



WINTERHEART

by Esper

Winterheart is an adventure for four 4th-level characters, with instructions included to easily modify the encounters for smaller or larger parties.

On a dark, snowy night, there comes a dream of lust, blood, and a girl with a heart of winter...

A FIFTH EDITION-COMPATIBLE ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 4TH LEVEL

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The elves of House Sangellion were exiled from the distant elven city of Two Rivers over a century ago, and its members have been struggling to rebuild ever since. Nowadays, the Sangellions and their retainers reside in a lonely keep in the Kitra Forest. They dream of regrowing their elder tree—a symbol of honor, ancestry, and divine favor—but a rival faction called the Aurum Consortium stands in their way. The Aurums have encroached upon and plundered Sangellion lands for years (see “Regional Factions” below), and the conflict peaked five years ago, when Aurum loggers unwittingly chopped down the Sangellion’s elder tree.

Aldric Sangellion is his house’s sole heir. He fell in love with Katina Lokari, a human girl whom he met while performing in her hometown of Stormyroot. For two years, they kept their love affair a secret. Katina’s father, Tathis, was a member of the Aurum Consortium.

The Aurums and their hirelings began to build a bridge over a forest river nearly a month ago. Sangellion forces arrived as soon as they learned of this new expansion, and the standoff soon exploded into a bloody skirmish. (Marked “old battle site” on the map.) The elves were victorious, and the surviving humans, including Tathis Lokari, fled back to Stormyroot.

That night, Tathis attempted to smuggle his family out of the Kitra Forest for good. Their escape plans were discovered by Sangellion agents, and the Lokaris were ambushed. Tathis and Katina were killed in the ensuing chaos, and Chryssa, the youngest daughter, a girl with latent ice magic, was taken captive. Only Galenna, the girls’ mother, managed to escape.

Aldric Sangellion was grief-stricken by his lover’s death, and fell into a deep melancholy. His father gave him Chryssa, his latest “war trophy,” and the titular “Winterheart”, in hopes that it would console his son. Galenna, overwhelmed by sorrow and fury, sent

word to the greater Aurum Consortium in the eastern city of Sordaria. Chryssa is currently captive within Sangellion Keep, where her heart grows bleak as winter.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters experience the same vivid dream, in which they see a human girl held in a forest keep. Her captor mentions he is working to defeat a group known as the Aurum Consortium. The vision contains an image of an unnatural and deadly winter, a foreboding glimpse of what will occur if girl’s despair overtakes her and her icy magic runs wild. The characters travel to the forest town of Stormyroot, but find its keep is not the one from the dream. Their investigation leads them to the local tavern, which is frequented by two bitter rivals, and each attempts to get the characters onto his or her side.

That night, a second dream comes to the characters, revealing more about the obsessive Aldric Sangellion and the crucial nature of Chryssa Lokari’s situation. Soon after, the characters uncover a lead on the castle from their dreams: Sangellion Keep. The abducted maiden is from Stormyroot, and her family’s history with House Sangellion is one of conflict, bloodshed, and mourning. When a war troop from the Aurum Consortium arrives to march against the Sangellions, the characters have their opportunity to infiltrate the keep and rescue Chryssa.

REGIONAL FACTIONS

House Sangellion

The Sangellions were once a proud noble house in the elven city of Two Rivers. They were banished four elven generations ago, after a period of

turmoil that began with them serving wine that contained blood. Their elder tree (a royal bloodleaf) was cut down, and they were forced out into the wilds with only the possessions they could carry. After wandering the Kitra Forest for a month, they located a stronghold and took it by force.

Beliefs. The Sangellions were wrongly exiled; their family is valued above all other things; they are disdained by the gods, but they will reclaim their divine favor.

Goals. Claim and protect their land; regrow their house's elder tree, a royal bloodleaf; regain their honor and return to Two Rivers.

Obstacles. The Aurum Consortium logs and mines on Sangellion land (near the Satyr's Spit river), and the elves fear that the Aurums are undermining their sovereignty in Kitra Forest.

The Aurum Consortium

This ambitious organization is comprised of individual sects scattered across the land. Its constituent groups include a builders' company, a merchant guild, and a militant religious order serving a god of civilization. Some Aurum sects operate openly, maintaining a credible image, while others are more clandestine. In Stormyroot, the Aurum Consortium has built respect by improving the local trade road and protecting it from outlaws.

Beliefs. Civilization is slowly crumbling; a more capable entity will always overtake a lesser one; the Aurums have gained divine favor by strengthening order and society.

Goals. Utilize the natural resources found in the eastern Kitra Forest (lumber, gemstones, furs); gain political and

military control in Stormyroot; oust House Sangellion from Kitra Forest.

Obstacles. The Sangellions have argued and fought against the Aurums for years. Though the elves technically do not own the land they inhabit, the local government is unwilling to oppose them. Lord Paramon Phaskomil currently holds the seat of legal power in Stormyroot, and he is reluctant to grant the Aurums true power in his domain.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Dream. The mystical vision the characters simultaneously experience should both foster sympathy for Chryssa, and show that her death will have far-reaching implications: a terrible and prolonged winter will blanket the land if she is not saved.

The Slain Relative. As an optional hook, one of the Aurums who died in the recent forest battle was a family member or close friend of a character. The character receives an official letter from the Aurum Consortium that delivers this troubling news and advises the character to come collect the remaining assets of the deceased's estate, including 300 gold of valuables. The letter also implicates House Sangellion as the murderers.

THE DREAM

The GM may decide the location at which the ominous dream occurs. This place should be within 100 miles of Stormyroot. Some suggestions include a roadside inn, a wooded grove, or a hill cave. The same dream comes to anyone who sleeps, trances, meditates, or prays at the specified location. This happens not because of the location itself; it is actually Chryssa's locket that produces the vision. The necklace hangs out of sight (from inn rafters, a tree branch, or a cave ledge), having been brought there by a bird Chryssa spoke to. When the characters rest at the location, read or



paraphrase the following:

A slender elf dressed in regal crimson approaches a stone keep in a snow-dusted wood. The lilting sounds of a harp drift ethereally through the trees, and he halts at the base of the keep's tower. A girl emerges onto a small balcony on the tower's highest floor. She is a human, black-haired and scarcely old enough to be called a woman. Her breath is tight and fearful, but her gaze is cold and stoic.

The man on the ground calls up to her. "Worry not, my beloved. Soon, I shall destroy the damned Aurums, and nothing shall stand between us. My affection for you grows with each day's passing. Stay safe in your tower; you shall learn to love me soon." He blows a kiss and vanishes into the snowy woods.

Alone on the balcony, the girl looks down. The vision is immediately overtaken by an image of her lying dead and broken on the stones below. From the sky comes whipping winds, howling blizzards, and

icy rain. The vision then shifts to reveal farmlands with dead fields, familiar towns smothered in white and grey, and people huddled indoors, shivering.

The dream image snaps back to the girl on the balcony. A bird alights upon the balustrade and hops comfortably close to her.

"Please," she tells the bird, "find someone, anyone who can help me. I will throw myself from this balcony before I love that man." She removes her necklace and locket, and holds out her hand. The bird takes the tiny chain, then flies away.

After the dream-vision, the characters may attempt skill checks to comprehend it.

Intelligence (Arcana) DC 15. The vision was definitely supernatural, though the maiden may not fully realize the extent of her power. She knew how to communicate with the bird, though did not perform a spell in the strict sense. Chances are, she possesses a sort of innate magic. It is also seems that if she dies in the tower, an unnatural winter will consume the land.

Intelligence (History) DC 12. The stone fortress in the dream resembles a place called Phaskomil Keep, which is in the nearby town of Stormyroot.

Intelligence (Nature) DC 10. The woods in the dream are part of the nearby Kitra Forest. Winters in this region are frosty, but winter is almost over, and snowfall is rare this close to spring. The disastrous blizzard in the dream was not a natural phenomenon.

Charisma DC 10. If the characters are near civilization, they can ask the locals about the forest stronghold. They are guided toward Stormyroot, a small town in the easternmost part of the Kitra Forest. The local lord has a stone keep resembling the one in the dream.

Wisdom (Perception) DC 15. The character locates Chryssa's necklace. Inside the locket is a portrait of two young girls with their names inscribed below. The elder, Katina, has straw-blonde hair and high aristocratic features. Chryssa, the younger, is clearly the woman from the dream. She looks vibrant and joyful here, and white violets are braided into her auburn curls.

Chryssa's necklace is imbued with a faint aura of divination magic. Unless she escapes captivity, anyone who rests within 30 feet of the locket for the first time experiences the same foreboding dream.

TRAVELING TO STORMYROOT

The Ilios Road, an active trade route, winds some 6 miles into the Kitra Forest before reaching Stormyroot. The town is nestled in an area of cleared forest. At the west end of the settlement, on the edge of the woods, stands Phaskomil Keep.

The outskirts of Stormyroot are lined with derelict houses, and shallow snowdrifts line the southern and western sides of the buildings. Despite their crumbling town, the townsfolk still find a way to survive, and people are going about their daily routines. The strong scent of cedar follows a lumberjack with his cart while three unwashed children chase behind, and four women in work clothes carry kegs of ale towards a tavern whose sign reads "Seven Snakes."

Stormyroot

Population. 3,160 (93% human, 5% elf, 2% other)

Government. Paramon Phaskomil, resident noble lord. Under him is a town council.

Defense. Lord Paramon commands a town watch of 32 guardsmen. He can also summon a conscripted army of 200 local men. He also commands 12 sentries who guard him, his family, and his keep.

Commerce. Stormyroot regularly deals with merchants from distant cities, exporting lumber, wool, fur pelts, gemstones, olive oil, and herbs. Most basic supplies are sold in the town market. There are two taverns, named Seven Snakes and Arrowhead.

Organizations. Stormyroot has two temples, a fairground, and a private guildhall for the Aurum Consortium.

Point of Interest. The town square features the stump of a once-mighty oak tree that was struck by lightning during a fierce storm.

INVESTIGATING IN STORMYROOT

The townsfolk stare at the characters, and they are quick to start chatting about this group of armed travelers.

If the characters go to the local lord's keep, they are halted at the entrance by a soldier wearing Phaskomil's colors: an orange stripe across a green field. If the characters ask to speak to the lord, the guardsman asks them to wait at the Seven Snakes until Lord Paramon is available. In 3 hours, a servant boy goes to Seven Snakes and summons the characters to meet with Paramon at the town square.

Any character who succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check realizes that the keep is similar to the one in the dream, but it is not quite the same. This one has less moss and fewer vines growing on its stones, and it bears orange and green banners, while the other keep's standard was crimson.

If the characters wish to gather information around Stormyroot, the townsfolk tell them that Seven Snakes is the best place to check.

SEVEN SNAKES

The tavern is on the north side of the town market. Its doorfront placard is painted with the image of seven green snakes. If anyone asks why the tavern is called Seven Snakes, the owner, Agnes, hollers from wherever she is, "'Cause I keep seven pet snakes for anyone a-causin' trouble!"

The Tavern Patrons. Seven Snakes is frequented by many locals, though two are particularly noteworthy: Eumelia and Onedimus. These two scoundrels each yearn for the other's downfall. A tavern patron speaks with the characters about the quest at hand, but offers only very basic information until the characters help them defeat their rival.

Eumelia Trago

Eumelia is an elegant priestess from one of the local temples, but her true skill is seduction. She is secretly paid by the Aurum Consortium to persuade town councilmen to vote in favor of the Aurum's projects. When she sees the characters, she approaches one of them (her "target"), though she is sly enough to make it seem completely natural.

Appearance. Nearing middle age, voluptuous, long curly hair.

Personality. Clever, discreet, alluring.

Combat. As **cult fanatic**.

Goals. Eumelia longs to get rid of her rival, Onedimus. He knows something of her involvement with corrupt politics, and she suspects he associates with House Sangellion. Eumelia attempts to ensnare her target and convince them that Onedimus has harassed her for years and even stolen from her. She promises her affection, pleasure, and a secret about Aldric Sangellion, if only the character can make Onedimus disappear for good. Eumelia recommends framing the man for thievery or scaring him out of town. "Or perhaps," she suggests, "he'll have a bad accident."

Development. If Eumelia's target character permanently gets rid of Onedimus, she reveals that Katina Lokari had a secret romance with Aldric Sangellion, before she died. Should the character ever meet Aldric, simply sing a line from Katina's love song, "Summer Sweet," to make him flinch (Aldric suffers disadvantage on his next attack roll or saving throw after the first time he hears the song in an encounter). Katina sang it once in the Seven Snakes, but the only line Eumelia can remember is, "O days of wind and rain are gone away/ And now we live in days of summer

sweet.”

Onedimus Kaion

Onedimus performs magic tricks, claiming to know real spells. He is a spy for House Sangellion, and alerts them when Aurum forces arrive in Stormyroot. He approaches the characters and tries to win their favor with a jaunty disappearing trick.

Appearance. Graying, with a short black beard, wears a light yellow robe.

Personality. Jovial, conspiratorial, convinced of his own righteousness.

Combat. As spy.

Goals. Onedimus loathes Eumelia due to her involvement with the Aurums, but he fears they will harm him if he tries to expose her. Onedimus attempts to befriend any character approached by Eumelia, and cautions them that she is not to be trusted. He warns that Eumelia is a wicked temptress that once used him to gain precious information about his employer, who he falsely claims to be Lord Paramon. A character who doubts this lie may make a Wisdom (Insight) contested by Onedimus' Charisma (Deception) check.

He promises to give the characters a *spell scroll of invisibility* as well as a secret about Chryssa Lokari if they expose Eumelia during a tryst with a council member. Lord Paramon Phaskomil is a righteous, law-abiding man who will call for both Eumelia and the offending councilmember's arrest, if given proof.

Development. If the characters coordinate Eumelia's imprisonment, Onedimus provides the spell scroll as promised. He also informs them he once saw Chryssa Lokari walking in the woods, and he swears that there is some magic in her

Councilman Escalus

Eumelia currently has a councilman named Escalus wrapped around her finger. She meets with him every night in an abandoned house on the outskirts of town. The Aurums are currently trying to create armed checkpoints along the forest roads to keep the Sangellions out of their territory, and Escalus is the deciding vote. The checkpoints are ostensibly to reduce banditry in the region, but the Aurum's true motives are common knowledge.

voice; he spied her speaking to animals and claims she once sang a ballad so tragic the clouds wept with sorrow.

MEETING LORD PARAMON PHASKOMIL

About three hours later (if the characters requested a meeting), one of Lord Paramon's servants summons the characters to meet with the noble lord at the Town Square, near the namesake tree stump. Alternatively, Paramon sends for the characters when he gets word that unusual travelers are in town.

Paramon wants both the Aurums and the Sangellions to leave Stormyroot in peace, but fears open conflict. Dozens of local workers have been killed in the rival factions' conflict; most recently, the laborers who were building the bridge in the forest. His distaste for the Aurum Consortium runs deepest, as they pose a direct threat to his authority.

Lord Paramon is an aging human with deep stress lines on his brow. He wears fine green and orange clothing and is accompanied by a pair of guardsmen. His voice carries authority and highborn education, but his weariness shows. He can answer many basic questions the characters may have.

The Dream. The keep seen in the mystical vision is actually Sangellion Keep. The girl in the dream must be Chryssa Lokari, who

was taken captive in a battle a month ago. The foreboding blizzard causes Paramon incredible concern, but he can offer no advice.

Aurum Consortium. The Aurums have aided construction and trade in the local area, and they have brought a couple outlaw gangs to justice. However, their conflicts and outside customs are too much. Paramon wants to oust the Aurum Consortium, but he is having difficulty convincing the Town Council.

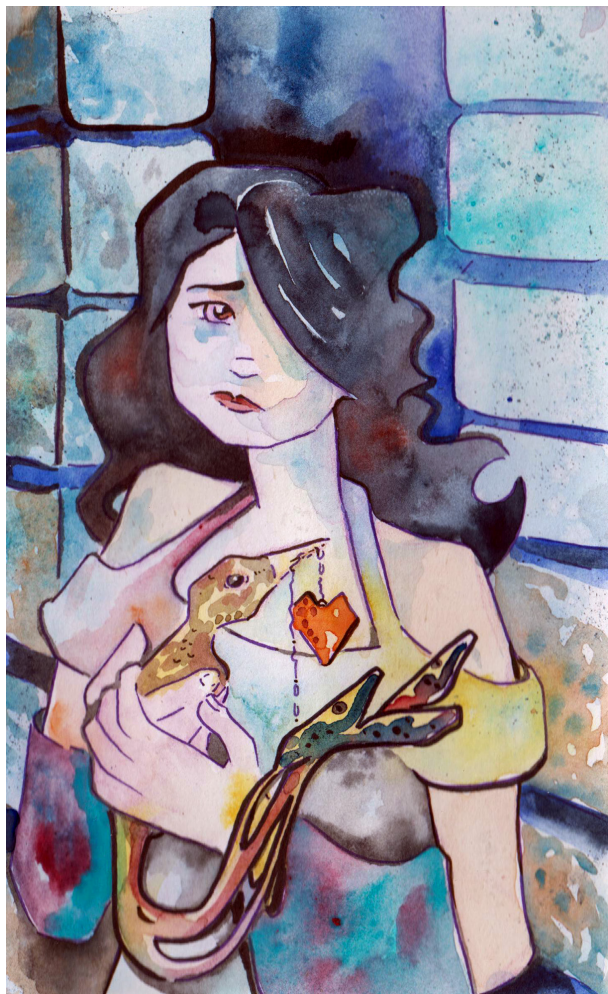
House Sangellion. The elves' keep lies 10 miles southwest of Stormyroot, and is quite similar to the one here in town. Both keeps were once strongholds for the elven dominion that ruled this forest, many years ago. He regards the Sangellions as untrustworthy, brooding, and territorial, though he admits he has had good interactions with the elven minstrels that play in town from time to time.

Lokari Family. Despite his misgivings about the Aurum Consortium, Paramon feels sorry for the Lokaris, especially Galenna, who lost both her husband and her two daughters in a single day. Lord Paramon tells the characters where Galenna lives, should they like to speak with her.

MEETING GALENNA LOKARI

The characters can learn the whereabouts of Galenna's house from Lord Paramon, the tavern patrons, or by a DC 15 Charisma check to gather information from the townsfolk. She is a motherly soul who dresses in tidy clothing and has worrying eyes.

Galenna is Tathis' widow and Chryssa's mother. Tathis was a member of the Aurum Consortium and an enemy of House Sangellion, but lost his life shepherding his family away from the conflict (see "Adventure Background"). Galenna sent an urgent message to the larger sect of Aurums in the city of Sordaria, desperately calling for her husband's allies to avenge his death.



Upon calling at her door, Galenna answers coldly and curtly, masking her grief with frigid indifference. Mentioning the Aurums or Sangellions allows the character to make a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check to get her to open up. If anyone speaks Chryssa's name, Galenna's façade crumbles and she invites the group in, practically in tears. If asked about the dread storm from the dream, Galenna quietly explains that her daughter has always possessed a magical gift. She walked barefoot in the winter snow as a child, and seemed to speak with the whispering winds when an ice storm passed through the forest. Her gift is untamed, Galenna fears that Chryssa's fear is corrupting its benign power. To secure Chryssa's safe return, Galenna offers to give all her money

and jewelry (worth a total of 200 gp), or her unconditional aid on any task within a day's ride of Stormyroot. She uses **commoner** statistics.

THE SECOND DREAM

The characters receive another dream the first time they rest in Stormyroot, or at another dramatically appropriate point. This vision occurs only once, and it comes only to those who experienced the first dream.

The melancholy girl from the previous dream sits on a bed in an opulent solar, with a happy mastiff wagging its tail beside her. The door swings open, and a lavishly-dressed elf enters the room. His jewelry jangles as he throws his arms wide.

"Dearest Chryssa, I've missed you!" He strides to the side of the bed and strokes her cheek, seeing the tears on her face. "No, my love, dry your eyes. And smile. When you smile, you are even more beautiful than your sister was."

He moves to kiss the maiden, but she seizes his wrist. His eyes flash and he throws his full weight against her, slamming her wrist against the headboard.

"No!" she screams. "Don't touch me, Aldric... I'll kill you!"

The mastiff barks and leaps at Aldric. The elf buckles as its jaws tear into his leg. Eyes watering and short of breath, he staggers to his feet and draws his rapier. He thrusts viciously and the hound wails.

The dream ends suddenly, and you awake to the wailing of the wind.

The events of this dream transpired just last night. Chryssa Lokari is alive and untouched, but she is consumed by fear and sorrow. She spends every waking hour alternately spinning a dagger towards her chest and considering the balcony's steep edge, completely unaware of the ice that is slowly engulfing her

chambers. If Chryssa takes her own life—if the characters do not rescue her from Sangellion Keep during the Aurum's upcoming attack—her untamed magic will surge from her body and scar the land with its elemental power.

ARRIVAL OF THE AURUMS

The next evening, a cadre of eighty Aurum soldiers arrives in Stormyroot, booking every available room in the Seven Snakes. The foot soldiers are lightly armored, carrying shields and spears. Their commanders ride horses, armored in banded cuirasses and crested helms. Emblazoned on all their shields are three golden pillars, the sigil of their order. This squadron has traveled from the city of Sordaria to strike at the Sangellions' heart, using Stormyroot as a base. They intend to march on Sangellion Keep to end their feud once and for all. They formulate their tactics swiftly and march southwest toward Sangellion Keep by the next dawn. This information spreads around Stormyroot in no time at all. If Eumelia is on the characters' side, she suggests they break into Sangellion Keep while the bulk of the elves' forces are fighting the Aurums.

SANGELLION KEEP

A lumberjacks' trail leads 3 miles south out of town, ending at a slender river called Satyr's Spit. The Sangellions believe the land on the other side of the river is theirs. Sangellion Keep is located 7 miles farther into the forest. As the characters approach its mossy walls, sheets of freezing rain begin to fall from the sky.

Layout and Features

The keep's creeper-choked walls are 25 feet high, with a 70-foot-tall tower at each corner. There is a single front entrance, a wide main corridor that loops around the keep, and an interior courtyard with doors to each tower and the great hall. Chryssa Lokari is imprisoned on the top floor of the northwest tower.

Ceilings. All rooms and corridors are 15 feet tall.

Corridors. The corridors are 20 ft. wide and wrap around the rectangular shape of the keep.

Light. All rooms and corridors on the main floor are lit by brightly-burning torches in iron sconces along the walls. Aldric's tower is lit by ethereal *dancing lights* that cast eerie shadows on the walls as the characters pass.

Personnel. Aldric and his father ride from Sangellion Keep to engage the Aurums (marked "new battle site" on the map), leaving only a handful of soldiers in their stronghold. There are about fifty noncombatants throughout the keep, including servants, messengers, and retainers. They flee from all threats, and will reveal that Chryssa is being held in Aldric's chambers in the northwest tower, if captured.

The Front Gate

The front gate faces east. When the characters come within 60 feet of the front door, two elven **scouts** within the keep demand they halt, calling through arrow slits in the stone wall (granting them three-quarters cover). These elves have orders to attack all non-elven visitors, and will open fire if the characters approach. The oaken doors are heavy, reinforced with iron, and barred from the inside (AC 17, 20 hp; Break DC 22).

If the characters arrive before the battle begins, 2 more **scouts** and 4 **guards** are present in and around the entrance.

The Entrance Hall

Two **guards** (armed with longswords) are positioned within the entrance hall, a 30 ft.-by-40 ft. rectangular room. Two corridors lead westward, running along the northern and southern walls of the keep. If they hear a commotion outside, they run down the 80 ft. corridor that leads to the northwest tower for reinforcements.

The tower chamber is a circular room with a 40 ft. diameter. The room has two openings for the corridors connected to it, and a staircase that winds up the wall. The Sangellion's elven mercenaries, a group of 3 **thugs** (armed with longswords and shields) with 2 **mastiffs** guard

the tower.

Tactics. The two guards with longbows take cover behind overturned tables or corridor entryways. The melee combatants focus their attacks on one or two characters. The **scout** flees the keep if the battle takes a turn for the worse, while the others fight to the death. The tower's **thugs** lurk on the stairs and will attempt to push characters off of them when they ascend.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Party of Three Characters. Remove 1 **thug** and 1 **mastiff**.

Party of Five Characters. Add 1 **scout**.

FREEING CHRYSsa

The stairs in the tower chamber wind up through each of the six floors of Aldric's tower. If the characters take 10 minutes to search each of the tower's five lower floors (including bedrooms, lavatories, and herb gardens) they find 30gp worth of valuables per floor. At the top of the staircase is a locked, reinforced door (AC 17, 20 hp; Break DC 22, Pick Lock DC 15). Its hinges are frozen solid, and a supernatural chill emanates from within.

Aldric's bedchambers are beyond the door, and Chryssa Lokari is inside,



huddled in furs in the center of the room, a trembling arm pointing a dagger at the door. Frost emanates from her body, and the floor is slick with inch-thick ice. As soon as the characters enter, she throws the dagger (+4 to hit, 1d4+2 piercing damage), leaps to her feet and clumsily dashes to the balcony, preparing to leap off it. If the characters tell her they have come to carry out a rescue, an eager, defiant look replaces her terror. She hastily apologizes for throwing the dagger, but her words are clumsy and full of nerves.

Resolving the Battle. Before the characters exit the bed chamber, the GM must determine the outcome of the battle between House Sangellion and the Aurum Consortium. The Aurums have a larger and better-funded contingent, but the Sangellion's spy, Onedimus, provided the elves with the Aurum's battle plans, giving the Sangellions a 50% chance of victory. If Onedimus was killed or driven away, however, the Sangellions' chance of success falls to 15%.

If the Sangellions win the battle, Aldric rides back to the keep to instruct the servants to prepare a feast. If the Aurums win the battle, Aldric retreats with the remnants of his army, hoping to flee with Chryssa on horseback. Regardless the battle's outcome, **Aldric Sangellion**, 1 **warsinger** (see below), and 2 **scouts** can be found in the tower chamber, blocking the characters' escape.

Aldric is horrified that the characters have taken Chryssa from his tower, but he maintains his composure. He speaks proudly, with restrained venom, and challenges the party's best warrior to a duel to the death, in order to settle —

Aldric Sangellion

XP 700 (CR 3)

Neutral medium humanoid (elf) fighter 6

Initiative +4

DEFENSE

AC: 19 (studded leather, shield, *cloak of protection*)

hp: 49 (6d10 + 12)

Saving Throws: Str +5, Dex +5, Con +6, Int +1, Wis +5, Cha +2

Resistance: advantage on saving throws vs. charm

Immunity: sleep effects

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Action Surge: Aldric takes an additional action this turn (1/rest).

Second Wind: Aldric recovers 1d10 + 6 hit points as a bonus action (1/rest).

Combat Superiority: Aldric has four superiority dice (4d8). He knows the following maneuvers (save DC 15): *disarming attack*, *parry*, *riposte*.

Extra Attack: Aldric makes two attacks.

Melee Attack — Rapier: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 6 piercing damage

Ranged Attack — Longbow. +7 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 piercing damage

STATISTICS

Str 12 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+4) **Con** 14 (+2) **Int** 11 (+0)

Wis 12 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

Skills: Athletics +4, History +3, Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Performance +5, Persuasion +4

Other Proficiencies: Harp

Languages: Elvish, Common

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

TRAITS

Elf Traits, Dueling Fighting Style (already applied), Battle Master

Warsinger

XP 100 (CR 1/2)

Neutral medium humanoid (elf)

Initiative +1

DEFENSE

AC: 14 (chain shirt)

hp: 16 (3d8 + 3)

Saving Throws: Wis +2, Cha +4

Resistance: advantage on saving throws vs. charm

Immunity: sleep effects

OFFENSE

Speed: 30 ft.

Spellcasting: The elf warsinger is a 2nd-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). The warsinger knows the following spells:

1st level (3 slots): *healing word*, *heroism*, *thunderwave*

Elvish Battle Shout (1/day): One elf of the warsinger's choice within 30 ft. of it makes an attack as a reaction. The warsinger uses this ability as a bonus action.

Melee Attack — Longsword: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d10 +1 slashing damage

Ranged Attack — Longbow: +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 1 piercing damage

STATISTICS

Str 13 (+1) Dex 12 (+1) Con 13 (+1) Int 12 (+1)

Wis 11 (+0) Cha 14 (+2)

Languages: Elvish, Common

Senses: Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

—who gets “the girl.” If Aldric wins, he tells the remaining characters to leave and never come back. If he loses the duel (and is killed), his allies and servants fearfully allow the characters to leave with Chryssa. If the characters refuse the duel, Aldric and his men attack.

Tactics. The **warsinger** stays behind Aldric. The latter uses *disarming attack* against the strongest melee fighter. The **warsinger** then picks up the disarmed

weapon (interacting with the object as a free action). Aldric likes to use *riposte*, but he always saves one superiority die in order to *parry*. Aldric fights to the death, and his men surrender only if he is defeated and they clearly cannot win

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Party of Three Characters. Remove the 2 scouts.

Party of Five Characters. Add 1 elf warsinger.

CONCLUSION

If the characters reunite Chryssa with her mother, the two fall into a tearful embrace. After a moment, Galenna releases her daughter and immediately seizes the nearest character in a massive, motherly bear hug. Regardless of whether the Aurum soldiers return to Stormyroot to prepare a feast or a triage, Galenna urges the party to ignore them. She gives the gold she promised and offers them beds for the night, now that the Aurums have taken over the Seven Snakes.

Though Chryssa is safe, the story could still end in many different ways. The blood spilled by the two feuding factions has not resolved their age-old conflict, and Chryssa's burgeoning sorcerous power could still pose a threat to the Kitra Forest—even the entire realm!

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