

To Heir is Human

The PCs uncover a conspiracy to abduct the Prince's son and stop it

Player's Introduction

Traveling along the King's Road following the White River, you watch the windswept pines lean in the blustery autumn air. Suddenly you notice a canoe bobbing along the river bank – there is an unconscious man inside! Hauling the canoe ashore, you are shocked to see the man wearing a redcoat of the imperial army. During the empire such uniforms were common, but one hasn't been seen in Galeay for as long as you've lived there. The soldier bears many tiny wounds, all infected, and a terrible gash on his head. Even having just been pulled from the river he is sweating terrible and muttering the name "Misha." He needs to be brought to a healer quickly – the nearest, the hermit witch Morae, lives just outside Fallcrest proper.

DM's Background

Ten years ago, Prince Eydanus had a brief affair with Celonwy, a noble of the rival House Gweyfan who was exiled because of their affair. When Celonwy became pregnant, the Queen sought to set up an arranged marriage with an allied house to explain the child's birth. However, when Celonwy learned her child might be taken from her, she went into hiding. During the first two years, the King's men searched high and low for her, and she entrusted her son Arslein to the witch Morae for safekeeping until it was safe for Celonwy to return. Morae raised the boy, teaching him of the earth and stars, how to heal and to tell the truth. However the Prince's chamberlain Oskell Velimna has hired mercenaries led by the wicked Braseis to infiltrate Fallcrest and kidnap Arslein.

Quest 1: Friend of the Elves

You support the elves fighting against the tyrannies of Alsyaia's warlords, especially their battle against the brutal Worg Corp. Whatever this soldier is planning his allies can't be far – and you'll be ready for them.

Quest XP: 250 for defeating the Worg Corps mercenaries.

Quest 2: Heir's Guard

You are a friend of the witch Morae and have grown fond of her adopted son Arslein. When you learn he is a bastard heir you grow determined to keep him and his secret out of the Prince's hands.

Quest XP: 250 for keeping Arslein and his secret safe.

Quest 3: The Soldier

You suspect there is more to the soldier's story than meets the eye and are determined to discover his true identity to protect Fallcrest and perhaps even the soldier himself.

Quest XP: 250 for discovering the true identity of the soldier.

Setting

Fallcrest and the Barony of Harken during September are cool and windy, with gloomy mists settling about the riverbanks. The adventure begins in Fallcrest and takes the PCs to Harken and back with encounters with gypsies in the woods between.

Level 1 (XP 600)

#1: The Redcoat

Question the wounded soldier and diffuse the mob

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

Skill Challenge: Questioning the Redcoat (XP 600)	
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Read-Aloud Text

The PCs can confirm there is a Lyneis in Harken with Morae.

There has been talk about the wounded redcoat and the town has mixed reactions: Some want him dead (“those redcoats are murderers!”), others want him out of town (“his kind can’t be trusted!”), and a few think he should get the town’s hospitality like anyone else. Though the witch Morae has taken him under her wing for now, the gathering mob will get the attention of the town guard soon enough. At least you have some time to determine his identity and what he is doing in Galeay. He stirs from his unconsciousness. “Wh- where am I?”

“I am Braseis, breach-master, Worg Corps. I was on leave traveling to Harken to visit my grandfather Lyneis, but... I can’t remember clearly. Something happened on the road, there was a beast, it attacked me... but somehow I must have escaped using the river. Thank you for saving my life.”

Questioning the Redcoat

When one skill unlocks another {} are used.

When asked about “Misha”: *“She is my love. I left her to travel home.”*

In actuality, Misha is his wife taken hostage along with his daughter.

When asked about the canoe: *“I found it at the river’s edge.”*

Nature DC 15: The canoe is made of the sacred white birch, which grows along the White River.

Arcana (trained) DC 20: Enchanted dwarven runes on the hull read: “Never to sink lest the family crest of Ati’Rourden has been dishonored.”

Flawless Victory (0 failures or success at Intimidate #3): He breaks down and reveals the truth, pleading that the PCs don’t bring this to light as his family’s lives are at risk.

Victory (10+ successes): The PCs know he is lying but that he’s being put up to it by someone he fears or has leverage over him.

Partial Victory (8-9 successes): The PCs know he’s hiding something but are convinced it’s not for malicious reasons.

Defeat (<8 successes): The PCs believe his story hook, line and sinker.

Primary Skills (DC 18): Bluff, Diplomacy, Heal, History, Insight, Intimidate, Nature, Perception, Religion

Development, The Mob (5 successes): The mob outside attempts to break down the door and begins throwing stones. The PCs might try to hold the door fast, talk them down, or even violently subdue them. If they do not, two flasks of alchemists’ fire come hurtling through the window.

Bluff: You rely on deception or innuendo to massage the truth out of him.

► **Diplomacy success #1**

Carefully constructing a plausible bluff using something you know to be not true, you aim to bait the man into an outright lie. On a failure, the man becomes suspicious, increasing the DC of all non-knowledge skill checks by 2. On a success, you learn whatever bit of knowledge you were looking for.

► **Insight success #2**

Suspecting he is being blackmailed/threatened to feed you this story, you covertly let on that you know, giving him a chance to slip you information that might enable you to help him.

Diplomacy: You engage him in seemingly harmless conversation in an attempt to catch inconsistencies in his story.

► *“I always return to visit my grandfather, especially now with his health ailing. I followed the Nentir River through the Witchlight Fens then began my way up the White River. A storm forced me to spend the night in a cave. I remember being woken by a growl and attacked by a beast. I can’t describe it such was the darkness of the cave. It raked a terrible blow across my head with its claws, and... all I remember was running blind... then moments of consciousness with the river around me.” {Bluff}*

► **History success #1**

“I couldn’t help myself. My grandfather is sick and needs my help. Please, I beg of you, don’t let word of my absence spread.”

► **Heal success #1**

“It was as large as an ogre. Perhaps in the darkness and pain I mistook its club for its claws. As for my life, perhaps it intended to feed me alive to its young? I’ve been through worse, and the gods must have seen me through to the other side.”

► **Religion success #1**

“I was just appointed chaplain rank, but I haven’t earned it yet. I came to share the good news with my grandfather.”

► **Nature success #1**

“Tombwood? I- I found these boots with the boat.” {Intimidate #3}

Heal: You examine the man’s wounds to get a better idea of what happened.

► The head wound was made by an object both blunt and spiked – it was probably not aimed to be a killing blow, but a stunning one. Given the state of scabbing the wound is a couple days old. {Diplomacy #2}

► He has contracted filth fever, usually associated with rats. It is not contagious, nor is it usually fatal, but in advanced stages it prevents recovery from wounds. Chances are he encountered the rats *after* his head wound, otherwise the latter wouldn’t have scabbed over.

► **Nature success #2**

Ghenian is a rare medicinal herb used by alchemists to make an elixir which feigns unconsciousness. The imbiber’s pulse slows and to all observers they seem unconscious though they retain a semblance of awareness and can awaken from the stupor with a bit of effort. However, there are unintended side effects.

History: You drawn on your knowledge of military history.

► The Worg Corps are brutal shock troopers leading the fight against rebels opposing the Alsyaian king. Mostly orphans and criminals join because the Corps requires you give up your family and old life.

Breach-masters are responsible for leading charges. {Diplomacy #2}

► The Worg Corps used to be notorious for mistreating captives and raiding villages. An infamous instance occurred in Vasber where an elven village was plundered and destroyed by Barseis. {Intimidate #3}

Insight: You carefully watch his body language and listen to his voice.

- ▶ Anger and desperation are concealed by his current daze, and he has trouble keeping eye contact. He seems to be full of dread.
- ▶ Whenever anyone says his name “Braseis” there is a look of intense pain on his face. {**Bluff #2**}
- ▶ It’s clear the man has practiced this story and is weaving truth, half-truth, and lies to create a convincing tale. {**Intimidate #2**}

Intimidate: You subtly or overtly threaten the soldier.

- ▶ *“Please I mean you no harm. I only wish to get well enough so that I might visit my grandfather. I swear upon my vow to the Worg Corps.”*
- ▶ **Insight success#3**
You get aggressive, and all of a sudden he convulses and something black trickles from his nose as he collapses. He has fainted but with a little effort you revive him. {**Nature #2**}
- ▶ **Diplomacy success #3**
He cracks and reveals his family might be in Tombwood as he was led to and from there blindfolded. Flawless Victory.
- ▶ **History success #2 (must be eladrin, elf, half-elf)**
You swear to kill him for the slaughter at Vasberg. Flawless Victory.

Nature: By examining clues you make connections to their natural origins.

- ▶ **Perception success #2**
Examining the boots you recognize the white clay in the lighter mud from clay pits near Tombwood. {**Diplomacy #3**}
- ▶ **Intimidate success #2**
Examining the black ichor the man spat out, you recognize the smell as Ghenian, a root with the power to induce unconsciousness. {**Heal**}

Perception: You pick up on minute clues others might miss.

- ▶ You notice a tattoo of a helmeted wolf on the inside of his forearm; it is standing above a three circle rune with an olive branch in its mouth. {**Religion**}
- ▶ His boots have a second layer of lighter mud, barely starting to cake, underneath the first darker layer. Judging by the thunderstorm 3 days ago, this means he went somewhere before the cave he’s talking about. {**Nature**}
- ▶ His uniform is too large for him. The shredding of his disheveled garments conveniently made this difficult to determine.

Religion: You decipher the religious meaning of his tattoo.

- ▶ **Perception success #1**
The three circle rune is a pagan religious symbol of warding on the passage to the underworld, while the olive branch is a sign of peace. Military chaplains, responsible for healing the wounded, use such symbols to be identified in battle ... not breach-masters. {**Diplomacy**}

Treasure

6 Herbal Poulitice (Level 3) from Morae who says “in case you run into gypsies on the way”

Level 1 (XP600)

#2: Running Witch

En route to Harken, the PCs rescue a gypsy witch from her pursuers.

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

	Worg Corps Mercenary (XP 150) 5 Worg Corps Grunts (XP 200) 2 Gray Wolves (XP 250)
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Read-Aloud Text

Dusk approaches as you trudge along the King's Road, admiring the southern view. Suddenly your ears perk up – someone is running through the woods toward you. Through the fading light you spot fleeting images of a cloaked woman running amidst the pine trees. She looks over her shoulder. Following her glance you spot five ragged soldiers in pursuit with torches and leashed wolf hounds. You hear their captain yell, "Head her off! She's trying to lead us into a trap!" The soldiers are closing on the woman rapidly.

Features of the Area

Fading Light: On the third round, low-light conditions prevail without a light source.

Trees: Difficult terrain and cover.

The Trap: If the fight lasts to the fifth round and the gypsy witch has been able to keep running, include 2 deathjump spiders and a false-floor pit trap.

Treasure

Valera provides the PCs a Harrow Deck reading, and they may trade at the gypsy camp (1,000 gp limit).

Resolution

The soldiers are Worg Corps mercenaries pursuing a secondary mission to abduct the gypsy witch Valera for her gift of prophesy. The Prince intends to use her for a variety of endeavors, including finding his daughter Ilona, divining a cure to his impotency, anticipating threats to his rule and ferreting out traitors.

Valera reveals they were asking her about the Prince's son, who they wanted her to find. She invites the PCs to the gypsy camp, where she reveals they are waiting for a child of prophecy to lead them home.

Worg Corps Mercenary	Level 3 Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +2	
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Speed 5	
⊕ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 2d6+4 damage and 1 ongoing damage (save ends)	
⊕ Crossbow (standard; at-will; load minor) ♦ Weapon	
+4 vs. AC; 1d10+4; hit or miss: if the target attempts to move before the start of the worg corps mercenary's next turn, the mercenary gets an attack of opportunity on the target.	
Worg Corps Ferocity	
After successfully downing an opponent, the damage of the worg corps mercenary's battleaxe attacks increases to 2d8+4 until the end of his next turn. In addition, for each enemy the mercenary downs, he increases his ongoing damage by 1 until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +9, Stealth +7	
Str 16 (+4) Dex 13 (+2) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 11 (+1) Cha 10 (+1)	
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe, crossbow, 15 quarrels	

Worg Corps Grunt	Level 3 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 38
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +2	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Speed 5	
⊕ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage	
Worg Corps Ferocity	
After successfully downing an opponent, the damage of the worg corps grunt's battleaxe attacks increases to 2d8+4 until the end of his next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 16 (+4) Dex 13 (+2) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 11 (+1) Cha 10 (+1)	
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe	

Interlude

The PCs perform footwork to further their investigation.

A smattering of dim lights lighting the thatched roof cottages welcomes you to the Barony of Harken, a motley group of rustic villages. You find the only inn, the Goose & Barrel, tucked in between a woodshop and a bakery. The matron, a robust middle-age woman named Analeise, provides you with a pint of warm cider and cozy rooms. You drift off to sleep soon after watching the last embers in the fireplace.

Read-Aloud Text

Lyneis is Dead

The PCs discover Lyneis died six months ago and his eldest son Ren retired from the Worg Corps to tend the family farm; he reveals Braseis was raised in the household after being orphaned and referred to Lyneis as “grandfather”, but Ren never trusted Braseis. In the Worg Corps, Braseis was a violent savage who lied and cheated his way to sergeant, and his unit plundered an elven village after defeating a rebel force hiding there. Ren suspects that Braseis’ unit also sold themselves as mercenaries on the side though he has no proof.

Rules

Answers/Handouts

The Boat Maker

The dwarven shipwright Berharn Ati'Rourden reveals the boat's insignia marked it as a gift from Duke Wydein to a local knight named Sir Lieverd for rescuing the Duke's son; when the knight died in battle the boat was entombed with him. Through talking with the shipwright and investigating his shop, they could secure a boat to return downriver. The shipwright will recommend asking permission from the knight's widow Analeise (who runs the local Goose & Barrel Inn and Stables) before disturbing his peace, which she will readily grant the PCs, concerned that her husband's rest was disturbed.

Level 2 (XP 750)

#3: Sir Lieverd's Tomb

PCs venture into a tomb seeking answers and must escape alive.

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

Poison Oak Smoke (XP 250)
Magic Sigil (XP 125)

3 Rat Swarms (XP 375)

Read-Aloud Text

Moving through the grave houses by torchlight you stop before the knight's tomb. Built into the side of a hillock, only the tomb's entrance is visible, a heavy stone door set into a carved façade with two angelic statues, one bearing scrolls the other a sword and shield. Above the entrance is the knight's coat of arms, a cock killing a snake. The knight's widow Analeise empties a flask of oil at the base of the stone door, then heaves on an attached rope, slowing opening the tomb's entrance. Only the echoes of the grinding door can be heard in the tomb's penetrating silence.

Features of the Area

Perception DC 25 (DC 20 if PCs realize the rubbed out sigil is a clue):

Secret door reveals passage to a vault door locked from the other side – it is only opened on a DC 25 Strength check or Knock ritual.

Perception DC 25 (DC 20 if PCs specifically search floor/low places):

Loose flagstone on other side of secret door leads to underground tunnel leading to surface (DC 15 Dungeoneering to avoid getting lost; -1 healing surge).

Development

Several items are missing from the tomb besides the canoe – a drinking horn, heirloom axe, and wolf-skin cloak.

While the PCs are inside the tomb conspirators start a bonfire with poison oak at the entrance and seal the PCs within the tomb, threatening to suffocate them with deadly smoke. By the time they hear the stone roll into place it's too late. The smoke forces swarms of diseased rats to flee, attacking the PCs in their panic. The rubbed out sigil is a clue to a secret door (Perception DC 20, or if they use the rubbed out sigil as a clue DC 15) revealing a tunnel that leads to the other burial mounds.

If they are having trouble, Sir Lieverd's ghost may point the way.

Handouts

Verses of Sir Lieverd's Tomb

Poison Oak Smoke

Level 2 Elite Obstacle

Hazard

XP 250

A deadly poison oak fire causes skin blisters, rapid blindness, and suffocation.

Hazard: The smoke begins at the fire's origin, taking up 6 squares. Each round it grows another 6 squares, until it has filled the enclosed space.

Perception

Characters automatically perceive this hazard when it starts, however a DC 15 Nature check reveals that the smoke is from poison oak and is particularly dangerous.

Trigger

When the fire is lit by NPCs, and possibly sealed into a closed space.

Attack

Standard Action Burst (as above)

Targets: Creatures within burst

Attack: +5 vs. Fortitude

Hit: Target takes 1d6 damage. Each round the smoke hits, increase damage and attack by +1.

Followup Attack (when a creature is hit again by the smoke)

On the second successful consecutive attack against the same creature, a failed Endurance check causes the creature to start suffocating (see DMG page 159) and go blind (save ends).

Countermeasures

◆ **Put out the fire:** This requires exposing oneself to the most intense of the smoke which makes an opportunity attack with a +2 attack bonus. With access to sufficient water or earth, a character can attempt a skill challenge to extinguish the flames; unless in a closed environment the smoke clears in 1d6 rounds. Alternately, a character can inflict 24 points of ice or fire damage with a spell and spend a healing surge.

◆ **Covering your face with a wet cloth:** Gain a +2 bonus to the Fortitude defense and Endurance checks to resist suffocating.

◆ **Dropping prone:** Gain +2 save vs. smoke-induced blindness.

Magic Sigil

Level 2 Puzzle

Riddle

125 XP

The circular engraving, easily dismissed as water drainage, is actually four connection magic sigils in each cardinal direction. You realize the wall facing each sigil has several unusually placed bricks, and if intimating a staircase.

A character trained in Arcana or Religion or fluent in Supernal realizes the four sigils are focus, passage, transcendence – the last has been rubbed out. These are well known characters from the Holy Canticles.

Answer

Each sigil is activated when a symbol characterizing it is held by a person holding the symbol standing on the sigil and speaking the sigil's name.

When the appropriate symbol is used,

Room #4 (Warding)

Symbols: shield, cloak

Scroll: *"Seek ye not the high places; what is small and meek is greater than that which is large and mighty. You shall know the Friend by their weakness. (Canticle of Euni 13:1)"*

Consequences

Clues

- ◆ **Make Whole ritual:** Reveals the rubbed out sigil is "Warding."
- ◆ **Arcana or Religion DC 15:** Theft of funerary objects can be a sign of evil magic – such objects are considered to hold a piece of your fate.
- ◆ **Arcana DC 22:** The circle looks like it was used for the Magic Circle ritual at one point.
- ◆ **Religion DC 20:** The fourth sigil in this set is traditionally "Warding." However, these holy sigils are never used out of context like this, as it reduces their holy meaning to a looser symbolic interpretation.

Level 1 (XP 600)

#4: Treacherous Knight

PCs face off with a treacherous knight and give chase.

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

Skill Challenge: Horse Chase
(XP 600)

Human Knight (XP 400)

Read-Aloud Text

Having narrowly escaped the knight's tomb, you accompany Analiese back to the inn both for her protection and to retrieve her husband's journal, which she believes might hold a clue about the assailants and tomb theft. Reaching the Goose & Barrel, your eyes still stinging from the smoke, you notice a group of mercenaries loafing outside of the inn. As you enter, they give you hard stares and mutter amongst themselves.

Features of the Area

Tactics

Returning to the inn, the PCs are met by Sir Michaem intimidating a serving girl; unbeknownst to them he has the journal. He'll try to bluff his way past. If Sir Michaem bluffs them, the serving girl reveals he took the journal after he mounts his horse, and the PCs can give chase. If his bluff fails he'll take the serving girl hostage to try and escape. During the horse chase he'll toss the serving girl to the ground.

If the PCs defeat Michaem they discover the journal has a code and Michaem has a Worg Corps tattoo; after a short rest they hear horse hooves approaching (6 Worg Corps mercenaries). In their weakened state fighting is a poor option, and the widow offers them horses to flee to a sage who knew her husband and can help decode the journal.

Horse Chase

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Endurance, Insight, Nature

Victory (10+ successes): The PCs reach Harken before Michaem and are able to decode the journal before he arrives.

Partial Victory (8-9 successes): The PCs catch up with Michaem and can fight or else reach Harken minutes before him.

Defeat (<8 successes): The PCs do not catch Michaem who reaches the sage before them. Or else they are overtaken by him.

Development; Tossed Maiden (5 successes): If Michaem took the serving maid as a hostage, he'll throw her off his horse at this point, hoping the PCs will stop to tend to her and let off pursuit.

Human Knight (Sir Michaem)	Level 5 Elite Brute
Medium natural humanoid	XP 400
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +4	
HP 130; Bloodied 65	
AC 18; Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 20	
Speed 5	
From Alea Publishing's <i>Feudal Lords: Noble</i> pdf supplement	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11	
Str 16 (+5) Dex 10 (+2) Wis 14 (+4)	
Con 15 (+4) Int 12 (+3) Cha 18 (+6)	
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, broadsword, tabard	

Worg Corps Grunt	Level 3 Minion
Medium natural humanoid	XP 38
Initiative +2 Senses Perception +2	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 14	
Speed 5	
⊕ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d8+4 damage	
Worg Corps Ferocity	
After successfully downing an opponent, the damage of the worg corps grunt's battleaxe attacks increases to 2d8+4 until the end of his next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Str 16 (+4) Dex 13 (+2) Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 16 (+4) Int 11 (+1) Cha 10 (+1)	
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, battleaxe	

Level 2 (XP 750)

#5: The Cipher

PCs visit a sage, racing against the clock to decode the knight's journal.

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

Skill Challenge: Decode the Journal (XP 125)	Human Knight (XP 400) 6 Worg Corps Grunts (XP 225)
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Handouts

Sir Lieverd's Journal

Features of the Area

Spiral Staircase:

Tactics: PCs Lost Horse Chase

If Michaem reaches the sage first, he convinces the town watch that he is being pursued by bandits and then barricades the door to the sage's home; PCs need to talk their way past guards, possibly leading to a fight or gaining their aid. They'll break in to find the sage unconscious, the room torn through, and the window open with a grappling hook and rope down below. This is a ploy by Michaem who is actually hidden in the chamber pot room. When the sage comes to he discovers his cipher machine missing! If Michaem is wounded there is a faint blood trail (active Perception DC 20). Unless the PCs discover Michaem, they reach a dead-end. However, Michaem still needs the sage to decipher the journal and he waits for backup to catch the sage unawares.

Tactics: PCs Won Horse Chase

If PCs reach the sage first he'll reveal the code is from the Knights Seneschal, an order dedicated to restoring Galeay's throne to the rightful heir. The sage has a cipher machine which can decode the journal, but it will take time. Michaem and the Worg Corps mercenaries converge on the sage's home. Their strategy is for the mercenaries to launch alchemical bolts (flash, smoke, thunder) from rooftop and wait for the PCs to be flushed out the front door. Michaem has learned from the PCs' escape from the tomb and enters the sewer tunnels beneath the sage's tower to sneak up on the PCs. At the same time the sage reveals the sewer tunnels run beneath his tower and there is a secret entry in his basement. If the PCs enter the sewers they confront Michaem in the darkness. If they go out the front door they must contend with the perched mercenaries.

Decode the Journal

The PCs attempt to decode key pages of the journal using the sage's cipher machine before the bad guys get to them.

Setup: This skill challenge assumes one or two PCs help the sage decode while the others fight. Each segment is roughly a round of combat. If PCs realize that the verse numbers in Sir Lieverd's tomb correspond with dates in his journal, then reduce the DC to 16 as they hone in on the exact page.

Primary Skills (DC 18): Arcana, History, Insight, Perception, Religion, Thievery

Victory (4+ successes): The PCs decipher the entire journal.

Partial Victory (3 successes): The PCs decipher the first two entries: Eismond and Lenzmond.

Defeat (<3 successes): The PCs are unable to decipher the journal given the time constraints.

Development (3 successes): The sage is hit by a crossbow bolt, and without healing he may die. However, healing him requires that player to drop out of the skill challenge for one segment.

Level 1 (XP 600)

#6: Through the Mists

PCs use mystical mists to reach Fallcrest before their foes.

Setup

The PCs encounter the gypsies by the river en route to Fallcrest. If they are on good terms with the gypsies the witch gives them a *firefly vial* before telling them of the mists and its hazards. Otherwise she simply tells them of it, with no warning. This encounter includes the following challenges.

Skill Challenge: Witchlight Mists (XP 600)	
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Read-Aloud Text

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Tactics

Witchlight Mists

Swirling mists envelope you, and you lose all sense of time and place as you wander, the occasional road marker the only sign you are not yet lost. Faint lights call to you in the distance, beckoning you toward them.

Passing through the mists allows characters to cover a great distance quickly through fey magic, but it also puts them at risk from the deceiver spirits lurking in the mists.

Setup: To walk the mists without incident, the PCs will have to use their cunning and common sense. Every round and every failure roll d10 on the table below to determine what the PCs encounter.

Primary Skills (DC 18): Arcana, Insight, Nature, Perception

d10	Result
1	Ghost of Sir Lieverd asks them to bear a message to his wife. If they agree, he dominates the PC (save ends) and begins randomly attacking allies believing them to be his murderers.
2	An illusory Morae appears claiming she is contacting them by ritual, that Braseis has betrayed, and they need to follow her; if they do it leads to an ambush with 3 spectres.
3	Illusion of prison cell standing in a clearing; a woman and her children plead for the PCs to spare some food. The woman says: <i>"Have you seen my Euric? Tell him Misha is praying for him. Tell him..."</i> If the PCs give them food, the PCs fall twenty feet into a ravine.
4	Illusion of Worg Corps plundering a village and people crying for help. If a PC tries to rescue a terrified villager, the PC gain vulnerable radiant (5), and takes -1 penalty to attack and skill checks in sunlight until an extended rest.
5	If Sir Michaem is dead, his ghosts appears (phantom warrior) to provoke a fight; if no one draws a weapon he melts away. If Michaem is alive, an illusion of him killing the gypsy witch before fleeing passes through the mists; if the PCs follow they become separated and aiding is no longer possible.
6	An illusion of a marker the PCs have already passed. If they double back lose 1 healing surge.

- 7 A cave entrance emerges, with the mists swirling into the entrance. A voice whispers from within: *"Seek ye not the high places; what is small and meek supports the large and mighty. Thus, ye shall know the way by its weakness."* PCs entering the cave are weakened until the end of the next encounter, but gain unlikely aid in next encounter.
- 8 A rainstorm pounds down on the characters as they follow a creek. A fiddler on a waterlogged raft poses a riddle to them: *"My bottle has a hole in the bottom, but it's always full. Yet still I can't get drunk! What am I to do?"* (the answer is "get out of the rain") A failed answer causes a PC to start drowning, but a correct answer gives them +2 on the next check.
- 9 A group of adventurers who look vaguely similar to themselves are stopped at a crossroads arguing over a map which makes no sense. They don't seem to notice the PCs at all, nor do they notice the dark shapes looming out of the woods around them. At this point, a PC can make a Wisdom check (DC 14) to realize something isn't right – *they* are those people they're looking at; the PC then snaps back to their body in time to scare off the shadows. As long as a PC doesn't realize what's going on, they lose 1 healing surge per round. Any PC returning to their body regains an action point.
- 10 A corpse hangs from a tree – it is one of the PCs! For the remainder of combats this adventure, that PC always grants combat advantage. However, alerted to the danger they gain +4 initiative.

Victory (10+ successes): The PCs beat the bad guys to reach Arslein in Fallcrest and can take a short rest.

Partial Victory (8-9 successes): The PCs arrive at the same time as the bad guys and get no short rest.

Defeat (<8 successes): The bad guys beat the PCs there, and the *bad guys* gain tactical advantage.

Level 2 (XP 750)

#7: Witch's Gambit

PCs stop Morae from blindly fleeing into a trap.

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

Skill Challenge: Woodland Tracking (XP 100) False-floor Pit Trap (XP 100) 2 Net Traps (XP 200)	2 Deathjump Spiders (XP 350)
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Read-Aloud Text

Reaching Morae's cottage, you find it empty and ransacked. Clearly the place was hastily searched, but it appears Morae and the bastard heir had already left. You notice the scattered components of a ritual and a sticky piece of incense covered in dead flies. An open book has an incantation addressed to the "Weaver" with magical runes for protection, travel, and stealth. You note mud tracks leading out the back door into the woods.

Features of the Area

Webs:

Woodland Tracking

The PCs follow the tracks of a shrewd witch who has employed counter-tracking techniques both mundane and magical. They must pursue the trail as quickly as possible to catch their quarry.

Setup: To catch the quarry, the PCs track them into the woods.

Primary Skills (DC 18): Arcane, Athletics, Endurance, Insight, Nature, Perception

Victory (4+ successes): The PCs catch up with their quarry quickly, cutting them off before they reach their destination and gaining a surprise round.

Partial Victory (3 successes): Just as their quarry reaches allies/hideout/destination, the PCs arrive on the scene.

Defeat (<3 successes): When the PCs arrive at the end of the trail, they find their quarry snared in a net trap.

Development: At 2 successes the PCs are faced with the pit trap and deathjump spiders which Morae intentionally has led them to. The fight takes place independently of this skill challenge.

At 3 failures, the PCs have been thrown off by a decoy trail and face a Lost in the Wilderness skill challenge (DMG p. 79), each PC making a check every hour, before they can continue this challenge.

When the skill challenge ends, if a net trap has been triggered, Braseis and his cronies emerge from the underbrush (DC 15 Perception or they gain a surprise round), leading to the next encounter. Morae yells for Arslain to "run to the bog!"

Resolution

Net Trap

Level 5 Lurker

Trap

XP 100

A net springs around a group of creatures, hauling them twenty feet in the air.

Trap: A tripwire springs a net which engulfs a small group of creatures and hoists them into the canopy in an entangled bunch.

Perception

◆ **DC 12:** The clearing ahead looks

◆ **DC 17:** There is a fine tripwire hidden in the underbrush.

Trigger

2 squares house the tripwire which triggers the trap.

Attack

Standard Action Burst 1 (centered on triggering creature)

Targets: Creatures within burst

Attack: +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: Target is immobilized and restrained. Drawing an item requires a DC 12 Acrobatics check.

Escaping

◆ **Cut Free:** A character may attempt to cut through the net (AC: 4, Fortitude: 12, HP: 20) with a light blade. The 20' fall inflicts 2d10 to all characters ensnared.

◆ **Squirm Out:** A DC 17 Acrobatics check allows a character to escape the net and reach the outside. A DC 12 Athletics check allows them to shimmy over to the tree and safely down climb.

Countermeasures

◆ **Spring the Trap:** Cutting the tripwire triggers the net trap.

◆ **Counterweight:** A DC 12 Thievery check disarms the net by neutralizing the counterweight mechanism.

◆ **Second Tripwire:** A DC 17 Thievery check resets the 2 triggering squares and allows a crafty character to add additional conditional or delays to the net's trigger.

Level 4 (XP 1150)

#8: The Bastard Heir

One-liner

Setup

This encounter includes the following challenges.

Witches' Grave Bog (XP 125)	Braseis (XP 500) 2 Worg Corps Mercenaries (XP 300) 6 Worg Corps Grunts (XP 225)
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Read-Aloud Text

Text

Features of the Area

Swamp: Difficult terrain.

Illumination

Environment

Tactics

While Barseis can hatch some clever plots, once committed to battle he is a straightforward, and occasionally careless, opponent. He focuses on knocking one opponent prone with *worg's cunning* or *wrath of the guulvorg*, and following it up with a *savage kick*. Once the opponent is bloodied he'll use a *brutal hilt sap*. If the opponent withdraws from the fight, Barseis won't pursue them unless they're an elf, which he will preferentially target. If Barseis is confronted by excessive ranged force, he won't hesitate to withdraw from battle to seek more advantageous terrain providing him with cover and choke points.

Witches' Grave Bog	Level 2 Obstacle
Hazard	XP 125

A gurgling mire threatens to drown interlopers as their legs are grabbed by undead hands pulling them under.

Hazard: The bog takes up 20 squares with a couple narrow strips of land navigating through it. It acts as difficult terrain.

Perception

Characters automatically perceive the bog, though a DC 20 Religion check reveals there is something unholy about this place.

Trigger

Initiative +0, the hazard rolls initiative when the encounter begins.

Attack

Standard Action Burst (roughly 20 squares)

Targets: Creatures within burst

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: Immobilized and begin sinking (save ends)

Secondary Effect: A failed save causes the character to begin drowning, losing 1 healing surge per turn unless rescued or succeeding a DC 20 Acrobatics or Strength check to escape.

Countermeasures

- ◆ **Aid Ally:** A branch/rope grants a drowning ally a +4 to their next Acrobatics/Strength check.
- ◆ **History DC 15:** Bogs have been used as mass graves for witches killed by the Inquisition.
- ◆ **Nature DC 15:** Find a strip of solid land.
- ◆ **Religion DC 15:** Restless dead are often appeased with the blood of the living, though wine is considered a symbolic alternative.
- ◆ **Offering:** A blood/wine coated holy symbol ends the hazard.

Braseis	Level 1 Solo Brute
Medium natural humanoid (half-elf)	XP 500

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision

HP 120; **Bloodied** 60

AC 18; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14

Resist +5 saving throws; **Vulnerable** 5 psychic

Speed 5

Action Points 2

Ⓢ **Vicious Attack** (standard action; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage and ongoing damage (1); save ends

Ⓡ **Savage Kick** (minor action; target must be prone; at-will)

+3 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 3 damage and target requires a standard action to stand up until the end of Barseis' next turn

Ⓡ **Pack of One** (standard action; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Close burst 1; make a basic attack against each adjacent enemy.

Ⓡ **Brutal Hilt Sap** (immediate reaction; when adjacent enemy first becomes bloodied)

+3 vs. Fortitude 1d4 + 3 damage and the target is dazed until the end of Barseis' next turn

Ⓡ **Worg's Cunning** (immediate reaction; when an enemy makes a melee attack against Barseis; recharge when first bloodied) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage and target is knocked prone

Ⓡ **Wrath of the Guulvorg** (standard action; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage and target is knocked prone and dazed; save ends

Ⓡ **Blade of the Butcher** (immediate reaction, when first bloodied)

+6 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage and target takes ongoing damage (3); save ends

Elf Loathing

Barseis deals an additional damage die on attacks against eladrin or elves.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Athletics +6, Bluff +5, Endurance +7, Intimidate +5

Str 16 (+3) **Dex** 11 **Wis** 12 (+1)

Con 16 (+3) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

Equipment: chainmail, battle axe (Sir Lieverd's), morningstar, wolfskin cloak (Sir Lieverd's), drinking horn (Sir Lieverd's)

Epilogue

Ending 1: A Hiding Place

Though the PCs put a stop to Braseis, now that Arslein's identity is known there will be others. Morae decides she and Arslein must move, for the town is no longer safe, and she tells the PCs if they don't know where she's going they won't have to lie if someone asks them; she gives them each a minor magical item as a token of gratitude.

The PCs are also rewarded by the Prince's magistrate (see below).

Ending 2: The Stand

Having rescued Arslein, the PCs decide not to leave him in Morae's care after their conflict with Morae. Perhaps they agree to let Arslein adventure with them, or perhaps Morae is injured or killed and they must find a new caretaker, or perhaps they entrust him to the gypsies.

Ending 3: Worst Case Scenario

Braseis abducted Arslein and the PCs are left nursing their wounds. However, all is not lost, for Morae has a charm which allows her to find Arslein – she promises to send notice once she finds him, but to be safe she doesn't want anyone to know where she is going.

PCs receive a bounty of 10 gold per mercenary they killed or drove away from Lord Markelhay.

Reward

Ritual scroll (*secret page*,
400 gp

Reward

400 gold

Reward

10 gp/mercenary defeated

Further Adventures/Notes

The Prince's magistrate arrives to reward the PCs handsomely, offer them a contract to "finish this unpleasant business" and deliver a message: "If you tell anyone of the boy's identity the Prince will spare no expense to hunt you down."

If Arslein remains in Morae's care, he gains the hospitaler template.

If he is abducted by Braseis, he gains the squire template.

If he is entrusted to the gypsies, he gains the lookout template.

If he joins the PCs, he may gain any of several templates.

The campaign continues in **Heir Line Fracture**.

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