

War of the Burning Sky

The Scouring of Gate Pass

by Ryan Nock



A fantasy adventure for 1st-level characters



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An Adventure for 1st-Level Characters
By Ryan Nock

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INTRODUCTION

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.

BACKGROUND

The following information details only the background of this adventure. If you are running it as part of the campaign saga, you will find more information in the *Campaign Guide*.

It is New Year's Eve, and near midnight on this frigid evening the heroes gather in a small condemned tavern in the Free Citystate 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. 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.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

If you are running this episode as a stand-alone 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.

If you plan to run this adventure as part of the campaign saga, you'll want to refer to the *Campaign Guide*, available free through E.N. Publishing. The *Campaign Guide* will help you work the events of the campaign into your own setting, provide suggestions for getting the characters involved in the adventures, and give you an idea of what lies further down the road so you can prepare.

As with any 1st-level adventure, there is little in the way of a safety net for the PCs. If you want to start the campaign off with a more heroic feel, consider starting the PCs at 2nd level. By the third adventure, the slight XP boost gained by this will be imperceptible, and you won't have to worry as much about accidentally killing your party before things get underway.

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 wizard's school. 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.

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 from the Ragesians.

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 enchanter. 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 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 on a special mission to retrieve 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 for characters to be involved in the adventure is for them to be part of the same resistance group that Torrent works with. People

PSIONICS IN THE ADVENTURE

This adventure does not require the psionics rules at all, nor do any of the installments of campaign saga. However, if you are using psionics, make the following slight adjustments.

The trillith (dreamborn monsters that play a role in later adventures) possess abilities similar to psionic powers, and two of the characters in this adventure – Kathor and Crystin – have connections to the trillith. This is represented by them possessing sorcerer levels, but if you are using psionics they could instead have similar psionic abilities.

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 feats that you can grant characters if they are associated with one of these groups. 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 out of the way of a 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 be aware of what 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 about 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 (Open Lock DC 25), 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 about 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 (Open Lock DC 20), 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 (Open Lock DC 25), and there's nothing to see on the roof now anyway. Torrent jokingly compliments the group's paranoia if they're this cautious, 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, ask for Listen checks. Make a note of which PCs beat DC 20, and tell them they hear a variety of distant bells throughout the city chiming to celebrate the turning of the New Year.

Gate Pass



- A. Poison Apple Pub
- B. Depository Tower
- C. Gabal's School of War
- D. Elvish Ghetto
- E. Erdan's Manor
- F. Herreman's Barracks
- ▣ Watchpost

Distance In Miles

0 3

SCM

Torrent grimaces and straightens in her chair, saying, "That's one 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 on 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 Knowledge (local) checks (DC 10 or less) to recall any 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 Knowledge (local) check (DC 10) 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 anyone.

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.

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.

Inquisitors — Knowledge (Arcana or Religion) Results

DC 10: The inquisitors hunt for dangerous magic, which in their mind pretty much means any magic used by other people. They have special skills for stopping other mages' spells. Most inquisitors are humans, orcs, or half-orcs, and they carry metal claws on their hands. Many inquisitors are skilled interrogators, and they use their claws to slit the wrists of prisoners, forcing the prisoner to answer quickly.

DC 15: Inquisitors are almost exclusively clerics, with access to divine fire, magic, and protection domains. 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 20: Inquisitors cannot turn or control undead; instead, they channel negative energy to dispel magic. Positive energy can inhibit their counterspelling abilities.

DC 30: 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.

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,

Lyceum — Knowledge (Arcana or History) Results

DC 10: 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 of the school often travel the world to learn foreign magic.

DC 15: 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 20: Simeon has no actual battle experience, having primarily served as an advisor for nobles and rich merchants. In an attempt to make his school seem more legitimate (and to discourage Dassen from trying to levy taxes against them) he 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.

DC 30: 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.

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 when he sees Peppin isn't there.

Inquisitors. Torrent has never faced one, but she has heard stories. Allow the heroes to make Knowledge (arcana or religion) checks to recall the information listed in the sidebar.

The Ragesian Army. Torrent suspects they have scouts scattered all over the mountains and surrounding lands, but she's confident they can avoid most if not all the Ragesians by taking her route.

A Knowledge (history or nobility & royalty) check (DC 15) 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 magic-users aside from the inquisitors, but they do have some wyvern mounts, and a few monstrous allies.

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.

Other stuff. Allow the heroes to make Knowledge (arcana) checks to recall the information in the sidebar.

Torrent can provide any information requiring a DC 15 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.

THE AMBUSH (EL 4)

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 thugs (warrior 1) to smash open the door, distracting the heroes' attention, while a half-dozen scouts (rogue 1) rush down from the second floor. Two more thugs and a fighting dog 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, 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 have a good sense of 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, ask the heroes for Listen checks. Anyone who beats DC 20 hears creaking floorboards overhead from the bounty hunter scouts' movement. From this moment, the party has two rounds before the bounty hunters make their move.

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.

THE BLACK HORSE BOUNTY HUNTERS

This disreputable band consists of about twenty-five men, commanded by **Renard Woodsman** (LE male human ranger 3), who stays at his camp in the mountains south of Gate Pass. Renard's second-in-command, **Kathor Danava** (LG male human sorcerer 1/ fighter 2), is in charge of the bounty hunters' mission to capture magic-users 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 he 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 an armband – red, with a black horse head, and letters that read 'murderers' in Ignan (a joke by the tailor who made the armbands; it's supposed to say 'Black Horse').

Tracking Down the Bounty Hunters. 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 and try to end fights without everyone dying. If the heroes come to him privately, Kathor could be convinced to help. – *continued on next page*

Round Two. At the end of the second round, a Listen check (DC 5) detects Kathor shouting, “Front door: go!” and then the front door shudders as a battering ram slams into it. Make a Strength check for the bounty hunters at the door (d20+5 vs. Break DC 18). They 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 been struck by a Ragesian bomb (see sidebar).

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.

Have everyone in the building make Reflex saves (DC 10) to avoid taking 1 point of fire damage from spraying oil. Additionally, 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, choose a nearby unoccupied square, as mere falling debris can be fatal to 1st level characters. Creatures passing through squares filled with burning debris must make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid taking 1d6 points of fire damage.

continued from previous page – 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 Unfriendly because he doesn’t trust anyone and wants to be left alone to brood, but if the heroes can make him Friendly or Helpful, 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 that 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.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the heroes make Kathor at least Friendly, reward them with experience as if they had defeated a CR 3 challenge.

RAGESIAN BOMBS

These specially-made bombs consist of a hollowed-out 2-ft. diameter stone sphere, filled with a large bladder of oil, a flask of alchemist’s fire, and a thunderstone. The bombs strike with great force, shattering walls and rooftops, and the oil splashes in a 20-ft. radius and the alchemist’s fire ignites it. The thunderstone simply creates a frightening sound intended to awaken everyone in the city. The Ragesians’ hope is that the people will fill the streets in curiosity or fear, making it harder for Gate Pass soldiers to reach their posts.



Torrent

CR 2

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.

Female human fighter 1/cleric 1

CG Medium humanoid

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15

hp 17 (2 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** -1, **Will** +4

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +4 masterwork battleaxe (d8+2, ×3)

Ranged +0 light crossbow (d8, 19–20), rapid reload

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Combat Gear potion of remove paralysis, scroll of hide from undead, two flasks of holy water, wand of cure light wounds (50 charges)

Special Actions feat of strength (+1 Str as free action, lasts 1 round, 1/day), turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+2, 1st), turn fire and command, rebuke or bolster water creatures 4/day (+1, 2d6+2, 1st)

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st — *bless*, *enlarge person*^D, *magic weapon*

0 — *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*

D Domain spell **Domains** Strength, Water

Abilities Str 15, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13

SQ spontaneous casting (*cure* spells)

Feats Negotiator, Rapid Reload, Skill Focus (Swim)

Skills Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Sense Motive +6, Swim -1 (+9 without armor or shield)

Possessions Masterwork battleaxe, light crossbow, breastplate, light steel shield, dagger, 40 crossbow bolts, copious variety of beverages in backpack, 300 gp, large padded hip pouch containing numerous potions of *stand the heat* (two per PC, plus at least six more).

Tactics: Torrent only uses her 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.

Black Horse Bounty Hunters

Bounty Hunter Scouts (2)

CR 1

Male half-orc rogue 1

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

hp 11 (1 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 sap (d6+2 nonlethal), or +2 morningstar (d8+2)

Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19–20)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Combat Gear 2 thunderstones

Abilities Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +3, Ride +6, Spot +5

Possessions studded leather armor, morningstar, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp

Bounty Hunter Thugs (4)

CR 1/2

Male human warrior 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15

hp 6 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 sap (d6+2 nonlethal) or +3 short sword (d6+2, 19–20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19–20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10

Feats Animal Affinity

Skills Handle Animal +6, Ride +6

Possessions scale mail, light wooden shield, sap, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp. Plus one portable battering ram among the four of them.

Sauce, Dog (CR 1/2): hp 6; MM animal appendix. Sauce is a simple brown hunting dog, trained to attack weak-looking people, especially those without armor, at the command of any of the bounty hunters.

Kathor Danava

CR 3

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

Male human fighter 2/sorcerer 1

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; Senses Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 24 (3 HD)

Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), ride 35 ft. (7 squares)

Melee +6 masterwork greatsword (2d6+3, 19–20)

Ranged +3 composite longbow (d8, ×3)

Base Atk +2; Grp +5

Atk Options Mounted

Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge

Combat Gear two tanglefoot bags (+3 ranged touch), net (–1 ranged touch), two potions of *cure light wounds*

Spells Known (CL 1st) – arcane spell failure 40%

1st (5/day) – *shield*, *true strike*

0 (4/day) – *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ trillith spirit

Feats Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Concentration +4, Handle Animal +6, Ride +8

Possessions Masterwork greatsword, composite longbow, 40 arrows, half-plate, shortsword, heavy warhorse, banded mail barding, 350 gp

Trillith Spirit (Su): 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.

Kathor's Horse, heavy warhorse: hp 30; MM animal appendix. Speed 35, AC 20 (banded mail barding).

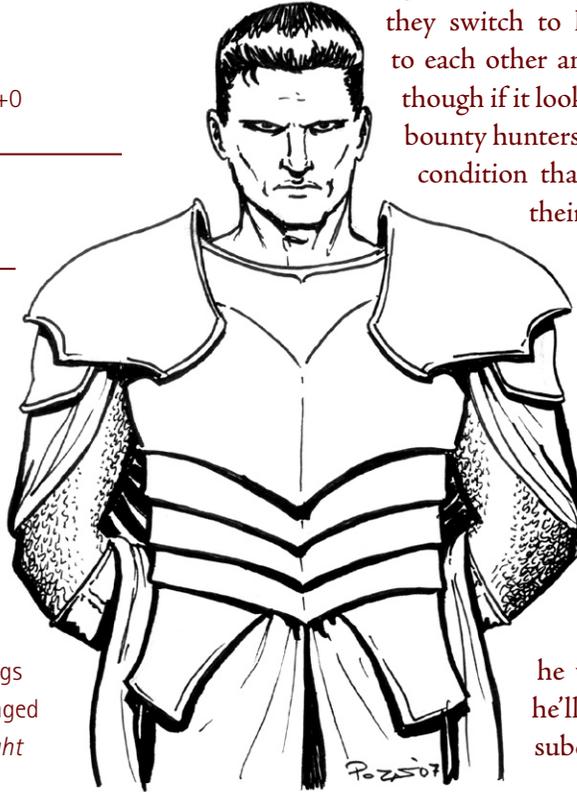
Tactics: The bounty hunters strike to subdue, unless they realize a particular person is too dangerous to be cautious with, in which case they switch to lethal damage. They're loyal to each other and won't abandon their allies, though if it looks like the party will kill fallen bounty hunters, they might surrender on the condition that they're allowed to tend to their friends.

Kathor himself does not get involved, though once combat begins he'll cast *shield* on himself and wait. 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 (Concentration DC 10 while riding, or DC 15 while his mount is running), then charging while using Power Attack for full. Kathor does not understand exactly how his magic works, so he may make several attempts to cast his spells if he is disrupted by armor or 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 you.

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 (difficult terrain, 1d6 fire damage per round, Ref DC 15 to avoid catching on fire). Alternately, they might try to break open one of the boarded up windows (Hardness 5; hp 5; Break DC 10; takes 10 ft. of movement and a Climb or Jump check DC 10 to get through).

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 (Hardness 5; hp 15; Break DC 18), 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 unload charges of her cure light wounds wand to get everyone healthy, and 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

WHAT IF TORRENT DIES?

An NPC should never be vital to the party's success, so if Torrent dies it isn't too hard to give the party the information they need to succeed. A note on Torrent's body or a map in her gear can direct the party to the rendezvous with Rivereye and to the safehouse, and it's not hard to find out where the road to the fire forest is. You could also have another member of the resistance link up with the party at the safehouse — perhaps even Rantle — to act as a guide to the city.

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 A CITY UNDER ATTACK

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. As they travel, the following encounters occur in their path.

Aiding the Wounded (EL 1)

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 is moving by, the man finally collapses from exhaustion.

If the party helps heal the man and his wife, reward them for a CR ½ encounter. If they go out of their way to ensure that the family gets safely to a shelter, reward them for a CR 1 encounter. 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.

Burning Building (EL 2)

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.

Options include arranging a group of people to catch her with a blanket (which requires a Strength

check DC 19 to catch her safely, with up to eight characters allowed to aid each other), climbing up the side of the building to reach her and then climbing back down (Climb DC 10, perhaps difficult while carrying a 150-lb. woman), casting *feather fall* on her when she jumps, or going through an adjacent building that isn't on fire, reaching the roof via a skybridge, and dropping 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 them for a CR 2 encounter.

Terror in the Skies (EL ½)

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. Have the PCs make a Will save (DC 21). Nondragon creatures who fail become panicked for 1 minute. Almost everyone in the crowd panics at the same time, screaming and tearing at each other to flee. Those who panic flee irrationally through the crowd, and must make a Reflex save or else take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from the crush of terrified citizens. One soldier patrolling the gate wall jumps in terror and falls amid the crowd, being trampled to unconsciousness.

Characters who make a Spot check (DC 10, or DC 5 for those with low-light vision) 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.

Animal Crossing (EL 2)

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 dire weasel.

Now a scared and unfriendly dire weasel runs through the streets, while its 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, dire weasel (CR 2): hp 13, MM animal appendix.

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 Diplomacy check (DC 15) 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 waste of time.

ACT TWO: RETRIEVING THE CASE

In the next district to the east, a gnome spy named **Rivereye Badgerface** (CG male gnome sorcerer 4) 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 ft. square, while the tower itself is 60 ft. in diameter and 80 ft. high. A 20-ft. 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 warrior 4/expert 2, Sense Motive +10). Two security guards (LN warrior 1) 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 (Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30), which are protected by a special *arcane lock* that can be bypassed with a password that the guards all know (today it is “Avilona barflew”).

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)

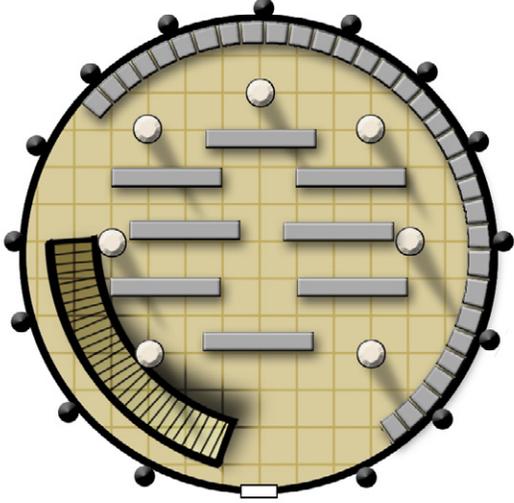
Rivereye has been taken captive by an elf spy from Shahalesti named **Larion Prevarieth** (N male elf rogue 2/wizard 1). An associate of Larion, **Shealis Amlauril** (N female elf evoker 5), has been watching the goings-on of the rebellion while posing as a student at the city's wizard's school. Shealis 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.

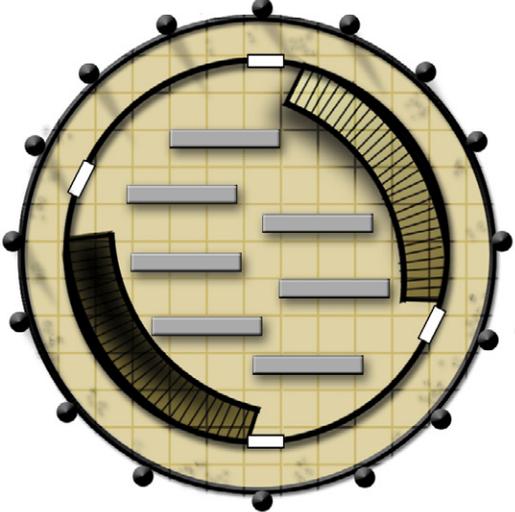
The first floor of the tower is one huge room, and though the far side is hidden in shadows, it looks to be about sixty feet in diameter. A broad stone ramp circles clockwise upward to the left of the door, while the interior of the room is filled with aisles of metal lockers, each slightly larger than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

Depository Tower

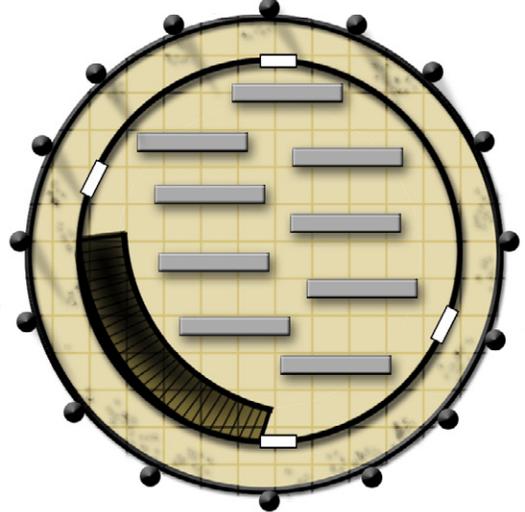
1 Square - 5 ft.



First Floor



Second and Third Floor



Fourth Floor

SCM

When the party arrives, Larion 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 pull off looking like a gnome), then casts *unseen servant* and orders it to open the nearest door to the balcony if he comes within 5 ft. of it. He also drinks a potion of *spider climb*, in case he has to flee.

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 Spot check (DC 25) sees 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.

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.

Lantern archon (CR 2): hp 4; MM.

Larion Prevarieth

CR 3

Without his disguise, this elf is short and wiry, his blond 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.

Male elf rogue 2/wizard (illusionist) 1

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Celestial, Elven

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 15 (3 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1 (+3 vs. enchantment); evasion

Immune sleep

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 masterwork rapier (d6, 18–20) or +1 sap (d6 nonlethal)

Ranged +4 dagger (d4, 19–20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1

Combat Gear two potions of *jump*, two potions of *spider climb*, two scrolls of *comprehend languages*, scroll of *erase*, scroll of *expeditious retreat*, scroll of *knock*, scroll of *true strike*, oil of *magic weapon*

Special Actions Quick Draw, sneak attack +1d6

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st — *disguise self*, *feather fall*, *unseen servant*

0 — *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*

Prohibited Schools Abjuration, Enchantment, Necromancy

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 13

SQ evasion, trapfinding, mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14)

Feats Improved Initiative, Quick Draw

Skills Balance +10, Bluff +7, Climb +4, Concentration +4, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +9, Gather Information +5, Jump +7, Open Lock +5, Tumble +10

Possessions Masterwork studded leather, masterwork rapier, sap, eight daggers, spellbook (listed spells, plus cantrips and *magic aura*), thieves' tools, two sunrods, 50 ft. silk rope, 10 pp in Shahalesti coinage.

Tactics: The lantern archon uses its *aid* spell-like ability on itself and Larion if it has the chance before the party sees it. Remember that its aura of menace applies to all hostile creatures, not just evil creatures. 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 second floor, which his *unseen servant* opens for him. He heads outside, tells the servant to keep the door closed, and then *spider climbs* to the roof. From this point on, if the door to the balcony is open at the beginning of Larion's turn, the servant closes it.

Once on the roof, Larion drinks a potion of *jump*, then sprints down the sloped, snow-covered roof (a 20-ft. running start; Balance DC 17) and jumps, hoping to clear at least twenty feet. It's 20 ft. to the fence that surrounds the compound, and then another 10 ft. to the nearest rooftop. Regardless of whether he gets enough distance, he casts *feather fall* and descends safely, 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 tumble away 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. He'll try to make it to a wall or pillar so he can crawl along the ceiling and stay out of sight long enough to get to the balcony. Once he calls for help, the lantern archon flies down the ramp, and should arrive one round later. The lantern archon tries to keep the party's attention focused on it so Larion can get away.

Both Larion and the archon prefer to attack

TREASURE LOCKERS

The large reinforced lockers are of varying sizes (Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30), and are warded with a *fire trap* (d4+3 fire damage in 5-ft. radius, Ref DC 13 half, Disable Device DC 27), which the owner of the locker can bypass with a password. Should the PCs manage to open one of these lockers, it should contain treasure appropriate to a CR 4 encounter.

orcs and half-orcs, and are hesitant to attack elves or half-elves. Remember that Larion still has to make a Climb check (DC 20 for the side of the tower, though *spider climb* grants him a +8 bonus) to hold on if he takes damage while *spider climb* is active.

Tower Layout

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 (Hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 20). The banners are 15 ft. long (Hardness 0; hp 2; Climb DC 20), 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: Both Larion and the archon head back to Shealis at Gabal's school if they get away, warning her that someone might 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. Should the party manage to capture the lantern archon, it is willing to 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.

On the four floor, Rivereye and several guards are tied up and unconscious, with one dead half-orc moved far away, his face burned by the lantern archon's light ray. If awakened, Rivereye hails the party as his saviors, explains what happened, and tells how he outwitted Larion. He's sad that Peppin is dead, but begs the party to recover the case and make sure it gets to Lyceum. As part of his job as servant in the imperial palace, Rivereye was placed under a *geas* by the inquisitors not to talk about what he overheard, but he can say that the case contains information that can't be lost. If asked, Rivereye can describe the case — black metal, about a foot long and wide, and half a foot deep, made of (he thinks) adamantine, with a lock.

Rivereye says that he overheard the lantern archon talking with three elves, and though he didn't understand the elves, he understood the celestial — thanks to its *tongues* ability — and knows the group had a contact at Gabal's school. (Celestials are not very good at being sneaky.)

Torrent encourages the party to recover the case, and Rivereye can guide them to Gabal's school. If they're too injured or out of spells, she understands they need to rest, and recommends taking shelter in a nearby temple to a god of music and revelry, under which is one of the resistance's many safe houses.

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.

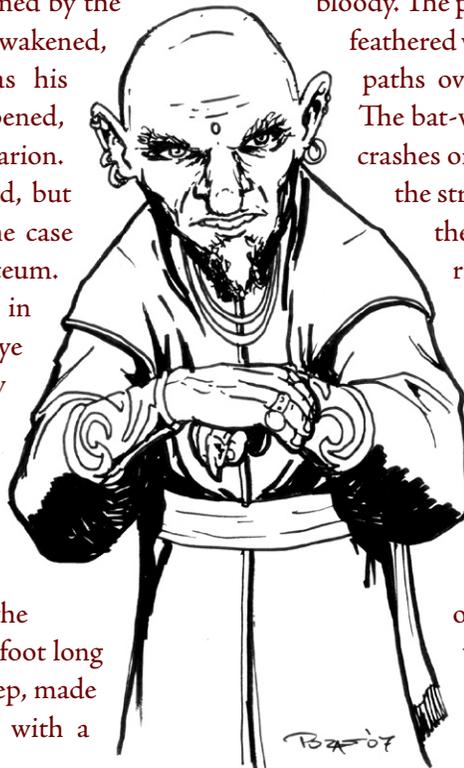
Fallen Devil (EL 2)

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 (Survival DC 5). He headed down an alley, and less than a hundred feet into his trail the party finds a trio of townsfolk, chopped to death by 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 full plate, 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 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, wearing full plate and a heavy steel shield, and carrying a masterwork battleaxe and a silver shortsword. Because of his weakened state, he counts as a CR 2 encounter.

Flaganus Mortus (CR 2): hp 32 [9 currently]. LE human fighter 4, AC 21, touch 11; Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; melee +9 (d8+5 masterwork battleaxe).

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-ft. 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 1), 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 uses bardic music to inspire courage (or a similar effect), or succeeds on a Perform check (DC 15) 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 harrasing 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 Diplomacy check (DC 15) can get the two teens to leave the woman alone, as can an Intimidate check (DC 1d20+1; the bullies have 1 HD, no Wisdom bonus, and no protection against fear). Any obvious use of magic or any overt violence just makes things worse, though, angering the crowd.

If the PCs calm things down, either by quieting Mulysa 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 cleric 6) 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 used to encrypt its contents. 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 (and level up if they have enough XP). Not much else occurs at the safe house. It is, after all, safe.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the party keeps the half-orc woman from being beaten, reward them for a CR ½ challenge. If they calm the crowd, reward them for a CR 1 challenge, 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 for it.

The Elvish Spymaster (EL 5)

The leader of a ring of Shahalesti spies, **Shealis Amlauril** (N female elf evoker 5), 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 Gather Information check (DC 25) can discover where the two spies with the case are.

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

Gabal's School. Gabal's school consists of a small campus with four 50-ft. 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** (NG male human enchanter 5).

During the Day: If the PCs arrive any time after sunrise, the front gate is surrounded by over forty angry people, all of them Unfriendly 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, 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 Shealis has had any visitors this evening (such as Larion or the lantern archon), Diogenes knows about it, so the party should not be surprised by their presence.

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 ft. 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

CR 5

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.

Male human wizard (enchanter) 5

NG Medium humanoid

Init +4; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Elven, Ignan, Orc (plus the phrase "don't eat me" in Draconic)

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 24 (5 HD)

Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 dagger (d4–1, 19–20)

Base Atk +2; Grp +1

Combat Gear two potions of *cure light wounds*, scroll of *dispel magic*, scroll of *hold person*, scroll of *suggestion*, scroll of *resist energy*, scroll of *see invisibility*, wand of *charm person* (50 charges)

Special Actions reactive counterspell, spellduelist (*Player's Guide*, pg 8)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th, +2 ranged touch)

3rd — *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *suggestion* (DC 18)

2nd — *acid arrow*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *summon monster II*

1st — *charm person* (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *shield*, *sleep* (DC 16)

0 — *daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Prohibited Schools Evocation, Necromancy

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 13

Feats Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Reactive Counterspell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Concentration), Spell Focus (enchantment), Spellduelist

Skills Bluff +9, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +13

Possessions spellbook, spell components, 100 gp

Tactics: Diogenes is a keen judge of his opponent's skills, and enjoys the thrill of outwitting a foe. The rules of speldueling require that both duelists start with no spells active. You can lose any of four ways — falling down and not getting up within a round; leaving the 60-ft. 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 until she starts casting, then cast *obscuring mist*, effectively ruining her spell when she becomes unable to target him. Then he'll cast *shield*, then *protection from energy (fire)*, then *summon monster II*, and will only actually start using directly offensive spells afterward, or if Shealis heads into the fog. He'll reactively counterspell anything that he thinks is too dangerous.

Shealis Amlauril

CR 5

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.

Female elf wizard (evoker) 5

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elven

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 13 (5 HD)

Fort +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5 (+7 vs. enchantment)

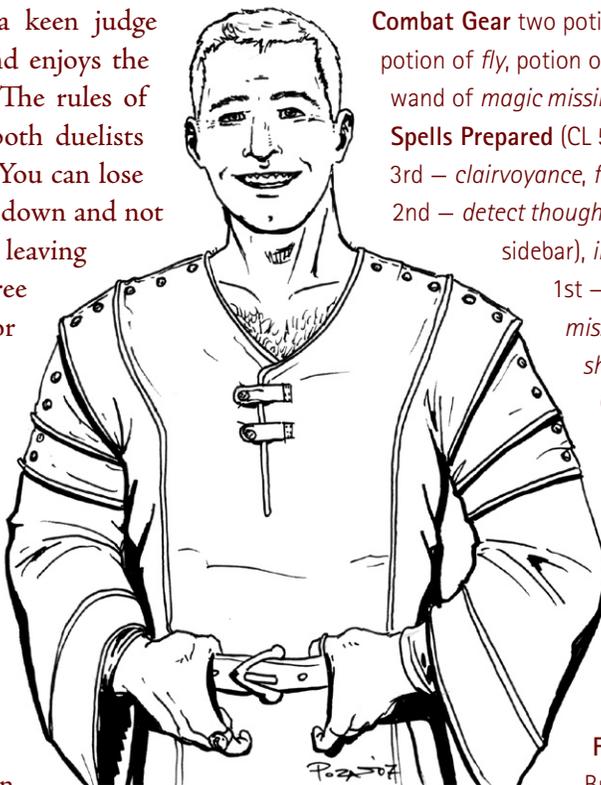
Immune sleep

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 longsword (d8-1, 19-20)

Ranged +5 longbow (d8-1, x3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1



Combat Gear two potions of *cure moderate wounds*, potion of *fly*, potion of *invisibility*, potion of *jump*, wand of *magic missile* (1st level, 25 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th, +5 ranged touch)

3rd — *clairvoyance*, *fireball* ×2 (DC 16)

2nd — *detect thoughts*, *Gabal's superior missile* (see sidebar), *invisibility*, still *magic missile*

1st — *comprehend languages*, *magic missile* ×2, *protection from evil*, *shield*

0 — *detect magic*, *light* ×2, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* ×2

Prohibited Schools

Conjuration, Enchantment, Necromancy

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Brew Potion, Still Spell

Skills Bluff +4, Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Spellcraft +13

Possessions spellbook (contains listed spells plus cantrips and *daylight*, *fly*, *jump*, *scorching ray*, *shocking grasp*, and *spider climb*), spell components, chain shirt, mithral gloves worth 200 gp, 10 pp, two doses of silversheen, *hand of the mage*

Tactics: So close to completing her mission, Shealis is a 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 ready an action to cast *flaming sphere* when her foe starts to cast a spell, then use *magic missile* and *Gabal's superior missile* while chasing her opponent with the sphere.

GABAL'S SUPERIOR MISSILE

(*Player's Guide*, pg 8)

Divination/Evocation [Force]

Level: Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: See text

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Up to five creatures, no two of which can be more than 15 ft. apart

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

The archmage Gabal proudly states that this spell is superior to the old standby *magic missile* in urban settings. Though its range is shorter, it can be cast even without line of sight to its targets.

The spell creates two energy darts, plus an additional missile for every two caster levels beyond 3rd, to a maximum of five at 9th level. Each missile strikes its target unerringly, and does 1d4+1 damage. This spell has two modes.

The first mode has a casting time of a standard action and is identical to *magic missile* except for its shorter range.

The second mode has a casting time of a full round action. You become aware of every visible creature within range of the spell, and can divide the targets among them, though all targets must be within 15 ft. of each other. You can target creatures that have total cover or total concealment with respect to you, as long the target is not totally concealed and there is a clear route between you and the target. A clear route is one where line of effect can be traced from one square to the next along the route, but the beginning and end of the route do not need line of effect to each other. The total length of this route cannot exceed the spell's range.

For example, you could target a creature inside a room even if there was a wall between you, as long as a door or window was open. Likewise, you could target a creature hiding behind a *fog cloud*, as long as there was a clear route around the fog. However, you could not target a creature totally concealed within the *fog cloud*.

Additional Possible Allies: Larion Prevarieth and the lantern archon, if present, have not used magical healing, and will only have healed if the party waits more than 8 hours to track down Shealis. The archon makes liberal use of *aid* to keep Shealis alive, while Larion tries to stay between Shealis and any warriors.

Aftermath: If the party has Diogenes' *aid*, remember to split XP for this encounter with Diogenes.

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 of 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 Unfriendly, 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, LG male elf wizard 13) 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, or 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."

Elvish Ghetto Hideout (EL 4)

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 Spot check (DC 27) 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 should eventually succeed one of his automatic Search checks (DC 20) to notice one of the several secret doors that lead inside. Alternately, a Gather Information check (DC 15) 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 Search check (DC 15) 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 Unfriendly to non-elves. They are Friendly to elves, but must be made Helpful 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 (EL 2)

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).

Kurychek, Imp (CR 2): hp 13; MM.

Tactics: 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.

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 Search check (DC 20) detects this secret door made of wood, painted to look like a brick, plus notices that there are three switches that can turn, hidden in a carving of various celestials. If the Search check beats DC 22, it also detects the trap hidden behind a carving of sunbeams.

Trap: The door has three switches which can be turned, carved to resemble an winged woman with a trumpet (a lawful good trumpet archon), a noble and muscular man with a lion's head (a neutral good leonal), and an armored woman with a gleaming greatsword (a chaotic good ghaele eladrin). A Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 12) can identify the alignments of the three figures, and with the aid of the note in Shealis' spellbook, the party can figure out the clue. You must turn the switches associated with the ghaele, then the leonal, then the archon — associated with the planes of Arborea, Elysium, and Celestia — and the door will open if you push on the sunbeam carving. If you turn them in another order and try to push the door open, it springs the trap.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (blue whinnis, DC 14 Fort save resists, 1 Con/unconsciousness); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 17. Additionally, when the trap triggers, 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. The imp was sent to retrieve the case, and it cannot let its bargain go unfulfilled. However, it doesn't want to risk being killed by the elves, so it wants to work with the party.

The imp need only fulfill the letter of its agreement, so it will permit the party to take whatever is inside the case; it cannot be blamed when it brings back an empty 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 or 3)

The entry room is watched over by a trio of celestial badgers, which 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 warrior to come downstairs. If combat does begin, two rounds later the warriors arrive at the base of the stairs, armed and ready for battle.

The 50-ft. 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 leads upward in the back right corner, and one of the doors stands at the foot of the stairs.

Celestial badgers (3, CR 1/2): hp 6; MM.

Hazard — Doors: 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 can open and close with a move action, or 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-ft. square, with only the sparsest furnishing — a pair of mats for the elves to rest on, a few shelves stocked with food.

Shahalesti Warriors (2)

CR 1

Male elf fighter 1

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, elf

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16

hp 11 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1 (+3 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 longsword (d8+1, 19–20), or +2 shortsword (d6+1, 19–20)

Ranged +3 shortbow (d6+1, ×3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Combat Gear 2 thunderstones

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +0, Ride +6

Possessions chainmail, buckler, longsword, shortsword, composite shortbow [+1 Str] with 20 arrows

Treasure: A small unlocked coffer holds 100 pp. The case the party seeks, a thick steel box etched with swirling patterns and warded with *arcane lock* (Break DC 28), lies beside one of the mats.

Development: Should the party manage to get a look inside the case (perhaps they repeatedly throw it off a roof-top), the case contains a book written in Infernal in a code (Decipher Script DC 35), 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 in the campaign saga, *Shelter from the Storm*, when it is revealed that the book is a horrifyingly detailed treatise on ways to empower magic through mass ritual torture, and the coded text outlines a vast excavation project going on in the frozen wastes of northern Ragesia.

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, any Diplomacy check takes a –5 penalty. Only if they 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, wanting to have something to report if they have to leave the city empty handed. If Shealis is with the party, she is adamant in refusing 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.

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, 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, the elves might have gained the case and the information it contained, and they might be willing to organize a joint mission that follows the plot in adventure eight.



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 arrival of the inquisitors, since the city council might need 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 Gate Pass defenders drove back the initial assault, but the attack cost many lives, and even now the men on the walls report that the Ragesian attack was only a small portion of their entire force. The invading army has demanded that a group of

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 gains a +8 bonus if he is able to get another military order or council decree as a base sample, but two guards will check the document for authenticity at each gate, with a Forgery check modifier of +2. 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.)

inquisitors be allowed into the city, and threaten to renew their attack if they do not receive a prompt agreement from the city 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 (EL 7)

The gates leading south are 10 ft. wide and 20 ft. 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 warrior 1), four officers (LN warrior 3), and a pair of gatekeepers (LN expert 4, Forgery +2, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9) 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 ft. tall (Climb DC 20), crenelated, with a strange metal awning that sticks out to either side just below the top of the wall, which requires another Climb check (DC 25) to get around. Even if the party gets over this wall, the far side of the wall is steep and covered in gravel and snow, incurring a –5 penalty to Move Silently checks. The gate guards won't pursue, but they will fire crossbows. There is a hundred foot clearing beyond each wall, and the ground is difficult terrain.

If the patrolling guards are alerted, they can be 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 (EL 1)

The party may go back to Gabal's school looking for help getting out of the city, and if Diogenes (page 23) is Helpful, they can secure his aid. If they helped him resolve his grudge against Shealis, he's automatically helpful. Otherwise a Diplomacy check (DC 20) is necessary, as well as at least 375 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 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, and then get a wagon and a pair of horses and go with them to the southern exit gate. There he hides in the covered wagon and tells the party to talk loud and keep the guards distracted

for a few minutes while he goes to work. Through a variety of small slots in the wagon he charms each and every guard at the gate (sixteen total) with his *wand of charm person*. Then, when he's confident he's gotten them all, he gets out of the wagon, and amid the warm greeting by all his new friends he simply asks them to let the party out.

Ad-Hoc Experience: If the party gets Diogenes' help and manages not to ruin his plan, reward them for a CR 1 encounter.

Councilman Menash (EL ½)

Erdan Menash (CG male half-elf expert 7) is one of the more colorful characters in the city council, a former merchant and tailor who used to sell well-crafted but horribly unfashionable gear to adventurers, with the goal of making sure everyone knew he was the one sponsoring their 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 tower depository, in the same district as a 90-ft. statue of Emperor Coaltongue. The outer walls are painted vivid green, yellow, and purple, and the two guards he keeps for protection (N warrior 2) are forced to wear tabards of the same colors. The guards meet visitors at the entry gate and offer to let guests stay inside to wait for the councilman. 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 frustrated, complaining in a high-pitched, wheezing voice about the nincompoops in charge of the city. He does a double take when he sees the party, surprised to have guests.

Erdan 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 and will start 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 repeating crossbow designed to look like a porcupine; everything but the now-trite spiked chain — made more exotic by unorthodox decorations like red and yellow frogs on pommels, or axeheads in the shape of bunnies. 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 to elaborate and garish decorations that Erdan had hoped to use in the Festival of Dreams, such as a bear mask for the giant statue of Coaltongue in the center of the city, 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 is willing to talk about what has happened to the city, providing 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 western-most district caught fire and has been nearly gutted, but the 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, and after hearing their story and needs, the party should make a Diplomacy check. Displaying enthusiasm about Erdan's odd creations grants a +2 bonus to this check.

If somehow the party offends Erdan and makes him Indifferent, 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.

If he remains Friendly, he will offer to give them a note for a trusted friend of his, **Captain Herreman** (NG male half-orc fighter 4), who runs a small cavalry detachment that regularly patrols the southern border. The message will include a note asking Herreman to take the party along, plus two official orders to quickly patrol the roads to the south — one that lists Herreman's normal patrol size, and the other that is increased by the number in the PC's party. Herreman and the party will depart through one gate, then Herreman will let the party go their own way, and then he will 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.

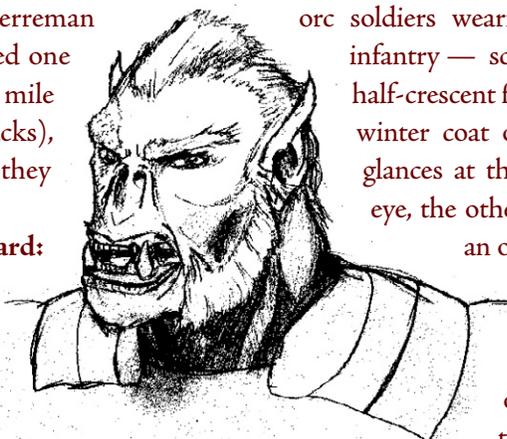
If the party makes him Helpful, he will do as above, plus offer to give each party member a single weapon, suit of armor, or special item from his collection, with a value of up to 400 gp, up to and including his precious repeating crossbow. Of course, all the gear is atrocious looking, but it is a valuable gift. Selling these items should be difficult to say the least. If Torrent is still with the party, she'll take a masterwork 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 always willing to buy gear the party has picked up from looting their enemies, glad to have a chance to get a few more swords or suits of armor for the defense of the city. He pays a fair price, half the market value of the items, and if they have made him Helpful through Diplomacy checks he'll 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 one district to the east, less than a mile away, near a large stable and barracks), begs them to send aid as soon as they can, and bids them good luck.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award:

If the party gets Erdan's aid at all, reward them for a CR ½ encounter.



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 suddenly 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.

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 about thirty feet back and following on side streets or through alleys. A Spot check (DC 12) can detect the thugs' pursuit after a few minutes of travel, and though the thugs are disguised as city guardsmen, a Spot check (DC 15) can see through their disguises.

The thugs approach the party at some point 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 approaches 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 (Bluff +0, though they aid another the lead thug), and try to convince them to hand over their weapons. If the PC (or the entire party) comes along they lead them down a side street to a dead-end alley, where they attack the weakest-looking PC with saps.

If the party doesn't fall for the bluff, they threaten to call for other guards, but won't start a fight in the middle of the day. They'll just 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.

Bounty Hunter Thugs (6, CR 1/2): hp 6; see page 12.

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

Roguish Rescue (EL n/a)

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 Spot check (DC 20), and 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.

DESIGNER'S NOTES — RANTLE

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 Leadership Performance feats. 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.

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.” Should the party never become imperiled, Rantle will approach them just before they reach Herreman’s barracks.

Rantle

CR 4

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.

Male human rogue 2/fighter 2

CG Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen -1,

Spot -1

Languages Common

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 25 (4 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork greatsword
(2d6+4, 19–20)

Ranged +5 dagger (d4+3, 19–20);
point-blank shot

Base Atk +3; Grp +6

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack,
leadership performances, sneak
attack +1d6

Combat Gear two smokesticks, two
potions of *cure light wounds*,
scroll of *burning hands* (Use
Magic Device +5 vs. DC 21)

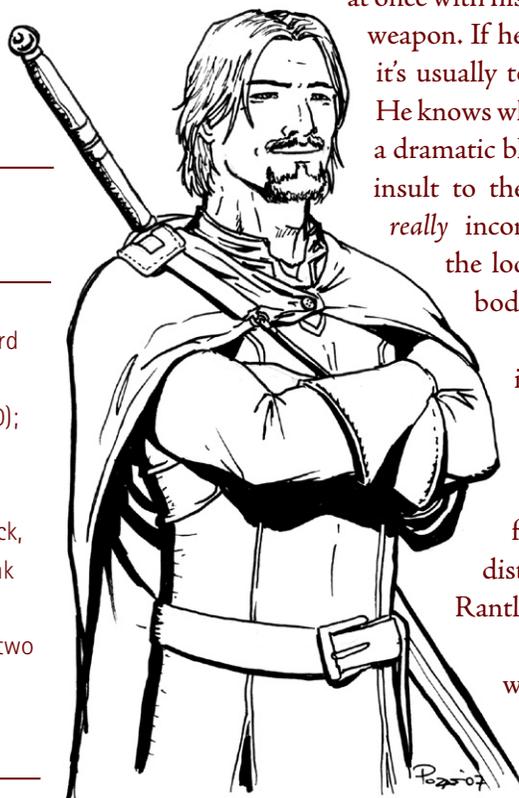
Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12,
Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13

SQ evasion, trapfinding

Feats Cleave, Leadership Performance, Maneuver Leader,
Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +7, Hide +6, Intimidate +5,
Move Silently +5, Open Lock +6, Perform (oratory) +8,
Perform (sing) +4, Ride +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Tumble
+5, Use Magic Device +5.

Possessions Masterwork greatsword, masterwork chain
shirt, shortsword, two daggers



Leadership Performances (Ex): Twice per day, Rantle can inspire or direct his allies in one the following ways: (1) give a one-minute speech to grant himself and allies who hear it +1 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, lasting for the first 5 rounds of combat in the next hour, or (2) as a standard action, grant every ally within 30 ft. an immediate move action. This does not affect Rantle himself.

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 cut through multiple foes at once with his greatsword, which is 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, and that he had wanted to come to ask a favor before the Ragesian assault distracted him. For once in his life, Rantle’s seeking 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 pretty 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 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 she looks too good for her own good. In short, she’s pretty much the stereotype of a fire mage. It’s kinda 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 be charming for.

Captain Herreman’s Barracks (EL n/a)

Herreman’s barracks are less than a mile away from Councilman Menash’s home. Consisting of several three-story buildings with attached stables, the barracks are lodgings for 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 they’re outside the gates, Herreman suggests that going any further at night might be dangerous, and directs the party to a safe camping spot two miles from the city, in an abandoned tower that once was a watchpost for the city, but is now in disuse. Should the party somehow 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 to move his patrol up with a Diplomacy check (DC 20). 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. As it is a mountain road, movement is at $\frac{3}{4}$ normal speed ($4\frac{1}{2}$ miles per hour on an unencumbered light warhorse; or about 1 mile per hour for a gnome or halfling on foot who is encumbered). It should take the party somewhere between one and four 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. The Black Horse bounty hunters have laid an ambush, their leader having been alerted via a *sending* spell to stop the party at all costs and recover the case in their possession. He was offered a reward of 10,000 gp for this task. The Ragesians have 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 2nd level before they reach it.

THE PLAN

The leader of the Black Horses, **Renard Woodsman** (LE male human ranger 3), has planned for a 600-foot stretch of the road to be a gauntlet. Renard loves making complex plans, even a simpler method might be more successful. Renard's Map details how he is dividing his forces — himself, Kathor, four thugs, two scouts, and two horsemen.

At point 1, two scouts hide on a cliff overlooking the road (Spot DC 21 to notice them from 50 ft. away). Once the party gets within 50 ft., the scouts move to total cover and use the sound of the party's

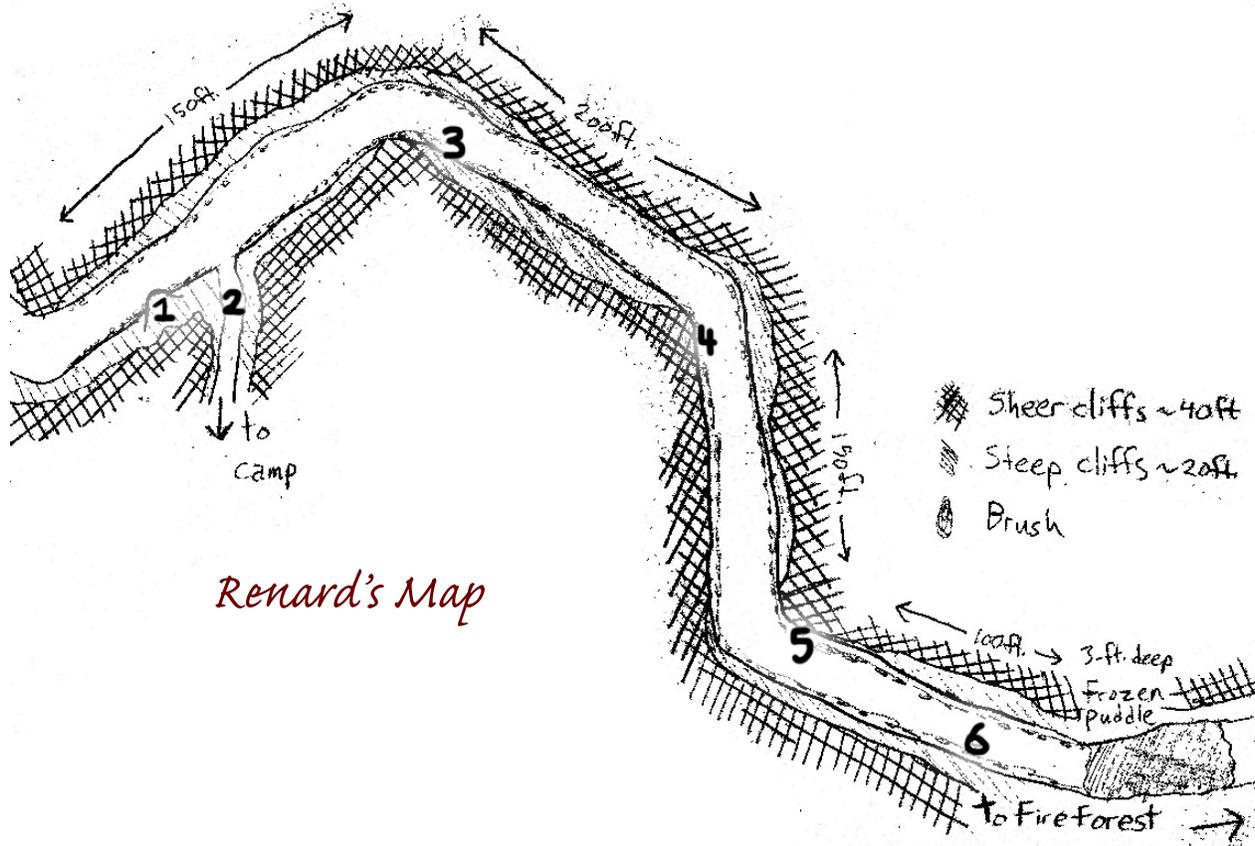
movement to know when to spring the ambush. Their job is to wait until the party has gone just past their position, then spook the party's horses with the loud boom of thunderstones thrown behind them (ranged touch +1 against AC 5). The hope is that the group will run further ahead down the gauntlet. If the scouts succeed in throwing their thunderstones within 10 ft. of a horse, its rider has to make a Ride check (DC 10) to keep the horse from bolting; a bolting horse moves at its fastest possible pace for one round.

At point 2, Renard and two of his men are mounted on light warhorses, hiding behind a large pile of rubble. As soon as the party passes them they will charge in pursuit, Renard firing arrows while his men try to ride in and strike with their saps. The scouts at point A 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, with orders to fire his crossbow at the party's horses as soon as they get within 200 ft., and to keep firing as long as he has a clear shot.

At point 6, Kathor waits. When the horns sound, Kathor casts *shield* on himself, then rides out, readying an action to cast *true strike* when the party gets within 100 ft., with the intention of charging on his next round. 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, the last thug at point 5 is mounted instead, and he tries to block the party's escape.)

The road is 20 ft. wide, with 5 ft. of foliage on either side (difficult terrain, 20% concealment), and then relatively steep cliffs that ascend at a 60 degree angle (Climb DC 0) to a height of 20 ft. Feel free to scatter obstacles in the road, such as fallen trees, rubble, or patches of ice, to make the scene more interesting.



Renard's Map

Running 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 A sound a different note on their horns, which calls for all the bounty hunters 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, because the bounty is only for living magic-users, and the bounty hunters assume anyone could just 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 cross most battle maps in a single round. Even one with a medium load (as most of the party's will be) can run 200 ft. in a round.

However, the road, even with the brushy edges, is only 30 ft. 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.

Bounty Hunter Scouts (2, CR 1): hp 11; see page 12.

Bounty Hunter Thugs (2, CR 1/2): hp 6; see page 12.

Kathor Danava (CR 4): hp 32; see page 13.

Kathor's Heavy Warhorse (CR n/a): hp 30, MM animal appendix.

Light Warhorses (3, CR n/a): hp 22, MM animal appendix.

Bounty Hunter Horsemen (2)

Male human fighter 1

NE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, orc

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15

hp 11 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), ride 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee +3 sap (d6+2 nonlethal), or +4 longsword (d8+3)

Ranged +3 composite longbow [+2 Str] (d8+2, ×3), or +3 ranged touch (tanglefoot bag)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Combat Gear 2 *potion of cure light wounds*, 2 tanglefoot bags

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +1, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Ride +6.

Possessions chainmail, composite longbow [+2 Str] with 20 arrows, lance, longsword, sap, gilt horns worth 13 gp, light warhorse, armband, leather barding.



CR 1

Renard Woodsman

The rider wears black studded leather, and a black helmet decorated with a silver horse's head. A cape billows behind him as he rides, and all you can see of his face is a toothy smile.

Male human ranger 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, elven, orc

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 20 (3 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (4 squares), ride 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee +4 masterwork spiked gauntlet (d4)

Ranged +6 masterwork composite longbow (d8, ×3), point-blank shot, rapid shot

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3

Atk Options Mounted Combat

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 13

SQ favored enemy (elf) +2, wild empathy +6

Feats Endurance, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track

Skills Handle Animal +7, Heal +5, Hide +7, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Ride +10, Spot +5, Survival +7.

Possessions +1 chain shirt, +1 cloak of resistance, light warhorse, leather barding, masterwork composite longbow with 40 arrows, masterwork spiked gauntlet, black horse helmet (+1 competence bonus on Ride checks, faint transmutation, market value 100 gp), armband, 40 gp.

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 (Survival DC 6), the party can find the bounty hunters' camp, about a mile away along a rough game trail.

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 (*Player's Guide*, pg 3). 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 opens the gate (Hardness 10; hp 30; Break DC 24; Open Lock DC 25), 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 bounty hunters had captured a mage and tossed him in one of these tunnels for safe-keeping. He died, as did his cat familiar, but Renard Woodsman had lost the key to the lock, so he decided to leave the body there, since the cold weather was keeping 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

This silk sheet displays faded images of old myths of the city of Gate Pass. When worn as a belt sash or a cloak, this item functions as a *phylactery of faithfulness*, with the extra ability to cast *align weapon* once per day if the wearer whispers, "Please don't let my death be in vain," during which the shroud briefly is as vivid and beautiful as when it was first created. It cannot align a weapon to evil.

Faint divination and transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *align weapon*, *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*; Price 3,000 gp.

dream shroud (see sidebar). Anyone witnessing the transfiguration becomes aware of the powers of the shroud.

As for the camp itself, there are eight light horses, huddled together 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, reward for the capture of mages. Amid the surviving gear of the bounty hunters are several mundane daggers and shortswords, plus an *everburning torch* and two does of *oil of timelessness*. 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 Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 15) detects 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, then 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 (NG female human sorcerer 1) 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

WEAKLY ENHANCED FIRE MAGIC

Spells with the fire descriptor cast within a mile of the fire forest are automatically empowered.

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 (old NE male human wizard 9) 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. But Crystin still loves him, and won’t leave without him. Crystin 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 Indifferent to the party, and will not go with them unless he is made Helpful, 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 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 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 house. If the party stays the night, or at least goes inside the farmhouse for a few minutes, the Ragesians attack as the party leaves, coming in on foot so as not to draw attention.

Haddin’s History

A Knowledge (local) or bardic knowledge check (DC 10) 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 was killed by rioters, and Haddin fled the city in disgust, taking his wife and newborn daughter.

Occasionally people would see a young woman who closely resembled Haddin's wife come into 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.

THE FARMHOUSE

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

Haddin is very sick, coughing 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 did not realize his value, how they did not respect him. If the party ask questions about his past, he laughs them off, and when Crystin starts to answer, Haddin glares at her, and she suddenly turns meek.

A Sense Motive check (DC 25) detects that Crystin is under the effect of an enchantment spell, a custom effect that Haddin developed — permanently compelling his daughter so she would obey him. Crystin is slowly coming to resist the effect, which makes Haddin scared. If the effect is dispelled

(caster level 9), Crystin tells the party everything and begs them to take her away from her father.

The masterwork 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 2000 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 portrait of her mother and her when she was a child.

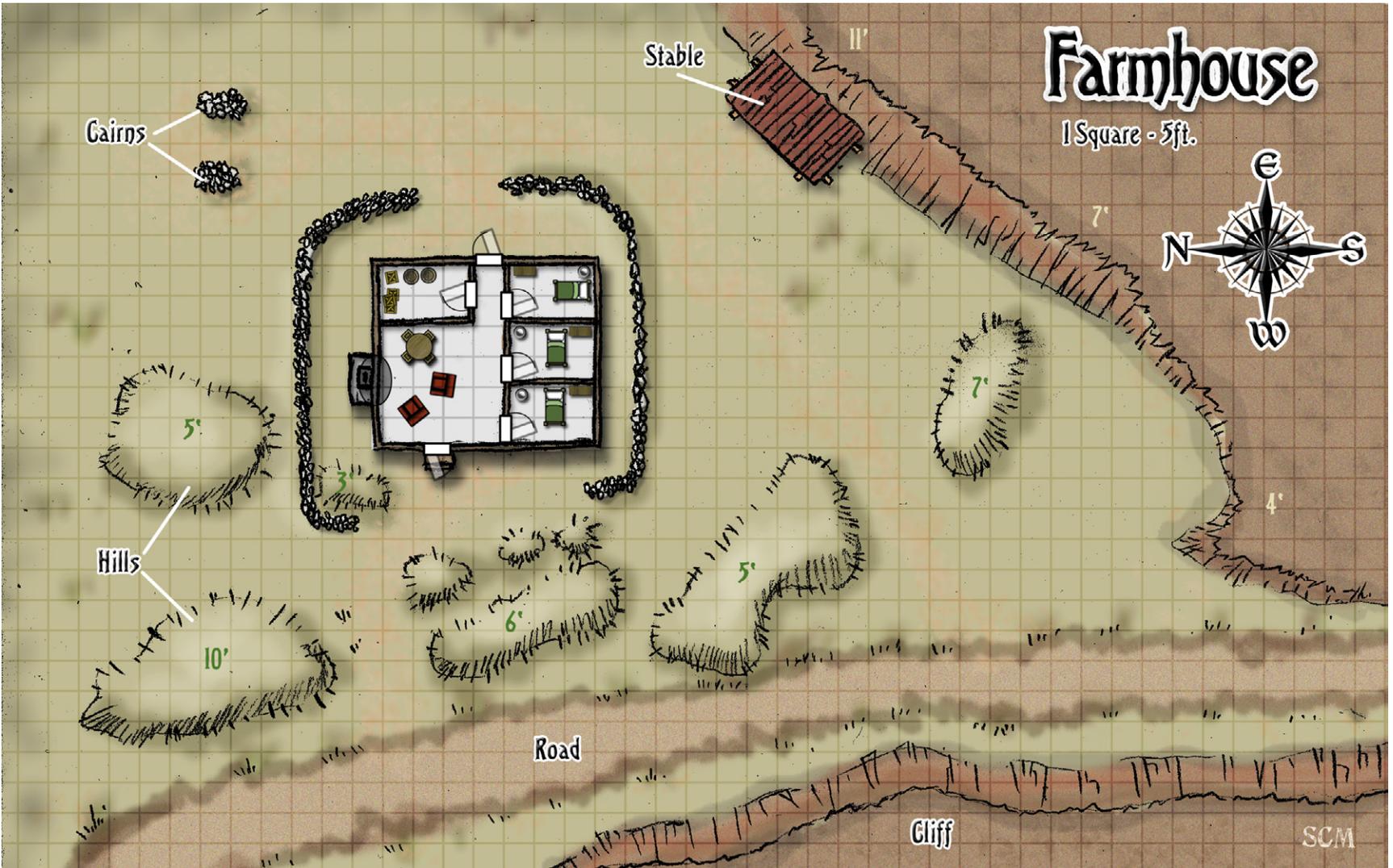
Ad-Hoc Experience: If the party manages to get Haddin to come along without knocking him out, reward them for a CR 2 challenge. If they manage to learn about the permanent compulsion affecting Crystin and free her, reward them for another CR 2 challenge.

THE ATTACK (EL 7)

The 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 one goblin, Kralrak, sneak atop the barn, where he has a view of the front and back of the farmhouse. Then he sends the other goblin, Emran, to the door to pick the lock. Boreus uses the scroll of *magic circle against chaos* on himself, then calls out, his voice feral and commanding, demanding Haddin come out and turn himself over, and threatening to kill the old mage if he doesn't surrender.

If anyone comes out, Kralrak will shoot that person with a +1 *human bane crossbow bolt*, and then the Ragesians will rush the door. If no one comes out, Boreus will cast *silence* on Emran, who will then open the door and lead the charge, with the six skeletons rushing in after him. Either way, Boreus, his bodyguard Smiley, and the two Ragesian soldiers slowly saunter up to the door, being careful to remain within the radius of the *magic circle against chaos* so neither of them can be dominated, moving only 20 ft. per round. As they approach, Smiley pulls out his potion of *enlarge person*, then readies to drink it if anything dangerous comes out the door.



Haddin Ja-Laffa

CR 4

Once strong and handsome, this man 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.

Old male human wizard 9

NE Medium humanoid

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, dwarven, elven, goblin, orc, undercommon

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9

hp 10 (9 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +4 dagger (d4, 19–20)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Spells Prepared (CL 9th)

5th — *dominate person* ×2 (DC 22)

4th — *stone shape* ×3

3rd — still silent *charm person* ×2, silent *detect thoughts* ×2

2nd — *detect thoughts* ×2, *knock* ×2, silent *charm person*

1st — *charm person* ×6

0 — *read magic* ×4

Abilities Str 10, Dex 9, Con 7, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 11

Feats Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Mastery (*charm person*, *detect thoughts*, *dominate person*, *knock*, *stone shape*), Still Spell

Skills Craft (painting) +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (local) +17, Spellcraft +19.

Possessions Aged book (not his spellbook, which he destroyed in anger, but rather a sketchbook from when he was still a good man, in love with his wife and daughter), basic clothes, cold weather outfit, dagger, 30 gp.

Tactics: Haddin's options are highly limited because the only spells he has available are those he memorized with Spell Mastery — a list of spells intended to let him escape if he was ever captured. Basically he just tries to mind control people.

Special Note: 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 level.

Crystin Ja-Nafeel

CR 1

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

Female human sorcerer 1

CG Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common, elven

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee -1 quarterstaff (d6-1)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -1

Spells Known (CL 1st)

1st (4/day) — *magic missile*, *sleep* (DC 13)

0 (5/day) — *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14

SQ trillith spirit

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +5, Sense Motive +x, Spellcraft +5.



Possessions quarterstaff (used to be a *staff of charming*, now out of charges), basic clothes, cold weather outfit.

Trillith Spirit (Su): 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.

Tactics: 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 looks to be in danger.

Boreus

CR 4

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

Male orc cleric 4

LE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, orc

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (having used scroll of mage armor earlier)

hp 30 (4 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +5 hand claw (d4+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Combat Gear brooch of

shielding (101 charges), scroll of *cure light wounds* ×4, scroll of *mage armor*, scroll of *magic circle against chaos*, wand of *hold portal* (10 charges)

Special Actions reactive

counterspell, rebuke magic (3/day, d20+4), turn water creatures or command fire creatures (3/day, d20)



Spells Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd – *cure moderate wounds*, *produce flame*^D, *silence*, *sound burst*

1st – *bane*, *burning hands*^D, *cause fear*, *command*, *endure elements* (used)

0 – *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*

D Domain spell **Domains** Fire, Magic

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11

SQ light sensitivity, rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting (*inflict* spells)

Feats Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)

Skills Concentration +12, Spellcraft +7

Possessions Hand claw, inquisitor's mask (*Campaign Guide*, pg 16), 73 gp

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): Boreus can counterspell even when he has not readied an action, as long as he is aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up his standard action on his next turn, having effectively already used it.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Three times a day, Boreus can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls d20+4 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Tactics: Boreus's main goal is to make sure his allies stay in a 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.

Ragesian Soldiers (2)

Male half-orc fighter 1
LE Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18

hp 12 (1 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +5 masterwork battleaxe (d8+2, ×3)

Ranged +2 shortbow (d6, ×3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4

Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure light wounds*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 9

Feats Great Fortitude, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +1, Ride +3

Possessions banded mail, heavy shield, masterwork battleaxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, 5 days of rations, light warhorse, 10 gp

Krarlrak and Emran

Male goblin rogue 1
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12

hp 7 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 small shortsword (d6, 19–20)

Ranged +5 masterwork small heavy crossbow (d8, 19–20), rapid reload

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -4

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (both) and one +1 *human-bane bolt* (Krarlrak) or one *potion of invisibility* (Emran)

Special Actions sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6

Feats Rapid Reload

Skills Climb +4, Disable Device +4, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +7, Spot +6, Tumble +7

Possessions masterwork small heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, leather armor, small shortsword, thieves' tools, 28 gp

CR 1

Smarg "Smiley" Hobbler

Male orc barbarian 1/fighter 1
NE Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -2, Spot -2, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12

hp 21 (2 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** -2

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork silver greataxe (d12+5, ×3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +6

Combat Gear *potion of enlarge person*

Special Actions rage (7 rounds)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 6, Cha 11

SQ uncanny dodge

Feats Cleave, Power Attack

Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +13, Swim +8

Possessions masterwork silver greataxe, leather armor, platinum chain worth 140 gp

Stats while Raging: AC 11, hp 25, Fort +7, Will +0, +9 melee (d12+8, ×3), grapple +8.

Stats while Enlarged: AC 11, space 10 ft., Ref +1, reach 10 ft., +7 melee (3d6+6, ×3), grapple +11.

Stats while Raging and Enlarged: AC 9, hp 25, Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +0, space 10 ft., reach 10 ft., +9 melee (3d6+9, ×3), grapple +13.

Human skeletons (6, CR 1/3): hp 6, MM. Armed with scimitars.

XP Reward: Haddin and Crystin will not necessarily get involved in this battle, but if they do, it will reduce the PCs' XP reward slightly. If either dies in the battle, it is best just not to count him or her in determining XP.

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 who is the second in command of the Inquisitors, Ursus, and Guthwulf.

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* any PC who 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 they 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 ONE – GATE PASS

A more detailed description of Gate Pass is included in the *Player's Guide*. Here we present information that should not be available to the players, but which is necessary for the adventure.

CITY LAYOUT

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. Over the years it has been controlled by both nations that border it — Ragesia and Shahalesti — until a few decades ago the natives drove out the Ragesians and negotiated their city as neutral ground. Because of this repeated history of occupation, 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 twenty-seven 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 is 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, and people view the arches created by skybridges as gateways.

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

REACTION TO MAGIC-USERS

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 Unfriendly 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 opponents of this 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 magic-users, and such is his sway that the term has caught on among the common citizens.

Most of the city believes (or at least claims to believe) that the Scourge is only intended to capture those responsible for killing the emperor, 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 the rules for cold weather dangers, consider giving every character a free cold weather outfit, which grants a +5 circumstance bonus on Fortitude saves against cold weather (or alternately, it reduces the effects of cold weather by one step). 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 1st-level 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. Movement in the streets costs double, and the DC of Balance or Tumble checks increases by +5. Attempting to run or charge down a street requires a Balance check (DC 15 with the modifiers). Failure by 4 or less means the character cannot run or charge, but can act normally. Failure by 5 or more means the character falls. Alleys and rooftops receive less traffic, so the snow is fresher, not requiring Balance checks except on uneven surfaces, but incurring a -5 penalty to Move Silently checks.

INTERDISTRICT GATES

A typical gate between districts is guarded by twenty soldiers (LN warrior 1), two officers (LN warrior 3), and a gatekeeper (LN expert 4, Forgery +2, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9) 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 can pass between districts without being accosted. Most of the gate guards aren't eager to deal with spellcasters, and prefer to turn a blind eye to anything not blatant. 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 mages who flee.

THE MAIN 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 a *hallow* spell that includes an *invisibility purge*, while a walled courtyard just inside the gates has a *hallow* that is tied to a *detect magic* effect. 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.

THE NORTH AND SOUTH GATES

For details on these exits, see their description in Act Three.

War of the Burning Sky

REGIONAL MAP



APPENDIX TWO: COMBAT STATS

Allies & Potential Allies

Torrent

CR 2

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.

Female human fighter 1/cleric 1

CG Medium humanoid

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 15

hp 17 (2 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** -1, **Will** +4

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +4 masterwork battleaxe (d8+2, ×3)

Ranged +0 light crossbow (d8, 19–20), rapid reload

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

Combat Gear potion of remove paralysis, scroll of hide from undead, two flasks of holy water, wand of cure light wounds (50 charges)

Special Actions feat of strength (+1 Str as free action, lasts 1 round, 1/day), turn undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+2, 1st), turn fire and command, rebuke or bolster water creatures 4/day (+1, 2d6+2, 1st)

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st – *bless*, *enlarge person*^P, *magic weapon*

0 – *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*

D Domain spell **Domains** Strength, Water

Abilities Str 15, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13

SQ spontaneous casting (cure spells)

Feats Negotiator, Rapid Reload, Skill Focus (Swim)

Skills Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Sense Motive +6, Swim -1 (+9 without armor or shield)

Possessions Masterwork battleaxe, light crossbow, breastplate, light steel shield, dagger, 40 crossbow bolts, copious variety of beverages in backpack, 300 gp, large padded hip pouch containing numerous potions of *stand the heat* (two per PC, plus at least six more).

Tactics: Torrent only uses her 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.



Diogenes

CR 5

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.

Male human wizard (enchanter) 5

NG Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Elven, Ignan, Orc (plus the phrase "don't eat me" in Draconic)

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 24 (5 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 dagger (d4–1, 19–20)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1

Combat Gear two potions of *cure light wounds*, scroll of *dispel magic*, scroll of *hold person*, scroll of *suggestion*, scroll of *resist energy*, scroll of *see invisibility*, wand of *charm person* (50 charges)

Special Actions reactive counterspell, spellduelist (*Player's Guide*, pg 8)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th, +2 ranged touch)

3rd — *dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *suggestion* (DC 18)

2nd — *acid arrow*, *hideous laughter* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *summon monster II*

1st — *charm person* (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *shield*, *sleep* (DC 16)

0 — *daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Prohibited Schools Evocation, Necromancy

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 13

Feats Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Reactive Counterspell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Concentration), Spell Focus (enchantment), Spellduelist

Skills Bluff +9, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +13

Possessions spellbook, spell components, 100 gp

Tactics: 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 any of four ways — falling down and not getting up within a round; leaving the 60-ft. ring; having three of your spells countered; or not casting a spell for two rounds in a row.

Knowing that Shealis will go for offense, Diogenes will ready until she starts casting, then cast *obscuring mist*, effectively ruining her spell when she becomes unable to target him. Then he'll cast *shield*, then *protection from energy (fire)*, then *summon monster II*, and will only actually start using directly offensive spells afterward, or if Shealis heads into the fog. He'll reactively counterspell anything that he thinks is too dangerous.



Rantle

CR 4

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.

Male human rogue 2/fighter 2

CG Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 25 (4 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +5, Will -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork greatsword (2d6+4, 19-20)

Ranged +5 dagger (d4+3, 19-20); point-blank shot

Base Atk +3; Grp +6

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, leadership performances, sneak attack +1d6

Combat Gear two smokesticks, two potions of *cure light wounds*, scroll of *burning hands* (Use Magic Device +5 vs. DC 21)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13

SQ evasion, trapfinding

Feats Cleave, Leadership Performance, Maneuver Leader, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +7, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +6, Perform (oratory) +8, Perform (sing) +4, Ride +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Tumble +5, Use Magic Device +5.

Possessions Masterwork greatsword, masterwork chain shirt, shortsword, two daggers

Leadership Performances (Ex): Twice per day, Rantle can inspire or direct his allies in one the following ways: (1) give a one-minute speech to grant himself and allies who hear it +1 to attack and weapon damage rolls and saves against fear effects, lasting for the first 5 rounds of combat in the next hour, or (2) as a standard action, grant every ally within 30 ft. an immediate move action. This does not affect Rantle himself.

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 cut through multiple foes at once with his greatsword, which is 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.



Haddin Ja-Laffa

Once strong and handsome, this man 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.

Old male human wizard 9

NE Medium humanoid

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common, dwarven, elven, goblin, orc, undercommon

AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 9

hp 10 (9 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +4 dagger (d4, 19–20)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Spells Prepared (CL 9th)

5th — *dominate person* ×2 (DC 22)

4th — *stone shape* ×3

3rd — still silent *charm person* ×2, silent *detect thoughts* ×2

2nd — *detect thoughts* ×2, *knock* ×2, silent *charm person*

1st — *charm person* ×6

0 — *read magic* ×4

Abilities Str 10, Dex 9, Con 7, Int 20, Wis 17, Cha 11

Feats Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Mastery (charm person, detect thoughts, dominate person, knock, stone shape) Still Spell

Skills Craft (painting) +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (local) +17, Spellcraft +19.

Possessions Aged book (not his spellbook, which he destroyed in anger, but rather a sketchbook from when he was still a good man, in love with his wife and daughter), basic clothes, cold weather outfit, dagger, 30 gp.

Special Note: 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 level.

CR 4

Crystin Ja-Nafeel

CR 1

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

Female human sorcerer 1

CG Medium humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Common, elven

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 12

hp 5 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee -1 quarterstaff (d6–1)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -1

Spells Known (CL 1st)

1st (4/day) — *magic missile*, *sleep* (DC 13)

0 (5/day) — *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *mending*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14

SQ trillith spirit

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +5, Sense Motive +x, Spellcraft +5.

Possessions quarterstaff (used to be a *staff of charming*, now out of charges), basic clothes, cold weather outfit.

Trillith Spirit (Su): 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.

Tactics: Haddin's options are highly limited because the only spells he has available are those he memorized with Spell Mastery — a list of spells intended to let him escape if he was ever captured. Basically he just tries to mind control people.

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 harms way if someone looks to be in danger.



Act One Enemies & Antagonists

Bounty Hunter Scouts (2)

Male half-orc rogue 1
 N Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5, darkvision
Languages Common, orc

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
hp 11 (1 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +2 sap (d6+2 nonlethal), or +2 morningstar (d8+2)
Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19–20)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear 2 thunderstones

Abilities Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6
Feats Toughness
Skills Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +3, Ride +6, Spot +5
Possessions studded leather armor, morningstar, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp

Bounty Hunter Thugs (4)

Male human warrior 1
 N Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15
hp 6 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +3 sap (d6+2 nonlethal) or +3 short sword (d6+2, 19–20)
Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10
Feats Animal Affinity
Skills Handle Animal +6, Ride +6
Possessions scale mail, light wooden shield, sap, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp. Plus one portable battering ram among the four of them.

Sauce, Dog (CR 1/2): hp 6; MM animal appendix.

CR 1 Kathor Danava

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

Male human fighter 2/sorcerer 1
 LN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 24 (3 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), ride 35 ft. (7 squares)

Melee +6 masterwork greatsword (2d6+3, 19–20)

Ranged +3 composite longbow (d8, ×3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attacks, Spirited Charge

Combat Gear two tanglefoot bags (+3 ranged touch), net (–1 ranged touch), two potions of *cure light wounds*

Spells Known (CL 1st) – arcane spell failure 40%

1st (5/day) – *shield*, *true strike*

0 (4/day) – *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ trillith spirit

Feats Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Concentration +4, Handle Animal +6, Ride +8

Possessions Masterwork greatsword, composite longbow, 40 arrows, half-plate, shortsword, heavy warhorse, banded mail barding, 350 gp

Trillith Spirit (Su): 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.

Kathor's Horse, heavy warhorse: hp 30; MM animal appendix. Speed 35, AC 20 (banded mail barding).

Act Two Enemies & Antagonists

Lantern archon (CR 2): hp 4; MM.

Larion Prevarieth

CR 3

Without his disguise, this elf is short and wiry, his blond 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.

Male elf rogue 2/wizard (illusionist) 1

CN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Common, Celestial, Elven

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13

hp 15 (3 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1 (+3 vs. enchantment); evasion

Immune sleep

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 masterwork rapier (d6, 18–20) or +1 sap (d6 nonlethal)

Ranged +4 dagger (d4, 19–20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1

Combat Gear two potions of *jump*, two potions of *spider climb*, two scrolls of *comprehend languages*, scroll of *erase*, scroll of *expeditious retreat*, scroll of *knock*, scroll of *true strike*, oil of *magic weapon*

Special Actions Quick Draw, sneak attack +1d6

Spells Prepared (CL 1st)

1st — *disguise self*, *feather fall*, *unseen servant*

0 — *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*

Prohibited Schools Abjuration, Enchantment, Necromancy

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 13

SQ evasion, trapfinding, mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14)

Feats Improved Initiative, Quick Draw

Skills Balance +10, Bluff +7, Climb +4, Concentration +4, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +9, Gather Information +5, Jump +7, Open Lock +5, Tumble +10

Possessions Masterwork studded leather, masterwork rapier, sap, eight daggers, spellbook (listed spells, plus cantrips and *magic aura*), thieves' tools, two sunrods, 50 ft. silk rope, 10 pp in Shahalesti coinage.

Tactics: The archon uses its *aid* spell-like ability on itself and on Larion if it has the chance before the party sees it. Remember that its aura of menace applies to all hostile creatures, not just evil creatures. 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.

Flaganus Mortus (CR 2): hp 32 [9 currently]. LE human fighter 4, AC 21, touch 11; Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; melee +9 (d8+5 masterwork battleaxe).

Shealis Amlauril

CR 5

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.

Female elf wizard (evoker) 5

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, Celestial, Draconic, Elven

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14

hp 13 (5 HD)

Fort +0, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5 (+7 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 longsword (d8–1, 19–20)

Ranged +5 longbow (d8–1, ×3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +1

Combat Gear two potions of *cure moderate wounds*, potion of *fly*, potion of *invisibility*, potion of *jump*, wand of *magic missile* (1st level, 25 charges)

Spells Prepared (CL 5th, +5 ranged touch)

3rd — *clairvoyance*, *fireball* ×2 (DC 16)

2nd — *detect thoughts*, *Gabal's superior missile* (see sidebar), *invisibility*, still *magic missile*

1st — *comprehend languages*, *magic missile* ×2, *protection from evil*, *shield*

0 — *detect magic*, *light* ×2, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* ×2

Prohibited Schools Conjuraton, Enchantment, Necromancy

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 10

SQ mageknight (*Player's Guide*, pg 14)

Feats Armor Proficiency (light), Brew Potion, Still Spell

Skills Bluff +4, Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Spellcraft +13

Possessions spellbook (contains listed spells plus cantrips and *daylight*, *fly*, *jump*, *scorching ray*, *shocking grasp*, and *spider climb*), spell components, chain shirt, mithral gloves worth 200 gp, 10 pp, two doses of silversheen, *hand of the mage*

Tactics: So close to completing her mission, Shealis is a 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 flying 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 ready an action to cast *flaming sphere* when her foe starts to cast a spell, then use *magic missile* and *Gabal's superior missile* while chasing her opponent with the sphere.

Shahalesti Warriors (2)

CR 1

Male elf fighter 1

N Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3, low-light vision

Languages Common, elf

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16

hp 11 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1 (+3 vs. enchantment)

Immune sleep

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 longsword (d8+1, 19–20), or +2 shortsword (d6+1, 19–20)

Ranged +3 shortbow (d6+1, ×3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Combat Gear 2 thunderstones

Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +0, Ride +6

Possessions chainmail, buckler, longsword, shortsword, composite shortbow [+1 Str] with 20 arrows

Celestial badgers (3, CR 1/2): hp 6; MM.

Kurychek, Imp (CR 2): hp 13; MM.

Tactics: 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.

Act Three Enemies & Antagonists

Bounty Hunter Thugs (6)

CR 1/2

Male human warrior 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15

hp 6 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 sap (d6+2 nonlethal) or +3 short sword (d6+2, 19-20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19-20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10

Feats Animal Affinity

Skills Handle Animal +6, Ride +6

Possessions scale mail, light wooden shield, sap, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp, Gate Pass city guard uniform.

Act Four Enemies & Antagonists

Bounty Hunter Scouts (2)

CR 1

Male half-orc rogue 1

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13

hp 11 (1 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 sap (d6+2 nonlethal), or +2 morningstar (d8+2)

Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19-20)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2

Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Combat Gear 2 thunderstones

Abilities Str 15, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Toughness

Skills Climb +5, Hide +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Open Lock +3, Ride +6, Spot +5

Possessions studded leather armor, morningstar, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp

Bounty Hunter Thugs (2)

CR 1/2

Male human warrior 1

N Medium humanoid

Init +0; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1

Languages Common

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15

hp 6 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +3 sap (d6+2 nonlethal) or +3 short sword (d6+2, 19-20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow (d8, 19-20)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10

Feats Animal Affinity

Skills Handle Animal +6, Ride +6

Possessions scale mail, light wooden shield, sap, short sword, light crossbow with 10 bolts, armband, 5 gp.

Kathor Danava

CR 3

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

Male human fighter 2/sorcerer 1

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17

hp 24 (3 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), ride 35 ft. (7 squares)

Melee +6 masterwork greatsword (2d6+3, 19–20)

Ranged +3 composite longbow (d8, ×3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attacks, Spirited Charge

Combat Gear two tanglefoot bags (+3 ranged touch), net (–1 ranged touch), two potions of *cure light wounds*

Spells Known (CL 1st) – arcane spell failure 40%

1st (5/day) – *shield*, *true strike*

0 (4/day) – *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ trillith spirit

Feats Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Concentration +4, Handle Animal +6, Ride +8

Possessions Masterwork greatsword, composite longbow, 40 arrows, half-plate, shortsword, heavy warhorse, banded mail barding, 350 gp

Trillith Spirit (Su): 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.

Kathor's Horse, heavy warhorse: hp 30; MM animal appendix. Speed 35, AC 20 (banded mail barding).

Bounty Hunter Horsemen (2)

CR 1

Male human fighter 1

NE Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, orc

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15

hp 11 (1 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), ride 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee +3 sap (d6+2 nonlethal), or +4 longsword (d8+3)

Ranged +3 composite longbow [+2 Str] (d8+2, ×3), or +3 ranged touch (tanglefoot bag)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3

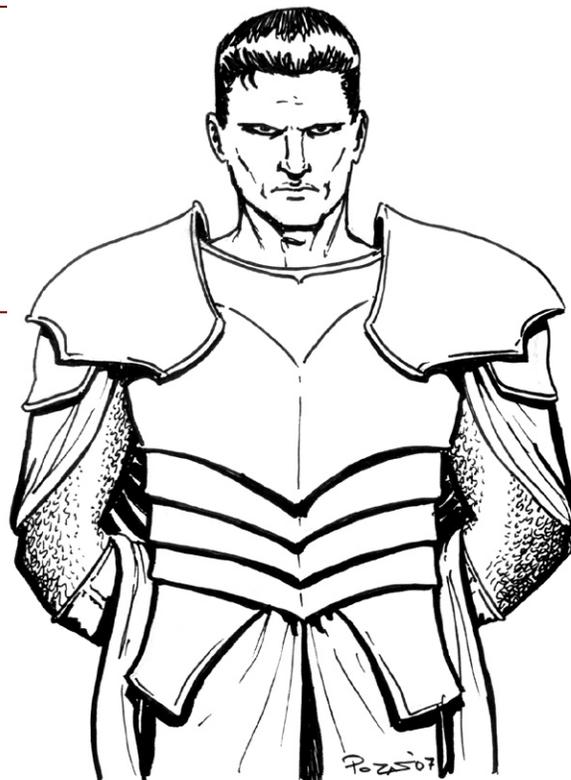
Combat Gear 2 *potion of cure light wounds*, 2 tanglefoot bags

Abilities Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +1, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Ride +6.

Possessions chainmail, composite longbow [+2 Str] with 20 arrows, lance, longsword, sap, gilt horns worth 13 gp, light warhorse, armband, leather barding.



Renard Woodsman

CR 3

The rider wears black studded leather, 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.

Male human ranger 3

LE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Common, elven, orc

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp 20 (3 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (4 squares), ride 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee +4 masterwork spiked gauntlet (d4)

Ranged +6 masterwork composite longbow (d8, ×3), point-blank shot, rapid shot

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3

Atk Options Mounted Combat

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 13

SQ favored enemy (elf) +2, wild empathy +6

Feats Endurance, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track

Skills Handle Animal +7, Heal +5, Hide +7, Knowledge (nature) +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Ride +10, Spot +5, Survival +7.

Possessions +1 chain shirt, +1 cloak of resistance, light warhorse, leather barding, masterwork composite longbow with 40 arrows, masterwork spiked gauntlet, black horse helmet (+1 competence bonus on Ride checks, faint transmutation, market value 100 gp), armband, 40 gp.

Light Warhorses (3, CR n/a): hp 22, MM animal appendix.



Act Five Enemies & Antagonists

Boreus

CR 4

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

Male orc cleric 4

LE Medium humanoid (orc)

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2, darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common, orc

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (having used scroll of mage armor earlier)

hp 30 (4 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +5 hand claw (d4+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Combat Gear *brooch of shielding* (101 charges), scroll of *cure light wounds* ×4, scroll of *mage armor*, scroll of *magic circle against chaos*, wand of *hold portal* (10 charges)

Special Actions reactive counterspell, rebuke magic (3/day, d20+4), turn water creatures or command fire creatures (3/day, d20)

Spells Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd — *cure moderate wounds*, *produce flame*^o, *silence*, *sound burst*

1st — *bane*, *burning hands*^o, *cause fear*, *command*, *endure elements* (used)

0 — *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*

D Domain spell **Domains** Fire, Magic

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11

SQ light sensitivity, rebuke magic (see below), spontaneous casting (*inflict* spells)

Feats Reactive Counterspell, Skill Focus (Concentration)

Skills Concentration +12, Spellcraft +7

Possessions Hand claw, inquisitor's mask (*Campaign Guide*, pg 16), 73 gp

Reactive Counterspell (Ex): Boreus can counterspell even when he has not readied an action, as long as he is aware of a spell being cast. If he does so, he gives up his standard action on his next turn, having effectively already used it.

Rebuke Magic (Su): Three times a day, Boreus can attempt to counterspell or dispel, as if with *dispel magic*. He rolls d20+4 against DC 11 + caster level of the targeted effect. A given use of Rebuke Magic can dispel no more than one magical effect. See *Campaign Guide* for more details.

Tactics: Boreus's main goal is to make sure his allies stay in a fighting condition, so he counterspells 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.



Ragesian Soldiers (2)

Male half-orc fighter 1
LE Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18

hp 12 (1 HD)

Fort +6, **Ref** +1, **Will** -1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee +5 masterwork battleaxe (d8+2, ×3)

Ranged +2 shortbow (d6, ×3)

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4

Combat Gear 2 potions of *cure light wounds*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 9

Feats Great Fortitude, Power Attack

Skills Intimidate +1, Ride +3

Possessions banded mail, heavy shield, masterwork battleaxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, 5 days of rations, light warhorse, 10 gp

Krarlrak and Emran

Male goblin rogue 1
NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12

hp 7 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +2 small shortsword (d6, 19–20)

Ranged +5 masterwork small heavy crossbow (d8, 19–20), rapid reload

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -4

Combat Gear potion of *cure light wounds* (both) and one +1 *human-bane bolt* (Krarlrak) or one potion of *invisibility* (Emran)

Special Actions sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6

Feats Rapid Reload

Skills Climb +4, Disable Device +4, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +7, Spot +6, Tumble +7

Possessions masterwork small heavy crossbow with 20 bolts, leather armor, small shortsword, thieves' tools, 28 gp

CR 1

Smarg "Smiley" Hobbler

Male orc barbarian 1/fighter 1
NE Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen -2, Spot -2, darkvision

Languages Common, orc

AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12

hp 21 (2 HD)

Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** -2

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +7 masterwork silver greataxe (d12+5, ×3)

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +6

Combat Gear potion of *enlarge person*

Special Actions rage (7 rounds)

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 6, Cha 11

SQ uncanny dodge

Feats Cleave, Power Attack

Skills Climb +8, Intimidate +5, Jump +13, Swim +8

Possessions masterwork silver greataxe, leather armor, platinum chain worth 140 gp

Stats while Raging: AC 11, hp 25, Fort +7, Will +0, +9 melee (d12+8, ×3), grapple +8.

Stats while Enlarged: AC 11, space 10 ft., Ref +1, reach 10 ft., +7 melee (3d6+6, ×3), grapple +11.

Stats while Raging and Enlarged: AC 9, hp 25, Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +0, space 10 ft., reach 10 ft., +9 melee (3d6+9, ×3), grapple +13.

Human skeletons (6, CR 1/3): hp 6, MM. Armed with scimitars.

CR 1

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by Ryan Nock

As the Ragesian army marches upon the neutral city of Gate Pass, you must retrieve vital war intelligence from a spy and deliver it to the distant wizards' school of Lyceum.

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