

ECHOES OF HEAVEN

Produced using the *Open Game License* for the 3.x edition. This product is a supplement and requires the core open game rules to play.



What would you sacrifice for a second chance?
Or who?

Part Four in the Epic Campaign *The Moving Shadow*.

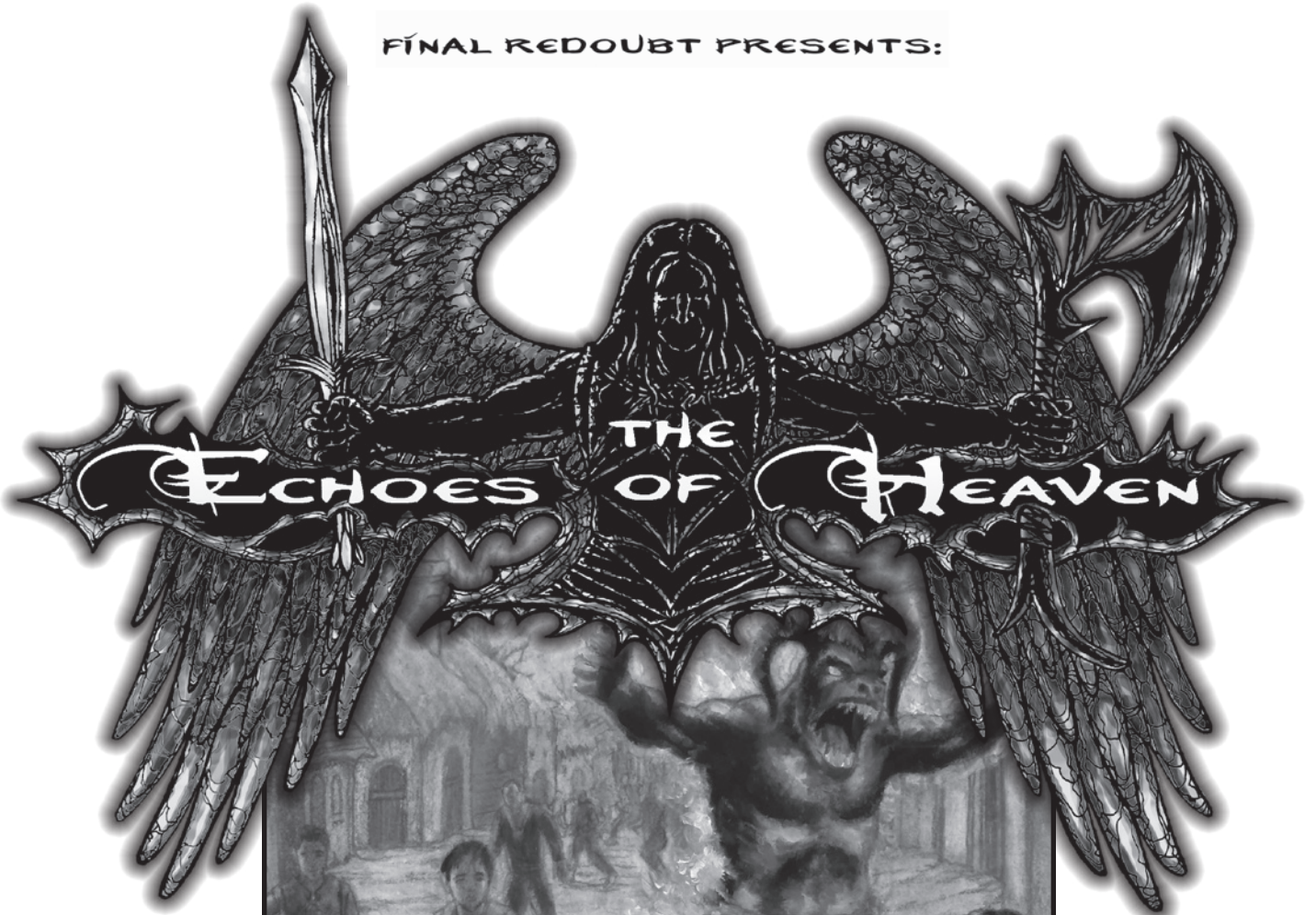
For 8th level characters.



The Tainted Tears

by Robert J Defendi

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With that, the festering pit of Hell opened, and the entire world quaked.
— *Parison 5:1*

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Special Support: Heike A. Kubasch, Bruce Neidlinger; Tim Dugger, and Steve Long.

We'd also like to thank all the fans on the Iron Crown Forums who have shown so much support and enthusiasm, especially Allenmaher, Buddha, Cormac Doyle, Grafton, Ictus, Ironmaul, Lichemaster, Lorenen, Maelstrom, Marke, Norin, Pendragon, Quasar, Smiling DM, Wolfram Riegler (our first customer), and Yammahoper.

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Produced and distributed by Final Redoubt Press, 263 Fall Street, Salt Lake City, UT, 84116.

Stock #1004DB



Alliance

Gae

Elaoron

Tarukkhâl

Athal

Erendui Ri

Aréth Range

Morthorn's Path

Benzel Forest

Elgen

Rolob

Barene

Stertonja River

Elune

Köhler

Invill

Fiast R

Eiler

rest

Gr



The Village of Invill





Teaser

Introduction

Welcome to the fourth adventure in *The Moving Shadow* campaign. This adventure, *The Tainted Tears*, is the fourth of a ten-part series that will take a group of characters through the Mortal Realm. Starting at 2nd level and taking the party to 20th, these adventures are a part of a campaign that will take the world to the brink of destruction. The actions of a few may save the many, and a band of heroes will stand between civilization and apocalypse.

This adventure is for 8th level characters. The Teaser uses 8th level characters as well, see the boxed text below.

Each adventure in *The Moving Shadow* campaign comes with a sourcebook. Included with *The Tainted Tears* is *The Bestiary*, in which one can find the unique monsters of the Mortal Realm.

These adventures are statted with versions for four different games: those using the **Open Game License**, plus HARP, HERO, and Rolemaster. This version of *The Tainted Tears* is statted for **OGL**.

To continue, you must first decide whether to run these adventures in the Mortal Realm or in another world entirely. If you intend to run in the Mortal Realm, you should begin by brushing up on *The Echoes of Heaven*, paying special attention to the sections on the Elven-Dwarven Alliance, Köhler, Gaerydd, and Ulcers in general. Then you should read this adventure and carefully note the power level of the various encounters. Some of these are meant to be difficult—nearly fatal—and you should be careful to make sure they are not too tough or too easy for your game table. Even in two groups with identical rules, the level of powers in the re-

spective characters will vary, if only because of the way the GM adjudicates rules calls. You should also probably read the entries in *The Bestiary* for all the monsters listed in this adventure.

This adventure is the fourth in a series, but it's intended for characters at the 8th level of play. If you intend to run the Teaser, they will still use the 8th level versions of their characters (this should puzzle the players who are paying attention.)

One final note. We've written these adventures with the novice GM in mind. Because of this, we take a bit of time to explain how to handle certain in-game issues, such as story construction and player free will. If you are not a novice GM, feel free to skip these sections.

Adventure Background

A millennium ago, the Warlord, one of the Great Fiends, attacked Uzarâg with an army of orcs. The Dwarves fell and scattered. Many settled in Felric's Redoubt. Others helped found the Elven-Dwarven Alliance. Others went to surviving Dwarven Kingdoms. The Diaspora of the Uzarâg Dwarves began.

More recently, just last year, a party braved the Ulcer of Stanor Monastery. There they used what they thought was a Holy Relic, a diamond splinter of the throne of God, in an attempt to close the Ulcer. All they managed was to make the Ulcer stronger and help to complete one of the steps in the resident Demon's plans.

In casting this Relic into the Ulcer, they discovered the Splinter was corrupted. Merging it with

Characters

In *The Throne of God*, you made 2nd level **OGL** characters but kept 1st level versions. You used those versions in the second teaser, which flashed back to how the characters met and showed the first steps in their adventure together.

The players would probably have thought this was a wonderful idea until the novelty wore off. By the time they reach the last adventure, dropping back down to first level versions would be more of a bother than a point of interest. That won't be a problem, however. The characters *think* they were 1st level during their adventures before the fall of Heaven. They *think* they remember everything that happened.

They've since learned they were wrong.

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the growing power of the Ulcer increased the corruption. The Demon intended it to make the Ulcer permanent. What they accomplished was creating a powerful Relic of Heaven and Hell, one that could create Ulcers. The Demon didn't complete his plan to make the Ulcer permanent, and because of this, the Splinter remained in its corrupted form and wasn't folded into the power of the Ulcer.

The Splinter ended in the hands of a Demon of Gluttony named Azgúk. He used the Splinter to create an Ulcer in Felric's Redoubt, then hid the Splinter in Hell. He took control of the Bucklemaker's Guild and caused the guildmaster to go on a murder spree that nearly destroyed the city in hellish corruption and Infernal Taint. A party of adventurers, presumably the same ones who created the Splinter, tracked the murderer back to the Guildhall and killed Azgúk, destroying the Ulcer and saving the city.

But little did anyone know that the Splinter's creation was not an accident. Morthorn, a Duke of Hell, learned of the plot to use the Unholy Relic to strengthen the first Ulcer, and he made some changes of his own. He had a plan for creating an Unholy Relic that could corrupt the fabric of the Mortal Realm, but it couldn't be created in his *own* lands, Ulcer or not. He could only create it by tricking a Demon into instilling it with *it's* power. He hatched an elaborate plan to further corrupt the Unholy Relic. He succeeded but lost the Splinter in the process.

Morthorn's servants waited for the Relic to be used and when the adventurers destroyed Azgúk, Morthorn pieced together the Demon's identity after the fact. Armed with that knowledge, he was able to track down the Demon's hiding places in Hell. He found the Splinter. The Demon, killed permanently in his own Ulcer, never knew its fate.

He took this relic and performed a test in the western lands of Felric's Redoubt, as depicted in the adventure *The Echoes of History*, as shown in the *Guild Adventurer #2*, from *Guild Companion Publications*. There he created an Ulcer and then abandoned it, satisfied with the Splinter's power.

Armed then with the Unholy Relic he'd fought so hard to create, Morthorn launched his real plan at last. He started with a focus on Uzarâg.

There his minions took the Splinter, trying to use it inside this permanent Ulcer. His plot was to cause the Ulcer to suddenly expand, but the actions of a party of adventurers, in accidental alliance with the Warlord, foiled this plan, and Morthorn fled back to Hell with the Splinter.

Even more recently, events in a village in Gaerydd tragically unfolded. There, a group of rustlers raided the village, killing villagers who tried to interfere. Central to this mystery were Cedion and Tannith, two young lovers. Cedion discovered that Tannith's father was the head of the rustlers, and she stumbled on them. Before Cedion could respond, they took Tannith prisoner. Cedion, stunned with fear, almost couldn't bring himself to try her rescue, especially after a first group of angry villagers was slaughtered. In the end, he found the courage. Fighting his way into the rustler camp, he saved his love from a certain, but quick death at the hands of her own father.

Only then did the real tragedy strike. As the day of their wedding approached, Tannith became ill. The village priest diagnosed her with cancer of the blood, but in a village as small as Invill, there's no magical healing. Now Cedion watches his love die in agony, wishing every day that he hadn't rescued her, that he'd let her die that day last fall.

Or at least he does until Morthorn comes.

Adventure Summary

This is an overview of how an average game group might experience this adventure. We've broken the adventure into a Teaser and three Acts, and each is listed below.

TEASER

In the Teaser, ten thousand years ago, the characters begin their long travel into the Fallen Lands of Heaven. In the last adventure, they learned they'd been the first people to discover the enemy forces had invented the magic of Necromancy.

Now they've moved beyond the civilized border and into lands too long in darkness. Here they find the upsetting evidence of Mortals gone mad without God's light. When they finally find people, those

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people are crazed and attack the characters with the intent of ripping them limb from limb.

ACT ONE

Act One begins at the yearly festival in the Elven-Dwarven Alliance, when the people celebrate the rescue of their Dwarven ancestors by their Elven enemies. Things are light and fun at this celebration, but an accident gives the characters some time to hero for the crowds.

Then Lanie, the Cardinal's agent, finds them and tells them that Gleann had a vision that Morthorn intends to come back through the gate into Uzarâg. Almost before the characters have time to plan, an explosion detonates, Morthorn steals horses, and the chase is on.

The characters likely can't get ahead of Morthorn, and so things degenerate into a chase and a tour of the Duke of Hell's destruction. The characters wade through the men he kills, follow him through the next country and into the woods, where Morthorn creates a quick Ulcer. This Ulcer doesn't take well and after a battle with corrupted wolves, the characters can continue. Across the river into Gaerydd, Morthorn creates a second Ulcer and this one latch-

es onto the tragedy in the village of Invill. The characters will have an almost impossible time picking up a trail on the far side of the Ulcer if they skirt around. The only way is through.

But once in the nightmare of Invill, the only way out is to destroy the Ulcer.

ACT TWO

Once inside, things become much less linear. The characters find a village with only one living inhabitant, and he's insane. As they enter the buildings, they find themselves in the bodies of the villagers, living out memories of things that happened in the village's past. At least, that's what happens in some memories.

In others they fight hordes of Demons. Invill is an Ulcer without proper root. There's a Demon Grove to the northwest, but it's more a conglomeration of all the evil than a single driving force. If one Demon can seize control, he'll have it all. The offshoot . . . Invill is lousy with Demons.

At first the characters will fight to figure out the nature of the nightmares in general. Once they realize that they're seeing the past, they'll start to piece together the events. They'll realize that two young

A Hammock Story

You probably haven't heard the term before, or if you have, you've heard it in a different context. When we at Final Redoubt Press talk of hammock stories, we're referring to stories whose entire purpose is to get you from one point in the tale to another. They aren't earth-shattering. The world doesn't come at risk (well, maybe a little). The main point of them is that all the pieces on the board are lined up in one place at the end of one story. At the beginning of the next major events, they need to be lined up in another. Something needs to go between, to get us from point A to point B.

The Tainted Tears is a hammock story.

It serves two purposes. First, the characters need to know Morthorn has the Splinter in the world, and yet not know where. They need the pressure of the chase with nowhere to run to. That's where the next story begins.

But on a more fundamental level, things have been intense lately. The issues in Felric's Redoubt could have caused disastrous effects to the balance of world power. Failure in Uzarâg could have led to the end of the world. What's worse, things only become more intense in episode 5, *The Last Hallowed Place*.

The players need a break. Things will soon become disasterous, and they'll stay that way until the end. Meanwhile, we have the events here, in *The Tainted Tears*. Though you can use the threat of the Ulcer to force character's hands and make them step inside, the Ulcer's expansion isn't the real story here. This is the story of a village that knew misfortune, and the two lovers who found themselves in the middle, lovers all but torn apart. It's a Human story. We're in this story to remind the characters what they fight for, because starting with the next adventure, things are going to get very, very bad.

Teaser

lovers named Cedion and Tannith are central to the tragedy of Invill. Rustlers were stealing from the village. Through investigation, Cedion discovered that Tannith's father was the ringleader. Worse yet, the father captured Tannith for learning too much. The party must follow him, learn from him. Only in the end will they discover he's trapped in these nightmares too. They'll think that he abandoned Tannith, that she died at her father's hand. At last, they will realize that Cedion rescued her, only to have her waste to an agonizing and horrific death by cancer. Cedion plays these nightmares out again and again, hoping for a chance to let his love die swiftly, in the rustler camp. Once the characters have understood all this and convinced Cedion to save her once more will the nightmares part enough that they can enter the Demon Grove.

ACT THREE

In the Demon Grove, they will fight from encounter to encounter, destroying more nightmares of Invill, this time more directly. Finally, they'll find the heart of the Ulcer. There, after fighting the dark core of the Demon trees, they will destroy the Ulcer. Only then will they learn the last truth. They thought Tannith was dead when Morthorn made the Ulcer.

Tannith was merely dying.

They find her in the Demon Grove. Here they can heal her or end her suffering. Either act brings her and Cedion peace.

Troubleshooting

The most important element in any adventure is free will. You cannot railroad a party into doing what you want and still produce an ideal adventure. Therefore it's important that you never try to force the party along the adventure path described above.

So what do you do if they strike off on their own?

It takes a gentle hand to keep a party and a story line on the same path. The primary thing to remember is not to try to force them back along the way, that is the intention of the Dramatic Purpose descriptions, outlined below.

If a party decides to go the wrong way, the easiest way to kick them back on path is to have someone talk to them. In the early part of the adventure, there are plenty of people in Morthorn's wake willing to offer advice and point the party in the right direction. Later, the constraints of the Ulcer will keep them in line, but this is a trap in and of itself. Since the Ulcer traps anyone inside, you must be clear about what characters enter and what don't. It isn't fair for a character to get stuck inside an Ulcer when they didn't intend to step over the threshold.

If that doesn't work, try to entice them back. Smoke on the horizon always gets a party's attention. The remains of Orcish raids are also good.

But if the party insists on doing their own thing, let them. It can take a while to get them back on track but don't let that stop you. Bring them back gently, in stages.

The worst thing you can do is say, "Because the adventure says so." If the party figures something out too early, so be it. If they miss clues but continue in the right direction, let them. Never put them in a situation where the plot of the story is more frustrating than interesting. Above all, let them have fun. If they decide following Morthorn is more important than stepping into the Ulcer, *let them*. Think of this entire adventure as a guideline, not as a script.

Dramatic Purpose

Every major event in this adventure has a Dramatic Purpose. These are there so the GM can better decide what to do if the party goes off book. If an encounter's Dramatic Purpose is important (like the Act Two twist) then the GM will know that it *has* to happen somehow. If it's less important, he'll know he might be able to skip it or replace it with something else. One thing to remember about Dramatic Purposes is even the small ones are important. If you run an adventure with no easy combats, the players will feel exhausted, maybe even desperate, and they might stop enjoying the game.

If a group diverges wildly from the written adventure, let them. Take the Dramatic Purposes of the encounters they are skipping and invent new encounters that serve the same purpose. If the party

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has somehow skipped all the easy fights, or Heaven forbid messed them up so badly they weren't easy anymore, invent some *new* easy fights and drop them in the party's path.

Maybe the party abandons the adventure entirely and refuses to go back. If so, who are any of us to say they did wrong? Take the remaining dramatic events and create new ones for the party, following their new path. It might not be this adventure, but it will be *an* adventure, and it will be a lot more fun than arguing about whether the party is ruining the GM's plans.

Of course, then the world will begin to end, but at least there are good adventures in that.

As long as all the purposes are served, you will have a workable story, probably even a good one. It doesn't matter if it isn't the story you set out to tell. Gaming is a collaborative effort, after all.

Running the Campaign

This adventure is part four in a ten-part, ongoing campaign. This brings up some issues one wouldn't have in a stand-alone adventure.

DOWN TIME

It's possible that someone will want to run these adventures before the entire series has been released. It's likely that a game group may finish an adventure before the next one is available.

We've taken this into consideration. You can't run a ten-part adventure and not expect to take some side trips. Don't worry if this is your intention. We've built downtime into the story between each adventure. Near the end, it might be nice to run the

adventures concurrently, but there's no point in this series where one adventure *must* be played directly after the one before.

In fact, we've provided a series of free Adventure Seeds for download online. These, along with some full adventures published through the *Guild Adventurer* by *Guild Companion Productions*, integrate with *The Moving Shadow* campaign to create a story, from beginning to end. The great thing about the Adventure Seeds is that you can flesh them out to be as long or as short as you like. For the full order of adventures and Adventure Seeds, download *What to Buy First?*. You can find all these products on www.finalredoubt.com.

EXPERIENCE AND TABLE PACING

If you're running these adventures in a series, then the issue of experience will come into play. Some groups might want to do the adventures one right after another. Others might have ten sessions between each adventure (especially if they meet frequently while waiting for the next release).

The thing to remember about experience is that it's all arbitrary. Many GMs ignore official experience guidelines. Some have home systems. Some just assign experience by story points, some by number of sessions, regardless of session content.

The important thing to remember is that no experience system is set in stone. If you have multiple adventures in this series and you wish to run them back to back, then a party will need to gain two levels in a single adventure. If you want to run eight adventures in between, then they need to average a fourth of a level each time experience is given. It doesn't matter how fast a group advances as long as everyone understands what to expect and *why* to

The Dirty Little Secret of Good Storytelling

Not many people will admit to it, but most GMs have done it. We lie. We fudge a dice roll, we influence a result. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as it makes the adventure more—and not less—enjoyable.

For instance, the Chorus in this adventure was not meant to be anyone special. Still, the players *expected* him to be. They kept presenting theories on his actual identity, most of them Cedion. The need was so great that they'd forget they'd ruled out such an idea the week before. Eventually, the GM bowed to this need and made the Chorus Tannith's father. That was made a part of the finished adventure. The GM was willing to see a need in the players and fulfill it. He didn't try to force the story into its prewritten form.

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expect it. If you tell a party you want to game every single night but the next adventure isn't out for two more weeks, they'll understand they might need to advance more slowly.

Playing in Another Game World

If you wish to run this adventure in another world, whether one of your own or one produced by another company, that's okay as well. It might take a touch more work, however.

Changing the Elven-Dwarven Alliance is easy, just choose either an Elven or a Dwarven nation in your world (an Elven nation would probably fit most easily). As for the Church, try to find a mostly good or neutral church. A little corruption wouldn't hurt the flavor of the campaign as a whole. The church must take a hard line on heresy, for the scene with the Witch-Hunters to make sense. The biggest problems are fitting Uzarâg and the Warlord into the adventure (and in later adventures Dientor and the Demon Queen). Uzarâg could be an undiscovered site, but there needs to be someone like the Warlord living there. Two obvious choices are to borrow another bad guy from your world or simply bring the Warlord over and work him into your history. It's important the idea of corruption fits in your world, and there is a way for corruption to be hidden from the magic of Good.

Those are the hard parts, because they are what the party must interact with most often.

What would seem, at the first, to be the most difficult issue is the easiest. Ulcers are an everyday occurrence on Meridrin, but in another world, they might be alien. If that's the case, all you need to do is come up with a way for the church to know this might be coming. Priests have prophetic visions . . . maybe one foresaw it. All that leaves is the root cause of the Ulcer.

But by now characters have learned that Morthorn can create an Ulcer. With a Duke of Hell (or whatever plane you'd like) working behind the scenes, it isn't hard to imagine the final nemesis hatching a plan that would begin with this little piece of Hell

on earth. Perhaps he's the only one to figure out a way to make an Ulcer. Perhaps he's even done it before, and no one has ever noticed. There is much evil in most game worlds. It might take some time to recognize an Ulcer for what it is.

To Tease or not to Tease

If you've decided to run this adventure in the Mortal Realm, you must decide whether to run the Teaser. The Teaser is optional. Each adventure comes with one, and through them, you will play out a ministry that maps out the character's adventures in Heaven.

So you must decide if the Teaser is right for your group.

By running the Teaser, you have placed your characters in a different frame of reference than anyone else in the world. They will have a unique perspective on events, on customs, and on the nature of the Church. They won't know anything intellectually that others don't (except for irrelevant details, like the street names in the Holy City). The Teaser will not make them any more powerful.

But for those who would like this Teaser, there is a powerful element of wish fulfillment. These people are veterans of the greatest war ever fought. They've known Angels personally. They've witnessed one of the greatest eras of history.

It all boils down to that. If you think your game group would find those wish fulfillment aspects appealing, run the Teaser. If you think it's not their thing, it will probably come off as a silly gimmick. Let your group be your compass.

Assorted Names

In any adventure, the party will run across several people who aren't listed in the adventure. The GM might have to come up with several names in a single local. Because of this, a list of some general Gaerynch names follows. Feel free to use them on characters the party meets along the way.

Male Gaerynch names: Perwyn, Calfyn, Henion, Lanwyn, Meredyn, Aedion, Codin, Tewnion, Urwion, Moctyn, Eiddwyn, Arddyn, Calen, Ancon.

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Female Gaerynch names: Telig, Diarel, Blydno, Cenar, Hova, Melust, Dyl, Gener, Malo, Manderth, Pirfys.

In Gaerydd, the last letter of a man's first name and a family name denote rank: "n" = commoner, "d" = freeman, "k" = land owner, "s" = clergy, "l" = nobility (patriarchs in the Church or higher).

Adventure Difficulty

As we said before, the power level of every game table is different. So although this adventure has been play tested, it's impossible to test the difficulty of the adventure against the exact power level of an individual table (without playing it).

It's difficult to affect the challenge level of an encounter in the middle. However, a *great deal* can be done between battles. A GM should adjust encounters if he feels they've been too easy or too hard. As long as the game remains fair, a little adjustment on the fly can be a good thing.

One final note. It's generally best to leave the final battle be once it's started. This is usually the most dangerous part of the adventure and players *need* to feel like they can die. So although some fast and loose play can be a good thing during most of play, when the climax comes, the GM should probably let the chips fall where they may.

Campaign Cartographer

All maps in this adventure were designed using ProFantasy's *Campaign Cartographer* (some have them have had a bit of post-CC work done). You will find versions of the maps built with both Campaign Cartographer 2 and 3 included with the PDF version of this product and some on our web site (www.FinalRedoubt.com) as well. This will allow you to print these maps at any scale, including 1"=5' for miniature use. If you don't own the program, ProFantasy provides printing and viewing software on their website that you can use to print these maps. Go to www.Profantasy.com.

Campaign Cartographer is a trademark of ProFantasy Software Ltd.

Note: *All magical items are in italics.*

Teaser

The Teaser begins ten thousand years before the rest of the adventure. The War in Heaven has raged for a millennium and the forces of Heaven believe they're winning. Only the Five Prophets and God Himself knows that a second Fall looms on the horizon, and when it comes, Heaven will fall with it.

Ulcers

There is much talk in this adventure about Ulcers. Those who are new to *The Echoes of Heaven* might find this a bit confusing.

Ulcers are an infection in the Mortal Realm, where the nature of Hell has contaminated the land and the laws of nature break down. Anything can happen in an Ulcer and the shape of the place warps around the wishes and dreams of those inside. Some Ulcers become powerful puzzle traps, some fill with hordes of Cambionic creatures (such as Orcs and Hobgoblins). Others might fill with dreams taken form.

Any adventure a GM might like to run can take place in an Ulcer. The sky's the limit, and it doesn't matter how outlandish, how improbable the nature of the adventure site is. Ulcers are, by their definition, not of this earth.

Ulcers are caused by evil. Worse, they are rooted in evil, but spells that detect good and evil only detect the Divine or Angelic sparks and infernal corruption in *The Echoes of Heaven*. There is no way to determine what evils anchor the Ulcer, and so the Witch-Hunters have a much more direct solution. When they find an Ulcer, they kill everything inside.

Period.

Teaser

The player characters met during the Teaser of *The Festering Earth*. They've been sent into the lands of the Fallen Angels, deep behind enemy lines. Although the forces of the Host have the Fallen on the ropes, one Fallen Angel still plots and plans. The party is to find out as much information as they can without getting killed. Their job is reconnaissance, not attack. The Fallen Angel's name is Mathos, the name God gave him when he fell.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the Teaser is to hook the players in, hopefully before even a single die is thrown. In a television show, the Teaser is the part of the episode that comes before the credits, lasting anywhere from thirty seconds (for shows like the defunct *Enterprise*) to more than ten minutes (for shows like the also defunct *Alias*). The Teaser is (relatively) short, to the point, and usually set up to end in a cliff hanger to keep the viewer from changing channels.

Our Teaser serves much the same purpose. In it the characters start in a unique environment . . . the final days of the War in Heaven. This will be a brief and sometimes violent opening that will hopefully set a tone for the rest of the campaign . . . if it's used. The Teaser of this adventure (and the other adventures in the same series) create a storyline, not quite told in order, of the characters and their battles in the last days. The Teaser is optional.

BEYOND THE LIGHT OF GOD

When play begins, read or paraphrase the following:

It was the last days of the War in Heaven.

All of Heaven used to shine with the light of God, but as you pushed deeper and deeper into the Fallen Lands, all you saw was darkness and horror and rot.

The Light of God did not enter into those lands. It wasn't that it couldn't, but that God Himself had denied his most treacherous children the light. In the lack of light, the crops withered and faded, and the topsoil eroded. Winds whipped stinging

sand across most of the lands, all except those few fields where the Fallen Angels created enough light for plants to struggle into something resembling life. A treacherous, half-existence.

There.

There you walk, mile after mile of desolation around you. Few Mortals live this far into the Fallen Lands. This is the place of the foul betrayers of God, the Fallen Angels. Around you, endless stretches of bitterness, hate, and fury. The fate of those who'd risen against their Fallen.

And you must continue walking. The Fallen Angels have learned a new skill. They've learned to tap the power of the Nopheratus, the force of Un-death. More than that, they'd taught Mortals this same dark art. And you must know more. Without this information, the Faithful might fall.

Then, up ahead, a change in the monotonous landscape. This change comes in the same form as many others, a skeletal house, a shattered wooden frame, silhouetted in the darkness. Then the crumbling husk of a bell tower. It was once a town. You have no idea how much is left.

Again, hand out the 8th level versions of the characters. If characters have any really unique items, you might need to replace them, but otherwise assume they had more or less the same types of gear as they do in the modern day. Again, the characters might point out the logic problem here. These characters are higher level than the characters were at the end of their campaign in Heaven. Tell them that they don't know why. They had remembered this differently before.

The town itself is deserted. As the party explores, allow them to find long-dead remains, seemingly caught in some terrible civil war. Man clutches man's throat. Father has killed son. Grandmothers have stabbed grandfathers. There is no one still alive.

Build up the descriptions of these finds. Allow the dread and horror of each new scene to build. Do not rush this scene. You are building the mood that will carry throughout the entire adventure.

Teaser

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to introduce the characters back into the Teasers and to allow them a little time to roleplay their way back into their pre-Sundering characters.

—A man in the ground to his torso. From the scooping marks in the ground it looks like he buried *himself*.

Dramatic Purpose

In this scene we set mood and foreshadow what is to come.

DEEPER

When you are ready to continue, read or paraphrase the following:

You leave behind that tragic, desolate city. You wonder what could have caused those people to kill one another. Was it madness caused by life in this unrelenting night, or something else? Was some more dangerous, insidious force at work here? Is this just one more aspect of the Nopheratus?

As the characters move more deeply into these lands, show them one image after another. Do not take as much time on these. You're building your pace here. Allow it to show in your voice and your posture as well.

Some of the scenes they find:

—Deserted settlement after deserted settlement. In one, they see a man standing watch on the edge of town, his body dead but somehow still standing its vigil.

—The corpse of a man in a tree, the foes who trapped him there long gone.

A FINAL VILLAGE

When you've finished your vignettes, read or paraphrase the following:

It's difficult to judge time in these forsaken lands, but you think it's on the third day of ruins when you find one last village . . . but this one isn't ruined. This one still teeters on its foundations.

The shutters on the windows have shattered. Doors lay broken in frames. Dried blood coats the rim of the well.

They find signs of violence but no bodies. Focus on the bloody well. Make the image stick in their minds to play against the well in Act Two.

Dramatic Purpose

In this scene we set mood and foreshadow what is to come.

The Story of the Teasers

We've talked about the Dramatic Purpose of the Teasers as a story form, but what do the Teasers themselves do, as story elements plugged into these adventure? What do they contribute?

The first three are fairly obvious. The first placed the characters, started the story with a bang, and defined their origin. The second showed how the characters met. The third showed hinted that their memories don't match reality, and showed that they were the ones who discovered the Fallen taught the magic of Necromancy.

Things become more subtle in this and the next Teaser. These two Teasers advance the character's physical position, detailing their travels as they delved into the Fallen Lands. They also cover certain elements as the characters follow Joseph Campbell's Hero Cycle.

But these aren't the important roles. What these two Teasers really do is set mood. They foreshadow. They echo the events later in the story. The crazed Mortals of this Teaser strengthen the story of Act Two, building expectations and dread into the subtext of that story the players might not feel otherwise.

Teaser



Dramatic Purpose

We're still setting mood, but now we're ramping up the drama for the tragedy to come.

ALAS, LIFE

When character approach the now-silent keening, read or paraphrase the following:

You suddenly hear shuffling sounds from the right. Looking over, you see human beings, their tongues lolling, their eyes wide with madness. They froth slightly at the lips.

Then to the left you can see more, also shuffling forward. One of them leans back his head and lets lose with a wail of despair. Then he seems to scent you on the wind.

They rush to attack.

AT LAST, LIFE

As they move past the well, read or paraphrase the following:

As you move deeper into the village, a sudden, keening wail rises in the darkness. It is a wail of grief and terror, of torment, of despair. It tears through your head, pounding like daggers into your skull. Then, all is silent.

The howl seems to come from the village center.

Insane Villagers:

human commoner 7; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 7d4+10; hp 33; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +3/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6+1, club); SA -; SQ -; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Jump +8, Listen +3, Ride +6, Search +1, Spot +3, Swim +6; Athletic, Improved Initiative, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness

Possessions: Club

There is one villager for every PC. These people are intent on killing the characters, and the char-

Teaser

acters will have to decide how to proceed. In the end, they might just have to kill these crazed people, putting them out of their misery.

When this battle is done, move onto the final dialog, reading or paraphrasing as necessary.

That was ten thousand years ago. Ten thousand years of distortion, anger, and holy war between those last moments in Heaven

and the present day. Ten thousand years.

And yet, you remember it. To you it was merely months ago and the memory is fresh in your mind. Solid. You can recall every detail, almost every word.

And yet this time, as you thought back on it, it all came out differently. This time it's confused. Muddled. These events you just remembered, the man in the tree, the rush of the villagers: they are real. They are true. You know in your hearts that these events happened exactly in this order, exactly with these details.



And yet, you always remembered it differently. Something is wrong with your minds.

Give the players time to react, then continue to Act One.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a basic challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the character's abilities. It's also meant to allow them to test their new skill, as they likely advanced in level just before starting this adventure.

Act One

Act One

Ten Thousand years have come and gone. The Five Prophets split Heaven into Heaven, Hell, and the Mortal Realm. The endless march of time has wrought a world laboring under the myopic guidance of monolithic racial churches and feudal brutality. Mortals have fallen a long way since the days when they rubbed elbow-to-knee with the greatest Angels in Heaven.

How Act One begins depends on whether you've run the previous adventures. See below for more details.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the first act is to introduce all the major characters, the plot, and the setting elements. Act One can be difficult to handle because it often gets a bit ho hum if the GM isn't careful. The act should end with the characters entering a "new world," meaning that they are going out to take care of some problem or to fulfill some new role.

This is an adventure, though, not a movie. A GM should make sure that they don't use this notion of movie structure to railroad characters.

But there is nothing you can do until you have a clue of Morthorn's next plan. The last you saw, he'd taken the Splinter back to Hell. He could appear anywhere with it when it's time to move. You can only hope to get a clue before it's too late.

But you can't just sit around and despair, and while you make time with these friendly, open people, preparations are in order. It's time for the Alliance festival, to celebrate the union of Elves and Dwarves. For a week now, the entire city has been abuzz with activity.

Ask the party if they have any business to take care of on the last day before the festival. If they wish to buy anything, let them know that they might want to wait until the festival. After everything settles, move on to the next event.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows the characters to get back into the mode of play.

IF THE PARTY PLAYED THE PREVIOUS ADVENTURE

When you are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:

Time passes, and while you fear that you've failed, life rushes on with or without you.

You have moved into the city of Elaorun in the Elven-Dwarven Alliance. Here you have wintered, thought, discussed, and planned your next move, but there lies the problem. There is no next move.

Morthorn, Duke of Hell, escaped with the Splinter, for what purpose you aren't sure. You do know two things, however. The Splinter can create an Ulcer of Hell in the Mortal Realm, and it can expand the scope of an existing Ulcer. So while you don't know what Morthorn intends to do with the Splinter, it can't possibly be good.

IF THE PARTY DID NOT PLAY THE PREVIOUS ADVENTURE

When you are ready to begin, read or paraphrase the following:

You have wintered in the Elven-Dwarven Alliance east of Uzarâg in the city of Elaorun. Here you have thought, discussed, and looked for your next job, your next problem, your next wrong to right. That's the problem . . . things are quiet.

But you can't just sit around and waste time, and while you make time with these friendly, open people, preparations are in order. It's time for the Alliance festival, to celebrate the union of Elves and Dwarves. For a week now, the entire city has been abuzz with activity.

Ask the party if they have any business to take care of on the last day before the festival. If they wish to buy anything, let them know that they might

Act One One

want to wait until the festival. After everything is settled, move on to the next event.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows the characters to get back into the mode of play.

THE FESTIVAL

When you are ready to move things forward, read or paraphrase the following:

Over one thousand years ago, Uzarâg fell to the Warlord. The Dwarves of the eastern fortresses rushed to fortify the capital, only to find the remnants of their people already fighting a rearguard retreat. It was too late. There was no way for them to escape the Warlord alive. Even the underground

roads had been lost and the combined force of Dwarves languished and died in the passes.

Then an army of Elves appeared from the east, the hereditary enemies of Uzarâg, but instead of catching the Dwarves in a pincer maneuver, they volleyed arrow after arrow into the Warlord's forces. This combined force of Dwarven infantry and Elven archers wasn't enough to win, but it was enough to rescue the Dwarves, allowing them to escape into Elven lands, where they were welcomed as brothers.

Now every year on this date the Dwarves throw a great festival. Here, both races celebrate another year weathered within sight of the Warlord. Here, the Dwarves thank the Elves for their salvation and the Elves thank the Dwarves for everything they have done to repay this debt. It's a time of celebration and renewal.



Act One

The festival is an exciting time. Allow the characters to wander the streets, seeing the sights. Some highlights are as follows:

- Elven bards sing for the crowd.
- Dwarven hammer players make music on tuned breastplates.
- Elven Illusionists create living tales of the Dwarven salvation and horror stories of the Warlord.
- Dwarven tumblers working with Elven acrobats.
- Melees
- Archery contests.
- Foods of every kind.

In addition, there are crafts from every Dwarven master, no matter how exclusive, priced as if by a journeymen (a great deal, but *very* hard to find something human sized before it's snatched up.) The Unwed Dwarven warriors have lined up for weeks to get these deals, and they're limited. However, if there are holes in the party's equipment that can be fixed with exquisite craftsmanship, this is the perfect time to let them get lucky.

A HIGH-FLYING ACT

When you are ready to move things forward, read or paraphrase the following:

As you move through the city, you see the most amazing thing happening above you. Four towers stand in corners around a central square. Each tower stands about fifty feet off the ground and as you move into the square, an Elf flies majestically off one tower and across the street. Only then do you see him land head first in a roll and bounce into the air, flipping and landing on his feet.

For a moment, you think there must be magic involved, then you see another Elf running across a tower. At the last moment he jumps, landing in a crouch at the very edge, and springs into the air. Beneath him a pair of Dwarven legs thrust up, as if the Dwarf were lying on his back out of sight, helping to hurl the Elf in a gentle arc across a second street.

You are just warming up to the performance when a third Elven acrobat launches off another Dwarven thrower. The crowd gasps as they realize that this acrobat is trying to jump diagonally across the square.

You don't need to see the look on his face to know something is wrong.

The tumbler intended to jump diagonally, but he slipped at the last moment and doesn't have enough lift to carry him across. The characters can try to use magic to save him. If the Elf hits the tower gently, he can climb up to a window himself. If not, the Elf shatters his shoulder but catches, although he can only hold on for ten rounds. He's five feet below a window, thirty feet off the ground.

It's a Climbing Check (DC 20) to scale the outside of the tower. It's a one-hundred-fifty-foot run to climb to the inside to the window. The Elf will need to have someone else supporting his entire weight when his ten rounds expire. Otherwise, he falls to the ground.

Dramatic Purpose

This should be an easy encounter. It's meant to give the characters time to bask a little.

RENEWED CELEBRATION

If the party saves the acrobat, read or paraphrase the following:

A cheer goes up in the crowd and Dwarves heave you onto their shoulders. Elves cheer and dance around you as the Dwarves carry you forward with a step and a bit of a jig.

They carry you into a street where Dwarves play the most amazing hammer music you've heard since the day began. Moving down the street, you can see Elven dancers leaping and flipping into the air.

The performers don't seem to know what's going on but they don't need to. The Dwarves toss you into the dancers who whisk you into their dance even as two hammer players pound away on perfectly tuned breastplates.

Allow the player to roleplay (or at least say) how long they dance. After they seem satisfied, give them one last chance to take care of business at the festival. Things are about to get out of control.

Act One One

Dramatic Purpose

This scene allows characters to revel in their success. Since character successes usually happen at the end of an adventure, they're often glossed over. Here the players get to revel in the adulation for a bit.

A FRIEND RETURNS

Give them one last chance to take care of any final business at the festival. When you are satisfied they are done, read or paraphrase the following:

You are moving through the crowds of celebrating Elves and Dwarves when you see a familiar face pushing through the crowd. He's tall and good looking with dark, wavy hair.

"Thank God I've found you," he shouts when he's near.

The man is Lanie, a priest working for Cardinal Gleann of Belm. If the characters have worked with him before, they will recognize him immediately. If not, he'll introduce himself and explain that he's one of the Cardinal's agents abroad, and the closest one to the nearby fortress in Uzarâg. The Cardinal had a vision that Morthorn, after his defeat in *On Corrupted Ground*, is about to come back through a gate into the Mortal Realm. If the characters played *On Corrupted Ground*, they've probably seen the gate, a closet to Hell as it were.

Either way, Lanie briefs them as completely as possible.

Whether Morthorn was killed by the Warlord, enough time has passed for him to reenter the Mortal Realm. The easiest path back in is one of the Uzarâg gates, and Morthorn is familiar with these. The Warlord can't guard more than one gate personally and so it's a simple matter for Morthorn to enter through an Uzarâg gate and simply walk out of the country.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene gives the characters their quest. It also briefs them on the back story, should they be new to the campaign.

NO TIME, BOOM

Before they can do more than process this information, read or Paraphrase the following:

Just then a tremendous blast of flame rises into the air to the south. For a moment, everyone just stares, then, as one, they rush toward the flames.

The Elves and Dwarves charge forward. The party should probably follow. The fire is coming from south of the city.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a connective scene. It moves the plot forward onto the next encounter. It also gives the characters impetus to move.

THE RANCH

When the party follows, read or paraphrase the following:

It takes several minutes to run to the fire. When you get there, you find a ranch, roaring in flames. Great greasy columns of smoke rise into the air. Charred bodies litter the ground, looking as if they tried to crawl to safety. The shattered remains of two barrels seem to be the main source of the fire.

The corral has been smashed open on one side. The horses are missing.

Morthorn is making good time. He has chosen to arrive on this side of the gate in a man-sized form but the level of destruction is so great that the party should have no question that this relates to Lanie's vision. He has ten of the fastest Elven horses, so he can move from one to another as they tire. If the party wants to follow, they will need to follow on the

Act One

ground, so as not to lose the trail. If they use magic to move ahead, they lose the trail, but they might be able to guess they'll meet him at Rolob. After that, following might be their only recourse.

Of course if they find him, they might have to fight him, and that is almost certain death. It takes a Survival Check (for tracking, DC 5) to follow Morthorn.

Note: We said above that the party should be able to connect this event with Morthorn. What happens if they don't or if they suspect a trap? Well, this is the fastest-paced section of the adventure and you don't want it to bog down. Give them the clues they need to feel certain of the situation. A great tracker might identify Morthorn's prints, if the characters met him in the last adventure (even though they are

the wrong size now). If he shield-bashed some of the dead bodies, that would leave a very distinctive pattern from the spikes on his shield. Finally, as a last resort, there could be a surviving witness. Just make sure that all you are doing is providing the party with information and not railroading. If they come to the right conclusions and they still want to stand around and debate, let them. You're just making certain their decisions are informed ones.



Act One

Dramatic Purpose

This is another connective scene. It moves the plot forward onto the next encounter.

BEASTMEN

Morthorn brought Beastmen with him out of Uzarâg. He turns them loose when he's halfway to the southern pass out of the Elven-Dwarven Alliance. If the party is following at this point, read or paraphrase the following:

As you move through the woods, you hear a crashing sound ahead of you. At first you don't see anything at all, then you catch a glimpse of mottled light on fur, flickering with speed.

They come at you through the underbrush, humanoid beasts on all fours, growling and snarling as they charge, frothing at the mouth.

There are three Beastmen for every party member.

Beastmen: warrior 1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grp +1/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d4+3, claw); Full Atk +4/+4 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws); SA –; SQ Infernal Taint, Low-Light Vision, Run on All Fours, Scent; SV Fort +4, Ref+0, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +5; Alertness.

Possessions: None.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straightforward fight. It's meant to stretch the characters' abilities.

A PARTING

If the party follows Morthorn, when they reach the southern pass (about twelve hours after leaving town), read or paraphrase the following:

You reach the beginning of the pass south out of the Alliance. A small Dwarven fort sits on either side of the pass, manned by Elven archers. Your Elven escort pulls up at the edge of the woods.

"We aren't welcome in Köhler," the leader says. "It would be better if you went on alone. We can't send an armed force into foreign lands."

If the party teleports here, they won't have much of a battle. Morthorn rides straight through. There aren't any calvary here to force him to fight.

Dramatic Purpose

This is either a connective scene or a completely overwhelming fight. Luckily for the party, Morthorn couldn't care less about them. He'll hack through them as quickly as possible.

ROLOB

If the party uses magic to get to Rolob ahead of Morthorn, read or Paraphrase the following:

Rolob is small as cities go, maybe two thousand souls crammed into a few dozen acres. The city isn't fortified but a large fortress stands to one side, the men on the defenses positioned to guard against invasion from the Elven-Dwarven Alliance.

The city seems peaceful, abuzz with commerce and life. A calvary contingent rides out from the front gate, but they stand down when they see you aren't a full band of Elves and Dwarves.

The Humans will take anything the party has to say seriously. They are used to the idea of nasty things coming out of the Ulcer, even though they rarely make it this far.

If Morthorn comes out of the pass while the PCs are here, there's likely to be a fight unless the PCs stop it and there's no one stationed here talented enough to kill the Duke of Hell. It will be a slaughter, which you should describe in great detail.

If the party comes after Morthorn has moved through, they find a different sight:

Act One

This tiny city looks untouched and whole. The fortress looks untouched as well, except for a fan of bodies from the front gate toward the pass, all soldiers, all cut down by a blade.

On closer inspection, the city is undamaged, but the citizens seem another matter. They wander around in a daze, children crying, adults in shock. By the road into town, an old man screams hysterically, over and again. The screams are the only sound you can hear in the eerie silence.

The fortress sent a unit out to meet Morthorn, seeing a single rider dashing with ten horses. The battle escalated and now only eleven troops remain alive. The rest of the city has decided this is some sort of sign for the apocalypse. Morthorn is so evil and the Splinter is so powerful that many who look on Morthorn have visions of Hell.

Dramatic Purpose

This is either a connective scene or a completely overwhelming fight. Luckily for the party, Morthorn couldn't care less about them. He'll hack through them as quickly as possible. Either way, it sets mood and shows the stakes.

ELGEN

If the party pushes hard and they have horses, they can make it to the town of Elgen the same day. If not, they have to push hard to make it there in two days. It only takes a Survival Check (DC 5) to keep the trail the entire time. When they arrive read or paraphrase the following:

Morthorn is definitely more concerned with speed than his spoor. He leaves a huge trail as his ten horses eat up the land, but the trail gets older with every hour. One man with ten good horses is just too fast.

The sun is long since setting by the time you arrive at the town of Elgen. This place is only a bit larger than Rolob, but there is no evidence of warfare here, no bodies, no calvary-torn earth. The town seems almost peaceful.

There is one strange thing. As you approach you can see a group of citizens fanning north out of the city. Mostly women, they seem to be looking for someone, their voices calling thinly on the wind.

The women are looking for a group of children who disappeared. It's up to the party whether they want to help, but they have to camp soon anyway if they don't want to risk losing the trail.

Morthorn didn't fight here. There was no force sent out to meet him. A lone rider with ten horses was little more than a curiosity.

It's a Survival Check (for tracking, DC 18) to find the children. If the party follows, they locate them in a cave. When they enter, read or paraphrase the following:

As you mount the slope to the cave, you can hear a pathetic mewling sound. Moving more quickly, you crest the lip and hear a scrambling inside. As your eyes adjust, you see a pitiful sight.

Nine children cower in the back of the cave, weeping and sucking their thumbs, although they're far too old for the latter. They panic and squeal when they see you, all scrambling to hide behind a bundle of tattered cloth and bone. It takes you a moment to recognize the thing:

It's a dead body.

The kids looked on Morthorn as he rode by and saw visions of the death of this mage, who was attacked unawares by a bear. Terrified by the gruesome sight they were driven here as they tried to flee the vision.

The body has a magic item.

Bracers of Spell Targeting: This item grants the wearer a +4 bonus to attack rolls for any spell requiring such a roll (usually ray spells).

Dramatic Purpose

This is another connective scene. It moves the plot forward onto the next encounter. It also rewards the characters for a good deed.

Act One

INTO THE WOODS

It takes until noon of the next day to arrive at the edge of Benzel Forest. When they arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

Benzel Forest looms in front of you as you ride. Morthorn's path leads straight inside and as you ride, the trees bend inward as if permanently leaning into Morthorn's wake.

The woods have been twisted by the Duke's passage. Morthorn, carrying the Splinter, is just a little too much to leave reality untouched. Worse, Morthorn has used the Ulcer here to slow the party down. That night (only a fool rides in the woods at night) the following happens:

The trees sway and move in the night, moving to a wind you can't feel, can't hear. In the distance you hear a howling as the fingers of the trees scratch and claw at the limitless black sky.

The wood is turning into an Ulcer. This is the first sign. It's taking longer than usual because there's little evil here for the Ulcer to attach to. It's being forced to corrupt as it grows, creating its own evil.

Later that night the lookout might see glowing eyes in the night (we suggest allowing the guard a Spot Check (DC 27)). If they don't see the eyes, the party will be caught off guard five rounds later when the beasts attack. There are three times as many wolves as party members.

Ulcer Wolves: CR 1, Medium animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1; Track, Weapon Focus (bite)

Possessions: None.

Killing the wolves ends this proto-Ulcer and the trees return to normal.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene can either be very difficult or merely challenging, depending on how much damage the wolves do before the party rallies.

THE RIVER

If they are riding, the party should arrive at the Frast River on the third day after leaving Elgen, assuming they continue following the trail. When they arrive, in the late afternoon likely, read or paraphrase the following:

The River Frast is still wide and slow at this point. You aren't certain how deep it is, but you suspect that barges reach this far north. Morthorn's trail plows right into it.

The party will need to travel downstream two hours to find a ferry or up one hour to find a ford. Otherwise, it will take a Ride or Handle Animal check (DC 25) to coax the horses into swimming across. Hopefully the characters can come up with some magical way of getting all their gear across. This is a challenge of a more mundane nature. It's meant to give the characters a logistical challenge, rather than a combat one.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a challenge of a more mundane nature. It's meant to give the characters a logistical challenge, rather than a combat one.

ARRIVAL AT INVILL

That night, read or paraphrase the following:

While you sleep that night, you all have the same, terrible dream:

You dream of a village, drenched in a rain of tears. Into this village strides Morthorn, the tears steaming off his armor. The people of the village don't seem to notice him, merely drudge along with their heads bowed. Morthorn looks at them, smiles evilly, and then looks over his shoulder, an impatient expres-

Act One

sion on his face. Then he holds up the Splinter and you see a great wave of darkness flow outward.

The village withers. The people wail in torment. Morthorn turns back to look the way he came and his eyes meet yours. He salutes, then turns and continues on his way.

"They're all going to die," he says as he leaves.

The party can make of this what they will, but the truth is that Morthorn knows they pursue him, and he wants them to lose the trail. He therefore starts an Ulcer at the village of Invill. He did this at least twenty-four hours ago (depending on the speed of the party, it could be much more).

They will arrive at Invill early the next morning. Read or paraphrase the following:

As you move forward, you can see a strange discoloration in the grass. The closer you get, the clearer you can make it out and as you ride within fifty feet you can tell the grass withers and dies before your eyes. The Ulcer, it has to be an Ulcer, is growing. It's growing and already it's big. There's no telling how big it will be before it stops.

If the players want to turn around or skirt it, let them. Make sure they realize the size makes following

Morthorn practical only if they ride straight through the Ulcer. It will be almost impossible to pick out the trail on the other side if Morthorn has done this to lose them. If they *still* ignore it, move on to the next adventure in this series or one of the Adventure Seeds once they've lost the trail (which is an absolute certainty, given the area they need to search).

If the party steps inside, they merge with the nightmare of Invill. They cannot escape until it has ended.

This is very crucial. Do *nothing* to make the party feel like you want them to enter. Give them the facts, but express no opinion of what they should do. If one enters, clarify what he says so you are absolutely sure he intended to step inside. Once inside, an invisible force keeps him from exiting. If the players were to find this out after thinking you'd forced them to enter, they'll feel railroaded. If they enter, fine, but if they don't want to, don't force the matter. Better they skip the entire adventure than feel railroaded.

Dramatic Purpose

This is another connective scene. It moves the plot forward onto the next encounter. It's also the moment of truth, when the characters decide whether to enter Invill and the nightmare.



Act Two Two

Act Two

Act Two begins the moment the characters enter Invill. This act contains everything that happens from when the characters start their adventures in the nightmare until they enter the Demon Grove. Most of the adventure will probably take place here in this act.

Dramatic Purpose

Act Two is the confrontation of the story. It's also been called the "blue collar work" of storytelling. In Act Two we cover all the meat of the adventure, everything that happens from the actual adventure beginning until the climax. Act Two should start with a complication, early on, to make matters worse than the characters initially thought. Typically, there's an Act Two twist at about the halfway point. This carries the story in a new direction. Act Two usually ends with a disaster or a revelation, the purpose of which is to destroy the character's carefully laid plans and take things to the edge of despair.

THE VILLAGE OF INVILL

The village of Invill was a quiet, humble place. Now it's a nightmare of horrified memories and Demon intruders. To exit the village, the characters will have to destroy the heart of the Demon Grove. To do that, they will have to find Cedion and convince him to do the right thing. Only then will the heart of the Ulcer open for them.

There is a *hard* way. If the characters mess things up too badly, they *can* destroy the Ulcer by killing every bit of evil inside. This includes the Chorus, who's on a redemption path and won't count against the Ulcer if the party lets him take things to their conclusion. This means killing many Demons, and the GM will have to decide just how many and then add encounters to fight them, but it might be their only hope if they do something such as accidentally kill Cedion. If they *do* accidentally kill Cedion, the Demon Grove opens for them.

History

Invill is an average village with an absentee lord. The villagers have made their way in the past grinding away at their crops and their jobs. The lord came once a year to train villagers and collect his portion of the taxes. His bailiff managed the place in his stead. Everything was essentially peaceful.

And then last fall they began having problems with rustlers. This intensified until villagers died. Finally, the rustlers were killed or routed.

But there is a more personal tragedy wrapped up in the Ulcer.

The Tragedy

The rustlers were the primary focus of the village through the fall. Villagers died trying to catch them, and a young lover named Cedion set himself to solving the mystery. Unfortunately, the head of the rustlers was the father of Cedion's love, a woman named Tannith. When things intensified, Tannith discovered her father was behind the crimes. She confronted him, his men moved to kill her, and he captured her instead.

A group of villagers, now alerted to the rustlers' location, attacked their camp and were slaughtered. Cedion, too afraid to continue, stayed behind. Finally, after a second group was slaughtered, he screwed up his courage and managed to break up the rustlers and rescue his love in an ambush.

Only after that did they discover she was dying of cancer.

As Morthorn created the Ulcer, Cedion lay ridden with guilt. His love's mother laid out her funeral dress, and he clutched the necklace he'd intended to give her when he asked for her hand in marriage. Into the middle of all this pain came the power of the Splinter.

Now the Ulcer sits without a powerful evil in control. Demons compete for this right, but none have been able to claim it. The one who finally drives Cedion mad will likely control the Ulcer.

The PCs must put a stop to this. Only they can figure this tragedy out and set things right. Otherwise, the Knights Lonnuso will come.

And kill them all.

Act Two

Possession

The characters in the memories will essentially be possessing the bodies of the villagers involved in that memory, and in turn, the memory of the villager possesses the character, replacing all their stats and skills. This is involuntary. During the possession, the character is aware that something is wrong, and he can access his own basic memories, but not his skills, even the knowledge-based ones. The character appears to be the villager in every detail.

Essentially, print or copy versions of the templates at the end of this adventure. If you have more than six players, print a second set. Then at the beginning of every memory, shuffle one of each template and if necessary random extra copies so you have enough for your entire group. Then hand them out randomly to the players to determine which villagers they will play. Tell each player what character from their template they are, as determined by the cast list for the encounter. If you have more than six players, assign

the identities to the duplicate as you feel proper for the scene. For instance, if you had seven players and you randomly drew an extra brawler for the shuffle, then one player would play the beadle and another the blacksmith, even though only one of them was present according to the adventure.

Breaking the Possession

To break the possession, the character can do one of two things. First they can break the possession with a feat of will, taking a full round to try to resist. Resolve this with a DC 25 Will save. If they fail, they may not attempt again until the next dramatic moment, as determined by the GM. Alternately, if the body of the person in the nightmare is killed or knocked unconscious, the possession ends as well.

When the possession ends, the body in the nightmare vanishes and the player character's body replaces it, in the same condition it was in upon entering the memory (in other words, damage taken



Act Two

by the possessed body vanishes). Other player characters can then see the character as they really are and all their abilities, skills, and equipment return to normal.

After the players get use to this effect, they may start purposely killing their villager personae to get free. This is expected. They might even use the villager personae as a type of armor, letting them absorb hits at the beginning of the fight. Don't discourage clever tactics. Some of these fights can become *very* hard.

Dramatis Personae

There are many players in this tragedy. As the story continues the player characters will take the roles of one or more of them. Here is a list of those involved, and if they are people the player characters will possess, the template the player will use as a character sheet.

Note: *Normally in an OGL game a template is added to a character, altering their abilities. The templates in this adventure completely replace a character. Essentially, it becomes the new character sheet for the duration. If the character has any normal templates, they are unaffected when the player is using his own character sheet, but they are suppressed along with the character's other statistics when an adventure template is in use.*

Cedion Ervin **No Template**

Cedion is our hero, or perhaps our tragic icon, in this little play. He is the male lead, a young man full of love and idealistic hope. It's hard when you learn the world isn't what you thought it is, and that none of your dreams will come true.

Tannith Merin **No Template**

Tannith is the object of Cedion's affection, the tragedy, and our female lead. Cedion has rescued her, only to watch her waste away over the winter in an agonizing death.

The Chorus **No Template**

Secretly Tannith's father, the Chorus is the only living person wandering the village in the "real

world." Cursed by his sins, he trips in and out of the nightmare, reliving his crimes over and again.

Ceffona Kenwyn **Educated Template**

Ceffona is one of the most educated people in the village, no small feat for a peasant in Gaerydd. She is notable because she recently brought in a large brew of ale. This makes her home the village tavern.

Davyn Abrin **Naive Template**

A small boy, Davyn is an orphan more or less adopted by all the village. He has managed to get himself into the center of many of these events.

Dondan Pabron **High Template**

Dondan is the bailiff of the manor and, therefore, the de facto lord of this village, not that this means a lot in Gaerydd, where the village priest is the real ruler. As the representative of the lord, and therefore the village's military such as it is, he finds himself greatly concerned with these events.

Ergan Teren **Burnout Template**

Ergan is the town drunk. He manages to drift from event to event throughout this story.

Gertherd Ervin **Burnout Template**

Cedion's mother, Gertherd is an old, used-up woman. Even through her exhaustion, she's managed to watch over her son.

Gwirvin Dodwyn **Burnout Template**

Gwirvin is the village amputee, missing one arm. He aches to help during these events but feels helpless.

Lleyn Clolyn **Brawler Template**

Lleyn is the village blacksmith. As such, he's one of the fittest and most dangerous men in the village. Either him or the beadle manages to get near all these events.

Maeros Aelys **Educated Template**

The village priest, Maeros, watches over these events. And they need his guidance. As the priest in a theocracy, Maeros is the real power in the village, the lord being in charge of nothing more than military matters.

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Melian Pethwain

The beadle is the lawman of the village, also known as the hayward. Melian's primary job is to make sure the village sheep made it into the church pen every night.

Mirgwyr Mandyn

Mirgwyr is the village snoop. She has made a life out of making other people's business her own.

Perneth Ferin

Perneth is a young girl, just barely of marrying age. She is attracted to the danger and the mystery of these events, the romanticism of it all.

Tein Amleun

Tein is the reeve of the town, meaning that he shares authority with the beadle. However, his duties tend to be more in running the village than enforcing the laws.

Tewyn Merin

Tewyn is Tannith's brother. He has as much at stake as anyone in stopping the rustlers, but because of his stealth skills, he thinks that he can solve this mystery single-handedly.

Language

The magic of this Ulcer transcends the language barrier. Every player character or villager believes everyone is speaking his native language.

Escaping the Nightmare

When in a memory, the characters might try to just walk off the playing field, so to speak. Unfortunately, they can't. Each memory is a little pocket world, a mini-Ulcer that contains only the land necessary for the memory. If a character tries to leave this area, he will find himself disoriented, reentering from a random direction. The only way to exit a memory is to fulfill its exit criteria.

Where Are the People?

The only real person the characters can meet, until they find Cedion in his own nightmare, is the Chorus. This might lead some GMs to wonder where the people are.

Brawler Template

Sneak Template

Naive Template

High Template

Sneak Template

There are hundreds of memories taking place at once, and many of the villagers are trapped in their own individual nightmares. Others died assaulting the rustlers. Only the Chorus and the player characters have the ability to move from memory to memory because they are outsiders. The only real people they will encounter in the memories are the Chorus and Cedion.

Location-Based Encounters

Location-based encounters are memories the player characters enter when they step into a house. The character is then transported into a mini-Ulcer, formed of a memory.

In these encounters, the characters investigate the same mystery Cedion himself investigated. These can be done in any order. Keep track of how many location-based events you've done. The events are based on how far they've gotten.

Event-Based Encounters

Event-based encounters are time triggered. Whenever the characters exit a location, check to see if they are due for an event (see Events, below). If so, run the event before they make it back into the "real world."

In these events, the characters unravel the current mystery, the mystery that led to Tannith on her deathbed. They always take place in the predefined order.

The Real Order (of Events)

A GM might find it useful to read through these encounters in chronological order. The order is as follows:

Location 1: The Rustlers First Kill

Location 3: The Rustler's Red Herring

Location 5: Shepherd Implies Cedion is a Rustler

Location 4: The Rustlers Murder Village Children

Location 2: The Villagers Beat Cedion Because They Suspect He's Involved

Location 7: Cedion Tracks the Rustlers

Location 9: Cedion Recognizes the Lead Rustler

Location 10: Tannith Discovers her Father is the Lead Rustler.

Location 11: Tannith's Father Takes Her Hostage

Act Two

Event 2: Cedion Fails to Follow Rescuers into the Rustlers' Grove.

Event 7, Vision 1: The First Group is Slaughtered

Event 5: The Second Group Finds Cedion

Event 7, Vision 2: The Second Group Continues without Cedion

Event 7, Vision 3: The Second Group Dies

Event 6: Cedion Decides to Go Back Inside the Grove.

Event 7, Vision 4: Tannith's Father Orders Her Death

Event 7, Vision 5: Cedion Kills Everyone But Tannith's Father. They Square Off.

Event 7, Vision 6: Cedion Carries Tannith From the Grove

Event 7, Vision 7: The Village Heals

Event 7, Vision 8: A New Priest Tells Cedion Tannith Has Cancer

Event 1: Cedion Is Told There Is No Hope

Event 7, Vision 9: Tannith Curses Cedion for Letting Her Live.

Event 3: Cedion Attempts Suicide by Witch-Hunter

Event 4: Tannith's Deathbed

Exit Conditions

Each memory, whether a location-based or event-based encounter, has exit conditions. When the characters meet these conditions, the memory ends and the characters might either move on to an event encounter or they appear back in the "real world" of the Ulcer. This is the only way to get out of one

of these memories, and this is the reason Cedion is trapped.

The Village

The village itself is a series of keyed encounters (meaning they are numbered and attached to numbered descriptions in this act) and a few unkeyed locations. See the unkeyed locations first. Only the keyed encounters count against the event clock. The characters may visit as many unkeyed locations as they like, as often as they like.

Ruined Building

This is a large ruined building in the center of the village. When the characters enter this building, read or paraphrase the following:

This building sits in ruins, the woven sticks of the wattle shattered, great chunks of mud lying in piles. Pushing through the freestanding doorway, you find yourself standing amid piles of rubble and broken furniture, the sky hungry and yawning above you.

Nothing happens at this location.

Empty Buildings

There are empty buildings in the village (the standing buildings without an encounter number). When the characters enter one of these buildings, read or paraphrase the following:

Wrapping Your Head Around it All

This adventure can be confusing. Basically, it boils down to this:

When the characters enter a building, shuffle the templates and hand them out. The players use those character sheets until the possession or the memory ends. We've boiled all the characters down to these six templates for ease of play. Some are much more powerful than others, so shuffle well.

Go straight into the location-based memory. When they exit, check to see if there's an event due. If so, shuffle the templates and hand them out again. Go straight into the event without returning to the present.

When they finish the event, send them back out into the "real world."

Read through the encounters in their real order once, so *you* understand what's going on. The characters in the memory aren't real people, though. Don't let them answer the player's questions substantively. They can discuss the events of the memory itself, but they'll change the subject if the players ask about the past or the nature of the Ulcer in general. The exceptions are the Chorus and Cedion, and only when outlined in the adventure.

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This building stands cold and silent. As you step through the front door, you find only rotting rushes, dull echoes and dust drifting in shapes that vaguely resemble human forms.

Nothing unusual happens in these locations.

Graveyard

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Weathered crosses and marking stones stand in uneven rows here, the names scratched into them, most of them crudely, as if with a knife. You can hear whispering as you stand here, the voices of a dozen, a hundred restless dead.

There is no threat of ghosts here. Mood is all this location has to offer.

The Rustler's Grove (Off Map)

If the characters take the time to track this down, and they somehow find it, read or paraphrase the following:

This deserted grove of trees shows signs of past habitation. Old fires, discarded clothing, pieces of junk and old bones litter the ground. It looks like it hasn't been occupied in some time.

There is nothing of note here. This place is long-since abandoned.

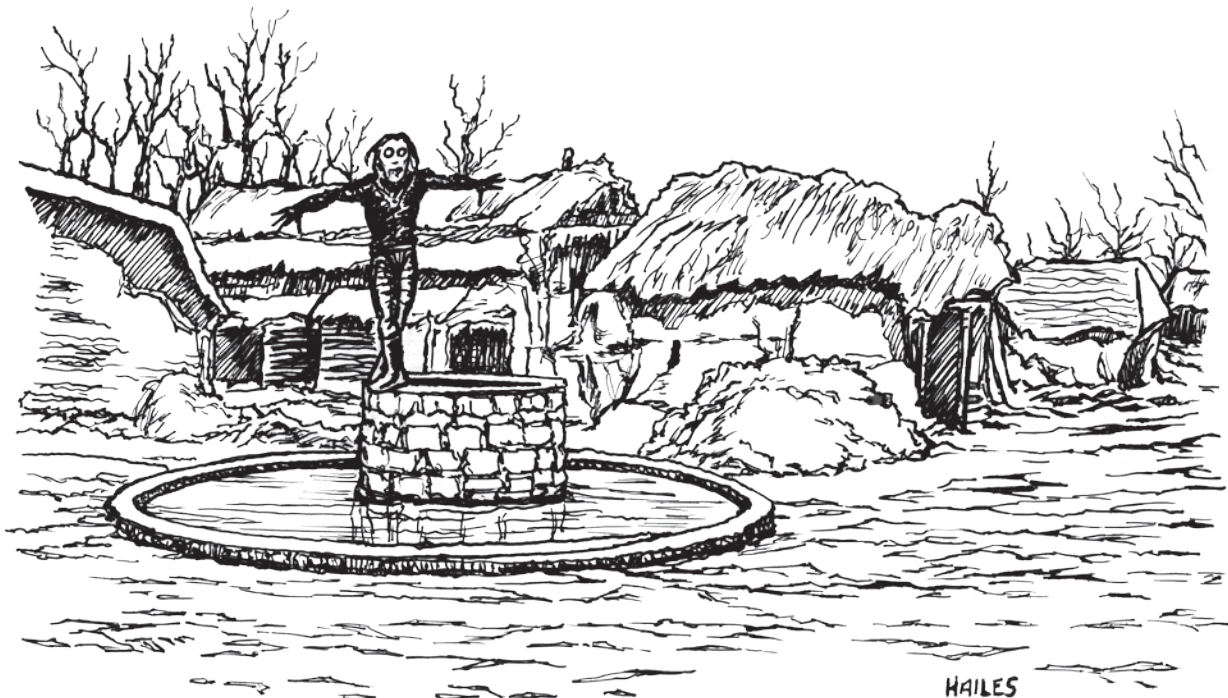
1) Entering the village

When the characters first enter the village, read or paraphrase the following:

You walk across wasted fields, the winds blowing ruined topsoil across your face. Ahead, you see the ramshackle remains of wattle and daub buildings, the windows empty, the walls sagging. The thatch has blown from many of the roofs, strewn road.

Ahead, you see a man standing on the lip of the well, slowly walking around and around and around, arms out like a tightrope walker. He looks up and sees you, his eyes hollow, his clothes tattered. His teeth are yellowed and rotting.

"Welcome!" he wheezes. "To Hell."



Act Two

This is the Chorus. When the party asks him anything, read or paraphrase the following:

The man cackles. "I can't tell you. I can't, but it will show you. It will it will it will." You feel a tingling and your vision starts to darken. "Oh God!" he screams. "Not now. Not again!"

Then everything spins, and you are suddenly sick to your stomach. The world dissolves away around you and for a moment you see cavorting Demons, their hides slick with slime, their mouths grinning and full of needle fangs.

Then you are standing in a village tavern, a house that happens to be selling beer. Rushes rot on the floor and a fire in the middle of the room makes the entire place smoky and dark. You hold drinks.

But you aren't yourselves.

Before you have time to do more than process what has happened, a man bursts in the door. "Beadle!" he says. "It's happened again."

Shuffle the templates and hand them out to the players. Tell them that these will be their characters until further notice. Compare the cast list below to the templates the players hold and tell them which villager they're playing. Let them know they have their own sense of identity and basic memories of their player character, but not their skills. Make sure the beadle is one of the characters.

Then continue to *What Happens in the Memory*.

Cast

Cedion Ervin
Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template
Davyn Abrin — Naive Template
Ergan Teren — Burnout Template
Maeros Aelys — Educated Template
Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template
Tein Amleun — High Template
The Chorus

What Really Happened

This was the first time the rustlers killed a shepherd to get his sheep. They carefully scouted out all the fields, but no sheep had strayed this day. One of the shepherds had, however. A rustler killed the twelve-

year-old with a sling stone. Then they fell on the fold. Excited and frightened from this kill, they grabbed three sheep and carried them bodily away.

Another shepherd found the body and screamed for help. Soon, the entire tavern had emptied to see the corpse. It was this day that they realized their troubles went beyond a few errant animals. This was the day everything changed for Invill.

What Happens in the Memory

The characters likely follow the nameless villager (a bit player, no one of note) out to the fields, the village is whole and perfect now, no sign of the Ulcer. There they find a boy, a shepherd no doubt, dead from a head wound. Let the players roleplay this out. If they investigate the body, Knowledge (Arcana) checks (DC 15) (to examine the dead body) will show the boy was killed by a sling. The rustlers carried three sheep out over a rocky waste to the south to escape. It's bordered by a stream. They could be anywhere. All trails end there.

Exiting this Memory

To exit, the characters must pick up the body of the boy and carry him to the village. If the party does this, the Chorus will caper and praise them for letting him out. Make sure that's clear. If they don't, read or paraphrase the following:

The ragged man from the well capers and shouts after a while. "We have to get out!" he says, his voice tinged with madness. "It won't let us out until we end it! It has to end just like before!"

He then runs back to the site of the killing, gesturing for you to follow. When he gets to the boy, he picks him up and solemnly carries him back toward the village.

Everything swirls into darkness and suddenly you find yourself back into the wasted version of the village. The sky is bruised and swollen above you. The ragged man laughs and screams and crawls back up onto the well, sobbing.

As soon as this happens, launch immediately into Event 1. This is the only time the characters see the "real world" between location and event memories.

Act Two

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to teach the players the main rules of this nightmare. While they likely have yet to learn how to shed the body and skills of the villager they play, here they learn there are exit conditions necessary to escape back to the “real world” of the Ulcer.

2) The First Building

When the party enters this location, read or paraphrase the following:

You step through the door of a rather intact house, past the husks of dead flowers and rotting melons. As you move inside, you enter a place of light and warmth. It appears to be the tavern, the same tavern you were in before. A table along one side serves as a bar. It seems much of the village population is here.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they’re playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin
Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template
Davyn Abrin — Naive Template
Ergan Teren — Burnout Template
Lleyn Clolyn — Brawler Template
Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template
Tein Amleun — High Template

What Really Happened

As the trouble with the rustlers escalated, people in the village began to realize that Cedion had lost none of his own sheep. Suspicious, they harbored resentment. Finally, violence erupted one night in the tavern. Lleyn and some of the others tried to help Cedion, and might have saved his life that night. As it was, he escaped with nothing more than a quick beating.

What Happens in the Memory

Cedion walks in after a bit and a couple of tavern toughs start pushing him around. The fight escalates and it seems like they’re likely to beat him to death. If the party doesn’t intervene, that is nearly what happens. No one tells the party *why* they want to kill Cedion. There’s one attacking patron for every party member.

Tavern Patrons: human commoner 3; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 3d4+3; hp 13; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +1/+3; Atk +4 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+2, unarmed strike); SA —; SQ —; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10. Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +5, Jump +6, Listen +1, Spot +2; Athletic, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Unarmed Strike).

Possessions: None.

Exiting the Memory

Cedion goes down right at the beginning of the fight (on purpose . . . he doesn’t want to fight back). The scene ends when someone helps him up and out of the tavern.

Check to see if it’s time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This fight is probably not that challenging to the party, though the exit condition may be. This scene mainly shows the characters the violence of the situation, and gives them their first red herring.

3) The Clean House

When the characters enter this home, read or paraphrase the following:

The home is immaculate, even in death. There is no dust, the shutters in the windows hang at perfect angles, the pebbles leading to the front door are carefully raked. Even the withered flowers have fallen in neat little rows.

Act Two

As you move through the door, you step out the other side into a clean, bright street. Looking around you seem to be in the same village, but on the other side, standing before the large manor house of the lord.

A man teeters on top of the building, swaying precariously at the edge. He has short hair and a muscular build, maybe a little fat for a peasant. A look of despair colors his face. His eyes are closed. He looks like he is going to jump.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin

Tannith Merin

Davyn Abrin — Naive Template

Dondan Pabron — High Template

Gertherd Ervin — Burnout Template

Maeros Aelys — Educated Template

Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template

Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

The Chorus

What Really Happened

Tannith's father was the head of the rustlers. He was careful to take more sheep from himself than anyone else. The irony is that he protected Cedion, casting doubt on him.

At this point, however, the rustler is putting on a show. Claiming to be destitute, he climbed onto the lord's manor with the stated intention of ending it all. Tannith, taken in, begged him to come down. He refused, stating he was ruined. Eventually enough people gathered to guarantee the image of his "suicide attempt" would stick in their heads. Only then did he allow the others to talk him down.

What Happens in the Memory

The rustler threatens to jump because he's destitute. Tannith screams frantically for him to come down, but he insists that he's been hit harder than anyone else by the rustlers. The Chorus watches on, unseen

by all but the party. He chants "jump, jump, jump!" over and again.

It's a DC 20 Climbing Check to climb up to the roof with him. He has no intention of jumping, and if the party tries to talk him down, they will succeed. If the party knows the truth about the rustling and try to expose him, the Chorus screams in panic, telling them that if it doesn't end right, they'll be trapped in the memory forever.

Exiting the Memory

When he comes down safely, the party exits.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight roleplaying encounter that has no real risk, but the characters likely don't know that. If so, it allows them to feel like they've saved a life, and gives them another red herring. If they know the truth already because they've entered this location near the end, then it plays as a bitter ruse and shows some of the sickness spewed on the village by this rustler.

4) The Burned-Out House

When the characters enter this location, read or paraphrase the following:

You move into the burned-out husk of a building, reeking of char and corrupt flesh. Your footsteps clear the soot off the pebbles of the walk, leaving brilliant white prints in your place.

As you step forward, you come out into a clearing next to a burbling stream. You are all gathered around a bit of rope hanging from a tree, the type that a child would run and catch, swinging out over the water.

One of you is about to take your turn on the rope when you hear a movement around the bend. You turn just in time to see a group of hard-looking men leading sheep into view. The leader signals the rest to stop. Then one by one they draw weapons.

Act Two

Do not shuffle and hand out templates. Hand out only the naive template, and tell the players that they are all playing children.

Cast

All children using the naive template.

What Really Happened

A group of children found a bit of rope and tied it to a tree by the stream, not knowing that they were positioning themselves in the path of the rustlers. The rustlers, out gathering sheep, didn't realize this until they were on their way home with the evidence. On finding the children, they decided there was nothing left to do. The children had seen too much. The rustlers killed them all.

What Happens in the Memory

The rustlers draw weapons and attack. When the children each die, the characters emerge in their normal form. As always, they can try to change earlier with a Will save. There's one rustler for every party member.

Rustlers: human commoner 5, warrior 2; CR 4; Medium humanoid; hp 40; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +4/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, club); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2,

club); SA —; SQ —; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Ride +2, Search +1, Spot +5, Swim +4, Use Rope +2; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (club).

Possessions: Club.

Exiting the Memory

This time the characters don't exit by recreating history. The horror of this event is so great, the character's own need for justice warps the reality of the Ulcer. The memory ends here when every rustler is dead.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the character's abilities just a bit and force them to expend their resources. Because of the nature of the murder, it's also meant to get them enraged.

5) The Wailing House

When the characters enter this location, read or paraphrase the following:

The sound of a dozen voices cry as you enter this house, rising and falling on the night air. They scream in pain, in terror, and in anguish.

As you step through the door, the darkness swirls around you and you appear in a field outside of town. You walk with Cedion as he leads his sheep back into the village.



Act Two

In the distance, you can see another shepherd doing the same.

Then you hear a whistling sound and the fellow in the distance goes down. You see men in the tree line.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin

Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template

Davyn Abrin — Naive Template

Gwirvin Dodwyn — Burnout Template

Lleyn Clolyn — Brawler Template

Tein Amleun — High Template

Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

What Really Happened

The rustler became emboldened after killing the first shepherd. They managed to make or steal bows and then prowled the edge of the woods. This day, they found a relatively isolated shepherd and shot him. Cedion and a few of the villagers stood within sight at the time. They attacked the rustlers and drove them off. They then tended to the shepherd's wounds.

What Happens in the Memory

There is one rustler for every party member. Conduct the fight normally.

Rustlers: human commoner 5, warrior 2; CR 4; Medium humanoid; hp 40; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +4/+6; Atk +5 missile (1d6/x3, short bow); Full Atk +5 missile (1d6/x3, short bow); SA —; SQ —; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Ride +2, Search +1, Spot +5, Swim +4, Use Rope +2; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Short bow.

After the battle, they will probably check on the wounded man. As they tend to his wound, he shouts at Cedion, asking why *he* hasn't lost any sheep.

Exiting the Memory

When they pull the arrow from the man's wound or break it off, the memory ends.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the character's abilities just a bit and force them to use their resources.

6) The Creaking House

When the characters enter this house, read or paraphrase the following:

This house sways gently in a wind you can't feel. You can hear the creaking of the branches of the wattle as it sways, back and forth, back and forth. Mud coating the walls cracks and flakes, sifting down to the ground in a fine powder.

As you step inside you find yourself back out on the street. Around you, through the alleys between the houses, step children, each of them with a major wound, a cracked skull here, a shattered arm there. They are dead, shuffling forward, their eyes burning with an all-too-personal hate.

Don't hand out templates this time. These might look like the children the characters possessed during the murder. They aren't.

Cast

The Party

What Really Happened

Nothing. These events stem out of the Demons' war to control the Ulcer.

What Happens in the Memory

The Ulcer is at war with itself as the Demons compete for control. The characters stand in the way now.

Act Two

The kids are Undead. They attack the party, one for every party member.

Undead Children: CR 5; Small undead; HD 9d12; hp 61; Init +1; Spd 20; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk/Grp +4/+1; Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, slam); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+1, slam); SA —; SQ Undead traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 12, Con —, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: None.

Exiting the “Memory”

The characters exit when they kill the Undead.

Check to see if it’s time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up challenging fight, perhaps *very* challenging. It’s meant to stretch the character’s abilities just a bit and force them to expend their resources.

7) The Ghostly House

When the characters enter this location, read or paraphrase the following:

This house is odd, ghostly. As you approach you can see through the vaguely transparent walls. Odd, otherworldly lights begin to flicker within.

As you step through the doorway, the lights swirl and flicker around you, breaking into a hundred ghostly images. When the lights clear, you are back in the tavern. People laugh and sing, drinking ale by the pint.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they’re playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin

Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template

Ergan Teren — Burnout Template

Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template

Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template

Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

Tein Amleun — High Template

What Really Happened

As the town drank, the rustlers struck, killing another villager. He managed to scream, and Cedion and a group of villagers arrived. The rustlers took too many sheep this time, though, and they left a trail on the edge of the stream. He tracked them until they paused for a break on the other side of a berm. Cedion looked over and saw that Tannith’s father led the rustlers.

What Happens in the Memory

The villagers drink with Cedion until they hear a scream in the night. They leave and follow and come to a field where the shepherd is dead and the sheep gone. It’s a Survival Check (for tracking, DC 18) to follow. They snake down the stream and this time the sheep leave enough of a trail to follow. When they get to the end, Cedion will climb up a berm and move a branch to look. He says, “Oh my God.”

Exiting the Memory

When the party looks over the berm, they come back without seeing.

Check to see if it’s time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up skill challenge. It should be easy enough for the party, although frustrating in the end. The frustration should pique the players’ interest, however. A little withholding information can be a good.

8) The Steaming House

When the characters enter this location, read or paraphrase the following:

Steam rises from this house as if every square inch is soaked in boiling water. As you step inside, the muggy interior swirls in a blast of hot fog and you find yourself back in the village tavern. Around you the villagers stare into their cups, the silence eerie.

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Then, one by one, they look up, their eyes hungry with hate.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

The Cast

Gwirvin Dodwyn — Burnout Template
Maeros Aelys — Educated Template
Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template
Perneth Ferin — Naive Template
Tein Amleun — High Template
Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

What Really Happened

This didn't happen.

What Happens in the Memory

The characters play their template characters, but other characters from the templates are also in the tavern. These are actually Demons of Deceit, one for each party member. They attack.

As noted above, this isn't a real memory, but an attempt of the Demons in the Ulcer to kill all the player characters. Luckily, only these few can manifest against the player characters now.

Galpharus, Demon of Deceit: CR 7; Large Outsider; HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +7; Spd 50; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk/Grp +7/+16; Atk +13 melee (2d6+5/19-20, greatsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+5/19-20, greatsword); SA Bane; SQ Damage reduction 10/good or cold iron, darkvision (90'), fast healing 5, immunities, infernal taint, low-light vision, outsider traits, resistance to air 10, acid 10, electricity 10, soul sense, spell resistance 18, tongues; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +16, Hide +9, Intimidate +14, Jump +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Search +12, Sense Motive +13, Spot +13; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword)

Possessions: Large longsword.

These Demons pour all their magical energy into vying for the Ulcer. Because of this, they have no spell-like abilities or fear effects. When they take damage, they change into their true form. The Demons appear to be the size of Humans due to the constraints of the dream, but for all game purposes, treat them as large.

Exiting the Memory

When the Demons are dead, the memory ends.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a difficult fight. It can be overwhelming if the Demons can secure an early tactical advantage.

9) The Creaking House

When the characters enter this house, read or paraphrase the following:

This house creaks and groans like a living thing. The entire structure seems to sway as you approach and once you enter, it becomes louder and louder until it turns into the sound of crickets, birds, wind in leaves.

You are in the woods, beyond the stream, lying against a berm. Your hand moves away the branches, and you see a group of rustlers with fifteen or so sheep. In the distance, you can just glimpse a man moving off into the woods.

"No, God," Cedion Says. "Not him."

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin
Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template
Ergan Teren — Burnout Template
Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template
Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template
Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

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Tein Amleun — High Template

What Really Happened

Cedion and a group of villagers arrived at the berm after tracking the rustlers. Cedion recognized the head of the rustlers and rushed off to tell Tannith. The rustlers attacked and drove off the remaining villagers.

What Happens in the Memory

The Rustlers attack. Cedion runs off, screaming that he has to tell her, has to warn her. The party will probably have to let him leave as they fight the rustlers. There is one rustler for every party member.

Rustlers: human commoner 5, warrior 2; CR 4; Medium humanoid; hp 40; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +4/+6; Atk +5 missile (1d6/x3, short bow); Full Atk +5 missile (1d6/x3, short bow); SA —; SQ —; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +2, Ride +2, Search +1, Spot +5, Swim +4, Use Rope +2; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Short bow.

Exiting the Memory

When the party continues forward, either following Cedion or tracking the man, the memory ends.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the character's abilities just a bit and force them to expend their resources. In addition, we withhold information again, further piquing the players' interest.

10) Silent House

When the party enters this location, read or paraphrase the following:

This house sits quietly. So quietly, in fact, that it seems to soak up all the sounds of your movement, leaving you jarringly without any echoes or background noise. As you step inside this silence surrounds you, chokes you, and for a moment you black out.

When your vision clears, you are walking back up out of the stream and to the village. In the distance, you can hear raised voices.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin

Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template

Ergan Teren — Burnout Template

Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template

Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template

Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

Tein Amleun — High Template

What Really Happened

Cedion returned to the village and told Tannith that he saw her father leading the group of rustlers. They argued and she demanded where. Cedion made the mistake of telling her and she ran off to confront him. Cedion tried to follow her but turned his ankle, and she got a lead on him. The villagers, returning, thought his injury was more pressing and stopped to help him, not realizing what Tannith planned.

What Happens in the Memory

As the characters approach, they hear snatches of conversation, such as "rustlers" and "your father" and a woman's voice screaming, "No!" As they come out through the buildings, they catch a glimpse of motion as Tannith runs back the way they came, dodging between two other buildings. Cedion runs to chase her but he turns his ankle in a hole and collapses with a cry.

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Exiting the Memory

When the party stops and inquires after Cedion's condition, the memory ends.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene is the Act Two Twist of the past mystery. Here, the characters discover that Tannith's father was really in charge of the rustlers. This twist could come at almost any time during Act Two, which is why we structured the events more linearly.

11) The Shaking House

When the party enters this house, read or paraphrase the following:



This house shakes and rumbles as you approach, as if containing terrible forces. As you enter, the walls around you blur and distort and suddenly you're in the woods. Up ahead, you hear a woman screaming.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Davyn Abrin — Naive Template
Gwirvin Dodwyn — Burnout Template
Maeros Aelys — Educated Template
Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template
Tein Amleun — High Template
Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

What Really Happened

Tannith charged into the woods and caught up with the rustlers. There she confronted her father, and they argued. The rustlers, afraid to let her go, moved to kill her. Her father ordered them to stop, knowing the villagers were coming and preferring to hold her as a hostage and kill her later, should they lose the pursuit.

What Happens in the Memory

The party can see ahead through the trees. There, Tannith takes her father to task about leading the rustlers. He grows angry and the rustlers raise their bows to kill her, but he shouts, "Not here!" As the party is about to arrive, the trees around them turn into Demons of Deceit and attack, cutting them off. There is one Demon per party member. These are all that have broken free from the Ulcer struggle long enough to try to kill the party.

Galpharus, Demon of Deceit: CR 7; Large Outsider; HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +7; Spd 50; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk/Grp +7/+16; Atk +13 melee

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(2d6+5/19-20, greatsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+5/19-20, greatsword); SA Bane; SQ Damage reduction 10/good or cold iron, darkvision (90'), fast healing 5, immunities, infernal taint, low-light vision, outsider traits, resistance to air 10, acid 10, electricity 10, soul sense, spell resistance 18, tongues; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +16, Hide +9, Intimidate +14, Jump +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Search +12, Sense Motive +13, Spot +13; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword)

Possessions: Large longsword.

These Demons pour all their magical energy into vying for the Ulcer. Because of this, they have no spell-like abilities or fear effects. When they take damage, they change into their true form. The Demons appear to be the size of Humans due to the constraints of the dream, but for all game purposes, treat them as large.

Exiting the Memory

When the party kills the last demon, they exit the memory.

Check to see if it's time for an event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a difficult fight. It can be overwhelming if the Demons can secure an early tactical advantage.

12) The Demon Grove

If the party gets here before convincing Cedion to do the right thing in Event 6, breaking the Ulcer's hold, the grove screams and the trees wail and a great wind pushes them back. Tell them that they feel like a dozen, a hundred different people all at once, and they begin to go mad. If they come back after subsequent memories but before Event 6, they've acclimated to the cast, and it's better, but they still get pushed back. Once they've completed Event 6 and they try to enter, read or paraphrase the following:

As you enter the grove the trees scream and shake and thrash about as if to block you. A great wind swirls up in front of you and you feel a dozen personalities swelling up in your head. Davyn, Lley, Melian, one by one they try to dominate your mind, try to take over your body, but you're used to them now, you push them down, choke them back, and press on.

Around you the trees change and the woods warp. The very ground seems to distort and melt beneath you. Soon you wander through a different grove in a different place, but somehow you know that all locations, all times in this Ulcer are linked.

Up ahead you can see glimpses through the trees, a man, Cedion if his clothes are any indication, limping forward, a club in hand, pressing deeper into the wood.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Davyn Abrin — Naive Template
Gwirvin Dodwyn — Burnout Template
Maeros Aelys — Educated Template
Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template
Tein Amleun — High Template
Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

What Really Happened

Cedion entered the rustlers' grove, far from this grove. There, he risked everything to save his love.

What Happens in the Memory

Characters who push forward break out of the memory. Run the final event and go to Act III.

Exiting the Memory

Pushing forward ends the Act, after the last event.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a connective scene. Here we build to the final reveal.

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beautiful woman, her flesh bruised and swollen, her breathing ragged. He looks up and says, "Please. Help her. This is all my fault."

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin the scene. Make sure Maeros (the priest) is one of the characters, if you end up with extras.

Cast

Cedion Ervin

The Events

Interspersed with the characters' experiences with the past mystery through the location-based encounters, you'll find the events. These happen as the characters are exiting certain location-based encounters, before they make it back out into current Invill. These events aren't tied to a specific location, but rather to the number of locations the characters have explored. They occur every other time the characters come out of a location-based encounter.

Event 1—After the First Location

When the characters finish the first location-based encounter, read or paraphrase the following:

You hear a scream and realize that it's yours. Then the village swirls and dissolves again and you find yourself in a room. Candles light the darkness. The smell of sweat and sickness is all pervasive. There is a bed to one side and kneeling by it you see Cedion, from your last vision. On the bed lies a once-

Tannith Merin

Lleyn Clolyn — Brawler Template

Tein Amleun — High Template

Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

Gertherd Ervin — Burnout Template

Maeros Aelys — Educated Template

Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

What Really Happened

Tannith's condition has deteriorated since the kidnapping. She is now dying, and Cedion's prayers have gone unanswered. Here, he begged the new Priest for some way to heal her body.

What Happens in the Memory

He's talking to the player who plays the priest (the player is the priest from the cast list, even though in real life he had died by now). She is beyond the priest's help. Even if the players manage to break the possession and access their real bodies and skills, healing magicks won't save her. This memory

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is ruled by the reality it echoes, and there *was* no healing magic.

Exiting the Memory

The characters exit the memory when the player running Maeros tells him there is nothing he can do.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the inciting incident of the current mystery. This doesn't mean that it's the first element in the mystery, but rather that this is how the characters learn of the mystery.

Event 2—After the Third Location

When the characters finish their third location-based encounter, regardless of its number on the keyed map, read or paraphrase the following:

As the former memory dissolves, you find yourself immediately somewhere else. You stand in dense trees, a path leads forward and into the darkness.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin
Davyn Abrin — Naive Template
Gwirvin Dodwyn — Burnout Template
Maeros Aelys — Educated Template
Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template
Tein Amleun — High Template
Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

What Really Happened

The characters listed in the cast list, minus Cedion, formed a group to go kill the rustlers and take back their herds, if possible. Davyn, not allowed to come, followed, secretly. They came across Cedion, too frightened to go forward. They left him behind and moved forward to confront the rustlers.

What Happens in the Memory

As the party creeps forward, Davyn hiding in the background, they come across Cedion. He's hiding in the grass, weeping with fear. If they talk to him, all he will say is that they're up ahead, and that he can't go any farther. Then they hear a woman's scream, and he bolts to his feet, but he still can't move forward.

Exiting the Memory

The memory ends when the party goes forward without him.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the first red-herring of the current mystery. Here, the characters will likely come to the conclusion that Tannith is bruised because of the rustlers, and that this is Cedion's fault because his courage faltered.

Event 3—After the Fifth Location

When the characters exit the fifth location, regardless of its number on the keyed map, read or paraphrase the following:

The darkness swirls around you, leaving you standing on the frozen road of the village in the dead of winter. Cedion stands in the center of the road, surrounded by knights on horseback. He weeps and he stands among them, screaming, "Kill me. I spit on the Scion! Gwyr is a pretender! He cavorts with Demons! Just kill me!"

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin
Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template
Gertherd Ervin — Burnout Template
Lleyn Clolyn — Brawler Template
Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template
Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

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Tein Amleun — High Template

What Really Happened

After the priest told Cedion that Tannith was dying, Cedion despaired. Suicide is a mortal sin, but when the Knights Lonnuso came through the village, he saw his opportunity. The Witch-Hunters are very loyal to Gwyr in Gaerydd, so he spouted insults and heresies with the intention of bringing down their wrath. It works, and only the begging of the villagers and a young woman shielding him with her own body stopped the Witch-Hunters from executing him on the spot.

What Happens in the Memory

Whereas the other suicide attempt is fake, this one is real. These are Knights Lonnuso and after this speech they are hellbent on killing him. It takes It takes a DC 35 Diplomacy check to talk them out of it. A good story and roleplaying can grant a bonus, as would young Perneth refusing to let them kill him without killing her as well . . . bonuses are GMs discretion but +1 – +5 for roleplaying and +10 for Perneth would be in the right range. If they can't, they will have to fight their way out. There is one knight for every character.

This event takes place after the death of most of these villagers. These villagers' deaths were imprinted on the Ulcer, however, and these are the people present in the Ulcer's version of the event.

Knights Lonnuso: human fighter 10; CR 7; HD 10d10+22; hp 84; Init +6; Spd 20; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk/Grp +10/+13; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5/17-20, longsword); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+5/17-20, longsword); SA —; SQ —; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +13, Knowledge (Religion) +3, Listen +2, Ride +7, Sense Motive +2, Search +4, Spot +3; Dodge, Improved Critical (Longsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Weapon Specialization (Longsword).

Possessions: Chainmail, longsword, heavy metal shield.

Exiting the Memory

During the fight, Cedion will strip off his tunic and bare his chest. When a party member covers him up, live or dead, they exit.

Dramatic Purpose

This is either an extremely difficult roleplaying moment or an extremely difficult fight. Either will test the players and their characters to the limits. In addition, this is the Act Two twist of the current mystery, as the characters gain their first real clue that everything here revolves around Cedion's plight.

Event 4—After the Seventh Location

As soon as the characters leave the memory of their seventh location, regardless of its number on the keyed map, read or paraphrase the following:

Out of the swirling darkness you appear back in a dingy room in the village. To one side you see the body of the woman, Tannith. Her breathing is soft, irregular. To one side they have set out a dress for her. You can hear the steady splash of rain outside.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin

Tannith Merin

Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template

Davyn Abrin — Naive Template

Ergan Teren — Burnout Template

Melian Pethwain — Brawler Template

Tein Amleun — High Template

Tewyn Merin — Sneak Template

What Really Happened

There were few left to stand vigil on her last day, just before Morthorn arrived. Cedion came in alone and saw the dress there that she would be buried

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in. He took out the necklace he'd intended to give her that day, back when they'd learned the truth about her father. It was to be the day he asked her to marry him. Afterward, he'd decided to let her grieve before asking, but by then she became sick. As Morthorn rode down upon the village, Cedion placed the necklace with her dress, held her hand, and whispered to her the speech he'd prepared last fall, to ask for her hand. Finally, her mother came in and comforted him.

What Happens in the Memory

The villagers the characters are playing were dead during this memory, but their echoes are trapped in the Ulcer, and so the characters can still possess them. The dress is the burial outfit for Tannith. Cedion comes in after a time and unwraps a necklace of bone and turquoise. He sets it among her burial clothing. He tells the party that he had intended to ask her to marry him, and that this was an engagement gift. He was going to give it to her that night when they found the rustler camp.

Exiting the Memory

When one of the characters comforts Cedion, the memory ends.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a roleplaying scene, meant to make an emotional connection between the players and the story.

Event 5—After the Ninth Location

When the characters finish with their ninth location, regardless of its number on the keyed map, read or paraphrase the following:

You are suddenly in the streambed, charging along, following rough trail markers left by the advanced party. An overturned stone, a torn up bush, when they went forward after the rustlers, they left what marks they could.

Now you tear up out of the stream, knowing you're closing in on the rustler's lair after all. Knowing that soon this will be over.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template



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Dondan Pabron — High Template
Ergan Teren — Burnout Template
Lleyn Clolyn — Brawler Template
Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template
Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

What Really Happened

The second group of villagers rushed out on the heels of the first. They found Cedion, crippled with fear, stumbling out of the woods, grasping the necklace for strength. Cedion directed them toward the camp and collapsed with fear.

What Happens in the Memory

The characters race along, hot on the trail, they finally come out of the stream more than a mile away, moving up onto rich, green plains. In the distance, they see Cedion stumbling out of the trees, demons on his trail. He carries the necklace in his hand. There is one Demon for every party member.

Galpharus, Demon of Deceit: CR 7; Large Outsider; HD 7d8+21; hp 52; Init +7; Spd 50; AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk/Grp +7/+16; Atk +13 melee (2d6+5/19-20, greatsword); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+5/19-20, greatsword); SA Bane; SQ Damage reduction 10/good or cold iron, darkvision (90'), fast healing 5, immunities, infernal taint, low-light vision, outsider traits, resistance to air 10, acid 10, electricity 10, soul sense, spell resistance 18, tongues; SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +16, Hide +9, Intimidate +14, Jump +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Search +12, Sense Motive +13, Spot +13; Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword)

Possessions: Large longsword.

These Demons pour all their magical energy into vying for the Ulcer. Because of this, they have no spell-like abilities or fear effects. When they take damage, they change into their true form. The Demons appear to be the size of Humans due to the constraints of the dream, but for all game purposes, treat them as large.

Exiting the Memory

When they defeat the Demons of Deceit and go to Cedion, the memory ends.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the character's abilities just a bit and force them to expend their resources.

Event 6 – After the Eleventh Location

When the characters finish the eleventh location, regardless of its number on the keyed map, read or paraphrase the following:

The memories around you swirl and you see glimpses of pain. Cedion weeping with fear in the grove . . . Cedion weeping over Tannith's deathbed . . . Tannith's expression when her father ordered her death. The tragedy of this village, the horror that happened here. They're coming clear.

You find yourself standing in the grassy plain, the same plain where you killed the Demons pursuing Cedion as he fled the Rustler's Grove. The bodies of the Demons are here no longer. There is just you and Cedion. He still clutches the necklace. He is prostrate with fear.

Shuffle and hand out the templates, then match them to the cast below and tell the players which of the characters on the template they're playing in this scene. When you are ready, begin.

Cast

Cedion Ervin
Ceffona Kenwyn — Educated Template
Dondan Pabron — High Template
Ergan Teren — Burnout Template
Lleyn Clolyn — Brawler Template
Mirgwyr Mandyn — Sneak Template
Perneth Ferin — Naive Template

What Really Happened

The group left Cedion, charged into the grove. Cedion, bolstered by his love for Tannith, found the courage to follow.

Act Two



What Happens in the Memory

This is really Cedion, not a memory, and he's trying to change things. He's convinced that if he lets her die here, that she will die quickly and not suffer any longer. The party must save his soul. In real life he turned around and went back. If he changes that decision, he will be a party to her murder and damned to Hell (we're assuming here the party can save her and there are no true issues of euthanasia here . . . this adventure isn't about political statements, it's about broken dreams).

If the party can convince him persuasively to come with them back inside, he will scream, "But I did go back, and that made it worse!" This should go through the players like a shot, as they realize that Cedion didn't abandon her after all and that this is really him. He will not explain how it made matters worse, but if the party can convince him to trust them, he will lead them into the forest. This breaks the Demon's plans to drive Cedion mad, and opens the Demon Grove to the PCs.

Exiting the Memory

Only Cedion can lead the party out of this memory. He does so by leading them into the grove.

Dramatic Purpose

This is an *intense* roleplaying scene when done properly. It's the first time they realize that Cedion is really here, and this is more than just his memory. It's also the beginning of the big reveal of both plot lines, as the players realize that this isn't a story about the price of cowardice, it's a story about the price of courage, the aftermath of disaster, and the responsibility a person takes when saving another's life.

Event 7 – The End of Act II

When the characters successfully enter the Demon Grove, read or paraphrase the following:

The sound of your hearts is heavy in your ears. Thoom-thoom. You see flashes of vision, too quick to decipher. Thoom-thoom. The sound is driving. Relentless.

You see the first group enter the grove, little Davyn sneaking up behind. Thoom-thoom. The rustlers wait in ambush, they fire a volley of arrows into the group, then another. Crawling on the ground, the groups tries to leave, begs for mercy, but a final volley ends their calls, killing Davyn as well.

Thoom-thoom.

You see Cedion, running from the grove, weeping. The second group from the village runs to him and he tells them in gasps and cries what's happening. They rush on without him, charging into the rustler's grove.

Thoom-thoom.

They come in better prepared, seeing the slaughter as they approach. The first volley only drops half of them and they fight, the blacksmith dropping two with a heavy club before he falls himself. The last two rustlers and Tannith's father finish him off.

Thoom-thoom.

Cedion turns around and rushes back. In the grove, at the same time, Tannith's father orders her death. They are leaving now, and he's not having any witnesses.

Thoom-thoom.

Cedion charges in, coming out of nowhere, dropping the first rustler in a single blow. Taking an arrow in the side even as he clubs the second rustler to death. Finally he squares off with Tannith's father.

Thoom-thoom.

Wounded, covered in blood, Cedion carries an unconscious Tannith out of the Grove.

Thoom-thoom.

Tannith healthy, Cedion recovered, the village healing its losses as children play.

Thoom-thoom.

Tannith weaker now, pale, sickly. The new priest shaking his head over her bed, saying the word with deep pity. Cancer.

Act Two Two

Thoom-thoom.

The images are faded now, darkening. You hear Tannith's moans of pain, over and over, worsening. "Kill me," she screams. "Dear god, why didn't you let me die?"

Continue to Act Three.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the end of Act reveal. Here, we learn something of the real truth behind this entire adventure. The end of act reveal should change the nature of the story and rocket the characters into the final dramatic climax.



Act Three

Act Three

The stage is set. The players are in place. It's time to enter the Demon Grove. But this Ulcer still has secrets.

Dramatic Purpose

Act Three contains the final climax of the story and any denouement. Act Three starts the minute the characters' expectations collapse and the moment they begin the final battle, in whatever form it might take. Act Three contains the climax and any falling action necessary to resolve the story.

THE DEMON GROVE

This is the heart of the Ulcer. Aspects of it borrow from the horrors of the tragedy.

The trees have grown into one another, forming walls along the paths.

Each path has a fork, but only one of the paths is open and visible when the characters first reach it (it's always the right path). The characters must follow the right path to the end, defeat the encounter there, and fulfill the exit requirements. Only when those conditions are met will the other path open, letting them continue. For instance, there is no path to 3 until the characters successfully finish area 2. When they do, read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly you hear a great moaning in the distance and a tremendous rustle of leaves and creaks of branches.

The left branch of the path, behind them, is then open.

1) Entering the Demon Grove

When the characters begin Act III, read or paraphrase the following:

Around you the trees have grown into the shape of twisted human forms, merging one into another. A path leads off into the darkness, lit by an eerie brown light, making the entire place appear as if caked in dried blood.

2) The Ghost Clearing

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The trees that surround this clearing writhe with pain and twist with ghostly light. Flickering forms emerge from the shadows, one after another, their faces familiar. Little Davyn, the blacksmith, Tannith's mother. They look at you with hate and hunger then charge.

There is one ghost for every party member.

Ghosts: CR 5; Medium undead (incorporeal); HD 10d12; hp 65; Init +6; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grp +7/+9; Atk +10 melee (1d8+3, slam, only against ethereal); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+3, slam, only against ethereal); SA Corrupting gaze (DC 17), corrupting touch, draining touch, manifestation; SQ +4 turn resistance; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide +10, Intimidate +6, Listen +14, Search +14, Spot +14; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: None.

Exiting the Area

The remains associated with each ghost are hidden on the edge of the clearing. Burning, burying, or otherwise putting these into a respectful state opens the next exit.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straight-up challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the character's abilities just a bit and force them to use their resources. The exit criterion will likely be *very* difficult. It might take the players some time to figure it out, or even to realize that they are supposed to figure it out.

3) The Weeping Clearing

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

A gentle rain falls in this clearing. You can smell the moisture on leaves with a vague undertone of rot. As you come into view of the clearing, you can

Act Three

see the fat heavy drops falling. It seems the overhead canopy of trees are, themselves, weeping.

Exiting the Area

Each party member must drink the tears to open the exit. They are bitter and salty.

4) The Restless Dead

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This clearing whispers and crackles with the sound of stirring leaves. The rustlers' dead bodies lie on the ground.

There is a rustler for every party member.

Undead Rustlers: CR 4; Medium undead; HD 8d12; hp 55; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grp +4/+6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, slam); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, slam); SA —; SQ Undead traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con --, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 5.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: None.

Exiting the Area

When they burn, bury, or otherwise put the bodies of the Undead rustlers into a respectful state, the exit opens.

5) The Nightmare Clearing

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This clearing pulses with a deep thrumming sound as you approach. A dark flickering light throbs in time to the beat. As you come forward you can make out Cedion, hanging in a network of vines and branches. While it seems the branches merely support his weight, those attached to his head burrow into the skull. These burrowing tendrils pulse as well, and although the light comes from everywhere and nowhere, the sound seems to come from these tendrils.

If the characters didn't kill Cedion during event six, he's alive here. Killing him isn't likely, but if the characters decided to kill everything in the Ulcer out of frustration, that's the only time they could have done it. If he's alive, read or paraphrase the following:

Cedion's eyes are open, flicking about rapidly. His face is a mask of horror.

Cutting a mind-tendrils causes 1 hp of damage. If they stabilize him immediately after every cut, then he will survive. If they cut multiple tendrils at once, it will take more powerful healing magic to save him. He has already dropped to 0 hit points (out of 30), and there are six tendrils.

Exiting the Area

When Cedion no longer supplies the nightmare (meaning the party has extracted him) or the characters cut free his dead body, the exit opens.

6) The Grove Monster

When the characters approach this area, if the Chorus is still alive, read or paraphrase the following:

You creep forward to the next clearing when suddenly you hear a noise crackling in the underbrush behind you. Turning, you see the man from the well, but he's no longer grinning around his rotting teeth. "Stop," he says. "If you go in there, you'll all die. That isn't the evil that anchors this Ulcer. "I am."

If Cedion is with the party and conscious, read or paraphrase the following:

Cedion nods at the old man. "Father," he says.

He's actually Cedion's prospective father-in-law, but who's counting.

The Chorus will tell them that Cedion defeated him, last fall in the grove, but Cedion saved his life. This winter he's been living secretly in this grove. Now he's convinced that he's the evil center of the Ulcer.

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He ordered the death of villagers, he caused the death of his own son, and he tried to kill his daughter.

He has seen what's in the next clearing, as this was his home. Now he knows a way to put this all to rest. The party has taken care of all the evil he couldn't defeat. Now they have to deliver him to the final location.

When they enter the final clearing, read or paraphrase the following:

This clearing sways and writhes with an energy all to itself. Vines and branches hang into the center, and as you approach, a rain of water drops, tinged pink, rises and swirls in the center, mixing with leaves and dirt and debris, flowing into a formless creature that roars and rears.

This is the heart of the Ulcer, a creature formed of bad memories, tears, and nightmares.

As the party fights the creature, the trees themselves attack and bash at them. Each has a +5 melee attack bonus and one attacks every party member every round (unless one flees back around the corner) with a slam for 1d8+4 damage.

The Grove Monster: CR 10; Large construct; HD 10d10+30; hp 88; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grp +7/+15; Atk +10 melee (2d6+4, slam); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (2d6+4, slam); SA —; SQ Construct traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Toughness.

Possessions: None.

The Chorus will make it to the center if the party . . . or one of its members . . . didn't kill him previously. Then he will tear open his shirt and expose himself to the creature. The creature will lose initiative, allowing the characters time to reconsider. Astute party members might realize that this act of redemption means he *can't* be the evil here. If they save him or if he dies, they can still beat the monster. Let them decide what to do. Either way, the Chorus is a noncombatant.

When the party kills the grove monster, the entire grove shakes and hisses. Suddenly the mud of the ground swells up, vomiting Tannith into a pool of mud.

The party can do one of two things, kill her or heal her. She has cancer of the blood. How the adventure ends depends on how the party continues.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the dramatic last image of the climax.

IF THE PARTY FAILS

If the party fails, they are stuck in the Ulcer or dead. It's probably best not to let them get stuck, and if all else fails, give them some Int or Wis checks to figure out how to exit a memory.

This means the most likely way for them to lose is to kill Cedion in the second to last event, triggering the Demons to come. If this happens and they die fighting all the Demons that struggle for the Ulcer, then that's the end, the party has died. The adventure is over.

Dramatic Purpose

Stories need a result of failure. This is it.

DENOUEMENT

The denouement is the falling action of a story. In it, the bad guys get punished, the good guys get their rewards, and all loose ends are tied up.

Oh, and it's pronounced dā'nū'män.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the entire denouement is to give the characters a feeling of completion, to let the story wind down and wrap up naturally.

If They Kill Tannith

If the party kills her and Cedion survived, read or paraphrase the following:

As Tannith's heart beats a last time, the grove moans and pounds around you. You stumble back,

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wondering whether the Ulcer is about to collapse, when suddenly Cedion rises. His eyes focus on his love for the first time and he stumbles forward, tears falling onto his cheeks. Then he collapses, draping himself over her body and weeps with pain and release.

If They Save Tannith

If the party saves her (meaning they cure her disease) and Cedion survived, read or paraphrase the following:

As Tannith's eyes open, she gasps and begins laughing and sobbing, staring at her unbruised arms, moving in what you can only assume are her first painless movements in some time. The grove shakes and moans about her, and you are just wondering if the Ulcer is collapsing when Cedion rises and stumbles forward, his own tears falling. He gathers her into his arms and clings to her as if she were the only pier amid a rising tide.

Describe their reactions to the Chorus as you see fit.

The Ulcer Collapses

After you have read the preceding, or if Cedion died, move straight to the following:

With a dull wump, a blast of air surges out from the center of the grove, rushing over you. In its path, the trees twist back into their normal form. The colors return to healthy green and spaces appear between the trees. Sunlight breaks through the canopy above for the first time. The nightmare is over.

But Morthorn still has the Splinter, and now his trail is cold.

There is no ill effect for being in this Ulcer when it collapses. All Ulcers are different, after all.

The Demons have been collecting treasure from all over the Ulcer, which is big by the end of the adventure. Therefore, Tannith's body was lying on a large pile of treasure.

52 SP, 613 GP, 1,855 PP, 15,000 GP brown spesarite stone, 70,000 GP gold and amethyst armband. Also, a masterwork mandolin, masterwork lockpick set, 2 studded leather armor, 3 masterwork breastplates, masterwork chain shirt, plate chamfron, masterwork full plate, metal gauntlet, masterwork cutlass, longbow, short bow, masterwork composite bow, masterwork longbow, sling, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *wand of dispel magic* (17 charges, CL 15), +3 *studded leather armor*, *Belt of Movement* (feather fall, jump, fly, each CL 5th, each once per day), +3 *breast plate*, +1 *morning star*.

Playing the Next Adventure

If you intend to play *The Last Hallowed Place*, how you proceed from here depends on when exactly you intend to play it. If you wish a little time between adventures, you'll need to find something to fill their intervening time. If you don't use our free Adventure Seed product, invent trouble that immediately grabs the characters' attention. They've lost Morthorn's trail, if you give them something pressing, they'll be grateful for the distraction.

Try to time the adventures so they'll end when you are ready for *The Last Hallowed Place* (If, for instance, you are waiting for it to release). Otherwise, just have fun and let the play continue. *The Last Hallowed Place* begins fairly quickly, but the time is unspecified, so keep things moving and you won't have any time problems.

The Last Hallowed Place begins in Gaerydd. It's possible to adjust the beginning to start elsewhere, but it would be better to bring them back for the opening. If not, putting them somewhere east of Gaerydd would have them positioned at least in the right general area, but Gaerydd is best.

If you intend to run the next adventure immediately, follow the instructions in the Experience section.

Act Three

TEMPLATES

Brawler Template

CR 5

Human warrior 5

N medium humanoid

Str: 15

Int: 11

Dex: 14

Wis: 12

Con: 16

Cha: 10

Init: +2 **Senses:** Listen +1, Spot +3

Base Attack: +5; **Grp** +7

Fort: +7, **Ref:** +3, **Will:** +2

AC: 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp: 39

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: club +8 (1d6+2)

Full Attack Melee: club +8 (1d6+2)

Feats: Athletic, Run, Weapon Focus (club)

Skills: Appraise +1, Craft (Blacksmithing) +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +1, Knowledge (Religion) +1, Move Silently +3, Ride +3, Survival +2, Spot +3.

Languages: Gaerynch

Possessions: Clothes, club, dagger.

Background/History: Use this template with two of the characters central to this adventure. They are:

Lleyn Clolyn: Lleyn is the village blacksmith. As such, he's one of the fittest and most dangerous men in the village.

Melian Pethwain: The beadle is the lawman of the village, also known as the hayward. Melian's primary job is to make sure the village sheep made it into the church pen every night.

Personality/Motivation: The brawlers are straightforward. They care about the village and attack problems head on.

Quote: "What's wrong?"

Powers/Tactics: The brawlers are warrior-types. They trust in their combat abilities and aren't used to meeting foes they can't beat.

Campaign Use: These characters appear in the different memories as necessary. To scale the Brawler Template, change its level and combat feats.

Appearance: Lleyn is a burly man with a continuous scowl, who prefers to wear a leather apron.

Melian is a strong man with a penetrating glare. He wears clothing a step above a normal peasant, but still fit for real work.

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Burnout Template

CR 2

Human commoner 2

N medium humanoid

Str: 12

Int: 9

Dex: 10

Wis: 11

Con: 10

Cha: 10

Init: +2 **Senses:** Listen +2, Spot +4

Base Attack: +1; **Grp** +2

Fort: +0, **Ref:** +0, **Will:** +0

AC: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp: 6

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +2 (1d4+1/19-20)

Full Attack Melee: dagger +2 (1d4+1/19-20)

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Skills: Handle Animal +12, Knowledge (Local) +0, Knowledge (Religion) +9, Ride +1, Spot +2, Swim +1.

Languages: Gaerynch

Possessions: Clothes, dagger.

Background/History: Use this template with three of the characters central to this adventure. They are:

Ergan Teren: Ergan is the town drunk. He manages to drift from event to event throughout this story.

Gertherd Ervin: Cedion's mother, Gertherd is an old, used-up woman. Even through her exhaustion, she's managed to watch over her son.

Gwirvin Dodwyn: Gwirvin is the village amputee, missing one arm. He aches to help during these events but feels helpless.

Personality/Motivation: The burnouts are straightforward. They care a little, but mostly they just coast from event to event.

Quote: "Someone should do something?"

Powers/Tactics: The burnouts are bad at everything. They avoid combat when possible.

Campaign Use: These characters appear in the different memories as necessary. To scale the Burnout Template, change its level and combat feats.

Appearance: Ergan is a messy, unkempt individual with dark hair.

Gertherd is a thin, wasted, gray-haired woman. She tends to clean her hands endlessly on a tattered apron.

Gwirvin is a haunted looking man with light-brown hair and a missing arm.

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Educated Template

CR 2

Human expert 2
N medium humanoid

Str: 10 **Int:** 14
Dex: 11 **Wis:** 12
Con: 10 **Cha:** 12

Init: +2 **Senses:** Listen +3, Spot +8

Base Attack: +1; **Grp** +2

Fort: +0, **Ref:** +0, **Will:** +0

AC: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp: 12

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +1 (1d4/19-20)

Full Attack Melee: dagger +1 (1d4/19-20)

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Skills: Decipher Script +3, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +2, Hide +1, Knowledge (Local) +7, Knowledge (History) +6, Knowledge (Nature) +4, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +4, Knowledge (The Planes) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Move Silently +1, Ride +2, Search +5, Spot +8, Swim +1.

Languages: Gaerynch, Divine Tongue, Literate

Possessions: Clothes, dagger.

Background/History: Use this template with two of the characters central to this adventure. They are:

Ceffona Kenwyn: Ceffona is one of the most educated people in the village, no small feat for a peasant in Gaerydd. She is notable because she brought in a large brew of ale. This makes her home the village tavern.

Maeros Aelys: The village priest, Maeros, watches over these events. And they need his guidance. As the priest in a theocracy, Maeros is the real power in the village, the lord being in charge of nothing more than military matters.

Personality/Motivation: The educated are contemplative and cautious. They like to step back and think things through before acting.

Quote: "I understand."

Powers/Tactics: The educated avoid combat when they can. When fighting is necessary, they try to use tactics and careful planning to carry the day.

Campaign Use: These characters appear in the different memories as necessary. See the individual encounters.

To scale the Educated Template, change its level and combat feats.

Appearance: Ceffona is a homely woman with a wide friendly face and an easy laugh. Her dress is always stained from work.

Maeros is a smart young priest who takes his job as spiritual and civil leader of the village seriously. He dresses in neat clothing and vestments.

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High Template

CR 4

Human aristocrat 4
N medium humanoid

Str: 11 **Int:** 10
Dex: 14 **Wis:** 13
Con: 12 **Cha:** 14

Init: +2 **Senses:** Listen +2, Spot +3

Base Attack: +3; **Grp** +3

Fort: +2, **Ref:** +3, **Will:** +7

AC: 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp: 22

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +3 (1d4/19-20)

Full Attack Melee: dagger +3 (1d4/19-20)

Feats: Iron Will, Negotiator, Persuasive

Skills: Bluff +6, Diplomacy +11, Forgery +1, Gather Information +4, Handle Animal +3, Heal +2, Intimidate +5, Listen +2, Knowledge (History) +3, Knowledge (Local) +1, Knowledge (Religion) +3, Perform (Dance) +4, Ride +3, Search +1, Sense Motive +6, Spot +3, Swim +1.

Languages: Gaerynch

Possessions: clothes, dagger.

Background/History: Use this template with two of the characters central to this adventure. They are:

Dondan Pabron: Dondan is the bailiff of the manor and, therefore, the de facto lord of this village, not that this means a lot in Gaerydd, where the village priest is the real ruler. As the representative of the lord, and therefore the village's military such as it is, he finds himself greatly concerned with these events.

Tein Amleun: Tein is the reeve of the town, meaning that he shares authority with the beadle. However, his duties tend to be more in running the village than enforcing the laws.

Personality/Motivation: The highs are talkers, diplomats. They try to handle problems with diplomacy, if possible.

Quote: "We should talk."

Powers/Tactics: The highs only fight when it's necessary, preferring to rely on social skills. They are used to being able to talk their way out of problems.

Campaign Use: These characters appear in the different memories as necessary. See the individual encounters.

To scale the High Template, change its level and combat feats.

Appearance: Dondan is a crisp looking man in nice clothes, if not fine.

Tein dresses in good peasant clothes, but he takes care with his grooming, especially his dark hair.

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Act Three

Naive Template

Human commoner 1
N medium humanoid

Str: 8 **Int:** 12
Dex: 11 **Wis:** 12
Con: 10 **Cha:** 10

Init: +0 **Senses:** Listen +6, Spot +6

Base Attack: +0; **Grp** -1

Fort: +0, **Ref:** +0, **Will:** +1

AC: 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp: 4

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger -1 (1d4-1/19-20)

Full Attack Melee: dagger -1 (1d4-1/19-20)

Feats: Alertness, Stealthy

Skills: Hide 4, Listen 6, Knowledge (Local) 2,
Move Silently 3, Ride 1, Spot 6.

Languages: Gaerynch

Possessions: clothes, dagger.

Background/History: Use this template with two of the characters central to this adventure. They are:

Davyn Abrin: A small boy, Davyn is an orphan more or less adopted by all the village. He has managed to get himself into the center of many of these events.

Perneth Ferin: Perneth is a young girl, just barely of marrying age. She is attracted to the danger and the mystery of these events, the romanticism of it all.

Personality/Motivation: The naives don't realize their own limitations. They have the perceived invulnerability of youth and think they can take on the world.

Quote: "We need to do something!"

Powers/Tactics: The naives are terrible at everything. They don't realize this, however, and that can get them into trouble.

Campaign Use: These characters appear in the different memories as necessary. See the individual encounters.

To scale the Naive Template, change its level and weapon skills.

Appearance: Davyn is young and messy, with tousled brown hair the mothers of the village love to comb.

Perneth is a pretty young girl, barely of marrying age. She grooms herself constantly.

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CR 1 Sneak Template

Human expert 4
N medium humanoid

Str: 11 **Int:** 11
Dex: 12 **Wis:** 13
Con: 10 **Cha:** 10

Init: +1 **Senses:** Listen +9, Spot +8

Base Attack: +3; **Grp** +3

Fort: +1, **Ref:** +2, **Will:** +5

AC: 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

hp: 14

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +4 (1d4/19-20)

Full Attack Melee: dagger +4 (1d4/19-20)

Feats: Alertness, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (Dagger)

Skills: Bluff +5, Gather Information +1, Hide +7,
Jump +2, Listen +9, Knowledge (Religion) +4,
Move Silently +7, Sleight of Hand +4, Search +5,
Sense Motive +6, Spot +8, Swim +1.

Languages: Gaerynch

Possessions: Clothes, dagger.

Background/History: Use this template with two of the characters central to this adventure. They are:

Mirgwyr Mandyn: Mirgwyr is the village snoop. She has made a life out of making other people's business her own.

Tewyn Merin: Tewyn is Tannith's brother. He has as much at stake as anyone in stopping the rustlers, but because of his stealth skills, he thinks he can solve this mystery single-handedly.

Personality/Motivation: The sneaks are careful. They attack problems from all directions.

Quote: "I've got this."

Powers/Tactics: The sneaks are anything but straightforward. They are some of the more talented people with a knife, for different reasons, but they prefer to let the brawlers attack.

Campaign Use: These characters appear in the different memories as necessary. See the individual encounters.

To scale the Sneak Template, change its level and combat feats.

Appearance: Mirgwyr is a middle-aged woman with sharp eyes and an innocent look.

Tewyn is a young, good-looking rake with a swagger and an easy grin.

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It was the last days of the War in Heaven.

All of Heaven used to shine with the light of God, but as you pushed deeper and deeper into the Fallen Lands, all you saw was darkness and horror and rot.

The Light of God did not enter into those lands. It wasn't that it couldn't, but that God Himself had denied his most treacherous children the light. In the lack of light, the crops withered and faded, and the topsoil eroded. Winds whipped stinging sand across most of the lands, all except those few fields where the Fallen Angels created enough light for plants to struggle into something resembling life. A treacherous, half-existence.

There you walk, mile after mile of desolation around you. Few mortals live this far into the Fallen Lands. This is the place of the foul betrayers of God, the Fallen Angels. Around you, endless stretches of bitterness, hate, and fury. The fate of those who'd risen against their Fallen.

Welcome to the fourth adventure in *The Moving Shadow* campaign. This adventure, *The Tainted Tears*, is the fourth of a ten-part series that will take a group of characters through the Mortal Realm. Starting at 2nd level and taking the party to 20th level, this campaign will take the world to the brink of destruction.

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