

# 1.01 – Fires at Dawn

## Skill Challenge

### Read the following:

*You awake to shouts and the clang of metal on metal. Looking out over the city, you see smoke and fire in many places, especially near the main gates. You call down to a woman scrambling to gather her clothes off a line and she replies, “That ambassador got himself killed. The Elves are taking everybody. I’m not going to end up in the camps, sure I’m not!” She stuffs her belongings in a sack and scuttles off down the street.*

*You discuss your options, but none of them seems good. Even under the best of circumstances holding off an army of this size would have been a near thing. There simply are not enough people left in the city to properly man the walls. With their troops inside the city, things are even grimmer. You watch in horror as a squad of Elves subdue a family of six, shackle them and march them off.*

Allow the PC’s to make plans and ask questions. Your descriptions of their flight from the city should evoke images of chaos, panic and fear as the city is attacked from within. The Elves are angry and taking their frustrations out on the populace.

*At many of the larger intersections, you see clusters of prisoners tied together under heavy guard. It seems certain that the city will fall and that thousands will be taken captive.*

*You look for a way out, huddled atop a tall building, and watch as a group of archers and crossbowmen try to free a cluster of captives. They injure some of the swordsmen, but are wiped out when an Elven magus steps forward and waves his hand, filling their position with blue flame. You slink off as quietly as you can.*

Fires at Dawn
<b>Level:</b> 1
<b>Complexity:</b> 3 (8 successes before 3 failures)
<b>Primary Skills:</b> Athletics, Perception, Stealth
<i>Athletics (DC 10):</i> The character leaps from rooftop to rooftop, shoulders aside doors or hurdles through windows.
<i>Perception (DC 10):</i> The PC hears patrols in time to avoid them or finds places for the party to hide.
<i>Stealth (DC 10):</i> The character hides everyone under the straw in a stable or helps camouflage the party.
<b>Secondary Skills:</b> Diplomacy, History, Insight
<i>Diplomacy (DC 13, maximum two successes):</i> The character asks for help or assistance.
<i>History (DC 15, maximum one success):</i> The PC remembers details about the city.
<i>Insight (DC 15):</i> The character figures out the most effective routes.
<b>Victory &amp; Defeat</b>
<i>Successes Accrued</i>
0 – 3: The race to the wall is a grueling affair, ending in a frantic swim that leaves you gasping, bloody and exhausted. [Each character takes 2d6 damage and loses 2 healing surges.]
4 – 7: You find a partially burnt out arrow tower and gingerly make your way up to one of the slits. Although the jump is farther than you would like and you land hard, at least you are clear of the city. [Each character loses a healing surge.]
8+: Luck seems to be with you as you round a corner to find a large section of the outer wall brought down by an explosion. You scurry across the rubble and make your way into the forest. [See below for possible loot.]

Loot
Level One Magic Item – Player 2 (Suggestion: +1 Weapon)

## GM’s Notes

The escape from Atriar should feel like a disaster film. Let the PCs save each other and the occasional NPC, but remain completely overwhelmed and outclassed. Making them afraid to fail the mechanical portion of the skill challenge should take a back seat to establishing a mood of fire, death and chaos.

Given the amount of “box text” in the first three encounters, your players may get a bit anxious to get to the real fighting. Letting them have a little action here may relieve some of that pressure.