

THE FOLIO

Mini-Module



WHITE SHIP CAMPAIGN

The Ruins of Alaxar

Mini-Adventure WS2.5

by Scott Taylor

The Ruins of Alaxar is a companion adventure made to go along with the events unfolding in Folio #15. It is designed for 1E & 5E mechanics and is for characters levels 3–5. It contains the information needed to run a side adventure that will help characters in their exploration of the Sacred Plateau.

Smoke still rises from the ruins of the once mighty citadel of the Corsairs of Uthoria. Now, amid the ruins, the characters find that a deadly force still lurks, and they must end it if they are to find the new location of their quest's last hurdle, the Necrotic Pearl.

Mini-Adventure WS2.5

THE RUINS OF ALAXAR

A mini-adventure for use with The Isle of Jade
Characters Levels 3–5

Dungeon Master Notes

This adventure should be used after the characters find the Triceratops and the villa, but before they try to cross the T. rex graveyard. The adventure has been designed to help bridge the gap between (the likely event of) characters following the smoke on the plateau to the ruins (which hold nothing of particular value to the quest) to when they actually find the Necrotic Pearl.

1. Primary Purpose: To deliver the true location of the Necrotic Pearl to the characters.
2. Secondary Purpose: To provide the characters with a bit of magic before heading to the observatory and running into T. rexes, which far outpace their HD totals at this time.

All ‘grey blocks’ are for 5E conversions in this section.

Alaxar

Alaxar was once a strange collection of villas, temples, and gathering sanctuaries. Its many walls and bridges spanned the lovely natural watercourses that spring from the depths beneath the plateau. Though not readily defined as a settlement or city, Alaxar once sported plentiful gardens, and in its heyday, nearly a thousand Corsairs. With time, Alaxar fell into a ghostly torpor as age destroyed the half-blood Corsair children of the original settlers (those children sired by unions with the villagers on the island) and attrition took many of the true bloods. Imagine Minas Tirith before the coming of the armies of Mordor, it still held depth and regality but was all but abandoned.

When the Necrotic Pearl came to rest on the sacred platform in the High Temple, the city soon broke to madness, and the remaining true bloods dueled magically and physically with power lost to the ages. The destruction was thorough, and the city and its remaining people were utterly destroyed. Now, only smoldering ruins and those spirits summoned up by the true bloods remain.

Ruins Searching

When dealing with the characters moving through the ruins and searching for clues and items, have each player roll percentile dice three times during the course of the

adventure. If the roll is 20% or below, a randomly determined item will be found. Also, at some point during the search, the characters will uncover some ancient, half-ruined maps of the plateau. These maps will reveal the existence of the observatory, which when paired with the message at the final encounter, should allow the players to deduct where the pearl now hides.

Necrotic Clouds

Necrotic clouds are an aftereffect of the Necrotic Pearl being placed on the altar of the Amazons. These coalescences of dark energy have a corruptive power and will seek out life in an attempt to turn it evil and malign. They have no real persona or nature, save that they are a magical force and therefore not subject to mundane attacks. They do no physical damage; instead, they drain Wisdom, destroying and corrupting the character's mentality. Any character completely drained of Wisdom becomes a Chaotic Evil NPC for the DM to control.

Necrotic Cloud [AC 5, HD 6+6, HP 42, #AT 2/1, D 1–4 (Wisdom Drain), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

NONE

Necrotic Cloud [AC 15, HD 6d10+12, HP 42, Initiative +1, #AT 2, Hit +3, **Dam Necrotic Envelope 2 (1d4)**, **Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons**, **Vulnerability: radiant, Corruption (DC 12 Constitution or take 2 (1d4) Wisdom damage)**]

Running Combat & Exploration

When the party members get to the Great Bridge (the entry to the ruins), they can surmise that the bridge will not support the weight of their Triceratops transport, and they must cross it on foot. Once inside, combat will be fairly straightforward with party Search checks being made after every two encounter points.

Telling the Story

The story here should be one of sadness and despair. The characters should feel a palpable sadness, loss, and evil throughout the ruins—charred bodies, beautiful buildings now rubble, crumbling works of art and statues, all gone. I'd also suggest running the bulk of this adventure at night,

if possible, forcing the characters to move through the still-burning fires under the light of the Blood Moon could be fun, and you could use the corruption as a lever, telling them that their time is running short.

Working with Folio #15

This adventure is written in conjunction with Folio #15 and is a bridge between the 2nd and 3rd sections of that larger arc.

Free-form Adventuring

This adventure and its companion adventure, WS2.6 Lost Among the Crystals, have been designed in a ‘wilderness format’, which is to say there will be no dungeon crawling or maps needed. Encounters are based on exploration of the city, and therefore will happen free-form. If the DM chooses to use miniatures, randomly place rubble on a map and have the characters move through it as you like.

The Smoldering City

‘Fires both deep blue and flaring orange light the crimson stain of the Blood Moon as you lumber down the broken path to the Great Bridge. Beyond the tumbledown towers of the span, parts of the upper bailey are still visible in the dark waters below, the skeletons of temples and villas are illuminated by the remnants of a blaze that must have rivaled a druidic firestorm.’

1.

Mad Fern Goblin Gang

Small red eyes appear within the gloom of the surrounding rubble and are accompanied by a hissing brand of communication.

Although native to the lowlands, there were two small tribes of fern goblins that encroached on the plateau over the past decades. One, the Bone Noses, has fallen to the corruption and been drawn like a moth to the ruin’s flame. Now, the characters must deal with them.

15 Fern Goblins [AC 6, HD 1, HP 6, #AT 1, D 1–6 (Javelin/Spear), +1 to hit with missile weapons]

TREASURE

A DOZEN SMALL POLISHED STONES USED FOR TRADING AND ONE LOOTED MAGIC ITEM OF THE DM’S CHOICE.

15 Fern Goblins [AC 15, HD 2d6, HP 7, Initiative +1, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Javelin/Spear (1d6+2), Nimble Escape (Disengage or Hide as a bonus action)]

2.

Ash Elemental

Dust and ash swirl around your boots, some rising up to force a cough before a full on haze surrounds you.

One of the favorite manifestations of the Necrotic Pearl's power is corrupted elementals. In this case, an ash elemental lurks amid the ruins and will attack the party, moving from target to target and never attacking the same person twice until everyone has been attacked at least once.

1 Ash Elemental [AC 3, HD 6+6, HP 42, #AT 1, D 1–10 (Slam), +1 or better weapon to hit, Choking Cloud (-2 to hit due to visibility)]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Ash Elemental [AC 16, HD 6d12+12, HP 48, Initiative +4, #AT 1, Hit +6, Dam Slam 9 (1d10+4), Choking Cloud (DC 12 Constitution save or be at disadvantage on attacks)]

3.

Greater Zombie

A small slide of rubble to your west reveals the fallen arch of an old temple with a dark shadow looming on the verge.

One of the Corsairs used an enlarge spell on herself to create a fighting juggernaut, only to fall to a powerful fire spell and then be raised by the Necrotic Pearl as a giant zombie. Now, the huge creature is looking for victims within the destruction.

1 Giant Zombie [AC 4, HD 10, HP 60, #AT 2/1, D (1–8) +8 (Maul), Slow (always attacks last)]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Giant Zombie [AC 16, HD 10d8+10, HP 50, Initiative +1, #AT 2, Hit +5, Dam Maul 12 (1d8+8)]

4.

Necrotic Cloud

The hairs on the back of your neck stand on end as a vaporous darkness manifests at the edge of your vision, snaking tendrils coiling and pulsing around the ruined stone.

A necrotic cloud still lurks around the ruins, hoping to find victims for its corruption.

Necrotic Cloud [AC 5, HD 6+6, HP 42, #AT 2/1, D 1–4 (Wisdom Drain), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

NONE

Necrotic Cloud [AC 15, HD 6d10+12, HP 42, Initiative +1, #AT 2, Hit +3, Dam Necrotic Envelope 2 (1d4), Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons, Vulnerability: radiant, Corruption (DC 12 Constitution or take 2 (1d4) Wisdom damage]

5.

Fallen Gargoyle Temple

The ruins of a large temple stand as a stark reminder of what this place once was. Still towering pillars rise up like finger bones clutching at the sky, and statues of nubile warrior women lay broken and strewn about the entry.

There are four statues still relatively intact that will rise to greet a searching party, acting as a type of gargoyle. They attack by using two claws, a knee blade, and their cape, which acts as a bash attack.

4 Gargoyle [AC 5, HD 4+4, HP 25, #AT 4/1, D 1–6/1–6 (Claws), 1–8 (Knee Blade), 1–8 (Cape Swipe), +1 or better weapon to hit]

TREASURE

NONE

4 Gargoyle [AC 15, HD 7d8+21, HP 52, Initiative +2, #AT 4, Hit +4, Dam Claw 5 (1d6+2), Knee Blade 6 (1d8+2), Cape 4 (1D6+1), Damage Resistance: non-magical weapons]

6.

Smoke Mephit Ambush

An ember, no more than a smoldering nut, rolls across the broken ground at your feet, giving you pause to look into the surrounding rocky debris...

A quartet of smoke mephits has taken refuge in the smoke, flames, and debris of a broken villa and are now intent on playing a ‘game’ with the players. They will start hurling fire at everyone, trying to set them ablaze, and will fly and hide if searched for, making anything but missile weapons and spells useless against them. If the characters decided to move off without killing all four of them, the remainder will gate in more ‘friends’ (up to 4 again) and follow the characters, harassing them at each provided opportunity (when the party is under attack by other enemies).

4 Smoke Mephits [AC 7, HD 4, HP 20, #AT 1, D 1–6 (Thrown Cinder)]

TREASURE

NONE



4 Smoke Mephits [AC 12, HD 5d6+5, HP 22, Initiative +2, #AT 1, Hit +4, Dam Claw 4 (1d4+2), Cinder Breath (Recharge 3–6) [DC 10 Dex or be blinded), Throwing Cinders (Hit +5, Dam 5 (1d6+2)]

7.

Greater Dinosaur Skeleton

A large fountain, broken and half full, dominates a once grand pavilion. As you stare into the dark water, an impact tremor sends ripples over the surface.

One of the great tame beasts of the Corsairs, a huge and tank-like Ankylosaurus, was killed in the infighting, its skeletal remains now animated by the Necrotic Pearl. Due to its huge size, having some remaining flesh, and a massive shell, it takes regular damage from all piercing and slashing attacks.

1 Ankylosaurus Skeleton [AC 5, HD 8+8, HP 62, #AT 1, D 2–10 (Tail), Save versus petrification or be stunned 1–4 rounds]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Ankylosaurus Skeleton [AC 15, HD 8d12+16, HP 68, Initiative +2, #AT 1, Hit +7, Dam Tail 18 (4d6+4) [DC 14 Strength or be knocked prone]

8.

The Summoned Demon

The High Temple mound is a thing to behold, like a cracked open crypt that has spilled its contents all down the side of a hill. Blasted blocks, smoldering pillars, and huge chunks of earth provide a landscape of pure destruction and chaos.

Amid the chaotic debris, a vrock demon lurks, having been summoned by the high priestess before the final conflagration that destroyed the temple. Once the beast is destroyed, those characters searching the ruined high altar will find a message in blackened blood upon one broken section of the wall that reads, 'The Ember is no more, the Pearl has gone to the stars.' This message, along with maps uncovered in the searching of the city, should lead players to the observatory on the far side of the plateau.

1 Vrock Demon [AC 0, HD 8, HP 56, #AT 5, D 1-4/1-4/1-8/1-8/1-6, Magic Resistance 50%]

TREASURE

NONE

1 Vrock Demon [AC 15, HD 11d10+44, HP 104, Initiative +4, #AT 2, Hit +6, Dam Beak 10 (2d6+3), Talons 14 (2d10+3), Multiattack, Spores (Recharge 6) (DC 14 Constitution or become poisoned 5 (1d10)) Stunning Screech (1/Day) (DC 14 Constitution or stunned until the end of the vrock's next turn), Resistance: elements and non-magical weapons]

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