

BEGINNER BOX BASH: TERRORS

By JOE CAUBO & JP CHAPLEAU



RUNNING THIS DEMO

Beginner Box Bash: Terrors is a *Pathfinder RPG Beginner Box* demo adventure for 4–6 *Beginner Box* characters of 1st level. It is meant to be run as part of the *Beginner Box Bash* special event, but can be run as a stand-alone demo of the game at other events as well. Players are encouraged to use the provided pregenerated characters, but may also create their own

1st-level player characters if time permits at your event. Aside from the map, everything you need to run this demo can be found in the *Pathfinder RPG Beginner Box*.

Running Time: 45 minutes–1 hour

Map: *GameMastery Map Pack: Crypts* (PZO4031)

Pawns: 1 × skeletal champion, 4 × skeletons, 1 pawn per PC

Several nights ago, a group of thugs pulled off a successful scam in the town of Sandpoint. At their leader's urging, they immediately set off through the countryside, thinking to put some distance between themselves and the now-upset villagers of Sandpoint and let the incident fade. Two nights ago, they found themselves on the outskirts of the town of Galduria, and decided to make a tour of every tavern in town to celebrate their recent success. Midway through their tour, they encountered

a horse-drawn wagon carrying a lone, haggard crone. Heavily influenced by the flagons of wine and ale they had consumed, the revelers stopped the vulnerable-looking old woman and roughed her up, beating her into unconsciousness and stealing a few gunny sacks of seemingly random possessions from her wagon.

Among the items they found when they dumped the contents on the ground, the miscreants discovered a macabre

black candle covered in strange sigils and smelling faintly of blood. In their drunken haze, they went to a local cemetery and lit it, performing a mock rite, imitating witches' hexes and cultish chants. Amid all their fun, they didn't notice when a pair of shambling corpses rose from a nearby crypt and began dancing among them. Before they could recover from their drunken torpor, the undead tore them all to shreds.

SUMMARY

The player characters are sent by visiting Pathfinder Society Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch from Sandpoint into the Varisian town of Galduria to investigate rumors of an undead uprising. There, they must question the townsfolk before venturing into the cemetery late at night to confront the menace head-on.

GETTING STARTED

Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch leads the PCs through the town of Sandpoint as she visits her contacts in the city. On a crowded street, a man suddenly approaches her and presents his *wayfinder* (a magical compass used by Pathfinders). He speaks to her quickly and softly, then departs into the crowd and is never seen again. Read the following to get the adventure underway.

In the hustle and bustle of Sandpoint's market, the smells of spices and other exotic aromas dance in the air. After a brief conversation with a man brandishing a mysterious golden compass, Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch turns around. She glances at you, gathering your attention before she begins speaking in a low voice.

"It has come to my attention that trouble is afoot in the small town of Galduria, northeast of our current location. The town is known for being home to the Twilight Academy, a school of magic dedicated to... unconventional topics. Reports among our fellow agents speak of the disappearance of some young thugs who assaulted a teacher of the Academy, Hazelindra, on her way home. Furthermore, rumors speak of terrors that lurk around the town's graveyard, which are being blamed on the Academy. I also heard that a strange light emanates from the graveyard at night. I believe the light, the disappearances, and the walking dead may be linked. If this is indeed the case, whatever ties the three together is worthy of investigation and research. Find out everything you can about the situation, and report back to me. Keep your work quiet."

With that, the venture-captain whispers to her servant, who immediately begins digging for small bags of coin to hand out. Heidmarch says, "This should be enough money for each of you to secure safe passage to and from Galduria. I look forward to hearing your report." She turns and disappears with her servant into the crowds of the marketplace.

The travel to Galduria takes 2 days, and the PCs meet no difficulty along the roads, encountering few travelers and

no obstacles. A successful DC 15 Knowledge Local check allows a PC to remember that the unorthodox magical studies of Galduria's Twilight Academy recently led to a group of necromancers losing control of their experimental zombies, which ended up wreaking havoc on the city and the surrounding countryside. As the PCs approach the town, they find the streets are largely empty and a constant fog hangs in the air, the result of vapor from the hot spring waters filling nearby Ember Lake condensing in the chill of early Varisian winter. A feeling of isolation and loneliness permeates the destitute boundary of town. When the PCs arrive, they find it devoid of the hustle and bustle of crowds that they are accustomed to from Sandpoint. The few folks walking down the streets move at a brisk pace, looking ready to break into a run at a moment's notice.

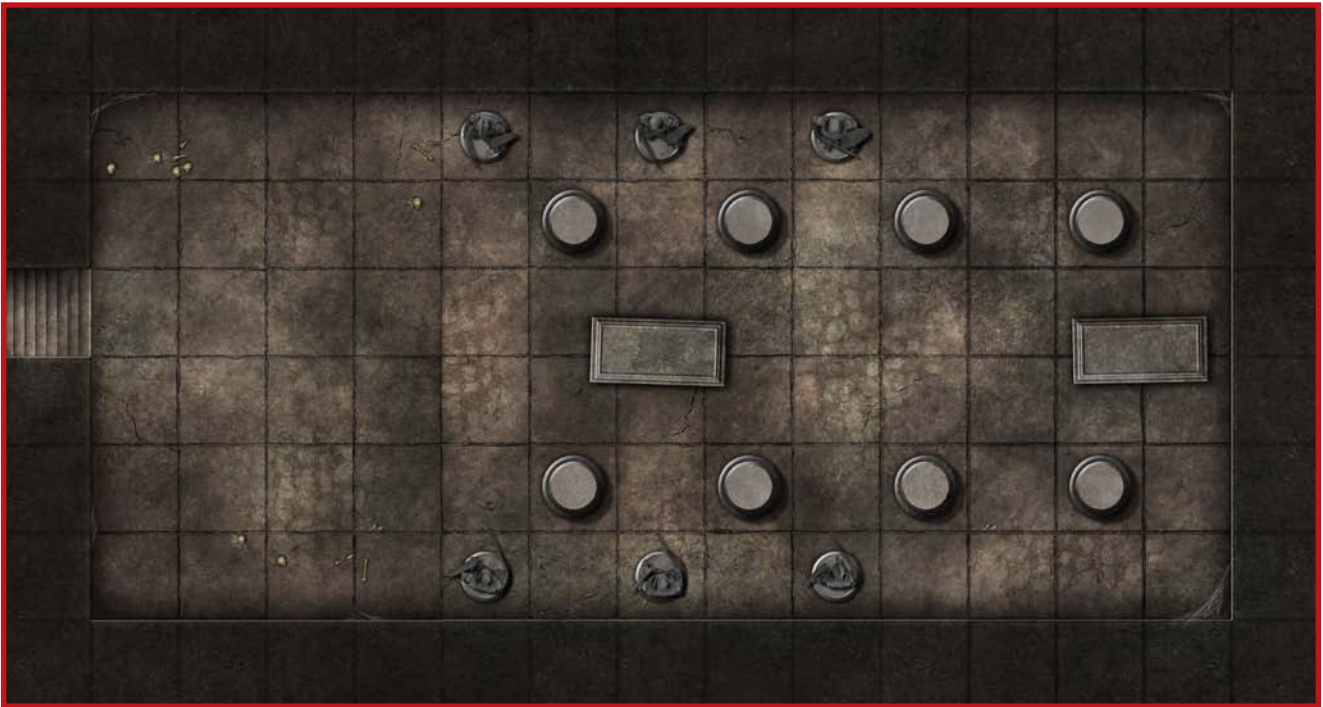
GALDURIA OUTSKIRTS

Galduria is a small trading town on the banks of Ember Lake. The disturbances have come from the western part of the town, the area closest to the graveyard. A widening in the street forms a plaza where a small stream flows into a cracked fountain. Around the plaza are the local inn, a small temple of Desna, and a watch post from which a single guard eyes anyone approaching suspiciously but does nothing.

The PCs have a number of options to investigate the strange happenings in and around the area, which they can pursue in any order. They need not engage in all the listed activities, and GMs should feel free to move the story along as they see fit by interjecting one or skipping another. Only the meeting with the witch Hazelindra is mandatory for the adventure, as she is known about the haunted candle and can provide the PCs with the information they need to complete their mission.

Innkeeper: The local innkeeper, a man named Eldon Forber, knows that a few nights ago, a group of thugs came through, but they paid him not to tell anyone about their presence in town. While his inebriated patrons rambled to one another about their exploits that night, the innkeeper overheard that they planned to use "the candle from that old crone" in some game of dark mockery at the graveyard. Assuming the candle was associated with the Twilight Academy, he purposefully stopped listening to the drunken ruffians' tale, if only so he could plausibly deny any knowledge down the line. Forber takes his promise not to speak of the thugs seriously, and can only be convinced to talk about them through trickery. A PC can get the above information out of him with a successful DC 15 Bluff check.

Peasants: The town's poor and downtrodden inhabitants have heard the sounds of wailing and shuffling movements in the night air, emanating from the graveyard west of town, and because of their superstition, refuse to go out at night. Rumors suggest that another of the Twilight Academy's fell rituals must have gone awry. Stoic and resigned, the peasants seem to accept their self-imposed curfew as their lot in life and don't give any signs that they feel anything needs to change. If PCs ask about the missing thugs or inquire about anything suspicious on the night they disappeared, they can



learn from one peasant that she heard drunken singing from the graveyard on the night in question with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check to gather information.

Priest: Amelon Birm, the local priest of Desna and sole curate of the small temple that graces the center of the village, has been missing since the day after the undead first appeared. While the townsfolk assume he went to Sandpoint to retrieve necessary spell components or reinforcements to fight what they believe to be a growing threat to their town, he was in fact killed the very first night after the drunken thugs' visit, when he tried to end the undead threat himself. A successful DC 15 Perception check while searching the church uncovers the priest's records, the last entry in which states that he was going to investigate the old cemetery near town to see what the shapes moving in front of that strange light were.

Watch: Galduria's watch, composed of four stout men led by a myopic retired crusader, reports a few run-ins with stray undead that wandered down from the graveyard in the past few days, generally alone and without purpose. The men are worried, and none of them are willing to leave the town after dark. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Sense Motive check realize that one of the watchmen isn't telling the whole truth; if coerced a little, he reveals that he has seen an eerie light in the graveyard the past few nights, flickering from dusk until dawn, and that he thinks the undead abominations are burning a bright fire each night.

Witch: The old witch Hazelindra lives outside of town and was attacked by the thugs on the way home from her teaching position at the Twilight Academy. Hazelindra is particularly suspicious of strangers after being beaten and robbed the other night—and she also fears that she'll be blamed for the current undead uprising. The PCs must

convince her of their benign intentions before she is willing to speak with them, much less open her shuttered home to them. They can convince her with a successful DC 15 Bluff or Diplomacy check.

If they convince her to talk, she tells them that a group of thugs beat her up while she was traveling on the road home and stole some of her items, including a magical item she's been studying recently called a *candle of night*. She informs them that when the candle is lit, it animates any dead bodies within the area around it as undead, but it remains invisible during daylight. In addition, it cannot be extinguished save by snuffing the flame with live-flowing blood. Hazelindra adds that the PCs can keep the candle as long as they do not tell the Academy of her connection to this situation.

THE MAUSOLEUM (CR 4)

The cemetery is half a mile west of the town, and is accessible via a narrow footpath through the dense, foggy foothills surrounding Galduria. If the PCs travel there during the day, they find the remains of the undead's previous victims and signs of undead activity, but see neither walking undead nor the candle.

At night, however, a bright, flickering light pierces the cold mist that permeates the graveyard, emanating from a crypt in the center of the necropolis. Following the beacon leads the PCs to the candle, which is in a small mausoleum. As the PCs approach the mausoleum at night, read the following to set the scene.

A flickering candle shines like a beacon from atop a stone sarcophagus in this cold, dank crypt. Two rows of columns support the ceiling around a second sarcophagus, and six somber statues stand vigil over the place of rest. The figures throw broken shadows on the walls, giving the

appearance of movement and leaving swathes of the room enshrouded in darkness. The air smells of dampness and freshly churned earth.

Creatures: A group of skeletons, raised by the *candle of night*, lurk in the dark shadows of the mausoleum, and attack the PCs as they enter to retrieve the magic candle. The four skeletons are dressed like thugs—in fact, these are the remains of the thugs who activated the candle. The skeletal champion wears the garb of a cleric of Desna (identifiable with a successful DC 15 Knowledge Local or Knowledge Religion check). Defeating the undead is easier if the PCs extinguish the *candle of night*—see the Development section.

HUMAN SKELETON (4)

CR 1/3

XP 135 each

hp 4 each (*Game Master's Guide* 80)

SKELETAL CHAMPION

CR 2

XP 600

hp 17 (*Game Master's Guide* 79)

Development: With the skeletons defeated, the PCs can deal with the *candle of night*. With a successful DC 15 Knowledge Arcana or Knowledge Religion check, the PCs learn this minor magic item cannot be extinguished save by snuffing the flame with live-flowing blood. In order for the PCs to put out its flame (and prevent more undead from rising from graves along their path back to Sandpoint), they must douse the candle in blood from an open wound (dealing at least 1d4 points of damage). When the flame goes out, any animated undead in the graveyard quickly break apart, losing 1 of hit point per round.

CONCLUSION

The townsfolk of Galduria thank the PCs for ending the threat, and Hazelindra is most pleased, offering them a hearty meal as a reward for their efforts, as well as allowing them to keep the *candle of night*. When the PCs head back to Sandpoint to deliver the candle to Venture-Captain Sheila Heidmarch, she expresses her gratitude and admiration of the PCs' work, and promises that she will consider them for any future missions she may have.



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The Pathfinder Roleplaying Game rules can be found online as part of the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Reference Document at paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/prd



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