades**. Select one encounter for each failed task, up to a maximum of 3 encounters. Use whichever encounters seem most interesting, in whatever order you desire. Proceed to either **Medic** or **For a Horse**, as appropriate, 5 to 8 (1d4+4) rounds after the last of these encounters.

## DOGS IN THE STREETS

As they move through the fort, seeking out foes to fight or allies to help, the PCs are set upon by a group of goblin dogs. This encounter can occur anywhere on the grounds; keep the party in motion to add tension to the battle and make them feel like they're being overwhelmed.

**Creatures:** Two normal goblin dogs are led by a particularly mean and tough brute. The goblin dogs focus their attacks on a single opponent at a time. They flank and harass a single horse, moving on to the next one after they have killed the first. Each goblin dog flees if reduced to half its maximum hit points.

## GOBLIN DOG BRUTE

*Medium Beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 8 (1d8+4)

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Perception +5, Stealth +6

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; passive Perception 16

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

## SPECIAL TRAITS

**Allergic Reaction** The dander from a goblin dog's disgusting, mangy hide is highly irritating to all creatures except goblins and other goblinoids. A non-goblinoid creature damaged by a goblin dog's bite, who deals damage to a goblin dog with a natural weapon or unarmed attack, or who otherwise comes into contact with a goblin dog (including attempts to grapple or ride the creature) must make a DC 14 Constitution save or break out in an itching rash. A creature affected by this rash has disadvantage on ranged and other Dexterity-based attack rolls and saves, and both Dexterity and Charisma skill checks for 1 day (multiple allergic reactions do not stack).



Remove disease or any magical healing removes the rash (and the associated penalties) instantly.

### ACTIONS

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

### GOBLIN DOGS (2)

Hit Points 6 each (see 13a.)

**Reward:** 200 XP for dispatching all the goblin dogs.

### NO RIDER, NO PROBLEM

This encounter should happen near one of the walls. Carl's forces used axe beaks, massive birds with weapon-shaped heads, to break through the walls in some areas. The birds' riders were killed or knocked from their mounts as the walls collapsed.

**Creatures:** Two angry axe beaks set their sights on the heroes. One axe beak is still dragging the goblin along by the stirrup. That axebeak is entangled, suffering a -2 penalty to its AC and on Reflex saves. The birds can be calmed with **Wisdom (Animal Handling)** or **Charisma (Diplomacy)** checks (DC 16). If not, they must be put down before they hurt the fort's soldiers.

### AXE BEAK (2)

*Large beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11

**Hit Points** 19 (3d10 + 3)

**Speed** 50 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

14 (+2)   12 (+1)   12 (+1)   2 (-4)   10 (+0)   5 (-3)

**Senses** passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Beak:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

**Reward:** 100 XP for controlling or putting down the axe beaks.

### SNAKE IN MY BOOT

The attackers hurled several pots over the wall, each containing a large venomous snake trained to seek out and bite people. This encounter could happen anywhere. The PCs may find that the snakes are preparing to attack a group of soldiers defending the wall.

**Creatures:** The vipers prowl together in search of targets.

### VENEMOUS SNAKES (3)

*Tiny beast, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 13

**Hit Points** 2 (1d4)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

**STR**   **DEX**   **CON**   **INT**   **WIS**   **CHA**

2 (-4)   16 (+3)   11 (+0)   1 (-5)   10 (+0)   3 (-4)

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** —

**Challenge** 1/8 (25 XP)

### ACTIONS

**Bite:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Reward:** 75 XP for eliminating the snakes.

## 14. MONSTER AT THE GATES!

When the PCs have completed both For a Horse and Medic, give them 1d6 rounds to rest, then read the following aloud:

*Suddenly, a great crashing boom rattles the walls of the fort. Dirty and battered, Sargent Bromhead runs up to you, his helmet missing and blood coating the side of his face.*

*"They've figured out the ruse and know we are still weak. Some of them are trying to bash down the gate and the rest are turning from attacking the walls. If they all come at the gates, we aren't going to be able to hold. I'm sorry my friends. I think this is the end."*



Just then, you hear peals of laughter and a flight of pixies speeds past you overhead! Then another! And another still! Several great shadows blot out the sky for a moment. Gazing up you see the outlines of giant eagles circling the fort. Lithe forms of the fey leap down from the birds, falling down upon the goblins and gnolls who howl in surprise and shock."

A soldier runs up to Bromhead. "Sir! It's them! The faeries! They've got the goblins and gnolls on the run!"

Bromhead turns to you. "By Losinia's bright gaze! We've got a chance now. Go! Deal with the monsters at the west gate while I rally the boys at the wall!"

With his troops either fighting the fey or running for their lives, Carl steps into the battle, charging forward to burst into the Fort.

Give the PCs a moment to react and head toward the gate. When they reach it, read or paraphrase the following:

*With a thunderous clamor, a blast of lightning smashes the gates to pieces, revealing a vicious looking ogrekin.*

*He strides into the fort, brandishing a greatsword and calling out a challenge, "You cowardly vagabonds! Accursed adventurers! You've ruined my plans! Now you face me in combat! You face the Warlord of the North! You face...Carl!"*

The rather normal name shocks everyone to stillness for a moment. This seems to irritate Carl. Let the players react to this, then continue.

*"Well?" he demands, standing with his hands on the pommel of his huge blade. "To the victor goes the fort! What are you waiting for?"*

*In a silent answer, the brute of a man flings a lightning bolt into the gatehouse tower, and it explodes in a shower of splinters and ozone.*

Carl's opening of combat with a *lightning bolt* to the gatehouse tower obliterates a ballista and sends two men operating it sprawling. This serves two purposes"

First, it demonstrates Carl's potential power to the players, so they know this is the big fight.

Second, it explains why NPC soldiers don't interfere with this battle; the attack breaks their morale, and they focus on helping the fey rout the Warlord's troops.

**Creatures:** Carl is an ogrekin (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*), a misshapen monster related to ogres. Ogrekin have certain mutations that are either beneficial or disadvantageous. Additionally, Carl is a sorcerer, a spellcaster who carries arcane magic in his bloodline, rather than in books. Carl's powers are somehow connected to the ice and chill winds of a distant realm.

During combat, Carl opens up with ranged spells like *magic missile*. He only uses his *lightning bolt* or *sleet storm* when he can target the most foes. When his foes get close enough, he switches to his +1 *greatsword*, first taking an action to imbue it with the *frost* ability. This is Carl's moment to carve his name into history. He will not retreat.

## **CARL, WARLORD OF THE NORTH**

*Large giant, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 16 (leather armor, natural)

**Hit Points** 50 (6d6 + 24)

**Speed** 20 ft.; icewalker

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Con +6, Cha +6

**Skills** Insight +2, Intimidation +6

**Damage Resistance** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common, Giant, Gnoll

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

### **SPECIAL TRAITS**

**Arcane Armor Training** Carl is able to cast spells in light armor.

**Cold Steel** Six times per day, Carl can touch a weapon and grant it the *frost brand* power for three rounds. Targets struck by a *frost brand* weapon take 1d6 points of cold damage in addition to the normal attack damage.

**Font of Magic:** Carl has sorcery points (6 per long rest), which he can expend on his spells and abilities.



**Icewalker** Carl gains resistance to cold and can move across snow and icy surfaces without penalty and without leaving tracks.

**Metamagic:** Carl has gained the ability to use the empowered spell (3 dice) and the twinned spell abilities.

**Sorcerous Bloodline:** Carl's power comes from some cold and distant source, granting him powers associated with the frozen north.

**Spellcasting:** Carl is a 6th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks. Carl has the following Sorcerer spells:

**Cantrips (at will):** *chill touch, dancing lights, mage hand, message, ray of frost*

**1st level (4 slots):** *charm person, fog cloud, magic missile*

**2nd level (3 slots):** *enlarge/reduce, gust of wind*

**3rd level (3 slots):** *lightning bolt, sleet storm*

**Stunted Legs** Carl's short legs reduce his base speed by 10 feet.

**Thick Skin** Carl's thick skin



grants him +2 natural armor bonus.

## ACTIONS

**+1 greatsword:** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5)

## ITEMS

**Equipment** +1 *leather armor, +1 greatsword, figurine of wondrous power (silver raven), 150 gp*

**Treasure:** Carl's possessions are sized for him, but can fetch a good price from Threllish merchants. If the PCs captured Groultooth before he could send word to Carl, they should already possess the *silver raven*, so it will not be among his equipment.

**Reward:** 1,100 XP for defeating Carl.

**Development:** With Carl defeated, the remaining goblins and gnolls flee into the woods, pursued by the faeries. The fort is saved; proceed to Concluding the Adventure.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With Carl defeated and his goblins and gnolls routed by the fey and fleeing back into the Westerlands, the heroes are victorious. That night, Falling Spring Station echoes with merriment as humans and fey celebrate the fall of the Warlord of the North. Queen Latharna and her people depart with the dawn, after pledging continued friendship with the now recovered Commander Chelmsford.

When it comes time for the PCs to depart, read or paraphrase the following:

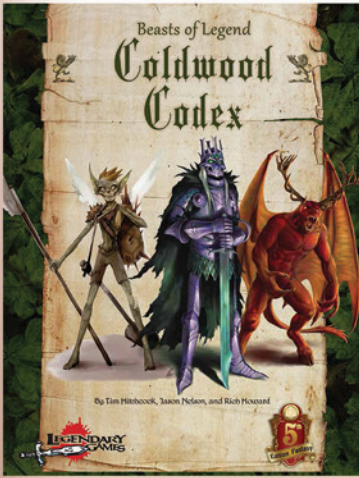
*You are given fresh horses and supplies, and Sergeant Bromhead sees you off at the gates. "Well, I never put much tuck in adventurers, not even the ones in the Zekerian Order. Thought they were all a bunch of ne'er-do-wells and wanderers, but you've sure proved me wrong. We know that Colonel Rorke will be rewarding you when you return to report to him but Commander Chelmsford wanted you to have a little extra from all of us."*

*He hands you each a pouch containing 250gp, a potion of cure moderate wounds, and a several bundles of preserved beef. "I made the jerky myself," Bromhead says. "I call it the Stomach Destroyer! You ride safe now and be well!"*

With that, the PCs can kick their horses into a gallop and leave Falling Spring Station safely behind them.

**Reward:** Upon returning to Colonel Rorke, each PC receives 1,000 gp, and the group gains an important and influential contact in the Threllish Army who will, no doubt, have more adventures for them soon enough.

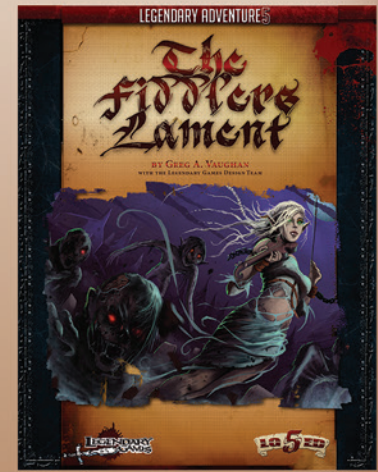




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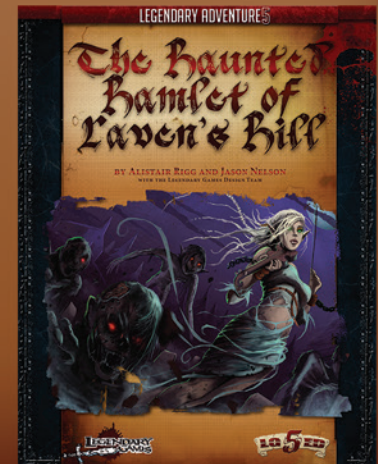
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