

# March 17, 2025

The party freed the rogue Mercykiller's son from the prison town of Curst and headed for **Rigus** (between Lawful Neutral and Lawful Evil). Along the way, they passed through Semuanya's Bog (lair of the Lizardpeople god of fitness and survival) where Harvey spotted a familiar looking copse of marsh trees. After some work, he was able to harvest 9 doses of a hallucinogenic poison from them.

The tower marched for weeks through a wide range of terrain, including a dead-looking area dominated by active volcanoes criss-crossed by recent lava flows. Eventually they reached **Rigus**, a heavily fortified city with multiple defensive walls built around a small hill in an otherwise dusty, desolate plain.

When a couple miles out from the town, a human in rust-red platemail flew out to halt the party. **Corporal Shu** demanded the party "Halt your weapon of war and retreat out of sight of Rigus's tallest tower, or we will destroy you with martial force!" The party convinced the Corporal they were not attacking the city, set down the tower and disembarked, and the tower retreated back a few miles.

The party was tired and covered in dust when they reached the long line of visitors stretching from Rigus's single gate. Caravans carrying food and weapons were inspected and all visitors questioned, some being brusquely taken away apparently for more intensive questioning.

After over an hour of waiting, the party reached the front and were questioned about their reasons for visiting Rigus (giving answers ranging from tourism to joining the Rigus army in order to kill people. They liked that last answer), whether they were willing to join the army of Rigus to support a cause greater than any one individual, and if they had a weapon of interplanar destruction to declare. They liked Harvey's homicide-friendly answers and were suspicious of Nine's undisclosed divinity, but they eventually let the party through the gate. Everyone was given a grey pin to wear at all times. If the party was found without their pins, they would be immediately ejected from the city.

Once past the gate, the party saw the city wasn't \*entirely\* military. Children played in the streets and there were a few shops and ordinary homes, but they were mostly squeezed between enormous defensive fortifications and weapons of war. The city had 7 defensive walls and a fortress in the center, with single gates placed on alternating sides, to make siege of the city as difficult as possible. The walls didn't look particularly battle-scarred, but a soldier informed the party they were assaulted almost daily.

The party found out the gate was in the middle of the city, so they headed that way. It took a couple hours and over a mile of winding back and forth to get to the middle of the city. As they approached, they noticed that the fortifications on the outer few walls faced outward, but the fortifications on the inner three walls all faced \*inward\*.

The “fortress” in the center of the city at the top of the hill was actually a fortified wall around a central courtyard with a shining, new steel hatch on the ground in the center. The inside of \*this\* wall looked freshly repaired with battle damage peeking through here and there, and the hatch appeared to have been replaced recently. As the party watched, the hatch opened and a platoon of soldiers climbed up a ladder and out of the ground, while another platoon climbed down to replace them and the hatch was re-closed.

Apparently the gate was down through the hatch, and the forces of **Acheron** assaulted their positions regularly. “Slaties” (recent visitors with gray badges) weren’t allowed close to the gate. The assaults had grown much more aggressive in recent weeks, with eerily efficient timing (consistently hitting right at shift changes, or when maintenance crews were working right in front of the gate and vulnerable, and the defenders were growing frustrated. The guards suggested the players find **Major Kalak** if they were interested in signing on as mercenaries.

Major Kalak’s tent was nearby but took a while to find because the tents were all identical. She initially dismissed the party but eventually decided they could be useful. She feared a spy was somehow passing info to the forces of Acheron on when to attack, and she’d reward the party if they investigated. The party agreed and she took them to the courtyard.

A guard opened the hatch and everyone climbed down a long ladder to a large cave in the middle of the hill upon which the city was built. Inside the cave was the gate, ringed by barricades and 200 Rigus soldiers. The area was littered with broken weapons and debris and the troops were preparing for an attack. Half the troops were led by a cheerful, charming Cambion who chatted with the party at length, and the rest by a dour, professional human woman who barely acknowledged the party before moving on to preparations.

As the party started investigating the gate area, the gate lit up and three huge metal missiles (the size of pick-up trucks) fired into the massed soldiers of Rigus causing a ton of damage and injuring the party. Dozens of screaming human, hobgoblin and goblin berserkers screamed as they charged through the gate! Fight!

The party only had to contend with a few of the berserkers, leaving the rest for the soldiers, and defeated them right in front of the gate fairly quickly. The party noticed they kept getting hit by stray crossbow bolts and the berserkers didn’t appear to be using crossbows. Eventually, Harvey looked around and noticed the human sergeant had a crossbow and while she was “fighting” a berserker, it appeared to be more “stage fighting” with dramatic sweeping swings aimed directly into the other person’s shield or aimed away from the other person entirely.

Shortly after, the gate blazed to life again and three two-headed giants charged through the portal, one wearing metal plates for armor and had a helmet. The party engaged the Ettins and when the armored leader was significantly wounded, it called “You must help me now” apparently to the human sergeant?

She sighed and waved the berserker off, directing him to attack the soldier behind her. She then concentrated for a moment and shifted into a large grey frog-like humanoid and entered the battle on the side of the Ettins!

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