

# The Haunting of Soldragon Academy

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**N**ot all residents of the City of Mages aspire to wizardry. The Soldragon Academy of Martial Training has provided a well-rounded warrior's education to the children of Mor Aldenn's elite for more than a generation. Recently, the boarding school has been experiencing strange and sinister events. The headmaster, Mertius Soldragon, needs help in protecting the children in his care and unraveling the mystery.

The Haunting of Soldragon Academy is a Pathfinder Roleplaying Game adventure designed for four or five 5th to 6th-level characters. The adventure takes place in the Soldragon Academy of Mor Aldenn and the surrounding countryside. This adventure may be set in any wilderness city large enough to boast an elite boarding school.

## Adventure Background

### FOUNDING OF THE SOLDRAGON ACADEMY

Thirty years ago, the warrior-scholar Piper Soldragon realized his dream. Piper respected magic, but had never been drawn to the art himself, and he knew many of the elite in Mor Aldenn felt the same about themselves and their families. Piper wanted to found a warrior's school for the children of the wealthy in Mor Aldenn, but one where the children would learn art, grammar, science, and literature as well as combat and tactics. Retiring from a successful adventuring career, Piper Soldragon hired two instructors and purchased an abandoned manor house in Mor Aldenn, turning it into a boarding school. The Soldragon Academy of Martial Training was born.

Throughout Piper's life, his Academy grew in reputation and size. It remains an exclusive school for the children of the well-to-do in Mor Aldenn and, although its focus is to educate one-day aristocrats in the fighting arts, graduates of the Soldragon Academy have a well-rounded learning of science and art as well. Notable graduates of the Soldragon Academy include several scions of the Summersong family (including Taron Summersong), many Aldenic Guardsmen, and even a few members of the Fighter's Guild.

### MASTER OGGMUN'S SAD TALE

Instructors have come and gone throughout the thirty-year history of the school, but only one has met with a horrible end:

twenty-three years ago, after seven years of teaching, the gnomish instructor Master Brynn Oggmun Quickblade was mauled to death by dogs.

The father of one of the students stopped in to see his daughter before taking his retainers and his hounds out for a hunt. The ferocious dogs, left momentarily unattended in the academy's courtyard, broke their leashes and attacked poor lone Master Oggmun, who was crossing the courtyard for a late lunch at the time. Since then, there has been a strict ban at the Soldragon Academy forbidding animals of any kind, although few people remember the origins of this ban. The incident of Master Oggmun's death was covered up as quickly as possible, to keep the reputation of the school untarnished. The only one to remember the sad, violent death of Master Oggmun is the second of Piper Soldragon's original instructors, Milo the Deft, who still teaches at the Soldragon Academy.

Master Oggmun's ghost lives on at the Soldragon Academy, however, and he has done his best to watch over the students he loved teaching in life. Master Oggmun hasn't made his appearance known often, perhaps once every few years, but now and again a student will report seeing a strange, bloody gnome in the halls or in the courtyard of the Soldragon Academy. The faculty generally dismisses such tales and, until recently, no one except the rare student knew there was a ghost haunting the Soldragon Academy.

## THE FACULTY TODAY

Piper Soldragon passed on a decade ago, and left the care of his academy to his nephew, the bard Mertius Soldragon. Mertius shares the same dedication to a "well-rounded warrior's education" that is his uncle's legacy. As such, he has hired instructors who not only teach fighting and tactics, but sciences and history as well. Mertius also invites guest lecturers from Mor Aldenn from time to time, such the renowned sage Olendir Kortt. Only one of the permanent instructors staunchly disputes Mertius' vision, and that is the one-armed warrior Grandel Carble.

Carble is a skilled warrior gifted with a spectacular memory. When he was a young man, Carble lost his arm in one of Calathia's wars in the south. He wandered north for many years, a bitter mercenary, until he met Mertius Soldragon. Mertius was only somewhat impressed with Carble's mercenary history, and much more impressed with Carble's memory—particularly his encyclopedic recall of epic poetry. Mertius invited Carble to teach fighting and poetry at the

## Scaling the Adventure

*Although this adventure was designed for PCs of 5th-level to 6th-level, you can scale this adventure as follows:*

### 3RD-LEVEL OR 4TH-LEVEL:

- Reduce Oggmun's ghost's corrupting touch damage to 6d6 and lower the DC of his special abilities to 15. The ghost flees after only two rounds.
- Make Gurge a scrag.
- Remove Gutrina from the hags; she leaves due to infighting just before the PCs arrive.
- Make Carble a 6th-level fighter, or lower his hit points to 60, reduce his attack bonuses by 4, remove his Improved Critical Feat, and do not use Power Attack.

### 7TH-LEVEL OR 8TH-LEVEL:

- Give Oggmun's ghost the Advanced template.
- For Gurge, use the stats of a frost giant (except for cold immunity and fire vulnerability).
- Add two hill giants to the hag covey encounter (they are disguised as children, but aren't very good at maintaining the disguise).
- Make Carble a 12th-level fighter, or raise his hit points to 160, increase his attack and damage by 4, and give him the Critical Focus and Bleeding Critical feats.

Soldragon Academy. Having no other immediate prospects, Carble agreed, though he was a bit disappointed that it was his recall of silly poetry, and not his "real warrior's grasp of combat," that earned him his job. This was two years ago.

Since then, Carble has reached two decisions. First, he enjoys teaching young people to be warriors; he's a gifted combat instructor despite his handicap. Second, Carble hates a "well-rounded warrior's education." Carble feels that the arts, history, and sciences are a waste of time; a true warrior has no need of such frippery and nonsense. Carble wants to start his own warrior's school, but he knows that he can't compete with the prestigious Soldragon Academy. Carble has been secretly looking for a way to discredit his employer and shut down the



The Soldragon Academy of Martial Training

Soldragon Academy for months now. Just recently, he's discovered a way.

## CARBLE'S SCHEME

Like all the instructors, Master Carble heard the occasional tale of the bloody gnome in the halls of the Soldragon Academy. Unlike past instructors, though, Carble followed up on the rumors. Carble believed in the ghost, and surmised that the ghost is the shade of the gnome dueling instructor, Master Oggmun. Carble discovered that the gnome had no family or relatives, and was buried in the gardens of the courtyard. Carble had no trouble digging down one night to recover the gnome's old bones, broke open the gnome's wooden coffin, and replanted the garden with bulbs to conceal his search (*although, being no gardener, Carble does not know that bulbs are out of season and therefore present a clue to the source of the bones*).

Carble knew, from his more adventuresome days, that ghosts

are often tied to their bones. With Master Oggmun's bones, Carble can force the ghost to do many things, but Carble must use some of the bones each time. Carble has been commanding the gnome ghost to scare the students away from the Soldragon Academy. Master Oggmun hates this task, but he cannot defy Carble as long as Carble has his bones.

Carble's plan is working well. Only about thirty students, out of an original class of fifty, remain at the Soldragon Academy. After **ENCOUNTER 2**, this number drops to only 19. Mertius is frantically assuring the parents of the last few students that he has everything under control. These 19 students are the sons and daughters of parents who still believe that Mertius has the situation under control, or live too far from Mor Aldenn to have heard the ghastly rumors. In fact, Mertius has no idea what's going on. Carble's plan has been successful so far, and he has only a few more moves to make before finishing off the Soldragon Academy for good.

## THE HIKE

The day after the adventure begins, Carble is supposed to take the students on a day hike in armor, as part of their training. Carble knows that if this hike goes badly, it will spell the end of the Soldragon Academy. However, he doesn't want to be implicated himself, and he doesn't want any of the children harmed. After all, Carble intends to start his own school with many of the same pupils, denouncing "poor, cursed Mertius" and assuring parents that the *Grandel Carble School of Warriors* is where their children belong. Carble may be a bitter, selfish man, but he likes children in his own gruff way.

Carble has planned to put himself out of suspicion entirely. In fact, he intends to fake his own death, forcing Mertius to lead the day hike. Carble asked a "sorceress" acquaintance to confront Mertius and scatter the children. Carble would rather that Mertius wasn't killed (*although he's not particular on that regard*), and he wants the children scattered into the forest south of the city. Carble assumes that should put a good scare into the children and force Mertius to shut down the Soldragon Academy for good. Then Carble plans resurface, claiming that the ghost only wounded him, and open his own school.

## VORANKA'S COVEY

Carble made a serious error in his choice of "sorceress." He met a beautiful woman who lived south of Mor Aldenn and gotten to know her somewhat well. Her name is Voranka. Carble confided his aspirations, and ultimately his plans, to her. Unfortunately, the wicked Voranka is not what she appears. Voranka is a green hag that has used her *disguise self* ability to dupe Carble.

Voranka is a member of the Night Hag's covey. Voranka and two other hags (*a sea hag named Katelna and another green hag named Gutrina*) crossed the Spindleflow river weeks ago and currently lair in the marshy forest south of Mor Aldenn and west of the road to Moon's Folly. Voranka's mission is to scout the areas to the south of Mor Aldenn and discover any opportunity to infiltrate the city. The Night Hag assigned a hill giant from the Skullbreaker clan—a brute named Gurge—to accompany the three hags on their mission.

Originally, Voranka intended to lure Carble along before killing and eating him. When she heard about his plan, however, the evil hag realized that she could feast upon Mertius and the children, if she were crafty. So Voranka offered to help Carble by assaulting Mertius and scattering the children. Carble accepted this plan, but insisted that the children must come to

no harm. Voranka eagerly agreed, although it was a bald-faced lie.

The hag covey has its own evil agenda. They intend to have Gurge kill and eat Mertius, and then kidnap all of the children. The hags haven't thought much past this point in their plan, and they differ as to what to do with the children. Katelna and Gutrina would prefer to just eat all the children, but Voranka believes the children might be valuable for ransom. Unfortunately for the children, hunger is likely to win out—the hags have found gathering food difficult while keeping a low profile near the city.

## Adventure Summary

Mertius Soldragon encounters the PCs in the Market of Mor Aldenn and asks whether they would be willing to investigate some recent hauntings at his boarding school, the Soldragon Academy of Martial Training. The PCs have time for a quick chat before meeting the four other instructors at a communal lunch. The lunch is interrupted by the appearance of the ghost of Master Oggmun, a former instructor at the Soldragon Academy. The ghost terrifies the teachers and students and faces the PCs in combat, if only for a short while. After lunch, the PCs' investigations begin in earnest. Several clues pepper the Soldragon Academy grounds, although none point to Master Carble as the real culprit behind the mysterious events.

The following morning, the PCs discover Carble's office awash in blood. Clues indicate that the poetry teacher was slain by the ghost earlier that morning. Mertius explains that Master Carble was going to take the children on a hike that day, and Mertius wants to send the children safely away from the haunted school for a time. Mertius asks that the PCs lead the children on the hike instead. The hike will take the PCs and the children through the wilderness to the south of the city.

The most difficult aspect of the hike is the children themselves. They dawdle, bicker with each other, and pester the PCs. Near the end of the hike, the PCs encounter the hill giant Gurge, who clearly expects Mertius Soldragon to be leading the hike. The PCs may obtain some useful information from Gurge but, eventually, the hungry hill giant attacks.

At the end of the hike, the PCs encounter a clever illusion set by Voranka and her allies. The hags, disguised as the teachers of the Soldragon Academy, demand the PCs load the children into a nearby wagon (in fact, a massive cauldron disguised with an illusion). While interacting with the hags, the PCs learn that