Encounter 2: Competitors

Encounter Level 2 (704 XP)

Setup

8 zombie rotters (Z)
2 Emerald Claw sergeants (E)
Mallora, Emerald Claw necromancer (M)

This encounter takes place as the characters leave the Tower of Scars, having taken a short rest, examined the Prophecy mark, and freed the prisoners. Use the same map, but place the Emerald Claw agents on the positions shown on the map on the next page.

When confronted by the Emerald Claw agents outside the tower, Bren helps the PCs as much as he is able, since he would rather go wherever they plan to take him than fall into the clutches of the Emerald Claw. Lacking other stimulus, Aric curls into a ball on the ground, and the Emerald Claw agents ignore him for the moment in favor of more aggressive opponents.

As the characters emerge from the tower, read:

Strange orange lightning flashes across the sky, followed by a rumble of thunder that shakes the ground beneath your feet. A gust of wind, unseasonably warm, shakes the dry branches of the trees—and then you notice the corpses shambling toward you. Two human men wearing the insignia of the Order of the Emerald Claw grin at you from behind the zombies, hefting their flails. Behind them, a gaunt woman dressed in green and black scowls in your direction.

2 Emerald Claw Sergeants (E)

Medium natural humanoid, human
XP 125 each

Level 2 Skirmisher (Leader)

HP 56; Bloodied 28
AC 12; Fortitude 10, Reflex 7, Will 12
Speed 6

✦ Flail (standard; at-will) + Weapon
+4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage, and one of the Emerald Claw sergeant's allies within 5 squares of it can shift 1 square.

✦ Crossbow (standard; at-will) + Weapon
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage.

Combat Advantage

An Emerald Claw sergeant deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Fanatic (immediate reaction, when reduced to 0 hit points)

The Emerald Claw sergeant makes a basic attack against an enemy that is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil Languages Common
Skills Intimidate +4

Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail, crossbow with 20 bolts

Mallora, Emerald Claw Necromancer (M)

Medium natural humanoid, human
XP 150

Level 3 Artillery (Leader)

HP 98; Bloodied 49
AC 13; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 16
Speed 6

✦ Bone Quarterstaff (standard; at-will) + Necrotic, Weapon
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage plus 1d6 necrotic damage, and Mallora gains 5 temporary hit points.

✦ Ray of Enfeeblement (standard; at-will) + Necrotic
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened until the end of Mallora's next turn.

Death Burst (standard; recharge x2 x3) + Necrotic
Area burst 2 within 10; affects enemies; +6 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 necrotic damage. Effect: Each undead ally in the burst gains 5 temporary hit points and can shift 1 square as a free action.

Fanatic (immediate reaction, when reduced to 0 hit points)

Mallora makes a basic attack against an enemy that is adjacent to her.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Equipment robes, bone quarterstaff

Mallora makes a basic attack against an enemy that is adjacent to her.

Alignment Evil Languages Common
Skills Intimidate +4

Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail, crossbow with 20 bolts

Bren ir’Gadden (B)

Level 1 Soldier (Leader)

Medium natural humanoid, half-elf
XP 100

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 31; Bloodied 15
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 12
Speed 5

✦ Longsword (standard; at-will) + Weapon
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Bren's next turn.

✦ Magic Missile (standard; encounter) + Arcane
Ranged 20; +5 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 1 damage.

✦ Inspiring Strike (standard; requires a longsword; recharge 5/7)
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and one ally within 5 squares of Bren gains a +2 power bonus to its next attack roll against the target before the end of Bren’s next turn.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword

APPENDIX
**Tactics**
The Emerald Claw agents want the prisoner for themselves. While the zombies try to pin down as many characters as possible, the sergeants attack Bren ir’Gadden. If they reduce him to 0 hit points or fewer, they knock him unconscious rather than killing him, but then try to use the threat of killing him to secure their escape from the player characters.

Mallora uses her *death burst* power as often as possible, placing it to benefit as many of the zombies as possible. She uses *ray of enfeeblement* on PC strikers and controllers. Throughout the fight, she mutters curses against the PCs, insulting them and their fighting ability, and taunting them with the superiority of the Emerald Claw. She retreats if the sergeants capture Bren, treating it as a clear victory.

Mallora and one Emerald Claw sergeant carry two magic items you can award as treasure: a level 4 item and a level 2 item of your choice.

**The Mourning**
While the characters face the Emerald Claw agents outside the Tower of Scars, utter devastation is sweeping across Cyre—the Mourning has come. Each round, the characters see the Mourning progress until the armies on the Saerun Road far below are annihilated and, visible from the tower, a wall of dead-gray mist surrounds the newly formed Mournland.

At the end of each round of combat, read one of these sentences to the players. (You might want to put “The Mourning” in your initiative tracking behind all the characters and monsters, as a reminder to read the next description.)

*The eastern sky seems to catch on fire—clouds, fog, and the air itself ignite in a terrible conflagration.*

*The sky is illuminated in lurid orange and red, casting strange shadows across rolling banks of gray fog.*

*Great tendrils of fiery lightning reach across the cloud-draped sky.*

*A huge bank of gray mist lit from within by a raging fire is sweeping down the Saerun Road from the east.*

*You can no longer see the armies fighting on the road below—they’re hidden in the gray fog.*

*Occasional flashes of fire are all you can see in the mist that hides the battlefield, but the echoes of distant screams reach your ears.*

When the characters defeat the Emerald Claw agents, read:

*Deathly silence falls over the hillside around the ruined tower. You still can’t see the road below, and no more cries reach you from the battlefield. That dead-gray mist hangs in the air like a wall around Cyre—too still, too quiet. Something terrible has happened.*

**Concluding the Encounter**
If the characters fight off the Emerald Claw agents and keep Bren safe, they manage to escape from the tower. However, the armies that were fighting on the Saerun Road below have been annihilated by the mysterious Mourning. Characters who travel in that direction quickly find their paths blocked by the dead-gray mist of the Mournland (see page 94), which should dissuade them from moving farther in that direction.

Once the characters see the effects of the Mourning, take them forward four years to 998 YK. Spend some time with the players to help them decide what their characters did during the four years after the events of the Day of Mourning. It’s safe to assume that they delivered Bren ir’Gadden wherever he was supposed to go (unless the Emerald Claw agents made off with him) and never heard from or about him again. If they had other quests leading them to the tower, they completed those as well, and got all the promised rewards. But then what?

The rest of this chapter is full of tools you can use to build your first adventures set in the City of Towers. The rest of “The Mark of Prophecy” adventure appears on the following pages. Then a few encounter sites are detailed, which you can use to stage your own encounters as you expand your campaign.