

# Ghost of a Chance

An Adventure for Legendary Lives

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## Background

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(The referee should provide this information to the players.)

For two weeks, the elven village of Alderlan has been celebrating the betrothal of the baron's son. Word of the lavish festival has spread across the land, and like many others, you have traveled to Alderlan to partake in the revelry. The graciousness of your hosts has impressed you, and you've made quite a few friends among the Alder tribe.

The night before the wedding, you attended a spectacular banquet. After hours of incredible entertainment and savory food, Delrien Alder rose from his place at the head of the table and spoke these words:

"This is a time of joy for the Alder tribe, and we gladly share our happiness with our visitors. But we were not always as merry as this.

"Sixteen years ago, we were engaged in such terrible disputes with the Longbow clan that war seemed inevitable. As we prepared for battle, a sidhe seer stepped between us, saying, "Peace and prosperity will be yours, Delrien Alder, and yours too, Alexi Longbow if you hark my words. A child will be born in both your houses. If the babes are both boys or both girls, then the goddess Dana will sanction your warring, and count it just. But if the children are a boy and a girl, then let them be wed. It is a sign from Dana that the clans should join as one, and be strong."

"Heeding the wisdom of the ancient one, we laid down our arms and waited. First, my mate was delivered of a son, whom we named Conrad. A few months later, the Longbow tribe saw the birth of a lovely girl, Marli. The goddess Dana had shown her will. A truce was called between our clans, and the wedding set for the day of Conrad's sixteenth birthday.

"Conrad has grown into a handsome, strapping young elf. This morning, he left us to

journey to the sacred glade to be wed. Tomorrow, when he reaches the sacred glade, the generation old feud between us and the Longbow tribe will be over!"

As the crowd cheers, Delrien toasts Quill, a Longbow diplomat who sits at his side. Many toasts follow, and it is quite late by the time you return to your inn and collapse in your bed. The festival takes its toll, and its late the next afternoon when you are awoken by a commotion in the street below your window.

## Beginning the Game

The player characters start in their rooms at the local inn. Looking out their windows, they will see a group of elves surrounding a dust-encrusted priest slumped astride a weary mount. The priest is helped off his horse and into the inn.

Downstairs, the players find the priest sitting at a table, gulping from a flagon of water, as a maid wipes the grime from his face. A crowd stands around him, the fear and dismay clear in their voices. "It's Javel Alder," one of the onlookers murmurs, "the priest who left yesterday with Conrad's wedding party."

Delrien Alder bursts through the front door. "What has happened!" he demands. At his heels, Quill the Longbow diplomat follows.

Javel explains what happened. "The wedding party left yesterday as planned. Conrad, in his eagerness to reach the sacred glade, rode until dusk. We were riding over Highfall Crest, when dozens of shadowy men darted forward. They were quick, deadly and silent. Although I can't be sure, I think they wielded daggers. The horses went wild during the fight, making defense almost impossible. My bolting horse threw me into the undergrowth, and I was knocked unconscious."

(Referee's Note: A Good Empathy roll will indicate to a player who checks that Javel is lying. He's too proud to confess that he was actually frozen by an all encompassing terror.)

"When I recovered, the fighting was over. The attackers were digging shallow graves for the bodies. I was so frightened by the silent marauders that I fled into the night. I found my horse and spurred it into a froth until I reached home."

If asked, Javel will admit that he did not see the bodies clearly, and he does not know if Conrad was among them.

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## The Brink of War

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The Alder clan is incensed. Who but the Longbows would wish to harm their ruler's heir? Quill pleads that they had nothing to do with the affair. He argues that if Conrad could be found and wed to Marli, the two clans could still live in peace.

If the players suggest that someone go look for Conrad, Delrien will gruffly dismiss the idea. "My warriors must stay in Alderlan to prepare for war with the Longbow tribe. If Conrad is dead, he cannot be brought back to life. And if the Longbows have taken him hostage, the only way to restore his freedom is by force. Clearly, the Longbows do not want peace. So we shall have war instead." He gestures at Quill. "Soldiers, take this Longbow spy prisoner!"

## Involving the Players

Here is a situation ripe with heroic opportunities! Optimally, the players will volunteer to find Conrad to prevent the war. If they are reluctant, Quill can ask them to find out what really happened to save his own skin. Or, Delrien might send the players to seek revenge for Conrad's murder. If the players refuse to get involved, tell them they're a sorry bunch of heroes and maybe they should play something less daring, like checkers. *Legendary Lives* is only for the bold.

## The Wedding Party

If the players ask, they will be provided with a description of the wedding party, which consisted of:

Conrad Alder, a strapping, handsome elf. He carried a splendid ring of betrothal, a circlet of silver bearing the entwined crests of the Alder and

Longbow families. With this ring, he would wed Marli.

Darris Alder, Conrad's friend and best man, who was known to be almost as handsome as Conrad himself.

Nedri Alder, Conrad's uncle, who favored fine tobacco.

Javel Alder, the priest who escaped the carnage.

Three men at arms. Like the others in the wedding party, they wore the green and gold raiment of the Alder family.

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## Highfall Crest

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The most obvious place to start the search for Conrad Alder is Highfall Crest. The cliff is nearly a day's journey away. It is a dark and gloomy place. A Great Legends roll will bring to mind the story of a forgotten cemetery in the vicinity, where an ancient civilization of men once buried their dead. But of course, that's just a rumor.

A character who examines the trail along the cliff and rolls *Passable* or better on *Track* can locate the scene of a battle. One set of hoof prints leads over the edge of the cliff, and at the foot of the cliff 100 feet below is the carcass of a white steed with the green and gold livery of the Alder family. This is Conrad's horse, but his body is nowhere to be found. A vast quantity of blood on the saddle bodes ill for Conrad's safety. It only takes a *Poor Nature* roll to realize that horses don't normally charge off cliffs unless terribly frightened. Also on Conrad's horse is his saddlebags, which contain items perfect for use with a firbolg's *Far Sight* power. Using *Far Sight* to see Conrad's surroundings will give the firbolg the impression of floating serenely in warm, bubbling water, shrouded in a silent darkness.

## Five Graves

Searching the area, the players find a clearing which contains five shallow, recently opened graves. In one grave is a small tobacco pouch embroidered with elven runes. A *Passable Literacy* roll enables a character to read the initials N.A. (The pouch belonged to Nedri Alder, a member of

the wedding party.) Otherwise, the graves are empty.

As the players search the area, the person with the highest Listen roll hears someone coming through the brush. A moment later, an elf wearing green and gold stumbles from the woods. He appears badly wounded. It isn't until he comes closer that the players are hit by an aura of fear. Each player must make a Sanity check.

The elf is a true zombie who will attack the nearest player. He does Poor damage and has a Defense of Passable, Good, Great, Superior. Altogether, there are five zombies in the area, all members of the wedding party. One zombie appears every other turn. The zombies are drawn to the scent of blood, and will always attack the most wounded character.

After the battle, the players are left with five dead elves. With guesswork, the players can account for everyone in the wedding party except Conrad and his best man, Darris.

### Five Graves & a Fist

A Passable Search roll turns up a bit of green and gold cloth caught on a broken branch on the

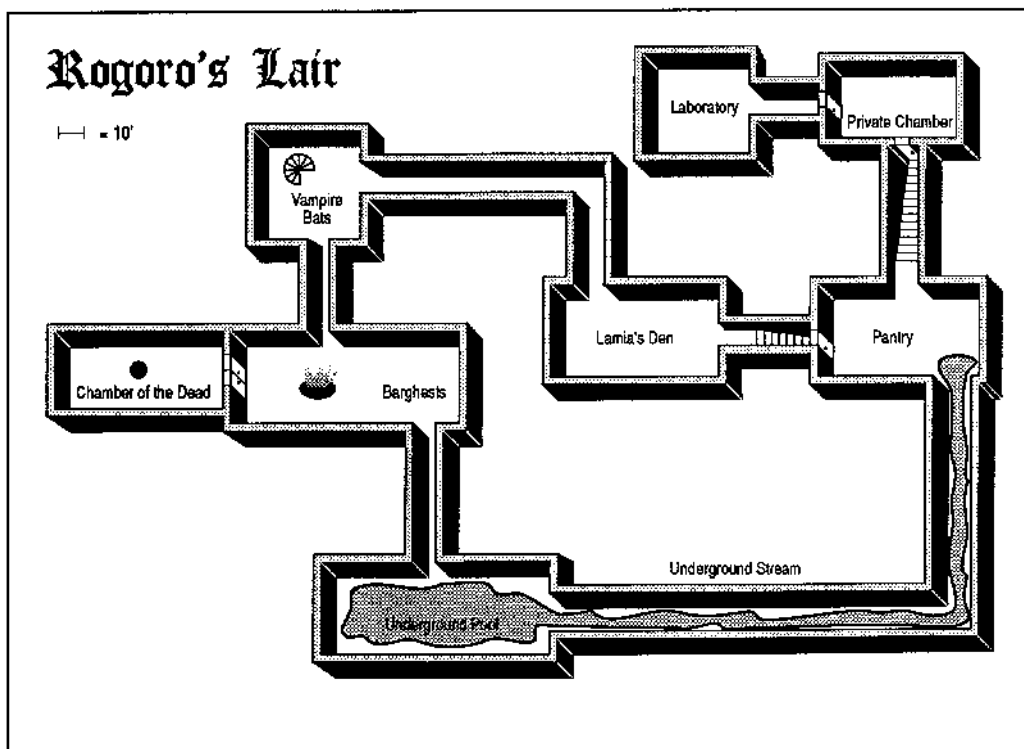
northwest side of the clearing, where the tracks of several creatures can be found leading away. Following the tracks is easy, especially since the leaves are punctuated by drops of dried blood. The trail takes the characters three miles to the northwest where they come upon an ancient, hidden graveyard.

If the players enter the cemetery at night, they will be beset by a horde of forty rogue zombies that will force them to flee. During the daylight hours, the zombies remain in their tombs, so entering the cemetery then is relatively safe.

In the center of the boneyard is a large rock that has been carved into the shape of a clenched fist. A plaque on the pedestal reads, "In memory of Ean, beloved son of Rogoro. May you live again."

Footsteps lead onto the podium, and a careful examination (along with a Passable Search roll) reveals a smear of dried blood trailing from the fingers of the fist. Pressing on the thumbnail releases a trigger that causes the fist to open, exposing a spiral stairway leading down. The trigger can be located by a Passable Unlock roll.

### Rogoro's Lair



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## Vampire Bats

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Upon entering the fist, the party finds themselves standing on a spiral staircase in total darkness. Around them echoes the sound of flapping wings. As the party climbs down the forty foot staircase, they are attacked by four giant vampire bats. These awful creatures have Poor Damage and a Defense of Good, Great, Superior. Anyone hit by a bat must roll Passable on Agility or else fall from the staircase.

After finishing with the bats, the party descends into a dismal cavern with two exits. Firelight dances on the walls of the passage to the south.

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## Barghests

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A small fire burns in the center of this chamber, and the sweet smell of incense hangs in the air. Spiritualists feel uneasy and afraid in this room, and they will soon see why as three barghests advance threateningly from the shadows. They will attack anybody who tries to enter the Chamber of the Dead. They attack with their bite (Passable damage) and horns (passable damage). They each have a Defense of Good, Good, Great, Superior, Awesome.

The heavy, double doors to the Chamber of the Dead are surrounded by a carved arch. The stone is sculptured into the form of a hundred twisted, suffering figures. The small figures are posed in attitudes of anguish, their limbs stretched as though climbing towards the top of the arch, where a larger statue of a lean faced man sits upon a throne, a staff across his legs.

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## Underground Pool

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A narrow path leads to a pool that is fed by an underground stream. There is enough space between the river and the cave walls to walk one abreast, but this passage is slippery and a Great

Agility roll is needed or else the character will fall into the cold stream. If this happens, the character must roll Passable on Swim or else be swept back to the pool. Cave leeches lurk in the dark waters, and (Fate vs Great) leeches will attach themselves to any character who enters the water. The leeches wiggle under clothing and armor where they cannot be seen. It takes 10 minutes for the leeches to drink their fill and drop off. After having his blood drained, a leech's victim will suffer a skill penalty equal to the number of leeches attached to him. For instance, a character with three leeches would be at -3 on all skills for one day. The bloated leeches can be easily removed once discovered.

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## Chamber of the Dead

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A low humming sound comes from this chamber, which is piled high with strangely twisted crystals. There is a dark pit in the middle of the floor, and on the opposite wall hangs a beautiful silver-tipped staff. The marble rack that holds the staff is engraved with the words "Speak to Me."

It is very cold here, and a spiritualist will be bombarded with a variety of thoughts and sensations, as the dead try to channel through him. Each crystal is actually the life essence of a person, magically converted into crystalline form. They are fragile, and characters must make Good Dexterity rolls to handle them correctly. If not, they will break, releasing a ghost. The ghosts, while not malignant, are so frightening that a character seeing one must roll Good on Sanity or else flee mindlessly. A frightened character must also make a Passable Agility roll or else plunge into the central pit.

The silver staff is magical. If the possessor points it at a dead body and commands "Speak to Me," the staff allows the spirit of the corpse to speak aloud for (Passable vs user's Knowledge) x 2 minutes. The ghost can be clearly heard by everyone in the local area. It is usable three times per day, and is worth about 10 gold pieces. If the staff is used on the crystals, the spirits will babble forlornly about freedom, suffering, and how cold it is.

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## Lamia's Den

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A hideous stench overwhelms the players as they draw near this room. It is full of bones and filth, and chains hang from the wall. A lamia lives here. She carries a scimitar (Good damage) and will also attack with her front claws (Passable damage). She has a Defense of Passable, Passable, Passable, Good, Good, Great, Great, Superior, Superior, Awesome.

The lamia taunts and mocks the party, trying to lure them into the room. Once a person enters the den, the lamia pulls a chain on the wall, which releases a net from above. A Great Dodge roll is needed to avoid being tangled in it for (Strength vs Awesome) minutes. She is not interested in killing people, but wishes to capture them for later feedings; however, if attacked she will defend herself to the death.

Darris is chained to a wall. Most of his blood has been sapped from his body, and he is barely alive. He remembers the attack on the wedding party with a shudder. "Dozens of undead creatures swarmed over us, their decayed stench sending our mounts into turmoil. I saw Conrad fighting manfully to control his steed, until the zombies tore him from his horse, their claws ripping open his throat, releasing a jet of crimson that splashed across the saddle. The horse, in terror, charged over the cliff. A moment later, I was also pulled down. I fought as best I could, until a blow to my head knocked me unconscious.

"When I awoke, I found myself chained here. A strange man in a black robe interrogated me about Conrad - was Conrad stronger than me? Did Conrad suffer any illnesses as a child? What infirmities had I suffered? I admitted that I had endured a bout of chicken pox as a child, and that Conrad was both stronger and swifter than me. What did it matter? I saw the wound to Conrad's throat. No one could survive that. The man in black merely nodded, a distracted expression on his lean face, and turned me over to the lamia."

Darris is too weak to accompany the party. If given directions to the surface, he will make his way to safety on his own.

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## Pantry

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This room is crowded with foodstuffs, a fireplace, and a natural spring that feeds an underground stream. Bones lie on the floor, and the odor of blood is heavy in the air. Over the fireplace is a portrait of a dark-eyed young man with a lean face. The plaque beneath the painting reads "Ean, beloved son of Rogoro."

On a Good Search roll, a simple ring of silver can be found on a shelf. This is Conrad's ring of betrothal, and it is easily identified by the entwined crests of the Longbow and Alder families.

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## Private Chambers

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Rogoro's room is dank and drafty. An unmade cot stands in one corner, while uneaten food lies molding on a table. Robes, incense, and colored powders are heaped on shelves.

The door to the west is locked and trapped. Unless a magical incantation is said (known only to Rogoro), anyone trying to open it or unlock it will trigger a blinding flash of light. Those near the door will be blinded for (Stamina vs Great) x 2 minutes. The flash can be activated only once, and then the door can be safely opened with a Good Unlock roll or Superior Strength roll. A character searching for a trap on the door will find it on a Good Search roll, and can remove it with a Great Traps roll.

A journal entitled "Rogoro's Study of Life and Death" is hidden among the papers on the desk. The last few entries read:

"My studies are nearly complete. My dear Ean! The wasting sickness that destroyed your body shall not keep you from me any longer! All I need is a worthy specimen to give you a mortal shell, now that your own has betrayed you. I have sent out my servants to find such a man. Only the best will do.

"My servants returned sooner than expected, with two candidates, the finest specimens of the group they discovered. I questioned the one that could still speak, and I am certain I made the right choice. My son Ean shall live again! As I write this, it is only a matter of hours, nay, minutes before the transference is complete."

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## Rogoro's Laboratory

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From the doorway to Rogoro's room, the party can see down a long hall into a laboratory. The far room is dark except for a strange, greenish glow coming from a large tank in the middle of the room. Within it floats Ean, the man whose portrait hangs in Rogoro's room. A glass pipe connects his tank to another where the body of Conrad hangs suspended in fluid. The liquid flows steadily from Ean's tank to Conrad's tank. Conrad's neck bears a deep gash that has been carefully stitched shut. Both men are clearly dead.

Standing at a control panel behind the tanks is Rogoro. Before the characters can react, he throws a large red lever. Instantly, the waters in Ean's tank begin to roil, and a psychic shriek of agony from Conrad's ghost assaults any characters in the hall or the laboratory, stunning them for one turn. They must roll *Passable* on *Dexterity* or else drop whatever is in their hands. All this happens too quickly for the players to race down the hall or fire a missile weapon.

The next turn, Rogoro raises his arms and the earthen floor before the tanks erupts as four ghouls scramble from the dirt. They attack with claws (*Passable* damage) and large teeth (*Poor* damage). They each have a *Defense of Passable*, *Passable*, *Good*, *Great*, *Superior*, *Awesome*.

On the following turn, Rogoro will cast a *Deathwish* on one character. For (*Will vs Good*) turns, the character must attack himself once per turn unless restrained by his companions. The player rolls his attack as though striking at a foe to determine the amount of damage he does to a random body part.

Rogoro has a *Defense of Passable*, *Good*, *Great*, *Superior*, *Awesome*. His touch causes flesh to putrefy, doing *Passable* damage in combat.

There are two possible endings to the adventure, depending on what happens during the battle in the laboratory.

### Breaking Neither Tank

If the tanks are not broken within 5 turns from the time the lever is pulled, the transference will be

completed. Ean will have total control of Conrad's body, and Conrad's spirit will pass on to the afterlife. Ean, having access to Conrad's memories, will pose as the heir to the Alder throne. He will say that they must hasten to the sacred forest for the wedding ceremony. Marli will readily accept him as her husband. He will then begin secret plans to conquer the elven tribes, beginning with the assassination of Conrad's father and the domination of the Longbow tribe through Marli. Since Ean is insanely evil, he will be a ruthless leader of the Alder-Longbow coalition. The players will be blamed for bringing back Conrad, and become hated by elves everywhere.

### Breaking the Tanks

If the glass tank which houses either body is smashed, or the connecting tube is broken, the transference will not take place, and Ean will become a rogue zombie, bursting from his tank to attack the party. See Chapter 11: Foes for more information on rogue zombies.

Although dead, Conrad's spirit will remain with his body for at least three days. The players can communicate with his spirit by using the silver staff found in the Chamber of the Dead.

"It's too late to bring me back to life," Conrad says. "I only wish I could still marry Marli somehow, both because I love her and because I wish to stop the war between our families. She must still be waiting for me at the sacred glade. I only regret there is now no way for me to take my wedding vows."

It's up to the players to realize that with the silver staff, Conrad can still speak his wedding vows at the ceremony. If they come up with this wild plan, and carry Conrad's body to the sacred glade (Conrad will provide directions), they will still have to convince Marli to marry a dead man. If the players use the staff to let Conrad tell his own story, Marli will agree to marry his spirit. She doesn't want war, and she doesn't mind being a widow. If the players pull it off, then the two elven tribes will be joined in peace, and the minstrels will sing their names as the heroes who ended the Longbow-Alder feud.