

THE BATTLE OF CHARMED RUN



HOME BREW

Fight to protect the Island of Osonora

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	3
Adventure Hook	3
The Journey to Wheldrake	3
Charmed Run	5
Appendices	7

MAP 1.1 CHARMED RUN

1 square = 5 foot

CREDITS

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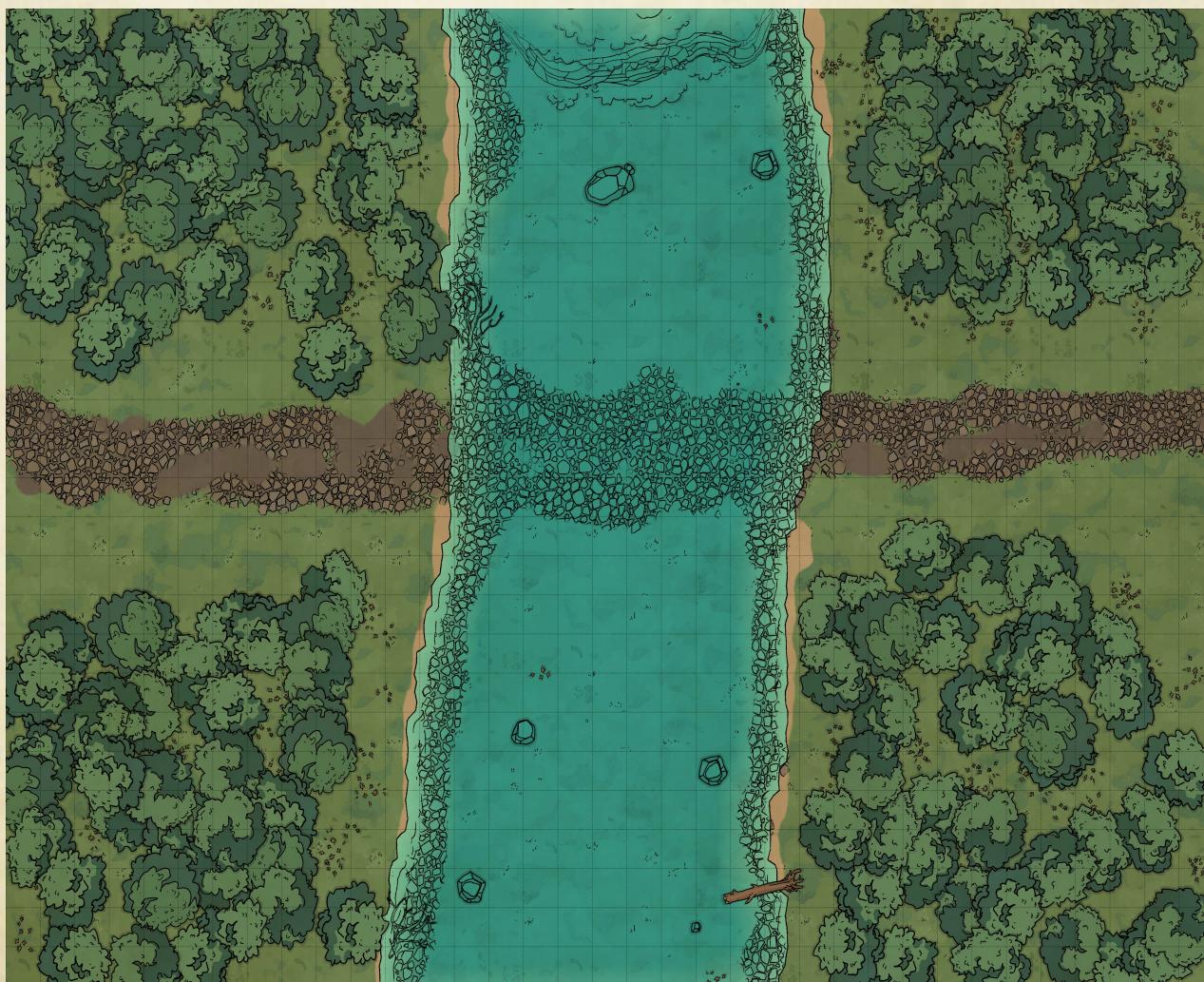
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ADVENTURE PRIMER

The Battle of Charmed Run is a 5th Edition adventure for **4-6 characters of 3rd-level** and is **optimized for a party of four characters**. This adventure sees the party escorting their patron safely back to the city of Wheldrake. Along the way they are beset upon by the undead forces of the evil necromancer Khulgath. Although this adventure is part of the larger *Plague of Madness* adventure series, you are free to place it into any setting that would fit with an escort mission.

BACKSTORY

The small village of Widekirk, sits on the northeast coast of the Isle of Osonora. If you played any of the earlier parts of the *Plague of Madness* adventure, then you will be well-acquainted with the village. The nearby city of Wheldrake is besieged by monster attacks, the most powerful among them laying waste to whole parties of adventurers. The monster is too powerful for normal means and so Lord Commander Embuirhan has sent his most trusted servant, Jarik Dotsk, to retrieve an artefact capable of destroying the beast, the *moonblade of xan*.

Jarik has already secured the blade but must now reach Wheldrake to complete his mission. Jarik is under no illusions that his mission has remained unnoticed and that dark forces hunt him.

The Church of Vauna (goddess of darkness), a powerful underground cult seeks to create a second cataclysm and the destroy the City of Wheldrake. It is they who unleashed the monsters on the city and now, having discovered the purpose of Jarik's mission, are moving to stop him for fear that the artefact he's retrieved could stump their plans. The Church of Vauna has sent the necromancer Khulgath to kill Jarik and retrieve the sword. Khulgath has had time to build a large force of undead who guard the two main routes.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The Church of Vauna seeks to stop Jarik and has sent forces to waylay him on the road. The party must protect Jarik or, in the worst case scenario, the *Moonblade of xan*, and see it safely delivered to Lord Embuirhan in Wheldrake. The party pass through an ancient forest and the obstacles it offers. Finally Khulgath's forces find the party and the characters must survive multiple waves of enemies while protecting Jarik and the artefact.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Having met Jarik (LG wood-elf *scout*) before, the huntsman is already a trusted ally and patron, and the characters know him to be a capable warrior. Meeting him in the Elf in the Food Inn, in the village of Widekirk, however, they find a jittery and worried looking man. Read or paraphrase the following:

"Oh, oh adventurers good, good." Jarik's eyes dart worriedly to the door of the tavern as it opens to reveal a farmer entering. He eyes the man suspiciously until the landlord welcomes him by name.

He frequently and unconsciously reaches for a slim package wrapped in cloth, that leans against his chair, as if check to make sure it's still there. "Thank you for coming. I have need of your services once again my friends." Jarik lowers his voice to barely a whisper before continuing. "I need to deliver this package safely to Lord Embuirhan in Wheldrake, but I fear that my Lord's enemies seek to waylay me."

Looking around and lowering his voice even further, he continues. "These monster attacks have made the roads dangerous of late, but I received word that our enemies know of my mission. There is little doubt they will strike and, while we are perhaps safer here in town, I would not put these simple people at risk. I must leave immediately."

So saying, Jarik begins packing a small satchel with the rations. "If you'll come I can promise you gold once we reach the City."

Jarik doesn't know who these enemies are, but Lord Embuirhan has warned him that his whereabouts are known and to expect trouble. Payment for delivering the package to Lord Embuirhan is 100 gp, but if Jarik survives the journey he will give the characters his *cloak of elvenkind* as well. If the characters attempt to stay and gain more information Jarik will simply leave the inn without them.

THE JOURNEY TO WHELDRAKE

The route from Widekirk to Wheldrake should be a straightforward one. A day's journey through the Betrachtung Forest to the village of Morin's Crossing where they can cross the only bridge over the Morinhead River and rest in relative safety of the village. From there the road continues on for another day's walk through the forest and onto the city.

THE BRIDGE AT MORIN'S CROSSING

The first leg of the journey passes without incident, but when they near the bridge they find it destroyed. Read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead you see the bridge, or what's left of it. Once a large wooden structure spanning the massive river, all that remains is the stone pilings. There are no boats or craft in the river either.

Looking across at the village of Morin's Crossing also proves worrying. The place seems to have suffered an attack. Bodies later scattered on the road and at least one building is ablaze.

The Morinhead River is roughly one hundred and fifty foot wide. It is extremely fast flowing and there are significant under-currents. Crossing the river requires five successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) checks to cross.

If a character has a swimming speed they make these checks with advantage, but if a character wears medium or heavy armour they do so with disadvantage.

A failed check results in the character being pulled sixty foot downstream and making no forward progress. If a character fails the check by more than five they are dragged under water and are unable to breath. Resurfacing requires another successful DC 20 Strength saving throw.

Jarik will not easily risk the crossing here, fearful that the artefact will be carried away or lost if anything goes wrong. To persuade him to cross will require a character to succeed in a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Jarik does offer an alternative, however, the crossing at Charmed Run, a ford an hour's journey northwards through the forest.

If the characters succeed in crossing here, then Khulgath's forces attack them on the road rather than the ford.

BETRACHTUNG FOREST

The path to the ford passes through the Betrachtung Forest and is fraught with dangers and obstacles. The forest is an ancient place, filled with ancient magic. It is nearly alive and some of the trees are so old they have *awakened*. The forest is protected by Barasil, a lesser deity who was once a powerful druid-priest of Miuna. Roll 2d4 and use the table below to determine the obstacles and hazards they face.

d4	Obstacles
1	Obstacle - Gorge
2	Trick - Awakened Tree
3	Obstacle - Razorvine
4	Obstacle- Overgrown mushrooms

GENERAL FEATURES

The forest is thick and hot. It is also quiet, perhaps too quiet.
Light. It should still be daytime as the party travels through the forest, but the thick canopy is an effective sunshade making the area within the forest lightly obscured.
Treeline. The region the path passes through is heavily wooded. Leaving the path and moving through the woods is considered difficult terrain.

1 - OBSTACLE: GORGE

The characters come across a gorge that bisects their path. It is only 10 feet wide but is 50 feet deep. They need to find a way to cross safely or backtrack. If they choose to cross they need to find a safe way to cross. There is of course, the chance of falling into the gorge. If a character falls the 50 feet they take 5d6 bludgeoning damage and are knocked prone.

2 - TRICK: AWAKENED TREE

Many of the trees of the Betrachtung Forest are awakened. Although they do not completely understand what's happening they are able to recognise good from evil. If at least half of the party has a good alignment the trees will cast *suggestion* on them. This spell is not noticeable to the party, but reduces their passage. Roll one less d4 on the obstacles and hazards. If any of the party has an evil alignment, then roll one additional d4.

3 - OBSTACLE: RAZORVINE

A large thicket of **razorvine**, 25 feet deep, is tangled amongst the trees, blocking the path. Each 10-foot-high, 10-foot-wide, 5-foot-thick section has AC 11, 25 hit points, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage. To pass through the thicket the characters will need to cut their way through. When a character first comes within contact with razorvine they must succeed on a DC 11 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

4 - OBSTACLE: OVERGROWN MUSHROOMS

The characters come across a dark section of the forest, completely covered with overgrown mushrooms. The mushrooms range in size from a few inches to four foot tall. To progress past them they must be hacked down.
The area is 25 foot across but runs for as far as the characters can see. If they decide to cut their way through, roll 1d4 for each 5 feet they travel. On the roll of a 1 they accidentally uncover a patch of **yellow mold**.
The mold ejects a cloud of spores that fills a 10-foot cube originating from the mold. Any creature in the area must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage and become poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the creature takes 5 (1d10) poison damage at the start of each of its turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a successful save.



CHARMED RUN

GENERAL FEATURES

Charmed Run is actually named for the shallow gorge that the river passes through a little further upstream. The gorge carves its way through the limestone and seams of sparkling quartz break through the walls. When sunlight washes onto the crystal the beams reflect and refract from wall to wall, creating a rebounding rainbow; it is one of Miuna's prettier wonders. As the water moves through the Run the constant twists and turns slow the water down and creates a natural ford a few hundreds yards to the north. Jarik's enemies have indeed sent forces to stop him from delivering the moonblade. They destroyed the bridge at Morin's Crossing and then planned an ambush at the ford. The descriptions relate to map 1.1.

Gorge. While not deep, the gorge ranges from 50-60 feet wide. The churning waters within the gorge will drag a creature under and breaking free requires a successful DC 22 Strength saving throw.

River. Out of the gorge the waters travel more slowly.

Ford. At the ford the waters are shallow enough to cross but are considered difficult terrain.

Light. By the time the party reaches the ford it will be early evening. There is, however, moonlight to see by.

Treeline. The region the river passes through is heavily wooded. The canopy of leaves also obscures the moonlight, so consider this area dark.



THE BATTLE OF CHARMED RUN

WAVE 1 - AMBUSHED!

Khulgath's undead patrol both banks of the river, but he has left his strongest servants here at the ford. Read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as you reach the edge of the gorge a loud gong shatters the stillness of the evening and two hulking creatures step out of cover in the trees. Each one a clatter of bone that seems to have been freshly wrenched from its body. They stand at least a dozen feet tall, although they are hunched over, pawing at the dirt with their legs, imitating a runner's stance. As you rally yourself for a fight, both of them launches forwards into a charge, their bull-like horns glinting with fresh blood.

ENCOUNTER: KHULGATH'S GUARDS.

Khulgath has left two **minotaur skeletons** on the western bank to guard the crossing. Khulgath has also left a metal gong tied in the trees nearby. The skeletons have orders to raise the alarm and then attack any creature that attempts to cross.

JARIK DOTSK

Jarik will do his best to avoid fighting. He's not a coward, but he knows he serves the party best by getting out of the way and keeping the *moonblade* safe. When the fighting starts, he will use his *cloak of elvenkind* to help him hide within the treeline. If it's safe to do so, he'll try to stabilize a character that falls nearby.

WAVE 2 - THE CAVALRY ARRIVES

When the minotaur skeletons sound the alarm, every undead nearby hears the sound and heads for the ford. Khulgath recently killed an adventurer called Dhorn and has been able to create a wight. He has used the wight to swell his forces further.

ENCOUNTER: KHULGATH'S LIEUTENANT.

The closest forces are only a short distance away. At the start of the fourth round of combat, Dhorn the **wight** enters from the east riding a **warhorse skeleton**.

TREASURE

Dhorn's saddlebags contain 110 gp.

WAVE 3 - HELP ARRIVES!

When the party finishes off the undead from waves 1 and 2 they receive aid. Alternatively, if you feel they have had it a little easy, hold onto this until the end of Wave 3. Read or paraphrase the following:

While the undead lay broken and chunked around you, you hear the march of more coming from all directions. From the treeline the first and then second undead come shambling towards you. More and more pour out of the forest.

"We're surrounded!" Calls out Jarik, fear coating his voice.

But then, a strange green light surrounds you and a voice fills your mind.

"I do so detest the undead, they are an abomination. But be warned, there is worse still infecting these lands. I want this pestilence out of my forest. Make it so!"

The green light absorbs into you, as you are filled with renewed vigour. As the magic passes through you, your exhaustion ebbs and you feel your wits once again sharpen.

Barasil, a lesser deity in charge of the Betrachtung Forest, has witnessed the characters bravery and daring and has given them a boon. Each character gains the benefit of a short rest.

ENCOUNTER: ZOMBIES!

Three **zombies** and three **skeletons** have the party surrounded, all of them fight to kill.

WAVE 4 - FINALE!

Khulgath himself, enters the fray. This time prepared to fight to the death, lest he fail and face a worst punishment.

ENCOUNTER: KHULGATH THE NECROMANCER.

As the party finish off wave 3, **khulgath the necromancer** (see appendix B), supported by two **zombies** and two **skeletons** arrives. Khulgath will seek to kill Jarik and retrieve the *moonblade*, if it hasn't already been taken.

TREASURE

Khulgath carries the *staff of the necromancer* (see appendix A) and wears a *circlet of blasting*.

ARRIVING IN WHELDRAKE

After the battle, the party can cross the ford and a little way along the road will be able to find Khulgath's camp. There is nothing to loot here, but the area had been cleared and made ready to camp.

One more day's journey will take the party safely into the city of Wheldrake. Within the city the party can easily find directions to Lord Embuirhan's manse, if Jarik is not there to lead them. His Lordship has arranged for the party to stay in the Drunken Goat Inn in the Oldtown district and will pay the characters the promised 100 gp. If Jarik is still alive, he will give the party his *cloak of elvenkind*. If he died and the party has taken the cloak, his widow will seek out the party to ask for it back.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

With heart, soul and steel the adventurers will have dealt with Khulgath and helped to return the Moonblade to Lord Embuirhan. If they failed and the sword was taken, Embuirhan will need to find another way to defeat the monster. Either way, the Church of Vauna is still strong and continues to make trouble for Mintarn island.

The details of this can be found in *The Twilight Savant*, part four of *A Plague of Madness*.



APPENDICES

A - MAGICAL ITEMS

THE EBONSTONE MOONBLADE OF XAN

Weapon (Longsword), artefact (requires attunement by an elf or half-elf, of good alignment)

Moonblades were named in part because of their relationship to Vaara and that each sword was made and wielded by the most devoted of the moon elves who worshipped her. This blade was wielded by Xan, an enchanter and sword master. The sword was made to offer protection to the wielder. The blade will grow in strength over time, but starts with the following properties:

- It grants a +1 to attacks and damage rolls.
- It has the finesse property.
- While attuned to the moonblade, you are resistant to poison and immune to the blinded, deafened, petrified or stunned conditions.

THE STAFF OF THE NECROMANCER

Wondrous Item (Staff), artefact (requires attunement by a spellcaster of evil alignment)

Made almost five hundred years ago by the archmage Shanitor the Failure this staff oozes dark, necrotic energy. It was created to raise undead armies. The Staff is only as powerful as the creature who wields it. To unlock the Staff's true power the wielder must unlock certain prerequisites:

- The wielder can cast the *chill touch* cantrip at will.
- The wielder can cast the *animate dead* spell once per day, animating or controlling one additional creature.
- Prerequisite: Level 4. The wielder can cast the *create undead* spell once per week.
- Prerequisite: Level 8. The wielder can now cast the *create undead* spell once per day.

B - NPCs AND MONSTERS

Khulgath the Necromancer

Medium Humanoid (high-elf), lawful evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armour)
Hit Points 22 (5d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Perception +2
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Elvish
Challenge 2 (450XP)

Fey Ancestry Khulgath has advantage on Saving Throws against being Charmed, and magic cannot put him to sleep.

Special Equipment Khulgath carries the *Staff of the Necromancer* and wears a *circlet of blasting*.

Spellcasting Khulgath the Mage is a 4th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). Khulgath has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (At will): *chill touch*, *firebolt*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*.

1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *disguise self*, *mage armour*, *shield*, *sleep*.

2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *scorching ray*, *suggestion*.

Actions

Chill Touch. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120ft, one creature. *Hit* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage

Dagger (Melee). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft, one target. *Hit* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage

Dagger (Ranged). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 20/60ft, one target. *Hit* 3 (1d4+1) piercing damage

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