



# ELEGY FOR A BROKEN KING

## A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ Core Adventure

Version 1.0

by Luke Pitcher

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The trail of a missing son leads you to Dustbridge, in the lands of the former Great Kingdom. A cold wind blows through Prince Strychan's town; something very new, and surpassingly old, is in the offing. A one-round Core adventure set in Dustbridge and North Kingdom for characters level 8-15 (APLs 10-16).

**Sources:** *Complete Warrior* [Andy Collins, David Noonan, Ed Stark], *Spell Compendium* [Matthew Sernett, Jeff Grubb, and Mike McArtor], *COR3-02 Return to the Isles* [Chris Tulach], the Web article *Kalstrand: City of Gold* [Paul Looby], *Ivied the Undying* [Carl Sargent] and *ONW3-05 To Hell and Back* [Steve Pearce].

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To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL™ gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2007.

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## Players Read No Farther

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

## Preparing for Play

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

# LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

Mundane Animals Effect on APL		# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Core adventure, set in Dustbridge and the North Kingdom. All characters pay 2 Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a DC 20 Survival check, the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In the gazetteers of the Flanaess, the domain of Thornhold is seldom regarded. Nestled in an obscure quarter of the North Kingdom, not far from the domain of Dustbridge, it has been ruled for centuries by princelings of the House of Garasteth. The last of these is Verthek.

Verthek is a harsh old man, but an honorable one. Devoted to Stern Alia (LN Oeridian demigoddess of Oeridian culture, Law and Motherhood), he takes his

responsibilities to his few remaining subjects seriously. But these are not times for petty princelings. Marauders are rife, and the neighboring Torquann rulers, ever hostile to Garasteth, want to carve up Thornhold's lands for themselves. Thornhold's funds have steadily been eaten up in hiring mercenaries to keep these wolves from the door, and to rebuild after their visits. Verthek looks upon the portraits and statues of his ancestors thronging the corridors of Thornhold, and feels himself unworthy of his heritage if he allows his birthright to perish.

A Garasteth loremaster, Verthek has read in librams brittle with age of the artifacts wielded by the forces of Law in the pre-history of the Flanaess and of the Wind Dukes of Aaqa and their *Rod of Seven Parts*. Such devices are long lost, of course.

Therefore, Verthek of Garasteth has decided to make a new one.

Without special resources, forging a powerful wondrous item would be beyond Verthek's present means, accomplished mage though he is. But he has dark materials to work with. Verthek has wrested fragments from the *Causeway of Fiends* to fashion his masterpiece.

Verthek knows the hazards of this ghastly substrate. One slip might leave him helpless before emergent fiends. In modern times, only Delglath of Rinloru has ever taken this risk. Verthek, however, feels that he has no choice. To protect his people, he needs the power an item forged from the Causeway will provide.

Verthek has already begun the necessary ritual of empowerment. It ends a few nights from now, on Godsdays of Richfest, when Celene is full in the sky. His recourse to fell substances and time-lost magics of creation, however, has had unexpected consequences. Planar forces are stirring at his call and those who know how to interpret the signs can trace their origins to Thornhold and Verthek.

At this critical juncture the PCs, intent on other business, enter the picture.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

**Introduction: Intruders in the Dust.** The PCs go to Dustbridge, having been sent there by Henther Frone, a wealthy merchant. Frone's son Grenthal is missing and was last heard from in the vicinity of the town. The PCs have therefore come to Dustbridge to find him. Once they start their investigation, the action moves to Encounter 1.

**Encounter 1: Dirty Pretty Town.** The PCs track down Grenthal to a drug den in the back streets of Dustbridge. Once they find him and head back to their lodging, the action moves to Encounter 2.

**Encounter 2: A Breath of Fresh Air.** As the PCs escort Grenthal back to their lodgings, the streets of Dustbridge are suddenly attacked by enraged air elementals, screaming cryptic messages about the "Wind Dukes of Aaqa." Some of these creatures attack the PCs. Once the battle is concluded, the action moves to Encounter 3.

**Encounter 3: Baator is Empty.** The PCs have the opportunity to ponder the meaning of the elemental

incursion as they tend Grenthal Frone back to health. While they are doing so, they are invited to a meeting with Lord Gilgrann.

Gilgrann, an agent of Prince Strychan of Dustbridge, tells the PCs that the elemental incursion was triggered by the forging of a powerful magic item, after the fashion of the time-lost techniques employed by the Wind Dukes of Aaqa. Vertheke, Prince of the nearby domain of Thornhold, is the man to blame. Gilgrann wishes to hire the PCs to investigate what Vertheke is doing, and use their own discretion as to what to do when they find out. Time is of the essence, as the ritual of creation most probably culminates at 7 p.m. the following night. If the PCs accept this proposition and head for Thornhold, the action moves to Encounter 4.

**Encounter 4: The King of a Rainy Country.** The PCs arrive in Thornhold just as the place is subjected to a raid by ruthless mercenaries, sellswords hired by a neighboring Torquann prince to spread chaos and bloodshed in Vertheke's lands. After fighting the mercenaries, the PCs have the opportunity to interact with the townsfolk, and begin to build up a picture of the perilous state of Vertheke's domain. Once they head for Vertheke's own abode, the action moves to Encounter 5.

**Encounter 5: Pale Kings and Princes.** The PCs explore Vertheke's home. If they are attentive, they garner clues about what is driving the mage to his current undertaking, and guess that his new item is being created from the material of *The Causeway of Fiends*. The Great Hall of the house is sealed behind a magical barrier. Once the PCs penetrate the magical barrier, the action moves to Encounter 6.

**Encounter 6: His Dark Materials.** The PCs enter the Great Hall to find Vertheke in the midst of the ritual to create his masterpiece, *Vertheke's Orb*. The mage-prince is prepared to explain why he is employing dangerous elder magics in this fashion: he sees no alternative means to secure the safety of his people. He also warns that interrupting the ritual brings dire consequences.

If the PCs interrupt the ritual, the risks of using material from the *Causeway* become manifest, and the action moves to Encounter 7. If they permit the ritual to conclude, it instead moves to Encounter 8.

**Encounter 7: The Ritual Rent.** Disrupting the ritual causes uncontrolled tanar'ri to appear, which try to kill first Vertheke, and then the PCs. When the combat is over, the action moves to encounter 10.

**Encounter 8: A Terrible Beauty is Born.** The PCs watch the creation of *Vertheke's Orb*. If the PCs permit the ritual to end, but then attack Vertheke, the action immediately moves to Encounter 9. If the PCs permit Vertheke to complete his ritual and keep the orb, he thanks them for their consideration and bids them farewell. The action then moves to Encounter 11.

**Encounter 9: Mage at Bay.** Attacking Vertheke means facing the old wizard and his guardian constructs. Once the combat is concluded, the action moves to Encounter 10.

**Encounter 10: Settling Up.** Returning to Dustbridge, the PCs report to Gilgrann, who offers to buy

the orb if they have it. He pays them for their mission and bids them good voyage. The action moves to Encounter 12.

**Encounter 11: Lord Gilgrann Regrets.** The PCs leave Vertheke with the orb and return to Dustbridge and Gilgrann, but have a nasty surprise; the orb, acting on its own initiative, has already taken revenge on Gilgrann by convincing him that Strychan wants him to dispose of the PCs. Gilgrann's servant creatures therefore ambush the party at the second interview. When the combat is over, the action moves to Encounter 12.

**Encounter 12: Loose Ends.** The PCs make final decisions about the fate of *Vertheke's orb*, if it is still in their possession, and send Grenthal home to his father. The adventure ends.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Before play begins, determine whether any PCs at the table have any of the following items:

- The Brand of Pyremius from *ONW3-05 To Hell and Back*. A PC with this AR item is targeted by Heyolt's attacks in Encounter 4.
- Malthindor, Oblivion's Blade from *COR3-02 Return to the Isles*. If a PC is openly carrying this item when speaking to Vertheke in Encounter 6, it may affect what the old wizard says to the PCs.
- Levels in sorcerer or the Air Domain and/or Law Domain (as a selected Domain). This is relevant to Encounter 3. Do not inform the PC why they are having the dream (though divination magic might provide some clues).

## INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins in a back room at the Yolkstave Inn in Kalstrand, the capital of Ahlissa. Kalstrand, the City of Gold, is an important center of trade (as the effective headquarters of the Royal Guild of Merchants of Aerdy), religion (since it houses a great Cathedral of Zilchus) and diplomacy (because it hosts the Court of the Nightingale Throne and the Imperial Council of Ahlissa). It is also the starting point for many adventuring parties intent upon exploring the Glorioles Mountains. Any or all of these factors might be used to motivate the presence of PCs in the city. Their presence in the Yolkstave Inn, however, stems from having heard by word of mouth that someone had a business proposition for them. As the story begins, the PCs are meeting this man, Henther Frone.

*You are in a small, light back-room at the Yolkstave Inn in Kalstrand. Present are a band of adventurers—yourselves and a worried merchant, who is the reason you are all here. The short, sturdy man before you speaks:*

*"Thank you for your time. I'm a plain man, so I'll come to the point. My son is missing. I want him found; for what is a father without his son? If you are all as good as I've heard, and*

*you take on this task, I don't doubt that I'll soon be a happier man...and that you will be richer ones. If you go to Dustbridge, and bring Grenthal home to me, I'll make each of you 300 gold the wealthier. What do you say?"*

### **Frone's Story**

Frone is exactly what he appears: a short, pugnacious Oeridian male in his late fifties, grizzled but still robust. He is terse and to the point in his discourse. Frone is a wealthy merchant, and believes in hiring the right people for a job; knowing that the lands of the former Great Kingdom can be dangerous, he thinks that experienced adventurers are most likely to be able to deal with any unexpected challenges which might rear up in the search for his son. Frone can give the PCs the following information:

- Frone's son, as he has already said, is named Grenthal. Just over a year ago, Frone sent the young man off on a Grand Tour of the Flanaess. He wanted to bring his son up as a gentleman of quality, and thought that he might acquire more sophistication and worldly wisdom by mingling with the great and the good of various lands.
- Over the course of the next few months, Grenthal visited Rel Deven and Delaric, dutifully sending letters back to his father. Grenthal's last letter was sent on his arrival in the town of Dustbridge, three months ago. Frone has not heard from him since. The letters are usually sent in-trust through the various trade networks run by Zilchans. This last letter was sent via the local Zilchus Western Trading Company in Dustbridge.
- Frone is worried about his son's well-being. The situation in the lands of the former Great Kingdom has calmed down a little since the Greyhawk Wars, but things are still far from being as they were in the noon-tide of Aerdy. If any trouble should emerge in bringing Grenthal home, Henther wants to be sure that his agents in this matter can handle themselves and protect his son. From what he has heard of the PCs, they fit the bill.
- Grenthal did not, as far as his father knows, have any notable friends or enemies, nor can he think of anyone who might hold a particular grudge against his family. The House of Frone has always prided itself on getting on well with others – ever since Henther's grandfather made the mistake of angering a priest of Fharlanghn.
- Grenthal's description is as follows: Oeridian; twenty years of age, black hair; brown eyes; a large mole on his right cheek; 5 foot 9 inches tall; sturdy build. Frone also shows the party a recent portrait of him.
- The fee for this undertaking (which is non-negotiable) is 300 gp for each PC, to be paid when Frone's son is returned to him. In addition, Frone is happy to use his mercantile

connections within the lands of the former Great Kingdom to expedite the PCs' future journeys in this area of the Flanaess, if they bring Grenthal back.

☛ **Henther Frone:** male human, expert 8, LN.

Frone hands over to the PCs his son's last letter, sent on his arrival in Dustbridge. This is written in Common, and is reproduced in Handout 1. Frone cannot shed much light on its contents, except for Grenthal's quip about "that old priest of the Dweller on the Horizon". If asked about this, Henther Frone explains that his own grandfather was once cursed for an act of discourtesy by a powerful cleric of Fharlanghn. Since that day, the eldest son of the House of Frone has never been able to use travel magics to move from one place to another more swiftly. This is annoying for a family of merchants, but something the Frones have learned to live with. The curse afflicts both Henther and Grenthal.

Henther Frone also gives the party a small gem which, when crushed in the hand, enables the holder to cast a single *sending* spell, with Frone himself as the recipient. He tells the PCs to use this to tell him how his son is as soon as they find him. He insists rather pointedly on the fact that the *sending* can only contact Henther Frone himself (PCs inclined to try to sell it find that its resale value is negligible). The gem itself is a deeply flawed crystal of blue quartz, worth only 1 gp as a gem in its own right, but it does have the single-use power which Frone claims for it.

If a PC refuses, the adventure is over for that character. Those who accept find that the journey to Dustbridge is uneventful. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Pelor is low and bloody in the west, as you reach the outskirts of Dustbridge. The rich arable land around promised contentment at your goal, and your first sight of the town does little to gainsay that impression. As you near the town, the Richfest merry-making— raucous and full-throated— is easily audible.*

*A dozen or so townsfolk are clustering on a green, with ale-mugs in their hands. The laughter is loud; the drink flows free, and if the bear beset by six foaming dogs, has had its eyes gouged out, well, the gazes of the watching throng are bright and greedy enough to compensate.*

Animal fighting is of course a popular pastime in the Flanaess, but PCs spending any time in Dustbridge find that the inhabitants are almost obsessed with it, and never tire of devising variations or handicaps (like the blinding of the bear). It says much about the town that this is among the less unpleasant of its recreations. Some PCs may wish to break up the bear-baiting; others may want to place small bets. Indulge either wish. This bunch of locals is not about to argue with powerful adventurers, although they become sullen and snide if their

amusement is taken from them. After this hiatus (if any), the mission is on: move to Encounter 1.

## ENCOUNTER 1: DIRTY PRETTY TOWN

Have the PCs make bardic knowledge or Knowledge (local: Core) checks at this point. The results of these checks determine what useful facts the PC in question knows about Dustbridge. Those making a particular DC also know all the information from the easier DCs as well. PCs asking the locals for general information about their town easily discover the facts from DCs 15 and 20 below (no skill check required).

- **DC 15** Dustbridge is a town of about 3,000 inhabitants, ruled by Prince Strychan. Although wedged between Ahlissa and North Kingdom, it is not formally a part of either. It was largely untouched by the Greyhawk Wars and has since prospered.
- **DC 20** Strychan, the ruler of Dustbridge, is a Prince of the House of Naelax, once the ruling dynasty of the old Great Kingdom. However, he disassociated himself from Ivid's regime and publicly denounced the madness of the Overking even before the fall of Rauxes. He is also rumored to be a powerful mage.
- **DC 25** Despite Strychan's contempt for Ivid, he is whispered to be as debauched and depraved as the old Overking in his private "entertainments." It is said that some of the wealthier citizens of Dustbridge ape their liege lord's proclivities with repulsive parties and amusements of their own. Beneath the prosperous surface of the town, one who knows where to look may find addiction, sadism, and torture for sport. For those who would stimulate or deaden pleasure or pain, almost any sensation can be procured in Dustbridge for the right price.
- **DC 30** Rumors have lately circulated from Nyronnd that that an emissary of Strychan has been seen leaving the palace of Overking Grenell, the ruler of North Kingdom. Whether this means that the formerly independent Strychan is about to pledge his allegiance to Grenell is unknown, but the news has been greeted with alarm in Ahlissa.

### Finding Grenthal Frone

Although the PCs may suspect any number of supernatural terrors of swooping upon Frone's son, the truth is much more mundane and sordid. Shortly after arriving in Dustbridge and sending his dutiful final letter, Grenthal was enticed into the succession of lavish and debauched entertainments in which some of the wealthy folk of Dustbridge routinely indulge. The expense of these revels eroded his funds, even as the manic and sadistic edge to them gnawed at his sanity. No longer able

to afford his original lodgings at *Celene's Smile* (one of the swankier and more reputable local hostelrys), he lies day and night, barely conscious, in a filthy drug den called *The Blood Haven*, seeking to chase away with cheap narcotics the memory of what he has seen at Dustbridge's revels.

Grenthal's letter did not mention where he was living. The PCs therefore have to do a certain amount of detective work to find out where he is. This is a good opportunity for urban PCs with good social and investigative skills to strut their stuff, and they should be permitted to do so. There are a number of obvious ways in which the PCs might conduct their investigations:

### Using Magic

PCs may well be able to circumvent onerous information gathering through the use of magic. Since the PCs have Grenthal's last letter, they might be able to employ *discern location*, which immediately reveals that Grenthal is at the *Blood Haven*. Once they have the name, the den is easily located.

(*Greater*) *scrying* aimed at Grenthal allows him a Will save, which, however, he is unlikely to make. His modifier for the save is 0, since he gets +5 for the PCs' secondhand knowledge of him, -4 because they have a possession of his (the letter) and -1 because of his wretched Will save. If he fails the save, the PC gets a vision of Grenthal lounging vacantly in a place which is clearly a drug den of some description, swathed in violet smoke. The sight of this smoke allows the PCs to make Knowledge checks to identify it as *Ke' bleesh* (see "Drowning in Violets" below).

### Grenthal's Letter

Grenthal's last letter did not mention the place where he was staying by name, but there is one clue on which smart PCs may pick up: the innkeeper's reference to the "Soul Forger". A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check tells any PC who did not already know it that "the Soul Forger" is a title of Moradin, the chief god of the dwarven pantheon (clerics of Moradin, paladins of Moradin, or pious templars of Moradin know this automatically). If a PC thinks to ask which local hostelrys have a dwarven innkeeper, any Dustbridge resident can readily confirm that *Celene's Smile* is the only one (no skill check needed).

If the PCs miss this clue, they can still find *Celene's Smile* through dogged detective work. A DC 15 Gather Information check (taking 10 and retries are permissible) gets the information from the locals that a young visitor of Grenthal's status would most likely stay at *Celene's Smile*.

The staff at *Celene's Smile* readily confirm that Grenthal had been staying there, but note that he had not been seen for almost a week and that in the last days of his stay he seemed to be harried, upset, and seemingly under the influence of a narcotic; his breath, for some reason, smelled strongly of violets.

## Drowning in Violets

DC 15 Craft (alchemy), Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (local; Core) checks recognize the smell of violets, or the sight of violet smoke, as characteristic of *Ke' bleesh*, a Baklunish drug similar in its effects to opium. If the PCs ask around as to where one goes in Dustbridge to find *Ke' bleesh*, enough patient probing (no skill checks required) identifies an establishment called *The Blood Haven*, in Glory Lane, as the center of the trade. This leads the PCs to the drug den, and so to Grenthal Frone.

## Zilchus Western Company

Tracking the source of the letters leads to the small Dustbridge outlet of the Zilchus Western Company. This is a widespread merchant house controlled by a sect of Zilchus clerics. They specialize in importing and exporting goods from the far west, as well as power brokering. Their public affiliation with the Royal Merchants Guild of Ahlissa is friendly but separate.

Each merchant compound is led by an Exchequer who reports to his superiors elsewhere. The day-to-day running of the compound is left to the lower ranking Holy Clerk.

If the PCs seek answers here, they are helped by Holy Clerk Groaqil as Exchequer Benzedon is busy with other matters (until later in the adventure).

Holy Clerk Groaqil is not privy to the current location of Grenthal Frone, but he does know the lad was staying at *Celene's Smile* when he dropped off the last letter. He can also confirm that the letter the PC's have is the last letter that was sent.

For the cost of 20 gp and a day's wait, the Holy Clerk offers to track down the lad's location. If any of the PCs have favorable standing with any other Holy Clerks from around the Flanaess (they have an unexpended AR favor/influence), the Holy Clerk waives the fee and gets back to the PC's with the information within a few hours.

☛ **Holy Clerk Groaqil:** male human, expert 2/ cleric 5 of Zilchus, LN.

☛ **Exchequer Benzedon:** male human, cleric 9 of Zilchus, LN.

## Other Means

PCs unable to follow the trail above can either pursue their own leads (DM's discretion as to plausibility and efficacy), or simply work their way through the town cajoling and bribing until they are pointed in the direction of the *Blood Haven*. The latter option takes 150 gp in assorted bribes to achieve, which is spent from the PC's cash on hand (and entered on the AR as spent). This represents both locating and winning over local people of influence, hence the size of the necessary payment. Note that this has to come out of the PCs' own pockets, as they have not been paid yet; money above the cap at the end of the adventure *cannot* be used to pay it off.

## THE BLOOD HAVEN

Sooner or later, the PCs arrive outside *The Blood Haven*. The small and nondescript door to this establishment is in a dirty alley off one of the grubbier side-streets of Dustbridge. It is watched by Jerran, a short thin bald Oeridian man (male human commoner 3, AL N) of about fifty. He raises his eyebrows if the PCs are armored or carrying large weapons, but does not bar their path. He is not being paid enough to argue with greatswords-wielding warriors and the like.

When the door is opened, it becomes clear that the room is filled with unpleasant smoke of a strange violet hue. PCs entering the room must immediately make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be sickened by the noxious fumes assailing their nostrils (-2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for as long as the PC is in *The Blood Haven*; the effect disappears 1 round after the PC leaves). Resistances to poison count for this save, and PCs who are immune to poison are likewise immune to the sickening. The nausea is caused by the cloyingly sweet-scented violet smoke. PCs making a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) Knowledge (nature) or Knowledge (local; Core) check identify the fumes as coming from *Ke' bleesh*.

If the PCs venture further into the room, read or paraphrase the following:

*As the fumes stretch and lounge upon the air, you become aware of at least a dozen figures, huddled in niches of the room around you. From a nearby corner, a voice breaks the violet languor with its chatter.*

*"Carnival; carnival. The vale of flesh; flesh unveiled. Flesh that squeals; flesh that yields. Who is the master? Who is the swine? All it takes to make the one the other is a sharp knife and some patience."*

*The owner of the voice, a frail emaciated figure, squints up at you through a mat of greasy hair.*

*"Good day, fine sirs. Would you be so good as to lend me some funds? I seem to have mislaid my... wits..."*

*And with these words, Grenthal Frone staggers upright, only to drop down in a swoon at your feet.*

☛ **Grenthal Frone:** male human, aristocrat 2, AL NG.

Grenthal is in a wretched state. Multiple addictions, malnutrition, and disease have wasted his body even as the nightmarish fragments of memory he retains of Dustbridge's "entertainments" have broken his spirit. What he has gone through in the last couple of months has left him in a state of physical and mental fragility which even a *heal* cannot fix immediately. A DC 15 Heal check tells the PCs that it would be unwise to try to move him from Dustbridge until he has recovered mentally a



bit, even if the PCs can bring *heals* and similar magic to bear on him.

It is likely that the PCs wish to remove Grenthal to a place of safety. If they attempt to do so, however, *The Blood Haven's* resident muscle blocks their path. These are six men in leather armor, carrying clubs. They are all male human LE warrior 1 and they *do* think that they are being paid enough to argue with these adventurers, although they may find reason to revise that appraisal very quickly. It takes a DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidate check to convince them to stand down without bloodshed; otherwise, battle is joined. The thugs give up and try to run away as soon as they realize just how badly they are outclassed; one flashy spell or display of conspicuous valor from any of the PCs does the trick.

PCs attempting to (*greater*) *teleport*, *dimension door*, or *plane shift* Grenthal, or to subject him to any other spell with the teleportation descriptor or other movement spells, find that the spell automatically fails to affect him. If Grenthal is asked about this, he readily confirms that this is the result of the family curse to which he alluded in his letter; the eldest son of the House of Frone cannot benefit from transportation magics. Although Grenthal does not know the full nature of this affliction, it is functionally equivalent to a permanent, non-dispelable *dimensional anchor*. It can be negated only by a *wish*, *miracle*, or a *remove curse* cast by a 16th-level or higher level cleric with the Travel domain (which is why Henther never bothered to get it removed).

If the PCs move Grenthal out into the open air, he regains consciousness and a measure of lucidity fairly quickly. He then begs the PCs to take him back to their lodgings. The action moves to Encounter 2.

## ENCOUNTER 2: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

The PCs come to this encounter once they have rescued Grenthal from *The Blood Haven* and are shepherding him to a place where he can recuperate. Ten minutes after they leave the drug den, they find themselves on an open street. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Grenthal's eyes suddenly widen. He points a trembling finger upwards. "Forgive me, friends, I fear that the fumes are yet clouding my brain. Is that truly happening?"*

*Above your heads, the dome of heaven darkens. A skein of green lightning meshes the sky. Thunder speaks: once, twice, a third time.*

*And from the rolling clouds, something screams down to confront you.*

### APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Elder Air Elemental**: hp 204; *Monster Manual* 96.

### APL 12 (EL 13)

➤ **Elder Air Elemental** (2); hp 204 each; *Monster Manual* 96.

### APL 14 (EL 15)

➤ **Elder Air Elemental** (4); hp 204 each; *Monster Manual* 96.

### APL 16 (EL 17)

➤ **Advanced Elder Air Elemental** (4); hp 272 each; Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The elementals are maddened beyond endurance. It is not possible to reason or negotiate with them. They first appear in the air 450 feet above the PCs. If this encounter happens during the day, the PCs have no trouble spotting them. At night, it takes longer for the creatures to come into view, but remember that the elementals themselves only have darkvision out to 60 ft. and need to descend before they can see their targets clearly unless the PCs have a light source revealing their location. The odd weather phenomena do not impede visibility. Assume, unless the players have already stated otherwise, the PCs are bringing Grenthal home during the daylight hours.

The PCs are currently standing on a street some 40 feet across and straight in both directions for some distance. It is flanked by rows of buildings standing 20 feet high; there are front doors on each side at intervals of 20 feet. In the daytime, as the combat begins, there are a dozen other passers-by near and around the PCs; put them on the map in a fairly random configuration. They are all normal peasants (male or female human commoner 1) and flee on their initiative (initiative modifier +0). At night time, only a small group of late night revelers stumble upon the street at such an unfortunate time.

Grenthal, whose initiative modifier is +0, collapses in terror and adopts a fetal position at the PCs' feet in the (justified) hope that the elementals simply ignore him. For their part, the elementals disregard the fleeing commoners and Grenthal, not (despite possible PC paranoia to the contrary) because they have been sent to deal with the party, but because they know the more formidable threat when they see it.

The apparent madness of the elementals affects their tactical abilities. They do not use their whirlwind at all, and the following additional tactical restrictions are in place until the individual elementals fall below half of their starting hit-points. They do not use their Flyby or Spring Attack. They prefer to hover above the PCs and hammer away at them at close range. A DC 15 Knowledge (planes) check suggests that something must have driven the creatures to the point of insanity to surrender their tactical advantages.

Indeed, they even try to pursue the PCs into buildings if the characters take refuge there. PCs trying this find the doors locked and barred; assume that the ground floor of each house is a simple 20-foot square with 10-foot-tall ceilings. Since the doors are only 5 feet across,



the air elementals simply try to demolish the walls (x) if the PCs hide within.

❖ **Strong Wooden Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; AC 5; DC 18 Break. Open Lock DC 25.

❖ **Exterior House Wall (per 5-foot square):** 1 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 15; DC 22 Break.

Should the PCs abandon the commoners in the streets, the air elementals turn on these defenseless humans as secondary targets. Swiftly, all such commoners are slain.

At all APLs, the elementals continually shriek words in Auran. Anyone within 200 feet of them at any point can hear them automatically. Anyone who speaks Auran language can make out that they are saying the same things over and over again: “Law curbs.... Law masters... Law subdues.... The Reign of Aaqa returns... The tools of Aaqa are forged anew... The Wind Dukes are come again...” This continues round after round, so someone cats *tongues* in the course of the combat also get the full spiel. The creatures cannot explain themselves more coherently than this, even if subjected to magical compulsion. If no one speaks Auran, have all the PCs make both a Listen check and Intelligence check. Those who make a DC 15 Listen check can tell that the same pattern of sounds are being repeated. Those who pass the Listen check and the DC 15 Intelligence check notices that the elementals seem to be repeating the sequence of syllables “Aaqa” a great deal.

The elementals have no treasure. Once the combat is over, the action moves to Encounter 3.

## ENCOUNTER 3: BAATOR IS EMPTY

This encounter begins as soon as the combat with the elementals is over. The PCs now have two problems on their collective plate: caring for Grenthal Frone, and the nature of the elemental incursion they have just witnessed. PC sorcerers, or those with access to Air or Law Domain, may also swiftly find themselves with something else to consider as well: see “Dream Me a Dream” below.

### LOOKING AFTER GRENTHAL

Either immediately after they found Grenthal, or in a spare moment after the fight with the elemental(s), one of the PCs should remember to contact Henther Frone using the *sending* gem. Regardless of how euphemistic they are in their message, Frone’s return *sending* is worded substantially the same:

*Lodge him with the Dustbridge Zilchus Western Company until he can come home. Tell them I will pay; my credit is good with them.*

The temple compound of the Zilchus Western Company in Dustbridge is indeed ready and happy to look after

Frone’s son until he is strong enough to travel (see Encounter 1 for more information on the Zilchus Western Company). Once Grenthal is removed from the environment of *The Blood Haven* and delivered to Exchequer Benzedden, he rallies surprisingly quickly, and is ready to begin his journey home to his father in a few days. If the PCs talk to Grenthal in this period, he can say the following, rather shamefacedly, about his experiences in Dustbridge:

- Shortly after arriving in Dustbridge, Grenthal was seduced into the “entertainments” of the moneyed elite of the town, but became more and more disturbed by what he was witnessing at these revels.
- As a result he started resorting more and more to drink and *Ke’bleesh* to blot out the memories of what he had seen, and so fell into a spiral which reached rock-bottom in *The Blood Haven*.
- What little memory Grenthal retains of those parties is deeply unsettling. Drunken games of blind man’s bluff where the “blind man” had his eyelids stitched shut “to stop him peeking” were the least disturbing thing he remembers seeing. Grenthal is no longer sure, however, how much of his recollections were real and how much drug-fuelled hallucination.
- Grenthal does not remember the identities of his hosts or the other revelers (so PCs itching to go on a righteous rampage are disappointed.)
- All Grenthal wants now is to go home. He starts making preparations to do so, but it takes a couple of days before he feels mentally up to the task. These preparations are not yet complete when the messenger from Gilgrann comes to the PCs as described in “A Note That’s Worth The Noting” below.

### DREAM ME A DREAM

The PCs however, may have more on their minds than just Grenthal’s well-being. They have the elemental attack to consider and possibly something more. On the night after the rescue of Grenthal and the attack by the elementals, any PC with levels of sorcerer or the Air or Law Domain experiences a curious vision while asleep (or in trance). Give such PCs Handout 2 at this point.

If such PCs are subject to *The Dreaming* AR item from previous adventures, they should be informed that the present vision is *not* like those to which that AR item subjects them; whatever power is behind this vision, they sense that it is not the same as that behind the Dreaming. Though they may not yet know it, this vision relates to the Causeway of Fiends, the ultimate source of the power that has provoked the elemental raids.

### Of Wind Dukes and Causeways

While Grenthal is recuperating, the PCs have ample opportunity to ponder what they witnessed in the streets of Dustbridge. They now have at most three main leads to pursue, if such they should desire, depending on what

exactly they witnessed or understood about the struggle in which they were involved.

### **The Attack Itself**

PCs ask around locally about the assault by the elementals, who make a DC 15 Gather Information check reveals the following (add a +2 circumstance bonus to the roll if the PCs defeated the elementals without damaging nearby buildings or the passers-by):

- The elemental onslaught which the PCs witnessed was by no means the only one. People from all areas of Dustbridge and its surrounding villages experienced similar weather distortion and attacks by enraged “wind demons” (as the informants colorfully but inaccurately put it; they do mean elementals, however), all at approximately the same time as the attack on the PCs.
- The “wind demons” swooped down, laid waste to property and anyone who did not get out of the way fast enough and then, after their rampage, vanished as abruptly as they had appeared. No one has any clear idea of what caused this.

### **(The Wind Dukes of) Aaqa**

If PCs attempt Knowledge checks to find out more about “Aaqa” or “Wind Dukes”, the results are as follows:

- **DC 25** bardic knowledge or DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or history) checks reveal that “Aaqa” was the name of a place or realm from the pre-history of the Flanaess. Its exact location has been lost to the mists of time, since it pre-dated even the earliest extant writings of the Ur-Flan. PCs only get to make this check if they made out the syllables “Aaqa” during the elemental raid.
- **DC 35** Bardic knowledge or DC 40 Knowledge (arcana or history) check reveal that the “Wind Dukes of Aaqa” were beings or entities from Flanaess pre-history. The Wind Dukes were champions of unbending Law, and partisans of a war so ancient that even the names of the victors are forgotten. But their day ended long ago. Why the elementals the PCs fought spoke of them remains a mystery. PCs only get to make this check if they made out that the elementals were speaking of the “Wind Dukes”.

### **The Vision of the Causeway**

PCs experiencing the vision of the Causeway, will be probably curious to learn more about it. If the vision is communicated to fellow PCs, they may all try Knowledge check to learn more. Resolve such checks as follows:

- **DC 25** Knowledge (geography or local: Core) check identifies the site from the vision as the Causeway of Fiends, an unusual geographical feature on the coast of North Kingdom. It is a great pathway of granite slabs descending in orderly formation from a half-mile inland,

which then becomes a causeway leading to the Island of Cursed Souls. The Causeway is never submerged by the sea through which it passes.

Knowledge (arcana) or bardic knowledge checks not only identify the Causeway, but also give more information about it, depending on the achieved DC. (Making a particular DC also gives the information from all the easier DCs above it):

- **DC 25** The site is the *Causeway of Fiends*, an unusual geographical feature on the coast of North Kingdom. It is a great pathway of granite slabs descending in orderly formation from a half-mile inland, which then becomes a causeway leading to the Island of Cursed Souls. The Causeway is never submerged by the sea through which it passes.
- **DC 30** The Causeway is shunned by all. During the fullness of Celene, fiends of many kinds stalk it, rending each other in endless conflict and attacking anything foolish enough to approach within a half-mile or so. The fiends appear to be bound to this distance, however, and cannot travel farther inland.
- **DC 35** Stone fragments have—rarely—been taken from the Causeway and enchanted to craft devices of dark and portentous power. This is a surpassingly dangerous undertaking. One tiny slip in a process which might take dozens of spells and months of time would leave the enchanter helpless before the arrival of uncontrolled fiends. Even the court arch-mages of the old Great Kingdom hesitated to take such a risk.

The immediate relevance of this to what has just befallen is unknown to them. The truth of the matter is complicated, and as of right now, it is almost impossible for the PCs to discover.

## **WHAT IS REALLY HAPPENING**

Verthek, using stone from the *Causeway of Fiends* to craft his masterpiece, began the penultimate stage of the necessary ritual just before the elemental incursion. Few in recent millennia have dared to harness the Oerth's own mystical substrates to make items of such fell magic. Thus he was forced to look back to the forging techniques of the Age of Dreams to perfect his process. After much laborious research, he managed to piece together some of the item-crafting magics used by the Wind Dukes of Aaqa themselves, entities whose unswerving dedication to Law Verthek found quite congenial. These he deployed in the penultimate stage of making his *orb*.

In his desire for the *orb*, though, Verthek failed to consider the fact that these elder magics might have their own side-effects. At the chanting of words all-but-forgotten, servitors of the vanished Dukes that had lain dormant for millennia stirred into action. Aware that the pacts of old had been reactivated, but unable to discover who had done so and to what end, these elemental

servitors vented their impotent fury upon anything in their path. Such eruptions of enraged elementals have therefore occurred in many places within approximately a two-hundred-mile radius of Thornhold, including Dustbridge, Delaric, and some parts of the North Kingdom.

Most people in the affected area have as little idea as the PCs about what just happened, with one important exception. Prince Strychan of Dustbridge himself has learned from reports of the attacks that the elementals babbled about the Wind Dukes of Aaqa. He likewise knows, as the PCs do not, that the mage-prince of Thornhold has lately been observed procuring the necessary supplies for the manufacture of wondrous items (Strychan's spy network is extensive and efficient). Aware, as a wizard himself, of the links that the Wind Dukes had to the creation of powerful magical devices, Strychan has correctly deduced the sort of enterprise Vertheke is undertaking.

Strychan does not want a nearby ruler getting his hands on an item of powerful magic. He finds himself, however, in a bit of a diplomatic bind. Vertheke's principality is within the borders of North Kingdom, and while Overking Grenell tolerates bickering and skirmishes between the lesser lords of his realm. Any invasion from a foreign prince (such as Strychan) would however meet with a swift and punitive response, as well as tipping Grenell off to the fact that Thornhold had somehow become significant. Far better, Strychan reasons, to send in a carefully selected squad of totally disposable operatives, with no overt links to Dustbridge, to find out exactly what Vertheke has created. If these operatives should happen to be excitable, adventuring types—the sort, say, who might hot-headedly kill Vertheke and take his creation when they see at first-hand what he is doing—so much the better.

Although the local branch of the Zilchus Western Company is comparatively independent of the ruling elite by Dustbridge's low standards, Grenthal Frone's convalescence there, and the prowess of his rescuers, is reported almost at once to Strychan (as he was in the market for some adventurers already), who sees in the PCs the operatives he needs. He therefore primes one of his own people with a proposition for them.

## **A NOTE THAT'S WORTH THE NOTING**

Two or three days after the elemental attack, while Grenthal is still getting strong enough to travel, a messenger wearing the livery of Dustbridge appears at the lodgings of the PCs.

This individual presents them the compliments of the Lord Gilgrann, and invites them to attend upon his Lordship to discuss a matter of mutual profit. The messenger stresses that time is of the essence, as the matter which Lord Gilgrann wishes to discuss with them is quite urgent, with implications for the safety of both the PCs themselves and all who live in Dustbridge and perhaps beyond.

If the PCs make DC 30 Knowledge (nobility and royalty or local: Core) or bardic knowledge checks, they are aware that Lord Gilgrann is a minor local lord, noted for his musical talents and refined sensibilities. He is also noted for his constantly rotating supply of female courtiers.

If the PCs refuse, the adventure is over. If they take the bait, the messenger leads them across town until they arrive at a small but well-proportioned mansion on the outskirts of Dustbridge. The messenger ushers them in through the main doorway, and lights a candelabrum, from a torch set into the wall, as the velvet curtains of the great windows in the foyer are firmly drawn. The PCs are led up a great marble staircase, until they stand before a large oak door. The messenger flings this open, indicates to the party to go in, and retires, taking his candelabrum with him.

Read or paraphrase the following:-

***The room before you is large, about eighty feet long and fifty across. The only light flickers from two glass globes at the far end of the chamber. All the room's windows have been bricked up.***

***Lucid notes pluck the umbral air. At a great harp between the globes a middle-aged Oeridian man crouches, while three attractive young women - their dress a tribute to the handkerchief-maker's art—loungue on a nearby divan. The harpist looks up.***

***"Ah, my guests." He stands, and beckons to you to join him. "I am Gilgrann. Pray accept my most abject apologies for the lack of light. In the current deplorable state of my nerves, the merest glint of the Sun Father's glare is exquisite torture to me..."***

This man is indeed Lord Gilgrann. Despite possible PC fears to the contrary, neither he nor any of the three young ladies is a vampire; he genuinely does not like sunlight.

♣ **Lord Gilgrann of Torquann:** male human, aristocrat 1/ bard 7, N.

♣ **Senna, Greneth, Clespa:** female human, expert 1, N.

The three young ladies are Senna, Greneth, and Clespa, if anyone asks. They are just some of his constantly rotating stable of comely courtesans should any PCs question why three new girls are present later. Note that they are *not* the same people who appear in Encounter 11.

Gilgrann ushers them out, with plentiful apologies for the odious necessity of putting business before pleasure, before he turns his attention to the PCs.

### **Gilgrann's Proposition**

Play Gilgrann as a languorous, drawling aesthete, who accentuates his own "sensitivity" to the point of wry self-parody. There is more to the man than this, however,

although this is the façade he likes to present. Gilgrann, who is from the Aerdy House of Torquann, is the lord of a very small estate on the fringes of Dustbridge's domain. He owes much of his wealth and standing in Dustbridge to Strychan, for whom he has functioned as the agent and mouthpiece several times down the years, usually (as now) when dealing with individuals who might balk at working directly for a Naelax prince. Gilgrann fears Strychan's displeasure greatly, and is therefore well-motivated to recruit the PCs. Strychan has told him everything that the Prince of Dustbridge has worked out about Verthek's enterprise (see "What is really Happening" above).

After exchanging some preliminary pleasantries with the PCs and offering them some excellent wine, Gilgrann cuts to the chase. Read or paraphrase the following:

*"Your courtesy in coming to see me is much appreciated. Exchequer Benzeden of our local Zilchus Western Company, with whom I lunched but yesterday, says that young master Frone has been vocal in sounding your praises. I therefore wish to put a proposition before you.*

*"The elemental attack which you played such a signal and valorous part in repulsing was not unique. Many more took place at the same time throughout the domain of Dustbridge. It is reported that this storm-plague afflicted places as far away as Delaric. Last night, I discovered the origin of this onslaught...and gained an inkling of the imminent peril it portends for this town, and for the world beyond. Dustbridge, and perhaps the Flanaess as well stands in urgent need of heroes...and time is not on our side."*

*Gilgrann lifts his glass. "It is my hope that such heroes stand before me...."*

**Development:** Everything Gilgrann has said to the PCs so far has been entirely true, and he is careful not to stray from the path of veracity in his subsequent conversation with them. He omitted Strychan's part as a shadow-player behind this expedition as a matter of policy, since he is aware that some adventurers would bridle at the idea of working for a Naelax. However, if he is asked outright whether he is working for someone else, or whether Strychan knows about this plan, he acknowledges at once that *"Prince Strychan has smiled upon this venture, yes"*. Gilgrann neither knows nor cares why Verthek has decided to create an item of power, only that the process of creation is underway, and he knows nothing about any link with the *Causeway of Fiends* (nor, for that matter, about many of the other topics on which he lightly touches to impress the PCs; Gilgrann knows little about Sulm, for example, beyond the name of that vanished kingdom). Beyond this, he is happy to field questions from the party. Here are his responses to some likely queries:

**Q:** Why do you think that Dustbridge is in peril? Who, or what, was behind the elemental attack?

*"The creatures you fought had stirred because they sensed the rising anew of elder magic, magic older than Aerdy, lost to the Flanaess before dust choked the Suel Imperium, before even the wells of Sulm itself ran dry. Someone, somehow, had begun a forging after the fashion of the Wind Dukes of Aaga, and the world is too old now to endure what would befall if the tools of that vanished realm were to come again."*

*"Last night, I determined who this malefactor was. There is a domain, Thornhold, a hard day's ride from Dustbridge. Its lord, Verthek, styles himself a Prince, for that part of the North Kingdom is a patchwork of petty principalities. He is a noble of House Garasteth, and, like many of that house, accounts himself learned in the traditions of old Aerdy. But, as the poets teach us, great learning does not bring wisdom. He it is who has begun the crafting which stirred the elementals from their sleep."*

**Q:** Why doesn't Dustbridge just send its own people to deal with this Verthek?

*"For us of Dustbridge to involve ourselves in the affairs of Thornhold in any fashion would be to invite the wrath of Overking Grenell. Thornhold is within the bounds of the North Kingdom, so Verthek is the Overking's vassal. Grenell would undoubtedly see our intervention as an act of war. The consequences of that you may readily imagine."*

*"There is a need, then, for outsiders, individuals of proven valor, who could venture into Thornhold on Dustbridge's behalf, uncover Verthek's machinations, and decide for themselves upon the appropriate course of action. Such individuals would be richly rewarded for their doings on this town's behalf."*

**Q:** Why are you so worried about someone forging a magic item? Why do you think that the whole Flanaess may be in danger?

*"Because to tap into the primeval Oerth magic, as the Wind Dukes did of old, is an act of hubris and of folly. Whatever Verthek is creating, it has already caused great harm to the domain of Dustbridge. Who knows what horrors could be brought to the Oerth if the process were to be completed? A plague of elementals, it is our fear, might only be the beginning..."*

**Q:** Why do you say that "time is not on our side"?

*"Because such an exercise in elder magic requires certain astrological conjunctions for*

*its efficacy, and the next such time fast approaches. It is my belief that Verthek's forging will reach its conclusion at the fullness of Celene, on Godsdays of Richfest. In other words, tomorrow night."*

Q: What exactly do you want us to do?

*"I desire you to ride to Thornhold forthwith; to beard Verthek in his den; and to take what measures you consider appropriate to what you find there. Not knowing for sure what he intends with his creation, I place no more precise injunction upon you than that. Report to me thereafter what you have discovered, and you will then receive your payment."*

Q: What do we get out of this?

Gilgrann names a sum equal to one hundred times the APL in gp as the reward for each PC once the party reports back to him what happened in Thornhold.

Q: Why should we want to help Dustbridge? It is a town full of degenerates, ruled by a monster.

*"Ah, to be a hero, and only feel the need to save those of whom one approves! Dustbridge's ways and amusements are not, perhaps, your ways, and many honest yeomen of this domain would no doubt agree with you. Tell me, who do you think were the ones who suffered most in the late attack: the rich and, as you might put it, decadent, with the wherewithal to defend themselves, or those honest folk in the fields? Spare a glance for them, if they are indeed visible from the moral pinnacle on which you perch. And if the call of virtue awakens no responding note in your breast, remember that you will be paid for this endeavour."*

Q: How do we know that this is not just some ruse to get outsiders to assassinate a rival prince?

*"You do not. Remember, however, the terms of the present undertaking. I ask only that you journey with all dispatch to Verthek's abode, and act as you see fit on the basis of what you see there. Your own eyes and ears will show you what is underway, and I trust that seasoned adventurers such as yourselves will assess the situation at its true worth."*

Q: How did you find out that Verthek was responsible for what is happening?

*"It is expedient for the lords of a domain to keep themselves apprised of their neighbors' doings. Dustbridge's informants within the North Kingdom have reported for the past few months that Verthek has been abroad, procuring arcane supplies as if for some work of creation or forging. When it became clear that the elementals had been awakened by*

*someone aping the achievements of time-lost Aaqa, suspicion fastened upon the Prince of Thornhold, and divinations have confirmed it."*

Q: Can you tell us anything more about Verthek and Thornhold?

*"There is little more to say. Verthek is a mage of some ability, as is the Garasteth way. It is surprising, however, that he has dared to use the forging techniques of the Wind Dukes, for all his attainments. The mages we have consulted averred that only the greatest of living wizards—Reydrich of Zelradton, Tenser of the Nyr Dyv, Lakaster of Winetha, or Mordenkainen himself—would have the skill and knowledge to emulate them."*

*Thornhold itself is a small and barren demesne, barely a day's ride from border to border. The inhabitants should trouble you but little. Verthek is all that makes the domain formidable."*

Gilgrann is correct that this forging would typically be beyond Verthek's means. It is Verthek's dangerous decision to use raw materials from the Causeway, a decision of which Strychan and Gilgrann are still unaware, which makes his current endeavor possible.

If the PCs agree, Gilgrann reminds them again that Verthek's ritual finishes when Celene is full in the sky, if not before. Since the interview with Gilgrann terminates at dusk (7 p.m.), and Celene rises at 7 p.m. on the following day, this gives the PCs 24 hours to ride to Thornhill (including a night's sleep).

Thornhill is 28 miles on good roads from Dustbridge. Gilgrann is prepared to loan fast horses if the PCs do not possess them already. Thus, if the PCs sleep in Dustbridge and set out at dawn the next day (7 am), it should easily be possible to make it to Dustbridge by about 3 pm, but donkeys, mules, and laden ponies or warponies may have trouble keeping up without extra effort. When the preparations are complete, the action moves to Encounter 4.

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE KING OF A RAINY COUNTRY

The ride to Thornhold is uneventful. The PCs probably arrive at the town of Thornhold itself at about three in the afternoon on the day after their interview with Gilgrann, four hours before Celene rises. Resourceful PCs may teleport to Thornhold instead, in which case they can arrive much earlier. No matter how early they get there, the final stage of Verthek's ritual has already begun, although the amount of time left before it ends of course differs. Teleporting PCs may have the option to rest overnight after Encounter 4 before tackling the prince's home. The town of Thornhold itself nestles at the foot of the bluff on which Verthek's mansion stands; it is necessary to pass through the town center to reach the

path up to the mage-prince's abode. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs reach Thornhold:-

***After the gaudy colors of Dustbridge, the dominant note of Thornhold is gray. The lowering gray of the heavens, tired and bleary with rain, finds its match in the roughened gray of the small town's buildings.***

Thornhold is a small town, and it is only a couple of minutes before PCs passing through it approach the town square at its center. There is a curious absence of people on the streets. As the foremost PCs are about to round the corner into the square, however (see the map), they hear an incredibly loud, angry voice bellowing in a harsh-sounding language. Anyone who speaks Giant understands what is being said as:

***"You call this swill, beer? You think that we are pigs; that only a swine would drink this, is that it? You think that you can insult us like that and get away with it, little cow?" There is then the sound of wood splintering.***

Anyone who rounds the corner can then see a town square, decorated as for Richfest festivities. There are the remnants of a long oak table in the corner of the square, behind which cower sixteen townsfolk (all commoner 1—alignments a mixture of LE [3], NE [2], LN [7], N [3] and LG [1])—who seem to be an innkeeper and his staff. Spilt ale mugs and plates of food are strewn everywhere. Around the table, blocking any egress for the townsfolk, are two human men, one in full plate with the symbol of a grinning bat-eared face on a chain around his neck (a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the holy symbol of Pyremius, NE god of murder and fire), the other wearing the robes of a mage, and a smug grin to boot, and two hill giants with greatclubs, one of whom has just smashed the table, and now looms over a cowering serving girl, about to strike her.

The PCs have interrupted the depredations of a band of mercenaries, which has descended upon the town of Thornhold intent upon rapine and slaughter. These villains have been hired by the prince of one of the domains that marches with Thornhold, Gerelt of Torquann, to sow chaos and bloodshed in his neighbor's lands. Such strikes have become increasingly common of late, and are one of the motivations for Verthek's current plan. The mercenaries are Heyolt, a human Suel priest of Pyremius, Frenzel, an Oeridian mage, and two hill giant brothers, Grawl and Torg.

As the PCs enter the picture, the mercenaries are currently reaching the climax of a trite scenario of bullying and intimidation. About fifteen minutes before the PCs got to the square, the traditional communal Richfest revelry of the townsfolk was gate-crashed by this gang of thugs, who swaggered up to the drinks stand and started demanding beer. All the revelers who could do so sidled away at this point, to lock themselves in their own houses (hence the deserted streets), but the unfortunate

serving people could not accomplish this without "offending" their new clientele. The intention of the mercenaries was, of course, always to become "upset" at an imaginary "insult" at some point and then "teach the curs to know their betters". This is the point which the scenario has now reached.

The mercenaries are about to start killing these people. They have not spotted the PCs yet, so the PCs can nip back behind the corner to buff up, but they kill their captive audience at the rate of 1d4 per round until the PCs distract them. The mercenaries cannot be negotiated with; Prince Gerelt is paying them well to start some mayhem, and they are itching to begin.

Once the PCs do interfere, the mercenaries concentrate on attacking them (as more obvious threats and a more interesting fight) and the townsfolk flee to a safe distance. The mercenaries attack as soon as they see that the PCs are adventurers, and therefore likely to be carrying some interesting loot.

#### APL 10 (EL 12)

➤ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 9 (Pyremius); hp 75; Appendix 1.

➤ **Frenzel:** male human necromancer 9; hp 55; Appendix 1.

➤ **Hill Giants (2):** hp 102, 102; *Monster Manual* 123.

#### APL 12 (EL 14)

➤ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 11 (Pyremius); hp 91; Appendix 1.

➤ **Frenzel:** male human necromancer 11; hp 67; Appendix 1.

➤ **Grawl and Torg:** male hill giant barbarians 2, hp 152, 152; Appendix 1.

#### APL 14 (EL 16)

➤ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 13 (Pyremius); hp 107; Appendix 1.

➤ **Frenzel:** male human necromancer 13; hp 79; Appendix 1.

➤ **Grawl and Torg:** male hill giant barbarians 4, hp 178, 178; Appendix 1.

#### APL 16 (EL 18)

➤ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 15 (Pyremius); hp 123; Appendix 1.

➤ **Frenzel:** male human necromancer 15; hp 91; Appendix 1.

➤ **Grawl and Torg:** male hill giant barbarian 6, hp 204; Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** At all APLs, the two hill giants are entirely straightforward; they prefer to rush up to the PCs and hit them with their great clubs. If the PCs try to stay out of their way, they hurl rocks. They avoid using their Improved Sunder feat, since Frenzel and Heyolt do not approve of destroying anything that has a resale value. The tactics of the two casters depend on the APL.

At APL 10, both Heyolt and Frenzel go airborne at the first opportunity (by virtue of their pre-cast *air walk* and *overland flight* respectively). Not expecting serious opposition in Thornhold, they begin with *prayer* and *slow* respectively, before moving to more offensive spells in subsequent rounds. Heyolt then uses a *flame strike*, followed by *mass inflict light wounds*. Thereafter he concentrates on spontaneous *inflicts* and curative magic for his allies. Frenzel uses *Evard's black tentacles*, followed by *waves of fatigue* on those caught in the tentacles. Both men concentrate their efforts on people staying out of melee with the giants (who they think can handle themselves). If one of the PCs has the *brand of Pyremius* from *ONW3-05 To Hell and Back*, in which case that PC is the target of Heyolt's attention whatever he does.

At APL 12, Heyolt follows *prayer* with a *blade barrier*, trying to catch as many PCs with it as possible. The first PC to close with him is subjected to a *harm* spell. Frenzel adds a quickened *mirror image* to his first round of activity, and looks for a mage or a rogue to hit with a *baleful polymorph* once his main area effect spells are cast. Otherwise, their actions are as for APL 10 above.

At APL 14, Heyolt follows *prayer* with a *fire storm*, then an empowered *flame strike*. Apart from this, strategy is as for APL 12 above, except that Frenzel replaces *waves of fatigue* with *waves of exhaustion*.

At APL 16, Heyolt follows *prayer* with his two *fire storms*, while Frenzel follows *slow* with *horrid wilting*. Otherwise, their strategy is as for APL 14 above.

**Treasure:** Gained from looting the bandits.

**APL 10:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp).

**APL 12:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *lion's shield* (764 gp).

**APL 14:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *lion's shield* (764 gp), *cloaks of resistance +2* (4: 1333 gp all together), *figurine of wondrous power (ivory goats)* (1750 gp).

**APL 16:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *lion's shield* (764 gp), *cloaks of resistance +2* (4: 1333 gp all together), *figurine of wondrous power (ivory goats)* (1750 gp), *ring of protection +4* (2667 gp), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp).

**Development:** Once the battle is over, the PCs have the opportunity, if they so desire it, to interact with some of the townsfolk of Thornhold, who start to shuffle back into the square. These folk are nervous and shy of powerful strangers, but their confidence may be gained with a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check (add a +2 circumstance bonus if the PCs have offered to heal any of the townsfolk injured in the raid, but impose a circumstance penalty of -1 per townsfolk killed in the previous fight to represent emotion and anger at outsiders). If at any point the PCs announce an intention to kill or harm the Prince of Thornhold, the townsfolk immediately clam up and look at them with deep suspicion and ill-feeling. If the PCs succeed in winning

the trust of these people, they can coax them into answering the following sorts of questions:

Q: What was happening just now? Who were these people? Why were they attacking you?

*"Our attackers were mercenaries, sellswords in the service of that bast... of Prince Gerelt of Torquann. His lands march with Thornhold to the east. His people have wanted us of Thornhold as their chattels for generations; he brings in sellswords to do his dirty work so that he can disavow them if they fail. In years gone by, the threat of the Overking's wrath would bring Gerelt to heel, but now Grenell woos the western princes, so it is said, and the woes of Thornhold are no longer his concern. In the last twelvemonth, the raids have been ever more frequent and more brutal. But Prince Verthek has said that Gerelt and his kind will never lord it over Thornhold while he draws breath, and in two score years I have never known the Prince of Thornhold make a promise he did not keep."*

Q: What do you think of Verthek? What sort of a ruler is he?

*"Prince Verthek has ruled in Thornhold these forty years. He is the last of his line; his son fell in the Herzog's service while the Ivids yet ruled from Rauxes. He is a stern man, with no great love for those would stir sedition, or your preaching Pelorites, but his magic has sheltered us in time of trouble and thrown back the wolves from our door since before some here were born. 'You belong to me,' he says, 'and therefore I belong to you.' Not but that he demands the Oerth in tribute when the crop yields are good..."*

Q: Has anything unusual been happening here recently?

*"Well, wind demons tore down from the sky a couple of days ago; they wrought some destruction, but then they were gone. No doubt the Prince labors to find out whence they came, for he has not appeared in public since then. My sister's eldest says that he saw strange lights above the Prince's mansion last night, but that child was ever soft in the head."*

The townsfolk have no idea what Verthek is doing. The Prince's mansion is visible from the town of Thornhold proper, standing on a bluff above the settlement. The path is steep, but not arduous, taking about ten minutes to traverse at a movement rate of 30. It is unguarded. Once the PCs decide to investigate Verthek's home, the action moves to Encounter 5.

**Troubleshooting:** If the PCs fly over the town or try to circumvent it altogether, the giant starts bellowing sooner and loudly enough to draw their attention to the square; alternatively, one of the casters goes airborne and



uses a flashy and pyrotechnic spell such as *flame strike* to intimidate the locals, thus attracting the party's notice.

## ENCOUNTER 5: PALE KINGS AND PRINCES

The PCs arrive at this encounter once they investigate Verthek's abode. The Prince of Thornhold is in the Great Hall, conducting the final stage of his ritual. The PCs find little of interest elsewhere in the house, if their thoughts turn only to plunder. If they are of a more thoughtful breed, they may uncover clues herein that help to explain what is going on in the Great Hall. When the PCs arrive outside the mansion, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

***The two-story manor house before you is small by the standards of such dwellings, but is nevertheless elegantly proportioned. Red ivy, vivid as a gash, clings to the gray stone between the lofty, shuttered windows, and the great main doors are firmly shut.***

All the outer doors and windows of the mansion have been secured by an *arcane lock* cast by Verthek himself. They can only be opened by physical force, a *knock* spell (which suppresses the effect for 10 minutes) or by dispelling them (Verthek's caster level depends on the APL).

❖ **Main door:** strong wooden door, hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 33.

❖ **Side door:** good wooden door, hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 28.

❖ **Shuttered windows:** hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 23

Unless otherwise stated, the interior doors are all closed, but not locked. Lighting throughout the complex is provided by *continual flame* fixtures.

### A. THE FOYER

This two-story chamber boasts a marble grand staircase to the first floor; the floor is polished marble. The first thing that strikes the PCs about it, however, is the statues. There are a dozen statues (marble, once again), all depicting different Oeridian men of stern mien, wearing the garb of wizards or of Aerdy nobility. The PCs may guess that these are Verthek's Garasteth ancestors, though the style is too idealized to permit of identifying any historical personages. Such a guess would be correct. Apart from the statues, there is not much to interest the PCs in this room.

### B. THE PARLOR

This well-appointed room contains plush furnishings and solid oak tables. There are also two marble busts, in the same severe sculptural style seen in the foyer. On one wall is a well-executed, full-length painting of a tall, thin

Oeridian man of about fifty, with long graying black hair and the garb of a noble staring full at the viewer with a stern gaze. By him sits an attractive Oeridian woman in her late thirties, grave of face, also clad as a noble, and beside her stands a small, somber lad of about twelve, who looks to be the son of the other two sitters. Behind them stretches a rather romanticized landscape of Thornhold. A DC 20 Profession (artist) or Appraise check identifies the style of the portrait as that of about three decades ago. The picture, of course, is of Verthek, his wife, Nenna, and his son, Varen (both long dead).

On a table by the largest chair rests a large parchment scroll. It is in Old Oeridian; its title is *The Stringent Devotions*. A DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check recognizes this scroll as one of the canonical texts in the worship of Stern Alia, LN Oeridian demi-goddess of Duty and Family. Hymns extolling the virtues of discipline, community, and duty make up most of its length; it is worth 5 gp.

### C. THE LIBRARY

As befits a Garasteth noble, this room is large, and crammed with shelves full of tomes of every description. The vast majority of these are works on Oeridian history and genealogy, but there are a few bestiaries and works dealing with matters arcane. None of the books is magical, although some of the rarer works here would interest the scholarly.

Laying in plain view on the center table is a page of parchment. It contains two fragments of text, seemingly copied from different works, but both in the same firm, elegant handwriting. The first fragment (Handout 3) is in Old Oeridian. The second (Handout 4) is also in that tongue. Only give out these handouts if the PCs can read the appropriate language (through Speak Language, Decipher Script, or magic).

#### Handout 3:

***Their's was the oldest struggle, and the highest cause. Good and evil are light unwoven in their prism; pretty hues for children to gape at, that change as the lamp moves, but the prism remains. Without Law waits only Miska; the maw that yammers and howls, the webs that bind. This the Dukes of the Wind understood, and so made the Rod to confront it.***

#### Handout 4:

***...for stone taken thence is a mighty thing, whereby a spellshaper may pass the bounds of skill he is allotted, but its price is one whereat even the Old Ones balked. Let the forging be without spot, warded with cunning and wrought with skill, yet the least disturbance ere the ritual's end will bring ruin; for those things for which the place of the stone is named are jealous of their treasure, and will come forth to ravage without stint or limit if the hand should falter or the tongue should trip in the casting..."***

#### **D. THE STUDY**

This is another small and well-appointed room, with the statuary PCs have encountered elsewhere in the house (two busts and one statue of long-dead Garasteth nobles). It contains only a desk and three comfortable chairs. The desk has a secret drawer (DC 25 Search check to find and open it), which contains a ledger, written in Old Oeridian, detailing the finances of the Thornhold estate over the last thirty years. Anyone taking a couple of minutes to leaf through it and making a successful DC 15 Intelligence check or Profession (bookkeeper) check ascertains the following:

- The estate has been in some financial trouble for a little over ten years, since CY 583-4. A further DC 15 Intelligence or Knowledge (history) check notes that the beginning of the bad period coincided with the outbreak of the Greyhawk Wars. Expenditure for hiring mercenaries to repulse raiding parties, or for artisans to rebuild the Principality of Thornhold after such raids, has gradually eaten up Thornhold's resources.
- The situation became drastically worse about a year ago; expenditure on protective garrisons and repairs peaked; then ceased altogether. Thornhold has little left in reserve, and Verthek seems to have taken to selling off valuable items (including jewelry and magic) to keep the Principality afloat.
- A few months ago, expenditure began again, but Verthek now seems to have been buying mostly arcane supplies of one sort or another. These, again, were financed by selling off heirlooms.

Apart from the ledger, there is little of interest in this room.

#### **E. THE LABORATORY**

This room is fitted out as a fairly standard arcane laboratory. It has some unusual features, however, which may be detected through the application of various skills:

- A DC 15 Craft (alchemy) check confirms that many essential alchemical items seem to be in short supply here, despite the laboratory's well-kept appearance.
- A DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that the laboratory seems to be geared toward the creation of wondrous items. If the check succeeds by 5 points or more, the PC also observes that some of the materials, items, and configurations used in this laboratory are unfamiliar and unusual, as if the user of this laboratory has been departing in some way from the orthodox canons and techniques of item creation.
- A DC 25 Search check (PCs who state that they are searching for stone receive a +5 circumstance bonus; *detect evil* or *detect magic*

applied to the whole room negates the need to roll) discovers small splinters of a curious rock on a workbench. It is similar in consistency and texture to granite, but is strangely warm and greasy to the touch. The shards of stone radiate faint magic (universal school) and faint evil, if divinations are used upon them. Any character with stonecunning can confirm that, despite the similarity, it is not normal granite. DC 30 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (arcana) checks (PCs with levels in the stonelord prestige class may add their class level as a competence bonus to this roll) deduce that the stone is taken from the Causeway of Fiends. Further Knowledge (arcana) checks can then reveal more information about the Causeway, as described in Encounter 3.

#### **F. THE KITCHEN, PANTRY, AND SERVANTS' QUARTERS**

These are entirely what one would expect of a small noble household. All are currently deserted. Verthek sent his staff away to their families several days ago, without explanation, so that they would not impede the ritual. There is nothing here to interest the PCs.

#### **G. THE FIRST FLOOR**

This consists entirely of bedrooms and guest bedrooms, decorated with the same marmoreal statuary as the ground floor. Once again, there is nothing here to interest the PCs.

#### **H. THE GREAT HALL**

The great double doors to this chamber are shut and *arcane locked*.

❖ **Strong wooden door**, hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 33, *arcane lock* (CL= Verthek's current level).

If the PCs manage to open them, they find that behind them a screen of swirling green light blocks the entrance. This wall of light blocks all and any attempts to discern what lies beyond it, whether magical (*detect* spells, *clairvoyance*, *prying eyes*.) or mundane (Spot, Listen, scent, and even blindsense, tremorsense or blindsight are blocked by it).

The screen itself radiates moderate Abjuration magic. Although the PCs probably cannot see it, the screen forms a hollow box whose dimensions exactly match those of the Great Hall itself.

DC 25 Spellcraft checks reveal that this effect is a variation on *Mordenkainen's private sanctum*, functioning in most respects exactly like that spell. However, the odd variations from the way in which that spell usually manifests (the unusual color, for example) suggest that it is not a standard casting, but rather the by-product of something going on inside the chamber itself. The check also reveals that the screen does not present a

physical barrier, and PCs should be able to pass through it without damage or hindrance (this is true, but see below).

If the PCs successfully dispel the screen (use Verthek's caster level), it simply flickers for an instant before being automatically renewed by what is happening in the room. The flicker is not lengthy enough to see what is beyond the screen.

As soon as any PC steps through the screen of light, or otherwise enters the Great Hall, the action moves to Encounter 6.

## ENCOUNTER 6: HIS DARK MATERIALS

This encounter begins as soon as any PC enters the Great Hall. Read or paraphrase the following to the players of the PCs who entered, but remember that the screen of green light around the room blocks sight and hearing, so PCs outside at that moment do not know what is going on inside. Also, note that Verthek only speaks at once if the entering PCs are visible. The PCs can interrupt Verthek's speech with attempts to cast spells or initiate combat at any point, but this is a decision they may subsequently regret.

*Beyond the wall of light, a spacious chamber opens before you, one hundred feet long and sixty wide. Fifty feet in, two great statues face one another from the opposing walls: the one a plate-mailed warrior, bearing a battleaxe; the other, a six-armed figure wielding weapons in each of its hands. At the far end of the chamber stands the equally large marble depiction of a woman, cowled and robed like an Oeridian matron. Before this last image stands an old man, clad in a simple white shift. On a plinth before him rests a stone orb, a foot or so across.*

*Between the great doorway and the plinth, the floor of the room is intricately etched with glimmering sigils. Above the sigils, a slight perturbation troubles the air, and whispers gnaw at the edge of hearing. The old man speaks:-*

*"If you seek Verthek, Prince of Thornhold, you have found him. By entering this chamber now you have brought peril upon us all. You are safe where you stand, but if you leave this room, speak any spells, or cross the sigils before I am done, you call down destruction upon Thornhold and upon yourselves. Do not doubt me, for all our sakes."*

The old man is indeed Verthek, Prince of Thornhold. Anyone who has been in the parlor recognizes him as the man from that room's portrait. The three large statues are depictions of Oeridian gods; DC 15 Knowledge (religion) checks recognize the knight with the axe as Heironeous, the figure with six arms as Hextor, and the female figure as Stern Alia. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check

confirms that the glimmering sigils are indicative of elder magic, suggesting techniques and procedures older than the extant traditions of the Suloise, Oeridians, or Bakluni, and perhaps predating even the Ur-Flan. The orb on the plinth is crafted out of stone from the *Causeway of Fiends*, but its texture is not obviously distinguishable from normal granite as viewed from the doorway (although PCs who discovered the shards of stone in the laboratory see that it is the same material). The entire room radiates moderate Abjuration magic; in addition, the area of the sigils and the orb radiate strong magic of an indeterminate school. The orb also radiates strong evil.

**Development:** The PCs have come upon the last stage of Verthek's ritual. The ritual ends when the full moon Celene rises, which happens at 7 p.m. on the day after the PCs speak to Gilgrann. It is most likely that they have arrived with an hour or so to spare before this happens, but they may have come much earlier if they *teleported* from Dustbridge. If, for whatever reason, they only get to the Great Hall after Celene rises, they find the ritual completed and Verthek in the Great Hall staring into the finished orb (which entails some changes to the boxed text above).

Before Celene rises, the ritual is easily disrupted, but such disruption, as the ancient texts warn, comes at a price. The ritual is immediately disrupted if any of the following conditions is met before it ends:

- Any living creature within the Great Hall leaves it by any means. This includes creatures that came in after the ritual began, such as the PCs.
- Any spell is cast, or any magic item is activated, by someone within the Great Hall which is not part of the forging ritual. Note that spell effects already active when PCs cross the threshold do not cause a disruption; it is the activation, not the continuance, of mystical influences that is the unbalancing factor. Non-continuous supernatural abilities which mimic a particular spell (such as abundant step) count as spells being cast for this purpose. Spells cast into the room from the outside do not disrupt the ritual unless one of the other conditions also applies.
- Anything or anyone crosses the sigils or the air above them before the ritual is ended. This includes missile and thrown weapons. Any summoned or conjured creature (including one from a *bag of tricks*) flatly refuses to cross the boundary, however.

If the ritual is disrupted at any point, the action immediately moves to Encounter 7 below. Otherwise, the PCs may, if they wish, converse with the lord of Thornhold.

### SPEAKING TO VERTHEK

If the PCs do not immediately disrupt the ritual, Verthek is willing to converse with them. Most of his own role in the ritual is now complete, and he only needs to chant again for the last fifteen minutes of the ritual; hence his willingness to talk. His first query, as might be expected,

is as to the identities of the PCs and their motives for breaking into his home. He is also, however, ready to answer some questions. Here are his responses to some likely queries:-

**Q:** Why would it be dangerous for us to cast spells, leave the room, or cross the sigils?

***"The stone with which I am working is a key to my fiefdom's ills, but it is also a lock, with which one tampers at one's peril. If the ritual is disrupted, by so much as a misplaced foot or an untimely spell, the walls of reality will be sundered, and fiends from Outside will be delivered into this Creation. They will butcher me, then you, and then my people. Whatever your motives for balking me, they cannot be worth that price."***

Verthek knows that an error in the ritual brings forth powerful evil outsiders, but he does not know the exact breed or power of the likely arrivals.

**Q:** What are you creating?

***"The orb will be akin to a crystal ball, but stronger and more certain in its divinations. With its aid, the foes of Thornhold will no longer invade my fiefdom and ravage my people unportended. Forewarned is forearmed, so they say... and so my neighbor princes will discover if they try me."***

**Q:** How can you justify making a thing of evil, or the destruction which its making has unleashed?

***"Evil, you say? Good and evil are names – partners at a drunken dance that change their places as the music bids them. I have ruled in Thornhold for forty years. Loyalty to my liege sent my son to die in the Herzog's name – was that virtue? I paid mercenaries, the scum of the Oerth, to keep my neighbor princes from making my people their chattels after the Greyhawk Wars – was that vice? All that lasts, all that gives a man meaning, is his duty. And a prince's duty is to keep his people safe."***

***The orb I forge brings Thornhold that safety. In the old time, the Wind Dukes forged tools in the service of unflinching law, to hold at bay the chaos that howls outside creation. In these lesser days, the Prince of a small realm renews their arts only to keep the wolves from his door. All I seek is the strength to keep my land as it has always been."***

If any PC openly bears the sword Malthindor (from COR3-02 *Return to the Isles*), Verthek adds:

***"And am I to be told that things of so-called evil may not be wielded for weal by those who carry Yagrax's bane?"***

Verthek does not know about the air elemental attacks which his ceremony has created, since he has been secluded in his mansion for days. If he is told about them, he expresses sincere regret at this unforeseen consequence of his actions, but assures the PCs (accurately) that they will not recur when the ritual is ended.

**Development:** Verthek wants the PCs to let him complete his ritual and use the orb he is making to keep Thornhold safe against future incursions from his enemies. He is prepared to swear any oath the PCs desire about not using the orb for purposes other than maintaining Thornhold's well-being, as he has no intention of doing otherwise anyway. He refuses point-blank to abort the ritual, surrender the orb, or undertake not to use it at all, and no amount of Diplomacy or threats can make him change his mind on this. His response to PC offers to sort out the problem of the intrusive neighboring princes is derisive:

***"You are adventurers. At the best you would wield your spells and speak your spells on my behalf, with valor and skill, I doubt not, and then, four or perhaps five hours later, you would move on to another adventure, while we in Thornhold awaited reprisals."***

If the PCs permit Verthek to complete his ritual, it finishes at the allotted time (which may take anything from a few minutes to hours, depending on the time of the PCs' arrival). The action moves to Encounter 8.

## ENCOUNTER 7: THE RITUAL RENT

The PCs come to this encounter only if they disrupt Verthek's ritual before its completion, as described in Encounter 6 above (otherwise, the action moves to Encounter 8 instead). Disrupting the ritual causes a catastrophic backlash of the powers immanent within the orb, and immediately summons uncontrolled, powerful fiends. If this happens, read or paraphrase the following:

***The sigils wink out, as does the light at the door. There is a momentary shudder in the ground, as if the Oerth flinches from a wound. On the plinth, the orb crumbles to dust."***

***A blizzard whips through the chamber, but its flakes are not of snow. Realities spin and dance before your eyes. You glimpse a maze of weeping knives, a city built from violated flesh..."***

***The hall snaps back into focus. Its statues and decorations are now a shattered ruin. Next to Verthek, monstrous figures have appeared."***

The figures are tanar'ri. They appear right next to Verthek, and attack immediately on their initiative. The backlash from their appearance undid the enchantment

which sustained the Great Hall's construct guardians (see Encounter 9 below); these constructs are no more, and play no part in the coming fight.

#### **APL 10 (EL 13)**

🔱 **Glabrezu:** hp 174; *Monster Manual* 43.

🔱 **Verthek:** male human invoker 11; hp 56; Appendix 1.

#### **APL 12 (EL 15)**

🔱 **Glabrezus (2):** hp 174, 174; *Monster Manual* 43.

🔱 **Verthek:** male human invoker 13; hp 66; Appendix 1.

#### **APL 14 (EL 17)**

🔱 **Nalfeshnees (3):** hp 175, 175, 175; *Monster Manual* 45.

🔱 **Verthek:** male human invoker 13/ archmage 2; hp 76; Appendix 1.

#### **APL 16 (EL 19)**

🔱 **Mariliths (2):** hp 216, 216; *Monster Manual* 44.

🔱 **Verthek:** male human invoker 13/ archmage 3; hp 81; Appendix 1.

Verthek's statistics are presented in Appendix 1 under encounter 8.

**Tactics:** The first priority of the tanar'ri is to kill Verthek, by the speediest and messiest means possible. When Verthek falls or the PCs get in the way of this goal, they turn their attention upon the player characters. With the usual arrogance of their kind, they do not use their *summon tanar'ri* ability until at least one of their own number has been destroyed, banished, or incapacitated. Otherwise, tactics vary according to the APL.

At APL 10, the glabrezu opens up with a *power word stun* on Verthek, then full attacks him. Where the PCs are concerned, it follows up an initial *confusion* with melee attacks, but look for opportunities to buff with *mirror image*. Because of the confined nature of the fight, the glabrezu does not use *reverse gravity*.

At APL 12, one of the glabrezu opens up with a *power word stun* on Verthek, while the other uses a full attacks on him. Where the PCs are concerned, they follow up an initial *confusion* with melee attacks, but look for opportunities to buff with *mirror image* or use the remaining *power word stun* (on an enemy mage, for preference). Because of the confined nature of the fight, the glabrezu do not use *reverse gravity*.

At APL 14, one of the nalfeshnee tries to *feeblemind* Verthek, while the others maul him with their full attacks. Against the PCs, they make liberal use of their *smite* ability and physical attacks, but one of them also looks to buff itself and its colleagues with *unholy aura* as soon as possible. *Slow* is also attempted early on, and they seek out opportunities to *feeblemind* opposing arcane spellcasters.

At APL 16, the mariliths simply use full melee attacks on Verthek until he dies. Against PCs, they prefer to use full melee attacks where possible, with liberal use of *blade barriers* to control the battlefield.

If Verthek survives the initial assault, he joins in on the side of the PCs, using his quickened spells to buff himself where appropriate while using offensive spells against the tanar'ri. His tactics are much the same as those he would use against PCs (see below) with appropriate modifications for the nature of his enemies: for example, he does not waste time with illusions at APLs where the demons have *true seeing*. If the PCs do not seem to know much about what they are facing, he shouts out as much advice about the demons as his Knowledge (planes) allows him. If Verthek survives, he is sufficiently chastened by the vision of what he almost visited upon his fiefdom to undertake not to repeat the experiment, and he keeps this promise. If the PCs attack him at this point, he defends himself as for Encounter 9 below, but without his golem servants, which were destroyed in the disruption of the ritual. In any event, there is little more thereafter for the PCs in Thornhold, and the action moves to Encounter 10.

The tanar'ri have no treasure. The destruction of the orb which disruption of the ritual entails, however, means that the PCs gain the Friends in High Places AR.

## **ENCOUNTER 8: A TERRIBLE BEAUTY IS BORN**

The PCs come to this encounter if they permit Verthek to complete the ritual of empowerment. Read or paraphrase the following:

*As the old man chants before the orb, time blurs. The only sign of its passing is the steady brightening of the sigils on the floor, the increasingly urgent susurrations in the air. Suddenly, it is over. The sigils and the whispers are gone. In front of Verthek, the orb begins to glow.*

At the moment of the ritual's end, the orb awakens. Despite the possible fears of the PCs, it is not an artifact, although it is a powerful, intelligent wondrous item. Verthek's orb is a *crystal ball with telepathy*, with the additional lesser powers of *bleed* (3/day), *deathwatch* (continually active), and *zone of truth* (3/day), and the special purpose power of bestowing a +2 luck bonus on its wielder's attacks, saves, and checks (note that Verthek starts receiving this benefit as soon as the ritual ends). The orb has Int 17, Wis 17, and Cha 10; can communicate via speech or telepathy (it does not talk while the PCs are present, however); speaks Common, Old Eeridian, Draconic, and Infernal; and has 120 ft. darkvision and hearing. Its alignment is Lawful Evil. The orb has hardness 10 and 15 hp; all its saves are at +11 (this is the result of using stone from the *Causeway*).

The *orb* has the special purpose to *Preserve the Land*. It desires only a feudal utopia in which serfs till the soil peacefully, the lord protects his lands, and everyone obeys the will of his feudal superiors without delay or hesitation. In pursuit of this idyll, there is no lie to which it would not stoop, no atrocity before which it would quail, and no sea of blood through which it would not have its wielder wade. It willingly serves only one it recognizes as a true lord of a fiefdom. This includes Verthek, and does not include any PCs or their cohorts under any circumstances (regardless of any noble titles they may happen to have; it takes at least half a millennium to prove a bloodline in the *orb's* book). In the hands of a PC, personality conflicts are frequent (Will save DC 14 to avoid falling under the *orb's* control) and the *orb* flatly refuses to grant its luck bonus.

The *orb's* origins in the *Causeway of Fiends* bring an additional burden. Two days after a character claims it, he begins to be troubled by vague, haunting whispers and visions of half-glimpsed landscapes in the hours of darkness, regardless of whether the character needs to sleep. These presences undermine the character's health, imposing a -2 penalty on her Constitution. This penalty cannot be overcome by any known means while the *orb* is in the character's possession, but disappears, along with the disturbing visions, seven days after it leaves his ownership.

## AFTER THE RITUAL

Once the ritual is complete, Verthek thanks the PCs for their good sense in not disrupting it, and bids them return to their homelands. If the PCs do indeed depart at this point, he puts an *alarm* spell on the doors to the Hall and begins experimenting with the properties of the *orb*. In any event, he remains in the Great Hall for at least the next day. The action moves to Encounter 11, where the *orb* begins its machinations.

Verthek does not initiate hostilities with the PCs, but it is possible that they may attack him once the ritual is over, whether because they think it safer that way or because they are frustrated by his obdurate refusal to relinquish the *orb*. If this happens, the action moves to encounter 9.

## ENCOUNTER 9: MAGE AT BAY

The PCs come to this encounter if they attack the Lord of Thornhold after his ritual is complete. Depending on APL, one or more of the deity statues are powerful golems, enchanted and placed there long ago by an ancestor of Verthek.

Cunningly fashioned as golems go, they are not detectable except by spells that specifically state that they detect golems (golems do not radiate magic) or by a *golembane scarab* (the sensing function of which does not constitute a disruption of the ritual). The golems activate in defense of Verthek. At APL 10 it is the statue of Heironeous, and at all other APLs it is both Hextor and

Heironeous that spring to life and attack those who menace the prince of Thornhold.

### APL 10 (EL 13)

➤ **Verthek**: male human invoker 11; hp 56; Appendix 1.

➤ **Stone golem**: hp 107; *Monster Manual* 136.

### APL 12 (EL 15)

➤ **Verthek**: male human invoker 13; hp 66; Appendix 1.

➤ **Stone golem (2)**: hp 107, 107; *Monster Manual* pg 136.

### APL 14 (EL 17)

➤ **Verthek**: male human invoker 13/ archmage 2; hp 76; Appendix 1.

➤ **Stone golem, Advanced (2)**: hp 161, 161; Appendix 1.

### APL 16 (EL 19)

➤ **Verthek**: male human invoker 13/ archmage 3; hp 81; Appendix 1.

➤ **Greater stone golem (2)**: hp 271, 271; *Monster Manual* 136.

**Tactics**: Verthek instructs the golems to keep the party away from him and to use their *slow* abilities to best effect. Verthek's own strategy depends on the APL.

At APL 10, Verthek immediately casts a quickened *mirror image*. If he does not have a clear shot at any of the PCs, he uses area effect spells on them (*confusion*, *slow*, *chain lightning*, and *fireballs*); if anyone gets close to him, he opens up with his empowered *scorching rays*. He looks for an opportunity to turn *invisible* and to seal troublesome PCs behind a *wall of force*. If the golem is badly damaged, he uses *transmute mud to rock* to heal it.

At APL 12, Verthek again buffs himself with quickened spells, but his primary concern is to incapacitate individual PCs with no-save spells such as *forcecage* and *power word blind*. Otherwise, his strategy is as for APL 10 above.

At APLs 14 and 16, Verthek follows the strategy for APL 12, but when he does use energy spells, he exploits his *mastery of elements* ability to twist them into forms against which his foes are less likely to be protected (sonic *scorching rays* or acid *fireballs*, for example).

Verthek does not contemplate coming to terms with the PCs unless they are showing conspicuous success in repulsing the attacks of himself and his servants **and** the *orb* has been destroyed in the course of the fight. Although angry at the destruction of what he sees as Thornhold's salvation, he is intelligent enough to see that Thornhold would be hurt even worse by his own demise. Attempts by PCs to negotiate a cessation of hostilities at this point are therefore not dismissed out of hand. If the PCs seem trustworthy, and offer to help in rebuilding Thornhold (whether through restorative magic or convincing Thornhold's enemies that the Principality has strong defenders; assume that PCs at this level are up to either task if they wish, without roleplaying it out),

Verthek can be talked into calling off his servitors – but the PCs must convince him of their trustworthiness first. Otherwise, he fights to the death.

**Treasure:** There is little of significant monetary worth for the PCs to scavenge from Verthek's abode, except for what is on the old mage's person; everything has been sold down the years to keep the Principality safe and finance the making of the *orb*.

**APL 10:** Loot: 129 gp.

**APL 12:** Loot: 259 gp.

**APL 14:** Loot: 259 gp.

**APL 16:** Loot: 259 gp.

The great statue of Stern Alia at the far end of the room contains a concealed, lead-lined compartment (DC 50 Search check to discover). This contains some jewelry and Verthek's spellbooks. If the PCs discover it, PC wizards may copy any of the spells that Verthek has memorized at their APL according to the usual rules and limits for such copying, but may not buy the book at the end of the adventure.

The PCs may now have *Verthek's Orb*. When they decide to go back to Dustbridge the action moves to Encounter 10.

## ENCOUNTER 10: SETTLING UP

The PCs come to this encounter only if they have either defeated Verthek or interrupted his forging, so that the *orb* is either in their possession (however briefly) or destroyed by the disruption of the ritual. If the PCs have left the completed *orb* in Verthek's possession, their trip back to Dustbridge is uneventful, although a surprise awaits them there. The action moves to Encounter 11 instead.

### The Better Part of Valor?

Some PCs, conscious of the fact that by this stage they have released demons, committed minor regicide, or come into possession of a potent evil magic item, may be tempted not to return to Dustbridge at all, or to do so only to retrieve Grenthal. Such PCs are forgetting that, in the first place, their original intent was to escort Grenthal home to his father and, in the second, they have yet to be paid for Gilgrann's mission.

Moreover, the terms of their agreement with Gilgrann indicated that they should behave as they saw fit once they discovered what Verthek was doing, so he has no grounds on which to withhold their payment.

### A Sphere of Influence

The return trip to Dustbridge is, from the perspective of the PCs, uneventful. If the PCs have the *orb* and desire to do so, they may pass the time investigating its properties. The *orb's* strategy is to play dumb; it does not wish the PCs to discover that it is intelligent, so it masquerades as a simple *crystal ball with telepathy*. If its secret is

discovered, it begins its policy of sullen opposition to being used by "commoners".

Destroying the *orb* is not physically difficult; see Appendix 2 for its stats. However, if the *orb* realizes that such a plan is afoot, it implants the telepathic suggestion to "protect the *orb*" in the mind of a likely PC (DC 14 Will Save to resist, as per the usual ability of a *crystal ball with telepathy*). If the PCs destroy the *orb*, they all receive the Friends in High Places AR item.

### Back in Dustbridge

Grenthal is soon picked up from the Zilchus Western Company; he is rested and ready to head home. If the PCs send word to Gilgrann, a meeting is readily arranged. It takes place in the same room as before, and indeed there is a sense of *déjà vu* about the encounter: same journey up the great stairs, same darkened room, same harp, same harpist. This time, however, there is no audience of young ladies.

Gilgrann asks the PCs for their report of what happened in Thornhold. If given a more-or-less accurate account of what Verthek was doing, he shakes his head sombrely and murmurs, "*there is little on Oerth sadder than the dotage of a once-great mind*" and similar platitudes. If he discovers that the PCs are in possession of the *orb*, he swiftly makes them the following offer:

***"An item of such dark power should not, I think, be left unguarded. If you are willing, I should be delighted to take it off your hands—for due recompense, of course. And I am not the only one in these parts who would consider himself greatly in your debt if you were to assent."***

Gilgrann initially offers the PCs 6,000 gp for the *orb*, but can be bargained up as high as 12,000 gp (this does not allow PCs to exceed the treasure cap, however). This is much lower than the usual resale price for a *crystal ball*, but, as he points out, normal *crystal balls* are not made from elder magic and so prey to possible complications.

Gilgrann does not have the money on him, but arranges an exchange through intermediaries at a later date, and keeps his word. If a deal is struck, Prince Strychan is pleased that so troublesome an item is now out of circulation; all the PCs receive the Favor of Strychan AR item.

Gilgrann also pays the PCs immediately and in cash the amount agreed at the beginning for their mission (100 x APL gp to each PC).

If the PCs have the *orb* but are not prepared to sell it to Gilgrann, he is disappointed and makes an effort to convince them, but does not use threats or force the issue (having divined that individuals capable of taking a powerful magic item from a Garasteth noble in his own house probably do not respond well to intimidation). He pays the PCs for their mission, as above, and affably wishes them fair voyage. In any event, the action moves to Encounter 12.



**Treasure:** This treasure is gained if the PC's successfully sell the orb to Gilgrann.

**APL 10:** Coin: 1,000 gp.

**APL 12:** Coin: 1,200 gp.

**APL 14:** Coin: 1,400 gp.

**APL 16:** Coin: 1,600 gp.

## ENCOUNTER 11: LORD GILGRANN REGRETS

The PCs only come to this Encounter if they left Verthek in possession of the *orb* at the end of Encounter 8 (otherwise, Encounter 10 takes place instead).

The trip back to Dustbridge is uneventful, from the perspective of the PCs. As in Encounter 10, Grenthal is ready to go home, and a final meeting with Gilgrann is easily arranged. However, while this is going on, Verthek puts his new device to work to discover who sent the PCs to pry into Thornhold's affairs, a task which the combination of his intellect, his local knowledge and the *orb's* abilities soon accomplishes. Verthek is content once he finds out that Gilgrann was the agent.

The *orb* has other plans.

### The Orb Strikes

If the orb is still in Verthek's hands when the second interview with Gilgrann is arranged, events take a different and bloodier course. Before the PCs come, the *orb* (acting independently of Verthek), *scries* Gilgrann, and sends him the following telepathic message, in a cold, hate-filled whisper, "Verthek still rules in Thornhold, fool, and new power is his. Strychan would not lightly forgive you, unless you remove the witnesses to your folly."

Gilgrann does not recognize this voice, of course, but the *orb* is expertly playing upon what it has determined is his main weak point, his almost pathological fear of the Prince of Dustbridge's displeasure. Gilgrann assumes that the voice is that of one of Strychan's other servants, standing in judgment on him. He therefore panics, summons allies, and attempts to ambush the PCs, before going into hiding from what he imagines to be his liege's displeasure.

In this case, Gilgrann is absent when the PCs are ushered into the Great Hall, but, once again, three attractive and under-dressed young Oeridian ladies are lounging there. This time, however, they are *polymorphed* dark naga hangers-on of Gilgrann's extended circle.

One of the nagas smiles prettily at the PCs as soon as they have entered the room, and says: "**Lord Gilgrann is... indisposed, I am afraid. Prince Strychan, however, bids us give you this message.**" At this point, the nagas revert to their true forms and attack. This reversion takes a standard action for the nagas in the surprise round; PCs who beat the nagas' Bluff checks with Sense Motive checks may also act in that round. After that, the combat proceeds normally.

### APL 10 (EL 13)

➤ **Dark naga sorcerer (3):** female dark naga sorcerer 2; hp 67, 67, 67; Appendix 1.

### APL 12 (EL 15)

➤ **Advanced 19 HD dark naga sorcerer (3):** female dark naga sorcerer 2; hp 167, 167, 167 Appendix 1.

### APL 14 (EL 17)

➤ **Advanced 25 HD dark naga sorcerer (3):** female dark naga sorcerer 2; hp 235, 235, 235; Appendix 1.

### APL 16 (EL 19)

➤ **Advanced 29 HD dark naga sorcerer(3):** female dark naga sorcerer 4; hp 248, 248, 248; Appendix 1.

**Tactics:** The tactics of the nagas are normal for those of their kind. They rely on their bite, sting, and spells. They do not use area effect spells in the opening round, as they hope to end the fight quickly without destroying Gilgrann's house. After that, no such tactical restriction applies. The nagas are not comfortable with the use of *polymorph* as an offensive tactic and generally prefer their own forms in combat.

**Treasure:** Gilgrann uses this house as a locale for clandestine meetings; it is not his ancestral home, and has none of his more valuable possessions. Like much else in Dustbridge, the elegant façade of this place does not conceal much substance: the most that can be scavenged from it is some artwork and furnishings. If Gilgrann had not got around to paying the PCs yet, however, they find their fee, in coin, in a nearby chest (no Search check required).

**APL 10:** Coin: 1,000 gp.

**APL 12:** Coin: 1,200 gp.

**APL 14:** Coin: 1,400 gp.

**APL 16:** Coin: 1,600 gp.

**Conclusion:** The nagas, if captured and interrogated, say that Gilgrann told them that Strychan was displeased at Verthek's retention of his new creation and would kill both them and him unless they removed the embarrassing witnesses to this fiasco. (This registers as true to detection spells, because the nagas believe what Gilgrann said; in fact, of course, this was not Strychan's command, but the *orb's* set-up instead). Hot-headed PCs may be inclined to go after Gilgrann, or Strychan, or both, at this point, but no such strategy is viable; the former is in hiding, under magical protections equivalent to a *mind blank*, while the latter is a powerful wizard who (unlike Verthek) has the resources of an entire prosperous city-state with which to defend himself: harsh truths, but one the PCs have to live with for now. When the battle is over, the action moves to the Conclusion.

## CONCLUSION

The PCs reach this encounter once they leave Gilgrann's house in Encounter 10 or 11. Depending on their

previous actions, they may (or may not) have some loose ends to tie up.

### The Fate of the Orb

If the PCs destroyed the *orb*, left it in Verthek's hands, or traded it to Gilgrann, the *orb's* further destiny is, for the moment, out of their hands. If not, they still have to decide what to do with it. There are three main courses of action.

### Keeping the Orb

Some PCs may be tempted to keep the *orb*. If they do so, however, they very quickly discover that the item's resentment at being used by "commoners" makes it considerably more trouble than it is worth. In particular, it starts using its ranged telepathic abilities to alert anyone it can find to the PCs' current location, promising rich booty if its current "defilers" are slaughtered.

Possession of the *orb* is thus tantamount to having a huge glowing arrow pointing from the sky at where its owner currently is with a "reward" note attached. This starts with alerting petty marauders, and ends by tipping off the likes of Iuz himself. Make it plain that for PCs, owning the *orb* is a death sentence.

### Selling the Orb

This proves to be a slightly problematic undertaking, since few individuals in the Flanaess have the resources or the inclination to buy such an item (and many of those who do are not easy to contact).

A DC 15 Knowledge (local: Core) check (or Grenthal's prompting, if the PCs are having trouble with the checks), suggests that it might be easiest to deal with a powerful temple or broker in items (such as the Zilchus Western Company).

There are four likely temple candidates for this:

If the PCs want the *orb* destroyed or forever hidden the temple of Pelor is a good choice.

If the PCs are apathetic about who might eventually get their hands on it the temples of Boccob or Zilchus are good choices (since the followers of the Uncaring One or the Great Guildmaster might subsequently decide to sell it on).

Devout Pholtans may prefer to hand responsibility for the orb over to Wintershaven instead.

Boccobites, Pelorites, and Zilchans all offer the PCs the same financial deal as Gilgrann (see Encounter 10), but if a deal is struck, the PCs receive the Friends in High Places AR item instead of the Favour of Strychan on their AR.

The followers of Pholtus expect the PCs to find their reward in the virtuous act of handing over an item of evil to be purged by the Blinding Light (they offer no financial remuneration), but the PCs still receive the Friends in High Places AR item if they do so.

**Treasure:** The PCs gain this coin for selling the Orb.

**APL 10:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

**APL 12:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

**APL 14:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

**APL 16:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

### Other Options

Well-connected PCs may have different ideas about how to dispose of the orb. You should judge these ideas according to his individual discretion. These PCs gain the following AR item:

∞ Friends in High Places on the AR.

### Destroying the Orb

See Encounter 10 above for the mechanics of destroying the *orb*. PCs receiving no financial reward, but gain the Friends in High Places AR item as described there.

### Family Reunion

The final loose end, of course, is Grenthal Frone. With the aid of the PCs, his trip back to the side of his (more-or-less) delighted father is assured, who pays up without hesitation and congratulates the PCs on their success. The PCs gain the Favour of Henther Frone AR item.

## The End

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

### Encounter 2: A Breath of Fresh Air

Defeat the air elemental(s)

APL10	330 XP
APL12	390 XP
APL14	450 XP
APL16	510 XP

### Encounter 4: The King of a Rainy Country

Defeat the mercenaries

APL10	360 XP
APL12	420 XP
APL14	480 XP
APL16	540 XP

### Encounter 7: The Ritual Rent

Defeat the demon(s)

APL10	390 XP
APL12	450 XP
APL14	510 XP
APL16	570 XP

### Encounter 9: Mage at Bay

Defeat Verthek and the golems

APL10	390 XP
APL12	450 XP
APL14	510 XP
APL16	570 XP

### Encounter 11: Lord Gilgrann Regrets

Defeat the nagas

APL10	390 XP
APL12	450 XP
APL14	510 XP
APL16	570 XP

### Discretionary Role-playing Award

APL10	270 XP
APL12	315 XP
APL14	360 XP
APL16	405 XP

### Total Possible Experience:

APL10	1,350 XP
APL12	1,575 XP

APL14	1,800 XP
APL16	2,025 XP

## TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast identify, analyze dweomer or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy; Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; Magic = Magic Items.

### Encounter 4: The King of a Rainy Country

**APL 10:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp).

**APL 12:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *lion's shield* (764 gp).

**APL 14:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *lion's shield* (764 gp), *cloaks of resistance +2* (4: 1333 gp all together), *figurine of wondrous power* (ivory goats) (1750 gp).

**APL 16:** Loot: 840 gp; Magic: *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *lion's shield* (764 gp), *cloaks of resistance +2* (4: 1333 gp all together), *figurine of wondrous power* (ivory goats)

(1750 gp), *ring of protection +4* (2667 gp), *ring of sustenance* (208 gp).

#### Encounter 9: Mage at Bay

**APL 10:** Loot: 129 gp.

**APL 12:** Loot: 259 gp.

**APL 14:** Loot: 259 gp.

**APL 16:** Loot: 259 gp.

#### Encounter 10: Settling Up

**APL 10:** Coin: 1,000 gp.

**APL 12:** Coin: 1,200 gp.

**APL 14:** Coin: 1,400 gp.

**APL 16:** Coin: 1,600 gp.

#### Encounter 11: Lord Gilgrann Regrets

**APL 10:** Coin: 1000 gp.

**APL 12:** Coin: 1200 gp.

**APL 14:** Coin: 1400 gp.

**APL 16:** Coin: 1600 gp.

#### Conclusion

**APL 10:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

**APL 12:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

**APL 14:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

**APL 16:** Coin: 2,300 gp.

(The orb is treated as Coin here because of the likelihood that the PCs sell it)

#### Total Possible Treasure

**APL 10:** Loot: 969 gp; Coin: 3,300 gp; Magic: 208 gp - Total: 4477 gp

**APL 12:** Loot: 1099 gp; Coin: 3,500 gp; Magic: 972 gp - Total: 5571 gp

**APL 14:** Loot: 1,099 gp; Coin: 3,700 gp; Magic: 4,055 gp - Total: 8,854 gp

**APL 16:** Loot: 1,099 gp; Coin: 3,900 gp; Magic: 6,930 gp - Total: 11,929 gp

#### Special

‡ **Friends in High Place:** This favor may be expended once for one of the following effects. In all cases the PCs must pay all normal costs.

- Enchant a single melee weapon with the *spell storing* enhancement.
- Gain one-off access to ONE of the following items: *Murlynd's spoon*, *rope of climbing*, *pearl of the sirines*.
- Learn a single Core access sorcerer/wizard spell of up to 6th-level from the school of Abjuration.

‡ **Favor of Vertheke:** This favor may be expended once for one of the following effects. In all cases the PCs must pay all normal costs.

- Enchant a single melee weapon with the *axiomatic* enhancement.
- Gain one-off access to ONE of the following items: *glove of storing*, *horseshoes of a zephyr*, *maul of the titans*.

- Gain a permanent +1 competence bonus to all Knowledge (royalty and nobility) checks, from Vertheke's tuition.
- Learn a single Core access sorcerer/wizard spell of up to 6th-level from the school of Evocation.

‡ **Favor of Strychan:** His favor may be expended once for one of the following effects. In all cases the PCs must pay all normal costs.

- Enchant a single melee weapon with the *bane (vermin)* enhancement.
- Gain one-off access to ONE of the following items: *hand of glory*, *pipes of pain*, *robe of bones*.
- Learn a single Core access sorcerer/wizard spell of up to 6th-level from the school of Necromancy.

#### ‡ Favor of Henther Frone -- A Greater Money Counter Note:

Most favors with the servants of the Money Counter are bought, but sometimes, they are earned. This favor can be exchanged at any Temple of Zilchus for a one-time casting of a 4th-level cleric spell or less. The spell must be core access and the PCs must be in the presence of an appropriate level of Zilchan cleric (DM's discretion). Alternatively the note can be held on to – it may have other uses in other adventures. Cross through when used.

## ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

#### Item Access

##### APL 10:

- *Eyes of the eagle* (Core; DMG; 2,500 gp)

##### APL 12 (all of APL 10 plus the following):

- *Lion's shield* (Core; DMG; 9,170 gp)

##### APL 14 (all of APLs 10-12 plus the following):

- *Figurine of wondrous power (ivory goats)* (Core; DMG; 21,000 gp)
- *Cloak of resistance +2* (Core; DMG; 4,000 gp)

##### APL 16 (all of APLs 10-14 plus the following):

- *Ring of sustenance* (Core; DMG; 2,500 gp)
- *Ring of protection +4* (Core; DMG; 32,000 gp)

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE KING OF A RAINY COUNTRY

➤ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 9 (Pyremius); CR 9 Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d8+18+9 hp 75; Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +6 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +6 ranged (1d4, sling); SA rebuke undead, spells, spontaneous casting; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 19, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +14, Knowledge (religion) +12, Spellcraft +12; Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Toughness, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy).

**Languages:** Common.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 3/day; 1d20+11; turning damage 2d6+9.

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *light*; 1st—*bless*, *burning hands*\*, *cure light wounds* (2), *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *hold person*, *produce flame*\*, *silence*, *sound burst*; 3rd—*bestow curse*, *burning hands* (empowered)\*, *dispel magic*, *prayer*, *cure serious wounds*; 4th—~~*air walk*~~, *inflict critical wounds*\*, *spiritual weapon* (empowered), ~~*freedom of movement*~~; 5th, *flame strike*, *inflict light wounds*\*.

\***Domain spell.** Pyremius; Domains: Destruction (smite 1/day; make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on the attack roll and a +9 bonus to damage if the attack hits; must be declared before the attack is made); Fire (turn/destroy water creatures, rebuke/command/bolster fire creatures 3/day).

**Possessions:** Heavy steel shield, full plate armor, heavy mace, sling, 10 sling bullets, 2 wooden holy symbols of Pyremius, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *air walk*, *freedom of movement*):** SQ walk on air as though on solid ground, move and attack normally regardless of attempted impediments.

➤ **Frenzel:** male human wizard 9 (necromancer); CR 9 Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d4+18+9 hp 55; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 8, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +14, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +16, Knowledge (nature) +16, Spellcraft +18, Spot +10; Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Silent Spell, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

## APPENDIX 1: APL 10

**Languages:** Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal.

**Spells Prepared** (5/6/6/5/4/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*color spray*, *grease*, ~~*mage armor*~~, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (2), *glitterdust* (2), *mirror image*, *see invisibility*; 3rd—*displacement*, *ray of enfeeblement* (empowered, 2), *slow*, *stinking cloud*; 4th—*dispel magic* (silent), *enervation*, *Evard's black tentacles*, ~~*false life*~~ (empowered); 5th—~~*overland flight*~~, *waves of fatigue*.

**Prohibited Schools:** Enchantment, Evocation.

**Possessions:** 1 dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, *eyes of the eagle*, 2 spell component pouches, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *mage armor*, *false life* [empowered], *overland flight*):** hp 76; Spd 30 ft. fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14.

## ENCOUNTER 9: THE MAGE AT BAY

➤ **Prince Verthek of Thornhold:** male human wizard 11 (invoker); CR 11 Medium humanoid (human); HD 11d4+22 hp 56; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (royalty and nobility) +19, Knowledge (planes) +19, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +9, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +21; Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (transmutation), Still Spell.

**Languages:** Common, Auran, Draconic, Infernal, Old Oeridian.

**Spells Prepared** (5/7/6/6/5/4/2; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*; 1st—*alarm*, *charm person*, *color spray*, *expeditious retreat*, *magic missile*, *protection from evil*, *true strike*; 2nd—*bear's endurance*, *darkness*, *gust of wind*, *magic missile* (still), *magic missile* (silent), *see invisibility*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt* (2), *magic missile* (still, silent), *slow*; 4th—*confusion*, *fireball* (silent), *greater invisibility*, *scorching ray* (empowered, 2); 5th—*dispel magic* (silent, still), *shield* (quicken), *transmute mud to rock*, *wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning*, *mirror image* (quicken).

**Prohibited Schools:** Conjunction, Necromancy.

**Contingency:** If Verthek is subjected to any physical or magical attack, a *displacement* spell immediately activates.

*Possessions:* dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, 2 spell component pouches, statuette of Verthek (focus for *contingency*).

## ENCOUNTER 11: LORD GILGRANN

### REGRETS

☞ **Dark Naga Sorcerer (3):** female dark naga sorcerer 2; CR 10; Large aberration; HD 9d8+18 plus 2d4+4; hp 67; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (2d4+3 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +9 melee (2d4+3 plus poison, sting) and +4 melee (1d4+1, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA poison, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immunity to poison, resistance to charm; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 13, Cha 21.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +19, Concentration +16, Diplomacy +17, Intimidate +17, Listen +17, Spellcraft +19, Spot +17; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Lightning Reflexes.

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Infernal, Old Oeridian.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 16 or lapse into a nightmare-haunted sleep for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Resistance to Charm:** Dark nagas have a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against all charm effects (not included in the statistics block).

**Detect Thoughts (Su):** A dark naga can continuously use *detect thoughts* as the spell (caster level 9th; Will DC 17 negates). This ability is always active. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Dark nagas are immune to any form of mind reading.

*Sorcerer Spells Known* (6/8/7/7/5; save DC 15 + spell level; caster level 9th): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, silent image*; 2nd—*cat's grace, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray*; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, lightning bolt*; 4th—*bestow curse, polymorph*.

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE KING OF A RAINY COUNTRY

☛ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 11 (Pyremius); CR 11 Medium humanoid (human); HD 11d8+22+11 hp 91; Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +8 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +8 ranged (1d4, sling); SA rebuke undead, spells, spontaneous casting; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 19, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +16, Knowledge (religion) +14, Spellcraft +14; Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Toughness, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy).

*Languages:* Common

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 3/day; 1d20+13; turning damage 2d6+11.

Cleric	Spells	Prepared
(6/6+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0— <i>cure minor wounds</i> (2), <i>detect magic</i> , <i>guidance</i> (2), <i>light</i> ; 1st— <i>bless</i> , <i>burning hands*</i> , <i>cure light wounds</i> (2), <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>protection from good</i> , <i>shield of faith</i> ; 2nd— <i>bear's endurance</i> , <i>bull's strength</i> , <i>hold person</i> , <i>produce flame*</i> , <i>silence</i> , <i>sound burst</i> ; 3rd— <i>bestow curse</i> , <i>burning hands</i> (empowered)*, <i>cure serious wounds</i> , <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>invisibility purge</i> , <i>prayer</i> ; 4 <sup>th</sup> — <i>air walk</i> , <i>cure critical wounds</i> , <i>freedom of movement</i> , <i>inflict critical wounds*</i> , <i>spiritual weapon</i> (empowered); 5 <sup>th</sup> — <i>flame strike</i> (2), <i>mass inflict light wounds*</i> ; 6th— <i>blade barrier</i> , <i>harm*</i> .		

\***Domain spell.** Pyremius: Domains: Destruction (smite 1/day; make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on the attack roll and a +11 bonus to damage if the attack hits; must be declared before the attack is made); Fire (turn/destroy water creatures, rebuke/command/bolster fire creatures 3/day).

*Possessions:* *lion's shield*, full plate armor, heavy mace, sling, 10 sling bullets, 2 wooden holy symbols of Pyremius, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *air walk*, *freedom of movement*):** SQ walk on air as though on solid ground, move and attack normally regardless of attempted impediments.

☛ **Frenzel:** male human wizard 11 (necromancer); CR 11 Medium humanoid (human); HD 11d4+22+11 hp 67; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 8, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Spellcraft +20, Spot +11; Empower Spell, Great

Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell.

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal.

*Spells Prepared* (5/6/6/6/5/3/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*color spray*, *grease*, ~~*mage armor*~~, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (2), *glitterdust* (2), *mirror image*, *see invisibility*; 3<sup>rd</sup>—*displacement*, *ray of enfeeblement* (empowered, 2), *slow*, *stinking cloud*, *vampiric touch*; 4th—*dispel magic* (silent), *Evard's black tentacles*, *enervation*, ~~*false life*~~ (empowered), *stoneskin*; 5th—*baleful polymorph*, ~~*overland flight*~~, *waves of fatigue*; 6th—*false life* (quicken), *mirror image* (quicken),.

*Prohibited Schools:* Enchantment, Evocation.

*Possessions:* 2 spell component pouches, 1 dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, *eyes of the eagle*, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *mage armor*, *false life* [empowered], *overland flight*, *stoneskin*):** hp 89; Spd 30 ft. fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14: SQ DR 10/adamantine.

☛ **Grawl/Torg:** male hill giant barbarian 2; CR 9 Large giant; HD 12d8+72 plus 2d12+12 hp 152; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +11; Grp +22; Atk +18 melee (2d8+10, greatclub) or +17 melee (1d4+7, slam) or +11 ranged (2d6+7, rock); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d8+10, greatclub) or +17 melee (1d4+7, 2 slams) or +11 ranged (2d6+7, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ fast movement, low-light vision, rage 1/day, rock-catching, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +18, Spot +18, Survival +3; Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

*Languages:* Common, Giant.

*Possessions:* 2 Large greatclubs, Large hide armour, 5 throwing rocks, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Raging – *prayer*):** hp 180; AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; Grp +25; Atk +21 melee (2d8+14, greatclub) or +20 melee (1d4+10, slam) or +12 ranged (2d6+10, rock); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d8+14, greatclub) or +20 melee (1d4+10, 2 slams) or +12 ranged (2d6+10, rock); SV Fort +20, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +19, Spot +19, Survival +3.

## ENCOUNTER 9: THE MAGE AT BAY

☛ **Prince Verthek of Thornhold:** male human wizard 13 (invoker); CR 13 Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d4+26 hp 66; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d8/19-20,



light crossbow); Full Atk +5/+0 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger) or +6 ranged (1d8/18-20, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 21, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +18, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (royalty and nobility) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +11, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +23; Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (transmutation), Still Spell.

**Languages:** Common, Auran, Draconic, Infernal, Old Oeridian.

**Spells Prepared** (5/7/6/6/6/5/3/2; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation*; 1st—*alarm, charm person, color spray, expeditious retreat, magic missile, protection from evil, true strike*; 2<sup>nd</sup>—*bear's endurance, darkness, gust of wind, magic missile* (still), *magic missile* (silent), *see invisibility*; 3<sup>rd</sup>—*dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt* (2), *magic missile* (still, silent), *slow*; 4<sup>th</sup>—*confusion, fireball* (silent), *greater invisibility, scorching ray* (empowered, 2), *wall of ice*; 5<sup>th</sup>—*cone of cold, dispel magic* (silent, still), *shield* (quickened), *transmute mud to rock, wall of force*; 6<sup>th</sup>—*chain lightning, magic missile* (quickened, still), *mirror image* (quickened); 7<sup>th</sup>—*forcecage, power word blind*.

**Prohibited Schools:** Conjuraton, Necromancy.

**Contingency:** If Verthek is subjected to any physical or magical attack, a *greater invisibility* immediately activates.

**Possessions:** 2 spell component pouches, dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, statuette of Verthek (for *contingency*), 1500 gp of ruby dust (for *forcecage*).

## ENCOUNTER 11: LORD GILGRANN REGRETS

➤ **Advanced 17 HD Dark Naga Sorcerer (3):** advanced female dark naga sorcerer 2; CR 12 Huge aberration; HD 17d8+68 plus 2d4+8 hp 167; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14 ; Base Atk +13; Grp +28; Atk +18 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +18 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, sting) and +13 melee (1d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA poison, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immunity to poison, resistance to charm; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +16; Str 24, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 13, Cha 23.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +28, Concentration +26, Diplomacy +26, Intimidate +26, Listen +25, Spellcraft +27, Spot +25; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell.

**Languages:** Common, Draconic, Infernal, Old Oeridian.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 22 or lapse into a nightmare-haunted sleep for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Resistance to Charm:** Dark nagas have a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against all charm effects (not included in the statistics block).

**Detect Thoughts (Su):** A dark naga can continuously use detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 17th; Will DC 18 negates). This ability is always active. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Dark nagas are immune to any form of mind reading.

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/8/8/7/5; save DC 16 + spell level; caster level 9th): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, silent image*; 2nd—*cat's grace, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray*; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, lightning bolt*; 4th—*bestow curse, polymorph*.

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE KING OF A RAINY COUNTRY

☛ **Heyolt:** Male human cleric 13 (Pyremius); CR 13 Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d8+26+13 hp 107; Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +9; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +9 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +9 ranged (1d4, sling); SA rebuke undead, spells, spontaneous casting; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +15; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +18, Knowledge (religion) +16, Spellcraft +16; Empower Spell Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Toughness, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy).

*Languages:* Common

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 3/day; 1d20+15; turning damage 2d6+13.

Cleric	Spells	Prepared
(5+1/7+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0— <i>cure minor wounds</i> (2), <i>detect magic</i> , <i>guidance</i> (2), <i>light</i> , 1st— <i>bless</i> , <i>burning hands</i> *, <i>cure light wounds</i> (2), <i>divine favor</i> , <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>protection from good</i> , <i>shield of faith</i> ; 2nd— <i>bear's endurance</i> , <i>bull's strength</i> , <i>darkness</i> , <i>hold person</i> , <i>produce flame</i> *, <i>silence</i> , <i>sound burst</i> ; 3rd— <i>bestow curse</i> , <i>burning hands</i> (empowered)*, <i>cure serious wounds</i> , <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>invisibility purge</i> , <i>prayer</i> ; 4th— <del><i>air walk</i></del> , <i>cure critical wounds</i> (2), <i>divine power</i> , <del><i>freedom of movement</i></del> , <i>inflict critical wounds</i> *, 5th— <i>flame strike</i> (2), <i>greater command</i> , <i>insect plague</i> , <i>mass inflict light wounds</i> *, 6th— <i>blade barrier</i> , <i>harm</i> *, <i>heal</i> . 7th— <i>fire storm</i> *, <i>flame strike</i> (empowered).		

\***Domain spell.** Pyremius: Destruction (smite 1/day; make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on the attack roll and a +13 bonus to damage if the attack hits; must be declared before the attack is made); Fire (turn/destroy water creatures, rebuke/command/bolster fire creatures 3/day).

*Possessions:* *cloak of resistance* +2, *lion's shield*, full plate armor, 2 wooden holy symbols of Pyremius, heavy mace, sling, 10 sling bullets, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *air walk*, *freedom of movement*):** SQ walk on air as though on solid ground, move and attack normally regardless of attempted impediments.

☛ **Frenzel:** male human wizard 13 (necromancer); CR 13 Medium humanoid (human); HD 13d4+26+13 hp 79; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4-1, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +5/+0 melee (1d4-1, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 8, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +18, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +17, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +21, Knowledge (nature) +21, Spellcraft +23, Spot +12; Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell.

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal.

*Spells Prepared* (5/7/6/6/6/5/3/2; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0— *acid splash*, *detect magic*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st— *color spray*, *grease*, ~~*mage armor*~~, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd— *blindness/deafness* (2), *glitterdust* (2), *mirror image*, *see invisibility*; 3rd— *dispel magic*, *ray of enfeeblement* (empowered, 2), *slow*, *stinking cloud*, *vampiric touch*; 4th— *dimension door*, *enervation* (2), *Evard's black tentacles*, ~~*false life*~~ (empowered), ~~*stoneskin*~~; 5th— *baleful polymorph* (2), *dimension door* (silent), ~~*overland flight*~~, *waves of fatigue*; 6th— *disintegrate*, *false life* (quickened), *mirror image* (quickened); 7th— *displacement* (quickened), *waves of exhaustion*.

*Prohibited Schools:* Enchantment, Evocation.

*Possessions:* 2 spell component pouches, 1 dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, *eyes of the eagle*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *figurine of wondrous power* (ivory goats), 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *mage armor*, *false life* (empowered), *overland flight*, *stoneskin*):** hp 101; Spd 30 ft. fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14: SQ DR 10/adamantine.

☛ **Grawl/Torg:** male hill giant barbarian 4: CR 11 Large giant; HD 12d8+82 plus 4d12+24; hp 178; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +13; Grp +25; Atk +21 melee (2d8+12, greatclub) or +20 melee (1d4+8, slamor +13 ranged (2d6+8, rock); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d8+12, greatclub) or +20 melee (1d4+8, 2 slams) or +13 ranged (2d6+8, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ fast movement, low-light vision, rage 2/day, rock-catching, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +20, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +20, Spot +20, Survival +5; Blind-fight, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

*Languages:* Common, Giant.

*Possessions:* 2 Large greatclubs, Large hide armor, 5 throwing rocks, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Raging – *prayer*):** hp 210; AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19; Grp +28; Atk +24 melee (2d8+16, greatclub) or +23 melee (1d4+11, slam) or +14 ranged (2d6+11, rock); Full Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (2d8+16, greatclub) or +23 melee (1d4+11, 2 slams) or +14 ranged (2d6+11, rock); SV Fort +23, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 30, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +21, Spot +21, Survival +6.

## ENCOUNTER 9: THE MAGE AT BAY

➤ **Prince Verthek of Thornhold:** male human wizard 13 (invoker)/archmage 2; CR 15 Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d4+30 hp 76; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+1, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d4+1, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 21, Wis 8, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +20, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (royalty and nobility) +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +13, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +28; Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (spellcraft), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (transmutation), Still Spell.

*Languages:* Common, Auran, Draconic, Infernal, Old Eoridian.

**Mastery of Elements:** The archmage can alter an arcane spell when cast so that it utilizes a different element from the one it normally uses. This ability can only alter a spell with the acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic descriptor. The spell's casting time is unaffected. The caster decides whether to alter the spell's energy type and chooses the new energy type when he begins casting. This ability costs one 8th-level spell slot.

**Spell Power:** This ability increases the archmage's effective caster level by +1 (for purposes of determining level-dependent spell variables such as damage dice or range, and caster level checks only). This ability costs one 5th-level spell slot.

*Spells Prepared* (5/7/6/6/6/5/4/3/1; base DC = 15 + spell level; caster level 16th): 0— *detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation*; 1st— *alarm, charm person, color spray, expeditious retreat, magic missile, protection from evil, true strike*; 2nd— *bear's endurance, darkness, gust of wind, magic missile* (still), *magic missile* (silent), *see invisibility*; 3rd— *dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt* (2), *magic missile* (still, silent), *slow*; 4th— *confusion, fireball* (silent), *greater invisibility, scorching ray* (empowered, 2), *wall of ice*; 5th— *cone of cold, dispel magic* (silent, still), *fireball* (empowered), *transmute mud to rock, wall of force*; 6th— *chain lightning, greater dispel magic, magic missile* (quickenened, still), *mirror image* (quickenened); 7th— *cone of cold* (empowered), *forcecage, power word blind*; 8th— *Bigby's clenched fist*.

*Prohibited Schools:* Conjunction, Necromancy.

**Contingency:** If Verthek is subjected to any physical or magical attack, a *greater blink* immediately activates.

**Possessions:** 2 spell component pouches, dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, statuette of Verthek (for *contingency*), 1500 gp of ruby dust (for *forcecage*).

➤ **Advanced Stone Golem:** CR 13 Huge construct; HD 22d10+40 hp 161; Init -2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 6, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +16; Grp +38; Atk +28 melee (4d8+14, slam); Full Atk +28 melee (4d8+14, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA slow; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft. immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 39, Dex 7, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Slow (Su):** A stone golem can use a slow effect, as the spell, as a free action once every 2 rounds. The effect has a range of 10 feet and a duration of 7 rounds, requiring a DC 21 Will save to negate. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** A stone golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

A *transmute rock to mud* spell slows a stone golem (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw, while *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure but negates its damage reduction and immunity to magic for 1 full round.

## ENCOUNTER 11: LORD GILGRANN REGRETS

➤ **Advanced 25 HD Dark Naga Sorcerer (3):** female advanced dark naga sorcerer 2; CR 14 Huge aberration; HD 25d8+100 plus 2d4+8 hp 235; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +19; Grp +34; Atk +24 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +24 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, sting) and +19 melee (1d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA poison, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immunity to poison, resistance to charm; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +20; Str 24, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 13, Cha 25.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +37, Concentration +34, Diplomacy +35, Intimidate +35, Listen +33, Spellcraft +35, Spot +33; Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat Casting, Dodge, Enlarge Spell, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell.

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Infernal, Old Eoridian.

**Poison (Ex):** Injury, Fortitude DC 26 or lapse into a nightmare-haunted sleep for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Resistance to Charm:** Dark nagas have a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against all charm effects (not included in the statistics block).

**Detect Thoughts (Su):** A dark naga can continuously use detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 25th; Will DC 19 negates). This ability is always active. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Dark nagas are immune to any form of mind reading.

*Sorcerer Spells Known* (6/8/8/8/5; save DC 17 + spell level; caster level 9th): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, silent image*; 2nd—*cat's grace, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray*; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, lightning bolt*; 4th—*bestow curse, polymorph*.

## ENCOUNTER 2: A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

➤ **Advanced Elder Air Elemental:** CR 13 Huge elemental (Air, Extraplanar); HD 32d8+128 hp 272; Init +16; Spd. fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 28, touch 20, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +24; Grp +38; Atk +34 melee (2d8+6, slam); Full Atk +34 melee (2d8+6, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA air mastery, whirlwind; SQ damage reduction 10/–, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; AL N; SV Fort +16, Ref +30, Will +12; Str 22, Dex 35, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Listen +37, Spot +37; Alertness, Blind-fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse

*Languages:* Auran.

**Air Mastery (Ex):** Airborne creatures take a –1 penalty on attack and damage rolls against an air elemental.

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE KING OF A RAINY COUNTRY

➤ **Heyolt:** male human cleric 15 (Pyremius); CR 15 Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d8+30+15 hp 123; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +11; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +11 ranged (1d4, sling); Full Atk +11/+6/+1 melee (1d8, heavy mace) or +11 ranged (1d4, sling); SA rebuke undead, spells, spontaneous casting; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +7, Will +16; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +20, Knowledge (religion) +18, Spellcraft +18; Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy).

*Languages:* Common

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 3/day; 1d20+17; turning damage 2d6+15.

Cleric	Spells	Prepared
(6/7+1/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0— <i>cure minor wounds</i> (2), <i>detect magic</i> , <i>guidance</i> (2), <i>light</i> ; 1st— <i>bless</i> , <i>burning hands</i> *, <i>cure light wounds</i> (2), <i>divine favor</i> , <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>protection from good</i> , <i>shield of faith</i> ; 2nd— <i>bear's endurance</i> , <i>bull's strength</i> , <i>hold person</i> , <i>produce flame</i> *, <i>resist energy</i> , <i>silence</i> , <i>sound burst</i> ; 3rd— <i>bestow curse</i> , <i>burning hands</i> (empowered)*, <i>cure serious wounds</i> , <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>invisibility purge</i> , <i>magic vestment</i> , <i>prayer</i> ; 4th— <i>air walk</i> , <i>cure critical wounds</i> (2), <i>divine power</i> , <i>freedom of movement</i> , <i>inflict critical wounds</i> *, 5th— <i>flame strike</i> (2), <i>greater command</i> , <i>insect plague</i> , <i>mass inflict light wounds</i> *, <i>slay living</i> ; 6th— <i>blade barrier</i> , <i>greater dispel magic</i> , <i>harm</i> *, <i>heal</i> . 7th—		

*fire storm*\*, *flame strike* (empowered, 2); 8th—*fire storm*, *incendiary cloud*\*.

\***Domain spell.** Pyremius: Destruction (smite 1/day; make a single melee attack with a +4 bonus on the attack roll and a +15 bonus to damage if the attack hits; must be declared before the attack is made); Fire (turn/destroy water creatures, rebuke/command/bolster fire creatures 3/day).

*Possessions:* *cloak of resistance* +2, *lion's shield*, *ring of protection* +4, full plate armor, 2 wooden holy symbols of Pyremius, heavy mace, sling, 10 sling bullets, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *air walk*, *freedom of movement*):** SQ walk on air as though on solid ground, move and attack normally regardless of attempted impediments.

➤ **Frenzel:** male human wizard 15 (necromancer); CR 15 Medium humanoid (human); HD 15d4+30+15 hp 91; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4-1, dagger) or +8 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d4-1, dagger) or +8 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 8, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +20, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +21, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +23, Knowledge (nature) +23, Spellcraft +25, Spot +13; Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (transmutation).

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Giant, Infernal.

*Spells Prepared* (5/7/6/6/6/6/4/3/2; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*color spray*, *grease*, *mage armor*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (2), *glitterdust* (2), *mirror image*, *see invisibility*; 3rd—*protection from energy (fire)*, *ray of enfeeblement* (empowered, 2), *slow*, *stinking cloud*, *vampiric touch*; 4th—*dimension door*, *dispel magic* (silent), *enervation* (2), *Evard's black tentacles*, *stoneskin*; 5th—*baleful polymorph* (2), *dimension door* (silent), *overland flight*, *vampiric touch* (empowered), *waves of fatigue*; 6th—*disintegrate*, *false life* (quicken), *greater dispel magic*, *mirror image* (quicken); 7th—*displacement* (quicken), *spell turning*, *waves of exhaustion*; 8th—*horrid wilting*, *maze*.

*Prohibited Schools:* Enchantment, Evocation.

*Possessions:* 2 spell component pouches, 1 dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, *eyes of the eagle*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *figurine of wondrous power* (ivory goats), *ring of sustenance*, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Pre-cast – *mage armor*, *false life* (empowered), *overland flight*, *protection from energy (fire)*, *spell turning*,**

**stoneskin**): hp 113; Spd 30 ft. fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; SQ DR 10/adamantine, protection from fire (120 points), spell turning (8 spell levels).

➤ **Grawl/Torg**: male hill giant barbarian 6: CR 13 Large giant; HD 12d8+72 plus 6d12+36 hp 204; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +15; Grp +27; Atk +23 melee (2d8+12, greatclub) or +22 melee (1d4+8, slam) or +15 ranged (2d6+8, rock) ; Full Atk +23/+18/+13 melee (2d8+12, greatclub) or +22 melee (1d4+8, 2 slams) or +15 ranged (2d6+8, rock) ; Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ fast movement, improved uncanny dodge, low-light vision, rage 2/day, rock catching, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +21, Ref +8, Will +11; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

**Skills and Feats**: Listen +22, Spot +22, Survival +7 ; Blind-fight, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatclub).

**Languages**: Common, Giant.

**Possessions**: 2 Large greatclubs, Large hide armor, 5 throwing rocks, *cloak of resistance* +2, 4 emeralds (500 gp each), 1 garnet (100 gp).

**Power-Up Suite (Raging – prayer)**: hp 240; AC 19, touch 7, flat-footed 19 ; Grp +30; Atk +26 melee (2d8+16, greatclub) or +25 melee (1d4+11, slam) or +16 ranged (2d6+11, rock) ; Full Atk +26/+21/+16 melee (2d8+16, greatclub) or +25 melee (1d4+11, 2 slams) or +16 ranged (2d6+11, rock) ; SV Fort +24, Ref +9, Will +14; Str 30, Dex 10, Con 27, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 5.

**Skills and Feats**: Listen +23, Spot +23, Survival +8 .

## ENCOUNTER 9: THE MAGE AT BAY

➤ **Prince Verthek of Thornhold**: male human wizard 13 (invoker)/archmage 3; CR 16 Medium humanoid (human); HD 16d4+32 hp 81; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4+1, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d4+1, dagger) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 8, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 22, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats**: Concentration +21, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (royalty and nobility) +25, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (history) +25, Knowledge (Splintered Suns) +16, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +30; Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (spellcraft), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (transmutation), Still Spell.

**Languages**: Common, Auran, Draconic, Infernal, Old Eoridian.

**Mastery of Elements**: The archmage can alter an arcane spell when cast so that it utilizes a different element from the one it normally uses. This ability can only alter a spell with the acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic descriptor. The spell's casting time is unaffected.

The caster decides whether to alter the spell's energy type and chooses the new energy type when he begins casting. This ability costs one 8th-level spell slot.

**Spell Power**: This ability increases the archmage's effective caster level by +1 (for purposes of determining level-dependent spell variables such as damage dice or range, and caster level checks only). This ability costs one 5th-level spell slot.

**Arcane Reach (Su)**: The archmage can use spells with a range of touch on a target up to 30 feet away. The archmage must make a ranged touch attack. Arcane reach can be selected a second time as a special ability, in which case the range increases to 60 feet. This ability costs one 7th-level spell slot.

**Spells Prepared** (5/7/7/6/6/5/5/3/2; base DC = 16 + spell level; caster level 17th): 0—*detect magic, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation*; 1st— *alarm, charm person, color spray, expeditious retreat, magic missile, protection from evil, true strike*; 2nd- *bear's endurance, darkness, gust of wind, magic missile* (still), *magic missile* (silent), *see invisibility, touch of idiocy*; 3rd- *dispel magic, fireball, lightning bolt* (2), *magic missile* (still, silent), *slow*; 4th- *confusion, fireball* (silent), *greater invisibility, scorching ray* (empowered, 2), *wall of ice*; 5th- *dispel magic* (silent, still), *fireball* (empowered), *shield* (quicken), *transmute rock to mud, wall of force*; 6th- *chain lightning, greater dispel magic, magic missile* (quicken, still), *mirror image* (quicken), *touch of idiocy* (quicken); 7th- *cone of cold* (empowered), *forcecage, power word blind*; 8th- *Bigby's clenched fist, ~~mind blank~~*

**Prohibited Schools**: Conjurancy, Necromancy.

**Contingency**: If Verthek is subjected to any physical or magical attack, a *greater blink* immediately activates.

**Possessions**: 2 spell component pouches, dagger, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, statuette of Verthek (for *contingency*), 1500 gp of ruby dust (for *forcecage*).

➤ **Advanced 25 HD Dark Naga Sorcerer (3)**: advanced female dark naga sorcerer 4: CR 16 Huge aberration; HD 25d8+100 plus 4d4+16 hp 248; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +20; Grp +35; Atk +25 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, sting); Full Atk +25 melee (2d6+7 plus poison, sting) and +20 melee (1d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA poison, spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft., detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immunity to poison, resistance to charm; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +21 ; Str 24, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 13, Cha 26.

**Skills and Feats**: Bluff +40, Concentration +36, Diplomacy +36, Intimidate +36, Listen +34, Spellcraft +37, Spot +34; Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat Casting, Dodge, Enlarge Spell, Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell.

**Languages**: Common, Draconic, Infernal, Old Eoridian.

**Poison (Ex)**: Injury, Fortitude DC 26 or lapse into a nightmare-haunted sleep for 2d4 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Resistance to Charm:** Dark nagas have a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against all charm effects (not included in the statistics block).

**Detect Thoughts (Su):** A dark naga can continuously use detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 25th; Will DC 20 negates). This ability is always active. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Dark nagas are immune to any form of mind reading

*Sorcerer Spells Known* (6/8/8/8/8/5; save DC 18 + spell level; caster level 11th): *0*—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic*; *1st*—*expeditious retreat, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield, silent image*; *2nd*—*cat's grace, invisibility, mirror image, scorching ray, touch of idiocy*; *3rd*—*dispel magic, displacement, lightning bolt, wind wall*; *4th*—*bestow curse, polymorph, wall of ice*; *5<sup>th</sup>*—*telekinesis, teleport*.



## APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

### IMPROVED TOUGHNESS

#### [GENERAL]

*Complete Warrior*

You are significantly tougher than normal.

**Prerequisite:** Base Fortitude save bonus +2.

**Benefit:** You gain a number of hit points equal to your current Hit Dice. Each time you gain a HD (such as by gaining a level), you gain 1 additional hit point. If you lose a HD (such as by losing a level), you lose 1 hit point permanently.

**Special:** A fighter may select Improved Toughness as one of his fighter bonus feats.

### BLINK, GREATER

*Spell Compendium*

Transmutation

Level: Bard 5, Celerity 8, Sorcerer/wizard 5.

This spell functions like *blink* (*Player's Handbook* page 206), except that you have control over the timing of your "blinking" back and forth between the Ethereal Plane and the Material Plane. You can also ready an action to blink away from any physical or magical attack. The attack misses automatically unless it also affects ethereal targets (as a force effect does). While blinking, you have no chance of interfering with your own attacks or your own spells. When moving through solid objects, you do not risk materializing inside one unless you actually end your movement there, in which case you materialize and are shunted off to the nearest open space, taking 1d6 points of damage per 5 feet traveled in this manner.

### VERTHEK'S ORB

*VertheK's orb* is a *crystal ball with telepathy*, with the additional lesser powers of *bless* (3/day), *deathwatch* (continually active), and *zone of truth* (3/day), and the special purpose power of bestowing a +2 luck bonus on its wielder's attacks, saves, and checks. The orb has Int 17, Wis 17, and Cha 10; can communicate via speech or telepathy; speaks Common, Old Oeridian, Draconic, and Infernal; and has 120 ft. darkvision and hearing. Its alignment is Lawful Evil. The orb has hardness 10 and 15 hp; all its saves are at +11 (this is the result of using stone from the Causeway).

The orb has the special purpose to Preserve the Land. It desires only a feudal utopia in which serfs till the soil peacefully, the lord protects his lands, and everyone obeys the will of his feudal superiors without delay or hesitation. In pursuit of this idyll, there is no lie to which it would not stoop, no atrocity before which it would quail, and no sea of blood through which it would not have its wielder wade. It willingly serves only one it recognizes as a true lord of a fiefdom. This does not include any PCs or their cohorts under

any circumstances (regardless of any noble titles they may happen to have; it takes at least half a millennium to prove a bloodline in the orb's book). In the hands of a PC, personality conflicts are frequent (Will save DC 14 to avoid falling under the orb's control) and the orb flatly refuses to grant its luck bonus.

The orb's origins in the *Causeway of Fiends* bring an additional burden. Two days after a character claims it, he begins to be troubled by vague, haunting whispers and visions of half-glimpsed landscapes in the hours of darkness, regardless of whether the character needs to sleep. These presences undermine the character's health, imposing a -2 penalty on her Constitution. This penalty cannot be overcome by any known means while the orb is in the character's possession, but disappears, along with the disturbing visions, seven days after it leaves his ownership.

Moderate divination and strong evil; CL 19<sup>th</sup>; Cannot Be Crafted; Price 160 200 gp; Weight 7lb.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 1

*Father,*

*My first day in Dustbridge finds me in good health, and better humor. The journey here from Delaric was variegated by colorful incident and good companionship. Doubtless, travel on the wings of spells would have been swifter, but I would venture to wager that it would have been a dull, drab undertaking by comparison. Perhaps that old priest of the Dweller on the Horizon did your grand-sire a service, after all...*

*The hostelry at which I now lodge should suit my purposes admirably. The inn-keep says that if I can find better food than his in fifty leagues, then may the Soul Forger wither his beard. From what I tasted at dinner, my host's beard is safe.*

*Those with whom I conversed in Delaric say that Dustbridge offers unique experiences and unusual opportunities for enlightenment and instruction. I cannot wait to put these claims to the test, and to share with you the fruits of these labors. I remain,*

*Your loving son,  
Grenthal.*

## PLAYER HANDOUT 2

*Your dreams this night are... unusual. It seems that you float high in the air above a troubled main. Brine scours your mouth, but the buffeting winds cannot dislodge you from your impossible perch.*

*As you look at the sea below you, you see that not all of it, after all, is in motion. A thin straight granite causeway slashes the face of the deep, joining the mainland to an island. But this causeway is not above the surface of the sea; against all sanity, it runs across what should be the ocean bed. The baffled waters rise eighty feet or more on either side of it, yet the causeway, and the air above it, stands inviolate...*

*The vision ends, and you wake.*

## PLAYER HANDOUT 3

[The following is written in Old Oeridian]

*Theirs was the oldest struggle, and the highest cause. Good and evil are light unwoven in their prism; pretty hues for children to gape at, that change as the lamp moves, but the prism remains. Without Law waits only Miska; the maw that yammers and howls, the webs that bind. This the Dukes of the Wind understood, and so made the Rod to confront it.*

## PLAYER HANDOUT 4

[The following is written in Old Oeridian]

*...for stone taken thence is a mighty thing, whereby a spellshaper may pass the bounds of skill he is allotted, but its price is one whereat even the Old Ones balked. Let the forging be without spot, warded with cunning and wrought with skill, yet the least disturbance ere the ritual's end will bring ruin; for those things for which the place of the stone is named are jealous of their treasure, and will come forth to ravage without stint or limit if the hand should falter or the tongue should trip in the casting...*

## DM'S AID: TIMELINE OF EVENTS

<b>Pre-History</b>	Entities known as the <i>Wind Dukes of Aaga</i> , champions of unbending Law, bind air elementals to their service and create items of power in their struggle against the Queen of Chaos and her consort Miska. The greatest of the latter is the artifact that would later become known as the <i>Rod of Seven Parts</i> .
<b>CY 515</b>	Verthek is born as the heir to the Principality of Thornhold, which at this time is one of many tiny Principalities scattered throughout the North Province of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy.
<b>CY 550</b>	Verthek weds Nenna of Cranden.
<b>CY 554</b>	Verthek becomes Prince of Thornhold on the death of his father. His wife Nenna bears a son, Varen.
<b>CY 556</b>	Ivid V, last Overking of the old Great Kingdom, ascends to the Malachite Throne.
<b>CY 566</b>	The group portrait in Verthek's study is painted.
<b>CY 574</b>	Verthek's son Varen dies in the course of military service for Verthek's liege, the Herzog of North Province. Nenna dies as well shortly thereafter.
<b>CY 576</b>	Gerelt of Torquann, the Prince of the neighboring realm, begins secretly to sponsor mercenary actions against Thornhold, believing that Verthek's access to the protective resources of the powerful House of Cranden have weakened with the death of his wife.
<b>CY 582</b>	The Greyhawk Wars begin. Thornhold is increasingly beset by bandits, and the Principality is soon in financial difficulties.
<b>CY 584</b>	Herzog Grenell of Naelax, the ruler of North Province, declares independence from the old Great Kingdom. The Greyhawk Wars end.
<b>CY 586</b>	Grenell of Naelax is crowned Overking of the Kingdom of Northern Aerdy (North Kingdom), of which Thornhold is a vassal Principality.
<b>CY 595</b>	Grenthal Frone departs on his Grand Tour, visiting Rel Deven and Delaric. Thornhold's finances reach a state of crisis, and Verthek starts preparations to forge his <i>orb</i> .
<b>CY 595</b>	Grenthal sends his last letter to his father from Dustbridge.
<b>Late Coldeven</b>	
<b>CY 596</b>	Henther Frone hires the PCs; the adventure begins.
<b>Late Wealsun</b>	
<b>CY 596</b>	Grenthal is found in the <i>Blood Haven</i> ; Verthek begins the penultimate stage of his ritual; the elemental attacks occur.
<b>End of Wealsun</b>	
<b>Richfest 596</b>	Gilgrann meets the PCs; Verthek begins the last stage of his ritual.
<b>Moonday</b>	
<b>Richfest 596</b>	Unless interrupted, the ritual that forges the <i>orb</i> ends at 7 pm on this day.
<b>Godsday</b>	

## DM'S AID: LOCATIONS AT A GLANCE

**👑Kalstrand (large city):** Conventional; AL: LE; 40,000 gp; Population 24,000; Mixed (Human 79%, Halfling 9%, Elf 5%, Dwarf 2%, Gnome 2%, Half-elf 1%, Half-orc 1%, Orc 1%).

*Authority Figures:* Xavener (NE human male rogue 15), Overking of the United Kingdom of Ahlissa, Grand Prince of Kalstrand, Crowned Head of the Celestial House of Darman.

*Important Characters:* Rachern (LE human female aristocrat 12), Queen Consort; Larissen (LN human male cleric 19 – Zilchus) Grand Patriarch of Zilchus; Paldred (LE human male fighter 12), Prince of Darman, commander of the Kalstrand Garrison.

**Overview:** Kalstrand is the capital of the United Kingdom of Ahlissa, the most powerful of the successor states to rise from the ashes of the Great Kingdom of Aerdy. Untouched by the ravages of the Greyhawk Wars, this former provincial city has stepped from obscurity to take its place among the great capitals of the Flanaess. Trade is the foundation upon which Kalstrand's glittering palaces, temples and monuments are built. Wealth, privilege and profit are worshiped here and all power flows from them. The poor are naught but another commodity to be bought and sold. No other Ahlissan city so embodies the ethos of the princes of the Celestial House of Darman, the noble house that dominates the United Kingdom. Kalstrand is the fruit of their ambition and a mirror to the darkness of their souls. It is a city where a smile can hide a thousand betrayals. Like a true Darman, Kalstrand conceals its evil behind a glittering façade.

(from *Kalstrand: City of Gold* by Paul Looby)

**👑Dustbridge (large town):** Conventional; AL NE; 3,000 gp; Population 3,000; Mixed (Human 79%, Halfling 9%, Elf 3%, Dwarf 2%, Gnome 2%, Half-elf 1%, Half-orc 2%, Orc 2%).

*Authority Figures:* Strychan, (NE (CE) human male wizard 14) Prince of the House of Naelax.

*Important Characters:* Benzedon (LN human male cleric 9 - Zilchus), Lord Gilgrann of Torquann (N human male aristocrat 1/ bard 7), local land-owner.

**Overview:** Dustbridge is a place of surfaces and deceptions. Its inhabitants seem contented enough; the town weathered the Greyhawk Wars without difficulty, and has prospered since them. However, its Prince, Strychan, is a man of surpassing sadism and cruelty, a connoisseur of tortures. Many of the richer townsfolk ape their liege, and there is a manic and cruel edge to Dustbridge's revels which are disturbing even by the standards of such places as Eastfair.

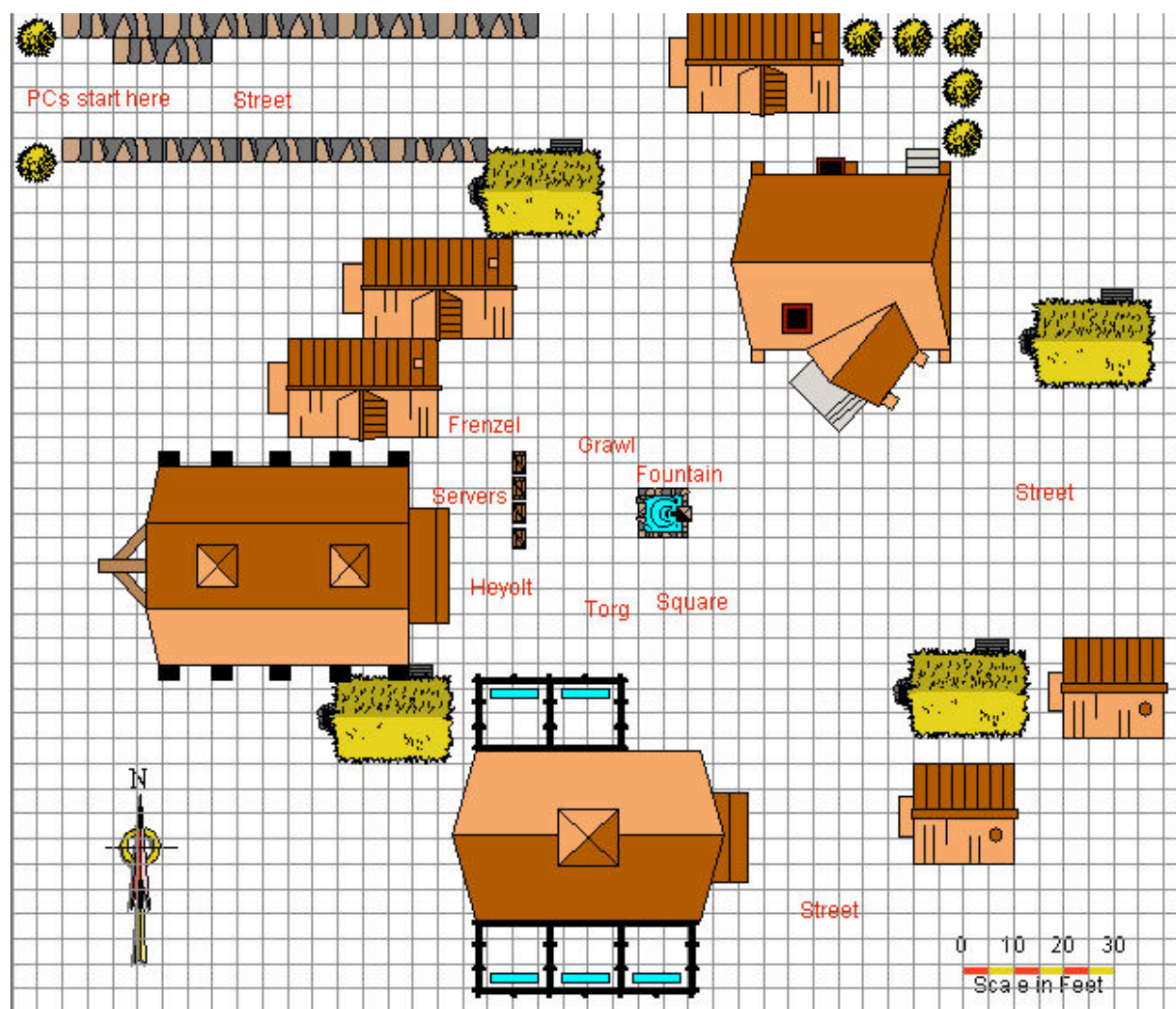
**👑Thornhold (small town):** Conventional; AL LN; 800 gp; Population 1,000; Isolated (Human 96%, Halfling 2%, Elf 1%, Half-Orc 1%).

*Authority Figures:* Verthek (LN human male wizard), Prince of the House of Garasteth.

*Important Characters:* Beret (LN human male expert 3) inn-keeper, Fenerel (LN human female cleric 6 – Stern Alia) local priestess.

**Overview:** Thornhold is presented in Encounter 4. It is a community in decline, beset by arrogant neighbors and almost at the limits of its resources.

## DM'S AID: THORNHOLD SQUARE



# DM'S AID: VERTHEK'S HOUSE

