

001: Echoes Under Fort Thunder

Two plug-and-play encounters for 1st-Echelon Draw Steel

by Look Out Behind You Studios

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DRAW STEEL**

001A: Secure Fort Thunder

Goals

Enemy forces have made camp in the battlements of Fort Thunder. Earn 1 victory point for killing all the enemies.

Movement

- Squares with a tree grant cover (whether on the ground or in the tree).
- Squares with any amount of tall grass count as difficult terrain and grant concealment.

Height

- Trees are **2 squares** high for the purposes of climbing and jumping from.

Encounter

The heroes begin in the box marked “START.” The positions of each enemy in ***Squad A*** are immediately detectable, all other enemy forces start concealed.

- The enemies have not yet noticed the heroes’ approach.
- A large drum is visible (north of the gate, in the box marked “DRUM”). While the drum is not destroyed, it grants the following Malice Feature, which requires a creature to use its maneuver adjacent to the drum:

War Drum (Maneuver)	5 Malice	While the Drum is not destroyed (15 Stamina)
All enemies can make a melee free strike. <i>Squad D</i> appears near the drum. Each time the drum is used again, another <i>Squad D</i> appears near the drum.		

While the enemies are not aware of the heroes, have each hero move as if already in combat, one at a time.

- If a hero ends their turn not concealed, they must succeed a medium Presence Test or combat begins with the entire enemy force alert.
- If the heroes attack before the enemies are alert, combat begins and the enemies are surprised.

At the end of the 2nd round of combat in which the enemies are not surprised, ***Squad C*** arrives in the box marked “BACKUP.”

Encounter Details

Assuming zero victories, this encounter begins at Standard difficulty. At the end of the first round, reinforcements come up from the stairs in the hold and the encounter increases to Hard difficulty. The encounter can further increase in difficulty if the heroes do not defeat the enemy forces quickly enough and they allow the War Drum to activate.

1st-Level Party: Goblins

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces
2	Walls Courtyard Backup Drum	Squad A: 4 Snipers (m), 1 Stinker (capn) Squad B: 4 Runners (m), 1 Warg + Assassin (capn, rider) Squad C: 3 Warriors Squad D: 6 Runners (m)
4	Walls Courtyard Backup Drum	Squad A: 4 Snipers (m), 1 Stinker (capn) Squadless: 2 Assassins Squad B: 4 Runners (m), 1 Warg + Assassin (capn, rider) Squadless: 1 Warg + Stinker (rider) Squad C: 3 Warriors Squad D: 6 Runners (m)

* for unlisted party sizes, add 1 Warg + Stinker (rider) (Courtyard – Squadless) per extra member over a listed party size.

Goblin Suggested Tactics

The wargs and riders will head out toward the party. Mounted wargs can cover 20 squares in one turn (move, Sprint maneuver, Bite/Charge action, rider uses Ride move action). After a warg charges, its rider has an edge on melee attacks until the end of their turn.



2nd-Level Party: Gnolls

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces
2	Walls	Squad A: 4 Chainflails (m), 1 Cackler (capn)
	Courtyard	Squad B: 4 Chainflails (m), 1 Abyssal Summoner (capn)
4	Backup	Squadless: 1 Tusker Demon
	Drum	Squad C: 3 Marauders Squad D: 6 Abyssal Hyenas (m)

* for unlisted party sizes, add 2 Abyssal Archers (Walls – Squadless) per extra member over a listed party size.

Gnoll Suggested Tactics

A Chainflail can explode into a Bloodpool to boost the damage of other Chainflails or other ranged units on the battlements. The Abyssal Hyenas summoned by the war drum (5 Malice) can turn into Gnoll Marauders by stepping into the bloodpool or via the Abyssal Summoner's Cackletongue (used at no cost if within range of another Cackletongue). The gnolls also want to group up to make use of Death Frenzy.

3rd-Level Party: Time Raiders

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces
2	Walls	Squad A: 3 Archons (m), 1 Nemesis (capn)
	Courtyard	Squad B: 3 Myriad (m), 1 Vertex (capn)
4	Backup	Squad C: 2 Hijacks
	Drum	Squad D: 8 Archons (m)

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

Time Raider Suggested Tactics

The Vertex can act as a ferry from the battlements to the heroes with its Split Space (5 Malice). The Time Raider trait Foresight makes concealment in tall grass or behind trees unhelpful for the heroes. Should the Presence Test on approach against the Time Raiders be medium, or hard? Food for thought. The Nemesis' Kinetic Crush makes the target take extra damage when they're force moved, which the Hijacks can do from range with their Psi-Sickle.

001B: Silence the Echoes

Goals

The knights buried in Fort Thunder continue their watch of the portal to Arcadia even in death. Earn 1 victory point each for:

- Close the portal to Arcadia
- Kill all invaders from the portal

Movement

- Standing on rubble or on a coffin (unless the water is frozen) both count as difficult terrain.
- While in 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.

Height

- The water is **2 squares** deep.
- Statues are **4 squares** high (above water) for the purposes of climbing and jumping from.

Encounter

The heroes begin in the box marked “START.” The portal to Arcadia is obviously open (to the ***Jungle***), the enemy forces walks through and are immediately hostile to the heroes. Additionally, the undead ***Knights*** also notice the heroes and are hostile.

The stone tablet at the entrance glows a deep purple. Inscribed upon them clearly is a prompt: “Speak your oaths, Knights of Delia, and close shut the jaws of Arcadia!”

In order to close the portal:

- At least (# of party * 2, max 9) oaths of the 9 knights must be read aloud. Each knight statue has the oath inscribed on the statue, but it’s faded and requires the reader be adjacent to or on top of the statue to read.
- While the portal is open, at the end of every other round or rounds during which the portal location changes, a Squad joins based on what location in Arcadia the portal is connected to.

When the last necessary oath is spoken, the portal changes location, sends the last Squad through, and closes shut. The location has no effect on the room.

When an oath is spoken aloud, the portal connects to a new location in Arcadia. Choose from the table. Each location affects the room (except once the portal closes). At the end of the round that the location changed, enemies enter through the portal according to the location.

Location	Effect
Jungle	Thorned vines rapidly grow to cover all the stone walls and statues. When a creature is force moved into the thorns, they are bleeding (save ends).
Frozen Peak	All the water squares become Frozen Pond hazards. Anyone in the water takes 5 cold damage and is restrained until the square of pond they're on is disabled.
Volcano	All the squares of the portal gain Lava hazards with the Magma Flow upgrade.
Swamp	All the water squares become Corrosive Pool hazards. At the end of each round, any consumed Corrosive Pool squares are replaced.

Encounter Details

Assuming zero victories, this encounter begins at Standard difficulty. At the end of every other round or rounds during which the portal location changes, approximately 2/3 the heroes' encounter strength enters through the portal.

1st-Level Party

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces
#	Coffins Portal	Knights: (# + 1) Specters Jungle: (# - 1, min 1) Wode Elf Tree Chirurgeons (30 Stamina) Frozen Peak: (# + 1) High Elf Bloodletters Volcano: (# / 2, min 1) Basilisk Tonguesnappers (with fire immunity 4 instead of acid and poison immunities) Swamp: (# + 1) Kobold Venators

Suggested Tactics

When a creature from the portal gets low on stamina, a specter can use Decaying Touch on them with the 2-Malice bonus. If it kills, the creature dies and becomes another specter.

Kobold Venators can light their net on fire for 3 Malice, which can potentially trigger the Corrosive Pool hazard to explode. The Basilisk can pull targets closer to the Lava with its Prehensile tongue. Even if a Basilisk (with fire immunity 4) gets burned, it won't take much fire damage from the burn.

Since each of the locations' creatures don't typically share a faction, it'll be a challenge to keep track of all the factions' options. Luckily, many of the monsters themselves have ways to spend Malice, so generally you can lean into those options and not worry about the faction Malice Features.

2nd-Level Party

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces
#	Coffins Portal	Knights: (# * 2) Specters Jungle: (# / 2, min 1) Bugbear Shadow Sneaks Frozen Peak: (# / 2, min 1) Striped Condor Griffons Volcano: (# - 1, min 1) Basilisk Tonguesnappers (with fire immunity 4 instead of acid and poison immunities) Swamp: (# + 1) High Elf Deathtouch (with 5 Malice Heartpiercer, damage is fire damage)

Suggested Tactics

When a creature from the portal gets low on stamina, a specter can use Decaying Touch on them with the 2-Malice bonus. If it kills, the creature dies and becomes another specter.

High Elf Deathtouches can use their Malice to explode the Corrosive Pool. The Basilisk can pull targets closer to the Lava with its Prehensile tongue. Even if a Basilisk (with fire immunity 4) gets burned, it won't take much fire damage from the burn.

Since each of the locations' creatures don't typically share a faction, it'll be a challenge to keep track of all the factions' options. Luckily, many of the monsters themselves have ways to spend Malice, so generally you can lean into those options and not worry about the faction Malice Features.

3rd-Level Party

Party Size	Location	Enemy Forces
#	Coffins Portal	Knights: (# * 2 + 2) Specters Jungle: (5 * #) Lizardfolk Grunt (m), (#) Lizardfolk Scaletooth (capn) Frozen Peak: (# - 1, min 1) Striped Condor Griffons Volcano: (# - 1, min 1) Crux of Fire Swamp: 1 Chimera (no villain actions, no Solo Turns, Stamina = # * 40)

Suggested Tactics

When a creature from the portal gets low on stamina, a specter can use Decaying Touch on them with the 2-Malice bonus. If it kills, the creature dies and becomes another specter.

The Lizardfolk will absolutely crowd the room and swim around, shifting the heroes into walls to make them bleed from the thorns. The Chimera should use Area attacks as much as possible and end up hurting both the heroes and whatever else is in the crossfire (and if it uses fire, it'll probably explode the Corrosive Pool).

Since each of the locations' creatures don't typically share a faction, it'll be a challenge to keep track of all the factions' options. Luckily, many of the monsters themselves have ways to spend Malice, so generally you can lean into those options and not worry about the faction Malice Features.