




WHISPERS OF DREAD

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This is the first adventure of the Lands of the Ravaged Sun campaign, designed for a group of 3-6 characters of level 1. It can be dropped into any Dark Sun setting or played as part of a greater campaign involving the disappearance of an entire people and the reappearance of an artifact not seen since the Cleansing Wars of Rajaat.

Beneath the shadows of the towering Ringing Mountains sits the once-peaceful village of Thirst, now gripped by fear as ruthless slavers claim the area. The locals whisper that the dark forces operate from an ancient, battered stone keep nearby, now a den of misery and despair. As friends and family are taken, one by one, voices quietly cry out for help in a land parched for justice.

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This adventure brims with treacherous slavers and deceitful templars; the author disclaims any liability for lost souls or the burdens of freedom's high cost.

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

An entire halfling tribe mysteriously vanishes, taking with it the stability, protection, and trade it once provided to the village of Thirst. Shortly after, a merciless band of slavers – called “reavers” by the locals – moves into a nearby fortress ruin, forcing the villagers of Thirst to provide them tribute. The villagers fear to speak above a whisper now, dreading the reavers will hear them and punish them more, and have abandoned hope of respite.

These reavers, a band of mercenaries, thugs, and tamed monsters, are led by Medhanit, a Balican templar posing as a Dune Trader with a covert mission issued by her god-king to find clues as to the halfling disappearance. With the aid of her pet psion, a sadistic mindbender who spies from afar, Medhanit supplies and funds her expedition through kidnapping and enslaving those around Thirst. When she leaves, she plans on leaving no villager alive or free to spread word.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The players create reasons their characters seek to rescue reaver captives in Part 1, Prologue. In Part 2, Arriving at Thirst, the party finds a village where people are fearful to speak above a whisper. In Part 3, the Tribute, reavers have arrived in Thirst to demand tribute. In Part 4, the Keep, they must find a way to breach the reaver defenses and free the captives. In Part 5, the Return, the reaver leader Medhanit returns from a scouting mission and may intersect the party, or hunt them down. In Part 6, Conclusion, the adventure wraps up with Medhanit arrested or slain and her reaver operation disbanded. Depending on the level of successes, the NPCs from the Adventure Backgrounds will dole out their rewards and possibly bonus ones. The campaign continues in *The Temple of the Rock Drake*. Ultimately, the party succeeds if it can remove the reaver threat from Thirst and get the captives to safety. This adventure uses Milestone Experience, and at its conclusion, characters will gain a level to the oppressed.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Day 1, afternoon: A reaver band arrives and demands its weekly tribute outside Thirst on the “green patch.” It stays the night, harassing villagers.

Day 2, morning: The tribute band leaves for the keep, using the gulch.

Day 3, afternoon: A dust storm is visibly moving into the area.

Day 4, morning: The tribute band arrives at the keep. The dust storm hits the keep, obscuring the area shortly after. No one alarmed if tribute band is running late.

Day 4, afternoon: The dust storm subsides.

Day 5, morning: Medhanit returns from scouting (see Part 4: The Return).

Day 6, afternoon: Slave trader Athius Gandhas arrives to take slaves, including the hostages.

Day 7, morning: The reavers and Athius leave the keep, mission done. They jointly ravage Thirst to supply their return trip to Balic with future slaves.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

The difficulty of the adventure can be increased by:

- Adding a roaming monster, such as an anakore or a wild erdlu before reaching **Part 2: The Keep**. Alternately, the wandering monster may be attracted to conflict at the keep, hindering or aiding the party's efforts at a pivotal moment.
- Adding a patch of bloodgrass near **Area 1: Keep Surrounds**
- Moving up the arrival of Athius Gandhas from Day 6. Gandhas sets up his primary camp a mile away from the keep and is present with a small band to discuss delivery of the captives when the party arrives. This adds four slavers and Gandhas (see **Part 5: The Return**, for statistic blocks). If the alarm is raised, Gandhas might join the fray in the courtyard. If Medhanit is present, he sends two guards to her office to ensure she does not flee. If matters appear drastic, he sends all his guards to the courtyard and joins Medhanit in her office.
- After the captives are freed, a lone belgoi stalks the weakened escapees. While captives may have armed themselves with improvised clubs and gear liberated from their captors, they are weak from imprisonment. The belgoi is sated once it has taken at least three, and it may take more if the captives are undefended.

Overall, additional encounters should follow the adventure theme of not only freeing people from vile captivity but ensuring their safety.

FAQ/TROUBLESHOOTER

Should I track food and water?

Unnecessary, but you can. While survival is often a Dark Sun trope, not every group wants to track supplies, especially if the quest is unrelated to survival on limited resources. This quest is focused primarily on the rescue of the reaver captives.

How can I bond characters?

Characters should have good reason that they are willing to trust their lives to the person next to them. Before starting the adventure, consider having Player 1 explain how they met Player 2's character, and continue around the table until every player has spoken. Then, reverse the order, and have the player explain why their character would risk life and limb for the character alongside them. The adventure backgrounds may help spur ideas.

How do I handle the issue of slavery in my game?

However you best see fit. In this adventure, slavery is an evil to be overcome, a persistent and powerful adversary whose presence adds to the oppressive, dying nature of Dark Sun, where life is valued very little. Those who stand against this evil, whether by word or deed, are few in these lands, but included the vanished halflings, who abhor it.

What if players don't encounter Medhanit after they have freed the slaves?

It is possible if the party abandons rescuing the captives. The party will not receive rewards nor the milestone experience requirement as Medhanit is free to resume her business. She should seek out the party anyways to punish them, after she has destroyed Thirst.

What if Junal is prevented from telling players of his cousin Raxan's plans to seek out the Earth Drake egg?

Any one of the prisoners or reavers and their leaders could have overheard Junal mention that his cousin Raxan is looking for a valuable Earth Drake egg. Alternately Raxan can approach the party upon their return to either Thirst (he is searching for his cousin Junal) or Celik (he is looking for swords for hire). This is necessary for progression into the LOTRS1-2 adventure.

Are all difficulty checks (5E) assigned?

Not all as many are situational. The DM should be guided by the table for difficulty checks, ranging from Very Easy (DC 5) to Medium (DC 15) to Nearly Impossible (DC 30).



PART 1: PROLOGUE

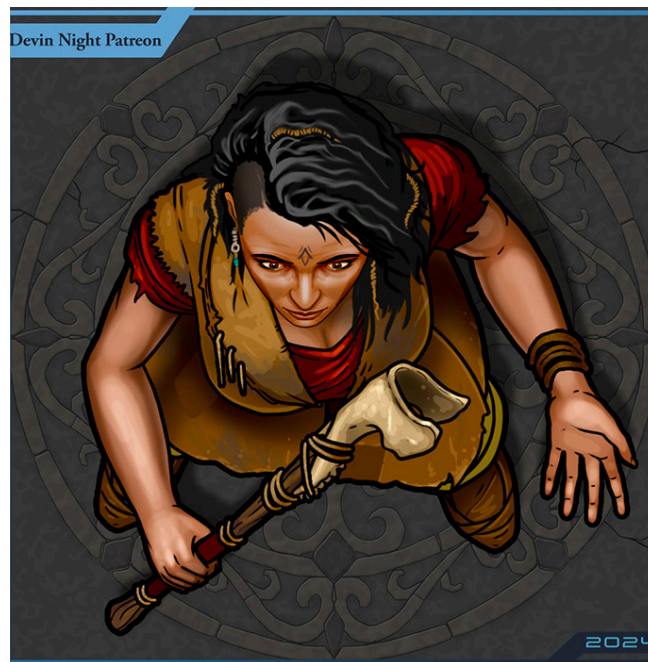
GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure begins with characters arriving at the outskirts of the small farming village of Thirst, which lies 35 miles northwest of the nearby small city of Celik and close enough to the Ringing Mountains to see snowcaps. Players should pick adventure backgrounds from **Appendix A** or have them randomly assigned. These will link them to the adventure and provide rewards for completion of particular goals. More than one player can be part of a background, though only one reward is given.

PROLOGUE PERSONALITIES

- **Karabo.** Middle-age half-elf faro needle farmer, slow drawl, stained teeth.
- **Letsie.** House Maraneth agent, a merchant who can speak on behalf of the House and bind it to agreements. Human woman, shaves head bald, never speaks unless necessary. Her House does little trade in slavery, relying on Celik's ruins for wealth. The House symbol, on the medallion offered, is a shovel with a gold chain at the end to symbolize the wealth uncovered in the ruins of Celik.
- **Simret.** Slender half-elf, young woman who doesn't want to be a farmer like her father Karabo, never combs her unruly hair, often taps a finger into her palm when talking, prefers animals over people. Starts the adventure as kidnapped by the reavers.
- **Zeudi.** Hulking human woman, greying mane, battle-scarred arms, member of a tribe of escaped former slaves called The Free. Takes deep breath through nose before explaining serious things. Trains guards in Celik.

SIMRET:



PART 2: ARRIVING AT THIRST

The party arrives on Day 1 outside the village of Thirst, first encountering the villager Pura:

Read to the players:

In the shadow of the towering Ringing Mountains lies the small, parched village of Thirst, where resilient souls of Athas eke out a living from the unforgiving land. The mid-morning sun weakly spills over a pastoral community of adobe huts perched near a sloping gulch. Farmers already tend to crops, eyeing you with hesitation, halting their chores. The closest woman drops her rake and hustles over to you, eyes wide with panic. She holds a finger to her mouth and hisses in a dread whisper "If you value your lives, or ours, you will not speak aloud. For your sake, you should turn around..."

VILLAGE OF THIRST

(pop. 50, mostly human and a few half-elves)

- The village sits on the edge of a gulch which is all that remains of a long dried up river that has lost not only its water but also its name.
- Vegetable farms, crude adobe huts alongside a deep gulch, rain-catching devices on all buildings.
- Everyone speaks in a dreaded whisper, as if afraid someone is trying to listen in. Travelers are warned to hush. "The reavers will hear you, and we'll all pay for it."
- Everyone has a version of a story where Nox talked aloud of fighting back, and the reavers showed up soon after and took him away. His wife said a runner should seek help, and they showed up and took her as well. Now, no one dares speak louder than a whisper.
- No warriors, no weapons, no shops or inns. Visitors can stay in Gar's shaded kank pen with the kank.
- Some hunt for wild kank honey and meat by laying snare traps.
- Trade gone, nothing new thanks to halflings vanishing. Locals call halflings "the People" and were used to them trading meat and pelts.
- All know reavers showed up after and took their people. They keep 4 children hostage and demand food and water tribute weekly.
- Everyone knows the ancient keep and believe it cursed by the evil of those who lived in it long ago. Those who stay within its walls too long will soon find death.
- Keep 25 miles away, 2-day journey if you follow the

gulch, will tear feet up if crossing rocky terrain.

- Villagers are broken and will not fight, even if hostages return.

PERSONALITIES

- **The Elders – Lyra, Sa-rea, Romila.** Sun-weathered, wrinkled, decision-makers. Distrust bravado and promises. Lone travelers are targets for reavers. Junal, a visiting red haired bravo of a man who foolishly paid coin to people for rumors of "monster eggs" in the area, vanished after talking too loudly. They just want outsiders to leave, for everyone's sake.
- **Gar, kank farmer.** Responsible for bringing tribute on back of his domesticated kank to the "green patch" outside town (a hill with scraggly trees and many patches of grass). Doesn't know origin, but childhood rhyme in Thirst is: "Don't play on the green / or you'll never be seen."
- **Pura, mother of a child hostage.** Will sneak the party water if offering to rescue. Doesn't believe the keep is cursed, just dangerous because it is falling apart.
- **Ribold, oldest man in village.** "Older than the dirt we farm in" he claims. Escaped slave, gave the slavers the name "reavers," a slang he used back in Urik. Figures there's not enough people in Thirst or the region to sustain a slave operation, so something else is afoot. He suspects (partly true) they must've found something in the keep itself. He also complains of his aching knees and that a dust storm must be moving in soon.

PART 3: THE TRIBUTE

ENCOUNTER: REAVER TRIBUTE PARTY

Read when players arrive at the tribute spot:

Four armed men and women in a mismatch of leather armors lounge in the shade provided by a scraggly tree, atop a hilltop. The village is visible below, and the hill is mostly covered with several three-foot-tall patches of green grass.

- 4 overconfident and obnoxious reavers here for tribute (athasian bandits).
- One has a wild psionic talent he calls the "nudge."

5E: Action on target that can see him within 30 ft., DC 9 Charisma saving throw negates, otherwise at the start of the target's next turn, Zahl "nudges" them 5 ft. in a direction of his choice, though the effect fails if the target can ascertain the destination is dangerous, such

as falling into a ravine. Recharge 5-6.

2E: Power Score 10, no saving throw, effects as above. If fail to activate, cannot use ability for 24 hours.

- 1 domesticated kank drone with leather saddle packs (speed 40 ft., carries up to 300 pounds without losing speed). It retreats if damaged.
- 2 patches of bloodgrass, each occupying a 5 ft. square and having 20 tendrils.

TERRAIN

Two 5 ft. squares of grass are known by the reavers to be bloodgrass; the locations of which can be determined by the DM.

Druids/rangers automatically get check to recognize; those proficient in Nature/Survival have a harder check but a bonus if specifically looking for bloodgrass (**5E:** DC 11 Nature or Survival check, with advantage for rangers/druids, DC 13 others; all get advantage if specifically looking).

TACTICAL

The reavers will attempt to shove or “nudge” targets into bloodgrass. They will scatter for the keep if 2 are downed. The wild talent never flees. They also will use the kank for cover against ranged attacks.

ROLEPLAY

Not expecting anyone armed or non-human. Immediately hostile and remind the villagers about the hostages, a mighty-fine shame if they didn’t do what they were told and got some children killed. Openly reveal Medhanit and a powerful mindbender run things, boast (falsely) they have 50 warriors.

Everyone but the wild talent (true zealot) can be coerced/threatened to reveal:

- Path to the keep via gulch, expected back on Day 4.
- Around 20 warriors (mostly true, they can’t count very well), some zhackals (mindbender’s pets).
- Mention Medhanit keeps a monster but none have seen it personally.
- She is away looking for something (unknown).
- Guessing 12 captives, all set to be sold by end of the week, including children of Thirst. Don’t know what happens next.
- Fear Medhanit, know little about her other than cultured and tall, big payout expected when the captives are sold.

TREASURE

6 cp each. The kank carries 12 days of food and water.

BLOOD GRASS

Bloodgrass appears to be a normal patch of dark green grass with long blades, often growing in conjunction with other grasses. The blades of bloodgrass have light veins that darken when the bloodgrass has recently been fed, which it does by wrapping tendrils around intruders and piercing their flesh to inject poison and drain blood. Luckily, bloodgrass is relatively immobile, and once spotted, can usually be avoided without difficulty.

Patches of bloodgrass do not activate immediately, awaiting their prey to fully enter. When prey is in the bloodgrass the plant will attempt to ensnare its victim with its tendrils. As well, tendrils that hit inject a paralyzing poison into the victim each round, the poison has a cumulative effect.

Extra tendrils that are nearby can attack a victim that has been immobilized. The tendrils begin to bore into the victim and as time goes by there is a chance that a tendril reaches the brain. If this happens, it wraps itself through the skull and kills its victim. Once the victim is drained, the tendrils release the husk to lie where it fell. If another potential victim happens by later, he might recognize what has occurred and can avoid being trapped. A successful check reveals the nature of the bloodgrass, and that it is wise to avoid.

PART 4: THE KEEP

Many hundreds of years after being ravaged by war, a lonely keep stands isolated on the foothills of the southern end of the southern Ringing Mountains, its glory days as a way point for stone from nearby quarries to be put on barges and shipped down river to Thirst and then to Celik are long forgotten. One of its towers which happened to house its gatehouse lies in ruins, its walls barely holding the scars of past conflicts. This decrepit fortress, now little more than a relic of a bygone era, has found a new purpose as the hideout for a band of ruthless reavers led by Medhanit, a favored templar of Balic posing as a Dune Trader. The reavers of this band targeted the village of Thirst, capturing several of its villagers by posing as merchants looking for caravan guards as well as other loners or small groups it found in the wastes planning to ransom or sell them into servitude.

The NPCs provide basic information for how to find Medhanit’s keep, a small stone fort which she seems to have protected with mercenary reavers. It is no more than twenty-five miles west-northwest from the village of Thirst. Travel there should be relatively safe for the first half of

the journey, this close to a village, but it is known that she has guards. Villagers all recommend using the gulch to approach the keep as the surrounding land is covered with very sharp broken stone fields that are ruinous on feet and leather boots alike.

TRAVEL SPEED

If the player characters hustle at a fast pace on their journey, they might reach the keep within a day, but they will not be able to forage or move with stealth, and they will take a level of exhaustion due to the heat and inability to rest on the journey.

FOOD AND WATER

There are no water sources freely available on the journey, and the farms are loath to share more than a single person's share each, as their livelihoods depend on watering their crop. Player characters moving at a normal or slow pace will have time to trade coin for some fresh food. Once past the farms (the first 5 miles or so) there are no further food sources available, and foraging or eating prepared rations is necessary.

AREA 1: KEEP SURROUNDS

About 25 miles northwest of the village of Thirst can be found an old stone keep with three serviceable towers. A fourth tower which also served as the keep's gatehouse has tumbled down, leaving a corner of the keep exposed.

There are no wandering monsters in the area thanks to the halfling tribe's former presence and reaver's current presence. The gulch comes within a quarter-mile of the keep. Those traveling the rocky terrain around the keep (past the maps), perhaps seeking an alternate route besides the gulch, risk cutting feet. Anything without a natural armor class takes 1 point of damage per minute (rounded up) walking on the rocky terrain. The terrain destroys sandals (5 hit points) and leather footwear (10 hit points) in short order. The gulch approach is clear of this hazard.

Davke and Anatu (the keep's two tribal warriors with short bows) patrol the weathered walls, keenly watching for intruders. Their heightened vantage point atop the twenty-foot-high fortifications offers a broad view, though their cover is somewhat compromised in areas by the crumbling stone. If a DM chooses to include bloodgrass in the Keep Surrounds area, it is immobile, and looks like a good hiding-place for potential trespassers however once it is recognized, it becomes apparent that approaching the keep from any other direction other than the southeast will be made much more difficult.

REAVES GARRISON

The keep has a current total garrison of 6 human tribal warriors, 4 human athasian bandits, 2 leaders (thugs) named Yrsa (leads tribal warriors faction) and Farryn (leads bandits faction), the psion Rigat (loyal to city of Balic), his dominated 2 zhackals, and 4 agony beetles that will attack anything except Rigat.

Medhanit is out scouting with her own force. Her bandits faction is loyal, guaranteed full payment after the venture, and also expecting profit from the slave sales. Those scouting with her know she is a templar; those at the keep do not. Each carries 1d6 cp.

The tribal warrior faction is mercenaries, expecting to be paid mostly from the slave sales at the end of the week. Each carries 2d6 cp.

The reavers will try to take characters captive (in Area 5, pens) rather than killing them, securing their gear with Rigat (Area 4) until Medhanit can decide what to do with them. Rigat will attempt interrogations of fighter types, removing them to area 4 under heavy restraint and guard (6 of any type) (2E: inflict pain; 5E: incite fear repeatedly).

Reavers rotate positions approximately every 6 hours, leaving holes in defenses as they awaken, eat, relieve themselves, and go to new positions. The wall is always manned.

During the daytime, the zhackals at Area 5 will react if a sentient creature is dying (but not dead) within the keep surrounds. While they have no vocal cords for noise to alert others, they will attempt to get within 5 ft. of the dying creature, which may be a clue to reavers something is amiss. Unless ordered to attack by the psion Rigat or attacked, they are satisfied with feeding and will leave characters alone.

Read to players approaching the keep from any angle:

A crumbling square stone keep strives to remain intact, defying time and weather. Three towers still proudly jut upward while the fourth has fallen and been replaced by a man-made gate and palisades. A small plume of smoke rises from the fort. The surrounds of the keep are dotted with more thick tangles of brambleweed, as well as some tall areas of dark green grass long enough to hide someone from sight. You can see at least one humanoid guard atop the walls.

- Walls 15 ft. tall, average climbing checks, reinforced and propped up.
- Towers are 25 ft. tall but the interiors are barricaded shut and not safe to use.
- Walls patrolled by 2 lazy and bored guards (tribal

warriors) whose job is simply to shout to the courtyard if they see anything. They rotate every 6 hours (guards from Area 2 climb up, wall guards go to Area 3 courtyard and wake up replacements who get food, then go to Area 2).

- At night, the guards do not carry a torch and rely on the moonlight, half full for both moons for purposes of this adventure.
- ▶ Exit to Area 2 (gate breach) by climbing rubble
- ▶ Exit to Area 3 (courtyard) by 15 ft. jump
- ▶ Exit to Area 4 (keep interior) by ladder
- ▶ Exit to platforms between Areas 4 (keep interior) and 5 (slave pens)

TERRAIN

Surrounded by a mix of thick tangles of brambleweed and open short grass and stony areas, to the north areas of 4 ft. tall dark green grasses.

TACTICAL

Walk battlements, opposite sides. 50% chance to see, each minute, the other guard is gone. During day, all guards armed. At night, 50% are sleeping on open-air pallets in Areas 2 and 3, can arm up within 2 rounds of an alert.

ROLEPLAY

Expecting tribute, know all faces, strangers no reason to be here, little can bluff them, check in with Yrsa (Area 2) if issues. Know what tribute reavers knew.

DEVELOPMENT

Day 4 dust storm hits mid-morning, cover faces and hunker down, cannot see if other guard vanishes. The storm provides light obscurement (cannot see past 100 feet, only shapes visible between 50 and 100 feet, muffles noise for 2 hours, abating by early afternoon.)

KEEP REACTIONS

- If a guard alerts, Yrsa orders 2 tribal warriors from Area 2 to reinforce the area of breach. She does not leave Area 2 unless a fight is obvious and her presence necessary.
- Farryn orders 2 awake athasian bandits from Area 3 to search and wakes the rest. Sleeping tribal warriors join Yrsa at Area 2 (gates). Farryn personally notifies the psion Rigat (who is either 50% at his room in Area 4 or 50% near the Area 5 slave pens, immediately goes

to Area 4 if any trouble), then double checks the slaves at Area 5 before returning to Area 3 to check on the search.

- Rigat stays in Area 4 and directs his 2 athasian bandit guards to watch the door and ladder, barring the door to Area 3, unless there is obvious battle in Area 3 for his guards to attend to. He psionically orders the zhackals from Area 5 (slave pens) to search for non-reavers, unless it is night at which time they are out hunting.

The reavers will not leave the keep nor chase anyone who runs away, preferring to shoot from a distance if foes linger.

The captives at Area 5 wait until Farryn leaves before taking any actions. If conflict occurs near their pen, two survivors attempt to grapple any enemy in reach. If they can hear conflict continuing after Farryn goes, and the zhackals are gone, they will use a sharp piece of flint secreted away by Simret to saw through the thick ropes in 1 minute. All scavenge for weapons from dead enemies or grab boards to use as clubs but only Simret, Opoguk, and Junal will fight. The rest flee at the hint of conflict.

See Area 5. All survivors are impeded by exhaustion, with minus 4 (2E) or disadvantage (5E) on all d20 rolls, half movement, and half Hit Points, except as below.

- Simret, survivor, 5 Hit Points, 5 temporary hit points and +2 to hit reavers due to rage, ends once she takes a rest of any kind.
- Opoguk, tarek survivor, 15 Hit Points, wild psionic talent Mind Slam (target he can see within 60 ft. takes 1d6 force damage, if Larger or smaller knocked prone;
2E: Power Score 9 (if roll PS, target passes out 1 round instead of prone), target save vs. death to negate effect, usable 3x per day;
5E: target DC 12 Constitution saving throw to negate, recharge 5-6.
- Junal, human trader survivor, 4 Hit points, innate psionic talent that intelligent enemies (Int 3+) attack him last if reasonable, viable foes available.
- What if the players retreat and long rest? The keep occupants know Medhanit will return soon and are loathe to pursue. If players attempt a "hit and run" then "long rest" strategy, remember the terrain outside the keep is unsuitable for rests, dropping to near-freezing at night and sweltering hot during the day. Also, optionally, some monsters have begun to fill the void of the halfling tribe absence, including a pair of anakore and a lone belgoi, that could harass characters or even the enemy if in the wilderness.

Note: If a player character goes down in battle and can

not be restored, the DM can give the player control of all three helpful survivors. Alternately, a captive could be a PC class, perhaps recently captured and without exhaustion levels.

Note: Failing to climb walls and falling can be fatal to 1st level groups, especially without access to a wide variety of healing options. DM's may consider giving a chance to make a saving throw if one fails a climbing check to avoid harm.

AREA 2: PALISADE GATE



Read if players approach the gate, adapting if approaching from the inside due to being slaves captured previously:

It seems that long ago, the keeps fourth tower which housed its gatehouse was destroyed in battle, taking some of the connected walls with it. Now, the rubble-strewn breach that made up the gatehouse serves as the main point of ingress into the fort and has been fortified with bone and wood palisades, sharpened bone and wood stakes at their base, and a bone and wood gate. Loose stones treacherously decorate the sloped approach up towards the newly-built series of bone and wood palisades that watch over a wide bone gate. Sharp stakes discourage anyone from charging.

- Palisades are 10 ft. high, giving +1 to attack with ranged weapons against those below.
- 2 ruffian bully tribal warriors (Forel and Draka) who hate hard work, spend time seeing who can tell the worst jokes and gambling with dice. They are poorly-equipped and unprofessional, outcasts drawn from

nearby areas or recruited from potential captives. One has 12cp (big winner).

- 1 leader thug, mul bandit Yrsa, (+1 to attack and damage, if reduced to 0 HP by an attack, she remains at 1 HP; feature renews after 24 hours), the only professional in her mind around here, heavy handed disciplinarian and mercenary, hates the bandits faction and can be bribed if things going badly for Medhanit and her forces. She keeps her crossbow close to hand and her mace on a thong to her belt, and is quick to slap one of her underlings if they do not behave. She smacks her mace into her other hand while speaking, ready to brawl if needed. Has 2 cp (big loser in gambling) and wears a bone ring (5 cp value) signifying her as a winner in an arena bout in Urik.
- At night, Yrsa goes to Area 4 exterior area to sleep.
 - ▶ Exit to Area 1 (keep surrounds) by gate
 - ▶ Exit to Area 1 (keep walls) by climbing rubble
 - ▶ Exit to Area 3 (keep courtyard)

TERRAIN

Difficult outside. Stakes deal 1d6 piercing damage if forced onto one. Walls here easy to climb.

TACTICAL

8 extra spears, call for aid immediately. Will not pursue outside the palisade and use it for cover (75% if duck behind). At night, one carries a torch.

ROLEPLAY

Know faces, cannot be bluffed and throw spears before extended parlay. Yrsa finds excuses to hold back forces, lets bandits faction absorb losses. If the party has taken out the psion Rigat or the leader Farryn, she might accept a bribe (50cp, 30cp at worst) and looting rights to pack up any remaining tribal warriors and leave. Will not leave or make any act to abandon if Medhanit is present, and will not attack reavers for coin.

DEVELOPMENT

Same reactions for Day 4 as Area 1 (cover faces and hunker down during dust storm).



AREA 3: KEEP COURTYARD

Read when players enter the courtyard, adjusting order of description depending on where the characters enter:

A large stone building inside the keep's walls takes up about three quarters of the internal footprint. It is not in good repair, and parts of the stonework are dilapidated, although its tiled roof seems to be staying up for now. Water troughs are shaded by a wooden structure, with fabric between the beams to provide cover. A firepit burns low but constant, giving off a light plume of smoke. One corner by the rank smell is an obvious trash pile. To the northwest, stone blocks are set against a wall so that someone can stand on them and look over the wall into an open-air pen. To the northeast, a path leads to a secure wooden door, and to the east, a worn path winds to a crude plank functioning as a door. To the southeast the front gate is visible. The courtyard floor is made of packed earth and some loose flat stones.

- 2 alert, gossiping athasian bandits (named Korim and Firret), itching for action, cruel. These are armed with dual tortoise blades (1d4 slashing damage, cannot be disarmed, each acts as a buckler adding +1 to armor class, +2 when both are being used). 5E, bonus action attack with off-hand. They also carry javelins.
- 2 sleeping tribal warriors.
- 1 leader thug, stern looking elf Farryn
- Movement 2E 15, 5E 35 ft.,

- Longbow (extra +2 to hit, 1d8 piercing damage), replace mace with bone jawbone carrikal (1d10 slash or 1d12 if used 2-handed);
- Can Hide using the various terrain features of keep, double speed burst in combat (feature renews after spending one round not moving), has been skimming a little of their bets, and carries 3d6 ceramic pieces and his lucky lizard tail.
- At night, everyone here except 1 athasian bandit (who stays by fire) sleeps.
- 20 days of non-perishable foods, three 250 gallon water containers.
- ▶ Exit to Area 2 (gate)
- ▶ Exit to Area 4 (keep interior) by door
- ▶ Exit to Area 5 (slave pens) by climbing up stone blocks into pen, 12 ft. wall

TERRAIN

Stone buildings are in poor shape, guards not on duty take whatever pallet is open is open when sleeping. At night, 3 torches added to area.

TACTICAL

Prefer a line of 3 in front, with one throwing javelins and Farryn with bow.

ROLEPLAY

Farryn is fanatically loyal to Medhanit. His main priority is keeping the slaves locked up. He will be suspicious of any efforts to draw his guards away from the slave pen. He puzzled out she can't be a Dune Trader and doesn't care.

DEVELOPMENT

During the Day 4 dust storm, take cover near water trough or in stone building.

AREA 4: KEEP INTERIOR

Read the appropriate description depending on where characters enter:

A wooden door from Area 3 (courtyard) leads to a miniature courtyard, secured by a wooden-hinged bar. The dim confines of the keep's building seem oppressive after the blazing sky outside. Elevated wooden platforms that supply shade for pallets and supplies are located here. Old wooden stairs lead up to the elevated platforms that connect to the outer walls. An interior wooden door leads to an intact area of the keep in the northeast.

The northeast interior room is a mess, a ramshackle storage area for several barrels and buckets, with daily use items like mugs and plates casually tossed about. A threadbare-woven rug, still far too fine for the derelict nature of the keep, decorates the area. The dim confines of the

keep's building seem oppressive after the blazing sky outside. Wooden frames prop up crumbling stonework walls, and a ladder leads up to the battlements above. Barrels of food and water are stored here in the shade, and some of the reavers have bedrolls beneath the wooden platform to keep them cool and protected as they prefer to sleep away from the barracks. A door leads to the southeast, and a curtain has been hung in front of it. Finally, a wooden door leads to the west. The interior has a strong aroma of unwashed bodies in close confines, although some bunches of herbs hanging on twine from the rafters help a little. The floor is littered with daily use items like mugs, plates, and empty containers.

- Wooden structures (Doors, stairs, platforms, planks) are all creaky.
- 2 nervous but lucky athasian bandits (Mukul and Ikshay), glad to have a spot in the exterior where they find shade, if conflict immediately see if Rigat needs them. At night, they are asleep.
- 1 wilder psion, Rigat, who is here 50% of time and 50% at the Area 5 slave pens. Keeps small agafari-wood box tied to belt (10 cp), holds 4 agony beetles. At night, asleep here. Attempts to detect psionic auras here may detect that Rigat has an aura as a psion.
- At night, interior room lit by two oil lamps.
- Loose stone next to a pallet under exterior stairs hides 12 cp.
- 150 days of rations in barrels and boxes in exterior.
- Under rug is a very cleverly placed stone plug (25 STR)



to lift, 2 medium creatures can try), hiding a 10 ft. drop down to a 10 ft. x10 ft. chamber with a single fountain, described in Area 4A: Fountain.

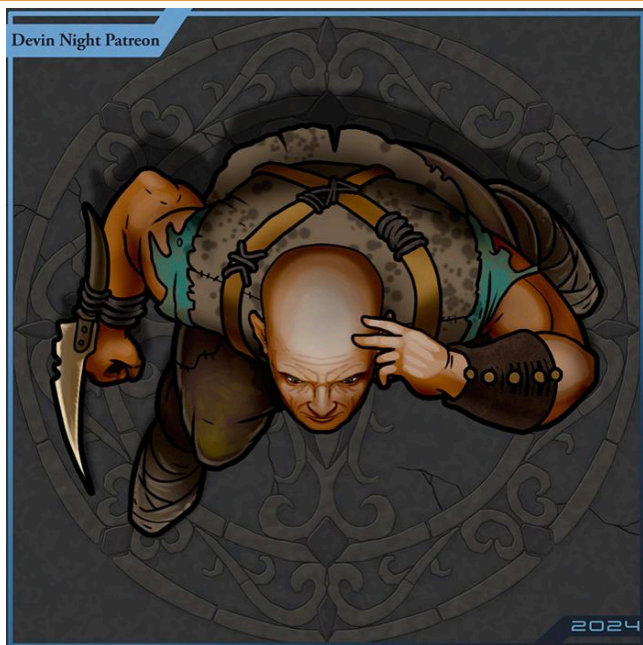
- ▶ **Exit to Area 1** (walls) by ladder
- ▶ **Exit to Area 1** (walls) by wooden platform
- ▶ **Exit to Area 3** (courtyard) by wooden door with interior bar
- ▶ **Exit to Area 5** (slave pens) by west wooden door, walking under platform, and through gate
- ▶ **Exit to Area 6** (Medhanit office) by wooden door
- If combat in this area occurs during day 5 or 6, it is likely to alarm Medhanit in her office (25% chance), giving her a chance to arm herself and ready for confrontation.

TACTICAL

Rigat loathes slaves and promises them horrors. Hides behind guards, then as an Action throws the agony beetles from his box in the direction of foes (no hit required, any square within 10 ft.). Because the beetles are tiny, they can land in a character's space. The beetles act on their own initiative and fly towards the nearest target, preferring targets with psionic powers. They will attack nearby reavers, except Rigat, who has a unique affinity to them.

2E: Rigat prefers telepathic attacks on largest armed target; in **5E:** uses crowned in sorrow, then fear on obvious warriors, push into walls on casters (extra 1d6 damage if traveled 10 ft.) until crowned renews.

RIGAT



ROLEPLAY

Rigat is responsible for ensuring the prisoners do not escape, has a forbidding snarl on his face at all times, and enjoys using his powers to intimidate and terrify the captives. A punishing tyrant, Rigat has taken every opportunity to strike or insult the captives when he can. He spends his off-duty time stalking around restlessly, and keeps his agony beetles within reach at all times. He attacks anyone he does not recognize immediately and will use his psionic powers to harm and debilitate as many targets as possible, and if any of the captives are present, he will be tempted to harm them in order to draw attention from the player characters to aid them. Rigat makes full use of his push talent to split up attackers and throw them into walls, or to throw objects

Rigat is greedy and doesn't want to die. He tries to surrender if below 10 Hit Points, freely offering the daily schedule of events sidebar. He only knows what Medhanit tells him, and that was to secure the area and take slaves. He doesn't know why she goes out scouting but did hear from slaves about halflings disappearing that used to live around here. He is also devious and will patiently play the subservient prisoner until opportunity arises. He will not reveal her identity as a templar, even if faced with death, but is aware. Finally, as far as he is aware only he knows about 4A, having discovered it (using captives, now sold and gone, to pull up the plug), but hasn't tested the waters.

DEVELOPMENT

Day 4 storm, Rigat will be inside.

AREA 4A: FOUNTAIN SUB ROOM

Located beneath the carpet in Area 4 and unknown to Medhanit and any of the keep's current inhabitants other than Rigat, there is no map provided for this room. It is a 10 ft. x 10 ft. chamber decorated only by the fountain. If the players do not discover the room themselves, or learn of it from Rigat, Simret will mention that she felt an odd seam in the stonework beneath the carpet when she was forced to kneel there at one point.

Read to the players when they look into the room:

The room is slightly cooler and musty. It may have once connected to another chamber, but that passage has long since collapsed. Unlike the rest of the keep, the stonework is intact and decorated with elaborate wall carvings of industry. The square chamber has no features except a fountain, a hexagon-shaped stone basin with runic carvings on every side. A small trickle of water flows from two finials at the top, decorated like a warhammer, and the droplets of water, with a silver gleam, appear to fall slowly, as if feathers.

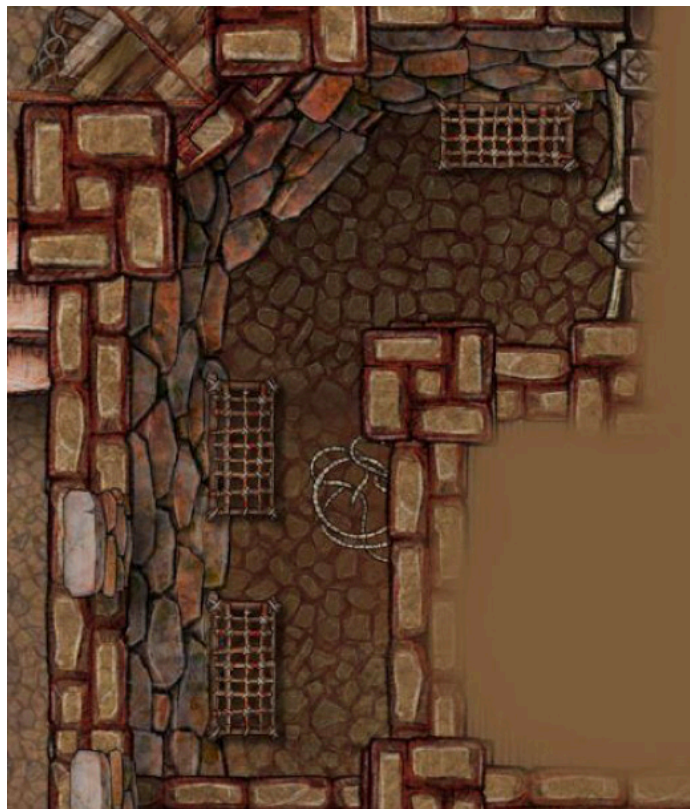
- A dwarf trained to read ancient dwarven might recognize these as phrases paying homage to “[unknown term] of water and earth” and praising “[unknown term] of change,” “gawds.” Remember, literacy is outlawed in Athas, though some dwarven settlements such as Kled secretly preserve and study this runic language.
- Water normally would splash from each hammer head, but now it is barely a trickle. The trickles fall in drops, and each drop falls slowly, like a feather. The basin is full, with a 1 ft. deep water that seems to gleam with a faint sheen of silver.
- The wall carvings depict an intact keep and the gulch having some odd version of silt skimmers floating atop it, loaded with harvested stone. The area is depicted as far lusher, with many trees alongside the gulch. A sharp-eyed viewer will notice people atop the keep, and while all appear to be dwarves, one of them is carved so as to appear bearded (disgustingly so to a dwarf).
- Substance is potable, fountain and water radiate magic (alteration/transmutation, enchantment). If consumed, the player rolls 1d12 and receives a random effect of which they are aware (**2E** rules listed first, then **5E**):
 1. Polymorph into a random terrain-appropriate 1st level /CR 1/2 monster, cannot change out of form until form reduced to 0 hit points, retain mental faculties, lasting 4 hours.
 2. As above, but 2nd level/CR 1 monster.
 3. Skin becomes hue of stone, half/ resistance to piercing damage, take double /vulnerable to slash/bludgeon, lasting 4 hours.
 4. As above, half/resistance to slashing damage, take double/vulnerable to pierce/bludgeon, lasting 4 hours.
 5. As above, half/resistance to bludgeoning damage, take double/vulnerable to pierce/slash, lasting 4 hours.
 6. Immune to fear/frightened condition and 5 temporary hit points, cannot receive beneficial effects that improve d20 rolls, such as bless, lasting 4 hours.
 7. Grow a long beard, or current beard become lustrous. Grows back within minutes if removed, lasting 1 week.
 8. +4/advantage on saving throws against charms and compulsions, -4/disadvantage on saving throws against fear, lasting 4 hours.
 9. Gain +2 damage if striking with any type of hammer weapon, lasting 4 hours.
 10. Surrounded by a golden glow, cannot hide or go invisible, gain ability to cast command without using any components (Charisma-based casting) for next 4 hours. If use ability, must wait 1 hour before using again.
 11. When hands clenched into fists, they become durable, like stone,

dealing 1d8 bludgeoning damage, able to damage objects like doors and +4/advantage on rolls to break things. Lasts 4 hours.

12. Roll twice, ignoring rolls of 12 and duplicate rolls. Gain both those features.

- A creature can only benefit from one drink every 24 hours. The magic of the fountain, once powered by an elemental connection to water with specific effects once controlled by clerics, is waning, and it has only 1d4+4 drinks left before the power fades, the fountain stops flowing, and the basin is left with non-magical water.

AREA 5: SLAVE PEN



Read when players approach the gates:

A firm wooden gate is lashed together with giant-hair rope pens in a shaded area whose filth and stench flows outward. The occasional cough and groan can be heard from within.

From the courtyard, there is a small enclosed area (on the left) that currently holds fourteen captives in dark, cramped quarters. Simret and the other thirteen are a diverse lot of mixed humanoid races, including a taciturn tarek by the name of Opoguk (hiding his identity as a priest of elemental earth), a dwarven merchant (noble) named Ragguth, a down on his luck trader named Junal, and a variety of

farmers and tradesfolk. The door to the captives' cage is made of wooden bars lashed together with rope. If they're aware that intruders are present, several of the captives, including Simret, try to reach out through the bars to grab any of their captors.

- 2 tamed zhackals rest outside the pen, not minding the smell, allowed to feed on emotions of the dying and dissuading any slaves from approaching the door. At night, they are let loose to hunt in the wild.
- 50% during day of Rigat (Area 4).
- 14 dispirited and exhausted (4 levels: halving their hit point maximum and speed, and giving them disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws) captives:
- 4 human children from Thirst, all below age 10.
- 2 adult human men from Thirst, commoners.
- 3 human travelers, commoners.
- 1 tribeless elf trader, commoner, caught sleeping and embarrassed to be here.
- Simret, half-elf, survivor, see **Sidebar: keep reactions**.
- Opoguk, tarek, survivor, see **Sidebar: keep reactions**.
- Junal, human, survivor, see **Sidebar: keep reactions**.
- Ragguth, dwarven noble merchant, commoner with maximum hit points, will ransom himself if he can return to Celik for 20cp, was focused on bringing back a relic from Celik to his home of Tyr.
- Door is challenging to break open, secured by a rope mechanism that connects to an outside hook-knot. The rope resists slashing, must be sawed (takes 1 minute with a slashing device).
- Inverted bone spikes to prevent climbing out of the pen, dealing 1d4 piercing damage to unarmored persons attempting to climb out of the pens and another 1d4 if failing a check to climb or jump by them
- If zhackals are gone and a rescue appears imminent, captives will grab at foes adjacent to the door, acting last in the round with a combined +4 Strength (Athletics).

See Sidebar: keep reactions for escape attempts. Only Simret, Opoguk, and Junal will risk escape if death is a possibility. If free, the other 11 will want to flee immediately, each looting 2 days of supplies and heading for the gulch. All but the elf can be convinced to stay at the keep, if the characters stay. All are terrified of Rigat.

DEVELOPMENT

Day 4 storm, Rigat will be inside.

AREA 6: MEDHANIT'S OFFICE



Read when players enter the office:

This room smells fresh. It is an office-bedroom, lavishly decorated, with a small window above that lets in dim light and outside air. A firm wooden desk surrounded by chairs holds some animal-hide sketches, and near it a long bed with gauzy curtain, personal chest, and wardrobe complete the chamber.

- If Medhanit is here, she has 2 athasian bandits (Dodai and Tungge) with her at all times (traveling with her when scouting). Seeks to parlay while using enthrall (captives have advantage on this saving throw, 2E +4 save), preferring more captives. See Part 5: the Return, for more combat strategies.
- If attacked here, Medhanit uses the desk for cover.
- Ceiling and walls are about 10 feet high, made of mortared stone with old wooden beams bracing them from beneath.
- Firm wooden desk, padded chair, papyrus ledger, ink pot.
- On desk, roughly sketched scout maps of keep area and a route to Balic with depictions of oases and a hook claw symbol, universal for a hazard of some kind.
- On desk, brass oil lantern (lit when Medhanit here).

- On desk, incense burner with pagafa tree sticks.
- Desk drawer, contains small locked traveling chest that contains 43 cp, 2 sp, and a ledger, illegible to most Athasians who cannot read. Records sales and ransoms with all slave sales to a Balican captain named Athtius Gandhas, transactions are routine so that the next one would be expected around Days 5-7.
- Two hard-carved chairs and two stools next to desk.
- Long, narrow bed, gauzy curtain around it.
- Personal chest, same lock as traveling chest, by bed. Vial of tamarisk scented (mellow) perfume (12 cp), extra incense sticks (4 cp), small silver amulet with embossed image of regal woman (sorcerer-queen Abalach-Re of Raam, 25 cp)
- Wardrobe by bed, two sets of fine robes/shawls, sized for a person over 6 ft. tall (30 cp).
- Window that looks west out onto the courtyard, too small for even a halfling to squeeze through.

DEVELOPMENT

Medhanit does not return to the Keep until the morning of Day 5 (see **Part 5: the Return**). If all appeared in order, she would resume running operations from her office, touring the Keep and slave pens once a day.

MEDHANIT



PART 5: THE RETURN

Mid-morning on Day 5:

- Medhanit and her scouting party return with little fanfare. Alerted if (1) no smoke from firepit, (2) no guards on walls, and (3) if any slaves visible. If alerted, will attempt to send 2 athasian bandits to climb a faraway wall and report back while Medhanit remains out of arrow range.
- Medhanit Haben, favored templar of sorcerer-king Andropinis, over 6 ft. tall, prefers cream robes and shawl, always calm and expressionless unless punishing an interloper. Regal demeanor sets her apart from reaver rabble. Carries a skull-topped staff while in keep for authority but otherwise relies on a nasty obsidian flail in combat.

5E: vicious mockery replaces the insult with her calling out "By the power of Andropinis!" She has avoided its use thus far except when around her most loyal troops, but will not hold back this battle.

2E: version has already cast call lightning spell on wandering monsters and needs to pray again to regain it.

- Coward at heart, drops weapon and falls prostrate on ground, wailing, if reduced to 10 hit points or less.
- Carries tiny brass key in a pocket, opens office chests.
- 4 loyal athasian bandits, with higher Strength (+1 attack/damage in melee). They know their leader is a templar. Each carries 8 cp.
- 1 jhakar, a scaled reptilian bulldog-shaped pet with a keen nose. Fights to death.
- All wear reinforced thick leather boots specifically protecting against the shredding rocks.
- If the keep is obviously defended, she sets up a temporary camp and attempts to negotiate by sending one of her bandits forward on her behalf. This is a ruse to buy time for the slaver Athtius Gandhas to arrive and reinforce her on Day 6. The camp has three canvas tents (hers is the center tent) situated on sandy terrain between a rock outcropping and a huge boulder. Her forces have a 360 degree field of view with a lookout always posted up high, using a perimeter of torchlight at night and are vigilant. If Athtius arrives and reinforces (see below), she will send troops to surround the keep and scale the walls from a variety of angles (1-2 per wall). Her other troops will build makeshift tower shields, providing +2 Armor Class and +2 on Dexterity-based saving throws against ranged attacks/spells, and rush the gates.

- Two athasian bandits remain to create a barrier around Medhanit (giving her +4 bonuses instead), and her jhakar stays by her unless an obvious target is nearby.

2E: hot and cloudy allows use of call lightning at extreme ranges, if allowed to regain this spell. She will strike from afar before committing troops, at targets on the wall, before moving closer to spot targets sheltering at the gate or inside.

5E: moves within 60 ft. to use vicious mockery, attempts to get within 30 ft. to use fear to break a defensive line.

- If Medhanit falls or surrenders, any of her reavers that see this are shocked and lose their next Action.
- If the captives escaped, she will rally any troops and immediately pursue. If no reavers survived, she waits a day for Athius to arrive to reinforce her hunt, then uses her jhakar to track the captives by smell. If the party is slowed by captives, she will outpace them. She reasons that Celik is the only logical place to go and will use her knowledge of the region to shortcut ahead of the party. She uses similar strategies as above. The captives are terrified of her and will not aid in combat.
- If the party abandons the captives, they can outpace Medhanit, unless she uses a shortcut. She may divert to Thirst to destroy and enslave, and then pursue.
- If Medhanit is interrogated, she freely reveals she is an elected templar from Balic, here on a sanctioned mission to uncover why the halflings vanished. She funded her mission with slaves but had no ambitions to stay long-term (she hides that she was going to raze Thirst before leaving). She found more mystery than clues and only discovered a single abandoned hunting camp with rotted meat (uncharacteristic for halflings to let meat go to waste, for those who know their culture). She did not know where the tribe was nor why this was important to the sorcerer king, and the villagers of Thirst were equally befuddled as they were used to halfling trade. She believed she had accomplished all she could without expanding the enterprise to include mounts and long-distance exploration.

On Day 6:

- Athius Gandhas shows up with a mekillot-wagon (wagon sits atop the behemoth, giving attackers +1 to hit defenders below).
- Athius Gandhas, thug (maximum hit points, extra +1 to attack/damage with any weapon), with:
- 12 tribal warriors,
- 1 thug supervisor,
- 1 half-elf wilder psion that can control the mekillot.

- The upper wagon has room (very cramped) for 20 slaves with giant hair rope shackle holes, and dangling from the wagon are benches/handholds (with overhanging shade) for guards to sit in the open air. It also has a separate driver's compartment for the psion and Athius, who keeps his 100cp stash and extra weapons here. Rear of wagon has enough supplies for everyone for the trip back to Balic.
- If the captives have fled, he will send 2 of his tribal warriors to assist with the hunt and remain at the keep for 2 days. After that, he calls it a loss and leaves (he travels his route by memory, not map).
- If the keep is held by the characters, he will send no more than 4 of his tribal warriors to help Medhanit. If the party is having an easy time of it, 1 thug supervisor may join. All flee immediately if it appears Medhanit's forces are losing or they lose 50% or more forces, or if Athius or his psion are threatened.
- If Medhanit is captive when he arrives, he will attempt to negotiate for her release (he offers their lives, safe passage, and warns them she is someone very important, a noble). He suspects but is not sure she is a templar and fears angering her in any way, though he is not loyal so as to risk his life and enterprise. He will not risk using his mekillot in any offensive action and prefers retreat.

PART 6: CONCLUSION

The adventure wraps up with Medhanit arrested or slain and her reaver operation disbanded. Depending on the level of successes, the NPCs from the Adventure Backgrounds will dole out their rewards and possibly bonus ones. The campaign continues in The Temple of the Earth Drake.

BONUS REWARDS

Reaver Hunter: If the adventurers killed Medhanit or turned her over to Zeudi to take to the Free, Zeudi is gruffly overjoyed and awards them her personal pension-prize: a gaj bone helm of comprehend languages (wearer uses an Action to cast comprehend languages at will, she jokes she'd rather not hear what others say about her). They also have the gratitude of the Free.

Rescuer: If Simret returns safely, Karabo borrows against next month's harvest for an additional 30 cp reward and won't take no for an answer. Simret will promise "any time, any place" aid.

Fake Trader. Letsie comes up with 25 cp in additional rewards if the reavers are permanently shut down.

Revenge: The villagers of Thirst send an elder with a valued treasure, given to them by a druid: 2 pears of healing (function as potions of healing, never rot), and an apology for not believing there was hope.

Junal: He mentions his cousin Raxan is looking for a valuable egg, whispering “an Earth Drake egg,” and says the opportunity could be lucrative for you all. He is more than happy to introduce you and vouch for your skills.

If Medhanit is arrested, she later arranges for her release with House Maraneth. She can become a recurring villain if the party ever ventures near Balic.

EXPERIENCE

Each character gains a level at the conclusion of the adventure.

APPENDIX A: ADVENTURER BACKGROUNDS

BACKGROUND #1- REAVER HUNTER

You have a relationship with the retired soldier Zeudi. She routinely visits Celik and her people caught wind of a fake merchant called Medhanit capturing people for slavery, operating somewhere around the nearby village of Thirst. The Free have offered a reward if you can find evidence of what’s going on, and who or where the buyers of the slaves might be. After that, kill them all.

Rewards: 20 ceramic pieces for evidence, another 20 cp for evidence of who the buyer(s) are. If you bring this Medhanit in, or provide proof you killed them, Zeudi will think of a bonus.

BACKGROUND #2- RESCUER

Your half-elf friend Simret has been kidnapped. Her father, Karabo, who lives in Celik, explains that Simret responded to a job for caravan guards a week ago at the village of Thirst. However, it was a ruse to capture able-bodied persons. Karabo found all this out from an elf trader passing through the area recently. The elf bragged that he easily outran the “kank riders” (a derogatory term) who spotted him. He saw a woman leading a large group of toughs and accurately described the wild hair of Simret. He fears Simret will surely be sold into slavery, and time is of the essence.

Rewards: hopes you will help based on friendship. 20 ceramic pieces for knowledge of her fate.

BACKGROUND #3- FAKE TRADER

House Maraneth, which controls Celik, wants the fake merchant Medhanit gone, by whatever means the adventurers see fit. She is reportedly kidnapping free people and giving all other reputable dune traders in the area a bad name. Their agent Letsie awaits word.

Rewards: small bronze medallion with the banner of House Maraneth engraved on it, worth 25 ceramic pieces if sold to the right buyer but worth more as a symbol of House Maraneth’s friendship. It entitles them to a one-time “friend’s rate” of 50% off a purchase (maximum 100cp in savings), and a lifetime 5% discount when purchasing goods from House Maraneth.

BACKGROUND #4- ESCAPED

Background #4. Escaped. You were almost captured by reavers just outside the farming village of Thirst and managed to escape during a dust storm. You overheard their leader is called Medhanit and you were expected to be sold into slavery. You may have met or already known Simret from Background #2 who was duped into believing she would be a caravan guard. You might have been there for the same scheme and was lucky enough to escape to Celik, where you sought your friends. DM Note: This could allow for a survival element at the beginning of this module if players escaped into the wastelands, which is a fantastic experience for first time Dark Sun players as they make their way back to Celik.

Rewards: vengeance.

APPENDIX B: NPCS & MONSTERS AD&D 2E

Only original AD&D 2e stat blocks will be found here, for Bloodgrass, Zhakl and Agony Beetle see official Dark Sun AD&D 2e materials

Bandit, Athasian

Medium Humanoid (Any Race); usually evil; AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (bone weapon) or 1-6 (short bow); ML Average (9); Int Average intelligence (10); XP 65.

Equipment: leather armor, bone hand weapon, wooden short bow.

Favored Templar

Medhanit (7th level): AC 7 (caru leather armor); MV 12; hp

32; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (obsidian-spiked flail); SA/SD templar spells; SZ M (6 feet tall); ML Champion (16); Int Exceptionally intelligent (16); AL LE; XP 975.

Equipment: obsidian-spiked flail, robes of office, carru leather armor, obsidian holy symbol.

Spells (3/2/2): 1st- bless, command (x2), remove fear; 2nd- enthrall, hold person; 3rd- call lightning, prayer.

A favored templar has risen to some acclaim and power within their bureau. They may not have come to the personal notice of their sorcerer king, but they have been granted some authority and will often command troops in the field or squads of guards on a specific mission.

Survivor

Medium Humanoid, usually neutral (1HD); AC 10; MV 9; HD 1; hp 1-6; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2 (unarmed) or 1-4 (club); ML Unsteady (6); Int Average intelligence (10); XP 7.
Equipment: rags, improvised club.

Thug

Medium Human, usually evil; AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; HD 3+3; HP 16; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (stone mace) or 1-8 (crossbow); ML Steady (11); Int Average intelligence (10); XP 120.
Equipment: leather armor, stone mace, crossbow with giant hair string.

Tribal Warrior

Medium Humanoid (Any Race); Any Alignment; AC 7 (carru leather armor); MV 12; HD 2; hp 9; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (stone spear); ML Average (10); Int Average intelligence (10); XP 65.
Equipment: carru leather armor, 2x spears.

Wilder Psion

Rigat (5th level): AC 10; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 27; THACO 19; #AT 1; SA/SD psionic powers; SZ M; ML Steady (12); Int Highly intelligent (14); AL Any; XP 420.

Equipment: wrist razor, ragged clothing.

Psionics: Level 5; Dis/Sci/Dev: 2/3/10; Attack/Defense: PB/IF, MB, TS;

Power Score: Int; PSPs 65.

Powers:

Psychokinesis – Sciences: project force, telekinesis

Psychokinesis – Devotions: animate object, ballistic attack, inertial barrier, levitation, molecular agitation

Telepathy – Sciences: psionic blast

Telepathy – Devotions: awe, conceal thoughts, contact, inflict pain, repugnance

Rigat is a wilder psion, a practioner of The Way with little formal

training but a lot of raw talent. A wilder psion might make use of their talents to oppress those around them, or might be trying to harness their powers to accomplish a goal. Their powers are often blunt expressions of force, but somewhat effective. Since birth, he has always been able to listen into other's conversations and in addition to his formal psionic powers has innate Clairaudience with no power score penalty at 10 miles or less.

APPENDIX C: NPCs & MONSTERS D&D 5E

Bandit, Athasian

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), usually evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
11(+0)	14(+2)	12(+1)	10(+0)	10(+0)	10(+0)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually common)

Challenge 1/8 (25xp)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Actions

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

Short Bow: Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 80/320, one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+2) piercing damage

Bloodgrass

Medium Plant, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 1 per tendril (20 tendrils in verdant belt terrain, 30 in forests)

Speed 0ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
14(+2)	12(+1)	16(+3)	2(-4)	10(+0)	9(-1)

Vulnerabilities Slashing, Area attacks, such as burning hands, damage the full hit points of bloodgrass, whereas single-target effects such as weapons damage one tendril at a time.

Damage Resistances None

Senses blindsight 5 ft

Languages none

Challenge 1/2 (100xp)

Proficiency Bonus none

Actions

Grapple and Restrained(variable): Any creature with blood entering the space of bloodgrass is attacked by 1d4 tendrils that attempt to grapple it. The target must succeed on a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid being grappled, with DC of 7 +1

per tendril (Escape DC 9 + 1 per tendril). On its turn, the bloodgrass attacks with 1d4 more tendrils against any target in its space, forcing either a check against non-grappled creatures or increasing the DC against grappled creatures to escape. Bloodgrass can bring all its tendrils to bear against a single target.

Poison: On its turn, bloodgrass will inject poison into a grappled creature. The creature must succeed on a DC 7 + 1 per tendril Constitution saving throw or gain the paralyzed condition for 2d6 rounds. At the end of its turns, a paralyzed creature may attempt another saving throw to end the effect.

Bore and Blood Drain: The tendrils begin to bore into the victim and drain its blood. Against paralyzed creatures, the bloodgrass tendrils will bore into the creature for 1 piercing damage per tendril. If it reduces a target to 0 Hit Points, it reaches the brain of the target and kills the target in 1d6 rounds.

Description

Once the victim is drained, the tendrils release the husk to lie where it fell. If another potential victim happens by later, he might recognize what has occurred and can avoid being trapped. Adventurers with the nature or survival proficiencies have a chance to notice the bloodgrass among the other vegetation. If for any reason they are specifically looking for the bloodgrass, the adventurer's proficiency check occurs with advantage. Druids and rangers have a chance to notice the bloodgrass with advantage also.

Favored Templar (Medhanit)

Medium Humanoid (Usually Human), Any Evil

Armor Class 13 (studded leather armor)

Hit Points 42 (7d8+7)

Speed 30ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
12(+1)	12(+1)	12(+1)	14(+2)	14(+2)	16(+3)

Skills Intimidation +5, Religion +4

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +5

Senses Passive Perception 12

Languages Common, can read and write

Challenge 3 (600xp)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Spellcasting: The favored templar is a 7th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (saving throw DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The favored templar usually has the following spells available and casts all spells using 4th level spell slots (2 spell slots):

command, enthrall, fear

Staggering Smite: The favored templar's melee weapon attacks deal an additional 7 (2d6) psychic damage (already included in the statistic below).

Actions

Overpowering Authority (recharge 6): As an action, the favored templar can cause each creature in a 10 ft. radius originating from themselves to make a Wisdom saving throw against its spellcasting DC. Creatures that fail are charmed or frightened by the favored templar (their choice) until the end of their next turn.

Obsidian-spike flail: Melee weapon attack: +3 to hit, reach 5, one target. Hit: 5 (1d8+1) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) psychic damage.

Vicious Mockery: Spellcasting cantrip: The templar calls out "In the name of [sorcerer king or queen] I command you to...!" laden with subtle enchantments at a creature it can see within 60 ft. If the target can hear it, they must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or take 5 (2d4) psychic damage and have disadvantage on the next attack roll it makes before the end of its next turn.

Description

A favored templar has risen to some acclaim and power within their bureau. They may not have come to the personal notice of their sorcerer king, but they have been granted some authority and will often command troops in the field or squads of guards on a specific mission.

Jhakar

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 25 (3d8+12)

Speed 40 ft.

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
14(+2)	15(+1)	19(+4)	3(-4)	12(+1)	10(+0)

Skills Perception +8, Survival +6

Senses Passive Perception 18

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Keen Tracker: The jhakar has advantage on Wisdom checks to track prey.

Actions

Bite: Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6+2) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC12 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Survivor

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 5 (1d8+1)

Speed 30ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
12(+1)	12(+1)	12(+1)	12(+1)	12(+1)	12(+1)

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common
Challenge 1/8 (20xp)
Proficiency Bonus +2

Actions

Fist: Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 2 (1+1) bludgeoning damage.
Club: Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage.

Thug

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Non-Good Alignment
Armor Class 11 (leather armor)
Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)

Speed 30ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
15(+2)	11(+0)	14(+2)	10(+0)	10(+0)	10(+0)

Skills Intimidate +2

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100xp)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Pack Tactics: The warrior has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the warrior's allies is within 5 ft. 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.

Tribal Warrior

Medium Humanoid (Any Race), Any Alignment
Armor Class 12 (hide armor)
Hit Points 11 (2d8+2)

Speed 30ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
13(+1)	11(+0)	12(+1)	8(-1)	11(+0)	8(+1)

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages Any one language

Challenge 1/8 (25xp)

Proficiency Bonus +2

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

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, or 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack).

Wilder Psion (Rigat)

Medium Humanoid (Usually Human), Any Alignment

Armor Class: 10

Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)

Speed 30ft

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
9(-1)	11(+0)	12(+1)	15(+2)	12(+1)	14(+2)

Skills Arcana +4, Insight +3, Intimidation +4

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +3

Senses Passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Telepathy 120

Challenge 1 (200xp) Prof Bonus +2

Psionic Focus (wilder): The wilder psion has advantage on insight and intimidation checks.

Psionic Manifesting: The wilder psion is a 5th-level psionic manifester. Its manifesting ability is Charisma (power save DC 12, +4 to hit with power attacks). As an action, the wilder psion can manifest psionic powers Crowned in Sorrow, Incite Fear, Push), as below.

Clairaudience, usable 2/day as a psionic ability requiring no components. Rigat's range is up to 10 miles.

Actions

Wrist Razor: Melee Weapon Attack: +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6) slashing damage, Light, finesse, immune disarm.

Crowned in Sorrow (1/day). **Psionic power.** The wilder psion chooses one target it can see within 60 ft.. The target must make a Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 15 (3d8) psychic damage and can't take reactions until the start of its next turn. On a successful save, it takes half damage.

Incite Fear (recharge 5-6). **Psionic power.** The wilder psion chooses one target it can see within 60 ft.. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the wilder psion for 1 minute, or until the wilder psion's concentration ends. Whenever the frightened target ends its turn in a location where it can't see the wilder psion it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself with a success.

Push. **Psionic power.** The wilder psion chooses one target it can see within 60 ft.. The target makes a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 9 (2d8) force damage and is pushed up to 10 feet in a straight line away from the wilder psion.

Reactions

Intellect Fortress. As a reaction when taking psychic damage, the wilder psion gains resistance to psychic damage for that attack.

Description

Rigat is a wilder psion, a practitioner of The Way with little formal training but a lot of raw talent. A wilder psion might make use of their talents to oppress those around them, or might be trying to harness their powers to accomplish a goal. Their powers are often blunt expressions of force, but somewhat effective.

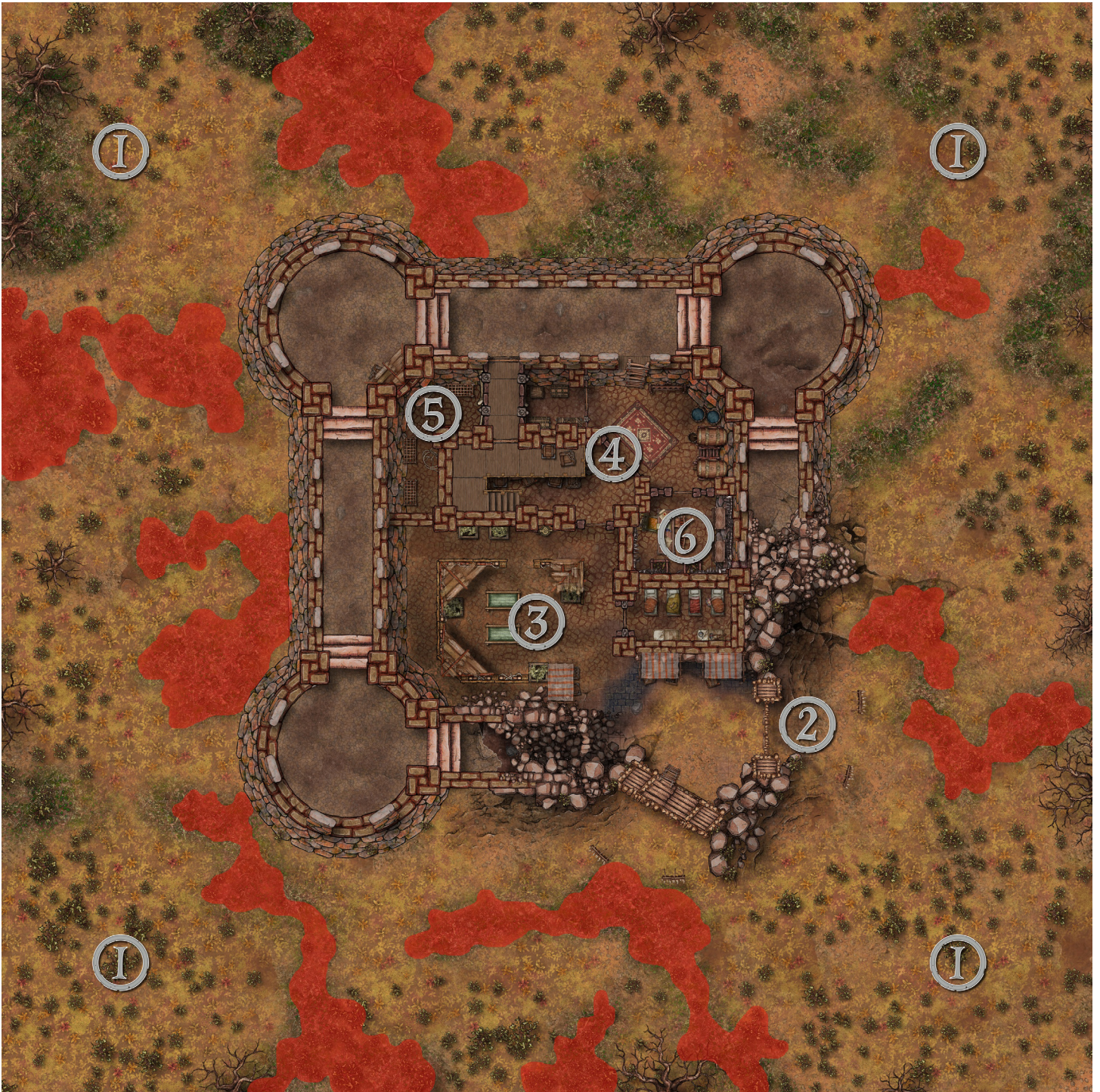
APPENDIX D: MAPS

Part 3: The Tribute



Part 4: The Keep - Area / Interior Locations & Bloodgrass (DM eyes only)

Note: If Bloodgrass is added to the Keep Surrounds area, it does not look red in appearance, however red is used on the map below to indicate its suggested locations.



Part 5: The Return - Medhanit Temporary Campsite

