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Marked in red are the locations of each part of the adventure.

Raiders of Ivywatch

Raiders of Ivywatch is an adventure set in Vasloria, a woody, humid, and vaguely Europe-like region of Orden. The adventure is designed for two to seven 1st-level heroes and grants an average of 12, but as many as 20 Victories.

Deatheye Yslansh

The lizardfolk necromancer Deatheye Yslansh wants to summon the Avatar of Torment, Excrucior Interfectus to wipe out Tullow Vale and leave behind a wasteland of death for her to lord over.

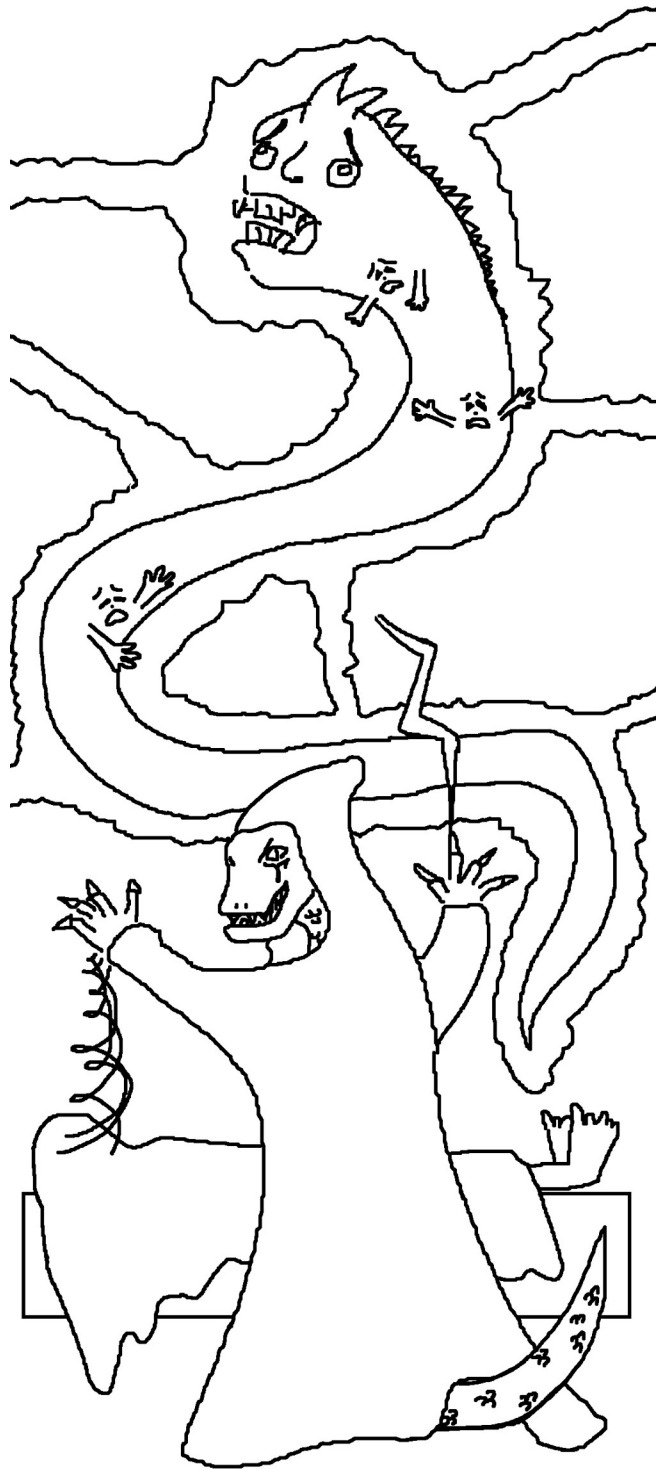
Ajax's Hawklords bombard Ivywatch and steal the Statue of Redemption. The attack provided the perfect opportunity for Yslansh to use her forces to collect the materials she needs: bodies. Lives.

All the while, with the removal of the statue and the ancient seal it held, long-shut portals around the vale open wide, letting anything through...

Adventure Hook

Raiders of Ivywatch assumes the following adventure hook.

Guards for Hire: The heroes accompany a merchant who has hired them for protection along the wooded road to Ivywatch, promising coin and political connections as a reward.



Deatheye Yslansh summons Excrucior Interfectus

Prepping the Adventure

Raiders of Ivywatch is divided into scenes. Each scene contains a combat encounter or a montage or a negotiation or group tests or some other stuff! Scenes explicitly lead into other scenes, so you always know what *can* come next, as the director.

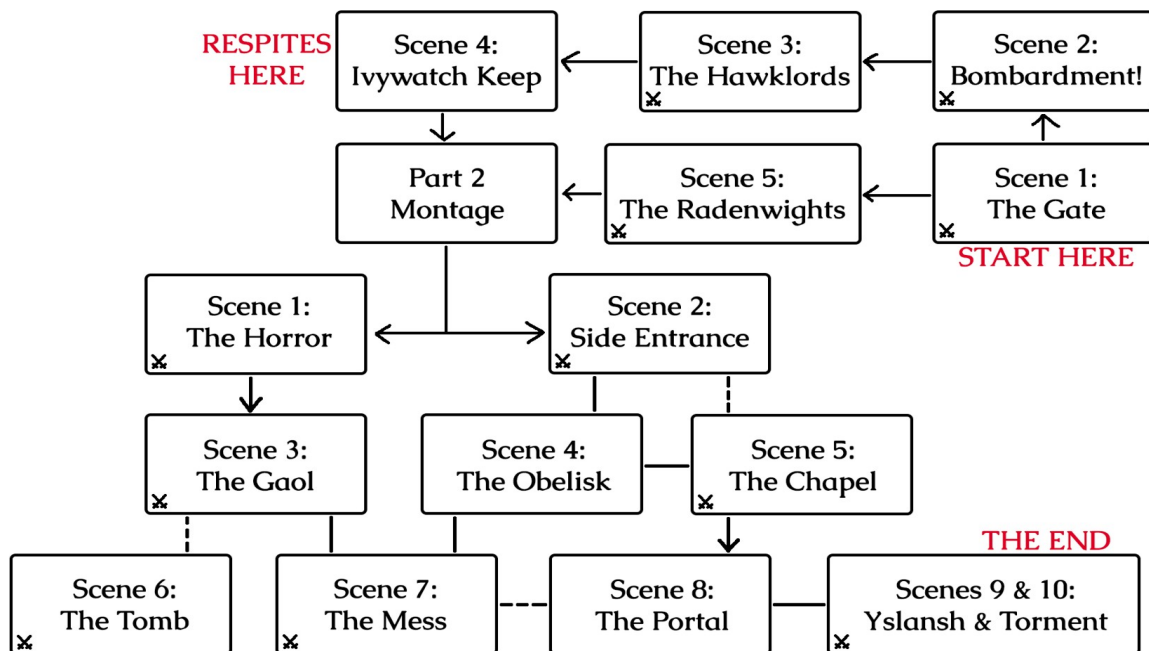
But because some parts of the adventure have branching paths, there are some points of the adventure that are better suited to ending your session than others!

Scenes with crossed sword icons have combats and will likely take the most prep time.

Respites that the heroes take will likely be back in Ivywatch, and the NPCs they might talk to during that respite are detailed in Part 1 Scene 4: Ivywatch Keep.

Depending on the speed and size of your table (how many players do you have? How comfortable are they with the rules and their characters?), combats will generally take around 2 hours. Scenes 7, 9, and 10 in Part 2 take a bit longer, on average about 3 hours each.

Note: the montage that begins Part 2 is very unlikely to be failed. The heroes will almost always succeed and proceed to Scene 2: Side Entrance.



An example of how sessions might go for a table of 5 heroes who have 4-hour sessions:

Session 1	Intro, The Gate, Bombardment!
Prep:	<i>The Hawklords, Side Entrance</i>
Session 2	The Hawklords, Ivywatch Keep, Part 2 Montage (Success!)
Prep:	<i>The Chapel, The Mess</i>
Session 3	Side Entrance, The Obelisk, The Mess

Prep:	<i>The Gaol, The Tomb</i>
Session 4	Finish The Mess, The Chapel
Prep:	<i>Yslansh</i>
Session 5	The Portal, Respite, The Gaol
Prep:	<i>Torment</i>

At this point, you've prepped basically everything (the party skipped P1S5 and are unlikely to go to P2S1) and can run without prep for the remaining (~2) sessions.

Running the Adventure

Throughout the events of *Raiders of Ivywatch*, the heroes will naturally want to take Respites. If the heroes leave a location unfinished, upon their return, choose a battlemat from one of the formerly-combat Scenes they pass through and fit it with the following encounter.

Draw Steel! “Beyond Saving”

The heroes are confronted with the consequences of their hesitation.

Earn 1 Victory for killing all non-minion enemies.

Dir. Note: The zombies are recognizable as former Ivywatch citizens. When the heroes defeat all the non-minions, the zombies return to being inert corpses.

Encounter

The heroes begin in the box marked “START.” The positions of all enemies are immediately detectable.

Party Size	Location	Malice – <i>Undead</i> Enemy Forces:
2	-	Squad A: 1 Ghoul (capn) + 6 Rotting Zombies (m) Squadless: 1 Umbral Stalker
4	-	Squad A: 1 Ghoul (capn) + 8 Rotting Zombies (m) Squad B: 2 Specters Squadless: 2 Umbral Stalkers

* for unlisted party sizes, add 2 Ghouls (Squadless) per extra member over a listed party size.

Tactics

The umbral stalkers’ Freezing Dark malice ability blocks line of sight, slightly re-contextualizing a familiar map.

A Note on Encounter Balance

The encounters in this adventure are all balanced to the expected number of victories a party has at that encounter. Encounters attempt to leave enough tactical wiggle room for the Director to step on the gas as hard or light as they want to challenge the heroes without needing to adjust the encounter table.

Guide to Tullow Vale

Tullow Vale is tucked in between the foothills of the Myr Mountains of Vasloria, with farmland to the east and elf-haunted wode to the west.

The Central Tension

Long ago, an ancient civilization in Tullow Vale was ruled centrally by a single dwarven king in the great city of Kalacles. In the wake of Ajax’s campaign and the death of the more recent, local Vaslorian duke, the lords of Tullow Vale now question whether to retain the town-and-lord system, paying taxes to but not protected by a distant and apathetic baron, or to centralize power under the Old Ways and choose a new King of the Vale.

Movers and Shakers

Two characters representative of major factions in Tullow Vale appear in *Raiders of Ivywatch*.

Gwenyll Thorton, Lord of Ivywatch

“We’ve survived worse, and we did it by looking out for ourselves. And nobody else.”

Lord Thorton is skeptical of anything but a **decentralized Vale**.

Native Language: Caelian

Motivations:

- **Legacy** – The Thortons have prevented Ivywatch’s destruction for generations and Gwenyll will sacrifice much, and many, to maintain that standard.
- **Peace** – As a trading town, Ivywatch only prospers in peace, and Gwenyll places huge value in that.

Pitfalls:

- **Protection** – Gwenyll knows that Ivywatch is only kept alive by its citizens, and her failing to prevent the Hawklords and lizardfolk raids on her watch is eating her up inside.
- **Vengeance** – Thortons are taught young that vengeance is a fool’s errand and an easy path toward death and destruction.

Bleddyn, Squire to the Oak Shields Company of the Knights of Golden Ivy

"I was to spend today in prayer, but if the dogged churls insist on a fight, I must oblige."

Every Knight of Golden Ivy swears an oath to Tullow Vale. **Bleddyn wants a King** to represent the Vale, lest the oath they swear be hollow.

Native Languages: Old Vaslorian, Kheltivari

Motivations:

- **Higher Authority** – Bleddyn respects the chain of command and is honored to serve Knight Andreja. Bleddyn admires Paladin Millicent and thinks she ought to be Commander.
- **Protection** – As goes the oath of the Oak Shields Company of the Knights of Golden Ivy, Bleddyn "shelters the Vale" and never wavers.

If the heroes detect that Bleddyn is wavering in spite of their oath and they point this out, Bleddyn does not appreciate it and Protection becomes a Pitfall.

Pitfalls:

- **Revelry** – Bleddyn doesn't fight for the glory or for the fun of it, and is suspicious of those who do.

Negotiation with Bleddyn is the culmination of information gathering in *Raiders of Ivywatch* and their interest can increased and decreased in other ways, listed in Part 2, Scene 8.

Other Nearby Faction Leaders

Here are some other faction leaders that are nearby Ivywatch, but do not appear in this adventure.

Wilim "the Idle" Griffies, Lord of St. Gaed

"You weren't able to save the peasants from their fate? A pity."

Lord Griffies **wishes he was King** Griffies.

Tybald MacGraw, Guildmaster of the Company of Cordwainers

"The company knows every boot in the Vale. Where it's been and where it's going."

Guildmaster MacGraw foresees the greatest profit in the Capital of a **centralized Vale**.

The Mountain Reaching Downward in Still Water's Mirror, Listener to the Apothechron

"Listen long enough and the Vale's history echoes. A speech becomes a legend becomes a speech again."

Listener Stillwater **does not want to compete with a King** for the hearts of her parishioners.

The Magnificent Merlu, Director of the Radenwights of Tull Wode

"The breadth of my character cannot be summarized in a single quote! I am the MAGNIFICENT MERLU!"

Merlu is writing his Magnum Opus based on the power struggle in Tullow Vale. In his professional opinion, the best version of that story is one where **a King is crowned in the end**.

Part 1: Ivywatch

You've spent the last few days following the Baron's Road south down to Ivywatch, walking alongside the wagon of your employer, a blond, spectacle-wearing, fidgety polder merchant named Lewin Coppertoe.

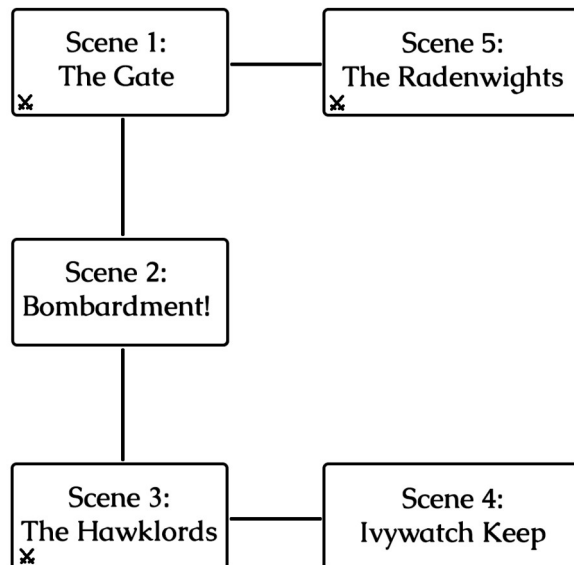
Should Mr. Coppertoe and all of his cargo make it safely to Ivywatch, you will be paid the rest of the agreed upon amount and he promises to put in a good word for you with his cousin, the steward to the lord of Ivywatch.

Bouncing around the wagon is a fellow guard: Baxter is Lewin's cousin's dog that he left with Lewin when he had to quickly return to Ivywatch and couldn't make other arrangements. Lewin and Baxter are both looking forward to Baxter's return to his owner.

Boxed, italicized text like this is meant to be read aloud to your players! If boxed text, italicized or not, has a gray fill like this one, feel free to share it with your players. If it has no fill, it might contain spoilers!

Dir. Note: Director notes like this contain information that should **absolutely not** be shared to players!

Scenes



Each part of the adventure has a scene graph like this one showing which scenes connect to which.



Lewin Coppertoe & Baxter

Take a moment to do the following:

- Encourage the players to introduce their heroes if they haven't already.
- Each of the heroes are each well-known in some region, if not this one. Ask each player what the title is of the most popular bard's song about their hero's exploits.
- Ask the players how their heroes each spend evenings in camp while on the road, and how exactly Baxter interrupts them.

The heroes and their employer approach the town of Ivywatch, but something feels off.

The party attempts a **Medium Intuition Group Test** to sense what's wrong.

- *Fewer than half succeed:* The party feels eyes watching them from somewhere, but they can't tell from where exactly. In the upcoming combat encounter, the heroes can start anywhere within the box marked "START."
- *Half or more succeed:* The party smells blood in the air and they see no guards on the battlements of the town. In the upcoming combat encounter, the heroes can start anywhere they choose on the map.

Scene 1: The Gate

Lewin cautiously drives the cart around a huge missing chunk of the bridge on your way into Ivywatch. A horse-sized iron ball lies among rubble in the river below. Pools of blood paint the floor of the gatehouse, but there are no bodies in sight.

“Well, this isn’t safe at all! Clearly!”

Lewin is shaking like a leaf just looking at what has become of Ivywatch. His eyes widen as he spots a horde of lizardfolk rounding a corner and sprinting towards the gate. Towards your wagon.

Some of the lizardfolk carry people, struggling and screaming. They need help, now. Lewin cries out, his voice cracking.

“Ignore them! You must protect me! And my wares!”

He looks at you all expectantly.

“Don’t be heroes!”

Draw Steel! “The Horde”

Lizardfolk race past the heroes and their employer.

Earn 1 Victory for keeping Lewin (who stays on the “WAGON”) alive until all the enemies are dead or gone.¹

Earn 1 Victory for saving sufficient citizens from the lizardfolks’ clutches before they reach the box marked “ESCAPE.” The Director chooses what number of saved citizens is sufficient.

- While in a full square of water, use the “Underwater Combat” rules: fire immunity 5, lightning weakness 5, and if your speed doesn’t have the Swim keyword, all your power rolls take a bane.
- The bridge is **2 squares** above the river.
- Stairs and ladders allow heroes to surmount height differences as if they were half as tall.

¹ This adventure assumes the players know exactly what the conditions are to earn Victories in each encounter. Just read it aloud before they draw steel.

Encounter

Depending on the result of the previous Group Test, heroes begin either in the box marked “START” or anywhere else on the map. The positions of all enemies are immediately detectable.

Each lizardfolk grunt holds a citizen of Ivywatch (see “Tactics”).

Party Size	Location	Malice – Lizardfolk Enemy Forces:
2	Gate Wall	Squad A: 6 Tonguers (m) Squad B: 6 Grunts (m) Squadless: 1 Skyterror
4	Gate Wall	Squad A: 8 Tonguers (m) Squad B: 5 Grunts (m) Squad C: 5 Grunts (m) Squadless: 2 Skyterrors + 1 Bloodeye

* for unlisted party sizes, add 5 Shellguard (m) in a new squad (Gate) per extra member over a listed party size.

Round 2: Deatheye Yslansh

At the end of the 1st round of combat, the heroes are interrupted by the clarion call of a warhorn from the forest behind them. From the trees appears an entire lizardfolk warband, **carrying even more citizens!**

A cloaked figure emerges further and throws back their hood. A pale face with one jet-black eye looks out at the heroes and points a crooked finger.

At your feet, the bodies of the slain arise again. Their minds are gone; all they know is KILL!

The warband and their cloaked leader disappear back into the forest with their hostages.

Nearby corpses arise as undead and attack the heroes! The following enemies appear amidst the combat. They do not attempt to escape; they fight to the death.

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces: Undead
-	Gate	Squad Y: 4 Rotting Zombies (m) Squad Z: 4 Rotting Zombies (m)

Handling Hostages

The grunts in **Squad B** (and **Squad C**) each carry a citizen. Hostages are carried in many encounters in *Raiders of Ivywatch*.

The following rules apply throughout the adventure:

- Each hostage has 8 Stamina unless otherwise noted.
- Hostages do not take turns.
- Using the Grab maneuver on a hostage automatically gets a tier 3 outcome on the power roll. Enemies can grab hostages despite any size difference.
- If a hostage is grabbed by an enemy, freeing them from the grab frees the hostage.
- A hostage, upon being freed, will immediately slip through the enemies and escape, exiting the combat (in this case, back into the town).

Tactics

Lizardfolk Combat Strategies

The bloodeye can attack from high ground, where it has an edge. The skyterror can fly between the gate and the middle building and has an edge on their Poison Blowdart from high ground.

Spending 10 Malice allows the lizardfolk to use Flood the Shores, which can hugely aid in their escape! Water Pit (5 Malice) also can prevent opportunity attacks, reduce falling damage, and regrow tails so lizardfolk can shed conditions! Remember that minions can't gain temporary Stamina.²

Bring the Bodies!

The lizardfolk all would rather run away than fight to the death. And they will try to take corpses (not zombies) along with them!

² The adventure assumes that the players clearly understand which enemies are minions ("these ones look particularly frail and untrained!") and which are captains commanding minions ("they seem to listen to the orders of this one!").

The Hawklords Return!

When the combat ends, an iron orb the size of a horse falls from the sky onto the gate into town, destroying it. Heroes in the box marked "GATE" must make an Agility power roll:

11-	Barely escape the rubble, hurting yourself in the process. You have a bane on your next power roll as part of a montage test or in a combat encounter.
12-16	Escape the falling rubble without issue.
17+	Escape with ease and extra time: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first hero to get this result spots and grabs a silver locket in a pool of blood. It holds a tiny painting of a young adult human and is inscribed with "K+V" in a heart.• Other heroes to get this result can each help one hero who got a Tier 1 result, boosting them to Tier 2 (they will not be slowed).

Descending from the sky above Ivywatch is a flight of Hawklords. All but one carry huge iron orbs, and they fly toward Ivywatch Keep.

If the rest of the iron orbs have the same purpose as the one that fell on the gate, whomever remains in Ivywatch is in immediate danger.

Baxter intuitively understands this and leaps from the wagon toward the gate. He runs full tilt down the main road of Ivywatch toward the keep.

But! Every second, the lizardfolk warband marches further into the forest with the hostages. Their fate is uncertain, even if you found them quickly...

If the heroes choose to follow Baxter's lead and save Ivywatch from the Hawklords, go to Scene 2.

If the heroes choose to enter the forest and track down the lizardfolk warband, go to Scene 5.

With the forest swarming with lizardfolk and Ivywatch under siege, Lewin will not budge from his wagon. He yells to the heroes as they leave:

*"Your contract is broken! This is **not safe!**"*

Scene 2: Bombardment!

Following Baxter's race against the Hawklords to the keep will be a montage test. The failure limit is 2 and the success limit is equal to the number of heroes (minimum 3, maximum 5).

The challenges of the montage test align with obstacles along the way to the keep.

Following Baxter

- *A multi-story tavern has collapsed, covering the road with a heap of splintered timbers and rubble that would be insurmountable for a normal person.*
- *The main road ends at the market square and splits into many alleys and narrow streets. It's not obvious which path is most direct to the keep.*
- *A raging fire's roar drowns out Baxter's barking, making it harder to tell which direction he's determined is quickest to the keep.*
- *As you pass some corpses, a lizardfolk you thought dead claws at you, gashing your leg. You can't run with the wound unattended.*
- *Bodies and mud clog up the street passing the collapsed chapel. Baxter nimbly navigates the mess, but you're too big to follow in the same way.*

If a hero takes on a challenge with an intrigue or lore skill and succeeds, they find a lizardfolk corpse clutching a rosary that doesn't appear to be theirs.

The first hero to get a tier 3 outcome finds a sealed letter among the rubble addressed to "Jacqueline."

Deflect the Orbs!

The heroes arrive at the keep just as the Hawklords begin their second assault of Ivywatch, dropping iron orbs on the keep. The party attempts an Agility Group Test to deflect the bombardment.

The heroes' successes and failures in the montage test determine the difficulty of the Group Test and the consequences of success or failure.

Total Failure

The heroes attempt a **Hard Agility Group Test** to deflect the iron orbs.

- *Fewer than half succeed:* The keep's walls and bridge are destroyed. The citizens are far more vulnerable now. The heroes are exhausted from the chase and the bombardment. In Scene 3, all heroes begin the encounter slowed (EoT).
- *Half or more succeed:* The hawklords that descend cry out to the heroes "Are you the bastards that led the lizards to attack?!" The townsfolk glare at the hawklords with hate.

Partial Success

The heroes **earn 1 Victory** and attempt a **Medium Agility Group Test** to deflect the iron orbs.

- *Fewer than half succeed:* The keep's walls and bridge are destroyed. The citizens are far more vulnerable now.
- *Half or more succeed:* The hawklords that descend cry out to the heroes "Are you the bastards that led the lizards to attack?!" The townsfolk glare at the hawklords with hate.

Total Success

The heroes **earn 1 Victory** and attempt a **Medium Agility Group Test** to deflect the iron orbs.

- *Fewer than half succeed:* The keep's walls and bridge are destroyed. The citizens are far more vulnerable now.
- *Half or more succeed:* The hawklords that descend cry out to the heroes "Are you the bastards that led the lizards to attack?!" but the townsfolk throw rocks at them. In Scene 3, all enemies begin the encounter slowed (EoT).

See Scenes 3 & 4 in the full adventure!

Scene 5: The Radenwights

The forest opens to a small clearing with a stone structure sinking in a pond in the center. Part of the lizardfolk warband is taking a short break and you've caught them unawares.

Allow the heroes to devise a plan of attack.

Dir. Note: Ask them leading critiques like “what if they have a scout you can’t see?” and “what’s plan B if you all roll poorly?” Finally, ask them “are you absolutely sure that you’re ready?”

When the heroes enact their plan (or otherwise break stealth), interrupt them before the first ability is used:

Suddenly, you hear a booming and nasally voice.

“The heroes have caught the warband unawares!”

And a guitar strums. The lizardfolk in mere seconds are packed and heading out of the clearing, fleeing the heroes and the voice.

“But they are a step too late! Will their mistake cost the townsfolk their VERY LIVES!? Perhaps a different party of heroes are better suited to the rescue mission... A party such as...”

A small group of armed radenwights (and one playing guitar) appear from among the ruins.

“THE GILDED DOOM OF HEAVEN’S FANG!”

“And now, it’s time to DRAW STEEL! As narrated by ME, your humble narrator!”

“THE MAGNIFICENT MERLU!”

Throughout the fight, Merlu taunts the heroes and feeds them clues about the lizardfolk’s lair’s location simultaneously. For example:

“The tactician hesitates in her strike as her thoughts wander to the fate of the poor citizens, whisked away to the evil, mossy lair of the scaly fiends!”

Merlu’s voice is coming from a magical, oddly angular stone in the pocket of one of the radenwights.

The clues Merlu feeds the heroes are:

- The fort sits atop a hill like a sentry and casts a portentous shadow in the direction of Ivywatch.
- The fort is surrounded by poisonous plants and mushrooms.
- The fort echoes with the rumble of a waterfall, which mimics the growl of the fort’s guard.

Draw Steel! “The Radenwights”

The Gilded Doom of Heaven’s Fang attempts to prove they are the superior heroic party, with steel and blood!

Earn 1 Victory for defeating the radenwights.

- Squares with any amount of tall grass count as difficult terrain and grant concealment.

Encounter

The heroes begin wherever they decided in their plan. The positions of all enemies are immediately detectable.

Party Size	Location	Malice – Radenwights Enemy Forces:
#	Ruins	Squadless: 1 Piper + # +1 of Ratcroats
	-	Hazard: Pillars (DTO)

Tactics

Ratcroats are size 1S. If they use En Garde! against a hero larger than them, the power roll has an edge. Swarm a hero with the radenwights so that when one deals damage, the rest can make free strikes with Ready Rodent, and then the piper can refresh the use of Ready Rodent with their maneuver.

The piper can use its Piercing Trill to take down pillars from a distance and heal itself or the ratcroats!

If only the piper remains, it surrenders.



Merlu's Speaking Stone

To Be Continued!

When the fight ends, the heroes notice the stone that Merlu communicates through (or are offered the stone by the piper). Merlu concludes the narration:

"The heroes prove their worth! But their ego has cost them precious time! Will they discover Fort Ranaghan and the terrible secrets within? Will they save the citizens before it's too late!? Find out next time with ME, your humble narrator!"

"THE MAGNIFICENT MERLU!"

The party gains and immediately knows how to operate the treasure (**give the players the Reward "Merlu's Speaking Stone"**).

Continue the adventure with Part 2: Fort Ranaghan.

Summary of Part 1

The plot points of Part 1:

- The heroes know the lizardfolk have kidnapped citizens.
- The heroes saw the leader of the lizardfolk.
- The heroes saw the Hawklords attack Ivywatch.
- The heroes chose between following Baxter to save Ivywatch from the Hawklords or following the lizardfolk to save the citizens from their fate.
- If the heroes followed Baxter:
 - they met Lord Gwennyl Thorton.
 - they acquired the Jewel of Redemption.
- If the heroes followed the lizardfolk:
 - they met (kind of) The Magnificent Merlu!
 - they acquired Merlu's Speaking Stone.
- The heroes learned of Fort Ranaghan and where to find it.

The B-Plot

If the heroes save Ivywatch from the Hawklords' second assault, they acquire the Jewel of Redemption.

If the heroes follow the lizardfolk to save the hostages right away, they acquire Merlu's Speaking Stone.

The Hawklords can track the jewel and Merlu knows the location of his stone, and the heroes know it. The heroes also know how useful and powerful their treasure is (it helps them kill monsters better!), so ideally they want to keep it in spite of the danger.

Enter, the B-Plot. At any time, if the players linger or hesitate or just need a kick in the ass, you can deploy an encounter where the Hawklords find them and attack! Or Merlu sends more radenwights to create drama!

The conclusions of the B-Plots are not featured in this adventure.

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