*cover art by Jaelani / Rectopus (@jaelani36)*

**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.

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### 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.

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

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### 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.

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## 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 verison 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 Respites. If the heroes leave a location unfinished, upon their return, choose a battlemap 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) <br> *Squad B:* 2 Specters |
| 4 | - | *Squad A:* 1 Ghoul (capn) + 6 Rotting Zombies (m) <br> *Squad B:* 3 Specters <br> *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 battlemap. 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!

## Scenes



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



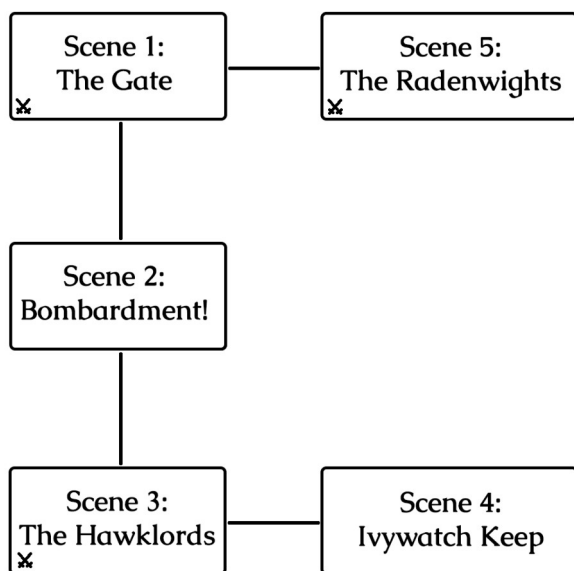*Lewin Coppertoe & Baxter*

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 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.

# 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.

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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: *Lizardfolk* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 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: *Undead* | |
|---|---|---|---|
| # | 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!

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[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:<br>• The first hero to get this result spots and grabs a silver locket in a pool of blood. It holds a picture of a young adult human and is inscribed with "K+V" in a heart.<br>• 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 <u>Scene 2</u>.

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

# 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.

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### 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.*

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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.

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### 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).

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### 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.

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See <u>Scenes 3 and 4</u> in the full release!

# 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 + # of Ratcrobats <br> ***Hazard:*** Pillars (DTO) |

### Tactics

Ratcrobats 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 ratcrobats!

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 .



*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.

### 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 another meddle of radenwights to create drama!