INTRODUCTION

Reavers of Harkenwold™ is a two-part Dungeons & Dragons® adventure set in the Nentir Vale, a region introduced in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game. The first half of the adventure takes the characters from 2nd to 3rd level and is presented in this book. Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast contains the second half of the adventure, which is designed to take characters from 3rd to 4th level.

Reavers of Harkenwold pits the heroes against the Iron Circle, a company of cruel mercenaries that has seized control of the small land of Harkenwold. In this adventure, the heroes become daring rebels and lead the folk of Harkenwold against their oppressors.

Harkenwold is a small barony in the southeast reach of the Nentir Vale. Several tiny hamlets and a number of steadings (isolated farms) are scattered across the broad dale of the White River. The great Harken Forest surrounds the realm, isolating it from the lands nearby. In better times, this quiet backwater contently avoids major trouble.

At present, Iron Circle mercenaries are plundering the land. Baron Stockmer, the rightful lord, is a prisoner in his own keep, and a villainous lord named Nazin Redthorn rules in his place. The Harkenwold folk are down to their last hope—that brave heroes will answer their calls for help and break the Iron Circle.

Adventure Background

Lord Vhennyk and his mysterious Iron Circle mercenaries came to the Nentir Vale from the southern city of Sarthel roughly two months ago. Their mission: Bring the Nentir Vale to heel. Vhennyk decided that overt operations would start in the relatively isolated Barony of Harkenwold, a collection of hamlets scattered over fifty miles of the upper White River valley. He tasked his subordinate, a brigand captain named Nazin Redthorn, with seizing the region, then hurried on to implement his other plans for the Vale.

About six weeks ago, Nazin led a large band of Iron Circle mercenaries into Harkenwold in a surprise attack. The brigands stormed Harken Keep and took Baron Stockmer captive. Iron Circle sweeps and raids soon quelled any show of resistance, leaving Harkenwold a conquered land.

The new bandit “authorities” are pillaging Harkenwold through “tolls” and confiscations, harshly punishing anyone who resists. Nazin is further strengthening his hold by negotiating with other malevolent forces. In particular, he’s used some of the loot he’s plundering from Harkenwold’s suffering populace to buy the friendship of a group of odious bullywugs (a race of bipedal frog people).
ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventurers have a truly heroic challenge ahead of them: the liberation of an oppressed land.

Reavers of Harkenwold is split into two parts, each part contained within its own 32-page adventure book. Although the story’s outcome hinges on the actions of the player characters, the adventure will likely unfold as follows.

Part 1: The Iron Circle

On the outskirts of Harkenwold, the adventurers encounter a band of Iron Circle marauders threatening a farmhouse. They intervene and rescue the widow Ilyana and her sons (encounter E1). Ilyana tells the heroes about Harkenwold’s troubles and begs them to help end this evil. She directs the heroes to the nearby village of Albridge and two key figures in Harkenwold’s growing resistance: a retired adventurer named Dar Gremath and the druid Reithann.

Dar Gremath is keen to deal with isolated Iron Circle detachments. He suggests certain targets, among them a supply caravan (encounters E2 and E3). For her part, Reithann advises the heroes to strike at the Toadwallow Caverns, the lair of a bullywug tribe allied to the Iron Circle (encounters T1 through T3). If the heroes defeat the bullywugs, the rebels in western Harkenwold are free to bring the fight to the Iron Circle. Regardless of which option they pick, the adventurers can return to the other quest whenever they want.

Cleaning out the Toadwallow or raiding the Iron Circle brings the adventurers to Nazin Redthorn’s attention and convinces him that they are a serious threat. He dispatches strong patrols to hunt them down (encounter E4). The defeat of one of these strike forces emboldens freedom fighters throughout the region.

Heartened by the adventurers’ aid, the people of Harkenwold prepare for battle against the invaders. The leaders of the resistance ask the heroes to contact the Woodsingers, a clan of elves living in the Harken Forest south of Harkenwold (encounter D1). To gain the aid of the elves, the adventurers must defeat the evil lurking in the wizard sanctuary of Dal Nystiere (encounters D2 through D4). Accomplishing the quest concludes this part of the adventure.

Part 2: The Die Is Cast

Returning from the forest with Woodsinger warriors as allies, the adventurers learn that Nazin Redthorn is marching to destroy the resistance. In the Battle of Albridge (encounters B1 through B4), the heroes lead the Harkenwolders and their elven allies against the Iron Circle. With hard fighting and some luck, the Iron Circle is defeated, and the surviving mercenaries retreat to Iron Keep—a stronghold too well fortified for the Harkenwolders to storm.

In the climactic challenge of the adventure, the heroes infiltrate Iron Keep (encounters K1 through K7). With fortune on their side, they strive to free Baron Stockmer, defeat the remaining Iron Circle soldiers, and kill or capture Nazin Redthorn. Their heroic efforts bring freedom to Harkenwold once again!

USING THIS ADVENTURE

Reavers of Harkenwold can be played as a follow-up to “The Twisting Halls” adventure presented in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Fantasy Roleplaying Game. The player characters should be 2nd level when they start this adventure and at least 4th level by its conclusion.

The adventure has the following components:

Reavers of Harkenwold Part 1: The Iron Circle (this book) provides an overview of Harkenwold and encounters that pit the heroes against the Iron Circle and its allies. The encounters are split into three major sections: Events (E), the Toadwallow Caverns (T), and the sanctuary at Dal Nystiere (D).

The second adventure book, Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast, contains the second half of the adventure, with encounters divided into two major sections: the Battle of Albridge (B) and Iron Keep (K).

The adventure comes with two foldout battle maps depicting key encounter locations. The battle maps are designed for use with cardboard tokens or plastic miniatures, but they don’t encompass every encounter in the adventure. For encounters that the battle maps don’t cover, you can either draw the maps for your players using wet-erase markers and a blank battle map (available for purchase at your local hobby store), or you can build the maps using D&D® Dungeon Tiles.

Reavers of Harkenwold includes many villains and monsters, tokens for which can be found in this box or the Monster Vault™ boxed set.

Getting Started

Read this book first, and familiarize yourself with the overall structure of the adventure. You won’t need to look at the adventure book for Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast until you’re ready to run that part of the adventure. Review the adventure outline on the next several pages, particularly if you are a new DM.

See “Setting the Stage” (page 5) for ways to engage the characters in the story, or use them as examples to devise your own adventure hooks. Once everyone has gathered, start with encounter E1 (page 12).
FREEING HARKENWOLD

To successfully overthrow the Iron Circle and restore freedom to Harkenwold, the adventuring party must accomplish at least four of the following goals:

✦ Defeat the bullywugs of the Toadwallow Caverns.
✦ Forge an alliance with the Woodsinger elves.
✦ Win the Battle of Albridge.
✦ Rescue Baron Stockmer from Iron Keep.
✦ Defeat Nazin Redthorn, the leader of the Iron Circle in Harkenwold.

Achieving four of these goals ensures that the Harkenwolders eventually triumph over the Iron Circle. Achieving all five brings about an immediate victory. For example, losing the Battle of Albridge would be a serious setback for the Harkenwolders, but the remaining villages can beat the Iron Circle if Nazin Redthorn is dead, the Baron is freed, the Woodsinger elves are on their side, and the bullywugs pose no threat.

Running the Adventure

Guiding the players through such an involved plot can seem daunting at first, but don’t despair. The adventure breaks down into five distinct chapters. Your players have a great deal of latitude to decide which specific tasks the characters are going to tackle next. All you have to do is offer them the decision points, and run the challenges and encounters associated with the course they choose. The storyline follows this general course:

Reavers of Harkenwold, Part 1: The Iron Circle
✦ Chapter I: Road to Adventure (encounters E1–E3)
✦ Chapter II: Opening Salvos (encounters T1–T3, E4)
✦ Chapter III: Gathering Allies (encounters D1–D4)

Reavers of Harkenwold, Part 2: The Die Is Cast
✦ Chapter IV: Battle of Albridge (encounters B1–B4)
✦ Chapter V: Iron Keep (encounters K1–K7, E5)

Chapter I. Road to Adventure The adventure begins with encounter E1 (page 12).

The adventurers confront a gang of Iron Circle marauders and stop them from burning down a farm. When they’ve defeated or driven off the villains, they meet Ilyana, their first contact in Harkenwold. Ilyana advises the party to continue on to the nearby village of Albridge and seek out the rebel leader Dar Gremath or the druid Reithann.

Dar Gremath: The rebel leader asks the heroes to begin direct action against the Iron Circle.

Reithann: The druid asks the heroes to go to the west end of the vale and deal with the vicious bullywugs lairing in the Toadwallow Caverns.

Chapter II. Opening Salvos The heroes decide to take on the bullywugs or oppose the Iron Circle.

Iron Circle: If the heroes choose to take on the Iron Circle directly, Dar Gremath suggests several different opportunities for causing mischief. The heroes can root out Iron Circle soldiers troubling a local village, or they can waylay an Iron Circle supply wagon (encounters E2 and E3, pages 14–17). Most of these events take place within a day’s travel of Albridge, the heart of the rebellion.

Quest XP: Taking out the supply wagon earns a minor quest reward of 100 XP.

Bullywugs: If the heroes take on the bullywugs, they can waylay an Iron Circle supply wagon (pages 20–25).

Making Enemies: Defeating the bullywugs or taking out the supply wagon provokes a response from the Iron Circle. This leads to encounter E4 (page 18).

Chapter III. Gathering Allies Now that battle is truly joined between the adventurers and the Iron Circle, a workable plan for defeating the marauders must be devised. Both Reithann and Dar Gremath suggest contacting the Woodsinger elf clan in the Harken Forest and asking for their help against the Iron Circle. Winning the friendship of the Woodsingers isn’t easy. The heroes must battle the evil undead mage lurking in the sanctuary of Dal Nystiere to prove their mettle to the elves. This quest leads to encounters D1 through D4 (pages 26–31).

Quest XP: Forgiving an alliance with the Woodsinger elves earns a minor quest reward of 150 XP.

The heroes might first choose to revisit the option they didn’t take previously, dealing with the Toadwallow bullywugs or fighting Iron Circle soldiers where they find them.

Chapter IV. Battle of Albridge When the heroes return from their elven adventures, they find the barony abuzz with news: Nazin Redthorn is gathering Iron Circle soldiers to march on Albridge. Dar Gremath is organizing a force of Harkenwold militia for defense. At the start of encounter B1 (Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast, page 3), a messenger from Dar Gremath asks the adventurers to come to Albridge as quickly as possible to help fight off the Iron Circle.

The player characters travel to Albridge, possibly with Tor’s Hold or Woodsinger reinforcements, just in time to participate in Dar Gremath’s council of war. The battle unfolds in the course of encounters B2 through B4 (Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast, pages 6–11).

The battle turns on the heroes’ successes up to this point in the adventure. If the heroes have been reasonably successful so far, the rebels break the Iron Circle army and win the day.
Setting the Stage

Use one or a combination of the hooks below to motivate the characters to participate in this adventure.

**Agents Provocateur:** The characters are native to the town of Fallcrest, a few days west of Harkenwold. Lord Warden Markelhay, ruler of Fallcrest, hears that mercenaries have taken over Harkenwold and decides to send Baron Stockmer help. He summons the heroes to his keep and commissions them to go to Harkenwold, work to defeat the Iron Circle, and restore the baron to his throne.

**Bandit Hunting:** The heroes are on the trail of a gang of marauders who attacked a farmhouse a few days’ travel away. The trail ends in northern Harkenwold, where it becomes clear that these bandits are not merely isolated raiders.

**Interrupted Pilgrimage:** One or more of the heroes are returning from a pilgrimage to a temple in the town of Fallcrest. A divine character whose patron is Erathis, Pelor, or Sehanine works best for this, but devotees of Ioun, Kord, Bahamut, Corellon, Avandra, or Moradin fit as well. Following the King’s Road east after their visit, the adventurers pass into Harkenwold.

**Trouble at Home:** One or more of the adventurers are native to Harkenwold. While visiting the dwarven town of Hammerfast, several days’ journey to the north, they learn from traveling merchants that brigands have taken over Harkenwold. They must hurry back home if they plan to do something about it.

Chapter V. Iron Keep

Whether victorious or defeated, the surviving Iron Circle soldiers retreat to Iron Keep and hole up, hoping for reinforcements. Defeating Nazin Redthorn and his marauders means that Iron Keep must fall. The Harkenwold rebels have no chance of storming the battlements. A small team of highly capable and skilled volunteers, however, could infiltrate the castle, rescue the baron, and put an end to Nazin Redthorn. The heroes’ assault on Iron Keep is covered in encounters K1 through K7 (*Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast*, pages 16–30).

**Quest XP:** Defeating the Iron Circle in the battle earns the characters a major quest reward of 750 XP.

**Victory or Defeat:** Whether Nazin Redthorn still holds Iron Keep. Harkenwold cannot be truly free as long as its principle fortress is in enemy hands.

**Conclusion:** If the heroes succeed in freeing Baron Stockmer and defeat Redthorn and the remaining Iron Circle reavers, the adventure comes to an end. The heroes have liberated Harkenwold, and they can go on to whatever challenge awaits them next. If you wish to use the Iron Circle as an ongoing threat in your campaign, encounter E5 provides a fitting epilogue.

EXTRA CREDIT

The players might “miss” aspects of the adventure by choosing to do other things. For example, if they decide to deal with the Toadwallow bullywugs first and then head for the Woodsinger elves, they’ll skip over encounters E2 and E3. Not a problem. The adventure is designed to give real importance to the players’ decisions about the task of freeing Harkenwold.

Your players might devise other ideas for helping Harkenwold. For example, they could visit different villages and train the militia, inspire more townsfolk to take up arms, or waylay numerous Iron Circle patrols. You can repurpose some of the specific encounters in this book to handle these fights. Alternatively, feel free to create suitable skill challenges covering these tasks.

Eventually, the party should arrive at the Battle of Albridge, the pivotal point of the adventure. You might need to create new victory point goals if the players have concentrated their efforts on things not discussed in detail here.
The Barony of Harkenwold is a broad valley just over 50 miles long and roughly 20 miles wide located between arms of the Harken Forest. This primarily open land consists of gently rolling hills covered in a mix of cheery meadows, light forest with little undergrowth, and the occasional thicket. The climate is cool and rainy. Many small streams wind their way across the land, eventually joining the White River. These brooks are at most a few feet wide, and small footbridges cross them regularly.

Harkenwold’s total population is about 2,000, scattered across half a dozen small hamlets and a score of isolated steadings. Most of the citizens are humans (50%), halflings (25%), and dwarves (20%), with a smattering of other folk (5%). Unless otherwise specified, NPCs the characters meet are human.

Harkenwolders living in the countryside are primarily farmers, shepherds, or woodcutters. Denizens of the hamlets also include woodworkers, smiths, carters, brewers, cheese makers, and leatherworkers. The other villagers tend nearby fields or orchards.

Harkenwold’s Steadings
A steading is a farm or homestead in Harkenwold’s countryside. Each of these settlements features a strongly built house of fieldstone and timber, surrounded by approximately 200 acres of pastureland and cropland. Some steadings have defensive palisades around the main house. A single extended family commonly lives in the house—two or three couples with their children, their older relations, and a few hired hands. Rarely do the total inhabitants of a steading exceed 20 people.

Traveling in Harkenwold
Characters on foot average 2½ to 3 miles per hour on roads or trails. Walking from Tor’s Hold to Easthill, for example, takes about two days. If the adventurers avoid the well-traveled trails and strike out directly overland, the mixed terrain reduces their speed to three-quarters normal. Venturing into the Harken Forest or the Briar Hills is much more difficult. The rougher terrain reduces speed to half normal.

Travelers in Harkenwold are rarely more than a mile or two from the nearest steading. Most Harkenwolders are happy to put up visitors for the night, although the accommodations might be a dry barn or stable.

Sites of Interest
Places of note in Harkenwold are detailed in the following pages.
Albridge

Population 180

The second-largest village in Harkenwold, Albridge stands where the King’s Road crosses the White River. The center of resistance to Iron Circle rule, the rebel leader in Albridge is Dar Gremath, a retired adventurer (see “Major Characters,” page 10).

As the adventure begins, the rebels are gathering arms and armor, exchanging messages with disgruntled folk in other villages, and posting lookouts to report on Iron Circle movements in the countryside. Later, Albridge is the site of Nazin Redthorn’s attempt to crush the Harkenwold rebels in a single battle, as detailed in encounters B1 through B4 (Reavers of Harkenwold Part 2: The Die Is Cast, pages 3–11).

Important locations in Albridge include:

1. Old Tower. This vine-covered ruin was once a post for soldiers guarding the bridge. The roof collapsed long ago, leaving the interior open to the weather, but the walls are still sound.

2. Erst the Wainwright. Erst is stout, middle-aged, and balding, well known as a human of few words. A crafter, he sells mostly to local farmers in need of carts, wagons, or wheelbarrows, as well as the rare merchant still making use of the old King’s Road. Erst’s grandfather was a smuggler—hidden tunnels under his workshop offer the rebels a good place to hide their arms and armor.

3. Gerrad’s House. Gerrad, a hale and white-haired old halfling, is the village elder. He and his wife Nioma are skilled weavers and sell simple but well-constructed garments of all kinds. Gerrad was appointed village elder by Baron Stockmer 30 years ago, and he conducts most of the town business from the common room of the Mallard Inn. He hides the keenness of his mind behind an affable manner and long-winded stories. Gerrad is well aware of Dar Gremath’s efforts to organize resistance and supports them. He hopes to deflect Iron Circle suspicions for as long as possible, but realizes that direct confrontation is inevitable. He despairs that the rebels will not be strong enough.

4. Village Green. This open space serves as a market in good weather. On most days, the children of the hamlet gather here to play. Merchant caravans use the green as a campsite if they’re too big to fit in the Mallard’s innyard.

5. Kathrid’s Smithy. Kathrid is a black-haired, mature dwarf who served as a guard in the dwarven settlement of Hammerfast when she was younger. She is an industrious, can-do type who talks incessantly while she works, filling her listener’s ears with advice on every topic imaginable. She is a close ally of Dar Gremath and serves as his chief lieutenant in the resistance. If anything happens to her commander, Kathrid is ready to step in and continue the fight.

6. The Mallard Inn. This small inn and taphouse is owned by Onneth, an older half-elf man nearing retirement. Onneth is a good-hearted soul, but he is fretful, forgetful, and incompetent. Most importantly, he can’t keep a secret, so the resistance leaders are careful about what they say around him. Room and board at the Mallard costs 5 silver pieces per night.

7. White River Mercantile. This trading post deals in locally produced woodwork, leather goods, provisions, and a handful of luxury items imported from Fallcrest or the lands to the south. It is run by Roma Featherton. She is a brisk, robust, officious halfling who recently took over the business from her ailing father. Her cousin Abel and his family help out. Most mundane equipment other than armor or weapons is available here for the normal cost.

8. Gremath Stables. Dar Gremath, an aging and retired human adventurer, rarely speaks about his long-ago travels. From this base in his livery and stable, Dar has organized the resistance in Harkenwold. Under cover of stabling their mounts, locals arrive and depart regularly, reporting Iron Circle movements and carrying messages to rebel leaders in other towns.

Dal Nystiere

The eladrin settlement of Dal Nystiere fell to ruin centuries ago, destroyed by some unknown threat, and the Harken Forest has all but swallowed up its remains. Strange witchlights and evil monsters are known to haunt the ruins, and the Woodsinger elves have learned to give the place a wide berth.