

TP2 Building Resistance

By Dan Hass



Chogneaux's annual tribute to the Tofarian Empire has been disrupted. Those who were designated for slavery have escaped the village, but Baron Reolus is in a tough spot. Can heroes be found to defend against the inevitable backlash? A Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition Adventure for 1-8 2nd level characters. Episode 2 in *Tyranny in Purple*.

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Adventure Summary

TP2 Building Resistance is a Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition adventure designed for 1-8 2nd level characters. It is designed to run using only the *Basic Rules (BR)* and *DM Basic Rules (DBR)* (these are a free download [here](#)). It also utilizes the free *Unearthed Arcana Feats (here)*, *Wardrow's Feat Compendium (here)*, and the *Hoard of the Dragon Queen (HDQ)* supplement ([here](#)). The DM and players should get a strong exposure to D&D 5th Edition and if it is going to be an primary hobby the *Player's Handbook® (PHB)*, the *Monster Manual® (MM)*, and the *Dungeon Master's Guide® (DMG)* are necessary investments.

While the encounters include scaling for 1-8 characters, parties of 1 or 2 PCs and 7 or 8 PCs are fringe circumstances that may play oddly. Specifically, parties of 1-2 are highly susceptible to a single bad die roll, and 7-8 can slow play dramatically. Ideally a party will be 3-6 PCs.

It is set in the *Dimgaard Campaign Setting* (the *Dimgaard Campaign Guide* is a free pdf available at drivethrurpg.com), but could be set in other campaigns. The Digital copies of the encounter maps are available [here](#).

Dimgaard Philosophy

Dimgaard's primary principle is that D&D should be an entertaining experience. In particular, it should be fun and interesting. The "best" D&D is a collaborative storytelling event where the DM provides the framework and supporting details, while the players contribute by roleplaying the heroes (their characters) that results in epic tales.

"Epic" implies that the heroes be challenged and that success is a question to be decided by the heroes' deeds and choices. *The Lord of the Rings* is only an epic because the reader doesn't know until the final pages if Frodo, Aragorn and the rest will achieve their objectives or die, fruitless, in their efforts.

A great Dimgaard session (and really any D&D session) is where there is the finest line between success and failure and the heroes *just* manage to win (occasionally, just surviving is "winning"). But for those narrowest of victories to have true meaning, they cannot be foregone conclusions, and likely there will be times when the PCs fail – Boromir comes to mind or Gandalf's expedition to Isengard where he was captured.

Preparing the Adventure

It is always a good idea for the DM to read through an adventure before running it. *TP2 Building Resistance* is no different. There are some rather complex encounters that will benefit if the DM spends a few minutes deciding how she will play them. *TP2 Building Resistance* can be run with a lot of interaction between the PCs and NPCs depending on the inclinations of the players and DM. The module deliberately gives **just enough** information about NPCs to move the plot along, leaving a lot of room for a DM to individualize these to her campaign. It makes things smoother if the DM spends a few minutes deciding how she will deliver the NPCs' interactions. Some DMs revel in the opportunity to assume the personas of multiple NPCs over the course of a session while others prefer a summary approach. The decision is a matter of style and showmanship. Similarly, many players look forward to opportunities to interact "in character" while others prefer to summarize. Neither approach is "correct"; both are valid ways to collaboratively build a story, but the DM should try to anticipate her players' preferences (and decide her own) and prepare accordingly.

A battlemat or dungeon tiles may be helpful, but not necessary.

Items for Review

- *MM/DM Basic Rules*: giant centipede
- *PHB/Basic Rules*: Group Checks

Running the Adventure

TP2 Building Resistance is made up of five encounters. An encounter is "something significant that happens" (on average an encounter should take 20 to 40 minutes of game time). Generally, these will fall into two categories: roleplaying or combat. Often the decision as to what type of encounter it will be is based on the PCs' actions. Sometimes a combat encounter may evolve into a roleplaying encounter when mistaken identities, misunderstandings, or action based on false assumptions are corrected, thus ending the violence. Other times conversations, interrogations, or negotiations can become heated and erupt in violence changing a roleplaying encounter into a combat encounter.

Dimgaard gives the DM opportunities to reward good roleplaying. Good roleplaying can generally garner players an easier path to achieving the desired outcomes.

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However, it takes stellar roleplaying to completely avoid combat. Dimgaard is a dark and violent place where opponents with short tempers often find violence the most direct route to achieving their goals.

The encounters in *TP2 Building Resistance* challenge PCs in different ways. The combat encounters are expected to meet the definition of **hard** (*DMG* p.81), but additionally there are encounters to test the PCs ability to deal with diplomatic situations and pose difficult questions about their character's morals.

Modification "Exploits"

Technically each encounter uses a **medium** XP budget per the encounter building guidelines. And for many parties a **medium** encounter may turn out to meet the definition of hard as PCs may be built for roleplaying and the party may not have optimized their tactics.

Modifications have been made to the creatures which do not increase the calculated CR of the creature but do increase the challenge of the creature. These are denoted with a ¹. These are not intended to be used with all parties, nor does a DM need to use every suggested modification. The DM should gauge the effectiveness of the party and decide which of these to use (keeping in mind the definition of **hard** encounters).

Adventure Background

In *TP1 Tribute Time* the PCs were hijacked into being part of the slave quota for the village of Chogneaux's annual tribute. The PCs and several other tribute members escaped and had established a camp in a grove a few miles from Chogneaux.

The fugitives have no known allies to take them in. They are running low on supplies. They are anxious to the point that they cannot sleep.

Meanwhile, Baron Reolus is in a difficult position. If he doesn't fulfill his quota, he could be replaced as baron or even tried for treason. He tried to quietly extract help from associates within the Empire, and that provoked a bigger response than he expected.

Adventure Outline

TP2 Building Resistance deals with the vulnerabilities of a camp exposed to the world. It starts with the PCs facing the problem of supplying the camp.

The camp is attacked by predators and natural threats.

Baron Reolus' sheriffs attempt to bring the rebels to justice. A short time later, troglodytes from an undisclosed source attack.

Finally, the Tofarians (with their leader Tayang) attempt to end the matter.

Rests

The PCs are expected to complete 6+ medium or hard combat encounters without taking a long rest. Even short rests should be cautiously allowed since many PCs' resources recharge on a short rest.

Once the action starts, the PCs can't take a long rest. If they insist, the action of the adventure simply interrupts their rest.

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Starting the Adventure

The action of *TP2 Building Resistance* takes place a few days after the events of *PE1 Tribute Time*. While Chogneau is a well-equipped town with a sizable craftsmen population, the PCs are currently not welcomed in the city. The DM should account for the time required to successfully infiltrate or find conspirators when awarding and adjudicating downtime. The *PHB* 187, *DMG* 127, and the *Dimgaard Campaign Guide* all have suggestions for downtime activities and the DM may develop some of her own.

PCs' Resources

Managing the PCs' access to extraordinary equipment is another tool to modulate the difficulty of the encounters. If PCs are underpowered, downtime can contribute resources (potions, scrolls, etc.) to increase their effectiveness. Stronger parties may not need this type of support.

The PCs should be 2nd level. There may be aspects of the characters that the players want to share and discuss. The DM can facilitate by reading or paraphrasing:

You have integrated into the population of escaped tributes. The camp is not elegant but it is sufficient, and you have met other talented individuals. The day begins with you in the presence of these comrades.

Once the players complete their introductions and discussions, the DM can introduce the action with:

The camp's occupants are in a tough situation. The flight from Chogneau was not well-planned. As such those who escaped are poorly equipped. Simply feeding the group of several dozen is the first challenge.

The "Resistance"

Historically, Chogneau had been able to meet the manpower requirements of the annual tribute with undesirables, and it helped keep Chogneau rid of criminal elements. Sometimes the Baron would have to fund a raid into nearby territories if there weren't enough criminals. However, the sudden increase in the quota required well-liked citizens to be tagged for slavery. The friends and family of these helped them out of Chogneau to join the "resistance".

The PCs should explain what they will do to ensure the group's survival. This takes the form of a skills challenge.

Skills Challenges

Skills challenges are not a part of the 5th edition rules, but they model situations outside combat where the PCs engage in specialties to achieve a common goal that doesn't imply a single ability check or even a group ability check. A skills challenge allows players to explore their character abilities outside combat and builds a narrative around an event that takes more time than combat.

In a skills challenge, a round represents a specific amount of time – maybe a minute or maybe two hours. The party must achieve a certain number of "successes" to achieve the goal. The players relate how their character will contribute to the effort, and the DM decides how to determine if the activity contributes a success. Sometimes the skills challenge will suggest the descriptions of successes, but often it is left to the DM and players to narrate the success based on the PCs actions. Often there is a possibility of a setback or failure with consequences described. Also, there are usually consequences associated with the total amount of time the PCs require to achieve the goal.

Supplying the Camp

Skills Challenge

It is going to take a combined effort to supply the camp, and it will involve danger as supplies are harvested or smuggled out of Chogneau. Each round of the challenge corresponds to about 30 minutes. **The events of encounter 1 should be woven into the skills challenge.** The expected skill to use is Wisdom (Survival) to gather food from the environment. However, a player may have a viable alternative for his/her character. For example, a PC may use Charisma (Deception) or Dexterity (Stealth) to infiltrate Chogneau and retrieve supplies. Once every action is declared, the PCs make the appropriate ability check as a group check (*BR* 59/*PHB* 175). If the check is a 15+ it counts as one success. It requires three successes (cumulative) to supply the camp. At the end of each round, a number of **giant centipedes** (*DBR* 23/*MM* 323) equal to the number of party members attack the party. Each attacks once with surprise and then squirms away.

With the camp supplied for the day, there is a momentary reprieve in the stress, but it doesn't last long. (Encounter 1 should have occurred as part of the skills challenge, and the DM can present Encounter 2.)

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Encounter 1: A Dark and Dangerous World

Random Encounters

The *DMG* p.85 has a section on random encounters. In Dimgaard adventures, the first encounter is often isolated from the storyline, and heavily skewed towards combat. This serves multiple purposes.

The DM can use it to gauge the PCs' combat effectiveness to modulate the subsequent encounters. However, if the encounter goes badly, the PCs can still successfully complete the adventure.

The random encounter also presents the DM with an opportunity to tailor the adventure. She can substitute an encounter she has designed for the particular PCs in her campaign and still complete the storyline of the adventure.

Finally, there may simply be a different encounter that the DM believes would be more interesting to present to the players. There are Encounter Galleries in the Kickstarter offerings that may offer alternative encounters that make substitution an easier task.

Map. Camp

Background. Spiders have spotted the camp members as a potential food source.

Suddenly there are screams of terror from the fringe of camp. Giant spiders are attacking.

Running the encounter. The spiders are predators. They have skulked up and attacked some of the camp members. There is one unconscious camp member for each spider. The camp members make a death saving throw on initiative count 20 (losing all ties).

Scaling the encounter. There is one **Giant Wolf Spider** for each PC.

Giant Wolf Spider. *DBR* 29; *MM* 330.

¹**Saving Throws** Con +3, Cha -1

¹**Damage Immunities** poison

¹**Condition Immunities** prone, poisoned

¹**Burst of Speed (1/day).** The spider can Dash as a bonus action.

¹**Obscuring Cloud (1/day).** As a bonus action, the spider releases a cloud of particles that creates highly obscured terrain in a 10 ft. radius centered on its location.

Skills Usage & Treasure

It is desirable to deviate from random loot as treasure at times. One way is using skills to extract valuable components from the carcasses of defeated creatures. Harvesting poison (*DMG* 258) is the precedent for this: it requires a DC20 skill check to successfully extract loot from the carcass; the carcass can yield only one item, and a failure destroys the carcass without any loot being extracted.

In this case, each carcass can yield one vial of *spider venom*, which (based on the price of the similar, but more powerful *serpent venom*) should have a retail price of about 150 gp.

Concluding the encounter. If the PCs manage to save more than half the unconscious camp members, they achieve the story award: Hero of the Resistance.

Hazards (Traps)

The demands of the adventure day are impossible to implement in a standard, four-hour session. A combat encounter will consume thirty+ minutes even though it lasts only three rounds. If the DM is presenting 6+ combats, it leaves little time for anything else in a session.

To allow for story building, character development, and roleplaying, Dimgaard adventures simulate the results of a combat encounter with hazards – a type of trap, environmental effect, disease, or similar mechanic. These can be applied to the party and resolved with minimal session time spent. By implementing 2-4 of these events, the session has time for non-combat encounters and activities.

If the DM feels the extra resource taxes are unnecessary, she can exclude them.

Whipvine

Plant event

The PCs' activities take them into an area of dangerous plants that attack each party member once.

Whipvine. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) slashing damage.