



DRAGONS OF WINTER

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INTRODUCTION

The great saga of DRAGONLANCE continues here.

In 1985, players of *Dungeons & Dragons* had already enjoyed a year's worth of adventure in the world of Krynn. Fantasy readers had been introduced to the remarkable story of the Innfellows, the wicked Dragon Highlords, and the return of both the True Gods and the dragons of legend to a world stricken by war. Following on the success of *Dragons of Autumn Twilight* and AD&D modules *DL1* to *DL4*, TSR began the next story arc in the Chronicles trilogy, starting with a sourcebook (*DL5 Dragons of Mystery*) and then the release of *Dragons of Winter Night*.

Dragons of Winter combines the classic DRAGONLANCE adventure modules *DL6 Dragons of Ice*, *DL7 Dragons of Light*, *DL8 Dragons of War*, and *DL9 Dragons of Deceit*, revised and repackaged to re-present the second chapter of one of fantasy's most enduring sagas. You will need the *Dungeons & Dragons* core rules, the DRAGONLANCE Campaign Setting, and the *War of the Lance Campaign Setting Companion* to get the most out of this adventure. Although this adventure makes use of the *Towers of High Sorcery* sourcebook, *Holy Orders of the Stars* sourcebook, the *Bestiary of Krynn* sourcebook, and the *Knightly Orders of Ansalon* sourcebook, these books are optional and all necessary information is provided.

If you are the Dungeon Master, it is strongly suggested that you read this adventure from start to finish, making notes as necessary and paying particular attention to the pacing, themes, and major encounters of each chapter. If you are one of the players, congratulations! Whether you play as one of the original Innfellows, the new heroes introduced in this adventure, or a hero of your own creation, now is the time to stop reading, grab your dice and pencils, and get ready to play the adventure that started it all!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Five years ago, a band of good friends frequented the Inn of the Last Home, the most popular tavern and inn in the treetop city of Solace. They made a pact to go off on their own in search of some sign of the true gods, agreeing to meet back at the Inn of the Last Home on that day five years later. Each taking a different path, they set out for the far corners of Ansalon. Although they returned with little more than stories and rumors to guide them, they would soon embark upon a quest to keep a mysterious Blue Crystal Staff out of the hands of a new and dangerous threat, and in so doing restore hope to a despairing world.

Along the way, the heroes uncovered a new race in service to Takhisis, the Queen of Darkness—draconians—and witnessed the invasion of their homelands by the Red Dragonarmy. Led by a high priest of Takhisis named Verminaard, the Innfellows fought to protect the refugees of that invasion, ultimately securing them safety in the valleys near the ancient dwarven kingdom of Thorbardin. Joined by a pair of elven nobles and emboldened by their success, the heroes have reached a critical point in their quest. Rumors of

weapons that may be used to oppose the dragons and their masters lie to the south, and it is in the once-majestic Lordcity of Tarsis that the story resumes...

CHARACTERS IN THE ADVENTURE

This adventure is designed to support the players taking on the roles of one half of the Heroes of the Lance, with some new heroes joining them at the start of the adventure. However, it is flexible enough that it can also be played using characters of the players' own design, as long as certain vital character archetypes are represented. This section explains how to go about using the classic characters or facilitating the creation of original characters that fit into these archetypes. If you have already played through *Dragons of Autumn*, you will already be acquainted with these archetypes. In *Dragons of Winter*, however, the focus on various archetypes has shifted to reflect the overall themes of the middle part of the trilogy.

PLAYING THE HEROES OF THE LANCE

If you and your players elect to play this adventure with the Heroes of the Lance, you'll find stat blocks for them in the Appendix on page 205. Feel free to make adjustments to them as you see fit; however, before making a major change, examine the adventure carefully to be certain you're not removing a vital aspect of the character. Each pregenerated character has starting equipment packages assigned from the sample packages available to all original characters.

The Heroes of the Lance begin at 9th level. At the start of the adventure, the following are available as player characters: Elistan, Flint Fireforge, Gilthanas Kanan, Laurana Kanan, Sturm Brightblade, Tasslehoff Burrfoot, and two new PC heroes, the Solamnic Knights Aran Tallbow and Brian Donner. Theodenes the Gnome and Vanderjack the Sellsword are two more characters that become available for use as player characters later, perhaps to replace dead or retired characters, or they may remain NPCs.

Derek Crownguard, originally a pregenerated hero in the classic modules *DL6* through *DL9*, is an NPC in this adventure. Although his destiny is not firmly attached to the storyline in the novels *Dragons of Winter Night* and *Dragons of the Highlord Skies*, Derek is an antagonist in many ways. See the **Derek Crownguard: Glory Descending** sidebar for more details.

PLAYING OTHER HEROES

You and your players may instead decide to play your own heroes or to replace certain members of the classic lineup. If you choose to go this route, one of the first things to do is to decide at what level the characters should start the adventure. The adventure itself was designed for eight 9th level player characters (the southbound Heroes of the Lance and the Solamnic Knights that accompany them). This translates to 11th level in terms of the classic four-member balanced party of a fighter, cleric, wizard, and rogue. If your game group decides to use their own characters (or a smaller subset of the original heroes), be sure to keep this in mind.

When designing your own player characters, be certain to cover all the Major Archetypes (discussed below). A character may fulfill more than one archetype.

APPROPRIATE RACES

Most standard player character races can be used without difficulty. Humans, making up the majority of the residents of Abanasinia and the West, are the obvious choice. Half-elves, kender, and half-kender are almost as easy to work in. Player character dwarves may be either hill dwarves (Neidar) or mountain dwarves (Hylar and Daewar), though the latter must have some reason to have left the safety of Thorbardin. Player character elves are always Qualinesti elves, although their homeland has been overrun and their people have fled across the seas to safety. For the most part, gnome characters will require special backgrounds; Theoden, introduced in **Chapter Six**, is a good example of an adventuring gnome.

More exotic and monstrous races are more difficult to explain, but certainly not impossible. Because the adventure begins at a higher level, it presents a good opportunity for a player who wants to try a race with a level adjustment, such as a centaur. Half-ogres have potential. Full-blooded ogres, minotaurs, and sea elves are extremely unusual in this part of Ansalon at this point in time. A goblin is a playable, if weak, character. A hobgoblin would make an interesting foil for one of the villains in the story.

Only a few races are completely inappropriate. Tarmak are unknown on Ansalon at this time. Draconians are the enemy and could not possibly be a hero at this point in history.

APPROPRIATE CLASSES

Almost any class appropriate for **DRAGONLANCE** in general would be appropriate in this adventure. However, keep in mind that this adventure occurs in the Age of Despair. Two important conditions of the universe exist that restrict appropriate classes.

First, the gods of Light have only recently returned. Characters may have levels of cleric, but unless they serve an Evil god, they gain no god-granted class features (supernatural and spell-like abilities or spellcasting). Similarly, other divine spellcasters (ranger, druid, and paladin) do not have their god-granted abilities. If a player chooses to take a level of one of these classes, the character must read the *Disks of Mishakal* (currently in the possession of Goldmoon) or be ministered to by the cleric Elistan, and then devote himself or herself to a god in order to gain the benefits of the class. You may decide as Dungeon Master that the cleric either begins the game having read the *Disks of Mishakal*, or that Elistan is an NPC party member, especially if you do not want to roleplay out this spiritual epiphany during play.

Additionally, the Summer of Chaos that will re-introduce ambient magic to mortals is still many decades away; mystic, sorcerer, and bard are therefore unavailable classes. Only those creatures that have access to ambient magic to begin with may take levels of sorcerer or mystic: dragons (including aurak and bozak draconians), fey, and other natural spellcasters. Ordinary mortals (such as the heroes) will not have access to this class.

MAJOR ARCHETYPES

These are the major archetypes that should be fulfilled in the adventure. If your players create their own characters, be certain that these four archetypes are represented. Having the players talk over their various concepts and ideas, and

letting them decide among themselves which archetypes they would like to play, allows them to agree on these roles and work toward a complementary group similar to the original Innfellows.

Archetypes have no direct game benefit, although some mention of them is made in the text of the adventure, and some things may happen to specific heroes who represent this archetype. If you are playing this adventure with the standard rules for XP, then consider giving Personal Story Awards to players who stick to their heroes' archetype. If you are using the simplified advancement rules, you may reward players who role-play their archetypes well with other one-use benefits—a +2 luck bonus to an attack roll, skill check, or saving throw of their choice, for instance.

THE HAWK

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Hawk archetype is related to aggressive impulses. Driven by frustration or despair, this character often seeks a foe to focus his aggression upon, although as the story develops he may begin to understand the need for peace and stability. He has seen war and witnessed tragedy, but it is in his nature to continue along this path in order to achieve the serenity of one who has risen above it. In this adventure, the Hawk stands as a contrast to the Shepherd, who wishes to shelter others from the dangers of the world through faith, and the Idealist, who believes that honor and glory are more important than aggression and impulsiveness.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

Gilthanas Kanan fills this niche role in the story. For an elf, he is quick to anger and quick to react against the threat of the Dragonarmies. The fate of his people weighs heavily on his shoulders and Gilthanas lets his concern for his people fuel his anger. This weight is lifted somewhat now that the elves have fled into the west, but Gilthanas continues to struggle until the threat of the Dragonarmies has been eliminated.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

Any warrior character with levels in fighter, barbarian, or ranger could fill the role of Hawk. Nobles, too, especially among the nonhuman races, are likely to possess the required emotional drive.

THE IDEALIST

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Idealist archetype is that of the beautiful, gifted, and doomed. This character in the story is fated to fulfill some destiny during the adventure and is willing to give up his life to accomplish this task. The Idealist is contrasted by the Hawk, who seems to succumb to despair and violent urges, and the Rogue, who seems to avoid danger and find a way out of a situation rather than embrace it. The Idealist is comforted by the Shepherd, who represents all that the Idealist stands for.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

Sturm Brightblade has chosen to dedicate his life to the tenets of the Knights of Solamnia. In all aspects of his life he tries to embody the ideals and principles of his knightly training. He would not willingly do anything to mar that image. As the Idealist archetype, Sturm is fated to a tragic end in order to pull together the crumbling organization of the Knights of Solamnia. He is a skilled warrior, willing to defend his friends at any cost.

Among the Innfellows, Sturm was not always understood, but as new allies joined the cause Sturm's bravery and idealism began to manifest more clearly. He now faces other members of the Order for which he has so long professed membership, the Knights of Solamnia, and the very real threat that they may reveal to his friends that he is not a true Knight as the Measure would dictate. As the story progresses, Sturm grows to realize that the world is not as black and white as he once thought, but he must cling to these ideals or else lose himself to dishonor.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

The character to take this role should have some affinity with the noble ideals of the Knights of Solamnia. It will take a huge sacrifice to bring the Knights back together and rally them against the invading Dragonarmies. A knight or warrior affiliated with the Knights would be the most likely candidate for this role, though even a non-knightly character may prove to have the commitment and conviction to rise above the darkness and inspire others at great risk to himself.

THE SHEPHERD

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Shepherd is the individual chosen by the Prophet to gather the faithful together and lead them into the light. Like the Prophet, the Shepherd is strong in his faith and marked by destiny to pass this faith to others; unlike the Prophet, the Shepherd's purpose is to lay the foundations for the faithful and build a secure shelter of spiritual community.

At the beginning of the adventure, the Shepherd is the bearer of the Disks of Mishakal, bequeathed to him by the Prophet at the end of *Dragons of Autumn*.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

Elistan of Haven was once a High Seeker, a member of a faith that worshiped the false gods that became common after the Cataclysm. His non-existent deities were of no value when the Dragonarmies overran his homelands. As a captive, Elistan met Goldmoon, cleric and Prophet of the goddess Mishakal. He recognized her true faith and divine gifts, and this opened the way for Elistan to learn of the true gods. A follower of Paladine, the Celestial Paladin and most high among the Gods of Light, Elistan is now the Shepherd. He has dedicated his life to spreading his faith, fighting the evil around him, and doing what he must to gather the lost and the helpless under the broad wings of the Platinum Dragon.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

This role requires a character of good moral alignment that bears the blessing of the gods. A cleric is the best candidate, although a paladin or druid could fit the role if his or her

background can be made to work. The Shepherd starts the adventure with the Disks of Mishakal, hence the need for a good-aligned divine spellcaster.

THE ROGUE

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Rogue is usually the jack-of-all-trades. This archetype has a wide array of skills at his disposal. He regularly uses these skills to his own advantage, but he also often uses them to assist the other members of his party. He routinely presents the Shepherd with reasons to be concerned and can be a problem for the Idealist, but his willingness to go behind the backs of authority works well with the Hawk's impulsive streak.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

The irrepressible kender Tasslehoff Burrfoot plays the Rogue archetype among the Heroes of the Lance. Being a kender, Tasslehoff grew up perfecting a number of skills that come naturally to those of his race; moving silently, hiding in shadows, and picking locks and pockets are all second nature to him. Tasslehoff's role as the Rogue presents him with challenges that other party members rely on him to overcome. He is employed as a scout to range ahead and find enemies before they find him or his companions. He is also known for acquiring items the party may need (and more than a few they don't). When the party is trapped, it is often Tasslehoff who finds a way out. Tasslehoff is energetic, intensely curious, and entirely fearless.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

There are certainly times when a character who knows how to sneak, pick locks, and get into places he's not supposed to be can be very handy. Rogues (of course) and rangers can fit this bill very well; a mariner might also work, or even a master with suitable specializations.

ADDITIONAL ARCHETYPES

These are some additional archetypes that can be included in the adventure. Although they are not necessary, you may find that if you have fewer than eight players some of these heroes might have more than one archetype. The Rogue might also be the Bon Vivant, for instance, and the Shepherd might also be the Mentor. The pregenerated heroes provided at the end of this adventure include representatives of all four minor archetypes.

THE BON VIVANT

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Bon Vivant is the life of the party, the hero who embraces wine, women, and song. Stouthearted, indulgent, and usually ribald at the best of times, the Bon Vivant's carefree personality often hides wounds and deep tragedies that never seem to surface. The Bon Vivant thus covers his insecurities with confidence and bluster, or at the very least tries to make sure that others see only the best in him and in the world around them.

THE GOLDEN GENERAL

In the original novel of *Dragons of Spring Dawning*, the young Qualinesti princess Laurana becomes the Golden General, the inspirational figure who guided the Knights of Solamnia to victory. Although there is no reason why Laurana's player cannot similarly take her character from the archetype of the Maiden (which is very similar to the Ingenue, Tika's archetype in *Dragons of Autumn*) into the archetype of the Golden General (which is more or less identical to the Leader, which was Tanis' archetype in *Dragons of Autumn*), Laurana's path is not predetermined. Thus, any hero may, in the course of the adventure, be revealed as the Golden General and thus leave their former archetype behind. Obviously, they may not be known as the Golden General, a name Laurana earned because of her hair and radiant nature, but the archetype still works.

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Golden General is the face of the group. She does the talking in delicate social situations, she negotiates with friends and enemies when appropriate, and she is trusted to make many decisions on behalf of the entire party. She carries the beacon of hope for the downtrodden and defeated in the face of the Dragonarmy onslaught.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

Laurana is the classic Golden General, an inspirational figure to the Knights of Solamnia after the Battle of the High Clerist's Tower and a rallying point for all of the heroes. When she is kidnapped, she spurs the group to immediate action; when she speaks to the armies of Solamnia and the West, their hope is rekindled. It is not surprising that Tanis, when he is finally reunited with his childhood love, sees much in her that he identifies in himself.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

Any charismatic character with a sense of responsibility can fill this role. The other characters should like and trust him, even if he doesn't trust himself. The Maiden, the Idealist, and the Defender are all excellent choices for the Golden General, but a case could be made for any of the others.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

Aran Tallbow, the Knight of the Crown who accompanies the Heroes from Tarsis on their quest to recover the *dragon orb*, is this story's Bon Vivant. A skilled archer, he is easy-going, fond of his drink, and popular among the ladies. The flamboyant Aran hides a drinking problem with his good nature and ready wit, making him the epitome of the Bon Vivant. He contrasts against other Knights, such as the

stalwart Brian Donner and the arrogant Derek Crownguard, in that he sees glory and honor as necessary evils in the pursuit of a good life.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

The Bon Vivant is a role that suits warriors and rogues of all stripes. It is somewhat less common among wizards and clerics, if only because those professions are sought out by more serious or focused individuals, and the Bon Vivant is a free spirit. Social background is somewhat irrelevant; Bon Vivants are as likely to be counted among the idle rich as they are the lusty barbarians.

THE GALLANT

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

Brave, chivalrous, and bold, the Gallant lies somewhere between the Protector and the Idealist among the lesser archetypes. The Gallant upholds the good, defends the innocent, and plays peacemaker when he has to. He seeks to be spiritually whole, to find faith and meaning in the face of the darkness he shields others from. The Gallant truly believes that there are greater forces acting upon the world, and that it is his duty to somehow champion those forces in order to let others see the light. He supports the Idealist's noble goals, tries to keep the Hawk from becoming consumed with his aggression, helps the Shepherd protect the flock, and gives the Rogue somebody to look up to.

THE CLASSIC CHARACTER

Brian Donner, the doomed Knight of the Sword from *Dragons of Winter Night* and *Dragons of the Highlord Skies*, is this story's Gallant. He keeps Derek Crownguard from becoming too obnoxious, finds hope in the city of Tarsis, and dies living up to a greater cause that he would never live to see flourish. In this adventure, Brian Donner's fate is not sealed in Icereach. If he spends time with Elistan learning about the gods, Brian's paladin abilities manifest fully and he might yet achieve the sense of spiritual fulfillment that has eluded him.

WHAT COULD REPLACE THE CHARACTER

Although the Gallant is most suited toward a noble, paladin, or fighter character, characters belonging to other classes may be just as suited to the role. A White Robe mage, a priest of Paladine or Kiri-Jolith, or even a high-minded mariner or rogue could take on the Gallant archetype and do just as well in it.

THE MAIDEN

THIS ARCHETYPE'S ROLE IN THE ADVENTURE

The Maiden archetype is similar to the Ingenue archetype described in *Dragons of Autumn*, but represents a more mature archetype, the woman who has mastered her challenges and come to terms with her personal power. The Maiden maintains her desire to overcome challenges, both emotional and physical, and in the course of doing so she seeks the protection of those around her in order to inspire them. The Maiden brings out the Archetypes in all others.