

The Paladin's Demise

A fantasy role playing adventure



Disclaimer

This is a fantasy role playing adventure. It was designed for Dungeons & Dragons, but it can also be used for other rule systems, like Pathfinder.

This is not a fully developed and detailed adventure. A Dungeon Master will have to fill in the necessary details himself. The reason is that the author of this adventure believes that the players determine the story and that the Dungeon Master merely defines the world and gives the players a challenge in it. Therefore, this adventure contains only a description of the villain's plans and the effect of those plans on the world. It is up to the players how they thwart or foil those plans. This adventure uses the Forgotten Realms setting as its world.

Because of the setup, this adventure requires an experienced Dungeon Master, who has the necessary creativity and flexibility.

The bigger plan

The bad guy in the series of adventures, of which this adventure is a part, is the lich Szass Tam. He plans to become a necromancy god. What he needs for that is, among other things, a large group of followers. He plans to create those himself and that is what this adventure is about.

The main outline of this adventure

In Baldur's Gate is a paladin order called the Order of the Roseheart. From Tyr, the god they worship, they have been given a heart-shaped red crystal, which gives them the power to do good deeds. Ghantax, a beholder from the underworld of Baldur's Gate, has stolen that crystal. As a result, the paladin order has lost a significant portion of their powers, negatively impacting their will to perform good deeds. Because of the theft, a little more has become known about the crystal's powers. It turns out to be a rare type

of crystal that can be mined in Moonshae Isles. Szass Tam has discovered that, after certain treatment, those crystals can be used to disperse a poison gas that kills people and turns the corpses into undead. Szass Tam has commissioned a Red Wizard to mine more crystals from the mountains of Moonshae Isles. To make that mining go well, they've kidnapped several mining experts. His goal is to use the crystals to transform the inhabitants of Baldur's Gate into undead followers.

About this adventure

This adventure is written by Hugo Leisink. Questions about this adventure can be sent to hugo@leisink.net.

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Scene 1 - The kidnapping in Waterdeep

The situation

A few days ago, mining expert Kergam Daywood was kidnapped in Waterdeep. Yesterday, an attempt was made to kidnap a second mining expert, Mergin Foghand, from his home, which failed. The boss of the mining guild in Waterdeep, Ellon Riverlance, offers Mergin to stay somewhere else until this situation is resolved.

The adventure

The adventure begins at an inn in Waterdeep, where the party is sitting quietly, enjoying an evening meal. Two people enter, looking around suspiciously. They are Ellon and Mergin. They walk to the bar and Ellon books a room for Mergin at the inn. Ellon and Mergin walk upstairs and after a while only Ellon comes back down and walks out.

Ten minutes later, a Hobgoblin Captain and a Hobgoblin come in. These have orders to kidnap Mergin and bring him to the port. They've discovered Mergin's hiding place by shadowing him. The Hobgoblins do not know more than just this assignment. The Hobgoblin Captain runs directly up the stairs and the Hobgoblin stays on the stairs to stop anyone who wants to go up. The innkeeper sees this happening and intervenes. The Hobgoblin responds aggressively to the innkeeper. Meanwhile, the Hobgoblin Captain is upstairs looking for Mergin, who has locked himself in the room. Outside, another Hobgoblin is waiting with a horse and cart. The party is supposed to intervene on this situation.

If the kidnapping succeeds, Mergin is taken to a warehouse at the port. There, two bribed port employees crate him to load him into a nearby ship. Whether the kidnapping succeeds or not, Ellon approaches the party asking them to help him. From the previous kidnapping, he knows the warehouse in question and the nearby ship are suspect, but city guards have been unable to find anything. He knows that the ship lying there will sail to Baldur's Gate and asks the party to go with that ship to find

out who is behind the kidnappings and why those people are being transported to Baldur's Gate. He asks them to contact Bardek Brodahk, the boss of the mining guild in Baldur's Gate.

Investigation of the ship while it is in port comes to nothing. For security reasons, only city guards are allowed on the ship, and the Red Wizard, who is already secretly on board, fools them with magic. So, it is up to the party to free the kidnapped mining expert during the journey to Baldur's Gate.



Scene 2 - The boat ride to Baldur's Gate

If the kidnapping of Mergin succeeded, then he lies in a crate in the cargo hold of the ship. If the party stopped the kidnapping, then Kergam lies in that crate. The ship is primarily a transport ship for goods, but it also accommodates some passengers. One of those passengers is a Red Wizard, who keeps his identity hidden and protects his cabin through magic. The other passengers are merchants (owners of the goods being transported) and travelers.

Passengers are prohibited from entering the cargo hold during the journey. The Red Wizard is too strong for the party, but will not go for victory during a fight. He will burn the ship's sails and go to Baldur's Gate via a teleportation spell. When that happens, the ship can only travel at one-quarter speed. The ship's captain, Starkon Seasorrow, knows of a broken ship nearby with some sails still attached. What he doesn't know is that that ship is being herded into place by a sleeping Kraken. The party is asked to take a rowboat to that ship and retrieve the sails. The Kraken's tentacles are visible in the hold of that ship. If the party is not careful enough, the Kraken will wake up and will pull down the ship it is holding.

If the party fails to free the mining expert from the cargo hold, it will be lost from sight in Baldur's Gate.



Scene 3 - The investigation in Baldur's Gate

The situation

The Red Wizards present in Baldur's Gate will do everything to hide their true identity. Everyone who comes into contact with a Red Wizard will not know it is a Red Wizard.

In the system of subterranean corridors and sewers of Baldur's Gate, the kenku Croaker calls the shots. He is the leader of the thieves guild. Although the thieves guild consists of a variety of races, his immediate confidants is a large group of other kenku. Upon meeting him in the underground corridors, he will move through that group of Kenku, with everyone looking the same. Only when all is safe will he step forward from the group and make himself known.

The mining expert Melcer Wiseglade was kidnapped from his home a few weeks ago by members of the thieves guild, at the behest of the Red Wizards, and taken to the harbor via the underground corridors. There he was put on a ship bound for Moonshae Isles. Croaker is aware of this. Shortly after the kidnapping, Elanoor, Melcer's wife, also disappeared. However, no one knows how and why she disappeared or where she is.

The thieves guild also transports crates for the Red Wizards from the port to the church. For Croaker, these are nothing more than paid assignments. He has no knowledge of the crates' contents.

The paladins of the Order of the Roseheart have completely lost the will to do good deeds due to the loss of their crystal. They have been persuaded by the Red Wizards to exchange their church in the middle of Baldur's Gate for an abandoned monastery just outside the city. A large amount of liquor, which was part of the offer, certainly helped. The paladins now spend their day drinking and doing nothing. In the monastery, a rosary made of wood hangs on the wall in the prayer room. It is obvious that something is missing from the center of that wreath, namely the

heart-shaped crystal. It is common knowledge that the paladins have lost their roseheart crystal and that they are now in the monastery. Exactly who is in the church now is not known to anyone, because the Red Wizards do not allow anyone into the church.

The Red Wizards wanted the church because it is large, has large spacious basements, which also provide access to the sewers of Baldur's Gate. In that church, they can process the crystals from Moonshae Isles for their own purposes. They use the sewers to transport the crystals unseen from the port to the church and, after being processed, to distribute them throughout the city.

In the monastery, a Red Wizard watches over the paladins. She suppresses any attempts to reclaim the church and tries to keep outsiders away. She gives the paladins liquor in exchange for simple tasks, such as protecting the crystals while being transported by the thieves guild through the city's underground passages. Even the paladins do not know what is in the crates they protect.

Ghantax is still in possession of the Roseheart crystal. It is hidden in his lair, located in the underground corridors of Baldur's Gate. No one in Baldur's Gate knows the crystal is there. Like Croaker, Ghantax sees himself as boss of the underground corridors and sewers. Croaker has more influence, due to his large group of thieves, but Ghantax is much stronger. He makes Croaker pay for using the underground corridors.

The adventure

After arriving in Baldur's Gate, the logical step for the party is to go to the mining guild. Bardek Brodahk, the head of the mining guild, tells them that the mining expert Melcer Wiseglade has disappeared for several weeks. His wife Elanoor has not been seen in that time either. He gives the party the address of Melcer's house. In the basement of that house, there is a hole in the wall, which leads to the underground corridors. Through that hole, Melcer has been kidnapped. A kenku feather in the house may lead to Croaker and

his group of kenkus.

As the party investigates the underground passageways, they encounter a group from the thieves guild and a paladin, bringing a crate with crystals from the harbor to the church. The paladin can be identified by the familiar roseheart logo on his armor.

Croaker is willing to tell about Melcer's abduction to the harbor and that the ship he was loaded on has left for Moonshae Isles. In return, he wants an artifact that is in the museum. What he wants and why is at the Dungeon Master's discretion.

If the party investigates the church, the Red Wizards will do everything in their power to chase the party away, non-violently. Inside the church, the Red Wizards are working on the crystals. From the church, they are transported through the underground passages to various places in the city. They are hidden in the basements of houses. The inhabitants of those houses are murdered and replaced with doppelgangers, who take on the identity of the previous inhabitants. They will do everything they can to keep the crystals hidden.

When the Red Wizards start to notice that the party is investigating Melcer's disappearance or one of the houses that contain a crystal, they will pay Vobran to arrest them for murder. To support the allegation, they use the corpses of the people whose house they took to place a crystal in the basement. As a result, they end up in prison and have to fight monsters in the arena during the day. In prison, there are several ways to escape, such as bribing a guard, creating an uprising, escaping through the sewers and befriending a monster to be fought in order to break out by force.

The goal for the party is to find their way to Moonshae Isles to further investigate the kidnapping of Melcer and what the crystals are being used for.



Scene 4 - The Liberation on Moonshae Isles

The Situation

On Moonshae Isles, a group of people from a small village in the middle of the island are held captive and forced to mine crystals in the mines. They are guarded by lizardfolks. The lizardfolks are forced to do so by the Red Wizards. This is because the lizardfolks' shaman is imprisoned in the city of Gwynneth. The Red Wizards have led the mayor of that city to believe that the lizardfolk have been attacking people and trying to poison a well nearby Gwynneth. The town guards confirming these false accusations are being pressured by the Red Wizards to do so.

In addition to the shaman, the Red Wizards have also imprisoned several women and children of the lizardfolk. They are held captive by an adult green dragon in his cave in the mountains. This dragon does so in exchange for gems that are also found in the mines.

Near Gwynneth, a group of druids live by themselves in the forest. They maintain a good relationship with the town of Gwynneth.

The Adventure

Halfway through the journey to Moonshae Isles, the ship is attacked by pirates. Although the ship's sailors can defend themselves somewhat against the pirates, the giant crocodile that fights along with the pirates is too strong for them. When the giant crocodile is dead, the pirates will flee.

The ship eventually arrives in Gwynneth. When the party starts asking questions because of their investigation, residents will refer them to the town hall. When they arrive there, they witness a heated discussion between Bren Damag, the mayor of Gwynneth, Nuadax, the leader of the druids, and Zehnam, a Red Wizard posing as an expert on indigenous peoples. Zehnam suggests that the lizardfolk are a threat and that capturing their shaman to keep them quiet, is the right decision. Nuadax, however, believes that the lizardfolk's behavior is not

natural and that what exactly is going on here, must be investigated. Bren lacks the decisiveness to make a decision on this and leaves it as it is for now, to Zehnam's satisfaction.

When the party comes into contact with lizardfolks patrolling the forest around the mine, the lizardfolks will try to scare them away. However, it will be obvious to the party that they are not doing so with full conviction. The lizardfolks think that hurting people can have consequences for the safety of their captured shaman. The people in Gwynneth do not know of the existence of that mine and therefore do not know what goes on there. That the lizardfolk are so relatively close to town is inexplicable to them, because their village is located deep into the forest and they are not known for being this hostile.

The challenge of the party is to free Melcer and the villagers in the mine without a major confrontation with the lizardfolk. In addition, to also free the lizardfolk from the Red Wizards. The adult green dragon holding lizardfolk captive is too strong to defeat. So freeing those lizardfolks will have to be done in a sneaky and devious way.

When Melcer is freed, he tells how he was kidnapped from his home and forced by some Red Wizards to investigate a heart-shaped crystal in the possession of a great beholder in the underground corridors of Baldur's Gate, not knowing it was Ghantax. If the party has not discovered it before, this is the moment the party learns that the Red Wizards are their real adversaries.

Optionally, Melcer reveals that the beholder also told how he stole the roseheart crystal from the church. He sent a group of kobolds to do that for him. Let the players play than scene, being the kobolds.

The journey back to Baldur's Gate goes off without a hitch.

Scene 5 - The denouement in Baldur's Gate

Upon arrival at Baldur's Gate, Melcer wants to go straight to his wife, who of course is not at home. Bardek has discovered that Elanoor was captured by the city guards shortly after Melcer's abduction. At night she is locked up, but during the day she performs administrative community service. The head of the city guard, Vobran Chetsk, has been bribed by the Red Wizards to use false evidence of theft in the charges. In this way, the Red Wizards want to discredit her so that no one believes her about her husband's kidnapping. Both Melcer and Bardek ask the party to free her. To avoid any hassle with the town guards, it is imperative that this be done in a quiet way.

After being rescued, Elanoor tells about a house she had to clean as part of her punishment. There she saw a weird big crystal in the basement and noticed that the inhabitants were acting weird and suspicious. The crystal will spread poison gas if it is destroyed or activated by the Red Wizards. The doppelgangers wear an amulet that protects them from the crystal's poison gas. They are tasked with protecting the crystal, but to destroy it when that is about to fail. A crystal disperses enough poison gas for an area of several hundred meters. This will of course reveal the real threat of the crystals and the Red Wizards' plan.

Bardek thinks it's a good idea to investigate that house and to also steal back Ghantax's crystal. They will need the paladins in their fight against the Red Wizards. Ghantax is too strong for the party to defeat. Stealing the crystal will have to be done by stealth.

The final battle will take place in the church. The paladins want it back and want revenge on the Red Wizards who deceived them. The Red Wizards in the church all wear an amulet to protect them from the poison gas. It will be a big fight between many Red Wizards and the party and the paladins. In the process, the Red Wizards will deploy poison gas. Halfway the fight, Ghantax shows up. He has

discovered that his crystal has been stolen and suspects the Red Wizards of it. The poison gas will eventually transform him into an undead beholder. In this form, he can be defeated by the party. In the fight with the Red Wizards and the undead beholder, most of the paladins will perish. The few that remain will retreat to live in solitary, bringing a final end to the Order of the Roseheart.



Characters

Szass Tam

Lich Wizard, CR 30. The big bad guy who wants to become a god.

Characters in Waterdeep

Ellon Riverlance

Male human. Boss of the Mining Guild in Waterdeep.

Kergam Daywood

Male human. Mining expert.

Mergin Foghand

Male human. Mining expert.

Characters in Baldur's Gate

Bardek Brodahk

Male dwarf. Boss of the Mining Guild in Baldur's Gate.

Croaker

Male kenku rogue, CR 9. Leader thieves guild. Sees himself as boss of the underground corridors or sewers of Baldur's Gate. Wants to maintain power and position. As long as money is sufficiently available, it is of less importance. Weekly payments to Ghantax bother him considerably and would prefer to get rid of him, but sees no possibility given Ghantax's strength.

Elanoor Wiseglade

Melcer Wiseglade's wife.

Ghantax

Beholder, CR 13. He has stolen the crystal from the Order of the Roseheart, revealing the magical possibilities the crystal has to offer. He also sees himself as boss of the underground of Baldur's Gate and treats Croaker as a tenant, forcing him to pay weekly for his stay there.

Jaro Moonbane

Leader of the paladins of Order of the Roseheart.

Jhadara Myrae

Female human mage, CR 12. Red Wizard and commissioned by Szass Tam to arrange the mining of crystals in Moonshae Isle in order to transform the inhabitants of Baldur's Gate into undead minions. Is not known in Baldur's Gate as Red Wizard. She is not part of the city government, but is known there as someone who likes to offer her magical arts as a service.

Melcer Wiseglade

Mining expert from Baldur's Gate. He was kidnapped by the Red Wizards and transported to Moonshae Isles. There, he forcibly oversees the mining process.

Vobran Chetsk

Human male fighter, CR 5. Corrupt head of Baldur's Gate city guard. Grew up in a poor family and hates rich people. Is bribable to do jobs or look the other way, which Croaker and Jhadara Myrae are happy to take advantage of.

Characters on Moonshae Isles

Bren Damag

Mayor of the town of Gwynneth. Is searching how to properly deal with the lizardfolk situation.

Nuadax

Leader of the druids. His goal is a natural balance between people, animals and nature on Moonshae Isles. Advises Bren on this.

Zehnam

Red Wizard in Gwynneth. Manipulates Bren in his view of the threat from the lizardfolk.

Zirvaish

The Red Wizard who oversees the mining process on Moonshae Isles.