



ADVENTURERS LEAGUE™

SHACKLES OF BLOOD

The Red Plumes have increased patrols in the region surrounding Hillsfar, and a string of disappearances has followed in their wake. Naturally, this has roused the suspicion of the factions. Join your factions and find out the truth behind the missing farmers. A four-hour adventure for 1st-4th level characters.

Adventure Code: DDEX3-2

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Shackles of Blood*, a D&D Expeditions™ adventure, part of the official D&D Adventurers League™ organized play system and the Rage of Demons™ storyline season.

This adventure consists of five mini-adventures, and is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 3rd-level characters**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure. A player with an ineligible character can create a new 1st-level character or use a [pregenerated character](#).

The adventure is set in the Moonsea region of the Forgotten Realms, in and around the city of Hillsfar.

THE D&D ADVENTURERS LEAGUE

This adventure is official for D&D Adventurers League play. The D&D Adventurers League is the official organized play system for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®. Players can create characters and participate in any adventure allowed as a part of the D&D Adventurers League. As they adventure, players track their characters' experience, treasure, and other rewards, and can take those characters through other adventures that will continue their story.

D&D Adventurers League play is broken up into storyline seasons. When players create characters, they attach those characters to a storyline season, which determines what rules they're allowed to use to create and advance their characters. Players can continue to play their characters after the storyline season has finished, possibly participating in a second or third storyline with those same characters. A character's level is the only limitation for adventure play. A player cannot use a character of a level higher or lower than the level range of a D&D Adventurers League adventure.

If you're running this adventure as a part of a store event or at certain conventions, you'll need a [DCI number](#). This number is your official Wizards of the Coast organized play identifier. If you don't have a number, you can obtain one at a store event. Check with your organizer for details.

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the [D&D Adventurers](#)

[League home](#).

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Before you show up to Dungeon Master this adventure for a group of players, you should do the following to prepare.

- Make sure to have a copy of the most current version of the [D&D basic rules](#) or the *Player's Handbook™*.
- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you'd like to highlight or remind yourself while running the adventure, such as a way you'd like to portray an NPC or a tactic you'd like to use in a combat.
- Get familiar with the monster statistics in the Appendix.
- Gather together any resources you'd like to use to aid you in Dungeon Mastering, such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, battlemaps, etc.
- If you know the composition of the group beforehand, you can make adjustments as noted throughout the adventure.

BEFORE PLAY AT THE TABLE

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information. This includes:

- Character name and level
- Character race and class
- Passive Wisdom (Perception)—the most common passive ability check
- Anything notable as specified by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, and so on)

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character (if applicable).

Ensure that each player has an [official adventure logsheet](#) for his or her character (if not, get one from the organizer). The player will fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for XP, gold, downtime, renown, and number of permanent magic items. He or she will fill in the other values and write notes at the conclusion of the session. Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet.

If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player's character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array. Point players to the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for reference.

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode.

Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

ADJUSTING THE ADVENTURE

Throughout this adventure, you may see sidebars to help you make adjustments to this adventure for smaller/larger groups and characters, of higher/lower levels that the optimized group size. Most of the time, this is used for combat encounters.

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given in the adventure, or for other reasons. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you might want to make it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Use these as a guide, and feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

This adventure is **optimized for a party of five 1st-level characters**. To figure out whether you need to adjust the adventure, do the following:

- Add up the total levels of all the characters
- Divide the total by the number of characters
- Round fractions of .5 or greater up; round fractions of less than .5 down

You've now determined the **average party level (APL)** for the adventure. To figure out the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the following table.

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Average party strength indicates no recommended adjustments to the adventure. Each sidebar may or may not offer suggestions for certain party strengths. If a particular recommendation is not offered for your group, you don't have to make adjustments.

DUNGEON MASTERING THE ADVENTURE

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You help guide the narrative and bring the words on these pages to life. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure. This is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.
- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they 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. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

In short, being the DM isn't about following the adventure's text word-for-word; it's about facilitating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. The *Dungeon Master's Guide*™ has more information on the art of running a D&D game.

DOWNTIME AND LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of each play session, players must declare whether or not they are spending any days of downtime. The player records the downtime spent on the adventure logsheet. The following options are available to players during downtime (see the [D&D basic rules](#) or the [D&D Adventurers League Player's Guide](#) for more information):

- Catching up
- Crafting (exception: multiple characters cannot commit to crafting a single item)
- Practicing a profession
- Recuperating
- Spellcasting services (end of the adventure only)
- Training

Other downtime options might be available during adventures or unlocked through play, including faction-specific activities.

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of

expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services. Alternatively, if the party finishes an adventure, they can be assumed to return to the settlement closest to the adventure location.

Spell services generally available include healing and recovery spells, as well as information-gathering spells. Other spell services might be available as specified in the adventure. The number of spells available to be cast as a service is limited to a **maximum of three per day total**, unless otherwise noted.

SPELLCASTING SERVICES

Spell	Cost
<i>Cure wounds</i> (1st level)	10 gp
<i>Identify</i>	20 gp
<i>Lesser restoration</i>	40 gp
<i>Prayer of healing</i> (2nd level)	40 gp
<i>Remove curse</i>	90 gp
<i>Speak with dead</i>	90 gp
<i>Divination</i>	210 gp
<i>Greater restoration</i>	450 gp
<i>Raise dead</i>	1,250 gp

ACOLYTE BACKGROUND

A character possessing the acolyte background requesting spellcasting services at a temple of his or her faith may request **one spell per day** from the Spellcasting Services table for free. The only cost paid for the spell is the base price for the consumed material component, if any.

Faiths that can call upon spellcasting services in and around Hillsfar include the following: Chauntea, Lliira, Mielikki, and Tempus.

CHARACTER DISEASE, DEATH, AND RECOVERY

Sometimes bad things happen, and characters get poisoned, diseased, or die. Since you might not have the same characters return from session to session, here are the rules when bad things happen to characters.

DISEASE, POISON, AND OTHER DEBILITATING EFFECTS

A character still affected by diseases, poisons, and other similar effects at the conclusion of an adventure can spend downtime days recuperating until such time as he or she resolves the effect to its conclusion (see the recuperating activity in the D&D basic rules).

If a character doesn't resolve the effect between sessions, that character begins the next session still affected by the debilitating effect.

DEATH

A character who dies during the course of the adventure has a few options at the end of the session (or whenever arriving back in civilization) if no one in the adventuring party has immediate access to a *raise dead* or *revivify* spell, or similar magic. A character subject to a *raise dead* spell is affected negatively until all long rests have been completed during an adventure. Alternatively, each downtime day spent after *raise dead* reduces the penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks by 1, in addition to any other benefits the downtime activity might provide.

Create a New 1st-Level Character. If the dead character is unwilling or unable to exercise any of the other options, the player creates a new character. The new character does not have any items or rewards possessed by the dead character.

Dead Character Pays for Raise Dead. If the character's body is recoverable (it's not missing any vital organs and is mostly whole) and the player would like the character to be returned to life, the party can take the body back to civilization and use the dead character's funds to pay for a *raise dead* spell. A *raise dead* spell cast in this manner costs the character 1,250 gp.

Character's Party Pays for Raise Dead. As above, except that some or all of the 1,250 gp for the *raise dead* spell is paid for by the party at the end of the session. Other characters are under no obligation to spend their funds to bring back a dead party member.

Faction Charity. If the character is of level 1 to 4 and a member of a faction, the dead character's body can be returned to civilization and a patron from the faction ensures that he or she receives a *raise dead* spell. However, any character invoking this charity forfeits all XP and rewards from that session (even those earned prior to death during that session), and cannot replay that episode or adventure with that character again. Once a character reaches 5th level, this option is no longer

available.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As the ultimate law in Hillsfar, The Red Plumes are as corrupt as they are cruel, and regularly enrich themselves at the expense of the common folk in Hillsfar and its surrounds.

A half-orc sorcerer named Breex Vandermast has teamed up with a company of Red Plumes under the command of Captain Erlich. These Plumes have taken to raiding small villages around Hillsfar, kidnapping non-humans and selling them to the Arena where they serve as desperate combatants. Their most recent victims are the Tinfellows, a family of halflings with connections to The Harpers. The halflings are being held prisoner inside several caged wagons at a camp the Plumes have made inside the Cormanthor Forrest.

Whether by their own device or lack of caution, the characters are captured by a group of Red Plume patrol; possibly having first been betrayed by an elf met near the farm. If they are lucky, however, they may escape capture. But their mission remains the same; find the halflings and other missing farmers and free them.

A HEAVY HANDED OPENING

There may be some contention regarding the Red Plume ambush that occurs early in the adventure, and rightly so. Be sure, however, to explain the significance of this occurrence; it shows that the Red Plumes have moved from simply removing non-humans from the city to actually assaulting and kidnapping from the surrounding area.

The characters may or may not learn the truth about why, however. In short, Breex has taken it upon himself to earn a bit of extra coin by kidnapping locals and selling them to Mags at the arena. Captain Erlich has signed on in exchange for a portion of the gold earned from the sale and for the land belonging to the kidnapped farmers, which he plans to give to his many relatives.

Either as a result of their capture or their own ingenuity, the characters are taken or smuggled into the Arena where they must participate in a recreation of an ancient, historical battle. In the chaos that follows, they must flee the arena—and the city—with their precious cargo in tow.

HILLSFAR

Known as The City of Trade, Hillsfar connects a sheltered bay on Moonsea to two major roads leading south and east through Cormanthor Forest with a third that travels west to the Dragon Coast. Within her high walls raw ore, lumber and furs are traded for imported goods, spices and luxury items.

Hillsfar is a xenophobic and totalitarian city-state that does not tolerate non-humans. First Lord Torin Nomerthal is the de facto ruler of Hillsfar, despite the oversight of a feckless senate. Nomerthal is a man in his middle years who hides his shrewd ambition under well-crafted paternal demeanor. He is popular with the citizens of Hillsfar, and those that don't love him fear the retribution of the Red Plumes, the city guard and standing army.

Lately the people of Hillsfar have grown restless, lustful and greedy. They clamor for new spectacles to satiate their hedonistic desires; the Red Plumes are only happy to profit from.

OVERVIEW

This adventure is divided into an Introduction and three Parts.

Introduction. The characters meet Olisara Lightsong in a backwater inn and are recruited by Those Who Harp to investigate the disappearance of several farming families between the Cormanthor Forest and Hillsfar.

Part 1. The characters look into the most recent of the suspicious disappearances—that of the Tinfellow family. During their investigations, they meet an elf that is not all that she appears to be. The party comes across a less-than-scrupulous Red Plume patrol. If they're lucky, they may be able to get away. Otherwise, they are taken into custody.

Part 2. The characters—either due in part to their defeat, or their intentional capture—are taken to Hillsfar by the Red Plumes. Once in Hillsfar, they are bought and sent to the Arena. Within the Arena, they are reacquainted with a familiar face.

Part 3. The characters face a deadly group of halfling gladiators in a reenactment of the destruction of Northkeep. Assuming they survive, they must square off with Breex, a sorcerer with money on his mind.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Before the adventure begins each character has received a personal invitation to attend a theatrical event, The Poppet's History of Hillsfar, playing one night only at the Cloverwall Roadhouse. Each elaborately styled invitation has been delivered to the character by unusual means; found in a character's boot in the morning, appearing at the bottom of a mug of ale or even dropped at their feet by an unusual bird.

Faction Assignment (Harpers). Any characters that

are members of the Harpers have been charged with investigating a family of missing halflings—the Tinfellows—and discovering their fate. If possible, they should be freed. For more information, they have been asked to go to the Cloverwall Roadhouse to meet Olisara Lightsong.

Heroes of Phlan. If the characters have participated in adventures from the preceding seasons, they may be aware of the plight of the town of Phlan, now conquered by the green dragon Vorgansharax; the Maimed Virulence. Just as residents of Phlan escape to Mulmaster, so too did they flee to Hillsfar—be it in smaller numbers. Those characters still trying to find aid for Phlan are asked by refugees to attend an event at the Cloverwall Roadhouse and be on the lookout for potential allies that might aid in either feeding the refugees or retaking Phlan.

INTRODUCTION: THE PUPPETEER'S OFFER

The Cloverwall Roadhouse is a ramshackle two-story inn a day's ride northwest of Hillsfar. The tavern offers reasonably-priced meals and lodging, and the tavern keeper operates an amateur smithy that can shoe horses and repair armor as needed. The main tavern room is nearly empty but the sound of laughter washes up from the basement. A broad-shouldered Shou human (Gai) stands in the doorway under a banner that reads "Poppet's Playhouse". He curtly greets the characters, takes their invitations and directs them down the stairs to the show. Anyone without an invitation is not permitted into the basement.

This low basement is full of empty benches facing an ornate hand-puppet stage. The air is cool and musty and thick with the smell of the two oil lamps that burn beside the stage. A few puppets with human features wearing red-feathered hats whack away at other puppets with elven, dwarven, and halfling features with tiny wooden swords.

Although you seem to have arrived in the middle of it, the simple puppet show depicts the recent history of Hillsfar. The puppet Red Plumes defeat pompous elves, obstinate dwarves, and scheming halflings with their swords.

The puppet show culminates as a puppet in golden armor appears. The crowd of puppets erupts with Cheers of "Torin!" and "Lord Nomerthal!" The heroic poppet strikes a dazzling pose and exits the stage. The unusual production is over.

Without waiting for the characters to decide whether or not to applaud, a regal female elf in a simple traveler's cloak steps from behind the stage—the golden-armored puppet clutched in her hand.

ROLEPLAYING OLISARA LIGHTSONG

Olisara is a high ranking agent of The Harpers, although she only hints at the authority she commands. Her long, white hair, pale skin contrast with her piercing blue eyes. Her demeanor is direct, her sense of humor is dry, and she displays an almost disconcerting amount of knowledge regarding those with whom she holds audience. She uses this to bend them to her agenda—in this case, a rescue mission.

Quote: "Hello there. I trust your family is well. Has little Willa recovered from her cold?"

Olisara is accompanied by Gai, a male human from the far-east, and her close friend, Elltrix. Members of the Harpers faction recognize her immediately as their representative to the Moonsea region. Unless the players threaten Olisara these NPCs remain in the background.

"Welcome friends. My name is Olisara Lightsong. I thought a glimpse of the propaganda that passes for entertainment in these parts here might be illuminating. We who harp wish to enlist your services."

"In the past half-dozen tendays, several farmsteads between Hillsfar and the Cormanthor Forrest have been raided; the farmers themselves have disappeared, never to be heard from again. The latest clan to go missing was the Tinfellows, a family of halflings who have aided my allies in the past. We would enlist to you discover what became of our friends and rescue... or avenge them."

As the characters ask questions Olisara elaborates on the intelligence the Harpers have received.

Seven farms have been raided in the last sixty days.

- Several farms have been raided by persons unknown in the last two months. The farmers themselves gone, never to be seen or heard from again.
- Olisara has not been able to locate any witnesses to these raids in her brief investigation, and only recently learned of these disappearances from rumors and messages sent by concerned relatives.
- Most of the farms are north and west of Hillsfar.
- The most recent—and co-incidentally—closest farmstead affected is owned by the Tinfellows, a family of halflings sympathetic to the Harpers in the past. Their farm is located less than a day away; on the border of the Cormanthor Forest. Olisara provides directions.
- The characters will be the first "eyes on the ground" representing the Harpers.
- In closing, Olisara reveals a piece of information that obviously concerns her. She has received reports that the Red Plumes had been seen actively kidnapping people, but until recently, dismissed it as a tall tale; a story to scare kids and nothing more.
- Recent developments, however, have lent these stories a bit more credibility. Olisara suggests that if the characters encounter a group of Red Plumes who seem up to no good, it may be a good opportunity to find out where their alleged victims are being taken.
- As the factions's relationship with the leadership of Hillsfar is already tense, non-violence would probably

reap greater rewards than not.

Olisara offers 40 gp up front to cover any expenses and 60 gp each upon their return and report of their findings. If the characters ask about aid for Phlan, Olisara replies, "The Harpers will always come to Phlan's aid whenever its people call. Until such time as they are ready to return home, they are welcome with my people in Elventree. Of course friends always return favors."

PART 1: TINFELLOW VALLEY

The Tinfellows laid their claim in a narrow valley over a hundred years ago. Just north of the Cormanthor forest, Tinfellow Valley features a long southern exposure and a fresh alpine river. Here, the halflings raised sheep and farmed roots and hardy grains, and as their small farm prospered other settlers made their home in the valley.

THE RAID ON TINFELLOW FARM

Twelve days before the characters arrive at the farm a patrol of Red Plumes raided the farmstead. They rode in from the south; burning most of the homes, kidnapping a dozen halflings, and driving the rest into the wilderness. The captives were hauled off to a Red Plume camp just inside the forest.

The leader of the Red Plume squad conducting the raids—Captain Erlich—sent word of a now-vacant valley to his impoverished brother Deirk. The younger Erlich gathered his family, hired a carpenter on credit and hiked in to re-settle the area. They have since set up a small work camp near the stream and cleared the debris from the previous farmstead.

GENERAL FEATURES

Tinfellow Valley has the following general features:

Terrain. The ground here is well-tended, be it slightly overgrown. A packed-dirt road leads from the cluster of buildings to the northeast; towards Hillsfar. Short fruit trees and wheat fields are scattered around the valley.

Light. The weather is clear and mild, with scattered clouds. It is well lit during the day and dimly lit during the evenings thanks to Selûne's bright and full light overhead.

Sounds. Construction. Baying sheep. Songbirds.

Smells. Wheat and fruit trees. Cut grass. Pipeweed.

Arriving in Tinfellow valley you pass a humble millhouse to your left, its wheels turning in the alpine stream.

As you hike up into the valley proper you detect the sound of sawing timber, and coming around the bend you can see the base of a new log cabin being erected in the center of the valley. Several ruined cottages are scattered around the southern slope, nothing more than low stone walls heaped with burnt timbers.

The valley is bright but cold, the hills are covered with waist high chaparral and dotted with sheep.

When the characters arrive Deirk and his sons are busy building a new cabin. Characters that succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) notice a grey-haired woman—the Widow Miller—peering at them from inside the millhouse.

THE LOCALS

The farmers present in the valley are not soldiers or adventurers. They are simply looking for a new method to survive in the harsh north. While most are armed with a light hammer or dagger, they are simple commoners; they flee or beg for mercy if attacked outright. Following each name is information that the characters can glean during the course of their interaction.

DEIRK ERLICH

A bony shouldered man missing several front teeth.

- Deirk comes from the slums of Hillsfar, and plans to send for his wife and daughters when his cottage is complete.
- Deirk claims that his family has lived in this valley for years and were attacked by elves a tenday ago. This is a bold-faced lie; he and his family came here to try and claim the homestead just after the Tinfellows were captured (Deception +2).

GREY, CHORT AND JERMEE ERLICH

Deirk's sons are healthier in appearance but the family bears signs of pervious malnutrition. They are 13, 17 and 20 years old, respectively.

- The boys defer any questions to their father, Deirk, whom they have good reason to fear.
- "We aren't allowed to talk to folk like you".

BAAR TWORGEIR

The hairy carpenter is barrel-chested with a long, red beard.

- Since coming to the work camp he's figured out they are building on stolen land but fears reprisal from the Red Plumes if he raises suspicions.

THE WIDOW MILLER

The grey haired woman, Vigdas, has lived alone in the millhouse since her husband's death two winters ago

- She was friends with the Tinfellows.
- The night of the raid the Red Plumes came to her door but left her unharmed.
- She saw the Red Plumes ride off to the north.

DERIEL RETHSLANE

This elf **scout** lies hidden in the valley's low brush. She has been waiting for someone to come looking for the missing halflings. Characters succeeding at a DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check notice the elf. Otherwise, she approaches the characters later as they investigate the outskirts of the valley.

INVESTIGATING THE FARM

Characters who actively investigate the farm and the valley and succeed on the appropriate DC 10 skill checks can learn the following:

- Wisdom (Survival). The Red Plumes can be tracked back to their camp in the forest. Characters that succeed on this check finds a trail of heavy boot prints that converge near the barn and lead up over a pass on the northern ridge. Characters that succeed this check by 5 or more notice halfling footprints intermingled with the boot prints.
- Intelligence (Investigation). Characters who investigate the burned cottages and succeed on this check deduce that these cottages were built for halfling sized humanoids. The damage appears to have occurred roughly a tenday ago.
- Wisdom (Animal Handling). The sheep are skittish. They are afraid of any humanoid over three feet tall, keeping their distance from taller folk.
- Wisdom (Perception). Characters who investigate the surrounding area and succeed on this check find the body of a halfling male in the stream, near the spring. It is one of the Tinfellows, with crossbow bolt through his back. A subsequent Intelligence (Investigation) reveals that the head of the bolt was treated with some kind of poison, whereas a successful Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals that the halfling succumbed to poison and then drowned. Deriel Rethslane is hiding nearby and approaches any player that examines this body, though she hides in the shrubs to remain hidden from the Erlich's.

If the characters have been snooping around the valley for a while, Erlich sends his youngest son running out the valley to find a Red Plume patrol and alert them to the characters's presence.

DERIEL RETHSLANE

This female moon elf **scout** has been living among the trees and beasts of Cormanthor forest for over a century. Years ago she fell in love with a surface-dwelling drow merchant named Arrizz (DDEX3-1 *Harried in Hillsfar*). Things have gone from bad to worse for Arrizz. He recovered from his malady, the Underdark fungal illness known as Goodroots, only to be captured by the Red Plumes a tenday ago and subsequently sent to the Hillsfar arena to fight or die. Deriel confronted the Red Plumes and negotiated an exchange. She promised to bring the Plumes worthy combatants to sell to the arena in exchange for Arrizz's release. Seeing the characters, she thinks she has found a way to complete her bargain.

Unless the characters find her first, Deriel approaches the heroes when they are investigating the outskirts of Tinfellow valley. She tells them about the Red Plume raid, and that she is keeping some of the Tinfellow's safe in her hidden camp. She asks the heroes to help her escort these refugees back to the safety of the Elven Court in Elventree.

If the characters decide to follow Deriel she leads them to a secret hidden path that leads up out of the valley from the west and down into the deep lush forest, where her ambush awaits. Alternatively, they may choose to turn down her offer and instead track the Red Plumes.

ROLEPLAYING DERIEL RETHSLANE

Deriel is short for an elf, with pale--almost blue--skin and long, black hair tied in dozens of knots atop her head. She has a habit of chewing on her thumbnail when listening to others speak and has little patience for debate or contemplation. Deriel values protecting the harmony of nature, and defending her elven people.

Quote: "You don't belong here."

TRACKING THE RED PLUMES

If the heroes decide to follow the Red Plumes' trail instead of traveling with Deriel, have the player in the lead of the marching order make a Wisdom (Survival) check with the following results:

TRACKING RESULTS

Result	Result
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1	The characters become hopelessly lost, and after a long and exhausting march they wander directly into the ambush site. The Red Plumes hear them coming and begin the combat with surprise.
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2 - 7	The characters lose track of the Red Plumes. Deriel finds them and attempts to lead them to the ambush site.
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8-15	The characters are able to follow the trail to the Red Plume camp without incident.
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16 - 19	The characters locate the camp. They can also tell from the tracks that at least a dozen other soldiers are active in the vicinity.
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20+	The characters locate the camp and discover tracks leading to the ambush location. They are able to approach the ambush site undetected from the south (see Deriel's Ambush, below)
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XP AWARD

If the characters successfully track down the Red Plume patrol to the ambush site, award each character 100 XP.

RED PLUMES' CAMP

The Red Plumes have made camp near where a cart trail crosses a small river just within the border of the Cormanthor Forest. They have four wagon carts outfitted with large cages arranged in a train. Two of the carts are full of miserable looking halflings—the poor Tinfellow clan—while the third holds an irritated boar and the fourth cart is empty.

Breex Vandermast, a rather nasty sorcerer, resides primarily at the camp, guarded by six **Red Plume patrolmen**. Breex is a cloaked figure carefully tending to a smoldering fire under a small copper kettle, though he takes great care not to inhale the fumes from the kettle. He is brewing the poison the Red Plumes use to incapacitate their victims.

ROLEPLAYING BREEX VANDERMAST

Breex is a mean-spirited half-orc whose short, somewhat portly stature underlies his viciousness. His lanky, black hair and unsightly build conceals his true demeanor. He is intelligent and annoyingly confident. He is quick with a biting insult. As the unofficial leader of this group, he is in it for the coin. Were the First Lord to find out his group's activity, it is unlikely that he would be spared a rather terrible punishment.

One sore point, however, is his Orcish ancestry. While Breex displays a stupefying amount of prejudice against non-humans, anyone who points out his own blood's "shortcomings" quickly finds themselves at the business end of a *shocking grasp* as Breex loses all of his composure—screaming and spitting in rage.

The sorcerer has been behind the kidnappings from the start. He convinced Captain Erlich and his men to begin raiding the forest for victims and he provides them with poisons to aid in the kidnapping. The sorcerer takes pleasure in the violence of the arena and that compels him to gather victims for the bloody sport.

The patrol each carry a signal horn that can be used to call the rest of the Red Plumes from their position at Deriel's ambush. If called a second group of 6 **Red Plume patrol** arrives five rounds later. The lock on the cart cages can be opened with thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check.

If Deriel led the characters to the ambush and escaped, she is here, pleading with Breex to free Arrizz. She calls out a greeting as she approaches so the guards cannot be caught unaware. If the characters attack the occupants of the camp, she once more attempts to flee. If at all possible, Breex should avoid capture and flee to Captain Erlich and his men.

THE BOAR

The cage containing the boar can be unlocked with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. It is angry and attacks a random target before fleeing into the woods. This makes an excellent distraction if the characters manage to sneak into camp and get the drop on the Red Plumes. The DM should reward creative uses of the boar if the characters think to use it in their plans.

If there is a fight and the boar was not set free, the boar breaks free of its cage at the end of the second round and makes an attack against the nearest creature (+5 melee and 10 (2d6+3) slashing damage) before running off into the forest.

If the characters are successful in their attack against the Red Plumes and Breex, they find some disheartening information. Breex carried a letter written in untidy scrawl and signed in an illegible signature ordering him to venture into the lands surrounding Hillsfar and round up those suitable for service in the arena. It instructs him to work with those Red Plumes accompanying him to take them without delay to the arena and give them to a person named "Mags" who will provide suitable compensation for his troubles.

TREASURE

In the unlikely event that Breex is slain here, the characters find that he kept his worldly wealth upon his body. He wears a surprisingly large number of pieces of jewelry worth a total of 250 gp. He also carries a *scroll of dimension door*.

TALKING WITH THE TINFELLOWS

The Tinfellows are grateful for the rescue. Elbus Tinfellow, the patriarch of the clan, is only too happy to tell the characters the story of their capture and torment.

- The clan raised sheep and farmed roots and hardy grains, and as their small farm prospered, other halflings flocked to the valley to join their farm.
- Twelve days ago a patrol of Red Plumes raided the farmstead, riding in from the south and setting fire to the homes they kidnapped the families and hauled them off to a Red Plume camp just inside the forest.
- Oddly a half-orc spellcaster named Breex has been working with the Red Plumes who under the command of Captain Erlich. Elbus thinks that the Red Plumes are more afraid of Breex than Captain Erlich.
- He heard one of the soldiers say that the Red Plumes were kidnapping nonhumans and selling them to the Arena where they serve as slave gladiators in the games there.

THE DERIEL'S AMBUSH

The Red Plumes have been hiking all over the forest in search of prey and are happy to have Deriel bait the trap for them. The patrol is hiding among a cluster of ancient elven ruins a half day's hike from Tinfellow Valley.

TAKE 'EM ALIVE!

Both the Red Plume Camp and Deriel's Ambush are designed to overwhelm a party of 3rd level adventurers. In both Scenarios, the Red Plumes have the numerical advantage and offer the characters a chance to surrender. They focus primarily on melee weapon attacks to avoid inadvertently killing the characters.

If the characters do not take up their offer, any character reduced to 0 hit points by the Red Plumes is knocked unconscious instead of killed. In the unlikely event that a Red Plume does not have the option to do this, Captain Erlich provides a *potion of healing* to the fallen character and reissues the offer of surrender.

Above all, be sure to stress that the Red Plumes are subduing those reduced to 0 hit points, not killing them—even if it means that having a patrol use its action to use Medicine on a character that was dropped by a ranged attack and is dying. Be obvious here; your players will appreciate you for it.

GENERAL FEATURES

The cluster of elven ruins has the following general features:

Light. The thick canopy blocks much of the sun's light from penetrating to the ruins below. If the encounter occurs during the day, the area is dimly lit. Otherwise it is completely dark. If the ambush occurs at night, one of the Red Plumes in each group spends their first turn setting a nearby clump of heavy brush on fire. This fire provides dim light.

Terrain. The ground here is flat, but overgrown—creating difficult terrain beyond the buildings.

River. The river is fast moving, but shallow enough to ford without concern of being swept away.

Heavy Brush. The brush heavily obscures any creature standing behind it and is treated as difficult terrain.

Smells. Wild flowers. Fresh rain.

Sounds. Song birds. Babbling water. Characters who succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check hear faint sounds similar to that of a taut crossbow string and the scraping of metal armor on stone.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove four Red Plume patrol
- **Weak party:** Remove two Red Plume patrol

THE AMBUSH

A full dozen members of the **Red Plumes** plus their leader—**Captain Erlich**—are here, awaiting Deriel's arrival. When she approaches the ambush point (marked "X" on the map) Deriel signals her arrival with a series of fluttering whistles. If asked, she informs the characters that she is signaling to the halflings that she has returned. As usual, this lie can be detected with a Wisdom (Insight) check opposed by Deriel's Charisma (Deception) check. Success reveals that Deriel is not being completely honest about something.

Once the ambush is sprung, Deriel, on her turn, leaps into the brush, hides, and makes good her escape back to the Red Plume camp.

This ambush is intended to be overly difficult, but not impossibly so. Notice that the adjustments for the encounter include only those that make it easier for lower-level groups. The intent is that they are captured, but should not be so heavy-handedly so that any other alternative is impossible. Cunning and crafty characters should be rewarded.

RED PLUME POISON

Both Breex and the Red Plume patrol use a sleeping poison brewed by Breex. Each patrol has one poisoned bolt loaded into their crossbow. As an action, they may poison a bolt and load it into their crossbow, though they cannot poison a bolt and fire it using the same action. Add the following to the patrol's first successful attack with their heavy crossbow:

The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

1. OUTBUILDING

The remains of this 10-foot-by-10-foot outbuilding has no roof. The entirety of the eastern wall and much of the northern and southern walls have crumbled away.

Occupants. A Red Plume **spy** hides here. When the trap is sprung, she waits until the second round to emerge from hiding, using *sneak attack* upon the adventurers's unsuspecting back ranks.

If the characters get the drop on the spy, she attempts to flee into the forest to warn **Breex Vandermast**.

2. RUINED RESIDENCES

These two buildings are 25 feet square and separated by a 5-foot wide "alley" between them—now overgrown and strewn with the fallen remnants of their facing walls. The entirety of the eastern walls have collapsed as has the southern wall of the southern building. The stone door of the northern building is still intact and closed, while that of the southern building fell and shattered eons ago.

Occupants. Three **Red Plume patrol** hide in each of the two residences. Additionally, **Captain Erlich** is hiding in the northern of the two buildings. If Deriel gave the signal (see above), they spring from their hiding place when the trap is sprung.

ROLEPLAYING CAPTAIN ERLICH

Erlich is a callow commander with terrible breath who hides his cowardice behind threats of violence. He is afraid of Breex and his men know it. Any obedience or respect that the patrol afford Captain Erlich is done out of fear of Breex's wrath should he learn that they've been insubordinate.

Quote. "Let's see what color your blood is."

3. STOREHOUSE

Approximately half of this 20-foot-by-15-foot building has collapsed. The stone door is still intact.

Occupants. Four **Red Plume patrol** hide inside of this building. If Deriel gave the signal (see above), they spring from their hiding place once the characters reach the ambush point (marked "X" on Map 1).

THE HUNTED BECOME THE HUNTERS

If the characters successfully track the Red Plumes to the ambush site and approach from either side, they are able to see the Red Plumes hiding in the ruins on whichever side of the road they approach from. While they may not immediately know exactly how many of the patrol they might face, if they did well enough in tracking them, they may even be able to get the drop on the Red Plumes—turning the tables in their favor.

XP AWARD

If the characters surrender or otherwise allow themselves to be captured, award each character 50 XP.

ESCAPE, THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

It is possible that the characters choose to escape the Red Plumes—either by simply avoiding their ambush, or even fighting and defeating them. In such a case, they may wish to report back to Olisara Lightsong with their findings. Otherwise, they must venture into the city proper to find additional information. The latter, however, is not only difficult, but unlikely to yield any rewards. By the time the characters are able to enter the city, the halflings have entered the arena and the characters must find a way in.

If the characters managed to not only find but also free the missing Tinfellows, Olisara reminds them that other farmsteads have been raided and the fate of their residents is also unknown. The fact that the Red Plumes mentioned the arena is especially troubling to her.

Olisara is troubled at the reports that the characters bring back with them, but is thankful they were able to return with their report. To that end, she asks the characters to find out where the captured locals have been taken and free them. Olisara is dismayed by this, as she knows they will be heavily guarded, so she recommends that the characters come up with a covert way to gain entrance into the city and find the captives. A head-first approach would be a suicide mission.

Barring exceptional planning from the characters, Gai suggests that the characters accompany him towards Hillsfar, in the guise of other captured farmers. If the characters consider posing as a Red Plume guards, they may retrieve a couple viable Red Plume uniforms from any slain patrol they killed or incapacitated earlier, though not enough for the entire group.

If the characters follow them, Gai's suggestions prove valuable; the characters meet up with another group of Red Plumes transporting recently captured locals who, in turn, take them captive.

Proceed to Part 2.

PART 2: THE ROAD TO HILLSFAR

Once captured, the characters are stripped of their possessions; left only with the clothing and armor on their backs, and dumped into the two empty cage carts. The Red Plumes make room in the third cart by roasting and eating the boar.

The characters are shackled to the floor of the cart with their arms bound behind them with rope. Characters revealed to be spell casters are gagged with rags and their fingers bound with a series of complex knots that renders it impossible to perform any somatic spell components. The Plumes are especially on the lookout for spell components and thieves' tools and any character found with lock picking equipment is believed to be a criminal and beaten, taking 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage in the process.

Once the prisoners are reasonably secured, Captain Erlich orders the caravan to Hillsfar (unless he was slain by the characters previously, in which case another Red Plume Captain has taken his place).

THE TRIP TO HILLSFAR

After a celebratory meal of boar, the characters are taken to Hillsfar in bondage. Along the way, the Red Plumes are particularly verbally abusive to nonhuman prisoners.

GENERAL FEATURES

Hillsfar (and its surrounds) has the following general features:

Terrain. The land outside of Hillsfar is flat, rolling plains. The road is well-used and rutted, but dry and travel is easy. Within the city gate, the roads are paved with cobbles.

Light. The sun is high in the sky and the weather clear. The area is well-lit.

Smells. City life; rotting trash, nightsoil, filthy water. The market is abound with the smell of food; baked goods, dried goods, and fresh goods, alike.

Sounds. The clatter of wagon wheels, people shouting, children laughing, haggling.

TRAVELING

The trip to Hillsfar takes three grueling days. The prisoners are provided nothing but water and scraps of rotting bread. The Red Plumes keep an eye on each cart at all times; jabbing at captives with sticks to pass the time. The captive halflings offer no resistance to their

tormentors and suffer in silence from their wagon cages.

The journey is cramped and uncomfortable; unless the characters can convince their guards to give them proper rations and let them rest, each character arrives in Hillsfar a level of exhaustion by the time they reach Hillsfar. A successful DC 10 Constitution saving throw prevents this, however. A DC 17 Charisma (Persuasion) check is needed to succeed by arguments based around healthy slaves making better gladiators, and thus commanding higher prices should garner advantage on the check.

At the end of the second day the Plumes pull the wagon train off the road to make camp in a wide and clear pasture. The Red Plumes "requisition" a cask of ale from a nearby roadhouse and after several pints each they form a crude wrestling circle and take turns knocking each other into the dirt. Any hero who wants to show their strength wrestling the Plumes could earn their respect (opposed Strength (Athletics) checks), and with it enough rations of beef and ale to cure the characters of their exhaustion before they arrive in Hillsfar.

BREEX VANDERMAST

If he is still alive, Breex is now with the caravan as it returns to Hillsfar. Throughout the trip back, he gleefully explains all of the horrible things that will happen to the characters once they've been sold and put into the arena. He regales them with stories of past events—usually involving events where non-humans were slain in particularly heinous ways.

Any character that succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Wisdom (Insight) checks realizes that Breex is, in fact, a half-orc, disguised as a human. If confronted, he vehemently denies this and whomever revealed his ruse becomes the target of his rage throughout the remainder of the trip.

ROLEPLAYING BREEX VANDERMAST

Breex is a mean-spirited half-orc whose short, somewhat portly stature underlies his viciousness. His lanky, black hair and unsightly build conceals his true demeanor. He is intelligent and annoyingly confident. He is quick with a biting insult, especially if his target is not human.

One sore point, however, is his Orcish ancestry. His orcish features are slight enough that through the use of a disguise kit, he is able to pass fairly easily as a very ugly human. However, anyone who identifies and points out his racial "short comings" quickly finds themselves at the business end of a *shocking grasp* as Breex loses all of his composure—screaming and spitting in rage.

ARRIVAL

On the morning of the third day the wagon train arrives at the massive Hillsfar Gate. Caravans from the south packed with finished goods join carts stacked with fish and timber from the docks. The Red Plumes force their wagons ahead of the merchant caravans and are quickly admitted past the customs checkpoints and into the city. The common people are afraid of the Red Plumes and quickly part before their formation, avoiding eye contact with the soldiers.

HILLSFAR, THE CITY OF SIN?

Recently Hillsfar has found itself in the throes of a supernatural depravity. A surge of hedonism has gripped the citizenry and this wanton atmosphere is obvious to the characters from inside their cages. **In describing the extent of these debasements, consider your players and their comfort level. Do not venture into inappropriate territory at their expense.**

Any heroes who have been to Hillsfar before do not recognize the rowdy scenes that passes by. From inside the cages the characters can observe any of the following:

- A fat man in filthy silk robes gibbering and shouting nonsense at anyone in earshot. He shakes a six-fingered fist in the characters' direction.
- Two pregnant women, each carrying a baby, argue over a milk seller's limited supply.
- A tavern packed to the gills with inebriated Hillfarrians.
- Two men in splendid, but identical, red velvet capes facing off ready to fight in the street.
- A "festhall" with a line of eager customers with a line around the corner.
- The Vault of Swords undergoing expensive reconstruction as embossed golden plates are hammered onto the previously stoic exterior façade.

MEETING MAGS

The characters and the other prisoners are brought before the great walls of the arena, where a makeshift slave market has been erected in an open square. The market is operated through a partnership between the Arena House and a coalition of merchants and bookies that front for the Rogues Guild. The clerics of Tempus do not seem to be especially happy about the situation of forcing slaves to fight, but are still ministering to the newly minted gladiators and encouraging them to fight that they may find a place in the afterlife with Tempus.

The arena combatants are either well compensated humans who fight on a commission basis, or "Guests of the Arena"; non-human captives who fight to stay alive. Human prisoners of the Red Plumes can also be sold into the arena at Guests in extreme cases, with their commissions being paid to the state until they pay off some predetermined fine or perish. Guests who survive

and thrive in the arena can increase their status and secure a more comfortable standard of living within the arena walls, but remain prisoners for the rest of their lives. Breex makes contact with a raven haired woman in a bright blue gown, Margery "Mags" Thrier.

ROLEPLAYING MAGS

Mags is a middle aged woman with spear-straight posture who manages the finances of the Arena House. She is accompanied by a short scarred man named Horac, and a shirtless Goliath. The silent Goliath wears a neck collar on a leash that ends lashed to Mags's wide, leather belt. Mags is direct and brash in her tone and speech and respects those who are direct with her.

Quote: *"Ten for that, you must be mad!"*

Mags carefully examines all of the prisoners, questioning those that she finds intriguing. At a tug on his tether, Mags sets the goliath leaping at the nearest cage holding a captive—growing menacingly. This is how Mags tests the prisoner's mettle. After this demonstration Mags, Horac, and Breex engage in a fierce negotiation. Breex insists she purchase the halflings along with the other characters. Mags eventually admits that she's already got a group of particularly nasty halflings and doesn't need another—especially halflings as stringy as these. However, they eventually reach agreement. Horac pays Breex and Mags the sorcerer departs.

TO THE ARENA!

Horac commands a trio of **veterans** who individually release and shackle each prisoner until all of the characters and the halflings are chained together in a line. The shackles themselves are a clever piece of ironwork whereby a series of cuffs are locked around the prisoner's neck and linked to the cuff of the prisoner behind them by a single chain threaded through a hoop on the shackle's side.

The characters's equipment is kept in a large chest near their cage.

Unlocking the manacles requires a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Alternatively, they can be forced open with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. However, due to the construction of the shackles, any check made by a character attempting to open their own shackle is made with disadvantage.

HOW REVOLTING!

Upon an alarm being raised, two groups of a full dozen **arena guards** each respond at the beginning of the fifth round. One group enters via the gate, while the other via the spectator's area, above. As always, the three **veterans** maintain a watch near the cage.

If attacked by prisoners in their charge or if the characters escape the cage, the guards and veterans attack them with glee, but are careful not to permanently damage the goods. Any opponents reduced to 0 hit points are knocked unconscious. Characters incapacitated in this way are thrown into the cage, described below and a *potion of healing* is administered at the beginning of Part 3, below. The arena guards in the spectator's area do not jump down into the arena, below. They instead wait in reserve in case the characters attempt to escape by scaling the walls. If so, they ready an action to attack the characters below with spears (with advantage, assuming that the target is climbing). If the characters seem to be getting the best of the veterans and arena guards in the arena, below, they use their crossbows. Add the following to the arena guard's first successful attack with their heavy crossbow:

The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, the target is also unconscious while poisoned in this way. The target wakes up if it takes damage or if another creature takes an action to shake it awake.

The characters are led through a series of winding tunnels and corridors containing countless cells holding various kinds of exotic creatures and people. Just before reaching the arena floor the halflings are detached from the chain gang and thrown into a small cell. The characters are lead through the large stadium gates and onto the floor of the arena itself. There they are thrown into a 15-by-30 foot iron-barred cage.

The cage's lock is of high quality, and requires a set of thieves' tools and a successful DC 20 Dexterity check to unlock. The lock can also be forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check or broken by damaging it (AC 18, 20 hit points, immune to poison and psychic damage). Doing either, however, is quite loud and rouses the veterans (who until now have been sitting in a circle throwing dice and boasting of their prowess in the ring (see the How Revolting! sidebar, above).

Once out of the cage, the characters have simply jumped from the pot into the fire. The walls of the arena are a full 20 feet high and perfectly smooth, enameled wood (although moderately sticky due to the abundance of water-proofing being slathered onto them). Climbing a wall requires a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check. The arena gate cannot be unlocked as it is barred on the other side. It must be broken, instead; requiring a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check.

The characters are ordered to the rear of the cage where their manacles are unlocked. Once unlocked, the characters are left in the cage while the arena's crew sets to work preparing the arena for the following day.

On the arena floor a work crew is busy erecting many elaborate wooden structures in the middle of the arena as other workers apply a thick coat of water-proofing to the interior walls. Any character with the Sailor background gets the impression that the walls appear to be in the process of being proofed against water.

The sun is at mid-day when the arena guards drape a filthy sailcloth over the cage, and toss a cask of drinkable water and a crate of moldy biscuits inside as well. These rations are sufficient for each character to remove one level of exhaustion as the characters rest.

DERIEL

As the sun begins to wane in the sky, read:

As the last rays of the sun's light disappear from the top of the arena's eastern walls, a pair guards enter the arena; dragging a struggling female elf.

"You rot-faced bastards! You promised!" She writhes and shouts as the Plumes pull aside the cloth covering your cage and throw her inside. "Where is he? Where is Arrizz!?"

In response, the Red Plumes laugh as they walk away.

Assuming that the characters met Derial already (see Part 1, above), she immediately recognizes them and puts as much space between herself and the characters as she is able. Without being prompted, she begins to apologize for her betrayal, and offers the following information:

- Within the Cormanthor Forrest, Derial met and subsequently fell in love with a drow named Arrizz.
- When he inexplicably disappeared one day she tracked him to a small beet farm, crawling with Red Plume soldiers.
- Arrizz wasn't there, however, and Derial caught Captain Erlich in his bath and with a dagger to his throat, ordered him to release her lover.
- Erlich promised to release Arrizz from the arena if Derial would assist him and his men in their search for fodder for the arena.
- Derial was forced to agree and eventually she when was no longer needed by the Red Plumes, she was dragged into the arena to die with the rest of the nonhumans.

- If any of the characters participated in the events of DDEX3-1 *Harried in Hillsfar*—specifically Mission #2: The Growth, they recognize the drow Arrizz as being the drow infected with the strange fungal disease. If ensured of his survival and rescue, she is elated and will aid in the battle the following day. Her statistics can be found in the Appendix, below.

DERIEL'S PREDICAMENT

Deriel has been betrayed by the Red Plumes and thrown into the cages with the poor souls she helped to abduct. She is paralyzed with despair and self-loathing. She knows the other prisoners hate her and is afraid of violent retaliation, though she won't lift a hand to defend herself. If one of the heroes shows her empathy and kindness, Deriel breaks down in tears and begs their forgiveness.

Unless reassured of Arrizz's survival (see final bullet, above), Deriel is despondent in the hours and minutes leading up to the battle (see Part 3, below). Upon the cage being opened, she leaps into the water and is slain by the quippers.

After her confession, Deriel surrenders the only item of value she has left to give, a sword gifted to her by Arrizz. From underneath her thick leathers she carefully extracts a dark-blue *+1 rapier* that she astonishingly managed to hide from the guards, and gives it to the characters. She then crawls into a corner of the cage and curls into a ball—despondent and unresponsive. She refuses to speak to the characters any more.

DEVELOPMENT

The hammering and shouting of the work crews continues through ought the day. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check overhear a few snippets of the crew's conversation.

- “That coating on the doors needs to be thicker or the pressure will crack the seal”
- “Bring the bell up here! No don't touch it you gutter orc you'll wear out the enchantment.”
- “Careful Horac, they'll bite your face off if you get too close.”

The night before the arena battle, the guards toss the characters's possessions (including monetary treasure, but excluding any thieves' tools that were confiscated) into the cage. This provides any wizards in the group the opportunity to rest and prepare their spells normally.

XP AWARD

If the characters treat peacefully with Deriel and placate

her concerns about Arrizz, award each character 50 XP.

TREASURE

Assuming they speak to Deriel, the characters are given a *+1 rapier*. Similarly, if the elf is slain, the characters find the weapon on her person—hidden beneath her leathers. If Deriel was slain in the events preceding or following the ambush, her *+1 rapier* is among the equipment tossed into the cage—the guards either didn't notice it or simply couldn't bothered to distinguish it from the characters equipment.

PART THREE: THE BELL IN THE DEPTHS

The following day, the characters find that they have been dragooned into fighting in a mock-reenactment of the fall of Northkeep—the legendary battle that destroyed the first human civilization on the Moonsea. Those who succeed in a DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recall the information in sidebar below.

THE DESTRUCTION OF NORTHKEEP

Built in 348 DR, Northkeep was a city on an island near the Moonsea's southern shore—about midway between the present-day towns of Elventree and Elmwood. Only a half century later, the city was beset upon by the Dark Alliance—a huge, non-human army led by the black dragon, Iyrauroth. To seal their victory, some 40,000 non-human clerics and mages sought for and brought upon the humans the wrath of Gruumsh which shattered the city and sent it beneath the waves.

The battle ended in a wave of destruction that saw Northkeep sink into the depths of the sea. The remains of the tallest building in Northkeep—the bell tower—remain visible under the water to ships passing by, a ghostly reminder known now as the Bell in the Depths.

THE ARENA

Hillsfar Arena is a rough oval 120 feet wide and 210 feet long with 20 foot high walls topped with a 5 foot tall railing. The walls of the arena have been closed and sealed, and the city aqueducts have been routed in preparation to flood the Arena. The surrounding stadium seating holds over 8,000 human spectators.

On the morning of the fight Mags wakes the heroes as her Goliath pulls the sailcloth off of the cage. The cages are hoisted off of the ground and lowered to their respective launching tower. The cage doors are tied by ropes that lead over the arena walls. The stage is now finished and the heroes get their first look at the complete fighting arena, including the bell and the barrels that once contained the hungry fish that swarm about the water.

GENERAL FEATURES

The arena has the following general features.

Terrain. The arena consists of five structures. They are:

- **The Bell Tower.** The lower-most level of this structure is 10 feet above the surface of the water. There are four ladders leading up from the water. These are trapped, however. The rungs are the dull grey of iron, but are—in fact—made of lightweight wood. If anything heavier than 10 pounds attempts to climb them, the rungs break. Noticing the farce is possible only within 5 feet of the ladder and requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check. There are iron ladders leading from the lower level to the upper level—20 feet above the surface of the water. A large, iron bell hangs in the center of the upper level. A wooden mallet hangs on a rope beside it. A small iron box is been attached to the inside of the bell. It is not locked. Inside of the lockbox is a *potion of healing*. Once the bell has been rung, the box breaks loose and falls to the feet of whomever rung the bell. The Bell Tower then begins to sink into the water. At the end of each round (including the round in which it is rung), it sinks 10 feet. By the end of the third round, it is at the bottom of the arena—10 feet below the surface of the water.
- **The Assault Towers.** The upper level of this tower is 20 feet above the water and 5 feet square. It is set with a 10-foot-tall pole to which is attached a zipline that leads to the lower level of the Bell Tower. Two ladders lead down to the middle level (10 feet above the water). Three lower platforms surround the tower (0 feet above the water). No check is needed to climb the ladders.
- **The Launching Towers.** The upper level (labeled "Humans" and "Dark Alliance" on the map) of these towers are 10 feet above the water. A ladder at each end of the tower leads down to a small 10-foot-square platform level with the surface of the water. A 3-foot-tall parapet has been built into the front of the Launching Towers. These short walls grant half cover to a Medium-size creature standing behind them, three-quarters cover to a Small-sized creature standing behind them, and total cover to any creature laying prone behind them.

Zipline. This rope leads from the highest point of the Assault Towers to the lowest point of the Bell Tower. As an action, a creature can travel the length of the zipline. As a bonus action, a creature using the zipline may make an unarmed attack to kick a creature within 5 feet of the point where the zipline ends on the Bell Tower's lower level. The attacking creature gains a +5 bonus to their

damage roll.

Handholds. Two walls of the Assault Towers have handholds leading to their middle levels. Climbing the handholds requires a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Ladders. No check is necessary to climb ladders, though each 5 feet of movement counts as 10 feet while climbing.

Light. It is midday when the battle occurs and the sun is high in the sky. The entire area is brightly lit.

Water. A full 10-foot-deep, the water is loaded with sediment from the arena floor. Any Wisdom (Perception) check made to notice anything beneath the water is made with disadvantage. The water is teeming with quippers (see, below). Any time a creature enters the water, roll a die. If the result is even, one of the **swarms of quippers** is within 20 feet of the creature and may attack it on its turn this round (unless it has already gone). Otherwise, it is further away from the creature and must move to the creature and engage next round.

Smells & Sounds. Shouts, yells, and screams of pain, joy and anger. Blood. Water. Unhealthy arena snack food.

THE FIGHTERS

Specific roles have been chosen for both the characters and their opponents, as follows:

THE GOOD GUYS

Although they may count some non-humans amongst them, the characters have been chosen to represent the human forces of Northkeep.

THE BAD GUYS

A group of captive halflings (not those captured from the farms) has been chosen to face the characters as representatives of the Dark Alliance. The halflings have been thrown into ill-fitting orc, goblin, and kobold costumes. The result is comical if not a bit off-putting as the halflings have thoroughly gotten into character. As the battle begins, the halflings are growling and howling in faux rage.

WE WHO ARE ABOUT TO DIE!

Any character that succeeds at a DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) can see Mags in her box seat giving the characters a curt "thumbs up"; her hand balled into a fist around what appears to be a fistful of betting tickets.

Slowly, the stands fill with spectators. Vendors hawk ale and meat pies. Gamblers eye the characters and bookies call out odds for gamblers. The crowd leaps to its feet when First Lord Torin Nomerthal enters and takes his seat in his luxury box, surrounded by two dozen Red Plumes. The common people give the Red Plumes a wide berth, afraid to run afoul of the ultimate law in Hillsfar. The characters can see their gear piled up outside of the cage, just out of reach. Across from his gate a fat announcer calls the start of the games with his magically-enhanced voice.

"Northkeep! The first city of men on the Moonsea. Their fate is known, but today we retell their tale so that the righteous men may triumph! I give you, The Northkeep Defenders!"

The crowd cheers as the First Lord motions in your direction. But a moment later, he continues:

"But take heed! For the vile mongrel races are legion, their hearts curdled by wickedness. I give you, the Dark Alliance!"

He gestures to the opposing tower, where a group of what appears to be goblins, kobolds, and other short monstrous humanoids howls and growls fiercely.

"Between them both stands the Bell Tower! That which we know today as the Bell in the Depths! Who will ring the bell first? What reward is in store for he who does?"

The lock on your cage springs open and the doors are pulled wide. The crowd bellows! The games have begun.

FOES AND TACTICS

There are a total of four **swarms of quippers** in the water. Each time a creature enters the water, roll a die. If the result is even, a swarm is close enough to the creature to attack it on its turn (presuming the creature doesn't leave the water before then).

The "Dark Alliance" is a group of halflings on the tail end of a particularly long winning streak. There are seven total halflings; five **thugs** and a **spy**—led by a **druid**.

The thugs make straight for the bell, while the spy hangs back and focuses primarily on ranged attacks; using his cunning action to hide behind the parapet of the Dark Alliance Launching Tower. The druid initially assists with ranged spell support before heading into melee after casting *barkskin*. The druid eagerly uses *thunderwave* to knock characters off of the towers into the water where the quippers lay in wait.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove one spy and the druid.
- **Weak party:** Remove one spy.
- **Strong party:** Add two thugs.
- **Very strong party:** Add two thugs and a spy.

CROWD EXCITEMENT

As the fight progresses the arena mob is whipped further into a bloodthirsty frenzy. This can be tracked with a Crowd Excitement Score, which begins at 0. Add 1 point to the score each time any of the following actions happen:

- A critical hit made by any combatant.
- Any combatant is reduced to 0 hp.
- Any combatant willfully enters the water.
- The first time a creature uses the zipline.
- Each time a combatant rings the bell for the first time.
- Any action the Dungeon Master deems is sufficiently exciting enough to thrill the crowd.
- At the end of each round after the first.

Once as a bonus action, a character may attempt to play to the crowd's frenzy. On its turn, a character may attempt a DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check with a bonus equal to the crowd's Excitement Score. If successful, the character receives the benefit of *bardic inspiration*. Thereafter, the character can attempt this again, though it must use an action to do so, and the DC increases by 5 each time after the first. The first character to ring the bell makes this as a free action and with no increase in the DC if that character had played to the crowd before. If the players don't use this mechanic, clearly describe the other team as doing so and encourage them to try it.

Just as the crowd loves a good show, they absolutely loathe a poor one. Any character that displays poor showmanship (by hiding or refusing to move around the arena) is showered with boos, hisses, and the occasional piece of rotted fruit (even the lowliest commoner gets in a lucky throw once in a while). The character must succeed on a DC 10 Charisma saving throw or each of the members of the opposing team receives the benefit of playing to the crowd, above. This may only happen once per character.

The crowd's Excitement Score has a maximum of 8 + the number of characters. Once the Excitement score reaches the maximum, if either side is completely defeated, or when the time is right in the game session, the crowd succumbs to its baser emotions and begins to riot.

Proceed to the section: "Stadium Riot" below.

XP AWARD

If the characters manage to ring the bell before the "Dark Alliance" is able to, award each character 100 XP. The characters gain a further 100 XP for disabling or knocking the halfling slave gladiators instead of killing them. The characters receive XP as normal for any halflings slain by the quippers.

STADIUM RIOT

The supernatural passion seeping up from Hillsfar's streets has combined with the blood frenzy of the arena and spilled over into outright madness in the audience. Some spectators push over a food cart and gorge themselves on the meat pies strewn upon the ground. Fighting between drunken spectators breaks out in a dozen places in the stadium. Crowds surge away from this danger and against the shields of the Red Plumes. A section of the railing breaks under the weight of the crowd and scores of spectators are pushed screaming into the water. The betting stands are trampled in a rush for gold.

The Red Plumes fire a volley of crossbow bolts into the crowd. At this provocation the crowd turns on the Plumes with a vengeance. The Red Plumes have preyed on the citizens of Hillsfar for years, and now the crowd wants their revenge. First Lord Nomerthal is rushed to his private exit as the Red Plumes are buried under the weight of the mob.

Below, the arena engineers open the drains in the arena floor which empties in 4 rounds, leaving the quippers to flop about, gasp, and die on the muddy floor.

GREAT SORCERY!

Breex Vandermast relishes in the thought of non-humans perishing in the arena. With the fight disrupted the sorcerer wants nothing more than to finish the job himself. **Breex** uses a *scroll of dimension door* to teleport from his vantage point in the spectator seats into the arena in front of the heroes.

In the tumult of the riot, a sense of uneasy calm falls over your group--a placid eye in a chaotic storm. The smell hits your first; the reeking stench of an unwashed body mingled with sulfur. A half-orc strolls nonchalantly out of a sickly, black-and-green cloud that appears from nowhere in front of you. Wearing charred and blackened armor, the wretched fumes surrounding the creature coalesce into a jagged blade of black-and-green metal.

A wry grin crosses his lips as he grips the blade tightly in his gauntleted hands.

"Time to plant your innards in the dirt and water them with your blood."

At the sight of the sorcerer, four **arena guards** join him in fighting the characters. Breex begins the combat having already cast *mage armor*. Breex uses his first to cast *haste*. Fully engulfed by the madness, they fight to the death.

If the characters are in bad shape from the arena fight, and you fear they may not survive, one or two of the fleeing halflings may double back and help them--especially if the characters were merciful and didn't slay any in the battle.

ADJUSTING THE ENCOUNTER

Here are some suggestions for adjusting this encounter. These are cumulative.

- **Very weak party:** Remove two guards; replace Breex Vandermast with evil sorcerer. The evil sorcerer begins combat with *mage armor* active.
- **Weak party:** Replace four guards with two thugs; replace Breex Vandermast with evil sorcerer. The evil sorcerer begins combat with *mage armor* active.
- **Strong party:** Replace four guards with three thugs
- **Very strong party:** Replace four guards with two thugs, add three spies.

TREASURE

Breex kept his worldly wealth upon his body. He wears a surprisingly large number of pieces of jewelry worth a total of 250 gp. They also find an expended scroll of *dimension door* (which Breex used to teleport to the characters).

One of the gambling kiosks has been pushed onto the arena floor and splintered into a mess of broken timber. Underneath the bookies chest has burst open releasing 200 gp in various coins and generic promissory notes.

Finally, the halflings carry a total of 50 gp in various treasure, including coins and jewelry.

CONCLUSION

With the arena floor cleared and the stadium guards dispersed, the characters have several options for escape. The characters find it surprisingly easy to slip away in the chaos that is filling the area. Once out of the arena, it's merely a matter of finding a sewer, an outgoing merchant's cart, or even getting caught by a Red Plume patrol (not led by a greedy half-orc sorcerer) and getting escorted out of town. Let the characters use their imagination here.

If any characters seeks them out, Arrizz and the poor Tinfellows are easily found and freed. In addition, the characters find an additional dozen farmers from the local area--non-humans all.

If returned to their homes, the halflings and the other farmers give the characters a total of 150 gp in trade goods, coins, and gems that they recovered during the escape. If asked, they also agree to send some of their crops to the Phlan refugees at Elventree or Mulmaster. Arrizz is happy to be reunited with Deriel--assuming that she still lives but is despondent if she does not.

If Arrizz recognizes any of the characters from DDEX3-1 *Harried in Hillsfar* he thanks them for once more saving him and vows that he will repay their kindness one of these days.

Whatever happens next, with the people in Hillsfar in open revolt against the authority of the Red Plumes the future of this dangerous and mighty city is far from certain.

XP AWARD

If the characters remember to free the farmers and aid in their escape from the city and eventual return to their homes, award each character 200 XP.

REWARDS

Make sure players note their rewards on their adventure logsheets. Give your name and DCI number (if applicable) so players can record who ran the session.

EXPERIENCE

Total up all combat experience earned for defeated foes, and divide by the number of characters present in the combat. For non-combat experience, the rewards are listed per character. Give all characters in the party non-combat experience awards unless otherwise noted.

COMBAT AWARDS

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Scout	100
Boar	50
Evil sorcerer	200
Red Plume patrol	200
Spy	200
Captain Erlich	700
Veteran	700
Breex Vandermast	700
Arena guard	25
Thug	100
Druid	450

NON-COMBAT AWARDS

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Surrendering to the Red Plumes	50
Track the Red Plumes to the ambush	100
Treat peacefully with Derial	50
Spare the halfling gladiators	100
Ring the Bell first	100
The Tinfellows returned alive	200

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **900 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **1,200 experience points**.

TREASURE

The characters receive the following treasure, divided up amongst the party. Characters should attempt to divide treasure evenly whenever possible. Gold piece values listed for sellable gear are calculated at their selling price, not their purchase price.

Consumable magic items should be divided up however the group sees fit. If more than one character is interested in a specific consumable magic item, the DM can determine who gets it randomly should the group be unable to decide.

Permanent magic items are divided according to a system. See the sidebar if the adventure awards permanent magic items.

TREASURE AWARDS

Item Name	GP Value
Olisara's advance	40
Breex's possessions`	250
Bookie's kiosk	200
Dark Alliance halflings's possessions	50
Reward for returning the Tinfellows	150
Olisara's final reward	60

POTION OF HEALING

Potion, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

SCROLL OF DIMENSION DOOR

Scroll, uncommon

A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

+1 RAPIER

Weapon (rapier), uncommon

This weapon weighs half as much as a normal rapier and is fashioned of dark blue metal inscribed with images of spiders and webs. A description of this item can be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

PERMANENT MAGIC ITEM DISTRIBUTION

D&D Adventurers League has a system in place to determine who is awarded permanent magic items at the end of a session. Each character's logsheet contains a column to record permanent magic items for ease of reference.

- If all the players at the table agree on one character taking possession of a permanent magic item, that character gets the item.
- In the event that one or more characters indicate an interest in possessing a permanent magic item, the character that possesses the fewest permanent magic items gets the item. If there is a tie in the total number of permanent magic items owned by contesting characters, the item's owner is determined randomly by the DM.

DOWNTIME

Each character receives **ten downtime days** at the conclusion of this adventure.

RENOUN

All faction members earn **one renown point** for participating in this adventure.

Harper characters earn **one additional renown point** if they located the Tinfellows, freed them from Hillsfar, and returned them to their home.

DM REWARDS

You receive **200 XP**, **100 gp**, and **ten downtime days** for running this session.

APPENDIX: MONSTER/NPC STATISTICS

COMMONER

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 10
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

ACTIONS

Club. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

SCOUT

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5
Senses passive Perception 15
Languages any one language (usually Common)
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Keen Hearing and Sight. The scout has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, ranged 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

RED PLUME PATROL

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)
Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +3
Skills Perception +2
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Red Plume patrol makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Net. *Ranged weapon attack:* +3 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* A large or smaller creature hit by a net is restrained until it is freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net also frees the creature.

REACTIONS

Parry. The Red Plume patrol adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the Red Plume patrol must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

SPY

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Perception +6, Persuasion +5, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages any two languages

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The spy deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The spy makes two melee attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

BREEX VANDERMAST

Medium humanoid (half-orc), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)

Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 21)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)

Skills Animal Handling +2, Athletics +5, Deception +4, Persuasion +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Abyssal, Common, Orc

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Relentless Endurance (1/Long Rest). When Breex is reduced to 0 hit points, but not killed outright, he can drop to 1 hit point instead.

Savage Attack. When Breex scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, he can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Spellcasting. Breex is a 5th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Breex knows the following sorcerer spells:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, firebolt, message, minor image, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, feather fall, sleep*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur, misty step*

3rd level (2 slots): *haste*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Breex makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

REACTIONS

Parry. Thurl adds 2 to his AC against one melee attack that would hit him. To do so, Thurl must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

EVIL SORCERER

Medium humanoid (half-orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)

Saving Throws Int +5, Wis +3

Skills Arcana +5, History +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Relentless Endurance (1/Long Rest). When the evil sorcerer is reduced to 0 hit points, but not killed outright, it can drop to 1 hit point instead.

Savage Attack. When the evil sorcerer scores a critical hit with a melee weapon attack, it can roll one of the weapon's damage dice one additional time and add it to the extra damage of the critical hit.

Spellcasting. The evil sorcerer is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The evil sorcerer has the following sorcerer spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, message, shocking grasp*

1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat, mage armor, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *blur, misty step*

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

CAPTAIN ERLICH

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (plate, shield)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Special Equipment. Captain Erlich has two *potions of healing*.

Brave. Captain Erlich has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Captain Erlich makes two melee attacks.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage.

Poisoned Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage and the target must succeed on a DC 15 saving throw or become poisoned for 1d4 hours.

Battle Cry (1/Day). Each creature of Captain Erlich's choice that is within 30 feet of it, can hear it, and not already affected by Battle Cry gain advantage on attack rolls until the start of Captain Erlich's next turn. Captain Erlich can then make one attack as a bonus action.

BOAR

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11 (natural armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	9 (-1)	5 (-3)

Senses passive Perception 9

Languages —

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Charge. If the boar moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 3 (1d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 11 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Relentless (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). If the boar takes 7 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

ACTIONS

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

ARENA GUARD

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

ACTIONS

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Net. *Ranged weapon attack:* +3 to hit, range 5/15 ft., one creature. *Hit:* A large or smaller creature hit by a net is restrained until it is freed. A creature can use its action to make a DC 10 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net also frees the creature.

SWARM OF QUIPPERS

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 28 (8d8 – 8)

Speed 0 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	9 (–1)	1 (–5)	7 (–2)	2 (–4)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages —

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Blood Frenzy. The swarm has advantage on melee attack rolls against any creature that doesn't have all its hit points.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny quipper. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Water Breathing. The swarm can breathe only underwater.

ACTIONS

Bites. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) piercing damage, or 7 (2d6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

VETERAN

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The veteran makes two longsword attacks. If it has a shortsword drawn, it can also make a shortsword attack.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

DRUID

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 11 (16 with *barkskin*)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Medicine +4, Nature +3, Perception +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Druidic plus any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. The druid is a 4th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *produce flame*, *shillelagh*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *barkskin*

ACTIONS

Quarterstaff. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit (+4 to hit with *shillelagh*), reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage, or 4 (1d8) bludgeoning damage with *shillelagh* or if wielded with two hands.

THUG

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment

Armor Class 11 (leather armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Intimidation +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Pack Tactics. The thug has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the thug's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The thug makes two melee attacks.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

DM APPENDIX: NPC

SUMMARY

This section is provided to the Dungeon Master to help keep track of the various NPCs present in the adventure.

Baar Tworgeir (Bar Tor-GIR): male human, meek carpenter.

Breex Vandermast (Buh-REEX Van-der-Mast): male half-orc sorcerer, vicious poisoned, slaver, and blood sport enthusiast. Uses a disguise kit to conceal his racial features; able to pass as a very, very ugly human.

Captain Haakon Erlich(Hah-KAHN Ir-lick): male human, racist captain of the Red Plumes, coward.

Deirk Erlich(Dirk Ir-lick): male human, racist slum dweller turned farmer, brother to Captain Erlich and father to Grey (13), Chort (17), and Jermee (20).

Deriel Rethslane (Der-E-el Reth-Slane): female moon elf, impatient ranger from the Cormanthor forest and lover of the drow Arrizz, forced into betraying the characters to the Red Plumes in order to free her love from the arena.

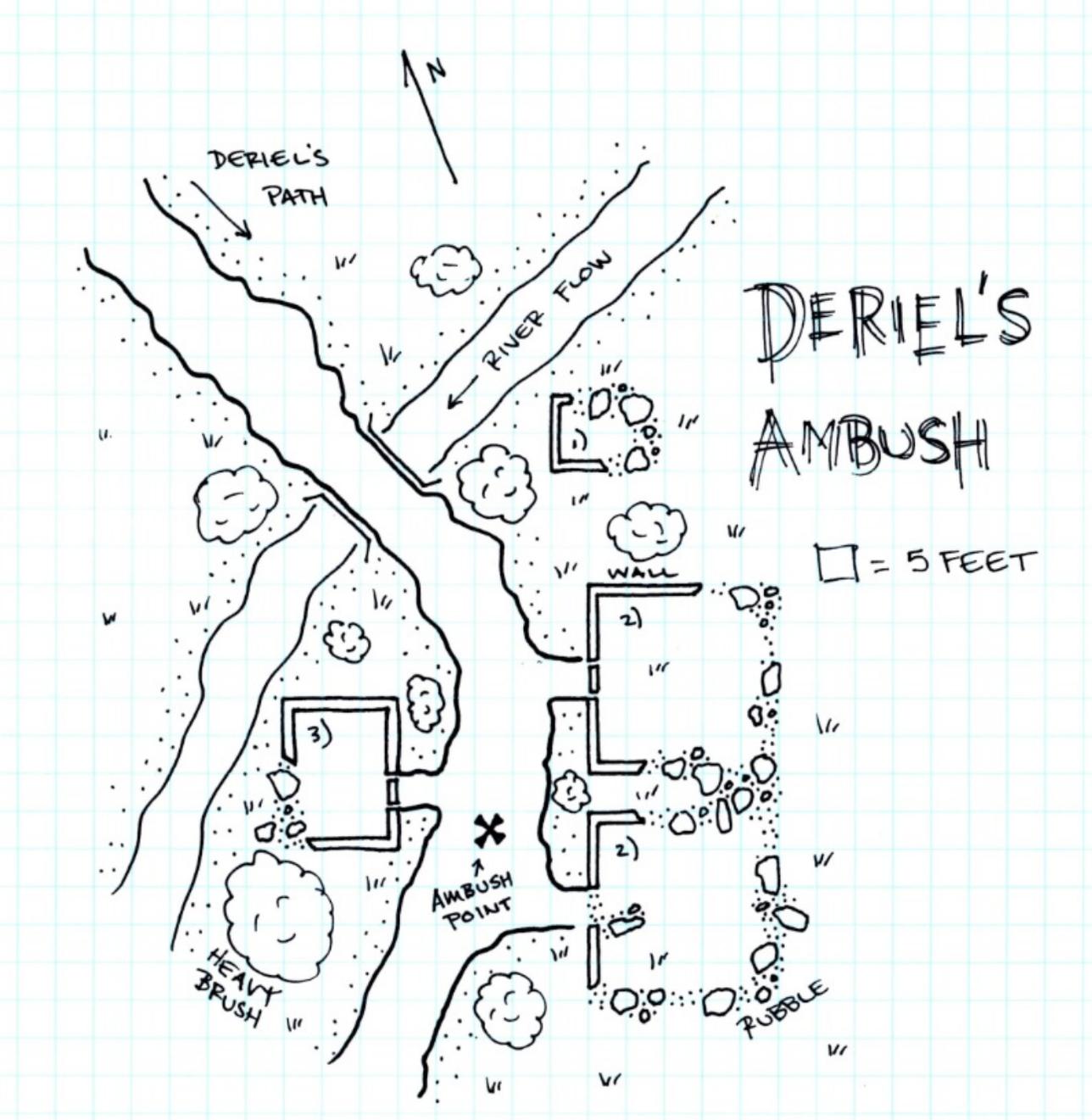
Elbus Tinfellows (EL-bus Tin-Fell-Ohs): male halfling farmer, straightforward, Harper ally, in need of rescuing.

Margery "Mags" Thrier (MAGs Theer): female human, brash slave owner at the arena, always with a short scarred man named Horac and a shirtless Goliath, buys the characters and then bets on them.

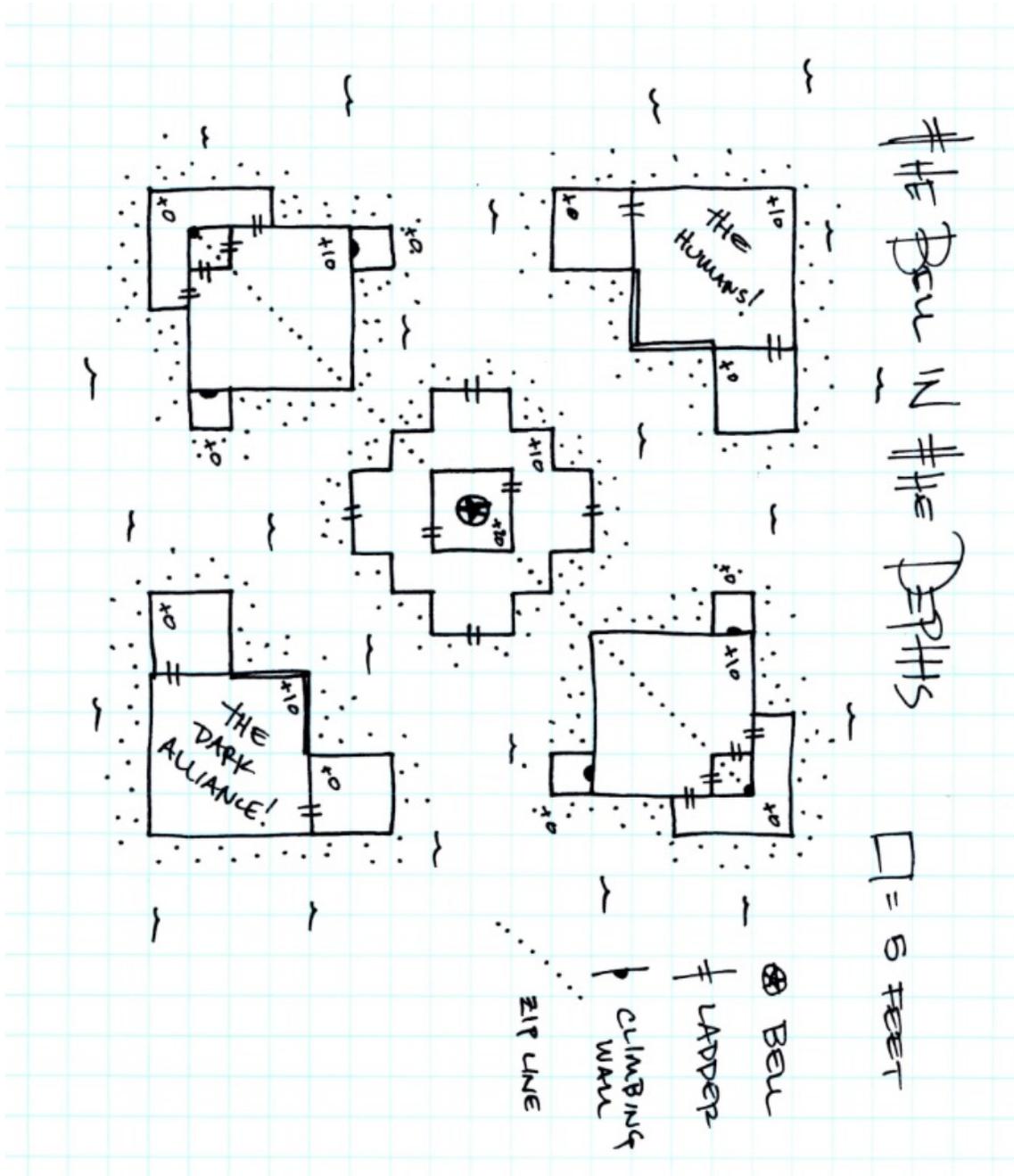
Olisara Lightsong (O-lee-sar-ah Light-song): female moon elf, Harper, faction representative to the Moonsea region. Dry sense of humor and likes to disconcert others by displaying how much she knows about them.

Widow Vigdas Miller (VIG-das Mil-Ier): female human, friend of the Tinfellows, afraid of the Red Plumes but helpful.

MAP: DERIEL'S AMBUSH



MAP: THE BELL IN THE DEPTHS



RESULTS CODE: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2015

If you are DMing this adventure during the months of August or September 2015, please show your players this page. The QR code below can be scanned, and will allow them to give feedback and results on the adventure to influence the storyline in the future!

If a player does not have a mobile device, please tell them to head to dndadventurersleague.org/results to enter their results.

