

A HEROIC TIER ADVENTURE

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™

MARCH OF THE PHANTOM BRIGADE



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 1ST – 3RD LEVEL

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™, an exciting official DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® program. This adventure is a mini-campaign season designed to be played in one-encounter sessions once per week at your local Wizards Play Network location. Each week, players can earn in-game rewards for their characters and Renown Points toward special program-exclusive D&D Fortune Cards™ that can be used in this and future seasons of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS play.

Preparing for Play

The DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS play kit provides all you need to DM this adventure, including poster maps of encounter areas and a sheet of tokens to represent monsters, adventurers, and battlefield effects. Follow the steps below to prepare for play.

Before you run Session 1:

- ◆ Skim the Adventure Background and Adventure Summary to get a feel for the flow of the story.
- ◆ Read **Session 1: On the Road**, page 6, and **Stirge Attack**, page 8. If you are starting at another point, read the appropriate sections and what has come before.

At the table of your first session:

- ◆ Ensure that each player has a character to play. Players can use one of the characters provided in the kit or can create their own personas using the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules.
- ◆ Give each player a D&D Encounters Play Tracker. This sheet, found in the play kit, allows the players to track treasure, experience, and Renown Points earned for each play session.
- ◆ Get a session tracking sheet from the organizer. Record all the players' DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with your DCI/RPGA number. If you or any of the players don't have a DCI/RPGA number, ask the organizer for a membership card.

During the session:

- ◆ Each session is one encounter. Just DM the encounter assigned for that week's session. Typical playing time for one encounter is 90 minutes to 2 hours.
- ◆ Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the game. As the DM, you can make some adjustments to the adventure (see the sidebar on page 5) to facilitate player fun.

At the end of your first session:

- ◆ Have the adventurers take a short rest if they want, but remind them to track their daily abilities. Healing surges used, daily powers expended, and other daily resources do not refresh in between sessions,

only at the end of each chapter. Make sure your players track this information on their D&D Encounters Play Trackers.

- ◆ Turn in your session tracking sheet to the organizer. Make sure you've recorded all the DCI/RPGA numbers on it, along with names and the play date.
- ◆ Report Renown Point totals earned for each player to the organizer. The organizer fills out the Renown Point Tracker for the location and tells you if any players have earned D&D Encounters Cards.
- ◆ Give out treasure and experience points. Make sure the players write down rewards on their D&D Encounters Play Trackers.
- ◆ Collect your special reward for providing your time as a DM to make the event happen. Your organizer has more details on this reward.

At the end of each chapter:

- ◆ The adventurers take an extended rest, regaining all of their healing surges, hit points, and daily powers. Also, their action point total resets to 1.
- ◆ Once you've been the DM for a few sessions, it's easy to prepare for your next session. Simply skim the next session's material, and you're ready to go.

Creating a Character

Players are responsible for bringing their own characters to each play session. A first-time player can bring a 1st-level character created using the rules found in the *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*™ rulebook, *Heroes of the*

Forgotten Kingdoms™ rulebook, or the *Class Compendium: Heroes of Sword and Spell*™ rulebook. In addition, players can use rules presented in *Dragon*® magazine in support of those products.

If a player doesn't have a character or doesn't want to create one from scratch, several pregenerated adventurers are provided in the play kit.

At the end of each session, you award experience points, treasure, and Renown Points. The players record that information on their D&D Encounters Play Trackers, and you report the Renown Points each player earned to the organizer.

Changing Characters: Players can switch characters during a D&D Encounters season. If a player wants to do so, he or she can bring a new character with an amount of experience points equal to the character he or she previously played in the season. However, the new character does not keep any treasure or items from the previous character.

Character Death: If a character dies during a session, the player has two choices. He or she can bring the same character back at the beginning of the next session with four fewer healing surges, or he or she can start a new level-appropriate character. If a character dies and has fewer than four healing surges remaining, that character loses all of his or her remaining healing surges and can return next session but has hit points equaling only his or her bloodied value.

No other penalty exists for death except for the potential loss of Renown Points for surviving eight or more sessions without dying.

Advancement

At the end of each session, you award experience points. The point total includes the encounter reward plus any exploration or story rewards. The exploration and story rewards vary, depending on group size. Choose an amount appropriate for the size of the group. For example, in the first session, the party receives 400 to 600 XP for helping to resolve the dispute between Splintershield and Malgram. If a party contained only four characters, you might award 400 XP. If a party contained six characters, you could award 600 XP. For five characters, award 500 XP.

After calculating the total XP reward, divide it by the number of player characters (do not include nonplayer characters), and award each character that amount of experience points.

Milestones: For every two encounters a character completes without taking an extended rest, the character reaches a milestone, gaining an action point.

Treasure

As the characters progress through the mini-campaign, they have the opportunity to gain treasure in the form of gold pieces, valuables, and magic items. Whenever

A CHANGING GROUP

Since you can never tell who's going to show up to a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS session from week to week, you might wind up with a different group of players at various times. Some players might be starting in "midstream," some could have missed a session or two, and others might have played all the sessions with a different DM. That's fine. Catch up new players with a brief summary of what has come before and make sure that returning players have marked off resources they spent (healing surges, daily powers, and so forth) since their last extended rest.

Majority Rules: If some element of the adventure plot hinges on the adventurers having made a particular decision in a previous session, and the current group of players is not the same as that previous group, then poll the players to see what their previous groups decided to do. Go with the majority; if it's an even split, side with the most positive result. For example, if three of five players' characters were in a group that decided to take the mountain path in Session 1, then use that decision for determining the probability of the random encounters in Session 2.

characters discover treasure, follow the instructions provided in the adventure. Use the following rules to divide treasure among the characters.

Magic Items: During the adventure, a number of magic items might be discovered. The exact nature of a magic item is usually determined by a roll on the Treasure Table.

TREASURE TABLE

d20	Result
1	2 potions of healing
2	+1 magic armor
3	+1 magic weapon
4	+1 magic holy symbol
5	+1 amulet of protection
6	+1 magic wand, orb, staff, or rod
7	+1 veteran's armor
8	+1 vicious weapon
9	+1 safewing amulet
10	+1 symbol of life
11	+1 dwarven armor
12	+1 orb of inevitable continuance
13	+1 rod of deadly casting
14	+1 luck blade
15	+1 delver's armor
16	+1 lightning wand
17	ironskin belt
18	+1 amulet of health
19	+1 flaming weapon
20	+1 staff of storms

Awarding Magic Items: When the characters find a nonconsumable magic item, the players can decide which character receives it. Usually, these decisions will be easy, since certain items are better suited for certain characters. If this is not the case, then you should assign the new item to a character who has no nonconsumable magic items. If two or more characters lack nonconsumable magic items, have each of those players roll a d20. The character of the high roller receives the new item.

Selling Items: If none of the characters wants a particular magic item, the group can sell it at the end of the session using the rules from *Rules Compendium*. Divide the gold pieces received evenly among the party members.

When to Gear Up: Characters can buy equipment at the start of each chapter.

Renown Points

One of the great rewards for playing in a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS season is the accumulation of Renown Points (RPs), which are given out for accomplishments by players during, and sometimes in-between, sessions. These Renown Points are tracked at the Wizards Play Network location and reaching certain thresholds garners the player a tangible reward—an exclusive D&D Fortune Card.

Players can use these cards during the current DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS season, subsequent seasons, or possibly both. Each card provides a certain benefit as detailed on the card itself. Rules on using Fortune Cards during play sessions can be found in booster packs or online at www.DungeonsandDragons.com.

As the Dungeon Master, you award Renown Points at the end of a session of play, just like you would grant experience and treasure. Unlike experience and treasure, Renown Point totals earned for each player must be reported to the organizer at the conclusion of the session when you turn in your session tracking sheet. The organizer can then tell you if any players have qualified for a card.

The Renown accomplishments, their frequency, and the point values of each are listed below.

RENOWN POINT AWARDS

Accomplishment	Frequency	RP
Complete an encounter	Session	3
Bring a new player	Session	2
Moment of greatness	1/chapter	2
Revive a dying adventurer ally	1/chapter	2
Hit for 15+ damage against 1 enemy	1/chapter	2
Kill 3 minions in 1 attack	1/chapter	2
Take 50 enemy damage in 1 session	1/chapter	2
Create your own character	Season	5
Create a character with Character Builder	Season	5
Survive 8+ sessions without dying	Season	5

Bring a New Player: These points are awarded to existing players for each new player brought to D&D Encounters that has never before participated in the program (current and past seasons included).

Moment of Greatness: These points are a discretionary award given out by the DM or through party vote to a player for doing something inventive, daring, or just plain cool during a session of play.

Fortune Cards

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Cards are a new gameplay enhancement that showcases the chaotic and unpredictable nature of adventuring in a fantastic world of danger and magic. Every time players begin a session, they draw cards from their decks of Fortune Cards, activating the game benefit of the card at the appropriate time. Each card provides a game effect that enhances attacks, defenses, or provides some other sort of benefit to a player character. Fortune Cards are featured in Encounters seasons going forward—player rewards will consist of exclusive promotional Fortune Cards. Although players don't have to purchase Fortune Cards to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS, we think they'll enjoy this new enhancement to their game experience.

Fortune Cards are available in 8-card booster packs with differing levels of rarity (common, uncommon, and rare) and bring more excitement to the game table. Players can crack open boosters of cards just prior to participating in a game session or come to their game with pre-built decks. For players wanting to take advantage of this gameplay enhancement, we recommend purchasing 2 boosters per play session or bringing a deck built according to the Fortune Card rules, available in the booster packs or online at www.DungeonsandDragons.com. The set available for purchase and use during this season of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS is called *Shadow over Nentir Vale™*.

Encounters Cards: D&D Encounters Cards awarded in prior seasons have benefits similar to Fortune Cards. For this season, players can either use a D&D Encounters Card or a deck of Fortune Cards during each session. They cannot play with both options during the same session.

Renown Rewards

When a player earns 20 RPs, he or she earns the first DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fortune Card, called *Cautious Maneuver*. At 40 RPs, the player earns *Impervious*, and at 60 RPs they receive *One More Chance*. These cards are awarded to the player immediately following the session in which the card is earned. Players can add these cards to their Fortune Card decks upon earning them. These cards are distributed by the organizer and any questions regarding availability or quantities should be directed to him or her.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Over sixty years ago, a group of bold adventurers calling themselves the Silver Company delved into a mysterious tower that appeared in the ruins of Castle Inverness. The result was tragic—one of the Silver Company, a woman named Oldivya Vladistone, perished. Her husband, Salazar, continued to adventure with the Silver Company for some years, growing more despondent the longer he had to deal with his wife's death. Eventually, Salazar Vladistone sacrificed himself to save his allies and the people of Hammerfast from an unknown danger in the Dawnforge Mountains. Vladistone's spirit did not rest quietly after his sacrifice, however. He became a ghost, haunting the Nentir Vale as he made pilgrimages to the grave of his wife in the ruins of Inverness.

Now, six decades later, an ambitious young cleric named Aldus Splintershield, seeking to make a name for himself and his clan, has begun organizing a group of settlers to found a new town in the ruins of Castle Inverness. Brother Splintershield is unaware that the

ghost of Salazar Vladistone visits the graveyard at Inverness to this day. The cleric has set his pilgrims on a collision course with the restless and soon-to-be vengeful soul of a former adventurer.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The adventure begins with the heroes as a part of a caravan of pilgrims setting out to found a town in the ruins of Castle Inverness. The heroes are 1st-level adventurers who have been hired to help ensure that the caravan reaches Inverness safely.

Session 1: In the first session, the caravan departs from Hammerfast. Along the way, the heroes have a chance to meet several important people, such as Brother Aldus Splintershield and the half-orc caravan guard, Malgram. When the caravan attempts to cross a small stream, it is attacked by stirges, which the heroes must fight off.

Session 2: This session opens with the heroes assigned to guard Faldyra, an elf wizard and scholar who is traveling with the caravan. During their assignment, the heroes stumble across one of several encounters: a carnivorous plant, a goblin ambush, or a pack of hungry drakes.

Session 3: In this session, Brother Splintershield asks the heroes to investigate the ruins of Castle Inverness before the settlers move in, ensuring that no danger lurks inside. In addition to learning more about the mysterious origins of the castle ruins, the heroes

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTERS

The first four encounters of the *March of the Phantom Brigade™* assume that you are DMing a party of five 1st-level characters and have players familiar with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game at your table. Encounters 5 through 8 assume a party of 2nd-level adventurers, and encounters 9 through 13 assume a party of 3rd-level adventurers. Compare the party at your table to this assumption, using the following guidelines.

Weak Party: You have a weak party at your table if it consists of only four characters, or most or all the players are new to the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. If you have a weak party, remove one of the lowest-level or least important nonminion monsters from the encounter.

Strong Party: You have a strong party at your table if it consists of six characters, or most or all of the players are veteran DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players who like added challenge. If you have a strong party, add one of the simplest nonminion monsters among those in the encounter whose level most closely matches the encounter level.

stumble across a pair of ochre jellies that have taken up residence inside the fountain.

Session 4: With the ruins of Castle Inverness cleared, the pilgrims move inside the walls. Shortly before Brother Splintershield begins his cleansing ritual, the broken tower at the center of the ruins shimmers and appears to become whole. At the same time, undead attack. The adventurers must defend Brother Splintershield against the onslaught of undead threatening to disrupt the ritual. Once the ruins are sanctified, the heroes meet the ghost of Salazar Vladistone, who rails against them for keeping him from the grave of his wife.

Session 5: This session begins several months after the conclusion of Chapter 1. The heroes and the town of Inverness have flourished. When rumors circulate that foresters from Inverness are missing, the heroes investigate, discovering a mysterious Abyssal plague.

Session 6: During this session, the heroes explore the Harken Forest, searching for the origin of the Abyssal Plague. While investigating a strange corpse, several phantom soldiers appear and slay Brother Splintershield, breaking the sanctification of Inverness. With the wards destroyed, the town is vulnerable to attack.

Session 7: This session begins with the heroes rushing back to Inverness to ensure the safety of the town. After sneaking past phantom sentries, the heroes help Malgram get many of the townsfolk out safely, dispatching a number of Phantom Brigade soldiers in the process.

Session 8: This session brings the heroes into direct conflict with the ghost of Salazar Vladistone. After realizing that Vladistone cannot be destroyed in his current form, the heroes rescue Faldyra and escape from the burning ruins of their village. Vladistone warns that he will have his revenge on the heroes.

Session 9: This session begins a few months after the attack on Inverness. Vladistone has rallied a spectral army known as the Phantom Brigade to his side. When Vladistone turns the ghosts of Hammerfast against its citizens, the adventurers come to the town's aid. Arriving at the library, they learn that Faldyra has information about Vladistone.

Session 10: Faldyra informs the heroes of Vladistone's history, including the place where he was slain. She tells them that they must recover a relic called the *arrow of time*, which was taken from the Ghost Tower. With the arrow, the characters can either destroy Vladistone or give the arrow to him, which can be returned to the Ghost Tower to banish it and restore his wife to him.

Session 11: The adventurers investigate the abandoned monastery and discover that the Silver Company's wizard used powerful magic to trap the monastery's inhabitants in time. To get into the magically sealed lower chamber, they must explore the monastery and fight the undead dwelling there.



Session 12: As the heroes explore the area and see the events of the past unfold before them, they also break portions of the spell holding the duergar in place. With the duergar defeated, they can continue their descent into the lower reaches of the monastery.

Session 13: In the final session, the heroes delve deep under the ruined monastery for the source of Vladistone's demise. As they explore the crumbling, frozen caves, they release the earthquake dragon that killed Salazar Vladistone sixty years ago.

They can recover the arrow from Vladistone's body during the fight. The characters can then choose either to use the *arrow of time* to slay the dragon before it killed Vladistone, altering the course of history instantly, or they can hand it over to Vladistone's ghost, who appears and asks for the weapon so that he can be reunited with his wife.

CHAPTER 1

At the beginning of *March of the Phantom Brigade*, each character starts with full hit points and healing surges, as well as 1 action point.

SESSION 1: ON THE ROAD

The adventure opens with the heroes in the town of Hammerfast, a former dwarven necropolis and one of the largest settlements in the Nentir Vale. The heroes have gathered as part of a settlement caravan and are preparing for departure. Read the following text aloud to begin the adventure.

You and your companions stand huddled in the chill of early morning, blowing clouds of mist with every breath. Dawn is just breaking, and the shadowed walls of Hammerfast loom above you. A caravan of settlers is preparing to depart, and you are among them.

Prompt the players to introduce their characters, and give them a moment to describe their characters and backgrounds. Once the players have finished, continue the introduction by reading aloud:

Some months ago, a call went out from the temple of Moradin in Hammerfast seeking able-bodied settlers to establish a new town to the southwest. Desiring to settle in this new town, you answered the call and now stand in a field outside the town awaiting the caravan's departure.

If any of your players are especially engaged in their characters' histories, you could ask them to explain why their characters signed on for this expedition. If players ask about compensation, tell them that the caravan master, Brother Splintershield, has offered each settler a small stipend to help build a home.

DAY 1: SETTING OUT FROM HAMMERFAST

Once the players have had a chance to become acquainted, the adventure truly begins when the caravan's financier, a dwarf cleric of Moradin called Aldus Splintershield, visits with the heroes as the first wagons of the caravan set out. Read aloud:

The caravan master calls to check readiness. Whistles sound along the wagons, indicating that all are ready to go. The master gives the signal, and the procession begins to advance

slowly. A male dwarf in the robes of a cleric of Moradin approaches you with a smile. "Glad to have you along," he says. "In just three days, we'll be founding our own town. We'll all go down in history."

Give the players a moment to interact with Brother Splintershield. The enthusiastic cleric expounds on the historic events about to take place, providing the following information.

- ◆ The town to be founded is in an area where a great castle once stood. Castle Inverness crumbled to ruin long ago, but its location was recently rediscovered by a group of rangers traveling off the beaten path between Hammerfast and Harkenwold.
- ◆ The new town will serve as a waypoint for traders traveling between Harkenwold and Hammerfast. The temple of Moradin is looking to create a better trade route to the south by forging a new road through the foothills of the Dawnforge Mountains. Inverness is to be the first advance station for the road-building workers and supplies.

CHARACTER PROFILE: ALDUS SPLINTERSHIELD

Brother Splintershield is a young cleric of Moradin. His family hails from a distant dwarven hold, and he is the first of his clan to make a name in Hammerfast.

Key Traits: Optimistic, exuberant, and aggressive. Brother Splintershield sets his sights on lofty goals and works hard to make them happen. He keeps a positive outlook, even in the darkest situations.

Goal: Brother Splintershield wants to help found the new town of Inverness to make the Nentir Vale safer for travel and to improve his status in the temple of Moradin.

Motivation: He is motivated by the prospect of increasing his clan's prestige in Hammerfast and the vale, as well as by a genuine desire for the expansion of civilization.

Fears: He is afraid of feeling useless and of losing prestige. To him, failing to complete this groundbreaking, divinely inspired task would be ruinous to both his own and his clan's reputation.

Weaknesses: Brother Splintershield can be overly optimistic. He has a hard time seeing the potential pitfalls and the degree of challenge in any endeavor.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: The cleric speaks with enthusiasm, can be loud and boisterous, and has a limp that forces him to lean on his staff as he walks. His injured leg is the result of a nasty run-in with a monstrous spider that he experienced during his initial journey to Hammerfast.

Once the heroes are done conversing with Brother Splintershield, read the following text aloud.

The caravan rolls easily down the Trade Road for several hours and everyone seems to be in as fine spirits as Brother Splintershield. Roughly ten miles outside town, the road leaves the towering peaks of the Dawnforge Mountains and begins rolling through the foothills. The rangers from Hammerfast pull away from their positions flanking the caravan. They confer briefly with Malgram, the caravan's half-orc guard captain, then offer warnings about the dangers of traveling through the Vale. They wave farewell and turn their horses back toward Hammerfast.

DAY 2: ARGUMENT ON THE ROAD

The easy camaraderie of the first day begins to dissipate on the second. An argument erupts between Brother Splintershield and the commander of the caravan's guards, Malgram. Read the following text aloud to begin the scene.

On the second day of the journey, signs of tension between settlers start to show. The caravan has turned south and abandoned the smooth Trade Road. It now follows a rough trail not meant for wagons and carts. The settlers have lost their initial enthusiasm and look road-weary already. When shouting is heard near the head of the caravan, heads rise abruptly and worried eyes scan for trouble.

When the characters investigate, they find Brother Splintershield and Malgram quarreling vociferously. Read the following text aloud.

At the head of the caravan, Brother Splintershield and Malgram are walking side by side, yelling at one another. The growl of Malgram's voice rings out over the open fields surrounding the trail. "Put your dwarven stubbornness aside for one minute and look at the logic. The forest side is far safer than the mountain side. Why can you not see it?"

The dispute arose after Malgram's scouts returned with word that strong fall storms and rushing streams have wiped out the trail ahead. The caravan must ford one of these streams some time tomorrow morning, and it has two options. One stream is closer to the northeastern edge of the Harken Forest, the other closer to the foothills of the Dawnforge Mountains. Malgram believes the foothills conceal orc tribes waiting to raid travelers, while Brother Splintershield asserts that the blessings of Moradin make the mountains the better choice.

The heroes can intervene to support one side over the other. If they provide a convincing argument one way or another, either Malgram or Brother

CHARACTER PROFILE: MALGRAM

Malgram is a half-orc ranger from Hammerfast who volunteered to be the captain of the guard in the new town of Inverness.

Key Traits: Surly, pragmatic, and suspicious. Malgram believes that only constant vigilance saves lives.

Goal: Malgram wants to get the caravan to Inverness and the town founded as soon as possible so the settlers can establish a more secure defensive position.

Motivation: Malgram is the son of an orc priest of Gruumsh. He has faced prejudice from the Hammerfast dwarves his entire life. He's looking to prove that he can handle the responsibility of founding a safe and secure town in the Vale.

Fears: Malgram has something of an inferiority complex when it comes to his lineage. His only real fear, however, is Gruumsh—because of his father's teachings, Malgram worries that one day the One-Eyed God will punish him for betraying his heritage and aiding the dwarves.

Weaknesses: Malgram's caution borders on paranoia, making it difficult for him to form friendships. His unwillingness to rely on others manifests in the attitude of "If you want something done right, do it yourself."

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: Malgram does not conceal his disapproval. He spits on the ground when others propose plans, snorts derisively during discussions, and abruptly walks away from people when he is done listening to them.

Splintershield acquiesces (grudgingly) and the caravan sets off in the direction the heroes recommend. Although this decision has no immediate repercussions (both directions lead to a stream infested with stirges), it will affect the events of Session 2.

Reward: The party gains an additional 400 to 600 XP at the end of the session for helping resolve the dispute.

DAY 3: FORDING THE STREAM

Early on the third day of travel, the caravan reaches the rushing stream that has been created by fall storms. Read the following text aloud.

Near the middle of the third day, the lead wagon of the caravan calls a halt. You see a quickly flowing stream that cuts across the open plain ahead of you. Although far from a coursing river, the stream is deep enough that the crossing will be no trivial matter.



Malgram and Brother Splintershield have—in a rare display of agreement—prepared a plan to ford the stream quickly and without incident. The two of them will lead half the caravan across the stream first, while the heroes stay behind to guard the second half. Once the first half of the caravan is safely on the other side, the heroes will escort the remaining wagons across.

STIRGE ATTACK

Encounter Level 1 (500+ XP)

Although the water crossing isn't inherently deadly, the wagons' sluggish movement through the stream makes the settlers vulnerable. A swarm of stirges flies in, intent on drinking their fill of blood from both horses and settlers. The attack coincides with the effort to ford the river, requiring the heroes to choose between confronting the stirges and helping the wagons and the settlers avoid the monsters.

Setup

5 stirges (S)
4 horses and wagons (H)
4 Inverness settlers (I)

The encounter unfolds as the heroes and the second group of wagons start to cross the stream.

When the heroes begin the crossing, read:

The sound of the rushing water and the creaking wagons masks a buzzing noise approaching from the sky. What you thought was a small flock of birds at first glance proves to be a pack of four-winged insects, each the size of a small dog. As the creatures close swiftly, the horses whinny with fear and the settlers cry in alarm.

Consider rolling initiative for each stirge separately or splitting them into two or three groups. This tactic ensures that neither side has too great of an advantage.

5 Stirges (S)		Level 1 Lurker
Small natural beast		XP 100 each
HP 22; Bloodied 11		Initiative +7
AC 15, Fortitude 12, Reflex 15, Will 12		Perception +0
Speed 2, fly 6		Darkvision
TRAITS		
Nimble Bloodsucker		
While the stirge has a creature grabbed, the stirge gains a +5 bonus to AC and Reflex.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
④ Bite ♦ At-Will		
Requirement: The stirge must not be grabbing a creature.		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d4 damage, and the stirge grabs the target (escape DC 12).		
Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 10 damage.		
Skills Stealth +8		
Str 8 (-1)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 1 (-5)	Cha 4 (-3)
Alignment unaligned		Languages —

Tactics

Stirges can attack the horses and the settlers, but the defenders do not retaliate. A stirge attack automatically hits and kills a settler. Each horse has 25 hit points. The horses and settlers do not have healing surges.

Stirges: The stirges desire only one thing: to feed. They attack any living creature in their path, choosing the nearest targets. If a hero attacks a stirge, nearby stirges might assist, but any stirge more than 5 squares away ignores other fights in favor of seeking out its own victim.

Remember that a stirge grabbing another creature gains a bonus to AC and Reflex.

Settlers, Horses, and Wagons: You do not need to detail the movement or attacks of the settlers, horses, and wagons. The wagons remain stationary until the heroes take actions to move them (see "Terrain Powers").

The settlers and the horses are scared by the stirges. Still, the settlers know the supplies in the wagons are paramount to their survival in the coming days and months. They do not fight the stirges or allow the horses to do so. Instead, they focus on trying to get the wagons across the stream. A settler adjacent to a wagon grants characters a +2 bonus to the check to use *push* or *pull* the wagon or *get along*!

WHEN HORSES DIE

If any horses died, Brother Splintershield calls upon the characters to help pull those horses' wagons. One character can pull a wagon for each slain horse. Any character who pulls a wagon loses one healing surge. If the characters can't agree on who will pull a wagon, Splintershield decides: Roll a d6 to determine which character must pull it.

Terrain Powers

Characters can use the following powers to affect the horses and wagons.

Push or Pull the Wagon

At-Will Terrain

You throw your shoulder against the wagon and give it a push.

Standard Action

Requirement: You must be adjacent to a wagon.

Check: Athletics check DC 12

Success: The horse and its attached wagon are free to move off the battlefield. They are removed from play. The horse is not subject to any opportunity attacks for this movement, and it can move through enemies' spaces. Any grabs on the horse end, and the grabbing creature falls prone.

Get Along!

At-Will Terrain

You spur on the horses harnessed to a wagon by taking their reins or calling out to them.

Standard Action

Requirement: You must be within 5 squares of a horse.

Check: Intimidate or Nature check DC 12

Success: The horse and its attached wagon are free to move off the battlefield. They are removed from play. The horse is not subject to any opportunity attacks for this movement, and it can move through enemies' spaces. Any grabs on the horse end, and the grabbing creature falls prone.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The stirge attack takes place in the morning on a cloudy day. The entire area is illuminated with bright light.

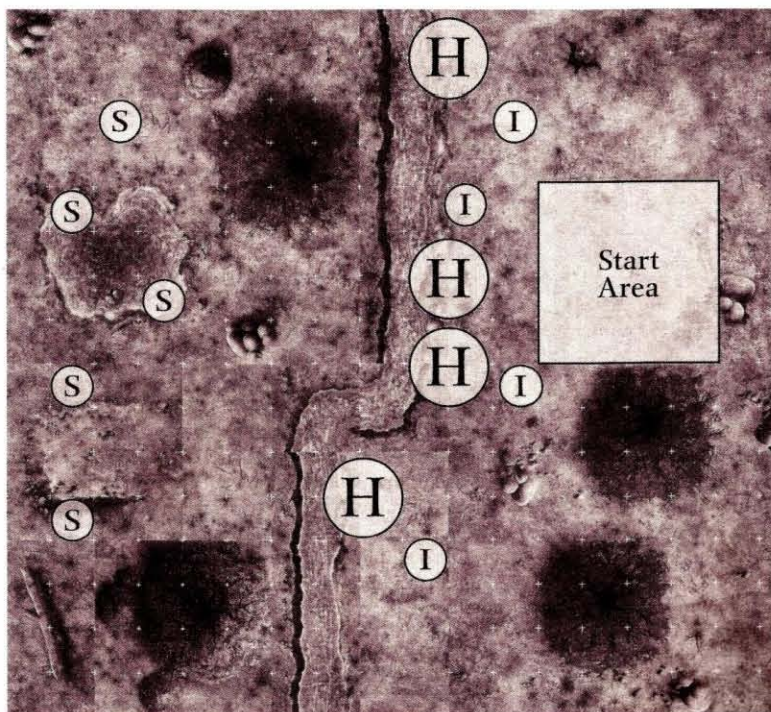
Bushes: These small shrubs are difficult terrain.

Log: These squares are difficult terrain.

Rocks: These squares are difficult terrain, but the rocks are not tall enough to provide cover.

Stream: The stream is no more than waist deep for most heroes and requires no skill to cross. Each square of the stream is difficult terrain. A creature that is prone in the stream has partial cover and partial concealment.

Trees: Each tree is 4 squares tall. A tree provides partial cover, but is not sturdy enough to climb.



Development

Once the stirges are dead and the wagons across the stream, the heroes reunite the caravan. Some time has been lost, however. If the settlers are to reach the former site of Castle Inverness by nightfall, they must push hard for the rest of the day.

If any settlers died, Brother Splintershield mourns the loss and orders the caravan to take some time to bury them.

Reward: For each horse that survived, the party gains an additional 20 XP for the encounter. For each settler that survived, the party gains an additional 10 XP.

SESSION 2: WANDERING MONSTERS

The Nentir Vale is lightly settled, and the caravan is traveling through unguarded territory. Not surprising for overland travel, the party is confronted by a random wilderness encounter. The attack occurs around midday on the final day of the journey.

A couple of hours after the successful stream crossing, Malgram approaches the party. Read the following text aloud.

Glancing about and keeping a keen eye out for danger, you note with satisfaction that the caravan has recovered well following the stirge attack. You spy the half-orc Malgram striding purposefully along the wagons toward you. Struggling to keep up with his long strides is a female elf in long robes that are a bit too elegant for road travel. When they draw near, Malgram holds up a hand to get your attention, then speaks in a low voice far more civil than his custom. "Faldyra has it in her head to go digging in the dirt, and she's far too valuable to the settlement to let her wander off on her own. I need you to watch after her for a while."

Before the party can respond, Faldyra steps forward to introduce herself more formally. She explains that she is to be the resident scholar in the new town of Inverness. She had heard rumors that an abundance of rare herbs grew in the area the caravan is traveling through. She intends to search a nearby stand of trees for quality specimens, but she agrees with Malgram that she cannot set out without guards. Since the heroes acquitted themselves well against the stirges, the half-orc has indicated that the party would be an acceptable escort. This part of the story provides the heroes a chance to get to know Faldyra and to glean more information about the caravan's destination.

Faldyra leads the heroes to a nearby copse and begins to dig for herbs. She passes the time amiably, asking about the heroes and what they hope to get out of founding a new town. While searching for herbs, she finds an item half buried in the ground, which she gives to the party. Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what she finds.

Faldyra might convey the following information over the course of her conversation.

- ◆ Castle Inverness was once home to hundreds of people. The castle fell into ruin long ago, but a single tower remains standing. The site was once considered dangerous, but decades ago a group of explorers plundered the tower and sealed it.
- ◆ Brother Splintershield is planning to perform a consecration ritual to imbue the land surrounding the

CHARACTER PROFILE: FALDYRA ALANIEL

Faldyra Alaniel is a female elf wizard from Winterhaven. She was recruited by Brother Splintershield to provide arcane and scholarly support for the new town.

Key Traits: Intellectual, focused, and oblivious to danger. Faldyra asks lots of esoteric questions and will ignore peril in her pursuit of knowledge.

Goal: Faldyra wants to explore the site of the new town and chronicle the location's history. She has already written several chapters about the rise and fall of Inverness, drawn from extensive research.

Motivation: Faldyra's interest in Inverness is personal—one of her ancestors vanished while exploring the Ghost Tower of Inverness.

Fears: Faldyra has a fear of the undead that goes far deeper than her race's natural disdain for such monsters.

Weaknesses: Faldyra is prone to latching onto a single piece of information and pursuing it blindly. She is quick to place her trust in others, particularly those who claim to have fresh information.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: Faldyra occasionally lapses into speaking Elven as her thoughts race, switching back to Common only when reminded.

tower with the blessing of Moradin. Faldyra fully supports this precaution—indeed, she advised it, given the unknown dangers in the area.

- ◆ Inverness is close enough to the Harken Forest that Faldyra hopes to convince some of her people to found an elven outpost nearby.

Reward: The party gains an additional 400 to 600 XP at the end of the session for befriending Faldyra and learning her plans to settle Inverness.

Wilderness Encounters

Near the end of Faldyra's herbal gathering, the heroes find trouble. To determine what the party confronts, roll a d6 and consult the Wilderness Encounters table below. If a majority of your players convinced Malgram and Brother Splintershield to veer closer to the mountains (from Session 1), add 2 to the d6 roll result (maximum result of 6). If the majority instead convinced the caravan to skirt the Harken Forest, subtract 2 from the d6 roll result (minimum result of 1). If the adventurers split evenly, or if they did not intervene in Malgram and Brother Splintershield's argument, do not modify the die roll.

WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

d6	Encounter
1-2	Defenders of the Forest (page 11)
3-4	Goblins in the Forest (page 12)
5-6	Hungry Drakes (page 13)

DEFENDERS OF THE FOREST

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

Setup

Carrion vine trap (8 seed pods) (S)
Faldyra (F)

A dangerous, carnivorous plant inhabits the copse of trees where Faldyra is gathering herbs. Known as a carrion vine, the plant is native to the Feywild. It spreads its roots across a wide area, extending seed pods to the surface. The pods have long, viny tentacles with barbed edges that grab living creatures and drink their blood.

When you are ready to start the encounter, read:

Several small, closed-bulb plants unfurl to reveal long, whipping vines within. Each vine is covered in thorns, and the tendrils begin to reach for you as if they hunger!

Carrion Vine (S) **Level 2 Solo Trap**
Object XP 625

Detect Perception DC 19 Initiative +6
HP 120; Bloodied –
AC 14, Fortitude 13, Reflex 11, Will –
Immune forced movement; Vulnerable 5 fire

TRAITS

Seed Pods

The seed pods of the carrion vine are all part of the same plant creature. For every 15 hit points dealt to this trap, remove one seed pod from the encounter (this removal has no effect on the carrion vine's number of attacks). The vine can make attacks using any square containing a seed pod as the point of origin.

Vampiric Plant (healing)

If the vine reduces a creature to 0 hit points or fewer, the carrion vine regains 15 hit points and regrows one seed pod.

STANDARD ACTIONS

Vine Tentacle (poison) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 3 (one, two, three or four creatures); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 poison damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 12).

COUNTERMEASURES

- ♦ **Confuse:** Nature DC 12. *Success:* The carrion vine ends one grab it is sustaining. *Failure (10 or lower):* The carrion vine uses vine tentacle against the triggering creature.
- ♦ **Repel:** Arcana DC 12. *Success:* The character deals 15 damage to the carrion vine, banishing a portion of the plant back to the Feywild.

Tactics

The carrion vine attacks anyone close to it. Have the vine attack Faldyra once to instill a sense of danger in the encounter, but don't kill her. She has an important role to play later in the adventure.

Faldyra (F) **Level 1 Controller**
Medium fey humanoid, elf XP –

HP 26; Bloodied 13 Initiative +1
AC 15, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13 Perception +6
Speed 7 Low-light vision

TRAITS

Wild Step

Faldyra ignores difficult terrain when she shifts.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⑦ Magic Missile (force, implement) ♦ At-Will

Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). The target takes 6 force damage.

⑦ Phantom Bolt (illusion, implement, psychic) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +4 vs. Will
Hit: 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and Faldyra can slide the target 1 square.

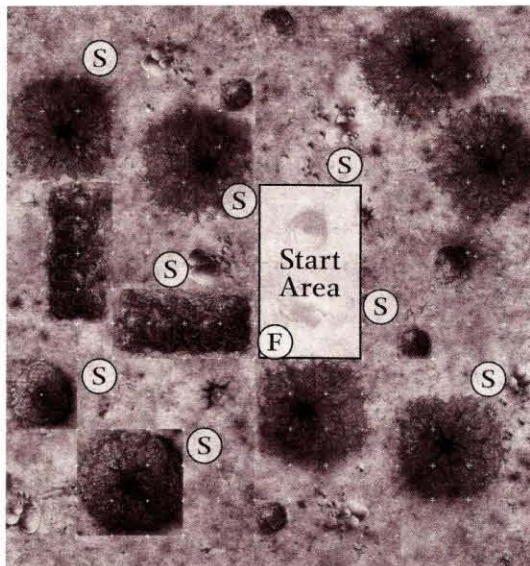
Skills Arcana +11, History +11, Insight +6, Religion +8

Str 8 (-1) Dex 12 (+1) Wis 13 (+1)

Con 10 (+0) Int 16 (+3) Cha 12 (+1)

Alignment good Languages Common, Elven

Equipment robes, wand



Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Shrubbery: The foliage is difficult terrain.

Development

When the heroes extricate themselves from the carrion vine's clutches, they find Faldyra more than ready to return to the caravan. The elf is grateful, but begs the adventurers not to tell Malgram about their "little altercation"—she is embarrassed that she did see the danger that the vine posed when they entered the area.

GOBLINS IN THE FOREST

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

Setup

5 goblin cutthroats (C)

5 goblin snipers (S)

Faldyra (F); see page 11

The people of Harkenwold are rarely troubled by the bands of goblins that inhabit the Harken Forest. These monsters avoid civilization for the most part. When the heroes and Faldyra go off on their own, the goblins see it as a chance to prey upon unwary travelers.

When you are ready to start the encounter, read:

The copse where Faldyra is gathering her herbs falls silent—the natural sounds of bugs and animals vanish. With a screech, a small raiding party of goblins bursts into the area. “Give us your treasure so we can kill you!” one shouts.

5 Goblin Snipers (S)	Level 1 Minion Artillery
Small natural humanoid	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +3
AC 13, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12	Perception +1
Speed 6	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Short Sword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
② Shortbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Goblin Tactics ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 17 (+3)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 8 (-1)
	Wis 12 (+1)
	Cha 8 (-1)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows	

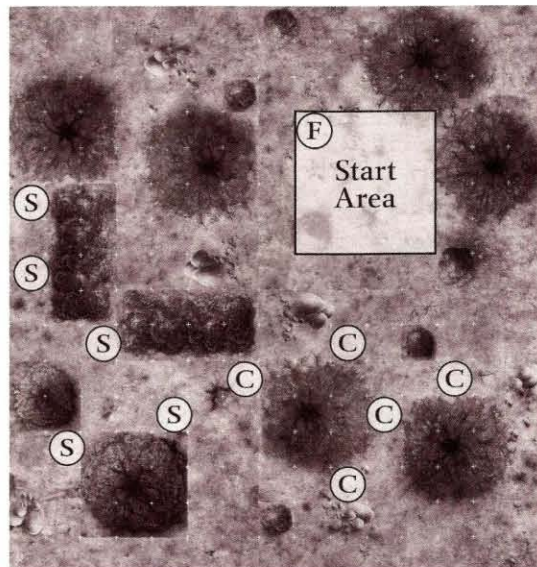
Tactics

The goblins are more interested in treasure than in killing, but they don't hesitate to engage in bloodletting. Have the goblins attack Faldyra once or twice to instill a sense of danger in the encounter, but don't kill her. She has an important role to play later in the adventure.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Shrubbery: The foliage is difficult terrain.



Development

After the heroes kill or drive off the goblins, they can easily convince Faldyra to return to the caravan. The wizard defers to the adventurers' judgment, but intimates that she would not be upset if they chose not to inform the caravan of the encounter. She was upset at Malgram's overprotectiveness when she proposed her outing. As a matter of pride, she has little desire to see Malgram publicly vindicated.

5 Goblin Cutthroats (C)	Level 1 Skirmisher
Small natural humanoid	XP 100 each
HP 30; Bloodied 15	Initiative +5
AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +2
Speed 6	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Short Sword ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 if the goblin has combat advantage against the target. In addition, the goblin can shift 1 square.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Deft Scurry ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The goblin shifts up to 3 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Goblin Tactics ♦ At-Will	
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.	
Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 17 (+3)
Con 14 (+2)	Int 8 (-1)
	Wis 14 (+2)
	Cha 8 (-1)
Alignment evil	
Languages Common, Goblin	
Equipment leather armor, light shield, short sword, 2 daggers	

HUNGRY DRAKES

Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

Setup

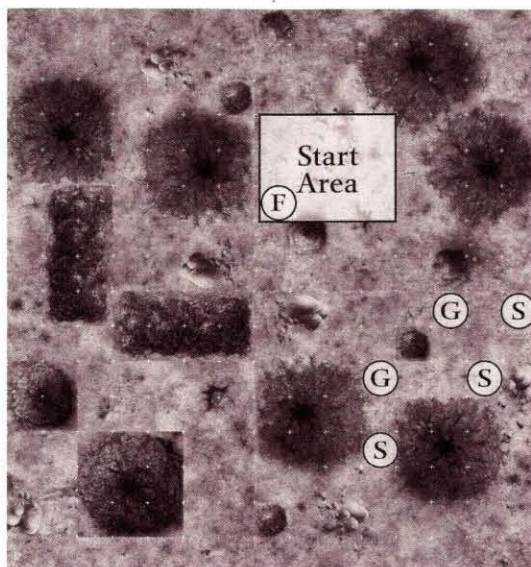
2 guard drakes (G)
3 spitting drakes (S)
Faldyra (F); see page 11

Sheer bad luck results in the heroes' run-in with a pack of hungry drakes.

As Faldyra is about to finish her collecting, read:

A rustle in the undergrowth alerts you to the arrival of several fierce-looking beasts. The creatures are covered in scales, some green and some gold. They push into the copse, their nostrils flaring as they follow a scent on the wind. When their eyes fall on you, the larger creatures growl, revealing a row of razorlike teeth.

2 Guard Drakes (G)	Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125 each
HP 48; Bloodied 24	Initiative +3
AC 15, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12	Perception +7
Speed 6	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 9 while the drake is within 2 squares of an ally.	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 3 (-3)
Alignment unaligned	Languages –
	Wis 12 (+2)
	Cha 12 (+2)



Tactics

The drake pack has gone a long time without much food, so its primary goal is to bring down a hero and then drag him or her off to feast.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.
Shrubs: The foliage is difficult terrain.

Development

When the heroes have dealt with the pack of drakes, Faldyra is more than ready to get back to the caravan. The wizard is grateful and suggests that they fill Malgram in on the details of the attack. Although she would rather not be around when Malgram's concerns about the danger are confirmed, the caravan should be warned in case more packs of drakes are hunting in the area.

3 Spitting Drakes (S)	Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural beast (reptile)	XP 150 each
HP 38; Bloodied 19	Initiative +5
AC 17, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +3
Speed 7	
Resist 10 acid	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage.	
☞ Caustic Spit (acid) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 acid damage.	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 3 (-3)
Alignment unaligned	Languages –
	Wis 14 (+3)
	Cha 12 (+2)

ALTERNATIVE TACTICS: DRAKE WRANGLERS

The guard drakes in this encounter were once domesticated creatures owned by a merchant who plied his trade in the Nentir Vale. They only recently became feral hunters and have asserted themselves as the leaders of this small, mixed pack. A successful DC 19 Perception check reveals markings on the guard drakes that appear to be ownership brands.

Although it's likely that the adventurers identify the guard drakes as the primary threat and meet that threat with force, observant heroes might try to command them. The spitting drakes are feral, but a character can make a DC 19 Intimidate check or Nature check as a standard action to confuse, deter, or cow a guard drake. On a success, that drake might become dazed or dominated until the end of that hero's next turn.

SESSION 3: SCOUTING THE TOWER

As the sun begins to set near the end of the third day, the caravan tops a hill overlooking the ruins of Castle Inverness. Read the following text aloud:

The setting sun casts a red-orange glow across the valley below. Beyond the vale is a small rise, atop which sit the ruins of a great castle. A perimeter of crumbled stone walls, now overgrown with foliage, creates the illusion of a natural barrier. At each of the four corners, ruined towers rise in various states of disrepair. Surrounded by the walls, a ring made of ancient, weathered stone clearly marks the former location of the central tower.

As you and the other settlers look over the ruins, Faldyra ruefully proclaims, "Welcome to Castle Inverness."

Faldyra is grateful to the heroes for their protection earlier in the day. She converses with them warmly. She explains that the caravan has stopped at this distance because Brother Splintershield wants to perform a cleansing ritual. The ruins are said to be haunted—the people of the Nentir Vale refer to the place as one of the "Ghost Towers," focal points for spirit activity that dot the area. Another Ghost Tower stands in the Witchlight Fens; Faldyra has heard of a third one somewhere in the vale, but the exact location is a matter of some dispute. The Ghost Towers are known to be places where the spirits of the restless dead wander by night. (In truth, the folklore is wrong—the towers themselves are ghostly, but the adventurers won't discover that until Session 4.)

After Faldyra shares this information, Brother Splintershield approaches. Turning to the heroes, he tells them that the caravan can't proceed to the site of the new town until the ritual is performed. Still, he is reluctant to enter the ruins with his fellow ritualists—all noncombatants—until a proper scouting of the area has been accomplished. Malgram's caution, at least in this matter, appears to have struck home with the cleric. Brother Splintershield asks the heroes to go on ahead and make sure that things are safe.

EXPLORING THE RUINS

After the adventurers cross the valley and ascend the hill to the ruins of Castle Inverness, they have a chance to explore for a bit. Allow the players to scout the area as they see fit, using the descriptions that follow.

Reward: The party gains an additional 80 to 120 XP for each of the five locations it explores.

Main Gate

The crumbling path up the hill leads to a main gate, likely the first place that the heroes explore.

The path up the hillside ends at the entrance to what was once Castle Inverness. All that remains of the main gate are two sides of an archway that reach no higher than a tall human. Beyond the gate lies the interior courtyard, but short, overgrown remains of the walls block much of the view.

As each hero passes through the main gate, he or she experiences a shiver of dread, as if from entering an alien environment. Indeed, any time a creature enters the ruins from the outside, the same feeling of unfamiliarity washes over that individual. It is hard to shake the sense that passing through the main gate archway transports one to another time and place entirely. Fortunately, the disturbing sensation subsides quickly.

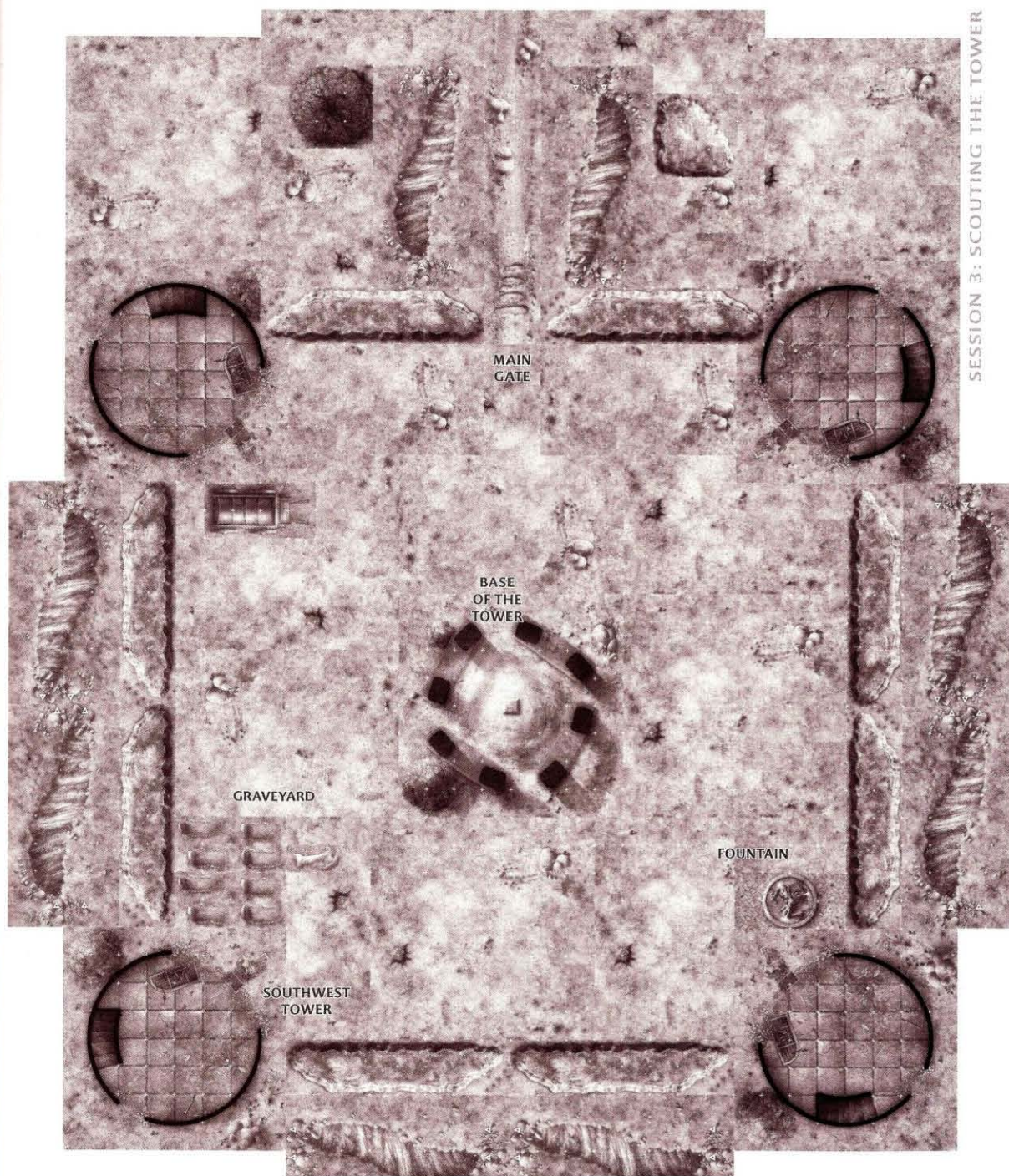
A successful DC 12 Arcana check reveals some lingering magic on the stones that make up the old gate, likely once a ward designed to keep out intruders. At present, it has lost its potency and is no longer a threat. A hero whose check beats the DC by 5 or more also understands that the sense of disorientation is caused by the nature of the ward's magic, as though it was placed using magical power and techniques completely alien to the world.

Base of the Tower

A ring of jumbled stones rests where once a massive central tower stood. When the adventurers examine the remains of the central tower, read the following text aloud.

A circle of stones sits at the center of the castle's courtyard, clearly where the central tower once stood. All that remains now is a small rise, covered by vines and brush, obviously untouched for decades. The stone circle is still intact under the overgrowth, but the stone looks incredibly old—far older than any structure you've ever seen. Oddly, no stones fill the interior of the circle, as though no solid ground floor existed in the original tower.

If any hero examines the stones that make up the base of the central tower, he or she can find the cornerstone that was placed when the tower was first constructed. The building block bears writing in a language that none of the heroes have seen before. If an adventurer copies down the text and takes it back to Faldyra, or shows the stone to her later, she indicates that the language originates from a distant place that sages have come to identify as Oerth. Faldyra can provide a translation of the writing: it appears to be the proper name "Galap-Dreidel."



Graveyard

The west edge of the ruins includes a small graveyard with worn headstones. When the heroes investigate the graveyard, read:

At first, the dozen or so headstones are barely discernible in the brush. They are worn with age, their etchings heavily eroded. On second glance, you notice the overgrowth is oddly different in this area. Unless your imagination is playing tricks on you, this graveyard appears to have been tended and cleared of debris on a regular basis.

A closer examination reveals that thirteen headstones populate the graveyard, three of which are only partially intact. Nine are whole, but the writing on them is illegible. The remaining headstone is still legible—it reads “Oldivya Vladistone, Wife and Friend.” A character who succeeds on a DC 19 History check recalls that Oldivya Vladistone was an adventurer some decades ago in a group called the Silver Company.

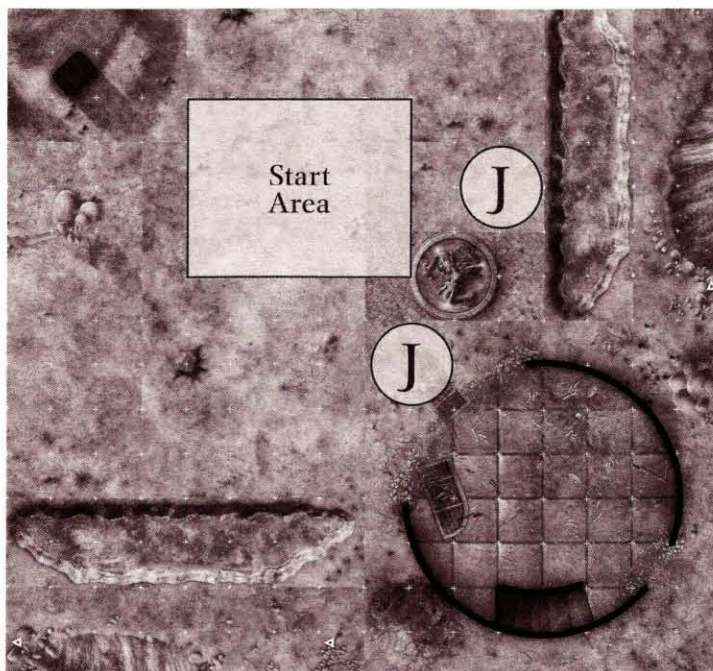
Southwest Tower

Although all four towers of the ruins are crumbling, the southwest corner is in much worse condition than the others. When the heroes examine it, read:

This tower has collapsed, and its foundations are fractured in a way that has sent cracks throughout the surrounding walls. Despite this, little debris litters the area. Indeed, no large stones of any kind are present.

THE ORIGINAL MODULE

The original module, *Ghost Tower of Inverness*, was set in Greyhawk, one of the first D&D worlds to be published. Through clues that the heroes find, this adventure suggests that the ruins of Castle Inverness were somehow transported to the Nentir Vale from Greyhawk. References to the original module, including Galap-Dreidel, have no significance to the overall plot of this adventure. They are merely winks and nods to savvy players.



Any hero who makes a DC 12 Dungeoneering check determines that the damage to the southwest tower is consistent with that in buildings left standing after an earthquake. If the hero's check beats the DC by 5 or more, he or she also notices that the foundation stones don't follow the contours of the hilltop, suggesting that the castle was not designed for this hilltop, but was instead moved here from somewhere else.

Fountain

In one corner of the castle ruins sits a small fountain. When the heroes examine it, read:

This stone fountain is the only structure not completely covered with plant life. In fact, the fountain is remarkably free of moss or fungus. It bears no sign of plant damage anywhere.

The fountain conceals the only true danger in the castle courtyard at present. Two ochre jellies have taken up residence in the cistern that feeds the fountain. They emerge to feed when they sense anything living nearby (within 5 squares of the fountain). Allow the players to make either a Dungeoneering check to identify why the fountain is clear, or a Perception check to spot the jellies. If the players don't ask to make any checks, then, after a moment, go to the Fountain Jellies encounter.

FOUNTAIN JELLIES

Encounter Level 2 (600 XP)

Setup

2 ochre jellies (J)

The oozes that lie in the fountain courtyard have lived in its cistern for some time now. When the heroes approach the fountain, allow them to make Perception checks.

If any hero gets a check result of 19 or higher, read:

As you inspect the fountain area, you notice corrosion and traces of amber slime. A slurping sound issues from the fountain. You barely have time to retreat a few steps before a pair of massive, jellylike globs fill the fountain's basin and undulate out onto the grass of the courtyard.

If no hero gets a 19 or higher on his or her Perception check, the ochre jellies surprise the party.

If the jellies gain surprise, read:

As you inspect the fountain area, you are momentarily distracted and turn away. Suddenly, a slurping sound issues from the fountain. Out of the corner of your eye you see some kind of amber sludge dripping out into the fountain's basin. Now you realize that the slime is advancing toward you.

2 Ochre Jellies (J)	Level 3 Elite Brute
Large natural beast (blind, ooze)	XP 300 each
HP 102; Bloodied 51	Initiative +0
AC 15, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 14	Perception +2
Speed 4, climb 4	Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, gaze effects; Resist 5 acid	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
Ooze	
While squeezing, the ooze moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Slam (acid) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Flowing Form ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The ochre jelly shifts up to 4 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Split ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The ochre jelly becomes bloodied.	
Effect (No Action): The jelly splits into two creatures, each with hit points equal to half its current hit points. Effects on the original ochre jelly do not apply to the second one.	
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 8 (+0)
Con 11 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)
	Cha 1 (-4)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —

Tactics

The ochre jellies are hungry. They are controlled by their instincts, bearing the party no particular malice. If you're unsure which character a jelly should attack, roll a die to determine randomly.

Once the ochre jellies split into smaller parts, the hunger that drives them is lessened. The smaller jellies are greedy for their own meal to consume and spread out in the hope of taking down a hero.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The sun is setting when the heroes begin their exploration. Long shadows stretch over the landscape. The squares along the eastern wall are in dim light. Otherwise, the area is brightly lit.

Fountain: The fountain is difficult terrain. A creature that is forced to move into the fountain must succeed on a saving throw or fall prone.

Walls: The ruined walls of the keep are thick enough to scale. They are 10 feet tall and require a DC 12 Athletics check to climb.

Treasure

A character who searches the fountain and succeeds on a DC 12 Perception check discovers a valuable left behind from a prior victim. Removing the item from the fountain requires a DC 19 Athletics check. When the item is removed, the fountain can once again be used to draw water from the underground cistern. This source of fresh water is a boon to the settlers.

Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what the heroes find. The party receives an additional 100 XP at the end of the session for the discovery.

Development

After the encounter, allow the characters to continue exploring until they are satisfied. Once they have verified that no more dangers remain, they can return to the caravan and give the go-ahead to Splintershield. Faldyra approaches them, interested in learning more about the creatures they encountered. (She asks several technical questions about the oozes while taking copious notes.) The adventurers might want to show her the inscriptions found on the central tower cornerstone and the grave stone. Although she has no knowledge of those names, she offers in return any information about Castle Inverness that she has not had a chance to convey previously.

IF THEY SKIP THE FOUNTAIN

In the event that the adventurers don't explore the castle ruins thoroughly, you can still run an encounter during this session. Use one of the encounters from Session 2, having the goblins or the drakes attack the adventurers on their way to report back to the caravan.

SESSION 4: ENTERING THE CASTLE

The heroes have a chance to recuperate from their battle against the ochre jellies as the caravan prepares for its approach to Castle Inverness. When this session begins, read the following text aloud.

The sun is nearly behind the horizon as Brother Splintershield leads the approach to the castle. The caravan slowly advances to the base of the ruins, then ascends the slope and passes through the gates, into the safety of the castle walls. Meanwhile, night falls and torches are lit. Despite the trials the settlers have faced during their journey, they are in good spirits and thankful for your assistance.

Allow the characters the opportunity to talk to Faldyra, Brother Splintershield, and Malgram. They can also help the settlers unload supplies. It's not long before a shriek sounds from some settlers near the base of the central tower ruins. Read:

The whole encampment falls silent at the sound of a scream. Heads turn toward its source, and worried looks face an unnerving sight. The ruined circle that once formed the base of the central tower wavers as though distorted. Before your eyes, a ghostly apparition of a magnificent tower, translucent but completely intact, grows up from the base. Once the specter of the tower has reached its full height, it solidifies. In a matter of seconds, the massive central tower of Castle Inverness has come to rest in its original place, as solid as the day it was constructed.

Any adventurers who want to inspect the Ghost Tower of Inverness from the outside can do so without fear of harm or reprisal. The entire caravan stands bewildered at the sight of the sudden appearance of the tower. If the heroes don't act, a brave soul approaches and touches it, indicating that it is indeed solid and seems mundane. Oddly, no exits or entrances are visible.

Before the heroes can get too involved in the investigation of the tower, Brother Splintershield sends his acolytes off in multiple directions, shouting that he wants the cleansing ritual to begin immediately.

THE CLEANSING RITUAL

Encounter Level 3 (850 XP)

Setup

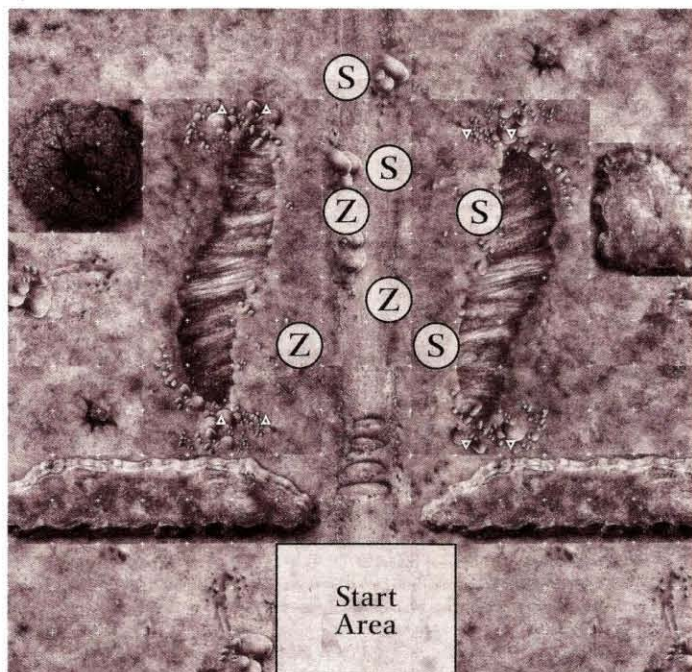
3 grasping zombies (Z)
22 decrepit skeletons (S)

Brother Splintershield's acolytes scatter about the castle ruins while the frightened settlers huddle in the middle around the tower.

When the ritual begins, read:

Brother Splintershield takes up a position near the front gate of the castle ruins. Together with a dozen acolytes spread in a ring around the walls, he commences a ritual to cleanse and protect the site of the town from evil. For a few moments, all that can be heard in the ruins is the chanting of the cleric and his acolytes, the nervous whispers of the settlers, and the haunting wind whipping across the walls of the castle.

The ritual is interrupted mere minutes into the process when Brother Splintershield lets out a cry of alarm. Marching up the path to the mouth of the castle ruins are several animated skeletons and a small number of rotting corpses. Brother Splintershield resumes the ritual after he calls for aid in defending the castle ruins.



At this point, the adventurers also notice that more undead creatures are climbing the hillsides toward the other acolytes. Malgram dispatches his scouts to fire arrows at them—which means that only the monsters approaching Brother Splintershield at the front gate are not engaged.

The undead heading up the path toward the cleric seem intent on disrupting the ritual. The heroes must defend Brother Splintershield for the 6 rounds it takes him to complete the ritual and ward the area against undead.

From the Ground

The encounter begins with four skeletons marching toward the castle. They act on an initiative of 15. Over the course of the battle, more skeletons appear, pulling themselves out of the earth in unoccupied squares near where the skeletons originally started.

Second Round: On an initiative of 15, four more skeletons appear and take their turns.

Fourth Round: On an initiative of 15, six more skeletons appear and take their turns.

Sixth Round: On an initiative of 15, eight more skeletons appear and take their turns.

Tactics

The undead attacking the ritual casters are ruled by innate hunger, mindlessly trying to kill and consume. The scent of blood makes them more aggressive, causing them to gang up on a bloodied character.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The area is illuminated by torches that give off bright light.

Rocks: These squares are difficult terrain, but they are not tall enough to provide cover.

Slopes: These squares are difficult terrain. Any creature that enters one of these squares must succeed on a DC 12 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Tree: The tree is 30 feet tall and requires a DC 12 Athletics check to climb. It can provide partial cover.

Development

When the sixth round is complete, so is the ritual. Bright light bursts from the casting circle, and a wave of thunderous noise rolls across the top of the hillside. Any remaining undead crumble immediately. The Ghost Tower, however, remains visible and intact.

3 Grasping Zombies (Z)	Level 1 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 100 each
HP 33; Bloodied 16	Initiative -1
AC 13, Fortitude 14, Reflex 11, Will 11	Perception -1
Speed 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
Zombie Weakness	
A critical hit automatically reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Ⓢ Slam ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 3 damage, or 1d12 + 8 against a grabbed target.	
† Zombie Grasp ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +4 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The zombie grabs the target (escape DC 12) if it does not have a creature grabbed.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Deathless Hunger ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 8 (-1)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 1 (-5)
	Wis 8 (-1)
	Cha 3 (-4)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —

22 Decrepit Skeletons (S)	Level 1 Minion Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 25 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +5
AC 16, Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +2
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Ⓢ Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The skeleton can shift 1 square before the attack.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 4 damage.	
Str 15 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 3 (-4)
	Wis 14 (+2)
	Cha 3 (-4)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —
Equipment longsword	

THE GHOST OF SALAZAR VLADISTONE

While the heroes rest from their battle against the undead, they can see that the cleansing ritual has had its desired effect. The sense of dread that haunted the walls of Castle Inverness has dissipated. Although a feeling of strangeness still washes over the adventurers when they pass through the gates, an air of serenity now covers the hilltop ruins.

Brother Splintershield and Malgram both thank the heroes for their efforts in seeing the ritual completed. Malgram has significantly more respect for the heroes now. He treats them all as equals, perhaps even deferring to adventurers who display martial prowess.

Brother Splintershield can tell the heroes that the cleansing ritual should be strong enough to repel any undead short of a dracolich. It also wards against evil spirits, demons, and devils. He remains puzzled by the appearance (and persistence) of the Ghost Tower, but he sees little that can be done about it now. If the tower was an imminent danger, the cleansing ritual would have either driven it away or failed to complete (if it wasn't strong enough).

When conversation between the heroes, Brother Splintershield, and Malgram dies down, a cry goes up from one of the scouts stationed at the front gates.

"Malgram! Brother Splintershield! Come forward to the gates. Hurry! Hurry!"

When the group arrives at the front gates, they are greeted with a strange sight. Marching up the path toward the ruins of Castle Inverness is a lone figure. The image resolves into an armed warrior bearing armor of ancient design and carrying a shield with heraldry. What is most disconcerting about this warrior, however, is that he is partially translucent—clearly a ghost of some kind. When the characters arrive at the front gates, read:

The ghostly soldier strides up the path, stopping just short of the place where the ritual was performed. The spirit looks back and forth across the ground in front of himself, as though examining a barrier that no one else can see. He looks up and calls out toward the castle in a raspy, otherworldly voice that echoes across the ruins.

"Who dares bar the path of Salazar Vladistone? What right have you to keep me from my sacred grounds? Send forth the one responsible for this disrespect so that I might slay him and break this spell."

Unafraid of the ghostly warrior, Brother Splintershield steps forward—though still to a place within the area of the cleansing ritual—and attempts to parley with the

spectral form. If the heroes don't come forward of their own accord, Brother Splintershield beckons to them and asks that they help speak on his behalf—his experience with ghosts is limited to the relatively benign spirits in Hammerfast.

The spirit of Salazar Vladistone seeks to convince Brother Splintershield to either face him in single combat or remove the cleansing ritual and be gone from the ruins of Castle Inverness. Brother Splintershield is willing to do neither. Because the ritual seems to be working well enough, the cleric rejects every demand that Vladistone's ghost makes.

Brother Splintershield cannot be convinced to leave Castle Inverness, claiming it is Moradin's will that the new town be founded here. He is confident that the spirit poses no threat, and he threatens to expand the ritual to include not only Inverness but the surrounding environs as well.

Roleplaying the conversation provides a good chance for the heroes to learn more about Vladistone, his motivations, and more of the history of Castle Inverness. Throughout the roleplaying encounter, the heroes can learn any or all of the following pieces of information.

NPC PROFILE: SALAZAR VLADISTONE

Salazar Vladistone is a ghostly noble who haunts the area around Castle Inverness. The truth about his history will be revealed later in this season.

Key Traits: Tormented, honorable, ruthless. Vladistone doggedly pursues his goals without sympathy for those who stand in his way.

Goal: Vladistone's original goal is to convince Brother Splintershield to abandon Castle Inverness. In subsequent encounters, the specter's goal is revenge upon those who have separated him from the burial place of his wife.

Motivation: Vladistone is angered by Brother Splintershield and the other settlers. When he is separated from his wife's resting place by the ritual, it ignites a smoldering rage within him.

Fears: Vladistone has little to fear as a ghost. Still, he shows extreme concern for the safekeeping of his wife's remains and the sanctity of her burial place.

Weaknesses: Vladistone is an old ghost and knows little of the modern Nentir Vale—he has spent much of his unlife at the grave of his wife. He is prone to reacting rashly when his wife's resting place is threatened.

Mannerisms and Physical Characteristics: Though undead, Vladistone has many of the mannerisms of a living creature. He stands tall and regal, in knightly posture. He moves with the deadly grace of a veteran weapon master. Finally, he behaves with chivalry and honor at all times, despite his anger.

Vladistone's Past

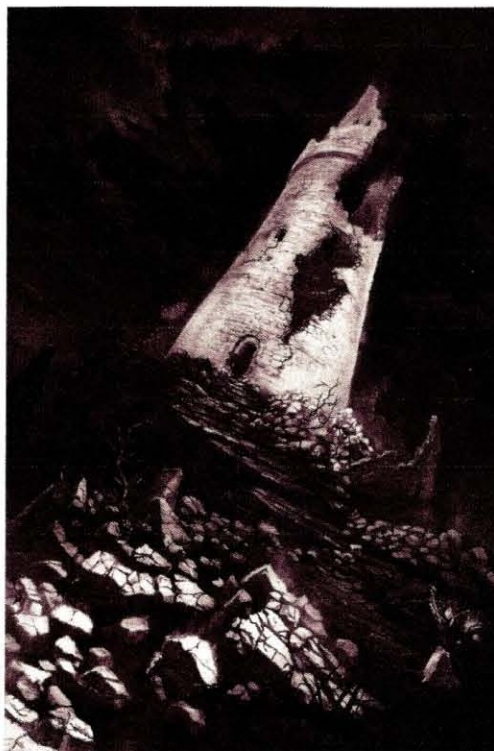
- ◆ Vladistone's ghost claims to be a hero who was an influential force in the Nentir Vale—the leader of the Silver Company, a name that means nothing to anyone in the caravan. A character who makes a successful DC 19 History check recalls that the Silver Company was a group of adventurers that were active in this area some sixty years ago, but their deeds have faded into obscurity.
- ◆ Astute heroes can recall that one of the grave markers inside the castle ruins bears the name Oldivya Vladistone. If they mention that name, Salazar's ghost becomes harsh, ordering them not to desecrate her name with their unworthy tongues. If they push for more information, he confirms that she was his wife. Although she is buried in the graveyard within the walls of Castle Inverness, his own resting place is far from here. He must travel some distance to visit her grave, and the cleansing ritual has now made it impossible for him to do so.

The Ghost Tower

- ◆ Vladistone's specter refers to the ruins of Castle Inverness as the Ghost Tower. He claims to have visited the tower after it was transported to this world. He will say no more about this fact.
- ◆ Vladistone intimates that he and his former comrades in arms once entered the Ghost Tower of Inverness. He has no information about how to get into the tower now—when he entered it, openings existed. A character who makes a DC 19 Insight check can discern that Vladistone has his suspicions about why the Ghost Tower is barred. In reality, the Ghost Tower awaits the return of an object taken from it: the *arrow of time*. This relic will feature heavily in the last chapter of the adventure.

Vladistone's Threats

- ◆ Vladistone warns that if Brother Splintershield refuses his commands, the ultimate outcome will not change. The ghost will still achieve his goal, and the cost for the delay will be the destruction of the caravan and the death of all its members. Brother Splintershield believes this threat to be empty and says as much. He points out that they already rebuked the undead disturbed by the cleansing ritual, and no force that Vladistone could marshal would be powerful enough to penetrate the barrier.
- ◆ If threats fail to impress the heroes, Vladistone warns them that the Ghost Tower houses a terrible magical relic that will destroy everyone nearby. He calls it a soul gem and claims that it can strip the soul from the body of a living creature, causing it to become a ghost just like him.



Development

If the heroes try to physically attack the spirit of Salazar Vladistone, he is unharmed. If a character tries to use a power that targets undead or deals radiant damage, his form disappears, but he continues speaking, issuing a warning.

Even if the characters do not attack Vladistone, eventually one side or the other will grow tired of talking. At an appropriate point in the conversation, Salazar turns to depart, offering a cryptic warning.

"You have denied but a single tortured spirit this night. We shall see how well you fare against the Phantom Brigade."

Reward

For speaking to Salazar Vladistone and learning about him and the Ghost Tower, the party receives an additional 400 to 600 XP.

Brother Splintershield also offers the party a pair of magic items as thanks for their help in dealing with the undead. Roll twice on the Treasure Table to determine what he gives them.

CHAPTER 2

This marks the beginning of the second chapter of *March of the Phantom Brigade*. Each character has had an extended rest and should have full hit points and healing surges, as well as 1 action point and access to his or her daily powers.

SESSION 5: THE ABYSSAL PLAGUE

The second chapter of the season opens with the heroes living comfortably in the newly settled village of Inverness. To set the scene, read:

Winter has come to the Nentir Vale. A heavy blanket of snow has draped the wilderness near Inverness in peaceful white. In the six months since you helped found the town in the ruins of ancient Castle Inverness, the settlers have constructed homes and workplaces, established farms in the surrounding valley, and begun laying a road north toward Hammerfast. Where once only crumbling ruins stood, the village of Inverness has grown and prospered thanks to the hard work of the homesteaders and the expanding trade with the village of Harkenwold to the south. The Ghost Tower continues its undisturbed vigil, despite every attempt to enter it.

At this point, offer the players a chance to describe what their heroes have been doing for the last four months. Some characters might have spent the intervening months fending off monster attacks, patrolling to protect the town against goblins from Harken Forest, or escorting supply caravans between Inverness and Hammerfast. New players could be seen as newcomers to Inverness who made their way to the town shortly before the winter snows made travel across the plains to the north too difficult.

When talk of activities during the intervening months has run its course, read:

The day is ending in Inverness. Shops are closing down, and farmers have begun to arrive in the village for an evening at the tavern. You make your way there as well.

You find the tavern crowded as usual. A fire roars in the hearth, and the revelers quickly shed their heavy outer clothing. Temperature and good cheer combine to create a warm glow in each patron's face.

After greeting a number of now-familiar settlers, you spot the wizard Faldyra. She has spent the past months studying the Ghost Tower, trying to find a way inside. So far, she's had no success.

Faldyra asks to join the heroes as they dine. If they accept, she sits quietly at their table and nibbles on her dinner—a stew of root vegetables which were gifted to the

town by an elf envoy that arrived and departed shortly after the town was founded. The wizard is content to let others do the talking. She is tired and a bit frustrated.

During their meal, the adventurers overhear a conversation at a nearby table. Several foresters—whom the characters recognize as Malgram's scouts from the caravan—are discussing strange happenings in the Harken Forest. Specifically, they are concerned about animal corpses that have been turning up with greater frequency of late. The bodies bear signs of disease—odd lesions and growths.

If they engage the scouts, the heroes can learn the following facts (and can make skill checks to uncover more).

- ◆ *The dead creatures show no visible signs of injury except for weird crystalline growths that have broken through the skin. The red crystals contain gold flecks. Heal (DC 13): The character knows no natural disease that has such symptoms.*
- ◆ *One of the hunters was attacked a few days ago by what seemed to be a rabid deer. Yet, when he examined the animal, he found the same lesions on the body. Nature (DC 9): A deer attacking a person is quite out of the ordinary. The animals are skittish and rarely come near people.*
- ◆ *Six nights ago, a trapper saw strange, hovering lights drifting through the forest as he returned to Inverness. The lights converged on a spot deep in the forest and then vanished. Arcana (DC 13): The lights could be a sign of any number of things, from will-o'-wisps to ghosts to fey magic bleeding through from another plane.*

DEATH COMES TO INVERNESS

Once the heroes have had a chance to learn all they can from the foresters, the door to the tavern bangs open and in strides Brother Splintershield, his brow creased with worry. Read:

All eyes are drawn to the entrance of the tavern when Brother Splintershield arrives. His eyes flick about quickly before settling on your table. He approaches purposefully and speaks to Faldyra, though his words and expressions take you all in. "I think you'd better come have a look at this. Some of the out-riders are back, and it looks bad."

Faldyra shares a concerned look with the adventurers before rising smoothly and motioning for Brother Splintershield to lead on. During the short walk to the town gate, the cleric refuses to answer any questions, his face set in grim determination. As the heroes move toward the village entrance, the moonlight of this cold winter night shines balefully on the Ghost Tower. It looms over them more ominously than ever.

Brother Splintershield eventually leads the heroes to Malgram and a group of dead bodies on the ground in the center of the village. When the characters arrive, read:

Lain out neatly in two rows are the bodies of six male humans. The body of each one bears numerous red crystalline lesions. The corpses are otherwise unmarked.

Malgram, the half-orc captain of the town guard, is kneeling over the bodies as you approach. "I've never seen anything like this. We were hoping one of you might be able to tell us what happened to these workers."

Malgram tells the heroes and Faldyra that these six foresters were part of a group of a dozen or so (the exact number can be adjusted depending on the size of the adventuring party and the need to raise or lower the level of the encounter to come) who spent the day cutting down trees in the forest. They took a horse-drawn cart with them this morning. Roughly fifteen minutes ago, these six workers stumbled through the village gate and collapsed just inside the barrier created by the cleansing ritual.

If the adventurers inspect the bodies, they can learn the following facts by making the appropriate skill checks.

Heal (DC 13): These loggers died from whatever caused the sores; nothing about the corpses indicates poison or another cause of death.

Arcana (DC 13): The sores and crystals are magical in nature but inert at present—they radiate no magical energy. The character suggests that when the men died, so did whatever caused the sores.

Additionally, the first time one of the heroes leans over a body to examine it, that corpse opens its eyes, apparently not quite dead. The man reaches out, grabs hold of the adventurer, and croaks out the following in a raspy, weak voice.

"... the demon of the forest ... a plague ... drank the water ... others may yet live."

With that, the logger collapses, at last dead. Brother Splintershield whispers a barely audible prayer, and Faldyra covers her mouth and turns away, struggling with emotion. Malgram eases an arrow back into his quiver, having smoothly drawn and nocked it when the man stirred.

If the heroes don't volunteer, Malgram asks them to serve as a search party, one of several he's putting together to enter the woods and find the remaining loggers. He has called upon the bulk of the guards for the job. Faldyra will remain in Inverness to try to find some mention of what killed the foresters in her scrolls and tomes.

Brother Splintershield is committed to joining one of the search parties. Malgram objects vociferously, pointing out that the cleric's life is bound to the ongoing protection ritual keeping the settlement safe. Brother



Splintershield cannot be dissuaded, however. "So I'm to cower behind these walls ignoring the depredations of this malignant scourge? I think not!"

Malgram turns to the heroes and urges them to stay close to the cleric and bring him back alive, whether they find the loggers or not.

Several sources of water surround Inverness. Brother Splintershield suggests they explore the forest to the east, where several ponds are fed by springs. Malgram's search parties will explore the streams and ponds in the other directions.

Reward: The party gains an additional 600 to 800 XP at the end of the session for investigating the Abyssal plague and aiding in the search for its source.

THE MISSING FORESTERS

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

Setup

5 plagued foresters (F)
Brother Splintershield (B)

Brother Splintershield heads east, and the adventurers fall in alongside him.

When the group enters the forest, read:

Even in the depths of a winter night, the Harken Forest is alive with activity. Nocturnal birds flutter from one tree to the next. The wind blows dead leaves across the forest floor, creating a constant whisper of sound. The full moon shines down, producing long, ominous shadows across the snowy ground. The only illumination that reaches into the darkest places is the flickering from your torches.

The adventurers can attempt skill checks to help locate the missing foresters. No matter the outcome of these checks, the heroes eventually stumble across the loggers. Even so, successful use of the following skills provides certain benefits during the ensuing encounter. Use the following suggested benefits, or create your own. Each character can make such an attempt only once (though they can attempt other skill checks).

Insight (DC 21): The character is mindful of small details about the rhythms and cycles of the forest, including when the nocturnal animals go silent. This absence of noise warns the party that danger is near. The character gains a +1 bonus to all defenses until the end of the next encounter because he or she is prepared for the encounter.

Nature (DC 21): The hero identifies the tracks of the foresters and can navigate the woods to reach a good location for battle. The character gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of the next encounter as a result of favorable terrain.

BRINGING BACK VICTIMS

If the heroes knock one or more of the plagued foresters unconscious, they can attempt to carry those individuals back to Inverness. This task is arduous, and the heroes have no way of knowing if the loggers can be cured. In reality, the Abyssal plague cannot be cured, and any foresters brought back to the village soon die or become monstrous creatures that must be put down.

Perception (DC 21): The character can spot signs of strange crystalline growths on nearby trees, warning the party when the foresters are near. He or she starts the encounter with 5 temporary hit points, steeled for the fight to come.

After the heroes have had a chance to contribute their skills to the search, they encounter the loggers in a clearing.

When the heroes reach the clearing, read:

A small break in the woods reveals the presence of six figures, dressed in tattered clothes that mark them as inhabitants of Inverness. The skeletal trees surrounding the clearing obscure your sight of them for a moment. When the view clears, they are much closer, and you notice unmistakable signs that they are infected by the same sickness as the ones who stumbled into Inverness earlier in the evening. Unlike their dead fellows, these foresters seem to be feverish, maddened, and aggressive.

Before you roll initiative for the foresters, consider splitting them into two or three groups to break up the action in the fight.

5 Plagued Foresters (F)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 125 each
HP 37; Bloodied 18	Initiative +4
AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12	Perception +0
Speed 6	
TRAITS	
Combat Advantage	
The plagued forester deals 1d6 extra damage to any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Hand Axe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
🎯 Thrown Axe (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
🏃 Chaotic Lurch ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The plagued forester shifts half its speed.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
🛡 Variable Resistance ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The plagued forester takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.	
Effect (Free Action): The plagued forester gains resist 5 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter.	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 12 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 6 (-1)
	Wis 8 (+0)
	Cha 13 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages —

Brother Splintershield (B)		Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf		XP –
HP 40; Bloodied 20		Initiative +4
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 15		Perception +11
Speed 5		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Stand the Ground		
Brother Splintershield can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.		
Steady-Footed		
Brother Splintershield can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚔ Mace (radiant, weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 3 radiant damage.		
⚔ Smite Foe (radiant, weapon) ♦ Encounter		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 3 radiant damage, and the target falls prone.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
🗨 Healing Word (healing) ♦ Encounter		
Effect: Close burst 5 (Brother Splintershield or one ally in the burst). The target can spend a healing surge and regains an additional 1d6 hit points.		
Skills Diplomacy +10, Religion +6		
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 11 (+1)	Wis 18 (+5)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 14 (+3)	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment lawful good Languages Common, Dwarven		
Equipment leather armor, mace		

Tactics

Fortunately for the heroes, the plagued foresters are not in their right minds and lack any tactical ability that they might normally display. Have the foresters attack Splintershield once or twice to instill a sense of danger in the encounter, but don't kill him. He still has a role to play in this adventure.

Plagued Foresters: The diseased settlers have been driven mad by the Abyssal plague—they are aggressive and chaotic. They do have enough sense left to flank heroes when they can. If one becomes separated from

the rest, it tries to maneuver to a place where it can be close to the others.

Brother Splintershield: Brother Splintershield is a capable warrior. He does not hesitate to join the front lines of battle. If any of the heroes become injured, he heals them. He refuses to use healing magic on himself unless it looks as though he would otherwise be taken out of the fight.

In anticipation of the scene involving his death in the next session, try to ensure that the cleric takes some damage during this fight. Such an event forces him to spend his sole healing surge afterward.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light. The attack takes place at night, but the area is lit by a full moon.

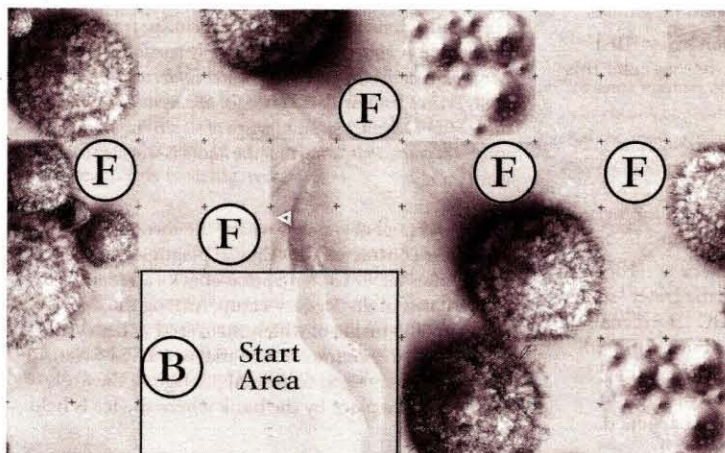
Trees: The area of the clearing is filled with a number of small, skeletal trees. Because they are so thin and wiry, the trees provide only partial cover and do not block movement.

Treasure

One of the plagued foresters carries a magic item. Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what item the forester has. If the characters are reluctant to take it, Brother Splintershield encourages them to use it for good so that the foresters did not die in vain.

Development

When the heroes have had a chance to take a short rest, they notice Brother Splintershield circling the clearing with an odd look in his eyes. He claims that the source of their infection must be nearby, because he can sense a wrongness to the area. He believes that they can find the source of the plague and perform a cleansing ritual to eliminate it tonight. He solemnly asks the heroes for their assistance.



SESSION 6: VENGEANCE

Now that they have determined the fate of the missing foresters, Brother Splintershield has asked the heroes to explore the Harken Forest to find the source of the mysterious sickness plaguing Inverness.

The area where the loggers were found is depicted in the area map on the opposite page. The heroes can explore the regions in any order they wish. Eventually, after the party has had the opportunity to investigate the various locations, it arrives at the plagued corpse, triggering the encounter on page 28.

Reward: The party gains an additional 125 to 175 XP for each of the six locations it explores.

A. The Unaffected Forest

Several tracts of unaffected forest are scattered around the area that the heroes are searching. The first time they enter such a locale, read:

You emerge into an area dense with trees. During the spring and summer, they would be covered in enough foliage to block out the sun. Now, the trees are bereft of leaves, and the moon shines brightly enough that you scarcely need a lamp or torch. Little appears to be out of place, except for the eerie silence that has settled over the woods since you encountered the loggers from Inverness. The quiet is broken only by the snow that crunches beneath your feet.

Further exploration reveals that this section of the forest is unaffected by the plague. Heroes who have training in Nature can confirm that the area holds no signs of anything out of the ordinary (no skill check required).

B. The Red Crater

The chaos demon corpse (see the section below) first appeared in the world here. When the heroes enter this locale, read:

Most of the trees in this area have been knocked down and splintered by some great force. A mound of earth sits at the center of the destruction. The pile's concave center contains several crystal formations similar to those left by the mysterious plague.

A hero can make a DC 13 Perception check to recognize that something was dragged away from the crater—something large, and heavy. Additionally, a DC 19 Arcana check reveals that some planar warping hovers around the edge of the crater. Such phenomena suggest that something was forcefully pushed into the world from another plane, creating this crater when it happened.

C. The Dead Bear Cave

The Harken Forest has caves aplenty. More than a few of these hideaways become hibernation dens for bears during the winter. When the heroes arrive at the edge of this cave, read:

As you approach a cave that opens into a hillside, a horrible stench assaults you. Even in the depths of winter, when the cold stems the speed of decay, something appears to have died inside.

If the heroes explore the shallow cave, they discover a pair of black bears that have clearly been dead for several days. Both animals bear the now-familiar crystal-filled lesions on their bodies. A character who makes a DC 13 Heal check determined that the bears died from wounds inflicted by each other—as though they were driven to tear into each other with their claws.

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Perception check can tell that no other animals have entered the cave since the bears' deaths. Someone who makes a DC 9 Nature check realizes the unlikelihood of this situation occurring naturally. Normally, scavenging creatures would have long since devoured the carcasses. The infection has kept other animals away, preserving the bears for the adventurers to discover.

The heroes notice few signs of other infected plants or creatures in the area. The bears must have contracted the plague somewhere outside the cave, then returned to it.

D. The Tepid Pool

The heroes follow an ice-covered stream to a large pool of water. Although much of the pond is covered in ice, the watery areas are laden with strangeness. When the heroes arrive, read:

A pool of water no more than 20 feet across lies in the clearing ahead of you. A pond of this size should be frozen solid this deep into winter, but this one is only partially frozen. Large gaps in the ice show black water underneath. The edges of the breaks fester with red crystals, apparently keeping the ice from advancing. Faint wisps of steam rise from the water's surface, indicating that the liquid is warmer than the wintry air.

This tepid pool of water is where the foresters of Inverness contracted the Abyssal plague. A character who makes a DC 13 Perception check can identify the remains of the loggers' camp. Among the debris is a tin cup, the inside of which is covered with crystal-line growths. A character who makes a DC 13 Nature check discovers signs of animal passage in the area, especially in a place by the bank where the ice is held

at bay by the crystals. Clearly, the animals of the area were infected after drinking from this pool.

The adventurers might conclude that the source of the disease is beneath the surface of the pond. Any character who has a high Wisdom or training in Nature can point out the danger of being soaking wet outdoors in the winter. He or she suggests following the stream before plunging into the pond.

E. The Ravaged Trees

Some stretches of the forest are marred. When the heroes enter one of the sections ravaged by the Abyssal plague for the first time, read:

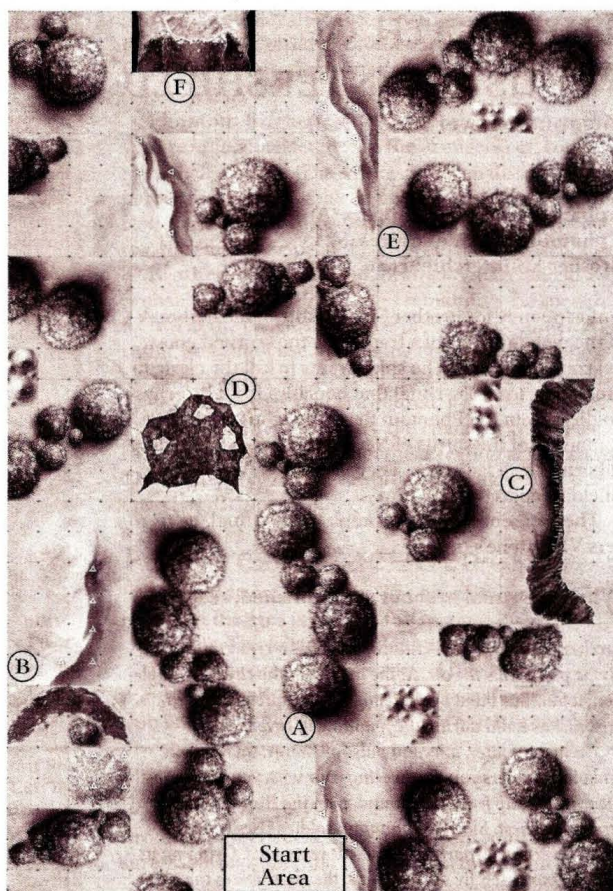
The trees in this area show signs of infection. They have developed the same crystal lesions, each of which is filled with gold flecks. Some trees are more affected than others. The worst of them look as though their growth has been shaped in strange, chaotic ways. Branches reach out in myriad directions, casting gnarled and sinister shadows across the snowscape.

It should be obvious to the players by now that the plague is extremely volatile and contagious, spreading to plant and animal life alike. A character who makes a DC 13 Nature check discerns no obvious pattern concerning which trees are infected and which remain untouched. This lack of uniformity suggests that the plague isn't airborne, but instead is spread by contact between infected hosts. Any hero whose check beats the DC by 5 or more also notices that the crystalline growths cause unnatural growth patterns that are harmful to the trees' survival.

F. The Plagued Corpse

If the heroes follow the frozen stream backward from the tepid pool, they discover the source of the plague: the well-placed corpse of a plague demon. When the heroes reach this clearing, read:

Up ahead, the trees thin, then surround a small clearing. A grisly sight greets you in the middle of the open area. The corpse of a large, monstrous creature lies rotting in the clearing, its body nearly overgrown with red crystals. The creature is generating an intense, supernatural heat—it has melted the surface of the stream and is causing a rivulet of water to flow beneath the ice downstream toward the pond.



This corpse was put here, as the heroes are about to discover, by the malevolent ghost Salazar Vladistone.

Brother Splintershield approaches the corpse and says:

"It's some manner of demon, but I've never seen its like. This sickness must be some kind of Abyssal plague—a malignancy brought here from beyond our plane. Perhaps I can cleanse it with a ritual."

Brother Splintershield begins to perform a cleansing ritual. For the next ten minutes, the adventurers can assist him in purging the clearing of the corruption of the Abyssal plague, or they can keep an eye out for trouble.

THE DEATH OF ALDUS SPLINTERSHIELD

Encounter Level 2 (678 XP)

Setup

3 phantom brigade armigers (A)

6 phantom brigade squires (S)

Brother Splintershield (B)

Unfortunately for Brother Splintershield, the outbreak of the plague is part of a trap set by the scorned ghost, Salazar Vladistone. The spirit wants to kill the cleric to break the cleansing ritual that bars him from Inverness. Soldiers from the Phantom Brigade, a ghostly army composed of the spirits of Nerath soldiers, have been suborned by Vladistone. They lay in wait for Splintershield, prepared to kill him.

The moment the cleric completes the ritual, he triggers Vladistone's trap.

When the ritual is about to be finished, read:

Brother Splintershield's chanting reaches a crescendo as divine power fills the air. At the instant of the ritual's completion, a familiar burst of cleansing energy spreads over the area just as it did during the founding of Inverness.

An instant later, a second pulse of energy, this one vile and oily, staggers you. Recovering your wits, you see a ghostly spear jutting up from the ground, piercing Brother Splintershield's chest. Slowly, a phantom soldier rises from the snow-covered soil, garbed in ancient vestments. Gripping its weapon purposefully as it ascends, the ghost forces the spear through the cleric with a sickening noise.

Brother Splintershield's mouth hangs open in shock. Several more spectral soldiers rise from the ground nearby.

WHAT IF BROTHER SPLINTERSHIELD LIVES?

If by good tactics and good fortune, the adventurers prevent the members of the Phantom Brigade from slaying Brother Splintershield, don't railroad the dwarf's demise. Instead, much to the cleric's surprise, being nearly killed is enough to break his connection to the protection ritual. In this case, allow Brother Splintershield to assist the heroes in the next session's events—though with no healing surges remaining it seems likely that the dwarf will eventually come to a painful end.

3 Phantom Brigade Armigers (A) Level 3 Brute

Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human XP 150 each
HP 40; Bloodied 20 Initiative +2
AC 15, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13 Perception +4
Speed 6; phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

TRAITS

Insubstantial

The armiger takes only half damage from any damage source, except force damage.

Unrelenting Brigade

Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the armiger, the armiger gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Soulbound Bardiche (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 8 psychic damage.

⚡ Charging Rebuke (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Effect: The armiger charges and makes the following attack in place of a melee basic attack.

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 4 psychic damage, and the armiger can push the target up to 1 square and knock it prone.

⚡ Furious Sweep (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d10 + 4 psychic damage.

Str 16 (+4) Dex 12 (+2) Wis 16 (+4)

Con 17 (+4) Int 13 (+2) Cha 13 (+2)

Alignment lawful good Languages Common

6 Phantom Brigade Squires (S) Level 3 Minion Soldier

Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human XP 38 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. Initiative +4
AC 19, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 14 Perception +2
Speed 6; phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

TRAITS

Unrelenting Brigade

Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the squire, the squire gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

① Soulbound Short Sword (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 4 psychic damage.

② Spectral Crossbow (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 4 psychic damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Shielding Martyr ♦ At-Will

Trigger: An enemy hits an ally adjacent to the squire with a melee attack.

Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The squire becomes the target of the attack.

Str 19 (+5) Dex 12 (+2) Wis 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) Int 14 (+3) Cha 11 (+1)

Alignment lawful good Languages Common

Brother Splintershield (B)		Level 2 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf		XP –
HP 40; Bloodied 20		Initiative +4
AC 18, Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 15		Perception +11
Speed 5		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Stand the Ground		
Brother Splintershield can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.		
Steady-Footed		
Brother Splintershield can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock him prone.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
⚔ Mace (radiant, weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 3 radiant damage.		
⚔ Smite Foe (radiant, weapon) ♦ Encounter		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 3 radiant damage, and the target falls prone.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
🕊 Healing Word (healing) ♦ Encounter		
Effect: Close burst 5 (Brother Splintershield or one ally in the burst). The target can spend a healing surge and regain an additional 1d6 hit points.		
Skills Diplomacy +10, Religion +6		
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 11 (+1)	Wis 18 (+5)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 14 (+3)	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment lawful good Languages Common, Dwarven		
Equipment leather armor, mace		

Tactics

At the outset of combat, Brother Splintershield has taken 18 psychic damage from a Phantom Brigade armiger's critical hit.

Phantom Brigade Armiger: The three armigers are concerned only with their primary mission: the death of Brother Splintershield. Their top priority is to

surround and slay the cleric. They ignore other creatures in favor of striking Brother Splintershield down. Once that is done, they turn their efforts on any heroes who remain.

Phantom Brigade Squire: The squires are tasked with running interference so the armigers can complete their mission. The squires focus on distracting the heroes as long as possible. If any squires are close to the cleric, and the adventurers aren't in danger of interfering, they take a swipe at the dwarf to hasten his demise.

Brother Splintershield: Brother Splintershield probably has no healing surges remaining—he spent his to heal at the conclusion of the previous encounter. As a result, he cannot use his healing on himself. Still, he is a true champion—if he manages to live for a few rounds, he aids any heroes who are injured.

When Splintershield dies, the characters can see a flash in the sky coming from the direction of Inverness. The flash indicates that the protective shield over the town has disappeared.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light. The attack takes place at night, but the area is under a full moon.

Shrubs: The foliage is difficult terrain.

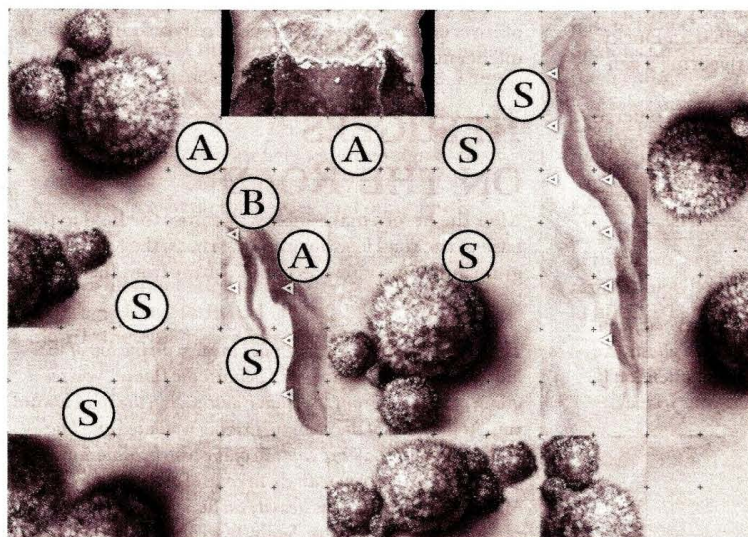
Trees: The area of the clearing is filled with a number of small, skeletal trees. Because they are so thin and wiry, the trees provide only partial cover and do not block movement.

Treasure

Brother Splintershield has a magic item from the Treasure Table on him. (Roll once to determine which item it is.) The characters can choose to take it with them. Naturally, Brother Splintershield would want them to use the item to defend Inverness.

Development

The heroes likely want to beat a hasty retreat back to the village. They can leave the forest with no difficulty, but at the end of the hour or so it takes to arrive within sight of Inverness, they realize they are too late. In the distance, the night sky glows yellow and orange as the village of Inverness burns.



Start Area

SESSION 7: THE BURNING OF INVERNESS

Inverness, the village built in the ruins of the ancient castle, is burning. Worse, ghosts swarm the place. When the session begins, read:

It takes more than an hour to trudge from the site of your confrontation with the ghostly spirits in the Harken Wood to a place where you can see the hill atop which sits the new settlement. You are horrified to find Inverness in flames. Fire rises from several buildings, flickering above the walls of the ruined castle. Against the yellow-red skyline, the outline of the Ghost Tower looms malignantly.

Through various breaks in the walls, you catch glimpses of settlers fighting fires and combating spectral soldiers similar to the ones that you fought in the woods. The embattled citizens are in dire need of your abilities. Unfortunately, dozens of ghostly guards patrol the area between the woods and the village proper. They are alert and moving with military precision.

SKILL CHALLENGE: SNEAKING INTO INVERNESS

The heroes must make their way across the fields that lead to the village without being seen by the spectral soldiers. The patrols are numerous, but they have a wide area to cover. If the heroes are skilled and lucky, they can arrive in Inverness without triggering a general alert among the attackers.

The skill challenge begins when the heroes emerge from the Harken Wood and start making their way to the road leading up the hill to Inverness. No real time pressure exists, allowing the heroes to make any preparations they desire before the challenge starts.

When the skill challenge begins, read:

The large, open fields that separate the Harken Wood from the road leading into Inverness are crawling with ghostly soldiers. You must cross this area without drawing attention if you are going to get into the village and help your friends.

Level: 1 (XP 150).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Time Frame: Each character can make a check in this challenge once per round as a standard action.

Primary Skills: Athletics, Nature, Perception, Stealth.

Athletics (DC 13): The hero dashes across the open ground quickly while the ghostly soldiers are distracted.

Nature (DC 13): The hero identifies the optimal route across the fields—one that has good cover and fewer obstacles that might slow the party's advance.

Perception (DC 13): The hero keeps an eye out for the Phantom Brigade soldiers and tell the other heroes when to hide.

Stealth (DC 13): The hero sneaks across the fields and help others move silently and swiftly toward the road.

Secondary Skills: Insight, Religion.

Insight (DC 21): The character spots patterns in the Phantom Brigade's movements, allowing the party to anticipate where the ghosts will be and, more important, where they will not be. Success grants a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check in this challenge.

Religion (DC 21): The character uses his or her knowledge of ghosts to predict and counteract the actions of the Phantom Brigade. Success grants a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check in this challenge.

Success: The adventurers make their way across the fields leading to Inverness without alerting the swarming ghosts. Because they avoided detection, they surprise the Phantom Brigade soldiers in the subsequent encounter.

Failure: The heroes are spotted by the Phantom Brigade patrols as they attempt to enter Inverness. Strangely, the ghostly warriors make no move to stop the party. The soldiers do warn their comrades inside of Inverness, however. No benefit is gained in the subsequent encounter.

REFUGEES ON THE ROAD

After the heroes make their way across the field to the base of the road leading into Inverness, they spot Malgram and some villagers coming away from the town toward them. Read:

The village of Inverness continues to burn on the top of the hill in front of you. Silhouetted against the flames, you see a group of refugees from the village descending the road toward you. At the head of the column, looking wounded and haggard, strides the half-orc captain of the watch, Malgram. The group pushes past you scarcely in control of their panic, but Malgram stops and leans heavily on his spear.

"It is good that you live. Sadly, Inverness is lost."



SESSION 7: THE BURNING OF INVERNESS

Assuming Brother Splintershield has perished, Malgram continues:

He pauses, taking in the group as a whole. "Where is Brother Splintershield?"

Malgram listens to the heroes' answer with increasing grimness, then nods and offers his respectful condolences for the cleric's death. Despite his disagreements with the cleric, Malgram clearly respected what Brother Splintershield had done for the village of Inverness.

In turn, Malgram fills the heroes in on what has happened since they headed into the Harken Wood. The captain provides the following information.

- ◆ Malgram's group of searchers found no sign of the missing foresters. After a time, they returned to Inverness to wait on the heroes' and other parties' return.
- ◆ Suddenly, a shudder echoed throughout the area. Faldyra alerted Malgram that the barrier protecting Inverness from harm had fallen.
- ◆ Shortly thereafter, several ghostly warriors began marching up the path to the village. More specters appeared within moments and began firing flaming arrows into the village, starting the blaze. Over the course of the next hour, the ghostly soldiers overwhelmed the village's defenses. They were led by the same ghost that threatened Brother Splintershield, Salazar Vladistone.

- ◆ Malgram and the surviving guardsmen eventually stopped fighting the ghost warriors and focused their efforts on getting the villagers out. Despite their efforts, many villagers remain inside Inverness, including Faldyra.

After Malgram briefs the heroes, he tells them that he is going to see his group of refugees to a safe distance away, then get them pointed toward Harkenwold. If the heroes warn him about the ghostly patrols, Malgram looks even more ashen-faced, but vows to do his best to help the refugees make their way to safety. He is anxious for any advice the adventurers can give about the terrain.

Malgram asks that the heroes enter Inverness and rescue Faldyra and the remaining villagers. He bids them good luck, then adds these ominous parting words: "Fight well. We will meet again—either in Harkenwold or in the realm of the Raven Queen."

Reward: For talking to Malgram, learning the fate of the town, and accepting his request to rescue the remaining villagers, the party gains an additional 600 to 800 XP at the end of the session.

FIGHTING PHANTOMS

Encounter Level 2 (678 XP)

Setup

2 Phantom Brigade justiciars (J)

1 Phantom Brigade armiger (A)

6 Phantom Brigade squires (S)

As Inverness burns around them and citizens flee for their lives, the heroes confront members of the Phantom Brigade. At the center of town, the characters come upon a group of Phantom Brigade soldiers moving from building to building and methodically driving people out of their homes, killing any who resist.

If the heroes succeeded in the skill challenge to sneak into Inverness, they get the drop on the ghostly soldiers. In this case, the adventurers gain the benefit of a surprise round and a +2 bonus to attack rolls for the encounter.

If, however, the heroes failed to sneak into the village of Inverness, the Phantom Brigade soldiers are prepared for their arrival. The party gains no benefit.

When the heroes reach the center of the village, read:

The village is in flames around you. Despite the spectral nature of the flaming arrows, the ghostly soldiers have no difficulty spreading the fire. A dozen phantom soldiers are moving through the town, entering homes and businesses without bothering to open the doors. Soon after, the inhabitants either come rushing out, or screams are heard that cut off abruptly.

The soldiers are clearly driving the inhabitants from their homes with a purpose. All too soon, they once again converge in the middle of the street, silently conferring with one another before moving on to the next home.

Tactics

Although the scene that the heroes have entered is horrific, the Phantom Brigade soldiers have not been specifically ordered to slaughter the inhabitants of the village. Instead, they are supposed to drive the villagers out of Inverness, attacking only those who resist. The Phantom Brigade soldiers follow their commands to the letter, with no room for interpretation.

Justiciars and Armigers: These soldiers have been ordered to deal with the villagers who refuse to leave. When the heroes intervene, the justiciars immediately identify the most capable warriors and engage them. They view the best armed and armored heroes as the true threat on the battlefield just as they would have in life. The spectral warriors leave any spellcasters for their squires.

Squires: The squires were trained in life to provide support for their superiors. They swarm any heroes that the justiciars do not engage.

2 Phantom Brigade Justiciars (J)	Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human	XP 150 each
HP 33; Bloodied 16	Initiative +4
AC 15, Fortitude 13 Reflex 16, Will 13	Perception +2
Speed 6; phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	

TRAITS
✧ Blind Justice ✧ Aura 1
Enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the aura.
Insubstantial
The justiciar takes only half damage from any damage source, except force damage.
Unrelenting Brigade
Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the justiciar, the justiciar gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS
① Soulbound Hammer (psychic, weapon) ✧ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 psychic damage.
② Hurled Hammer (psychic, weapon) ✧ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 psychic damage.
③ Evade and Strike (psychic, weapon) ✧ At-Will
Effect: Any marks on the justiciar end, and the justiciar shifts up to 4 squares before making the following attack.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 psychic damage.

Skills Insight +9		
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 17 (+4)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 15 (+3)	Cha 16 (+4)
Alignment lawful good	Languages Common	

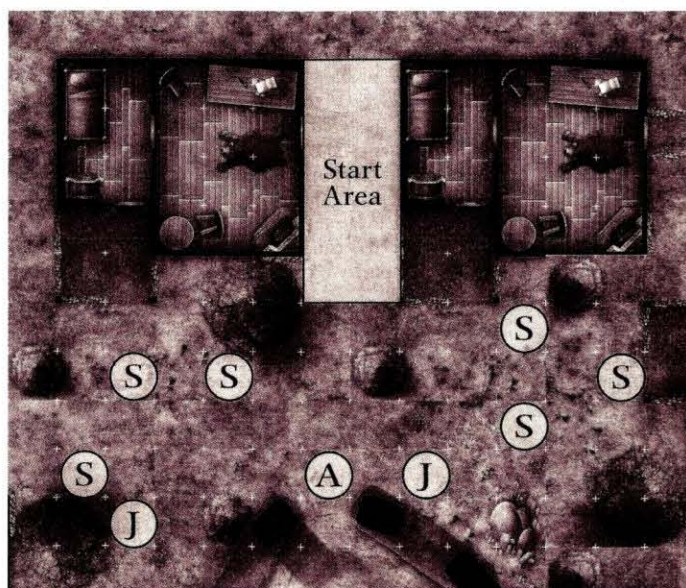
6 Phantom Brigade Squires	Level 3 Minion Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human	XP 38 each
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	Initiative +4
AC 19, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 14	Perception +2
Speed 6; phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	

TRAITS
Unrelenting Brigade
Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the squire, the squire gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS
① Soulbound Short Sword (psychic, weapon) ✧ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 4 psychic damage.
② Spectral Crossbow (psychic, weapon) ✧ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 4 psychic damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS
Shielding Martyr ✧ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy hits an ally adjacent to the squire with a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The squire becomes the target of the attack.

Str 19 (+5)	Dex 12 (+2)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 14 (+3)	Cha 11 (+1)
Alignment lawful good	Languages Common	



Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light.

Although the encounter takes place in the evening, the fires of the burning building provide excellent illumination.

Burning Buildings: The buildings that line the street are made of wood, straw, and stone. They are burning hot and fast. Any creature that ends its turn in one of the squares adjacent to a building takes 5 fire damage from the roaring flames.

Shrubs: The foliage is difficult terrain.

Treasure

At the edge of the burning ruins, a character who has a passive Perception of 19 or higher can spot an item that seems to be resisting the lick of the flames. Roll once on the

Treasure Table to determine what that character finds. The party receives an additional 150 XP at the end of the session for the discovery.

Development

When the heroes dispatch the ghostly soldiers, the villagers hiding nearby have a clear exit to the gates. The job is not over, however. The heroes know that Faldyra is still somewhere in the village.

They need not search long for her. A cursory hunt reveals that Faldyra is being held captive by the ghost of Salazar Vladistone at the graveyard in town—the burial ground of Vladistone's wife. In the next session, the heroes must deal with Vladistone and rescue Faldyra, thereby completing the evacuation of the town.

Phantom Brigade Armiger (A)	Level 3 Brute
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human	XP 150
HP 40; Bloodied 20	Initiative +2
AC 15, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +4
Speed 6; phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
TRAITS	
Insubstantial	
The armiger takes only half damage from any damage source, except force damage.	
Unrelenting Brigade	
Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the armiger, the armiger gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Soulbound Bardiche (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 8 psychic damage.	
⚔ Charging Rebuke (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The armiger charges and makes the following attack in place of a melee basic attack.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d10 + 4 psychic damage, and the armiger can push the target up to 1 square and knock it prone.	
⚔ Furious Sweep (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Close blast 2 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d10 + 4 psychic damage.	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 12 (+2)
Con 17 (+4)	Int 13 (+2)
	Wis 16 (+4)
	Cha 13 (+2)
Alignment lawful good	Languages Common

SESSION 8: ESCAPE TO HARKENWOLD

Up to this point, the heroes have encountered only ghostly soldiers assaulting the village of Inverness. As the chapter draws to a close, however, they come face-to-visage with the being responsible for the devastation: Salazar Vladistone, the ghostly noble they encountered at the end of Chapter 1.

From their entry into Inverness to the end of the skirmish with the Phantom Brigade soldiers, the heroes have seen no sign of Faldyra. In searching the village, they eventually come to the small graveyard where lie the remains of Oldivya Vladistone, the angry spirit's wife. When the characters approach, read:

The heat from the burning village makes you sweat, despite the winter chill that surrounds Inverness. Before you, the castle's graveyard is no longer devoid of activity as you remember it. At the center, you spy the ghost of Salazar Vladistone, the spectral warrior that vowed to kill Brother Splintershield when the town was founded. Slumped beside him is an injured Faldyra. Several phantom soldiers linger nearby.

"Why won't she appear?" demands Vladistone, his blade poised at Faldyra's throat. "What vile spell keeps my wife from me? Answer, wizard!"

Vladistone and his soldiers do not attack right away when the characters approach. The ghostly warriors stand guard to protect Vladistone from the adventurers. They hold their weapons at the ready. If the characters attack immediately, Vladistone meets the challenge. In that case, he talks to the characters only after the fight.

If the heroes are willing to parley with Salazar Vladistone, they can learn a great deal about the assault on Inverness and what Vladistone has been doing since

their encounter at the end of Chapter 1. The ghost's motivations might be unclear to the heroes. This role-playing incident allows you to explain his actions, setting up the rest of the adventure.

Faldyra is flustered from the ghost's threat on her life. She stutters and is unable to provide an explanation of what is stopping Vladistone from seeing his wife. She does not join in the fight unless a character specifically appeals to her for help.

The characters can learn the following information during their parley with Vladistone.

Vladistone's Wrath

- ◆ Vladistone is angry that the settlers blocked him from visiting the grave of his beloved wife, Oldivya. After Brother Splintershield refused to relocate, the angered spirit vowed to make all the settlers pay for their behavior.
- ◆ Vladistone's bitterness over the insolence of the living inhabitants of Inverness has grown into a smoldering rage, because now that he is at the grave of his wife, he is unable to communicate with her. He believes that someone has defiled the grave or cast some unholy spell.
- ◆ Following the characters' first encounter with the ghost, Vladistone ventured throughout the Nentir Vale, looking for other spirits to help him punish the people of Inverness and drive them out. During that time, he was able to bind the specters of a Nerath-era legion known as the Phantom Brigade to his will.
- ◆ Despite his obviously deranged anger, the heroes get the impression that Vladistone still has a sense of honor. He has not tried to stop the villagers from fleeing.



What He's Been Up To

- ◆ After Vladistone marshaled his ghostly brigade, he set in motion a plan to slay Brother Splintershield, break the spell protecting Inverness, and drive the people out of the village as it burned to the ground.
- ◆ Vladistone was responsible for the spread of the plague in the Harken Forest nearby. By happenstance, he stumbled across a plague demon corpse. He and his legion moved the body to a place where it would infect the water supply and spread the disease to animals and settlers alike. When Brother Splintershield left the protection of Inverness to purge the plague, Vladistone gave the command to spring the trap. Once the barrier had fallen, he led the assault on Inverness.

Ultimatum

Eventually, Vladistone threatens to make an example of Faldyra unless his wife is restored to him immediately. If the characters challenge him, he is willing to let the wizard go and face them instead. If the characters prove reckless with the wizard's life, he attacks her (though the blow only knocks her unconscious).

Even if the heroes waste little time in launching their attack, Vladistone is a powerful ghost and cannot be destroyed. As a result, you can have the ghostly noble convey his purpose, motivations, and demands during combat or even after he is defeated.

For example, early in the encounter the ghostly noble is overconfident and seeks to intimidate the heroes. On

his turn, Vladistone might say something like, "As you can see, I have bound the soldiers of ancient Nerath to my will. Clearly, you are unaware that the Phantom Brigade can be stopped by no mortal. Thus, my guards and I will make short work of you. Then, we will sweep across the Nentir Vale like fire through a dry forest." At that point, the adventurers can make History checks to learn more about the Phantom Brigade, Nerath, and so forth. As the fight continues, Vladistone makes similarly boastful or maddened statements, in the process communicating the information the party would have otherwise gained from parleying.

Reward

For speaking with Vladistone and saving Faldyra, the party gains an additional 600 to 800 XP at the end of the session.

Aftermath

When Vladistone and his ghostly cohorts are defeated, dawn is beginning to break over Inverness, but the sky is overcast, and the day promises to be gloomy and dismal. Faldyra is grateful for the heroes' help, though she mourns the loss of Brother Splintershield and the other villagers who have died.

The heroes can help the rest of the villagers escape the burning town, and they can gather what provisions remain. The refugees have a long journey ahead through the winter wilderness in order to reach safety.

As the heroes withdraw through the gates of Inverness, they catch movement out of the corners of their eyes. When they turn to look, they observe the Ghost Tower shimmering ominously.

Malgram recommends they travel northward to Hammerfast for refuge. Feel free to describe some of the journey and allow players to roleplay some of their characters' actions during the trip.

PHANTOM BRIGADE LORE

Although they have been mentioned at other points in this adventure, the heroes first hear the name of the Phantom Brigade during this conversation. Allow the heroes to make History checks to remember their studies.

DC 9: The Phantom Brigade is a cadre of ghostly soldiers that inhabit the Nentir Vale. Its members have been spotted from time to time over the last few decades.

DC 13: The soldiers of the Phantom Brigade bear arms and armor of the ancient empire of Nerath, a coalition of races led by humans that fell into ruin roughly a century ago.

DC 21: The Phantom Brigade consists of the spirits of ancient Knights of the Empire, who were sworn to protect the secrets of Nerath and its emperor. So committed were these ancient knights that they became ghostly soldiers, standing a never-ending watch over the vale, after their deaths during the chaos surrounding the empire's fall.

Faldyra (F)		Level 1 Controller
Medium fey humanoid, elf		XP –
HP 26; Bloodied 13		Initiative +1
AC 15, Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13		Perception +6
Speed 7		Low-light vision
TRAITS		
Wild Step		
Faldyra ignores difficult terrain when she shifts.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
☹ Magic Missile (force, implement) ◆ At-Will		
Effect: Ranged 10 (one creature). The target takes 6 force damage.		
☞ Phantom Bolt (illusion, implement, psychic) ◆ At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +4 vs. Will		
Hit: 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and Faldyra can slide the target 1 square.		
Skills Arcana +11, History +11, Insight +6, Religion +8		
Str 8 (–1)	Dex 12 (+1)	Wis 13 (+1)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 16 (+3)	Cha 12 (+1)
Alignment good Languages Common, Elven		

THE GRAVE OF OLDIVYA

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

Setup

3 Phantom Brigade templars (T)
Salazar Vladistone (V)

Eventually, the meeting between the characters and Vladistone concludes and conflict breaks out, whether the fight is started by the heroes wishing to save Faldyra, or by Salazar Vladistone to test their mettle.

When the talking is almost over, read:

The ghostly warriors standing near Salazar Vladistone drift forward, weapons at the ready.

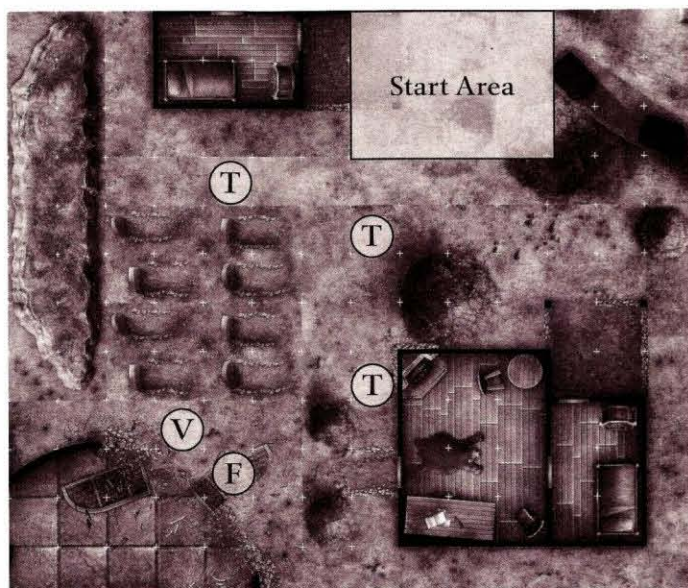
"What chance do the living have against an army of the dead?" Vladistone says, his raspy voice echoing with conviction. "Your struggles will accomplish but one thing: your deaths. Comfort yourselves in knowing that your demise will serve as a warning to others of the futility of standing against Salazar Vladistone."

3 Phantom Brigade Templars (T)		Level 3 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human		XP 150 each
HP 32; Bloodied 16		Initiative +2
AC 17, Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 16		Perception +12
Speed 6; phasing		Darkvision
Immune disease, poison		
TRAITS		
Insubstantial		
The templar takes only half damage from any damage source, except force damage.		
Unrelenting Brigade		
Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the templar, the templar gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
① Soulbound Morningstar (psychic, weapon) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 6 psychic damage, and the templar slides the target up to 2 squares.		
➤ Righteous Strike (cold, radiant) ♦ At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 5 (one or two creatures); +6 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 1d6 + 3 cold and radiant damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
⬅ Frightful Majesty (fear) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied		
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Will		
Hit: The target is dazed until the end of the templar's next turn.		
Effect: The templar can push each target 1 square.		
Skills Religion +7		
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 12 (+2)	Wis 19 (+5)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 13 (+2)	Cha 15 (+3)
Alignment lawful good Languages Common		

Salazar Vladistone (V)	Level 3 Elite Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human	XP 300
HP 67; Bloodied 33	Initiative +4
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 14	Perception +1
Speed 6, phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
⚡ Drag Into Death ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to Vladistone is slowed until the start of its next turn.	
Insubstantial	
Vladistone takes only half damage from any damage source, except force damage.	
Unrelenting Brigade	
Whenever an ally who also has this trait drops to 0 hit points within 5 squares of Vladistone, Vladistone gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of his next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
① Spectral Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Effect: Until the end of Vladistone's next turn, if the target makes an attack that does not include him as a target, that attack provokes an opportunity attack from Vladistone.	
② Spectral Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
⚡ Spectral Flurry ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Vladistone uses spectral longsword twice but must target a different creature with each attack.	
⚡ Vengeance-Driven Fury (weapon) ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The target falls prone.	
Skills History +8, Intimidate +11	
Str 19 (+5)	Dex 13 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 11 (+1)
	Cha 16 (+4)
Alignment evil Languages Common	

Tactics

Salazar Vladistone received satisfaction from the death of Brother Splintershield and the destruction of Inverness, but he is enraged that he continues to be barred from speaking to his wife. (If, for some reason, the cleric survives and is present in the encounter, Vladistone and his guards ensure his death at this point.) The ghostly noble has no significant interest in the death of Faldyra or the heroes, but he is driven by his anger. He refuses to show any sign of weakness or mercy. As a result, the tactics used by Vladistone and his ghostly soldiers are motivated more by a desire to get their point across than by a committed plan to kill the adventurers.



Templars: Vladistone has commanded his Phantom Brigade warriors to defend the graveyard against the heroes. The ghostly specters focus on characters attempting to harm Vladistone.

Salazar Vladistone: At the outset of the encounter, Vladistone has his translucent sword at the throat of the elf wizard Faldyra. If the heroes attack, he attacks her, rendering the elf unconscious. He has some notion of honor, so if a character challenges him or taunts him, he makes a reasonable effort to dispatch that foe.

Faldyra: The elf wizard is heartbroken at the destruction of the village, sorely wounded by her capture, and held fast by Vladistone's steely grip. She does not take actions during the fight unless Vladistone is moved away from her, at which point she will try to safely exit the area. If the heroes appeal to her to join the fight, she reluctantly agrees, but she keeps her distance.

Development

A few moments after the characters dispatch the last of the enemies, Salazar Vladistone briefly reappears. Read aloud:

With Salazar defeated, the Phantom Brigade begins to retreat, disappearing in the early light of dawn. All that remains of Inverness are burning, crumbling buildings. The cold wind swirls the ashe and cinders that fill the air.

As you survey the area, a dim form takes shape. It's Salazar Vladistone. His form even more ghostly and indistinct than before. He casts a gaze at his wife's gravestone and then back at you. Pointing his spectral sword at your group, he speaks in a voice that's scarcely a whisper.

"You shall regret this day. I shall be reunited with my wife. You and the rest of the living will suffer my pain." And with that, he fades away along with the rest of his troops.

After Salazar speaks, go to "Aftermath," page 35. If the characters try to attack him before he disappears, they find that he cannot be harmed, even by force attacks or attacks that target undead.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light. Although the buildings of Inverness continue to blaze brightly, the graveyard is a more secluded place.

Gravestones: The gravestones are difficult terrain. While standing in one of these squares, a living creature has vulnerable 2 psychic.

Shrubs: The foliage is difficult terrain.

Walls: The ruined walls of the keep are thick enough to climb. They are 10 feet tall and require a DC 12 Athletics check.

CHAPTER 3

This marks the beginning of the third chapter of *March of the Phantom Brigade*. Each character has had an extended rest and should have full hit points and healing surges, as well as 1 action point and access to his or her daily powers.

SESSION 9: ON THE WALLS

The final chapter of the season opens back where everything began: the dwarven town of Hammerfast. Two months have passed since the ghost commander Salazar Vladistone ordered the village of Inverness burned to the ground.

For the first month after Vladistone's defeat, the characters heard nothing from him. In recent weeks, though, the ghost has resurfaced, marching steadily toward the town of Hammerfast, where the heroes now find themselves. To start the session, read the following text aloud.

The dawn sun rises over your current guard post—the walls of Hammerfast. As the morning sun illuminates the fields outside Hammerfast, you gaze across a vast approaching army of ghosts.

Much has transpired since the burning of Inverness. Salazar Vladistone seems to have traveled through the Nentir Vale, gathering ghosts to his side. Many residents of the vale have fled at the approach of the army, but you stayed, determined to see through what began so many months ago.

Now, you fight alongside the inhabitants of the town, struggling against a foe that might well be unkillable.

Allow the players a moment to describe what their heroes have been doing in the intervening months. If any players are stumped and need suggestions, consider offering the following answers.

- ◆ Helping to bolster the defenses of Hammerfast.
- ◆ Assisting Faldyra in Hammerfast with research about the Phantom Brigade and Salazar Vladistone.
- ◆ Helping refugees rebuild a life in Hammerfast.
- ◆ Searching the Nentir Vale for signs of Vladistone, following rumors of his presence.

Vladistone Reappears

The session begins with the heroes and other brave soldiers on the walls of Hammerfast. Once the heroes have described their characters' last few months, a murmur passes among the troops, drawing all eyes out into the fields. Salazar Vladistone strides among the soldiers of his spectral legion, approaching the town. Read:

A flurry of words passes among the soldiers manning the walls with you. Several defenders point out into the fields beyond the town walls. There, a single specter emerges from the ranks of a ghostly army. It is none other than Salazar Vladistone.

The commander makes his way to the front of his legion and takes up a position much closer to the wall than the rest of his army. When he speaks, his words ring out unnaturally, like a clap of thunder.

"Hammerfast. Your walls spawned the corruption that fouled the grave of my love. Send out your Lady of Gold. Let the High Master pay the price for this transgression."

A murmur of concern—tinged with anger—flies through the soldiers stationed on the walls. No one offers an immediate reply. (Of course, the heroes are free to do so.) Just as the uncomfortable silence stretches to the breaking point, a young dwarf messenger approaches the heroes. He has come to fetch them to the Grand Library, where Faldyra has made a discovery regarding Salazar Vladistone.

The adventurers leave their posts and are replaced by several dwarf warriors that had been accompanying the messenger. As they do so, a shout echoes from the West Gate. A dwarf woman, whom the heroes recognize as sergeant of the guards, Thora Longhammer, calls out a defiant warning. If any of the heroes speak Dwarven, they understand her to say, "Go lie with the dead. Leave the living to walk over your grave." Thora sprinkles her words with a number of salty, difficult-to-translate Dwarven epithets.

This insolence sits poorly with Vladistone. The heroes know he does not respond kindly to anyone flouting his demands. Read:

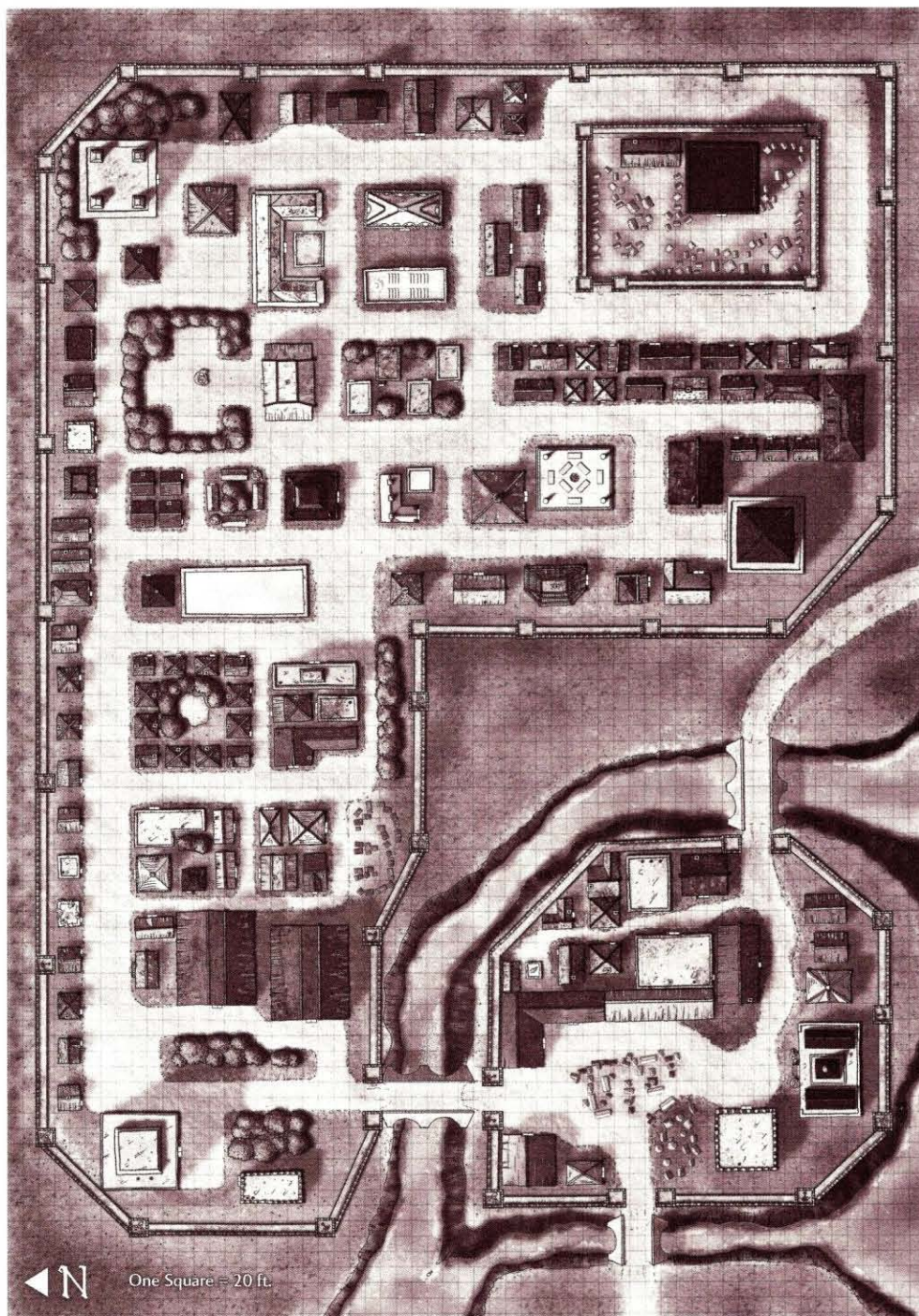
The visage of Salazar Vladistone's ghost twists into a mask of pure anger. With effort, he controls his rage. When he responds, it is with unnerving calm.

"I have warned you not to defy me." Vladistone's voice grinds like the movement of heavy stonework. "I have given you a chance to save yourselves by acceding to a simple and justified demand. Still, you refuse me foolishly and with unseemly coarseness. Now, you will all pay the price. I command the ghosts of the Nentir Vale . . . all of them."

A hush falls over Hammerfast as the defenders contemplate the full import of Vladistone's contention. After all, Hammerfast is a community filled with the dead.

Deep in the town inside the wall, the first screams begin. They grow steadily closer. Panic begins to spread among the soldiers on the walls.

At this point, the messenger prods the heroes. Whatever Faldyra has discovered could be crucial to avoiding the fate quickly descending on the dwarven town.



SESSION 9: ON THE WALLS

THE STREETS OF HAMMERFAST

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

Setup

3 dwarf spirits (D)
2 orc spirits (S)

As the heroes make their way to the Grand Library and Faldyra, they discover the source of the commotion in the streets of Hammerfast. Salazar Vladistone has exerted control over the ghosts that inhabit the town, disturbing the normal order of things. The spectral general has commanded the ghosts of dwarves and orcs to turn on the living inhabitants of the town—to either drive them out or kill them.



3 Dwarf Spirits (D) Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium shadow humanoid XP 150 each
HP 48; Bloodied 24 Initiative +4
AC 17 Fortitude 14 Reflex 16 Will 17 Perception +5
Speed 6; phasing Darkvision
Immune poison, disease

TRAITS

Insubstantial

The spirit takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force or radiant damage. When the spirit takes force or radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Stand the Ground

The spirit can move 1 square fewer than the effect specifies when subjected to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Steady-Footed

The spirit can make a saving throw to avoid falling prone when an attack would knock it prone.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Phantom Mace (force, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 force damage, and the spirit pushes the target 1 square.

⚔ Punishing Charge (force, weapon) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied

Effect: Before the attack, the spirit shifts up to its speed.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 4 force damage, and the spirit pushes the target 1 square.
Miss: Half damage.

MOVE ACTIONS

Defender's Charge ♦ At-Will

Effect: The spirit shifts up to half its speed, ignoring difficult terrain.

Str 14 (+3) Dex 12 (+2) Wis 18 (+5)
Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Dwarven

2 Orc Spirits (S) Level 3 Brute

Medium shadow humanoid XP 150 each
HP 56; Bloodied 28 Initiative +1
AC 15, Fortitude 17, Reflex 14, Will 14 Perception +2
Speed 6; phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, poison

TRAITS

Insubstantial

The spirit takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force or radiant damage. When the spirit takes force or radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Spectral Battleaxe (force, weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 3 force damage.

⚔ Vicious Blow (force, weapon) ♦ Encounter

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 3 force damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

⚔ Ghostly Defiance ♦ Encounter

Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the spirit bloodies it with an attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The spirit uses spectral battleaxe against the triggering enemy.

Str 18 (+5) Dex 11 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 10 (+1)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Giant

When you're ready to start the encounter, read:

As you wind your way through the streets of Hammerfast, the cacophony of battle grows louder with each step. You pass by Idara's Tower and close on the Grand Library. Suddenly, a group of ghosts passes right through the walls of a nearby building and spills out into the street. Setting their eyes upon you, they advance menacingly.

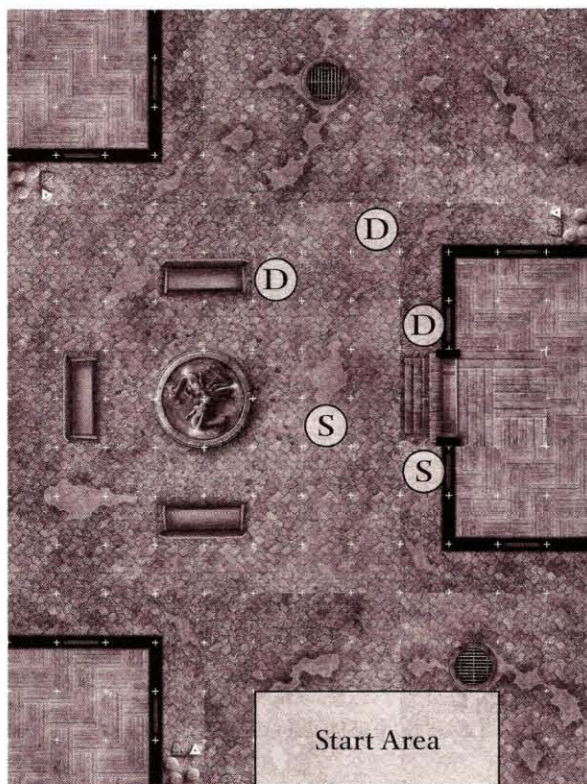
Any hero who succeeds on a DC 15 Religion check is able to discern that these ghosts are not acting of their own free will. It's likely that they are simply obeying commands forced upon them by Vladistone. The character understands that any adventurer who reduces one of the spirits to 0 hit points, but does not destroy it, can break Vladistone's control over it. Such a ghost is out of the fight—even spirits need time to recuperate after receiving a beating at the hands of the living—but it remains in Hammerfast and free of Vladistone's influence.

Tactics

Bent to Vladistone's will, the Hammerfast ghosts have little control over their actions. No real zeal invests their efforts. That said, these spirits were once attackers—or defenders—in the town and have significant combat experience. They use smart tactics when possible, but don't strike heroes while they are down. A ghost raising a weapon against a downed adventurer, then pausing and turning aside, could provide a clue that Vladistone's control over these spirits is not absolute.

Dwarf Spirits: The dwarf spirits are the remnants of loyal defenders that once protected the necropolis and each other from orc depredations. They are quick for dwarves, swarming to cover weak spots in their defenses. If the heroes manage to fell one of the dwarf spirits, the other two focus on the adventurer who made the incapacitating attack.

Orc Spirits: The orc spirits are less sophisticated in their tactics. When they see weakness, they consider little aside from striking and striking hard. Any time a hero is bloodied, they concentrate on that character. If no adventurers are bloodied, the orc spirits pick a single target and focus on that target to the exclusion of the others.



Features of the Area

Illumination: Bright light. The attack takes place outdoors during the daytime.

Barrels and Crates: These containers are empty, but their squares are difficult terrain.

Benches: These squares are difficult terrain.

Fountain: The fountain is difficult terrain. A creature that is forced to move into the fountain must succeed on a saving throw or fall prone.

Statue: Moving from the street onto the statue costs 1 extra square of movement. The statue can also provide partial cover.

Development

Although the heroes have dealt with a small group of suborned spirits in Hammerfast, other ghostly squads continue to maraud through the town. If the heroes are to have any hope of stopping Vladistone and ending his control over the ghosts of the Nentir Vale, they must reach Faldyra and learn what she has uncovered at the Grand Library.

SESSION 10: THE GREAT LIBRARY

The heroes finally make their way to the Grand Library of Hammerfast. There lies hope, in the form of knowledge that Faldyra has uncovered.

At the library, the heroes are met by Head Librarian Alzar Scrollkeeper, a choleric old dwarf with a ruddy complexion. Displaying little patience for questions, he escorts them past rows upon rows of bookshelves, each one stocked with a wide array of mismatched books and scrolls. In time, they arrive at a chamber deep within the structure. The adventurers find Faldyra surrounded by scrolls and tomes. Clearly, she has been hard at work for some time now. Although haggard and exhausted, she has a smile for the heroes when they enter. Read:

Deep within the Grand Library, in a chamber piled with books and scrolls, Faldyra leans heavily on a table, studying a massive and extremely ancient tome. Scattered across the table are several smaller books, each open to a page in the middle.

The elf wizard brushes her hair out of her face and lets out a heavy breath that raises a small cloud of dust from the books in front of her.

"I have found something. It seems that Salazar Vladistone is a great hero."

Although Faldyra's choice of words is somewhat shocking, she is essentially correct. Through roleplaying or recital, Faldyra has the following information to share.

Vladistone's Past

- ◆ Salazar Vladistone was once an adventurer in the Nentir Vale. He and his companions, known as the Silver Company, were famous explorers and warriors who operated near Hammerfast roughly sixty years ago.
- ◆ Vladistone's wife, Oldivya, was a member of the adventuring company. She was a devoted cleric of the Raven Queen, contributing healing and divine counsel to the Silver Company.

The Silver Company

- ◆ The Silver Company was famous for exploring the Ghost Tower of Inverness around the time it first appeared in the Nentir Vale. In fact, some of the early documents that Faldyra studied about Castle Inverness were written by the scholar who recounted this exploration.

- ◆ The chronicles provide some detail about what happened inside the Ghost Tower. According to the text, Oldivya died on the mission. The company buried her at Castle Inverness so her spirit could continue to guard the location or pass on to be with the Raven Queen, as the god willed it.
- ◆ The Silver Company continued to adventure throughout the vale for several years thereafter. Salazar began to take more and more risks. When challenged, he shrugged and claimed that his risks produced results. No matter; in the end, he would join Oldivya forever in the afterlife.
- ◆ The final report of Vladistone's adventuring career starts with the Silver Company's investigation of a dwarven monastery that had been infiltrated by duergar. As usual, the Silver Company successfully cleared the area of evil. Salazar Vladistone, however, did not share in their victory. He sacrificed himself to save the other members of the group. Vladistone's remains were cremated.

The Arrow of Time

Faldyra tells the companions that she believes the key to stopping Vladistone rests with an item that the Silver Company removed from the Ghost Tower of Inverness. When Faldyra finishes telling the party about the Silver Company, read:

Faldyra clears a space on the cluttered table, then walks over to the far wall and retrieves an ancient text. As she flips through the pages, you see various relics and artifacts documented in detail. She eventually stops on a page that depicts an arrow.

"The dwarves call this item the arrow of time. It was recovered from the Ghost Tower of Inverness by the Silver Company during their expedition. Shortly after that, the object seems to have disappeared."

Faldyra tells the characters that the chronicles speak only in the vaguest terms about Vladistone's death. Given highly detailed recitations of other adventures, of earlier aspects of the monastery mission, and of the deaths of other company members both before and after Vladistone's sacrifice, such a lack of specifics is odd. She believes that the Silver Company might have left the arrow with Vladistone's remains, intending to someday return and claim it.

When the characters ask for more information about the arrow, she says:

"As far as I can tell, the arrow's properties are completely untested. What we do know is that the arrow of time does not just slay an enemy. When the arrow is about to strike its target, powerful chronomantic enchantments embedded in the surface of the arrow send it back in time to a crucial

moment in the target's life. At that point in time, the arrow pierces the target's essence, destroying it. The vicious weapon not only destroys the creature, but it erases it from time, undoing much of what was done."

The arrow of time is clearly a dangerous weapon. Faldyra tries to impress upon the heroes the gravity of the item's power. From what she has been able to piece together, there are a few conditions of the arrow's use. First, the weapon can be used only against a living creature whose life force is weak enough to be disrupted by the weapon's magic—in game terms, it must be used against a living creature with fewer than one-quarter of its total hit points remaining.

At this, a character is likely to observe that the arrow would be of no use against Vladistone then. Faldyra nods and says:

"As I see it, you have two options ahead of you. You can use the arrow to kill whatever slew Vladistone, destroying that creature in the past before it killed Vladistone and allowing him to die in his natural course. Or, give the arrow to Vladistone in the hope that returning the object to the Ghost Tower will remove the tower from Inverness and allow him to commune with his wife again. Neither option offers any guarantees."

Faldyra can tell the heroes a little about the final resting place of Salazar Vladistone. She has found records concerning a duergar infestation and a series of unnatural earthquakes. These records indicate that the duergar problem was never solved, but rather, the earthquakes stopped and the duergar were not seen again. No one ever explored the monastery. Instead, the notes indicate that it was sealed and the path blocked off from further use.

The elf wizard is convinced that the abandoned monastery contains the key to stopping Salazar Vladistone. Retrieving the arrow from the site of the ghost's death might be the only way to stop Vladistone's spirit and his army of ghosts.

Reward

For speaking with Faldyra and learning about the arrow of time, the party gains an additional 600 to 800 XP at the end of the session.

In addition, Faldyra provides the characters with a longbow to use to fire the arrow, should they choose that alternative, and she gives them a piece of treasure. Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what the heroes receive.

A Warning from Vladistone

After Faldyra has spoken with the heroes, she provides them with directions to the monastery, the password they must speak at the doors to enter, signed chits to requisition fresh horses, and the paperwork necessary to get them past the guards on the path to the building.

The streets are still in chaos when they leave the Great Library. Most of Hammerfast's citizens have fled or sought refuge in parts of the town protected against the ghosts.

As the heroes depart the town for the monastery, Vladistone spots them and gives chase. They can keep ahead of the ghosts—just barely. The journey takes several hours. They cross rough roads and winding paths deep in the heart of the Dawnforge Mountains. Once on the path that leads to the monastery, the adventurers show their papers to the guards and pass without incident.

When the heroes arrive at the monastery, read:

The rough path you have been following ends in a set of marble stairs and an elaborately carved doorway. Two stone doors block the entrance of the monastery.

This area has clearly been abandoned for a long time. The stonework, once beautiful, has eroded. Rock slides have filled in part of the path.

Give the heroes a moment to take in the sight of the monastery before they are visited by a familiar face. Read:

The peace on the mountainside lasts only a moment before a disturbance draws your attention to something behind you. Traversing the path in your wake are three ghostly soldiers mounted on spectral horses. The center rider is none other than Salazar Vladistone, who brings his procession to a halt with a raised hand.

"Were I you, I would proceed no farther," the ghost's voice grates. "Inside you will find more than you bargained for. Trust me, I know."

Vladistone is not here to taunt the adventurers. He is genuinely curious about what they are doing. Still, he will not draw closer to the monastery. No matter how much the heroes might goad him, he does not budge from his spot. He waits outside as they enter, trying only to warn them again of the danger lying inside. What should frighten the characters most is that the ghost seems genuinely concerned for their safety . . . and his warnings ring true.

GUARDIANS OF THE MOUNTAIN

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

Setup

- 1 blazing skeleton (S)
- 2 ghouls (G)
- 2 flesh-crazed zombies (Z)

After the heroes speak the password at the entrance to the monastery, the stone doors part with a scrapping sound. The first chamber beckons.

When you're ready to start, read:

The light from outside partially illuminates the chamber beyond the entrance of the monastery. Thick dust hangs in the air, and everything inside is covered with a fine layer of grit. The floor is tiled mosaic, damaged but still clearly depicting a struggle between a dwarf avatar of Moradin and the forces of Gruumsh. The room is nearly empty of accoutrements, as one would expect from an austere monastery.

2 Flesh-Crazed Zombies (Z)	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 175 each
HP 55; Bloodied 27	Initiative +6
AC 18, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +3
Speed 6 (8 when charging)	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
TRAITS	
Flesh-Crazed Charge	
While the zombie is charging, its movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
Zombie Weakness	
A critical hit automatically reduces the zombie to 0 hit points.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Club ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, or 2d8 + 6 if the zombie charged the target.	
⚔ Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the zombie's next turn.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Deathless Hunger ♦ Encounter	
Trigger: The zombie is reduced to 0 hit points, but not by a critical hit.	
Effect (No Action): Roll a d20. On a 15 or higher, the zombie is instead reduced to 1 hit point.	
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 1 (-3)
	Wis 13 (+3)
	Cha 3 (-2)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —
Equipment club	

Unless the heroes all have low-light vision, they likely light up torches, engage sunrods, or cast spells to provide illumination as they enter. When the adventurers bring light into the room, or when all the characters are fully inside the monastery, they realize that they are not alone.

When either of those events occurs, read:

Shambling out of the darkness are the rotting bodies of duergar, flesh still hanging on their bones. As they shuffle forward, you are mesmerized momentarily by the gleam of hunger in their eyes. Suddenly, blue flames spring up behind them, revealing several other blazing duergar skeletons.

Blazing Skeleton (S)	Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural animate (undead)	XP 150
HP 41; Bloodied 20	Initiative +5
AC 17, Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +3
Speed 6	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 fire, 10 necrotic;	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
☀ Fiery Aura (fire) ♦ Aura 1	
Any creature that ends its turn in the aura takes 3 fire damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Blazing Claw (fire) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 3 fire damage (save ends).	
☀ Flame Orb (fire) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 3 fire damage (save ends).	
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5)
Con 17 (+4)	Int 4 (-2)
	Cha 6 (-1)
Alignment unaligned	Languages —
2 Ghouls (G)	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 150 each
HP 47; Bloodied 23	Initiative +7
AC 19, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 14	Perception +1
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic	
TRAITS	
Weakened Paralysis	
Whenever the ghoul takes radiant damage, one creature immobilized or stunned by the ghoul can make a saving throw against one of those effects.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Claws ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⚔ Ghoulish Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 19 (+5)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 11 (+1)
	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Common

Tactics

The monsters are the undead remnants of the duergar that invaded sixty years ago—the same duergar that the Silver Company vanquished. These particular undead had little love for the living when they were created. Sixty years of being trapped in the monastery has only fueled their aggression.

Skeleton: The skeleton uses the ghouls as a barrier against the heroes, preferring to stay back and make attacks from a distance. If any heroes get too close, it tries to retreat. If push comes to shove, it hates the living enough to engage in melee, even at the expense of its own health.

Ghouls: The ghouls' hunger for the flesh of the living is all-consuming. They retain enough of their memories of life as duergar to know that they need to cooperate with the blazing skeleton, however. They try to make themselves the front line of the battle whenever possible.

Zombies: The zombies mindlessly attack the nearest foes, exhibiting no tactics. They do tend to prefer bloodied creatures over unbloodied ones.

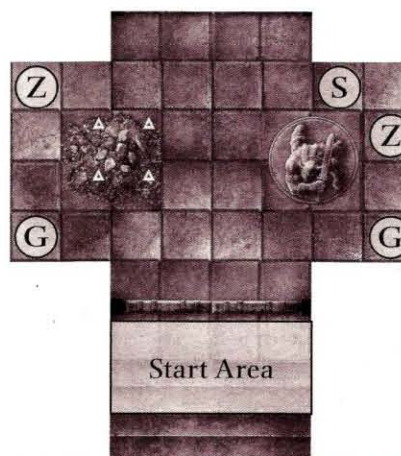
Features of the Area

Illumination: Dim light. The interior of the monastery has no lighting of its own, but the daylight coming in through the doors provides some illumination. The blazing skeleton's aura creates bright light in squares adjacent to it.

Slopes: These squares are difficult terrain. Any creature that enters one of these squares must succeed on a DC 13 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Statue: The statue can provide partial cover to creatures.

Rubble: The smashed statue and rocky earth are difficult terrain.



Development

Once the undead remnants of the duergar are destroyed, the heroes can move deeper into the complex. Fortunately for them, magic issuing from deeper within the monastery keeps other enemies at bay. The heroes should be able to take a short rest with no difficulties before advancing farther into the dungeon.



SESSION 11: IN THE MONASTERY

The heroes have entered the main building of the abandoned dwarven monastery with the goal of exploring the ruins and finding something to guide them in their struggle against Salazar Vladistone.

As they explore the various areas throughout the monastery, they also learn more about the Silver Company and the duergar, as well as the reason why Salazar Vladistone was killed. Each section of the ruin is described below with an accompanying ghostly vision of the past—a result of the arrow of time's presence. The visions are presented in chronological order here, but the heroes might explore the rooms in any order. The players might need some help piecing together the story to better understand what they have witnessed and what is required of them.

The Long Corridor

Beyond the antechamber, a long corridor stretches out, dark and foreboding, before the heroes. Read:

This long stone corridor cuts through the center of the monastery. Several doorless alcoves on either side lead to other rooms. As you step into the corridor, it pulses with arcane energy and a wave of magic washes over the hallway.

When the pulse passes, the hallway has changed. Once dingy and dark, the corridor is now well maintained and illuminated by torches in sconces. Seconds later, an illusory group of adventurers, among them Salazar Vladistone, stumble down the hallway toward you. Their faces and backward glances indicate that some terrible threat pursues them.

One of them, an eladrin warrior in resplendent armor, shakes his head as the adventurers catch their breath. "We should not have been surprised that the duergar brought dangerous help. Let us recover ourselves, then proceed with caution."

An instant later, the vision fades. Only the empty, dark corridor remains.

What the heroes have just seen is the first of many visions that await them during their exploration of the monastery. They are likely to surmise that the vision involves the members of the Silver Company, including Salazar Vladistone. A character who makes a DC 22 History check can confirm that they have just seen Vladistone, Alore Sirothien (the eladrin knight), Milligan Three-Toes (a gnome illusionist), and Tomas Alderson (a human wizard).

Otherwise, the corridor holds no secrets. It provides access to the sleeping quarters, the stairs, and the meditation room. When the characters inspect the door to the meditation room and the stairs, they find it is sealed

with an impassable stasis field. A character can make a DC 13 Arcana check to deduce that the presence of living creatures in the monastery seems to have triggered the residual magic of the arrow of time, which is competing with some kind of ritual that created a temporal stasis. That character can discern that if they are to pass the magical barriers, they need to explore the area and disrupt the stasis by making the events of the past to play out.

The Sleeping Quarters

Dwarf monks once rested peacefully between meditation periods in this chamber. The remnants of several wooden bunks stand, remarkably sturdy for having not been maintained in the last sixty years. As soon as the characters enter the room, read:

A familiar magical pulse washes over you and your surroundings, and the room is transformed once again. An image of the sleeping quarters as they must have been some sixty years ago appears. Gathered in the chamber are the four adventurers you saw in your vision in the hallway, recuperating and binding their wounds.

The gnome illusionist finishes bandaging her wounded hand, then hops to her feet. She speaks in unusually serious and grim tones for a gnome.

"Atherimos is not too dangerous on his own. This deep into the mountains, however, his death throes could collapse every passage from here to the town. We cannot win this battle, not without dying ourselves and killing who knows how many others in Hammerfast."

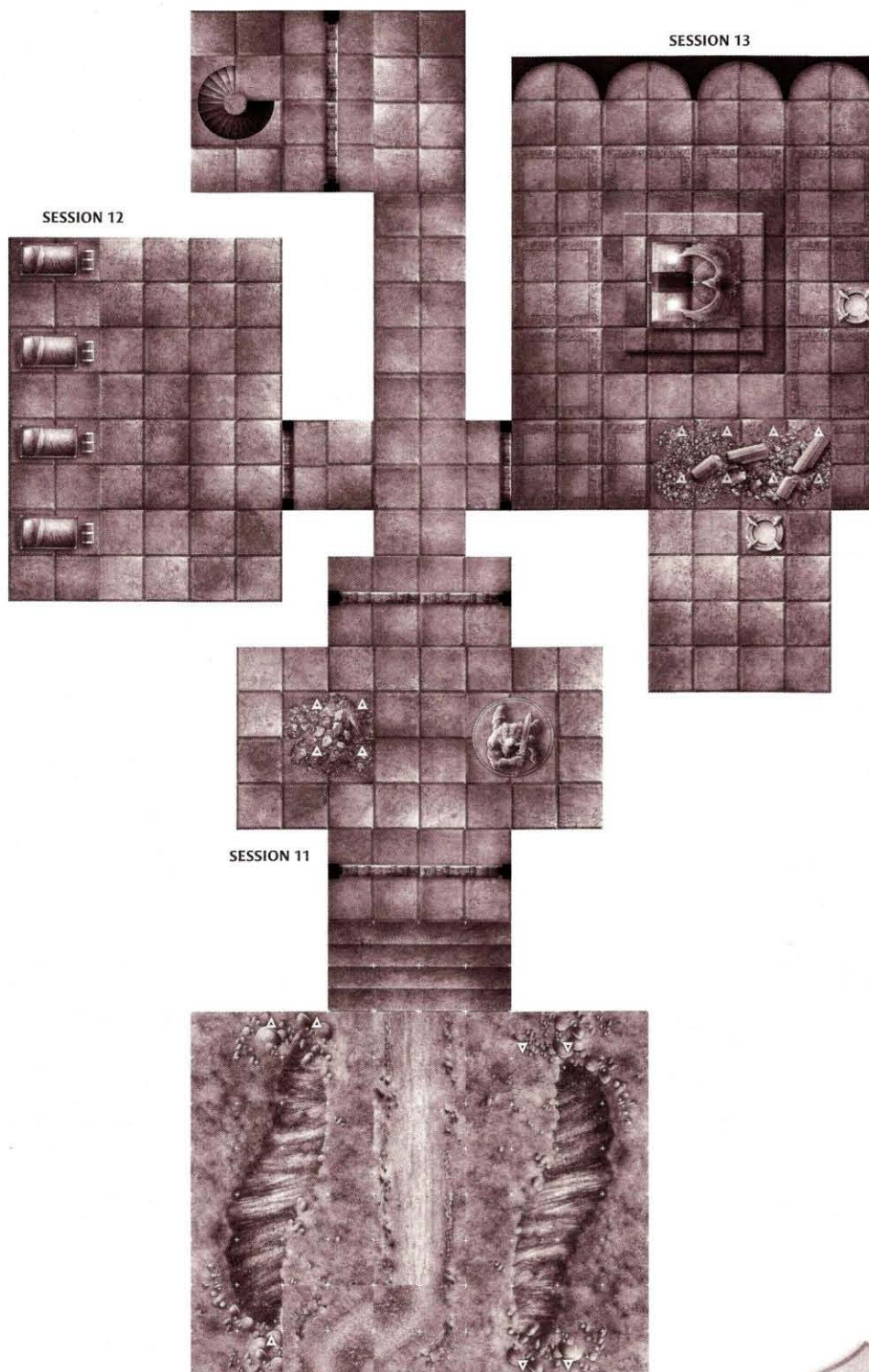
After the vision fades, a character can make a DC 15 History check to recall that Atherimos was the name of a catastrophic dragon (specifically, an earthquake dragon) that plagued the Nentir Vale for over a century before vanishing without a trace roughly sixty years ago. Some scholars suspect that the Silver Company dealt with Atherimos, but that supposition had remained unconfirmed—until now.

Additionally, a hero can make a DC 15 Arcana check to know that earthquake dragons such as Atherimos are extremely dangerous in unstable or mountainous regions. The presence of an earthquake dragon in the Dawnforge Mountains presents a dire threat to any person or any structure in a miles-wide radius.

Several ghouls and a carrion crawler have taken up residence in the sleeping quarters. When the characters trigger the vision, the creatures are disturbed. Go to **The Sleeping Quarters**, page 48.

Reward

For exploring the area, the party gains an additional 600 to 800 XP at the end of the session.



SESSION 11: IN THE MONASTERY

THE SLEEPING QUARTERS

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

Setup

1 carrion crawler scuttler (C)

2 ghouls (G)

2 ravenous ghouls (R)

Following their vision, the heroes have a few moments to explore the room and search for a way to break the barriers on the meditation room and the stairs.

When you're ready to begin, read:

The air seems to be charged with electricity for a moment as your vision fades. Motes of dust that once hung suspended in the air by some strange stasis field now drift aimlessly, the spell seemingly broken. Four beds line the far wall of this room, and each one is occupied by a desiccated duergar corpse.

In the past, some of the resident duergar rested here to recover from wounds caused by the Silver Company. Before they could heal, the magic of the Time Trap ritual (explained in Session 12) took hold. However, the magic of the stasis field was weak in this area of the monastery, and the living duergar were imperfectly preserved. Over the last sixty years, their bodies have wasted away while remaining trapped in the chamber, causing them to become ghouls. A carrion crawler has also burrowed into the room, through a narrow tunnel beneath the bed. At the prospect of consuming living flesh, its long sinewy form squeezes out of the burrow, joining the ghouls in trying to bring down the adventurers.

2 Ravenous Ghouls (R)	Level 3 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 150 each
HP 56; Bloodied 28	Initiative +3
AC 15, Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +0
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Claws ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage.	
⚔ Ravenous Bite ♦ Recharge [5], [11]	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 14 (+3)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 8 (+0)
	Wis 8 (+0)
	Cha 13 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common	

After the adventurers have a few moments to explore the room, read:

The duergar begin to stir, and only then do you see that they seem to be pale, ghoulish facsimiles of their former selves. They rise and begin to move toward you with hunger. Disturbed by the movement, a centipede-like form stirs near one of the beds.

2 Ghouls (G)	Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 150 each
HP 47; Bloodied 23	Initiative +7
AC 19, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 14	Perception +1
Speed 8, climb 4	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic	
TRAITS	
Weakened Paralysis	
Whenever the ghoul takes radiant damage, one creature immobilized or stunned by the ghoul can make a saving throw against one of those effects.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Claws ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
⚔ Ghoulish Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one immobilized, restrained, stunned, or unconscious creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 19 (+5)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 11 (+1)
	Cha 12 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common	

Carrion Crawler Scuttler (C)	Level 3 Skirmisher
Large aberrant beast	XP 150
HP 51; Bloodied 25	Initiative +5
AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 15	Perception +3
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb)	Darkvision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Bite ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, or 2d8 + 6 against a dazed target.	
⚔ Tentacles ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude, or +8 vs. Fortitude against a prone target	
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends). The carrion crawler shifts up to its speed, pulling the target with it.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
⚔ Unsettling Scuttle ♦ At-Will	
Effect: The carrion crawler shifts up to its speed. It can move through enemy spaces and climb during the shift. Each time the carrion crawler enters an enemy space for the first time during this movement, it makes the following attack against that enemy.	
Attack: Melee 0; +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target falls prone.	
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 2 (-2)
	Wis 12 (+3)
	Cha 14 (+4)
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

Tactics

The ghouls that have been trapped in this chamber for so long were once duergar, but decades of slowly dying of hunger and thirst have left them with nothing but a supernatural need to eat. These ghouls are driven by pure hunger, and are almost zombielike in their unthinking desire to eat the flesh of the heroes.

Ghouls: The ghouls might voluntarily choose to delay early in the encounter, because they want to let the ravenous ghouls swarm the heroes first so they can step in and attack while leaving the ravenous ghouls as the heroes' primary targets. Additionally, these ghouls tend to target the heroes who have come farthest into the room, to keep them from escaping while they are torn apart.

Ravenous Ghouls: The ravenous ghouls are not so cautious. Each ravenous ghoul tries to single out a hero to feast upon, though if a hero has been immobilized by one of the other ghouls it might switch its attacks to that character.

Carrion Crawler: The carrion crawler is motivated by the prospect of fresh food. It attacks the nearest characters and tries to take advantage of foes distracted by the ghouls.

Features of the Area

Illumination: The interior of the monastery is dark. The characters' light sources, if any, provide the only illumination.

Beds: The beds in this chamber are well-preserved as a result of the stasis field. Each bed is difficult terrain for a creature moving into its space. As a minor action, a creature can turn over a bed, allowing it to provide partial cover.

Treasure

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Perception check to search the area finds a chest under one of the beds. The chest is locked and can be opened with a DC 13 Thievery check or with a DC 19 Strength check.

For discovering the chest and opening it, the party gains an additional 250 XP at the end of the session. Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what the heroes find.



Development

When the heroes have dealt with the ghouls within this chamber, they have a chance to see the effect their appearance has had on the imperfect magic of the Time Trap ritual. A character can make a DC 13 Arcana check to determine that the ghouls were created by the decaying stasis field resulting from the Time Trap. If the Arcana check is 19 or higher, a character can discern that the party's appearance must be causing the stasis field of the Time Trap ritual to more quickly corrode.

When the heroes leave this chamber, they find that the stasis created by the ritual has faded from the doors of the meditation chamber across the hall, allowing them to enter that room, which they can do in the next session. It should be easy for the heroes to surmise that their continued exploration of the monastery will further weaken the spell placed upon the building.

SESSION 12: MEDITATION

Following their exploration of the sleeping quarters, the heroes should now be aware that the magical stasis that has gripped the monastery is beginning to crumble the more the heroes explore. The magic sealing the door to the meditation chamber is now open. The heroes have a chance to explore that chamber, as well as the stairwell beyond, and uncover a way to proceed further in their search for the arrow of time.

The Meditation Room

This room was once a place of peace and tranquility where the dwarves could spend their days seeking enlightenment. Judging from its current state, however, it was the site of a deadly battle. Read:

As you enter this meditation chamber, you are startled to see several duergar near the back of the room. You quickly realize that they are not about to join battle, however, because the monsters are frozen in time, unaffected by the ravages of the last sixty years.

There is another pulse of magical energy, and the scene before you transforms. The human wizard from the previous vision stands before his companions as though lecturing.

"I have prepared a ritual that will allow us to subdue Aetherimos and the duergar. When it triggers, it will lay an enchantment over much—though not all—of the monastery and the caves below. It will freeze in time everything caught in it. Our enemies will not age or die, but neither will they be able to affect the world around them."

When the vision fades, the heroes discover that their presence has disrupted a portion of the ritual that froze the duergar in place. They are now released—and ready to attack the heroes. Go to **Opening in the Trap**, page 51.

The Stairs

Once the heroes have released the sleeping quarters and meditation room from the hold of the Time Trap ritual, they are free to pass through the magical barrier that previously barred entrance to the stairs. The stone steps descend down to rough-hewn areas more like natural caves. Again, there is a pulse of magic that provides the heroes with a vision.

The dingy stairs waver and are replaced by a well-lit stairwell, heading down into the caves. At the top of the stairs, an image of a living Salazar Vladistone claps his eladrin companion on the shoulder.

"Go," Vladistone says. "I will stay behind and occupy the dragon."

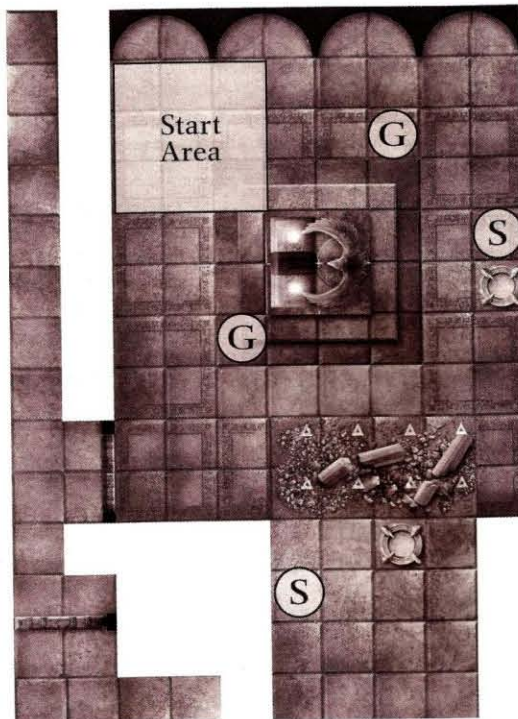
The eladrin knight frowns and shakes his head. "That is suicide, and you know it."

Vladistone shrugs and unsheathes his sword. "Perhaps. It has been too long since I saw my Oldiyya. Take the others and get out before Tomas's time trap is sprung. By the time Acherimos is done with me, it will be too late for the monster to escape."

"At least take the arrow of time with you, then," says the eladrin. "Perhaps with it, you can find a way to survive."

The adventurers have gained the final piece of the puzzle: the knowledge that Vladistone died to save his allies and ensure that Actherimos and the duergar were caught in the Time Trap.

More important, knowing how Vladistone died gives the adventurers another chance to consider how they want to use the *arrow of time*—to destroy Vladistone, or to try to bargain with him. The heroes should now realize that the *arrow of time* can be used to alter the course of history. If Actherimos still lies suspended by magic in the caves below the monastery, the arrow could be used to slay the dragon in the past, setting off a chain of events that would result in Vladistone never having been killed by the dragon, and thus never having become a bitter ghost of the Nentir Vale. The party must now descend into the caves under the monastery, recover the *arrow of time*, and defeat Actherimos.



OPENING IN THE TRAP

Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

Setup

2 duergar guards (G)

2 duergar scouts (S)

In the meditation chamber of the monastery, the magical pulse disturbs a section of the Time Trap set by Tomas Alderson sixty years ago. Four duergar, all of whom have no concept of how much time has passed, are released.

When the heroes have seen the vision in the meditation chamber, read:

As the vision fades and is replaced once more by the dingy, long-untouched monastery, something moves ahead of you. The duergar, which were frozen in time before the vision played out, now move around and stagger a bit. They look briefly disoriented, but then quickly turn toward you, weapons at the ready.

Features of the Area

Illumination: Like the rest of the monastery, this area is lit only by the heroes' light sources.

Altar: This altar was once dedicated to Moradin. The statue portion of the altar is blocking terrain. The rest of the altar is difficult terrain. A dwarf (other than a duergar) gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls while on or adjacent to the altar.

Rubble: Some of the ceiling of the cavern has collapsed here, creating difficult terrain.

Vessels: These might have once contained water. Now they are empty. They are difficult terrain.

Tactics

The duergar are brutal and savage. For them, no time has passed since the Silver Company was in the monastery. The heroes before them might look different, but they are invaders nonetheless.

Guards: The guards are aggressive warriors that move up and engage the heroes face to face. Each guard tries to lock down a different hero.

Scouts: The scouts are masters of stealth and invisibility magic. They want to stay on the fringes of the battlefield so that they can safely become invisible, hide from the heroes, and then leap out and attack.

Treasure

A character who succeeds on a DC 19 Perception check to search the area finds a cache in the altar. For discovering the cache, the party gains an additional 250 XP at the end of the session. Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what the heroes find.

2 Duergar Guards (G)

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

HP 58; Bloodied 29
AC 20, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 15
Speed 5

Resist 5 fire, 5 poison

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Warhammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage.

Effect: The duergar guard marks the target until the end of the target's next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS

🔥 Infernal Anger (fire) ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞

Effect: Until the start of the guard's next turn, its melee attacks deal 4 extra fire damage, and if an enemy adjacent to the guard moves, the guard can shift 1 square as an immediate reaction.

☠ Infernal Quills (poison) ♦ Encounter

Attack: Ranged 3 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).

Skills Dungeoneering +9

Str 14 (+4) Dex 15 (+4) Wis 15 (+4)

Con 18 (+6) Int 10 (+2) Cha 8 (+1)

Alignment evil Languages Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven

Equipment chainmail, warhammer

2 Duergar Scouts (S)

Medium natural humanoid, dwarf

HP 48; Bloodied 24
AC 18, Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 16
Speed 5

Resist 5 fire, 5 poison

TRAITS

Shadow Attack

The duergar scout's attacks deal 4d6 extra damage when the scout hits a target that cannot see it.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⚔ Warhammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d10 + 4 damage.

🏹 Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.

👁 Underdark Sneak ♦ At-Will

Effect: The scout becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it hits or misses with an attack.

MINOR ACTIONS

☠ Infernal Quills (poison) ♦ Encounter

Attack: Ranged 3 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends both).

Skills Dungeoneering +9, Stealth +9

Str 13 (+3) Dex 15 (+4) Wis 14 (+4)

Con 18 (+6) Int 10 (+2) Cha 8 (+1)

Alignment evil Languages Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven

Equipment chainmail, warhammer, crossbow

Development

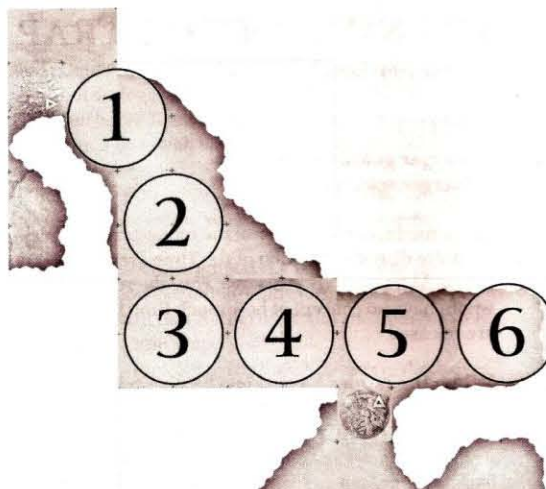
With the enemies in this chamber dispatched, the heroes can continue their exploration of the upstairs area. Only when they have completed it should they descend to the caves below the monastery.

SESSION 13: THE ARROW OF TIME

Descending into the caves beneath the monastery, the heroes see more signs of time distortion that must be the result of the Time Trap ritual performed by the Silver Company. Read:

The stairs lead down into the rough-hewn rock of a natural cave system. Deep in the mountain here, the chill of winter grips the caves. Ice clings to the walls and floor, making parts of the area treacherous merely to walk through.

Cave-In	Level 3 Elite Hazard
Object	XP 600
Detect Perception DC 15	Initiative see multiple turns
HP –	
AC –, Fortitude –, Reflex –, Will –	
Immune damage, forced movement, all conditions	
TRAITS	
Multiple Turns	
The cave-in hazard acts three times, on initiative 20, 15, and 10. The hazard takes a turn on each of those initiative counts. On an initiative count of 15, the cave-in uses <i>choking dust</i> .	
Unstable Terrain	
Creatures can enter the space of the cave-in, but the squares are difficult terrain. When a creature ends a move action in the cave-in's space, that creature must make a saving throw. On a failure, it falls prone.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
Attack ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Roll a d6 twice. The cave-in attacks creatures in each of the two spaces corresponding to the roll. See the tactical map for which squares correspond to which numbers.	
Attack: Melee 0 (all creatures in the corresponding space); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is restrained (save ends)	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Choking Dust ♦ At-Will (1/round; see multiple turns)	
Attack: Close burst special (all creatures in the entire cave-in or within 2 squares of it); +7 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends). If the target already has ongoing damage, that damage increases by 5.	
COUNTERMEASURES	
♦ Open an Entrance: Athletics DC 13. Success: One creature adjacent to the character performing the check can slide 1 square.	
♦ Struggle: Endurance or Acrobatics DC 13. Success: The character performing the check can make a saving throw against the slowed or immobilized condition.	
♦ Aid Breathing: Heal DC 13. Success: The character performing the check or a character adjacent to him or her can make a saving throw against ongoing damage.	
♦ Predict: Dungeoneering DC 13. Success: The character and his or her allies gain a +2 bonus to all defenses until the end of the next turn of the character performing the check.	



Throughout this area, signs of battle remain undiminished. The adventurers might find a dead duergar, its body freshly slashed with sword marks. Elsewhere, they see decades-old bloodstains, still slick and dripping. As the heroes pass by each of these places, a magical pulse releases the scene from its time stasis.

The disruption of the Time Trap ritual is harmless until the heroes reach a chamber where the earthquake dragon's power caused damage. When the heroes enter the chamber just before the one where Actherimos is imprisoned, read:

Moving through the underground caverns beneath the monastery, you come to a massive open room. This chamber seems empty at first, but as you pass through it, you notice rocks, pebbles, and vertical lines of dirt hanging in the air. The realization dawns on you that the debris remains suspended in the air because some tremor must have knocked it loose just before the Time Trap was triggered.

At this point, the pulse of magic triggered by the characters' presence undoes the Time Trap. This event places the heroes in the middle of a dangerous hazard—an ongoing cave-in. The cave-in hazard consists of six 2-by-2-square spaces, as shown on the accompanying map.

When the heroes reach the chamber where the dragon Actherimos is imprisoned in the Time Trap ritual, the cave-in ceases, and they have a few moments to recover. Read:

The icy chamber ahead holds the great earthquake dragon, Actherimos, and several of his duergar supplicants, all suspended in time by the Time Trap. The magic holding them in time seems to be fading. It looks as though you have a few minutes to rest before the ritual wears off entirely. The slightest disturbance to the room could speed up the dragon's release.



The characters will probably choose to rest. In the event they attack the dragon or try to poke around the room, describe how the magical stasis on the creatures seems to fade more hastily. The creatures in the room cannot be hurt until the ritual ends.

The *arrow of time* is clutched in the hand of the corpse of Vladistone, next to Actherimos. Remind the heroes, if necessary, that their objective is to obtain the arrow. They can then choose either to kill Actherimos with it (once the dragon has one-quarter or fewer of its hit points remaining), or offer it to Salazar Vladistone.

When the ritual ends, go to **Slaying the Slayer**, page 54.

Treasure

A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Perception check to search the rubble after the encounter finds the skeleton of a former duergar commander. The duergar commander has a piece of equipment that seems to have survived the devastation.

For discovering the skeleton, the party gains an additional 250 XP at the end of the session. Roll once on the Treasure Table to determine what the heroes find.

Concluding the Adventure

If the heroes use the *arrow of time*, they return to Hammerfast to find that the inhabitants have no idea that anything strange has transpired. Thanks to the *arrow of time*, the citizens have no knowledge of Vladistone, the Phantom Brigade, or any of the events the heroes have experienced during the adventure. Faldyra retains her full memory of both the original timeline and what has transpired in this one—a result of her study of the *arrow of time* and her skill with arcane magic.

If the heroes give Salazar Vladistone the *arrow of time*, he is true to his word. He returns to Inverness with the relic. The tower allows him to enter it and return the arrow, at which point, it disappears and allows him to see his wife again.

Although the Nentir Vale has been spared the ravages of the Phantom Brigade, a worse threat looms on the horizon, in the form of the Abyssal plague. You can read more about the Abyssal plague in a series of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS novels beginning with *The Temple of Yellow Skulls* by Don Bassingthwaite.

The next season of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS starts next week, but you can always keep the adventure alive. Check out other products that explore the Nentir Vale, including *Hammerfast*™, the *Dungeon Master's Kit*™, and *Monster Vault*™: *Threats to the Nentir Vale*™ (available June 2011).

SLAYING THE SLAYER

Encounter Level 2 or 3 (702 or 1,002 XP)

Setup

8 duergar thugs (T)

Atherimos (A)

Salazar Vladistone (see "Events in Battle")

When you're ready to start the encounter, read:

You witness the same pulse of magic you've seen before, and with that, the room bursts into activity. The dragon and the duergar seem disoriented for a second, but rally quickly and prepare for battle.

As Atherimos wheels about, you can see the mangled corpse of Salazar Vladistone beside it. Clutched in the corpse's hand is the arrow of time.

Tactics

The dragon is confident and content to let the duergar do his dirty work.

Duergar Thugs: The thugs are selfless soldiers devoted to Atherimos. They hurl themselves recklessly toward the heroes, heedless of damage.

Atherimos: Atherimos thinks it only appropriate that his supplicants charge forward and interpose themselves between him and the heroes. The dragon hangs back while he builds up his aura.

Salazar Vladistone: If Salazar joins the fight (see "Events in Battle"), he focuses on taking down the character who has the arrow of time. If that character falls unconscious, he takes the arrow and leaves the heroes to their fate.

8 Duergar Thugs (T)		Level 4 Minion Brute	
Medium natural humanoid		XP 44 each	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		Initiative +4	
AC 16, Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 14		Perception +4	
Speed 5		Darkvision	
Resist 5 fire, 5 poison			
STANDARD ACTIONS			
⚔ Warhammer (weapon) ♦ At-Will			
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC			
Hit: 8 damage.			
MINOR ACTIONS			
☞ Infernal Quills (poison) ♦ Encounter			
Attack: Ranged 3 (one creature); +9 vs. AC			
Hit: 6 damage, and ongoing 2 poison damage (save ends).			
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 15 (+4)	
Con 18 (+6)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 8 (+1)	
Alignment evil		Languages Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven	
Equipment chainmail, warhammer			

Atherimos (A)		Level 4 Elite Soldier	
Large elemental magical beast (earth, dragon)		XP 350	
HP 118; Bloodied 59		Initiative +7	
AC 20, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 14		Perception +5	
Speed 8 (earth walk), burrow 4, fly 4		Darkvision,	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		tremorsense 10	
TRAITS			
☼ Quaking Earth ♦ Aura 1			
When any enemy in the aura uses an attack power that does not include the dragon as a target, that enemy falls prone and takes 5 damage.			
STANDARD ACTIONS			
① Bite ♦ At-Will			
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC			
Hit: 2d8 + 3 damage.			
② Claw ♦ At-Will			
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC			
Hit: 1d6 + 4 damage.			
③ Double Attack ♦ At-Will			
Effect: The dragon uses bite and claw or uses claw twice.			
④ Earthen Maw ♦ Recharge [1]			
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex			
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).			
First Failed Saving Throw: The target is instead petrified (save ends).			
MINOR ACTIONS			
◀ Rising Tremors ♦ Recharge at the start of any turn when quaking earth is aura 1			
Effect: Quaking earth expands to aura 3. At the start of the dragon's next turn, quaking earth expands to aura 5. At the start of its following turn, the dragon makes the following attack.			
Attack (No Action): Close burst 5 (enemies in burst); +8 vs. Reflex			
Hit: 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target falls prone and cannot stand up (save ends).			
Effect: Quaking earth aura reverts to its original state and size (aura 1).			
TRIGGERED ACTIONS			
Sudden Quake ♦ At-Will			
Trigger: The dragon is pulled, pushed, slid, or knocked prone.			
Effect (Free Action): Each enemy in the dragon's aura falls prone.			
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 16 (+5)	
Con 19 (+6)	Int 15 (+4)	Cha 13 (+3)	
Alignment unaligned		Languages Common, Draconic, Primordial	

Events in Battle

Several key events happen during the battle that help to determine the outcome of the adventure.

When a hero takes the arrow of time from the corpse's hand, or when Atherimos becomes bloodied read:

Salazar Vladistone appears at the entrance to the cave. His eyes have a haunted look. His gaze fixes on the arrow before he turns to all of you.

"I remember now," he says. "How much I wanted to see my Oldivya. I know what you intend to do with the arrow, and I ask you—please do not send me back. I could not bear to return to that time and be without her again."

Vladistone will speak with the characters as they fight Atherimos. Although he asks that they do not kill Atherimos using the arrow, he is also unwilling to give

up his ghost legion unless they promise him the arrow. He wants to return it to the Ghost Tower, in the hope that restoring the relic to the tower will return Oldivya to him. He cannot bear to live without her, either in the past or the present.

If the characters promise to give Vladistone the arrow, he joins in the fight against Atherimos. If the characters renege on their offer or flatly refuse to give him the arrow, he joins the fight against them.

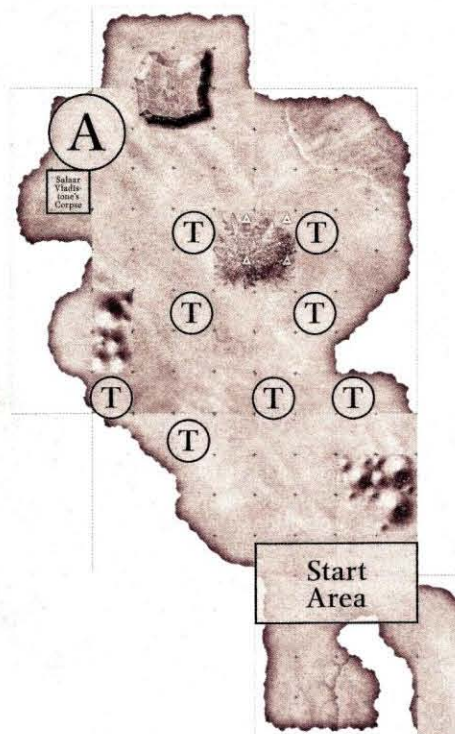
When Atherimos is reduced to 29 hit points or fewer, read:

The dragon's movements grow slower as your attacks add up. The wounds on the creature's body seem to have rendered it vulnerable to a shot with the arrow of time.

The character who has the arrow can now choose to fire it at the dragon as a free action. Even if the initial attack might have slain the dragon outright, the arrow strikes first, hitting automatically.

If a hero fires the arrow at Atherimos, read:

The arrow speeds toward the dragon, striking it in the chest. The whole chamber lights up for a moment, and a second later, all that's left of Atherimos is dusty bones that look decades old.



Salazar Vladistone's face is twisted, not in anger but in sadness. As his spectral visage fades, you hear him whisper. "I just wanted to see my Oldivya."

The arrow ends the dragon's life just before Atherimos would have slain Vladistone. As a result, Vladistone survived in the past and was forced to rejoin his companions and live out the rest of his life in misery.

Features of the Area

Illumination: As with the rest of the interior of the monastery, this area is dark. It is lit only by the heroes' light sources.

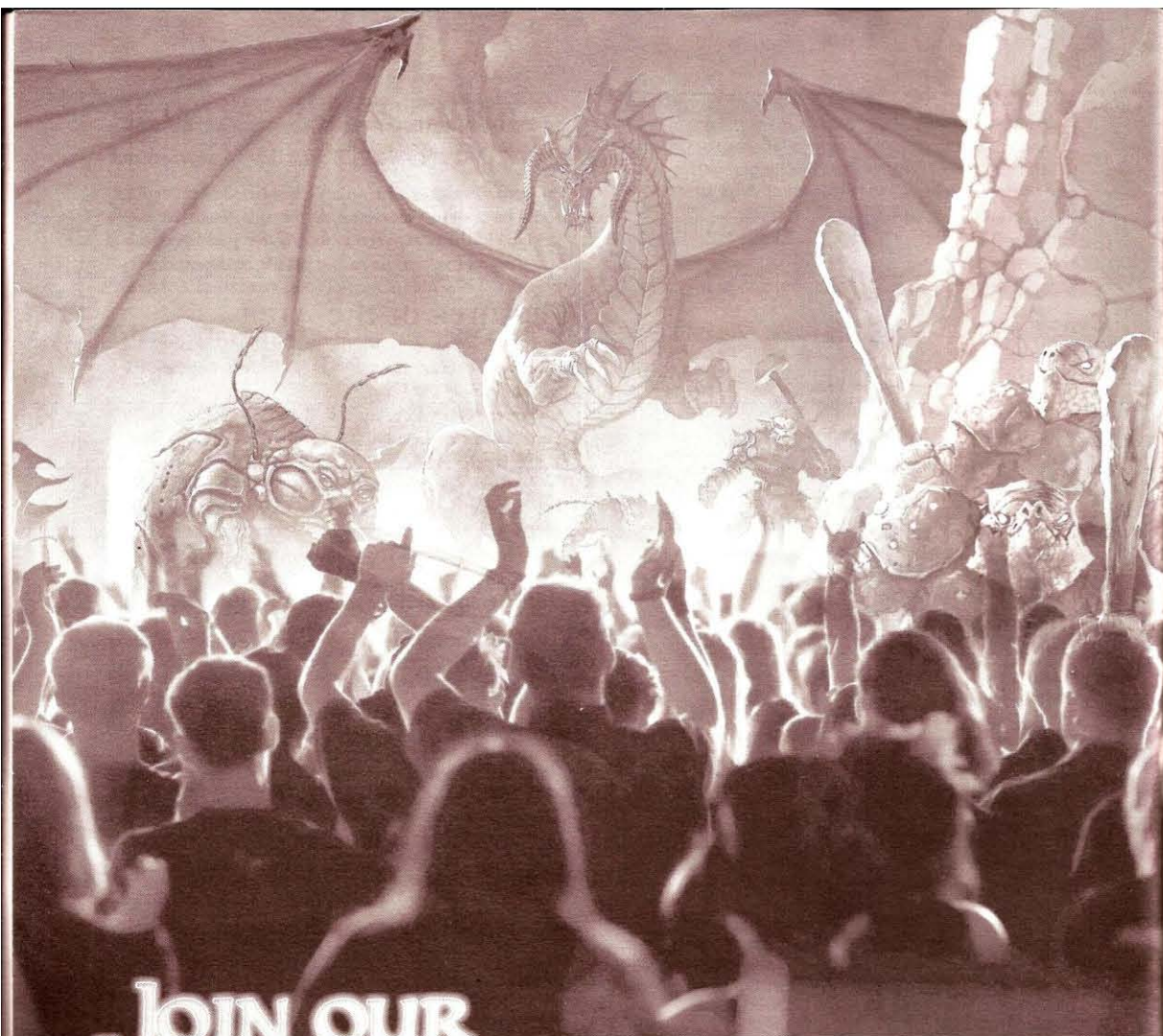
Frozen Pool: A creature that enters one of these squares must make a DC 13 Acrobatics check. On a failure, it falls prone.

Icy Rock: These squares are blocking terrain, though a character can climb atop the rock with a DC 13 Athletics check.

Icy Stalagmites: These squares can provide partial cover.

Shattered Ice: These squares are difficult terrain.

Salazar Vladistone	Level 3 Elite Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead), human	XP 300
HP 67; Bloodied 33	Initiative +4
AC 19, Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 14	Perception +1
Speed 6, phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
☠ Drag Into Death ♦ Aura 1	
Any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to Vladistone is slowed until the start of its next turn.	
Insubstantial	
Vladistone takes only half damage from any damage source, except force damage.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Spectral Longsword (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Effect: Until the end of Vladistone's next turn, if the target makes an attack that does not include him as a target, that attack provokes an opportunity attack from Vladistone.	
🏹 Spectral Crossbow (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.	
⚡ Spectral Flurry ♦ At-Will	
Effect: Vladistone uses spectral longsword twice but must target a different creature with each attack.	
⚔ Vengeance-Driven Fury (weapon) ♦ Recharge [2] [1]	
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The target falls prone.	
Skills History +8, Intimidate +11	
Str 19 (+5)	Dex 13 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 10 (+1)
	Wis 11 (+1)
	Cha 16 (+4)
Alignment evil	Languages Common



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**DUNGEONS
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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS
ENCOUNTERS

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE

What begins as a simple expedition to settle a new village in the ruins of the mysterious Castle Inverness sets off a chain of events that could threaten every living being from Winterhaven to Hammerfast. Not everyone in the Nentir Vale is happy to see civilization brought to Inverness, particularly the ghost of Salazar Vladistone, who commands the spectral legion called the Phantom Brigade.

March of the Phantom Brigade is an adventure designed for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ENCOUNTERS™ official play program. It includes information the Dungeon Master needs to run the adventure, 13 ready-to-play encounters (each intended for one session of play), and full-color foldout battle maps depicting the various encounter locations.

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