



cover art by Jaelani / Rectopus (@jaelani36)

“Raiders of Ivywatch” is an independent product published under the DRAW STEEL Creator License and is not affiliated with MCDM Productions, LLC. DRAW STEEL © 2024 MCDM Productions, LLC.

Raiders of Ivywatch © 2025 Look Out Behind You Studios LLC

**POWERED BY
DRAW STEEL**



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 between 8 and 18 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

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*. The first is Gwenyll Thorton, the lord 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**.

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.

The second is Squire Gwalchmai, a scout for the Knights of Golden Ivy, specifically the Oak Shields Company.

Gwalchmai, 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. **Gwalchmai wants a King** to represent the Vale, lest the oath they swear be hollow.

Motivations:

- **Higher Authority** – Gwalchmai respects the chain of command and is honored to serve Knight Andreja.
- **Protection** – As goes the oath of the Oak Shields Company of the Knights of Golden Ivy, Gwalchmai fights **"for the lives of all."**

If the heroes argue that "all" should include the evil creatures the Knights fight against in Arcadia, Protection becomes a Pitfall.

Pitfalls:

- **Revelry** – Gwalchmai doesn't fight for the glory or for the fun of it, and is suspicious of those who do.
- **Freedom** – What point is there to endless options when you have a duty? When you swear an oath to do something to your best ability? They're distractions.

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.

Running the Adventure

Throughout the events of *Raiders of Ivywatch*, the heroes will naturally want to take Respite. 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. Former villagers of Ivywatch, now turned undead, attack the heroes.

Earn 1 Victory for killing all non-minion enemies.

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	Enemy Forces: Undead
2	-	Squad A: 1 Ghoul (capn) + 6 Rotting Zombies (m) Squad B: 2 Specters
4	-	Squad A: 1 Ghoul (capn) + 6 Rotting Zombies (m) Squad B: 3 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 creates some interesting terrain, re-contextualizing a familiar battlemat. The rest of the enemies are just trying to make the heroes prone, so the enemies’ melee strikes have edges against them.

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!



Lewin Coppertoe & Baxter

Take a moment to do the following:

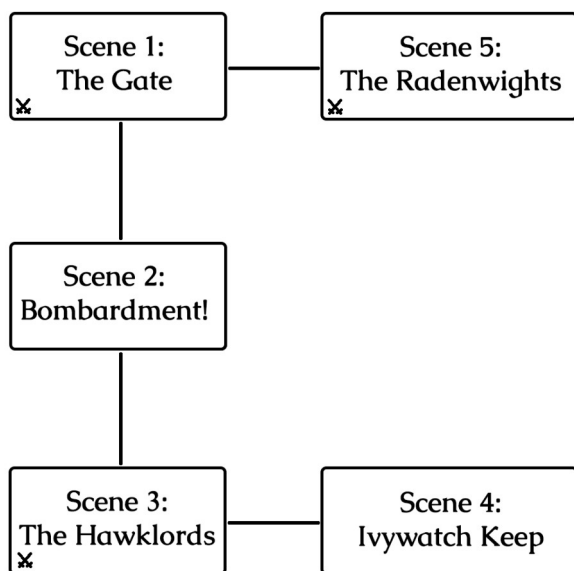
- Encourage the players to introduce their heroes if they haven't already.
- Each of the heroes are each well-known in some region, if not this one. Ask each player what the title is of the most popular bard's song about their hero's exploits.
- Ask the players how their heroes each spend evenings in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

Scenes



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

Scene 1: The Gate

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.

Movement

- 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	Enemy Forces: <i>Lizardfolk</i>
2	Gate	Squad A: 6 Tonguers (m) Squad B: 6 Grunts (m)
	Wall	Squadless: 1 Skyterror
4	Gate	Squad A: 8 Tonguers (m) Squad B: 5 Grunts (m) Squad C: 5 Grunts (m)
	Wall	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!

Nearby corpses arise as undead and attack the heroes! The warband and their cloaked leader disappear back into the forest with their hostages.

The following enemies appear amidst the combat. They do not attempt to escape; they fight to the death.

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces: <i>Undead</i>
#	Gate	Squad Y: # Rotting Zombies (m) Squad Z: # Rotting Zombies (m)

Tactics

Grunts & Citizens

The grunts in **Squad B** (and **Squad C**) each carry a citizen (grabbed). The citizens do not have turns in combat and cannot act, nor escape the grab themselves. The grunts will attempt to reach the box marked “ESCAPE” and exit the combat as quickly as possible.

Do not let the grunts use their action to move up to their speed again, unless the heroes begin the encounter in an extremely advantageous position.

A citizen, upon being freed, will manage to immediately slip through the enemies and escape back into the town through the gate, exiting the combat.

Lizardfolk Combat Strategies

The tonguers can pull the heroes into the water, where their power rolls have banes. The bloodeye can attack from high ground, where it has an edge. The skyterror can fly between the bridge and the battlements and has an edge on their Poison Blowdart from high ground. The shellguard give the heroes banes, which prevent them from using opportunity attacks.

Spending 10 Malice allows the lizardfolk to use Flood the Shores, which can hugely aid in their escape! Iron Jaws (3 Malice) is also useful for sealing off bottlenecks.

If the heroes are tanky (30+ Stamina) or the players are confident, assign the Skyterrors to captain the minion squads, especially the grunts (granting them Speed +2).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!

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](#).

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!”).

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 this challenge with an intrigue or lore skill, whether they succeed or not, they find a lizardfolk corpse clutching a rosary that doesn't appear to be theirs.*

The first hero to roll a Tier 3 their test 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 Success

The party attempts a **Medium Agility Group Test**.

- *Fewer than half succeed:* The keep's walls are destroyed. The keep is much less defensible 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).

Partial Success

The party attempts a **Medium Agility Group Test**.

- *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 Failure

The party attempts a **Hard Agility Group Test**.

- *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.

Scene 3: The Hawklords

The hawklords descend upon the keep, both against the heroes and among the townsfolk!

“We know the Jewel of Redemption is here, we know you have hidden it! Give it to us now and no one will get hurt!”

A stoic woman in leather armor walks forward and unsheathes a hand-and-a-half sword.

“Come and take it! Strike down a real lord and earn your jewel! If you can!”

Draw Steel! “The Hawklords”

The Hawklords attempt to kill Lord Thorton.

Earn 1 Victory and the title “Hawklords’ Quarry” for ending the immediate threat of the Hawklords.

Earn 1 Victory for preventing the Hawklords from killing the lord and any townsfolk.

Height

- Each ledge is **2 squares** tall.
- The battlements of the keep are **4 squares** tall.

Encounter

If the gate was destroyed in the group test, use the “GATE FALLEN” map variant, otherwise use the “GATE STANDING” map variant. Likewise, if the bridge was destroyed, put the “BRIDGE FALLEN” prop on the map, otherwise put the “BRIDGE STANDING” prop on the map.

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

Lord Thorton is a Human Warrior Level 1 Retainer during this encounter.

If Lord Thorton is close to death, her steward (an older polder) will throw himself in the way of the final blow, allowing Thorton a decisive strike on her attacker.

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces: <i>Humans</i>
2	Bridge Keep	Squad A: 8 Guards (m) Squad B: 1 Knave + 1 Giant Hawk (mt)
4	Bridge Keep	Squad A: 8 Guards (m) Squad B: 1 Knave + 1 Giant Hawk (mt) Squadless: 2 Brawlers

** for unlisted party sizes, add 1 Trickshot (Bridge – Squadless) per extra member over a listed party size.*

End of Each Round: Loose!

At the end of each encounter, the hawklords drop another iron ball from the sky:

Round	Where & How to Drop
1	Drop on the heroes, avoid townsfolk.
2	Drop on heroes on the walls or bridge, destroying the structure and making them fall (and take falling damage).
3	Drop on townsfolk and heroes (ideally more heroes than townsfolk). Allow each hero to Assist the Test of one of the targeted townsfolk as a free triggered action.

Iron Ball Drop

KW: Area, Weapon

Distance: 3 cube anywhere on map

Target: Each enemy in the cube

Effect: Each target makes an **Agility Test:**

11-	9 damage; M<2 prone can’t stand (save ends)
12-16	6 damage; M<1 prone can’t stand (EoT)
17+	4 damage; M<0 prone

Tactics

The knave and its hawk in **Squad B** will spend their turn trying attacking Lord Thorton. The guards and brawlers will try to reach townsfolk, grab them, and then attack them and use them as meat shields. The trickshots can focus fire on the heroes (or the Lord if you want to be mean) from high ground.

Scene 4: Ivywatch Keep

The lord of Ivywatch approaches you.

“I appreciate your help fighting those damn so-called lords.”

She wipes the blood from her blade. An inscription stands out red against the cold steel.

“Do you know what the jewel is they spoke of?”

- The inscription is in Kheltivari and reads “So will I shelter the Vale and never waver in the storm of evil.” Lord Thorton has no idea; it’s an heirloom.
- Before the heroes can confirm or deny they know of the jewel, a young boy interrupts.

A Happy Accident

The boy reveals a stone wrapped in a rag. It’s dirty, but golden and shaped like a berry from a vine.

“I... I’m sorry.” He looks back over his shoulder to an older couple. The woman looks at him sternly.

“Me and Ellyn were just playing Hopsgammen in the village green and uh... this fell off the... the statue. And I was going to return it, but... and now Ellyn...”

He holds the Jewel of Redemption out like it’s a wild animal. His father joins him.

“Milord, we had no idea. Thought it was just an odd rock he found in the river.”

- An **Easy Reason Test** reveals the jewel to be a sliver of sunmetal lacquered in tree resin – a well-known relic of Thyll Hylacae (**give the players the Reward “Jewel of Redemption”**).
- Lord Thorton takes the jewel, thinks a moment, and hands it to the heroes. “They said they *knew* we had this. They didn’t suspect, they knew. They can track this. And we can’t fight them off, but you can. Take it.”



Gwenyll Thorton, Lord of Ivywatch

The Lord of Ivywatch

“Well, back to the battle in front of us.”

Gwenyll turns back to the camp of townsfolk within the walls of the keep. Dozens of families are anxiously waiting in the courtyard, stables, and animal pen. A few people tentatively move among the crowd, calling out names.

The keep is a temporary sanctuary. Safe enough, a respite would be possible here.

Gwenyll asks the party without turning back to them, “Did you happen to see a merchant cart on your way into town, driven by a polder? Might look like my steward here?”

The steward is Lewin Coppertoe’s cousin, Calvin Toppahill. He suspects the “heroes” are vagabonds, were Lewin’s bodyguards, and that they killed him and stole his goods at the first opportunity. He has no evidence, he’s just suspicious of outsiders.

Gwenyll Thorton is **the Lord of Ivywatch**. If the heroes did kill Lewin, she knows the truth will reveal itself in time. But she fights the battle in front of her, and right now, that’s accounting for the health and safety of the citizens of Ivywatch.

This is not necessarily a negotiation, but the heroes can, with proper arguments and successful tests, be rewarded:

- If the heroes can prove that Lewin Coppertoe escaped, alive, then they **earn 1 Renown**.
- If the heroes show the locket, the letter, or the rosary, and can persuade the Lord and the steward that they didn't steal or kill to possess it, then they are awarded one **Healing Potion** per item and told who to seek among the citizens to return the items.

locket	Vaughn Morris, the tailor
letter	Jacqueline Mills, the farrier
rosary	Father Edmund, the pastor

- If the heroes mention the lizardfolk necromancer at the gate and the kidnapped citizens being taken into the forest, Lord Thorton listens seriously, and considers their words.

She cares more about Ivywatch and the still-alive people therein than chasing down some lizardfolk to who-knows-where.

The Lord and the Luthier

While the heroes speak with Lord Thorton and her steward or before they can leave the conversation, a frantic man interrupts them.

“Strangers! Did you see a young girl among the lizards? A blue dress with a white ribbon? It might have been dirty! Brown, black! She has uhh... green eyes! She’s missing a tooth here!”

The man quickly points to his left front tooth. He turns to Lord Thorton.

“Milord, please, Ellyn is still out there. I’ll be quick and silent, just let me go! Please!”

The man is Alan Reese, a luthier. Alan’s wife died in childbirth, he lives alone with his daughter Ellyn. Alan and Ellyn were separated in the raid on Ivywatch. Alan wants nothing more than to leave the walls of the keep and search for his daughter.

Lord Thorton wants to account for all citizens, but won’t let a single one she knows is alive and in her grasp escape from her, including Alan.

Alan Reese and Lord Thorton each make a plea to the heroes:

“You can leave these walls and you can handle yourselves! Please, find my daughter! Find Ellyn! Before it’s too late!”

*“Anyone not in these walls are likely already dead. But you are **alive**, Alan. We are **alive**, we are **here**, and we need **help**. From anyone who can give it! **All of you** will stay. At least until tomorrow.”*

As long as the heroes choose to help, whether they side with Alan or Lord Thorton, they **earn 1 Victory**.

- If the heroes side with Lord Thorton and decide to stay until tomorrow, they take one 12-hour **Respite** (go to “Respite in Ivywatch Keep”).
- If the heroes side with Alan and decide to leave immediately, the Lord acquiesces and tells the party where the citizens have likely been taken by the lizardfolk: Fort Ranaghan (go to [Part 2](#)). The heroes **earn the Marshal title**.

But What About the Jewel?

If the heroes argue to Lord Thorton that they should leave with the jewel to coax the Hawklords away from Ivywatch, she acquiesces and does not argue the point. Continue as if the heroes sided with Alan.

Respite in Ivywatch Keep

See “The Citizens of Ivywatch” during the respite.

After the respite ends, Alan joins the heroes and explains to them rumors he’s heard of a strange ruin out in the forest that lizardfolk have been seen around in the past: Fort Ranaghan.

After the respite, you might choose to run the “Beyond Saving” encounter with either of Ivywatch’s battlemaps.

Continue the adventure with [Part 2: Fort Ranaghan](#).

The Citizens of Ivywatch

In addition to their downtime activities, during their Respite in Ivywatch Keep, the heroes can speak with any number of the citizens of Ivywatch. The heroes can only do one skill or group test as part of a citizen's request per respite.

General Townsfolk

What you can expect from a normal person in town:

- They know of each of the heroes. Maybe they've heard the songs, maybe they know someone who spoke about the hero, maybe their family or friends were directly saved by them.
- Having been saved from the Hawklords' attack, they're grateful for the help, but frustrated that such capable warriors are here with them and not out seeking the kidnapped citizens.
- They have an opinion on the Central Tension: should Tullow Vale centralize power in the Old Ways under a new king, or should they preserve the decentralized system of towns-and-lords?

Specific Townsfolk

The voices of a few people in Ivywatch happen echo the opinions of large swaths of the town. Players can get a sense of the major conflicting opinions in town through these characters.

Baxter, the Head Guard (and Good Boy)

Baxter **doesn't really care** whether there's a king or not, so long as he gets fed and can be with Calvin.

- **Rumor** – Baxter suspects the farrier has a stash of cured meat in her tent.
- **Request** – A prized heirloom of Baxter's (a bone he found) fell down a deep ditch along the keep wall and he needs help to retrieve it (**Medium Agility Test** – does not count toward the test limit per respite).
- **Reward** – A rat he caught.

Gwenyll Thorton, Lord of Ivywatch

Lord Thorton is skeptical of anything but a **decentralized Vale**, where each leader is a neighbor to the people they lead and sees them, their struggles and their triumphs, every day.

- **Rumor** – Lord Griffies will be sending a delegation soon to Ivywatch to ask for Gwenyll's alliance in his bid for kingship. She was preparing to deny him, but now she's going to need to ask for aid too.

- **Request** – Gwenyll will first ask the party to assist with triage (**Medium Wisdom Group Test**).

Then, while citizens are unaccounted for, she will ask that the party seek out the lizardfolk, not for revenge, but to save as many townsfolk as can be saved.

- **Reward** – Triage: 1 Victory (post-respite).

Rescue: 1 Renown, 1 Wealth.

Calvan Toppahill, Steward to the Lord

Calvan enjoys being near the top of the social ladder, short though it may be in only a small town. He **does not want a centralized Vale**, which would surely extend the ladder and put him near the bottom.

- **Rumor** – Calvin recently learned from Father Edmund that long ago, the royal family of the Vale wore a lot of jade jewelry imported from the east. Calvin swears he's seen green jewels at the town market from some local miner company, probably out of Frome or somewhere closer to the Glories.
- **Request** – Calvin's wife Nonna says her garden was ripe for harvest when the attack happened. She wants one of the heroes to go to their home, harvest the plants, and bring them back to the keep to share among the families with injured (**Easy Agility Test** – does not count toward the test limit per respite).
- **Reward** – Nonna treats the heroes to a hearty meal from the Lord's kitchen. Increase Recoveries by 1 until the end of the party's next respite.

Lewin Coppertoe, Merchant of Currans

Lewin hates travelling and wishes he could set up shop in a single big city in a centralized Vale.

- **Rumor** –

- **Request** – Lewin is expecting mail from a supplier in Eddun's Ferry any day now, and he worries the post service will be scared off by the state of the entrance to the town. He asks that the heroes clean up the gate, patch the bridge, and ideally make it all somehow more inviting (**Medium Presence Group Test**).
- **Reward** – Monetary remuneration, including the payment the heroes are owed from their original escort mission. Each of the heroes' Wealth is increased to 2 if it's not already 2 or higher.

Vaughn Morris, the Tailor

Vaughn has heard rumor of the high fashion in Capital across the Bale Sea and wishes the Vale was centralized with a big city innovating in fashion and other fields.

- **Rumor** – Out in the forest, if you ever come upon a mass of broken trees propped up against each other, keep your eyes down to the ground and keep walking until you can hear birds and crickets.³
- **Request** – Vaughn just wants his partner Kane back home, safe.
- **Reward** – One Item Prerequisite for a 1st-Level Armor Enchantment where the Project Source Language is Khelt or Yllyric.

Vaughn is shocked to see the locket, but resolute. He wants to believe his partner, Kane, still lives. He puts the locket around his neck, and gives the heroes his own locket – identical, except the painting inside is of Kane.

Jacqueline Mills, the Farrier

Jacqueline believes the Vale is a pale echo of better times long ago in its history and thinks crowning a King would be a step forward.

- **Rumor** – The pastor had a bunch of books in the chapel written in a language no one knows anymore but was long ago spoken in the Vale.
- **Request** – Jacqueline needs to be escorted to her destroyed shop and home to retrieve her smithing tools (**Medium Might Group Test**).
- **Reward** – Jacqueline shows you her secret fishing spot just down the slope. When fishing in Ivywatch, your first tier 1 outcome does not end the activity.

Jacqueline reads the letter. It's from her sister in Frome. Jacqueline laughs, she and her sister named the farrier business "The Thorned Gauntlet" after an old fairy tale about knights, but after the Hawklords... she doesn't like knights so much anymore.

Father Edmund, the Pastor

The father fears that a King would only make a convenient puppet for Ajax. He prefers a decentralized Vale to that alternative.

- **Rumor** – Listener Stillwater of the Temple of the Apothachron is going to Currans this year for the Forestal Days celebration and might pass through Ivywatch.
- **Request** – The father intends to perform rites for **all** the dead in Ivywatch. He needs the party to collect the lizardfolk bodies at night without getting caught (**Hard Agility or Presence Group Test**).
- **Reward** – Will act as a master for "Learn From A Master" downtime activities for conduits and censors.

The father explains that the rosary is his, despite the foreign symbology on it. The Ivywatch chapel was to St. Gryffyn, but the father's personal rosary counts the stanzas of an old legend of Tullow Vale: Millicent the Oak Shield. A folk hero, really. He doesn't even know the tale, the rosary was his mother's.

³ Heroes who have lived in a wode know this is common practice for dealing with woody boogers (bigfoot).

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. 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.

Movement

- 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	Enemy Forces: Radenwights
#	Ruins	Squadless: 1 Piper + #+1 of Ratcrobat Hazard: Pillars (DTO)

Tactics

Ratcrobat 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 ratcrobat!

If only the piper remains, it surrenders.

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.



Merlu’s Speaking Stone

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 Gwenyll 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 some clues for finding it.

Clues for later that the heroes may have uncovered:

- the inscription on Lord Thorton’s sword
- The name of Millicent, the Oak Shield

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!