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RAZING AERITHMAS

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® ADVENTURE

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The cunning and ruthless Empire of the Crimson Light, under the brazen leadership of The Eternal Emperor, has crossed the Soulless Sea and conquered the quaint kingdom of Aeris. The emperor's heavy-handedness has seeded a growing rebellion, but the rebels do not stand a chance against the robust forces from across the sea in pitched battle. Instead, they look to a small band of local heroes to rise with them and cut off the head of the squeezing imperial serpent before it is too late. An adventure for 11th level adventurers.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2009.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your Senior GM directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

Keep in mind the following and note that some of these rules only apply to the D&D Championship Series:

- **Unlike normal RPGA adventures, you are not empowered to make adjustments to the adventure. You may, however, make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters. However, since this is a tournament, DO NOT adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure. It is important that you follow the tactics as written to provide a consistent experience between tables during the tournament.
- **While following the combats as outlined, try to give everyone a fun experience.** Try to feel out what the players like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Do not allow the round to stall due to your pacing. RPGA adventures are normally designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short but DO NOT adjust the pacing accordingly if the slowness or quickness or play is due to the actions of the players. The tournament scoring varies with how much of the adventure a team completes and as such you should NOT prompt a team to keep moving or give them hints the adventure does not tell you to give. Unlike a normal adventure where you might prompt the players to remain focused if they were to get off track, let the players dictate the speed of play. Because this is a tournament, it is possible that all of the characters may be dead before the end of the adventure. In this event, you may be forced to

end prematurely or if you desire, you may score the event and then continue play as if the PCs were all still alive. This is particularly appropriate if all of the characters die in the first hour of play.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. When directed to by the adventure, you should be given clues about how to interact with the PCs surroundings so the players can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue. Since this is a tournament, however, you are not allowed to give any clues to the party unless specifically instructed to do so by the adventure.
- **The adventure happens all in one day.** Unless specifically told otherwise in the adventure, the adventure happens all in one day and teams MAY NOT take an extended rest without ending the portion of the event that is scored. If your team discusses the possibility of resting, you MUST inform them that doing so will automatically end their round. If they agree, stop and score the event. If time remains and your team desires, you may to continue play for fun.
- **Unexpected difficulties and damage.** If the PCs do something that requires you to invent a DC or assign some damage that is not covered by the adventure, use the chart on page 42 of the DMG.

The following mechanical rules are important to ensure an equal play experience between tables during the tournament:

- **Enemies always roll an 11 for initiative.** Assume that each enemy rolls an 11 for their initiative and acts on 11 + their initiative modifier.
- **Do not roll for recharge.** Instead of rolling for the recharge of an opponent’s power, they occur as follows: 6 - recharges every six rounds; 5-6 - recharges every three rounds; 4-6 - recharges every two rounds; 3-6 - recharges every two rounds; and 2-6 recharges every round.

- **Unexpected difficulties and damage.** If the PCs do something that requires you to invent a DC or assign some damage that is not covered by the adventure, use the chart on page 42 of the DMG.
- **Enemies who use four or more dice when doing damage do average damage.** If an enemy has an attack that does four or more dice of damage, they do average damage. This value is listed in brackets after the damage expression, such as “4d6+2 [16].”

A great deal of good information on being a DM for a D&D game can be found in Chapters 1-2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second combat or trap encounter they’ve had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each adventurer another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The kingdom of Aeris has come under the rule of a cruel and oppressive imperial regime headed by the Eternal Emperor. Though the realm has prospered economically under his rule, those in need who refuse to adopt the Empire’s ways have suffered greatly. A resistance has risen in shadows of the Emperor's view. Much care and foresight has been given to protect the rebellion from the imperial eye. Its leaders struggle to help the disadvantaged and weak, but they cannot succeed on their own. The Emperor has learned of the resistance through his network of spies tracking more and more brazen moves of the rebellion. He plots methodically to locate its hidden network and destroy it. He has captured a rebel spy, imprisoned him, and used torture to extract information, but the spy is strong and stubborn.

A group of heroes, the adventurers, known as the Band of the Broken Tower has also joined the side of the rebellion, seeking fame, glory, and treasure. Using their vast array of talents, the Band managed to defeat the Eternal Emperor and restore peace to the maligned kingdom. But something is still amiss and the Band of the Broken Tower must once again adventure forth to save the kingdom from evil...

DM's INTRODUCTION

After returning Dragonfly Cutter, the artifact spear, to its rightful owner, the Band of the Broken Tower returned to Copper Hill for some much needed rest. Just days later, however, word reached them that the rebellion's leader and heir to the kingdom of Aeris, Yovann Kargel, had himself been assassinated... by the very emperor the Band had just killed! Now the Eternal Emperor possesses Dragonfly Cutter, the one thing he fears most, and the Band must reunite to save the artifact and destroy the Emperor once and for all.

The story begins when the Band's quiet amusement is interrupted by a visit from a messenger carrying bad news. She informs them that the leader of the rebellion has been killed by the Emperor and the artifact, Dragonfly Cutter, is already aboard the Red Horizon, a ship traveling eastward. The only way they can catch it, she says, is to climb the jagged Forsaken Cliffs and convince Donnondale the Falconer to lend his magical birds for the journey.

Climbing the Forsaken Cliffs will not be easy, even from the landward side. Hill giants live in the area and fend off intruders into their lands. The climb up the cliffs themselves can be perilous. While climbing, the adventurers face attack from above by a band of hill giants, manticores, and ogres.

After defeating the giants, the adventurers must negotiate with Donnondale for the use of his pair of huge birds, called Rocs, to speed them on their way.

The rocs will take them to the ship, but they are not trained to fight. They drop them on board and return to their master. The adventurers are left to battle the Emperor's wicked sailors aboard the Red Horizon, take control of the ship, and return it safely back to Aerithmas.

Once they arrive in Aerithmas, they find the Emperor has already begun razing the city. Much of the city is engulfed in flames as fiery hounds rampage through the streets.

The adventurers know they cannot fight their way into the palace; it is just too heavily guarded. Instead they must figure out a way to sneak in and quickly. In order to access the palace, the adventurers must instead pass through a maze-like labyrinth. Solving the riddle of the maze leads them to the Emperor's chamber, where they must defeat him once and for all using that which he fears most: Dragonfly Cutter.

During the battle with the Emperor, elves, eladrin, and other fey come to the aid of the citizens of Aerithmas. Once the Emperor has been destroyed, the great artifact disappears, in search of another realm to forge an historic bond between humankind and fey. As

for the adventurers, they become legends in the City of Waves and are able to retire back to their quiet Broken Tower for a time...

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Once you are seated but before handing out characters, read the following to the players:

READ ALOUD TEXT

Back at the Broken Tower in Copper Hill, you've been enjoying your recent triumph over the Eternal Emperor and awaiting word of the transfer of rule to the new leader when a young man on a horse arrives, panting and shivering. "I have a message for the Band of the Broken Tower. The Emperor lives..."

You may now hand out the characters to the players. Once the start time is announced, begin play with the PCs speaking with the messenger.

The messenger continue, "The Emperor has slain the king-to-be and taken the Dragonfly Cutter. He has already dispatched his fastest ship, the Red Horizon, to return the artifact to the Empire of the Crimson Light on the other side of the Soulless Sea. The citizens of Aerithmas plead for your help to recover Dragonfly Cutter and use it to destroy the Emperor once and for all."

The messenger brings the news to the attention of the adventurers with the pleadings from what remains of the rebellion to stop the Emperor.

The adventurers know that the Red Horizon is the fastest ship in the known world and setting sail at this point would be useless. The rebellion's only option at this point is to seek out Donnondale the Falconer, who lives atop Blue Cliff Mountain at the nearby coast of the Soulless Sea. Donnondale has tamed several large birds that can fly the adventurers to the sailing ship in time.

WHAT'S NEXT

When the PCs are ready to leave, or ask about the road to the falconer, the adventurers can make Nature checks to determine likely encounters along the path to the summit of Blue Cliff Mountain. A DC 25 result recalls that many people have complained about territorial hill giants, while others have mentioned attacks by giant birds of prey on cattle and sheep.

The adventurers can follow up with Monster Knowledge checks.

Nature (DC 15): Hill giants are type giant.

Nature (DC 20): Hill giants throw stones at range and close in with devastating club attacks.

Nature (DC 25): Typical hill giants have no known resistances or vulnerabilities.

The players should gain information about the goals of this adventure from the introduction: find Donnondale the Falconer, catch the Red Horizon, retrieve Dragonfly Cutter, and return to Aerithmas to defeat the Emperor. Once they have received this information, proceed to Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1: A GIANT HEADACHE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 10

SETUP

A couple of hill giants have made this mountain pass their home and don't appreciate intruders. They immediately call over some friends to help them defeat the adventurers.

- 1 Manticore (Level 10 Elite Skirmisher) (M)
- 2 Hill Giants (Level 11 Brute) (HG)
- 1 Galeb Duhr Earthbreaker (Level 8 Artillery) (G)

A 20-foot high cliff wall runs diagonally across the map, with a narrow set of stairs in the middle. The cliff provides cover for medium sized creatures at the bottom from anything more than 5 feet from the edge at the top, and cover to any creature on top of the cliff from any creature less than 20 feet away from the base below.

The galeb duhr begin as a boulder. Use a passive Perception check to detect it contested by its Stealth (+9).

The manticore is already in flight when the adventurers arrive and starts the battle 20 feet (4 squares) off the ground.

READ ALOUD TEXT

Climbing the east face of Blue Cliff Mountain is an arduous and tiresome affair. Birds of prey circle high in the sky, and from the ground without any reference to their size, you can't tell if they are big enough to consider you prey. As you approach a steep ridge, a large, winged mountain lion leaps from the cliff and roars loudly. Looming large above, you also spot two giants. One hoists a boulder above its head and grins. The other grabs a nearby tree by the trunk and snaps it off, swinging it deftly above its head.

TACTICS

The hill giants will remain at the top of the slope and hurl rocks until an adventurer reaches the top of the cliff and engages it in melee. If the adventurers do not attempt to engage the hill giants, after three rounds they will come down the hill after them. The hill giants can jump down the cliff without taking damage.

The manticore will fly above and rain spikes on the adventurers, occasionally landing to use *manticore's fury* and is mostly content to pester spell casters or other ranged combatants.

The earthbreaker will hurl rocks until anyone comes up the cliff, when it will use its *shock wave* to push them over the cliff. It will also use its burrow ability to keep from being attacked by the adventurers, shifting down or up one as appropriate, even skipping turns if its *shock wave* power doesn't recharge.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The early morning sun provides plenty of light on this cliff.

Bloody Cart: This bloody, broken cart looks to have belonged to the last group to take this path. Though this area counts as difficult terrain, it also filled with Blood Rock, granting combatants critical hits on 19 or 20 while standing on it.

Boulders: Squares with large boulders in them provide cover for medium sized or smaller creatures. They also count as difficult terrain.

Cliff: The cliff wall is 20 feet high and may be climbed with a DC 20 **Athletics** check. If an adventurer is successful, she may move one-half her speed. There is no time in combat to utilize a climber's kit. Failing the check by 4 or less, you remain halfway up, granting combat advantage. Failing by 5 or more results in falling. A creature that falls suffers 1d10 damage for every 10 feet fallen. See Players Handbook pages 182 and 284, respectively.

Steps: The steps on the path lead to the top of the cliff and do not need to be climbed. They do, however, count as difficult terrain.

WHAT'S NEXT

Once the adventurers have defeated the hill giants, the other creatures flee in separate directions. The adventurers continue their climb to find the falconer. Proceed to Interlude 1.

TREASURE

If the PCs chose to search among the wreckage of the old cart and in the pockets of the defeated giants, the adventurers find:

- Hydra Armor, Scale (Level 13)
- Helm of the Eagle (Level 12)
- Elven Cloak (Level 12)
- Potion of Healing (2) (Level 5)

ENCOUNTER 1: A GIANT HEADACHE COMBAT STATISTICS

Galeb Duhr Earthbreaker		Level 8 Artillery	
Medium elemental humanoid (earth)		XP 350	
Initiative +4		Senses Perception +12; tremorsense 10	
HP 73; Bloodied 36			
AC 22; Fortitude 23, Reflex 18, Will 20			
Immune petrification, poison			
Speed 4 (earth walk), burrow 6			
m Slam (standard; at-will)			
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.			
A Hurl Stones (standard; at-will)			
Area burst 1 within 10; +13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage. All squares in the area become difficult terrain. The earthbreaker can create stones to throw when none are present.			
C Shock Wave (standard; recharge 5 6)			
Close burst 2; +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Dwarven, Giant	
Skills Stealth +9			
Str 23 (+10)	Dex 10 (+4)	Wis 16 (+7)	
Con 19 (+8)	Int 12 (+5)	Cha 12 (+5)	

Hill Giant		Level 13 Brute	
Large natural humanoid (giant)		XP 800	
Initiative +5		Senses Perception +7	
HP 159; Bloodied 79			
AC 25; Fortitude 27, Reflex 21, Will 23			
Speed 8			
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.			
M Sweeping Club (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon			
The hill giant makes a greatclub attack against two Medium or smaller targets; on a hit, the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.			
R Hurl Rock (standard; at-will)			
Ranged 8/16; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.			
Alignment: Chaotic evil		Languages: Giant	
Skills Athletics +16			
Str 21 (+11)	Dex 8 (+5)	Wis 12 (+7)	
Con 19 (+10)	Int 7 (+4)	Cha 9 (+5)	
Equipment hide armor, greatclub			

Manticore		Level 10 Elite Skirmisher	
Large natural magical beast (mount)		XP 1,000	
Initiative +12		Senses Perception +13	
HP 210; Bloodied 105			
AC 26; Fortitude 24, Reflex 24, Will 22			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 6, fly 8, overland flight 10			
Action Points 1			
m Claw (standard; at-will)			
+15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.			
R Spike (standard; at-will)			
Ranged 10; +15 vs. AC (see also guided sniper); 1d8 + 5 damage.			
Hit or Miss: The manticore shifts 3 squares after making the attack.			
M R Manticore's Fury (standard; at-will)			
The manticore makes a claw attack and a spike attack (in any order) and shift 1 square between the two attacks.			
A Spike Volley (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6)			
Area burst 1 within 10; +15 vs. AC (see also guided sniper); 1d8 + 5 damage.			
Guided Sniper (while mounted by a friendly rider of 10th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount			
A manticore with a rider gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls with its spike attack and spike volley power.			
Alignment: Chaotic evil		Languages: Common	
Skills Stealth +15			
Str 21 (+10)	Dex 20 (+10)	Wis 17 (+8)	
Con 17 (+8)	Int 4 (+2)	Cha 12 (+6)	

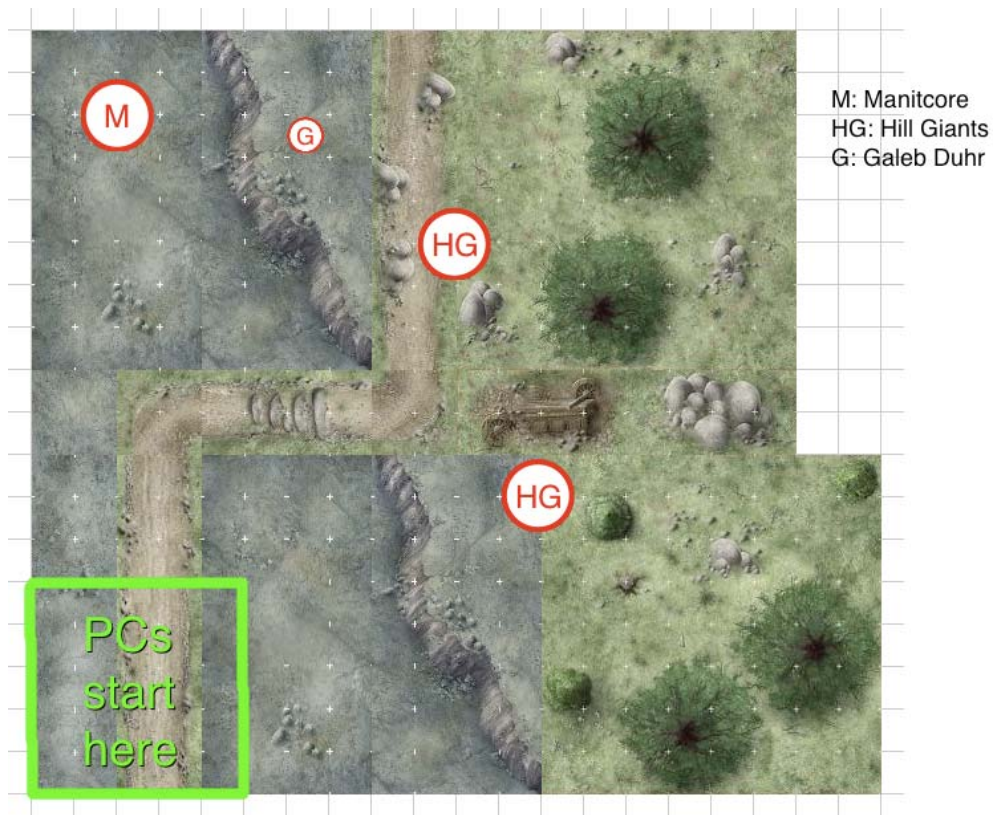
ENCOUNTER 1: A GIANT HEADACHE MAP

RUINS OF THE WILD

Road / Crevasse	8x2	x1
Cabin / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1
Ruined Tower / Field w/Trees	8x8	x1
Ruined Wagon / Briar	4x2	x1
Stream Bend / Road Bend	2x2	x1
Horse / Road Bend	2x2	x1
Field / Rock Outcropping	4x2	x1
Road w/ Steps / Fallen Pillar	4x2	x1
Field / Road	8x2	x1

LOST CAVERNS OF THE UNDERDARK

Floor / Tunnel	4x8	x2
Floor / Tunnel	8x2	x1
Floor w/Ridge / Tunnel w/Lava Gorge	4x8	x2
Floor / Tunnel	2x2	x1



INTERLUDE 1: HELP FROM ABOVE

After defeating the hill giants and finishing their climb. The adventurers speak with the falconer and enlist a pair of rocs to take them to intercept the ship carrying Dragonfly Cutter.

READ ALOUD TEXT

You finally reach the summit of the Blue Cliff Mountain. Its name comes from the shimmering mirror-like stones that make up the sheer cliff that faces the Soulless Sea, reflecting the blue of both sky and water. Near the summit, you see a small wooden hut with a thatched roof. Scattered around the area are dozens of berry bushes and a few small patches of ground that look like gardens. From the sky above, you hear a man's voice call down to you.

The man is Donnondale the Falconer, a human in his late forties. His pet birds spotted the adventurers on the way up and he mounted one of his larger birds in case they weren't friendly. He hails them and allows them a moment to explain themselves before descending.

Donnondale has the following information to give the adventurers (items listed without DCs are information Donnondale will share freely with the adventurers):

Who is he? What is he doing here?

He trained his first hawk when he was 9 years old and ever since, he has been in love with birds of prey. Donnondale used to work for third, and last, great benevolent king of Aeris, but he left the palace after the Emperor usurped him.

What does Donnondale know about the Emperor?

The Emperor took residence in the palace, which took the Three Benevolent Kings their entire lifetimes to complete. *Note: This is an important clue for Interlude 2.*

Diplomacy (DC 27): He knows the Emperor isn't human, but he cannot describe what he actually is. (He was lucky, or unlucky, enough to have seen through the Emperor's illusionary veil, but his mind is not strong enough to comprehend what he saw.)

What does Donnondale know about the palace?

He used to use an underground labyrinth which has a connection to the elemental plane of air to train his birds of prey by sight using symbols in the passages. The labyrinth leads to the palace and may be the easiest way

in. *Note: This is an important clue for Interlude 2 and the DM should be certain to make sure this comment is mentioned.*

What does Donnondale know about the Emperor's ships?

From his view atop the mountain, though, he has seen many skirmishes among passing sea vessels. He knows the fastest ship in the Emperor's fleet has a red sun on its sail.

Diplomacy (DC 20): He has seen strange things associated with that ship. Someone on board can manipulate the weather to give it favorable winds, or to disrupt enemy ships during battle.

The adventurers do not have a lot of time to spare speaking with Donnondale. They must get to the Red Horizon. While conversing with the adventurers, Donnondale equips two large birds, called rocs, with harnesses to accommodate the five adventurers.

WHAT'S NEXT

At minimum, the adventurers should know that the ship they are after has a red sun on its main sail. They should also be aware of the legacy of the Three Benevolent Kings and the presence of the labyrinth leading to the inner sanctum of the palace.

If they made their Diplomacy checks, they may have some insight into what they will face later in the adventure. The rocs fly them quickly to the ship and turn back to Blue Cliff Mountain after dropping them on board. Proceed to Encounter 2.

ENCOUNTER 2: A'HOY!

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 12

SUMMARY

The rocs swiftly catch the Red Horizon. The Red Horizon is a south-seas version of a Bireme with pontoon outriggers on both sides. Cargo netting runs on top of the length between the deck and the pontoons (as well as provide the oarlocks). Small safety nets also exist in the front and back. The nets are currently mostly empty.

The approach of the rocs has been noticed, but the crew will wait to see who it is before they attack. The adventurers will have to defeat the crew, recover the Dragonfly Cutter, and sail the ship back to port. Below deck are slaves who were press-ganged into working, and would be happy to crew the ship for their saviors.

READ ALOUD TEXT

The rocs speed on tirelessly. Below you the beat of a drum drifts up and you see a ship making best speed. Emblazoned on each of her sails is a red setting sun. You've found the Red Horizon. As you approach the ship the beat of the drums stills and is replaced by shouting and commotion. Large nets flank the ship, supported by auxiliary outriggers. The rocs wheel quickly and drop you unceremoniously into the cargo nets before speeding into the distance.

SETUP

Since the deck is crowded, rigging is up, and both sails are out and full, the rocs will deposit the adventurers somewhere in the side cargo nets and then leave—which side doesn't matter, but all of the party must land in the same net. The rocs will not assist in the fight in any way. The map is setup as if they choose the port net. If they choose the starboard net, mirror the setup locations. The adventurers will be somewhere in the middle of the net, not on any of the edges or right next to the boat, since the rocs take no chance of dropping their passengers into the water.

Privateer Captain (Level 13 Elite Skirmisher) (Z)

Slavelord (Level 12 Soldier) (Y)

Mistress of the Waves (Level 12 Controller) (X)

Deckhands (Level 10 Minion) (M)

TACTICS

Neither side has a surprise round. The battle will take place on the nets and main deck of the Red Horizon. While the adventurers can reach the lower deck via the central hold stairs (2), it's so packed with people, chains, and oars, there's no room to do much but get stuck (and probably then be easily dispatched).

The crew will try to split the adventurers up and take the weakest first. To make this happen, the slavelord will (given line of sight) try to harpoon the softest target and yank them through the opening in the railing. Then he and the deckhands can make short work of him or her. If the adventurers choose to congregate close together, the mistress will cast *icy violation* on them. Creatures may climb the railings (see features). When the adventurers make it onto the deck, the crew will band together with the slavelord to protect the mistress and provide support to the captain.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: It is midday on the high seas.

Cargo Nets(1): Large outriggers flank the ship. The spars run out from the ship to the outrigger. Atop these spars is a thick cargo net with a medium-density weave. The net counts as difficult terrain. While in the net, a creature may only be forced to move toward the deck (Pull only). Any attempt at other forced movement results in the target knocked prone in their current square. The nets are soaked with water and consequently are not easily damaged by fire (Resist 10 fire). They may be cut, but are extremely densely knit. Each square of net has 25 HP.

Cargo Nets

AC 4; Fortitude 12, Reflex 4, Will -

HP 25 per 1 square

Immune poison, psychic, necrotic; **Resist 10** fire

Grates: There are grates in the fore and aft of the ship. They count as difficult terrain.

Hold Stairs (2): Primary access to the hold is by stairs in the center of the deck. A creature may not enter the hold without keys or a DC 25 **Thievery** check, though they may go down (or get pushed into) these stairs. Chains are running across these stairs, and the oarsmen are currently in quite a panic, resulting in a very treacherous situation. These stairs count as difficult terrain. In addition, anyone beginning their turn on the stairs will suffer 5 damage from the oarsmen's chains. The top half of the stairs provide cover; the bottom half provides superior cover.

Hold Doors

AC 5; Fortitude 10, Reflex 5, Will -

HP 20 per square

Immune poison, psychic, necrotic

Strength (DC 22) to break

Masts: The ship has a foremast and main mast, represented by the obelisks. They can be climbed with a DC 25 **Athletics** check. The center mast has a small crow's nest 20 feet above the deck that can fit one medium size creature.

Railings: Railings surround the edge of the ship except for where the four doors are. The railings are about 5 feet up from the netting. The railing may be climbed (per PHB page 182) with a DC 17 **Athletics** check. The railings count as cover (-2 to attack rolls) to targets on opposite sides of the railing.

Surrounding Nets: The first square around the boat has narrow net around it also. These nets work the same as the cargo nets in all respects. This means there's no way off the ship, through direct means, without going over a net. As a result, a creature can't find their way into the water unless they choose to do so, or some extraordinary power tosses them into it. The nets sag 5 feet surrounding the entire ship before reconnecting to the masts and deck. An adventurer could climb out of them and jump into the water willingly.

Thrown into the water: Beyond the nets is the ocean. The ship is still moving at a decent clip (8 squares per round). An adventurer who has fallen into the water must make an Athletics check (DC 15) to tread water in the rough sea every round until the end of combat. If the adventurer fails, she must make an Endurance check (DC 15) at the end of the combat or lose one healing surge to represent the struggle to stay afloat as she is rescued.

WHAT'S NEXT

Once the adventurers defeat the crew, they must find the Dragonfly Cutter and return to Aerithmas. The Dragonfly Cutter is found in a long locked chest in the stern, chained to the deck and covered by other supplies. Give the Dragonfly Cutter Appendix to the players. They are welcome to use whatever method they wish to return to Aerithmas, though the easiest is to set the crew free below (they can be calmed down, and the key is found on the slavelord) and ask them to sail the ship back for them. A few of the crew have sufficient nautical skill to sail the ship quickly back to port. The remainder will grudgingly crew the oars as long as it gets them home (and free) as fast as possible. It will only take an hour or two to reach Aerithmas this way.

ENCOUNTER 2: A'HOY! COMBAT STATICS

Privateer Captain	Level 13 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (human ranger)	XP 1600
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +12
HP 252; Bloodied 126	
AC 29; Fortitude 29, Reflex 27, Will 24	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+18 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 2d8 + 14).	
M Cut & Thrust (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Make two scimitar attacks.	
M Boot to the Face (standard; recharge 5 or 6) ♦ Weapon	
+18 vs. AC; 3d8 + 6 damage (crit 2d8 + 30), and the target is stunned (save ends).	
M Two-Wolf Pounce (standard; recharge 4,5 or 6) ♦ Weapon	
Privateer Captain may shift 2 squares before making two attacks (main weapon and off-hand weapon). +18 vs AC; 2d8 + 6 damage (crit 2d8 + 22) (main weapon) and 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 2d8 + 14) (off-hand weapon). Effect: After attacking the primary target, the Captain may shift 2 squares and make a secondary attack. Secondary target is one creature other than the primary target. +18 vs AC; 2d8 damage (crit 2d8+16) (off-hand weapon).	
M In like Flynn (immediate reaction; when an adjacent enemy shifts away from Privateer Captain; at-will)	
Privateer Captain shifts to remain adjacent to the enemy. After the shift the Captain may make an attack. +16 vs. Reflex; Target is dazed until end of the Captain's next turn. Privateer Captain cannot use this power if the enemy shifts using a movement mode he does not possess.	
Pressing Attack	
Privateer Captain gains 1 action point the first time he reduces a foe to 0 hit points in an encounter.	
Practiced Swagger	
Privateer Captain's movement is not hindered by difficult terrain on any boat or ship.	
Hunter's Quarry	
As per Ranger class feature (PHB 104). 2d6 additional damage once per turn on marked target. Minor action to mark.	
Two-Blade Fighting Style	
As per Ranger class feature (PHB 104). Already included above.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Acrobatics +14, Perception +12, Athletics +17	
Str 22 (+12)	Dex 17 (+9) Wis 13 (+7)
Con 14 (+8)	Int 11 (+6) Cha 12 (+7)
Equipment 2 Scimitars, Leather Armor	

Deckhands	Level 10 Minions
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 125
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +5
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 26; Fortitude 24, Reflex 22, Will 23	
Speed 5	
m Club(standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+16 vs. AC; 6 damage	
Mob Rule	
A deck hand gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while at least two other deck hands are within 5 squares of it.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Str 18 (+9)	Dex 13 (+6) Wis 10 (+5)
Con 15 (+7)	Int 11 (+5) Cha 10 (+5)

Mistress of the Waves	Level 12 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (human wizard)	XP 700
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +14
HP 118; Bloodied 59	
AC 26; Fortitude 23, Reflex 26, Will 25	
Speed 6	
r Squall (standard; at-will) ♦ Arcane, Cold	
Ranged 10; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 cold damage and the target is slowed until the end of Mistress' next turn.	
A Icy Violation (standard: encounter) ♦ Arcane, Cold, Zone	
Area burst 1 within 10; targets enemies; +16 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 cold damage and the target is immobilized (save ends). Effect: The burst creates a zone of tentacles that last until the end of the Mistress' next turn. Sustain Minor: Make a +16 vs. Fortitude attack against all targets within the zone. On hit, the target takes 1d8 + 6 cold damage and is immobilized (save ends).	
A Wave Crest (standard: recharge 5 or 6) ♦ Arcane	
Area burst 4 within 20; targets enemies; +16 vs. Reflex; 1d10 +6 damage, the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends), and the target slides 3 squares and is knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target slides 1 square.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Perception +14, Insight +14, Bluff +12	
Str 11 (+6)	Dex 12 (+7) Wis 17 (+9)
Con 14 (+8)	Int 22(+12) Cha 13 (+7)
Equipment Glowing blue orb, bluish-green robe and hooded cloak	

Slavelord	Level 12 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (human)	XP 700
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +12
HP 122; Bloodied 61	
AC 28; Fortitude 28, Reflex 24, Will 23	
Speed 6	
m Harpoon (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is Restrained and takes ongoing 5 damage (until escape). While the target is Restrained, the Slavelord cannot use the harpoon to make attacks.	
m Katar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+19 vs. AC; 1d6 +6 damage (crit 2d6 + 12).	
R Reeling Harpoon (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 5/10; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the Slavelord makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +17 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares.	
M Block Charge (immediate interrupt, when an enemy ends the movement portion of a charge within 8 squares of the Slavelord; at-will)	
The Slavelord charges the enemy and slams into them: +17 vs. Reflex; target is knocked prone.	
Combat Challenge	
As per Fighter class feature (PHB 76). Target suffers -2 to attack other targets and suffers a basic melee attack if they attempt to shift away from the slavelord.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Perception +12, Intimidate +12, Athletics +17, Acrobatics +13	
Str 22 (+12)	Dex 14 (+8) Wis 12 (+7)
Con 18 (+10)	Int 9(+5) Cha 13 (+7)
Equipment hide armor, spear, 4 harpoons	

ENCOUNTER 2: A'HOY! MAP

DUNGEON TILES

Cave / Floor	4x8	x1
Obelisk / Floor	2x2	x2
Pool / Floor	4x4	x2
Ruins / Floor	4x8	x2
Stairs / Floor	4x2	x4
Wall / Floor	4x2	x2

ARCANE CORRIDORS

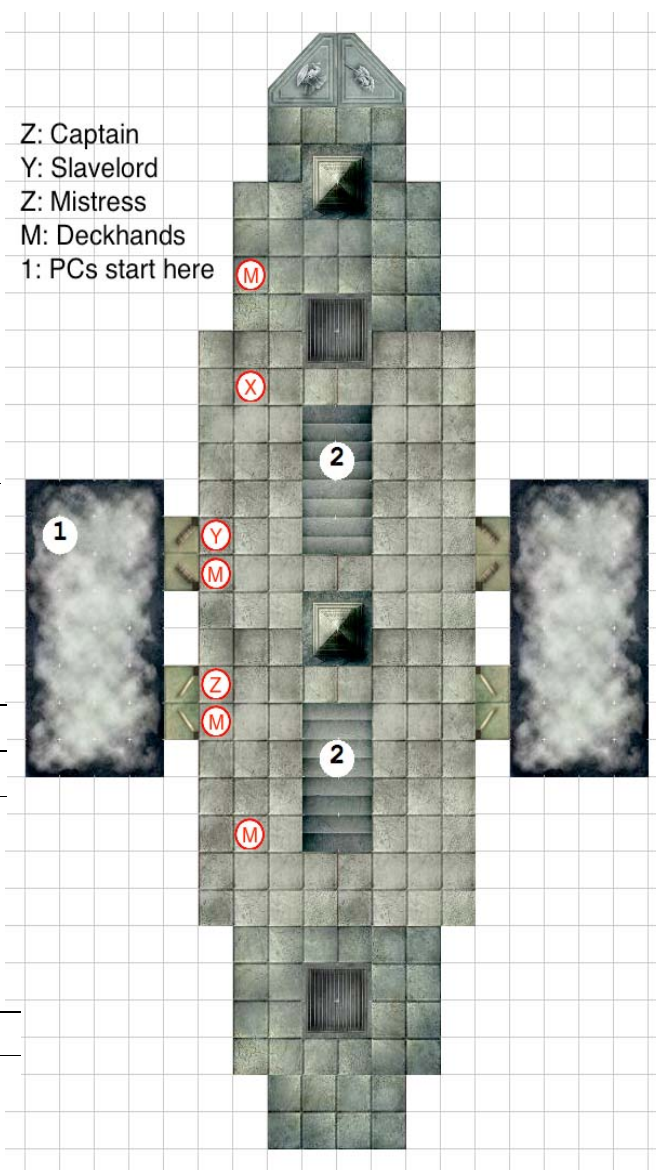
Fog / Floor	4x8	x2
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HIDDEN CRYPTS

Grate / Sink Hole	2x2	x2
Statue w/ Shield / Floor	2x2d	x1
Statue w/ Spear / Floor	2x2d	x1

FANE OF THE FORGOTTEN GODS

Closed Wood Doors / Open Wood Doors	1x2	x2
Closed Wood Doors / Open Wood Doors	2x1	x2



ENCOUNTER 3: BURN IT ALL

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 12

SETUP

The adventurers must make their way toward the palace, but they are intercepted in the streets by a band of the Emperor's ruffians. The fire archons have a hold of the hell hounds by leashes, which they loose immediately upon seeing the adventurers.

1 Tiefling Lieutenant (Level 11 Elite Soldier (Leader)) (L)

1 Nightmare (Level 11 Skirmisher) (N)

2 Fire Archon Emberguards (Level 10 Brute) (A)

1 Redspawn Firebelcher (Level 9 Artillery) (D)

4 Ashbred Hell Hounds (Level 9 Minions) (H)

READ ALOUD TEXT

As you approach the City of Waves from the sea, you see thick, black plumes of smoke rising from several buildings throughout the capital. Several ships filled with fleeing people have already begun to sail and more are hastily preparing to depart. Clanging of metal rings loudly as you near the docks. You can see clearly now that the city is being razed.

TACTICS

The emberguards try to lock down the defender types, while the lieutenant and nightmare support them. The firebelcher can use the nearby flames to its advantage, standing partly in them to keep multiple characters from ganging up on it. The lieutenant uses its mobility to target other mobile characters or ranged combatants. It tries to stay near the emberguards to make use of its leader abilities too. The hell hounds make use of their fire blast as quickly as possible and then try to annoy fast movers.

If the adventurers defeat the lieutenant, any remaining emberguards or firebelchers flee the area, effectively ending the encounter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Though it is late evening, the fires burn brightly, providing plenty of light. Because of the fires, however, the streets are filled with smoke.

Visibility is limited to 5 squares. After that, all creatures have concealment. The smoke does not have any other short term effects (breathing, etc).

Open Flames: Two of the buildings in this area are on fire. The flaming areas work just like wall of fire. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 1d6 fire damage. If a creature moves into the wall's space, or starts its turn there, the creature takes 3d6 fire damage. Entering a square occupied by the wall costs 3 extra squares of movement. The open flames block line of sight.

Volley of Arrows: Starting in round 5 of combat, a volley of arrows from Spiral Forest elven archers—aiding the City of Waves and the adventurers—peppers the Emperor's forces. Describe the following to the players:

Through the smoke and ash, brilliant, shining arrows rain down like droplets of piercing ice water on the fiery creatures. Glancing back down the streets, you see several elven archers stand on the battlements of the city wall, launching arrows to aid your cause.

Volley of Arrows (standard; recharge 4 5 6)

Init +9; Targets all enemies; +14 vs. Reflex; target is slowed.

WHAT'S NEXT

Once the adventurers have defeated the tiefling lieutenant, they are approached by a small group of elves from the Spiral Forest. They tell the adventurers that they are here to help and can deal with the Emperor's army in the city. The adventurers, however, must find a way into the palace and destroy the Emperor. The tiefling lieutenant can help if they took him alive.

Intimidate (DC 32): The lieutenant reveals the location of the labyrinth to the adventurers and comments that you will know it by the strange breeze that always emanates from it. A Discern Lies ritual can be used to reduce the DC of intimidating the lieutenant to 22.

Proceed to Interlude 2 to find the entrance to the Emperor's palace.

ENCOUNTER 3: BURN IT ALL COMBAT STATISTICS

Tiefling Lieutenant Medium natural humanoid	Level 11 Elite Soldier (Leader) XP 1,200
Initiative +10 Senses Perception +11; low-light vision HP 224; Bloodied 112 AC 29; Fortitude 25, Reflex 26, Will 22 Resist 20 fire Saving Throws +2 Speed 6 Action Points 1	
m Frozen Flail (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon Requires flail; +18 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage, and the tiefling lieutenant makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary attack: +16 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 cold damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon The tiefling lieutenant makes two frozen flail attacks, and deals an extra 1d8 damage on a hit against a marked or dazed target.	
C Frost Blast (standard; recharge 5-6) ♦ Cold, Weapon Requires flail; Close blast 5; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 5 cold damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and dazed (save ends).	
Fire Shield (immediate reaction; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon Requires shield; When the tiefling lieutenant is hit by a melee attack, the attacker takes 5 ongoing fire damage (save ends).	
C Redouble The Troops (minor; when first bloodied) ♦ Heal Close blast 5; All allies gain 10 hit points and +2 to their next attack.	
Combat Challenge As fighter class ability (see Players Handbook, page 76)	
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter) The tiefling lieutenant gains a +1 bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit it since the tiefling lieutenant's last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, the lieutenant deals an extra 5 damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, primordial Skills Athletics + 16, Intimidate +12 Str 20 (+10) Dex 14 (+7) Wis 12 (+6) Con 16 (+8) Int 15 (+7) Cha 15 (+7)	
Equipment flail, light shield, scale armor	

Nightmare Large shadow magical beast (mount)	Level 11 Skirmisher XP 600
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +11; darkvision HP 122; Bloodied 61 AC 25 (27 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 24, Reflex 23, Will 22 Resist 20 fire; see also hell's ride Speed 10, teleport 10	
m Hooves (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire +16 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Hell's Ride (while mounted by a friendly rider of 12th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Fire, Mount The nightmare's rider gains resist 20 fire.	
Hooves of Hell (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Fire The nightmare moves up to 10 squares. Each square the nightmare leaves is filled with fire to a height of 10 feet until the end of the nightmare's next turn. Any creature that hits the nightmare with a melee attack during this move, or that enters one of the flaming squares, takes 10 fire damage.	
Alignment Evil Languages - Skills Endurance +19 Str 23 (+11) Dex 19 (+9) Wis 12 (+6) Con 26 (+13) Int 5 (+2) Cha 15 (+7)	

Fire Archon Emberguard Medium elemental humanoid (fire)	Level 10 Brute XP 600
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +13 Ember Cloud (Fire) aura 1; any creature that begins its turn in the aura takes 5 fire damage. HP 131; Bloodied 65 AC 22; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 16 Immune disease, poison; Resist 30 fire Speed 8	
m Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon +11 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage (crit 2d12 + 15) plus 1d10 fire damage.	
M Immolating Strike (standard; recharge 4-6) ♦ Fire, Weapon Requires greataxe; +11 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage (crit 2d12 + 15) plus 1d10 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Primordial Str 17 (+8) Dex 22 (+11) Wis 14 (+7) Con 21 (+10) Int 14 (+7) Cha 12 (+6)	

Redspawn Firebelcher Large natural beast (reptile)	Level 10 Artillery XP 600
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +6; low light vision Fire Within (Fire) aura 5; allies in the aura gain resist 10 fire HP 85; Bloodied 42 AC 23; Fortitude 23, Reflex 20, Will 19 Resist 20 fire Speed 4	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire +14 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
R Fire Belch (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire Ranged 12; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
A Fire Burst (standard; recharge 5 6) ♦ Fire Area burst 2 within 10; +14 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage, and no ongoing fire damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages - Str 18 (+9) Dex 13 (+6) Wis 13 (+5) Con 19 (+9) Int 2 (+1) Cha 8 (+4)	

Ashbred Hell Hound Medium elemental beast (fire)	Level 10 Minion XP 125
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +13 Bellowing Ash aura 1; ashbred hell hound gains concealment against ranged attacks. HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 20 Resist 20 fire Speed 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire +13 vs. AC; 5 damage plus 3 fire.	
C Fiery Breath (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 10 fire damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages - Str 14 (+7) Dex 14 (+7) Wis 17 (+8) Con 16 (+8) Int 2 (+1) Cha 10 (+5)	

ENCOUNTER 3: BURN IT ALL MAP

DUNGEON TILES

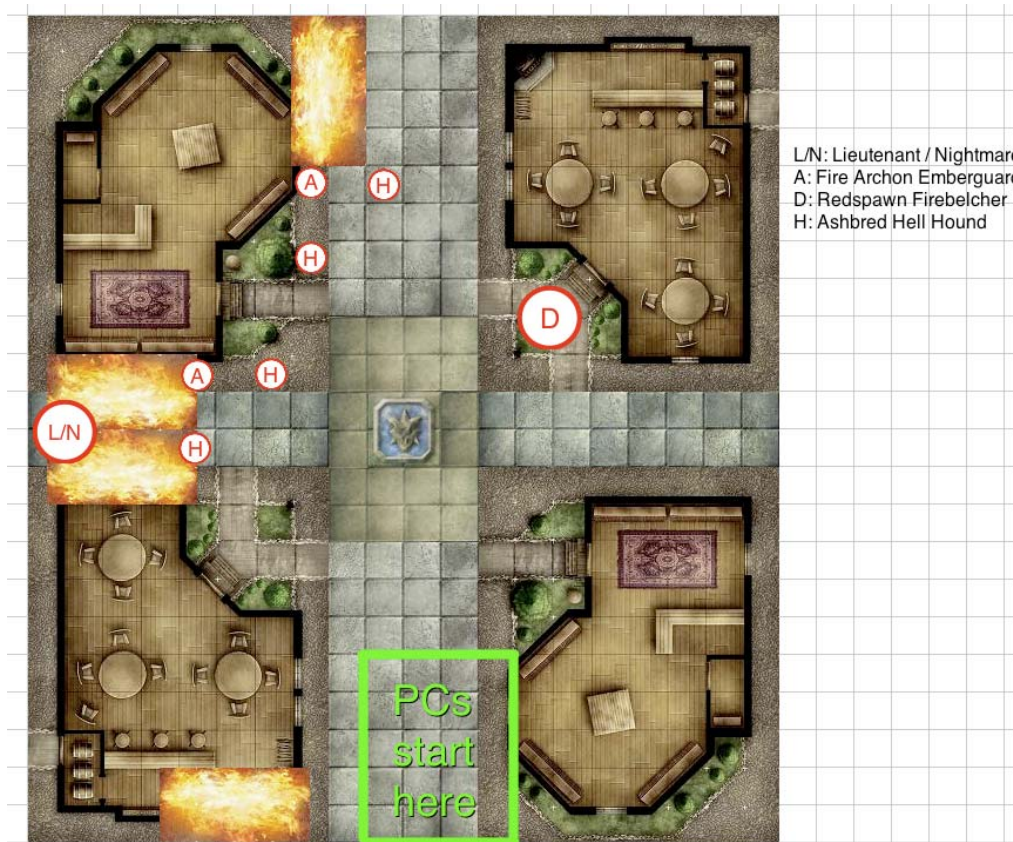
	x2
	x2
	x2

ARCANE CORRIDORS

	x2
	x4

FANE OF THE FORGOTTEN GODS

	x1
	x2
Arcane Energy / Floor	x2



INTERLUDE 2: THERE HAS TO BE ANOTHER WAY...

After defeating the Emperor's lieutenant and speaking with the Spiral Forest elves, the adventurers approach the palace.

READ ALOUD TEXT

As you near the palace, you notice a large squad of soldiers defending the entrance. A breeze emanates from the entrance, stirring the smoke. More soldiers armed with bows stand guard on the turrets. A frontal assault seems suicidal; you must find another way in.

The adventurers at this point should be given a brief amount of time to come up with ideas on how to get in to the palace. Clues were planted in previous adventures, so savvy groups will catch on. They may have also interrogated the lieutenant at the end of Encounter 3. If players struggle to come up with the answer after 10 minutes of real time, roll an Intelligence check to remember, but regardless of the result, jog their memory by reminding them about the secret labyrinth from previous rounds.

Once the adventurers determine that the labyrinth is their best option they move to the tunnels beneath the palace and are presented with the following puzzle challenge. The DM should describe the party sneaking through the smoke filled streets and through the portcullis blocked tunnels.

SETUP

The adventurers must solve a puzzle to select the correct path to the Emperor's palace. Before they arrive at the decision point (the intersection, see below), they pass through **four archways** in the maze of passages. Each of these archways has a symbol carved into a shape. Each archway should be presented to the players through roleplaying.

- A ship set in a circle
- A snake coiled about a line
- A bird overlaying a triangle
- And, a sword overlaying a square

After the adventurers pass through the four archways, they arrive at the decision point—a circular room with five passages leading out of it. The puzzle consists of four colored keystones set above four passages in the room. The fifth passage leads back the way the adventurers came. The four symbols above the new passages are, in clockwise order from the entry passage:

- A red keystone representing the element of fire.
- A white keystone representing the element of air.
- A green keystone representing the element of earth.
- And, a blue keystone representing the element of water.

DM NOTE

If after 10 minutes, the players are having trouble making the association between the colored keystones and the four elements, the DM can allow them to make an Arcana or Insight check (DC 25) to reveal the elemental connection. They still have to select the passage on their own.

If the players wish to use the History skill, allow them to make one skill check with others assisting.

History DC 30: The kingdom of Aeris had three great benevolent kings who built Aerithmas, the City of Waves, from a small port into the kingdom's capital. While the city is largely devoted to its maritime tradition and the docks, some parts of the city could be considered to be devoted to other elements such as the city's forges.

History DC < 30: The city of Aerithimas is also known as the City of Waves because of its rich maritime tradition.

SOLUTION

Each of the symbols corresponds to an element, and therefore a colored keystone. The clue is in the underlying shape; the three points of the triangle correspond to the Three Benevolent Kings of Aeris, revealed several times throughout this adventure series. Furthermore, the falconer in Interlude 1 hinted that he used these passages to train his birds, a further clue directing the players to select the bird symbol and therefore the element air. This should lead the players to select the **white keystone** corresponding to the element air.

Success: If the players choose the passage with the white keystone, either by chance or skill, they continue to the next encounter.

Failure: If the players choose a passage other than the white keystone, they lose valuable time running through the maze, back to the beginning and finally back to the decision point. To represent this, **each character loses a healing surge**. No more than two healing surges can be lost due to failure. There is no additional penalty for failing a third time.

WHAT'S NEXT

When the adventurers finally complete the puzzle, they arrive at the entrance to the Emperor's throne room. Proceed directly to Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 4: EMPEROR'S UNMASKING

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 14

SETUP

The Emperor awaits the adventurers in his throne room, where he has prepared two traps to keep them at bay while he attacks from range.

Near the entrance are two large webs. A passive Perception check (DC 27) is needed to notice a human-sized bundle of web struggling at location 'B'. Trapped inside is one of the many rebels the emperor has captured. An active Perception check opposed by the Bloodweb Spider Swarm's Stealth (DC 21) can reveal the presence of spiders in the web, but only if the players ask for it.

Rakshasa Emperor (Level 12 Solo Controller) (E)

Fire Serpent (Level 12 Obstacle) (S)

Ice Shackles (Level 12 Obstacle)

Bloodweb Spider Swarm (Level 10 Soldier) (B)

READ ALOUD TEXT

As you step into this large chamber, the low glowing orbs that illuminate it burst into vertical jets of fire, licking at the stone walls. At the opposite end of the room, a tall, gaunt man sits atop a jade throne, clutching two crystal spheres in his hands, one fiery red and the other icy blue.

TACTICS

With his first standard action, the Emperor tosses the red orb into the center of the large room, where it explodes into a 1 square ball of fire. As the fire burns, his deceptive veil drops, revealing him as a rakshasa. The fire then quickly spreads 5 more squares in a random direction determined by die rolls. At the end of each round, the Fire Serpent moves another 6 squares randomly. Its total length is 12 squares.

SERPENT MOVEMENT:

Initial setup: Use 12 six-sided dice or similar markers to represent the serpent. Roll 1d4 to determine the initial direction the serpent moves (it only moves in cardinal directions). Place a dice on the resulting square. Next, roll 1d3 to determine the direction the next two segments move. Place two segments in a row starting

with the resulting square. Repeat once more until six total dice have been placed on the map.

End of round 1: Roll 1d3 to determine the direction the next two segments move. Place two segments in a row starting with the resulting square. Repeat until 12 total dice have been placed on the map. The serpent cannot cross its own path, so you may be forced to roll a d2 or pick the only legal direction instead of a d3.

End of rounds 2+: Remove the tail 6 dice from the serpent and roll 1d3 to determine the direction the next two segments move. Place two segments in a row starting with the resulting square. Repeat until 12 total dice have been placed on the map. The serpent cannot cross its own path, so you may be forced to roll a d2 or pick the only legal direction instead of a d3.

The Fire Serpent will always avoid the square with the blue sphere, but not necessarily the square with the Emperor (if the Emperor has been separated from the blue sphere).

The Fire Serpent does not block line of sight, but its smoke does provide concealment. Creatures in a square containing fire are lightly obscured (the heat forcing most of the smoke to the side). Creatures adjacent to the Fire Serpent are heavily obscured (where the smoke is heaviest). Creatures near or in the flame suffer equivalent concealment penalties against all other creatures. For example, a creature adjacent to the Fire Serpent will suffer light concealment penalties when targeting any other creature.

With his first minor action, the Emperor babbles something in a language unknown to the adventurers. The blue sphere pulses and then glows a dim bluish steady light. The temperature in the room drops noticeably.

As long as the Emperor holds the blue sphere, he can direct the ice shackles against an adventurer in line of sight with a minor action. If he drops the orb, the shackles attack randomly. The Emperor is not a valid target for the shackles.

For the rest of the combat, the Emperor keeps away from the adventurers as best as he is able, using his powers to force the adventurers into his trap, or directing damage at the most vulnerable.

If any adventurers get within the aura of the Bloodweb Spider Swarm, it attacks. Otherwise it ignores the adventurers for the rest of the battle, feasting on its prey instead. If the players ignore the swarm until the end of the battle, the victim dies. Otherwise they can save him by defeating the spider swarm.

The fire serpent trap can damage the spider swarm and prisoner if it enters their square. If struck by the fire

serpent, the prisoner dies and the spider swarm suffers damage from the fire serpent as normal. If damaged by the fire serpent, the spider swarm comes out of the webs and attacks the nearest foe.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The room is well lit by flaming sconces.

Columns: The columns are made of strong timber and can provide cover. The large columns near the entrance block line of sight if a medium size or smaller creature stands directly behind them.

Webbed Areas: These areas count as difficult terrain.

Webbed Areas
AC 4; Fortitude 10, Reflex 4, Will -
HP 15 per square
Immune poison, psychic, necrotic; Vulnerable 5 fire

CONCLUSION

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you plunge the razor-sharp point of Dragonfly Cutter into the Emperor, the room is filled with radiant light. In an instant the light fades, leaving you all in vertigo for a moment. When you come to your senses, you see that the Emperor's remains have turned to ash; only his cloak and brooch remain. The once beautiful Dragonfly Cutter has disappeared, in its place a seemingly mundane spear.

The elves of the Spiral Forest aid the citizens of Aerithmas in fighting the Emperor's soldiers. As soon as the Band of the Broken Tower emerges from the palace with the remains of the Emperor, his loyal subjects surrender. Peace is restored.

By the next day, most of the fires are under control, again with the help of the elves. Many citizens are fatigued and upset, rightly so. Emerging from the soot and ash is a woman the Band recognizes. She is Jaesarys Kargel, widow of Yovann Kargel, and heiress to the kingdom. Covered in soot and mud, however, you might not have noticed. She briefly thanks you for your valiant efforts to restore peace to Aeris. And now, for a time, you'll have some rest back at the Broken Tower.

ENCOUNTER 4: EMPEROR'S UNMASKING COMBAT STATISTICS

Rakshasa Emperor Medium natural humanoid	Level 12 Solo Controller XP 3,500
Initiative +11 Senses Perception +13 Icy Orb aura 1; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 cold damage; the aura counts as difficult terrain for creatures other than the rakshasa emperor. HP 605; Bloodied 302 AC 28; Fortitude 23, Reflex 26, Will 27 Resist 10 cold, 10 fire Saving Throws +5 Speed 7 Action Points 2	
m Claw (standard; at-will) +17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the rakshasa emperor's next turn.	
r Mind Twist (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic Ranged 20; +16 vs. Will; 2d6 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
M R Double Attack (standard; at-will) The rakshasa emperor makes two claw attacks, one claw attack and one Mind Twist, or two Mind Twists.	
R Phantom Lure (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Psychic Ranged 10; +16 vs. Will; the target slides 2 squares.	
R Frightful Phantom (standard; recharge 5 or 6) ♦ Fear Ranged 5; +16 vs. Will; 3d8 + 6 psychic damage, the target is pushed 5 squares, and the target is stunned (save ends).	
C Disturbing Presence (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear Close burst 5; targets enemies; +16 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the rakshasa emperor's next turn. Aftereffect: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ Illusion The rakshasa emperor can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the rakshasa emperor's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.	
Phantom Image (minor; recharge 5 or 6) ♦ Illusion Until the end of the rakshasa emperor's next turn, any creature that attacks the rakshasa's AC or Reflex defense must roll twice and use the lower attack roll result. If either result is a critical hit, use that result instead.	
Bloodied Escape (free; when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Teleportation The rakshasa emperor can teleport 8 squares and use any of its other available attack powers immediately.	
Alignment Evil Languages Common Skills Arcana +16, Bluff +21, Insight +20 Str 16 (+9) Dex 20 (+11) Wis 20 (+11) Con 17 (+9) Int 21 (+11) Cha 22 (+12) Equipment icy orb, purple robes	

Bloodweb Spider Swarm Medium natural beast (spider, swarm)	Level 10 Soldier XP 500
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +6; tremorsense 5 Swarm Attack aura 1; the bloodweb spider swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura. In addition, an enemy that enters or starts its turn in the aura is slowed (save ends) by strands of crimson webbing. HP 80; Bloodied 40 AC 24; Fortitude 19, Reflex 23, Will 19 Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks	

Speed 4, climb 4 (spider climb) m Swarm of Fangs (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -	
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 24 (+10)	Wis 16 (+6)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 1 (-2)	Cha 8 (+2)

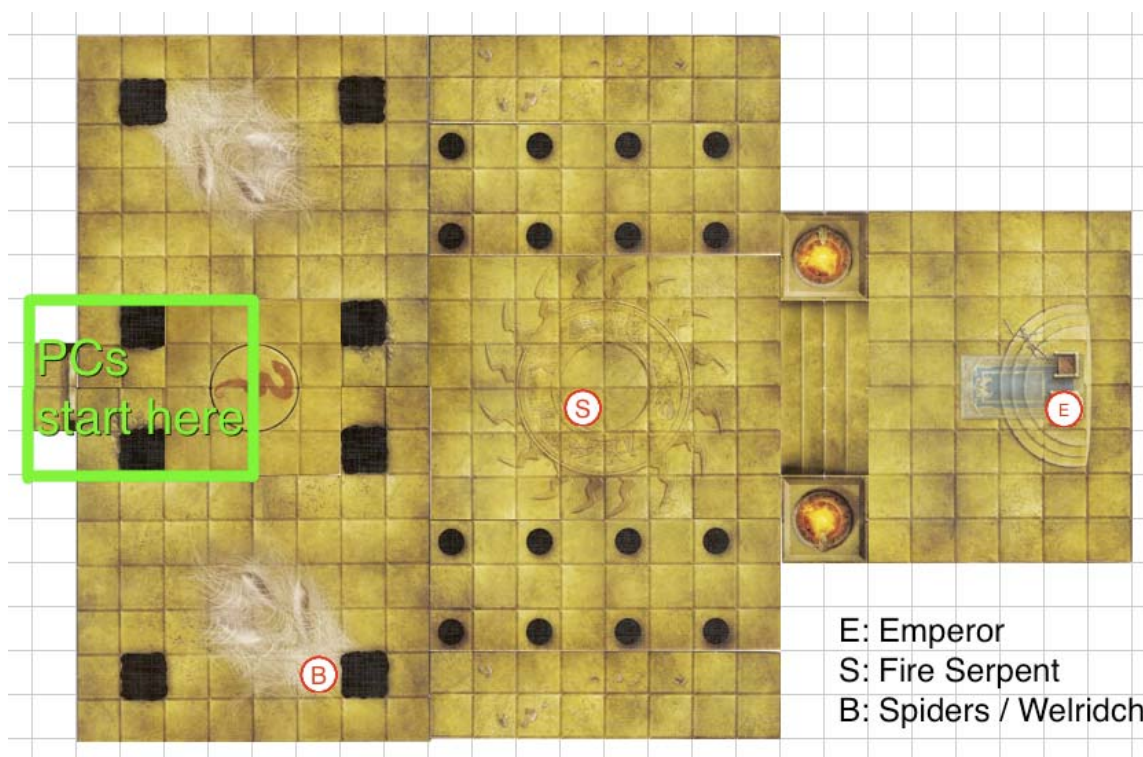
Fire Serpent Trap	Level 12 Obstacle XP 700
Trap: A moving wall of fire with a serpent-like head. Perception ♦ DC 25: The character notices that the fiery orb makes up what seems to be the head of the serpent.	
Trigger The fire serpent is triggered when the rakshasa emperor throws the fiery orb into the middle of the room.	
Attack Immediate Reaction Area wall 12 Target: All creatures on trigger squares when the trap activates. Effect: Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 1d6 + 5 fire damage. If the fire serpent moves into a creature's space, a creature moves into the wall's space or a creature starts its turn there, the creature takes 3d6 + 5 fire damage. Entering the square occupied by the wall costs 2 extra squares of movement. The wall does not block line of sight.	
Countermeasures ♦ A creature can make a DC 25 Athletics check to leap over the fire serpent without suffering damage for moving through. Damage is still suffered if the creature starts adjacent to the fire serpent. ♦ The fire serpent can be disabled by smashing the icy orb into the fiery orb using a successful DC 27 Thievery skill check.	

Ice Shackles Trap	Level 12 Obstacle XP 700
Trap: A frigid crystalline shackle materializes around your legs. Perception ♦ DC 20: The character notices that the icy orb pulses whenever the ice shackles appear.	
Trigger The ice shackles can be controlled by whoever holds the icy orb using a minor action to target one creature. If the orb is not held by anyone, then the shackles target the nearest creature at the end of the rakshasa's turn. The rakshasa is not a valid target for the ice shackles. If someone else picks up the orb, the initiative of the ice shackles resets to their initiative and they also become an invalid target. The ice shackles cannot attack more than once per round.	
Attack Standard Action Melee Target: One creature Attack: +17 vs. Reflex Hit: 4d6 + 5 [19] cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
Countermeasures ♦ The ice shackles can be disabled by smashing the icy orb into the fiery orb using a successful DC 27 Thievery skill check.	

ENCOUNTER 4: EMPEROR'S UNMASKING MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Stone Doors / Broken Urn	2x1	x1
Stairs with Cauldrons / Webs in Hall	8x2	x1
Floor w/crevasse / Hall	8x2	x2
Shelves / Hall	8x2	x2
Hall / Hall w/Pillars	8x3	x2
Snake Sigil / Intersection	4x4	x1
Floor w/webs / Floor	8x8	x2
Throne Room / Sun Room	8x8	x2



NEW RULES

DRAGONFLY CUTTER

Dragonfly Cutter is appropriate for high heroic-level characters or low paragon-level characters.

Dragonfly Cutter	Heroic Level
This spear was found centuries ago in the eastern realm of Tomji, where the Eternal Emperor has ruled for over 100 years. It is said that the blade is so sharp, that once a dragonfly landed upon it and was instantly severed in two. The spear has been content to remain hidden, awaiting its chance at glory by building bonds between fey and humans.	

Dragonfly Cutter is a +3 vicious spear with the following properties and powers.

Enhancement: Attack and damage rolls.

Critical: +3d12 damage; reroll any 1s on critical dice.

Property: Miss. Deal Dex modifier + 3 damage.

Property: You can throw *Dragonfly Cutter* as a heavy thrown weapon (range 5/10). It returns to your hand after being thrown as normal for a magic thrown weapon.

Property: Wielder temporarily gains Distant Shot feat when using this weapon.

Property: This weapon deals an additional 1d10 damage when thrown.

Power (At-Will): Minor Action. Mark an opponent.

Power (Daily): Free Action. You can use this power when you hit an opponent. Select one fey or human ally, or yourself. That character gains combat advantage and +2 to damage against the opponent until the end of your next turn.

GOALS OF DRAGONFLY CUTTER

Defend Tomji from outside threats to its sovereignty.
Seek out young warriors to mold into great heroes.
Build lasting bonds between humans and fey.

CONCORDANCE

Starting score	5
Owner gains a level:	+1d10
Owner or ally casts Enchant Item ritual on spear:	+2
Owner kills humanoid other than human or fey (max. 1/day):	+1
Owner kills human or fey (max. 1/day):	-2
Owner wields weapon other than <i>Dragonfly Cutter</i> in combat:	-2

Pleased (16-20)

The spear is clearly in tune with its wielder at this point, and the bonds between human and fey are being positively affected.

The spear's enhancement bonus increases to +4.

Critical: +4d12 damage; reroll any 1s on critical dice.

Property: This weapon deals an additional 2d10 damage when thrown.

Power (Daily): Temporarily gain Ultimate Parry Kensei Utility Exploit (PH pg. 87).

Satisfied (12-15)

The wielder has forged a friendship between humans and fey, and *Dragonfly Cutter* approves of his or her actions.

Power (Daily): 2[W] + Dex modifier. On a successful hit, the victim is slowed. If this attack bloodied the target, it is instead immobilized. A single save negates either effect.

Normal (5-11)

"*Dragonfly Cutter* favors those that forge lasting bonds between fey and humans."

The spear is reserved and caution with a new wielder until the character proves her worth.

Unsatisfied (1-4)

The wielder is fighting fey or humans and disgracing the name of *Dragonfly Cutter*. If the wielder doesn't soon change her ways, the spear leaves.

Special: You lose the Power to mark an opponent using this weapon. You also suffer a -2 to all damage rolls with this weapon.

Angered (0 or lower)

The wielder is not meeting the spear's expectations, and it will not remain in her possession long.

The spear's enhancement bonus drops to +2.

Critical: +2d12 damage; reroll any 1s on critical dice.

Property: This weapon deals no additional damage when thrown.

Special: You lose both Powers while using this weapon. You also suffer a -4 to all damage rolls with this weapon.

MOVING ON

The spear does not usually like to travel far from its place of origin. When the character next gains a level, a dragonfly emerges from the spear's tip and flies away in search of another worthy spear, landing on its blade, splitting its body and imbuing its enchantments upon this new weapon. The remaining spear is left behind as a normal +3 *vicious spear*.