
Rat Moon Rising

a sample adventure

"Rat Moon Rising" is an adventure for any number of beginning characters (5 - 10 advances.) It is intended to be fast-paced and dangerous and it is recommended that the standard advance be five experience points for this adventure. Don't worry: if that's not your group's standard advance rate, either take them through this adventure at a higher number of advances (10 - 15) or just lower the standard advance for this adventure. This adventure is set in the ruins of Maldor but should be able to fit any combination of characters you like.

Introduction

Phillipe the Dawnbreaker, a lord of Maldor, has sent a squad of his men on a border raid against his neighboring lord and enemy, Charles of the Zenith. It is a two day trip on foot to the border and they stopped for the night in the outskirts of an old city, Iohnsgaard (yons-guard). They disappeared that night and no one knows where they are. Phillipe assumes they were taken by Charles' troops but that is not the case. They were attacked in the night by Ratkin living in Iohnsgaard and are now being nursed back to health by the same group of Ratkin.

Cast of Characters

Phillipe the Dawnbreaker, lord of the land

Phillipe's a real bastard in that way that only effete nobles manage to be. He's cautious and crafty and has not pushed for full-out war against Charles. Instead, he focuses on minor skirmishes to keep his subjects' fears up and push Charles' hand into launching a large attack first.

Pools: Vigor 1, Instinct 1, Reason 3

Abilities: Athletics (V) 1, Reaction (I) 3, Resist (R) 3, Stay Up (-) 3, Etiquette (R) 5, Savoir-Faire (I) 4, Sway (I) 4, Dueling (V) 3, Divination (R) 2, Enthrallment (R) 2

Secrets: Know Capabilities, Secret of Magical Persistence, Secret of the Invisible Hand

Weapons and armor: Epee, +2 to strike commoners

Phillipe's guards and soldiers

Abilities: Athletics 2, Reaction 2, Resist 2, Stay Up 2

Visla, elven companion to Phillipe

Visla is an androgynous elf of indeterminate age. Basically, he's a weird cipher. He is always at Phillipe's side, whispering in his ear and orchestrating events. What Phillipe does not know is that Visla has told Squall of the soldiers' coming. He wishes to push Phillipe's hand into all-out war with Charles, the only thing Phillipe has resisted him in. By altering the Ratkin, he hopes Phillipe will react with force.

Pools: Vigor 0, Instinct 2, Reason 1

Abilities: Athletics (V) 0, Reaction (I) 2, Resist (R) 5, Stay Up (-) 1, Transformation (I) 5, Sway (I) 3

Secrets: Living Morph

Gerard, cousin of Phillipe and squad leader

Gerard is *not* a very good soldier. He's a much better liar and a pretty good all-around rake. Phillipe does not really like him, but as a favor to his aunt, has put Gerard in a seemingly good position as a captain in his guard. Somehow, he gets sent on the most dangerous missions; Phillipe says it's because he "wants to send a man he can trust." Phillipe has underestimated Gerard, however; he has made a deal with Charles that if he delivers the squad alive to Charles' troops, Gerard will be given a duchy in Gerard's lands.

Pools: Vigor 0, Instinct 2, Reason 1

Abilities: Athletics (V) 2, Reaction (I) 3, Resist (R) 2, Stay Up (-) 2, Deceit (I) 4, Savoir-Faire (I) 4, Infantry (V) 2, Discern Truth (R) 2, Stealth (I) 1

The injured squad members that can stand

Abilities: Athletics (V) 0, Reaction (I) 0, Resist (R) 2, Stay Up (-) 0, Infantry (V) 2

Charles of the Zenith, neighboring lord

Charles is a bear of a man, huge and hairy. As far as overbearing lords of Maldor go, he's not that bad. His taxes are only about half of a man's yearly income, as opposed to the standard three-quarters. He has little time for political nonsense or subtlety. Born a soldier, he achieved power through arms and continues with that mindset. Phillipe's machinations are beginning to grate on him, and if provoked, he will not hesitate to conquer his lands and put his head on a pike.

Pools: Vigor 3, Instinct 1, Reason 0

Abilities: Athletics (V) 4, Reaction (I) 3, Resist (R) 1, Stay Up (-) 3, Infantry (V) 5, Scrapping (I) 3, Dueling (V) 2

Secrets: Secret of Disarm, Secret of Mighty Blow

Charles' guards and soldiers

Abilities: Athletics 3, Reaction 2, Resist 1, Stay Up 2, Infantry (V) 3

Night-Paws, the Ratkin leader

Night-Paws is a jet-black Ratkin. He is surprisingly stealthy for his large size; he stands about five-and-a-half feet tall, which is immense for a Ratkin. He achieved leadership of the horde not just through strength, but cunning. He has dedicated the last few years to studying political philosophy. His anger at Squall for attacking these soldiers is great. He realizes they are the symptom, not cause, of his problems, and that they will cause much trouble to come down on his litter. Because of this, he is tending to their wounds, and hopes to get them on their way. If he finds out Gerard's identity as minor royalty, though, he will consider keeping him as a hostage or killing him.

Pools: Vigor 1, Instinct 2, Reason 2

Abilities: Litter-Bond (I) 3, Athletics (V) 1, Reaction (I) 2, Resist (R) 3, Stay Up (-) 4, Stealth (I) 4, First Aid (R) 4, Counsel (R) 2, Pray (V) 2, Scrapping (I) 2

Secrets: Secret of Blessing, Secret of Rat Familiarity, Secret of Rat Vision

Night-Paws' Ratkin followers

Abilities: Litter-Bond (I) 2, Athletics (V) 2, Reaction (I) 2, Resist (R) 2, Stay Up (-) 1, Scrapping (I) 2

Night-Paws' rat litter (attacks as one mass)

Abilities: Power (V) 1, Prowess (I) 3, Senses (I) 3, Brain (R) 0, Stay Up (-) 1

Squall, Night-Paws' primary rival

Squall is a light-grey Ratkin who grows weary of all of Night-Paws' talk and inaction. He wishes to wrest control of the horde for himself, then break the bones of all humans in his area. He has managed to convince three of the larger Ratkin warriors to follow him, and plans to challenge Night-Paws to a fight at the next festival of the full moon.

Pools: Vigor 2, Instinct 2, Reason 0

Abilities: Litter-Bond (I) 2, Athletics (V) 2, Reaction (I) 3, Resist (R) 2, Stay Up (-) 3, Scrapping (I) 4, Battle (R) 3, Orate (I) 2

Secrets: Secret of Rat Familiarity, Secret of Rat Size, Secret of Rat Vision, Secret of Imbuement (claws and teeth are +2 damage when attacking humans)

Squall's Ratkin followers (three from the horde)

Abilities: Litter-Bond (I) 1, Athletics (V) 2, Reaction (I) 2, Resist (R) 2, Stay Up (-) 2, Scrapping (I) 3

Squall's huge rat-thing

Hidden deep in Iohnsgaard, Squall has created a monster. Three years ago, he rescued a mutant rat from a litter, born deformed and half-dead, rejected by its mother. Raised on blood and pain, and fed on bone-cracked marrow, it has grown to immense proportions, the size of a large mastiff. It is insane and constantly in physical agony, and will unleash itself on anyone who disturbs it besides Squall.

Abilities: Power (V) 5, Prowess (I) 2, Senses (I) 2, Brain (R) 1, Stay Up (-) 3

Special: The rat-thing's savage attacks always do +1 damage. In addition, it suffers no penalties for being bloodied. It is a minor NPC, though, and can be removed as a threat without Bringing Down the Pain.

The Adventure

En route to Charles' domain, Gerard and his squad decided to stop for the night. Seeing campfires in the distance, they planned to camp with whatever travelers lit them. The fires were lit by Squall and his gang, however, who savagely attacked them. They were seen by a group of the horde loyal to Night-Paws and reported back to him. A stand-off occurred, and Night-Paws won, bringing the injured soldiers back to Iohnsgaard to heal them.

This is where the characters come in. Like in all games of *The Shadow of Yesterday*, the Story Guide should not try to force the characters together. They can come from any part of the adventure. Some hooks to begin with:

- Phillipe is going to wonder where the squad went when he hears nothing from them. Any of the characters could be sent as mercenaries to hunt them down, or be a part of his court.
- Any of the characters could be related to any of the squad members, and go searching for them on their own.
- Any Ratkin character can be part of the horde, on either side.
- Any player who wants to start off with their character hurt can play one of the soldiers.
- Any character could be loyal to Charles, who is going to wonder where Gerard is.

The main locales characters could be in are Phillipe's court, Charles' court, or Iohnsgaard.

So, what next?

Prospective Story Guides are probably thinking, "So, what do I do next? Where's the list of rooms in Iohnsgaard? What do the NPCs do?"

Go forth and play, I say. Your Keys on your players' characters will take care of the rest. Some things I've seen happen:

- The night the characters found Iohnsgaard was the Festival of the Full Moon. Instead of Night-Paws and Squall fighting for the tribe, a human challenged Squall, who accepted.
- A moon-priestess human character tried to talk to Gerard, who promptly was lewd and awful towards her. She rescued all the squad but him.
- Squall and Night-Paws were of the same litter. When one character attacked Squall, Night-Paws and a mass of rats joined in for a serious fight.
- The giant rat-thing showed up (it was not originally part of this adventure). It was born from Night-Paws' own mother, though, and ended up siding with him. Strangely, it was proven that Visla was its "father" by performing a strange ritual, and that Squall and Visla had a long-term relationship.

Key Scenes

Find the remains of the soldiers' possessions and chewed dog bones around the extinguished campfires (2 XP.)

Find out about the feud between Night-Paws and Squall (2 XP.)

Get challenged to a fight by Squall (3 XP for the character challenged.)

Meet Squall's giant rat-thing (1 XP.)

Discover Gerard's treachery against Phillipe. (3 XP.)

And make your own!

Sample Names

Human

Male

Burns, Cortez, Wolf, Raoul, Argus, Shield

Female

Ashley, Graciela, Catherine, Astrid, Maria

Ratkin

Male

Tam, Kan, Salny, Pick-Tooth, Brasseye

Female

Twyla, Rose, Carlotta, Zoyo
