

TP4 A Different Baron

By Dan Hass



The resistance is firmly established in Chogneaux, but a long-term movement requires a favorable Baron. Can heroes turn the political environment in Chogneaux towards revolution? A Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition Adventure for 1-8 4th level characters. Episode four in *Tyranny in Purple*.

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Adventure Summary

TP4 A Different Baron is a Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition adventure designed for 1-8 4th 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 and Mystic (here)* and *Wardrow's Feat Compendium (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. *TP4 A Different Baron* 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. *TP4 A Different Baron* 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

- Feats. Spear Master, Trained Reflexes
- Magic Items. *cloak of elvenkind, headband of intellect, stone of good luck*
- Monsters: giant boar, giant spider, giant vulture, guard, owl, swarm of insects (spiders), thug, wolf, zombie
- Mystic (Avatar). *mind thrust, psychic hammer, diminution, mantle of command, mantle of fury, psychic assault*

Running the Adventure

TP4 A Different Baron is made up of eight 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.

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

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 *TP4 A Different Baron* 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 characters' 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

Baron Reolus is in a precarious situation. His tribute to the Tofarian Empire has been disrupted, and a resistance cell is now ensconced in his territory. He could lose his fief.

Meanwhile, his son Ragno has doubts about serving the empire. He is inclined to leverage the resistance into a broader rebellion, but his father sees that as a

foolhardy venture destined to destroy all Chogneau.

The resistance at first appeared fragile, but the local Tofarian response force was repelled (as well as the Baron's sheriffs). The resistance has clearly solidified their situation, and won't be dissuaded or easily overcome.

Baron Reolus has sent for aid from peers in the hopes of avoiding an escalation, but they are several days away.

Adventure Outline

The PCs are presented with the reality that they must replace Baron Reolus, and his son Ragno is proposed as an alternative.

The PCs must infiltrate into Chogneau, and may decide to take Ragno's lifelong friend (Imbert) with them to persuade him to overthrow his father. They must overcome the opposition of the townsfolk, the watch, and Tofarian agents to reach Ragno.

Once convinced, Ragno offers a plan to infiltrate the Chogneau keep and take his father into custody. Ragno engineers a diversion that greatly reduces the keep's protective staff and the PCs navigate a hidden tunnel entrance.

If the PCs can overcome the remaining castle guards, they take Baron Reolus into custody and force a change of power to Ragno.

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, Ragno is assisted in overthrowing his father by other agents.

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Starting the Adventure

It has been a few days the events of *TP3 A Secure Location*. However, the PCs have limited access to civilization. Still there may be some downtime activities the PCs could engage in. 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.

Expected Resources

At this level, the PCs may be subjected to a debilitating effect that could greatly impact the ability to succeed – such as being diseased or poisoned. *Lesser restoration* is not an important spell (and often overlooked by PCs) until it is a crucial spell. It is highly recommended that PCs spend some downtime to acquire a scroll of *lesser restoration* if no PC is going to prepare it. The party still needs a PC with *lesser restoration* on the PC's spell list to activate the scroll.

The PCs should have just advanced to 4th level. There may be aspects of their characters that the players wish to discuss. The DM can read or paraphrase the following to prompt player interactions:

The Resistance's camp is safe, but not comfortable. Satisfying the minimum needs to survive is a difficult task. In the effort, you have affiliated with a group of talented individuals. You begin the day sharing a meager breakfast as you discuss the situation.

Adapting the Adventure

The adventure presumes that the PCs successfully completed *TP3 A Secure Location*. However, this may not be the case. If not, then the presumption is that other heroes were successful but had to sacrifice themselves in the achievement. The new PCs have learned of the resistance and come to oppose the Tofarian Empire.

With the players' introductions complete, the DM can launch the action of *TP4 A Different Baron* by reading or paraphrasing the following:

Members of the Resistance still have contacts within Chogneau. They relate that Baron Reolus is committed to opposing the Resistance as his only path to retaining his fief. He is certain that the Tofarian Empire will invade Chogneau and destroy the town as an example if he cannot eliminate the Resistance. The Baron now rarely leaves his keep.

However, the Baron's son, Ragno, still interacts with the community. And while he hasn't supported the Resistance, the impression is that he is resentful of the Empire and might be persuaded towards the Resistance if he were convinced it was a viable alternative to subservience to the Tofarians.

Among the resistance is a citizen, Imbert, who grew up with Ragno and who could help persuade him. However, contacting Ragno is not likely to be an easy affair. The Resistance members are now quite notorious, and infiltrating Chogneau will present challenges.

There may be an opening, though. Ragno attends the afternoon religious services at the town temple on this day. Under the guidance of the church, he likely won't be heavily guarded, and a careful approach may reach him.

Imbert is a **Commoner** (*DBR 54; MM 345*) except with 9 hit points due to the physical nature of his life as a laborer. If the PCs manage to infiltrate Imbert to Ragno (Encounter 4), they automatically persuade Ragno to their cause.

Imbert's Tale

Imbert is of common birth, but he and Ragno are the same age and they grew up as friends. They have a strong attachment even though Imbert now is a simple laborer while Ragno will be the next baron of Chogneau. Baron Reolus hates the association between his son and the lowly Imbert, but he had no legitimate means of removing Imbert from the scene until the unexpected increase in the slave tribute. Reolus used this as a pretext to add Imbert because he had no other choice.

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Encounter 1: Into Chogneaux

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. Path into Chogneaux

Background. It is a dark and dangerous world, and outside the protection of a community are dangerous predators.

You are less than an hour outside Chogneaux. The day is cold, but otherwise pleasant. Suddenly, above the trees comes an angry screech.

Running the encounter. The vultures are hungry to the point where they are brave enough to attack PCs.

What is the Challenge

Most encounters have a particular twist they use to test the PCs and make the encounter interesting. In this case, the vultures can fly and some PCs may not have acquired the ability to attack from range.

Note that this encounter is not integral to the story. Once the DM has discerned the abilities of the PCs and imposed a modest resource tax, the encounter has achieved its goal. It is not necessary to grind this out to the bitter end.

Two good ways the DM can close the action early are: 1) the vultures retreat at half hit points, 2) the vultures focus on a PC resource (animal companion or mount) and flee with it once killed.

Scaling the encounter. There is one **Giant Vulture** for each PC; if there are 3+ PCs, reduce the number of giant vultures by one.

Giant Vulture. *DBR* 29; *MM* 329.

¹**Hit Points** 30 (4d10+8)

¹**Saving Throws** Dex +2, Cha +0

¹**Flyby.** As an owl (*DBR* 39/*MM* 333)

¹**Gangly.** The vulture's natural attacks have a reach of 10 ft.

Giant Vulture Tactics

The vultures will swoop in to attack and then fly up out of reach. The vultures are beasts so their tactics are instinctual, but they are pack hunters, so they will focus on bringing down one creature. They also have some experience identifying the easiest member of a group to take down.

When a creature is rendered unconscious, a vulture will grab it and flee with it.

Concluding the encounter. Beasts are not the only danger of the wilds. As the PCs approach, even the plants pose a threat.

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, but to conform to the XP expectations the DM will need to find alternate source (additional story awards) or use milestone advancement.

Fire Flower

Plant event

Plants release a chemical cloud similar to alchemist fire. Each party member suffers 11 (2d10) fire damage. A successful DC16 Dexterity saving throw halves the damage. If the save fails by 5+ it does an additional 11 (2d10) fire damage. Any creature with a passive Perception or passive Nature of 16+ has advantage on the saving throw.