

Best Defense

A One Round D&D 3rd Edition Living Greyhawk
Adventure

By Thomas Miller

The walls of Ratikhill are threatened. Sir Gatoril can only spare a small detachment to aid in the defense of northern borders of the Loftwood. The detachment is sent, but not before the battle begins. The players and the militia from the unfinished Fort Bredivan must hold off the invasion until help arrives. An adventure for 1st and 2nd level characters.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in **bold italics**. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

To determine the tier, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any henchmen or animals according to the values on their certificates. Compare the total to the chart below to find the tier.

Tier	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4 nd

The level cap indicated the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Adventure Summary and Background

Background

The humanoid invasion of the Bone March over five years ago was seen as a travesty by most. But, to some, it was seen as an opportunity. Humanoid clans and petty bandit kings now mostly populate the Bone March. Numerous temples to Hextor have appeared throughout the March, feeding on the many battles and strife caused by such chaos. Whether the individual temples are acting in conjunction under a higher power is unknown and remains to be seen.

News has come south from Ratik about a keep, now being called Fort Bredivan, built inside the northern borders of the Loftwood. Such a fortification would cause a significant change in the Loftwood, which is currently a battleground with neither the humanoids from the Bone March nor the forces from Ratik being able to gain control. The hidden powers pulling the strings want this to continue.

To prevent the completion of the keep, an evil priest of Hextor from the eastern city of Johnsport, has been ordered to destroy this new fortification before it can be completed. This priest, Atkurn Bloodfist, has entered the Loftwood with a contingent of orcs from the Skull Crusher clan and two ogres who were sent from the temple's humanoid hordes. With gold and promises of carnage, he has enlisted the aid of other orc and gnomish bands from the Loftwood. Atkurn knows that the humanoids from Spinecastle are making another assault on Ratikhill and plans to use that distraction of Ratikan forces as a chance to destroy Fort Bredivan before it can be completed.

The cry has gone out across southern Ratik for help. The army of Ratik has gathered in defense of Ratikhill, the fortress that blocks Kalmar pass. The humanoids of the Bone March are staging one last offensive before winter. Sir Gatoril, commander of the army, has called all Ratik forces to Ratikhill, leaving Lord Bredivan with only his local militia and whatever other forces he can gather to defend his unfinished keep. Word has been sent to Sir Gatoril of the force of humanoids gathering in the Loftwood, and he has sent a contingent of cavalry to aid Lord Bredivan. But, they will come after the battle has been joined.

Adventure Summary

All players' characters start off in the port town of Tinker's Cove. Tinker's Cove lies on the northern coast of the Lands of House Bredivan and is only a day's march from the fort. Upon arriving at the fort, the characters will be ushered hastily before Lord Bredivan and his war council, who will be going over the final defensive preparations. The characters will be allowed to introduce themselves and then be assigned to a specific position in the fort's defenses. The humanoid army will soon appear at the Loftwood's tree line and attack. During the battle, there will be specific encounters in which the PCs can take part. Near the end of the battle, the Cavalry from Ratikhill will arrive and help the fort's defenders push the invaders back into the Loftwood.

Introduction

As you stand in Tinker's Cove's small town square you let the words of the town crier sink in. The icy cold northern wind blows in off Grendep Bay, and you pull your winter's garb tight about you.

"All who would defend Ratik from the humanoids of the Bone March, go with haste to Fort Bredivan!" the crier had said. *"Every sword arm is needed!"* the town crier finished before stepping down from the stocks. From the crowd, someone cheered: *"For House Bredivan!"* The crier spoke of a large force of humanoids gathering within the Loftwood near the construction site of Lord Bredivan's new keep.

The keep, Fort Bredivan, is located just along the northern edge of the Loftwood. *"If there were any forest that needed such a fortification, it is the Loftwood,"* you hear a man mutter. The large conifer forest, known as the Loftwood, stretches from the foothills east of the southern end of the Rakers to the Solnor Ocean. The Rakers, the foothills and the Loftwood form a natural barrier between the southern lands of Ratik and the Bone March, a humanoid infested land to the south. The Loftwood, at one time, was a major source of building materials for Ratik's rich trade in ship building supplies. In the five years since the Bone March's fall, it has become a battleground.

The lands to the north of the Loftwood are under the protection of Lord Bredivan, current ruler of House Bredivan, one of the landholding noble houses of Ratik. It is this house that has suffered the worst from the increased humanoid activities in the Loftwood. This house is financing the new keep. From such a strategic location, forests for miles around could be defended and then cultivated for their precious wood.

"I'll not let them bleeding gnolls have it!" another man bellows. *"Where is the army?"* someone asks. It is answered that Sir Gatoril, commander of the army of Ratik, has called all his forces to the defense of Ratikhill. Another larger force of humanoids has gathered near Kalmar pass, surely, to make a last offensive on Ratikhill before winter. *If Fort Bredivan is to remain standing, it is going to take every volunteer House Bredivan can get. "To Fort Bredivan!"* is the cry.

Hopefully this will be enough to get the players interested in helping defend the keep. Allow the players

to purchase whatever items they need before departing to the fort.

Encounter One

The journey across the fields between the coast and the northern edge of the Loftwood was quick. It felt good to have the cold winds of the bay at your back. The uncompleted fort was easy to find. Many other volunteers were making their way toward it, while workers and their families were fleeing toward the safer lands of the northern coast. You note that the fort itself is nothing more than a couple of wooden walls. The other parts of the fort are only deep ditches and hastily constructed palisades or wooden markers placed in the ground. In the center of what is to be the keep, a small tent town has been erected, the tents are now the headquarters of the keep's defenses and it is here you were directed upon your arrival.

There are a large group of volunteers gathered outside one of the larger tents. A banner outside the tent displays the arms of house Bredivan, an axe above a forest of trees on a field of white. Volunteers are being brought into the tent in small groups. Soon it is your turn.

As you enter the tent, you see a small group of older stone-faced men standing around a central table. Maps and small markers lay scattered across the table. A tall dark-haired man, clean-shaven as is the custom for the nobles of Ratik, greets you, "I am Lord Bredivan and I thank you for coming in this time of need. I would know whom I would be sharing the field with. What are your names and from where do you hail? How can you help?"

Allow each of the players to introduce their characters at this time. Lord Bredivan is sincere in his thanks for their support, but is very busy. Any long-winded introductions will be interrupted. These introductions will allow him and the other nobles of house Bredivan, gathered around the table, to remember the characters and justify the influence reward for house Bredivan. Any players who are rude, abusive, or generally insulting should not receive the influence reward at the end of the scenario. Continue when the players have finished.

"Each of you will be remembered. May Trithereon lend his strength to our defenses. Sir Barret will assign you to positions in the field." With that and a wave of his hand toward a soldier near the flaps you entered through, Lord Bredivan dismisses you.

Sir Barret has been assigned the duty of distributing the volunteers among the militia. He was listening as the characters introduced themselves and should have an idea of who are fighters, who are healers, and so on.

At this point, the players should be taken to the central table where the miniatures battle is to take place. Sir Barret will break the volunteers into small balanced units and then dispatch them where they are needed, during the battle.

Important Note: Throughout the battle, there will be healers from the local temple of Trithereon on the field. If a player states he is looking for a healer, have them roll a

spot check (DC 16) to spot one of the healers as they try to remove the wounded from the field. It will take the players 1d4 round(s) to reach the healer. Allow the healer to cast a cure light wounds spell 1d8+1 on the requesting player.

Encounter Two

Sir Barret has positioned the volunteer units near the center of the defending force. The Palisades rise above, behind you. Ahead, the numerous infantry units of the Bredivan militia stand in formation, awaiting the arrival of the enemy. To the right, the gnomish minipult units from Nonizhold ready their artillery. It is a comfort having them here, their fame having preceded them from Baron Alain's invasion of the Bone March so many years before.

The wait is not long; the archers on the wall spot them first. The enemy emerges from the forest across the field, before you. Most of the humanoids are orcs. You see the banners of at least three clans being waved above the horde. You also see the tall gangly shape of gnolls in their numbers. "Worgs!" An archer above you calls out. Some of the other volunteers begin to mutter and shift as a group of orcs rides onto the field atop the large beasts. On the forest's edge, some larger artillery can be seen being rolled into the clearing by even larger humanoids. There must be over a hundred of them in all.

The enemy emits a cacophony of howls and taunts, banging axe to shield, working themselves into fervor. Just when the noise seems unbearable, the mass lunges forward. Lord Bredivan's officers signal for the archers and artillery to release their ammo. The battle has been joined.

As the orc infantry units charge into Bredivan's defending units, the two become one chaotic mass. Some javelins fly from the throng, but casualties among the archers on the wall are relatively light, especially compared to the devastation wreaked on the orc skirmishers by the gnomish minipults and the archers as they charged. Now that battle is joined, the artillery and the archers pick their targets more closely.

To your left, a unit of orc archers exits the woods and rains concentrated fire on the defending unit on the side of the fort away from the gnomes. That unit is taking severe casualties. A large unit of orcs sees the weakness in the line and tries to drive a wedge there. Sir Barret turns to the volunteers, shouting. "There! Hold the line!"

Each of the PC groups must battle the units below, to hold the line. If the dice are against them, have Lord Bredivan bring another group of militia in behind them to allow them to peel off and fall back.

Due to the season, the sky is a blanket of deep gray clouds, promising snow. The orcs suffer no penalties because of the light.

Orc Lieutenant, War3: CR 2; Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d8 + 3d8; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail); AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk +5 melee (1d12+3 [crit 19-20], longsword); SQ Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8 Cha 8

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3, Climb +2, Intimidate +6, Jump +4; *Feats:* Alertness, Power Attack
SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity
Equipment: Longsword, scale mail

Orc Sargeant War2: CR 1; Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d8 + 2d8; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail); AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 [crit x3], greataxe); SQ Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will -1

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8 Cha 8

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3, Climb +2, Intimidate +4, Jump +4; *Feats:* Alertness
SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity
Equipment: Greataxe, scale mail

Orcs (3): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail); AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk +2 melee (1d12+3 [crit x3], greataxe); SQ Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8 Cha 8

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3; *Feats:* Alertness

SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity

Equipment: Greataxe, javelin (2); scale mail

Encounter Three

Your unit has defeated its immediate enemy. Just as you are catching your breath and readjusting your gear, a runner comes up and relays a message from Sir Barret, "The healers and the wounded are being attacked! Worg riders have come out of nowhere! You are to go to the defense of the healers!" You make good time running across the cleared area around the fort-to-be. As you enter the woods, you and the rest of your unit slow down. There is no need to worry about how to find the site; the screams of those trying to fend off the humanoids allow you to find it easily. As you get within 10 yards of the tent, you see four worgs and their riders tearing into the bodies of the wounded and attacking the healers. Seeing armed assailants approaching, the ravagers turn their attention to your group.

If the orcs and worgs are defeated, the surviving priests of Trithereon who were tending to the wounded will be most grateful to the characters. They will cast a single cure light wounds 1d8+1, per character.

Worgs (4): Medium-Size Magical Beast (5 feet long); HD 4d10+8; hp 22; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA Trip; SQ Scent; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3

Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spot +9

Feats: Alertness

SA: Trip (Ex)—A worg that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action.

SQ: Scent (Ex)—Can detect opponents within 30 ft. by sense of smell.

Orcs (4): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail); AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk +2 melee (1d12+3 [crit x3] greataxe); or javelin +0 (1d6+2,

javelin); SQ Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8 Cha 8

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3 Feats: Alertness

SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity

Equipment: Greataxe (one is a masterwork weapon), javelin (2); scale mail

Encounter Four

No sooner do you emerge from the wood, leaving behind the priests, than a runner hastily makes his way toward you. Breathing hard, he relays another message from Sir Barret. "The enemy has two ballistae which are wreaking havoc with the archers mounted on the palisade. If they are not rendered inoperable, the ballistae will bring down the palisade and leave our archers vulnerable. Destroy them."

You head out, swinging wide into the forest, avoiding enemy units, and circle around the clearing. Soon you reach the edge of the clearing and see the ballistae and their crew. You are about 30 yards away and can see an ogre and four orcs defending the machines as their unarmed crews load them.

The ballistae crew are unarmed and unarmored, and will run away if the ogre is defeated. The ogre has a spyglass he took from one of the orcs who was supposed to be helping the ballistae sight targets.

Ogre: Large-Size Giant (9' tall); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +5 natural, +3 hide); Atk Huge greatclub +8 melee (2d6+7, huge greatclub) or huge long spear or +1 ranged (2d6 +7, huge long spear) 5 ft. by 5 ft. by 10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1

Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3 Feats: Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Equipment: Huge greatclub, huge long spear, spyglass, hide armor

Orcs (4): Medium-Size Humanoid; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 20 ft. (scale mail); AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk +2 melee (1d12+3 [crit x3], greataxe), or javelin +0 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SQ Darkvision; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1

Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8 Cha 8

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +3 Feats: Alertness

SQ: Darkvision 60 ft., light sensitivity

Equipment: Greataxe, javelin (2); scale mail

Encounter Five

As your group returns to the battlefield, you hear the thunder of hooves. Riding onto the field from the east is a large host of human cavalry; it must be the reinforcements from Ratikhill. The mounted warriors charged onto the field, driving a wedge into the side of the humanoid forces. These additional mounted troops are too much for the humanoids to bear and

the half not caught between the forces from Ratikhill and the Bredivan militia begins a full retreat into the woods. The other half begins falling under the combined swords of the Ratikans. Victory is ours!

Have all the players make spot checks (DC25). Read the following to those that succeed.

As you watch the remaining humanoid forces fleeing into the Loftwood, you spot a lone human figure near the forest's edge with an ogre and a small band of orcs. He is obviously trying to turn the fleeing forces around without success. He too soon flees into the woods.

Any characters that spot the human can make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC20). Those who succeed will note the human displayed the symbol Hextor upon his breastplate, a steel gauntlet clenching a set of arrows. (DC10) If a character uses the spyglass from encounter four.

The man the PCs spot is Atkurn Bloodfist. He tries in vain to stop the humanoids from fleeing. After he knows his mission has failed he flees into the forest. He will return in future scenarios as an antagonist. Should the characters want to follow him, explain there is still a battle occurring between the fleeing man and them.

Any players wanting to join in the last part of the battle are allowed to. Use the stats on the standard orcs from encounter two and face each character against one orc.

Conclusion

As the last few humanoids fall or flee into the Loftwood, a cheer erupts across the battlefield. Lord Bredivan can be seen in the middle of the field, holding his sword aloft, turning his mount in a slow circle. "We have won!" he shouts. "We have won." As the noise dies down, those able to do so put the enemy wounded out of their misery and look for surviving comrades. Some of the civilian workers and their families emerge from their hiding places within the unfinished keep, cheering the victors. The priests of Trithereon begin moving among the dead, saying prayers.

At this point, the adventure is over. If any players spotted Atkurn Bloodfist and wish to report this to Lord Bredivan, he will show interest and thank them for their keen eyes. He will also state that what they observed does not bode well for Ratik.

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the

game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Two

Defeating the orcs 100 xp

Encounter Three

Protecting the priests 200 xp

Encounter Four

Stopping the artillery 100 xp

Encounter Five

Spotting the priest of Hextor 25 xp

Total experience for objectives 425 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award 0-50 xp

Total possible experience 475 xp

Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 5gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief, such as Infamy. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter One

- Influence point with House Bredivan: This house controls the southeastern most territory of Ratic. The lands of house Bredivan lie on the northern border of the Loftwood Forest. The house will do the PC a favor in the future.

Encounter Two

- Masterwork Longsword (cost: 315gp, weight: 4lb): The handle of this weapon is masterfully crafted with gold inlays and jewels. The blade is long and straight, covered with swirling patterns of intricate detail.

Encounter Three

- Masterwork Greataxe (cost: 320gp, weight: 20lb.): The blades of this greataxe have been formed to resemble the roaring faces of dwarves. There are runes on the handle written in Dwarven that read, "Helmsplitter".

Encounter Four

- Spyglass (1,000 gp, 1lb): This spyglass is decorated with relief of sea nymphs and twirling seaweed designs. Objects viewed through the spyglass are magnified to twice their size.

Encounter Five

- 1d20 gold looted from battlefield.

Map

