The Siege of Durgam`s Folly

Option-Pack

*by **B**jörn **S**trohecker*

Credits

Author (Original Module)
Mike Mearls

Author (Option-Pack)
Björn Strohecker

Layout
Clark Peterson, adapted by Björn Strohecker

Editing
Charles `Pale Writer' Wright

D20 Editor
Scott Greene

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Playtesters
Christiane `Mausi' Schulz, Tim `Lord Unity' Einig, Sabine Weyand, Jörn Eggert, Stefan auf der Heyde

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Introduction

The Siege of Durgam's Folly by *Mike Mearls* is a challenging adventure for 4 to 6 characters of 5th to 8th level. It includes a wilderness area to cross, a fort to free from enemy's hands (or to defend from them), and a tricky dungeon, full of bizarre and surprising encounters, to explore. Maybe you want to challenge your players even more by adding a couple of options, which are intended to **raise** the overall difficulty of the adventure. You, as a DM, should consider carefully, if your players -and foremost their PCs- are experienced enough to handle these extra challenges. Most of the material herein should make them sweat more than just a little…

Option 1: Ogres on Guard!

Using this option means that, on the contrary to the behaviour described in the original module, the ogres are expecting retribution for the destruction of Hansonburg and the brutal murder of its citizens.

The main gate is not open, and the ogres did not use up all the ammunition for the catapults on top of the guard towers. There

are three to four ogres on the watch on top of each tower, two units of two ogres each regularly patrol in the main courtyard (#3) and two ogres guard the gatehouse (#2). Additionally, there are two more ogres guarding the entrance to the tower where the prisoners are kept (#9). If the party has any means to spy on the fort prior to entering it, these two guards may be the clue the PCs need to localize the prisoners. Any ogre, who detects an enemy within Durgam's Folly or its perimeter will immediately cry out an alarm and start to attack fiercely, if in range.

If a major alarm is sounded (i.e. if the party's intrusion has been detected), **Grimulak** will prepare for battle and enter the scene after 1D4+2 rounds. Should Grimulak be defeated half of the remaining ogres will try to flee, while the other half will retreat to the inner keep (#15) where they hope to be able to defend themselves better.

Tactics: If you decide to use this option, your party will have a very hard time trying to get into Durgam's Folly. The following tactics should lead to a success. These are given as examples, if your players come up with a different plan, you should let them try it. If you are certain the PCs are going for a suicidal plan, you may wish to give them a hint or two that there may be better solutions.

- *The Trojan Horse Tactic:* The characters may try to convince Trina to hand them over one of the caravan's wagons. They can hide inside the wagon and provoke an attack by the ogres. The coachmen then flee, and the wagon will be taken inside the fort to be looted. Alternatively, only one character may hide in the wagon, make a stealthy escape once inside the fort, and then try to open the gates for the remaining PCs and the caravan guards.

- *The Secret Tunnel:* This tactic makes it necessary to use **Option 2: The Secret Tunnel** (see below) as well.

Using this secret passage secures undetected entry to Durgam's Folly.

Once inside, the next task is to defeat more than two dozens of ogres as well as the ogre mage, Grimulak. If your players are having serious trouble making up a good tactic to handle the situation you may want to provide some helpful hints:

- *Let's use their Catapults!:* Anyone proficient with siege engines may try to use one of the previously mentioned catapults against their enemies. This requires the party to take one of the four guard towers. If they used the secret tunnel to enter (see below), their best choice is tower #5. Blocking all of the tower doors from the inside and using *Silence* spells will also be helpful. The PCs should stand a good chance to conquer the tower in this way.

- *Create a Diversion!:* While the majority of the PCs remains on top of tower #5 firing with a catapult, one stealthy character may try to arm and free the prisoners, who are held in the north-eastern guard tower (#9). Just when the ogres recover from the shock of being under catapult fire, the freed prisoners will take care of the next one!

- *Signal the Attack!*: The party may also want to have the caravan guards move as close to the fort as possible, hide, and wait for a signal from them to start their attack (i.e. if they managed to open the gates, disabled the catapults, etc).

In any case, the party should try to make up a good strategy, either one of the above, a combination of all the above, or some other plan that might seem fitting and promises success with little losses. You should make it clear to all of your players, that a straight attack without any strategic plan will most probably lead to their certain death!

Light Catapults (4): Hardness 10; hp 200; Range 100 ft. (minimum); damage 3d6; crew 2. It takes 5 rounds to load and prepare and 5 minutes to reposition to fire. One person can operate a light catapult, but all times (load and repositioning) are multiplied by 3. For more information see the Siege Engine rules in Chapter 5 in the *DMG*.

Option 2: The Secret Tunnel

There is a secret passage into Durgam's Folly. Thevik and Uli know about it and will tell the characters where to find the entrance, if they are convinced that the characters are fully trustworthy. Neither Theodocious nor Trina are aware of this passage. None of the senior officers has ever trusted the mage and his apprentice any further than they can spit.

The entrance is located about 2,000 yards southeast of the fort, hidden beneath a couple of bushes. A large, seemingly out of place, monolith points out this colony of briars. To find the trapdoor the briars must be cut or burned away. The latter is no good, as the smoke may be spotted by ogres on the south-east tower (Spot check at DC 12, if Option 1 is used). Still, the door lies hidden 5 inches below the soil, so a Search check is needed (DC 20). If Thevik or Uli have given a detailed description of where to find it, lower the search DC by 5 (to DC 15). If the party searches successfully, they find a round, iron trapdoor that is 3 feet in diameter. There is a handle attached to it that allows a character to lift it open with a successful Strength check (DC12). Below the trapdoor a tube-like manhole of the same diameter as the door leads 30 feet straight into the darkness. An old and rusted iron ladder makes climbing down an easy task (Climb check at DC 10) to completely descend to the bottom. Though the ladder looks badly damaged, it is sturdy and will carry the weight of any adventurer. This manhole is too tight to allow more than one medium sized creature to climb into it at a time.

The man-made tunnel is roughly 6,000 feet long and only 5 feet in diameter, filled with stale water to a height of 3.5 feet. It leads to the basement of the south-east tower (#5) of the fort. Feel free to use the mistake about the trap door in the map delivered with the original module. The exiting manhole is identical to the entry shaft in all respects.

In fact, this is an old sewer that was never finished and was subsequently forgotten about by everyone except for the fort's senior officers, who keep it as a secret flight passage. It slightly descends towards the center at 3,000 feet and ascends again afterwards. At the tunnel's center there is a crack in the wall where the water has been leaking in for quite some time.

The central 300 feet of the tunnel is completely underwater which forces the characters to dive through. The PCs may want to make sure it's passable by having the best swimmer among them explore the tunnel to find out.

To pass the underwater section, PCs must hold their breath and succeed at Swim checks (DC 10) each time they move through the underwater tunnel. Failing a Swim check means the PC doesn't move that round. Failing the check by 5 or more means the PC starts to drown (see Drowning in the *DMG*). Characters can take 10 on these checks if they wish. Don't forget the penalties to this check for weight carried!

You should point out to your players, that they have to dive through the cramped tunnel in complete darkness with possible obstacles in their way (i.e. debris from parts of the ceiling that have collapsed, etc) as the entire tunnel is in a bad state of decay.

This way the party is able to enter Durgam's Folly undetected, but also soaking wet and quite exhausted. Nevertheless, once inside the fort, the PCs better have a good plan if Option 1 is used!

Thunderstorms!

To further increase tension, you may wish to have a heavy thunderstorm come up. Once it starts raining the water level in the tunnel starts rising rapidly, which should put the PCs under substantial time-pressure. The passage will be completely flooded within one hour after it starts raining and will be impossible to pass for at least three days, unless the PCs can cast *water breathing* or similar spells. Three days is a long time for the ogres' captives in the fort…

The Beauty and the Wight

You still might want to add even more danger to this passage. Insert **Rainier, the** *Wight*, who is lurking in the tunnel. This poor soul is actually one of the men from the garrison, who tried to flee from the murdering clockworks and find help. He drowned in the tunnel and, due to the presence of the nearby temple of Orcus, he arose as a wight only days later.

This passage is his lair and he will attack any intruder immediately. Also, more of his comrades rot here. Currently there are two male, human corpses here; one of them badly torn from a fall into this tunnel. Both of the dead have not been raised as wights for some reason. Rainier leaves the tunnel at night to hunt and kill (he wants company), always using the exit outside of Durgam's Folly.

If you decide to use this encounter, reduce the DC for the Search check to find the entry to the tunnel to 10. The briars may be removed completely or partially as well. Rainier only conceals the trapdoor while he's out to pray.

Option 3: Useful Things...

Many items one may find during one's adventures are very useful things. A *potion of gaseous form* may well save the day, a magic

Note that Rainier can fight well in the dark due to his *blind fight* feat. Also, the tunnel does not have enough room for more than one medium and one small sized creature to fight side by side. For a complete and in-depth description of wights, *see Core Rulebook III, p. 183*.

Rainier, the Wight: CR 3; SZ M Undead; HD 4d12; hp 36; Init +1; Spd. 30 ft.; AC 15; Atk +3 melee (1d4+1 and energy drain, slam); SA energy drain (one negative level, Fort DC 14 to remove), create spawn; SQ undead, darkvision (60 ft.); AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 12, Con -, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Climb +5, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +16, Search +7, Spot +8. *Feats:* Blind-Fight.

Possessions: Rainier still has his purse hanging from his belt, a small leather bag, containing 12 gp, 21 sp and a small, gold framed picture of maybe 1½ inches in diameter showing a beautiful, human female. The inscription on the back of the frame reads: "*I Love You for Eternity! A thousand hugs and kisses, Sally.*" The frame is worth 10 gp if sold.

If the party decides to find out who the poor soldier was before he turned into a wight and then seek out Sally and return the picture to her, they should receive an appropriate experience award.

DM Note: Entering Durgam's Folly through this passage is pointless, if **Option 1: Ogres on Guard!** is not used. Should you decide to leave the ogres off guard but add the tunnel anyway, I suggest you bring in **Rainier, the Wight** and the possibly resulting quest for Sally as a bonus encounter.

weapon is one of an adventurer's basic needs, and the set of masterwork lock picks can possibly open the gates to the treasure

chamber. Some items are very different. They are vicious booby-traps.

The brain-gear thinks ahead, very much like a chess master. It figured that the ogres will not hold Durgam's Folly for too long, so it came up with a cunning idea.

To subdue more potent enemies, such as experienced adventurers, it constructed a set of insidious tools as a bait for intruders. It ordered Grimulak to place them in Theodocious' study (#7, see the map of Durgam's Folly in the original module). These are intended to help the brain-gear gather information about its possible enemies.

When the party enters Theodocious' study it is completely empty (as described in the module), except for a single supply crate. Its lid has been cracked open and it is mostly empty. At the bottom of the crate lie six identical metal boxes, five inches long, five inches wide and one inch thick, each wrapped in a soft cloth seemingly to prevent damage. All of the boxes have an anti-magic coating to conceal their magic nature. The coating, which looks like glossy paintwork, can be scratched off. Only after doing so can spells like *detect magic* and *detect traps* work on the boxes. The surface is slightly irregular and seems to be composed of small metal sticks about the size and shape of common matches. Embedded on the top of each box is a compass (+3 to Intuit Direction checks) and a small lamp, which astonishingly works like a *sunrod* (see the **PHB** for more information) in all respects. The lamp can be turned on and off by using a button on top of each box. To the right of each button there is a small symbol, resembling a stylised sun. Furthermore, each box holds a retractable pocket-lens in its side, which can be extended sideward. If a PC uses this lens to examine other items, scrolls, etc, he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his Spot checks. It may also come in handy for a rogue trying to pick a lock. If the lock's nature allows the use of a lens (i.e. if the keyhole is big enough), he

gains a +2 bonus to his Open Lock checks due to better sight.

Experienced PCs might find it suspicious that such useful items were simply abandoned. But this multi-functioning tool is a device an adventurer just won't leave to rot. That's the catch.

In truth, the boxes are **Spymaker-Clockworks**. They are completely mindless in and of themselves and do not need contact to the brain-gear to function. They merely follow a simple program. If stored in a backpack, and the backpack is worn, the spymaker detects the body's warmth and burrows its way through the backpack on its six retractable legs and pierces into the victims spinal cord with a retractable stinger. There it injects a tiny thorn through it then retracts the stinger, leaving behind one of its thorns. The victim feels nothing but a slight stitch in the back. Unless this is investigated within one hour, in which time the entry wound is still visible, he will not notice anything. No roll is needed to hit. The spymaker does not lose any of its functions until all of the thorns are used up. It just seems to be the item it always used to be.

Each of these insidious clockworks is loaded with a maximum of twelve thorns. If the last thorn is used, the spymaker ceases to function entirely. It cannot be repaired or reloaded in any way.

While moving in the target's backpack other characters that have a clear view on it may roll a Spot check (DC 15) to notice something moving in there.

Only full plate armor protects from being stung in the way described above. Every PC wearing a spymaker's thorn in the back, becomes an unwilling and unaware spy of the brain-gear.

Within three hours after the injection, each victim must roll a Will save (DC 20). If this roll is failed the brain gear is able to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel everything the PC does.

This effect works to a distance of up to five miles from the brain-gear.

Even worse, as the victims are in no way under control or influence of the brain-gear, they will probably not find out what they carry in their spinal cord until they come within a 30 feet range of the master clockwork. At this range the brain-gear may *harm* anyone carrying a thorn. It can do this at will once per round, even on multiple targets, this ability otherwise acts as per the 6th-level spell. To withstand this probably unexpected attack, the PCs must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 20) or lose all but 1d4 hit points. The brain-gear is caster level 14.

If the brain-gear falls to Orcus' hands, there soon might be more than one of its kind. See the description of this option in the original module. The thorns will work with **any** brain-gear, so the PCs are in for some future surprises, should they fail to detect and remove them.

To remove a thorn, all that is necessary are a set of tweezers and a calm hand. Check for Dexterity (DC 15) once for each thorn to be pulled out. This procedure is completely painless for the victim, he feels nothing except for another slight stitch.

When first found, the party has little chance to discover the hidden functions of the spymaker-clockworks. As mentioned above magic means will only reveal its magic aura or the trap if the coating is scratched off before casting the spell. An experienced rogue stands a better chance in this case. The trap can be found and disabled (Search, Disable Device, both DC 30), but at the cost of destroying all other functions as well.

Spymaker-Clockwork (Trap): CR 8; no attack roll necessary if not disabled or out of thorns (telepathic link, harm, long-term effect), Will save (DC 20) resists link, Fortitude save (DC 20) resists harm; Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30); Hardness 1; hp 3; Break (DC 8).

DM Note: This option can be used independently from Option 1 and Option 2. Even if you decide to use 1 and 2, you still won't have to use this one. It's all up to you.

If you use it, the brain-gear will most likely know what the PCs are up to, anytime after one of them was injected with a spymaker's thorn. The brain-gears' *harm* ability may strike at them even before they enter the inner sanctum and leave them most vulnerable. You should carefully consider this before adding this option to the adventure.

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