

# HAUNTING MEMORIES

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## Introduction

This adventure is set in Falkovnia. The characters are traveling through the forested center of the realm. There they must face a band of ghostly raiders who terrorize the local communities. Unless the characters can unravel the secret of the ghosts, which leads into the past of the region's Dark Lord, the characters and the local residents are doomed.

The adventure is for 3-5 characters of 5th to 7th level. The party should not contain too many spellcasters. One mage and one priest would be about right for the adventure. The characters will be more challenged by this adventure if they have only one or two magical weapons of +2 or greater. Since the main antagonists are only hit by +2 or better weapons, this will require the characters to be creative in battling them.

Adventure Theme Song: Carmina Burana, or some other chanting music.

## Part One - It Begins

### A. Day 1 morning

The adventure begins with the characters traveling through the central region of Falkovnia. As for why they are there, it is best that the DM create a reason based on his current campaign. Some ideas are, the characters run afoul of Vlad Drakov's men, and have fled to the less populated areas of the domain to hide out until the pursuit dies down, or the mists could have transported them there, in which case they will have to determine where they are on their own.

The interior of Falkovnia has no large settled areas. The terrain is heavily forested, and hilly. The inhabitants gather in small village communities of 20 to 100 people. These communities are unusually gathered near each other and are less than a day's travel apart. No roads connect the villages, but trails wind their way through the forest between the communities. The corrupt members of the local military very rarely travel through this area, as the people are few, poor, and have little to steal. Characters hiding out, will be quite safe from the roving patrols that guard the main roads of the realm. The characters left the roads three days ago and traveled north into the forest, heading for a village called Sibl, where they have been told they can find sanctuary from Vlad's troops.

"Having traveled through these dark woods for three days, you were looking forward to the safety of human civilization again. But it seems that you will have to wait a while longer. The small village you have just entered has been burnt to the ground. The remains of about a dozen buildings lie spread around a large clearing in the forest. You see the bodies of more than a score of people lying about. There is no sign of any survivors, and no sign of the village's attackers."

A search of the village uncovers 47 corpses scattered throughout the clearing. A few have been burnt by flames. Many more show signs of violent deaths, and 9 of the victims have had their throats slit while standing against a tree, as if executed. The attack looks as if it took place no more than one day ago. No sign of the attackers is

uncovered, and their trail disappears in the thick forest surrounding the village. After the party has finished searching the village, they can press on northwards towards the village of Sibl.

## B. First Night

That night the camp is set up on a rise. The land slopes downward at a gradual angle, allowing the characters to see a good distance to the west. After nightfall the lights of a small village appear far in the distance. If the characters want to travel to the village instead of camping out, tell them it will take them a couple of hours of traveling in the dark to reach the village, which is out of their way.

Around midnight, the village is attacked and destroyed. The characters are alerted to this as the first buildings are set aflame. Read the following to the character on watch at that time.

"The silence of the dead of night is interrupted by voices. It sounds like singing, coming from far away. You turn to the village in the distance and realize the wind is carrying the voices across the distance from the village. As you listen closely, it sounds more like rhythmic chanting than singing. It strikes you as strange that the entire village (and it must be the entire village for the sound to reach you) would wake in the middle of the night and gather to chant.

The chanting begins to fade a few moments later, and you see one of the small lights of the village suddenly brighten. Another house suddenly grows brighter, and then two more. You strain to see what is causing the lights, and then you see it. The houses are on fire! The village must be under attack!"

As the party races towards the village there is a 10% increasing chance per turn, that they come across a patrol of 4 swordwraith scouts. If the wraiths have surprise they will track the party and attack if possible. If they are surprised the wraiths will attempt to flee and lead the characters away from the village.

No matter how quickly the party responds the town is destroyed and the attackers are gone before they arrive. If the party destroyed or chased away the scout patrol then 10 refugees escape east towards the characters. If not, only 1 scared young boy, David, makes it away.

If the party meets any refugees they must appear calm and unthreatening to the villagers or they will run away. The villagers will not talk of the attack, and only stare mutely at characters asking about it, but can tell the party that the next village is a day's travel northeast. It is called Sibl, and is where the villagers will head.

## Part 2 - The Enemy Attacks

### A. Day 2

On the afternoon of Day 2, the party enters Sibl. They can see that the village is preparing for battle. The men of the village have gathered in the center of town, carrying crudely made weapons to practice with. The town's defenders are led by Lieberman, a strong lumberjack, who wields one of the town's few real weapons, a large ax.

Lieberman drafts every able body man and any strong looking woman in the defense of the village. The rest of the town's inhabitants, women children and the elderly are being

sent north to another village, called Goli.

When the characters first reach the clearing, five of the village's men stop them, and demand to know their names and purpose. If the party are traveling with any refugees from the other village, they will vouch for the characters. Otherwise, the five men question the characters extensively. The characters are then pressed into duty.

The villagers have built a 4 foot high wooden wall around the village. There is only about 50 yards of clearing between the wall and the surrounding woodlands, allowing an enemy to approach very close before being spotted. From survivors of other attacks the villagers have learned that the attacks come at night, and from the west. Lieberman place most of his 35 man force on the west side of the village. The villagers will not send out a patrol unless the characters suggest it. The patrols have a 50% chance of discovering a 4 wraith scouting patrol that night. Otherwise, the second night passes uneventfully, as does the next day. During this time the characters can help the villagers prepare defenses in any way they wish.

### B. Day 3, night - The attack

About an hour before midnight, read the following to the characters.

"Late into the night, you stand among the defenders of Sibl, waiting. These simple peasants grip their crude weapons with determination to defend their homes. But you can see they are nervous. A middle-aged man to your right paces back and forth in agitation. The man to your left stares out into the darkened night, not speaking a word. Others mumble conversations, but no one talks loudly. They have lit many torches to light most of the village, but their light does not penetrate the thick darkness of the forest, such as short distance away.

The silence of the night is pierced by the chanting of many voices. The chanting is low, but still audible, and is coming from the woods on the west side of the village. The villagers gather nearer, straining to see the chanters, but the darkness of the woods reveals nothing. As you gaze into the darkened forest, you think you see red fire flies. But the small red lights you see don't move erratically as fire flies do, and they travel in pairs. Suddenly the volume of the chanting increases greatly, and the tempo increases. A score of figures, with red glowing eyes, break from the cover of the forest and charge."

The nature of the attackers, while not apparent at first, quickly becomes clear as the twenty swordwraiths attack the west side of the village. After 5 rounds of fighting, or if half of the swordwraiths are beaten down, the attackers break off fleeing into the woods. Twenty-one of the villagers pursue the fleeing figures into the woods. The characters can join them, or remain in the village. The fleeing wraiths lead their pursuers into a clearing a quarter of a mile from the village. In the clearing an ambush has been prepared. On one side of the clearing are ten more swordwraiths. These swordwraiths are mounted on undead horses, and charge into the villagers. Once the ambush is sprung, the fleeing swordwraiths turn back and attack as well. The pursuing villagers are all killed. At the same time twenty more swordwraiths attack the town from the east. They set fire to buildings, and attack the remaining defenders of the village. The village will be destroyed, unless the party miraculously manage to defeat the entire band of swordwraiths. For the party to remain alive, they must either flee the village to either the north or south, or hide from the attackers. If the characters do hide from the wraiths, they can follow a group of the attackers back through the forest.

### C. Burial mounds

The wraiths' path remains visible for three hours after they have passed. After that it begins to fade, and by morning, it appears as if the path never existed at all. Following a group of swordwraiths, the characters are lead to a large burial mound in the forest, ten miles to the west southwest of the village of Sibl.

As long as the characters remain hidden, they can watch the swordwraiths gather in a circle and spend the rest of the night talking and boasting about the night's battle. Before dawn, the swordwraiths retire into the mound, sealing the entrance for the night.

The burial mound is a man-made hill, 50' tall, and almost 100' in diameter. There is only one entrance into the mound, blocked by a granite door, 1' thick. To open the door requires a knock or more powerful magic, or a combined strength of 50. Behind the door, a short narrow hallway leads deeper into the hill. The hallway leads to a circular room at the center of the mound. The room's ceiling is domed and made of marble blocks, into which is carved various epithets and slogans praising the valor of fallen warriors. The walls of the room are earthen, and the twenty swordwraiths lie in small niches carved into the earth.

During the day the swordwraiths are vulnerable. They must rest during the day, to heal any wounds they have received. During the daylight hours, the swordwraiths are vulnerable to silver weapons or weapons of +1 or better. While not harmed by sunlight, swordwraiths will avoid exposure to it at all costs. If the characters try to block the entrance to seal the wraiths inside, the wraiths will be trapped in the mound for three days. It takes them that long to dig out another exit.

### Part 3 - Final Stand

#### D. The Village of Goli

Twelve miles north of Sibl, is the next village, Goli, where all the surviving refugees from the destroyed villages have gathered. Goli is the last village in the area. The men here expect an attack and are building defenses including (pits, spikes to slow a charge, buildings set to explode if they are set aflame, rope snares to dismount riders.) There is a total of 60 men and women waiting to fight. Those people who cannot fight will be sent north into the hills to hide.

Since the characters have already faced off against the attackers, the villagers will be grateful for any advice the characters can give them. If the characters ask to be in-charge of the village's defenses, the townsfolk agree, and will follow the characters' orders.

The village of Goli is the largest in the area. Here the people have cleared some of the land around the village for farming. The fields are on the south and west sides of town and are not very large, but they do give the defenders a clear view of attackers coming from these directions. Any attackers would have to cross the 300 yards of clearing to reach the village.

The characters have the rest of that day, and the next to prepare the villagers for the attack. On the night of day 5, the swordwraiths will attack the town.

#### E. Day 5, night - The Battle of Goli

An hour before midnight on the fifth night, the chanting begins. It comes from the southwest, and draws the defenders into the fields. Unless the characters make other arrangements, 1/4 of the force is left in town, and the rest await the attack in the fields. The attack comes from the south and west. What remains of the cavalry attacks from the west, and rotates south. A group of twenty swordwraiths on foot attack from the south and try to drive the defenders into the path of the cavalry. The ten remaining footsoldiers enter the town from the east and attack the defenders in the village.

The men in the field are all lost, but the men in the town manage to hold out for a little while. Depending on where the characters are, they may be fighting for their lives. If they joined the men in the fields they will be hard pressed on two sides by the swordwraiths. However, if they remained back in the village, they face only 10 swordwraiths. The villagers occupy half of the wraiths, leaving five for the party to attack. After 10 rounds, the swordwraiths in the fields finish off the last of the defenders outside the village, and join the fight raging in the village. As the battle rages on, most of the town is destroyed. One of the swordwraiths will be seen stooping down to examine the tracks of the refugees that fled the day before. On the next round the rest of the wraiths flee into the night.

Eight of the defenders will have survived the attack. They will have seen the swordwraith studying the refugees' trail, and will wish to rush off to protect the refugees. The party can travel to the refugee camp, or can pursue the fleeing swordwraiths.

#### F. Pursuit

The wraiths' trail is just as visible as the previous one. However, the swordwraiths will prepare an ambush for anyone following them. Five swordwraiths will spring from concealment and attack. If the PC's are victorious they can continue down the trail. If the characters flee, they will lose the trail and not be able to find the swordwraiths' destination. Otherwise, the characters can follow the trail to another burial mound.

### Part 4 The Good Old Days

#### A. Burial Mounds

The trail leads roughly west for fifteen miles. The characters will not reach the end until after dawn. The trail ends at a collection of burial mounds. Three of the artificial hills are grouped in a clearing in the woods. The opening of each of the mounds faces the center of the clearing. In the clearing's center is a pedestal, here the dead would be laid out with honors before their entombment. The pedestal is occupied when the characters arrive. Lying on it, dressed in full armor, with sword and shield, is the body of an old man. If approached, the dead man speaks, "What are you youngsters gauging at? Don't you know how to show your respect."

The "dead" man is Mircea Buchen and he is not dead, though he longs to be. Mircea Buchen was a lieutenant in Vlad Drakov's army when it first entered Ravenloft over 50 years ago. He fought with the troops in the first two invasions attempts of Darkon as well as attempts made on other domains. He has been retired for many years now. During his retirement Buchen tried to forget the years of military failures spent in Ravenloft, and day dreamed of his youth when victories were common and death in battle was honorable. He is disgusted with the lack of victories of the falkovnian army.

As he grew older, he began to wish he had died in one of the many victorious battles of

his youth. His one desire was to die honorably in combat. To avoid what he considered the pitiful sight of the falkovnian soldiers, he took to wandering in the wilderness, where he lost himself in imaginary battles from his youth. He also secretly hoped to be attacked by some wild creature so he could die while fighting. One day he came across the burial mounds in the forest. Over the years he had forgotten, but upon seeing them he remember their purpose. This was where the death from the first invasion of Darkon were buried. Most were part of Drakov's original army and had been friends of Mircea. Here they had been buried with full honors after their fall in combat.

Mircea's dreams and desires for the good old days awakened the spirits of his former comrades. Each night as he lays sleeping, his former friends arise as sword wraiths, and instilled with dreams of former glory set out to recapture those dreams. The wraiths set out for the Darkon boarder in an attempt to invade the land again, but discovered they were unable to travel more than 50 miles from where Mircea lay sleeping. Unable to fight their hated enemy, they attacked the only people they were able, those in the nearby villages. They see these battles as training, or a warm up to their planned invasion of Darkon.

Mircea will converse freely with the characters, talking about the good old days, honoring those who have fallen in combat, and even the history of the dark lord, Vlad Drakov. If the characters listen patiently to his stories, Mircea will take a liking to them, and ask them to recount stories of their feats.

If impressed by their accomplishments, Mircea will confide in the party, telling them of his desire for death in combat. He will challenge one of the fighters in the party to honorable combat to the death. Refusals or patronizing ("Sure, why don't you fight the wizard. We'll even tie one of his hands behind his back.") will insult him greatly.

If any of the characters accept, Mircea asks for a few minutes to prepare himself, before meeting his opponent in the middle of the clearing. Mircea is still a skilled warrior, but his strength has waned. Beginning on the fourth round of combat, he begins to tired, resulting in a -1 to hit, damage, and initiative rolls. Every other round after that, subtract another 1 point as his exhaustion builds. Mircea will be grateful if he is killed before the tenth round ends. After that he will be so exhausted, he will see his death as a mercy killing, and not honorable death in combat. If killed before then, he will see his death as honorably facing a more powerful foe and being defeated.

Once defeated, the swordwraiths will no longer rise at dusk to terrorize the land.

However, the characters must bury Mircea with honors. This means lying him on the pedestal and paying their respect to a fallen soldier for the rest of the day and night. At dawn he should be entombed in one of the burial mounds. If this is not done, Mircea will rise as a swordwraith in ten days, and will re-animate the other swordwraiths, and lead them on raids throughout Falkovnia.

Mircea Buchen 6th level fighter THAC0 15; Dmg by weapon; AC 2; hp 35; MV 9; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; AL LE; ML 14; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 8, Int 13, Wis 14, Chr 15.

Equipment: Longsword 1d8/ 1d12, shield, and plate mail armor..

## B. Failure - the assault

If the characters do not defeat Mircea the rest of the swordwraiths attack the refugee camp on the night of the sixth day. The remaining the footsoldiers charge the defenders on top of a small hill and attempt to send the refugees into flight, while the cavalry waits to run them down. Unless the characters can defeat the remaining swordwraiths, the refugees are slaughtered.

## Appendix

40 Swordwraiths THAC0 13; Dmg by weapon; AC 3; HD 7; hp 35; MV 9; SA 3/2 attacks per round. Each hit drains 1 Str from victim; SD Immune to sleep, charm, and other mind-affecting magic. Turned as vampires. +2 or better to be hit; MR nil; SZ M; AL LE; ML 20. Equipment: Longsword 1d8/ 1d12, spear 1d6/ 1d8, battle ax 1d8/ 1d8, or lance 1d6+1/ 2d6.

The swordwraiths are the spirits of Mircea Buchen's fallen comrades. Their spirits have been drawn back to their bodies by Buchen's intense memories of the past. During combat, all of the swordwraiths perform a war chant to inspire themselves, and send fear into their enemies. The chant, which is spoken in an ancient language of Kyrnn, causes all creatures with less than 1 HD to fight at -1 to hit and morale due to fear. Any creatures greater than 1 HD can make a fear check to avoid this affect. The swordwraiths do not quite understand what has happened, and do not at first realize they are undead. As such they are not aware of all of their abilities and do not take advantage of them. While the wraiths are immune to weapons of less than +2, the swordwraiths do not realize this and will defend themselves from all attacks, and may even retreat from someone who is a better fighter. Gradually they will uncover their potential, but until then their tactics do not take into consideration the fact that they are immune to most forms of damage, and are not aware of how little a threat the local townsfolk pose to them.

While the swordwraiths can be defeated in combat, as long as Mircea is still alive they will reform in a weeks time. Thus only by granting Mircea his request can the characters lay the swordwraiths to rest. However, if any of the characters should take something from one of the burial mounds, be it a sword or a shield, the body whom it was stolen from will rise as a swordwraith and track down the thief. The swordwraith will not stop until the thief is dead or the object is returned. If defeated in combat, another swordwraith will animate and seek out the thief.

10 Undead horses THAC0 18; Dmg 1d6/ 1d6/ 1d4; AC 7; HD 3+1; hp 16; MV 18; SA nil; SD immune to sleep, charm, hold, and other mind controlling spells, and cold. Turned as wraiths; MR nil; SZ L; AL N; ML 20.

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