

REVENGE OF THE CARREDON

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INTRODUCTION

R*evenge of the Carredon* is a seven act adventure that takes place in the latter half of the first year of the war. The events it describes are not dependent upon other adventures, so this scenario can take place before or after other cosm adventures. The outcome determines the fate of Tolwyn Tancred, a powerful and influential figure in Queen Pella Ardinay's court, whose presence or absence could have a lasting impact on the morale of the forces of Light, the unity of House Tancred, and the odds of victory in numerous battles throughout the realm. By the end of the adventure, the heroes finally confront an ancient evil and solve an old mystery, while stopping the machinations of Uthorion.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Of the Gaunt Man's many powerful lieutenants, few possessed the potential he saw in Uthorion, a pallid young necromancer from a world where the boundary of life and death was almost nonexistent. When Uthorion discovered a Darkness Device of his own, the Gaunt Man, recognizing his capability, ceded to him a strange little magic-rich world for his first conquest: Aysle. The tiny cosm, finitely bound in a sphere not much larger than the disk world it contained, was to be Uthorion's to do with as he willed.

It wasn't a gracious gift. The Gaunt Man knew the strong magic of the place would make it a costly and long-term project, but at least it would keep the ambitious potential rival busy, and hopefully yield spoils eventually.

The armies of Light met the invasion with force, but one by one they fell, and Uthorion's dark hordes swept across Aysle. As a necromancer, Uthorion was never short of soldiers, and his former master loaned his own nightmarish forces to tip the scales.

After generations of battle, Uthorion pushed the forces of Light back to the Valley of the Sword. But even in this dark hour, victory was not assured. The harder he pushed, the stronger his opponents seemed to get. Much of their inner strength came from their heroes—stalwart Knight Protectors, Wardens, Magisters, and even the Queen herself.

He would need to break the heroes to break the army. No matter how strong Darkness became, Light summoned an equal strength, and the stalemate continued.

The Gaunt Man knew of a fell beast so terrible that no hero could possibly stop it: the Carredon. Long ago he had corrupted the spirit of a mighty dragon until it became a creature of foul darkness. As a Horror, such a creature could never truly perish, and so the Carredon rose again on Aysle. Uthorion realized his former master had just handed him the key to victory.

When sun set on that fateful evening, Uthorion's forces surged toward the armies of the Light. Flying high above them was the Carredon, a dragon unlike any the folk of Aysle had ever seen, borne aloft on leathery black wings. As Uthorion confronted Ardinay herself, high in her tower, ejecting her soul and taking her body for his own, the Carredon lay waste to the forces of Light. Tolwyn of House Tancred, one of the Knight Protectors, charged the Carredon in single combat. Her magic sword plunged into its eye. Enraged by this previously-unknown agony, the Carredon lashed out at her, piercing her with one massive claw, and launching itself back into the sky. This was the last anyone saw of Tolwyn for nearly 100 years.

In its pain, the beast returned to its home cosm, a fallow place, long ago drained of life and Possibilities. Tolwyn came with it, and despite her wounds continued the battle. She eventually triumphed.

Tolwyn's wound were fatal, but she did not die. She fell into a fevered trance, haunted by visions of her queen's spirit sundered from her body and a monster wearing her face and ruling in her place. Tolwyn staggered through the lifeless world of the Carredon until she eventually reached its end—and after that an endless void. Still she plodded on for decades, driven by the voices and visions that pulled her ever forward.

A century later, she awoke in a hayrick in Liandar, an entire continent away from the Valley of the Sword. She still wore her armor but was weaponless and disoriented. A crofter discovered her there and immediately recognized the warrior woman of legend. The war was long since over,

BETA CLEARANCE!

This adventure assumes the Storm Knights have progressed to Beta Clearance. If your group is only Alpha Clearance don't worry! The encounters here may be difficult early on, but not impossible. If the team is finding things too easy or difficult, here are a few options for the GM:

- **Upgrade or downgrade the opponents:**

Increase the number of reality-rated foes among them and the Possibilities each has, include magic weapons (and use them!), or add Perks like Endurance, Brawler, Whirlwind, or any Darkness Perk. Try one of those three types of upgrade first, and add more elements as needed. If things are too hard, leave out reality-rated leaders.

- **Increase or decrease the number of foes:**

Upgrading or downgrading is better, but changing the force of numbers is an easy operation and can be done in a pinch. Anywhere foes are listed as "# per Storm Knight," simply increase that number if things are too easy, or reduce it if things are too hard. Start by a difference of one, and go higher if it's still necessary. Remember, increasing the number also increases the number of reality-rated versions of the foe present. Most are Rare, meaning 1 in 10 are rated. It's important to use Combined Actions and Mob damage with so many foes in play.

Only alter the forces if players express that they aren't feeling challenged. Some fights are easy, some are hard. What should be an easy battle could suddenly become very difficult after a few unlucky rolls, resulting in Disconnection and Wounds. A light touch is best—remember these are heroes after all!

Uthorion vanquished (or so most people thought), and Aysle saved. Tolwyn knew better, and rode forth to save her Queen.

The rest is well-known history. But what neither she—nor anyone else—knew, was that she brought the Carredon with her. Its cold, tainted spirit clung to her, its spirit “riding” her own as she made her way back home. Its curse kept her alive and protected her from the void. Time spent in the strong magic of Aysle gave the Darkness strength, a strength that threatens to consume Tolwyn’s body and transform her into a weapon for Darkness.

If it succeeds, Tolwyn—and all she represents to the good folk of Aysle—is lost.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure is set near the end of the first year of the invasion. By this time, the heroes have worked with the Delphi Council extensively, and are nearing—or already reached—Beta Clearance.

The Storm Knights are in Oxford helping to repel one of Uthorion’s attacks. At a feast celebrating a victorious battle, it becomes increasingly clear that something is not right with Tolwyn. Archmage Wyrwind discovers the Carredon’s soul riding in Tolwyn’s body, and prescribes an ancient ritual to purge it from her, one that requires the heroes to seek out four artifacts aligned with the four Essences of Ayslish magic, along with the dead heart of the Carredon itself.

The Storm Knights depart on a hazardous race against time to find the four Essences and the Carredon’s heart before Tolwyn is lost. The heroes can choose in which order to pursue these pieces of the ritual. Along the way, they are harassed by Uthorion’s Stalkers, teams of hardy warriors of the Dark sent to prevent them from saving Tolwyn.

The trail of the first Essence, an acorn imbued with Life, sends the heroes to Norway, where it is said to have fallen from the sky. The Viking tribes, caught in an escalating dispute, present a hazardous political atmosphere that threatens to stop the Storm Knights’ quest in its tracks.

The second Essence is True Knowledge, in the form of a scroll that carries information in the

Adventure Background above. The heroes are directed to the court of Ellefaine, but a disaster in the library forces the heroes to cross Elfame and seek out the true name from the sinister witch, Jinny Greenteeth. Jinny offers the scroll only if the Storm Knights purge her domain from the influence of a Nightmare Tree.

Hunting for the third Essence of Time, a crystal from the place where Aysle was created, sends the Storm Knights into the Land Between, a labyrinth of endless caverns extending deep into the earth. With their Seeker as a guide, the Storm Knights traverse these caves, stumbling upon a desperate force of dwarves trapped in a subterranean keep, then ending their quest in a massive geode where an insane demigod is imprisoned.

To track down the fourth Essence, a lychee’s skull imbued with the power of Death, the heroes go to the Corsair enclave on the Isle of Man. There they recruit a Corsair who knows the object of their quest is aboard the ship of a necromancer-turned-pirate. The Corsair helps the team track the pirate across the North Sea, finally battling him in the icy wastes of the Graves.

Aside from the Essences, the Storm Knights also need the heart of the Carredon, which means they must find its body. With only a single Carredon scale to guide the way, they travel to London, where a dwarven inventor is rumored to have a device that can open a gate between Cosms. However, thieves have stolen a valuable component, and before the heroes can journey to the Carredon’s home world to retrieve its heart, they must track down a powerful thieves’ guild and steal back the machine’s power source.

At last, all five pieces acquired, the Storm Knights meet Ardinay and her forces back at Oxford for the final ritual. The Stalkers that have hounded the Storm Knights along the way make one final bid to stop the heroes. The ritual commences with the various pieces aligned according to prophecy. In an epic battle, the Carredon is pulled from Tolwyn—but starts to materialize once freed! Can the Storm Knights destroy it before it is fully reborn? Or will the Carredon’s foulness be unleashed upon the world once more?

ACT TIMING

Act One sets up the critical problem facing Aysle, along with the stakes. The heroes are given clues as to the location of the five components they'll need to save Tolwyn. The next five acts, Acts Two through Six, can be played in any order the players prefer, as the heroes track down those components one by one. Once all the components are in hand, the heroes gather in Act Seven to complete the ritual. Though they must make haste, there is time in each act for small diversions or short side adventures.



ACT ONE: THE MARK OF THE BEAST

The team starts out in the middle of a war. Weeks ago, Lady Pella Ardinay asked Quinn Sebastian for reinforcements. He sent a small team of Storm Knights, knowing they're more valuable in a fight than companies of regular troops or supplies. The newcomers haven't been on the lines very long when Uthorion's dark forces begin their attack.

OVERVIEW

Scene 1: The action starts with the team already in place in Oxford, helping the defensive lines hold against a push by Uthorion's forces.

Scene 2: The Storm Knights are invited to feast with Pella Ardinay as thanks for their deeds in the previous scene, but the party is disrupted by sniping allies and a curse overcoming Tolwyn—the Champion of Light!

Scene 3: Archmagus Wyrwind needs protection during a ritual to divine the curse affecting Tolwyn, and only the heroes can be trusted for the moment.

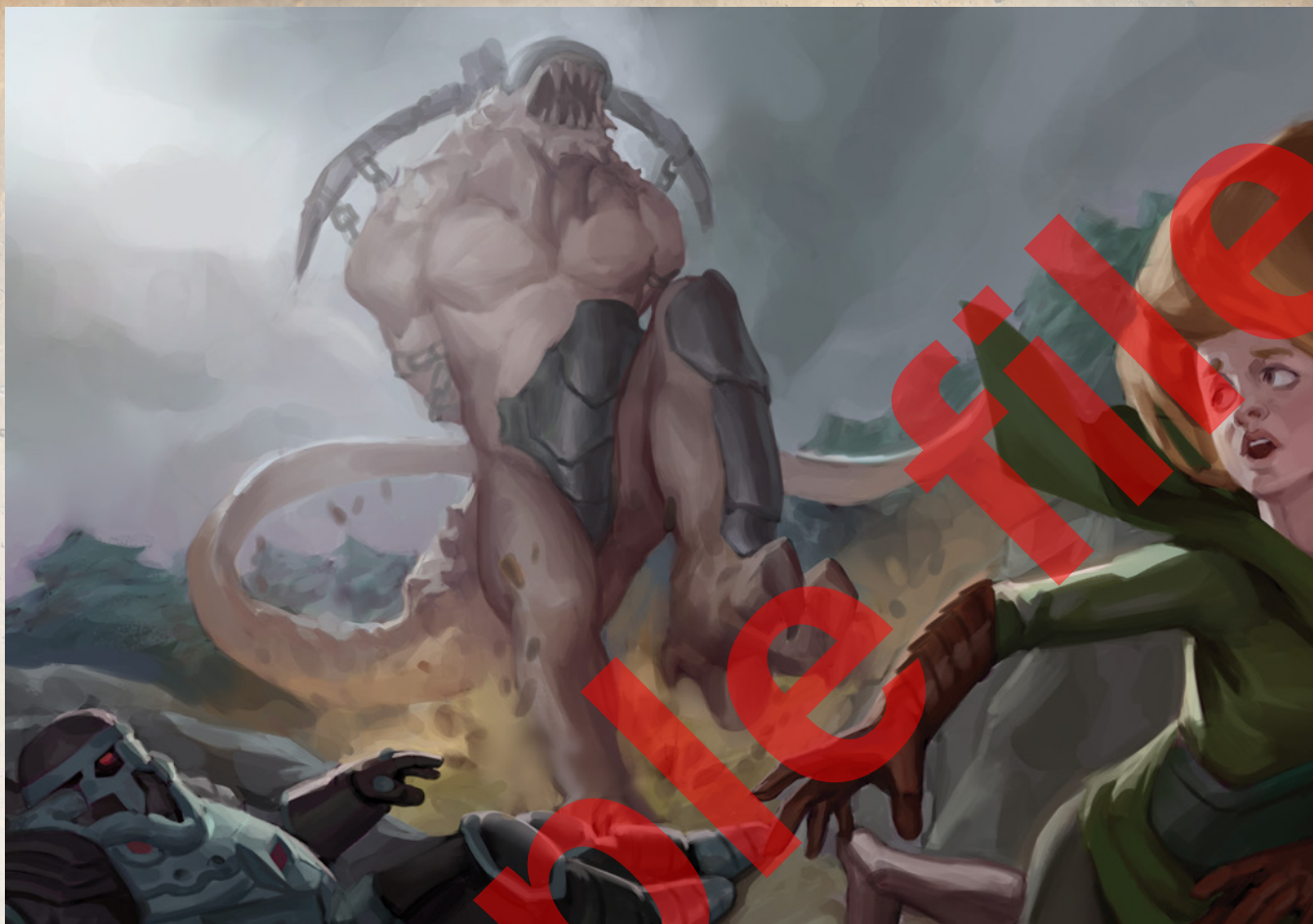
Scene 4: Wyrwind shares everything he learned, and now it's up to the Storm Knights to choose where to go next to stop the mysterious curse.

Scene 5: Oxford is surrounded, so where-ever the team chooses to go next they'll need to break through enemy forces to get there!

SCENE ONE: OXFORD DOWN

Standard Scene. Core Earth Dominant Zone. The Storm Knights were dropped into Oxford a few days ago via a Delphi Council Osprey. Since then, they've been attached to the 1st Regiment, the remains of an armored division stationed near Oxford and supporting Ardinay's forces in battle against Uthorion.

In the short time they've been here, the heroes haven't met Lady Ardinay herself, or Crown Prince Edward, rumored to be in the area leading a column of tanks. Most of their time has been spent with Major Sean Roberson, a sturdy chap with a knack for unit coordination and gallows humor. The 1st Regiment is a reserve at the moment, but



Uthorion has a host of unpleasant weapons in his magical arsenal.

Roberson gently jokes that he expects everyone to be content and waist deep in goblins or whatever—they're called very soon.

He's not wrong.

INCOMING!

Roberson and the Knights are in a large vehicle bunker about 50 meters behind a main trench line—a line which traces the edge of the Oxford hardpoint's sphere of influence—when reports of enemy activity break out. The first wave is projectiles fired from siege engines inside Uthorion's distant castle. Whatever the catapults are launching detonates explosively when it hits the ground, and makes a horrifying shrieking sound along with the bangs and rattles of destruction. The Dark Army's catapults just don't have the range that Core Earth artillery does, however, and all the shots fall far short of the front-line.

What was left of the city between the warring lines is thoroughly pounded to rubble, leaving a broken no-man's land of low ruined walls and rubble. The Challenger tanks in the bunker fire shots back at the distant castle in reply, mostly striking blue magical shields or landing on the intervening ground—adding to the din and destruction.

This opening volley is mostly about working the nerves of the defenders and making enough noise, so no one can detect the magical tunnels being dug towards the edge of the trench line. It also provides broken cover for the unlucky lurks and large surface troops soon to attack the trench head on.

Storm Knights don't need to test for fear or any psychological effects, but grant a Possibility if a character deepens the drama by breaking under fire, or if someone tries to use *persuasion* and give a stirring speech or a performance to keep the soldier's spirits up!

There's no point in charging forward into the trenches or the bombardment area yet. Roberson tries to halt any impetuous charges with a gentle "Steady on," and a suggestion to save it for the real attack, but if a Storm Knight is determined to go out and get blasted, grant them a nice 3 Wound hit (Soak-able) for their trouble.

THE FIRST WAVE

After an hour the shrieking explosions stop, but the battlefield isn't quiet for long. Sounds of gunfire erupt from the Core Earth lines, as distant lurks begin advancing through the rubble. The advancing troops are about 1000 meters away, so anyone with enough range can join in with the appropriate penalties, plus another -4 for Concealment and Toughness 10 cover.

Close range fighters may be chomping at the bit to move forward and get into the action by now, and farther down the line a group of three tanks charge forward over the trench and towards a mass of lurks there. The good Major still wants everyone to hold back and remain in reserve. "Bloody lunatics. Steady on."

After the heroes have a chance to make one or two attacks at long range, the situation changes again. Several pits open up just outside the trench, and waves of howling lurks leap from them to engage the soldiers on the line. Now—finally—it's time to act! Flip a Drama Card and begin a regular encounter. The lurks are in two equal groups. One group is inside the trench battling soldiers hand-to-hand. From the bunker they have -4 Concealment, Toughness 10 Cover, and watch out for Friendly Fire! The other group is still emerging from tunnels, and have the same Cover and Concealment, but no friendlies to get in the way. The heroes start at a range of 50 meters.

- **Lurks (4 per hero):** See page 100.

THE GOLIATH

Once the onslaught from the tunnels is dealt with, a new emergency draws the embattled Storm Knights' attention. Some distance down the line where the tanks moved forward, a massive beast lumbers towards the line. It would stand 40 meters tall, except it's hunched over and carrying what

looks like part of a castle tower on its back—a spire from the Dark Fortress itself!

Artillery shells and spells rain down on the creature, but detonate against a wave of blue energy about 100 meters away from it—the same kind of shield effect that protects Uthorion's mighty castle. A scholar or conjuration test intuits that the shield is useless against attacks closer than 100 meters, but there's a little gunfire from the line where the creature is that's breaking through.

This kind of unexpected situation is exactly what the Storm Knights are here for, and now Major Roberson and his men drive them to the breach in under a minute. This is enough time for Action Pools to reset, but there's no scene change so no new cards are drawn—and there's no time to recover any lost Shock.

At the edge of the shield effect, reality-rated characters feel the telltale tingle of shifting axioms, and the reason there's so little return fire from troops and vehicles inside the shield becomes clear. The beast is carrying some kind of massive Talisman, and now an Aysle Pure Zone is in effect. Roberson and his vehicles turn back unless the characters bid them to move forward, but the Pure Zone disables vehicles and weaponry in the hands of Ords completely and immediately. British soldiers have taken to carrying smithed short-swords at all times, so they aren't helpless, but there are more than enough lurks supporting the creature to keep any troops busy with the left-over.

- **Lurks (3 per hero):** See page 100. There are more around, but all are engaged with other soldiers.
- **Goliath:** See below.

GOLIATH

It's not entirely clear what kind of beast the goliath was before Uthorion's mages did their grim work on it. Now it's blinded, covered in thick metal plates, and carrying what looks like the remains of a stone tower on its back.

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 8, Mind 6, Spirit 8, Strength 22

Skills: Dodge 10, find 5, intimidation 10, tracking 8, unarmed combat 12