Mastering Combat Tactics in Cresthaven: A Complete Battle Scenario

written by CresthavenRPG Guru | September 12, 2024



Screenshot

Welcome to this detailed walkthrough of a tactical combat scenario in **Cresthaven RPG**, designed to help new players and Game Masters (DMs) master the core principles of combat. This scenario, set during the **Siege of Emberkeep**, provides an in-depth look at how to use terrain, cover, and special abilities like **Reach** and **Backstab** to gain the upper hand in battle. Whether you're learning how to interrupt powerful enemy spells or want to better understand how morale and positioning can shift the tide of combat, this guide will walk you through the decision-making process, helping you apply Cresthaven's rules in a real encounter. Perfect for both beginners looking to refine their strategies and DMs wanting to enhance their storytelling through combat mechanics, this scenario breaks down every choice step by step.

Scenario: The Siege of Emberkeep

Setting: The adventuring party is defending **Emberkeep**, a fortress at the kingdom's outskirts, from marauding invaders. The marauders have breached the main gate, and a chaotic battle ensues in the courtyard. The area is filled with rubble, overturned carts, and broken walls that offer various degrees of cover. The marauding force consists of melee fighters rushing through the breach, archers positioned on a distant hill, and two enemy spellcasters

preparing powerful spells.

Party Members:

- **Cavalier (Spear and Shield Fighter):** Armed with a spear and shield, the Cavalier excels in defensive tactics and can strike enemies from a safe distance, making them an ideal frontline protector. Positioned near cover, the Cavalier is ready to disrupt enemy spell casters and hold off melee threats.
- **Thief (Rogue/Assassin):** Agile and stealthy, the Thief hides behind rubble, preparing to sneak around the battlefield and deliver lethal **Backstabs**. Their high mobility and ability to flank enemies make them essential for quickly dispatching distracted foes.
- **Wizard (Spell caster):** Capable of casting devastating spells from a distance, the Wizard is currently positioned behind cover, preparing to eliminate the enemy archers with an area-of-effect **Fireball** spell. Though fragile, their offensive power is unmatched.
- **Cleric (Healer, Support):** Providing vital buffs and healing, the Cleric is positioned at the rear of the party, ready to cast **Bless** to enhance the party's attacks and step in with healing as needed to keep the party strong throughout the battle.

Battlefield Overview:

- **Obstacles and Cover:**
  - **Half Cover (+2 AC):** Rubble, overturned carts.
  - **Three-quarters Cover (+4 AC):** Large debris, chest-high walls.
  - **Full Cover (cannot be targeted):** Intact stone walls.

- **Enemy Composition:**
  - **Melee Fighters (6):** Charging through the breach.
  - **Archers (4):** Positioned on a distant hill, raining arrows from long range.
  - **Spell casters (2):** Supporting the marauders with destructive spells like **Fireball**.

Round 1: Declaring Actions

The marauders are storming through the breach, and the party must act quickly to hold the line, deal with ranged threats, and stop the enemy spell casters

before they unleash devastating spells.

Declare Actions:

- **Cavalier:** Will throw their spear to disrupt the enemy spell caster preparing to cast **Fireball**.
- **Thief:** Will sneak through the rubble and position behind the remaining marauders for a **Backstab**.
- **Wizard:** Will cast **Fireball** at the group of archers on the hill to eliminate the ranged threat.
- **Cleric:** Will cast **Bless** to boost the attack rolls of the Cavalier, Thief, and Wizard.

Roll Initiative:

The party rolls for initiative:

- **Cleric:** 17
- **Cavalier:** 16
- **Thief:** 14
- **Wizard:** 13
- **Marauders:** Various initiative slots for melee fighters, archers, and spell casters.

Round 1: Tactical Decision-Making and Execution

Cleric (Buffing the Party):

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Cleric casts **Bless** (3 AP) on the Cavalier, Thief, and Wizard, enhancing their attack rolls with a +1 bonus
  - **Action:** Cast **Bless** to boost the party’s attack rolls.
  - **Outcome:** The party’s attacks are enhanced, making it easier to land hits against enemies.
  - The Cleric then moves 2 AP to take cover behind a low wall, staying out of danger while still within range to provide healing if needed.

Cavalier (Spear Throwing to Interrupt the Spell):

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Cavalier spots one of the enemy spell casters starting to cast **Fireball**. Realizing the danger, the Cavalier throws their spear (3 AP) to interrupt the spell. With their spear's **Reach**, they can attack from a safe distance of up to 10 feet.
  - **Tactical Consideration:** The Cavalier knows that **any damage** will cause the spell to fail, so they aim to hit the spell caster before the Fireball can be unleashed.
  - **Outcome:** The spear hits the enemy spell caster, dealing damage and **immediately breaking their concentration**. The Fireball fizzles out, leaving the spell caster vulnerable and without casting their most powerful spell. The Cavalier then moves 2 AP to retrieve cover behind rubble.

Thief (Stealth and Backstab):

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Thief moves stealthily (2 AP) through the rubble, positioning themselves behind a marauder engaged with the Cavalier.
  - **Action:** Using the distraction provided by the Cavalier, the Thief uses 3 AP to deliver a deadly **Backstab**.
  - **Tactical Consideration:** By sneaking into position, the Thief can exploit the chaos of battle to deal critical damage to the enemy, staying safe behind cover until the right moment to strike.
  - **Outcome:** The Thief successfully lands a backstab, killing the marauder instantly.

Wizard (Fireball at Archers):

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Wizard casts **Fireball** (3 AP) at the group of archers on the hill, aiming to eliminate as many as possible. The area-of-effect spell will target the archers who are still out of range for melee attacks.
  - **Tactical Consideration:** The Wizard needs to act quickly before the archers can retaliate, so they choose Fireball for maximum efficiency.
  - **Outcome:** The **Fireball** explodes on the hill, killing two archers and

leaving the remaining two severely injured. The Wizard then uses 2 AP to move behind full cover, protecting themselves from any potential counter-attacks.

Round 1: Enemy Response and Morale Check

- **Melee Marauders:**
  - With two of their comrades killed—one by the **Thief's** backstab and the other injured by the **Cavalier**—, the remaining marauders are forced to make a **Morale Check** (DC 20 Wisdom).
  - **Outcome:** They **fail the Morale Check**. The remaining marauders panic and **flee** the battlefield, leaving the spell casters and archers exposed.

- **Archers:**
  - The remaining two archers, severely injured from the **Wizard's Fireball**, attempt to fire back but are too demoralized to aim effectively, missing their shots.

- **Spell casters:**
  - **First Spell caster:**
    - This spell caster, after being struck by the **Cavalier's thrown spear**, has their **Fireball** interrupted and fizzled out. They are left vulnerable and reeling from the damage and with less Mana

  - **Second Spell caster:**
    - The second spell caster, seeing the melee fighters flee, quickly casts **Magic Missile**, targeting the **Wizard**.
    - **Outcome:** The **Magic Missile** automatically hits, dealing guaranteed damage to the Wizard.

Round 2: Adjusting Tactics

With the melee fighters fleeing due to the failed morale check, and one spell caster disrupted, the party shifts focus to eliminate the remaining enemies.

Cavalier:

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Cavalier moves to retrieve their spear (2 AP) and attacks the wounded spell caster (3 AP).
  - **Action:** Melee attack using the spear's **Reach**.
  - **Outcome:** The Cavalier finishes off the first spell caster with a powerful strike, ensuring that no further spells can be cast.

Thief:

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Thief remains in stealth and sneaks behind the remaining spellcaster (2 AP).
  - **Action:** Using 3 AP, the Thief delivers a **Backstab** to deal massive damage.
  - **Outcome:** The backstab critically wounds the second spellcaster, leaving them barely standing.

Wizard:

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - After being hit by **Magic Missile**, the Wizard retaliates by casting **Magic Missile** (2 AP) at the last archer.
  - **Action:** Cast **Magic Missile**, which automatically hits the target.
  - **Outcome:** The last archer is killed, neutralizing the final ranged threat. The Wizard then uses the remaining 3 AP to move behind full cover.

Cleric:

- **Action Points:** 5 AP.
  - The Cleric casts **Cure Wounds** (3 AP) on the Wizard, healing them after the **Magic Missile** hit.
  - **Action:** Cast **Cure Wounds** to restore the Wizard's health.
  - **Outcome:** The Wizard is healed, keeping them in fighting condition.

Conclusion: Tactical Victory

By taking advantage of the **Cavalier's spear** to disrupt the spell caster's concentration, the party prevents a devastating **Fireball**. The **Thief**'s stealthy **Backstabs** and the **Wizard's Fireball** eliminate key threats, while the **Cleric** provides essential buffs and healing. The party wins the day by forcing the melee marauders to flee, neutralizing the spell casters, and eliminating the archers.

Key Lessons:

1. **Interrupting Spells:** Damage taken by spell casters breaks their concentration, causing spells to fail. The **Cavalier**'s spear throw prevented a powerful **Fireball** from being cast, showing how quick action can save the party from disaster.
2. **Morale Checks:** After losing key fighters, the enemy failed a **Morale Check**, causing them to flee and leaving the party with fewer opponents.
3. **Cover and Positioning:** The party made excellent use of cover to minimize damage while staying offensive, showing how terrain can shift the tide of battle.

The defense of **Emberkeep** is successful, with the enemy routed and the fortress secured!

What do you think?

We hope this breakdown of the **Siege of Emberkeep** has helped you gain a deeper understanding of Cresthaven RPG's combat mechanics and tactical decision-making. Whether you're a player looking to sharpen your skills or a DM wanting to bring more strategic depth to your sessions, we'd love to hear how this guide worked for you. Was this scenario helpful? Did it clarify key combat concepts, or do you have any suggestions for improvement? Your feedback is invaluable in making our resources as useful as possible for the Cresthaven community! Let us know your thoughts and experiences!