

ESCAPE FROM SEMBLIA



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By Chris Tulach

You weren't looking for trouble in civilized lands, just some good adventuring leads. Before you knew what was really happening, you wound up in the middle of an information exchange, and now you have to escape from the lands of Sembia to preserve your very lives! Off the beaten path to shake any pursuers, you take to the wilds in the hope that you'll reach a safe haven before you're captured.

Escape from Sembia is a Forgotten Realms adventure for five 1st-level characters and is a preview of the 4th Edition D&D game. The adventure has several decision points, but mostly consists of linear encounters that allow players to try out their characters' abilities and learn the game.

PREPARING TO PLAY

If you're running this adventure to preview the 4th Edition Dungeons & Dragons game, *Keep on the Shadowfell* contains all the rules you need to get started, along with sample characters.

To get the most out of this adventure, you'll want the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. All three will be released in June 2008.

If you're going to be a player in this adventure, stop reading here. If you're going to be the DM, make sure to read each encounter thoroughly, particularly paying attention to an encounter's terrain and other situational elements. Making this adventure work relies on bringing the individual encounters to life. In particular, the skill challenge and the final encounter need special attention, since you, as the DM, need to decide how best to customize them based on the player characters' actions.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Sembia is a peaceful land of mercantile activity where the folk are relatively safe from the problems that plague many other realms in Faerûn. However, the land of Sembia is controlled by the Empire of Netheril, a once-lost civilization that returned to Toril over a century ago. The Netherese have a dark and powerful history with strong ties to the Shadowfell. Their main goal is to unite the entire world under their rule.

Netheril does whatever it can to preserve the peace and prosperity of Sembian cities, since Sembia is their primary trade link with the rest of the world. While most citizens of Sembia have grown comfortable with this arrangement, there are a few determined cells of resistance. If a resistance cell is found by Netheril, it is swiftly crushed. As a result, those who resist Netherese rule are careful to hide their cells' existence. They often employ unwitting accomplices to help achieve their aims. The player characters happen to be perfect for this.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It's been slow. Real slow. Sembia, the merchant-controlled land you're in, is known for being peaceful and relatively safe, and you assumed that their emphasis on trade would bring you some good adventuring leads. That hasn't happened, and you started running out of coin. Now you need something—anything—to tide you over until your next foray into danger.

When in the city of Saerloon, you ran into an eladrin merchant who guaranteed you some good coin for a delivery assignment, so you took it. He paid you half up front and promised the other half when you reached your contact in Saerb, a town in northern Sembia.

You were handed a vellum scroll sealed with a purple wax symbol of a griffon rampant. The nameless merchant instructed you to keep the seal intact; he told you the scroll was enchanted to combust should it be opened in the wrong hands. The eladrin instructed you to deliver it to Inius Olger, a cobbler who lives in Saerb. You were to wait in the tavern across the street from his place, waiting for him to exit his shop at dusk to light a torch. That was the signal that it was clear to approach him to hand off the message and receive your final payment.

Now you wait in the tavern as dusk approaches. If you get this over and done with quickly, you can get back to some real adventuring!

RUNNING FOR FOUR PCs

If you have four player characters, instead of five, make the following changes to the encounters.

Encounter 1:

Reduce the number of human guards to three.

Encounter 3:

Reduce the number of hobgoblin archers to one.

Encounter 4:

Reduce the number of skeleton warriors to two.

Encounter 5:

Reduce the number of human berserkers to two.

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

SETUP

4 human guards (G)

1 human bandit (A)

Inius Olger (IO)

In this encounter, the PCs witness an altercation between their contact, Inius Olger, and some nefarious individuals. The PCs need to think fast to determine whether to save Inius's life from the corrupt guards and the Netherese agent, a human bandit.

At dusk, read the following: *A pasty, balding man exits the cobbler's shop and lights a torch outside. At that moment, you hear an authoritative voice call out to him, and you see several armed guards making their way up the street toward the shop.*

Perception Check

DC 12: *You see a man in a heavy black cloak among the guards.*

DC 16: *The cloaked man is brandishing a dagger.*

Now the PCs have to decide what to do. They can fight the guards right now or continue to watch, either entering combat later or leaving the area. If they enter combat, go right to initiative.

TACTICS

The guards move to intercept the PCs and keep them busy while the Netherese agent attempts to kill Inius Olger. To kill Inius, the agent needs only to hit him. If Inius dies, the agent joins the fight against the PCs. He attempts to flee if he is bloodied.

The guards use *powerful strike* to slow the PCs down. When the first guard is bloodied, he calls out for help. The guards withdraw if they're close to 0 hit points.

Inius's initiative count is 1, and he has a speed of 6. On his turn, he double moves to get back into his shop and hides behind the counter.

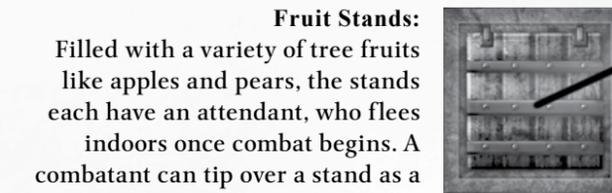
The first time a PC reduces a guard to 0 hit points, remind the player that he or she can choose to knock the guard unconscious instead of killing him. If the PCs kill any guards (the agent doesn't count as a guard), note it, since it has repercussions in the next encounter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Bakery Cart: Stacked with bread loaves and bags of flour, the cart has a baker attending it who hides underneath the cart at the first sign of combat. Each of the cart's squares contains a bag of flour, and a combatant can cut open a bag as a minor action and create a cloud of particles in the bag's square and all squares adjacent to it. The particles provide concealment until the end of the cutter's next turn.



Fountains: The fountains' squares are considered difficult terrain.



Fruit Stands: Filled with a variety of tree fruits like apples and pears, the stands each have an attendant, who flees indoors once combat begins. A combatant can tip over a stand as a standard action, spilling fruit in all adjacent squares. Those squares are then considered difficult terrain.

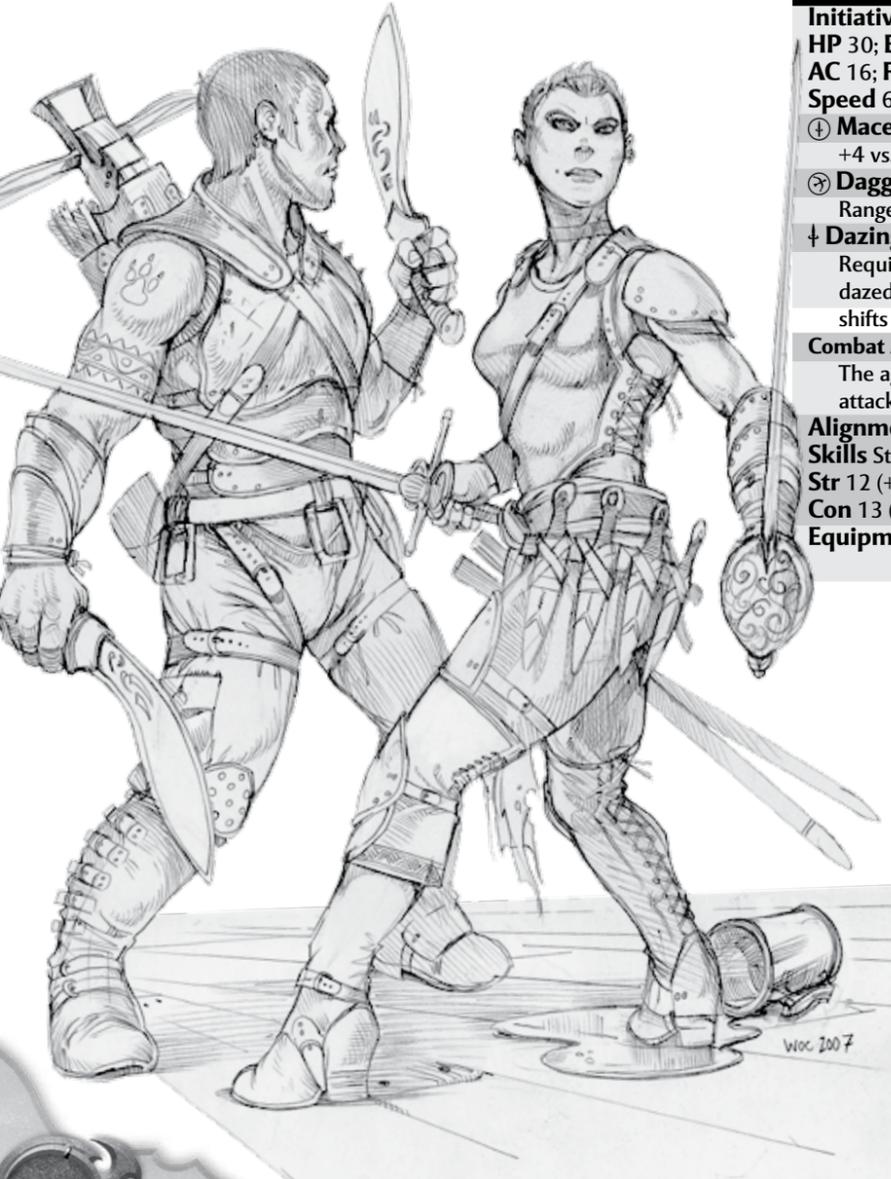
ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter has two possible outcomes depending on whether the PCs fight the guards. Both outcomes assume the PCs live.

The PCs Fight the Agent and the Guards: If Inius is still alive after the battle, he tells the PCs to hold on to the scroll, get out of town as soon as possible, and find a safe haven (he suggests either Cormyr or the Dalelands). He also gives 50 gp to each of them. A PC who picks up the dagger of the Netherese agent notices the blade is etched with a symbol of a clenched fist crushing a dove.

The PCs Leave without Fighting: Avoiding the fight might seem like a good option, but unless the PCs are very careful about where they exit, they are noticed by a guard who calls for help.

No matter what happens, the PCs need to flee the town and get to a safe haven. Most likely, a chase is on as the PCs move through Saerb, attempting to exit the town before the guards catch up to them. Go to the next encounter.



4 Human Guards (G) Level 2 Soldier
XP 125 each
Medium natural humanoid
Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6
HP 39; **Bloodied** 19
AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Speed 5

⊕ **Halberd** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the human guard's next turn.

⊖ **Powerful Strike** (standard; recharge ⓧ ⓧ) • **Weapon**
Requires halberd; reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

➤ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 15/30; +8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Streetwise +7
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts

Human Bandit (A) Level 2 Skirmisher
XP 125
Medium natural humanoid
Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +1
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12
Speed 6

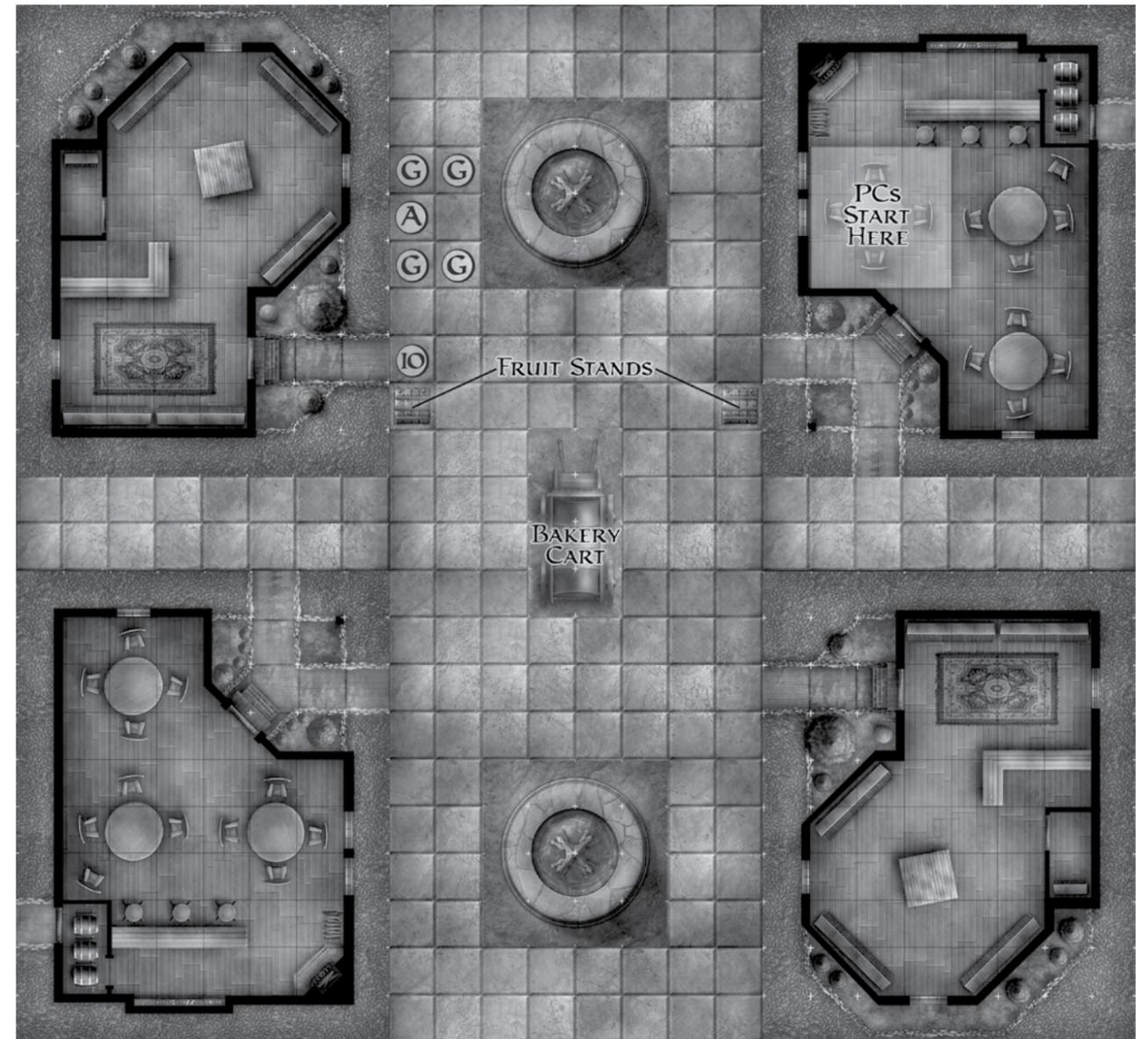
⊕ **Mace** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the agent shifts 1 square.

⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 5/10; +6 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage.

⊖ **Dazing Strike** (standard; encounter) • **Weapon**
Requires mace; +4 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the agent's next turn, and the agent shifts 1 square.

Combat Advantage
The agent deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target he has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers



The map uses tiles from the first *D&D Dungeon Tiles* set.

Tile	Size	Number
Cave/Floor	4 x 8	2
Crevasse/Floor	4 x 2	1
Crevasse/Floor	8 x 2	2
Dragon Statues / Floor	8 x 2	2
Ruins/Floor	4 x 8	2
Shop/Floor	8 x 10	2
Tavern/Floor	8 x 10	2
Trapdoor/Floor	1 x 1	2
Wall/Floor	4 x 2	1
Fountain / Magic Circle	4 x 4	2

The map also uses a tile from the *Ruins of the Wild* set of *D&D Dungeon Tiles*.

Tile	Size	Number
Wagon / Field with Log	4 x 2	1

ENCOUNTER 2: RUN!

Encounter Level 1 (300 XP)

SETUP

No matter how encounter 1 ends, the guards in Saerb are alerted to the PCs' presence in town and are hot on their heels.

Read the following:

The trill of a whistle pierces the air. From down the street, you see a large group of guards moving quickly your way. For the moment, the path appears clear in the opposite direction. You're going to need to make a break for it!

SKILL CHALLENGE

The PCs engage in a skill challenge to try to escape the town before the guards get a good look at them. In a skill challenge, the PCs make a series of skill checks, trying to make a certain number of successful skill checks before a certain number of failures. In this encounter, the PCs want to achieve eight successes before four failures.

The group will most likely be together at the beginning of the encounter. Describe the scene to them, ask them what they do, translate their actions into skill checks, and then describe the next scene. Continue this process until the group has achieved eight successes or four failures.

The players might ask questions about the environment; describe the town's streets so that they understand how they can use their skills. If the PCs split up, describe the environment for each group of characters separately. Keep the action flowing, making sure you keep the guards on the PCs' trail until the skill challenge is over (at which point the PCs escape immediate danger and are outside the town).

The following scenes are provided as examples. Feel free to customize them based on what the PCs do, and give hints to the PCs about what skills might be useful if they're having trouble deciding what to do.

SCENE 1

To the east you see an alley crowded with crates and boxes piled almost to the roofs. The buildings on either side of the alley appear to be warehouses.

Athletics (DC 12): Run through the alley, jump on the boxes, and climb up to a rooftop. On a failure, a PC strains an arm or a leg and loses a healing surge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC manages to scatter boxes to trip up the guards and gains a +3 bonus to his or her next Acrobatics or Athletics check.

Perception (DC 12): Notice that a warehouse door is ajar and duck inside. On a failure, a PC runs into a dead end and must immediately succeed on a DC 22 Acrobatics

or Athletics check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC finds a particularly good hiding place and can immediately make a DC 15 Stealth check to score an additional success.

Stealth (DC 12): Hide in a partly opened crate while the guards pass by. On a failure, a PC gets stuck inside and must immediately succeed on a DC 22 Acrobatics or Athletics check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC finds a particularly good vantage point and can immediately make a DC 15 Perception check to score an additional success.

SCENE 2

Down the street to the west you see a marketplace. Merchants are packing up their carts and putting their wares away in nearby tents as evening approaches.

Acrobatics (DC 12): Dodge through the crowd. On a failure, a PC stumbles and loses a healing surge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC gains extra ground and a +3 bonus to his or her next Acrobatics, Athletics, or Stealth check in the skill challenge.

Athletics (DC 12): Push over some carts to slow down the guards. On a failure, a PC strains an arm and loses a healing surge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC manages to scatter the carts particularly well, tripping up the guards, and gains a +3 bonus to his or her next Acrobatics or Athletics check.

Perception (DC 12): Spot a shortcut through a few tents. On a failure, a PC runs into a dead end and must immediately succeed on a DC 22 Acrobatics or Athletics check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC finds a particularly good shortcut and can immediately make a DC 15 Stealth check to score an additional success.

Stealth (DC 12): Blend in with the crowd or hide in a cart or a tent. On a failure, a PC gets stuck in the crowd or in a hiding place and must immediately succeed on a DC 22 Acrobatics or Athletics check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC finds a particularly good vantage point and can immediately make a DC 15 Perception check to score an additional success.

Streetwise (DC 12): Pay a merchant to create a distraction for you. On a failure, a PC runs into two muggers and must immediately try to talk his or her way past them by succeeding on a DC 18 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC receives a tip about a shortcut and gains one additional success (only one additional success can be gained through Streetwise in the skill challenge).

SCENE 3

To the south you see a street with a number of carousing tavern-goers, already well in their cups. The lights of a tavern glow warmly through open windows.

Acrobatics (DC 12): Dive through a tavern window. On a failure, a PC stumbles and loses a healing surge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC gains extra ground and a +3 bonus to his or her next Acrobatics, Athletics, or Stealth check in the skill challenge.

Athletics (DC 12): Push past the drunk townsfolk. On a failure, a PC is tripped by a drunk and loses a healing surge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC manages to trip several of the drunks, who delay the guards, and gains a +3 bonus to his or her next Acrobatics or Athletics check.

Perception (DC 12): Notice a stable to hide in next to the tavern. On a failure, a PC runs into a dead end and must immediately succeed on a DC 22 Acrobatics or Athletics check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC finds a particularly good shortcut on the other side of the stable and can immediately make a DC 15 Stealth check to score an additional success.

Streetwise (DC 12): Get a tip from one of the drunks on a good hiding place in the back of the tavern. On a failure, a PC runs into two belligerent drunks and must immediately try to talk his or her way past them by succeeding on a DC 18 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check or lose one success in the skill challenge. If a PC's check result is 20 or higher, the PC receives a tip about a shortcut behind the tavern and gains one additional success (only one additional success can be gained through Streetwise in the skill challenge).

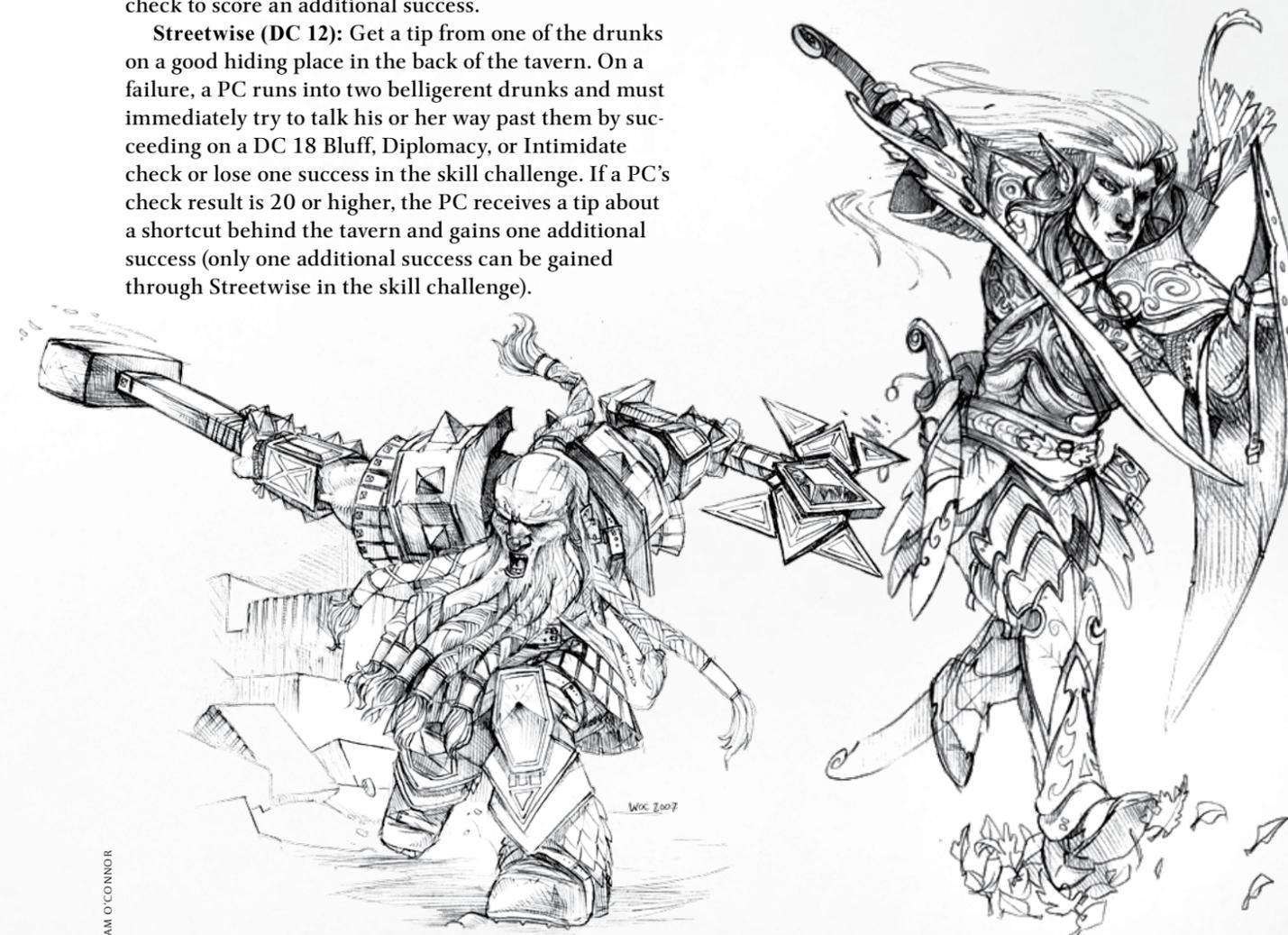
ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Completing the skill challenge takes the PCs about 10 minutes. Whether or not the PCs succeed at the challenge, they escape Saerb. What's important is whether they were observed long enough for the guards to gain an accurate description of them.

If the PCs succeed at the skill challenge, the guards didn't get a good look at them. This makes the final encounter a little easier.

If the PCs fail, the guards were close enough on their tail to get a good look at most of them and probably had a few scuffles with them. Each PC loses 2 healing surges. Their failure also makes the final encounter a little harder.

If this is the PCs' second encounter without an extended rest, they each gain an action point.



WILLIAM O'CONNOR

ENCOUNTER 3: UNEXPECTED VISITORS

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

- 2 hobgoblin soldiers (S)
- 2 hobgoblin archers (A)
- 1 hobgoblin warcaster (W)

After making it out of the town of Saerb, the PCs find themselves in the wilderness after dark. They'll need to make some decisions on where to go and what to do next.

Read the following:

You were able to put some ground behind you and the pursuing guards. Darkness is settling in, and those guards will probably gather others to hunt you down.

Let the players know that waiting around close to town isn't a good idea. They'll need to get farther away from roads and travel cross-country if they want to avoid patrols that on the lookout for them. The PCs are acquainted with Sembia well enough to avoid getting lost (there are numerous roads and farmsteads in the countryside).

Once the PCs continue on, read the following:

After traveling for an hour, you find a small wood that looks like a good enough place to take a breather and discuss further plans. The moon is out and close to full. You can see the silhouette of a ruined tower just ahead and a small fire flickering at the tower's base. You hear talking in the harsh language of Goblin and see human-sized forms moving about.

A PC who speaks Goblin can make a DC 12 Perception check to make out snippets of the hobgoblins' conversation. The hobgoblins are conversing about which farm to attack in a few hours and the merits of one over the other. "They have delicious pigs at the bald farmer's place," one says. "But the fat human used to be an adventurer and might have some treasure," says another, and so on.

The PCs are free to slip away if they choose, but they have an opportunity now to take care of what's probably a threat to nearby farmers. If the PCs want to fight, they can get the drop on the hobgoblins by dousing their lights and sneaking toward them, making DC 18 Stealth checks. Any PC who succeeds on the Stealth check can take one action during the resulting surprise round.

TACTICS

Once the hobgoblins are alerted to the PCs' presence, they keep a tight defensive formation near the ruined tower. They fight smart and fight to the death.

The hobgoblin soldiers attempt to stay next to each other to gain the benefits of *phalanx soldier*. They also attempt to block the PCs from attacking the archers but try to keep an opening for the warcaster to use his powers.

The archers retreat deeper into the tower, but they attempt to stay within 5 squares of each other to maximize their longbow attacks.

The warcaster leads off with *force lure*, and then attempts to get close enough to use his other rechargeable powers.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The hobgoblins camp at the base of the tower and have a small fire on the broken door lying outside the tower. The fire provides bright light within 10 squares. All other areas are in dim light unless a light source is present. Dim light doesn't affect creatures with low-light vision, but creatures with normal vision have a hard time seeing; their targets have concealment (-2 to melee attack rolls and ranged attack rolls against that target).

Boulders: Squares with large boulders in them count as blocking terrain. A combatant can jump on top of a boulder by making a DC 20 Athletics check or a DC 10 Athletics check with a running start.

Trees: Any square that contains mostly foliage in it counts as covering terrain. The center square of the big trees (where the trunk is located) counts as blocking terrain.

Pond: Pond squares count as difficult terrain.

Statue: The upright statue just outside and to the right of the tower is blocking terrain.

Treasure: The hobgoblins have a small sack containing 80 gp, looted from around the countryside. The hobgoblins also have five riding horses tethered behind the tower. If the PCs treat the horses well, the animals can be used as mounts.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the hobgoblins, they can take shelter in the ruined tower. They have no further encounters in the Sembian wilderness. Proceed to the next encounter once the players are ready.

Hobgoblin Warcaster (W) Level 3 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (goblin) XP 150

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14
Speed 6

⊕ **Staff** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage.

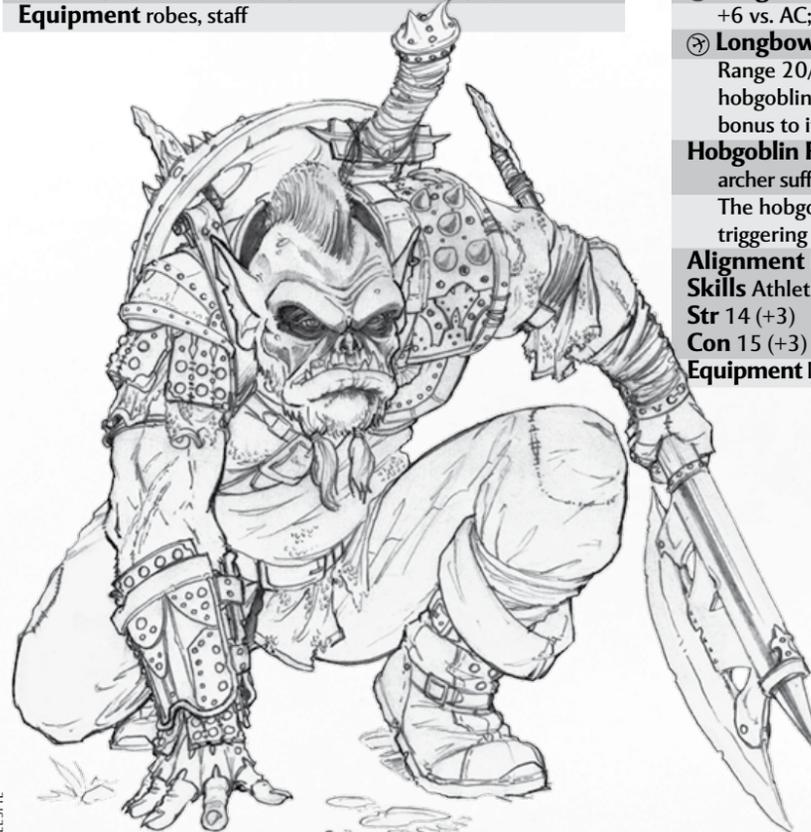
⚡ **Shock Staff** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹☹) • **Lightning, Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 lightning damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the hobgoblin warcaster's next turn.

↻ **Force Lure** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹) • **Force**
Range 5; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 force damage, and the target slides 3 squares.

⬅ **Force Pulse** (standard; recharge ☹☹) • **Force**
Close blast 5; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 force damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. *Miss:* Half damage, and the target is neither pushed nor knocked prone.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin warcaster suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin warcaster makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Arcana +10, Athletics +4, Stealth +10
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 16 (+4)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 19 (+5) **Cha** 13 (+2)
Equipment robes, staff



ADAM GILLESPIE

2 Hobgoblin Soldiers (S) Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (goblin) XP 150 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20
AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Speed 5

⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.

⚔ **Formation Strike** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Requires flail; +7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square provided it ends in a space adjacent to another hobgoblin.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin soldier makes a saving throw against the effect.

Phalanx Soldier
The hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +10
Str 19 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail

2 Hobgoblin Archers (A) Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (goblin) XP 150 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 30; **Bloodied** 15
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13
Speed 6

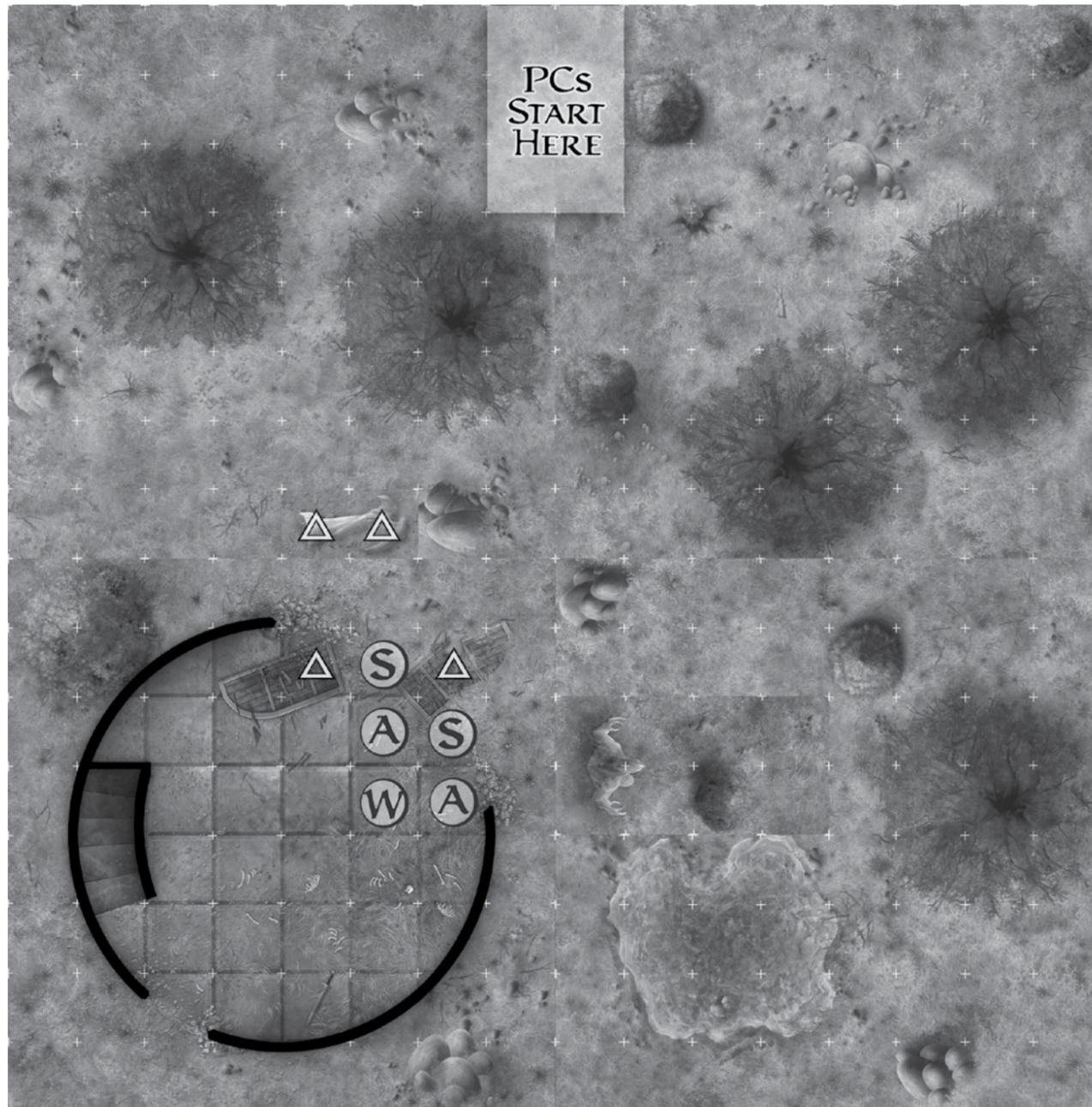
⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

↻ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 20/40; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin archer grants an ally within 5 squares of it a +2 bonus to its next ranged attack roll against the same target.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin archer suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)
The hobgoblin archer makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +5, Stealth +12
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 15 (+3) **Int** 11 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, longsword, longbow, quiver of 30 arrows

ENCOUNTER 4: INTO THE HILLS



PCs
START
HERE

The map uses tiles from the *Ruins of the Wild* set of *D&D Dungeon Tiles*.

△ = Difficult Terrain

Tile	Size	Number
Cabin / Field with Trees	8 x 8	1
Stonehenge / Field with Pond	8 x 8	1
Ruined Tower / Field with Trees	8 x 8	2
Fallen Statue / Mud Puddle	2 x 1	1
Field with Statue / Muddy Pond	4 x 2	1

Encounter Level 4 (850 XP)

SETUP

3 skeleton warriors (SW)
1 blazing skeleton (BL)
1 boneshard skeleton (BS)

At this point, the PCs need to make a choice. They know that Sembia is not safe for them. It's obvious that whatever the contents of the scroll, they're probably being hunted by agents of Netheril. They need to find a safe haven.

Two paths exist, both within a days' travel by horse: (1) The PCs can head west to the kingdom of Cormyr. This is a strong land that is ruled by a line of just kings and that opposes the expansion of Netheril at every turn. (2) The PCs can head north to the Dalelands. The Dalelands are a confederation of independent towns and villages that have constantly rebuffed attempts to be subsumed by other lands. Either path leads through the Thunder Peaks, a mountain range that separates Sembia from both Cormyr and the Dalelands. While the main mountain passes are probably too well traveled, there might be some trails in the foothills that would allow the PCs undetected passage.

Once the PCs have made their choice, read the following: *After traveling for many hours, you reach the Thunder Peaks without incident. Navigating through some old trails in the foothills, you reach a pass just as lightning streaks across the sky and thunder booms. The path ahead is littered with the remains of the dead, bones and rusted weapons scattered across the trail and near a sheer drop-off to your left. To the right of the trail, the terrain slopes steeply upward and then flattens out before ending at a cliff face that creates a natural wall.*

If the PCs chose Cormyr as their route, read the following: *The trail and grassy rise to the right are stained a reddish brown.*

Place the PCs on the map. Have them move across the map as a group. As they approach the center of the map, skeletal creatures rise from the remains to once again do battle. The skeletons rise up slowly enough that the PCs are not surprised. If a skeleton cannot rise in its marked location, it appears in the nearest unoccupied square.

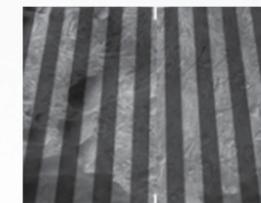
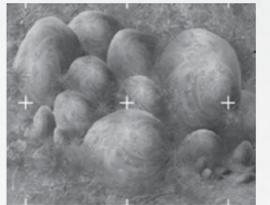
TACTICS

The skeleton warriors and boneshard skeleton surround the PCs in melee. They have only a vestigial memory of good tactics. The blazing skeleton use *flame orb* from its higher point until it is engaged in melee. It then switches to melee attacks. All the skeletons fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

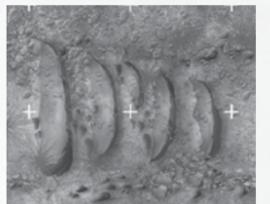
Blood Rock (Cormyr Path Only): The entire pass is permeated with the essence of bloody death from a past battle. Combatants score critical hits on a natural roll of 19 or 20.

Boulders: Squares with large boulders in them count as blocking terrain. A combatant can jump on top of a boulder by making a DC 20 Athletics check or a DC 10 Athletics check with a running start.

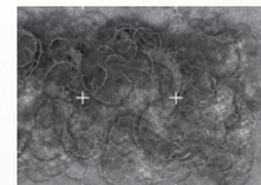


Cliff: The cliff drops 30 feet to the ground below. A creature that falls over the edge takes 3d10 damage and lands prone below. If a power or a bull rush forces a creature over the edge, the creature can immediately

attempt a saving throw to catch hold of the edge. A successful saving throw means the creature lands prone in the space nearest the edge and the forced movement ends.



Slope: Going up or down the slope to the top of the path is treated as difficult terrain.



Thick Foliage: A square that contains thick foliage blocks line of sight. Entering such a square costs 2 extra squares of movement.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs defeat the skeletons, they are able to travel through the rest of the pass without incident.

If this is the PCs' fourth encounter without an extended rest, they each gain an action point.

3 Skeleton Warriors (SW) **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 150 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 37; **Bloodied** 18
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 5

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton warrior's next turn; see also *speed of the dead*.

Speed of the Dead
When making an opportunity attack, the skeleton warrior gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 3 (-3)

Equipment chainmail, light shield, longsword

Blazing Skeleton (BL) **Level 5 Artillery**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 200

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
Fiery Aura (Fire) aura 1; any creature starts its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage.
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20
AC 19; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 fire, 10 necrotic;
Vulnerable 5 radiant
Speed 6

⊕ **Blazing Claw** (standard; at-will) • **Fire**
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

⊕ **Flame Orb** (standard; at-will) • **Fire**
Range 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 4 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 13 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 4 (-1) **Cha** 6 (+0)

Boneshard Skeleton (BS) **Level 5 Brute**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 200

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision
HP 65; **Bloodied** 32; see also *boneshard burst*
AC 17; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

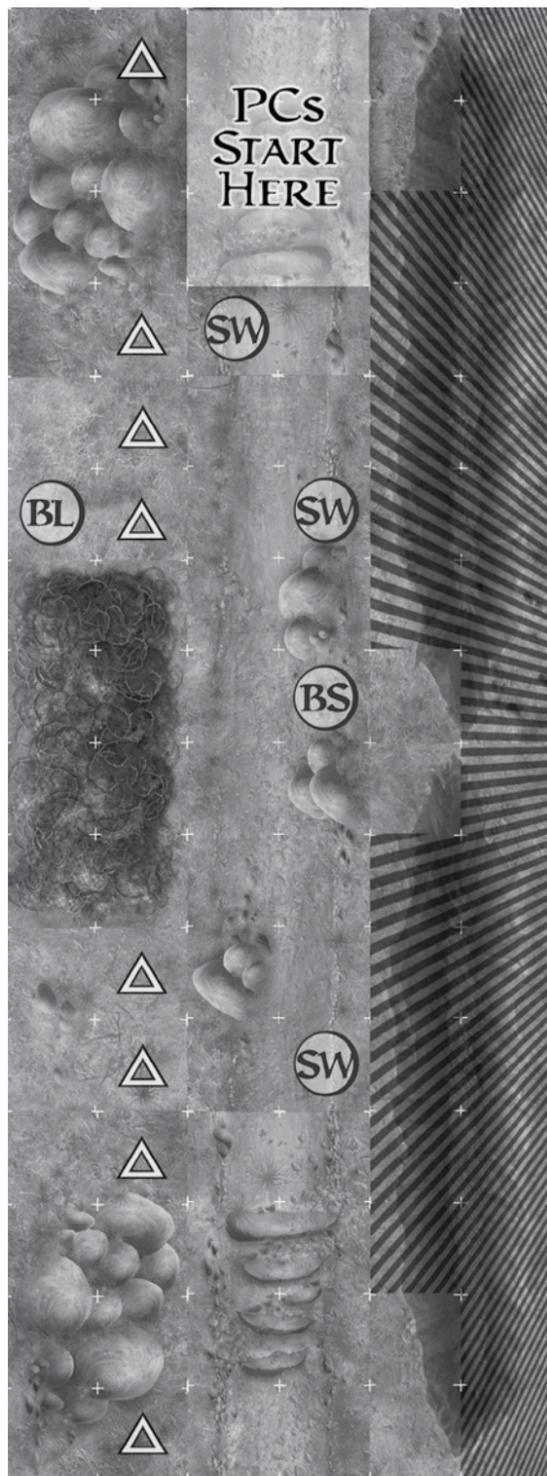
⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) • **Necrotic, Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11) plus 5 necrotic damage.

⊕ **Boneshard** (standard; at-will) • **Necrotic**
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

⚡ **Boneshard Burst** (immediate reaction, when first bloodied and again when the boneshard skeleton is reduced to 0 hit points) • **Necrotic**
Close burst 3; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 17 (+5) **Int** 3 (-2) **Cha** 3 (-2)

Equipment scimitar



The map uses tiles from the *Ruins of the Wild* set of D&D Dungeon Tiles.

Tile	Size	Number
Stream/Crevasse	8 x 2	2
Ruined Wagon / Briar	4 x 2	1
Field / Rock Outcropping	4 x 2	2
Road with Steps / Fallen Pillar	4 x 2	2
Field/Road	8 x 2	3

ENCOUNTER 5: ALMOST THERE

Encounter Level 5 (950 XP)

SETUP

- 3 human berserkers (B)
- 1 human mage (M)
- 1 shadar-kai chainfighter (SC)

The PCs have almost made it to their safe haven. They're in either Cormyr or the Dalelands now, but a Netherese agent—a human mage—has tracked them down and is preparing for one final attempt at capturing them.

Read the following:

You're now beyond the Thunder Peaks and are nearing your safe haven. Coming out of thick woods and rounding a bend, you see a bridge across a fast-running stream. On the bridge are three rough-looking men carrying greataxes. Behind thick brush just past the bridge stands a robed woman holding a staff and a pale-skinned elflike man absently twirling a spiked chain.

If the PCs succeeded in the skill challenge in encounter 2, the guards in Saerb didn't get a good enough look at them, and the agent and her warriors aren't sure if the PCs are coming this way. As a result, the PCs gain a surprise round against their foes.

If the PCs failed the skill challenge in encounter 2, they were identified and local folk were shown drawings of them and instructed to look out for them. Messages were relayed to the group at the bridge, who are ready for the PCs. The agent's forces gain a +2 bonus to their first attack rolls made against the PCs, because they've put together a good plan of attack.

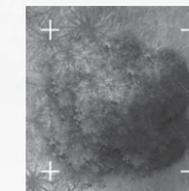
TACTICS

The berserkers move in to hold the bridge and attack the PCs savagely. They are undisciplined; they leave their positions on the bridge to flank a target, for example.

The Netherese mage stays on her side of the bridge, near the thick foliage so as to minimize the potential of being flanked. She uses her encounter powers when it is most advantageous and otherwise relies on *magic missile*. She attempts to flee if she becomes bloodied.

The shadar-kai chainfighter uses move actions and *shadow jaunt* to position for *dance of death*. He concentrates on attacking controllers and leaders, and he fights to the death.

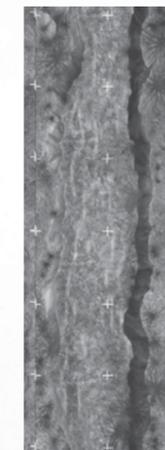
FEATURES OF THE AREA



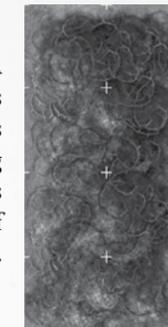
Small Trees: A small tree can provide cover to a creature that is in the same or an adjacent square.

Stone Bridge:

The stone bridge is 10 feet above the stream. Creatures that fall over the edge take 1d6 damage and land prone in the stream. They then slide 2 squares toward the bottom of the map. If a power or a bull rush forces a combatant over the edge, the combatant can attempt a saving throw to catch hold of the bridge. A successful saving throw means the combatant lands prone in the space nearest the edge and the forced movement ends.



Stream: Any combatant who ends a move in the stream slides 1 square toward the bottom of the map (or 2 squares if the combatant is prone). Jumping over the stream requires a DC 20 Athletics check (or DC 10 if the jumper has a running start).



Thick Foliage: A square that contains thick foliage blocks line of sight. Entering such a square costs 2 extra squares of movement.

Wooden Bridge (Dalelands Path): The bridge on this path follows the rules for the stone bridge, but it is made of wood and lashed together with rope. It's also rickety; a combatant who takes damage while on the bridge must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall into the stream.

Treasure: The mercenaries brought along their loot sacks, which contain some magic items (see "Magic Items").

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs knock the mage or the shadar-kai unconscious and later interrogate either of them, the PCs learn that the agent was ordered by her superiors to capture the PCs and take the scroll. The scroll has some important information, but neither of them knows the specifics. The berserkers are mercenaries and know nothing relevant.

After the battle, the PCs make it to their safe haven.

Read the following:

You've finally made it to the safety of friendlier lands. Now you'll need to ask around to see if anyone can help you find a suitable recipient for the scroll. But that's a story for another time.



3 Human Berserkers (B) **Level 4 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175 each

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2
HP 56; **Bloodied** 28; see also *battle fury*
AC 15; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14
Speed 7

⊕ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d12 + 4 damage (crit 1d12 + 16).

⊕ **Battle Fury** (immediate reaction, when first bloodied; encounter)
The human berserker makes a melee basic attack with a +4 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 1d6 damage on a hit.

⤵ **Handaxe** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Range 5/10; +5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Athletics +10, Endurance +10
Str 17 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes

Human Mage (M) **Level 4 Artillery (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5
HP 32; **Bloodied** 16
AC 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15
Speed 6

⊕ **Quarterstaff** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.

⊕ **Magic Missile** (standard; at-will) • **Force**
Range 20; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 4 force damage.

⤵ **Dancing Lightning** (standard; encounter) • **Lightning**
The mage makes a separate attack against 3 different targets: range 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 lightning damage.

⚡ **Thunder Burst** (standard; encounter) • **Thunder**
Area burst 1 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Arcana +11
Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 17 (+5)
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 18 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+3)
Equipment robes, quarterstaff, wand

Shadar-kai Chainfighter (SC) **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Medium shadow humanoid XP 250

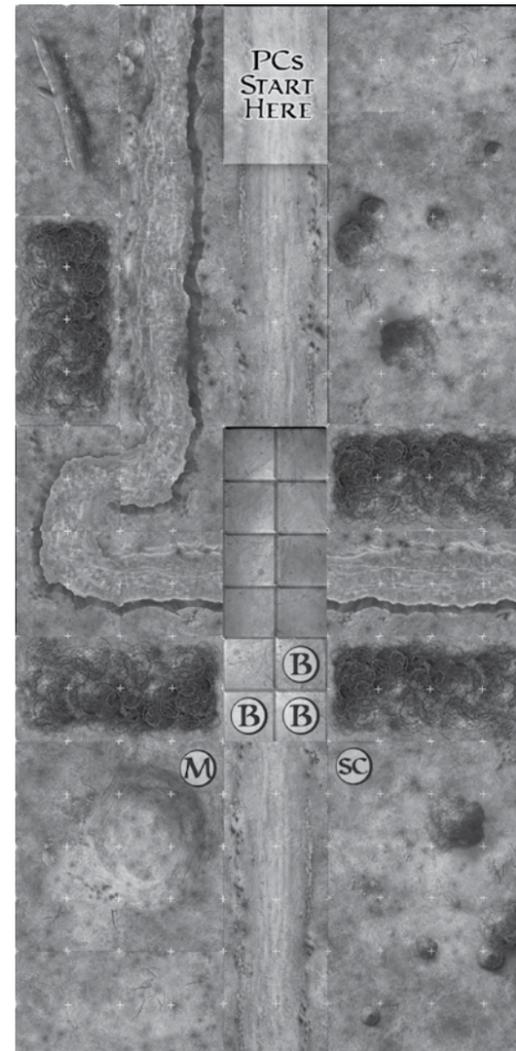
Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27
AC 20; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17
Speed 6; see also *dance of death* and *shadow jaunt*

⊕ **Spiked Chain** (standard; at-will) • **Weapon**
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage.

⊕ **Dance of Death** (standard; recharge [E]) • **Necrotic, Weapon**
The shadar-kai chainfighter shifts 6 squares and makes 3 spiked chain attacks at any points during his move. He can only attack a given enemy once, but he deals an extra 1d6 necrotic damage with each successful hit.

⤵ **Shadow Jaunt** (move; encounter) • **Teleportation**
The shadar-kai chainfighter teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of his next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Acrobatics +14, Stealth +14
Str 17 (+6) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, spiked chain



The map uses tiles from the first set of *D&D Dungeon Tiles*.

Tile	Size	Number
Ground/Floor	2 x 2	2
Obelisk/Floor	2 x 2	1
Pit/Floor	2 x 2	1

The map also uses tiles from the *Ruins of the Wild* set of *D&D Dungeon Tiles*.

Tile	Size	Number
Stream/Crevasse	8 x 2	1
Road/Crevasse	8 x 2	2
Stream/Road	8 x 2	1
Field/Skeleton	4 x 8	2
Graves/Briar	4 x 2	2
Mound / Hillside Door	4 x 4	1
Ruined Wagon / Briar	4 x 2	2
Stream Bend / Horse	2 x 2	2
Stream Bend / Road Bend	2 x 2	1
Covered Wagon / Field with Log	4 x 2	1
Field / Rock Outcropping	4 x 2	2

MAGIC ITEMS

If the PCs completed the final encounter successfully, each of them can pick a magic item from the following selection.

Vicious Longbow **Level 2**
This weapon is good for a ranger to wield.
Enhancement: +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls using the weapon
Critical: +1d12 damage on a critical hit

Symbol of Life **Level 2**
This is a perfect implement for a cleric to use.
Implement (Holy Symbol)
Enhancement: +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls using the implement
Critical: +1d6 damage on a critical hit using the implement
Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Minor Action.
Until the end of your turn, any character healed by one of your encounter powers or daily powers regains an additional 1d6 hit points.

Dwarven Plate Armor **Level 2**
This armor is good for a paladin.
Enhancement: +1 enhancement bonus to AC
Property: +1 item bonus to Endurance checks.
Power (Daily ♦ Healing): Free Action.
Regain hit points as if you had spent a healing surge.

Cloak of Resistance **Level 2**
This cloak is suitable for a character of any class.
Item Slot: Neck
Enhancement: +1 enhancement bonus to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will defenses
Power (Daily): Minor Action. Gain resist 5 to all damage until the start of your next turn.

Belt of Vigor **Level 2**
This belt is suitable for a character of any class.
Item Slot: Waist
Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to your healing surge value.

Heavy Shield of Protection **Level 3**
This shield is good for a fighter or a paladin to use.
Item Slot: Arms
Power (Daily): Standard Action. You and an adjacent ally gain resist 10 to all damage until the end of your next turn.