

## Heaven's Deep

Wounded in battle, a war mage hides in the medic wagon of a mercenary cult to avoid capture, but slipping away from the ambulance train once it has left the battlefield proves more difficult than he expected.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - PRE-DAWN:

Two armies face each other from opposite sides of a deep canyon in the mountains. Thick, untouched snow glitters in the bluish light of the nearest of four moons. One army is dressed in furs and scraps of leather, and several giants tower over them. In the Queen's Camp, humans and dwarves in uniform blue and gold tabards huddle in groups around small campfires. Several knights in gleaming silver plate mail sit atop winged horses, and a handful of giants draped in white furs hold enormous polished steel discs over their heads on the top of the ridge.

The Queen's generals look silently up at the giants behind them, as does FELICIEN - 40s, well-groomed human male, one of the Queen's war mages. The only sound is that of deep drums echoing like a heartbeat from across the canyon. As the first rays of sunlight touch the steel discs, the whole canyon erupts in thunderous noise and violent action. The armies charge each other on land and in the sky. Arrows, boulders, and bolts of magical energy arc over the canyon. The world becomes a blur of blood, steel, fire, and death as the armies crash against each other like ocean waves against rocky cliffs.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - MORNING:

The fighting has thinned somewhat and the snow on the canyon floor is marred with blood, mud, and bodies. Felicien and a score of soldiers are cut off from the rest of their army after a giant's boulder slams into the ground behind them.

SOLDIER 1

Backs against the rock! Felicien!

The group of soldiers tightens their formation against the boulder. Felicien makes a slashing motion with both hands, and jagged walls of ice shoot up from the ground on each side, forming a corridor around them. Several waves of enemies attack them, but the Queen's soldiers inflict far more casualties than they suffer. Three short blasts from a horn sound nearby, and the enemy ranks part to reveal a dozen heavily muscled warriors covered in blue-gray mud. They wield large wooden clubs peppered with shark teeth, and their own teeth have been filed into points.

SOLDIER 2  
(panicking)  
Requindat!

The Requindat attack with lightning speed, tearing through half of the Queen's soldiers in seconds. Felicien reaches into his collar and pulls out a brown crystal wrapped in silver wire on a leather thong.

FELICIEN  
Everyone down!

Felicien slices open his wrist with the crystal and hurls it to the ground without waiting. The crystal shatters and blood red ribbon of energy ripples down the corridor, washing over friend and foe alike. A handful of people duck under the pulse of light and merely scream in pain as they bleed from their eyes and ears; the rest disintegrate, leaving behind only a bloody mist that stains the entire area. Felicien is pale and shaking; he drops to one knee and watches in horror as REQUINDAT 1 continues to crawl toward him despite their injuries.

REQUINDAT 1  
(laughing)  
A pity we cannot fight as brothers,  
for what a feast you have laid  
before me!

Felicien reaches for a sword that lies on the ground, but he is too weak from the spell to lift it. Requindat 1 closes his hand around Felicien's wrist and pulls him down into the bloody snow where they both lay too exhausted and injured to move. A wailing horn in the distance sounds the retreat of the Queen's army. Felicien hangs his head in despair, then collapses unconscious in the snow.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY:

Bodies of the dead and dying litter the canyon floor, its pristine blanket of snow now a steaming reddish-brown sludge. Felicien stirs and looks around. Requindat priests in dark gray robes dot the field; some are tossing corpses onto a train of open-top wagons while others collect weapons, mutter healing prayers over the wounded, or dispatch those too far gone to save. Requindat 1 is lying on his back, clutching a shark tooth the size of a

dagger against his chest. A nearby PRIEST examines a similar tooth in the hand of another Requindat before carrying them gently to different wagon, one covered to keep out the elements and bearing the symbol of a red handprint on a white circle. Felicien mutters a short incantation and opens his hand. The tooth in the hand of Requindat 1 flies from his hand into Felicien's. Requindat 1 looks suddenly fearful.

REQUINDAT 1  
What? You...you would deny me  
paradise?

FELICIEN  
You are dying either way, Requindat.  
With this, I can live.

Felicien pricks his finger with the tooth and whispers. His features begin to shift, and within a few moments he looks exactly like Requindat 1.

REQUINDAT 1  
So be it, blasphemer. May your  
treachery lead you to Heaven's Deep,  
and the glory that should have been  
mine.

Requindat 1 dies. Felicien sees the Priest returning and quickly draws a symbol in his own blood on the body, which changes to look like him. The Priest arrives and Felicien holds up the tooth. The priest examines it closely.

PRIEST  
Can you walk?

FELICIEN  
I believe so.

The priest helps Felicien to his feet.

INT. WAGON - EVENING:

Several lanterns illuminate a dozen or so Requindat sitting or lying throughout the wagon. Some are dead, *all* are grievously injured. Felicien quietly pulls a cloak off of a corpse and wraps himself in it, pulling the cowl over his face before succumbing to exhaustion again.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - EVENING:

The wagon train snakes through the mountains away from the battle. In the darkening light, the distant canyon appears as nothing more than a dark spot on the wintry landscape.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY:

The train is stopped, and the priests are busy checking the horses, making repairs, and killing and eating the carrion birds that swarm around the open carts pecking at the corpses. Felicien peeks out of the back of the medical wagon, draws a symbol in blood on his forehead, and waits as his features once again metamorphose into those of a Requindat. He climbs out of the medical wagon and begins moving surreptitiously toward the tree line, stumbling several times.

EXT. TREELINE - DAY:

Felicien breaks the tree line and is startled to find the Priest leaning against a tree in front of him.

PRIEST

Where are you going, brother?

FELICIEN

I...I had to relieve myself...brother.

PRIEST

Very well.

The Priest motions to a tree, but does not move. Felicien tries to incant a spell, but collapses almost immediately.

EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY:

The priest leads Felicien gently but firmly back to the covered medical wagon, supporting him when he stumbles.

INT. WAGON - NIGHT:

Felicien huddles under his cloak as a blizzard rages outside. He whispers a spell and a tiny ball of flame appears in his hand, but it goes out after a few seconds.

EXT. SEASIDE MOUNTAINS - DAY:

Felicien peeks out of the covered wagon and sees the Priest riding alongside. In the distance, he sees a temple built into high cliffs that jut out over the sea.

INT. TEMPLE - EVENING:

This grand temple decorated with the bones of sharks and sea serpents. As the train moves through the temple, acolytes drag corpses from the open wagons and toss them into stone tanks writhing with unseen horrors of the deep. Only the covered wagon continues beyond an archway formed from the jaws of an unthinkably large shark.

INT. SEA ALTAR - DUSK:

The wagon stops and the priests bring the living and dead Requindat to the edge of a large circular opening in the floor. Hundreds of feet below, the black waters of the ocean bubble and froth. Standing on a dais opposite Felicien, the HIGH PRIESTESS raises her hands and a hush falls over the assembled crowd.

HIGH PRIESTESS

You have fought bravely, Requindat,  
and you have earned your place in  
Heaven's Deep. May you swim forever  
in the shadow of the Great Requina,  
Mother of the Fathoms Below.

Felicien tries again to incant a spell, but his voice disappears as the Priest lays a hand on his shoulder.

HIGH PRIESTESS

Behold, Requina!

The sky turns red as the sun sets, and the water below suddenly falls away as the colossal maw of Requina opens.

PRIEST

Bask in this glory, brother.

The priests push Felicien and the other Requindat over the edge of the hole to be consumed by Requina.

FADE TO BLACK