

SUBTERFUGE

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Adventure Code: PHLAN1-3



An ambitious plan for the reconstruction of Phlan would expand the city walls to protect all the citizens. Now a band of emissaries sent to acquire necessary materials has gone missing in the wilds of the Dragonspine Mountains, and only the Heroes of Phlan can find them. But will it be in time to prevent catastrophe for the city? A D&D Adventurers League adventure set in and around Phlan.

A four-hour adventure for 11th-16th level characters

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Subterfuge*, a D&D Adventurers League adventure, Part Three of the *Alliances Trilogy* set in Phlan.

*This adventure is designed for **three to seven 11th -16th level characters**, and is optimized for **five 12th-level characters**.*

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

The D&D Adventurers League

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

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

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

For more information on playing, running games as a Dungeon Master, and organizing games for the D&D Adventurers League, please visit the D&D Adventurers League home at:

www.dndadventurersleague.org

Preparing the Adventure

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

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

Before Play at the Table

Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information:

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

Players that have characters outside the adventure's level range **cannot participate in the adventure with those characters**. Players

with ineligible characters can make a new 1st-level character or use a pregenerated character. Players can play an adventure they previously played or ran as a Dungeon Master, but not with the same character.

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

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

If players wish to spend downtime days and it's the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now. Alternatively, they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters' spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting the Adventure

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

You may adjust the adventure beyond the guidelines given. For example, if you're playing with a group of inexperienced players, you might want to make the adventure a little easier; for very experienced players, you may want to make

it a little harder. Therefore, five categories of party strength have been created for you to use as a guide. Feel free to use a different adjustment during the adventure if the recommended party strength feels off for the group.

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

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

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

DETERMINING PARTY STRENGTH

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

Running the Adventure

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

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

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

- You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.

Doing so is especially important and applicable outside of combat, but feel free to adjust the adventure for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time.

- Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group. Never being challenged makes for a boring game and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating one. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a chance to shine.
- Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately. Watch for stalling, since play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish too early; provide them with a full play experience. Try to be aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly
- Read-aloud text is just a suggestion; feel free to modify the text as you see fit, especially when dialogue is present.
- Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to proceed. Players should be given clues and hints when appropriate so they can tackle puzzles, combat, and interactions without getting frustrated over lack of information. Doing so helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players "little victories" for figuring out good choices from clues.

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

Downtime and Lifestyle

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

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

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

In addition, whenever a character spends downtime days, that character also spends the requisite expense for his or her lifestyle. Costs are per day, so a character that spends ten days of downtime also spends ten days of expenses maintaining his or her lifestyle. Some downtime activities help with lifestyle expenses or add lifestyle expenses.

Spellcasting Services

Any settlement the size of a town or larger can provide some spellcasting services. Characters need to be able to travel to the settlement to obtain these services.

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

Spellcasting Services

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

Acolyte Background

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

Melvaunt is a large city where any acolyte can find a friendly shrine or temple.

Disease, Death, and Recovery

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

Disease, Poison, and Other Debilitating Effects

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

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

Death

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

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

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

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

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

Adventure Background

Phlan is a city marked by dramatic change and upheaval throughout its history. The centuries have seen it demolished and rebuilt multiple times, and Phlan's continuing existence on the coast of the turbulent Moonsea testifies to the perseverance and pluck of its people.

Recently, four powerful would-be rulers have vied for the Cinnabar Throne. They each have plans for the reconstruction of Phlan, none more ambitious or popular than those of Barrett Sokol. An up-and-coming lord, he leverages his noble background and place in the city's history against his general lack of political or business experience. His plans to rebuild Phlan as an impregnable fortress, complete with a towering wall to keep out invaders, have earned him much love among the people. He has a reputation for standing up for the little guy.

Charming, witty, and beloved among the common folk, Sokol has ridden far on his charisma and promises, as well as shrewd, if not entirely thought-out, bargains with the entrenched powers of the city. He has the support of The Welcomers, The Order of the Gauntlet, and the Labor Guilds, who expect him to reinstate the Council of Ten upon his elevation to High Councilor. Many see him as a potential puppet they can easily manipulate.

Sokol's plan faces a hurdle, however. Significant mining, transport, and careful diplomatic efforts to bring the needed stone from the Dragonspine Mountains are required. To this end, he has dispatched representatives to strike a crucial deal with the Hammersfell shield dwarf clan for the stone and quarry, but his emissaries have not returned. The delays have caused Guild leaders to doubt the feasibility of the plan, and support is wavering. The fate of the trade party must be determined and a deal struck, or the plans will surely fail before they've begun.

Behind the scenes, one of Sokol's rivals—Graben Samulkin, a priest of Bane—has worked to undermine the meeting with the dwarves by stirring up a local frost giant tribe and setting the emissaries up with a falsified map leading directly into their territory. In doing so, he plans to kill two stirges with one sling bullet: squash the efforts of his opposition, as well as getting the pesky adventurers who've thwarted him thus far out of the city while he performs his coup.

The State of Phlan

Phlan is an anchorage on the north coast of the Moonsea. Its inhabitants are celebrating the death of Vorgansharax: a green dragon who laid claim to the town for many months.

Knight Commander Greycastle led the alliance of heroes that slew the dragon (as told in DDEP4: Reclamation of Phlan). In doing so, she leaned on the neighboring city states of Mulmaster and Hillsfar. Masquerading as friends, these rival powers circle hungrily, eager to steer Phlan's future to their own ends.

Yet the townsfolk grow weary of tyranny. Veterans of the resistance demand a stake in the town's future. Merchants wish for fewer regulations. Loyalists call for the return of monarchy. With the militia too weak to impose order, Greycastle has conceded to an election. For the first time, Phlan's citizens have a say in their own destiny.

The Election

Four candidates have emerged as front-runners in Phlan's upcoming election.

Jhessail Greycastle

Knight Commander Greycastle is a hero, but her loyalty to the Black Fists makes her vulnerable. She pledges to:

- Establish a parliament of elected peers to govern Phlan, and serve as First Minister.
- Reform the Black Fists and weed out corruption in its ranks.

Barrett Sokol

The youngest scion of House Sokol has gained popularity among the labor guilds. He pledges to:

- Reinstate the mercantile Council of Ten and stand as High Councilor.
- Create jobs reconstructing Phlan and raising the old city walls.

Colvin Doverson

Lord Doverson claims ancestry with the Royal House of Daoran. If legitimized, this would make him heir to the Cinnabar Throne. He pledges to:

- Reinstate the monarchy and crown himself Lord Protector.
- Renegotiate trade deals with other Moonsea ports for the benefit of Phlan's merchants.

Graben Samaulkin

The religious fervor washing through town has aided this priest of Bane. He pledges to:

- Establish theocratic rule and declare himself Ruinlord of Phlan,
- Rebuild the Lyceum of the Black Lord and appease the god with plentiful sacrifices.

Adventure Overview

The adventure begins in Phlan, where Sokol recruits the characters to assist him in finding his missing emissaries. He wants to know what has become of them and—more importantly—see their mission accomplished and the deal secured. He enlists the aid of a guide—one Aveen Seakin—to see to it that the characters don't get lost as well, and he promises a hefty reward and the support of Phlan's next High Councilor (i.e. his own).

The characters depart for the Dragonspine Mountains and must explore the wilderness to find signs of the missing emissaries. Their speed at this task determines in what state they find the missing travelers, who have been taken captive by a frost giant clan. The characters must rescue the emissaries (or their equipment if they are all dead), and then journey on to meet the dwarves of Clan Hammersfell in an attempt to complete the deal.

The adventure ends when they return to Phlan to discover the city in chaos: Samulkin has made his move, and the stage is set for a dramatic confrontation.

Adventure Hooks

The characters meet with Barrett Sokol in Phlan, having come for one of the following reasons.

Heroes of Phlan

Characters who participated in previous adventures in Phlan (PHLAN 1-1 or PHLAN 1-2) are especially sought after, and can look forward to increasing their prestige within the city. Barrett Sokol—a prominent political figure and businessman—approaches these characters first, leveraging their fame among the people of Phlan to solicit their aid. He doesn't expect them to work strictly in the name of civic duty, of course, but he suggests a statue in their honor, crafted of choice dwarf-mined stone.

Exotic Treasures Wanted!

Explorers, treasure seekers, and characters of a wilderness persuasion who live and work in Phlan's environs have run across Aveen Seakin, a ranger and procurer for Aurora's Whole Realms Catalogue, who recruits them to meet with her employer, Barrett Sokol, about a job she is anxious to see done quickly and well.

Guild Interest: Order of the Gauntlet

The Order of the Gauntlet seeks to preserve peace in Phlan, and Barrett Sokol's plan to fortify the city against invaders seems an excellent one. Orders come down from the upper echelon to any characters with ties to the Order: support Sokol's scheme to the best of their ability.

Guild Interest: Labor Guilds

If Barrett Sokol's construction deal goes through, the Labor Guilds stand to reap economic and political benefits. Sokol has promised to use them for the construction efforts, potentially netting them a fortune, and if Sokol succeeds and is elected High Councilor, he has promised to reinstate the Council of Ten, with the Guilds controlling multiple seats and thus a great deal of power. The Labor Guilds haven't had an opportunity like this in years.

Guild Interest: Welcomers

For all his sunny disposition, Barrett Sokol made certain shady promises and cut certain deals, and if this construction bid falls through, he can't pay his debts. The Welcomers stand to lose a great deal of coin, and no amount of assurances from Sokol will make them rest easy. Characters working with the Welcomers are tasked to watch over the deal to make sure it happens at any cost.

Pacing the Adventure

Keep track of the days that pass, as well as any time the party takes a long rest (which triggers a new day to begin), as it affects the situation in **Part Three**. This determines how many of the emissaries are alive, if any, and how many the characters rescue (if any) in turn affects the meeting with the dwarves in **Part Four: Sealed Deal**.



PART 1. LEAVING PHLAN

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

Ambition is the greatest human trait: both our greatest strength and our most devastating weakness.

—*Catalan the Mad Bard, Complex Musings and False Veracities (1383 DR, the Year of the Vindicated Warrior)*

Introduction

Arriving on the pier of Thorn Island, the characters await their appointment with Barrett Sokol. Read:

From the water, Sokol Keep rises like a dark mountain from the water on Thorn Island. Parts of the keep are being repaired, notably the tower, which sustained significant damage in the reclamation efforts. The yard around the keep is peppered with large craters - the results of explosions of some kind - a common sight throughout the city, but the keep's survival has come to symbolize the town's grit as it stood tall after the smoke cleared. This fact is not lost on its new resident, the young Barrett Sokol. House Sokol is on the rise in Phlan society, with its young heir Barrett on the short list for the election of High Councilor.

Servants escort you through the functional but well-appointed halls of the keep. Tapestries depicting handsome men and regal women watch you from above, always seeming to look at you with pride that borders on arrogance. A functionary ushers you into a sumptuously decorated sitting room, where you are alone but for a cloaked half-elf woman with bright blue eyes and pale, blue-tinged skin who watches you from a corner, arms crossed.

You have barely passed a moment in this place before your host, Barrett Sokol, bursts through the doors, not waiting for his footman to announce him. Grinning broadly and flushed with excitement, he greets you magnanimously. "A thousand times thank you for coming!"

Sokol motions to the servants and requests refreshments for his guests, and opens with some small talk about the rebuilding efforts of the town. Characters who have met Aveen Seakin before (see Adventure Hooks) recognize the half-elf immediately.

- **Wisdom (Insight) DC12:** On close inspection, she seems to be attempting to hide some unknown anxiety.

Roleplaying Barrett Sokol

Sokol is a young, dark-skinned human man with a robust build, unruly dark hair, and an excitable, yet confident manner. As a noble, he's accustomed to his position, and does not shy from tough decisions. Like many politicians, he appears obnoxious at first, coming off as a backslapping glad-hander, but his natural charisma and surprising business savvy inevitably endear him to those whom he meets. When he does stop talking, he is a keen listener and offers a pointed assurance that he has understood your needs.

Once the characters are settled, Sokol lays out the basics of his plan. Read:

Sokol gazes out the window at Phlan across the bay, the light gleaming in his dark hair. "I love this city," he says, "and she needs to be defended. That's why I'm rebuilding and fortifying it, and that's why I need the best materials from the Dragonspine Mountains." He shakes his head sadly. "But now the emissaries I sent to seal the deal with the Hammersfell dwarves, the only ones able to extract the stone, haven't reported back, and I fear the worst. I need someone to find them and help them complete their mission. Or, if tragedy has befallen them, I need someone to close the deal for them." He looks at you dramatically—heroically. "I want that someone... to be you."

Have Sokol answer questions if asked, but otherwise relay the following information. Present but preoccupied, Aveen stays silent during the conversation, and Sokol steps in to answer any questions directed to her.

- **What exactly are we to do?** (Or any question about details): “Ah gods, I’ve got ahead of myself again. My agents left Phlan a ten-day ago to make contact with the Hammersfell Clan of the Dragonspine Mountains. The leader of my agents is a trusted friend, name of Bruw Clangeddin—dwarf, stout-hearted fellow, lots of scars, missing his left eye, deep drinker, you’d like him. Anyway, I would have expected them to make contact by now, or at least send word of their progress. All I’ve heard for the past six days is silence. I want you to go after them, discover what’s happened to them, and broker the deal. This wall needs to be built!”
- **Where does Clan Hammersfell reside?** “As I understand it, deep in the mountains, just south of the Glacier of the Silver Blades.”
- **What route did the emissaries take to get there?** “They tried for the most direct, expeditious route: up the Stojanow River, cutting through the western tip of the Quivering Forest and into the Ticklebelly Hills. (I know, I know, named by halflings, no doubt!) From there, they meant to follow a little-known pass skirting the Glacier of the Silver Blades.”
- **When was the last you heard of the emissaries?** “They sent word from the Ticklebelly Hills, just south of the Glacier of the Silver Blades. So I know they made it to the foot of the mountain.”
- **Who is that? (Aveen):** “Oh right, almost forgot about her. That’s Aveen Seakin—a ranger operating in these parts. She set up my boys with a map to lead them into the mountains. I’ve enlisted her as your guide. She knows the terrain as well as anyone. She’ll get you where you need to go”

- **How do we recognize the emissaries?**

“Bruw is the most distinctive dwarf I’ve ever seen: heavily scarred, tough, fair, missing his left eye. He also took my personal steward, Artora—about thirty winters, human, long dark hair, silver-tongued lady. She bears a silver House Sokol signet ring. The others are servants of House Sokol, like the guard you saw on your way in. Ringmail, swords, crossbows. They wear the house colors, which are green and gold.” He motions to an impressive family crest on the wall.

Note: If this question is not asked by the adventurers, Sokol will offer this information at the end of the conversation.

- **How many emissaries were there?** “I didn’t ask, honestly. Bruw likes to be cautious, though, and I’m sure he took at least ten armed companions.”
- **What are the emissaries carrying?** “As my official proxy, Artora carries a silver signet ring of House Sokol that seals documents with my authority. There’s also a first payment for the dwarves—a good faith gesture—of platinum coins imprinted with the arms of Phlan on one side and my face on the other.” (He pulls a shiny coin from his pocket to demonstrate.)
- **Why is your face on the coins?** “A little added incentive to work with me. Platinum’s good, but those coins will be worth more when I’m High Councilor. Also, I’m dashing.” He strikes an impressive pose.
- **What do you think happened?** “I fear they were waylaid and their cargo taken.”
- **Could they have stolen the cargo and disappeared voluntarily?** “No! Bruw would never betray me like that. We’re good friends.” This is true.
- **What kind of dangers might we face?** “I’ve heard about river bandits on the Stojanow and frost giants raiding the Ticklebelly Hills. Bruw’s map should have kept them out of trouble, though, and you’ll have Aveen. And of course yourselves. You should be fine.”

- **What's our reward for this?** "Aside from the gratitude and continued love of the people of Phlan? Well, I plan to compensate you handsomely, of course, and you'll have the ear of the next High Councilor of Phlan. A priceless reward. But let us say, 5,000 pieces of gold, payable in platinum or gems if you prefer." A successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check convinces Sokol to part with up to 20% of the reward up front (1,000 gp). Any more than that will have to wait. Everything is riding on this deal.

Faction Assignment (Lord's Alliance): If there are any Lord's Alliance members present, Sokol appeals to them away from the others. Even though he is not affiliated, he is a noble after all. "You look like you understand the importance of a signet ring to a noble family. It's vital to our credibility that the ring not fall into the wrong hands. I will be in your debt if you can return it to me."

The Sendoff Parade

When the characters have asked all their questions, a servant arrives and Sokol nods in recognition. Read:

Sokol offers you a brilliant smile. "Well, my friends, time waits for neither hero nor god, and it is past time for you to be on your way! The parade is all arranged." Then, before you can so much as question what he just said, Sokol sweeps away and his servants beckon you out to the front of the keep and to Sokol's waiting barge. Across the water, a huge crowd starts cheering as soon as you become visible.

It seems the would-be High Councilor has gathered together an assemblage of townsfolk and servants to see you off in style, tossing flowers in the air, shaking ribbon streamers in your direction, and shouting or stomping their feet. Trumpets announce you, and Sokol makes a great show of blessing your quest and sending you on your way.

- **DC 12 Wisdom or Intelligence (Insight or History respectively):** Sokol's parade serves two purposes. The first is political: to enhance his image in the political campaign by associating himself with the characters,

particularly if any are among the Heroes of Phlan, demonstrating his confidence and resolve in making his plan come to fruition. Secondly, he means to get the characters on their way as soon as possible, because any delay could prove disastrous.

Last Minute Preparations

Once the characters land on the docks of the city proper, they can slip away and take care of any business before the quest proper.

- **DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth):** This check is needed to go unnoticed. Being caught carries no consequences for the characters. (Only some potential political embarrassment for Sokol, as he made such a show of sending them off, and this undermines that.)

Time is of the essence, and characters can only do one of the following things before the party should get underway. If the players insist on doing more than one, it costs them a long rest.

- **Shopping Trip:** Despite its recent upheavals and history of conflict, Phlan soldiers on as a significant port town on the Moonsea. The reconstruction and influx of new residents bring a steady stream of trade and healthy economic competition from various interested parties. Items found in the Player's Handbook can be acquired, including regular healing potions. This outfitting requires precious time however.
- **Gathering Information:** Characters may wish to research the coming quest or look into the backgrounds of one or more of the non-player characters so far mentioned. In the time allotted, a character can learn any one of the following with 3d6 gp in bribes and drinks and a successful Charisma check, depending on what they're asking about. Meeting the higher DC grants all the lower level information as well. Dwarves and characters trained in History gain advantage on checks to find out about the Hammersfell dwarves. Characters with the following Background features gain advantage on their checks: By Popular Demand, Guild Membership, Influence, Rank, and Privilege.

PART 1

The DM may also choose to hand out information for good role-playing or bribes of an additional 100 gp or more during the investigation.

The Dragonspine

- **DC 12:** The isolationist shield dwarves of Clan Hammersfell live in the Dragonspine, constantly at war with the cold and various ugly creatures therein. They've a reputation for being great miners and craftsmen, and it's no great surprise Sokol would pick them as the suppliers for his ambitious reconstruction plans.
- **DC 15:** Recently, a tribe of frost giants has stirred in the mountains, raiding settlements in the Ticklebelly Hills. Something's stung 'em pretty bad, and they're spoiling for a fight.

Barrett Sokol and/or Bruw Clangeddin

- **DC 5:** The youngest son of House Sokol, Barrett's always been a dreamer—looking to build bigger and better edifices, usually with his name and coat-of-arms attached. He's a decent chap, able to back up all that hot air with coin and drive.
- **DC 10:** Sokol's right-hand dwarf is Bruw Clangeddin, a retired adventurer who's earned a dozen scars over the years. He's tough, speaks his mind, and he's trustworthy to a fault. He's named after a dwarf deity who shares his silver beard.
- **DC 15:** It seems Sokol and Bruw might not be on the best terms right now, as the dwarf reportedly had some none-too-measured words about one of Sokol's rivals, Graben Samulkin. Sokol might agree, but he cannot have his hired staff being impolite in polite society. Word is Sokol sent him on this latest mission to get him out of the city to avoid political embarrassment.

Aveen Seakin

- **DC 10:** Aveen Seakin keeps mostly to herself and not much is known about her. A ranger and procurer for various trade guilds in the area, she's recently brought in some good scores for the company behind Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog.
- **DC 15:** Aveen is half-aquatic elf, the child of a pirate captain on the Moonsea and an elf who swam up alongside her ship and visited her quarters every so often—or so the story goes. At least it explains her unusual appearance.

The Taciturn Guide: Aveen Seakin

Once the parade is over, Aveen Seakin opens up to the characters a little more, urging them to get a move on to complete the job for Barrett Sokol. It is obviously very important to her that this get done quickly and right.

Roleplaying Aveen

Thanks to her aquatic elf heritage, Aveen is slim and wiry with blue-tinted skin and vivid blue eyes. Naturally stand-offish, she distrusts “civilized” folk (i.e. politicians, urban characters, and those who dwell in Phlan) but is more comfortable around those who operate in the wilderness. She is very independent and driven to do the right thing, regardless of the means or consequences. Aveen reveres Eldath, the goddess of Nature and Tranquility.

Aveen in Combat

Aveen is a **scout**, but is not intended as a combatant. If the characters attack her, it is up to you if they overwhelm and defeat her or if she escapes, likely never to return. She can also breathe water innately and is resistant to cold (due to her *boots of the winterlands*, which can only be attuned to her).

Character Development

Make a note to refer to this section if/when the characters have further questions for Aveen or she takes part in encounters. She opens up to them more as time goes on, at your discretion, and she wants them to succeed.

If one or more characters are waiting for the others to do things, they may engage Aveen in conversation. She answers their questions as needed, but doesn’t much want to talk about herself, at least initially.

“You want to talk? Very well.” The guide draws back her hood, revealing silver hair that falls to just below her shoulders, from which gently pointed ears protrude like tiny mountains. “What would you know?”

- **Who are you?** “I work the land and procure items for various interested parties, particularly Aurora’s Whole Realms Catalog.”
- **What are you?** “My mother was a Chondathan pirate, and my father a sea elf. I am not so different from other half-elves you may have encountered, but I am as comfortable in water as on land.”
- **What’s the Whole Realm’s Catalog?** “It’s an organization that collects rare treasures from all over the Realms for sale to collectors and adventurers like you. At least, in theory. It’s still rebuilding to what it used to be.”
- **What’s your connection to this business?** “I know my way around the region, and I want to help people in trouble.”
- **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight):** Suggests Aveen is holding something back, but she seems earnest to help and opens up more if you win her trust.
- **DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion):** Aveen opens up more. This happens automatically if the characters are generally kind and fair to her and rescue at least one of the emissaries. At that point, she admits to them her dark secret: she made the false map (see below).



PART 2. THE SEARCH

Expected Duration: 90 minutes

Greed is a powerful motivator. It may not excuse bloody means, but it certainly makes them seem less likely to stain.

—Arita, “Fox Among the Uthgardt” (1469 DR, the Year of Splendors Burning)

Assuming the characters don’t linger in Phlan for the entire first day (i.e. each doing more than one thing), the search begins in earnest on Day 1. If they insist on accomplishing multiple tasks in the city, they begin the search on Day 2.

Aveen advises the adventurers to follow the river, as she expects it is faster. Additionally, the party has a chance to find clues to the emissaries’ disappearance.

- The Stojanow River: Following the emissaries, the characters follow the Stojanow River west, skirt the southern edge of the Quivering Forest, and then climb up into the Glacier of the Silver Blades. This route is comparatively fast but also very perilous, dealing with any number of hazards of the river and forest. Aveen estimates the route takes 4-6 days. She strongly advises this route.
- Alternate Route: At this tier of play, it is entirely possible the characters have some other means of covering the distance, like flight, potentially negating the journey. If this occurs, they can skip over much of the adventure travel; however, Aveen, tells them that they may also miss valuable clues left by their quarry along the way. It is not advisable to skip following the trail of the emissaries.

Experience the Outdoors

While the characters are traveling, regardless of the route they choose, they should experience changing weather patterns, precipitation, etc. Read-aloud text is included for each day, but consult the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* page 106-112 for added verisimilitude.

The Stojanow River

This is the route the emissaries took when they left Phlan a ten-day past, and Aveen thinks she can find signs of their passing and make up for lost time.

Adventures Along the River

The first leg of the journey takes the characters along the river that drains from the Dragonspine into the Moonsea, through Phlan.

The river’s current is too strong to permit effective travel by boat. It is easy to tell, however, that going the other way (toward Phlan) would be ideal for transporting heavy materials, such as the stone Sokol plans to import.

Travel along the river is difficult and carries with it some hazards. Aveen advises them to set a watch every night and maintain a wary state of readiness.

Travel Time along the River

It takes a **base of five days** to reach the foot of the glacier. Every new day, the characters also get a long rest to recover from the day's events. As a reminder, note the number of days this journey takes. Also note the following conditions:

- **Horses:** The terrain along the river is difficult, and horses do not save the characters any time. They do, however, make the party more comfortable (granting the characters advantage on Endurance checks related to trekking).
- **Vehicles:** Wagons or carts get stuck in the mud or break wheels on the rough terrain. Their presence actually adds one day to the duration of the journey.
- **Aveen's Guidance:** If the characters heed Aveen's advice and allow her to guide them, reduce the duration of the journey by one day. If she is not present or the characters pointedly ignore her advice (because they don't trust her or are being obstinate), they do not get this bonus.
- **Natural Explorer:** The presence of a ranger with this class feature grants the same bonus as Aveen's Guidance. (It's the same effect. The bonuses do not stack.)
- **Magical Assistance:** Adjudicate this using your best judgment. The journey is less a matter of speed than finding ways around obstacles. Doubling their overland speed, for instance, saves them about one day, not two.

Making Good Time

Traveling through the untamed wilderness while searching can be arduous. The characters can expedite their travel through the following means (or others that the players might invent on the spot, at your discretion).

Each character may attempt one of the following actions each day, with the following effects:

- If the party accomplishes at least four of these actions over the course of their journey, they save an entire day and arrive at the Quivering

Forest one day early (e.g., day 4 instead of day 5).

- Several of these actions can be failed badly enough that they damage the characters who attempt them or cost the party additional days of travel.

Each of the below actions can only count toward speeding the journey once.

- **Find a shortcut:** On a successful Intelligence (Nature) DC 12 or Wisdom (Survival) DC 15 check, the character finds a deer trail, a set of switchbacks, or a convenient ford that shaves some time off the overall journey. Failing this check by 5 or more leads the party down a false trail, and by the time they realize their mistake, they've lost a day of travel.
- **Hunt:** On a successful Dexterity (Stealth) DC 20 or Wisdom (Survival) DC 20 check, the character captures a particularly robust quarry. Characters who partake in this meal gain advantage on the next Constitution saving throw they make during the adventure. If the character fails this check by 5 or more, the character suffers a minor hunting accident, resulting in 3d6 damage.
- **Forage:** On a successful Wisdom (Perception) DC 20 or Wisdom (Survival) DC 15 check, the character finds a batch of succulent mushrooms that induce odd and vivid dreams in those who consume them, but see them wakeful and refreshed in the morning. If the character fails this check by 5 or more, the mushrooms are secretly poisonous, leading to vivid nightmares in those who eat them. Characters then increase their exhaustion level by 1.
- **Find a strong shelter:** On a successful Wisdom (Survival) DC 20 check, the character locates or constructs a particularly good shelter from the elements, allowing the party to rest in relative comfort for a night. A character who fails this check by 5 or more is convinced of the security of the shelter, only to have it fall apart around midnight and drench the party, raising everyone's exhaustion level by 1 for the following day.

- **Inspire the party:** On a successful Charisma (Performance) or Charisma (Musical Instrument) DC 20 check, the character tells a stirring or otherwise evocative tale or sings a memorable song, infusing everyone with strength and vitality to make it through the trip, granting advantage on the next saving throw one character makes during the trek. A character who fails this check by 5 or more leaves everyone dispirited and sad, using three Hit Dice from each character but gaining no benefit.
- **Prepare a fine meal:** On a successful Intelligence or Wisdom DC 20 check, a character prepares a delicious meal for camp, giving everyone added drive for further travel. If more than half the party consumes the meal, it counts toward speeding the journey. A character who fails this check by 5 or more poisons anyone who eats the meal, causing them to be poisoned until they take a long rest.
- **Endure hardship:** On a successful Constitution DC 15 check, a character can soldier through difficult conditions, inspiring the rest of the party to do the same. A character who fails this check by 5 or more suffers from exhaustion or sustains an injury, taking 2d8 damage and increasing their exhaustion level by 1.
- **Commune with nature:** On a successful Intelligence (Religion) DC 20 check (or upon utilizing a spell that would do something similar), a character earns the favor of the nature spirits in the region, who aid the party along the way. If a character fails this check by 5 or more, the spirits grow angry with the character and lead the party in a series of circles and switch-backs, costing them a full day spent hopelessly lost.
- **Tame a wild beast:** On a successful Wisdom (Animal Handling) DC 20 check or use of an *animal friendship* spell or similar magic, a character befriends a creature native to the Stojanow River or the woods around it, gleaned useful insights into its flow and the safest, fastest paths to the mountains. If a character fails this check by 5 or more, the animal grows angry (inflict 2d6 damage to the character) and flees.

Random Events

This table presents a number of options for events that might occur as time passes. Once per day, roll or choose from the random events table. Do not repeat Random Events—if you get a repeat result, nothing occurs or select another event.

Random Events on the Stojanow River

d6 roll	Random Event
1	Party finds an abandoned campsite with several animal-gnawed corpses and 200 gp worth of coin and gems scattered among the ruins. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) or DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds that the travelers were an unaffiliated group of adventurers, not the missing emissaries.
2	Heavy rain springs up suddenly and sweeps the ground away into the river. Every hero must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 2d10 damage from falling and abrasions.
3	The party finds an abandoned campsite that was used by the missing emissaries on this path. Any investigation they do suggests the emissaries were in good health and had suffered no delay.
4	Drawn by the sound of thunderous roars, the party witnesses an adult green dragon in the distance attacking something in the Quivering Forest to the north. If the party pursues, the dragon escapes before they arrive, and they discover only a destroyed grove. Heading this direction costs them an additional day of travel spent backtracking.
5	The party glimpses a unicorn in the distance, but it only approaches if one or more of them is Lawful Good or serves Mielikki. If the characters befriend the unicorn, it uses its <i>healing touch</i> (heal 11 [2d8+2 hp]) ability on up to three characters who seem wounded, then teleports away, never to return.
6	Party enters a befouled section of the forest, and the air is noxious. Each character must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until they take a long rest.

River Travel Montage

The descriptions provided herein are intended for each day of the journey up to the Quivering Forest. Feel free to improvise additional description, particularly in and around Random Events.

It takes a base of **five days** to reach the forest. At the end of the **sixth day**, they arrive at the forest, regardless of accumulated delays.

Day One – Just Setting Out

Read:

You set out upon your journey with the warm light of the sun on your face and the taste of the cool air on your tongue. Free of the cracked, crumbling walls and smoky haze of Phlan, the world opens up around you and you can perceive the rustic beauty of the northland. The river becomes more wild, and signs of civilization are less frequent.

Toward midday, you take a break in a gully near a bend in the Stojanow, where you watch brightly colored birds crush the carapace of a squirming beetle the size of your hand. Where the creature came from, you can't say for certain.

Check for random events at noon, and offer the players a chance to act to speed up the journey.

Day Two – A Thick Fog

Read:

A thick fog sets in on the second day of your trek along the Stojanow River, filling your lungs with a persistent, cloying damp that no amount of coughing or sneezing removes. The day is marked by several hours spent navigating through and around some ground made swampy by recent rain.

You break at midday where the river grows wilder and splits into half a dozen tributaries.

Check for random events at noon, and offer the players a chance to act to speed up the journey.

Day Three – The Mad Survivor

The adventurers may attempt to speed their journey, but there is no random event for this day. Instead, they encounter an injured mercenary desperately fleeing back along the Stojanow toward Phlan.

The third day dawns bleak, and the gray clouds linger throughout the morning and through the day. Thick brambles line the banks of the river—not dangerous, but irritating. Your hands sting from a multitude of small thorn pricks.

A sudden squawking of forest birds draws your attention, setting you on edge. The foliage rustles, and a wild-eyed woman staggers into your midst, stooped and cradling her injured side. She wears a cracked and broken harness of studded leather and torn clothes stained with black blood. Her stringy brown hair hangs in mud-soaked ribbons around her face, and she looks to be mad with terror.

She starts to say something, then vomits blood and bile and collapses into a quivering heap.

The woman is obviously injured and basically incapable of fending for herself. She falls unconscious but can be roused with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check or any healing magic. She is delirious, dehydrated, and half mad. Awake, she mumbles about “mountains,” “frozen giants,” and a “spear of ice.”

The characters might also take the following actions (or something else they improvise):

- **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight):** Gain insight into the woman's trauma and how best to speak to her: calm, soothing, and making her feel safe.
- **DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine):** Identify that she has several poorly healed lacerations and is evincing signs of frostbite in her fingers and toes.
- **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or a **DC 15 Wisdom (Perception):** Notice the shredded green and gold tabard the woman is wearing.
- **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation)** or a **DC 20 Wisdom (Perception):** Notice a tattoo on the woman's hand of a stylized bat with razor-sharp wings (the mark of the Razorhands mercenaries).

If the players succeed in rousing her and winning her trust, they learn the following information:

- Her name is Meenar, and she is a mercenary in the Razorhand Company out of Phlan, captained by a human warrior named Rouse Blackbrand.

- They were operating in the Glacier of the Silver Blades, and a battle with some frost giants went badly. Most of the company was killed or captured, and Meenar barely escaped. She watched several of her allies chopped up and eaten raw.
- Blackbrand instructed them to wear the green and gold tabards. She didn't ask why.
- Meenar is too weak to assist in combat but can travel if healed

Day Four – Cyclops Attack

Read:

Dense, impenetrable fog lingers from dawn until midday, when it burns off only to emit stinging clouds of mosquitoes and other insects, their drone driving you a bit mad.

You break at midday at the base of a small cliff wall that was carved by the river ages ago.

Suddenly from the corner of your vision, you see a shadow move. Looking up for the source of the shadow, a large boulder is hurtling toward your location.

Six **cyclops** raiding in the area have laid an ambush for the adventurers. Anyone with a **passive Perception** of 17 or higher is not surprised but is unable to prevent surprise for the rest of the party. The cyclops use rocks to attack from the cliff-top, which is 20 feet high, and they enjoy partial cover from their elevated vantage. The cliff may be climbed with a successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check.

The cyclops have no treasure, but one of them is wearing a necklace strung with human hands, one of which bears the mark of the Razorhand Company.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak** – Remove two **cyclops**
- **Weak** - Remove a **cyclops**
- **Strong** - Add a **cyclops**
- **Very Strong** – Add two **cyclops**

Day Five – Heavy Rains

Read:

The journey is beginning to grow hard indeed. It rains hard all day today, leaving you dispirited and uncomfortable.

You break at midday where the river grows wilder and splits into several tributaries. Some forest animal yowls in the distance. Your feet ache from the damp and the distance.

Check for random events at noon, and offer the players a chance to act to speed up the journey.

Day Six – Exhaustion Sets In

Read:

You've reached the end of your rope and just want this journey to be over. The extreme rain, winds, and lightning prevented anyone from resting the previous evening. Endless twists and turns have now left you exhausted. At last, you arrive at the Quivering Forest.

If the journey has lasted six days, increase every character's exhaustion level by one.

The Quivering Forest

When the characters finally reach the spot where the emissaries headed up into the Dragonspine Mountains, they find themselves at a corner of the Quivering Forest west of the Stojanow River, cut off from the main stretch of the wood.

Here, they find a **devastated campsite** that was used by Lord Sokol's emissaries to Clan Hammersfell. Also, a pixie called Ristamere lurking nearby witnessed the attack and can provide clues.

The Devastated Campsite

Upon arrival in the Quivering Forest, the characters easily locate the remains of a campsite used by Sokol's emissaries. The destruction is palpable—the smell alone draws them in:

You come upon a smashed and ruined clearing in the forest, where trees have been ripped wide to make room for something massive to come through. The remains of several tents and a smashed wagon, as well as broken pieces of weapons and armor, lie scattered across the shredded earth. In more than one spot, deep chunks of sod as wide as your hand and as long as your forearm have been ripped out of the earth itself. The air is unnaturally cold, leaving your breath visible like an evil omen.

You find two moldering corpses—one a dwarf half crushed under a fallen tree, the other a human lying face-down in the middle of the campsite with a huge, bloodless hole through her chest. You see no obvious sign of whatever impaled the latter. Both wear the green-and-gold colors of House Sokol.

If **six or more days** have passed since the party set out from Phlan, the elements have washed away some of the evidence, giving the characters disadvantage on all Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) checks made at the campsite.

Searching the dead woman (**Artora the steward**) automatically yields a silver signet ring of House Sokol (important for **Part Four**).

A successful Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the following information based on the result. If the party has found at least three clues (see below) before the Investigation check, the character makes the check with advantage:

- **DC 10:** The scene is chaotic but surprisingly pristine, particularly considering its age (at least a ten-day). The corpses have decayed somewhat, but you would have expected animal activity. Perhaps the strange chill has kept them away. A successful Wisdom (Nature) DC 15 check also yields this information.
- **DC 15:** The signs of battle suggest a quick assault. You think an overwhelming force fell upon the camp by surprise, wiping them out before they could mount an effective resistance.
- **DC 20:** Based on the damage to the trees, the divots in the ground (as though from massive axes), and the lingering chill, you believe this attack was perpetrated by a group of frost giants. Survivors were taken into the mountains.

The following skills may also yield important clues:

- **Wisdom (Perception) DC 15:** The character discovers tracks leading up into the mountains that can be followed back to the giants' camp. (If none of the characters can make this check, Aveen makes it automatically and points out the trail.)
- **Intelligence (Medicine) DC 15:** Studying the corpses, you think the human was killed by some sort of weapon that instantly freezes wounds as though cauterizing them.
- **Wisdom (Insight) DC 15:** Impact from massive weapons caused those divots in the ground, tearing up chunks of the earth like wounds. The character suspects greataxes.
- **Intelligence (Arcana) DC 20 or Intelligence (Nature) DC 20:** The chilling aura of this place puts you in mind of frost giant magic, which sometimes leaves a lingering mark on a place.
- **Wisdom (Survival) DC 15:** Tracks indicate the attackers took prisoners into the mountains.
- **Wisdom (Survival) DC 20:** The character reads the campsite like a scroll, determining there were five attackers, two of whom rushed in, two hung back to hurl rocks, and a fifth cast spells.

Trail of the Giants

In short order, the characters should determine that they need to head into the Dragonspine Mountains to find the giants who attacked the emissaries. Go to **Part 3: Coldest Steel**.

Ristamere the Pixie

Optional Encounter: time permitting (20 minutes)

Once the characters have found the devastated campsite, they may encounter a helpful pixie who is lurking nearby, intrigued by their arrival. He's been in the area for some time and knows quite a bit about what's going on, even if he doesn't articulate it very well. He witnessed:

- Giants attacking Sokol's emissaries.
- Graben's mercenaries camping here a few times.
- He doesn't understand "big folk" behavior but he knows enough to tell they were different groups.

With his innate ability to become invisible and natural stealth, Ristamere approaches the characters only if they do not seem overtly threatening. He flees immediately if they attempt to intimidate or otherwise frighten him. (He recognizes he's no match for the characters.)

If, or when, Ristamere comes out of hiding, read:

The air shimmers and a small, green-skinned, elf-like creature appears before you, flitting about in the air on gossamer butterfly wings. "Hello, hail, well met, big folk!" he says, his words rapid and high-pitched. "Are you after the giants? I wager you are, all the coin in your pockets and the secrets in your heads! I'll wager it!"

Roleplaying Ristamere

Ristamere is an excitable pixie who suffers from a deficit of attention. As he sees it, the frost giants were invaders into his wood, and he would like to see them punished—but he isn't about to part with his information for free.

He's generally good-hearted and wants to do what's right, but his tongue works faster than his mind, and he sometimes says impertinent things. Use the dialogue listed below as inspiration for conversing in his voice.

Ristamere answers questions, though he demands a prize in return for each answer. These may take the form of "something shiny" (such as a gemstone worth at least 10 gp or a platinum piece), or "something shady" (such as a secret about that character, to be proffered first).

In the latter case, he makes a random demand in exchange for his information. Roll 1d8:

Ristamere's Demands

Roll	Demand
1	Tell me something no one here knows!
2	Tell me something embarrassing about yourself!
3	Tell me the worst thing you've ever done!
4	Point to your favorite companion!
5	Point to your least favorite companion!
6	Show me your favorite color!
7	Tell me your greatest fear!
8	Describe a victory from your travels!

- **What happened here?** “A horde of giant things, they were—skin blue as death and hair like ice—came and stomped on all the big folk. Smaller than them, bigger than me. It’s a relative measure.”
- **Did the big folk kill any of the giants?** “No, but not for want of trying. Mostly they were surprised and didn’t have the chance.”
- **Where did the giants go?** “Back to their camp, I think. Not like I followed them. No no no! That’d be bad for pixie. Bad bad bad!”
- **Did the giants take any of them? How many?** “The giant things took half a dozen of the big folk, hollering and struggling—at least until they gave ‘em a slap or two. Shut ‘em right up. Gods, I hope they’re all right.”
- **How long ago did it happen?** “A while. Several dawns. Not a season. Just after the others.”
- **How long have you been here?** “Many seasons. I don’t really keep count. Long enough to see your friends and the others that came through.”
- **What others? or Have you seen anyone else in this area?** “A few times before I saw your friends, there were some very unfriendly big folk who camped here. They wore green and gold too, but not the same.”
- **What were the mercenaries doing in the area?** “Fighting, mostly. They raided up into the mountains, and came back with bloody weapons. Riled up the giants good and true.”
- **What happened to them?** “One day, they didn’t come back. Serves ‘em right, you ask me.”
- **Is there any treasure here?** “The giant things took it all away, ‘cept for mine. Which you’ll never find. NEVER NEVER NEVER!”

The Pixie’s Treasure

Ristamere keeps a small lair in a hollow tree nearby, which requires a **Wisdom (Perception) DC 20** check to find. It contains odds and ends from various travelers over the years:

- a tiny cameo portrait of a moon elf woman, worth 50 gp
- a tiny scrap of a scroll that radiates potent necromantic magic, worth 100 gp to a sage
- assorted coins of various mints, worth 200 gp total
- three random trinkets (Player’s Handbook page 160-1).



PART 3. THE COLDEST STEEL

Expected Duration: 80 minutes

"The world is a cold, hard place that does not bend to your storybook expectations. The sooner you learn that, the better."

—The Fox-at-Twilight (1483 DR, the Year of the Tasked Weasel)

The heroes have tracked the missing emissaries to a frost giant camp on the Glacier of Silver Blades, where any survivors are being held captive.

Fortress Freustragg

Chief Freustragg, Winter Priestess Pavrat, and their clan of **14 frost giants** make their dwelling on the side of one of the Dragonspine Mountains, overlooking the Glacier of the Silver Blades. They've dwelled here for some time, hunting in the wilds of the mountains and on the glacier, and occasionally raiding into the Ticklebelly Hills. They did not build the mountain fortress, which seems sized more appropriately for humanoid residents, but have made it their own. The fortress dates back centuries to an unknown civilization, and its origin is a mystery for another day.

The giants hadn't met with much opposition in their time in the mountains until the Razorhand Company started launching concerted attacks on them. Clad in the green and gold tabards and cloaks of House Sokol, the mercenaries staged raids on the giants—never enough to kill many, but quite enough to provoke them into attacking anyone wearing those colors.

The giants managed to capture most of the mercenaries, including their leader, Rouse Blackbrand, and have been eating them day by day. They'll get to the missing emissaries next, whose party they attacked because of their colors.

General Features

The following apply throughout the mountain fortress:

Light. Normal lighting from the sun filtering through the clouds. The towers and main hall are dimly lit inside.

Stairs. The main stairs up the mountain are ten feet wide and carved for creatures of humanoid size and shape. Smaller tracks of stairs snake up around the towers. The stairs evince wear and tear from the giants' occupation.

Snowdrifts. The snow is heaped deep on the mountain, making for difficult terrain off paved areas. The giants ignore this restriction.

Steep drop-offs. Any creature knocked off one of the paved sections of the mountain fortress has a chance to slip and slide down the mountain. Such a creature must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling. On a failure, the creature slips and falls 2d6x10 feet down the mountain, suffering normal falling damage. Climbing the snowy slope unaided requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check.

Calendar Check

Count up the number of days it took the characters to reach the frost giant camp. The giants consume one captive each day, starting with the mercenaries, and they had four mercenaries and six emissaries, not counting Rouse Blackbrand and Bruw Clangeddin (whom they save for last).

Example: If the characters have taken six days to reach the camp, the frost giants have eaten all four mercenaries and two emissaries, leaving four alive.

Each day the characters delay once they have arrived, they see the giants eat another captive. It's a grisly sight—the giants like their food alive and wriggling.

1. Guard Towers

When the characters come within sight of the camp, read:

By midday, you have pushed up into the mountains through shivering cold and deep drifts of snow to come at last within sight of your destination.

The frost giants have built a tiered fortress on the side of a mountain: a series of buildings of dark wood and ice. You see sentry towers on rocky outcroppings near the base that offer an excellent view of the surrounding country side. You suspect that approaching unseen might prove difficult.

Two **frost giants** keep watch on the sentry towers at the base of the mountain, presenting the characters' first hurdle in infiltrating the fortress. The towers are spaced approximately a hundred feet apart, with a giant manning each one. They are not paying strict attention, but they are also not asleep.

Unless both are taken down unawares and quickly, one sounds a thunderous bellow on a massive bone horn to alert the mountain camp, summoning three more **frost giants**, who arrive 3 rounds after the horn is blown.

The giants attack and flee only if frightened.

2. Guttled Towers

Stone steps wind their way up the mountain, many of them crushed or chipped from the tread of massive feet. Flanking the stairs are six crumbling towers and the remains of more structures long since weathered away. The towers are forty feet in diameter, their doors widened to accommodate residents larger than originally intended.

Eight **frost giants** dwell in the six functional towers. At midday (when the characters arrive), they gather higher on the mountain in the main yard to feast upon one of the captives.

3. Main Yard

This wide open expanse of stone offers the giants a logical gathering place. A central stone slab serves as some kind of altar upon which they have placed a series of skulls, blackened fingers, and other such trophies and traced a bloody symbol to their wintry goddess, Auril. The symbol requires a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check to identify.

Three **frost giants** keep watch in the main yard in the morning and through the night, and **Priestess Pavrat** can usually be found at the altar intoning prayers to Auril for strength and victory. Fanatical in her faith, she has convinced Chief Freustragg that the frost giants shall act as the goddess wills.

At midday, the entire clan (except for the sentries in locations 1 and 5) gathers in the main yard to feast upon one of the captives in a gruesome fashion.

4. Chief's Hall

A weathered, broken down hall of crumbling stone stands above the main yard of the fortress, and it is within its cavernous depths that **Chief Freustragg** sits on a makeshift throne of stone and twisted metal, brooding and awaiting an augury from Auril the Frost Maiden to launch another raid. Three **frost giants** attend him at all times as an honor guard.

Stepping into the hall makes one feel colder even compared to the wintry air outside. The hall itself is massive—two hundred feet square—and the side facing the main yard is open to the elements, its walls and ceiling largely collapsed decades or centuries ago. Perhaps the hall might have seen merrier times, but they have long passed.

Treasure

Freustragg collects all the clan's treasure for himself, and keeps it in a locked room in the hall behind his throne. Contained in this room are a dozen pieces of precious metal sculptures, bowls, and cups worth a total of 2,400 gp, four flame agate gems worth a total of 2,000 gp, and gold and silver totaling 2,600 gp.

The chamber also contains a slightly battered leather satchel containing the **trade documents**; (plans and a comprehensive listing of supply requirements for the mined stone necessary for the reconstruction of Phlan, a contract signed by Barrett Sokol), and 2,000 gp worth of platinum coins marked with the arms of House Sokol and Barrett's face. These coins are intended as a first payment to Clan Hammersfell, and it is not expected that the characters will claim them. If they do, that affects the negotiations with the dwarves in Part Four.

5. Fortress Gaol

A building set off behind the chief's hall boast a number of large, communal cells, each big enough to accommodate five or six captives. The cells are cold and drafty, but at least the building is largely sealed.

A single **frost giant** keeps watch outside the gaol building, often sleeping on the job (50% chance he is asleep). If the gaolkeeper is awake, sneaking past him requires a successful DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth) check. The sounds of battle in the main yard or the chief's hall rouse him automatically, but he waits inside the gaol, hoping to ambush would-be rescuers.

The number of prisoners depends on when the characters arrive. **Rouse Blackbrand** is kept in the mercenary cell and **Bruw Clangeddin** in the emissaries' cell. Both cells are locked (successful DC 15 Strength check or to Thieves' Tools to open). Their equipment (comically small for the giants) is scattered heedlessly across the floor, most of it battered and crushed to uselessness. The only surviving pieces are a suit of battered splint mail, a scuffed breastplate, three mostly intact shields, a couple notched longswords, and Bruw's much-scuffed battleaxe. These items are obviously worthless for resale.

Using the Prisoners

Bruw Clangeddin is a gruff but good-hearted shield dwarf with a thick silver beard (he is named for Clangeddin Silverbeard, a dwarf warrior deity) and numerous scars. A former warrior known for his patience, he's understandably upset by his current arrangements and would love to get revenge on the giants. He has little to offer the characters in exchange for their aid, other than his approval and the reward of "doing the right thing."

Rouse Blackbrand is a Sembian human man in his early forties with black hair, a short black beard, and a smooth, charismatic manner. Something of a charmer, he has managed to talk the giants into not eating him thus far. Describing himself as a mercenary, he keeps quiet on his exact origins when first encountering the characters, because they might not know who he is or why he's here. If they don't immediately release him, he promises to pay them in coin and/or information, so long as they take him from this awful place.

Both men are anxious to get out. Bruw wants to avenge his fallen comrades and would like to join in the fight. If necessary, Rouse promises to pay for his rescue in secrets, to "get back at that blaggard who got me into this."

If equipped with their weapons and armor, they use the Veteran statistics.

Against the Giants

How exactly the characters deal with the frost giants is up to them, but take care that scheming doesn't take up too much game time. This section presents several possibilities, which you can suggest to the characters by way of Aveen's advice on the matter:

Frontal Assault

Under this option, the characters attack brazenly, potentially fighting every giant in the camp.

At the guard towers, the characters have to overcome the sentries, as well as the three frost giants that answer the warning horn. Chief Freustragg keeps all other giants in reserve at the main yard. His thinking is, if anything can make it past his guards, he will listen to what they have to say. He stands confidently waiting in the main yard with the others. The gaolkeeper remains in location #5.

If the guards are defeated, another guard is sent to motion the adventurers forward to speak. If they do not come, Freustragg comes to hunt them down with the full force of his tribe, which is eight **frost giants** in addition to himself and Pavrat.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak** – Remove two **frost giant** reinforcements
- **Weak** - Remove a frost giant reinforcement
- **Strong** – Reinforcements arrive 2 rounds after the warning
- **Very Strong** – Add a **frost giant** reinforcement, and they arrive 2 rounds after the warning

Stealth Inursion

The characters seek to rescue the emissaries without being detected or by creating a distraction. Unaware giants have a passive Perception of 13, though Pavrat's high Wisdom gives her a passive Perception of 16. The prisoners themselves are too weak to fight.

Climbing an area of the mountain that is not observed (i.e. away from the paved area) is difficult on the sheer slope, requiring a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. Failure leads to 10d6 bludgeoning damage in the course of a battering plunge.

Negotiation

Freustragg awaits the adventurer's approach in his hall. From his throne, he has a vantage to see the adventure's approach, and they are beckoned inside and given a chance to speak. The characters may be able to convince the giants to part with the prisoners peacefully.

- **Charisma (Persuasion) DC 20:** Chief Freustragg demands no less than 1,000 gp worth of treasure in exchange for each prisoner. A successful check can convince him to lower the price to a minimum of 750 gp. He considers their possessions his treasure and will part with them for an additional 500 gp.
- **Charisma (Intimidation) DC 22:** Attempts at intimidation result in an immediate attack, unless the characters have showed their prowess by killing at least five frost giants thus far. If that's the case, a successful check results in Freustragg releasing one prisoner per giant the characters have killed. If the adventurers demand more, the giants attack.
- **Wisdom (Insight) DC 16:** The adventurers pick up on tension between the chief and his priestess advisor (see sidebar), granting them advantage on Charisma checks if they can leverage it.

Honor Challenge

Freustragg may not be the most devout of frost giants, but he has a powerful sense of honor that borders on religious faith. He respects strength and courage and sides with those who demonstrate such things. Under no circumstances will he turn down a fair challenge, and the characters might challenge him for the lives of the prisoners.

After interacting with or observing the chieftain, the characters might learn of his love of honor with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. If they speak Giant or are familiar with giants (background or relevant class feature, etc.), they gain advantage on this check.

If the adventurers successfully challenge **Freustragg**, he selects an honor guard composed of **Pavrat** and three **frost giants** to fight at his side.

Adjusting the Encounter

Here are recommendations for adjusting this combat encounter. These are not cumulative.

- **Very Weak** – Remove two **frost giants**
- **Weak** – Remove one **frost giant**
- **Strong** – add one **frost giant**
- **Very Strong** – Add two **frost giants**

Freustragg and Pavrat

Frequent lovers and constant battle companions, the chieftain and his spiritual advisor have led the tribe to great success, but recently friction has strained their relationship. Freustragg wants to raid and kill at whim, but Pavrat insists they act only with the blessing of Auril, and the chief grows resentful over her increasing attempts to undermine him. For her part, Pavrat would love nothing more than to supplant Freustragg with a more faithful servant of Auril.

Freustragg carries his spear with him at all times. The head of the spear is actually a human sized greatsword (frostbrand), which has been fashioned into a spear, creating a very large and deadly giant-sized magic weapon.

In combat, Freustragg uses the same stat block as normal frost giants, with the following additions.

- Freustragg has 30 hit points more than a typical frost giant and wields a *frostbrand greatsword* that he has fashioned into a spear and grants him resistance to fire. The normal damage is the same, but his affinity to cold causes the weapon to inflict an additional 6 (2d6) cold damage. The party can claim his spear and restore it to a sword if they defeat him, but it is a normal frostbrand in anyone else's hands (1d6 cold damage).
- Pavrat is a combination of a frost giant and a mage. She is Challenge Rating 9, worth 5,000 xp.

Rescuing the Prisoners

Once the adventurers have dealt with the giants and rescued the prisoners, take stock of the situation.

As a reminder, the giants have eaten one prisoner per day of the adventure, starting with the four captive mercenaries and moving on to the six captive emissaries, saving Rouse and Bruw for last.

If there is conflict between Bruw and Rouse or the adventurers can only save some of the prisoners, it is important to note that shared captivity has bred a gruff sort of friendship and respect. Bruw doesn't want to leave Rouse behind, while the somewhat more morally flexible Rouse advocates for the dwarf, at least until it becomes clear that leaving him is the only way to survive.

Bruw Clangeddin

Once rescued, the dwarf wants to continue on and complete the mission. He promised Barrett Sokol that he would see this deal inked, and he intends to see it done, whatever the cost. He is a tough dwarf, but what he's witnessed has left him shaken.

Most relevant is that the emissaries' chief negotiator, Artora, was killed in the giants' attack, and Bruw is unsuitable to negotiate the deal with the Hammersfell dwarves. If this doesn't come out in conversation (see below), he makes this perfectly clear before the party heads out.

Bruw answers questions as best he can:

- **What happened to you?** "Attacked by giants, we were. Down in the wood before we could climb into the mountains. Came upon us in the night and dragged most of us off. I saw two of me friends killed before they knocked me senseless."
- **Where are the other survivors?** "The giants a'been eating folk since we arrived—one every day. They made me watch."

- **What do we do now?** "Finish the job, a'course. We need the platinum and the scrolls for Clan Hammersfell, and then we need to get the deal done. Me friends won't have died in vain."
- **What do you know about Clan Hammersfell?** "More'n you'd think. I've a cousin in the clan, and I know where to find them. I don't have a silver tongue, though, so you'll need to lead the negotiation. I'll be there to help."
- **You're not going to do the talking?** "Artora was killed at our camp. It'll have to be you, or this deal won't get done. I'd like to address 'em, though. Pay my respects."
- **What do you know about Rouse?** "The big man's a mercenary. He was here when we got here, along with several of his own. The giants ate them afore starting on mine. He's a good man, for a sellsword."

Rouse Blackbrand

The mercenary is more circumspect than Bruw—he knows he did wrong, and revealing all might not be his best play. He knew about Samulkin's ploy to stir up the giants and went along with it, even if he didn't expect this fallout. He got rid of his House Sokol tabards and wears non-descript black leathers.

Once rescued, his primary interest is in getting out of that awful place alive, and then taking vengeance on the man who put him in that situation: Graben Samulkin. He seeks to befriend the party (as he has befriended Bruw) and cast himself as an innocent victim of a mutual foe.

Rouse answers the party's questions cautiously.

- What happened to you? "I lead the Razorhand Company out of Phlan, which was operating in the mountains. We were attacked by giants, and they dragged off several of us. It was horrible."
- Who hired you? "A priest in Phlan by the name of Graben Samulkin paid us to kill giants: a hundred gold coins for each pair of giant ears we brought back. Obviously, it weren't worth the hassle."
- How many were in your company? "Four plus myself who made it here. A dozen others. I don't know how many might have survived."
- What do you know about Graben Samulkin? "Never liked or trusted that snake. Should have listened to my gut. Is he your enemy too?"

A successful Wisdom (Insight) DC 15 check determines that Rouse isn't saying everything (the characters have advantage on this check if they have discovered the false uniforms or encountered the maddened survivor in Part Two).

If the ploy is revealed to Rouse but not his involvement, he feigns outrage and pretends to have been deceived. He flees when possible.

If confronted and/or threatened, he reveals the whole truth (that Samulkin hired his company to provoke the giants into attacking anyone wearing House Sokol colors) and throws himself on the mercy of his rescuers, promising their payment from Samulkin for the job (500 gp plus the 500 gp they have collected thus far for killing five giants). The coin is buried not too far from the destroyed campsite in the forest.

Note: **Aveen Seakin** knows Rouse can reveal her secret—and vice versa.



PART 4. SEALED DEAL

Expected Duration: 30 minutes

"Coin is more powerful than any sword or spell, but honor greater still." – Cormyrian aphorism

"What honor?" – Sembian rebuttal

This section of the adventure should be relatively short but important, as it represents the characters resolving Sokol's plan to enter into an agreement with the dwarves of Clan Hammersfell.

The dwarves are not intended to be antagonists in any way, and this section of the adventure is entirely a social encounter. If steel is ever drawn in earnest, end with the party failing and being escorted out.

Adventure Pacing Check-in

If time grows short, you can condense this part to a single Charisma (Persuasion) check or rule that the characters automatically succeed. See "Making the Pitch," below.

Seeking Out the Dwarves

The journey from the frost giant mountain to Clan Hammersfell's fortress is automatic, assuming the characters possess one of the following:

- Bruw Clangeddin knows the way.
- Aveen Seakin can lead the party there.
- The trade documents detail the location of the holdfast well enough to locate it.

Barring these advantages, the party can attempt to find the Hammersfell Holdfast with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check.

If the characters cannot find the dwarves or decide not to attempt to strike a deal with them, they return to Phlan, having failed their mission. Skip this section and go to Part 5: Phlan in Chaos.

Clan Hammersfell

Secure in their fortress in the icy depths of the Dragonspine, the dwarves of Hammersfell have a reputation for endurance and grit, particularly when it comes to mining.

Having emigrated from the west, Clan Hammersfell made their home in the mountains about a century ago, and their clan now numbers about two hundred. The dwarves have occasionally struggled with orcs and frost giants in the mountains, and have become increasingly isolationist. They have a less than stellar history with those who seek them out, having been the victim of various schemes and would-be thefts in the past.

The dwarves are suspicious of outsiders, and have tentatively agreed to meet with Barrett Sokol's emissaries only after months of correspondence between the heir and themselves. If the party is to have any luck of persuading them to sign on to Sokol's deal, they have to allay the dwarves' natural suspicions.

Entering Hammersfell Holdfast

When the characters approach the Holdfast, read:

By midday, you have pushed up into the mountains through shivering cold and deep drifts of snow to come at last within sight of your destination.

At last, out of the cleft of two snow-choked slopes you perceive a mass of intricately carved black stone that lights up with gleaming blue runes as you draw near. It opens into a yawning passage, from which the warm air of forges billows forth.

A thickly muscled dwarf woman in fine, gold-inlaid ringmail approaches you, flanked by half a dozen bitter-faced guards. "You must be the emissaries of Barrett Sokol," she says. "You are late." Without another word, she ushers you into the cramped, cold interior of the holdfast, and the heavy doors scrape closed behind you.

The dwarf who greets them is named Rhuldir, none other than the matriarch of the clan. She offers the characters some light refreshment—dwarven ale, hard brown bread, boiled meat—waiting indifferently while they refresh themselves from their journey.

Then, tight-lipped, she leads the characters to the audience hall, answering questions gruffly and in as few words as possible. She mostly lets them speak, wanting to learn more of these would-be negotiators before she has to bargain with them in earnest.

Audience with the Matriarch

The journey to the audience hall is a short one, as the holdfast is not large. During the journey, read:

You pass through the tight, low-ceilinged tunnels, at one point crossing a natural bridge over a gaping chasm where you can see dwarves mining great blocks of stone in the depths below, secured with chains that gleam in the torchlight. The pungent smell of chemicals assails your nostrils, and you are relieved when your guide bids you on.

You come at length to a wide audience chamber engraved with runic script along the walls and inset with torches that burn with blue, smokeless fire. A number of stone chairs fills the room, each of them occupied with a grizzled dwarf who stares at you with suspicion. The central chair,

where you would expect the clan's chief to sit, stands vacant—at least until your guide parts from your group and sits there herself.

"I am Rhuldir, Warchief of Clan Hammersfell," she says. "Offer me your master's terms, and we shall do business."

Making the Pitch

Roleplay the preliminary negotiation while you calculate the difficulty of convincing the dwarves to take Sokol's deal. The negotiation requires no fewer than three successful Charisma (Persuasion) skill checks out of six attempts, using the following considerations:

- **Charisma (Persuasion) check:** DC 20, minimum recalculated DC 15.
- **Bruw Clangeddin:** Having Bruw speak grants advantage on one Charisma (Persuasion) check. (Plus earns a bonus XP award for the party.)
- **Surviving Emissaries:** Seeing Sokol respect the clan enough to send a number of proxies reassures the dwarves. For each emissary present (not including Bruw), lower the DC by 1.
- **Dwarves in the Party:** If at least one of the members of the party is a dwarf, reduce the DC by 1.
- **Elves or Orcs in the party:** For every member of the party who appears to be at least part elf or orc, increase the DC by 1.
- **Sokol's Signet:** Showing this ring grants the party advantage on one Charisma (Persuasion) check.
- **Payment:** The dwarves are expecting the 2,000 gp for first payment. If it is not present, the characters have disadvantage on all Charisma (Persuasion) checks.
- **Trade Documents:** The dwarves care little for the paperwork, so the presence of Sokol's documents makes no difference to the negotiation, but it can offer the characters important insights into how to address their concerns (see below).
- **Good Roleplaying:** Grant advantage on the check if the characters play out the pitch well.
- **Other Skills:** The characters may attempt to win the dwarves over through numerous indirect means. See sidebar for suggestions.

Even if the party amasses three successful attempts or three failed attempts, keep playing out the negotiation until they think they've made a winning case, they give up, or six attempts have been made. They should not know whether they succeeded or failed until the dwarves render their final decision.

Winning the Dwarves Over

The following skills (all at DC 15) may be used to win the dwarves' admiration or respect, each time granting advantage to the subsequent Charisma (Persuasion) check as part of the negotiation:

- Knowledge of their history/customs: Intelligence (History)
- Evocations of the dwarven gods: Intelligence (Religion)
- Stirring tales of past heroics: Charisma (Performance)
- Feats of strength or endurance: Strength (Athletics)
- Boasting and crowing: Charisma (Intimidation)
- A drinking contest: Constitution saving throw

Each character may attempt to win over the dwarves only once. Allow players to improvise ways to impress the dwarves, using a DC 12 each time.

The Dwarves' Concerns

Each time the party seeks to attempt a Charisma (Persuasion) check, ask them to address one of the dwarves' concerns. Without the trade documents, the checks are made at disadvantage. Failure on the check makes the deal worse for Sokol on that point, as noted below:

- **How much is Sokol offering?** Answer requires the trade documents. It is a generous sum: 1,000 gp for a ten-day's worth of stone. Failure on this point prompts the dwarves to demand 2,000 gp per tenday instead.
- **How is the payment to be delivered?** Answer requires the trade documents. The coin will change hands in Phlan. Failure on this point prompts the dwarves to demand a private

courier to bring the coin to them each tenday.

- **How are we to ship the stone safely?**

Answer requires the trade documents. Once the stone comes down from the mountain, Sokol provides servants to protect the shipments along the river. Failure on this point prompts the dwarves to demand protection all the way from their quarry in the mountains.

- **Who will work the stone in Phlan?** Sokol's documents don't cover this, but succeeding on an easy Wisdom (Insight) DC 10 check, the characters realize he means to give the guilds these jobs. Failure on this point prompts the dwarves to insist on doing the construction themselves, because non-dwarven hands are unsuited to work with their superior stone.

- **Who will take charge of dealing with frost giant attacks?** Sokol's documents have no clause for this. If the party volunteers to clean out the giants, they gain advantage on this check. Failure on this point prompts the dwarves to demand Sokol hire mercenaries to destroy the giants.

Success or Failure

If the characters fail four or more Charisma (Persuasion) checks (i.e. don't address at least half the dwarves' concerns satisfactorily), then Rhuldir rejects their pitch and refuses to ink Sokol's deal.

If the party fails all six attempts, the dwarves are angered by the negotiations and exile them from their lands, never to return on pain of attack. They have no choice but to leave in disgrace. (If they stay and fight, they face a clan of fifty dwarves, including several elite warriors of CR 8-10. They may triumph handily, but they then gain a reputation as butchers.)

If, however, the party succeeds at three or more of the attempts, the dwarves accept the deal (plus any consequences to Sokol for failures). The party gains additional xp for sealing the deal (see page 19).

If the party succeeds at all six checks, the dwarves are impressed with their diplomatic abilities and extend the warm hand of friendship to them. They also gift the party with 1,000 gp worth of cut gems.



PART 5. PHLAN IN CHAOS

The difference between good and evil is that good lays down the sword when the quest is done. Evil never rests, and neither must we.

—Kalen Dren, *Watcher of the Eye of Justice* (1484 DR, the Year of the Awakened Sleepers)

This section of the adventure should be shorter than the rest, as it consists entirely of a set of descriptive text to end the trilogy of adventures and set up the interactive event.

Return to Phlan

The heroes return to Phlan at the conclusion of the adventure. If they attempt to contact anyone in the city by magic, their attempts are unsuccessful (or at least do not yield any immediate reply). This may produce some anxiety for them: play up the uncertainty as they return.

When the adventurers return to the city, read:

After your long journey through the cold, bleak northland, you are looking forward to a warm welcome in a city that celebrates you as heroes.

That feeling ends when you crest a rise and look upon Phlan, standing grim on the rocky coast of the Moonsea. Something is fundamentally darker about the city now. The wreckage of half a dozen ships smolder in the bay and greasy smoke rises from fires blazing in the heights like beacons. An unknown banner depicting a raised black fist waves from the pinnacle of the tallest tower. Something definitely seems off.

Once inside the city walls, Phlan is notably somber. Gone are the campaign posters for the Cinnabar Throne, leaving only shreds affixed to worn masonry. Fewer people walk the streets, and those that do keep to the shadows and eye you suspiciously. You hear dozens of whispers in your wake, and somewhere a child wails pitifully.

The docks are choked with people arguing heatedly on the verge of coming to blows. Your arrival sweeps through them like a pebble thrown into water, and they make way for you, staring daggers in your direction. You take a skiff

to Thorn Island, which fairly bristles with guards posted with crossbows and spears at the ready.

Only when you are ushered into a meeting with a harried and tired Barret Sokol, do you learn the truth: the other candidates for the throne are in prison or missing, the church of Bane has seized control of the city, and Graben Samulkin has declared himself the Ruinlord of Phlan.

In your absence, Phlan has fallen, and its troubles are only just beginning.

- If Aveen Seakin has been treated well and returned to Phlan safely, the adventurers earn the **Insider Trading** story reward.
- If Rouse Blackbrand is rescued and returned safely to Phlan, the adventurers earn the **Razorhand-shake** story reward.

Conclusion

Sokol has managed to find enough men loyal to his family to fight off any efforts to arrest him. His location on the island helps a great deal, however he thinks it's only a matter of time before they come for him in full force. It is no doubt common knowledge that the adventures have acted as agents for each of the candidates.

Rewards

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

Experience

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

Combat Awards

Name of Foe	XP per Foe
Cyclops	2300
Pixie	50
Frost Giant	3900
Pavrat	5000

Non-Combat Awards

Task or Accomplishment	XP per Character
Discover Aveen's secret	1000
Discover the signet ring	1000
Overcome giants without combat	2,000
Successful honor challenge	2,000
Each prisoner rescued	500
Allow Bruw to address the dwarves	500
Broker deal with dwarves	5,000
Return Rouse to Phlan	1000

The **minimum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **8,625 experience points**.

The **maximum** total award for each character participating in this adventure is **11,000 experience points**.

Treasure

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

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

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

Treasure Awards

Item Name	GP Value
Barrett Sokol Reward	5,000
Ristamere's Treasure	350
Frost Giants	7,000
Razorhand cache	1,000
Hammersfell bestowal	1,000

Frostbrand

Greatsword, very rare (requires attunement)

When you hit with an attack using this magic sword, the target takes an extra 1d6 cold damage. In addition, while you hold the sword, you have resistance to fire damage.

In freezing temperatures, the blade sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius and dim-light for an additional 10 feet.

When you draw this weapon, you can extinguish all non-magical flames within 30 feet of you. This property can be used no more than once per hour.

Renown

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

Lord's Alliance characters earn **one additional renown point** for safely returning the Sokol signet ring to Barrett Sokol.

Story Rewards

The characters have the opportunity to earn the following story rewards during the course of play.

Razorhand-shake. You have rescued Rouse Blackbrand from certain demise. At the party's request, Rouse vows to support their choice of candidate for Leader of Phlan. This may prove useful in the future.

Insider Trading. Aveen Seakin is impressed with your abilities and determination. She offers to put in a good word if any of them want to become procurers for Aurora's Whole Realms Catalog at some point in the future.

Downtime

Each character receives 10 downtime days at the conclusion of this adventure.

DM Rewards

You receive 600 XP, 300 gp, and 10 downtime days for running this session.

Appendix: Bestiary

Aveen Seakin (Scout)

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Nature +4, Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

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

Actions

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

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

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

Veteran

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 17 (splint)

Hit Points 58 (9d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.

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

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

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

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

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

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

Cyclops

Huge giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 8

Languages Giant

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Poor Depth Perception. The cyclops has disadvantage on any attack roll against a target more than 30 feet away.

Actions

Multiattack. The cyclops makes two greatclub attacks.

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (3d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Pixie

Tiny fey, neutral good

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 1 (1d4 - 1)

Speed 10 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Sylvan

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Magic Resistance. The pixie has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Innate Spellcasting. The pixie's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring only its pixie dust as a component:

At will: *druidcraft*

1/day each: *confusion, dancing lights, detect evil and good, detect thoughts, dispel magic, entangle, fly, phantasmal force, polymorph, sleep*

Actions

Superior Invisibility. The pixie magically turns invisible until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the pixie wears or carries is invisible with it.

Frost Giant

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	21 (+5)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +3, Cha +4

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Giant

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 25 (3d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Pavrat (Frost Giant Priest)

Huge giant, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (patchwork armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12 + 60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	9 (-1)	21 (+5)	9 (-1)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Con +8, Wis +7, Cha +4

Skills Athletics +9, Perception +3

Damage Immunities cold

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Spellcasting. Pavrat is a 9th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +8 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, resistance, sacred flame*(3d8) *ray of frost*(3d8)

1st level (4 slots): *bless, fog cloud, entangle* (flavored as ice), *shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, cloud of daggers* (flavored as ice shards), *shatter*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, call lightning, spirit guardians*

4th level (3 slots): *ice storm, greater invisibility*

5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

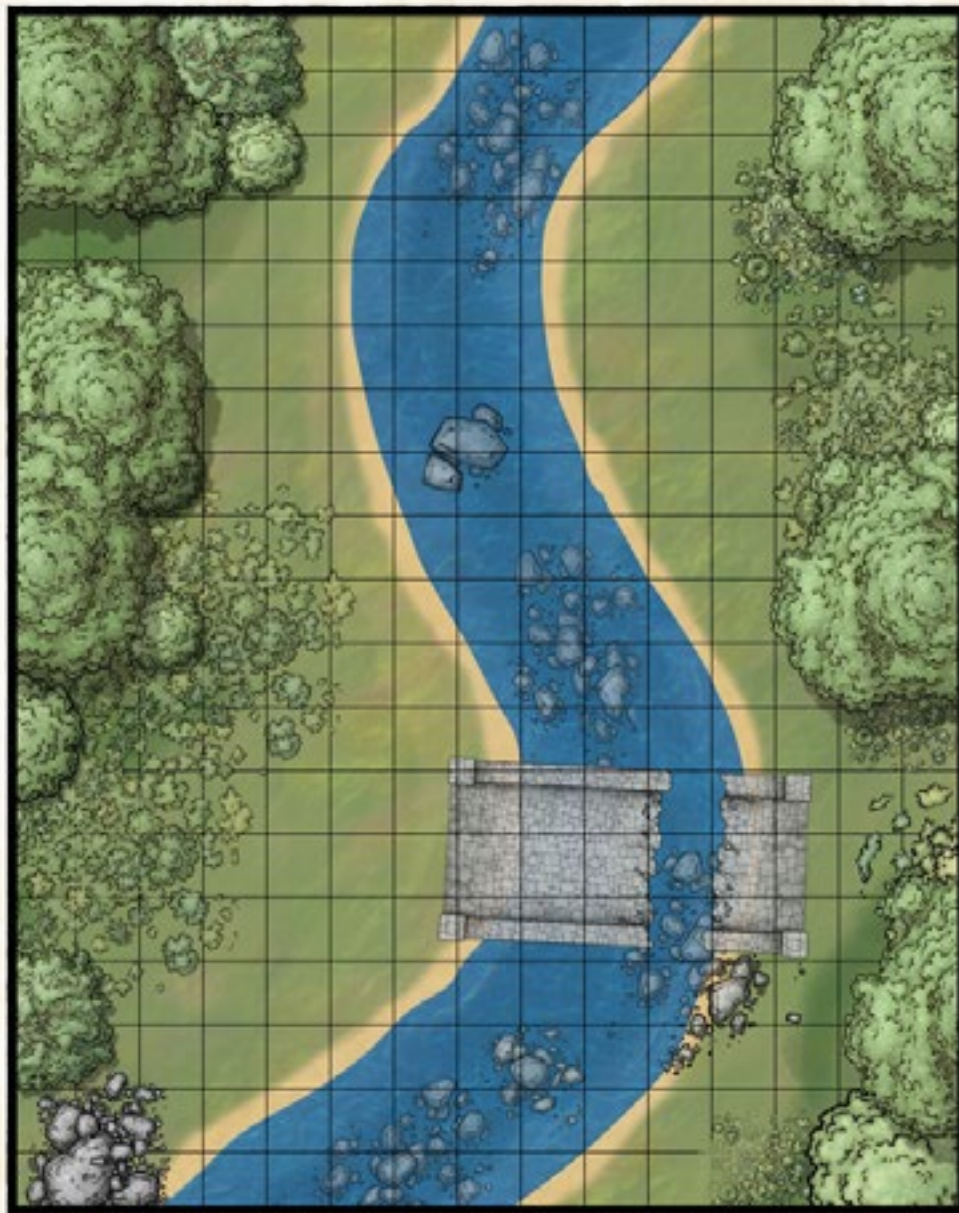
Actions

Multiattack. The giant makes two greataxe attacks.

Greataxe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 25 (3d12 + 6) slashing damage.

Rock. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 60/240 ft., one target. Hit: 28 (4d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

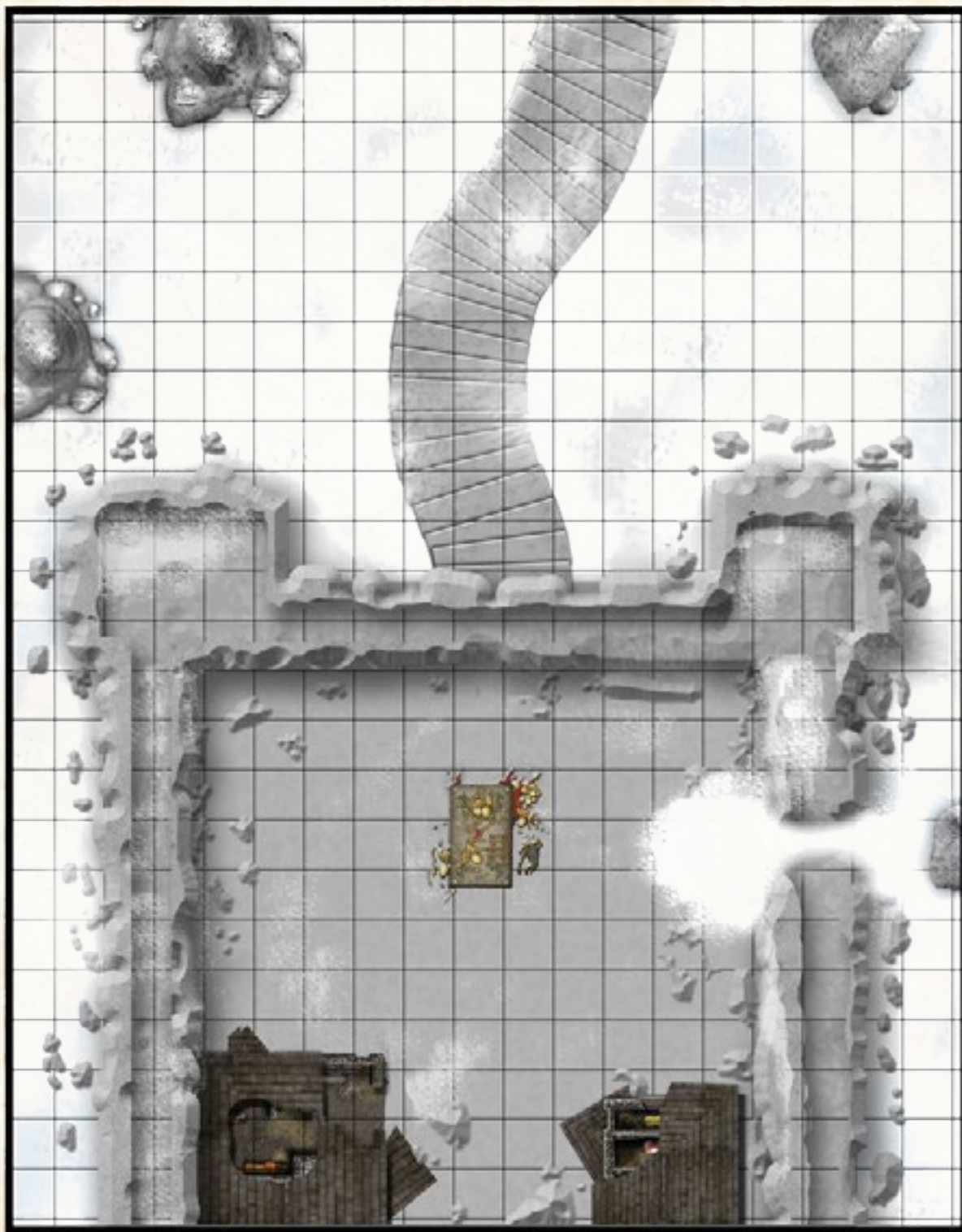
STOJANOW RIVER



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



FORTRESS FREUSTRAGG



1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

