

THE HARBINGER'S SILENT REQUIEM



CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

- **Theme/Genre:** Fantasy / Mystery / Horror
- **Tone:** Dark and Suspenseful with moments of Heroism
- **Target Level for Players:** Level 5
- **Expected Duration:** 2 hours
- **Player Focus Preferences:**
 - Combat: Medium
 - Roleplay: High
 - Exploration: Medium

BACKSTORY AND SETTING

WORLD OVERVIEW

The campaign is set in the Kingdom of Caelthyr, a land where the veil separating the material world and the astral plane occasionally thins. Skeptical nobles scoff at rumors of lingering curses, while villagers cling to warding charms and whispered warnings of “The Harbinger.” Legend holds that The Harbinger appears as an omen of catastrophic events, bringing sorrow in its wake.

LOCAL AREA

The adventure unfolds in **Ravenstead**, an isolated hamlet nestled beside the ruins of an ancient cathedral, **Sanctorum Vexalis**, long abandoned after a mysterious collapse. The cathedral’s shattered bell tower pierces the stormy skyline like a jagged scar. Dark whispers persist of strange wailing from its halls.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Over 150 years ago, the clergy of the Sanctorum sought to summon an angelic being to bless their soil with eternal bounties. But their ritual failed, and something else answered—a nameless harbinger whose arrival shattered the cathedral and cursed the surrounding land. Villagers bury their dead with a lock of silver blessed by the old priesthood to keep their spirits at peace, but supplies are dwindling, and the curse grows stronger.

IMPORTANT NPCs

1. **Elder Kendra Malvoise** - Ravenstead’s pragmatic leader. She desperately seeks to protect her people and is willing to sacrifice outsiders if necessary.
 - **Motivation:** Preserve the village at all costs.
2. **Erasmus Dorn** - A washed-up scholar obsessed with researching the Harbinger and linking it to obscure celestial texts.
 - **Motivation:** Gain academic recognition by uncovering “the truth.”
3. **Spirit of Ansel Farrow** - A restless ghost of a cleric who was an apprentice during the cathedral’s collapse. He seeks peace but knows dangerous truths.
 - **Motivation:** Redeem himself for past failures.
4. **The Harbinger** - A celestial, eerily serene figure exuding quiet despair. Its arrival heralds doom, though it is bound by an unwitting sense of justice.
 - **Motivation:** Restore balance between life and death—even through grim means.

PLOT HOOK

OPENING SCENE

The party arrives in Ravenstead on a stormy evening, where heavy rain drips from sagging rooftops. The streets are eerily quiet, save for shrouded villagers murmuring prayers at small shrines. Elder Kendra meets the party at the damp tavern, promising a monetary reward if they investigate the wailing emanating from the cathedral ruins.

During the exchange, a commotion erupts outside—a villager is found dead, his wide eyes frozen in terror, clutching a melted silver charm. His spirit rises moments later, eyes glowing with despair, and unleashes a piercing, otherworldly scream as his spectral form attacks.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Investigate the cathedral ruins, uncover the mystery of the curse, and determine if it can be stopped—or if the village must be abandoned.

KEY LOCATIONS

LOCATION 1: RAVENSTEAD (STARTING AREA)

- **Atmosphere:** Claustrophobic and gloomy, with weary villagers giving mistrustful glances. The heavy rain drips like tears from rooftops.
- **Key NPCs:** Elder Kendra, Erasmus Dorn.
- **Possible Encounters:**
 - **Combat:** A vengeful villager's ghost manifests (use **Specter** stat block).
 - **Roleplay:** Persuade terrified villagers to share local rumors.
 - **Clue:** The melted silver charm suggests the protective wards are failing. Erasmus hints at connections between celestial events and the curse.

LOCATION 2: THE FORGOTTEN GRAVEYARD (INTERMEDIATE AREA)

- **Atmosphere:** A haunted burial ground surrounded by crumbling statues depicting winged figures. Unkempt vegetation grows wild, and the air crackles faintly with static-like energy.
- **Encounter:**
 - **Puzzle/Trap:** The **Gate of Oblivion** – A rusted iron gate blocks entry to the cathedral pathway. Runes engraved on the gate glow faintly. The party must solve a word-based riddle: “I shine brightest when I am spent. What am I?” (Answer: A star/celestial body). Failure triggers a brief blinding light that deals radiant damage (1d6 to all party members).
 - **Roleplay:** The ghost of Ansel Farrow appears after solving the puzzle. He warns the party of the Harbinger's binding but offers cryptic advice to “seek the broken stars where glass meets stone.”

LOCATION 3: SANCTORUM VEXALIS RUINS (FINAL AREA)

- **Atmosphere:** The cathedral is a shattered hulk, with jagged stained glass scattered across the rain-slick floor. The walls are inscribed with celestial motifs, some defaced with claw marks. The ground trembles faintly underfoot, and the air carries a melodious, mournful hum.
- **Encounters:**
 - **Combat:** The party faces **Corrupted Figures of Lost Clerics** (use **Wraiths** or custom radiant-undead stat blocks). Combine radiant attacks with psychic assaults.
 - **Final Challenge:** Confront **The Harbinger**. It doesn't initially attack but warns that life and death have tipped too far out of balance. The group must choose to either negotiate with it (high DC Persuasion) or engage in combat. The fight includes environmental hazards: glowing arcs of radiant energy that must be avoided as they deal 2d8 radiant damage each round.

ENCOUNTERS AND CHALLENGES

ENEMIES

- **Specter (Modified):** Villager ghosts who summon bursts of radiant despair (small AoE damage).
- **Wraith-Like Clerics:** Infused with radiant corruption.
- **The Harbinger:** A celestial being with abilities like **Healing Aura**, spectral blade attacks, and a devastating **Wail of Sorrow**.

ROLEPLAY PROMPTS

- Erasmus suggests the curse could devastate the kingdom if spread, urging the party to seal the cathedral for good.
- Ansel Farrow pleads to save the Harbinger, claiming its curse is not entirely its fault.

PUZZLE MECHANICS

In the Sanctorum, the stained glass mosaics can be arranged to form a celestial alignment, temporarily weakening the Harbinger before the final battle.

CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

FINAL CHALLENGE

- If the party fights the Harbinger and wins, the celestial's destruction lifts the curse permanently but leaves behind sorrowful remnants (silent, wilting flowers in the cathedral).
- If the party negotiates, they learn the Harbinger only seeks balance. The curse can be dispelled through a ritual requiring a great sacrifice (e.g., an NPC's life).

STAKES

If the Harbinger is destroyed or appeased, the village is saved but undergoes political and spiritual turmoil. Failure to stop it dooms Ravenstead, unleashing the Harbinger's full wrath on the surrounding lands.

REWARDS

- **Loot:**
 - Radiant Glass Amulet (resistance to radiant damage).
 - Harbinger's Blade (magical longsword, +1d6 radiant damage).
- **Story Rewards:**
 - NPC favor from surviving villagers or Erasmus.
 - Potential political clout for saving (or condemning) Ravenstead.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

STAT BLOCKS

- Custom for The Harbinger and Wraith-like Clerics included (based on celestial and radiant powers).

SIMPLE MAPS

- Ravenstead Hamlet.
- The Forgotten Graveyard layout.
- Interior of the Cathedral Ruins with glowing hazards shown.

ATMOSPHERIC MUSIC

- Storm sounds for Ravenstead.
- Ethereal choral music and faint bells for the Sanctorum.

FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES

- If players seek alternatives to fighting the Harbinger, reward creativity through the ritual, persuading Kendra to participate, or forming a deal.
- Improvisation Tips: Lean into eerie, cryptic responses for the Harbinger and Ansel to maintain the mystery.

POST-GAME WRAP-UP

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What moments stood out most?
- Did you find the mystery compelling?
- Did you feel your choices significantly impacted the story?

EPILOGUE OPTIONS

Should players wish to continue, secrets of the astral plane or the Harbinger's origins could lead to new adventures in unraveling celestial mysteries.