

A Gnoll Horde attacks and surrounds *Fort Resolve* at night. Everyone helps to defend the walls. At the Outer Gatehouse, the PCs are asked to investigate the disappearances of Master-at-Arms Tesley Gorn and Outer Bailey Captain Gerik Stoates, missing since the attack began. The Wall Captain was last seen in the Outer Bailey Officer's Quarters. The Master-at-Arms went missing from the Outer Barracks.

WHAT'S GOING ON? 5 years ago, Yoncey Arkenshaw returned home after selling produce at market to find his wife and daughter dead and their farm burned. Distraught, he consulted a Diviner who magically revealed that members of a *Fort Resolve* scouting party were responsible. Arkenshaw swore revenge, joined the Order of Tyze (the God of Strength) with the aim of becoming a military priest so he could be posted to *Fort Resolve*. The scouting party members had risen through the ranks but were still part of the castle's garrison: Master-at-Arms Tesley Gorn, Outer Bailey Captain Gerik Stoates, Blacksmith Brigar Vess, Head Cook Shan Dolin, Lieutenant Krala Vesuvian and Inner Bailey Captain Drel Porshik. Arkenshaw found a magic stone that summons and controls Invisible Hunters and is using it to kidnap the murderers and bring them to the Temple of Tyze under the keep, using the Gnoll attack as cover.

FORT RESOLVE: The map shows the ground level yard buildings and first floor of towers and walls, as well as ground and first floor of the keep and dungeon below. Each tower has a trapdoor (a circled T) with a ladder leading to the battlements. All troops are on the walls fending off Gnoll attackers, leaving the yards and most buildings empty. The sound of battle is pervasive, and, along with the constant snowfall, means all sight and sound perception checks in the open air are disadvantaged.

Fort Commander Angrin Dedala, LG Dwarf **Gladiator Fighter**, has the power to punish the murderers (she is unaware of their crimes). If Arkenshaw is captured and taken to the Commander with his story (he has a *Fort Resolve* insignia from the scene, which can be matched to Shan Dolin's old uniform), the murderers will hang.

THE INVESTIGATION: The Outer Keep Barracks and Officer's Quarters show signs of a struggle - furniture and papers are scattered widely. A successful Medium Investigation check indicates the rooms appear to have been subjected to high winds. Outside the door are swirling circles in the snow, which disappear as the snow falls, preventing tracking. Each time one of the murderers is kidnapped, the crime scene shows the same signs.

Other non-related NPCs, if interviewed, note that the named NPCs (no one other than the murderers know what they did) have been nervous since the Master-at-Arms and Outer Wall Captain went missing.

As the story progresses, the murderers are kidnapped one-by-one by an Invisible Hunter using the confusion of battle and surrounding darkness/snowfall as cover. It carries the murderer's unconscious body to the Temple, where Arkenshaw ties them up. He conjures another Hunter to get the next (each disappears after completing one job, which is why the *Summoning Stone* has used up most of its charges).

If the investigation stalls, the PCs hear a scream from one of the murderers, arriving to find a Hunter lifting their unconscious body through the air. The PCs may attack or follow the body (the Hunter will attack if it notices them with a perception vs. stealthiness check, before taking the body any further). If killed, another Hunter will be dispatched, possibly targeting a different victim. Also, Vesuvian could contact the PCs and reveal his story, if the PCs didn't learn it earlier.

GNOLL ASSAULT: During the investigation, 2 Gnolls/PC get over the wall (wherever you decide, although the rear wall near the stores is suggested) and attack the PCs. If the PCs are defeated, troops come to their aid.

TEMPLE OF TYZE: Yoncey Arkenshaw, NG Human **Priest**, has a magic *Stone of Invisible Hunter Summoning* (use 1 charge to summon a Hunter, bonus action to issue command to track/kill someone, 3 charges remain when the PCs arrive, 1 charge will be used to summon a Hunter to defend Arkenshaw, if needed).

Master-at-Arms Tesley Gorn, N Human **Veteran Fighter**, and Outer Bailey Captain Gerik Stoates, N Human **Knight**, are bound and gagged (possibly some of the other murderers as well). Arkenshaw waits until all are kidnapped before killing any. If PCs fight the Invisible Hunter in the temple, however, Arkenshaw slits the throats of each murderer present, using his action to dispatch one per round, then escapes via the secret door. If any of the murderers survive he will return later and finish them off.

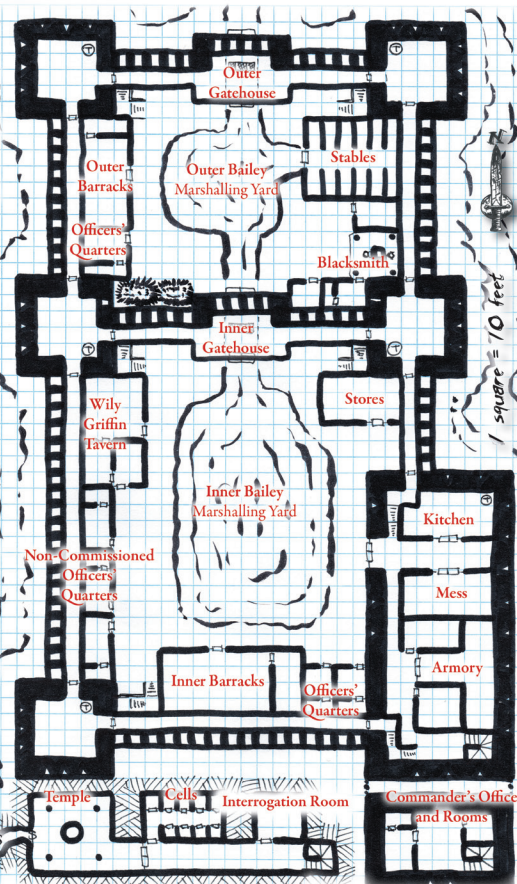
The Murderers

OUTER WALL: Lieutenant Krala Vesuvian, NE Human **Veteran Fighter**, asks the PCs to investigate. He says he suspects Gnoll infiltrators. A Medium Insight check reveals he is unnecessarily nervous. A successful Easy Intimidation/Persuasion check reveals: "I was involved in an incident, hushed up several years ago, and was sworn to secrecy. I'm worried I may be on a hit list. The Blacksmith and Head Cook took part in the incident."

BLACKSMITH: Brigar Vess, CN Half-Elf **Berserker Fighter**, was traumatized after the incident. He apprenticed to the fort's blacksmith, eventually replacing him. A successful Easy Intimidation/Persuasion check reveals: "5 years ago a scouting party murdered an innocent family. Master-at-Arms Tesley Gorn, Wall Captain Gerik Stoates and Head Cook Shan Dolin were in the scouting party. The incident was hushed up. I was sworn to secrecy and have been living with the guilt all these years."

KITCHEN: Head Cook Shan Dolin, LE Human **Ex-Soldier**, was chief instigator of the murders. He was demoted to a cook but like the other conspirators was sworn to silence. A successful Medium Intimidation/Persuasion check reveals all the information Vess has, plus: "I don't think the murders were that big an issue. I'm just angry I wasn't rewarded like the others were. Lieutenant Vesuvian and Colonel Porshik know more than they're saying."

INNER OFFICER'S QUARTERS: Inner Bailey Captain Drel Porshik, LN Human **Knight**: guilt-ridden, a successful Medium Intimidation/Persuasion check reveals all the information the others know, as well as: "5 years ago our scouting party came across a deserted farm on the frontier. We decided to burn it down for fun. A woman appeared from the woods with her daughter. They were killed and the bodies burned to protect our careers. Later, I discovered the man who owned the farm went missing not long after the incident. The members of the scouting party were sworn to secrecy under threat of death."



Cross My Heart, Hope to DIE

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Gnolls are attacking Fort Resolve at night! Everyone has been called to defend. Now, key staff are missing. Is it Gnolls, or something else? What secrets hide behind these walls?