

Summary

The duchess has holed up on Axis Island, so named because compasses spin on their axes here. The PCs are tasked with infiltrating to let in an invasion force, and if possible, saving Lya's cousin, Nathan.

Characters

Lya Jierre

Danoran Minister of Outsiders, and niece of the king. Clever and ambitious, she wants to make the world a better place, but at what cost? "A peaceful world is one where minds can best thrive." [1]

Voice: light french accent, a bit distant.

Captain Rutger Smith

Captain of the RNS Impossible. Smith earned his first command five years ago. Now 37, he has never led his ship into battle. That, combined with his fondness for the Malice-era philosophical writings of the pacifist monk William Miller, has made him the target of mockery by more established naval officers.

Voice: from the chest, a bolstering voice.

Attitude: Philosophical

Nicholas Dupiers

Paranoid mine foreman.

Voice: Angry and bitter

Attitude: Hostile

Tanya

Half-Elf [Druid](#) with a hound companion. Leader of the group, confident but cautious.

Double-checks everyone's armor and gear before setting out. Checks a locket with her husband in it.

Attitude: Maternal

Letmas

Human [mage](#) who is excellent at faking accents. Slips off to make tea during the mission briefing while an illusion of himself stays behind.

Attitude: Brotherly

Dani (replacing 7-foot Dan)

A lean but casual looking monk* with wraps around their arms and feet. A veteran of the Fourth Yerasol War. Offers to give lessons in "breaking stuff," and carries a bag full of bricks and wooden boards for that purpose.

Attitude: Casual

Burton

Goblin [spy](#) who carries a fancy surgical kit containing many varieties of daggers, knives, saws, and scalpels. According to Letmas, Burton once camped out in a Danoran latrine for three hours to get a shot at the commander of an enemy company. Ever since then, he's worn an amulet that constantly cleans him as the spell *prestidigitation*.

Attitude: nonchalant

RHC

Rewards

- The characters can collect 1000 gp each, though in our case rent in Central is 1000 gp.

Prestige Trade (1 per PC)

- **Shield Cuff**, common. (300gp). This unassuming looking wristcuff has three charges of the spell Shield.
- **Oil of Keeness**, common. (150gp). This oil can coat one slashing or piercing weapon or up to five pieces of magical ammunition. For eight hours, the coated item has a +1 to attack and damage rolls.
- **Tanglefoot Bag (bundle of 2)**, common. (100gp). As an action, you can throw this bag up to 20 feet, spilling the contents on impact. Make a ranged Attack against a creature or object, treating the Tanglefoot Bag as an Improvised Weapon. On a hit, if the target Large or smaller it is restrained, for 1 minute or until freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success.
- **Healing Vine**, common, requires attunement. (150gp). This vine wraps around an arm or leg and protects you with druidic magic. Taking an action to sprinkle a few drops of water on the vine will cause you to regain hit points up to a total of 20. You can also expend five hit points to end one disease or poison condition.

Items can be returned for their full monetary value, assuming they are undamaged.

Mission Critical Supplies

- 1 potion of Greater Healing per person (second moved to Burton's case)
- Gem of Brightness
- 4 faerie fire
- 2 passwall
- 2 silence

(Water Breathing potions moved to Burton's case)

Plans

Lya has been working with the king to make peace. She wants Risuri forces to remove the duchess before the duchess can provoke a war.

Duchess Ethelyn wants to hold the fortress (gathering her own reinforcements) and provoke the war she set out to do.

The PCs want to infiltrate the fortress and open the sea gates for the invasion force. Have their superiors stress that this needs to be done quickly and until they do, they're on their own. Stay safe; we don't want this to be a suicide run (if things are getting hard, maybe we can have them discover Nathan first and he'll be backup?)

The Infiltration Plan

Day 1

9 pm: Ship hoists black sails and reaches the cove at low tide. Letmas casts water breathing on the group and the infiltration team enters the sea cave. They'll secure the location and signal back, allowing the PCs to link up with them.

9:45: The groups exit the cave via the mine exit. They'll cross over the mountain to the north shore of the island.

10:30: The groups arrive at the back of the fortress.

~11:59: The group opens the sea gate while the PCs hang low, serving as backup and catching info that doesn't compromise the main operation.

Day 2

After the fighting ends, the infiltrators will bring the PCs in to find Nathan and investigate the duchess's story.

Encounters

3 Towers Puzzle

Special: Print out the handout a few times, use sharpies to mark up.

Special (Me): Have Roland Stanfield exiting the meeting with Lyla, to give the characters one last chance to air Grimsley's grievance.

The RNS Impossible

(Special: me)

In addition to Rutger Smith, we can have lots of opportunities for the team to interact with the infiltration team and learn from them. They might also want to see what tricks the PCs have up their sleeves.

Letmas is airy and uses [Amanensis](#) to copy notes for everyone. It's a nifty little trick he'll be happy to teach a mage; most can pick it up in a week or two (roll a d4 and take the result from 5, that's how many weeks it will take to learn this cantrip).

Tanya is responsible and double checks everyone's gear. She can teach a trick to hoot like an owl; a useful signal in a stealth situation; this only takes about an hour. She can teach other animal sounds too, up to your int modifier (or unlimited if you're a Druid or Ranger)

Dani can teach people a bit about "breaking things." With three months of tutelage, your unarmed strikes can become tougher, up to a d6 from a d4.

Burton can teach about stabilizing wounds. With Burton's trick, medicine checks to stabilize someone get a +1. This also takes about an hour to learn. This skill can be improved on, from advanced (two weeks, +2), to expert (3 months, +3).

BREAKIN THINGS MONK

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +6, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Quick Step. On each of its turns, the monk can use a bonus action to take the Dodge or Disengage action.

Mess Stuff Up. The monk's attacks do double damage to structures and objects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The monk makes three melee attacks.

Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage.

Dart. Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Slow Fall. The monk reduces falling damage by 15 points.

Saving the Infiltrators

9:02- the infiltrators appear to go missing.

Special (Me): A freak accident left the infiltrators strewn across the cave with (effectively) 0 hp.

Map Credits: [this post](#), [patreon](#)



Key:

Green V: hazard, sea vines. These long, wavy vines drift lazily around the undersea cave.

Dark Blue J: Aqua Jelly. These lumbering, barrel-shaped creatures are often found in tropical cave waters.

White S: Thrashing Gray ([conflux creatures](#)' white shark).

Gold P: Tanya's pack.

Gold X's: random trinkets. I used:

- A glass ring (this seaglass is shaped into a fetching ring pattern)

- Snake eye bone dice (ensider's enchanted trinkets 2)
- Three oysters, each containing a pearl worth 1d10x50gp each.

Blue To/corpse 1: Burton.

Green T/corpse 2: Tanya (further figure)

Pink D: Dani

Red L: Letmas

Actions

Stabilizing: It takes an action to stabilize (unless using a bonus action spell or something else).

Triaging: It takes an action to do a triage check (medicine or other skill check)

Movement: Movement under water is half speed

Dig Out: All the rock piles except Burton's are lighter and can be dug out in 5-str rounds.

Help: Up to three sailors can be recruited, though they can only breathe underwater for 13 rounds (assuming a con of 3).

Passwall will enable passing through the rock.

SEA VINES
Medium plant, unaligned. Long, wavy vines drift lazily near the rubble. An undersea hazard.

Armor Class 5
Hit Points 10
Speed 0 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
(-5)	(-5)	(-5)	(-5)	12 (+1)	(-5)

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone
Senses blindsight 10 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 11
Languages —
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Curl. An adjacent (or intersecting) creature must make a dexterity save DC 10 or have its movement stopped for the rest of the turn.

AQUA JELLY

Medium ooze, unaligned. A lumbering, near-transparent, barrel-shaped creature found in tropical waters.

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 19 (3d8 + 6)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Amorphous. The jelly can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Spider Climb. The jelly can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Sluggish. The aqua ooze hibernates at cold temperatures. When exposed to cold damage or otherwise frigid temperatures, the jelly's movement becomes 0 until the end of the next round and it releases anything it has engulfed.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+2) acid damage.

Engulf. The ooze moves up to its speed. While doing so, it can enter Large or smaller creatures' spaces. Whenever the ooze enters a creature's space, the creature must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw.

- On a successful save, the ooze shambles past the creature harmlessly. On a failed save, the ooze engulfs the creature, creating the disengenuous feeling of a warm hug. The creature takes 3 (1d6) acid damage and is engulfed. The engulfed creature can't breathe, is restrained, and takes 6 (2d6) acid damage at the start of each of the ooze's turns. When the ooze moves, the engulfed creature moves with it.

- An engulfed creature can try to escape by taking an action to make a DC 12 Strength check. On a success, the creature escapes and enters a space of its choice within 5 feet of the ooze.

Burton is wedged 15' away, leg caught under a pile of rocks, delirious and begging to cut off his leg. He'll bleed out in 20 rounds if not helped.

Tanya has been battered by rocks and washed 60' away by the sudden currents. She can hold on for about 25 more rounds.

Letmas fell on something sharp and is bleeding out quietly, concealed behind a rock. He only has about 15 rounds.

Dani is unconscious beneath the debris but otherwise mostly okay. They will asphyxiate if not found.

A *Thrashing Gray* will appear in eight rounds if Letmas's wounds are not stemmed and try to eat him (I'll probably wait until a party member arrives for dramatic effect)

Most of the crew's belongings have been washed away and ruined, but Tanya's pack is intact, containing infiltrator gear (rations in a waterproof seal, clothes, a bedroll, and a bar of soap), Druid gear (a neatly packed square component pouch, her staff), 50' rope, a scroll of pass without a trace, three fey lights, three sticks in a bag marked PROTOTYPE, 2 vials oil, an extra pair of glass goggles, a whistle, a phrase book, a map, 489gp, 100sp, and 100cp, a journal in waterproof casing. Tanya will tell you to please take what you need.

Shockstick Prototype: a thick metal rod with the symbol of a triangle shaped gear. Usage: make a melee attack. If the attack succeeds, roll 5d8. A creature with less than the resulting hit points is Stunned for one minute. If any creatures are adjacent and have hit points less than the carryover, they are also stunned (keep subtracting their hit points from the total).

DM Notes:

Prototype: If a subject is stunned, they also take 4d6 lightning damage.

Prototype: if the attack roll critically fails, the attacker takes 1d12 lightning damage.

Prototype: When the object is used, a voice blares “This is a prototype! Please fill out the customer use survey and mail to: Tinker Oddcog. 100 Wendover Lane, Slate, Risur, the big factory with.” The message stops for a moment...

“the smokestacks out of it. If you are dead, please accept my apologies.”

(The final version of this will probably discharge 20hp of stunning and only kill people with 5hp or fewer left).

The survey is tucked into the bag and asks questions such as “have you noticed any altered sense of taste or smell.”

Thrashing Gray

Burton’s stuff has washed up against the miner’s cave: a case with 2 greater healing potions, and 2 water breathing.

Nicolas Dupiers

Sneaks up to the top of the chamber (by the crane), and fires his pistol. He hides behind the barrels, making him unseen (can’t be targeted directly). However, the barrels are mildly explosive, doing 1d6 burst damage, which will make him scramble away. Half cover will make his AC 17.

NICHOLAS DUPIERS

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 40 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Cronies. Nicholas has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of his allies is within 5 ft. of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

Icon of Nem (attuned). While on Axis Island, if you hold the icon or wear it as a necklace, you gain darkvision out to 60 ft. Additionally, you unconsciously influence shadow magic, drawing Shadows to you. They defend you and obey your orders. In addition, you can use the Nem's Shadow reaction, on Axis Island and everywhere.

Icon of Urim (attuned). While on Axis Island, if you hold the icon or wear it as a necklace, your Armor Class increases by 1. Additionally, you unconsciously influence earth magic, drawing earth elementals to you. They defend you and obey your orders. Finally, you gain access to Urim's Manifestation, on Axis Island and everywhere.

ACTIONS

Panicked Reload. Nicholas makes a single pistol attack, then quickly tries to reload it. Roll a d20. On a roll of 10 or higher, he successfully fires another shot.

Pistol. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Urim's Manifestation. Once per day, you may cast a variant of wall of stone that creates up to three 5-foot square cubes of stone.

REACTIONS

Nem's Shadow. Once per day as a reaction to a spell effect or attack, you may become incorporeal until the end of your next turn. Incorporeal creatures are considered immune to all damage except force and radiant. This effect ends if you attack or interact with an object.

Party AC: 17, HP: 48

EPRD: 17.4 (1/3 of the party's hp)

Axis Earth Elemental: $40\% * 10 * 2 = 8 \Rightarrow 4$

Dupiers: $1.5 * (35\% * 2 * 5.5) = 5.8$

Shadow: $40\% * 9 = 3.6$ (And a nasty strength drain, but they can take a short rest)

17.4 expected damage. Oof! That's a third of the party hp. To regulate it, I can have the Earth Elemental do only one earth slam. That brings the expected damage down to 13.4, or a just over a quarter, urgent but not deadly.

Random Encounters

Wandering Golem

Special (Me): Instead of the golem, have them notice drops of black viscous fluid. This is extremely horrible to Antoine, and immediately gives him flashbacks to The Incident.

Wagon Trap

See module.

Danorans

See module.

Reality Fluctuation

See module.

Fire in the Woods (woods only)

See module.

Duchess Patrol (road only)

REBEL INVESTIGATOR

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 12

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Druidic plus any two languages

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Spellcasting. The druid is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks).

ACTIONS

Shillelagh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 to hit with shillelagh), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage with shillelagh or if wielded with two hands.

Delude (Recharge 11/12). *Lurid hallucinations trick you into attacking the wrong person.* Effect: The investigator slides the target 2 squares, and the target makes a melee basic attack against a creature of the investigator's choice

Fey Mists. *Chilling, impenetrable mists suddenly blind you.* *Melee Spell Attack:* Hit: 1d6+4 psychic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the investigator's next turn

REBEL PATROLMAN (8)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage, or 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack.

1 Investigator: $40\% * 6.5$ or $7.5 = 2.6$ or 3

4 Patrolmen: $35\% * 4.5$ or $5.5 = 2$ each

EPRD: 11, mid. Can decrease by subtracting a patrolman.

Panthers

PANTHER						
<i>Medium Beast, Unaligned</i>						
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Armor Class 12						
Hit Points 13 (3d8)						
Speed 50 ft., climb 40 ft.						
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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	
14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)	
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Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6						
Senses Passive Perception 14						
Languages --						
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)			Proficiency Bonus +2			
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Keen Smell. The panther has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.						
Pounce. If the panther moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the panther can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.						
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Actions						
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Bite. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.						
Claw. <i>Melee Weapon Attack:</i> +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. <i>Hit:</i> 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.						

Two panthers: $35\% * 5 = 1.75$

EPRD: 3.5

Infiltrate the Fortress

Modifications: if the previous encounters were tough, characters can take a long rest here or right after the infiltration. (Note that there are ~4 encounters ahead: open the gate, hold the lighthouse, get through the maze, and survive asrabey). Alternatively, it is possible they can find Nathan while infiltrating, and he can give them a bit of a hand.

Don't give them the map: describe what they see during exploration (with the understanding that they should infiltrate and open the sea gate) and give them it after they're done.

Your party knows a weak spot in the walls, courtesy of Lya's intelligence. Even Passwall would not be enough to breach the walls in any random spot.

Open the Sea Gate

Rebel wizard starts in the lighthouse. His pet naps with him.

One **patrolman stays at each lamp** and the others are down by the gangplank (or arriving).

Rebel Investigator is near the ship

Rebel Soldier is smoking a pipe at the bend in the ramp switchback.
(mark them up on my map)

Investigator and soldier link up and advance as fast as they could.

Patrolmen hang back and shoot from cover, (18-21 ac).

Rebel Wizard blasts from the safety of the lighthouse (or elsewhere). If bloodied, he moves downstairs to back up the patrolmen.

Patrolmen: $40\% * 4.5 = 1.8$ (* up to 8, 14.4 per round).

Investigator: $45\% * 6.5$ or $7.5 = 3-3.4$ (blinding)

Soldier: $45\% * 6.5 = 2.9$

Rebel Wizard: $45\% * 6 = 2.7$

Total = $9 + \#patrolmen * 1.8$. Ideally, I'd say 2 patrolmen at a time— 3.6, so 12.6- fairly deadly but survivable. More patrolmen coming each round or two.

Everyone except the Rebel Wizard can come back for the patrolmen wave.

Safety option: You recognize two of the (slightly bigger) patrolmen coming up the ramp— they're Itschka's cousins, Sergei and Antonio! You knew they were working in Slate, no idea how they ended up with the duchess.

Sergei and Antonio are legitimately confused— they think the Danorans were starting up a war again and they're serving their country for the duchess. They can be swayed back to your side, though they're initially cautious about the invasion. They'll ask for clemency from you (you'll have to lie a bit to get them off scot free).

Hold the Lighthouse

The (up to) 4 of you together need to hold the gate open as the defenders pour in. Antonio and Sergei can describe being on the other side of this just a few days back when the duchess came in— it's major *deja vu* for them.

Reduce the number of enemies as suggested if the party is weak.

Explain that we're entering a skill challenge to defend the gate?

Notes

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