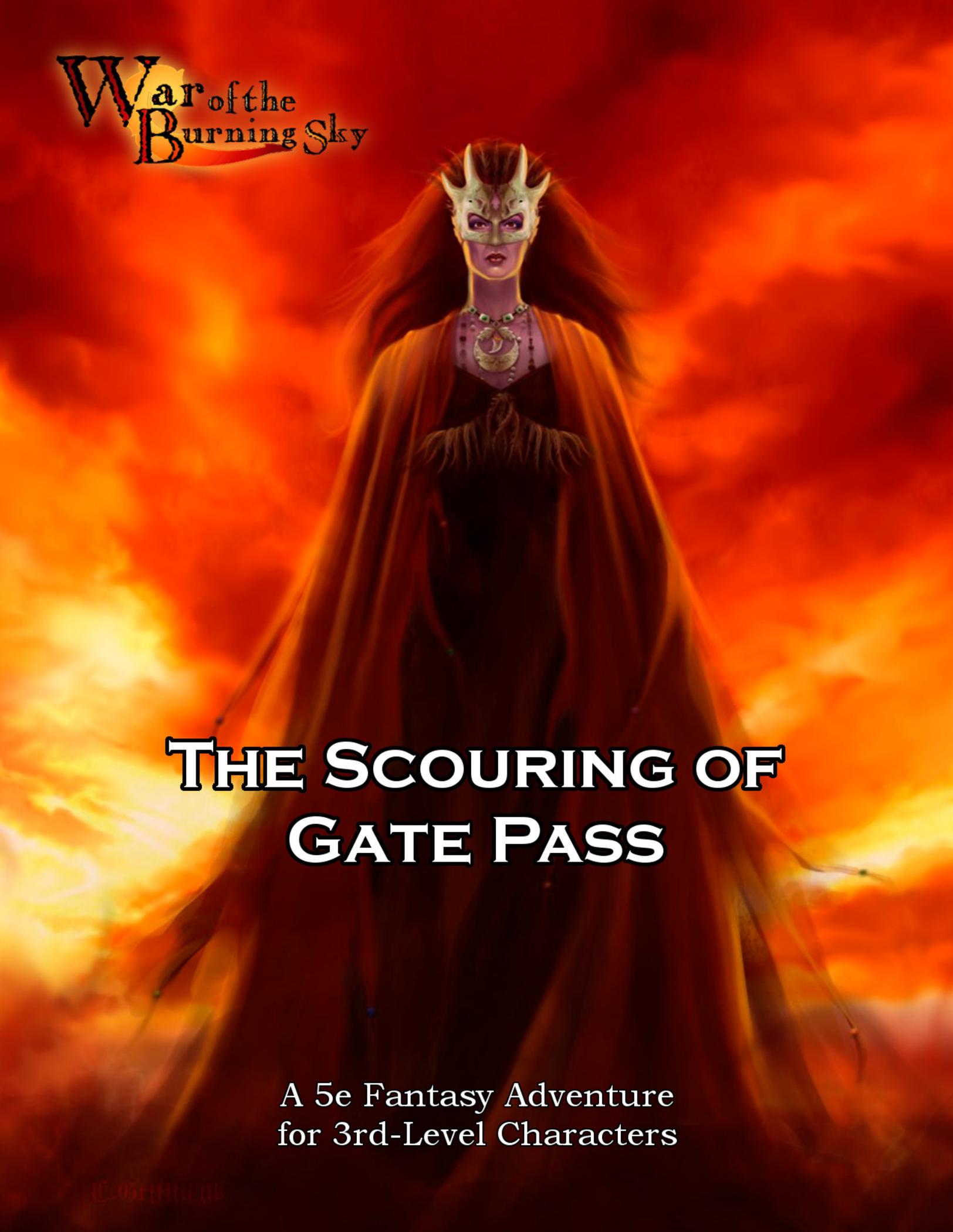


War of the
Burning Sky



THE SCOURING OF GATE PASS

A 5e Fantasy Adventure
for 3rd-Level Characters

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On the Cover
Cris Griffin heralds the arrival of Supreme Inquisitor
Leska with fiery clouds symbolizing the burning sky.



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INTRODUCTION

It is New Year's Eve, and near midnight on this frigid evening the heroes gather in a small condemned tavern in the Free City-state of Gate Pass. Located in the mountain pass which separates two hostile nations — Ragesia and Shahalesti — Gate Pass has been neutral since the end of their last war, but now from Ragesia a scourge comes for the city.

By now, every magic-user in Gate Pass knows of the Scourge. The Emperor of Ragesia died barely a month ago, and in a move to cement herself as the next emperor of Ragesia, Leska, leader of the Ragesian inquisitors, has decreed that all disloyal users of magic — arcane or divine — are to be tracked down and killed, to prevent future threats to the empire.

To carry out Leska's command, the inquisitors, clerics specialized in countermagic, travel with military escorts to the borders of Ragesia. Their first target is Gate Pass, its neutrality long viewed as an insult to the nation's honor. Those who resist them will have to face the searing power of the Ragesian Empire.

An entire army marches for Gate Pass, and the people of the city fear that they will not be able to resist the might of the Ragesian military. The city leaders are bowing under pressure, and have barred the exit from the city, intending to welcome the inquisitors that come with the army, for they foolishly hope that the Ragesians will reward their cooperation with mercy.

A local resistance movement, devoted to keeping both the Ragesians and the Shahalesti out of the city, has gathered vital military intelligence, and they need messengers to deliver the information to allies at a distant magic academy. With all their strongest warriors preparing to hold back the Ragesian assault, this vital mission falls to a party of inexperienced heroes — the player characters.

The Ragesian army is nearly at Gate Pass's doorstep, so time is short. The war is about to begin.

Welcome to the first adventure in the *War of the Burning Sky* campaign saga. Throughout the course of the campaign saga, a party of heroes will become involved in an escalating war between mighty magical nations, and after many adventures, military battles, and mysterious intrigue, it will be up to them to decide who will emerge victorious and rule in the aftermath.

GATE PASS

The Free City-state of Gate Pass lies in a mountain pass stretching many miles west to east, though it is seldom more than a mile wide north to south. Forty years ago Coaltongue conquered Gate Pass. Over two years a resistance formed against the Ragesians until Coaltongue decide the city was not worth it and allowed the citizens to negotiate for their city to be neutral ground between Ragesia and Shahalesti. Because of the strategic location and need for defense, the city is a fortress built in patchwork over many decades. High walls surround Gate Pass on all sides, and the city is divided into fourteen districts, each separated by a wall with a well-defended gate. A single main road stretches through the city — the Emelk Way — passing through each district and gate.

Because of cramped space, nearly every building in the city rises at least two stories, and in wealthier districts skybridges connect clusters of buildings owned by rich merchants. Walking under a gate is generally seen as good luck in the city — people view the arches created by skybridges as gateways.

In the center of the city, at its highest point, is the Grand Square, where 40 years ago the emperor of Ragesia erected a statue of himself 90 feet tall. When the city drove out the Ragesians they kept the statue as a trophy, and it is the victim of regular defacement.

Gate Pass and the Scourge

The city is torn by the current events. Many magic-users provide useful services to the community, helping defense and construction, healing the sick, and presiding over religious services. However, when given the choice between being conquered and handing over their neighbors, most of Gate Pass is more interested in protecting the greater good, which as they see it means protecting themselves.

Indeed, many in the city have grown to resent the city's magic-users for being the cause of their problems, to the point that the city council has decreed that magic-users should turn themselves over to the city guard, and no one is being allowed to leave the city unless on official business.

Most citizens of Gate Pass are hostile to magic-users. Under orders from the city council, the city guard is to take any magic-user they find into custody, and deliver them to a temporary holding facility in a repurposed mansion in the city center.



The city guard will generally attempt to subdue, only dealing lethal damage to those who do so first.

The major exceptions are Gabal and his wizard's school. Gabal and his red-robed students have publicly and angrily criticized the city for their cowardice, and have vowed to resist any attempt to remove them, be it by Ragesia or Gate Pass. Gabal was a hero in the original resistance against Ragesia forty years ago, and he insists that Ragesia intends to conquer Gate Pass for good. He has proclaimed Leska's inquisitors to be a "Scourge" against all users of magic, and such is his sway that the term has caught on among the common citizens.

Most inhabitants of the city believe (or at least claim to believe) that the Scourge is only intended to capture those responsible for killing the late Emperor Coaltongue, and that those who pose no threat to Ragesia will be left unharmed. Thus, many think Gabal is simply a troublemaker who wants a fight so he can relive the glory days of his youth. However, the city guard has so far chosen to let Gabal and his students do as they will, afraid of their power.

Weather

Since the city is in the middle of winter, if you intend to use rules for exposure and cold weather dangers, consider giving every character a free cold weather

outfit, which grants advantage on Constitution saving throws to avoid a level of exhaustion from exposure to extreme cold. Otherwise, it's safe to assume that there are enough buildings with fires keeping them warm that will welcome someone out of the cold for a few minutes, so that the PCs don't simply die from exposure while traveling through the city.

Combat in the Streets

Snow melts under the constant traffic throughout the city, making the roads icy, slushy or otherwise unpleasant in a wintry way. The streets are difficult terrain, and Dexterity checks and saving throws are made with disadvantage. Attempting to Dash down a street requires a DC 11 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Failure by 3 or less means the character cannot Dash but can still take a different action. Failure by 4 or more means the character falls and is prone. Alleys and rooftops receive less traffic, so the snow is fresher, not requiring Dexterity checks except on uneven surfaces, but incurring disadvantage to Dexterity (Stealth) checks.



Interdistrict Gates

A typical gate between districts is guarded by twenty soldiers (LN [thug](#)), two officers (LN [veteran](#)), and a gatekeeper (LN [commoner](#), [Insight +4](#), [Investigation +4](#), [Perception +4](#)) during the day, or sixteen soldiers and one officer after sunset. At any given time, eight of these soldiers walk the walls, making a full circuit every half hour to an hour, depending on the length of the wall, after which they swap out with one of the guards in the gate house. The rest of the guards stay in the gate house, a three-story structure built above and around the gate itself. Guards come from many races, though humans and half-orcs are most common.

Generally, people moving through the city, whether they are residents or visitors, can pass between districts without being accosted by gate guards. Most of the gate guards aren't eager to deal with spellcasters at all, and prefer to turn a blind eye to anything less than blatant signs of wrongdoing. However, if the party seems too cavalier about the danger they're in, it would be fair for a suspicious gatekeeper to demand to inspect their belongings, looking for spell components. The guards might try to extort a bribe, but they won't pursue spellcasters

who flee.

The Gates

The easternmost and westernmost districts are much more carefully protected. Dozens of soldiers, officers, and legitimate fighters and rogues watch these crenelated walls, armed with heavy crossbows and a variety of melee weapons. The main gates have two sets of doors that must be passed through to enter or exit the city. The kill zone between the gates is enchanted with an effect similar to the *see invisibility*, while a walled courtyard just inside the gates has a magical effect similar to the *detect magic* spell. Sneaking out of the city through these gates is all but impossible, and these guards will apprehend any magic-users trying to leave the city.

For details on the north and south gates, see their [description](#) in Act Three.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The heroes' main goal in *The Scouring of Gate Pass* is to get a cleric named **Torrent** out of a city under siege before a group of mage-hunting inquisitors arrive and begin capturing and killing spellcasters. Before they can leave, though, Torrent needs the

heroes to help her retrieve vital military intelligence from one of the rebellion's spies. However, spies from Shahalesti have already captured the contact, and the heroes will have to track down their base of operations in an elvish ghetto, all while the city is under attack.

Even after retrieving the information, simply walking out of the city is not an option, so the heroes will have to call upon allies in the city, most likely going to a sympathetic city councilman, or receiving aid from a cocky wizard. While they seek a way out of the guarded walls of the city, the heroes are constantly followed by a group of mercenaries hired to capture them. Once the heroes make it out of the city, they must defeat the mercenary commander and his men, who have laid a gauntlet along the one safe road.

Finally, the heroes head for the edge of the Innenotdar Fire Forest, a dangerous passage where Torrent thinks they can evade pursuit. At the border of the Innenotdar Fire Forest, however, they come across a hermit and his daughter. The daughter asks their help to convince her father to flee, but just as they are ready to depart, a Ragesian inquisitor, sent

ENCOUNTERS, RESTING, AND LEVELS

As level 1 characters are essentially paper mâché, this starting adventure is designed for level 3 PCs. Because this adventure was converted from an earlier edition, experience points and advancing levels do not line up. Instead of giving experience points, we recommend advancing the PCs to level 4 at the end of this adventure.

At several points in the adventure, the PCs have an opportunity to take a risk to help someone or solve a problem without combat. While the original adventure awarded ad-hoc experience, awarding inspiration to the PCs that contribute is one option to reward their actions instead of using experience points.

The encounters are balanced for a party of 4 PCs. Each encounter has a suggestion for how to adjust the number of creatures if your party is larger or smaller than 4 PCs. NPC participation can also make encounters easier. For instance, if Torrent's participation is making encounters too easy, you can consider her as an extra PC for the purpose of re-balancing the encounters.

Finally, the party is on a timetable. Between the Ragesian army, Shahalesti spies, and bounty hunters, the party needs to get Torrent and the case out of the city. They realistically have time for 1 long rest inside Gate Pass, 1 long rest outside Gate Pass (probably before the gauntlet), and 1 long rest at the end of the adventure.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

If you are running this episode as a standalone adventure, you can have the heroes escort the courier and her message to any organization you want them to become involved with for the rest of your campaign. You may want to change some of the encounters, since several of them are designed to hint at events that take place later in the saga. The majority of the encounters can work fine as is, however, just providing local color.

The Campaign Guide provides information to help you work the events of the saga into your own setting, offers suggestions for getting the characters involved in the adventures, and gives you an idea of what lies further down the road.

on a special mission to kill the hermit, arrives and attempts to capture them all.

If they survive, the adventure ends with the heroes preparing to enter the fire forest, the passage through which is detailed in the next adventure, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*.

CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

The easiest way to motivate characters to be involved in the adventure is for them to be part of the same resistance group that Torrent works with. People from any neighboring nation would have a reason to want to keep Ragesia and Shahalesti from going to war, so it is easy to justify any sort of character. Characters who are part of the rebellion would have been given orders simply to help Torrent, whose mission is a secret, though their superiors would have told them to trust her.

Characters could be natives of Gate Pass who want to protect their city. The player's guide contains a selection of bonus features that you can grant characters if they are associated with a group inside the city. All of these groups have the welfare of the city in mind and want to help Torrent and her message reach Lyceum safely. A PC associated with one of these groups might have been recruited by a resistance member, and told to meet Torrent.

Traveling PCs simply looking to get far from the war might have tracked down the resistance and been told they can earn safe passage if they join the mission. Or, for a sinister twist, a PC might be a spy for an enemy nation, sent to infiltrate Lyceum. Magic users of any sort would have a great stake in escaping the city. In general, the players and characters should understand what the initial meaning of "the Scourge" is before the game begins.

ACT ONE: THE SECRET MEETING

The heroes have been told to meet Torrent at the Poison Apple Pub a little before midnight on New Year's Eve, and to use the alley door. The pub has been closed down since its owner was arrested, but Torrent got permission from the owner's wife to use the building for the evening. Despite the rather dire circumstances, she doesn't want the new year to arrive without some sort of celebration, so she has drinks available for when the heroes arrive.

The people of the city know an army is on the way, so the streets are fairly deserted and normal festivities muted, letting the heroes travel unmolested. The pub is in a poorer district a little over a mile from the western city wall, filled with slush covered cobblestone streets and dark, snow-filled alleyways. The evening is dark and claustrophobic, the multistory buildings of the city looming in the night, no lights in most windows.

The pub is a two-story building attached by a rooftop bridge to a neighboring house. The door and windows are boarded up, and the curtains drawn (though a faint light can be seen if someone checks closely). A notice has been posted on its door:

Trehan Finner, owner of the Poison Apple Pub, has been taken into temporary custody under the protection of the city guard, until such time that he can be questioned by representatives of the Ragesian Empire, and found innocent of hostile collusion.

The Poison Apple Pub is hereby closed until further notice.

The adjacent building connected by the bridge is the Finner residence, currently unoccupied. Down the street from the pub is a stable where the heroes can leave mounts, and the heroes have been told to enter through a side alley entrance to avoid being seen. The door is locked and requires a DC 19 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to unlock, but if they knock, Torrent opens the door a crack a few moments later. After checking to make sure it's safe, she lets them in, gesturing casually to a table where she has set up a lamp, a map, several mugs, and a small keg of beer.

"Thanks for coming," she says. "Have a drink. Just because we're bout to go to war doesn't mean we can't celebrate the new year."



THE MISSION

The darkened pub is mostly empty now, its many tables and chairs pushed to one wall and covered with sheets. A single table sits in the middle of the room, with enough chairs for all of you. A small oil lamp and a keg sit on top of it, along with several mugs. At the back corner of the common room beside the bar, a staircase leads upstairs. The windows and door facing onto the street are closed, and you know they have been boarded up from the outside. On the wall behind the bar hangs a bronze bust of the former emperor of Ragesia, Drakus

Coaltongue, a regal, aged half-orc with a scar cutting diagonally across his face. You and Torrent are the only people in the room.

Torrent introduces herself to the heroes, making small talk and trying to be friendly before getting to business, all the while sipping a beer. If the heroes are curious about exploring the pub, the door to the kitchen is locked, requiring a DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to unlock, and the door to the storage room is hidden behind stacks of tables and chairs. They could check the coat closet, which is empty, as are all the bedrooms upstairs. A trap door in the roof of the upstairs master bedroom leads to the roof, but it's securely locked, requiring a DC 19 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check to unlock, and there's nothing to see on the roof now anyway.

If the heroes search the tavern extensively, Torrent jokingly compliments their paranoia, then tells them she doesn't want to waste any more time.

Whenever the heroes are comfortable, or they bring up why they're here, tell any PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check that they hear a variety of distant bells throughout the city chiming to celebrate the turning of the New Year.

Torrent grimaces and straightens in her chair, saying, "Another year gone. I guess it's time to get down to business.

"The city's in trouble. The Ragesian army is marching on us, and will be here by tomorrow. Before then, we have a mission."

"I used to study at a magic academy to the south, called Lyceum. They're good people. So when word reached them about Ragesia's 'Scourge,' they sent out messages calling for anyone fleeing Ragesia to come to them. They want to stand against the Ragesians, and the resistance wants their help. We just need to get a message to them."

"Normally we would have sent something by teleporting courier, but something strange is going on with planar magic. The last courier who teleported into Gate Pass, rumor is that he showed up burnt to a crisp. Not that I have that sort of magic anyway, but if we're going to talk to Lyceum, we're going to have to go overland. And that's a problem, because the city's walls are sealed.

"Ever since their emperor died, the Ragesians have been trying to show that they're not weak, and they're marching an army in our direction, since the mountain

pass we're in is apparently 'strategically valuable.' Either way, a few idiots on the city council want to negotiate with the Ragesians, and rumor is they're going to invite a group of inquisitors into the city to look for 'magic-users who are hostile to the empire.' They've sealed the gates of the city so no one can get out, to make sure they look like they're cooperating, and only military personnel can get in or out.

"We're going to have to get out of the city, and I'm open to suggestions as to how. Once we're out, I can get us safely to Lyceum, but before we get ahead of ourselves, we have a mission tonight.

"The short version is that we've got to meet a contact—a gnome named Rivereye Badgerface—in about an hour at a guarded depository about a half-mile from here. He's carrying a case of vital military intelligence which he stole from the Ragesian palace, and the heads of the resistance think that it needs to reach Lyceum. We've got to get that case, get out of the city, and get far away from here before the idiot city council lets the Ragesian inquisitors in. Once that happens, the odds of us escaping are," she finishes off her mug of beer in one long guzzle, "slim.

"I know I'd love to stay here and fight against the Ragesians, but I'm no soldier, and this mission might be more important. Worst case, you get away from the Ragesians and we can part ways a few days down the road. Best case, you can come with me to Lyceum, and we come back with an army of our own to drive off the Ragesians. But we've got to act fast either way. Are you ready for this?"

After this, the conversation turns to planning. Torrent does not take an active role, so that the heroes are the ones plotting their course, though she does provide information or suggestions if asked. The following topics may be of interest:

Gate Pass

Torrent knows almost as much about the city as a native, and answers any questions the party has about the city's defenses and laws. Alternately, allow DC 8 Intelligence checks for information you think the heroes are overlooking.

Getting Out of the City

The walls of the city are patrolled, and the gates are closed and guarded, except to official city

personnel and a few diplomats. Simply walking out is impossible, and sneaking out will be difficult. A DC 8 Wisdom check will reveal that one city councilman, Erdan Menash, is sympathetic to heroes and adventurers. Torrent has never met him, but she knows where he lives—his house is impossible to miss.

If the heroes ask Torrent for suggestions, she recommends they find someone with political power, or perhaps try to convince some of the mages at Gabal's school to lend their magic to aid their escape. Whatever plan the heroes come up with, Torrent has enough knowledge of the city to give them an idea to how difficult it will be (see Act Three: Escaping the City for a [discussion](#) of these options). She won't endorse any plan that requires them to kill any Gate Pass defenders or innocent bystanders.

The Road to Lyceum

Torrent has a much clearer plan for once the party is out of the city. They will take a little-traveled road south from the city to the border of the Innenotdar Fire Forest, thirty miles away. Decades ago, the Elf Road ran through the fire forest to the nation of Dassen, where Lyceum is, but during the last war some catastrophe happened. The forest was set on

fire, and it has not stopped burning since.

Torrent says that all the other major roads that would lead to Dassen, and thus to Lyceum, are either impassable in winter, or they'll be crawling with Ragesian soldiers. Rather than trying to survive in the wilderness in winter, or to sneak past countless patrols of Ragesians, Torrent has prepared for a journey through the fire forest. She has a pouch full of potions that will let the party survive the intense heat, and she doubts any hostile forces will be able to muster enough similar magic to follow them: two for each PC, familiar, animal companion, and cherished mount, plus six more. Each potion lasts one day, and she is confident the trip through the fire forest should take less than two days.

The road between Gate Pass and the fire forest is the most dangerous part of the journey, but it's relatively unused. Torrent thinks that if they go quickly they should be able to make it to Innenotdar safely and avoid any Ragesian patrols. Torrent assures them that Gate Pass is strong enough to fight off an assault, and the city can easily survive a siege of several months, long enough for the heroes to get to Lyceum and bring back reinforcements.

Lyceum

Allow the heroes to make Intelligence checks to recall the information in the sidebar.

Torrent can provide any information requiring a DC 11 or lower check, but she prefers to focus on more immediate matters rather than ramble on about the school. She says she was contacted by Lyceum a week ago by sending spell. The mages there know something is amiss with teleportation magic, but they're not sure exactly what's wrong, or how widespread the problem might be.

Rivereye's Story

The gnome sorcerer was a spy from Lyceum, acting as a servant in the imperial palace for Kreven, second-in-command of the inquisitors. Apparently Rivereye is very ugly and blithely unaware of it. His normal contact in Gate Pass—Peppin Tallman, a human wizard from Lyceum—would occasionally pass along information to the resistance, but a week ago that contact was found dead. A speak with dead spell revealed that Tallman was scheduled to meet Rivereye, as well as the time and place of the meeting, but the identity of Tallman's killer was unknown. Torrent is a little worried that someone else is after the case, and that Rivereye might spook

LYCEUM

An Intelligence (Arcana or History) check reveals the following information based on the threshold reached.

DC 8. Lyceum is a school devoted to teaching magic of all sorts. It is located in the small town of Seaquen, on the rocky tip of a marshy peninsula in southern Dassen. Students often travel far to learn foreign magic.

DC 11. The head of Lyceum, a diviner named Simeon, has visited all the major cities in the region and has friends and contacts among the mages of those cities. He founded his school to encourage solidarity among magic-users, and to find ways to use magic for the benefit of everyday people. Many governments think of him as a meddler.

DC 15. Simeon, primarily an advisor for nobles and rich merchants, has recruited a cadre of talented warmages and battle clerics, and has offered Seaquen's harbor as a home port for the Wayfarers, a group of magically-inclined entertainers, to both make his school seem more legitimate and to discourage Dassen from trying to levy taxes against it.

DC 23. Many years ago, an archmage was slain at the site where Lyceum now stands. Rumors say he was entombed beneath the school in caverns filled with fire.

when he sees Peppin isn't there.

Inquisitors

Torrent has never faced one, but she has heard stories. Allow the heroes to make Intelligence checks to recall the information listed in the sidebar.

The Ragesian Army

Torrent suspects scouts are scattered through the mountains and surrounding lands, but she's confident her route will avoid most if not all the Ragesians.

A DC 11 Intelligence (History) check lets a character recall that the army headed to Gate Pass has easily over ten thousand men, and is under the command of General Danava. They don't have many spellcasters, aside from the inquisitors, but they do have some riders with wyvern mounts, and the can call on a few monstrous allies. A PC

RAGESIAN INQUISITORS

An Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check reveals the following information based on the threshold reached.

DC 8. The inquisitors hunt for dangerous magic (any magic used by other people), and they have special counterspell abilities. Most inquisitors are humans, orcs, or half-orcs, and they carry metal claws on their hands. Many are skilled interrogators; they use their claws to slit prisoners' wrists, forcing swift answers.

DC 11. Inquisitors are almost exclusively clerics, with access to divine fire spells. They wear masks to shield their souls, and thus are more resistant to mind-affecting magic. No one has seen Supreme Inquisitor Leska's face for nearly forty years.

DC 15. Inquisitors cannot turn undead; instead they can control undead, and they can channel negative energy to dispel magic.

DC 23. Supreme Inquisitor Leska is rumored to be gathering information on how to steal divine power—not to become a god herself, but to make herself strong enough so that she never need be beholden to a deity. She and her followers are therefore all heretics in the eyes of the deities, and they cannot be raised from the dead except as undead abominations.

DC 30. Those in the imperial palace whisper that when Leska was a young servant of the Ragesian Empire, she offered the Emperor immortality if he agreed to make her one of his advisors. Coaltongue was intrigued, but one of his guards struck down Leska with a spear for her impudence. She pulled the spear from her throat, and a moment later the wound had healed.

with a background nobility, politics, or the military automatically succeeds on the check.

Payment

Torrent just laughs at this idea, and asks how much they think the inquisitors will pay them for the honor of cutting open their wrists and letting them bleed out as they're interrogated.

THE AMBUSH (EL 3)

Under the cover of the New Year's bells, a group of bounty hunters known as the Black Horses is setting up an ambush. Hoping to turn over spellcasters to the Ragesians for 100 gp a head, they plan to capture [Torrent](#) and any magic-users among the PCs. While the heroes talk with Torrent, a group of Black Horse hunters sneak into the pub through the trapdoor on the roof (using acid to melt the locks), while others gather around the ground floor.

The plan is for a pair of Black Horse thugs to smash open the door, distracting the heroes' attention, while six Black Horse scouts rush down from the second floor. Two more thugs and a [mastiff](#) wait in the alley to intercept them should they try to flee, and the path down the alley is blocked by a makeshift wall, forcing them to run into the street; there, the leader of the group, a former Ragesian cavalryman named [Kathor Danava](#), waits to finish them off. But things don't go as planned in two ways. First, the city falls under attack right as the thugs are about to spring their ambush. Second, Kathor feels the mission is dishonorable, and he decides not to lend his aid. The following scene involves several groups working in tandem while off-screen events affect the battlefield, so make sure you understand the timing of events before running this encounter.

Springing the Trap

Round Zero

When you feel the conversation with Torrent is winding down and the party has a good sense of its plan of action, the bells of the city's celebration go silent in the span of a few seconds. At the sudden silence, any heroes who succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check hear creaking floorboards overhead from the bounty hunter scouts' movement. From this moment, the party has two rounds before the bounty hunters make their move.

THE BLACK HORSE BOUNTY HUNTERS

This disreputable band consists of about twenty-five men, commanded by Renard Woodsman, who stays at his camp in the mountains south of Gate Pass. Renard's second-in-command, Kathor Danava, is in charge of the bounty hunters' mission to capture magicusers in the city. Renard was hired by the Ragesians to slip his men into the city, and his band has been busy taking out potential troublemakers. Every few days he is contacted by sending from an unknown Ragesian who gives him updates and intelligence on where likely targets are.

Kathor was formerly in the Ragesian military—his father is the general leading the army coming to Gate Pass—but left after discovering he had magical powers, afraid he would be taken in by the inquisitors. He joined up with the first group who respected his horsemanship skills, and in the few weeks since then he has slowly come to regret it. His father was once a friend of the city, so Kathor possesses a diplomatic passport which allows him (but only him) to enter or leave the city freely.

All Black Horse members wear a red armband with a black horse head and letters that read “murderers” in Ignan. (This is a joke by the tailor who made the armbands; he was told to stitch “Black Horse.” None of the bounty hunters read Ignan.)

The Black Horse in the city have paid for rooms in the Mannish Inn, about a mile from where the PCs meet Torrent. From there, Kathor communicates with Renard via his raven familiar, which delivers messages once a day. Kathor's honor forces him to generally obey Renard's orders, but he won't fight alongside the other bounty hunters unless forced, and even then he'll offer quarter. If the heroes come to him privately, Kathor could be convinced to help. The heroes can locate him at the Mannish Inn with a Gather Information check (DC 15), or by interrogating a bounty hunter.

Kathor starts as Hostile—he doesn't trust anyone and wants to be left alone to brood, but if the heroes can make him Friendly, he'll decide it's time to leave the bounty hunters, and won't be present at the ambush in Act Four. He warns them about Renard receiving sending spells, saying someone might be watching them.

If only Indifferent, Kathor merely warns the heroes that the rest of the company he works for is watching the exits of the city, and if they cross paths, his duty will force him to fight them. He suggests if that happens, they ask for quarter. He does not want to have to kill them.

If the heroes make Kathor friendly, reward any participating heroes with inspiration.

Round One

At the end of the first round, distant muted thumps fill the air, like the sound of ripe fruit landing on the roof of a house. These are actually Ragesian “bombs” being dropped by wyverns overflying the city.

Round Two

At the end of the second round, someone listening at the front door hears Kathor shouting, “Front door: go!” and then the front door shudders as a battering ram slams into it. The thugs at the door break through when they succeed at a DC 14 Strength check. They have advantage and a +5 for the Strength check and retry each round until they are successful, or until the party exits some other way.

The first bounty hunter to see the group shouts, “Drop your weapons and come quietly. We don't want to break your valuable little heads.”

If Torrent gets a chance to reply, she laughs and says, “Just try it, buddy.”

Round Three

At the end of the third round, the scouts on the second floor move down the stairs, hoping to pincer

the group, but only two of them make it down: just after they do, the building shakes and a deafening boom sounds overhead. The tavern has just been struck by a Ragesian **dragonbomb**.

Ceiling boards crack and buckle, and the flaming oil spraying around upstairs leaks down into the room like a fiery rain. Overhead, a handful of screams sound out as the remaining scouts are caught in the flaming burst and slain. A dying scout stumbles down the stairs, on fire. The bronze bust of Emperor Coaltongue falls off the wall and lands with a thud.

Those squares marked on the inn map with an “X” are filled with shattered debris from the ceiling, which counts as difficult terrain. If one of these squares is occupied, the creature must succeed at a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d10 bludgeoning damage and become prone and restrained until they or another creature uses their action to make a DC 10 Strength check to free the restrained creature. Then have everyone in the building make DC 8 Dexterity saving throws to avoid taking 1d6 fire damage from spraying oil. Creatures passing through squares filled with burning debris must make a DC 8 Dexterity saving throw to avoid



taking 1d6 points of fire damage.

Creatures

- 2 [Black Horse thugs](#)
- 2 [Black Horse scouts](#)

Add or remove a thug or scout for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

Tactics

Torrent casts buff spells if she has time before combat. Once battle begins, she relies on her family's heirloom battleaxe. Used to fighting with wizards, she often stays back to protect allied spellcasters in case enemies get past front-line defenders.

The bounty hunters strike to knock people out when they reach 0 hit points. They're loyal to each other and won't abandon their allies, though if it looks like the party will kill fallen bounty hunters, they might surrender on the condition that they're allowed to tend to their friends.

Kathor himself does not get involved. If a PC comes out of the tavern, depending on the situation he'll either call for the party to surrender, or order his men to surrender. If the party makes a break for it, he won't stop them. If attacked he'll defend himself and strike to subdue.

If it looks like all his men are defeated, he'll retreat on his horse, and in the chaos caused by the Ragesian attack, it should be difficult for any PC to pursue him. Should he be forced to fight, Kathor likes to set up devastating mounted attacks, maneuvering while casting *true strike*, then charging to attack. Kathor does not understand exactly how his magic works and must succeed at a DC 8 Concentration saving throw to cast a spell while he is riding (DC 11 when his horse uses the Dash action since his last turn), so he may make several attempts to cast his spells if he is disrupted by riding. Unless someone is attacking him, he will not engage until he's ready. He believes that a single show of overwhelming force is the best way to make enemies

fear fighting him.

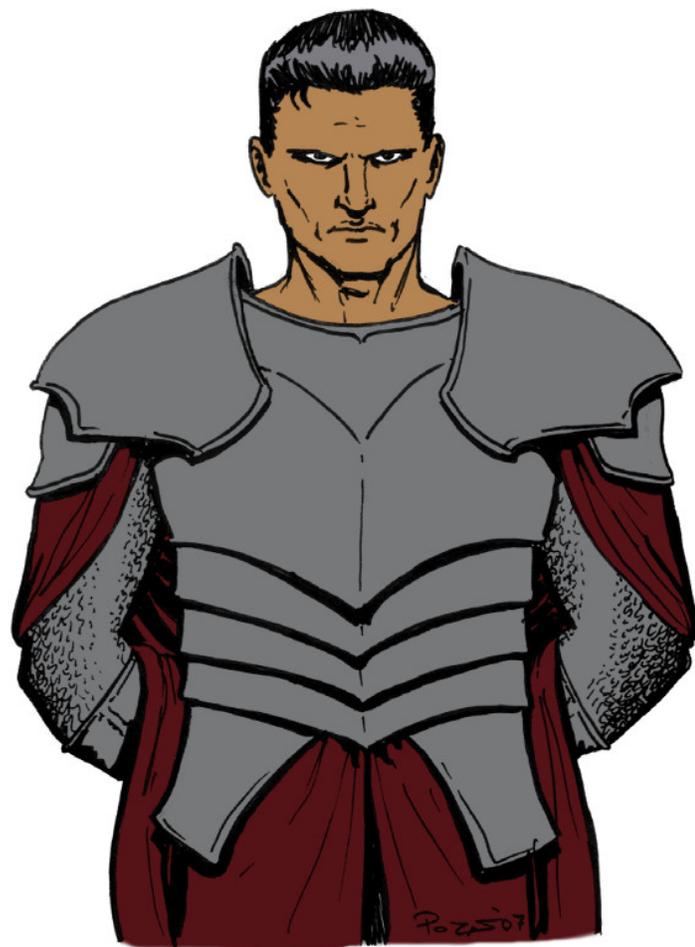
Hazard

The only highly flammable things in the pub are the sheets covering the unused tables, so after a few rounds they might catch fire. It will take many minutes for the pub itself to burn down.

Escaping the Pub

Aside from the alley door, the party could try to go for the roof where they could cross over to the Finner house by the skybridge, but to do this they would have to pass through thirty feet of flaming rubble. The rubble is difficult terrain which causes 1d6 fire damage per round, and anyone who takes fire damage must succeed at a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw to avoid catching on fire. Alternately, they might try to break open one of the boarded up windows (AC 15; hp 5; or DC 8 Strength check). Passing through an opened window requires a DC 8 Strength (Athletics) check and is difficult terrain.

If the party makes a break for it through the alley, they'll either have to go through a makeshift wall at the back of the alley (AC 15; hp 15; DC 14 Strength



check to break), or go out front, where Kathor waits for them.

Aftermath

If the party defeats the bounty hunters or if they escape, Torrent says they should hurry and get to her meeting with Rivereye. She's worried that the firebombing might make him flee, and she can't risk losing him. She'll encourage the party to head to the depository.

If the party is defeated, they likely won't die, since the bounty is only for living spellcasters. The bounty hunters pull out manacles and rope, but Kathor calls them off, saying that too many people will see them, and they can't risk dragging the prisoners around in the middle of an attack. The men will balk, but Kathor is stern, and eventually they spit at any helpless PCs, take some valuable gear from them (but not magic items), then mutter something about "hundreds of gold coins" and leave. Kathor ignores the PCs as he rides off.

NAVIGATING GATE PASS

The streets are starting to fill with panicking people, and though the bombing ends after a few minutes, a battle has begun at the west wall. Townsfolk rush about trying to put out fires or get to the shelter of temples, and soldiers hurry to their posts, slowed by the throng and chaos. All the while, bells ring urgent warnings up and down the mountain pass.

As the party heads for their rendezvous with Rivereye at the depository, emphasize the confusion and the masses of people surging about in near darkness.

Terror in the Skies

When the party nears the gate between the two districts, it is packed with too many people trying to squeeze through too narrow a passage. Suddenly, fear rolls across the party like blast of cold wind. PCs who fail a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw become frightened for 1 minute and take 1d6 bludgeoning damage as they run out into the panicked crowd. One soldier patrolling the gate wall jumps in terror and falls amid the crowd, being trampled to unconsciousness.

Characters who succeed at a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check (DC 10 for PCs with darkvision to at least 100 ft.) notice a crimson, bat-winged shape the size of a house swooping through the sky about a hundred feet overhead. As it passes out of view over

other buildings, a surge of panicked screams rise along its path. It is too dark to make out clearly what the creature causing the fear is. Once the panic ends, the party can regroup.

Aiding the Wounded

The party passes a family in the streets. The father is burnt and barely standing, having run back inside his burning house to try to rescue his wife, whose unconscious and burnt body he carries. With his three children, huddled in coats and whimpering, the man croaks out cries for help. As the party moves by, the man collapses, exhausted. If the party helps heal the man and his wife, reward the healers with inspiration. If they go out of their way to ensure that the family gets safely to a shelter, reward all the heroes with inspiration. If the party doesn't take the initiative, Torrent will offer to help, saying they can spare a little time to do the right thing, but do not reward the heroes with inspiration.

Burning Building

A cluster of four-story buildings have caught fire from the bombing, and a crowd is watching in dismay when horror strikes—a woman smashes out a window on the fourth floor and cries for help, screaming that she's trapped. From this moment, the party has four minutes to get her out before the fire reaches her room and she tries to jump. The heroes have several options to help her.

Arranging to catch her with a blanket. At least two heroes working together can catch her in a blanket by each succeeding at a DC 14 Strength check. A third hero helping grants advantage to one of the two heroes. A fourth hero helping grants advantage to the second hero making the Strength check. The woman is knocked unconscious and making death saving throws if one of the heroes fails their Strength check. The woman dies if both heroes fail their Strength checks.

Climbing the building. A hero can climb the side of the building with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) to reach her. Once reaching her, the hero realizes they need to have a Strength score of 15 to be able to attempt carrying the 150-pound person back down with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check made with disadvantage.

Magic. A hero can cast *feather fall* on her when she jumps.

Roundabout route. A hero can go through an adjacent building that isn't on fire, reach the roof via a skybridge, and drop a rope to pull her up.

Heading inside the burning building without protection would be almost certainly fatal. If the party rescues the woman, reward the heroes who participated in the rescue with inspiration.

Animal Crossing

Just two blocks from the depository, a wealthy merchant wanders the streets, calling for his “baby.” He sees the party and runs up to them, begging for their help. His house was struck by a bomb, and though the stone building did not burn, the sound of the thunderstone spooked Kiki, causing her to flee. Kiki is the merchant's pet giant weasel.

Now a scared and unfriendly giant weasel runs through the streets, while it's master runs around shouting for her to come back. The merchant might approach the party asking for them to bring his pet back, or Kiki might wander into their hiding place in the night. Though she's not immediately hostile, she will attack if threatened.

Kiki has a collar and tag that gives her name and the address of her owner.

The merchant is thrilled if he gets his pet back, and hurries to a shelter. He scoffs at the idea of payment, offended that anyone would be trying to profit in a time of war, but a DC 11 Charisma (Deception, Persuasion, or Intimidation as appropriate) check can convince him to hand over 10 gp as compensation for injuries the party sustained (or claim they sustained) bringing the weasel back.

Torrent, for her part, thinks this is a complete waste of time.

Narrating the Journey Instead

If you prefer, or the PCs focus only on their destination, you can simply narrate the heroes hurrying through the city using the following read-aloud text rather than running the following sequence of mini-encounters. If they want to stop and try to make a difference, you should let them, but the pervading sense here should be one of almost helplessness—chaos is raging around them, and there's nothing they can do to affect the battle.

You exit a burning building, and monsters are flying through the skies overhead. Buildings are crumbling and exploding a few streets over. People clog the streets trying to see what's happening, and you have to get through them to accomplish your mission. You press out into the crowds, heading east, where you see a huge cluster of burning buildings, and as you get close to the

gate to the next district, you are swallowed up in a huge throng of panicked townsfolk.

Soldiers from the eastern districts are trying to push through the crowd to reach the battle at the main gate, while normal people try to flee in the opposite direction. The gates, designed to hold back invaders, are too narrow to let you all through. You're being crushed, pushed back and forth, and though many are trying to yell for order, for people to let the soldiers through first, mayhem reigns.

And then something overhead roars, and all reason flees your mind. You are prey, helpless, and hundreds of shapes silhouetted against firelight swell close to you. As one, the crowd screams, and you fight to get away from the horror in the clouds, the thundering, dread-inspiring beats of its wings driving you on in swarming terror. It's all you can do to avoid being crushed in the press of bodies, and after minutes of struggling, you stagger wearily out of the crowd on the far side of the gate.

You regroup with your friends, watching panicked mothers crying out for their children, fathers carrying children burned near to death by the firebombing. Despair and confusion fills nearly every face, but you force your way onward, and you see your destination—the tower—standing high above the glow of your burning

city. You rush past a building on fire, hearing the screams of a woman trapped on a top floor, the roars of pain of those few who have managed to stagger out of the inferno. You pass looters smashing down doors of shops and pulling away trinkets that will be worthless in the coming days of battle. You even see a bewildered noble, so shocked by the attack that all he cares about is finding a lost pet.

Sometimes you see people fighting against the chaos—a city guardsman carrying a young girl, trying to find her mother; thugs from the local thieves' guild gathered out in front of their hideout, shouting orders to organize a fire brigade; a cluster of young men in white cloaks shouting for the injured to follow them to a nearby church—but most just look to the skies, watching helplessly as Gate Pass griffon riders battle the wyvern knights of the Ragesians.

Overhead you spot one of these battles, and then hear a thunderous crack as the griffon rider shatters his lance in the throat of a wyvern. He tosses his broken lance down to the crowd with a cheer as the wyvern spirals out of control and crashes to the roof of a building the next street over. Then moments later a deep, challenging roar fills the air, thumping, pulsing wingbeats fan the city flames and kick cinders into the sky, and you witness a massive red dragon fly forth from the smoke and crush the stunned griffon and rider in its snapping maw with a sickening, crunching sound.

Once again, after too short a reprieve, pandemonium besets the crowd. The streets clear as people flee desperately, foolishly into the nearest building, and as the dragon swoops away into the night, headed for the colossal statue of Emperor Coaltongue in the central district, you see that your path to the depository tower is clear.



ACT TWO: RETRIEVING THE CASE

In the next district to the east, a gnome spy named **Rivereye Badgerface** waits at the Depository Tower, expecting to hand over a case full of valuable military intelligence to his contact, Peppin. Unbeknownst to him, Peppin is dead, slain by agents of the elvish nation of Shahalesti.

The depository is an eighty foot high tower located in the center of its district, and is surrounded by a fenced compound that is guarded day and night. Torrent has an account there, so she and the party will be able to enter, though the guards are cautious, not wanting rioters to get inside.

The grounds of the depository are 120 feet square, while the tower itself is 60 feet in diameter and 80 feet high. A 20-foot high iron fence rings the compound, with the space between the fence and tower filled with well tended gardens. Just inside the entry gate are a pair of beautiful fountains: one depicting four elemental spirits common to local legends—a dragon, a worm, a kraken, and an eagle—and the other dominated by a statue of Emperor Coaltongue, posing with his torch held high, lit by continual flame.

There is only one entrance to the compound, through a sturdy gate house guarded at all times by four veteran depository guards (LN **veteran**, Insight +2). Two security guards (LN **thug**) patrol each floor of the tower, and another four patrol the grounds. The guards on the night shifts are all dwarves, orcs, or half-orcs, since their darkvision lets them better keep an eye on the valuables stored here.

The tower has only one ground entrance, large double iron doors (AC 19; hp 60; Damage Threshold 10; DC 21 Strength check to break; DC 23 Dexterity [Thieves' Tools] to unlock), which are protected by a special arcane lock that can be bypassed with a password that the guards all know (today it is "Avilona bar flu").

One guard will escort the party to the entrance to the tower, and offer them lanterns if they didn't bring a light source, since the interior is dark. He tells them there are guards inside, so make sure they don't "accidentally" open anyone else's locker. He also says that one ugly gnome already came inside, so they shouldn't be startled if they see him.

SPY VERSUS SPY (EL 4)

Rivereye has been taken captive by an elf spy from Shahalesti named **Larion Prevarieth**. **Shealis Amlauril**, an associate of Larion, has been watching

the goings-on of the rebellion while posing as a student at the city's wizard's school. Shealis sent Larion and a pair of Shahalesti soldiers to recover the information Rivereye is carrying. Accompanied by a lantern archon that is loyal to the Shahalesti, and aided by various potions, Larion and the soldiers snuck into the depository, watched from the rooftop for Rivereye to arrive, then followed him into the tower, where they quietly knocked out the dwarf and half-orc security guards, then ambushed Rivereye. One half-orc guard was killed in the process because the archon sensed that he was evil.

The elves recovered the case containing the information, but Rivereye managed to convince Larion that the case was trapped to explode if it was opened, and that only his contact Peppin knew the password. Larion knocked Rivereye unconscious and



hid him, then sent the two soldiers to take the case back to their hideout. Larion's fairly certain Shealis would be able to dispel any trap that might be on the case, but Larion is worried about ruining the mission. He and the lantern archon will wait until sunrise for the party, but if the party doesn't show they take Rivereye and retreat at sunrise.

The first floor of the tower is one huge room, and though the far side is hidden in shadows, it looks to be about sixty feet in diameter. A broad stone ramp circles clockwise upward to the left of the door, while the interior of the room is filled with aisles of metal lockers, each slightly larger than a coffin propped upright. The ceiling is twenty feet high, supported by squat round columns.

When the party arrives, Larion Prevarieth is on the second floor, near the ramp, and the lantern archon hovers silently on the third floor. Larion quickly uses *disguise self* to appear as Rivereye (he has to hunch to get his voice to come from the correct height).

He heads downstairs and feebly nods to the group, coughing and complaining that he caught a cold on his trip here from the Ragesian capital. Disguised as Rivereye, he's a pug-faced, ugly little gnome with blue robes and a runny nose. A DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check can see through his disguise, but it should be easy to figure out something is up when Rivereye calls whoever talks to him first "Peppin."

If the party doesn't make a big deal of this, Larion continues his ruse, assuming whoever he is talking to is Peppin. He takes the group to the second floor, to a random one of the countless lockers in the depository. He says that they just need to say the password, and it will open. Torrent knows nothing about needing a password, and if at this point the party has not said anything, Torrent asks for them to explain that Peppin isn't with them. Whenever Larion realizes he won't get a password from them (a password which doesn't exist in the first place), he flees.

Creatures

[Larion Prevarieth](#)
[lantern archon](#)

Add or remove 30 hp for Larion and 15 hp for the lantern archon for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs

Tactics

The lantern archon uses *aid* on itself and Larion if it has the chance before the party sees it. The lantern archon is a goodly creature, but it is loyal to the Shahalaesti and views anyone opposing its mission to be an enemy, though it will not kill foes who are no longer a threat.

Larion's goal is to escape. The archon will seek to help him.

If the party doesn't stop him, Larion simply runs to the balcony door on the third or second floor so that he can drink his potion of *jump* to jump over the 20-foot-high fence. Jumping from the third-floor balcony will allow him to jump to a rooftop across the street while the lantern archon provides covering fire. If his route back to the third floor is blocked, jumping from the second-floor balcony will allow him to clear the fence, but he must cast *feather fall* to land safely in the street on the other side. His bonus action of Dash, Disengage, or Hide provides a lot of flexibility in how to escape from the tower.

Regardless of whether he gets enough distance, he then tries to lose pursuit in the city streets. The lantern archon slips out through an open door on the top floor and flies away.

If the party impedes Larion's escape, he'll try to Disengage and just run, but if forced to fight he'll call for help, then run through the aisles of lockers trying to find cover so he can hide. If a direct route to the third floor is blocked, he'll try to make it to a wall or pillar so he can drink his potion of *spider climb* and crawl along the ceiling and stay out of sight long enough to get to the balcony. If he calls for help, the lantern archon flies down the ramp, arriving one round later. The lantern archon tries to keep the party's attention focused on it so Larion can get away.

Larion and the archon preferentially attack orcs and half-orcs, and hesitate to attack elves or half-elves.

TREASURE LOCKERS

The large reinforced lockers are of varying sizes and require a DC 21 Strength check or DC 23 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) to open. They have AC 19, hp 60, and Damage Threshold 10 and are warded with a [fire trap](#). Should the PCs manage to open one of these lockers, it should contain 200 gp in gems and either 3 common magic items, 2 uncommon magic items, or 1 rare magic item.

ENEMY GOOD GUYS?

Lantern archons are always good-aligned, and some groups may have a problem fighting celestials. One intent of this encounter is to show that the Shahalesti are not simple villains, even if their goals aren't matched to the party's. Most of the elves the party faces are neither good nor evil, but they are racist and distrustful of foreigners. They will tend to assume the PCs are evil, since they are trying to protect their nation, and view those who oppose them as threats to their families and homeland. Even if the party tries to negotiate, the Shahalesti start as Hostile. The neutral Shahalesti are more than willing to put a fallen enemy to death if no one (such as the archon) stops them.

The Depository Tower

Each floor of the tower contains dozens of metal lockers, used by merchants and noblemen to store valuables, or to leave for others to pick up. The ceilings are twenty feet high, with a stone ramp spiraling around the interior wall. The higher floors have balconies encircled by pillars, and every twenty feet or so colorful banners flutter along the side of the tower from the highest balcony, serving as advertisements for local merchants, a somewhat tacky blight to the tower's beauty.

Each balcony has four entrances, all of them strong wooden doors (AC 15; hp 20; Damage Threshold 5; DC 17 Strength check to break; DC 15 Dexterity [Thieves' Tools] to unlock). The banners (AC 11; hp 2; DC 15 Strength [Athletics] to climb) are 15-feet long, and thick enough to support a person's weight.

Combat Complication

The guards in the tower are all unconscious or dead, but if somehow the guards elsewhere in the compound are alerted, one veteran depository guard and three security guards rush to the scene, assuming someone is trying to steal something. The guards don't pursue anyone outside the gate.

War Flavor

Should any PC reach the balcony, he is treated to an awesome and stunning view of the battle at the city's western gate, about a mile and a half away. Fire lights up the western sky, the result of wyvern-bombing and of trebuchets hurling flaming balls of pitch into the city. Just then, a squadron of Gate Pass griffon riders swoop past over the city rooftops,

heading to join the battle, their battle horns blaring.

Aftermath

Larion and the archon head back to Gabal's school if they get away, warning Shealis that someone may come looking for her. They will then be present at the school if the party goes there.

If the party captures Larion, he refuses to cooperate unless convinced that the party is friendly to Shahalesti. If the party captures the lantern archon, it will talk to non-orcs. It is Unfriendly, but if made Friendly it will tell the party Larion works for Shealis, and offer to take them to her.

The depository guards won't let the PCs leave until they make sure none of the lockers are damaged. This way, even if the PCs don't look, the guards will locate the unconscious Rivereye, whose information is key in recovering the case.

REACHING THE SAFE HOUSE

The temple safe house Torrent knows is only a few blocks away, and by this point most people have cleared the streets, having already taken shelter, though the bombing has ended. In its place, a dramatic aerial battle occurs overhead. As the party nears the safe house, they have a chance to face their first Ragesian foe.

Fallen Devil (EL 2)

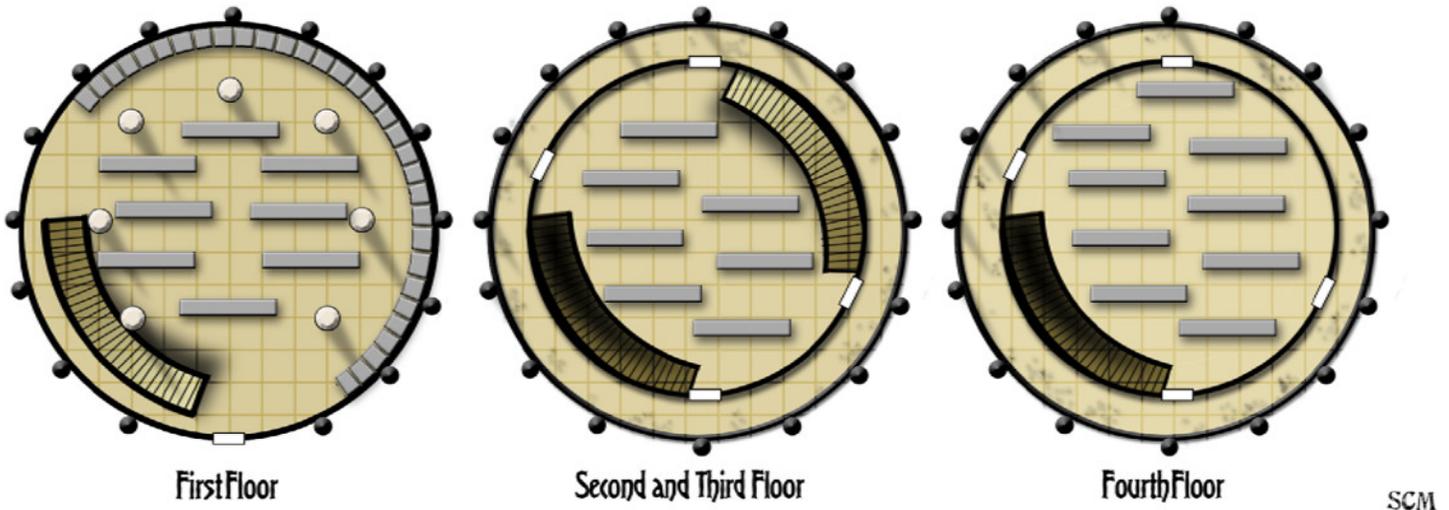
The battle in the skies between Ragesian wyvern riders and Gate Pass griffon riders has been long and bloody. The party sees two flying shapes—one with feathered wings, the other with bat wings—cross paths overhead, and a loud crack sounds out. The bat-winged shape spirals out of control and crashes onto the roof of a building further down the street with a death groan. A moment later, the shattered lance of a Gate Pass griffon rider falls out of the sky, its tip having snapped off in the neck of the Ragesian wyvern.

The building atop which the wyvern crashed is directly along the path to the safe house, and as the party comes alongside it, they see a rope tossed down from the roof of the building into the street. The rider of the wyvern dismounted, descended with this rope, and then fled down the nearest alley.

If the party investigates, they find the wyvern dead, a broken lance tip driven into its throat. The rider's tracks are easy to follow in the snow. The tracks lead down an alley, and less than a hundred feet from the wyvern the party finds a trio of townsfolk, murdered

Depository Tower

1 Square = 5 ft.



SCM

by someone wielding an axe.

If the party pursues the Ragesian fugitive, he is hiding in a house, having killed the family inside it, though he left one young boy alive, unconscious in the corner, gagged. When the party comes upon him he is just looking for clothes that will fit him, and if they can hide and wait long enough, he'll change out of his armor, hoping to disguise himself as a local before burning down the house to cover his tracks. If he hears the party approach, he grabs the young boy as a human shield (+2 AC) and awkwardly tries to threaten his life with an axe to his throat, demanding they let him leave.

The warrior, Flaganus Mortus, is a veteran, but injured. Normally he would be a challenge 4 NPC, but because of his weakened state he counts as a challenge 2 NPC. Flaganus is panicking and in shock from his wounds. He would not normally murder innocents, and if his attitude is changed from Hostile to Neutral, he will react with horror at what he has done and surrender.

Creature

Flaganus Mortus

Add or remove 40 hp for Flaganus for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs (minimum 3 hp).

THE SAFE HOUSE

If the party succeeds in recovering the case and wants to share it with other agents in the resistance, or if they just need a place to rest for the evening,

Torrent guides them to a nearby temple of the Order of the Aquiline Cross, devoted to a god of healing. She says it is a gathering place for resistance members.

The temple Torrent suggests is packed with at least a hundred nervous people, all squeezed into a 40-foot circular prayer chamber and adjacent rooms. Many are nervously relating rumors of how the battle at the main gates is going. Children cry, and priests tend to numerous injuries from fire, stampeding crowds, or violent looters. People are scared and demoralized. Priests go between the wounded, tending them as best they can, their healing spells all expended.

Just inside the front door, a dark-skinned and dark-haired young woman dressed all in black plays a depressing tune on a guitar—a typical new year's festival song, redone in a minor key. This is **Mulysa Bahri** (CE female half-elf bard), bringing everyone's spirits down because she enjoys sharing the suffering. She gets irritable if anyone talks to her, sarcastically saying she left the sheet music for her "happy songs" in her house, which burned down. If a character succeeds on a DC 11 Charisma (Performance) or Dexterity (Musical Instrument) check to try to bolster the spirits of the crowd, people calm noticeably, glad someone is still optimistic. If this happens, Mulysa rolls her eyes dramatically, gives up, and tries to sleep. Soon, the temple's high priest comes out to survey the situation and the encounter develops as outlined below.

However, if Mulysa is left to play her angsty music,

after a few minutes a pair of human teens begin harassing a young half-orc woman, irrationally blaming her for the Ragesian invasion. A gnome man tries to stop the fight, but succeeds only in attracting more attention. If the party doesn't do something, after another few minutes of insults and yelling the two men drag the woman outside in the street and start beating her, trying to get her to cry out (she won't). The frightened crowd just looks on, too shocked to interfere. A DC 11 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check can get the two teens to leave the woman alone. Any obvious use of magic or any overt violence just makes things worse, though, angering the crowd.

If the party keeps the half-orc woman from being beaten or calms the crowd, reward those who participated with inspiration, and make sure if the PCs return to Gate Pass in the future that at least one person they run into remembers their actions and thanks them.

If the PCs calm things down, either by quieting Mulya or by preventing the beating, the temple's head priest comes out and thanks them personally. If instead the PCs do nothing or manage to cause more trouble, after a moment the head priest arrives and chastises the crowd angrily (this quiets but does not truly calm the crowd), then goes to help the young half-orc woman. In either case, he recognizes Torrent or one of the PCs as a member of the resistance, and he takes them to his office to talk (after making sure the half-orc woman is safe, if she was accosted by the bullies). **Buron Watcher** (NG middle-aged male human [priest](#)) is tired and haggard-looking, and while he's not happy with any PCs who made things worse, he welcomes the arrival of anyone who isn't panicking. He has used all his magic for healing.

There is a small safe house under the temple where resistance meetings occasionally take place amid shelves of mountain whiskey, but tonight the PCs are the only resistance members present. Buron is relatively high-ranking in the resistance, and trying to meet with anyone above him is a futile effort; they're too busy dealing with the Ragesians. Buron is trustworthy, however, and can help the party with information and contacts if they feel lost or need suggestions.

If the party brings him the case, he cannot open it; if they have managed to open it, he can tell that the book found inside is written in Infernal, though he cannot decipher the code. He can have a scribe make a copy of a few pages so the resistance might

work at breaking the code, but he suggests the more prudent course is to take the case wherever they were originally supposed to. He is not aware of their mission when they first meet him, but if he learns of it, he will wish them a blessed journey. The party can rest at the temple. Not much else occurs at the safe house. It is, after all, safe.

THE ELVISH SPYMASTER (EL 6)

The leader of a ring of Shahalesti spies, **Shealis Amlauril**, is at Gabal's wizard's school, where she pretends to be a student. She does not have the case the party seeks, but is the only easy way for the party to find out where it is. There is a sizeable population of elves in Gate Pass, but they tend to stay to themselves in walled districts, and it is in one of these ghettos where the spies' hideout lies. Otherwise, a DC 19 Charisma (Investigation) check can discover where the two spies with the case are.

If neither Larion nor the lantern archon escaped the depository tower, Shealis stays in her room at Gabal's school, gathering her effects and collecting years' worth of observations so she can flee the city (with *invisibility* and her potion of *fly*) to Shahalesti. If either of the two escaped, however, Shealis is much more cautious and expects company later that night.

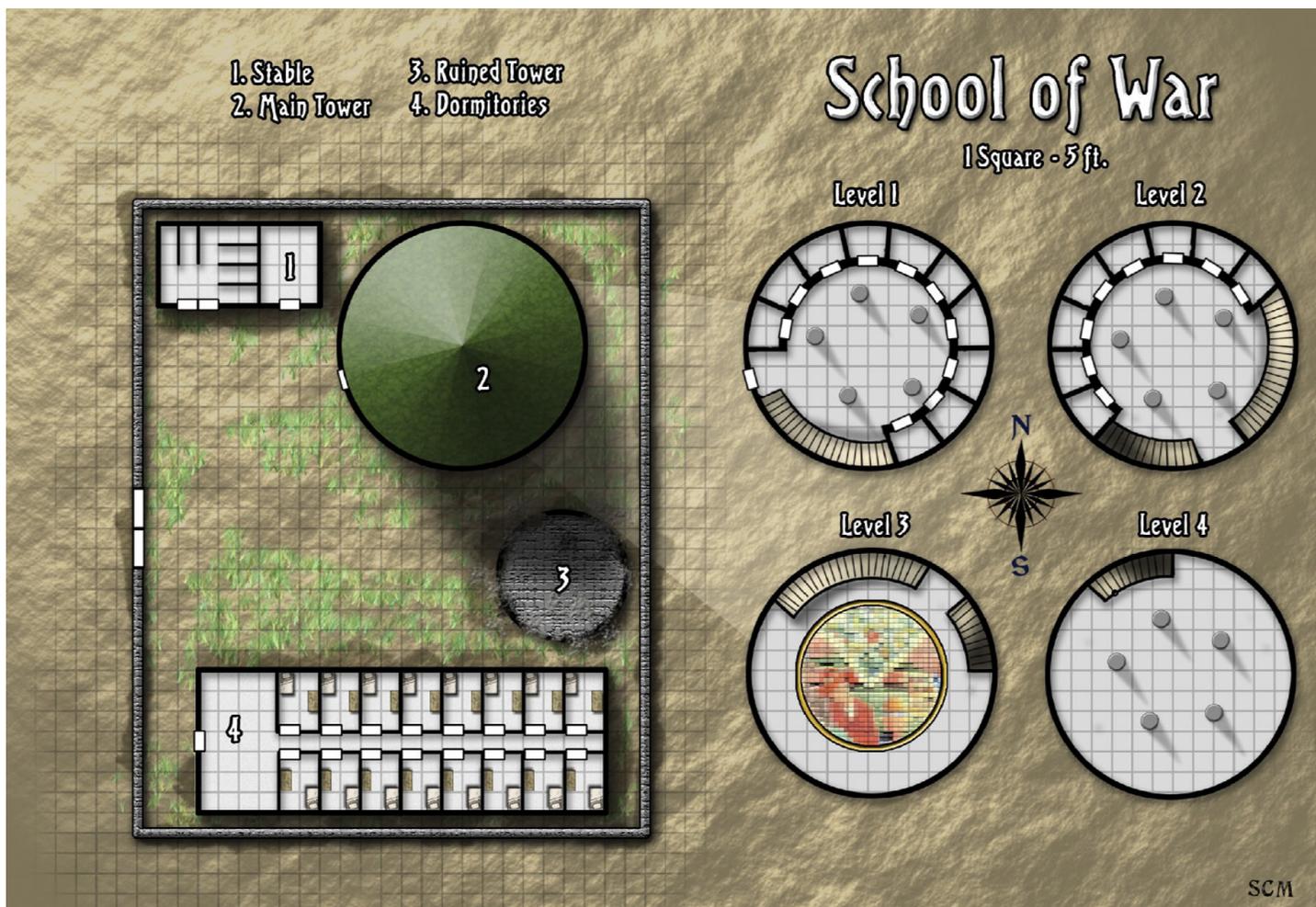
Gabal's School

Gabal's school consists of a small campus with two 50-foot-tall towers and several smaller buildings, surrounded by a moat and an iron fence. It is mockingly called The Castle by those in Gate Pass who don't like the school's pompous headmaster. Many of the students have fled, and those who haven't have arcane locked and trapped their rooms, making looting a difficult (and dangerous) prospect.

When the Ragesians assaulted, Gabal himself went into hiding, while some of his students went to the battle to lend their aid. Only a handful of students remain at the school—several 1st-level evokers, plus Shealis and a funny but disgruntled mage named **Diogenes**.

During the Day

If the PCs arrive any time after sunrise, the front gate is surrounded by over forty angry people, all of them Hostile to obvious magic users. People have heard that Gabal went into hiding, and are futilely protesting outside his nearly-abandoned school. Getting in through the arcane locked gates is practically impossible, though if the mob recognizes anyone in the party as a magic-user, they get loud



and start shouting at the party, surrounding them and pushing them.

Soon after the party arrives, Diogenes strolls out to the front gates and tries to be diplomatic, making it clear that he also thinks Gabal is a coward. He's fast-talking and smooth, and claims that the reason he and the other students are staying in the compound is so that the inquisitors will have an easier time finding them. Slightly balding and laid back, he's as unhostile as anyone you could imagine, and the mob calms down slightly, long enough for Diogenes to let the party in through the gates if they give a good reason (one better than "we want to riot").

At Night

If the PCs arrive the night of the attack, entry is easier, since Diogenes is at the front gate, watching for signs of trouble, smoking cigarettes in an attempt to stay warm. There is no angry crowd and Diogenes welcomes the company.

Regardless of how the party gets in, Diogenes is the only one of the students to express much interest in the party. If the party does not bother Shealis,

she is not even aware they're there. If the party asks, Diogenes can sell them scrolls of 1st-level wizard spells from Gabal's supply for 50 gp each, though there are no enchantment or necromancy scrolls.

War Flavor

One of the towers is cracked from a Ragesian bomb. Additionally, the corpses of a griffon and its rider float in the moat, having been slain by a wyvern's sting. They have already been looted by the students, though a greasy student might ask their help in dragging the corpses ashore for "experimentation." Diogenes shoos him away.

Getting Diogenes' Help

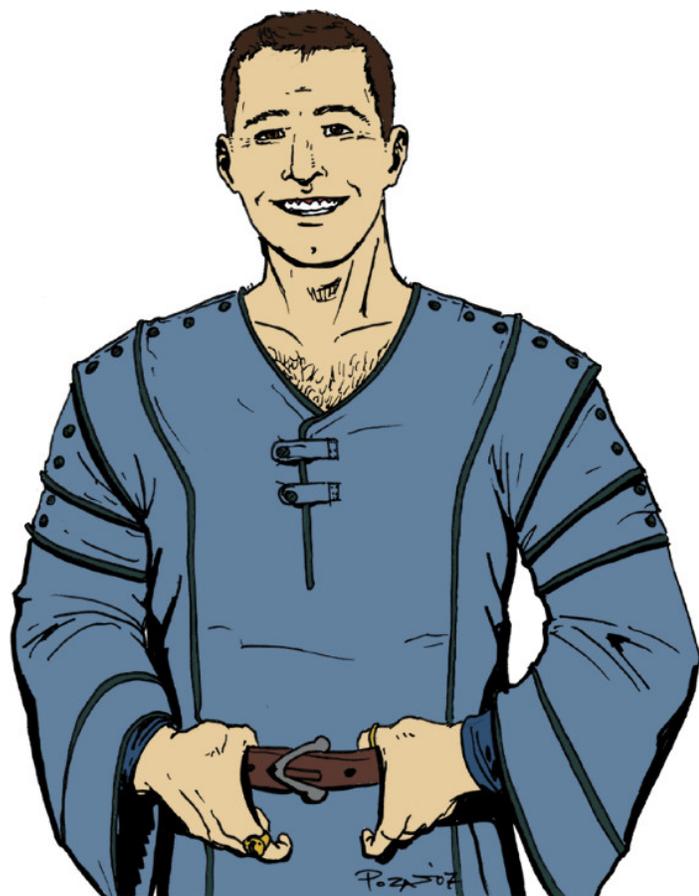
Diogenes has a long-standing grudge against Shealis, and will gladly help the party if they express that they're opposed to her, or if they mention the lantern archon, which Diogenes thinks is her familiar. Diogenes thinks having a familiar at all is a liability, and having one that glows like a floating target is just bad form—and Gabal's education is all about using proper form. Unfortunately, Gabal liked

Shealis better than him because Diogenes refused to practice evocation spells, preferring the subtlety of illusion and charm. In any event, Diogenes is more than willing to help the party get the case back from Shealis.

He takes them to a kitchen and offers them whatever they'd like while they discuss plans. If the Scourge or Gabal comes up in conversation, Diogenes mentions that he does not know what happened to Gabal or his best students and that several others, such as Durval (who appears in the next adventure), escaped the city with their families. If Shealis has had any visitors this evening (such as Larion or the lantern archon), Diogenes knows, so the party should not be surprised by them.

The party should not legitimately be able to defeat Shealis in combat by themselves, so if they want to get the case from her, they will have to outwit her or ambush her. Her bedroom makes an optimal place to face her, since she is unwilling to use a fireball or other area attacks in such a confined area. If the group faces her in any wide area, such as the training hall (a tall room with a ring on the floor 60 feet in diameter where spell duels take place), Shealis has a clear advantage.

If the party can't come up with a plan, Diogenes



says he knows Shealis is planning to leave, so he can challenge her to one final duel. He knows she has a grudge against him too and is sure she won't refuse. Diogenes says that when she comes to the dueling room, a sneaky PC should steal her spell component pouch with *Sleight of Hand*, leaving her with no spells but *magic missile*, *shield*, and cantrips. Then, during the fight the party can gang up on her, grappling her (and possibly the archon). Diogenes recommends most of them stay out of sight until the duel begins.

Diogenes is a keen judge of his opponent's skills, and enjoys the thrill of outwitting a foe. The rules of spelldueling require that both duelists start with no spells active. You can lose in any of four ways: falling down and not getting up within a round, leaving the 60-foot ring, having three of your spells countered, or not casting a spell for two rounds in a row.

Knowing Shealis will go for offense, Diogenes will ready *fog cloud* until she starts casting, then finish the spell, effectively ruining her spell when she becomes unable to target him. He will only actually start using directly offensive spells afterward or if Shealis heads into the fog. He'll *counterspell* anything that he thinks is too dangerous.

Shealis, so close to completing her mission, is nervous and perhaps overcautious. If facing multiple foes who aren't in convenient *fireball* formation, she'll opt to flee, using *invisibility* to hurry back to her room to get her spellbooks before drinking a potion of *fly* and escaping out her window. If the party did not defeat her lantern archon ally, it is here too, aiding her escape. In a duel, she's still cautious, preferring to use low-level spells. Confident that she can see through Diogenes's bluffs, she'll cast *flaming sphere*, then use *magic missile* while chasing her opponent with the sphere.

Creature

[Shealis Amlauril](#)

Add or remove 40 hp for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

Additional Possible Allies

Larion Prevarieth and the lantern archon, if present, have not used magical healing, and will only have healed if given the time to take a short or long rest. The archon makes liberal use of *aid* to keep Shealis alive, while Larion tries to stay between Shealis and any warriors.

Aftermath

If Diogenes gets a chance, he'll try to use charm person or suggestion to get either Larion or Shealis to tell the location of the hideout. However, the party can also find a map to the hideout inside the elvish spymaster's spellbook, which includes notes about the location of a hidden door that leads into an elvish ghetto, about a mile away. A map of the ghetto highlights a carpentry shop that lies next to one of the walls, and a note in Elvish reads, "Arborea before Elysium before Celestia."

If the party tries talking with Shealis, she is initially Hostile, but if made Friendly (such as by charming her), she will offer to let the group come with her to the hideout to examine the case together, but she will not let them take the case. However, she will give them her name and the name of a contact in Shahalesti (Clathan) whom the Lyceum mages can speak to via sending if they want to discuss the case later. She has a mission, however, and cannot spare time to accompany the party, even to help them out of the city.

Diogenes, though he seems like he doesn't like people and is a bit of a coward, doesn't want to leave his city. If the party presses him to come with them, he says, "There aren't that many inquisitors. I think I'll be fine. Plus, if I wasn't here to give them a hard time, there probably wouldn't be a city left by the time you guys get back. I hope at least one of you doesn't die."

GHETTO HIDEOUT

A pair of Shahalesti soldiers wait in their carpentry shop hideout, in a walled community of elves where they feel safe. The elves plan to give the case to Shealis when they see her next so she can take it to



Shahalesti. Before they get a chance, however, an **imp** sent by the Ragesians to retrieve the case plans to attack. As the party nears the ghetto where the elves are hiding, a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a raven (the imp in an alternate form) quietly shadowing them.

Getting into the ghetto is easy for elves, but not outsiders. There are no apparent doors, but an elf walking along the outside wall notices one of the several secret doors that lead inside with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Alternately, a DC 11 Charisma (Investigation) check can turn up the location of one of these doors, since occasionally people see elves slipping in or out. Opening a secret door is easy enough, requiring a DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate a triggering mechanism hidden amid various carvings of celestial creatures, gods, and myths.

The ghetto itself is quiet, filled with many trellises along the sides of buildings and plenty of open squares lit by modified *continual flame* spells that flicker and move like *dancing lights*. A few buildings have been damaged by fire, but children still play in the streets despite the recent danger. No one accosts them, but the elves are Hostile to non-elves. They are Neutral to elves, but must be made Friendly for them to admit that a group of elves from Shahalesti live in the upstairs rooms of a carpentry shop in the corner of the ghetto.

GATEMAKERS SHOP

This two-story brick building has a fake front door, and the windows are just wooden frames painted to look like curtains have been pulled. The chimney is exhaling smoke, a sign that someone is there, but there seems to be no entrance to the building. The only creature present is a simple rat rooting around for food, which scurries away if accosted (again, this is the Ragesian imp in an alternate form).

Sent by the inquisitor Guthwulf, Kurychek's mission is to retrieve the case that Rivereye brought from the Imperial Palace. He prefers to avoid combat, instead trying to manipulate enemies into helping him.

Secret Door

The real entrance is in an alley behind the building, with only a narrow space between it and the outer wall of the ghetto. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check detects this secret door made of wood, painted to look like brick, and alerts the characters that

there are three switches hidden in a carving of various celestials, whereas a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check also detects the [poison needle trap](#) behind a carved sunbeam. The switches, which can be turned, are carved to resemble an winged woman with a trumpet (a trumpet archon), a noble and muscular man with a lion's head (a leonal), and an armored woman with a gleaming greatsword (a ghaele eladrin). A DC 9 Intelligence check can identify the alignments of the three figures (lawful good, neutral good, and chaotic good, respectively), and with the aid of the note in Shealis' spellbook, the party can figure out the clue: turn the switches associated with the ghaele (Arborea), then the leonal (Elysium), then the archon (Celestia), and push on the sunbeam carving. If you turn them in another order and try to push the door open, it springs the trap.

If the trap is triggered, a bell begins ringing in the building, alerting the elves upstairs.

If the party has trouble figuring out how to get inside, they hear a quiet "psst" from a nearby invisible source. The imp, invisible, addresses the party, offering an alliance. Sent to retrieve the case, the imp cannot let its bargain go unfulfilled. However, it also doesn't want to risk being killed by the elves (which would also violate its bargain), so it wants to work with the party.

The imp need only fulfill the letter of its agreement, so if it needs to make a deal, it suggests that the party may take the contents of the case. With its knowledge of the planes, it can easily solve the riddle if the party is stumped, but it also knows the door is trapped. If the party needs help with that too, the imp says to give it a moment and stay out of sight, and it skulks away.

About a minute later, a young elf girl, the equivalent of a 7-year-old human girl, walks into the alley, talking to her "guardian angel." If the PCs don't do anything, the imp pretends to be an angel who needs the girl's help, and convinces her to open the door, springing the trap and impaling her with the poison needle. The girl cries out and whimpers for the angel to help her, and the imp makes her keep quiet until, a minute later, the poison causes her to pass out.

If the party figures out the trap themselves, the imp still makes its offer for an alliance. It only fights the party if they attack it first, or if they completely reject its offer, which would force it to violate its pact with its summoner.



AMIDST THE BADGERS (EL 1)

The entry room is watched over by a trio of beautiful celestial badgers, with coats of gold, silver, and platinum hue. They snarl as they fight, alerting the warriors upstairs. They are not intelligent enough to be reasoned with, especially if the party has an imp with them, though if the party makes no aggressive action one of the badgers eventually makes enough noise for a curious elf soldier to come downstairs. If combat does begin, two rounds later the warriors arrive at the base of the stairs, armed and ready for battle.

This 50 foot square room is dimly lit by a roaring fire in a fireplace against the left wall, filling the building with modest warmth. Casting shadows throughout the room are nearly a dozen doors, propped up by metal frames, all of them unfinished. Tools hang around the walls, stacks of wood are piled beside the fire place, and sawdust covers the floor. It looks like the workshop of a carpenter obsessed with doors. A staircase in the back right corner leads up, and one of the doors stands at the foot of the stairs.

Creatures

3 [celestial badgers](#)

Add or remove 1 badger for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

Hazard

The various doors in the room were originally created in case the elves had to pretend to be real carpenters, but now they sit unused, propped upright. They open and close and can act as cover otherwise. The door at the base of the stairs serves to keep enemies from approaching too quickly—the elves can stand on the stairs and shoot arrows into the room over the railing, which grants them cover. They only come off the stairs if they have no clear shot to the intruders.

SPY QUARTERS (EL 3)

The upstairs room is the same size as downstairs, 50 feet square, with only the sparsest furnishing—a pair of mats for the elves to rest on and a few shelves stocked with food.

Creatures

2 [Shahalesti soldiers, green](#)

Add or remove 1 soldier for every 2 PCs in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

Treasure

A small unlocked coffer holds 100 pp in Shahalesti coinage. The case the party seeks, a thick steel box etched with swirling patterns and warded with *arcane lock*, requiring a DC 21 Strength check to break, lies beside one of the mats.

Development

Should the party manage to get a look inside the steel case (perhaps they repeatedly throw it off a rooftop), they find it contains a book written in Infernal and in code, requiring a DC 26 Intelligence check to decipher, though there are copious maps and architectural drawings for some sort of underground complex. The value of this book will likely remain unknown until the third adventure, *Shelter from the Storm*, when it is revealed that the book suggests the “Scourge” refers to more than just Leska’s campaign against enemy magic users.

WHAT IF THEY FAIL?

If the party doesn’t get the case, it barely affects the plot of the campaign saga. However, adventure eight of the saga, *O Wintry Song of Agony*, holds the pay-off of this plot thread, in which the party gets a chance to thwart the plot alluded to by the documents in the case and thus turn the tide of the war. You will want to give the party another opportunity to find this information, perhaps by adding it to the plot of another adventure, or creating a side quest to retrieve it.

Without the party’s intervention, Kurychek the imp eventually manages to retrieve the case and turn it over to the Ragesians, though if the party ends up allying with the Shahalesti down the road, perhaps the elves have gained the case and the information it contained, and they might be willing to organize a joint mission that substantially follows the plot of adventure eight.



Negotiating

If the party attempts to negotiate with the elves, they are willing to listen, though they start as Hostile. If the party is accompanied by the imp, they have disadvantage on any Charisma (Persuasion) checks with the Shahalesti. Only if the elves are made Friendly will they let the party take the case, and even then only if the party makes it clear that they are working to oppose the Ragesians. The elves ask a lot of questions; they need something to report if they have to leave the city empty-handed. If Shealis is in the room, she adamantly refuses to turn the case over, and the elvish soldiers obey her.

Aftermath

Now that the party has their hands on the case, they can finally prepare to leave Gate Pass. If they have not already, Torrent recommends they go to the Temple of the Aquiline Cross to rest and heal.

ACT THREE: ESCAPING THE CITY

In their effort to retrieve the case, the party may have taken a few hours, or a day or more. This section assumes the party retrieves the case before the end of the first night. If the party takes longer, it is easy enough to delay the inquisitors' arrival: the city council needs several days to deliberate. However, when the party is finally ready to make their move to leave Gate Pass, word should start to spread that the council has agreed to the Ragesians' demands. The council has made it clear that, until they come to a decision, *no one* is to leave the city, on threat of death. They do not want the Ragesians to have any pretense to renew their attack.

The events of this act can occur in practically any order. The most likely course is that the party goes to Councilman Menash to get his help. Menash arranges from a city cavalry officer, Captain Herreman, to take them out of the city disguised as his soldiers, but before the party reaches Herreman they get ambushed by more Black Horse bounty hunters. During the ambush, a local hero named

Rantle comes to their aid, giving them another message to take to Lyceum. Then, with Captain Herreman's aid, they ride out of the city. However, be ready to rearrange events in response to the party's actions, and do not feel you need to force the encounters described here if the party comes up with another option.

THE DAWN OF WAR

As the night wears on, the sounds of battle slowly die, and the alarm bells cease to ring. By the time the party awakens, the city is eerily silent, the air crisply cold and tainted with smoke. People cautiously step out into the streets, looking for news, and so as the party sets out to travel, it's impossible for them not to hear the rumors.

The heroes learn that Gate Pass defenders drove back the initial assault, though the attack cost many lives, and even now the men on the walls report that the Ragesian attacked with only a small portion of their entire force. The invading army has demanded that a group of inquisitors be allowed into the city, and threaten to renew their attack if they do not receive prompt agreement from the city's leaders.

Amid these mutterings, one consistent (albeit petty) complaint is that the city has cancelled the parade for the Festival of Dreams, intended to celebrate the new year. The streets are scattered with burnt or trampled decorations that had been set up for the city-wide party, now indefinitely postponed.

EXIT GATES

The gates leading south are 10 feet wide and 20 feet high, set into a large gatehouse with room enough for eight guards to rest and keep warm. A typical southern gate is guarded by forty soldiers (LN **thug**), four officers (LN **veteran**), and a pair of gatekeepers (LN **commoner**, Insight +4, Investigation +4, Perception +4) both night and day. At any given time, sixteen of these guards (eight pairs of soldiers) patrol a circuit along the roughly half-mile length of the wall, with a guard passing a given stretch of wall about once a minute.

The outer walls are 40 feet tall, require a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) to climb, crenelated, with a strange metal awning that sticks out to either side just below the top of the wall, which requires another DC 19 Strength (Athletics) check to get around. Also, the far side of the wall is steep and covered in gravel

OTHER WAYS OUT?

It is not vital to the adventure that the party uses the recommended method to get out of the city, though many other options are less than optimal. They might try to sneak through the sewers, but those actually exit into caverns under the city, leading down, not out. They might try to steal griffons and fly away, but the griffons are very well-guarded, and most are injured from last night's battle. They could try to hide in wagons of hay and ride out in those, but even if they can come up with a convincing reason why wagons with hay need to leave the city in the middle of a siege, the hay will still be poked with pitchforks to make sure no one is hiding in it. They could try simply climbing over the walls, but with the guards on the walls, this would be very difficult.

They also might forge papers approving their exit instead of going to Councilman Menash. The forger has advantage on ability checks to forge the papers if they are able to get another military order or council decree as a base sample, but a guard will make Intelligence (Investigation) check with advantage (as another guard helps) to check the document for authenticity at any exit gate. Aside from military units, very few people are approved to enter or leave the city, even during the day. Kathor, who works for the bounty hunters, is one of these people, since he uses a diplomatic passport that belonged to his father, but even he cannot take other people with him.

and snow, incurring a disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. The gate guards won't pursue, but they will fire crossbows. There is 100 foot of clear line of sight beyond each wall, and the ground is difficult terrain.

If patrolling guards are alerted, they are joined by another two soldiers and an officer every two rounds, to a maximum of four sets of reinforcements. Trying to fight through or sneak through the gates without aid should be nearly impossible at this level.

USE YOUR CHARM

The party may go back to Gabal's school looking for help getting out of the city, and if Diogenes is Friendly, they can secure his aid. If they helped him resolve his grudge against Shealis, he's automatically Friendly. Otherwise a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check is necessary, as well as at least 175 gp payment to cover the expenses Diogenes intends to incur through his plan. Remember that there will likely be an angry crowd outside the Castle's fence.

If the party gets his help, he'll lead them out through a secret passage under the towers that leads to a nearby alley, then get a wagon and a pair of horses, and go with them to the southern exit gate.

There he has all but one of the heroes hide in the wagon while the other acts as the driver. He then times their arrival near the gate to catch one or two of the officers alone as they head toward their shift at the gate. Diogenes uses *charm person* to make the officers friendly. If he manages to ensorcel the officers, he proceeds to the next stage of his plan.

Diogenes then uses *suggestion* on one of the officers and suggests that the officer let the poor farmer back out of the city to return to their family. If the officer fails their saving throw, they escort the wagon to the gate, order the gates opened, and the heroes escape the city with the wagon without being searched. Any soldiers are mildly surprised but follow the officer's orders while the gatekeepers protest.

If the plan fails at any stage, Diogenes uses a *fog cloud* to cover everyone's escape.

THE COUNCILMAN

Erdan Menash, one of the more colorful characters in the city council, is a former merchant and tailor who sold well-crafted but horribly unfashionable gear to adventurers, with the goal of making sure everyone knew he was sponsoring heroism. Torrent does not know him personally, but if the party asks

for a suggestion, she recommends going to him.

He's not suspicious or fearful at all, so the party can easily get in touch with him. Unfortunately, the same bounty hunters who tried to capture the party are aware of Erdan's opinions, and so they keep watch on those who come and go at his house, and will attack the party soon after they leave.

Erdan's manor is a three-story building inside a low iron fence, located a few miles east of the depository, one district west of Summer's Bluff and the 90-foot statue of Emperor Coaltongue. The outer walls are painted vivid green, yellow, and purple, and the two guards he keeps for protection (N **thug**) are forced to wear the same colors. The guards meet visitors at the entry gate and offer to let guests stay inside to wait. Whenever the party arrives, Erdan happens to be out—he is trying to convince the city council not to allow the inquisitors in—but his guards say that he'll be home soon.

When Erdan arrives he is noticeably frustrated, complaining in a high-pitched, wheezing voice about the morons in charge of the city. He does a double take when he sees the party, surprised to have guests. He asks their names and their business, and is especially interested in details of what happened to them during the attack the previous evening. He is easily distracted, though, and will begin giving a tour of his house's many oddities if the party doesn't keep him on track.

Erdan lives alone with a home full of his bizarre creations. Exotic weapons of all sorts adorn the walls—whips, urgroshes, double axes, double swords, monk weapons, a heavy crossbow designed to look like a porcupine (but no spiked chain; too trite)—made more exotic by unorthodox choices like red and yellow frog pommels, or bunny-shaped striking heads.

The first floor consists of a greeting hall, a dining room, a kitchen and store room, a waiting room, and three galleries. The entire second floor is a workshop devoted garish decorations that Erdan had hoped to use in the Festival of Dreams: as a bear mask for the giant statue of Coaltongue, swords made of woven flowers, and dresses made of candy. He lives on the third floor, in a bedroom with a wonderful view of the grand square. Looking out of it, he sighs and shakes his head, sad that he won't get a chance to use his decorations.

Erdan can provide some interesting and exciting stories to help put the party's actions in perspective:

- The griffon riders, aided by a druid who took the form of a giant eagle, were able to drive off

a massive red dragon that was setting fire to the city, and they captured two of its riders.

- An incursion through one of the northern walls was held up by armed townsfolk, who lasted long enough for actual soldiers to arrive and slay the Ragesians.
- The westernmost district caught fire and was nearly gutted, but troops have kept fighting — even some who suffered terrible burns.
- A huge earth elemental rose up from the sewers near the houses of several city council members and managed to kill them while the bulk of the city's defenders were at the walls.
- A wyvern-rider crashed into a house and killed a family, but a group of unknown heroes tracked him down and slew him.

Erdan starts as Friendly. If somehow the party offends Erdan and makes him Neutral, he dolefully refuses to help them, saying he can't risk his position for their incompetent group. He asks them to leave before anyone finds out they were here.

After hearing their story and needs, if he has remained Friendly, someone in the party who conversed the most with Erdan should make a DC20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Displaying enthusiasm about Erdan's odd creations grants advantage on this check. If they succeed, Erdan offers each party member a single weapon, suit of armor, or special item from his collection, with a value of up to 400 gp, including his precious heavy crossbow.

Regardless of the result of the Charisma (Persuasion) check, a Friendly Erdan will offer to give them a note for a trusted friend of his, **Captain Herreman**, who runs a small cavalry detachment that regularly patrols the southern border. The note asks Herreman to take the party along and includes two official orders to quickly patrol roads to the south — one lists Herreman's normal patrol size, and the other is increased by the number of heroes. Herreman and the party will depart through one gate, then Herreman will let the party go their own way and return to the city through a different gate, using the other orders. Erdan will even have Herreman give the PCs each a light horse for the trip, which they should not feel obligated to bring back.

Erdan's gear all looks atrocious, but it works. Selling any of Erdan's items should be difficult if not impossible. If Torrent is still with the party, she'll take a falchion that looks like a dolphin, later admitting she intends to give it away as a gag gift to a friend in Lyceum.

Erdan is also willing to buy gear the party has

picked up from enemies, glad to have a few more swords or suits of armor for the city. He pays half the market value of the items, and if he is Friendly he'll also offer them a 10% discount on any items they buy from him. Erdan is able to sell the PCs most nonmagical items of up to 400 gp value.

When the party is ready to leave, Erdan gives them the note for Captain Herreman and directions to his post (located two districts to the east, a little over a mile away, near a large stable and barracks), begs them to send aid as soon as they can, and bids them good luck.

STREET AMBUSH (EL 4)

At some point during the day, probably after they leave Erdan's manor, a group of six Black Horse thugs begin to shadow the PCs, hanging back about 30 feet and following on side streets or through alleys. A DC 9 Wisdom (Perception) check detects the thugs' pursuit after a few minutes of travel, and though the thugs are disguised as city guardsmen, a DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) check enables the heroes to see through their disguises.

The thugs approach the party when they're out of sight of any other guards or soldiers. Two thugs use alleys and side streets to get ahead of the party and approach the party from the front, while the other four come from behind to block escape. They pretend to be taking one or two characters in the party for questioning on suspicion of being mages and try to convince them to hand over their weapons. Any opposed Charisma (Deception) check they need to make is at advantage as several of the thugs aid the leader with his story. If any PCs come along they head down a side street to a dead-end alley, where they attack with an aim to knock the PCs unconscious.

If the party doesn't fall for the bluff, the thugs threaten to call other guards, but won't start a fight in the middle of the day. They'll follow from a distance for a while, looking for an opening, but once the PCs get to Captain Herreman's barracks they leave for good and report to Kathor.

Creatures

6 Black Horse thugs

Add or remove 1 thug for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

War Flavor

If the party talks long enough with the fake guards, a prisoner caravan approaches from the west, heading for the central district. A dozen real soldiers escort a pair of wounded and bound orc soldiers wearing the uniform of Ragesian infantry—scale mail, a red tabard with a half-crescent fireball on the chest, and a heavy winter coat of bear furs. One of the orcs glances at the party through his one good eye, the other half of his face scarred from an old burn wound.

As the convoy marches by, the thugs become subdued, afraid of drawing attention to themselves. One half-heartedly congratulates the soldiers in an attempt to look the part of a city guard, and gets spit upon by the one-eyed orc for his trouble.

ROGUISH RESCUE

The party is also shadowed by a local hero, [Rantle](#), a member of the city's thieves' guild who is much better at sneaking than the bounty hunters. He can be noticed with a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check. If detected, he'll just approach the party, casually admitting that he was watching out for them and joking that he was looking for a chance to swoop in and save the day.

If at any point the party seems imperiled, Rantle dramatically charges to the rescue, cutting down an enemy with his greatsword before shouting, "Follow me! I'll get us out of this." Otherwise, Rantle will approach them just before they reach Herreman's barracks.

WHO IS THIS RANTLE GUY?

Rantle plays a role in adventure nine, *The Festival of Dreams*, which also takes place in Gate Pass, and he provides a connection to the sorceress Katrina who first shows up in adventure three, *Shelter from the Storm*. He also serves as an introduction to the Commander martial archetype. Finally, Rantle gives the game master an easy way to get the party out of a tough spot, be it a fight that overwhelms them or them getting stuck by alienating all allies who might help them get out of the city.

However, once he makes an impression and tells them about his sister, Rantle should not be able to help the party again, since he has a whole city to help. Try to make the encounter with Rantle memorable, so the party will recall him many adventures later.



Tactics

In the city, Rantle uses his popularity to his advantage, insulting his foes and encouraging bystanders to throw things at them. However, he never gets non-combatants involved if he thinks they might get hurt. He likes to cleave multiple foes at once with his greatsword, his signature weapon. If he uses his leadership performances, it's usually to help his allies get out of danger. He knows when to run (preferably after making a dramatic blow or delivering a blunt, smirking insult to the enemy leader—"You guys are *really* incompetent!"), and will usually use the local townsfolk to provide a wall of bodies to let him get out of sight.

Aftermath

Once the group is out of harm's way, Rantle says that he heard about the fight at the Poison Apple Pub, and that he had wanted to come to ask a favor before the Ragesian assault distracted him. For once

in his life, Rantle seeks someone else's help.

Rantle says he has a sister, Katrina, who "has a tendency to get into such trouble that I have no choice but to save her yet again!" She disappeared a little over a week ago, just before news of the approaching Ragesian army arrived. His sister is a competent sorceress, he says, though she did manage to burn a few of their homes down over the years. Rantle worries, justifiably, that she might be in trouble. The last he heard of her, she was planning to head to Lyceum to get to safety, and Rantle knows just enough about Torrent's activities to guess that's where she and the party are heading.

Rantle asks the party to deliver a scroll tube to his sister if they see her. Rantle describes his sister, "She's about five and a half feet tall, with long red hair, and too pretty for her own good. Pretty much your stereotypical fire mage. It's kind of embarrassing."

The scroll case Rantle asks them to deliver is sealed with red wax, but contains a letter from Rantle to Katrina, warning her that a some orcs came looking for her, but that he took care of them. There's a short traveler's song, written with music and lyrics, which wishes her a safe journey and quick return, and the end of the letter sarcastically thanks Katrina for the scroll she left for him.

The scroll in question is a scroll of *fireball*, which is also in the case. It contains a secret message written on it in disappearing ink. If held near an open flame, a message appears, written from Katrina to Rantle, intended to tell him that he was supposed to follow her to Lyceum for a chance to "make something of ourselves," and that she has been recruited by Ragesia to cause confusion and disarray among the mages of Lyceum. The message is hard to read unless the scroll has been used, in which case the normal ink vanishes. The disappearing ink trick was an old one between the two siblings, but Rantle missed it because he was too confused by what else was on the scroll.

Rantle doesn't have much else to offer, except a promise that he'll let the rest of the guild know not to mess with them. Unfortunately the bounty hunters are independents. If the party has completely ruined their options for escape, Rantle can arrange for some thief buddies of his to cause a distraction at one of the south gates, luring guards off the walls while the party crosses over. Rantle is much more willing to help the party if there are any women he can try to charm.

HERREMAN'S BARRACKS

Herreman's barracks, a quarter-mile from the southern exit gate, consist of several three-story buildings with attached stables and house a hundred soldiers. Each district has a similar set of barracks and number of soldiers.

Captain Herreman is a grim half-orc edging toward middle age, with a thick beard that he thinks hides his orcish tusks. He's very loyal to Councilman Menash, and fondly carries a dagger designed to look like a peeled banana, a memento of when he was an adventurer sponsored by the crazy merchant. Upon receiving the letter from Menash, he efficiently gets the party gear that will let them pass as members of his unit (studded leather, longswords, and light crossbows), acquires light or heavy warhorses for each of them (with military saddles and winter blankets, but no barding), and then gathers eight men that he can trust for this fake mission.

From there, unless the party interferes, their escape from the city is simple. Near sunset (when Herreman's regular patrol is scheduled), they ride to the gate. Along the way, a single bell at the west of the city rings out ominously and mournfully, and Herreman guesses that this means that the inquisitors have finally been let into the city.

Herreman hurries to the gate and hands over his orders to the gatekeepers, and the gatekeepers usher them through, wishing them good hunting. Ostensibly they're supposed to be looking for a Ragesian necromancer who is desecrating graveyards by raising the dead, a dramatic tale that Councilman Menash thought would give the mission enough urgency that the guards would not be suspicious.

Once outside the gates, Herreman says going any further at night is dangerous, and directs the party to a safe camping spot two miles from the city, an abandoned tower that was once a watchpost for the city, but that is now disused. Should the party become involved in combat while Herreman and his men are with them, the soldiers are loyal to Gate Pass first, the party second. They won't help the group fight gate guards under any circumstances.

If the party wants to leave earlier than sunset, they can convince Herreman with a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Doing so places them ahead of the timetable the Black Horse bounty hunters are working on, so instead of the ambush in Act Four the party manages to come upon the bounty hunters when they are just standing in the road, clustered together, looking for a good place to set an ambush.

ACT FOUR: THE GAUNTLET

The road from Gate Pass to the fire forest is thirty miles long, and depending on how the party got out of the city they might have light horses, or a wagon, or be on foot. It should take the party about two days to make the trip. If the party pushes their horses, they can hustle, traveling as fast as 9 miles an hour on a horse, though the horses quickly become fatigued. Random encounters, if any, should be minor.

When the party is 10 miles out from the city, they reach the Gauntlet. Black Horse bounty hunters have laid an ambush, their leader alerted via *sending* spell to stop the party at all costs and recover the case in their possession. A reward of 10,000 gp was offered for this task. Ragesia has many spies in the city, and they are aware of how important the stolen information in the case is.

If the party convinced Herreman to move his patrol to an earlier time, they manage to get on the road before the Black Horse can lay their ambush. Instead of being in tactical positions, the whole group is just walking or riding together, considering the terrain for possible advantages. The party might even surprise them.

This battle can be very dangerous, so try to make sure the party is rested before they reach it.

THE PLAN

The leader of the Black Horses, **Renard Woodsman**, has planned for a 600-foot stretch of the road to be a gauntlet. Renard loves making complex plans, even when a simpler method might be more successful. Renard's Map details how he is dividing his forces—himself, Kathor, three thugs, and two scouts.

At point 1, two Black Horse scouts hide on a cliff overlooking the road requiring a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice them from 50 feet away. If the party is not making an effort to be stealthy, the scouts hear them coming and move to total cover, making the check to find them be at disadvantage. Otherwise, once the party gets within 50 feet, the scouts move to total cover and use the sound of the party's movement to know when to spring the ambush. Their job is to wait until the party has gone just past their position, then spook the party's horses with the loud boom of [thunderstones](#) thrown behind them. The hope is that the group will run further ahead down the gauntlet. The rider of any horse caught within the 10-foot radius of a thunderstone, in addition to suffering

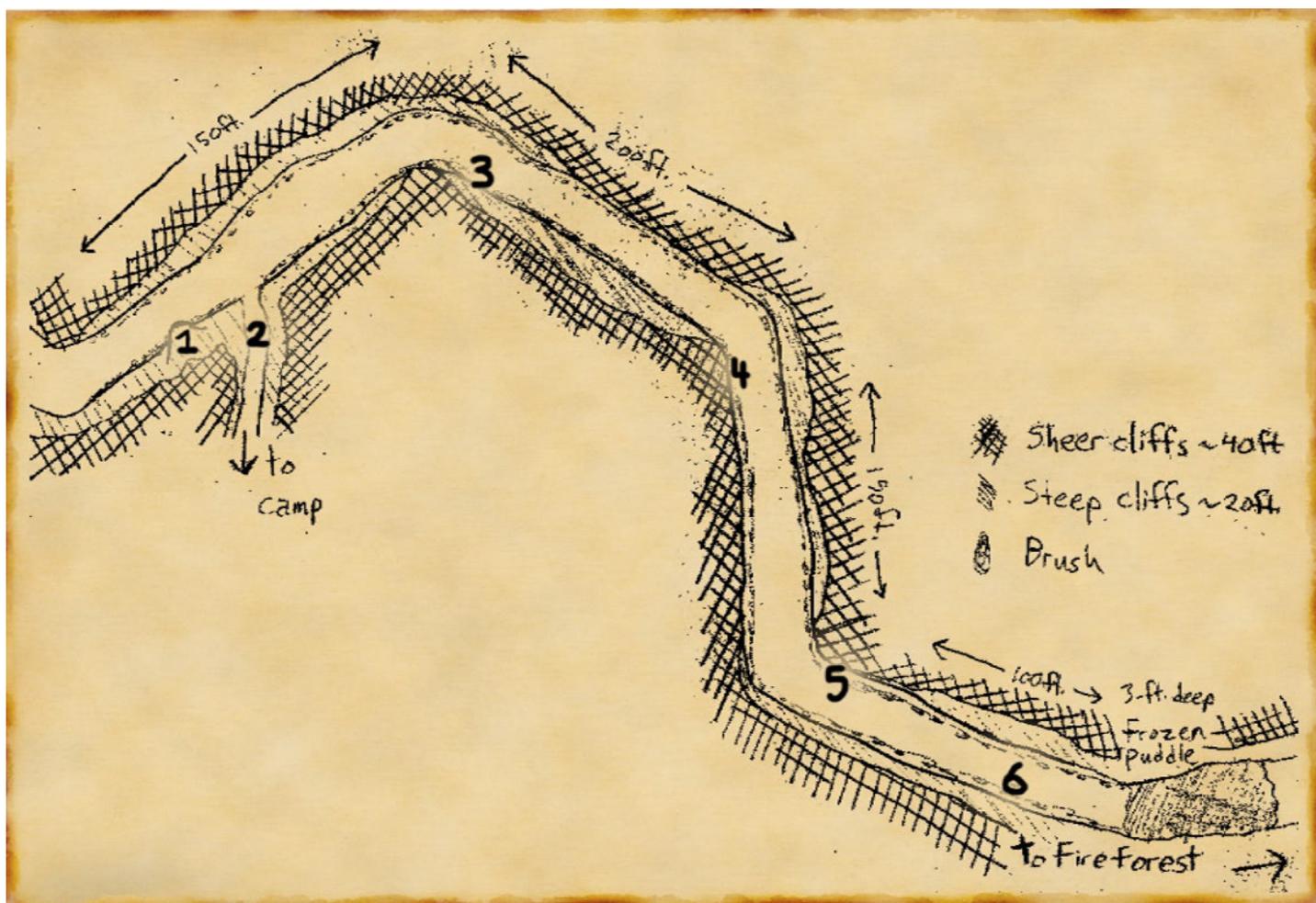


the normal effects of a thunderstone, must make a DC 11 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check to keep the horse from bolting; a bolting horse immediately moves 60 feet down the path. A bolting horse moves 120 feet along the path at the start of the rider's turn. The rider of a bolting horse may use an action to repeat the check, with the horse coming back under control on a success.

At point 2, Renard and a Black Horse thug are mounted on warhorses, hiding behind a large pile of rubble. As soon as the party passes them they will charge in pursuit, Renard firing arrows while the thug tries to ride in and strike. The scouts at point 1 sound their horns to alert the rest of the gauntlet, then fire their crossbows at the party's horses for as long as they have a clear shot.

At the points marked 3, 4, and 5, a thug waits in foliage by the side of the road requiring a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice (at disadvantage on a bolting horse), with orders to fire their crossbows at the party's horses as soon as they get within 200 feet, and to keep firing as long as they have a clear shot.

At point 6, Kathor waits. If someone charges toward him, he readies an action to cast *true strike*



when they come within 30 feet. Otherwise, he charges toward the nearest PC and casts or readies *true strike* if he is unable to reach the nearest PC to make an attack. In the middle of the road, Kathor blocks attempts to ride around him unless the mount presses through the undergrowth on the side of the road, and even then Kathor can take an attack of opportunity. (If the party convinced Kathor to leave them alone, then Kathor is replaced by another thug on a warhorse who tries to block the party's escape.)

The road is 20 feet wide, with 5 feet of foliage on either side that is difficult terrain, and then relatively steep cliffs that ascend at a 60 degree angle to a height of 20 feet. Feel free to scatter obstacles in the road, such as fallen trees, rubble, or patches of ice, to make the scene more interesting.

THE GAUNTLET (EL 7)

More likely than not, this encounter won't go as the bounty hunters plan. Even if the party's horses spook, most characters will turn to face a foe rather than run. If this happens, the scouts at point 1

sound a different note on their horns, which calls for all the bounty hunters including Kathor to come to their assistance. The party might not even have any horses, in which case the bounty hunters have to come into melee. They don't want to kill the party and will try to stabilize dying targets, because the bounty is only for living spellcasters. The bounty hunters assume anyone could be a disguised mage.

Perhaps most vexing for many groups, though, is that if the combat does turn into a running battle, no battle map is long enough to cover the entire length of this scene. A running horse, after all, can run 120 feet, enough to cross many battle maps in a single round.

However, the road, even with the brushy edges, is only 30 feet wide, so you could probably fit three or four segments of road on a typical battle map, drawn in parallel. Assume that at each end of the map, the road curves a 45-degree angle, to keep the battle developing one area at a time. By the time the battle reaches the last length drawn on the map, the first length should be unimportant to the battle, so you could cycle back to the start.

Creatures

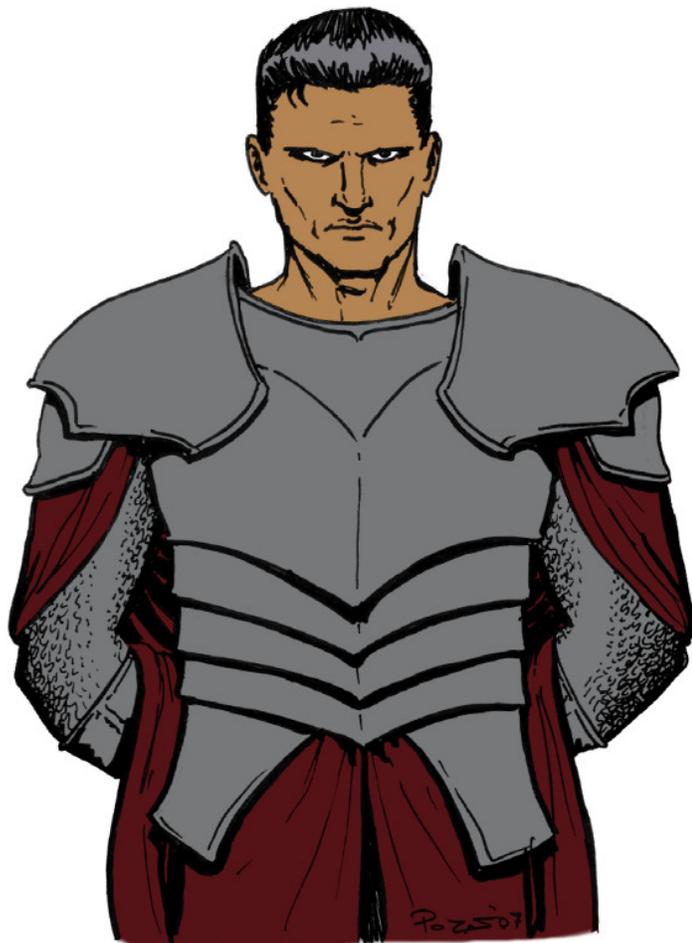
- 2 Black Horse scouts
- 3 Black Horse thugs
- Renard Woodsman
- Kathor Danava

Add or remove any combination of two thugs or scouts for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

Aftermath

If Renard is defeated, Kathor calls for the rest of the bounty hunters to stand down, which they will as long as the party does not press the attack. If both Kathor and Renard fall, the surviving bounty hunters try to flee. Either by following them, or by following the group's tracks with a DC 5 Wisdom (Survival) check, the party can find the bounty hunters' camp, about a mile away along a rough game trail to the south.

After defeating the bounty hunters, the rest of the trip is safe and clear. Depending on when the party left Gate Pass, they might need to camp before continuing, though Torrent will recommend they press on so they can rest at the border of the fire



forest where it's warmer.

Treasure

The bounty hunters' camp lies in a grotto with several small tunnels carved into the walls, sealed off with locked iron gates. Any local of Gate Pass recognizes these tunnels as where people place unopened clay jars after the new year's Festival of Dreams. There shouldn't normally be anything of value inside the caves, but inside one tunnel lies what appears to be a person sleeping, wrapped in a ragged sheet. The gate is held shut with a new lock.

If someone breaks opens the gate with a DC 19 Strength check or picks its lock with a DC 20 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check, they find a man, several days dead from exposure. A gray cat, also dead, lies curled beside him. He lies clutching a tiny clay jar, in which he placed a thin strip of paper that reads, "Please don't let my death be in vain."

The man was a sorcerer, tossed in one of these tunnels for safe-keeping. He died, as did his cat familiar, but Renard lost the key to the lock, so he decided to leave the body there, since the cold weather keeps it from stinking.

The man had tried desperately to stay warm, wrapping himself in a silk shroud, which was originally used to cover the clay jars. The shroud, which is printed with faded images of ancient myths, detects as possessing faint divination magic. If the party treats the body respectfully, such as by burying it or saying a prayer over it, the shroud glows briefly, the images on the fabric momentarily regaining their original vivid glory before fading again, becoming a *dream shroud*. Anyone witnessing the transfiguration becomes aware of the powers of the shroud.

As for the camp itself, there are eight light horses, huddled under blankets, and a half-dozen tents with cold cook fires near them. The camp has a chest which contains 1000 gp in coins, a pouch with 200 gp in rubies, and four notarized sheets proclaiming they can be redeemed at any Ragesian fort for 100 gp each: rewards for the capture of spellcasters. Amid the bounty hunters' gear are several mundane daggers and shortswords and a torch imbued with *continual flame*. In a spare pair of pants in Renard's tent, they can find the key to the locked tunnel.

ACT FIVE: THE INQUISITOR

When the party is about a mile from the edge of the fire forest, the sky ahead begins to glow faint red and orange, and the air smells of ash. The frigid winter temperatures warm noticeably, and red flowers dot the roadside amid yellowed grass. Cinders drift in the sky. Soon the cliffs alongside the road turn into craggy hills, and the forest fire itself comes into view, tall pine trees stretching down into a valley that burns to the horizon. A steaming river marks the border of the fire forest, and a vast field of ash coats the ground for the last quarter mile leading to the forest. A DC 11 Intelligence (Arcana) check is enough to inform the heroes that this area has weakly-enhanced fire magic.

Just before the ash field, about a half mile from the forest fire, the party spots a small farm, consisting of a two-story stone house and adjacent barn, and what looks like a pair of simple stone cairns. The farm is on a slight rise to the left of the road, and a young woman stands in clear view, dark-haired, eyes wide and blue, holding a slender black staff.

When the party is close enough to speak with her, it is clear that she is looking off vacantly, but she speaks to them, saying, “The Scourge comes, and the skulls of the dragon pursue you. I saw it in a dream.” Then she shakes her head as if coming to her senses and meekly apologizes.

She introduces herself as Crystin, and says that she needs their help. She and her father, Haddin, are magic-users, and they know the Ragesians are coming. Crystin says that she has visions, and she believes that wherever the party is going, they can protect her and her father. She wants to go with them. At the very least, she says, she can offer them a place to rest before they head into the forest fire.

THE SITUATION

Crystin Ja-Nafeel is a seer. A trillith (a type of dreamborn creature which plays a greater role later in the campaign) endowed its power upon Crystin’s mother, and then passed along to Crystin when her mother died. Crystin has had visions that the Ragesians are coming for her father, and she has prepared to leave, though she did not know until she saw the party where they could go.

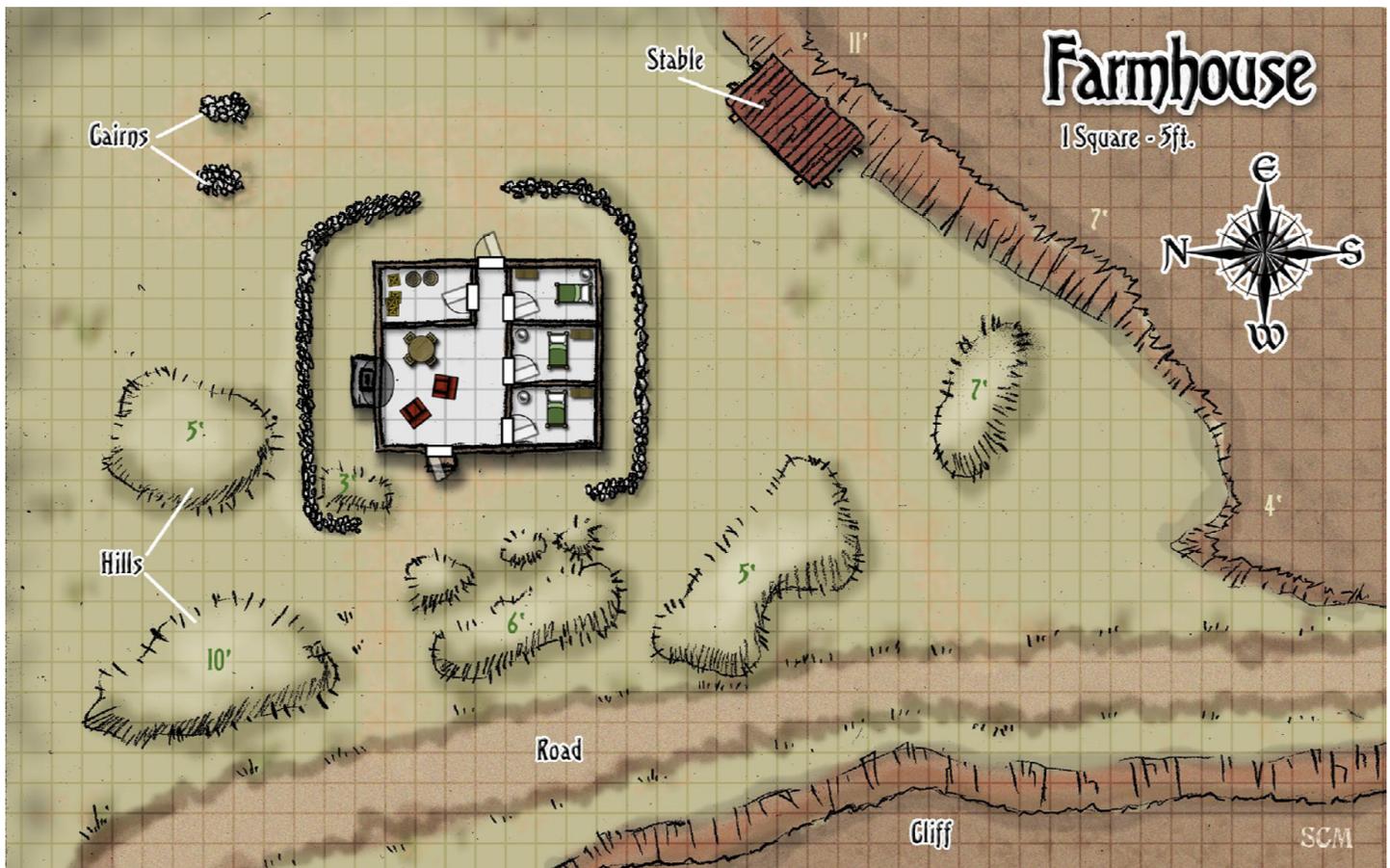
Haddin Ja-Laffa does not want to leave, and despite his age and feebleness, he’s prepared to fight the Ragesians who come for him. Haddin is truly an asshole, and since the death of his wife and



brother he has viewed Crystin not as a child, but as a tool. Despite this, Crystin still loves him and won’t leave without him. She asks the party to stay the evening at the house, and to try to convince her father to come along. She can provide food and warm beds, since the house has several unused rooms. Haddin is Neutral to the party, and will not go with them unless he is made Friendly, intimidated, or simply knocked out and carried.

Given Haddin’s reputation, an inquisitor was dispatched with the specific mission to kill him. The inquisitor and several bodyguards have marched through the mountains, avoiding Gate Pass’s patrols, and they manage to arrive at roughly the same time the party is leaving.

If the party simply ignores Crystin’s requests, when they are preparing to enter the fire forest they hear the sounds of horses coming from the direction of the farm, as the inquisitor’s group attacks; Haddin and Crystin hide in their house, and the Ragesians prepare to storm the place. If the party stays the night, or at least goes inside the farmhouse for a few minutes, the Ragesians will attack as the party leaves, coming in on foot so as not to draw attention.



HADDIN'S HISTORY

A DC 10 Intelligence (History) check from a PC with a background from Gate Pass reveals the following information once the party hears Haddin's name.

Twenty years ago, Haddin was a skilled artist and respected citizen of Gate Pass, but his half-orc half-brother Mandragore was a notorious criminal. One day, suddenly, Mandragore turned over a new leaf and began working to redeem his name. Rumors eventually arose that Haddin was mentally dominating his brother, and an investigation revealed it was true. Within weeks, amid protests of countless people who believed—right or wrong—that Haddin had likewise dominated them, Haddin's reputation was ruined. His brother tried to defend him, but he was killed by rioters, and Haddin fled the city in disgust, taking with him only his wife and newborn daughter.

After some years, a young woman who closely resembled Haddin's wife began coming to town to get supplies, her expression distant. The stories—true for once—say that this is Haddin's daughter, dominated by the bitter old mage.

FARMHOUSE

Aside from a few old cloth decorations, all the furniture here is made of stone, which looks magically shaped. A small hearth crackles with too-bright fire, and beside it an old man sits on a stone bench, perusing a book and coughing incessantly. A finely-crafted warhammer hangs on the wall, surrounded by countless beautiful paintings.

Haddin, very sick, coughs constantly, his lungs ruined by decades of breathing ash, but he refuses help, and is very hard to befriend. He only really likes people who share his negative opinion of life. He complains about how people never realized his value; how they never respected him. If the heroes ask about his past, he laughs them off, and when Crystin starts to answer, Haddin glares at her, and she falls meekly silent.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check detects that Crystin is under the lasting effect of an enchantment spell, a custom effect that Haddin developed—the effect permanently compels Crystin to obey him. She is slowly coming to resist the effect, though, which worries Haddin somewhat. If the effect is dispelled using *dispel magic* with a DC 15 spellcasting ability

check, Crystin tells the party everything and begs them to take her away from her father. The effect of the domination could also be removed by Haddin's death or any creative solution from the heroes.

The warhammer on the wall belonged to Mandragore, and Haddin won't stand to let anyone touch it. The paintings — created by Haddin years ago when there was still some decency in him — are worth 2,000 gp to an art collector, but would prove nearly impossible to carry through the fire forest unmolested. In any case, Haddin refuses to let anyone take them. Crystin takes just one, a small portrait of her mother and herself, painted when she was a child.

Ad-Hoc Experience

If the party manages to get Haddin to come along without knocking him out or manages to learn about the permanent compulsion affecting Crystin and free her, reward the participating PCs with inspiration.

THE ATTACK (EL 7)

Inquisitor Boreus is the youngest of the inquisitors sent to Gate Pass, but he is patient and cautious, not wanting to risk being dominated. If given a chance, he employs the following strategy.

First, he has Kralrak (NE goblin rogue) sneak into the stable for a view of the back of the farmhouse. Anyone heading out the back door will need a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice him. Then he sends the other goblin, Emran, to the front door to be ready to pick the lock. Boreus calls out, his voice feral and commanding from *thaumaturgy*, demanding Haddin come out and turn himself over, and threatening to kill the old mage if he doesn't surrender.

If anyone comes out the back door, Kralrak will shoot that person from a hidden position in the stable (granting him 3/4 cover) and shout an alarm, and the Ragesians will rush the door. If no one comes out, Boreus will cast *silence* on the front door and send Emran, who will then open the door, and the two skeletons will lead the charge with Emran rushing in after them. Either way, Boreus, his bodyguard **Smiley**, and the green Ragesian soldier slowly saunter up to the door, being careful to remain close together so Boreus can use *cancel* or *Rebuke Magic* on any attempt by Haddin to dominate someone. As they approach, Smiley pulls out his *potion of growth* and readies an action to drink it if anything dangerous comes out the door.



Creatures

- 2 skeletons
- 2 goblin rogues (Kralrak and Emran)
- 1 Ragesian soldier, green
Smiley
Inquisitor Boreus

Add or remove a skeleton and a soldier for each PC in a party larger or smaller than 4 PCs.

Tactics

Haddin's options are highly limited because he destroyed his spellbook long ago, and most spells have faded over time. The only spells he has available are those he always had memorized—a list of spells intended to let him escape if he was ever captured. In combat, he tries to control his enemies' minds. Haddin's advanced age and limited spell selection, as well as his lack of magical gear, makes his challenge rating much lower than would be indicated by his spellcaster level.

Crystin is frightened in combat, because things happen too fast for her visions to guide her. She tries to stay out of danger, but will go into harm's way if someone's in serious trouble.

Boreus' main goal is to make sure his allies stay in



WEAKLY ENHANCED FIRE MAGIC

Spells that do fire damage that are cast within a mile of the fire forest are automatically empowered (may reroll a number of damage dice up to your spellcasting ability modifier). Note that all of adventure two takes place within this radius.

fighting condition, so he counters spells that would take them out of the fight. When he's not busy doing that, he'll try to *command* enemy warriors to come closer so Smiley can cut them to pieces. Aside from Haddin, Boreus is interested in taking magic-using prisoners for Leska, though he does not care about non-spellcasters.

Aftermath

On the inquisitor's body is a scroll tube that contains his orders to kill Haddin so the old wizard cannot reinforce the city. The message says explicitly, "He is not needed. Do not take him alive."

Should the party attempt to interrogate any prisoners, no one but Boreus knows anything of value. Boreus is scornful, saying that his masters know they are headed for Lyceum, and that though they might have avoided the army, they will not be safe, for nowhere is beyond the searing reach of the Ragesian Empire. Boreus will betray the party if given a chance, but if the party asks, he will offer up the names of his fellow inquisitors who are in the city—Kreven (second in command of the Inquisitors), Ursus, and Guthwulf.

CONCLUSION

If the party is willing to let Crystin and Haddin come along, they will, with Crystin trying to help, and Haddin being a constant irritant, even going so far as to try to *dominate person* any PC he dislikes. If the party is not willing to bring them along, Crystin still thanks them for protecting her father, and says she will see them again. If Haddin died, or if Crystin was freed from his control, Crystin begs to come along, saying she has nothing else here. She promises to protect those who helped her.

Confident that the immediate threat is gone, Torrent recommends everyone rest again before heading on. When the party is finally ready, they should send the horses back to Gate Pass, and then cross a charred bridge over the river into the fire forest.

APPENDIX A: MONSTERS AND NPCs

BLACK HORSE SCOUT

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (studded leather)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	8 (−1)	12 (+1)	6 (−2)

Skills Athletics +4, Perception +3, Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

BLACK HORSE THUG

Medium humanoid (human or half-orc), neutral

Armor Class 16 (scale mail, shield)

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (−1)	9 (−1)	10 (+0)

Skills Animal Handling +1

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

CELESTIAL BADGER

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	2 (−4)	12 (+1)	5 (−3)

Senses darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The badger has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Celestial Creature. The badger comes from the Upper Planes and is more beautiful and regal looking than its common cousins from the Material Plane.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The badger makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

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

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4 + 1) slashing damage.

CRYSTIN JA-NAFEEL

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 38 (7d8 + 7)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +3, Cha +4

Skills Arcana +3, Insight +4, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Special Equipment. Crystin has a cold weather outfit.

Trillith Spirit. If Crystin dies, for a moment everyone experiences déjà vu, and then something barely visible drifts out of Crystin's body and vanishes, flying away into the sky. This is the trillith spirit that has occupied Crystin, granting

her sorcerer abilities, but its identity remains a mystery for now.

Spellcasting. Crystin is a 3rd-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *dancing lights, mage hand, mending, prestiditation*

1st level (3 slots): *detect magic, magic missile, sleep*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d6 – 1) bludgeoning damage, or 3 (1d8 – 1) bludgeoning if used with two hands.

Crystin's wavy dark hair frames a haunted face dominated by wide blue eyes that seem to see beyond the material world. Slender and docile, she cradles a thin black staff close to her, like it is precious to her.

DIOGENES

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 91 (14d8 + 28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (–1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3

Skills Arcana +5, Deception +3, Insight +3, Persuasion +3

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Ignan, Orcish, (plus the phrase “don't eat me” in Draconic)

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Special Equipment. Diogenes has 2 *potions of healing* and a pouch containing 100 gp.

Spellcasting. Diogenes is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *minor illusion, mage hand, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person, detect magic, fog cloud, hideous laughter, shield, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow, enthrall, suggestion*

3rd level (2 slots): *counterspell, dispel magic*

ACTIONS

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

Spellduelist. Diogenes can pretend to cast a spell as a bonus action. The spell must be on his spell list, and any onlooker who would use a reaction to him casting a spell—such as by attempting to *counterspell*, taking an attack of opportunity, or performing a readied action—must make a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check to realize the deception, or their reaction is used upon a failure.

Diogenes cannot cast any other spell on his turn other than the spell he was pretending to cast or a cantrip with a casting time of 1 action.

With a paunch, a prematurely receding hairline, and a sarcastic tone that is lost on most people, this blue-robed wizard possesses an everyman's charm.

FLAGANUS MORTUS

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (–1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Animal Handling +2, History +3, Intimidation +1

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Draconic, Orc

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Flaganus makes four melee attacks.

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Normally **Flaganus** would have 71 (11d8 + 22) hit points to make him a challenge 4 NPC. His hit points are lower here to model him being heavily injured from the battle in the sky.

GIANT WEASEL

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +5

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The weasel has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

GOBLIN ROGUE

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 14 (leather armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d6 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +2, Perception +4, Stealth +7, Thieves' Tools +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Special Equipment. The rogue has a set of thieves' tools and a pouch containing 28 gp.

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

Tool Proficiency. The rogue adds +7 to Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) ability checks.

ACTIONS

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

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

HADDIN JA-LAFFA

Medium humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 9

Hit Points 37 (15d8 - 30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	9 (-1)	7 (-2)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, History +7, Perception +5, Painter's Supplies +1

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Goblin, Orcish, Undercommon

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Special Equipment. Haddin has an aged book (not his spellbook, which he destroyed in anger, but rather a sketchbook from when he was still a good man and a loving husband and father), a cold weather outfit, and a pouch containing 30 gp.

Spellcasting. Haddin is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 15). He has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, mage hand, message, prestidigitation*

1st level (4 slots): *charm person*

2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts, knock*

3rd level (3 slots):

4th level (3 slots): *stone shape*

5th level (2 slots): *dominate person*

ACTIONS

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

Once strong and handsome, **Haddin** is now old and feeble, his brown hair stringy, his voice ragged from constant coughing. He dresses like a common merchant, but he clutches an aged book to his chest.

IMP

Tiny fiend (devil, shapeshifter), lawful evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities fire, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Infernal
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shapechanger. The imp can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a rat (speed 20 ft.), a raven (20 ft., fly 60 ft.), or a spider (20 ft., climb 20 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the imp's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The imp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Sting (Bite in Beast Form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Invisibility. The imp magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the imp wears or carries is invisible with it.

INQUISITOR BOREUS

Medium humanoid (orc), lawful evil

Armor Class 10 (leather armor)
Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +2
Skills Intimidation +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Orcish
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Special Equipment. Boreus has 4 *potions of healing*, his inquisitor's mask, and a pouch containing 73 gp.

Aggressive. As a bonus action, Boreus can move up to his speed toward a hostile creature that he can see.

Focused Casting. Boreus has advantage on Concentration saving throws.

Spellcasting. Boreus is a 4th-level spellcaster. His

spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, produce flame, resistance, thaumaturgy*
 1st level (4 slots): *bane, burning hands, command, detect magic, cure wounds*
 2nd level (2 slots): *scorching ray, shatter, silence*

ACTIONS

Hand Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Rebuke Magic (1/Day). Boreus casts *dispel magic* without using a spell slot. This cannot be countered by *cancel* or *counterspell*.

REACTIONS

Reactive Rebuke. Boreus uses his Rebuke Magic to instead cast *counterspell* without using a spell slot. This cannot be countered by *cancel* or *counterspell*.

Clad only in leather cords, bearskins, and a carved bear skull, **Boreus** looks savage. A three-pronged metal claw is strapped to his right hand, and fire seems to burn in his eyes.

KATHOR DANAVA

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (half plate)
Hit Points 110 (17d8 + 34)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4
Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +4
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Special Equipment. Kathor has two *potions of healing* and a pouch containing 350 gp.

Focused Casting. Kathor has advantage on Concentration saving throws.

Trillith Spirit. If Kathor dies, for a moment the air grows heavy, and then something barely visible drifts out of Kathor's body and vanishes, flying away into the sky. This is the trillith spirit that has occupied Kathor, granting him his sorcerer abilities, but its identity remains a mystery for now.

Spellcasting. Kathor is a 1st-level spellcaster. His

spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mending*, *true strike*
 1st level (2 slots): *detect magic*, *shield*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kathor makes two greatsword attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Net. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one Large or smaller creature that is not formless. *Hit:* The target is restrained until it is freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net.

Hidden under grey plate armor is a tightly muscled man, his armor worn from many battles, and humbly marked with symbols of sacred honor. **Kathor's** eyes have a darkness like a judge laying sentence. A broken helmet, cloven in the face, hangs from his belt.

LANTERN ARCHON

Small celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 28 (8d6)

Speed 0 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Damage Resistances lightning, poison, radiant; bludgeoning, slashing, piercing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, petrified, prone

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages can communicate in the language of any nearby creature

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Magic Resistance. The lantern archon has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The lantern archon can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *aid*, *continual flame* (self only), *detect evil and good*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The lantern archon makes two light ray attacks.

Light Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +2 to hit, range 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (2d6) radiant damage.

LARION PREVARIETH

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +2, Deception +5, Perception +1, Persuasion +3, Stealth +5, Thieves' Tools +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Celestial, Common, Elvish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Special Equipment. Larion has a potion of *jump*, a potion of *spider climb*, thieves' tools, 50 ft. of silk rope, and a pouch with 10 pp in Shahalesti coinage.

Evasion. If Larion is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Larion instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Larion deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage when he hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Larion that isn't incapacitated and Larion doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Spellcasting. Larion is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 11). Larion has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*
 1st level (3 slots): *charm person*, *disguise self*, *feather fall*, *sleep*

ACTIONS

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

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Cunning Action. Larion can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action.

Without his disguise, **Larion** is short and wiry, his dark hair and pale skin mostly hidden by black clothing. A small pouch

slung over his shoulder has slots for scroll cases and potion vials, and a rapier sits sheathed at his hip.

MASTIFF

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 5 (1d8 + 1)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages —

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Mastiffs are impressive hounds prized by humanoids for their loyalty and keen senses. Mastiffs can be trained as guard dogs, hunting dogs, and war dogs. Halflings and other Small humanoids ride them as mounts.

PRIEST

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage

increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds, guiding bolt, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic, spirit guardians*

ACTIONS

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage.

Priests bring the teachings of their gods to the common folk. They are the spiritual leaders of temples and shrines and often hold positions of influence in their communities. Evil priests might work openly under a tyrant, or they might be the leaders of religious sects hidden in the shadows of good society, overseeing depraved rites. A priest typically has one or more acolytes to help with religious ceremonies and other sacred duties.

RAGESIAN SOLDIER, GREEN

Medium humanoid (half-orc), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (splint, shield)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	9 (-1)

Skills Animal Handling +1, Intimidation +1

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Special Equipment. The soldier has a pouch with 10 gp.

Relentless Endurance (1/Day). When the half-orc is reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright, it can drop to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

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

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

RANTLE

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Int +2

Skills Acrobatics +4, Animal Handling +1, Deception +5, Intimidation +3, Performance +5, Persuasion +3, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4, Thieves' Tools +4

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Special Equipment. Rantle has 2 *potions of healing*.

Tool Proficiency. Rantle adds +5 to Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) ability checks.

Evasion. If Rantle is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, Rantle instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Sneak Attack. Once per turn, Rantle deals an extra 3 (1d6) damage when he hits a target with a finesse or ranged weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Rantle that isn't incapacitated and Rantle doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

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

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Leadership Performance (1/Day). Rantle can inspire or direct 2 creatures of his choice within 30 feet (including himself) in one of the following ways:

- The chosen creatures may use their reaction to move up to their speed and make a single weapon attack or cast a cantrip that targets a creature.

Tall, dark-haired, and roguishly handsome, by his goatee and massive greatsword you recognize this man as the local folk hero **Rantle**, a scoundrel and defender of the common man.

Despite his light chain armor, his smirk says clearly that he thinks he's invincible.

RENARD WOODSMAN

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt +1)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +2, Dex +4

Skills Animal Handling +2, Nature +1, Perception +1, Stealth +5, Survival +1

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Orcish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Special Equipment. Renard has a *potion of greater healing* and an armband worth 40 gp.

Colossus Slayer. When Renard hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 4 (1d8) damage if it's below its hit point maximum. Renard can deal this extra damage only once per turn.

ACTIONS

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

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

Renard wears a blackened chain shirt and a black helmet decorated with a silver horse's head. A cap billows behind him as he rides, and all you can see of his skin is his toothy smile.

SHAHALESTI SOLDIER, GREEN

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 60 (11d8 + 11)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Animal Handling +3, Athletics +3, Perception +3

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Fey Ancestry. The soldier has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The soldier makes two attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

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

SHEALIS AMLAURIL

Medium humanoid (elf), neutral

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 103 (23d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, Deception +3, Perception +4, Religion +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elvish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Special Equipment. Shealis has 8 *potions of healing*, a *potion of fly*, mithral gloves worth 200 gp, and 10 pp in Shahalesti coinage. Her spellbook contains the spells she has memorized as well as *comprehend languages*, *fly*, *protection from evil and good*, and *spider climb*.

Fey Ancestry. Shealis has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.

Focused Casting. Shealis has advantage on Concentration saving throws.

Sculpt Spells. Shealis can create pockets of relative safety within the effects of her evocation spells. When Shealis casts *fireball*, affecting other creatures that she can see, she can choose up to 4 of them including herself. The chosen creatures automatically succeed on their saving throws against the spell, and they take no damage if they would normally take half damage on a successful save.

Spellcasting. Shealis is a 6th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *Gabal's superior missile*, *magic missile*, *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *flaming sphere*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*

3rd level (3 slots): *clairvoyance*, *fireball*

ACTIONS

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

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

This blond elf woman's blue eyes flicker like shining sapphires, and her pale skin glows like snow. She wears concealing red robes, but the metallic gleam of chainmail peeks out from her collar. Her gloves shine like silver.

SKELETON

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 13 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands all languages it new in life but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

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

SMARG "SMILEY" HOBLER

Medium humanoid (orc), neutral evil

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +4

Skills Athletics +6, Intimidation +2

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing while raging

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Orcish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Special Equipment. Smiley has a *potion of growth* and a platinum chain worth 140 gp.

ACTIONS

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d12 + 4) slashing damage, 12 (1d12 + 6) slashing damage while raging, 13 (1d12 + 1d4 + 4) slashing damage while enlarged, or 15 (1d12 + 1d4 + 6) slashing damage while enlarged and raging.

Rage (2/Day). Smiley can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, he has advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. His rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if he is knocked unconscious or if his turn ends and he hasn't attacked a hostile creature since his last turn or taken damage since then.

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Thugs are ruthless enforcers skilled at intimidation and violence. They work for money and have few scruples.



TORRENT

Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 13 (breastplate)

Hit Points 55 (10d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +3
Skills Athletics +4, History +2, Insight +4, Persuasion +3
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Cantrips (at will): *guidance, light, spare the dying*
 1st level (3 slots): *bless, create or destroy water, cure wounds, detect magic*

ACTIONS

Battleaxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage or 7 (1d10 + 2) slashing damage if wielded with two hands.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +1 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d8 – 1) piercing damage.

Turn Undead (1/Day). As an action, Torrent present her holy symbol and speaks a prayer censuring the undead. Each undead that can see or hear her within 30 feet of her must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage.

A turned creature must spend its turns trying to move as far away from Torrent as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of her. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action.

As tall and strong as the typical warrior, **Torrent** is a distinctive looking woman with tanned skin and short white hair. Under a dark winter coat she wears a breastplate decorated with blue wave-like etchings, and a holy symbol to a sea god is tied to her wrist with a leather cord. Her demeanor is smooth but forceful, like an ocean wave.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)
Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

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

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d10 + 1) piercing damage.

Veterans are professional fighters that take up arms for pay or to protect something they believe in or value. Their ranks include soldiers retired from long service and warriors who never served anyone but themselves.

WARHORSE

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)
Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (–4)	12 (+1)	7 (–2)

Senses passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the horse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

ACTIONS

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

APPENDIX B: ITEMS AND TRAPS

ADVENTURING GEAR

Dragonbomb. This weapon is dropped by wyvern riders, functioning as a grenade-like weapon. Because the weapon simply drops, the rider makes a DC 10 Intelligence check (disadvantage over 20 feet of altitude), hitting the intended target on a success and missing in a random direction by 1d10 feet per 10 feet of altitude on a failure.

Alchemist's fire coats everything within 5 feet of the impact point dealing 1d4 fire damage at the start of a creature's turn (initiative count 0 for objects) until someone uses an action to put out the fire, and burning oil additionally covers everything within 10 feet of the impact point, dealing 5 fire damage for two rounds. The alchemicals typically last long enough to set fire to flammable objects. It also creates a deafening boom, and all creatures in a 10-foot-radius are affected by the thunderstone.

A dragonbomb consists of little more than a compilation of existing alchemicals. It has 10 flasks of oil, 4 flasks of alchemist's fire, and a thunderstone in a clay shell that shatters on impact. A DC 15 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check can create one if all the listed components above are available.

Thunderstone. You throw this stone at a point up to 20 feet away. When it strikes a hard surface or is struck hard, it creates a deafening bang. Any creatures within a 10-foot radius must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be deafened for 1 minute. Anyone concentrating within the area affected must also make a DC 15 Concentration saving throw, with disadvantage if they have been deafened. Deafened creatures may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of their turns, removing the deafened condition on a successful save.

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Cost	Weight
Dragonbomb	300 gp	20 lb.
Thunderstone	50 gp	1 lb.

MAGIC ITEMS

Dream Shroud

Wondrous item, uncommon

This silk sheet displays faded images of old myths of the city of Gate Pass. When worn as a belt, sash, or cloak, this item alerts you when you are about to perform an action or use an item that would modify your alignment before you actually carry it out. Additionally it allows you to cast *magic*

weapon without using a spell slot by whispering the command phrase, "Please don't let my death be in vain." This special ability cannot be used again until the next dawn.

TRAPS

Locker Trap

Simple trap (level 4)

The lockers of the depository tower can be protected with a fiery trap.

Trigger. Anyone who opens a protected locker without speaking the password causes fire to erupt from it.

Effect. A 10-foot cube of fire erupts from the locker with the locker as the midpoint of one side of the cube. Each creature in the area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) by anyone within 5 feet of the locker notices the faint runes etched into its frame. A DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check scratches out the correct rune to disable the trap. A successful *dispel magic* (DC 12) destroys the trap. Failure of either of these checks sets off the trap.

Poison Needle

Simple trap (level 2)

A poisoned needle is hidden within a treasure chest's lock, or in something else that a creature might open.

Trigger. Opening the lock without the proper key causes the needle to spring out, delivering a dose of poison.

Effect. When the trap is triggered, the needle extends 3 inches straight out from the lock. A creature within range takes 1 piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until they complete a long rest. While poisoned, the creature has disadvantage on Constitution saving throws and is unconscious for the first hour.

Countermeasures. A successful DC 17 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows a character to deduce the trap's presence from alterations made to the lock to accommodate the needle. A successful DC 11 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check disarms the trap, removing the needle from the lock. Unsuccessfully attempting to pick the lock triggers the trap.

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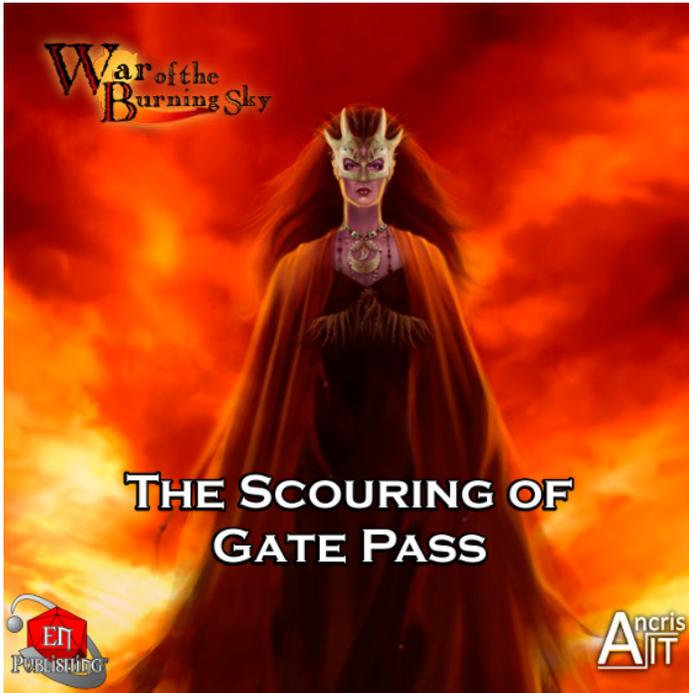


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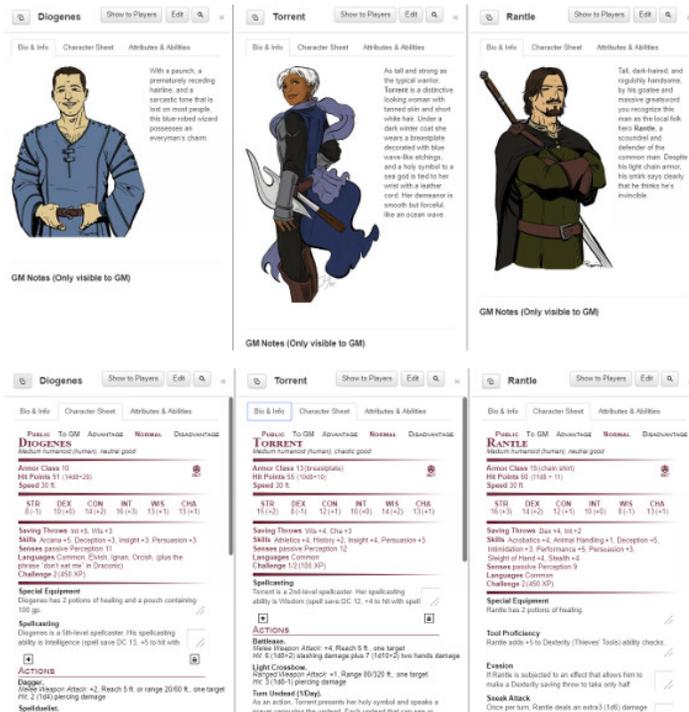
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