The Last Light at Mile Fifty



Dungeon Master's edition

A caravan mystery for four level-5 characters. 2-3 hours, with a two-hour fast track. Original 2014-style fifth-edition creatures and items. Investigation, a haunted shelter, and a renowned sword.

OPENING READ-ALOUD

Rain ticks against the copper nameplates outside Eastbarrow Gate. Beyond the walls, wagons stand nose to tail, their drivers arguing over a road that nobody wants to take. A broker in a patched green coat pushes a folded contract across a feed barrel toward you. Beside it lies a drawing of a sword with an arched guard. "Three caravans. Two patrols. And the captain still calls it delays." Do you open the contract, question the drivers, or go straight to the watchhouse?

Credits

This adventure is unofficial, original fifth-edition-compatible material. Elarra deliberately differs from a published banshee: a telegraphed wail, explicit rock-cover protection, a fixed boundary, bell-linked husks, and a discoverable permanent release. Use this packet's creature rules together rather than importing incompatible abilities from another edition.

Rules reference: the 2014 spell versions of Silence and Protection from Evil and Good; core mechanics checked against the bundled SRD 5.1. The warning and research procedures are authored for this adventure. No human playtest has been conducted; review the difficulty options against the actual character sheets.

This work includes material from the System Reference Document 5.1 by Wizards of the Coast LLC, available at https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode. Adventure text, characters, item designs, maps, and generated illustrations are original to this module. No official artwork is reproduced.

At the Table

DM truth: 2 | Cave keys: 5 | Clue ledger: 6 | Scenes: 6 | Conversations: 9 | Finale: 10 | Statistics: 13 | NPC dialogue: 15 | Treasure: 16 | Endings: 18 | Player handouts: 19

Overview

A city investigation and haunted-cave adventure for four level-5 characters using 2014-style fifth-edition rules. Allow 2-3 hours; use the fast track for two hours. The monsters, relics, gravewax, and haunting procedures are original homebrew, fully specified here. Use this dangerous, counterable variant instead of an official banshee stat block. The party should reach the cave with most of its resources.

Caravans vanish east of Caldris. A captain suppresses the reports, a bounty hunter has refused his money, and an old soldier's sword lies somewhere among the missing wagons. The road leads fifty miles to a perfectly reasonable place to shelter from a storm.

Tone: wet roads, uncomfortable bargains, ordinary people covering fear with certainty. Threatened lives and undead horror; no graphic gore. **Players need:** their character sheets and normal fifth-edition player rules. **DM needs:** this packet, a grid or the cave map, two counters for the bell fragments, and one Wail Pending marker.

DM Introduction

Three weeks ago, a rockfall opened the sealed rear chamber of Lastlight Cave, fifty road miles east of Caldris. Elarra, an elven roadwarden murdered by smugglers seventy years ago, haunts that chamber. Her promise to shelter travelers has curdled into a refusal to let anyone leave. By day she lies dormant in her broken road bell; after sunset she walks the cave, sometimes reaching its mouth. Storm-bound caravans have camped in the dry entrance and vanished after nightfall. This history explains her behavior; it does not excuse killing travelers.

Captain Dain Rusk lost six guards in two expeditions, including two trained investigators. Four died; guards Sella Dorn and Iven Pell remain alive behind an old soundproof store-room door in the cave. Rusk knows neither their fate nor the creature's identity. He kept the failures out of the public bulletin to avoid panic and disgrace. Bounty hunter Mara Venn interviewed an escaped caravan driver, recognized the pattern of a deathly voice, and declined Rusk's offer. She knows the best leads, but has never fought this spirit.

One vanished caravan carried Warden's Promise, the renowned sword of a road-saving hero. Its legal owner, the Mileward Carters' Guild, will transfer it to whoever recovers its shipping ledger and helps reopen the road. Payment, rescue, a famous weapon, and an enforceable favor from Rusk give the party several reasons to act. Investigation can identify a banshee, establish the location, obtain gravewax and tactical notes, and uncover Elarra's old oath. At the cave the party can rescue survivors, exploit daylight, raid the cache, fight with protection, or release the spirit by restoring her bell and opening the way out. Without intervention the haunting continues, unless the road is closed; warning travelers is a real victory even when the party retreats.

At a Glance

Truth: Elarra is a territorial banshee bound to the cave, not a highway robber. **Location:** road marker 50, six hundred feet north along a cart track. **Best lead:** Mara at the Broken Axle tavern. **Research:** Sister Ilen at the roadside shrine archive. **Leverage:** Rusk's unfiled casualty roster. **Prize:** Warden's Promise in area F. **Living missing guards:** Sella and Iven in C.

Run order: opening at the gate; free-order city conversations; optional research; two-day journey; cave exploration; confrontation or negotiated release; return.

PORTION	NORMAL TABLE TIME	TWO-HOUR FAST TRACK
Opening and gate rumors	15 minutes	10 minutes
Captain and bounty hunter	30 minutes	20 minutes
Research and equipment	20 minutes	10 minutes
Road and cave exploration	30 minutes	25 minutes
Finale	40 minutes	40 minutes
Return and rewards	15 minutes	15 minutes

Normal target: 150 minutes, with room for longer conversations. For the fast track, put Rusk at the tavern when the party arrives and let Ilen diagnose the evidence in one conversation. Skip the road hazard check, not the clues or warning before the wail. These are planning estimates, not playtest measurements.

Hook

At Caldris's Eastbarrow Gate, wagon broker Dell Fen offers a tip: the guild will reward anyone who finds its missing eastbound caravans. One carried Warden's Promise. Dell can show a signed salvage agreement rather than demanding faith in a tavern legend. Rusk offers a separate rescue contract if approached. Both offers are optional.

Ask each player which stake matters: recovering the sword, finding a missing traveler, earning the guard's assistance, protecting trade, or exposing the concealment. A character seeking city access can name a concrete problem that Rusk could help with; use the defined favor under Rewards. A personal connection adds a reason to care without replacing Sella or Iven or secretly making a loved one dead.

Stakes

The missing guards need a safe way out. The next caravan needs a truthful warning. Rusk wants the road reopened without losing his post. The guild wants its property and reputation accounted for. The sword is a genuine prize, but retrieving it alone does not end the haunting.

Calendar: begin at noon on Day 1. Sella and Iven were trapped three days earlier; water seeps into C, and their patrol rations are running low. The next caravan plans to leave at noon on Day 4. At the normal pace it reaches marker 50 on the evening of Day 6. Informing Dell, Rusk, or that caravan's foreman of a credible danger halts it automatically; no persuasion roll. Sella and Iven have water and food through Day 6. From Day 7 they are too weak to walk unaided, but remain alive until a new, openly established deadline; do not invent offscreen deaths for taking one research stop. If no warning reaches the Day 4 caravan, it is lost after nightfall on Day 6 unless the haunting has already been ended. Its foreman follows a warning even if Rusk prefers silence.

Factions

Eastbarrow Watch: Rusk controls the watchhouse records in Scene 2 and the rescue contract. His watch is understrength, not secretly serving Elarra. Disclosure can cost him his command; silence is something the party may bargain with, never a condition for rescuing anyone.

Mileward Carters' Guild: Dell speaks for the guild in Scene 1. It owns the sword and ledger in F. A safer road is worth more than a ceremonial weapon in storage, explaining its salvage offer.

The Lantern Shrine: Sister Ilen keeps traveler memorials and supernatural field notes. She supplies the research in Scene 3. She asks for the names of the dead, not a promise to destroy every ghost.

Lastlight's haunting: Elarra and two echo husks occupy E at the confrontation. The husks are fragments of the broken bell's spell, not the souls of recent victims. Destroying them does not murder the missing guards.

Locations

Location: Eastbarrow Ward

Caldris is a large river city of crowded rooflines, five gate districts, and ten thousand competing errands. The eastern outskirts hold wagon yards, cheap lodgings, and freight scales. Dell's yard and the watchhouse are a five-minute walk apart; the Broken Axle and Lantern Shrine are another five minutes along the same street. Visits can occur in any order.

Location: The East Road

Marker 24 has a staffed tollhouse and a secure fenced campsite. Lastlight lies at marker 50: a cart track runs six hundred feet north to the ridge. A small three-notched milestone marks the turn. At normal travel, cover about 24 miles in an eight-hour day: leave after research on Day 1, cover the remaining road on Day 2 and a short third morning, or leave at dawn on Day 2 and reach the cave early on Day 4. For a concrete schedule, finish city work by 4 p.m. on Day 1 and camp in Caldris; walk 24 miles on each of Days 2 and 3, then the last two miles on the morning of Day 4. Use another schedule if the party chooses, and record it aloud. An extra two miles beyond a full eight-hour march uses normal forced-march rules; never silently grant a fifty-mile afternoon walk. Horses help carry gear but do not automatically double the party's sustainable travel rate.

The tollkeeper confirms the cave's direction without a roll. Rest and mount changes can be arranged at ordinary campaign prices. Travel is a short montage; do not insert random fights that consume the resources the finale assumes. If the party wants a daytime arrival, let it camp at the tollhouse or in a tent. Weather invites shelter; it never forces them into the cave.

Location: Lastlight Cave

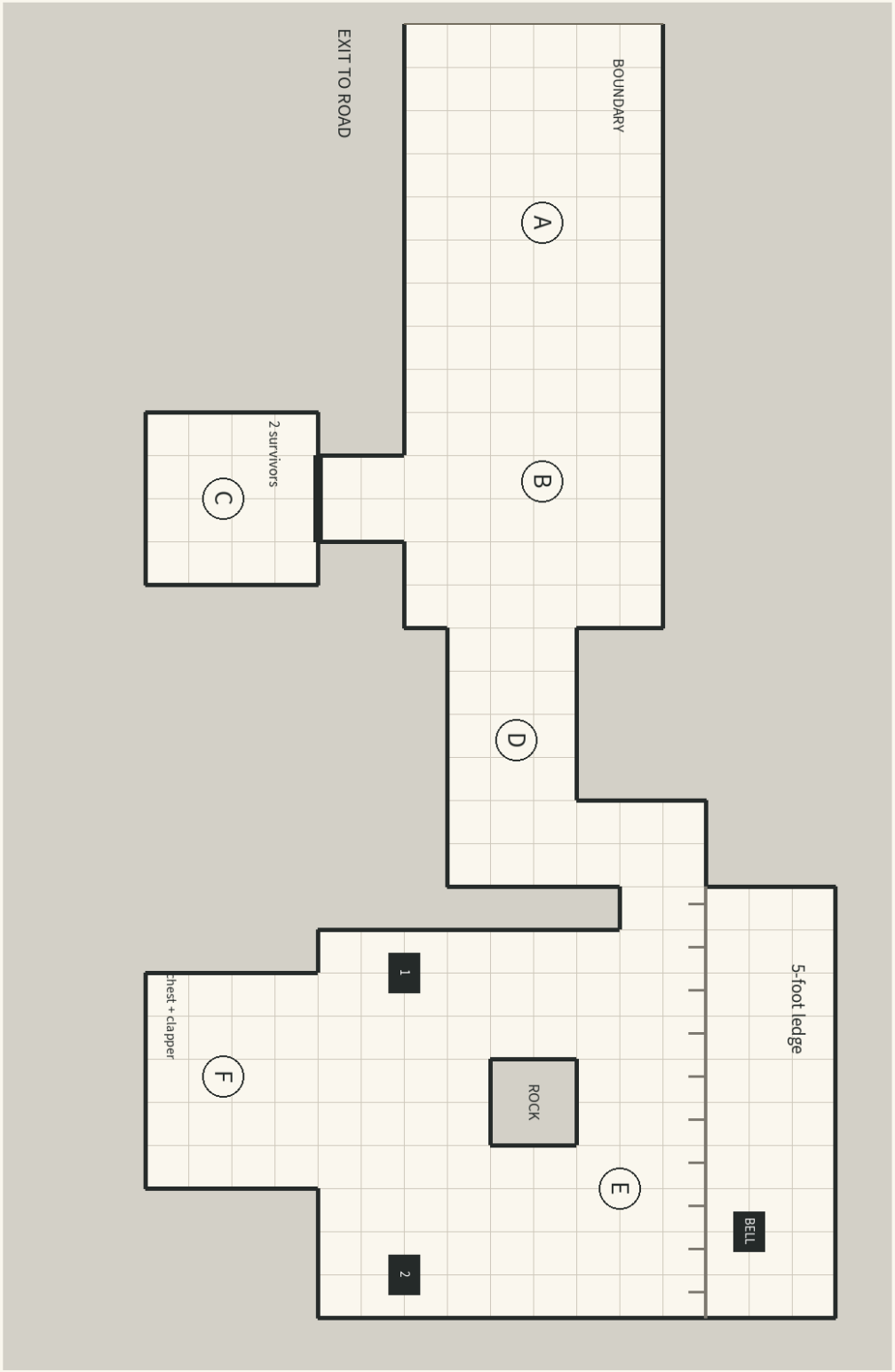
Natural limestone, cold drafts, soot from old campfires, and dry level ground under a low overhang. The mouth faces west. It is easy to miss from the road and easy to recommend as shelter. The deeper passages bend, hiding the shrine from campers. The tactical plan is an authored grid; the exterior illustration is atmosphere, not a second floor plan.

Lastlight looks like good shelter. Player-safe exterior illustration.



The inviting shelter

Cave Reference



Map key: use the keyed location descriptions on the following pages.

Geometry: each square is 5 feet. Normal chamber ceilings are 15 feet; the throat is 10 feet high. Coordinates below use the southwest corner of the map as (0,0), east right and north up. Solid rock is impassable to ordinary creatures. Connections are open unless a door is specified.

KEY	BOUNDS AND CONNECTIONS	WHAT MATTERS
A: Mouth	x 0-30, y 40-70; open west; east into B	Daylight, campfire, exit; a wagon fits.
B: Camp Shelf	x 30-60, y 40-70; west A; south passage to C; east D	Torn bedroll, patrol token, low abandoned fire.
C: Quiet Store	x 35-55, y 10-30; passage x 40-50, y 30-40 to B	South of B, with its door facing north. Sealed door blocks the wail.
D: Crooked Throat	x 60-90, y 45-60; then x 80-90, y 60-75; into E at x 90, y 65-75	Two bends provide solid-rock cover.
E: Bell Hall	x 90-140, y 30-90; west D through the opening at y 65-75; south F	Pillar x 110-120, y 50-60, floor to ceiling. North ledge y 75-85 is 5 feet high.
F: Freight Pocket	x 100-125, y 10-30; north opening into E	Sword chest, ledger, bell clapper, salvage.

A 5-foot-thick rock partition at x 90-95, y 30-65 separates D from E; the only D-to-E opening is at y 65-75. The west bell fragment is just east of that partition at (100,40). C's door is at (45,30); F opens into E along y=30. The hall's bell shelf is at (130,80); bell fragments hang at (100,40) and (135,40). The door into C is mundane oak lined with felt and sheet lead, originally used by miners storing blasting powder. The survivors have repaired its seals. It is a special sound barrier, not a claim that any closed door stops a banshee.

Day and night: from sunrise to sunset Elarra and the husks are dormant in E, with no corporeal body to attack. Hostile magic aimed at her bound spirit awakens her before its effect resolves; apply that effect normally, then roll initiative. Ordinary movement, rescue, and taking the sword from F do not wake them. Touching the broken bell, bell fragments, or Elarra's remains, or damaging Elarra directly, awakens the encounter immediately even by day. At sunset she manifests in E. If she senses living creatures inside, she drifts through D to B and then A after one minute; otherwise she remains in E until someone enters. Use the approach warning in Encounter 4 before combat. Outside A, a boundary stone ten feet west of the mouth marks the limit of her binding; she and the husks cannot cross it or attack beyond it.

Sunlight: direct natural sunlight reaches only A's western 10 feet during clear afternoons. Storm cloud or night removes that patch; dawn does not light a west-facing cave interior. Outside the boundary remains safe in every weather. Elarra's custom weakness operates only in actual sunlight, not torchlight or the 2014 daylight spell.

Investigation Ledger

Give the clue when a plausible conversation or search reaches its source. Checks change trust, time, equipment, or leverage; they do not erase essential evidence. Each character may try a different meaningful approach; repeated identical pleas do not generate unlimited rerolls.

CONCLUSION	FIRST ROUTE	INDEPENDENT ROUTE	CAVE FALLBACK
Go to marker 50	Dell's shipping stop list	Rusk's patrol route or Mara's sketch	Tollkeeper knows the turn
A supernatural voice strikes at night	Mara's survivor account	Ilen's treatment notes	Sella or Iven describes collapse after the voice
It is a banshee	Ilen identifies the combined evidence	DC 13 Religion or Arcana after Mara's account	Survivors' account plus Elarra's visible manifestation permits the same check
Silence/deafness defeats this wail	Ilen's field card	Mara's account of the deaf driver	Survivors' soundproof door and their warning
The bell binds her	Ilen's memorial entry	Ledger's rubbing of the old roadwardens' oath	Inscription plainly readable on E's ledge
Rusk lost six guards	Rusk admits it under pressure	Mara's dated offer and six empty roster slots	Four badges and two living guards

A failed identification check still establishes a dangerous sound-based undead; it does not create a false diagnosis. Ilen identifies it without a roll when brought the account of a translucent elven woman, nighttime appearances, and unwounded people falling at her cry. She names the banshee and explains that local hauntings can differ. Name the shrine lead when that evidence is available.

Scenes

Scene 1: The Wagons That Will Not Leave

Runtime: 15 minutes. **Objective:** choose a stake and gather leads. **Stakes:** frightened workers are one rumor away from a riot against the watch.

READ-ALOUD

Under the wagon-yard awning, a driver scratches three crossed-out departure dates onto a slate. Wet harness leather smells sharp beside a brazier. A younger carter taps the sword drawing while an older woman shakes her head. "Silver won't help," she says. "My cousin sent silver." The broker holds out the signed contract. Which voice do you follow first?

Run Encounter 1. Dell gives the stop list and the guild contract freely. The eastbound departures all scheduled a night near marker 50. Asking who has investigated points to Rusk; asking who knows the road points to Mara. A character who examines the empty wagon finds no claw marks or blood; this wagon never departed, and Dell says so. Do not fake physical evidence in it.

Success: the party gains a motive, two city leads, and the destination. **Fail-forward:** suspicious carters refuse personal stories but Dell still provides the written route. **Next:** Scene 2 or Scene 3, or travel directly to Scene 4.

Scene 2: The Job Nobody Took

Runtime: 30 minutes. **Objective:** compare Rusk's secrecy with Mara's evidence. **Stakes:** information can buy official help or create leverage that changes the return to the city.

READ-ALOUD

At the Broken Axle, rainwater drips from coats hung over the hearth. A scarred woman sits where she can watch both doors. Six small pebbles lie beside her untouched mug. She notices you looking and sweeps them into a pouch. "If the captain sent you, tell me what he said first." What do you tell her?

USE THE WATCHHOUSE ALTERNATIVE IF THE PARTY VISITS RUSK FIRST: - READ-ALOUD

The watchhouse smells of lamp oil and damp wool. Six hooks stand empty beneath a row of duty badges. Captain Rusk closes a ledger when you enter, but leaves a route map on his desk. "Missing freight is guild business. Unless you've brought something more specific." What do you put on the desk?

Run Encounter 2 for either order. Either visit can lead onward. Mara's pebbles stand for the missing patrol, a memory aid rather than evidence. Rusk's roster is evidence. Mara gives the supernatural account once the party treats the danger seriously; Rusk gives the route even if he refuses to confess.

Success: information and agreements are written on the party's evidence ledger. **Fail-forward:** a hostile Rusk withholds his advance; Mara and Ilen remain available. A hostile Mara still names the shrine and says, "Ask about someone falling dead without a wound." **Next:** research in Scene 3, or depart for Scene 4.

Scene 3: How to Survive a Voice

Runtime: 20 minutes. **Objective:** turn a suspected monster into a plan. **Stakes:** the party chooses which protections to carry and how to communicate while deafened.

READ-ALOUD

Brass travel lamps hang above shelves of weather-stained journals. An elderly dwarf in spectacles rolls soft wax between her palms while reading a torn report. "Tell me what someone actually saw," she says, "and then tell me what the tavern added." A slate beside her bears drawings of a mouth, a bell, and a shut door. Which account do you give her?

Run Encounter 3. Ilen provides the field card, explains each protection's limits, and offers four pairs of gravewax for 20 gp total. Showing Rusk's rescue contract, promising to return the patrol names, or explaining that the cost is prohibitive earns the same packet free. Do not withhold the defining preparation tool from poor parties. A successful research check adds a useful advantage; it never unlocks the basic counter after the mystery has been solved.

Ilen's old memorial names Elarra and records her oath: "A shelter is a promise of safe departure." She explains the release procedure under Encounter 5. The guild ledger rubbing in F and the shrine inscription provide that information independently.

Success: the party can name the wail's range, its countermeasures, and the drawback of deafness. **Fail-forward:** incorrect theories are corrected against the witness evidence; spending one hour with the journals supplies the field card. **Next:** choose departure time, then Scene 4.

Scene 4: A Dry Place in the Rain

Runtime: 30 minutes including travel. **Objective:** inspect the shelter, find the patrol, and choose an approach to the rear hall. **Stakes:** night changes an empty cave into an occupied hunting ground.

READ-ALOUD

The cart track ends below a limestone overhang. Rain drums on the leaves behind you, but the cave floor is dry. A cold fire sits neatly between three stones. Farther in, a strip of watch-blue cloth hangs from a bedroll, and a narrow passage disappears around a bend. Do you make camp, examine the cloth, or follow the passage?

Run Encounter 4. Show the exterior on arrival. Reveal the player map as explored, or deliberately share the full plan; it has no monster positions but reveals the cave's extent.

Success: survivors can leave, gear can be recovered, and the party chooses whether to confront the haunting. **Fail-forward:** the approach warning gives a chance to withdraw even if every city lead was skipped. **Next:** Scene 5 if Elarra is awakened or approached after dusk; otherwise resolve a daylight rescue or raid, then decide whether to

return.

Scene 5: The Shelter That Will Not Let Go

Runtime: up to 40 minutes. **Objective:** end the haunting, secure an escape, or recover the sword under pressure. **Stakes:** a single unprotected wail can drop several heroes, while coordinated preparation can neutralize it completely.

READ-ALOUD

Pale strands lift from the broken bell. They gather into a woman's travel cloak, a key hanging at its throat. Her feet never touch the stone. Two smaller shapes pull themselves upright beneath the hanging bell fragments. "The road takes everyone," she whispers. "Here, you will stay." She looks toward the passage behind you. What do you do?

Use this only when she manifests in E. If she approaches campers in A or B, use Encounter 4's warning instead; never teleport the party into the hall for a preferred battle map. Run Encounter 5 wherever they meet her. Keep the boundary, cover, and pending-wail position visible on the map.

Success: combat, release, and clever bypass produce distinct outcomes under Resolution Paths. **Fail-forward:** the party can retreat past the boundary, close the road, and return with protection; lost resources and surviving enemies persist as specified. **Next:** return to Caldris for contracts, testimony, and the captain's debt.

Encounter Matrix

ENCOUNTER	TYPE AND OPPOSITION	USEFUL PREPARATION	REWARD OR CONSEQUENCE
1: Rumors at the Feed Barrel	Social investigation; conflicting witnesses	Compare details and dates	Route, contract, credible warning
2: Six Empty Hooks	Negotiation with Rusk and Mara	Evidence, discretion, fair questions	Pay, casualty proof, survivor account
3: The Sound of Safety	Research and equipment choice	Accurate witness details	Gravewax, field card, release method
4: The Inviting Shelter	Exploration, optional storm mishap	Daylight arrival, search, hand signals	Two rescues, cache, cover positions
5: Elarra's Last Watch	One banshee and two echo husks	Silence, cover, bell fragments, oath	Safe road, sword claim, city favor

Encounters

Encounter 1: Rumors at the Feed Barrel

Setup: Dell and three carters argue under the awning. **Procedure:** give two rumors for free, including one useful true clue. Each focused question earns another relevant entry; use the table in order or choose to answer the question. DC 12 Insight distinguishes firsthand detail from embellishment; failure costs ten minutes listening, then reveals which source actually saw something. DC 12 Persuasion calms the yard and earns Dell's 10 gp equipment credit, applied once to nonmagical travel supplies. Credit is not cash and cannot be sold back.

RUMOR AND SPEAKER	TRUTH FOR THE DM	HOW TO VERIFY
"They all stopped near the fiftieth stone." Dell	True: the common scheduled camp	Shipping stop list; tollhouse
"Warden's Promise was on the last cart. The real sword." Young carter	True; guild owns it	Signed cargo inventory
"The sword cuts daylight out of the air." Old teamster	False: its light is not sunlight	Guild description or Ilen
"Bandits. No bodies means hostages." Stablehand	Wrong conclusion from real absences	No ransom demand; Mara's witness
"A woman called, and men fell without a wound." Cook	True secondhand account	Mara interviewed the survivor
"The captain sent six. None came back." Saddler	True	Roster or Mara's dated offer
"The cave's dry as a pantry. We used it for years." Older driver	True; rear rockfall is recent	Old route notes, fresh rubble
"My deaf uncle walked away while the others dropped." Toma's niece	True; Toma is recuperating elsewhere	Ilen's treatment record, Mara
"Silver coins buy passage past her." Gambler	False; someone invented a toll	No source can name a payer
"The bell belonged to a woman who guided lost travelers." Shrine runner	True history, incomplete cause	Ilen's memorial book

Escalation: accusing the watch publicly draws a clerk who invites them to Rusk; it does not start a mandatory arrest fight. **Noncombat approaches:** compare documents, buy a meal for a driver, help pack a reluctant wagon. Useful help earns a free rumor without a check. **Failure:** no contract signature is required to receive the route. **Transition:** Dell names both the watchhouse and the Broken Axle.

Encounter 2: Six Empty Hooks

Setup: resolve each NPC as a short conversation, not a repeated-roll contest. Players who offer the stated leverage obtain its result automatically. Otherwise choose one suitable social check. Persuasion asks for cooperation; Deception risks future trust; Intimidation can force a limited concession without creating loyalty.

Rusk's opening offer: 100 gp advance for investigating, 400 gp when the road is demonstrably safe, and 100 gp for each missing guard returned alive. Only Sella and Iven survive to be rescued. The advance counts within the 700 gp maximum, not on top. He says two guards are missing until challenged. Mentioning six hooks, Mara's offer, or the casualty rumor prompts admission of all six without a roll. DC 13 Insight notices that "two overdue" is a careful phrase; failure does not erase the visible hooks.

Rusk's leverage: promising to bring evidence before making a public accusation, or explaining a viable rescue plan, earns a signed contract and a copy of the roster automatically. Without either, DC 13 Persuasion wins them; failure gets the route and an unsigned offer, with no advance yet. A later rescue still earns its payment. DC 14 Intimidation extracts the roster, but Rusk insists on written receipts and will not grant a personal favor. A bluff succeeds on DC 14 Deception; if exposed, use the same distrust consequence. Taking the roster by force is a real crime; use the campaign's response, not an improvised combat designed to prevent the adventure.

Mara's evidence: Toma, a deaf caravan driver, saw a pale elven woman emerge after sunset. Others fell when her mouth opened; he felt a vibration in his cart and fled. A guard had previously reported the cave's sheltered bend and old bell. Mara has Rusk's dated offer asking her to locate six missing watch members. She refuses to join: "Knowing what kills you isn't the same as wanting to meet it."

Mara's leverage: admitting uncertainty, asking about survival rather than treasure, or buying her a 1 sp bowl of stew earns the full account and a route sketch. No check. With a purely mercenary pitch, DC 12 Persuasion or an offered 5 gp buys the same account; failure supplies the shrine lead and the warning about unwounded collapse. Threats make her end the conversation, but never remove the shrine or route already learned. She lends no secret superior weapon and does not rescue the party offscreen.

Escalation: showing Mara's note to Rusk removes his deniability; he signs the roster. **Success:** record which documents, payments, and promises were obtained. **Failure:** route and shrine access survive. **Transition:** Ilen can interpret the eyewitness details in Encounter 3.

Encounter 3: The Sound of Safety

Setup: an hour of in-world research, with no combat. **Core result:** Ilen's diagnosis and the field card require credible evidence, not a successful roll. Gravewax access is in Scene 3. One character can make a DC 13 Religion, Arcana, or Investigation check after describing how they use the archive. Help requires a concrete contribution. On success choose one: two healing draughts, an extra four-pair gravewax packet, or the old patrol floor sketch that reveals C's soundproof door before arrival. On failure the core information still arrives; no bonus resource. Only one bonus choice for the party.

Protection table: read the relevant rule aloud when the players plan around it.

PREPARATION	EXACT BENEFIT	COST OR LIMIT
Gravewax in both ears	Deafened; Elarra's hearing-dependent Wail cannot affect the wearer	Action to apply a pair; ten minutes; cannot hear speech, warnings, or auditory clues
Silence spell	Creatures entirely inside cannot hear the Wail; Elarra cannot produce it from inside the area	Use the character's 2014 spell: fixed 20-foot-radius sphere, concentration, verbal spells impossible inside
Rock cover or C's sealed door	This variant's Wail cannot cross solid total cover or that soundproof door	Pillar must completely block the target from Elarra's marked position; ordinary fabric and half cover do not work
More than 30 feet away	Outside Wail range when it resolves	Elarra can move before beginning the warning, but not during it
Protection from evil and good	Undead attacks against the recipient have disadvantage; blocks Elarra's frightened condition	Does not stop Wail or grant its Constitution save advantage; normal concentration/ components apply
Bless or Constit ution-save support	Improves the relevant save normally	Does not guarantee success; range/concentration still matter
True sunlight	Elarra cannot Wail there and has disadvantage on attack rolls	Her deep hall is dark even at noon; torchlight, sword light, and 2014 daylight are not sunlight
Quiet the two bell fragments	Each dismisses its linked husk; both remove her weapon resistance	Requires actions at two exposed points in E; see Encounter 5

Mundane cotton, fingers in ears, and improvised wax are unreliable against this supernatural voice: they grant advantage on the Wail save while both ears remain

blocked, but do not grant immunity or the deafened condition. Blocking with both hands uses an action and occupies both hands until released; well-secured improvised plugs leave hands free. Gravewax is a specific magical preparation. Decide this before the fight, not after a player stakes a life on ordinary earplugs.

Tactical rehearsal: invite the party to choose three hand signals and name who will carry healing. Deafness alone does not prevent verbal spellcasting outside magical silence, but a deafened target cannot receive an effect that specifically requires hearing, such as bardic inspiration. Ilen recommends a protected rescuer outside the wail's reach.

Failure and exit: even a party that cannot identify the exact monster can purchase or earn the wax by explaining the sound evidence. **Transition:** record available consumables and the departure time.

Encounter 4: The Inviting Shelter

Setup: choose daylight or night from the travel record. Nothing forces a night arrival. A storm is atmospheric pressure, not an encounter timer. If desired, a laden cart sticks on the track: one DC 12 Athletics or Animal Handling check frees it quickly; failure costs twenty minutes, not HP, and walking the final six hundred feet remains possible.

A and B: a deliberate five-minute search finds a watch badge, a page reading "the voice, not the teeth," and tracks leading to C and D. No roll. DC 12 Investigation finds them immediately and notices fresh rockfall dust coming from D. Failure spends the five minutes. Personal effects identify the dead guards Brann Holt, Neris Vale, Odo Flint, and Tessa Mere; Brann and Neris were the investigators. Return those names to Ilen. Recent casualties are not treasure containers.

C: gentle tapping receives two taps in return. Sella and Iven open the door when someone identifies as living help. An automatic conversation establishes the voice, its limited reach, and the door's protection. They saw a sword chest carried into F by the spirit. If the party tries the door without speaking, DC 12 thieves' tools opens it in one minute; forcing it is DC 15 Strength, an action per try. Failure alerts the survivors, who call through a speaking slot and then reseal it. The door has AC 15, 18 HP; smashing it destroys this refuge. Opening it intentionally costs an object interaction; shutting and setting its three catches requires an action. Closed and latched, it blocks Elarra and the husks as well as sound: an old roadwarden ward is carved into its lead lining. Damage breaks that ward permanently.

Sella and Iven each have AC 12, 6 current HP of 11 maximum, speed 25 feet, and no useful combat gear. Their ability modifiers are STR +1, DEX +1, CON +1, INT +0, WIS +1, CHA +0; no extra save or skill bonuses. An improvised club attacks at +3, reach 5 feet, for 1d4+1 bludgeoning. They act on initiative 10 if threatened, Dodge while moving toward the exit, and do not join the boss fight. They carry each other only with assistance. Before combat, escorting both from C through B and A requires no check. Once beyond the boundary they can wait safely or begin the return journey. Do not demand that rescuing them first triggers Elarra by day.

F: the chest is unlocked. Inside are the sword, the guild ledger, 80 gp in the guild's sealed purse, and two healing draughts. The ledger contains a rubbing of the oath and explains how its author fitted the bell's clapper. The clapper itself lies beneath the chest, found by lifting it or a one-minute search. The loose silver fittings in a sack beside the chest are worth 60 gp but belong to the shrine; the guild ledger author recorded Ilen's permission for recovered fittings to pay the rescuers. These are distinct from the 80 gp purse, which is returned with the ledger, not personal treasure.

Night approach warning: approaching the occupied hall or being approached in A/B, before initiative, everyone sees their flames bend toward the rear passage; a thin figure appears beyond the last bend and says, "You are safe now. You need never leave." Give the group one brief response: withdraw, talk, ready protection, or attack. Hostility or moving deeper without accepting her demand begins Encounter 5. Merely retreating does not cause a surprise wail. If characters sleep in the cave after ignoring the warnings, an awake lookout sees the approach; sleepers wake at her first spoken sentence. Nobody starts surprised solely because the DM omitted the warning.

Success: extracted guards, known terrain, or recovered freight materially change the finale. **Failure:** missed treasure remains in F; survivors still explain the voice if found later. **Transition:** awaken or confront Elarra, leave with what was recovered, or plan a return at a chosen time.

Encounter 5: Elarra's Last Watch

Opposition: Elarra, 110 HP, plus two echo husks, 12 HP each, unless a prior visit changed them. Place her at the bell shelf (130,80) and husks at their fragments (100,40) and (135,40) when fighting in E. If she reaches A or B, the husks accompany her; the bell fragments remain in E. There are no reinforcements or secret extra wails.

Talk first: she demands that everyone remain. She answers three questions before treating further movement toward the exit or shrine as refusal. "Who are you?" earns her name and office. "Why keep us?" earns "I let them leave once. The road brought none of them home." "What would release you?" earns "Ring the departure. I cannot make my hands remember it." A character presenting her oath or the bell clapper earns a three-round truce to begin the release; no check. Without proof, DC 14 Persuasion earns that truce once. Failure begins initiative without surprise. Attacking her, a husk, or a fragment ends the truce. Moving to repair the bell does not.

Initiative and wail: on her first hostile turn, she moves to threaten at least two audible living opponents if possible, then begins Last Wail as her action. Mark her position. Read: "Her jaw opens too far. Dust rises in a ring around her feet. The whisper builds toward a single note." Tell the players plainly that they have one turn each before the sound breaks. Until the start of her next turn she cannot

move voluntarily, use reactions, or take legendary actions. At that next turn's start resolve Last Wail from her actual position; it consumes that turn's action. Silence, incapacitation, sunlight, or destruction at that moment suppresses the release and still expends it for the night. Pushing her changes its origin; it does not cancel the warning or shorten the response window. She cannot restart a suppressed wail that night.

Afterward: she uses her claws against standing intruders, with priority to anyone handling the bell. She uses Dread Appearance instead when at least two unprotected foes can see her. Husks attack concentrating casters or characters working at fragments. They know what they can see, not the party's hidden spell list. Neither side intentionally strikes an unconscious character while a conscious intruder remains in the cave. She does not wall-dive out of reach every turn; her binding keeps her visible in open cave spaces at the end of her turn.

The bell fragments: each hanging fragment has AC 15, 10 HP, immunity to poison and psychic damage, and no other resistance. An adjacent character can wrap it in cloth and wedge its clapper with an action; with the field card or survivor instruction, no roll. Without that knowledge, DC 13 Arcana or Religion as an action reveals the method; failure still reveals the fragment's connection to its husk, and breaking it works. Destroying or muffling a fragment immediately removes its linked husk, wherever that husk stands. Both quiet removes Elarra's resistance to nonmagical weapon damage for the rest of this manifestation. Quieting fragments does not damage her, spend her wail, or perform the release. She cannot restore a fragment during a confrontation. A character who can reach both cannot quiet both with one action.

Rock and ledge: the floor-to-ceiling pillar grants total cover where it blocks every line to a creature's space; mark the safe side relative to the pending wail. It blocks this Wail even though ordinary sounds might bend around stone. The ledge costs 10 feet of movement to climb its 5-foot height; no check. The floor is wet but not difficult terrain. The D bends provide total cover from most positions in E. An ordinary shield does not create total cover. Disengage, Dodge, forced movement, cover, and readied healing all work normally.

Release procedure, available before or during combat: bring the clapper from F to the bell shelf. One adjacent character uses an action to fit it; no roll, and tools are not required. With it fitted, a character spends an action ringing the bell and speaking the oath while an unobstructed walkable route through D, B, and A leads outside. The bell and speaker must be outside magical silence; the speaker need not hear themselves. While manifested, Elarra must be able to hear the bell, with no silence effect or solid-rock total cover between her and it. While dormant or dispersed, ringing it at her shelf reaches the bound spirit automatically, provided the bell itself is not silenced. Daylight release is possible. If any requirement fails, the action has no effect, the clapper remains fitted, and the DM explains the observable obstruction. Retry when corrected. On success Elarra and both husks end immediately and permanently, regardless of HP or remaining Wail. No saving throw or third hidden requirement. The outer boundary stone must not have been used to barricade the mouth; opening any party-made barrier restores the route.

Deception about a nonexistent open road cannot replace an actual exit. Smashing the main bell (AC 17, 25 HP; immune poison/psychic) prevents the release rite until a smith repairs it, but does not make her invulnerable to combat. Removing the bell or remains does not move the haunting outside the boundary.

Retreat and return: Elarra cannot cross the boundary or send attacks beyond it. A party fleeing with the sword is not pursued to Caldris. Until the next sunset, surviving creatures retain current HP, spent Wail, and quieted fragments; a destroyed manifestation stays gone for that period. At the following sunset, unless released, Elarra and both fragments reform at full strength and two new husks appear. Quieting or smashing fragments is tactical, not a permanent solution. A short rest in C works if its ward is intact; a long rest outside is safe from this haunt. Tell players that the memorial predicts reformation before they claim the road is safe.

Defeat: resolve death saves normally. Elarra stops attacking when no conscious intruder remains, but does not heal or stabilize anyone. A conscious character can surrender: she permits an action to stabilize each fallen companion, then insists they wait in C until dawn. The party can refuse, escape later, or exploit this bargain. Do not invent a rescuer or quietly change a failed save. For a table that prefers capture to possible deaths, agree before play to have the haunting stabilize fallen characters; that is an optional tone change, not the default balance.

Success and transition: permanent release earns the safe-road payment immediately; defeating her body buys a night to retrieve the clapper and complete the rite. A victory without release leaves a known, avoidable hazard. Bring proof and survivors to Caldris, using Resolution Paths.

Creatures

Elarra and the broken bell; atmospheric creature vignette, not a floor plan.



Elarra and the broken bell

Creature Statistics

Monster: Elarra, Lastlight Banshee

Original fifth-edition-compatible undead; no official challenge rating assigned. Medium undead, unaligned in life but now hostile and possessive. **AC 14; HP 110 (13d8 + 52); speed 0 feet, fly 40 feet (hover).** STR 6 (-2), DEX 16 (+3), CON 18 (+4), INT 12 (+1), WIS 12 (+1), CHA 17 (+3). **Saves:** Wis +4, Cha +6. **Skills:** Perception +4. **Senses:** darkvision 60 feet, passive Perception 14; senses the presence, but not exact location, of living creatures anywhere within the cave. **Languages:** Common, Elvish. **Proficiency bonus:** +3.

Resistance: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks, lost while both fragments are quiet. **Immunities:** necrotic, poison; charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, exhaustion. She is not immune to radiant damage, deafness, incapacitation, being turned, or forced movement that does not require grappling. She has no legendary resistance, regeneration, spellcasting, or hidden immunity to player plans.

Bound Incorporeality: can move through creatures and objects as difficult terrain; takes 5 (1d10) force damage if ending a turn inside an object and must move into the nearest open cave space. Cannot pass C's intact ward or the outside boundary. Cannot leave the mapped cave through rock. Actual sunlight gives her disadvantage on attack rolls and prevents Last Wail.

Multiattack (action): two Withering Claw attacks. **Withering Claw:** melee spell attack +6 to hit, reach 5 feet, one creature; 10 (2d6 + 3) necrotic damage. It is an attack, not a cast spell; counterspell does not stop it.

Dread Appearance (action, once per manifestation): living creatures of her choice within 30 feet that can see her make a DC 13 Wisdom save. Failure: frightened of her for up to one minute; repeat the save at the end of each affected creature's turn, ending the effect on success. Success, including a later successful save, gives immunity to this appearance for 24 hours. Closing or averting eyes before her action prevents seeing it but uses normal unseen-attacker rules while maintained. This is separate from hearing-dependent Wail.

Last Wail (once per night; action to begin, next action consumed on resolution): use the full warning procedure in Encounter 5. At release, each living creature within 30 feet that can hear her and lacks solid-rock total cover or C's sealed door makes a DC 13 Constitution save. Failure reduces current HP to 0; it is not damage, does not reduce maximum HP, and does not kill instantly. Success deals 10 (3d6) psychic damage. Unconscious living creatures can be affected, but a failed save at 0 HP causes no failed death saves because it deals no damage; damage from a successful save follows normal rules. Undead and constructs are unaffected. Deafened targets and targets entirely inside silence are unaffected. Damage resistance does not prevent the failure effect. For this variant only, death ward is expended to leave its target at 1 HP on a failed Wail save. This is an explicit homebrew benefit beyond its normal protection against damage or instant death.

Legendary actions: two points, replenished at the start of her turn; use one option at the end of another creature's turn, never during the Wail warning. **Drift (1 point):** move up to 15 feet without provoking opportunity attacks. **Cold Reach (2 points):** one creature she can see within 30 feet makes a DC 13 Strength save or is pulled 10 feet toward her; no damage. Stop movement at solid obstacles and the intact ward. Cold Reach can reposition a rescuer but cannot drag someone through the boundary or a closed door. Both options require her not to be incapacitated.

Monster: Echo Husk

Two original Medium undead, each linked to one bell fragment. **AC 12; HP 12; speed 25 feet.** STR 12 (+1), DEX 14 (+2), CON 10 (+0), INT 3 (-4), WIS 10 (+0), CHA 5 (-3). No save or skill bonuses. **Immunities:** poison damage; charmed, frightened, poisoned, exhaustion. No damage resistance. **Senses:** darkvision 60 feet, passive Perception 10. Understands Elarra's Common but cannot speak. **Proficiency bonus:** +2.

Raking Hand (action): melee weapon attack +4 to hit, reach 5 feet, one creature; 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage. **Echo Bound:** cannot cross the boundary or C's ward; vanishes if its fragment is quieted or Elarra is released. It occupies space, cannot pass through objects, and has only normal opportunity attacks. Treat as CR 1/4 solely for Turn Undead/Destroy Undead thresholds; this is not a tested encounter rating.

Difficulty and Ability Rulings

For **three level-5 characters**, use Elarra at 80 HP, one husk, and one legendary point per round (Drift only); quieting either fragment removes her weapon resistance. For **five level-5 characters**, use 135 HP and three husks, the third linked to both fragments and vanishing when either is quieted. Keep Wail at DC 13 and do not add another use. For **four level-3 characters**, use 65 HP, one claw attack per action, one husk, no legendary actions; replace Wail's failed-save effect with 14 (4d6) psychic damage, half on success. Keep the full warning and all counters. Do not apply these variants cumulatively without recalculating for the actual party.

Why preparation matters: with a +2 Constitution save, an exposed character has a 50% chance of failing DC 13. Four such characters all exposed have a 6.25% chance of all failing, assuming independent rolls. Advantage reduces each failure chance to 25%; all four then fail together about 0.39% of the time. Gravewax, valid silence, distance, or rock cover removes the save entirely. This is arithmetic about one ability, not a survival forecast or proof of overall balance. Wail plus ordinary attacks can still defeat an unprepared party. Once it is countered, the two fragment objectives and rite give the party ways to reduce pressure without grinding through HP.

Respect player abilities: Turn Undead uses Elarra's Wisdom save +4; she has no exemption, and turning creates time to rescue or repair. For Destroy Undead thresholds only, treat Elarra as CR 5; the husks use the threshold given above. Dispel magic does not end these non-spell monster features or erase the entire haunting; it can end an actual spell normally. Spirit guardians, magical weapons, and radiant attacks work as written. Elarra cannot conveniently learn a new power to defeat silence, flight, or a protected party. If their plan dismantles the encounter, let it work.

NPCs

The captain, the hunter, and the archivist. From left: Dain Rusk, Mara Venn, Sister Ilen. Player-safe character reference.



Rusk, Mara, and Ilen

Handout Reveal Guide

• **The Guild's Offer:** Give at the wagon yard; it contains the cargo facts and ownership terms, not the monster's identity.

• **Mara's Offer Letter:** Give when Mara shares her evidence; this proves what Rusk knew and when.

• **Ilen's Field Card:** Give after research or an equivalent complete briefing; do not distribute in the opening rumor scene.

• **The Freight Ledger Rubbing:** Give with the ledger in F; this is an independent route to the release, not a city rumor.

• **Lastlight Player Map:** Give as explored, or explicitly allow the full plan; no creature positions or hidden explanations are printed.

• **East Road Route:** Give when the destination is learned. Distances are road miles; diagram is not to scale.

Cast and Dialogue

NPC: Dell Fen

Role: human wagon broker, patched green coat, ink on his cuffs. **Want:** reopen trade without another funeral. **Fear:** being remembered as the man who dispatched the next caravan. **Voice:** brisk until someone names a missing driver, then exact and quiet. **Leverage:** route records, the guild contract, equipment credit. **Knows:** caravan dates, sword ownership, Rusk's public "delays" story. **Hides:** his own debt to the guild, which is unrelated to the haunting.

Opening: "Gold is an offer. A name is a reason. There are twelve names on those carts."

About the sword: "The guild bought it from the old roadwarden's estate. It is ours to give. Here: seal, witnesses, inventory number."

About danger: "If I knew what took them, I'd put it on the board. All I have is the same stop on three schedules."

About help: "Bring me enough to warn people honestly. You don't owe a ghost your life."

Help earns records and a delay of the next departure. Threats get public documents only. If betrayed, he pursues repayment of guild property through civil authorities, not assassins. AC 10, HP 9, speed 30; ability modifiers all +0; no special saves or skills; improvised stick +2 to hit, 5 feet, 1d4 bludgeoning. Flees violence.

NPC: Captain Dain Rusk

Role: human watch captain, bald, close salt-and-pepper beard, gate badge worn smooth. **Want:** his people home and a credible account before his superiors learn he concealed the losses. **Fear:** replacing a rescue with a public trial of his judgment. **Voice:** clipped numbers, hands aligned with the edge of his desk. **Knows:** exact route and personnel, not the monster. **Hides:** two investigators among the six missing; no secret pact or personal theft.

Opening: "I can pay for answers. I will pay more for people."

When asked how many: "Two overdue." If challenged: "Two patrols. Six people. I should have said six."

About Mara: "She read the survivor's account and returned the advance. I called that cowardice. I am less certain now."

Asked to come himself: "Then this gate loses its only officer while the district is ready to riot. I can sign supplies out. I cannot become your fourth sword." This is his decision, not proof the party must accept the job.

When offered discretion: "Bring me a roster I can close. You will have a promise in my handwriting."

When threatened with exposure: "You can ruin me after we know whether they're alive. Put that part first."

Help brings the written contract and later favor. Honest public testimony makes him cooperate with an inquiry; he does not retroactively cancel earned wages. Betrayal by fabricated evidence makes him contest the lie, while verified rescues remain payable. If combat is forced: AC 16, HP 39, speed 30; STR +3, DEX +1, CON +2, INT +0, WIS +1, CHA +1; Wis save +3; other saves use ability modifiers, Insight +3, Persuasion +3; two sword attacks per action, +5 to hit, 5-foot reach, 1d8+3 slashing each. He calls for help and accepts surrender; this is not a planned encounter.

NPC: Mara Venn

Role: human bounty hunter, broken nose, dark braid, scarf, scarred leather. **Want:** live to collect work worth doing. **Fear:** being shamed into a job she has correctly judged lethal. **Voice:** dry specifics; never mystical vagueness. **Leverage:** Toma's account, Rusk's offer, route sketch. **Knows:** the dangerous pattern, not an exact stat block. **Hides:** she had a companion die on an unrelated ghost contract, explaining caution without making her secretly responsible.

Opening: "Tell me what he left out. That's usually where the job starts."

Why refuse: "No wounds. No theft. A woman who arrives after dark. That's not a bounty; that's a lesson somebody else already paid for."

Asked what survived: "Toma. Deaf since the mills. Said the others fell when she opened her mouth. He thought she was calling directions."

Asked for a plan: "Find out what kind of dead thing it is. Keep one person able to drag the others. Don't sleep where the patrol disappeared."

Called a coward: "Correct. A very experienced one."

Offered more money to join: "Keep it for the people willing to go. My answer isn't an opening bid."

Help or honest uncertainty earns respect. Pressure closes the conversation; betrayal makes her warn other contractors about the party. She will authenticate her note before an inquiry. AC 15, HP 44, speed 30; STR +1, DEX +3, CON +2, INT +1, WIS +2, CHA +0; Stealth +5, Insight +4; saves use ability modifiers; one crossbow attack +5, range 80/320 feet, 1d8+3 piercing, or two shortsword attacks +5, reach 5 feet, 1d6+3 piercing each. She disengages and leaves when violence threatens; she is not a bonus party member.

NPC: Sister Ilen

Role: dwarf shrine archivist, gray braids, spectacles, wax under her nails. **Want:** make old warnings useful to living travelers. **Fear:** confident folklore replacing observed facts. **Voice:** patient corrections followed by practical questions. **Leverage:** diagnosis, protections, memorial, release instructions. **Knows:** the field-card rules and Elarra's recorded oath. **Hides:** nothing essential; admits where records stop.

Opening: "The creature's name matters because it tells us which mistakes to stop making."

About protection: "Stop the sound, break the line, or stay beyond its reach. Pick two. Plans lose pieces."

About ordinary earplugs: "A little better than bare ears. Mine are enchanted. Don't confuse quieter with silent."

About the oath: "She promised safe departure. Put the clapper back, leave the path open, and remind her what a shelter is for."

About killing: "You may need to fight her. But smashing an apparition isn't the same as mending what keeps it here."

If the party lacks money: "Bring me their names. That is payment enough."

Respect or genuine need earns help. Threats make her request a watch witness but do not falsify research. Betrayal ends free supplies. AC 11, HP 18, speed 25; STR +0, DEX +1, CON +1, INT +3, WIS +2, CHA +0; Arcana and Religion +5; no extra save bonuses; staff +2 to hit, 5 feet, 1d6 bludgeoning. No combat spellcasting in this scenario. She remains in Caldris.

NPC: Sella Dorn and Iven Pell

Role: two living patrol guards, exhausted behind C's door. Sella has cropped hair and a habit of counting exits; Iven talks through plans to keep panic manageable. **Want:** get each other out. **Fear:** opening the door to a voice mimicking help. **Leverage:** firsthand information, four colleagues' names, proof that Rusk dispatched six. **Knows:** the voice, the door, the chest, and cloth muffling the fragments; they watched a husk flicker when a dropped cloak caught one fragment, then fled before experimenting. They do not know the release rite.

Sella, through the slot: "Say something a ghost wouldn't bother with. What does rain smell like outside?"

Iven, on the threat: "I saw Brann fall. She hadn't touched him. That door shut and the sound stopped."

Sella, on the captain: "He sent us to find people. He didn't tell us the first pair were investigators. Write that accurately."

Asked to fight: "Get us out first. Please." They will demonstrate hand signals and the fragment trick from safety, not serve as expendable shields.

Help earns testimony; coercion earns guarded compliance until an escape is possible. Neither lies to protect Rusk. Their combat and evacuation numbers are in Encounter 4. Both retain one identity and current HP across scenes.

Items

Item: Warden's Promise

Original rare magic longsword, requires attunement. A straight, fullered blade with an arch-shaped guard and an amber pommel bead. Renowned for its former bearer guiding sixty families through a siege; the fame is real, the claim that it creates sunlight is false.

While attuned, gain +1 to attack and damage rolls with it; damage is magical slashing, 1d8 one-handed or 1d10 two-handed, plus the normal ability modifier and +1. Without attunement it is a normal longsword for attack bonuses and damage resistance. As a bonus action while holding it, turn its light on or off: bright light 20 feet, dim light a further 20; not sunlight. Once per long rest, when an ally you can see within 30 feet takes damage, use your reaction while holding the sword to reduce that damage by 2d8 + your proficiency bonus, minimum 0. It protects another creature, not you. It cannot prevent Wail's failed-save effect because that effect is not damage. It can reduce the damage from a successful Wail save if you can see the ally.

Attunement uses a normal short rest; grabbing it from F does not grant instant powers. The guild transfers ownership under its signed contract once the ledger is returned and the cave is permanently released or the route is formally closed and a safe replacement campsite established. Merchants recognize it: once per adventure in Caldris, showing the transferred sword earns an introduction to a guild official, not automatic persuasion success. Its monetary resale value is left to the campaign; do not add an invented guaranteed sale price to the reward total.

Item: Gravewax

Original common consumable, sold in packets of four pairs. One pair fills both ears of one willing creature, using the wearer's action or an adjacent helper's action. It creates magical deafness for ten minutes, then crumbles harmlessly. Removing it early takes an action; a used pair cannot be reused. It blocks every audible signal and prevents this banshee's Wail from affecting the wearer. It does not prevent visual fear, claws, or damage generally. It is not a silence field and does not block the wearer's verbal spell components. Applying fresh wax while already protected replaces the duration; it does not stack. A creature can refuse it; no secret insertion into unwilling enemies.

Item: Healing Draught

An original labeled single-dose tonic: an action to drink or administer to an adjacent creature, including an unconscious willing ally, restoring 2d4+2 HP. Empty after use. Two lie in F; research can earn two more. These are the only provided healing consumables. They have no market resale value assigned in the reward tally.

Item: Lastlight Bell Clapper

Hand-sized iron clapper with a torn ribbon, not a weapon or general-purpose anti-undead device. In F beneath the chest. Fitting and ringing it at the main bell follow Encounter 5; outside that rite it is ordinary iron. Losing it permits a smith to make a replacement for 10 gp with one day and measurements of the bell. This delays release without permanently locking it behind a destroyed quest object.

Warden's Promise, gravewax, a road badge, and the bell clapper.



Warden's Promise and expedition equipment

Resolution Reference

Resolution Paths

Release: fitting the clapper, ringing the bell, speaking the oath, and leaving a valid departure route ends the haunting permanently. Quieted fragments fall still, and Elarra's final words are "Then let them go." Do not undo that victory with a sequel resurrection. The guild reopens the stop after an ordinary safety inspection.

Combat victory: at 0 HP Elarra dissipates; husks remain until destroyed, quieted, or released by the rite. The party can now complete the rite without her opposition, provided any remaining husks are handled. If it leaves without doing so, she reforms at next sunset. Rusk pays for verified rescues and evidence, but not the 400 gp safe-road balance until the threat is permanently resolved or a safe closure and replacement camp are implemented.

Daylight extraction: the party may free both guards and take the sword and ledger while the spirit sleeps. Honor this. They can return equipped for the rite or warn the guild and establish another camp. Do not make a daylight success summon an unannounced daylight ambush.

Containment: publish the cave warning, arrange a guarded replacement campsite at the marker-48 farm, and have Rusk post the closure. This needs two days of civic arrangements and costs 50 gp paid directly by the guild, not the party's reward. No further dangerous check. It stops caravan losses and earns the same 400 gp safe-road balance and sword transfer, although Elarra remains. Rusk cannot alone declare it safe by suppressing another report.

Retreat or partial success: reporting the identified threat with a survivor, dated records, or the recovered ledger earns 50 gp for evidence. This is an advance against the 400 gp safe-road balance: a later full resolution pays the remaining 350 gp, not another 400. Rescue payments stand independently. Warning the next caravan prevents its loss. Earned money and discoveries remain; sword ownership still follows the guild contract.

Exposure or discretion: testimony can remove Rusk from command; his lieutenant honors written guild-backed rescue contracts. Truthful exposure does not reduce cash. Discretion may earn his personal favor. Neither choice erases the families' right to know the missing guards' fate. Fabricated accusations earn no renown.

Rewards and Follow-Up

Party totals, not per character: up to 700 gp from the watch: 100 advance + 400 safe-road payment + 100 for Sella + 100 for Iven. If the advance was never paid, it is included on settlement. The optional 50 gp evidence payment comes from the 400, not in addition. The guild's sealed 80 gp purse is returned as cargo; it is not a reward. Shrine fittings provide 60 gp of saleable salvage under the shrine reclamation note. Thus the maximum guaranteed cash plus saleable salvage is 760 gp. The sword, up to four draughts, gravewax, and one 10 gp supply credit are separate in-kind benefits. Rescuing only one guard pays only that guard's 100 gp; warning/containment still earns the full safe-road payment.

Captain's debt: if the party resolves the danger or returns either guard, and did not extort Rusk, he offers one signed favor redeemable within six months: an expedited lawful audience with a city official, access to one nonrestricted municipal archive, or two guards escorting the party within city limits for one day. They will not break laws, fight a dungeon, or arrest a rival without cause. Record one use; no secret cancellation because the DM dislikes the favor. If he is removed before redemption, the watch converts it to the archive access or lawful audience.

Leverage instead of friendship: authenticated roster plus survivor testimony allows the party to compel one public inquiry into the concealment. This is an alternative political reward, not ownership of the captain. It can expose another city issue through ordinary play, but does not automatically win an unrelated court case. Extortion forfeits his personal escort favor; it does not forfeit earned wages.

Renown: rescuing either guard earns one named contact among the watch; securing the route earns the guild title Roadwardens of the East and free ordinary stabling in Caldris for thirty days. Releasing Elarra and returning the four deceased guards' names earns Ilen's archive access and replacement gravewax at cost, 10 gp per four-pair packet. These benefits do not require killing the spirit. Use milestone advancement according to the ongoing campaign; no untested XP rating is implied.

Follow-up seeds: the recovered ledger identifies the collector who was moving the famous sword; the families demand the missing reports be made public; the marker-48 farm becomes a useful base if the party chose containment. The sword has no hidden curse; earned rewards remain valid.

Handout: The Guild's Offer

The Guild's Offer

PLAYER COPY - DETACH OR SHARE

MILEWARD CARTERS' GUILD - RECOVERY WARRANT

Missing cargo: one travel chest carrying Warden's Promise, a straight longsword with an arch-shaped guard and amber bead; one shipping ledger; one sealed purse containing 80 gold pieces.

The guild will transfer title to Warden's Promise upon return of the ledger and either permanent removal of the Lastlight danger or formal closure of that stop with a safe replacement camp. Return the sealed purse as cargo. Recovery alone is not a transfer of ownership.

Last scheduled stop: the shelter north of the fiftieth east-road marker, at the three-notched stone. Dell Fen is authorized to sign for the guild.

PLAYER NOTES

FOR: _____ SESSION: _____

Handout: Mara's Offer Letter

Mara's Offer Letter

PLAYER COPY - DETACH OR SHARE

Venn,

Two patrols have failed to report from the fiftieth marker. Six watch members in all, including the two investigators sent first. I need a search conducted without a public call for volunteers. Bring me their location and an account I can act on.

The witness says the woman appeared after sunset. No visible wounds on those who fell. I have asked the shrine to preserve his statement.

D. Rusk, Captain, Eastbarrow Watch

Dated five days before the party's arrival.

PLAYER NOTES

FOR: _____ SESSION: _____

Handout: Ilen's Field Card

Ilen's Field Card

PLAYER COPY - DETACH OR SHARE

LASTLIGHT PRECAUTIONS

The evidence indicates a banshee. Her killing cry reaches thirty feet. Before it breaks she draws one long breath: move, block the sound, or take complete shelter behind rock. Everyone gets a chance to react.

Gravewax in both ears makes you deaf for ten minutes. Use an action to apply or remove it. You cannot hear your companions. Ordinary plugs help but are not certain protection. Magical silence works, but prevents verbal spells inside it. Protection from evil and good helps against her attacks and fear; it does not stop the cry.

Her bell has two hanging fragments. Wrap and wedge each one, or break it; each silences one smaller apparition. Quiet both and ordinary weapons can hurt her fully. Do not mistake this for ending the haunting.

Restore the clapper to the main bell. Leave the walking route out of the cave open. Ring it while saying, "A shelter is a promise of safe departure." The bell must be audible to her. If she has been dispersed, ring it at the shelf anyway. This releases the haunting; otherwise she returns at the next sunset.

PLAYER NOTES

FOR: _____ SESSION: _____

Handout: The Freight Ledger Rubbing

The Freight Ledger Rubbing

PLAYER COPY - DETACH OR SHARE

Copied from the old bell shelf:

ELARRA, KEEPER OF THE LAST LIGHT

A shelter is a promise of safe departure.

A note in the carrier's hand: The fallen clapper fits the split socket without a tool. The old ward requires bell, oath, and an open path to the road. The little hanging pieces make the sound go wrong, but muffling them alone will not mend the promise. I put the clapper beneath the chest so it would not be lost.

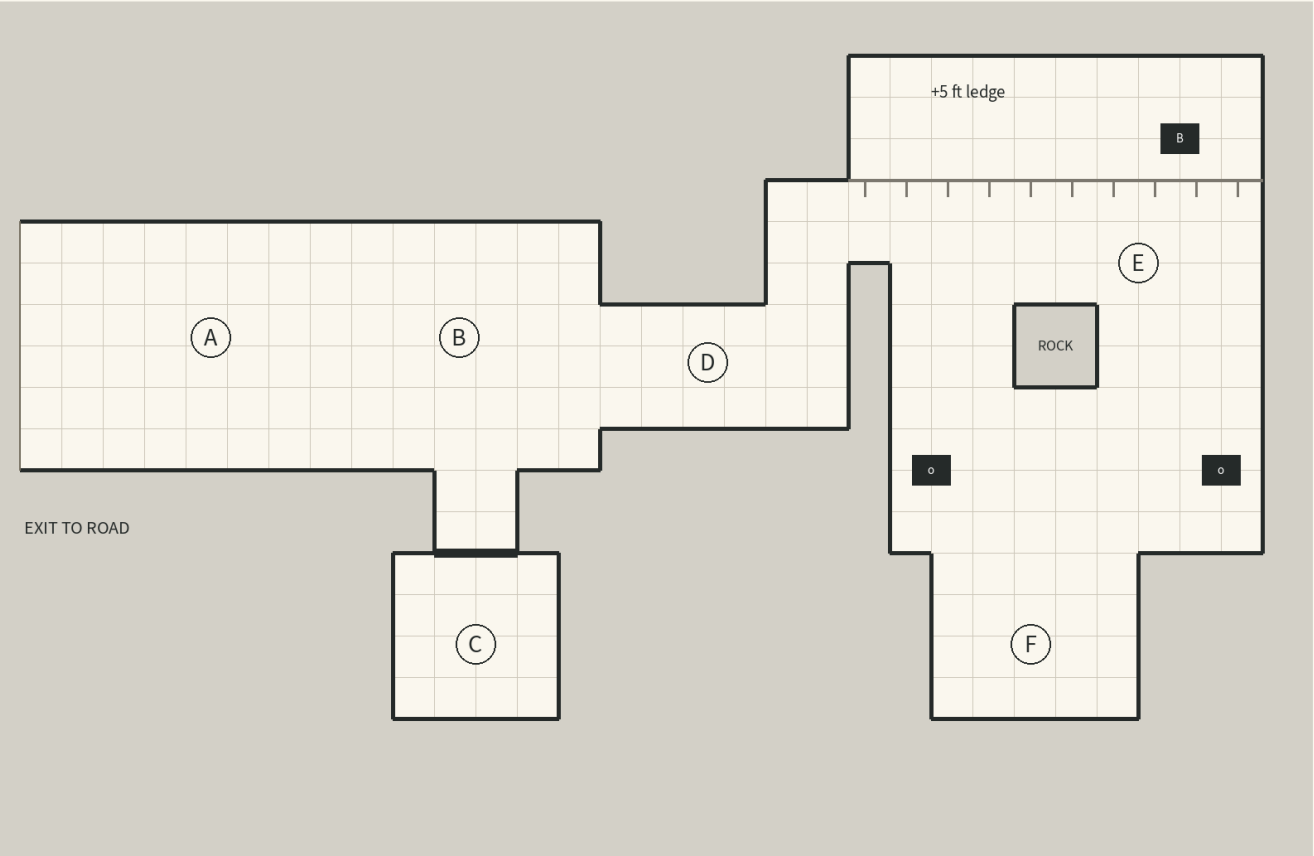
PLAYER NOTES

FOR: _____ SESSION: _____

Handout: Lastlight Player Map

LASTLIGHT CAVE

Player tactical plan - reveal as explored



0 10 20 feet

Each square = 5 feet | Ceiling 15 feet; throat 10 feet

North is up. Heavy lines are rock; dark bar is a door.

A Entrance B Camp area C Side room D Passage E Main chamber F Alcove

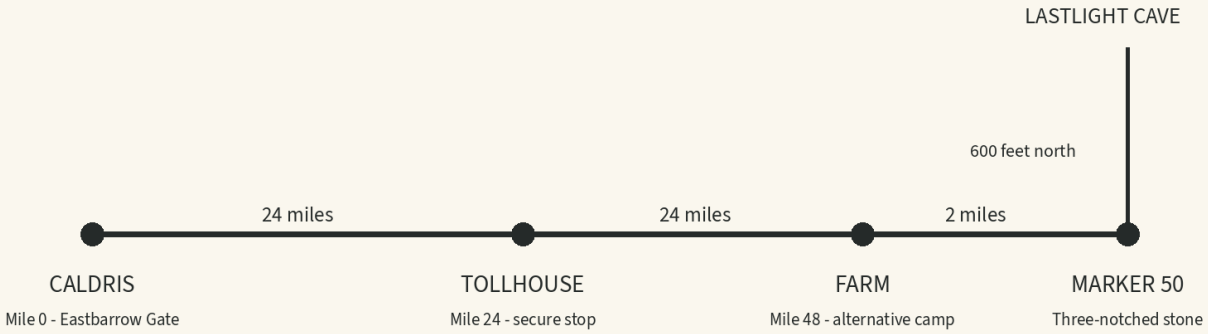
Visible bell fixtures are marked only as objects; no creature positions or hidden rules shown.

Player copy. Each square is 5 feet; reveal as explored.

Handout: East Road Route

THE EAST ROAD

Caldris to Lastlight | 50 road miles | Diagram not to scale



Normal pace: about 24 road miles per eight-hour travel day.

Plan the arrival time. The cave is an optional shelter, not the only campsite.

East →

Player copy. Fifty road miles. Diagram not to scale.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.

Session Notes

Decisions, discoveries, and the next adventure.