

# DRAGONLANCE

## SEEKERS OF SOLACE



The Dragonlance Nexus



A 5E DRAGONLANCE ADVENTURE FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> LEVEL CHARACTERS

# THE DRAGONLANCE NEXUS

## PROUDLY PRESENTS SEEKERS OF SOLACE

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### ON THE COVER

The flames of religious fanaticism burn hot on a cool autumn evening. In Solace's town square, Sturm Brightblade, Caramon Majere, and Raistlin Majere hold back a crowd of zealots while Tasslehoff Burrfoot frees an innocent tiefling woman about to be burned at the stake.

**D**arkness has fallen over poor, suffering Krynn. Thus it has been since the great Cataclysm, when the old world fell. Curse the High Priest of Istar, whose pride caused him to give orders to the True Gods! For the Gods punished Krynn for this blasphemy, and much was forever lost. Lost were the great cities, the accumulated wisdom and knowledge of many generations. Lost as well was all knowledge of the True Gods, and mankind sank into idolatry. Priests lost their power, and mankind lost hope for its salvation.

*But hope always springs from the most modest of causes, and so it was that the Innfellows began the salvation of Krynn...*

~From the Iconochronos of Astinus of Palanthus, Lorekeeper of Krynn, in the 351st year after the Cataclysm.

Three centuries ago, the **Kingpriest of Istar** provoked the wrath of the gods who smote Ansalon with a fiery mountain, tearing the land asunder. Mighty mountains crumbled, while new peaks rose. Ancient seas evaporated, while new seas formed. Most devastating of all, healing miracles disappeared as the clerics of the old gods vanished. Dwarves and elves retreated into their strongholds, leaving humans, goblins, and ogres to contend for the rest of Ansalon. Turmoil, death, and uncertainty. This is an **age of Despair**.

Time passes, trade routes are reestablished, but bandits and monsters still prowl the dark places of the wilderness, and gold doesn't provide the security it once did. Steel is the new currency. In the east, war has begun to creep westward in a tide that threatens to swallow everything in its path.

As a mantle of darkness settles itself over the land, the desperate cry out for heroes strong enough to stand against it, heroes with the heart and courage to offer a glimmer of hope. But hope is an illusion, a false promise.

Who dares to hope in the dark embrace of despair?

## INTRODUCTION

One of the frustrations I have experienced when running the original Dragonlance campaign is how much investment in Solace the player characters were meant to have while, at the same time, the players sitting at my table had so little. I wanted them to experience real distress when, after escaping **Xak Tsaroth**, they peer across the plains of Abanasinia and see smoke rising from Solace's direction. I wanted the **Pax Tharkas** refugees to be more than nameless NPCs to my players. I wanted my players to feel that loss when one of them died.

Several years ago, I began experimenting with a prequel campaign for 1st level characters using the information from the *Tales of the Lance* box set but also including little easter eggs from short stories and novels about the early adventures of the original companions. *Seekers of Solace* is the result of my experiments and something of a love letter to those products.

This adventure, designed for four 1st level characters, is set in the treetop town of Solace just a few short months before the events of *DL1: Dragons of Despair*. It is intended for players who prefer to create their own original characters, replacing the pregenerated characters made famous in the **Dragonlance Chronicles Trilogy**. The player characters will be challenged and tested as they explore the people and places of pre-war Solace and its surrounding locations.

The PCs will familiarize themselves with the people of Solace and their regional neighbors while attempting to foil the machinations of the Seeker leadership. If successful, they will advance to 5th level and be dropped into the events of the original Dragonlance campaign with deeper ties to the region surrounding Solace and greater investment in the events that will transpire when war descends upon the small community.



## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the centuries since the **Cataclysm** and the disappearance of the true gods, various cults sprouted, claiming to be the divinely inspired messengers of new gods offering salvation to all. One after the other, the prophets of these new religions failed to deliver on their promise, causing many people to become cynical and reject the idea that the true gods ever existed.

Decades ago, another cult arose in the region of **Abanasinia**. Unlike the others it didn't claim divine inspiration or the return of magical healing. It merely presented itself as a system wherein, if there were new gods to be found, spiritual people could earnestly and humbly seek them.

The cult gained more and more followers, and its political influence grew. So much so that the **Seekers**, as they became known, established a theocracy based in the **Lordcity of Haven** with the expectation that they would bring back a sense of safety and peace to Abanasinia. The **Seeker High Council** sent priests to the outlying towns and villages to shepherd the people and establish order.

The Seeker religion has flourished in recent years. As often happens though, a new generation of Seekers are more enamored with political power than the spiritual and philosophical wellbeing of their parishioners. They see themselves as rulers rather than guides to enlightenment. These corrupt Seekers, having failed to deliver on the promise of finding new gods, use the **Seeker Holy Guard** to keep the people in line. Rather than a local militia, the Seeker Holy Guard is little more than hired thugs who collect the burdensome **taxes** and **oppressive laws** the Seekers impose on the **local residents**. Some within the Seeker organization, not wishing to lose their political power, have become so desperate as to turn to **arcane magic**, performing 'miracles' to the **amazement of their ignorant supplicants**.

Meanwhile, the **armies of the Dark Queen** inch ever closer, their **sights** on the region of Abanasinia. Aided by the **Scales Society**, an organization only concerned with improving trade and **amassing wealth**, the powerful **Red Dragonarmy** has sent emissaries to the Seeker High Council in Haven, promising that they will be **allowed to remain** the nominal authority in the region and that **casualties** will be far fewer if the theocracy can **keep its citizens in line**.

## SEEKER LOCKLEY



With negotiations underway, the Seeker High Council has tasked **Lockley Desparé** (see *Appendix 1*, pg. 66), an ambitious and charismatic priest, with spreading fear in Solace so that the populace looks to the Seeker organization as a source of stability and security. To accomplish this, Seeker Lockley has unleashed a magical plague of his own making on the town.

However, Lockley has also manufactured a cure. Once the plague has spread, he plans to play the hero by presenting the cure as a sign that the Seeker gods have chosen him to usher in a new age of divine healing.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

*Seekers of Solace* is an adventure optimized for four 1st level characters. There are many directions the adventure can take depending on the choices of the PCs. Below is the assumed path the party will take. However, it is important that the Dungeon Master read the adventure in its entirety so they can account for unexpected twists and turns.

Chapter 1 is designed for 1st level characters. The PCs are given the opportunity to explore Solace, get to know its citizens, and establish relationships by helping a few with their problems. Once the PCs have established a reputation in town, they get a job guarding a caravan traveling from Solace to **Gateway**. Along the way, they discover their employer isn't the upstanding businessman he presents himself to be and has run afoul of a dangerous and mysterious enemy.

Chapter 2 is designed for 2nd level characters. The PCs learn that the **High Theocrat** of Solace has died of the plague. While the town waits for the Seeker High Council to name a replacement, the **Lord Mayor** tasks them with investigating the plague's source. They uncover clues that cast suspicion on Seeker Lockley, but they will need hard evidence before they can openly accuse the theocracy.

In Chapter 3, the PCs advance to level 3. They follow clues that lead them to the enchanted tomb of an ancient **Knight of Solamnia** and find evidence proving the plague was created by Seeker Lockley. They advance to level 4 as they race back to Solace to confront him.

Before they can act, however, they must rescue a friend falsely accused of the crime. If successful, they will advance to level 5 and be hailed as heroes by the people of Solace. They will also gain the unwanted attention of the Seeker organization. This will lead them into the opening events of *DL1: Dragons of Despair*.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run this adventure you will need the fifth edition core rulebooks: *Player's Handbook (PHB)*, *Dungeon Master's Guide (DMG)*, and *Monster Manual (MM)*. Additionally, a copy of *Tasslehoff's Pouches of Everything: Revised (TPE)* will contain more information about the Dragonlance world, including the unique classes and races found there.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location, or under specific circumstances.

The *Monster Manual* will contain most stat blocks used in this adventure for the encounters. The remaining stat blocks can be found in Appendix 1 on page 66, as indicated in text. When a creature's name appears in bold type that references the appropriate stat block in the *Monster Manual*.

Spells and equipment are found in the *Player's Handbook* or in *Tasslehoff's Pouches of Everything: Revised*. Magic items are located in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* unless the text directs you to an item's description in Appendix 2 on page 72.

## USING THE MAPS

This book contains a number of interior maps that are to be used by the DM only. As characters explore locations given on a map you can redraw portions of the map on a wet erase board, construct the map using tiles, draw the map on graph paper, or use another type of media to represent the location.

Any assembled or hand drawn maps do not need to be copies of the originals, and you can alter a map's features as you see fit. Maps do not have to be perfectly recreated, and you can omit details on the map that the characters would not know.

## NON DEADLY RESOLUTIONS

The players are free to choose a number of ways to resolve the encounters placed in this adventure. While many players may wish to fight what they feel is the enemy, there are consequences to violence against the citizens of Solace as well as members of the Seeker organization.

Players may choose to bribe, sneak, knock out, or strategize a unique solution to an encounter. Allow the players opportunities to find solutions to these encounters without resorting to violence.