



BLOODWRAITH

EARTHLY RICHES

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The bloodwraith, Pheogyrr, seeks a prize artifact and believes it to be in the enclave of the PCs. A squad of elves is sent to recover the artifact in the dead of night.

Like all *Bloodwraith* adventures, the details are vague, to give the gamemaster an opportunity to incorporate the adventure into her campaign.

INTRODUCTION

Pheogyrr requires an artifact in order to continue the war against humanity. He believes the artifact is hidden in the PCs' enclave, perhaps without anyone's knowledge of its power or presence. A number of things can go wrong for the elves or the enclave, which leads to further drama.

If the elves find and capture the artifact, things worsen for the human enclaves. If the elves do not find the artifact, they surely raze the enclave in the process. If an elf is captured, the PCs can learn what the elves are after.

STRUCTURE

This adventure is more an overview of ideas to help the gamemaster frame a game session, rather than a railroad of events. A casual read-through reveals the elves require an artifact, but the details are left to the gamemaster. Details about the elves and the results of the PCs actions are more common than a series of events the gamemaster must follow to the letter. The focus is on *how* the enclave changes as a result of this attack.

Do with it as you will.

THE ENCLAVE

This is a perfect starting adventure for *Bloodwraith*, though playing it after *Stone Houses* is recommended. An established enclave (and not a straggler enclave) is best. Elves ambushing a nomadic straggler enclave that somehow is unaware they possess the artifact is too easy. Such an adventure would end quickly at a low level.

It can be done, but it's not recommended.

NPCS

The NPCs from *Stone Houses* are an excellent source of information here, even if that enclave isn't used again. If nothing else, the Avag (leader) and the Namak (guardian) must be known to the PCs.

Consider having visions in *that* adventure foreshadow what is to come *here* and visions *here* resonate on what happened *then*. This is most useful if the gamemasters are reading these adventures back to back before playing.

PHEOGYRR

The baleful one is the manifestation of paranoia. He does not trust the other bloodwraiths with the artifact's power and thus, seeks it for himself. If it is indeed hidden in the enclave, the PCs and elders are unaware of it.

To prepare, Pheogyrr sends messages to the peoples' minds for weeks before sending the elves.

Visions are more common in this adventure. To fully appreciate the scale of the events, the PCs should receive unique visions in sessions leading up to this (if possible).

If Pheogyrr is successful in retrieving the artifact, the war only worsens for the humans. This is a huge step backwards for humanity. However. Tensions between the lower ranked bloodwraiths are sure to disrupt the war for a short while as well.

THE LONG CON

A number of adventures link through this story line. Even if the gamemaster and PCs do not follow all the proverbial bread crumbs from end to end, the NPCs in these adventures have goals and those goals advance whether the PCs pay attention or not.

Pheogyrr intends to enslave the enclave. There are probably others out there suffering a similar fate. In fact, the next adventure in the series — *Hallowed Ground* — involves stragglers from another enclaves being ambushed and killed, or stumbling upon the community and in desperate need of aid.

VISIONS

PCs suffering visions during this adventure may see images of another enclave, dirty and battered from some gruesome encounter.

Embellish as you see fit.

If this adventure leads up to *Desperate Wind* or *Hallowed Ground*, the visions warn of the last remnants of a slaughtered enclave, who may or may not find the PCs' community, but who are certainly dying at the time of this adventure. Gamemasters planning to run a longer campaign should consider plotting out the bloodwraith's endgame, with cryptic messages hidden inside the visions.

Other vision concepts include:

- A dwarven king who stands 12 feet tall and covered in ritual scars, eating the feet of an elven princess.
- Goblins worshiping the (flaming) effigy of a wight elf.
- A holy (human) child abducted by a tree spirit.
- A fracture wyrm pushing its way up through a pile of burning corpses on the edge of a chasm.

THE ARTIFACT

It is unclear what the artifact looks like. In fact, the elves do not know exactly what they seek. Ferency-Viars uses elven truth magic to discern where it is, but magic is not an exacting science and the item has remained hidden for a long time, indicating it's not easy to find.

The identification of the artifact is up to the gamemaster. It can be any of these, or something of her devising.

1d8 Artifact

- 1 **Blessed (glass) dagger, normally used only during ceremonies and rituals**
- 2 **(Magical) Bronze hammer, bestowed to the enclave's greatest warrior***
- 3 **Necklace of beads, previously blessed by a now-dead priest**
- 4 **Normal-looking cup with no known value**
- 5 **Onyx ring, no one can remember picking up**
- 6 **Ordinary stone, inexplicably hidden away by the enclave avag (chief)**
- 7 **Scarab-shaped amulet, glows green when touched by a sacred hand**
- 8 **Scrolls – bound together with twine and leaves – written in a dead tongue**

* An NPC of some renown

The options are open and the power of the artifact is questionable. The PCs should be unaware the enclave even possesses something of this power — though an adventure where the elves seek something from a PC is also a possibility.

The benefit of not knowing about the artifact is the potential for a follow up adventure (see below).

POWER LEVEL

Calling the object an artifact is a bit of a misnomer. It does not have the power to change the world, but it is a magical item, which is rare in Gyrr. If the artifact truly exists, its main power is its ability to conceal itself. It has remained hidden in the enclave for a long time, without anyone revealing what it can do. Should anyone come to realize it exists, she is likely to find its power level greater than those from the rulebook, but not so much so that one can summon lightning bolts with it.

Whatever the item does, its power amplifies in the hands of a bloodwraith like Pheogyrr. The PCs therefore have two reasons to keep it out of the hands of the elves.

THE ELVES

Eight elven hunters, one blood elf, and a goblin are sent to the enclave in search of the artifact. They are armed with bows and spears, and well-trained in both. They are led by Ferency-Viars, a blood elf. Ferency is sneaky and dastardly, hiding in the shadows while her cohorts scour the enclave in the dead of night (being stealthy is her best skill).

She knows some sorcery, as well as three spells of elven truth magic. In all, she can cast up to five spells from a distance before being forced to engage the PCs. Tactically, this means she may be able to harm the PCs for a while before they even know she is there.

Depending on who gets the jump on whom.

The elves kill, as quietly as possible, whomever is in the way, but focus mostly on finding the artifact. Raising an alarm would mean fighting the entire enclave, which belies the point of their tactics. If the PCs engage (or a fight starts for any reason), the elves are a good match and probably kill a few NPCs in the process.

Her slavish assistant, Gorvis the Unsightly, is a goblin druid with a penchant for cowardice. He is less likely to stand up against the odds, or most likely to run when things go sideways. He has a few spells up his sleeve, but those are used to protect himself, not the squad. Ferency keeps Gorvis around to run errands and scout. She doesn't trust him for anything meaningful and it's certainly questionable whether Gorvis is an asset or a liability.

NPCS

There are a number of ways to expand or modify Ferency-Viars' and Gorvis' characters to personalize this adventure.

- Ferency drinks the blood of two different bloodwraiths, but conceals the truth from both through powerful elven magic.
- Ferency-Viars has no intentions of handing over the artifact immediately. She wants to know what it is and what it does.
- Ferency-Viars wears a magical ring, given to her by Pheogyrr. She believes it grants protection. It actually helps Pheogyrr locate her anywhere in the world.
- Gorvis' magic stems from a ring Ferency forces him to wear. He has no druid powers without it.
- Gorvis comes from a small tribe of goblins not far from the enclave. They have no interest in the war with humans and wish to be left alone. Gorvis is considered a traitor and is actively despised.
- Pheogyrr does not trust Ferency-Viars and has planted a mole inside the squadron. One of the elves is also a blood elf, more loyal to Pheogyrr.

THE ADVENTURE

This is a low level adventure, designed as part of an ongoing series, though it can be played alone. The PCs are asleep, on guard duty, or sitting around a campfire telling stories. Wherever they are, the elves make their way into the enclave before someone (possibly) sounds an alarm.

Perhaps a few people die in the process. The elves, after all, have no respect for human life. However it happens, the elves attempt to find (and maybe take) the artifact. Everything after that is up to the PCs.

In the end, the gamemaster must determine if the artifact is there, if anyone in the enclave knew about it, and what (if anything) it does.

THE RAID

Ferency-Viars is over confident. She has served Pheogyrr for many years and never lost. Her decision to bring a small cadre of elves to the enclave is based on pragmatism and over-confidence. The plan is to sneak into the enclave in the dead of night and take what they are after, without any humans even knowing they are there. Pheogyrr's magic can then sew seeds of deceit in the community, so people blame one another for the missing item.

This is much easier than traipsing fifty elves through the forest to find an enclave, burn it to the ground, and search through the debris.

And that's not really her style anyway.

Ferency-Viars is not expecting much resistance, anyway. So if the PCs defend the community, she is not 100% ready for this. Tactically, she keeps herself far from the action as long as possible, keeping an eye on Gorvis that he doesn't run or switch sides. If necessary, she will kill him.

THE FIGHT

If someone sounds an alarm and the PCs run to the aid of the enclave, they have a fight on their hands.

This isn't the only way to start the fight, but it's the most obvious. An elf could tip-toe through a PCs tent as well and get caught with his hand in the proverbial cookie jar, if that works for you.

The elves are spread out across the community and not ready to fight en masse. This is to the PCs' advantage, depending on how the battle area is laid out.

Consider making battle maps for this encounter.

Of course, it's possible no one sounds the alarm (or the PCs do nothing to stop them) and the elves get away without the artifact. But that doesn't sound fun. Regardless of the outcome, once the encounter is over, most of the PCs suffer visions.

SURRENDER

This adventure does not require the gamemaster to keep any particular elf (or goblin) alive. If the PCs kill everyone (i.e. that is their play style), so be it. Maybe they start to ask questions after the fact. Maybe they chase down an elf (or goblin) who fled.

Skilled gamemasters know what to do from here.

If the PCs somehow corner Ferency-Viars, Gorvis, or a random elf, it's possible they surrender. It's possible they fight to the death, too.

Roll some dice, flip a coin, or make a calculated decision.

Regardless, if someone surrenders, the PCs may have a prisoner on their hands, which ratchets up the drama.

IF THE CHARACTERS LOSE

The fight could go poorly for the PCs. It is not impossible for the elves to overpower them and get away. If the artifact isn't here, the elves leave empty-handed, only to tear another enclave to shreds. If the artifact is here, one of the elves runs off with it, while the rest scatter in a dozen directions, making sure the humans cannot figure out where the artifact has gone.

IF THE CHARACTERS GIVE CHASE

Barring the PCs running faster than the elves, the PCs encounter them in a pre-planned ambush point. There may be two or four fresh archers waiting at the ambush point as well, to stymie the PCs while Ferency-Viars (or another elf) escapes. This could lead to a protracted overland chase for days, especially if one of the PCs is skilled at tracking.

In any of the instances above, the fate (and power) of the artifact rest solely in the gamemaster's hands.

IF THE CHARACTERS FLEE

The mere sight of elven raiders may be enough to tell hardened soldiers that the enclave has been compromised. Packing up the community and running deeper into the forest (or toward the ice wall) is a viable option, and one the Avag and Namak are unlikely to oppose.

It is, however, possible the PCs flee and leave the community behind in the dead of night. Such an act of cowardice will certainly keep them alive, but will make them unwelcome back in the enclave. This would be the beginning of a different campaign at that point; the elves would have what they want and the enclave would certainly be a fragment of its former self.

THE INTERROGATION

If someone is captured, the PCs may interrogate the prisoner. How the gamemaster conducts an interrogation is up to her. Die rolls, roleplaying, a back and forth bidding system. All of it works. But if captured, the prisoner may or may not talk. Under no circumstances does Ferency-Viars reveal who she works for and the other elves know only a few details beyond the search for an artifact.

1d8 What The Prisoner Knows/Suspects

- 1 **A blessed child was born in the enclave recently and she must be controlled.**
- 2 **The bloodwraiths are planning an attack against two different enclaves soon and need to know their weaknesses.**
- 3 **"The dwarven legion is right behind us. Nothing will be left here by dawn tomorrow."**
- 4 **The elf knows nothing, but has sworn a blood oath to destroy all humans on sight: "You had best kill me, human."**
- 5 **A fracture wurm has awoken and the elves need a sacrifice to appease it. They sense magic here and sought to use it against the great beast.**
- 6 **An important and powerful object is hidden in the enclave and it must be destroyed before it harms the world.**
- 7 **A sacred object of the elves was stolen and Ferency-Viars needed it to gain favor with her tribe.**
- 8 **Three other enclaves were burned to the ground in search of an unholy amulet. If the elves do not return with it, this enclave will die, as well.**

Gorvis knows less than nothing. Ferency purposely tells him misleading information and keeps him in the dark on most important facts. Gorvis believes Ferency worships a wight elf, who in turn provides her with magic and insight. He believes they were here to find a ceremonial object to appease the wight elf. Gorvis isn't lying about this, so the PCs should have no reason to suspect this isn't the case.

Gorvis claims to be able to take them to the grotto where the wight elf bathes. This is partially true. He knows of a grotto where he suspects *something* horrible lives. He has no idea where the wight elf actually resides. But he is so overcome with fear the PCs might kill him, he will tell them anything they want to hear.

OPENING SCENE

The following is not etched in stone, but rather is one way of opening a fantasy adventure. Unlike *Stone Houses*, this adventure has a much shorter opening, but it still maintains an *in media res* vibe.

"Someone is inside the camp! Help! Help!!!" Shriek cries of panic echo through the enclave followed by the sound of a horn, which is quickly silenced.

Outside someone's tent, a tall lanky figure runs past at an alarming speed. A voice, in a rough language, shouts. Tension mounts as the enclave plunges into chaos.

Do the PCs lie still, waiting for the calamity to pass? Do they jump to their feet, weapons in hand, ready to defend the enclave? Do they hide in the shadows, watching and waiting for the perfect moment to strike?

This opening scene is a blank canvas for the gamemaster to paint her story upon (utilizing all of the preamble information). What happens next is ultimately based on the PCs choices and the gamemaster's style. It is purposely left wide open in order to give everyone room to operate. *Bloodwraith* adventures do not run on rails and this particular story has lots of room to breathe.

STAGE TWO

This adventure could end quickly, or the PCs could uncover something big. Keeping a captured elf alive to question again later is a dangerous endeavor, but one that could prove fruitful. Using the elf as bait to draw out another raiding party could secure more information for the PCs, or at the very least get more elves killed.

It is impossible to define all of the story branches from this point on. If the PCs have uncovered anything from the interrogation, they have another thread to follow. If they ignore or don't understand it, they have additional choices to make about the community.

The PCs may never learn the truth of what is going on here and why the elves raided the enclave. What is true is that their home has been raided and they are no longer safe here. If the PCs do not conclude this on their own, the Avag, Ishkhan, or Namak certainly do. Regardless of the outcome, it is time to move.

Moving the enclave is a big step that changes the fate of the community. Where do they go? Who leads the expedition to a new location? Do they already have a solid evacuation plan? Do they split up the community until winter? The list of consequences is endless.

And this is purposeful, to give gamemasters room to create their own campaigns from here.

All the said, the following page lists some continuations.

POSSIBILITIES

The first thing to consider. Did the elves kill any humans? If so, the community now has burials to deal with. After that, there's the fear and anger in the community to deal with. People aren't going to lie still and let this attack stand. The enclave will demand action from the Avag and Namak. In lieu of that, the PCs may take action into their own hands, anyway.

Do the PCs know about the artifact they possess? Can they figure out what it does? Do they know how to trigger its function(s)? Who will use it? Does the artifact point to any other secrets? Other magic? A forgotten tomb from the ancient age? A safe place to move the enclave? A weakness of the bloodwraiths?

What happens when elves return to look for the artifact they failed to get the first time? Or they come looking for revenge for the elves who died? What happens if Pheogyrr sends another group to secure the artifact, but this time it's much larger? What if Pheogyrr could not trust Ferency and sent a second team (orc this time?) to follow up a day later?

What happens when the wight elf Gorvis tells the PCs about turns out to be real?

PLOT POINT TWO

This adventure may feel anti-climatic to gamemasters. After all, there's an artifact and some elves want it. They may take it or the PCs may capture an elf. Or maybe nothing happens. And if they do capture the elf, maybe they learn nothing. And they never realize the artifact does anything at all.

Which can be a let down for the players.

So maybe, instead, the story unfolds in a deep and meaningful way because the PCs do capture one of the elves, and the blood elf does make away with something valuable, but it's not the artifact, and the PCs *do* learn about the artifact and have a hint at what it does, but now the PCs have a lot of stuff to deal with and it's all overwhelming and too much for them to take in.

The possibilities for the adventure are wide because only each individual gamemaster knows what kind of adventure the PCs can handle. Maybe an attack about elves is enough. Story finished. And that's great. But what happens next? Does an NPC stumble upon a note written in blood (a clumsy and clichéd trope) hinting at more elves to come?

The adventure does as much or as little as you want it to do. The follow up is in *your* hands. An adventure that tries to cram a solution down your throat is doing the thinking for you. And what's the point of that?

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

What happens next rests solely on the gamemaster based on the information fed by the plot, NPCs, events, and visions. And don't forget the PCs. They have a lot of agency to make things happen. Hours of game play transpire whenever players are free to scrawl on the gameworld.

Gamemasters desperate for ideas to continue the saga need to consider what the elves want and what lies they've been told. Pheogyrr loves misdirection and paranoia. PCs turning on each other, or the community turning on the PCs is a great next step. Especially if it's only partially resolvable and has lingering doubts.

Enclave members need one another, but that doesn't mean it's always a comfortable fit. Think of it like a family getting together at the holidays and the older relatives keep bringing up politics and religion, when everyone else just wants to eat and share stories. Enclaves can be that kind of awkward at times.

The next four adventures in this series include a destroyed enclave, a newly encountered enclave, a vile orc priest, and a young girl used as a pawn in some horrible tree spirit's desperate gambit.

CREDITS

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