

DALE1-5

HUNTERS' DOWN

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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'SESSRENDALÉ' AND 'THE SEARING' BY ED GREENWOOD

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Vengeance smolders in the hearts of many. It sometimes takes only a little spark to flare back to an all-consuming rage. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in the Dalelands for characters levels 7-10. Final part of the 'Byar's Seven' quest. The other parts are *DALE1-2 Blades for Daggerdale*, and *DALE1-4 The Lady in Flames*.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DM REWARDS program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31 2012.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware

of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 7-10. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter – that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success – they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give**

out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Some 200 years ago, Archendale's army slaughtered and drove off the inhabitants of Sessrendale. The wilderness of Sessrendale, known as the Dead Dale, exists today because its soil was sewn with salt by the forces of Archendale. Today the average inhabitant of

Archendale still thinks justice was served and they are very sensitive about the subject.

For over a century a small cult of Hoar (god of revenge, exarch of Bane) has dwelled in a temple fortress shrouded in the depths of the Arch Wood. This informal order of bounty hunters and vigilantes are known as the Hunters of Vengeance. They enact what they believe to be Torm's will through the retributive hand of Hoar - a misconception that Hoar's true superior, Bane, is encouraging to continue.

A devotee of Chauntea (goddess of agriculture) in Deepingdale, Bokan Darian (human male), has recently started to investigate the revival of Sessrendale. This causes dismay with the people in Archendale, most notably a member of the Hidden Hand of Fate named Hethram (human male). He plans to abduct this devotee and kill him for his plans. He intends to use the recent influx of shadow creatures in the western Dalelands to justify killing this man.

Hethram has been busy for days spreading specific rumors in Archendale and Deepingdale through travelers, locals and the cult of Hoar. He has managed to get a small group of youths from two villages to set up a confrontation that very evening.

Hethram has prepared an ambush to attack them with shadow-creatures, who he managed to control thanks to a relic he stumbled upon years ago in a ruin in the Arch Wood. This is also the moment that the PCs become involved.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

Encounter 1 Forest ambush: Two groups of youths from different villages have sought each other out for a confrontation over Sessrendale. The PCs encounter them just as shadow creatures attack them.

Encounter 2 Aiding the injured: After the fight, the PCs can learn that the shadow creatures focused on the Arkhen youths. Soldiers from White Ford and armed farmers from a Deepingdale village arrive and request the PCs come back with them to their respective dales. The PCs have to choose here, leading to a separate social encounter in either (or both) town.

Encounter 3A White Ford: The captain of the garrison wants the PCs to find out where the recent war mongering comes from. Information can be obtained about a mustering of the Hunters of Vengeance and a small ruin in Arch Wood which until recently was used for meetings of the Hand.

Encounter 3B Highmoon: Here they can investigate the background of Bokan, and meet a trapper, Byar. Byar has pinpointed one possible location

where the local shadow creatures may congregate - a small ruin in Arch Wood.

PCs who learn that Bokan is the Hunters' target may instead decide to head to Bokan's farm house to warn Bokan and wait the Hunters there (Encounter 6B).

Encounter 4A and 4B Hethram's Hideout: Finding the ruin on the northern edge of Arch Wood and getting inside is a skill challenge. Traps ward the ruin as well.

Encounter 5 Confronting the Hand: A group of mercenaries has come to the ruin to take out Hethram. Here the PCs can learn that the Hunters of Vengeance muster at Hunters' Down.

Encounter 6A Showdown at Hunters' Down: At Hunters' Down the PCs can challenge the commanders of the group by argument or sword.

Encounter 6B Defending Bokan: At Bokan's farm the PCs can challenge the commanders of the group by argument or sword. This is a tougher challenge than 6A, since the mob is all fired up.

Encounter 7 The Baelnorn: One of the baelnorn from at Hunters' Down appears with a cryptic warning of more things to come.

side are teeming with birds, insects and small animal life.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The adventure starts south of the East Way caravan road, on a trail that runs between the hamlet of Landaw in Deepingdale and the village of White Ford in Archendale. There are several reasons why players can be on this road. They may be traveling home after adventuring in Sembia or Cormyr, or plan to seek out the famous library of the Leaves of Learning in Highmoon, or the famous Rising Moon Inn in Deepingdale.

PCs who have the favor **DALE06 Byar's Seven** or **DALE12 Byar's Seven** have an extra reason. They are quested to find the members of an adventuring group called "Byar's Seven". PCs with DALE06 were asked to do this by the group's members Swift Elyan and Dorrington Brightblade. PCs with DALE12 were asked by Lady-Mayor Addee Ulphor of Shadowdale.

In either case, the PCs found a clue from an Archendale Ridesman in the Drunken Lion tavern in Archenbridge, who told them of a trapper named Byar who lives in Deepingdale. The PCs are now travelling there.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

It is early evening on this quiet trail through the Dalelands between White Ford and Highmoon. You encounter only few other travelers on this trail of hard packed earth. The grasslands and woodlands to either

ENCOUNTER 1: FOREST AMBUSH

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 8 / 10 (1550 / 2200 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

2 shadow hounds (H) (1 for 4 PCs. 3 for 6 PCs)

1 dark stalker (St)

2 dark smasher (Sm)

8 youths (non-combattants) (y1-y8)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

2 shadow hounds (H) (1 for 4 PCs. 3 for 6 PCs)

1 dark stalker (St)

2 dark smasher (Sm)

8 youths (non-combattants) (y1-y8)

The last light of day is fading. When this encounter starts, the PCs are within an hour's travel of the village Landaw. The night falls before they get there.

Several youths from two nearby settlements are hurling insults, preparing for a confrontation when shadow creatures ambush them.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

As the trail winds through a copse of trees, you hear voices up ahead. You discern the voices come from one side of the trail, somewhere between the trees. They are high pitched and from time to time accompanied by hard laughter. You hear the occasional "whooting" and shouting followed by a dull crash and more taunting.

If any of the PCs scouts ahead, the following events occur right as he passes by. With a 19/20 Stealth check, that PC stays unnoticed by the shadow creatures.

Suddenly a terrifying, high-pitched, scream comes from the direction of the voices, followed by more screams and things rushing through the underbrush. Within moments a young boy, eyes wide with fear and tears, bursts out of the bushes and runs onto the trail, looking over his shoulder every other step, cringing at the screams that echo between the trees.

The boy does not speak at this time, only pointing to the area where the screams come from with a trembling arm. Assuming the PCs head towards the screams, they encounter the following.

Using a few felled trees as a rear guard, several youths use mere branches to fight off two humanoids trailing shadowy stuff and armed with greataxes. Here and there young boys and girls lie on the ground, wailing or very still. Some have a piece of red cloth around their heads or arms. A girl is in a low branch, a globe of darkness is at the base of the tree. A low growl emanates from the globe, terrifying the child.

A single scout, or very quiet party, can avoid detection by the marauders with a DC 19/20 Stealth check. One of the enemies is hiding in the underbrush. This is a dark stalker who was following the boy out on the road, trying to cut off his path. He is somewhat ahead of the PCs in the bushes along the road and joins the fight a bit later.

As soon as the shadow creatures notice the PCs, they turn and advance on them.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: It is early in the evening; the sun goes down in an hour or two. It is already darkening between the trees, making that area count as dim light for purposes of the abilities of the shadow creatures.

Youths There are 8 youths on the scene. Brarn (y1) and Faerelle (y2) are standing. Hilda (y3) is prone and hidden in a bush. Cirilon (y4) is prone. Laharra (y5) is in the top of a tree. Gulon (y6) and Steria (y7) are unconscious. Thomar (y8) is the boy that ran onto the road.

The youths do not fight. They try to hide or slowly move (shift) away. The shadow creatures do not target them once the PCs arrive. Treat them as minions (all defenses 10) in case they get caught in an area of effect.

Underbrush: The thicket of bushes makes this difficult terrain (1 square extra movement) and also counts as obscuring terrain.

Felled Trees: The felled trees are blocking terrain. It is also elevated and slippery, taking a DC 15 athletics check to jump or climb on them.

Hornet's Nest (N): In between the felled trees is a hornet's nest. They get angry when disturbed and attack anyone who comes within one square of their nest. When someone is up on the felled trees, or hiding between them, it takes a DC 10 Perception check to notice the nest for what it is, otherwise they just hear the angry buzzing.

If a creature is in the nest's square or an adjacent square, the hornets swarm out and attack. While under attack, a creature is dazed until the start of its next turn, and takes a -2 to attacks until it is more than 3 squares

away from the nest. A creature that used an action to move into these squares can still finish its move, but otherwise loses its actions for the turn, even if the move takes it out of the area again. Destroying the nest by any other means than fire results in an all-out attack at all creatures within burst 2 of the nest, with the same results as above.

A creature can grab the nest and throw it as a standard action when it is in the nest's square. It can be thrown up to 5 squares away, and anyone who is in range when it lands is attacked immediately.

TACTICS

The shadow creatures are intelligent and use their abilities in concert with each other and the environment. The two smashers advance on the PCs trying to gain combat advantage (see *dark step*). The stalker remains hidden and uses its *dark fog* from afar to get the PCs in a globe of darkness. It then creeps closer and attacks in concert with the smashers. The hounds use their baying power to affect as many enemies as possible, and teleport in concert with the smashers to create areas of darkness and outflanking situations. They fight to the death, under the influence of the relic.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a shadow hound.

Six PCs: Add a shadow hound.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PC's have defeated all the shadow creatures, they can aid and talk to the surviving youths. Proceed to the Encounter 2 once the players are ready.

If the shadow creatures are still alive, questioning them gives little result. They are insane - and have been for decades - and if questioned can only relate that they are out for vengeance, though for what slight they cannot tell.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 310 / 440 experience points for defeating the shadow creatures

TREASURE

The creatures carry no treasure.

ENCOUNTER 1: FOREST AMBUSH STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Dark Stalker (level 8)	Level 8 Lurker
Small shadow humanoid	XP 350
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 69; Bloodied 34; see also <i>killing dark</i>	
AC 22 (see also <i>dark step</i>); Fortitude 19, Reflex 22, Will 21	
Speed 6	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 (crit 1d8 + 12).	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +13 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
A Dark Fog (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ Zone	
Area burst 4 within 10; creates a zone of darkness that blocks line of sight (creatures with darkvision ignore this effect).	
C Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark stalker explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage	
The dark stalker deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (move; at-will)	
The dark stalker moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Invisibility (minor; recharge 3-6) ♦ Illusion	
The dark stalker becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +14, Thievery +14	
Str 12 (+5)	Dex 21 (+9) Wis 14 (+6)
Con 15 (+6)	Int 14 (+6) Cha 19 (+8)
Equipment black garments, scimitar, 4 daggers	

Dark Smasher (level 8)	Level 8 Brute
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 350
Initiative +9 Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 108; Bloodied 54 (see also <i>killing dark</i>)	
AC 20 (see also <i>dark step</i>); Fortitude 19, Reflex 18, Will 17	
Speed 6	
m Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+11 vs. Armor Class; 1d12 + 6 damage (crit 1d12 + 18).	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +11 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
M Bloodfury Attack (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
The dark smasher makes a melee basic attack and then spends a healing surge.	
C Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark stalker explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage	
The dark smasher deals +1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (Move, at-will)	
The dark smasher moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +12, Thievery +12	
Str 20 (+9)	Dex 16 (+7) Wis 10 (+4)
Con 18 (+8)	Int 11 (+4) Cha 11 (+4)
Equipment black garments, 4 daggers, greataxe	

Shadow Hound	Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 250
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
HP 70; Bloodied 35	
AC 19; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 17	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 7, teleport 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+11 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
C Baying (minor; recharge 5-6) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +8 vs. Will; the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.	
Shadow Ambush	
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +10	
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 15 (+5) Wis 13 (+4)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 6 (+1) Cha 16 (+6)

ENCOUNTER 1: FOREST AMBUSH STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Dark Stalker	Level 10 Lurker
Small shadow humanoid	XP 500
Initiative +14 Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 81; Bloodied 40; see also <i>killing dark</i>	
AC 24 (see also <i>dark step</i>); Fortitude 21, Reflex 24, Will 23	
Speed 6	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 (crit 1d8 + 13).	
R Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
A Dark Fog (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ Zone	
Area burst 4 within 10; creates a zone of darkness that blocks line of sight (creatures with darkvision ignore this effect).	
C Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark stalker explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage	
The dark stalker deals an extra 2d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (move; at-will)	
The dark stalker moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Invisibility (minor; recharge 3-6) ♦ Illusion	
The dark stalker becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +15, Thievery +15	
Str 12 (+6)	Dex 21 (+10) Wis 14 (+7)
Con 15 (+7)	Int 14 (+7) Cha 19 (+9)
Equipment black garments, scimitar, 4 daggers	

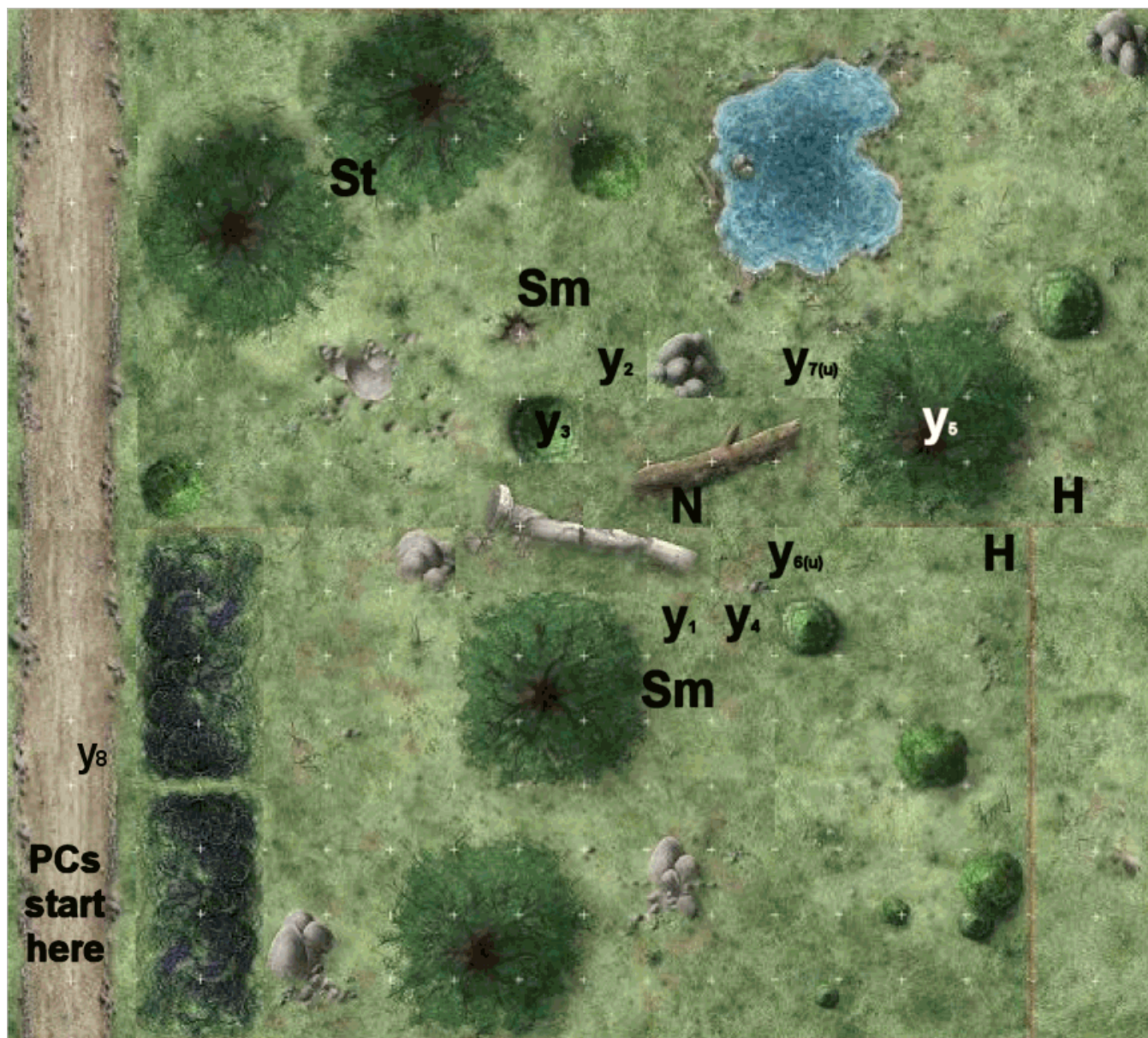
Dark Smasher (level 10)	Level 10 Brute
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 500
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +5; darkvision	
HP 128; Bloodied 64 (see also <i>killing dark</i>)	
AC 22 (see also <i>dark step</i>); Fortitude 21, Reflex 20, Will 19	
Speed 6	
m Greataxe (Standard, at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+13 vs. Armor Class; 1d12 + 7 damage (crit 1d13 + 19).	
R Dagger (Standard, at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +13 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
M Bloodfury Attack (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
The dark smasher makes a melee basic attack and then spends a healing surge.	
C Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hitpoints)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark stalker explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage	
The dark smasher deals +1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (Move, at-will)	
The dark smasher moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +13, Thievery +13	
Str 20 (+10)	Dex 16 (+8) Wis 10 (+5)
Con 18 (+9)	Int 11 (+5) Cha 11 (+5)
Equipment black garments, 4 daggers, greataxe	

Shadow Hound (level 8)	Level 8 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 350
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
HP 86; Bloodied 43	
AC 21; Fortitude 22, Reflex 20, Will 19	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 7, teleport 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+13 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 5 damage.	
C Baying (minor; recharge 5-6) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +10 vs. Will; the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.	
Shadow Ambush	
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages -	
Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +11	
Str 19 (+8)	Dex 15 (+6) Wis 13 (+5)
Con 14 (+6)	Int 6 (+2) Cha 16 (+7)

ENCOUNTER 1: FOREST AMBUSH MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x1



ENCOUNTER 2: AIDING THE INJURED

SETUP

Important NPCs:

The Archendale youths:

- **Brarn** (y1) - Boy, age 12, White Ford/Archendale. Son of a merchant. Brandished a stick at the shadow creatures and is wounded at the leg (bite).
- **Laharra** (y5) - Girl, age 11, White Ford/Archendale. Daughter of a farmer. Climbed in the tree. Her brother is Sterian.
- **Liana** - Girl, age 12, White Ford/Archendale. Daughter of a Ridesman. Fled towards White Ford.
- **Gulon** (y6) - Boy, age 13, White Ford/Archendale. Son of a fisherman. Unconscious.
- **Sterian** (y7) - Boy, age 9, White Ford/Archendale. Son of a farmer. Unconscious. His sister is Hilda.

The Deepingdale youths:

- **Faerelle** (y2) - Girl, age 14, Landaw/Deepingdale. Daughter of a farmer. Brandished a stick at the shadow creatures and is wounded on his side (claw)
- **Hilda** (y3) - Girl, age 11, Landaw/Deepingdale. Daughter of a farmer. Wounded leg and arm. Is on the ground, protected by Faerelle and Brarn.
- **Cirilon** (y4) - Boy, age 8, Landaw/Deepingdale. Son of a carpenter. Wounded foot and neck. Is on the ground, protected by Faerelle and Brarn.
- **Thomar** - Boy, age 12, Landaw/Deepingdale. Son of the Landaw village priestess (of Chauntea). Ran out on the road towards the PCs and continues to run towards Landaw if not stopped.
- **Folkon** - Boy, age 12, Landaw/Deepingdale. Son of a farmer. Fled towards Landaw.

As the shadow creatures attacked, the youths scattered. In total there were ten children, now only five remain standing at the felled trees. Two are unconscious and three are not on the scene. One is the boy the PCs encountered on the road and the other two ran full speed north and south (one to the farming community of Landaw, the other to White Ford).

The shadow creatures were brought to this location by Hethram from the east. He released them and instructed them to primarily target the youths with the red scarves (those from Archendale), hoping that

Deepingdale would be blamed. Hethram himself left immediately and his tracks can be found, but followed only for a short while (turning south and ending at the river). The creatures, being insane, do not remember him, and if questions on their master, refer to him as 'The Vengeful One'.

The red scarves are worn by the youths from Archendale. The Hunters of Vengeance also wear them when they go out on a hunt.

SCENE 1: AIDING THE CHILDREN.

With the sounds of battle fading away, the whimpering of the children remains. All of them are wounded in one way or another and the light of day fades even further, soon yielding to the night.

The PCs can use the Heal skill or healing powers to help the children. Diplomacy can be used to gain their trust. No actual skill checks are needed.

- The children do not want to go to any other town, other than their hometown. They cry and scream when taken elsewhere.
- They are from two nearby settlements, Landaw to the north and White Ford to the south.
- They were here to decide for once and for all who is the bravest dale. The treacherous Archendalers, or the elf-lackeys (referring to eladrin and elves) of Deepingdale (according to their own words).
- They were throwing insults and branches at each other when from out of the gloom of the trees the creatures of shadow attacked them.
- The children from Archendale claim that the Deepingdalers are trying to undo justice by attempting to bring the Dead Dale to life. As far as the children know, this is the Dale that has no life in it and where traitors go to die.
- The children from Archendale were posing as their heroes, the Hand of Vengeance (followers of Hoar). Members of the Hand wear red scarves around their head or arm when riding out for retribution.
- A boy (Messian) in White Ford told the other kids that he had been to Landaw on an errand and that the kids there had ran him off and dared the youths of White Ford to come to this place at the appointed hour.
- The children from Deepingdale claim they did not see Messian in the last days, but that his father Regol delivered a horse to Faerelle's father.
- Messian was supposed to be here too, but didn't show up.

- The Deepingdale-children heard from a trader named Calamhan of Selgaunt passing through their small town to Highmoon that they could be heroes if they met the small spies of the Hand of Vengeance along the road and prevented them from reaching Highmoon.

For more info on the Dead Dale or the Hunters of Vengeance, see the Appendix 2.

SCENE 2: WHERE DO WE GO?

Before the PCs decide to either ride on with the children or gets started in making camp, new people arrive on the scene.

The sun slowly sets, drawing long shadows in the forest. A group of horsemen arrive from the south. They are guards - Ridesmen - in the livery of Archendale. One of them has a boy in his early teens sitting behind her on the horse.

The guards come to take stock of what happened and want to take the Archendale children back to their parents. They ask the PCs to come with them to White Ford to dig deeper into why this attack took place.

Give the PCs a few seconds to respond and interact before reading on.

Shortly after the horsemen arrive, farmers armed with pitchforks and clubs show up coming from the north.

The farmers are from the village of Landaw in Deepingdale. They wish to know what happened to their children and take them back home. They also ask the PCs to come with them to Highmoon to tell the Moonlady about this ambush.

Among the farmers are the fathers of Thomar and Faerelle. The farmers throw insults at the Archendale guards, claiming the creatures came to punish Archendale for their creation of the Dead Dale. It is obvious that the guards only stay calm because of their discipline.

Both farmers and guardsmen desire the PCs to come along with them. They need to make a choice, as the two groups are not willing to cooperate.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends with the PCs departing for either Highmoon, or White Ford. The PCs can go either way here, or go their own. The decision gives them certain advantages and disadvantages. Going to one town increases all DCs for social skill checks in Encounter 3

in the other town by 5 (i.e. if they go with the farmers, all DCs in White Ford are 5 higher for social skills). Not going with either group makes the DCs in both towns harder. This is due to the mistrust that has been renewed between the Dales.

The next encounter starts as the PCs enter one of either town; Highmoon (Encounter 3B) or White Ford (Encounter 3A).

Any other route of the PCs choice (such as when they do not wait long enough to meet the soldiers or farmers) could also get them on track, by the DM's decision, or end the adventure. Both towns send armed parties into the Arch Wood to look for shadow creatures that night. The PCs may encounter one of those if they go their own way.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 3A: WHITE FORD

SETUP

Important NPCs:

Borgat Fierceblade, male human, Captain of the Guard

The small town of White Ford is quiet and tense. You can feel it in the air, see it in the alert eyes of the guards at the entrance to town and sense it in the anticipating and fearful looks of the group of townsfolk who have mustered near the gate. The guards that accompanied you into town, urge you in a gentle but stern manner, towards the barracks. The children are led towards the townspeople and greeted with cheers...and the inevitable cries of anguish.

This hamlet is named for a nearby whitewater-girt ford on the River Arkhen but is actually located well north of the water crossing on the north slope of the Arkhen Gorge just west of Arch Wood. It is closer to Highmoon in Deepingdale than it is to Archenbridge, which is located 45 miles downstream at the other end of Archendale, and is a decidedly more relaxed and civil place than the other Arkhen settlements.

The town is quiet but tense because of the attack on the youths that evening. Hethram has been preaching vengeance in town until about an hour or two to midnight (he went here right after he set the shadow creatures upon the youths). Most people are asleep or are told to stay indoors by the watch. The captain of the guard (Borgat Fierceblade) wants to question the PCs, house them in the barracks and let them start their investigation the next morning.

If the PCs did not come with the guards, remember that all DCs for social skills are 5 higher. The guards at the gate know who the PCs are by a description that was spread and alert Borgat to their arrival. The PCs are then shadowed by two Arkhen guards while they stay in town.

SCENE 1: THE CAPTAIN'S REQUEST

Inside the barracks, you are led into a room with a few guards and a tall red-haired man who stands behind a sturdy but empty desk.

The man is Captain Borgat Fierceblade, head of the garrison stationed at White Ford. After hearing a short report of what transpired at the ambush site, he introduces himself simply as Captain Borgat and then

likes to know what happened from the PCs. Assuming the PCs tell him the truth, he says the following:

"Thank you for your valor and preventing the death of our youths. I will be straightforward...I intend to hire you to find out who or what is behind this ambush. For now we're trying to get the town to quiet down, but if you accept you should start first thing in the morning."

The Captain offers to pay for their boarding, since they can get their own rooms at the barracks. He recommends them to go to the parents of the children they saved first.

Borgat can relate the following:

- Captain Borgat offers 100 / 125 gp a person for finding out who is behind the attack on the youths and the war-mongering, and for bringing this person to justice.
- Shadow creatures have been stalking the area lately. They have until now stayed close to the darker areas of Archwood.
- The guards are also conducting their own investigation, but Borgat prefers to have someone with a little less bias towards the situation at hand.
- The PCs do not gain additional rights as investigators. They are not above the law.
- Suspects should be delivered here at the barracks - and nowhere else! Last thing Borgat needs is a lynching in town.

SCENE 2: ASKING AROUND IN WHITE FORD

There are different approaches to asking questions in White Ford. As mentioned in Encounter 2, if the PCs do not enter White Ford with the guards or are not asked by the captain to aid, they receive less cooperation from the citizens. This translates into a +5 to all DCs for social skills. That penalty also applies if the PCs go ask around straight away at night, since most people are in their beds. Scouting at night might give them a head start, though finding the ruins at night might be very difficult.

The general attitude of the people is that Deepingdale should not have allowed one of its inhabitants to investigate the revival of the Dead Dale.

Below is the information the PCs can find, listed by locations and increasing DCs. Add +2 to the DC if the PCs use a secondary skill to get their information.

Note: The skill checks are guidance. This is not a skill challenge, so it is fine to wave skill checks and instead supply answers depending on what fits the interaction with the townsfolk.

GENERAL INFORMATION IN TOWN

Primary skills: Streetwise or Diplomacy

Secondary skill: Intimidate

DC 10

- It's the fault of the Deepingdalers, who think they can undo the punishment that Sessrendale justly deserved. (False)
- The Hand of Vengeance does not take the attack on the children lightly. There is someone paying for this soon. (True, if the PCs don't stop them)
- The Hidden Hand of Fate has declared retribution will be meted out. One of the priests, Hethram, said so himself. (True)
- The soldiers of Archendale are mustering near Ashabenford to march on Deepingdale. (False)
- It were adventurers like yourselves who started all this.

DC 15

- There is a mustering of the Hand of Vengeance next night. (True)
- A woodsman in Deepingdale has been investigating the revival of the Dead Dale for a while. Hethram found out about it, but most people are too scared to do something about it. (True)
- The elves and eladrin of Cormanthor have decreed that Sessrendale should be revived. (False)
- Someone who travels further and often into the forest might know where the Hand would muster. Perhaps Loromar the Trapper knows about such places. (True)

DC 20

- Hethram has been warning the town for a while now about the person who wants to revive the Dead Dale. Hethram left town just before the PCs' arrival. (True)
- The Hidden Hand of Fate uses several areas in the Arch Wood as meeting places. (True)
- Loromar is the last line of the Mikap family. That family has a bad name of sorts about Archendale, since they opposed against the destruction of Sessrendale. That's why he is without wife or children. (True)

DC 25

- The person who is trying to revive the Dead Dale is a priest of Chauntea (good goddess of life), called Bokan. He lives on a horse farm near the Glaemril River. (True)

- A mustering of the Hunters of Vengeance has been called. Blood can be expected to flow soon. (True)
- Loromar has a few gambling and drinking debts. He is in desperate need of gold. (True)

THE PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN

The children's parents are eager to talk to the PCs and can tell them the following:

- Hoar will make sure the children are avenged.
- It is the fault of the children of Landaw.
- Parents have petitioned with the Captain for extra protection, in case the people from Deepingdale come to try and finish the job. (True)
- The children were told to wear red scarves by Messiah, the son of a Sembian trader. (True)
- Hethram promised he would make sure the Hand would strike back. (True)
- One parent's nephew is a member of the Hand of Vengeance. He has claimed to be riding out to mete out just vengeance.

LOROMAR THE TRAPPER

Loromar Mikap is a human in his late 30-ies. He has the look of a forester and kind eyes. He is born and raised as an Arkhen, just like many generations before him. His family-line has always been different though, since his great grandfather opposed against attacking Sessrendale. Since that time, the Mikaps have always been viewed with a bit of suspicion. Loromar lives in a rundown house at the western edge of town. He sits outside his house on a tree trunk, drinking his morning/afternoon tea.

Loromar needs little compulsion to tell the PCs what he knows, though without much enthusiasm. He has considerable gambling debts, and any gold offered makes him more eager to help.

- He knows several places the Hand of Vengeance sometimes hold meetings at. He does not know the location of their main temple though.
- Some of the locations have fallen in disuse, while others are used regularly by other groups such as adventurers, woodsmen and traders.
- He knows one of the Hands in town, Hethram, uses a certain ruin from time to time. He has seen him there last month.
- He suggests that if Hethram is calling a mustering, it is best to get to him fast.

Loromar can tell the PCs where and how to find the ruin, and draws a rough map. (The map makes it easier to find the ruins. See Encounter 4).

He does not go with the PCs, for he doesn't want to be seen as a traitor more than he already was made out to be.

MESSIAN, THE SON OF REGOL A SEMBIAN TRADER

Regol lives with his wife (Maethe) and only son (Messian) on the south side of town. They breed and sell all kinds of workhorses. Regol's family brings the stock up from Sembia, where he sells it on to the farms in this region. He and his wife are the horse-doctors of the area and they are well liked by most.

When the PCs talk to Regol, he calls his son from the stables. He (and Messian) can relate the following:

- For all he knows, his son could have been dead. He caught him sneaking away from his chores last evening, and grounded him for the rest of the day.
- Regol delivered a horse to Landaw the day before, to the father of Faerelle.
- With a little persuasion, Messian admits he lied to the other children and that it was Hethram who had promised him gold, glory and candy if he would round up the kids and get them to the appointed place and be quiet about it. Hethram also told him the kids should make sure they wear red, just like real Hunters would.

If the PCs don't mention it, Regol himself proposes to go to Captain Borgat and have his son make a statement.

If the PCs go along with Regol and his son, they can get permission to enter Hethram's house if they ask for it. A few guards accompany them to make sure the place is kept tidy and guarded afterwards.

AT HETHRAM'S HOUSE

Hethram's place is near the edge of town. It consists of a house, surrounded by a low wooden fence. The house has a small stable for one horse, which is empty at the moment. The shutters have been closed, but the door does not have a lock on it.

The inside is small and cramped. A single room is used to sleep, eat and live. A second room is dug out into the ground and that's where several types of mushrooms are grown in dark, humid earth. All are edible, and none are poisonous.

A perception check may reveal clues:

DC 10: Judging by the age of food-scrap. The inhabitant left in a hurry, sometime last night.

DC 15: The PCs find a small prayer book to Hoar. Signed on the inside is 'Hethram'.

DC 20: Under a floorboard the PCs find a book on the breeding and use of poisonous mushrooms. Several pages have been marked.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs can exit White Ford any time, effectively ending the encounter for the time being. They most likely leave for Hethram's hideout, but heading to Landaw or Highmoon (Encounter 3B) is also possible if they fail to find out about the ruin.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 3B: HIGHMOON

SETUP

Important NPCs:

Moonlady Shava Enathuin, half-elf Lady (ruler) of Deepingdale

Byar the adventurer, male human

The PCs have chosen to go to Highmoon. They are accompanied by farmers and a number of soldiers who rode out to meet them and escort them to Highmoon. If the PCs go to Highmoon by themselves, skip the introduction and proceed to Scene 2, and remember that the PCs suffer a 5 point penalty to social skills.

The first part of the journey is to the small farming community of Landaw. The silence is thick with anticipation as you arrive. The cries of anguish and relief mix as the children are united with their parents.

Only Faerelle, Thomar and their fathers accompany you for the journey to Highmoon. Halfway to Highmoon, several Deepingdale guards on horseback, known as Swords, provide an escort for the rest of the way.

After about an hour on the road the PCs arrive in Highmoon. A grim contingent of watchmen takes over the escort from the soldiers. They ask the PCs to come with them to the Tower of the Rising Moon to meet Moonlady Shava Enathuin.

SCENE 1: THE LORD OF HIGHMOON

The current Lady of Deepingdale is Moonlady Shava Enathuin. The lady resides at the Tower of the Rising Moon and the PCs are escorted there by the watchmen.

You are guided to a central chamber and asked to wait there. The watchmen take up positions along the corridor leading towards the room. A sign over the door reads 'Starfall Chamber'. A magnificent and thoroughly detailed map of the Dales has been carved into the top of a huge circular table. Starlight is projected down onto the table by means of slanted mirrors.

A few moments later, Lady Shava Enathuin enters. She is dressed in a simple night gown, not having dressed after being woken. She greets everyone warmly and quickly has some food and drink brought in.

The Lady comforts the children and patiently listens to their stories. She also wants to hear the PCs version. She is patient and polite, and extends her gratitude for

their assistance. Her eyes sparkle as she comforts the children and assures them everything will be all right.

Once the children have been led away, she turns serious. She asks the PCs aid in solving who or what is behind these attacks.

The lady herself does not have much to share, except the following:

- Shadow creatures have been stalking the area lately. They have until now stayed close to the darker areas of the woods, such as near the Darkwatch, or deep in the Archwood.
- She knows of a trapper who studies the shadow creatures. She had not given him much attention, but he may know where they came from. She has no name at this point, but people in town know.
- She offers a reward if the PCs solve this (100 / 125 gp per PC)
- She asks them to handle this matter as delicately as possible. She wants to avoid a conflict with Archendale's hotheads.

Lady Enathuin offers the PCs lodging, and advises them to start as early in the morning as possible.

SCENE 2: ASKING AROUND IN HIGHMOON

There are different approaches to asking questions in Highmoon. As mentioned in Encounter 2, if the PCs do not enter town with the watchmen or are not asked by the lord to aid, they receive less cooperation from the citizens. This translates into a +5 to all DCs for social skills. That penalty also applies if the PCs go ask around straight away at night, since most people are in their beds.

Below is the information the PCs can find, listed by locations and increasing DCs. Add +2 to the DC if the PCs use a secondary skill to get their information.

Note: The skill checks are guidance. This is not a skill challenge, so it is fine to wave skill checks and instead supply answers depending on what fits the interaction with the townsfolk.

GENERAL INFORMATION IN TOWN

Primary skills: Streetwise or Diplomacy

Secondary skill: Intimidate

DC 10

- Arkhen-folk have always been known for their short temper.
- It is horrible this had to happen, but it shows that Archendale can't be trusted.
- Archendale is getting ready to muster an army now to fight someone over this. They just need to blame someone.

- The person leading the revival of Sessrendale is Bokan of Chauntea. A kind man who loves life. He lives east of Highmoon, on a farm near the Glaemril River, and is often traveling around the region.
- To learn about the region's history, the Leaves of Learning (temple of Oghma, god of knowledge) is a great place to go.

DC 15

- The Dead Dale would be a good place to expand into, once the restless dead are laid to rest. It was never meant to be a dead place. If only the Arkhen would stop being so hardheaded about it.
- The Dead Dale is an area best avoided for its many undead. Shadow creatures are not commonly sighted there.
- There is one person in town who is interested in shadow creatures. His name is Byar. He is a friend of Bokan and can be found in the Rising Moon Inn.
- Calamhan of Selgaunt, a trader who was in Landaw yesterday advised people to head out of town, for he'd done something that would make the Arkhen come here. I dunno what it was, but he left for Arabel in a hurry this morning. He was of the nasty sort, not sure if he was a trader at all. He stayed at the Rising Moon inn in town. (In truth, Calamhan left for Selgaunt as fast as he could. Searching the Rising Moon or road to Arabel yields no success.)

DC 20

- There have been several people who looked into the revival of Sessrendale over the past centuries. Many were bullied, killed or simply gave up.

SCENE 3 – THE LEAVES OF LEARNING

The temple of Oghma, god of knowledge, in Highmoon is a font of knowledge about the region.

The temple of Oghma the Binder, the largest and most impressive structure in Highmoon, stands at one end of Highmoon Hill above its walled, forested garden. One of the finest libraries east of Candlekeep resides in stout stone chambers inside. Grafted in the stones over the door is one of Oghma's dictates: 'Collect and preserve knowledge before it is lost.'

An acolyte welcomes the PCs to the temple. He inquires who they are and what their business is with the temple. The PCs are allowed into the reading room of the temple, but not the library itself.

The PCs can request knowledge about certain subjects at the temple. They are allowed to search for it themselves, and find most answers within a couple of hours. They are requested to put a fee of their choosing in an urn to help maintain the temple.

Any information that can be found is summarized in **Appendix 2: Locations and Organizations**.

SCENE 4 – BYAR

Byar can be found in the Risen Moon inn (famous throughout the Dalelands). He is up late in the common room. If approached, he greets the PCs, curious what they want of him. If told about the ambush, he reacts abhorred. He wants to know more about the shadow creatures. If the PCs somehow know the target of the Hunters of Vengeance is Bokan and they tell him, he is startled. He is somewhat suspicious and wants to know the names and backgrounds of the PCs. He is afraid that PCs are after him and that this is a trap

Byar knows the following about the shadow creatures:

- He had a run in with shadow creatures once. They killed his friends.
- He heard about increased activity of shadow creatures in the area and tries to find out what he can before facing them.
- He has seen several shadow creatures hanging around a ruin in Arch Wood. He can draw a rough map where it is. He urges the PCs to act quickly. (The map is a sketch, but does make it easier to find the ruins. See Encounter 4).

Byar knows the following about Bokan and Sessrendale:

- His friend Bokan has always been fascinated with the area.
- Bokan has been investigating the possibilities of the revival for a few months now. Not much success, but it seems someone is unhappy about it. One of Bokan's goats was slaughtered, and its blood smeared all over the door.
- Bokan made a mistake a few weeks ago. He told a Sembian merchant (Calamhan of Selgaunt) his tale. Byar suspects the merchant may have told it to the Arkhen, probably thinking he would make a good impression. That started the trouble for Bokan.
- Bokan took Byar in when he was wounded. Byar lives at Bokan's place, a farm on the Glaemril. Bokan is often away, roaming the dales. He is away now, so Byar traveled to Highmoon to

question the locals of the Rising Moon for the latest news on the shadow creatures.

If the PCs were sent to seek Byar, and tell him people are looking for him, he gets emotional. If he hears Sureen still lives, he is overjoyed, though also ashamed that he could not help her.

He relates the story of his adventuring party. Give the PCs **Handout: Byar's Seven**. He promises to return to his friends and make amends, and to make sure the PCs receive a just reward for reuniting them.

Byar then departs for Bokan's house, fearing he might be in danger. He cannot be persuaded by the PCs to go with them. If the PCs go with him to Bokan's house, and stay there, instead of investigating the ruin, go to Encounter 6B.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends if the PCs depart town. They should have enough clues to search for the hideout in the nearby forest. They can also go to Landaw to protect Bokan's house, or to White Ford.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4A: HETHRAM'S HIDEOUT

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 7 / 9, COMPLEXITY 3 (900 / 1200 XP)

SETUP

Hethram hideout is a ruin of a temple devoted to a now forgotten deity. The entrances are well hidden. Furthermore, a powerful trap has been placed on the 'main' entrance to the underground shrine.

Inside the ruins, Hethram is held captive by a group of mercenaries - if the PCs are quick, they can still save him.

The skill challenge is divided into two parts; finding the ruin, and finding the entrance. After that, in Encounter 4B, they might have to pass a trap which is placed on the entrance.

You set off to find the ruin mentioned, using the directions and clues you have found so far.

SKILL CHALLENGE: FINDING HETHRAM

Goal: The PCs try to find Hethram. It is important to find him early, not only to stop the Hunters of Vengeance, but also since Hethram himself is in danger.

Complexity: 3 (8 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Endurance, Nature, Perception

Other Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Dungeoneering, History, Religion, Thievery

Victory: The PCs find Hethram before he gets killed by a group of mercenaries (see Encounter 5).

Defeat: The PCs find Hethram, but not before he gets killed. They may also lose surprise to the adventurers in Encounter 5.

SCENE 1 - FINDING THE RUINS

Scene 1 takes 3 turns or 3 successes to complete. Each turn equals approximately one hour wandering the Archwood.

Endurance DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 3 maximum)

One character in the party scouts ahead, forcing that character to make an Endurance check due to moving at a faster pace through the rough terrain. Failure leads to the loss of 1 healing surge in addition to 1 failure for the skill challenge as a whole. This allows the party to cover more terrain in less time.

If the whole group moves along at a hustle, every PC should make an Endurance check. If half or more of the

PCs succeed, it counts as 1 success towards the challenge. If an individual PC fails, that character loses 1 healing surge.

History DC 19 / 20 (1 success, 1 maximum)

A PC may use his knowledge of ruins documented to exist in the Archwood to make a guess as to a proper location. Having either the map from Loromar or the map from Byar grants a +2 to the check.

Nature DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 3 maximum)

At least one character in the party must make a Nature check each turn to help the group find its way through the wilderness, and avoid natural hazards. Having either the map from Loromar or the map from Byar grants a +2 to the check.

Perception DC 19 / 20 (0 successes)

The PC notices something that helps to better survive the trek and find the way faster. Using this skill successfully provides a +2 bonus to the next character's Nature check.

SCENE 2 - ENTERING THE RUINS

The PCs arrive at the scene of the ruin. Now how to get into the underground portion of the lair?

In an open patch before you is a half-excavated ruin. What remains of the complex is formed from smooth, sweeping curves of black obsidian sculpted into flowing shapes, like those seen in elven homes and statuettes.

Here and there lie small piles of rubble. It matches the location and descriptions you have received. You see no creatures here, nor an erect building of sorts.

Scene 2 takes 3 successes to complete.

Finding the entrance:

Dungeoneering or History DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PC recognizes the building's architecture as that of the drow. Buildings that are this close on the surface are rare, and often heavily defended. Using knowledge of the construction type, you locate the entrance. It is blocked by a collapsed wall.

Dungeoneering or History DC 19 / 20 (2 successes, 2 maximum)

Besides the above, you also realize there should be a second, better hidden, entrance that is likely not collapsed. A successful Perception check reveals that entrance (see below).

Nature (DC 14 / 15) (0 successes)

You identify tracks of multiple bipedal creatures leading to and from a specific area of the rubble. This check does not count as a success or failure, but does add a +2 to the next person to make a perception check to find the entrance.

Perception (DC 9 / 10) (0 successes)

You find a jumble of creature tracks. Nature (see above) can aid in identifying what they are.

Perception (DC 14 / 15) (1 success, 1 maximum)

You find a wall that must have collapsed recently (within a day). The area around it resembles an archway, inscribed in faded runes.

Perception (DC 19 / 20) (1 success, 1 maximum)

Only after the PC realizes there is a second entrance, can they find the better hidden (secret) second entrance. This avoids having to dig out the collapsed wall.

Religion (DC 19 / 20) (0 successes)

You find clues that this ruin is a shrine. You can't determine the deity, but recognizing it as a drow. This check does not count as a success or failure, but does add a +2 to the next person to make a Dungeoneering or Perception check to find the entrance.

Clearing the entrance:

By clearing the entrance the PCs avoid the glyph (Encounter 4B), but they get 1 automatic failure towards the skill challenge since digging is time consuming and noisy. There is also no chance of surprising the mercenaries. They still gain the experience due to the downsides of digging.

Athletics DC 19 / 20: (1 success, 1 maximum)

You help remove the stones from the collapsed wall found with Dungeoneering or Perception. A failure leads to the loss of 1 healing surge due to a collapse or strained muscle.

Dungeoneering DC 19 / 20: (1 success, 1 maximum)

You instruct on the proper clearing of stones from the collapsed wall found with Dungeoneering or Perception.

Endurance DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 1 maximum)

You help remove the stones from the collapsed wall found with Dungeoneering or Perception. A failure leads to the loss of 1 healing surge due to a collapse or strained muscle.

Finding the trapdoor:

Dungeoneering DC 24 / 25 (1 success, 1 maximum)

You find the outlines of the trapdoor.

Perception DC 24 / 25 (1 success, 1 maximum)

You find the outlines of the trapdoor.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have found the hidden trapdoor move on to Encounter 4B. If the PCs dig their way through the collapsed corridor proceed with Encounter 5.

Success: The PCs were quick enough - Hethram is still alive in Encounter 5.

Failure: The PCs were too slow, and when they arrive in Encounter 5, Hethram is killed.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 120 / 160 XP per PC.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4B: HETHRAM'S HIDEOUT - TRAP

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 7 / 9 (300 / 400XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following traps at the low and high tier:

1 glyph of warding

The drow who built this hideout placed a nasty trap on the entrances. The last part of this encounter is to overcome this trap. The trap fires every time someone tries to open or pass the trapdoor, multiple times in a round, until disabled.

The trap is disabled for 1 minute if someone wearing the ring Hethram found (see Encounter 5) enters the trapdoor first.

It is possible that this encounter spills out into Encounter 5 because the PCs take too long or make too much noise.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs entered, they can move on to Encounter 5. If the PCs set off the trap, they loose surprise to the mercenaries in that encounter.

If they found the secret entrance, they find a passage with a secret door (DC 23 / 24 Perception to notice from the other side), leading into a room off to the left of the 'main' entrance. See Appendix 1 for the temple layout and the location of the entrances and the temple where Hethram is engaged. The other rooms of the temple are empty.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 180 / 240 XP per PC.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4B: HETHRAM'S HIDEOUT STATISTICS (LOW / HIGH LEVEL)

Low

Glyph of Warding Trap	Level 7 Warder XP 300
Trap: A magical glyph wards the portal, ready to explode with arcane fury when the trap is triggered and resetting immediately afterwards.	
Perception	
♦ DC 23: The character notices the glyph. The person trying to disable this trap, will also need to make this Perception check for finding the triggering runes.	
Additional Skill: Arcana	
♦ DC 23 : The character spots the glyph and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable it.	
Trigger	
When a creature tries to open the guarded portal or pass through it, the glyph explodes.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction Close burst 3	
Targets: All creatures in burst	
Attack: +10 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6+4 Necrotic damage and dazed till the start of the character's next turn.	
Reset	
The trap resets immediately, bursting again when the next person steps through.	
Countermeasure	
An adjacent character can disable the glyph with a DC 23 Thievery check.	

High

Glyph of Warding Trap	Level 9 Warder XP 400
Trap: A magical glyph wards the portal, ready to explode with arcane fury when the trap is triggered and resetting immediately afterwards.	
Perception	
♦ DC 24: The character notices the glyph. The person trying to disable this trap, will also need to make this Perception check for finding the triggering runes.	
Additional Skill: Arcana	
♦ DC 24: The character spots the glyph and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable it.	
Trigger	
When a creature tries to open the guarded portal or pass through it, the glyph explodes.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction Close burst 3	
Targets: All creatures in burst	
Attack: +12 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d6+6 Necrotic damage and dazed till the start of the character's next turn.	
Reset	
The trap resets immediately, bursting again when the next person steps through.	
Countermeasure	
An adjacent character can disable the glyph with a DC 24 Thievery check.	

ENCOUNTER 5: CONFRONTING THE HAND

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 8 / 9 (1550 / 2200 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 2 human outlaws (O) 3 for 6 players
- 1 drow adventurer (D)
- 1 shadowhound (H) - 0 for 4 players
- 1 zombie throng (Z)
- 1 crawling claw (C)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 2 human outlaws (O) 3 for 6 players
- 1 drow adventurer (D)
- 1 shadowhound (H) 0 for 4 players
- 1 zombie throng (Z)
- 1 crawling claw (C)

A group of mercenaries has been sent to retrieve a relic from this ruin, a relic that can be used to command shadow creatures. The mercenaries surprised Hethram when he returned to his hideout. The leader chopped off Hethram's hand to prevent him from using the relic to turn any undead against them. The hand is still on the ground, next to Hethram.

At the end of the corridor, you see a tapestry that covers a doorway. Through the tapestry you see there is light in the area beyond.

If the PCs succeeded in the skill challenge in Encounter 4, Hethram is still alive. If they failed the skill challenge, the mercenaries have killed him, and are finishing up by looting the hideout.

If the PC set off the trap or dug their way through the rubble, the mercenaries are on their guard, and are hiding in the alcoves or crypts to spring an ambush (DC 20 / 21 Perception notices the shadow hound; DC 21 / 22 Perception notices the human outlaws, and DC 25 / 26 notices the drow). If Hethram is alive, he can be heard whimpering.

If the PCS did not set off the trap, they can surprise the mercenaries. Read the following:

You hear a melodious voice say: "Pick up the ring!" A male voice replies: "What? Why me? What if it's cursed? YOU pick it up."

If Hethram still lives, continue with:

Another voice pleads, whimpering: "Please...leave me alone! I gave you what you came here for!"

Describe the following when the PCs get past the tapestry.

A large and reasonably well-furnished room is behind the tapestry. Roots from the trees overhead have broken through the 10 foot high ceiling here and there - but they look oddly withered. This seems like it once was a temple hall, though its floor is packed dirt rather than tiles. A shattered altar and a few out-of-place wooden chairs dominate the back of the room. To the left are some crates and cages, some of which hold pigeons.

It is impossible to determine what deity the altar was devoted to. A DC 19 / 21 Perception check notices a faint discoloration in the earth in front of the altar (where numerous dead lay buried).

If the PCs surprised the mercenaries, read:

In the middle of the room you see several men, a drow and a dog of shadows, standing over the corpse/whimpering form of a man.

The man's arm ends in a bloody stump, and his severed hand lies at his side.

The drow looks up in shock, and then commands the others to attack.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: As long as the shadow hound is alive, the room counts as dim light. Otherwise there is normal light, provided by several lamps and candles in the room.

Chairs (c): The chairs are difficult terrain. They can be moved one square as a move action (using them as an improvised weapon still takes a standard action).

Zombie Graves (Z): After the zombie throng bursts forth (see tactics), this area is uneven and several feet deeper than the rest of the floor. The area counts as difficult terrain. A creature that is moved into the area by an effect must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or be knocked prone.

Pigeon cages ([X]): There are several empty pigeon cages along the wall. They are not sturdy and they count as difficult terrain. A creature that is moved into it by an

effect must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or be knocked prone.

Shattered Altar: The altar is blocking terrain. One can jump on the altar (Athletics DC 10). If two or more creatures are on the altar at once, it breaks under their weight, knocking both prone. The altar is not too heavy and can be pushed on its side to provide cover for persons behind it.

TACTICS

One round into the combat (use the zombie throng's initiative), the ring on the hand causes the hand to animate, and commands the undead of the temple (the zombie throng) to animate and attack. The zombies burst out of the floor with a move action, and attack the PCs. The hand (with the ring) then tries to escape the room. It takes 6 rounds for it to find a way out of the underground lair and crawl away into the forest, not to be seen again in this adventure.

The outlaws attempt to keep the PCs at a distance with their halberds by shoving them and the chairs around. They also try to push the PCs in reach of the zombie throng. The drow uses its *darkfire* on a strong opponent and attempts to use its venomous slash ability early in the combat. They also work in conjunction with the hound as much as they can, steering clear of the zombie throng as much as possible.

The mercenaries fight to the death as long as the drow is alive, knowing they are in trouble from the persons who hired them if they can be identified by anyone in the area.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a shadowhound.

Six PCs: Add a human outlaw.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs search the personal possessions of Hethram they find his notebook, describing his growing knowledge on the ring of purple shadows, and several small bags of gold with names on them, matching the names of informants and instigators in Whiteford and Highmoon.

One of the pigeon cages still holds a few pigeons. All the others have already been sent out to Hethram's agents to warn them off the mustering. They have a small note attached to their legs reading: "Mustering; Hunters' Down; Midnight tonight; In the name of Vengeance".

See for any information the PCs may know on Hunters' Down in Appendix 2.

If the PCs received a map from Byar or Loromar, Hunters' Down is on it. If they don't have a map or a historian around they might have to ask someone on the way. Anyone native to the area can tell the PCs where Hunters' Down is located.

If the PCs captured any of the mercenaries alive, the thugs can reveal that they were ordered to retrieve a relic (a ring), which seems to have power over shadow creatures. Their contact was a drow female called Llaryen Auzkovyn. Hethram, if alive, admits to his crimes. He does not regret them, and is proud he could whip up the people to such a vengeful state.

The PCs likely now realize that Hethram is behind the ambush on the youths and that he is organizing a mustering at Hunters' Down this very night to deal vengeance to Bokan.

From here the PCs can either go to Hunters' Down to confront the mustering there (Encounter 6A), or go to Bokan's house and wait for the attackers to arrive (Encounter 6B).

If they go to Highmoon to warn the Lady, or to White Ford to warn captain Borgat (or use a Sending ritual), they are asked to go to Hunters' Down to try and prevent the attack on the official's behest. The authorities do not send their own people to Hunters' Down at this moment, to try and prevent further escalation of hostilities between Archendale and Deepingdale, but do double patrols on the road.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 310 / 440 xp for defeating the bandits.

TREASURE

If the PCs destroyed or caught the hand, they obtain the ring. If the hand was not destroyed, removing the ring stops animating it. The ring is not a magic ring, but instead functions like a +2 *symbol of vengeance*. Anyone who takes the ring gains the story award **DALE14 Vengeance is Mine** (they do **not** gain **DALE15**). Hethram carries with him a scroll containing a Signal of Pursuit ritual.

Furthermore, some of the zombies in the throng carried magical weapons and implements - though they never used them in this fight. The items are well crafted, the spidery motives indicating they were designed for drow - if not of drow make.

They include a *divine retribution armor* +2 (low-level version only), a *drow house insignia* +3 (high-level version only), and a *blackshroud weapon* +2.

In addition the mercenaries carries various coins and jewelry for a total of 50 / 75 gp for each PC.

ENCOUNTER 5: CONFRONTING THE HAND STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Human Outlaw (level 7)	Level 7 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +3;	
HP 79; Bloodied 39	
AC 23; Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 18	
Speed 5	
m Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +14 vs. Armor Class; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the outlaw's next turn.	
M Pushback Strike (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ Weapon	
Requires Halberd; reach 2; +14 vs. Armor Class; 1d10 + 9 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.	
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 16 (+6) Dex 14 (+5) Wis 11 (+3)	
Con 15 (+5) Int 10 (+3) Cha 12 (+4)	
Equipment chainmail, crossbow, crossbow bolts (20), halberd.	

Drow Adventurer (level 9)	Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid	XP 400
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 95; Bloodied 47	
AC 23; Fortitude 20, Reflex 23, Will 21	
Speed 7	
m Fangblade (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, weapon	
+14 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 poison damage (crit 1d8 + 19).	
R Shuriken (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +15 vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 poison damage.	
M Mobile Melee Attack (standard; usable when wielding a fangblade, at-will) ♦ Poison, weapon	
The drow adventurer can move up to 3 squares and make one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. It doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack.	
M Venomous Slash (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ Poison, weapon	
Requires fangblade; +12 vs. Armor Class; 3d8 + 7 poison damage (crit 1d8 + 30), and all enemies adjacent to the target take 6 poison damage.	
R Darkfire (Minor, encounter)	
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Reflex; until the end of the drow adventurer's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attackers, and the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Acrobatics +14, Intimidate +6, Stealth +16	
Str 12 (+5) Dex 20 (+9) Wis 16 (+7)	
Con 15 (+6) Int 12 (+5) Cha 10 (+4)	
Equipment: fangblade, chainmail, shuriken x20	

Shadow Hound	Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 250
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
HP 70; Bloodied 35	
AC 19; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 17	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 7, teleport 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+11 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 4 damage.	

C Baying (minor; recharge 5-6) ♦ Fear
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +8 vs. Will; the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.
Shadow Ambush
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.
Alignment Unaligned Languages -
Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +10
Str 19 (+7) Dex 15 (+5) Wis 13 (+4)
Con 14 (+5) Int 6 (+1) Cha 16 (+6)

Zombie Throng (level 7)	Level 7 Brute
Huge natural animate (swarm, undead)	XP 300
Initiative +1 Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
Swarm Attack Aura 1; the zombie throng makes a <i>mob of crushing</i> blows attack as a free action against any enemy that starts its turn within the aura. While the zombie throng is bloodied, it makes a <i>zombie grab</i> attack instead	
HP 101; Bloodied 50	
AC 19; Fortitude 22, Reflex 16, Will 18	
Immune disease, poison, fear; Resist 10 necrotic; takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 5 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks, 20 against critical hits	
Speed 4	
m Mob of Crushing Blows (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage.	
M Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed. Attempts to escape the zombie throng's grab take a -5 penalty.	
C Zombie Mess Grab (standard; recharge 6)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +8 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed. Attempts to escape the zombie throng's grab take a -5 penalty.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages ---	
Str 18 (+7) Dex 6 (+1) Wis 8 (+2)	
Con 21 (+8) Int 1 (-2) Cha 3 (-1)	

Crawling Claw	Level 1 Minion
Tiny natural animate (undead)	XP 25
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +0; tremorsense	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 12, Reflex 13, Will 10	
Immune: disease, poison. Resist 5 necrotic	
Speed 8; climb 4	
m Jumping Claw (standard; at-will)	
+3 vs. Reflex; 2 damage.	
Digit Slide (move; encounter)	
The crawling claw shifts up to 8 squares.	
Hampering Claws	
A creature that starts its turn adjacent to three or more crawling claws is slowed until the start of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages ---	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 3 (-4) Dex 16 (+3) Wis 10 (0)	
Con 13 (+1) Int 3 (-4) Cha 6 (-2)	

ENCOUNTER 5: CONFRONTING THE HAND STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Human Outlaw (level 9)	Level 9 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +4;	
HP 95; Bloodied 47	
AC 25; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 20	
Speed 5	
m Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +16 vs. Armor Class; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the outlaw's next turn.	
M Pushback Strike (Standard, recharge 5, 6) ♦ Weapon	
Requires Halberd; reach 2; +16 vs. Armor Class; 1d10 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.	
R Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 16 (+7) Dex 14 (+6) Wis 11 (+4)	
Con 15 (+6) Int 10 (+4) Cha 12 (+5)	
Equipment chainmail, crossbow, crossbow bolts (20), halberd.	

Drow Adventurer (level 11)	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid	XP 600
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
HP 111; Bloodied 55	
AC 25; Fortitude 22, Reflex 25, Will 23	
Speed 7	
m Fangblade (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, weapon	
+16 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 poison damage (crit 1d8 + 20).	
R Shuriken (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +17 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 poison damage.	
M Mobile Melee Attack (standard; usable when wielding a Fangblade; at-will) ♦ Poison, weapon	
The drow adventurer can move up to 3 squares and make one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. It doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack.	
M Venomous Slash (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ Poison, weapon	
Requires fangblade; +14 vs. Armor Class; 3d8 + 8 poison damage (crit 1d8 + 31), and all enemies adjacent to the target take 6 poison damage.	
R Darkfire (minor; encounter)	
Ranged 10; +14 vs. Reflex; until the end of the drow adventurer's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attackers, and the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Acrobatics +15, Intimidate +7, Stealth +17	
Str 12 (+6) Dex 20 (+10) Wis 16 (+8)	
Con 15 (+7) Int 12 (+6) Cha 10 (+5)	
Equipment: fangblade, chainmail, shuriken x20	

Shadow Hound (level 9)	Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 400
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +10; darkvision	
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
HP 94; Bloodied 47	
AC 22; Fortitude 23, Reflex 21, Will 20	
Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 7, teleport 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 5 damage.	

C Baying (minor; recharge 5-6) ♦ Fear
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +11 vs. Will; the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.
Shadow Ambush
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.
Alignment Unaligned Languages -
Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +11
Str 19 (+8) Dex 15 (+6) Wis 13 (+5)
Con 14 (+6) Int 6 (+2) Cha 16 (+7)

Zombie Throng	Level 9 Brute
Huge natural animate (swarm, undead)	XP 400
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
Swarm Attack Aura 1; the zombie throng makes a <i>mob of crushing blows</i> attack as a free action against any enemy that starts its turn within the aura. While the zombie throng is bloodied, it makes a <i>zombie grab</i> attack instead	
HP 121; Bloodied 60	
AC 21; Fortitude 24, Reflex 18, Will 20	
Immune disease, poison, fear; Resist 10 necrotic; takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 5 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks, 20 against critical hits	
Speed 4	
m Mob of Crushing Blows (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.	
m Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed. Attempts to escape the zombie throng's grab take a -5 penalty.	
m Zombie Mess Grab (standard, recharge 6)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +10 vs Fortitude; the target is grabbed. Attempts to escape the zombie throng's grab take a -5 penalty.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages ---	
Str 18 (+8) Dex 6 (+2) Wis 8 (+3)	
Con 21 (+9) Int 1 (-1) Cha 3 (0)	

Crawling Claw	Level 1 Minion
Tiny natural animate (undead)	XP 25
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +0; tremorsense	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 14; Fortitude 12, Reflex 13, Will 10	
Immune: disease, poison. Resist 5 necrotic	
Speed 8; climb 4	
m Jumping Claw (standard; at-will)	
+3 vs. Reflex; 2 damage.	
Digit Slide (move; encounter)	
The crawling claw shifts up to 8 squares.	
Hampering Claws	
A creature that starts its turn adjacent to three or more crawling claws is slowed until the start of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages ---	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 3 (-4) Dex 16 (+3) Wis 10 (0)	
Con 13 (+1) Int 3 (-4) Cha 6 (-2)	

ENCOUNTER 5: CONFRONTING THE HAND MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Hidden Crypts x1

Arcane Corridors x1



ENCOUNTER 6A: SHOWDOWN AT THE DOWN

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 8 / 10 (1600 / 2400 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

1 Commander Berdine Gaelle (B)

2 knight accordant (K)

4 mercykiller recruits (R)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

1 Commander Berdine Gaelle (B)

2 knight accordant (K)

6 mercykiller recruits (R)

The regional language spoken by the Commander and the knights is Chondathan.

Several Hunters have already mustered on the hill when the PCs arrive (place additional recruits on the map as you see fit).

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Three hunters stand by a dozen or more horses. Two have the cowls of their cloaks up, covering their faces. The one whose face you can see, stares at each of you for a moment and then grunts: "The Masters of Vengeance are up the hill. Go see them for instructions. You can leave horses here with us."

Up on the hill are the commander and her best knights. They are waiting for Hethram and several others who usually come join their troupe.

Read the following if the PCs head up the hill.

More hunters are on the top of the hill. You count about twenty; ten of them make up a perimeter guard along the edge of the more or less open space on top of the hill. One powerfully built human woman looks up at you.

"Hold it there. Who are you? What do you want? Better make it quick!"

The woman (Commander Berdine Gaelle) does not state her name to the PCs unless they appear to be there to join up (in which case she welcomes them and states her name as the hunt's commander). She and the other hunters have their hands on their blades.

The hunters seem excited and nervous and some don't look convinced they should be here. Perhaps it is not too late to talk the wavering rank and file out of this madness?

SKILL CHALLENGE: DISBANDING THE HUNTERS

Goal: Convince the recruits to not go out to kill Bokan.

Complexity: 1 (4 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate

Other Skills: Bluff, History, Insight, Religion

Victory: The recruits disband, and do not fight the PCs.

Defeat: The recruits join the hunt and attack the PCs.

The PCs may attempt to negotiate. Berdine and her knights cannot easily be swayed (they do not have the patience for a drawn out discussion that would achieve that), but the recruits may be.

Bluff DC 19 / 20 (1 success, no maximum)

The PC attempts to convince the recruits that Bokan is not working to restore Sessrendale.

Diplomacy DC 19 / 20 (1 success, no maximum)

The PC appeals to the recruits' morals, or explains the true source of the shadow creatures. A follower of Torm gains a +2 bonus on this check.

History DC 14 / 15 (0 success)

The PC restates the history of Sessrendale. This gives no successes but grants a +2 bonus on the next Diplomacy check.

Intimidate DC 19 / 20 (1 success, no maximum)

The PC makes clear that they are more powerful. A failed Intimidate triggers an attack (but it is possible for the skill challenge to continue during the fight if the PCs did not lose it yet).

Insight DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PCs gain insight in the group's dynamics and their fear of Berdine. This provides a +2 bonus on the next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check by this PC.

Religion DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PCs use their knowledge of Hoar to counter the religious fervor that drives the recruits, recounting an old element from Hoar's dogma:

"Walk the line of the Doombringer's teachings, seeking retribution, but do not fall into the trap of pursuing evil acts for

evil's sake, for that way is seductive and leads only to one's downfall."

If a PC makes a hostile move (or fails an Intimidate), or when the PCs either fail or succeed on the challenge, Berdine and her knights attack (without the recruits if the PCs succeeded on the skill challenge). If the skill challenge hasn't ended yet, it is possible to continue it during combat (though each check takes a standard action) - success during the combat means the recruits withdraw from the combat.

Alternatively, if the players like the roleplay, and if PCs put a lot of effort in it, it is possible to continue this challenge try to dissuade the remaining opponents to fight. In that case, the challenge ends after 3 failures are accumulated or a PC fails an Intimidate check. It takes 3 successes for each knight to withdraw, and 6 successes for Berdine (who gives up last).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Once a battle starts, the baelnorn who guard Hunters' Down make their presence known, using their powers to unnerve the combatants. They cause soft wailing to be heard and mist to rise from the pond on the hill.

Illumination: The lighting is normal, due to the torches and the moon.

Torches: Various freestanding torches (x on the map) are spread around the area. These torches provide the area's main illumination. If a torch is doused illumination dims, creating a 1-burst area of dim light.

A torch can be taken and wielded as an improvised weapon that deals 1d6 fire damage.

Wailing: Anyone who is within 5 squares of the pond can hear the wailing. They take a -2 on attacks while in the area of the distracting wailing.

Mist: At end of the first round of combat, a thick mist starts to bellow out of the pond. It covers 1 square in all directions each round, rolling outwards of the pool along the ground. Anyone in the mist feels an unnatural chill. The mist does not reach high enough to affect sight, but it sucks the body warmth from those inside it. Anyone who starts their turn in the mist is slowed (save ends).

Trees: The tree trunks provide cover to those standing in their square.

Underbrush: The underbrush and rocks are hindering terrain.

TACTICS

Berdine is not the kind of controller to stay out of melee combat. She attempts to grab and throw opponents around the battlefield.

The knights initially use their longbows, shifting to their war picks as soon as the PCs come within melee distance. They use their *blue fire spike* as often as possible.

The recruits try to position themselves so they can get several PCs at once with their headman's sweep. If the PCs win the challenge, they surrender, and attempt to withdraw.

The baelnorn do not show a favor to either side at this point, the powers affect everyone equally.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a knight accordant.

Six PCs: Add a knight accordant.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the commanders are persuaded or defeated, the other Hunters swiftly depart from the hill. The mist harmlessly disperses, and the wailing ends. Continue with Encounter 7.

If the PCs attempt to join them to ride out and then sabotage the mission, this may make the fight harder, as more people join up. In that case, continue with Encounter 6B, and adjust accordingly.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

For defeating or disbanding the hunters, each PC gets 320 / 480 xp.

TREASURE

The hunters don't have any treasure worth taking.

ENCOUNTER 6A: SHOWDOWN AT THE DOWN STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Knight Accordant (level 7)	Level 7 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +13	
HP 81; Bloodied 40	
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 16, Will 19	
Speed 5;	
m War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
+14 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 5 plus 3 force damage (critical 1d8 + 13 plus 3 force), and the target is marked.	
R Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 plus 3 force damage, and the target is marked.	
Blue Fire Spike (minor; recharge 3 - 6) ♦ Force	
Until the start of the knight's next turn, the knight's weapons become energy, attacking the target's Reflex instead of AC and dealing an extra 1d10 force damage.	
Knight's Eye (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts or an adjacent enemy marked by the knight attacks an ally; at-will)	
The knight makes a basic melee attack against the enemy.	
Forceful Critical	
On a critical hit with any attack, the target also slides 1 square.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Endurance +10, Intimidate +11	
Str 22 (+10) Dex 12 (+5) Wis 19 (+8)	
Con 17 (+7) Int 10 (+4) Cha 15 (+6)	
Equipment arrow x20, heavy shield, longbow, scale armor, war pick.	

Mercykiller Recruit (level 7)	Level 7 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 75
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +3	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 20; Fortitude 22, Reflex 16, Will 16	
Speed 5 (7 while charging);	
m Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+11 vs. Armor Class; 4 damage	
C Headman's Sweep (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires battleaxe; close burst 1; the target can choose to fall prone as a free action to avoid this attack; +9 vs. Armor Class; 4 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Giant	
Str 22 (+9) Dex 16 (+6) Wis 10 (+3)	
Con 19 (+7) Int 11 (+3) Cha 8 (+2)	
Equipment battleaxe, chainmail, light shield	

Berdine Gaelle (level 8)	Level 8 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +11	
HP 196; Bloodied 98	
AC 24; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 22	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Daggers (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Two attacks; +13 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
r Flick of the Wrist (minor; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +14 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
M Crushing Grab (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).	
M Strangle (standard; at-will)	
Grabbed target only; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 damage. Miss: half damage.	
M Choke and Throw (standard; recharge 5-6)	
+12 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 damage, and the target slides 3 squares, is knocked prone, and is stunned until the end of Berdine's next turn.	
M Quick Counter (immediate reaction, when an enemy misses Berdine with a melee attack; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Berdine makes an attack against that enemy; +13 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)	
Berdine deals an extra 1d6 damage against the next target that he has combat advantage against.	
Quick Draw	
Berdine can draw a weapon as a free action.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Diplomacy +11, Insight +11, Intimidate +13, Stealth +13, Thievery +11	
Str 19 (+8) Dex 17 (+7) Wis 14 (+6)	
Con 18 (+8) Int 12(+5) Cha 15 (+6)	
Equipment: dagger x12, hide armor.	

(based on Rathos Bloodghost, Dragon #366, adapted to apply to a human)

ENCOUNTER 6A: SHOWDOWN AT THE DOWN STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Knight Accordant (level 9)	Level 9 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +14	
HP 97; Bloodied 48	
AC 25; Fortitude 23, Reflex 18, Will 21	
Speed 5;	
m War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
+16 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 6 plus 3 force damage (critical 1d8 + 14 plus 3 force), and the target is marked.	
R Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 1 plus 3 force damage, and the target is marked.	
Blue Fire Spike (minor; recharge 3-6) ♦ Force	
Until the start of the knight's next turn, the knight's weapons become energy, attacking the target's Reflex instead of AC and dealing an extra 1d10 force damage.	
Knight's Eye (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts or an adjacent enemy marked by the knight attacks an ally; at-will)	
The knight makes a basic melee attack against the enemy.	
Forceful Critical	
On a critical hit with any attack, the target also slides 1 square.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Endurance +11, Intimidate +12	
Str 22 (+11) Dex 12 (+6) Wis 19 (+9)	
Con 17 (+8) Int 10 (+5) Cha 15 (+7)	
Equipment arrow x20, heavy shield, longbow, scale armor, war pick.	

Mercykiller Recruit (level 9)	Level 9 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 100
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +4	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 22; Fortitude 23, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Speed 5 (7 while charging);	
m Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+13 vs. Armor Class; 5 damage	
C Headman's Sweep (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires battleaxe; close burst 1; the target can choose to fall prone as a free action to avoid this attack; +11 vs. Armor Class; 5 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Giant	
Str 22 (+10) Dex 16 (+7) Wis 10 (+4)	
Con 19 (+8) Int 11 (+4) Cha 8 (+3)	
Equipment battleaxe, chainmail, light shield	

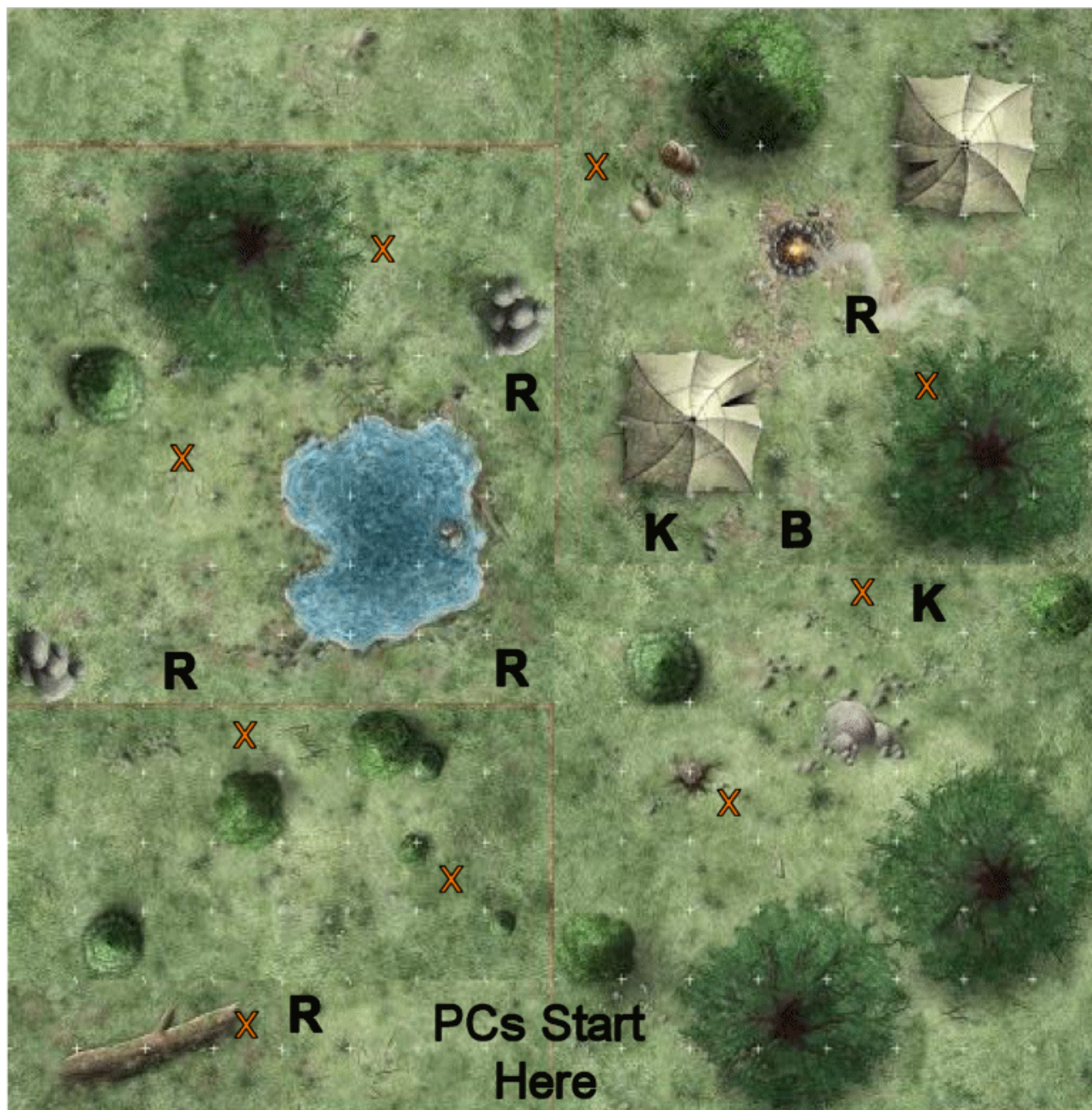
Berdine Gaelle	Level 10 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1000
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +12	
HP 212; Bloodied 106	
AC 26; Fortitude 24, Reflex 23, Will 24	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Daggers (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Two attacks; +15 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
r Flick of the Wrist (minor; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +16 vs. AC; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
M Crushing Grab (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).	
M Strangle (standard; at-will)	
Grabbed target only; +14 vs Fortitude; 2d8+5 damage. Miss: half damage.	
M Choke and Throw (standard; recharge 5-6)	
+14 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target slides 3 squares, is knocked prone, and is stunned until the end of Berdine's next turn.	
M Quick Counter (immediate reaction, when an enemy misses Berdine with a melee attack; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Berdine makes an attack against that enemy; +15 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)	
Berdine deals an extra 1d6 damage against the next target that he has combat advantage against.	
Quick Draw	
Berdine can draw a weapon as a free action.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Diplomacy +12, Insight +12, Intimidate +14, Stealth +14, Thievery +12	
Str 19 (+9) Dex 17 (+8) Wis 14 (+7)	
Con 18 (+9) Int 12 (+6) Cha 15 (+7)	
Equipment: dagger x12, hide armor.	

(based on Rathos Bloodghost, Dragon #366, adapted to apply to a human)

ENCOUNTER 6A: SHOWDOWN AT THE DOWN MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Ruins of the Wild x1



ENCOUNTER 6B: BOKAN'S HOUSE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 8 / 10 (1900 / 2800 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 Commander Berdine Gaelle(B)
- 2 knight accordant (K)
- 8 mercykiller recruits (R)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 Commander Berdine Gaelle (B)
- 2 knight accordant (K)
- 10 mercykiller recruits (R)

The regional language spoken by Commander Berdine Agelle and the knights is Chondathan.

If the PCs arrived here early, they did not find Bokan at home. If they wait, he arrives near dusk, only minutes before the hunters arrive (he hurried home when he spotted a group of hunters approach).

Bokan is a blond man with a large moustache, thin and aging, but yet tough as nails. There is little time to talk to him, as the hunters follow hot on his trail. If asked, Bokan has only enough time to acknowledge that he is researching a way to revive Sessrendale, but that he does not have the means yet - powerful magic is needed to remove the salt in the ground and put the undead to rest.

This encounter starts as the hunters arrive at Bokan's farm (place additional recruits on the map as you see fit).

A large group of people - mostly armed nothing more than sticks, stones, and torches - gather around the farmhouse, shouting in anger. A powerful built woman steps from the crowd. Several armed men follow her.

"Bokan! Come out and face your trial, or burn like all cowards do!"

She nods at the crowd, who hoot, and howl, holding torches high.

The PCs best course is to step out and fight. Boarding up inside the farm is not a good idea - if nobody steps out, Berdine Gaelle has the building set on fire.

Once the PCs step outside (or otherwise let themselves known), Berdine orders them to step away.

This gives the PCs a small window to turn the tide in their favor.

The hunters seem excited and nervous and some don't look convinced they should be here. Perhaps it is not too late to talk the wavering rank and file out of this madness?

SKILL CHALLENGE: DISBANDING THE HUNTERS

Goal: Convince the recruits to not go out to kill Bokan.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate

Other Skills: Bluff, History, Insight

Victory: The recruits disband, and do not fight the PCs.

Defeat: The recruits join the hunt and attack the PCs.

The PCs may attempt to negotiate. Berdine and her knights cannot be swayed (they do not have the patience for a drawn out discussion that would achieve that), but the recruits (and crowd) may be.

Bluff DC 19 / 20 (1 success, no maximum)

The PC attempts to convince the recruits that Bokan is not working to restore Sessrendale.

Diplomacy DC 19 / 20 (1 success, no maximum)

The PC appeals to the recruits' morals, or explains the true source of the shadow creatures. A follower of Torm gains a +2 bonus on this check.

History DC 14 / 15 (0 success)

The PC restates the history of Sessrendale. This gives no successes but grants a +2 bonus on the next Diplomacy check.

Intimidate DC 19 / 20 (1 success, no maximum)

The PC makes clear that they are more powerful. A failed Intimidate triggers an attack (but it is possible for the skill challenge to continue during the fight if the PCs did not lose it yet).

Insight DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PCs gain insight in the group's dynamics and their fear of Berdine. This provides a +2 bonus on the next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check by this PC.

Religion DC 14 / 15 (1 success, 1 maximum)

The PCs use their knowledge of Hoar to counter the religious fervor that drives the recruits, recounting an old element from Hoar's dogma:

“Walk the line of the Doombringer's teachings, seeking retribution, but do not fall into the trap of pursuing evil acts for evil's sake, for that way is seductive and leads only to one's downfall.”

If a PC makes a hostile move (or fails an Intimidate), or when the PCs either fail or succeed on the challenge, Berdine and her knights attack (without the recruits if the PCs succeeded on the skill challenge). If the skill challenge hasn't ended yet, it is possible to continue it during combat (though each check takes a standard action) - success during the combat means the recruits withdraw from the combat, and the crowd effects end.

Alternatively, if the players like the roleplay, and if PCs put a lot of effort in it, it is possible to continue this challenge try to dissuade the remaining opponents to fight. In that case, the challenge ends after 3 failures are accumulated or a PC fails an Intimidate check. It takes 3 successes for each knight to withdraw, and 6 successes for Berdine (who gives up last).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

The following features are found in the area:

Illumination: The lighting is normal, due to the torches, the farmlights, and the moon.

Crowd: The crowd does not engage the PCs directly. However, they throw insults and rocks, and any PC that gets next to the crowd is pushed and shoved.

A PC who starts his turn next to the crowd is grabbed (move action to break free again), and takes a -2 penalty to defenses and attacks. A NPC next to the crowd gains a +2 defense to AC due to cover from the crowd.

Any PC within 5 squares of the crowd is targeted with rocks and insults. At the end of the round, make an attack (+11/+12 vs. AC) to each PC within 5 squares of the crowd. On a hit, a PC is hit by a stray rock and dazed until the end of his next turn.

Crates: The crates are difficult terrain, but they provide cover to those standing in their square.

TACTICS

Berdine is not the kind of controller to stay out of melee combat. She attempts to grab and throw opponents around the battlefield, preferably towards the crowd.

The knights initially use their longbows, shifting to their war picks as soon as the PCs come within melee distance. They use their *blue fire spike* as often as possible. They try move the PCs towards the crowd whenever they can.

The recruits try to position themselves so they can get several PCs at once with their headman's sweep. If

the PCs win the challenge, they surrender, and attempt to withdraw.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove a knight accordant.

Six PCs: Add a knight accordant.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the commanders are persuaded or defeated, the other Hunters swiftly depart. Continue with Encounter 7.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

For defeating or disbanding the hunters, each PC gets 380 / 560 xp.

TREASURE

The hunters don't have any treasure worth taking.

ENCOUNTER 6B: BOKAN'S HOUSE STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Knight Accordant (level 7)	Level 7 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 300
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +13	
HP 81; Bloodied 40	
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 16, Will 19	
Speed 5;	
m War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
+14 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 5 plus 3 force damage (critical 1d8 + 13 plus 3 force), and the target is marked.	
R Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 plus 3 force damage, and the target is marked.	
Blue Fire Spike (minor; recharge 3 - 6) ♦ Force	
Until the start of the knight's next turn, the knight's weapons become energy, attacking the target's Reflex instead of AC and dealing an extra 1d10 force damage.	
Knight's Eye (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts or an adjacent enemy marked by the knight attacks an ally; at-will)	
The knight makes a basic melee attack against the enemy.	
Forceful Critical	
On a critical hit with any attack, the target also slides 1 square.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Endurance +10, Intimidate +11	
Str 22 (+10) Dex 12 (+5) Wis 19 (+8)	
Con 17 (+7) Int 10 (+4) Cha 15 (+6)	
Equipment arrow x20, heavy shield, longbow, scale armor, war pick.	

Mercykiller Recruit (level 7)	Level 7 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 75
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +3	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 20; Fortitude 22, Reflex 16, Will 16	
Speed 5 (7 while charging);	
m Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+11 vs. Armor Class; 4 damage	
C Headman's Sweep (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires battleaxe; close burst 1; the target can choose to fall prone as a free action to avoid this attack; +9 vs. Armor Class; 4 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Giant	
Str 22 (+9) Dex 16 (+6) Wis 10 (+3)	
Con 19 (+7) Int 11 (+3) Cha 8 (+2)	
Equipment battleaxe, chainmail, light shield	

Berdine Gaelle (level 8)	Level 8 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 700
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +11	
HP 196; Bloodied 98	
AC 24; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 22	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Daggers (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Two attacks; +13 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
r Flick of the Wrist (minor; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +14 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
M Crushing Grab (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).	
M Strangle (standard; at-will)	
Grabbed target only; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 damage. Miss: half damage.	
M Choke and Throw (standard; recharge 5-6)	
+12 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 damage, and the target slides 3 squares, is knocked prone, and is stunned until the end of Berdine's next turn.	
M Quick Counter (immediate reaction, when an enemy misses Berdine with a melee attack; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Berdine makes an attack against that enemy; +13 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)	
Berdine deals an extra 1d6 damage against the next target that he has combat advantage against.	
Quick Draw	
Berdine can draw a weapon as a free action.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Diplomacy +11, Insight +11, Intimidate +13, Stealth +13, Thievery +11	
Str 19 (+8) Dex 17 (+7) Wis 14 (+6)	
Con 18 (+8) Int 12(+5) Cha 15 (+6)	
Equipment: dagger x12, hide armor.	

(based on Rathos Bloodghost, Dragon #366, adapted to apply to a human)

ENCOUNTER 6B: BOKAN'S HOUSE STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Knight Accordant (level 9)	Level 9 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +14	
HP 97; Bloodied 48	
AC 25; Fortitude 23, Reflex 18, Will 21	
Speed 5;	
m War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
+16 vs. Armor Class; 1d8 + 6 plus 3 force damage (critical 1d8 + 14 plus 3 force), and the target is marked.	
R Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Force, Weapon	
Ranged 20/40; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 1 plus 3 force damage, and the target is marked.	
Blue Fire Spike (minor; recharge 3-6) ♦ Force	
Until the start of the knight's next turn, the knight's weapons become energy, attacking the target's Reflex instead of AC and dealing an extra 1d10 force damage.	
Knight's Eye (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts or an adjacent enemy marked by the knight attacks an ally; at-will)	
The knight makes a basic melee attack against the enemy.	
Forceful Critical	
On a critical hit with any attack, the target also slides 1 square.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Endurance +11, Intimidate +12	
Str 22 (+11) Dex 12 (+6) Wis 19 (+9)	
Con 17 (+8) Int 10 (+5) Cha 15 (+7)	
Equipment arrow x20, heavy shield, longbow, scale armor, war pick.	

Mercykiller Recruit (level 9)	Level 9 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 100
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +4	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 22; Fortitude 23, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Speed 5 (7 while charging);	
m Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+13 vs. Armor Class; 5 damage	
C Headman's Sweep (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Requires battleaxe; close burst 1; the target can choose to fall prone as a free action to avoid this attack; +11 vs. Armor Class; 5 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Giant	
Str 22 (+10) Dex 16 (+7) Wis 10 (+4)	
Con 19 (+8) Int 11 (+4) Cha 8 (+3)	
Equipment battleaxe, chainmail, light shield	

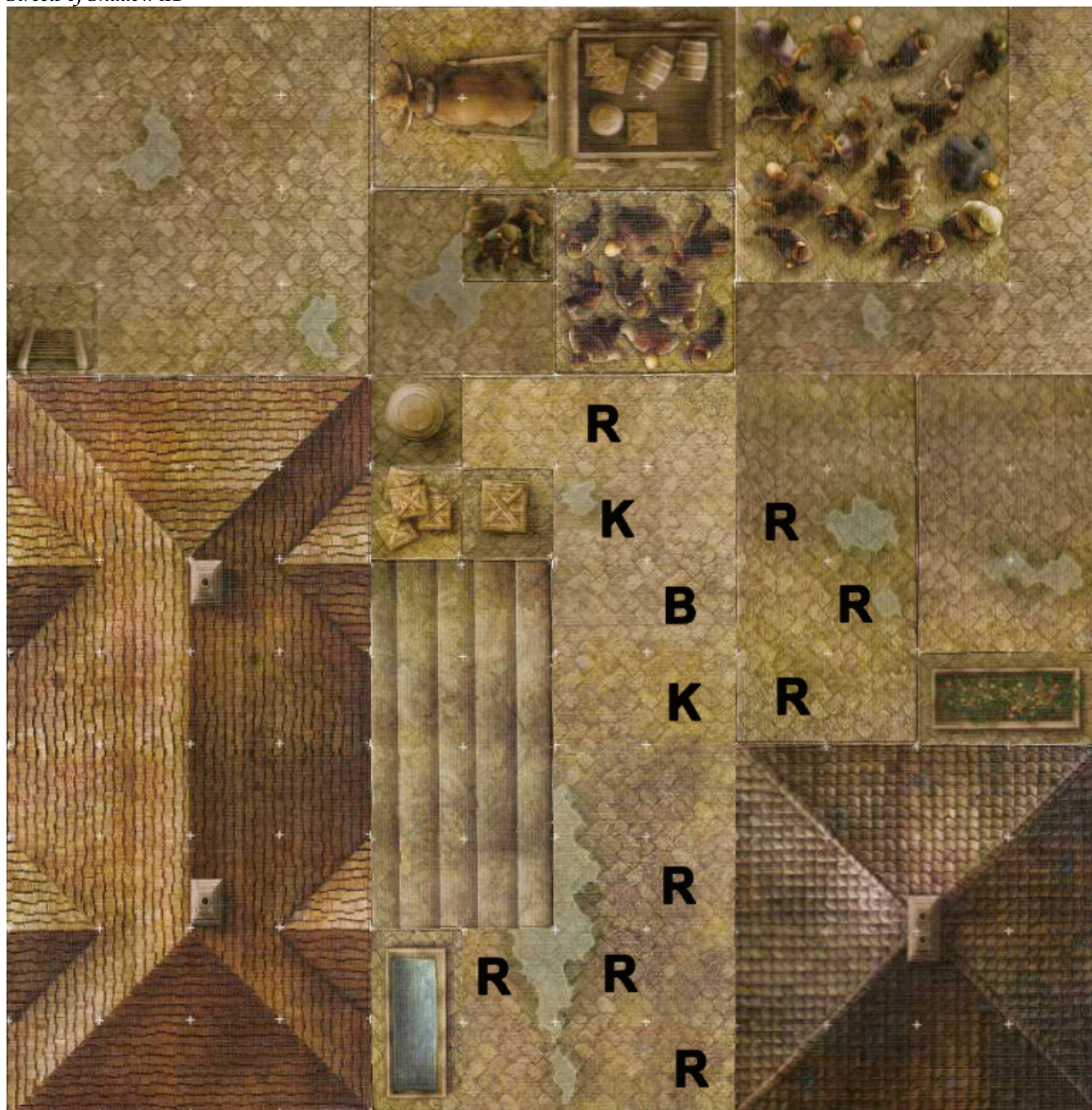
Berdine Gaelle	Level 10 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1000
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +12	
HP 212; Bloodied 106	
AC 26; Fortitude 24, Reflex 23, Will 24	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Daggers (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Two attacks; +15 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
r Flick of the Wrist (minor; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 6/12; +16 vs. AC; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
M Crushing Grab (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).	
M Strangle (standard; at-will)	
Grabbed target only; +14 vs Fortitude; 2d8+5 damage. Miss: half damage.	
M Choke and Throw (standard; recharge 5-6)	
+14 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target slides 3 squares, is knocked prone, and is stunned until the end of Berdine's next turn.	
M Quick Counter (immediate reaction, when an enemy misses Berdine with a melee attack; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Berdine makes an attack against that enemy; +15 vs. Armor Class; 1d4 + 6 damage.	
Predatory Eye (minor; encounter)	
Berdine deals an extra 1d6 damage against the next target that he has combat advantage against.	
Quick Draw	
Berdine can draw a weapon as a free action.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, one regional language	
Skills: Diplomacy +12, Insight +12, Intimidate +14, Stealth +14, Thievery +12	
Str 19 (+9) Dex 17 (+8) Wis 14 (+7)	
Con 18 (+9) Int 12 (+6) Cha 15 (+7)	
Equipment: dagger x12, hide armor.	

(based on Rathos Bloodghost, Dragon #366, adapted to apply to a human)

ENCOUNTER 6B: BOKAN'S HOUSE MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Streets of Shadow x1



ENCOUNTER 7: CONCLUSION

This event occurs once the PCs have defeated the Hunters.

A pale being shimmers into view, an elf with pale skin, stretched like parchment over its bones. Its white eyes burn into you as if it looks straight into your soul.

“This is not a beginning,” it says. “But neither is it the end.”

A DC 27 Religion check identifies this being as a baelnorn, an eladrin lich (generally non-evil guardians of eladrin tombs). A DC 15 Insight check realizes it is an apparition – an illusion – not a real creature. It is not really possible to see if it is male or female.

The baelnorn sending the apparition comes from the Down. It is not here to fight. If attacked, it takes no actions for one round except to frown at the childish display. If PCs continue to attack, it disappears.

The PCs can ask it questions, and it can give any answer that can be found in this adventure. In addition, it relates the following (even if not asked for it):

A darkness has been released. Find the man Byar, who lives with the man Bokan, who is the object of your quest.

Ask him about the shadows, to find a deeper darkness at the heart of these troubles.

If the PCs destroyed the hand, and found the relic, it states:

To keep the ring is a mean task, quite some responsibility. Best to destroy it’s powers, lest it falls in evil hands... think close before you keep it, because even as it can aid in dark days ahead, it also darkens the soul.

If the PCs wish to destroy it, but don’t know how, the baelnorn offers to destroy it for them. If the PCs throw it in the pond at the Down, it is dealt with.

Once he has stated his message and the PCs don’t have questions, the baelnorn departs, leaving a final message:

People will forget this happened quickly, as they are bound to forget and learn. Yet, not everything that was forgotten stays forgotten.

When those who were forgotten are remembered, the final war begins.

It then fades away.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The PCs can confront Byar, who relates his story (see the handout). They then have the option to return to Highmoon or White Ford to bring out report and claim their rewards.

If they choose to destroy the ring, by tossing it in the pond at the Down, it disappears in a flash of radiant fire as it hits the water (divination rituals confirm that it has been destroyed).

They can also talk to Bokan, but he doesn’t have much to share. His ideas for reviving Sessrendale require powerful arcane, primordial, and divine magic. He is yet looking into what magic he needs, exactly – let alone acquiring it. Sessrendale will stay a dead dale for quite some time.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

If the PCs confronted Byar and had him tell his story (or if they did so in Encounter 3B), and if they also have the story awards **DALE6 Byar’s Seven** and **DALE12 Byar’s Seven**, they earn 350 / 500 xp for completing the major quest: Byar’s Seven.

TREASURE

The PCs gain 100 / 1250 gp from either Captain Borgat Fierceblade or Moonlady Shava Enathuin, for finding the cause of the shadow creature problem.

In addition, Captain Borgat Fierceblade rewards the PCs with a *medallion of death deferred* +2.

Moonlady Shava Enathuin on the other hand, offers the PCs a *cloak of survival* +2.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs confronted Byar and had him tell his story, and if they also have the story awards **DALE06 Byar’s Seven** and **DALE12 Byar’s Seven**, they gain **DALE13 Byar’s Seven**.

If they found the ring, anyone who decided to keep it gains **DALE14 Vengeance is Mine**. Anyone else, who was at least present when the baelnorn arrived, gains **DALE15 Recognition of the Downs**.

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 1: Forest Ambush

310 / 440 XP

Encounter 4A: Hethram's Hideout

120 / 160 XP

Encounter 4B: Hetheram's Hideout - Trap

60 / 80 XP

Encounter 5: Confronting the Hand

310 / 440 XP

Encounter 6A: Showdown at the Down

320 / 480 XP

Encounter 6B: Bokan's House

380 / 560 XP

Major Quest: Byar's Seven

350 / 500 XP

Total Possible Experience

1470 / 2100 XP

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They

receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

Gold per PC

150 / 200 gp

(Encounter 5: 50 / 75 gp; Encounter 7: 100 / 125 gp)

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *divine retribution armor +2** (low-level version only) (level 8)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle B: *drow house insignia +3** (high-level version only) (level 12)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle C: *+2 symbol of vengeance** (level 9)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle D: *blackshroud weapon +2** (level 10)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle E: *medallion of death deferred +2** (level 9)

Found in Encounter 7, given by Captan Borgat Fierceblade

Bundle F: *cloak of survival +2* (level 9)

Found in Encounter 7, given by Moonlady Shava Enathuin

Bundle G: ritual scroll of Signal of Pursuit

Found in Encounter 5

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *potion of healing* plus 300 / 450 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle.

Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 350 / 500 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. Normally, if a PC earns three awards, they may only have 2 of them and must pick which two they want before ending the session (exceptions to this will be noted in the story award text).

DALE13 Byar's Seven

You have reunited Byar of Purl, Sureen Tevernesta, Dorrington Brightaxe and Swift Elyan, members of the adventuring group known as Byar's Seven.

While their resources are limited, they have their share of influence, and can arrange for shelter and safe haven any time you travel the western Dalelands (Daggerdale, Shadowdale, Mistledale, and Deepingdale). If the Dalelands is your home region, they can arrange contacts that may help you to set up a business, such as a tavern, stable, farm, shop or other minor enterprise in one of these dales. While this does not generate any significant income, ties to the region may be of aid in future adventures.

Byar's tale may not yet be done – the consequences of their misadventure yet affect the Dalelands, and his experiences may be key to resolving the problem.... but that is another tale.

DALE14 Vengeance is Mine

You have obtained a mysterious ring, referred to as the *ring of blue shadows*. While it acts as a *holy symbol of vengeance* (taking up the holy symbol slot as normal when worn), you know it has other properties. Perhaps in the future, these will be revealed... for good or bad. In the mean time, the baelnorn of Hunters' Down watch your every step.

This story award is only available if you decided to keep the *holy symbol of vengeance* as a treasure bundle. If you ever lose or sell the *holy symbol of vengeance*, this story award goes away. You can upgrade the *holy symbol of vengeance* as normal, without consequences.

DALE15 Recognition of the Down's

The baelnorn of Hunters' Down see in you destiny. They watch your every step, now that your fates have been interwoven with theirs. In the future, they may aid you – provided you further their goals.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

1. Did the PCs manage to prevent the Hunters to find and kill Bokan?

- a. Yes, they stopped them at Hunters' Down
- b. Yes, they stopped them at Bokan's Farm
- c. No

2. Did the PCs capture the hand and ring?

- a. No
- b. Yes, and they destroyed the ring
- c. Yes, and they gave the ring away
- d. Yes, and a PC kept the ring

3. If the PCs captured Hethram, what did they do with him?

- a. Killed him.
- b. Brought him to White Ford
- c. Brought him to Highmoon
- d. Set him free.
- e. Brought him to Hunters' Down

4. Did the PCs meet Byar?

- a. Yes, but nobody had the mayor quest
- b. Yes, and they completed the mayor quest
- c. No

NEW RULES

MAGIC ITEMS

Divine Retribution Armor

Level 3+

When you are hit, the divine power imbuing the links of this armor flares and empowers your attacks against those that harm you.

Lvl 3 +1 680 gp	Lvl 18 +4 85,000 gp
Lvl 8 +2 3,400 gp	Lvl 23 +5 425,000 gp
Lvl 13 +3 17,000 gp	Lvl 28 +6 2,125,000 gp

Armor: Chain

Enhancement: AC

Power (Daily): Immediate Reaction. Trigger: An enemy hits you with a melee or a close attack. Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a bonus to damage rolls against the triggering enemy equal to the armor's enhancement bonus.

Reference: *Player's Handbook 2*

Drow House Insignia

Level 12+

This amulet is expertly carved to display the insignia of a drow noble house.

Lvl 12 +3 13,000 gp	Lvl 22 +5 325,000 gp
Lvl 17 +4 65,000 gp	Lvl 27 +6 1,625,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: Gain an item bonus equal to the enhancement bonus to Intimidate checks when dealing with drow or spiders.

Power (Daily): Minor Action. Your form wavers and shifts, making you hard to see. You gain an item bonus equal to the amulet's enhancement bonus to Stealth checks and gain concealment until the end of the encounter.

Reference: *Demon Queen Enclave*

Medallion of Death Deferred

Level 9+

This distinctive talisman holds the icy grip of death in check.

Lvl 9 +2 4,200 gp	Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Lvl 14 +3 21,000 gp	Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp
Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp	

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Power (Daily): No Action. Use this power when you are reduced to 0 hit points or fewer. You regain hit points equal to 3 per plus of this item.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*

Symbol of Vengeance

Level 4+

This symbol allows you to exact your wrath upon enemies, returning their attacks with devastation.

Lvl 4 +1 840 gp	Lvl 19 +4 105,000 gp
Lvl 9 +2 4,200 gp	Lvl 24 +5 525,000 gp
Lvl 14 +3 21,000 gp	Lvl 29 +6 2,625,000 gp

Implement (Holy Symbol)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Power (Daily): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with an attack using this holy symbol. If the target of your attack dealt

damage to you or an ally since the end of your last turn, you deal an extra 1d8 damage. If the target of your attack reduced you or an ally to 0 or fewer hit points since the end of your last turn, you instead deal an extra 2d8 damage.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*

RITUALS

Signal of Pursuit

Level 8

As you attune your senses to the portal, you know that the next time someone steps through it, you will be able to learn everything about their identity.

Category: Divination

Time: 1 minute

Duration: 1 hour

Component Cost: 125 gp

Market Price: 680 gp

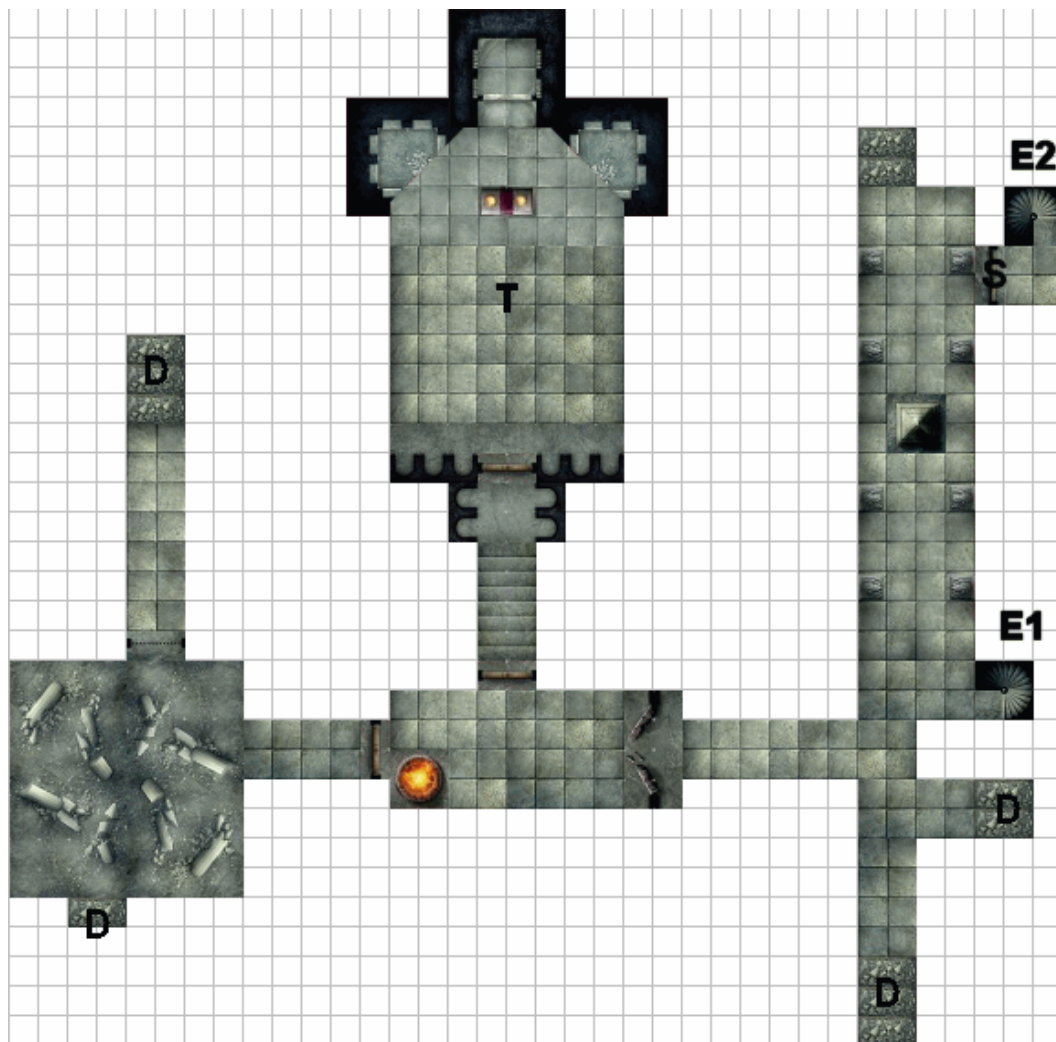
Key Skill: Arcana

You enchant a door within 5 squares of where you complete the ritual. The next time that door is opened, you know, as long as you are on the same plane. Depending on your Arcana check result, you can learn more.

Optional Focus: If you leave a small crystal model of the door worth at least 100 gp within 5 squares of the affected door, the ritual's duration becomes permanent as long as the model remains within 5 squares of the door.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*

APPENDIX 1: TEMPLE RUINS OVERVIEW



- E1: Main entrance
- E2: Second (hidden) entrance
- S: Secret door
- D: Dead ends
- T: Temple (encounter 5)

APPENDIX 2: LOCATIONS AND ORGANISATIONS

Below are various locations and organizations which the PCs may encounter or hear about in this adventure. PCs may learn the information contained either through their own means (through knowledge checks), or by scouring the library at the Leaves of Learning in Highmoon.

PCs who take their time (several hours) can find all the information below. For a quick browse of the library, they can make the skill check with a +4 item bonus from the library.

SESSRENDALE (THE DEAD DALE)

Located west of Deepingdale, this abandoned dale lacks all, life, and now only harbors undead.

A History check reveals the following:

DC 10: The Dead Dale was once a dale like the others in the Dalelands. Archendale invaded it hundreds of years ago because the people wronged them. After killing or driving off the inhabitants, the soil was strewn with salt. Nothing grows there now, hence its name.

DC 20: The Dead Vale used to be known as Sessrendale. Although Archendale claims it was a retributive invasion, the surrounding nations did not agree. The bonds with the other dales, Cormyr and Sembia were strained during that time. It is commonly believed that this incident is one of the main reasons why the people of Archendale are so strong headed and aggressive even today.

DC 30: Sessrendale was a small, vigorous, fast-growing dale community of Arkhen-folk who'd moved out of Archendale after recurring clashes and disagreements with the authoritarian rulership there. The Sessrar were guilty of being a threatening rival to Archendale far more than they were guilty of any fell evil, and although Archendale invaded and destroyed Sessrendale, doing so broke all trust any other Dalefolk, and the governments of Cormyr and Sembia, may have had in Archendale, and condemned it to being disliked, feared, and largely shunned by all, to slowly wither in isolation.

DC 35: The Dead Dale is now haunted by the spectres of those who died there. The undead are led by a creature referred to as the Dusk Lord, a cowed spectre of considerable might.

THE HUNTERS OF VENGEANCE

This organization of vigilantes has a strong following in Archendale.

A Religion check reveals the following:

DC 15: This informal order of bounty hunters and vigilantes, known as the Hunters of Vengeance, enacts Torm's will through Hoar. The inhabitants of Archendale are known for their short tempers, grudges, arrogance, and love of intrigue—quite a few Arkhen worship the Doombringer

DC 20: For centuries, a small cult of Hoar has dwelled in a temple fortress shrouded in the depths of the Arch Wood. They are known as the Hidden hand of Fate and believed to be the directing force behind the Hand of Vengeance.

DC 30: The Hunters of Vengeance enact what they believe to be Torm's will through the retributive hand of Hoar. Several recent events have led sages and priests to believe Hoar might be serving another master now. Who is not clear yet.

HUNTERS' DOWN

This location is a famous hill north east of Highmoon.

A History checks reveals the following about Hunters' Down:

DC 15: The hill of Hunters' Down is a landmark used by many to navigate the forest lanes north-east of Highmoon. Deepingfolk and outlanders alike use it as a meeting place.

DC 20: It is named for a long-ago battle in which human hunters died in a last stand atop the hill against a bugbear host. This hill has seen many confrontations between eladrin waiting for other eladrin and woodcutters waiting for their fellows, and between members of rival bands of adventurers.

DC 25: Originally, the hill is an ancient eladrin barrow tomb of the dead from a great battle in the Searing, the first bitter war between rival eladrin and elf kingdoms in the region. The Searing weakened the Fair Folk so much that they could not hurl back the humans who later invaded the Dragon Reach lands.

DC 30: Fey queen Ulesse Chamaranthe and a few of her elves survived the Searing. They became the baelnorn who guarded the Down through the passing ages, and still guard it today.

HANDOUT: BYAR'S SEVEN

The following is the tale of Byar's Seven, according to Byar of Purl:

- Byar is an Arkaiun, a human race that lives south of the Shaar. In his early days he was a pirate in Purl. He took up adventuring when he saved Swift Elyan, a female halfling, from being mugged.
- They soon traveled north, where they met Dorrington Brightaxe, a dwarf from Earthheart.
- The three formed various adventuring groups over the years, with varying success. The last group was formed a year ago, when Byar accepted a mission from a man in Melvaunt.
- The man, Lubeq, posed as a human merchant. Byar suspected the man had ties with the drow, due to the lore the man knew. Still, Byar needed a success, so he accepted the mission.
- The mission was to explore the dungeons under Semberholme. According to Lubeq, these held hidden portals to long lost eladrin and elven vaults, which held much treasure. Certain keys would open these portals. Lubeq knew some of these keys and their instructions. The hope was that a key would unlock a portal and grant access to one of the hidden treasure vaults.
- The mission was dangerous, as the elves would not like the exploration of these dungeons, but Lubeq's tales were too good to be ignored. Byar now regrets that he took up the offer.
- The first person they hired was a Malarite priestess, Sureen Tevernesta.
- Byar liked Sureen - in fact, he liked her a lot. Elyan hated her, for some reason - and not just her association with the beast lord. Dorrington didn't warm up to her either. Despite that, Sureen was accepted, and she soon became Byar's lover.
- Sureen brought in Mikon Nahan, a wizard with a fascination for fire, and his apprentice, Ainell, who seemed smarter than her mentor. Byar later found out that Ainell was Sureen's cousin.
- Finally, Lubeq insisted he would join the mission. Byar didn't like it much, but as he had the money and was the only one who knew the keys, he couldn't be left behind.
- The travel to Semberholme proved troublesome. The party drew the attention of the elves, and what should have been a reconnaissance mission led to an ongoing string of skirmishes, until the party made a desperate escape, deeper into the underdark of Semberholme.
- There Sureen, unwittingly, triggered a portal, sending the group into the depths of the earth.
- What they found was not a vault - nor treasure. Instead, they found a nightmarish place, filled with shadows and undead, a dark twisted maze that changed with every step, and a complex of tunnels that seeped the life out of them. Worse: the way back was closed, as the portal was one way.
- The dungeon turned Nazhan insane. He turned on the group, and they killed him in self-defense.
- Lubeq, who was blamed for the mishap, as he had withheld information, fell to shadows. He rose as one of them, and the group was forced to flee before they could lay his soul to rest.
- The group finally found a hall, filled with mirrors. Ainell claimed the mirrors held magical portals, but before she could explain, the group was attacked, and Ainell was dragged off. When the party refused to go after her, Sureen flew in a rage, and in her frustration shattered one of the mirrors.
- The mirror exploded in a hundred shards blazing with darkfire, which embedded themselves in her body, wounding her gravely and knocking her out. However, the blow did seem to have opened a gate.
- After some debate, the group took the risk and left through the portal.
- The portal dropped them in the woods of Cormanthor. Expecting to be close to Semberholme, Elyan and Dorrington wanted to leave as soon as possible, and desired to leave the dying Sureen behind.
- There was an argument, and for the first time in years, the group split up. Elyan and Dorrington went east, while Byar carried Sureen west.
- Shortly after, a group of ettercaps attacked them, and Byar was driven back while the fey took Sureen with them. While able to fight them off, Byar had been poisoned, and when pursued fell unconscious.
- He would have died had Bokan not found him, and brought him back to Deepingdale.
- Byar blames himself for Sureen's death due to his inability to protect her, and regrets the harsh words that fell between him and his friends, Elyan or Dorrington. He fears there is nothing he can do about it now.