

KEO3-03

Will of the People

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®] Keoland Regional Adventure

Version 1.1

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Within the Earldom of Linth, generations of mixed-blood humans have long railed against the Suloise noble house that has oppressed them. Now, the Earl's lands teeter on the brink of rebellion, and King Kimbertos has ordered a meeting between the Earl of Linth and the leader of his oppressed minority. Is this the first step towards peace – or war? A Keoland regional adventure for APLs 4-12 and Part One of the “Linth” series.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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Introduction

This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario, but the actual playing time will be closer to three and a half hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Preparation

First you should print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided will work as well. There is enough room along the inside margin to bind the adventure, if you desire.

Read this entire adventure at least once before you run your game. Be sure to familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

When you run an RPGA D&D adventure we assume that you have access to the following books: the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. We also assume that you have a set of dice (at least one d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20), some scrap paper, a pencil, an RPGA scoring packet, and your sense of fun. It is also a good idea to have a way to track movement during combat. This can be as simple as a pad of graph paper and a pencil, as handy as a vinyl grid map and chits, or as elaborate as resin dungeon walls and miniatures.

Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described in the introduction.

Keep in mind that you must have at least three players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than six players participating in the game.

Once you are ready to play, it is handy to instruct each player to place a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That

said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1. No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK

Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the

RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer*.

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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 being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc) use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. 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.
3. Sum the results of 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.

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

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will 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 you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the

face that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1st-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in Keoland. Characters native to Keoland pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

Is It a Full Moon?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

Adventure Background & Summary

(Note: Extensive background information on the House Linth and the Earldom of Linth is available at Keoland's website: <http://keoland.living-greyhawk.com>. That information is not needed to run this module, but it will help with providing background information to the players.)

The adventure begins as Earl Lucius of House Linth hires the party to escort him from Dredstadt to Laketowne. The Earl is meeting with Estren the Minstrel, the leader of the rebellious faction in the Earldom that seeks to topple the House of Linth and free themselves of the yoke of the tyrannous ruling house. During the first leg of the journey, the party has an opportunity to interact with the Earl and his escort, his nephew Averyn. Also, the overland journey shows the characters the supernatural blight that plagues the Earl's lands.

In Encounter One, an unknown antagonist deliberately informs a mob of peasants of the Earl's itinerary. The mob is already angry because of the anniversary of a pogrom against their people years ago.

The mob confronts the entourage. Attacking the peasant mob will be disastrous for negotiations with the anti-Linth rebels in Laketowne. The peasants probably present no real danger to a party of armed adventurers, but diplomacy and cool heads do best in this encounter.

In Encounter Two, the group arrives in Laketowne and is escorted into the city.

In Encounter Three, the PCs get to meet Estren, the leader of the rebels, and his aides. The Earl will encourage the group to talk with the members of the rebels, as Lucius hopes the group will supply him with information that will be useful for leverage in the talks.

This first day at the inn will allow the party to continue role-playing, this time with the rebels and especially the head of their delegation, Estren the Minstrel. This role-

playing will be important to further fill out the reasons for the antipathy between them and to allow the players to formulate an opinion and take sides.

The negotiations begin during Encounter Four. Through a series of dialogue snippets from the negotiations, it becomes clear that things are not going well. By the evening of the second day, the group should realize that the negotiations are stalled. The rebels will point to the breakup of the mob by the Knights of the Watch (or the PCs!) as proof that the Earl is not prepared to deal with their movement by any other method except violence.

Encounter Five finds that a group of very dangerous assassins attempts to kidnap Estren the Minstrel, the rebel leader. Intercepted by the characters, a fight will ensue. This will be a powerful mixed force, with the same number of levels as the PCs.

This is the catalyst of the adventure. Estren will accuse Lucius of hiring the assassins, a charge that Lucius will (truthfully) deny. Estren is aware that Lucius is a man of enormous wealth and will refuse to accept divinations such as *Zone of Truth*, claiming (correctly) that a noble of Lucius' wealth could purchase enchanted items that could confound such magic. (Indeed, the Earl wears an amulet that does just that) A brawl will nearly break out between the two delegations, before Lucius asks Estren if he will trust the characters to look into the matter independently.

Assuming the PCs have been acting properly, Estren will agree. The rebel leader gives the party 24 hours in which to discover who is behind the assassination. An important clue comes from a silver death's head pendant carried by the leader of the assassins.

Encounter Six deals with the investigation of the assassination. There will be a number of different avenues the character can pursue in the investigation. Examples include questioning any surviving or captured assassins; tracking the assassins back to their point of origin and discovering a clue; etc. Their search will reveal the existence of the Shadowdark, the city's thieves' guild.

Unbeknownst to the party or to Milo Astra (see below), the guildmistress of the Shadowdark within Laketowne is a member of the House of Linth, a niece of the Earl's. She has sequestered herself in a small but heavily protected underground hideaway beneath the streets of Laketowne. This area is Encounter Seven.

The Shadowdark doesn't wish to be implicated in the assassination plot (especially considering who their guildmistress is, and who the assassins' target was). They reveal that someone who attempted to hire them for a murder contacted them. The Shadowdark turned down

the offer – they're a guild of thieves, not assassins – but took an interest in the attempted hiring. They never got far enough into the negotiations for the would-be patron to reveal the assassination's target. If he had, the guildmistress would have immediately warned her uncle.

To get this information, the party will have to make peaceful contact with the guild. This is not as hard as it sounds; in this instance, the guild desires to help the party as it will serve to clear their own names and that of the Earl.

Attacking the guildmistress of the Shadowdark will earn the party her enmity – a dangerous thing!

The party ultimately gathers enough information to lead them to the head of the plot. This is Astra, a member of Estren's entourage, and a former member of the Knights of the Watch.

In Encounter Eight - in a suitably dramatic fashion - the party will arrive just as Milo Astra has incapacitated Estren and is about to slay him. A fight will ensue, where the former Watcher will fight to the death. Having exposed the assassin, saved Estren and cleared the Earl's name, both sides agree to continue negotiations. The simmering cauldron of civil war cools – for now.

Knights of the Watch as PCs

It is possible that one or more of the PCs in this scenario may be members of the Knights of the Watch. The DM should relate to the PC Knight(s) that the Commandant of Fortress Goarada (the Watcher's stronghold in Linth) has ordered the Knight to proceed with all haste to Dredstadt on a mission of the utmost importance. The Commandant tells the Knight that he will be contacted by Averyn Linth, who will have further orders for the PC at that time. Finally, the Knight is to place himself at the Earl's disposal.

Introduction

Today is a bleak day in the city of Dredstadt in the Earldom of Linth. Warm, steady rain has soaked you to the bone, leaving the air heavy and humid. Even within the Iron Stone Inn, the lingering dampness of the air makes your clothes cling to you and leaves your skin covered in a moist sheen.

It is around noon when all eyes turn to the doorway as a man enters the Inn's common room. Most glance at him only quickly, then lower their eyes to the floor, bowing at the waist in deference. As the man passes them, however, scowls can be seen on their faces. The man is Suel, clean-shaven, with pale skin

and light hair. He is dressed in a suit of plate and wears a tabard across his armor bearing a coat of arms – that of the Earl, Lucius Linth.

The man approaches you and gives a thin smile devoid of humor. His accent betrays him as a member of the nobility, and a resident of this region. "Hail and greetings to you. I am Averyn Linth, nephew to the Earl, and a knight in the service of Rao. I bring you this missive and hope that you will see fit to accept the invitation contained therein." He crisply hands you a scroll tube made of fine ivory, turns sharply on one heel, and leaves.

The tube is of exceptional quality, with one end having a delicate silver hinge, held closed not by a latch but by a delicate spring. Snapping the tube's end open with your thumb, you ease out a piece of fine vellum rolled closed and sealed with wax.

☛ **Averyn Linth:** Male Human (Suloise) Pal1.

Distribute **Player Handout #1**. Whether they are together or not, each character will receive one. The tubes are worth 10 gp each and may be retained by the characters. Only PCs with ranks in Appraise will know this (DC 10).

Assuming the characters accept the Earl's invitation, they can all meet at the designated spot to await the arrival of the Earl's carriage. Allow a few minutes for players to introduce and describe their characters to one another, and then read the following:

The sound of slow hoofbeats can be heard shortly before a large carriage – clearly that of a wealthy noble – appears out of the persistent mist and fog. The coach's driver is the same individual who contacted you earlier in the day. The coach draws alongside the curb, and the driver – no longer wearing armor but instead the outfit of a courtier – climbs down and opens the door. He gives a polite bow and motions to the coach's interior. From within, you can make out a single figure – Lucius, the Earl of Linth.

The Earl is dressed in magnificent, almost decadent, robes made of the sheerest silk of different hues of silver and black that have not been sewn, but woven, in a lattice-like fashion. The Earl is Suel, in his mid-fifties, and somewhat portly. Above his piercing blue eyes, a single silver circlet holds his wispy blond hair neatly in place. He wears little jewelry, but the pieces that you see appear to be of great value. The most notable is an amulet of dark beauty, made of obsidian and studded with tiny black opals.

He waits for the carriage door to shut and leans forward. As he begins speaking, the coach begins to move, each hoofbeat a crisp, staccato sound on the cobblestone streets. "I apologize for the need to meet in privacy, but there is much afoot. And I would think a cool breeze from a coach ride would do us all no small amount of good. Wouldn't you agree?"

☛ **Lucius, Earl of Linth:** Male Human (Suloise) Ari4.

The Earl's exact statistics are unimportant for this module. However, it is important to note that the Earl's amulet is a powerful magic item that (among other things) confounds any attempts to discern his alignment. (This amulet will play a *very* important role in future modules set in Linth). Any attempts to detect his alignment will simply fail.

The Earl will allow PCs to introduce themselves, and he listens intently to each PC as they do. He will nod politely to each one in turn. When the characters have finished, read the following:

With your greetings concluded, the Earl speaks to you, his voice quick and precise. "I must make haste to the north, to Laketowne. I am leaving this night, for my mission is an important one. The journey could be hazardous, and I seek a group of armed escorts. The assignment will continue while we are in Laketowne, for a few days at least. I will of course pay you each an appropriate sum for your time and abilities. I can assure you that this matter is vital to the stability of my lands and the Kingdom of Keoland as a whole."

The characters may have some questions for the Earl, samples of which are listed below.

What is your mission?

"My mission is an important one. My domain has suffered the rumblings of rebellion for some time. Indeed, a group of organized rebels has formed, and they propose to overthrow the House of Linth. Of course, this must be avoided at all costs. King Kimbertos has commanded me to meet in Laketowne with a representative of this rebel faction, a man known as Estren the Minstrel."

Who is Estren? What do you know about him?

"He is said to be a charismatic man, as befits his profession. He seems to hold the loyalty of those who follow him, and he is no fool. I have met him before, when he came to our ancestral manse to perform for us... he is among the best minstrels in the land, you understand. I have no idea why a man who makes his

trade performing for nobles would throw his support behind a group seeking to overthrow me."

Does Estren have any reason to hate you?

"I don't see how he could. I've only met him a few times, when he performed for my family, and I can't imagine how he would come to hate us. We were generous with our coin when it came time to pay him for his performances. Perhaps that Keogh blood of his makes him sympathetic to his kind. No offense intended towards anyone, of course..."

Why are the people of your land moving towards revolution?

"While we are stern rulers, we have always been fair ones. Of late, however, my lands have been plagued with a terrible blight, one that defies the efforts of wizard and druid alike. My people are beginning to starve, and nothing is more dangerous than a commoner with an empty belly. I've contributed coin from my own coffers in an attempt to help, but I can't seem to make them happy. I was about to ask the Knights of the Watch to smash this rebellion before it gets out of hand, but the King instead arranged this meeting in hopes of preventing a civil war."

Who are the Knights of the Watch? What is your involvement with them?

"The Knights are an organization that is headquartered in the Gran March but its Knights are spread throughout the Sheldomar Valley. They have seen action against the Ketites as well as the giant incursions in Geoff. They are a benevolent order given to fanciful titles. The Knights, in exchange for the right to build a fortress within the Earldom, agreed years ago to serve House Linth as the constabulary of the region. Given the current climate among the commoners, you can imagine that the Knights are not well-liked."

What about this blight on the land?

"No one is sure when it started, but it has gotten worse with each passing year. Animals sicken, crops die, and nothing grows. I have managed to shift my domain's production from agriculture to smithing and mining to keep the commoners working. But they must eat, and the longer they go without food, the more control I lose over the situation."

[The blight started five years ago (588 CY), but no NPC recalls any significant events occurring during that year.]

Who are your enemies?

"I am a powerful man, and as such, I have many. I know of no one who would seek to interfere with this mission

specifically, but there are many who would seek to do me harm, given the chance.”

How much are you paying us?

“Hmmp. Afraid that I’ll short-change you or something? It is five platinum griffins each, if that makes a difference. You will also earn my favor – something far more valuable in the long term.”

How far of a journey is it?

“We will be following the northern road to Laketowne, on Lake Athetki, about forty miles from here. This road leaves us far enough way from the druids of the Esberedeth that we will be left alone.”

Do you think the druids have anything to do with the Blight?

“No. Though I wish I could prove they were involved in such treasonous acts. I’d love to drive them from my lands. They follow dark gods, that lot, but as druids they have the favor of our King, a ranger of no small skill.”

Who is your messenger, the driver of the coach?

“The young man is my nephew, Averyn Linth. He is a holy warrior in the service to Rao, newly initiated. He is someone whom I can trust, so I accepted his petition to accompany me.”

Who knows about this mission?

“We have tried to keep it as secret as possible. My mission is known only to the leaders of the rebel resistance, the Knights of the Watch who serve me and protect these lands, some select members of my family, and to King Kimbertos and his aides.”

What kind of resistance might we encounter?

“I don’t know, but the peasantry is in an uproar.”

If the Knights of the Watch serve you, why not have them escort you?

“A full contingent of Watchers would attract far too much notice and virtually guarantee problems with the peasantry. I need a smaller, more diversified group that would look like the bodyguards hired to protect a noble but not be an obvious royal escort for an Earl.”

If the players suggest it themselves, they may be able to glean some information about the current state of affairs within the Earldom. PCs with Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Knowledge (history), Bardic Knowledge, or a related knowledge skill dealing *specifically* with the Earldom of Linth may be able to gain information. Award a +3 circumstance bonus to any Knights of the Watch (of

any rank), and allow them to use an INT check instead of a Knowledge skill if they lack an appropriate skill.

Have players make their checks and consult the table below and read each piece of information that applies (from the lowest roll to the highest one made by the PC):

Roll of 5 or better: *House Linth has put upon the commoners of Linth, who are mostly of Oeridian descent, for centuries. These non-Suel, collectively known as the Keogh, have grievances against the Earl.*

Roll of 10 or better: *In the past, the Knights of the Watch swore an oath to the reigning Earl of Linth. Since then, the Watchers have become the constabulary of the Earldom. The Watchers are disliked, even hated, by the commoners.*

Roll of 15 or better: *About a hundred and thirty-five years ago, a murderous Watcher marched into the Linth’s ancestral manse and beheaded the heir-apparent, Lady Magdalene, before falling on his sword. No one knows his motive for the act.*

Roll of 20 or better: *To make matters worse, the Watcher who assassinated the Earl wasn’t a Suel. The House of Linth painted the attack as an attempted coup d’etat by a rogue Watcher in league with the Keogh majority.*

Roll of 25 or better: *At the behest of the Earl, the Knights of the Watch cracked down on the commoners harshly. The Keogh still remember these bitter times as “The Nights of Long Lances.”*

Roll of 30 or better (or a 25 or better, and the player specifically asks): *The anniversary of the Nights of Long Lances is already being remembered. The passions of the commoners will be the most enflamed – this is a dangerous time for the Earl to be travelling across the countryside!*

The characters are free to accept or decline the Earl’s offer, with no umbrage taken by the Earl if they choose the latter. Assuming they accept:

“Excellent. Averyn,” the Earl calls out to the driver, “take us back. These fine souls have agreed to accompany us.” He smiles. “I’m pleased. I was worried that I would have to attempt the journey alone. My carriage will drop all of you off so that you may gather your belongings and make preparations. Once you have readied yourselves, take the south road out of town about a quarter mile to my mansion. I will meet you outside the gates. If you do not have a mount, inform Averyn and we will be certain to have a riding horse waiting for you.”

The Earl makes small talk with you until you arrive back at your meeting place. There, Averyn opens the carriage doors, allowing each of you to exit before closing the door, returning to the coach driver's seat, and wheeling the coach out of town.

Allow the group to make whatever purchases they wish – although they must do so quickly, as the hour grows late and the shops within Dredstadt are beginning to close. When they have done so and head towards Linth Manor, read the following:

Night is now upon you. Not far outside of town, an ancient looming edifice can be seen. Fifteen-foot high gates of black, wrought iron surround the ancestral manor of House Linth. No grass can be seen, and the trees scattered about are twisted and warped, without foliage. The manse itself is built of some deep black stone, sprawling with two large three-story wings abutting a five-story, square central tower.

Sitting before the closed gates is the same dark carriage of the Earl. Averyn stands before it, arms folded across his chest, and he nods to you.

As promised, Averyn will have mounts on hand for anyone who needs one – fast Keoish riding horses, fully equipped with saddle and tack.

☛ **Light Horse(s):** hp 19 each; see *Monster Manual*.

If requested, Averyn will allow one PC to ride beside him on the coach. Any PC that does finds Averyn to be pleasant enough company, although he does not share any information about his family beyond to say that they are “well-meaning people” who have ruled Linth for centuries. If he is asked any mission-related questions, he will answer similarly to the Earl (refer to the list of questions and answers listed previously in this section). No PC will be allowed to ride with the Earl; the carriage is the vehicle of a noble, not a taxi.

When the group has decided on a travelling formation and has made all of their preparations, pass out **Player Handout #2** as Averyn distributes fine vellum maps of the Earldom to each of the characters.

Lucius and Averyn will not accept any sort of alternate route – partly out of pride, but mainly because the carriage is only an effective conveyance on a well-maintained road.

The journey will take about forty-eight hours, with the players arriving at Laketowne just after nightfall two days from now. The carriage will cover sixteen miles a day on the road.

Treasure: The payment from the Earl and the scroll tube are the only treasure here.

All APLs: L: 1 gp; C: 50 gp; M: 0 gp.

Encounter One: Discretion and Valor

Leaving the gloomy spires of the Linth manse and the dark architecture of Dredstadt behind, your group begins its trek across the heartland of the Earldom. The blight is evident here, moving unchecked throughout the Earl's lands. Some grasses are so yellowed and brittle that they appear to be made of old paper and even crumble into dust against the breeze. Trees are stunted and warped into weird shapes, and any kindling collected for the cooking fire lends an odd purple tinge to the flames.

Not all of the first day's travel is grim, however. Averyn Linth is good company, and the weather is temperate and pleasant. When asked about the blight, Averyn can only tell you that it appeared five years ago. It began in the vicinity of these lands, and spread like wildfire over the course of that year. He relates that the druids of the land were at first suspected, but their own lands soon fell under the blight and even they have been unable to undo it.

The Earl keeps to himself, remaining in seclusion inside the carriage where he reads or dozes. Shortly after dusk on the first night, Averyn calls for a halt to break for camp.

Allow the group to make preparations to camp. If the players announce that they are searching the area, the mob will jump from their hiding places before they are discovered in an attempt to retain the element of surprise.

It is possible that the PCs might use forward scouts, such as familiars, magic or stealthy PCs. Allow a Spot check (DC 15 from the road, or DC 10 from the air) for anyone scouting ahead to spot the ambush party lying in wait. If the commoners are spotted, the PCs have to decide whether to choose to confront or evade them. In either case, the Earl will not abandon his carriage, so the road must be cleared or made safe by the PCs in some fashion to allow its passage.

If the PCs confront the commoners, the DM will need to modify the canned text descriptions below based on how they deal with them. The Earl will react to whatever method the PCs adopt (lethal force, non-lethal force, intimidation or diplomacy) as described below. The DM can begin with the third paragraph of canned text below for PCs that begin to parley with the angry mob while the carriage is still a safe distance away from them.

Angry shouts and catcalls interrupt the calm of the evening. About two-dozen humans – dressed in the garb of commoners – charge out of hiding places around the road. It is evident that they were awaiting your arrival. They wear no armor, and crude clubs comprise their only weapons.

“That’s his carriage all right, and one of his kin!” one of the men cries. A well-thrown club flies out of the night, striking Averyn in the head. He slumps, unconscious, without even crying out. The rest of the men surround the campsite.

“We’ve got a hundred-year-old bone to pick with the good Earl,” another man cries out. “Remember the Nights of the Long Lances!”

Despite their fervor, you catch nervous glances being exchanged between some of the farmers. These folk are obviously not fighters, and though you are outnumbered you could probably prevail by force or arms.

Any APL (EL 8):

👉 **Peasants (16):** hp 3 each; see Appendix I.

During the encounter, the Earl will not emerge from his carriage. He has no fear of this rabble, but he is curious as to how his bodyguards handle themselves and waits to see how the situation unfolds. He won’t take any action against his would-be attackers – they are effectively a mob of traitors, but Lucius knows that any action taken against them will lead to pain at the negotiating table. Thus, he will insist they be let go after (if) they are questioned.

There are essentially four ways the characters can handle this situation – lethal force, non-lethal force, intimidation, or diplomacy. In certain cases, more than one solution may be applicable (for example, some of the commoners are incapacitated, while others are slain). In this case, choose the *worst* result.

To keep players from shouting over each other, ask them to designate the character that is doing most of the talking.

Lethal Force:

Only the tiniest and lowest-level groups will have any problems defeating the commoners. Indeed, they will break and run if more than half of their number is killed or incapacitated. These ham-handed tactics are effective but will earn the disdain of the Earl. They’ve just made his job more difficult.

The Earl emerges from the carriage, surveying the damage you have caused, and his lips tighten into a thin grimace. “Damn it! I hired you to protect me and aid in this mission, not to kill peasants and make it more difficult! Surely adventurers of your caliber could have restrained yourselves! I could certainly not have been able to bargain with them myself, but perhaps you would have been able, had you tried!”

“Strange,” he continues, as he looks to his unconscious nephew, “from their words and their ambush, they clearly knew I was coming. But only a trusted few knew of my exact itinerary and schedule.” He folds his arms across his chest, contemplative.

Non-Lethal Force:

This represents such tactics as attacking to subdue, or spells such as *sleep*, *web* or *hold person* that can render the commoners helpless without hurting them. This is much preferable than simply wading in and slaughtering them, but the commoners will still harbor hatred for the Earl’s men who beat or ensorcelled them into submission.

The Earl emerges from the carriage, surveying the scene, and frowns. “I hired you to protect me and aid in this mission, not to fight peasants and make it more difficult. Your restraint is appreciated, but they will carry word back to their fellows. I could certainly not have been able to bargain with them myself, but perhaps you would have been able.”

“Strange,” he continues, as he looks to his unconscious nephew, “from their words and their ambush, they clearly knew I was coming. But only a trusted few knew of my exact itinerary and schedule.” He folds his arms across his chest, contemplative.

Intimidation:

This represents use of the skill of the same name, or by spells such as *fear* or *scare*. For purposes of an Intimidate check, the mob should be considered a single creature of 8 HD (i.e. a DC 18 check is needed to cow them). If successful, the mob will back away, heading back down the road towards Dredstadt. If the Intimidate check fails, or if the characters further harass the cowed group, their resolve will return and they will attack. Obviously, fear-based spells that work will cause the commoners to run off (and they keep running even beyond the spell’s duration) and if enough of the mob runs, even those that aren’t affected by the spell will follow suit.

The Earl emerges from the carriage, surveying the scene, and purses his lips. “Your restraint is

appreciated. My thanks. It is a shame that you hadn't attempted to parlay with them instead of frightening them off. Perhaps it would have been helpful in the negotiations. I could certainly not have been able to bargain with them myself, but perhaps you would have been able."

"Strange," he continues, as he looks to his unconscious nephew, "from their words and their ambush, they clearly knew I was coming. But only a trusted few knew of my exact itinerary and schedule." He folds his arms across his chest, contemplative.

Diplomacy:

This is the best option for the PCs, but it is a difficult one. The DC for a Diplomacy (or, at the DM's discretion and depending on the situation, Bluff) skill check is 15 + the APL at which the adventure is being played.

If the check fails, the mob will have had enough of the character, and they will shout him or her down. The DM should adjudicate the results of what happens next based on further PC action and using the results of other options as a guideline.

If the check succeeds, read the following:

The wind seems to have been taken out of their sails by your words. They glower at the Earl's carriage but begin to back away. The most vocal of their group still raise their fists in rage and shout at the carriage, but they allow themselves to be pulled away by their fellows.

Once the last of the angry mob has vanished, the Earl emerges from the carriage. He surveys the scene and nods in satisfaction. "Your restraint is appreciated. My thanks. Parlaying with them instead of resorting to force may be helpful in the negotiations. It is good that you sought to speak with them; I could certainly not have been able to do so myself."

"Strange," he continues, as he looks to his unconscious nephew, "from their words and their ambush, they clearly knew I was coming. But only a trusted few knew of my exact itinerary and schedule." He folds his arms across his chest, contemplative.

The party will probably not be able to garner any information about this attack at this stage. Averyn will claim (truthfully) to know nothing about how the mob could have known the Earl was coming. Neither Averyn nor the Earl has any idea who betrayed their route to the mob.

If a member of the mob is interrogated, he will fearfully relate the following information as they beg not to be sent to the Earl's gallows:

- The peasants were visited by a member of the rebels who notified them of the coming of the Earl.
- They were told that the Earl was coming to Laketown en route to Segor, where he was going to sign a law that would further increase the tax burden on the peasants.
- The peasant had never seen this rebel before, but can describe her: a lovely golden-haired halfling, quite tall for her kind, with startling green eyes. (This is NOT Milo Astra in disguise, nor is she a member of the rebels. She bears no resemblance to anyone the PCs may encounter in this adventure, and none of the NPCs will know of anyone matching her description. This person represents another group that has a vested interest in seeing the negotiations go poorly. This will be elaborated upon in further modules in this series.)

Encounter Two: Welcome to Laketowne

Resting upon the eastern shores of Lake Athetki, Laketowne prospers as a center of commerce in Linth. Iron goods created by the forges in the city of Dreduin are floated down the Athetki River on large barges. In Laketowne, these goods are either offloaded to waiting caravans, or the barges are floated into the southern cities of the Earldom.

Cooling breezes across the lake make the city comfortable. As the Earl's carriage approaches, a half-dozen knights ride forth on barded warhorses to meet you. They bear the coat of arms of the Knights of the Watch, a black field upon which rests a silver owl. Averyn raises a hand in greeting to the Knights, which is returned. The Watchers surround the carriage and escort your group into the city.

The leader among the Knights is Most Penitent Hellhound Simar Cattearn. He is the only one of the knights who will remove his helm, but all of the knights are of Suloise descent. Simar has long blond hair in a military cut, a lantern jaw, and narrow eyes. He will approach and hail Averyn, then circle around the carriage and the PCs.

The DM should vary the description of Simar's reactions to each one of the Duke's bodyguards. He might scowl at a half-orc, look suspiciously at a wizard, and salute a

member of the Imperial Military Academy or some other recognized military organization.

He looks over each character before nodding and bringing his steed alongside the carriage.

“We’ve come out to escort the Earl into Laketowne. It seems that the common citizens found out about the Earl’s journey, and the city is in a state of unrest.” He wheels his mount about, and his men take up a circular formation around you. Averyn snaps the drover’s whip and the carriage enters Laketowne.

You are led to a large, plush-looking inn, The Flustered Flumph. The sign above the door shows an odd-looking creature - with a disk-like body, eyestalks and dangling tentacles – struggling upside-down on its back.

Averyn and the Earl are whisked into the Inn while the Knights of the Watch unload the carriage. As you dismount and turn your steeds over to the stablehands, you notice that a small crowd has gathered. Their faces are dark and angry, but they aren’t threatening—yet.

The crowd isn’t in danger of riot, although the Knights who take up arms and stand guarding the door to the Inn are taking no chances.

Allow the characters to take whatever actions they wish. They may take this opportunity to talk with the commoners here, who will be suspicious at first since the PCs came into Laketowne as part of the Earl’s entourage. However, they appreciate the chance to vent their anger to listeners.

The commoners have several complaints. The main one is that there is not enough food to go around, and that the lion’s share of it goes to the nobles and the gentry (such as the Knights of the Watch). More and more, the commoners rely on food created magically by benevolent clerics.

Second is the lack of work. The ruinous blight has driven farmers from the countryside and into the cities. The flood of workers has made jobs hard to come by, especially those involving unskilled labor.

Third is the rampant poverty that goes along with unemployment. Laketowne is filled with beggars, and crime has skyrocketed. In particular, it seems the nobles are never the victims of theft, despite having so much more wealth – it’s as if the thieves target the commoners exclusively.

The DM should give **Player Handout #3** to PCs who spend time questioning the commoners about their

situation. Do not give the handout to groups that do not try to talk to the commoners.

The Flustered Flumph Inn

The inn is detailed in **DM Aids #1** and **#2**. The inn is very posh. The ground floor consists of a common room/dining area with nine tables that seat four apiece. On the northern wall, a long table filled with good food allows patrons to help themselves. A crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling just above a large piano – two contraptions created by zealous clerics of Murlynd and imported from the Free City of Greyhawk. A pair of staircases leads up to the second floor. On the western side of the ground floor, a kitchen, and two meeting rooms can be found. These rooms are where the negotiations will take place and consist of a large octagonal table that seats eight people.

The second floor consists of several types of rooms. The smallest rooms (marked **A** on the map) consist of a single bunk bed and a standing closet. A pair of rooms of similar size (**B**) is nearby, identical except that they are single beds. The rest of the rooms are luxurious. Three (**C**) are double occupancy rooms with a single large bed, a standing closet and a luxurious throw rug. Three other rooms (**D**) are posh single occupancy rooms with an oversized bed, writing desk and chair, and standing closet. Two bathrooms (**G**) consist of chamber pots and a washing basin.

Rooms **E** and **F** are the rooms of nobility and ambassadors, and are the rooms given to the Earl and to Estren, respectively. Each contains an enormous four-poster canopied bed, writing table, bookcase, standing closet, potted trees, throw rug and a private bath.

Encounter Three: Meeting the Rebels

Once the PCs have entered the Inn, they find the rebels meeting with the Earl:

The Inn is very posh. The ground floor consists of a common room/dining area with nine tables that seat four apiece. On the northern wall, a long table filled with good food allows patrons to help themselves. A crystal chandelier hangs from the ceiling just above a large piano. You have never seen the likes of either. A pair of staircases leads up to the second floor. On the western side of the ground floor, a kitchen and two meeting rooms can be seen. It seems that the entire Inn has been rented out for the negotiations, as no one save the delegates and the staff is within.

The Earl and Averyn are meeting with a tall man with a presence that can be felt even from the other side of the room. Estren the Minstrel is dressed in the finest of clothing and is unarmed. Behind him, two aides – both human and neither with the appearance of Suloise ancestry – stand waiting. The Earl shakes Estren's hand as if it was a poisonous snake. The minstrel looks no more eager to accommodate. This formality concluded, you hear the Earl say, "And these folk were my escorts, having accompanied me from Dredstadt and protecting me during the journey."

Estren nods and looks your group over. He then nods. "Good. Will they be providing your security during the negotiations?"

"Aye," says the Earl. "They're here for the duration."

The Earl pulls you aside. "It would help me greatly in the negotiations if I could get a feel for the grievances of these rebels. See if you can question Estren's aides. They might be willing to speak with you. Do not approach Estren unless he approaches you first; it is my place to speak with him. The more information I have about what's going on, the better chance I have of bringing a peaceful resolution to this impasse. Averyn can serve as my bodyguard in the meanwhile."

Estren clears his throat, causing the Earl to turn his head. "Earl Lucius, with your permission, I'd like to begin the negotiations in two hours. That will give you and your escorts time to get themselves settled in, I hope?"

The Earl nods. Without another word to anyone else, he and Averyn ascend the stairs to the second level.

Averyn will stand watch beside the Earl's chamber door while he prepares himself for the negotiations. He encourages the PCs to follow his uncle's suggestion to talk to those who are dissatisfied with the Earl.

The Rebel Entourage

Estren has two aides – Tam Kasi and Milo Astra. The latter is the antagonist of the adventure and his full statistics are provided in the Appendices. Tam Kasi's statistics are provided below in an abbreviated format. Estren's statistics are not provided so as not to spoil for the DM future modules in which he might be featured, modules the DM may wish to enjoy as a player.

♣ **Tam Kasi:** Male Human (Oeridian-Baklunish) Exp3.

♣ **Milo Astra:** see Appendices.

Estren is just under six feet tall and is slim and well proportioned. His clothes are impeccable and his bearing is magnetic (Cha 20). He is calm and never raises his voice in anger. His patience is seemingly limitless, and he will calmly debate points for hours on end. He listens carefully to his aides and makes decisions impartially. This has earned him the grudging respect of all factions within the rebellion.

Tam Kasi is a human of average height and build with dark, swarthy features. His skin is deeply tanned and crow's feet mar the corner of his eyes. He is Oeridian/Baklunish in ancestry. He is a common dirt farmer, and he speaks and acts that way. Tam represents the faction of "hawks" amongst the rebels, those who agitate for the violent overthrow of the Earl, consequence be damned. He is gruff and not especially pleasant company, and he won't trust the PCs (he can't see them as anything other than lackeys of the Earl.)

Milo Astra

Milo Astra is a former member of the Knights of the Watch. Astra believes that the House of Linth will bring the Lion Throne's downfall, and has determined that the Earl and his house must be destroyed.

To do this, he has concocted a plan. He knows that if Estren was assassinated and the Earl was implicated for it, it would surely cause a civil war and topple House Linth. In Milo's warped opinion, the only way to resolve the current crisis is to murder his closest friend, Estren.

Officially, Milo represents the "doves" of the rebels. He takes great pains to play this part well, to assuage suspicions against him. Once Estren is dead, he plans to kill himself to keep his secret and to further rouse the rebels into open revolt.

Milo is somewhat tall and stocky with long black hair tied in a braid. Although he claims to be Oeridian, he has some Rhenee ancestry to which he'd never admit. He has a calm, deliberate manner of speech and is clearly educated. He is pleasant and affable, and outwardly he is friendly almost to a fault. He is also a deadly warrior. He wears a suit of *glamered* armor made to appear like a leather jack. Milo is quite dedicated to his plan and exceptionally cunning.

Encounter Four: Rising Tensions, Falling Hopes

The first round of negotiations begins two hours after the PCs arrive at the Inn with the Earl. Before the negotiations, ask the PCs to organize themselves. Show

them the maps of the Inn and inform them that the first night's negotiations will take place in Meeting Room A on the ground floor.

Ask the players to describe where they are placing themselves and ask what security precautions they are taking. Inform the players that the Knights of the Watch are handling exterior security, with both stationary and walking patrols around the Inn.

If the players don't think to do it themselves, Lucius will request that one PC be stationed outside the door. This will also allow at least one PC to overhear snippets of the negotiations.

Estren and his aides, along with the Earl and Averyn, enter the northeastern meeting room and begin the arduous task of negotiations. The innkeeper, a quiet and elderly man of unknown ancestry, makes certain the diplomats are well supplied with water to quench parched throats.

It's a good thing, too. Judging from the bits of conversation that escape to your ears whenever the door to the room is opened, there are rather a few throats in there that are strained from yelling. It's clear that the negotiations are off to a rocky start.

Distribute **Player Handout #4**. Nothing unusual will happen while the PCs stand watch. After a marathon session of several hours, the negotiations will break up. The Earl will exit first, looking red-faced and irritated with Averyn following him. The young paladin of Rao looks miserable.

Estren and his entourage will then leave. Tam Kasi is clearly angry, his hands balled into fists. Milo Astra is calming him. Tam snarls that "the Earl will see his lands in flames before autumn!" before storming upstairs. Estren's face is a blank slate.

The Earl and Estren will sequester themselves in their quarters and will not be available to answer questions of the PCs. Tam Kasi will be far too angry to field any questions from those who work for the Earl.

Other reactions about the first day of negotiations:

- Averyn is miserable: ***"They are passionate about the plight of their people, and I agree something must be done. But they have already made my uncle a villain in their minds, and I don't see how anything can be accomplished so long as he remains so."***
- Milo Astra looks downcast: ***"I'd say the talks have broken down, except that phrase implies that there was something there to begin with. Tam is***

the leader of the faction amongst the rebels that agitates for revolt. He did not like what he heard from the Earl. If he doesn't hear something positive from the Earl by the time these negotiations close, not even Estren will be able to prevent a civil war."

Following the talks, the PCs can get some rest. They are free to choose any rooms they wish in the central or northern block of rooms of the second floor. They can set up watches or not; if they choose not to, the Earl will be quite annoyed with them in the morning. ("I suppose you were hoping that assassins are *day*people?")

Milo Astra will stand guard outside of Estren's door; the other members of his entourage will sleep in one of the small northern rooms with a bunk bed. In the morning, when Estren is up and about, Milo retires to whatever room is being used by Tam and naps until the negotiations begin.

Negotiations: Day Two

In the morning, the banquet table will be filled with a modest selection of breakfast food. The service is subdued, and the PCs and the diplomats are left to help themselves. The fare is simple but of excellent quality as befits the Inn.

Estren and Tam take a table as far away from the Earl as possible. The Earl and Averyn sit alone but motion for the PCs to join them when they are spotted. There's no room at Estren's table, and the minstrel will – if asked if he desires company – politely decline.

Milo Astra will remain asleep in his quarters while Estren and Tam take the remaining meeting chamber. A chambermaid will wake Milo, at his request, about an hour before the second round of talks is scheduled to begin. He will dress and come downstairs to join his fellows in their meeting room.

The Earl and Averyn will speak with the PCs if they join him at the table. He'll ask that they do, and Averyn will pull together two tables so the group can speak. Averyn will not say much more beyond what he may have already said (see above). The Earl is a bit more vocal:

The Earl's voice is an angry whisper. "Damnably ridiculous. I tell you, ever since that Yeomanry ambassador stuck his finger in the King's eye at court last year, notions of 'democracy' among the peasantry have been all the rage. You'll forgive me if I don't believe that every man has the ability – never mind the right – of self-governance."

He pauses, aggravated. "They are asking for popularly-elected vassals of each of the baronies of my lands who will directly administer them in accordance with the 'will of the people.'" He almost spits the last word.

"The King ordered this meeting, but he would surely find their suggestions too radical. But even if the King overrules any such proposal, it still leaves me with a civil war in my lands." The Earl's face goes dark. "Rest assured, my friends. If there is a revolt, the blood that soaks my lands will be red – not blue."

From the table nearby, Estren rises and nods to Tam. The bard then makes for one of the nearby meeting rooms.

About a minute afterwards, Estren lets out a cry and a thud can be heard...

Encounter Five: Unwanted Company

Milo Astra initially attempted to hire the Shadowdark to assassinate Estren. The guild declined, noting that they were an organization of thieves and not assassins. He noted that all of the organization's members wore a small silver death's head pin and sometimes dressed in black bodysuits with an embroidered white skeleton on the front and back. In the darkness, this gave each member the appearance of being some kind of undead.

When Milo subsequently hired the four assassins currently charged with the Estren's murder, he gave their leader, Adjadi, a stolen guild pin. He also wore an embroidered bodysuit taken from a lesser guild thief that he murdered for the two items. (He has subsequently destroyed the bodysuit, as a piece of potential evidence.)

If Adjadi is captured, her story about the appearance of who hired her and the silver pin she was given as payment will point the suspicion away from Milo Astra and towards the Shadowdark. Likewise, if she is slain, the pin found on her body will point the party towards the Shadowdark.

APL 4 (EL 8)

- ✦ Adjadi, Female Human Rog5: hp 26; see *Appendix II*.
- ✦ Bertram, Male Human Ftr4: hp 33; see *Appendix II*.
- ✦ Coyote, Male Human Sor4: hp 21; see *Appendix II*.
- ✦ Desdemona, Female Human Mnk4: hp 31; see *Appendix II*.

APL 6 (EL 10)

- ✦ Adjadi, Female Human Rog5/Asn1: hp 38; see *Appendix III*.
- ✦ Bertram, Male Human Ftr6: hp 48; see *Appendix III*.
- ✦ Coyote, Male Human Sor6: hp 31; see *Appendix III*.
- ✦ Desdemona, Female Human Mnk6: hp 45; see *Appendix III*.

APL 8 (EL 12)

- ✦ Adjadi, Female Human Rog5/Asn3: hp 50; see *Appendix IV*.
- ✦ Bertram, Male Human Ftr8: hp 63; see *Appendix IV*.
- ✦ Coyote, Male Human Sor8: hp 49; see *Appendix IV*.
- ✦ Desdemona, Female Human Mnk8: hp 59; see *Appendix IV*.

APL 10 (EL 14)

- ✦ Adjadi, Female Human Rog5/Asn5: hp 62; see *Appendix V*.
- ✦ Bertram, Male Human Ftr10: hp 78; see *Appendix V*.
- ✦ Coyote, Male Human Sor10: hp 61; see *Appendix V*.
- ✦ Desdemona, Female Human Mnk10: hp 73; see *Appendix V*.

APL 12 (EL 16)

- ✦ Adjadi, Female Human Rog5/Asn7: hp 74; see *Appendix VI*.
- ✦ Bertram, Male Human Ftr12: hp 93; see *Appendix VI*.
- ✦ Coyote, Male Human Sor12: hp 73; see *Appendix VI*.
- ✦ Desdemona, Female Human Mnk12: hp 87; see *Appendix VI*.

The DM should examine the statistics for the four assassins (Adjadi, Bertram, Coyote and Desdemona) carefully. Each has used a *portion of invisibility* to gain access to the Inn. If the PCs have set up magical wards to somehow circumvent this, the DM should do her best to formulate an effective entry strategy for the villains. At the higher APLs, the assassins will have a much better ability to penetrate the defenses of the Inn, as they will have a far greater ability to augment their stealth with magic.

However, under no circumstances will Milo Astra interact or assist the assassins in their attempts to enter

the inn. (Indeed, the killers wouldn't even recognize him as the one that hired them to do the job!)

Once inside, the assassins wait for Estren to enter and – seeing their chance – they attack. For dramatic purposes, Estren's attackers knock him out. They have been instructed to capture the rebel leader alive. (Milo feels the need to explain the reason why he needs to kill his friend before he actually does it.)

Tactics: Note that all of the assassins have ranks in Tumble. They are a mobile bunch and try to make sure that they offer each other flanking opportunities. The others especially try to make sure that Adjadi flanks her enemies as often as possible.

Coyote will have precast certain spells before the encounter (see his entries in the appendices for details of which spells he has precast; he can only precast the ones specifically mentioned as such in his entries).

The assassins have worked together for a long time and are generally loyal to one another, but if they find themselves reduced to single-digit hit points, they may seek to flee or surrender at the judge's discretion.

Important Note: To facilitate the PCs finding the pendant that will serve as a clue leading to the rest of the adventure, Adjadi will always fight to the death!

No one from either the Earl's or Estren's entourage will get involved in the battle, remaining in their rooms until the noise settles down. When the battle is over, they will emerge and survey the scene. Averyn will call for the guards (if no one's called already).

Four Knights of the Watch will arrive to take charge of any prisoners. The Earl will grant the PCs permission to interrogate (not torture!) the prisoners and to search their possessions and keep anything of interest.

The other three assassins will refer questions to Adjadi if she is somehow alive, explaining that she arranges their "jobs." However, she or they can ultimately relate the following:

- Adjadi was met at the lakeside wharves by a skeletal creature of some sort that kept its distance as it spoke in a masculine voice.
- The skeleton presented Adjadi with a silver death's head pendant worth 200 gold lions. It promised six more such trinkets upon completion of the capture.
- The skeleton promised to find the assassins and reward them; they had no standing plans to again meet the creature in a specific place.

- The skeleton claimed that they would earn "the favor of the guild" for their efforts; something the skeleton proudly claimed "was worth far more than the silver trinkets."

Any divination magic will reveal that all four are telling the truth when questioned. Fearing that the other side might claim they were "tampering with the witnesses" in some fashion, neither side will let the other question the assassins alone.

The pendant is made of pure silver of fine workmanship, carved in the shape of a skull missing the lower jawbone. Engraved on the back of the pendant is the mark of the silversmith that created the jewelry – "L.K." PCs may have a chance to identify the silversmith who created the pendant (see Encounter Seven for details).

Treasure: The assassins' possessions are the only treasure here.

All APLs: L: 139 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp.

Once the PCs have had the chance to question the intruders and/or search their corpses, read the following:

As the Knights of the Watch leave after securing the (remains of the) would-be assassins, a tense silence falls over the entourage. It is broken by a shouted accusation that rolls over the assemblage like a breaking wave.

"Missed him, you fat Suel bastard!" snarls Tam Kasi. "Next time you want him dead, you should try it yourself!"

"Keogh scum, how dare you accuse me..." The Earl steps forward, snarling a litany of curses, when Estren the Minstrel roars "Enough!"

Clearly, Estren rarely raises his voice; despite the chaos of the scene, both of his aides jump in surprise. Even the Earl startles.

"Tam, quiet yourself. We have no evidence..." Estren says, turning to face the Earl with a dark look upon his face, and continues, "... only strong suspicions."

Averyn speaks. "Uncle could agree to a divination to prove he is not behind this..."

Milo Astra cuts off the young paladin. "No. We would question whether the wealth of the Earl had gone towards trinkets or enchantments designed to confound such magic. The Earl would likewise question any spells cast by us towards that end."

The Earl nods, calming himself. "Indeed." He folds his arms across his chest. "So what is to be done,

Estren? Shall we leave now, return to our homes, and begin arming ourselves for a civil war?"

The Minstrel is silent for a moment, and then turns to look at you. "Perhaps we don't need to. These folk have proven themselves to be opposed to the assassins. I may owe my life to them."

"Lucius," he says, "I propose that we agree to allow these heroes to investigate the assassination. If they can bring me proof that you were not involved in this, I am willing to continue the negotiations. But if not, I can only assume that you have had a hand in this and I must return to my constituents with word of the same."

"I have nothing to hide," the Earl growls. Now both Lucius and Estren regard you curiously, wondering if you will continue your service to the Kingdom.

The Earl reminds any mercenary characters demanding payment that they've already been promised compensation, and that while they're in his lands, they are subject to his laws. (The implied threat will be evident – aid the Kingdom in its time of need, or the Earl will make your life extremely difficult...)

Any PC who asks will receive a writ from the Earl, stamped in melted wax with his signet ring. This writ will state that the PCs are on an official investigation for the Earl, and that the characters should be given the utmost consideration for their needs.

DMs should award a +4 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based checks for the PCs dealing with official authorities, as well as persons and organizations loyal to the Earl. Likewise, the writ would arouse the ire of commoners and many others in the city who have a great dislike of the Earl, causing a -4 circumstance penalty on Charisma-based checks.

Encounter Six: Finding the Hidden

At this point, the PCs may have one or more of the following clues:

- An undead creature hired the assassins.
- The creature claimed to belong to a guild.
- The creature presented them with death's head pendants for their work.
- An undead creature burglarized a peasant's home a month ago (this is from **Player Handout #3**).
- The pendant bears a silversmith's mark "L.K."

This isn't a lot to go on. However, there are several methods by which PCs could get information on their quarry.

- The most difficult route is for non-rogues to get information on the guild from local, legal sources. The commoners simply don't know anything about it. The Knights of the Watch (who function as the constabulary in the Earl's lands) are reluctant to speak about a guild of thieves. They will identify the pendant as being a token of membership in the thieves' guild. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 18 + the APL of the party) will get the Knight who is being questioned to admit that the center of activity for anything illegal in the city is the dock area. The Watcher will mention that crime is very bad in that part of town. *If the Knight is further questioned on the topic*, he or she will mention that it's gotten so bad that two merchants were driven out of the same storefront over the course of a year because their shop was constantly being burglarized. *If asked for its location*, the Knight will mention the shop was on the corner of Osprem's Way and Lakeside Street. The Watcher won't mention the silversmith or the reason why the Knights closed down her shop.
- PCs may (logically) extrapolate that the "bad part of town" would be the place to look for thieves. Any Watcher or commoner will be able to tell the PCs that the most dangerous part of town is the dock, especially at night (no skill check required). A commoner might be prevailed upon (with a successful Diplomacy check of 10 + the party's APL) to add in hushed tones that:

"Dark things walk at night down by the docks, things that are supposed to be dead! They've been spotted often enough that the lake barge pilots don't stray out of doors after sunset. Think I'm crazy? Who's ever heard of sailors who don't go out and carouse after a hard day's work?"

- PC rogues might attempt to make "professional" contact with the guild. This will require the rogue to make a Gather Information check (DC 10 + party's APL). Only characters with rogue levels may attempt this roll (or assist on attempts to make this roll). On a successful roll, a bartender in one of the seedier dives down in the dock area will pass the rogue a scrap of paper with a scrawled address upon it – "Osprem's Way and Lakeside Street". (This address is for Lyssa Kev's old shop, which is now abandoned and a secret meeting area for the Shadowdark.)
- Any jeweler or silversmith in town (there are several) will be able to identify the smith's mark on

the pendant as being that of Lyssa Kev. They will mention that her shop was located in the area of the docks. It was closed down a year ago because rumors said it was used as a front to fence stolen goods. The artisan will tell the PCs that two journeymen silversmiths purchased the shop since then, but each left after a month or so after their shop was excessively burglarized. As far as the artisan knows, the shop is still vacant.

- Shrines exist throughout the city, the largest being that of Lydia. PCs who approach the cleric who tends these shrines seeking information about undead thieves might find some valuable clues. PCs who question the cleric in charge of the shrine, an elderly human female named Torli Kimba, will get the following information:

"Some whisper that undead are roaming the docks, but I know better. Well, not much better, since I'm speaking of things I shouldn't to sword-bearing youths doubtless seeking to get themselves killed in the name of adventure... oh, where was I? Ah, yes... well, the other night, I was walking through the docks – there are so many there who are in need of the help of the church. I was at Osprem's Way and Lakeside Street when I saw them; a pair of skeletons carrying a chest between them. They were coming out of a vacant store-front on the corner."

"I snatched my holy symbol and called upon the blessings of Lydia. They fled into the gloom, taking their chest with them."

"But... I've encountered such creatures in my adventuring days, and when you turn them away you... feel something, like a resistance... I didn't feel that. I think they fled simply because I startled them. I think that somehow, whatever these creatures were, they weren't undead."

The Old Silversmith's Shop

Having tracked down the only common lead in their investigation, PCs should find their way to the old silversmith's shop.

Lyssa Kev was a silversmith who indeed used her shop to move stolen goods. Silver jewelry stolen by the Shadowdark that was too distinctive to sell through a fence was brought here. In the shop, Lyssa melted down the silver and used it in the creation of other pieces she crafted. Thanks to the cut-rate prices of fine silver, she was able to turn a handsome profit. In exchange, Lyssa crafted the death's head pendants for the members of Laketowne's Shadowdark guild.

The Knights of the Watch started to receive complaints of Lyssa's success from other silversmiths and merchants in the city. She was caught when a stolen piece was spotted and recognized by a Watcher who had taken the report of the theft. Lyssa had carelessly left the piece in the back room on a table, and it was spotted through a door she had left ajar. Lyssa was arrested, convicted and hung.

But Lyssa's storefront was more valuable to the Shadowdark than simply her processing of stolen silver jewelry. In the basement of her shop was a secret door that hid a small circular staircase. It led to an underground area that had initially been dug by the city fifty years ago as a sewer extension, but the project was subsequently terminated. Lyssa's shop was built on top of the excavated area. The Shadowdark found out about the small series of chambers and decided it would make an excellent meeting place.

When Lyssa was caught, two new merchants attempted to move in to the shop. The Shadowdark were loath to give up their hiding place and set out to "encourage" the new owners to vacate. After burglarizing the shop almost weekly, it was left to stand vacant, except for the thieves dwelling within.

When the PCs arrive, the most dangerous member of the Shadowdark is present and waiting for them. Her name is Maressa Linth, niece of the Earl, and she is the Guildmistress in this city. Maressa also happens to be Averyn's sister, although neither has spoken with the other in some time.

Maressa would make a powerful adversary in her own right for a group of adventurers. But for today, she represents the key the PCs need to solve the mystery of who wants Estren dead.

Your investigations have brought you to the old silversmith's shop on the corner of Osprem's Way and Lakeside Street. All around are the signs of the hard times of the people of Linth. Buildings are faded and run-down, and the streets are deserted. The shop is a squat, simple building of two stories.

The bottom floor has a large window for displaying merchandise, now boarded up. A door sits on the right face of the structure. A second floor shows broken windows and seems to be nothing but a giant gull and pigeon roost. Bird droppings are everywhere.

The building is thirty feet square. The door leads into a short hallway with the shop on the left. In front, a now-collapsed staircase is littered with bird droppings and led up to the second floor. The upper story is deserted; PCs who somehow climb up to investigate will find a

hopelessly ruined living area with nothing of interest or note. Any PCs who question the birds will get a description of “white bones at night.”

The ground floor area of the shop is divided neatly into two halves by a plaster wall. The front of the shop contains now-empty display cases and a great deal of broken glass, probably from the large exterior window. PCs can easily see that booted feet have come through this area on a number of occasions (Search check DC 15). Those PCs with the Track feat can attempt to follow the tracks to the secret door (Wilderness Lore check DC 15).

The rear portion of the shop contains broken furniture, a dormant forge, a metal smith's table, and a few broken smith's tools scattered around the room. The tracks will lead up to a portion of the wall that is counterbalanced; a simple push will pivot the secret door open. No check is required to find the door if the PCs are following the tracks (they know what they're looking for). Otherwise, a Search (DC 18 + APL of the party) will discover the secret door.

Beyond the secret door is a short five-foot square platform with a metal spiral staircase that descends twenty feet down. The bottom of the stairs opens up into a short passageway. At this point, the DM should refer to **DM Aid #3**.

Encounter Seven: The Shadowdark Lair

A *continual flame* spell cast on an empty torch sconce in each room illuminates the four chambers in the complex. The place is quite small and is designed to be a meeting place and bolthole for Shadowdark needs. There are a dozen or more such places around Laketowne. Each door in the complex is unremarkable and is locked. The ceilings in this area are a uniform ten feet in height.

🔒 **Locked Simple Wooden Doors:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 15; lock (hardness 15, hp 30; Open Lock DC 10 + the APL).

Area 1 – Entryway Passage

Having discovered a secret means of entering an area beneath the shop, you find yourselves well below street level. Your best estimate is that you have traveled twenty feet or more down the stairs. Before you a passage stretches eastward fifteen feet to a closed door.

This passageway is unremarkable except for the thin tripwire crossing the hallway three feet before the door, three inches off the ground. This is a trigger for a trap,

but isn't a trap *per se*. The tripwire can be noticed with a Spot check (DC 18 + APL of the party) or with a Search check (DC 15 + APL of the party) for anyone who is looking for one. The tripwire is made of fine piano wire painted gray to better remain unseen. It stretches out of the northern wall from a very tiny hole and is anchored to a tiny eyehook screws inset into the wall on the south side of the passageway.

This is a rather devious trap set by the Shadowdark as their first line of defense against intruders. The tripwire is actually the trigger for the flame jet trap located in the passageway connecting Areas 2 and 3. The normal procedure for “disarming” the tripwire is simply to step over it. However, this actually leaves the trap in the nearby passageway *armed*. The trick is to snip or untie the tripwire; the resulting slack disarms the trap.

It's possible to avoid the trap later on, but it is *much* simpler to deal with it here. A successful Disable Device check will determine for the rogue the reverse logic of the trap and that the wire should be cut or unstrung. Note that unlike most traps, failing the Disable Device check here will not set off the trap in the passageway, no matter how badly the roll is failed (don't share this with the players, of course).

All APLs (EL 0):

🔪 **Tripwire Trigger:** CR 0 (does no damage); Search (DC 15 + APL of the party); Disable Device (DC 20).

Area 2 – Meeting Room

This room is ten-feet square and has four chairs clustered around a round table. Clearly, space was at a premium in this room; the chairs would have to be moved in order for a human to squeeze by. The table has a single candle, melted down to a nub, in an iron candleholder on the table. At the opposite corner of the room, another door is set into the western wall.

The candle wax is still warm if anyone thinks to check, indicating that the room was recently occupied. The candle wasn't used for illumination (the room is already magically lit) but for a forgery job involving a signet ring.

In the short passageway between areas 2 and 3 is the aforementioned flame jet trap. Depending on the actions of the party in Area 1, the trap may be armed or disarmed. A pressure plate embedded in a loose stone on the floor activates the trap. This causes a bellows-like device to billow a combustible gas while a flint and steel “striker” ignites the fumes. This blast will affect whatever character is in the lead.

APL 4 (EL 2):

🚩 **Flame Burst Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll necessary (4d6 fire damage, Reflex Save [DC 20] half damage); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 6 (EL 3):

🚩 **Flame Burst Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll necessary (6d6 fire damage, Reflex Save [DC 20] half damage); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 8 (EL 4):

🚩 **Flame Burst Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll necessary (8d6 fire damage, Reflex Save [DC 20] half damage); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 10 (EL 5):

🚩 **Flame Burst Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll necessary (10d6 fire damage, Reflex Save [DC 20] half damage); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 12 (EL 6):

🚩 **Flame Burst Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll necessary (12d6 fire damage, Reflex Save [DC 20] half damage); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Area 3 – Storage Room

This ten-foot-square room appears to be used for supply storage. A good-sized crate and cask are here, along with a standing bag labeled “jerky.”

Supplies are stored here in the event that a thief needs to “lay low” for a substantial period of time. There is enough food and water here to last two thieves for as many weeks.

The crate is trapped. If it is moved or jostled (touching won't set it off, but trying to open it certainly will) it will activate a trigger weight in the floor. This will cause a hidden weapon to discharge into the room. This will send one or more projectiles into the room at about waist level. The discharge emanates from the northeastern corner of the room and fires diagonally into the opposite corner. It will affect anyone standing in either square. The crate is filled with stones to lend it a sense of weight and to give it the illusion of containing something.

APL 4 (EL 2):

🚩 **Javelin Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +16 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 18).

APL 6 (EL 4):

🚩 **Poisoned Dart Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); poison (small centipede poison, Fort save [DC 11] resists, 1d2 Dex/1d2 Dex); Search (DC 21); Disable Device (DC 22).

APL 8 (EL 6):

🚩 **Fusillade of Spears:** CR 6; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +21 ranged (1d8, spear); 1d6 spears per target in each 5' x 5' area; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 10 (EL 8):

🚩 **Fusillade of Poisoned Spears:** CR 8; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +21 ranged (1d8 plus poison, spear); poison (medium spider venom, Fort save [DC 14] resists, 1d4 Str/1d6 Str); 1d6 spears per target in each 5' x 5' area; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 12 (EL 10):

🚩 **Fusillade of Poisoned Spears:** CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +21 ranged (1d8 plus poison, spear); poison (purple worm poison, Fort save [DC 24] resists, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str); 1d6 spears per target in each 5' x 5' area; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 20).

Area 4 – Bunkroom

This room contains another trap, this one activated by stepping on a pressure plate on the floor. On the ceiling, up to a half-dozen spiked clubs (depending on the APL of the adventure) have been arranged as a trap. They are spring-loaded, and will snap down and smash the first person entering the room. The APL of the party determines the number of clubs that bludgeon the victim.

APL 4 (EL 2):

🚩 **Spiked Club Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (1d6, club); Search (DC 18); Disable Device (DC 22).

APL 6 (EL 3):

🦋 **Spiked Club Trap:** CR 3; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15/+15 melee (1d6, club); Search (DC 19); Disable Device (DC 22).

APL 8 (EL 4):

🦋 **Spiked Club Trap:** CR 4; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15/+15/+15 melee (1d6, club); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 22).

APL 10 (EL 5):

🦋 **Spiked Club Trap:** CR 5; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15/+15/+15/+15 melee (1d6, club); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22).

APL 12 (EL 6):

🦋 **Spiked Club Trap:** CR 6; mechanical, location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15/+15/+15/+15/+15 melee (1d6, club); Search (DC 24); Disable Device (DC 22).

Area 5 – The Guildmistress

Before meeting Maressa Linth, the PCs must contend with one final trap. This is a simple covered pit trap. It is also another pressure plate trap, sensitive enough that prudent PCs tapping ahead of themselves with a staff or pole will harmlessly activate the trap.

APL 4 (EL 2):

🦋 **Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 6 (EL 3):

🦋 **Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 plus poison each); poison (black adder venom, Fort save [DC 12] resists, 0/1d6 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 8 (EL 4):

🦋 **Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 plus poison each); poison (medium spider venom, Fort save [DC 14] resists, 1d4 Str/1d6 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 10 (EL 5):

🦋 **Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 plus poison each); poison (sassone leaf residue, Fort save [DC 16] resists, 2d12 hp/1d6 Con); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 12 (EL 6):

🦋 **Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 plus poison each); poison (purple worm venom, Fort save [DC 24] resists, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Having dealt with a plethora of traps, you stand facing a passageway that abruptly ends. The narrow chamber seems to be used as a place of audience for the skeletal figure that sits on a cushioned seat atop a short dais. It cocks its head as you enter, and then bows slightly at the waist without rising. A skeletal arm gestures towards a pile of cushions, seeming to desire that you sit.

As your eyes adjust to the light, the figure on the throne is no creature of bones and dark magic. Instead, it is a figure of flesh and blood, wearing a black bodysuit. Elaborate embroidery work on the entire garment would certainly give the illusion of the wearer being a skeletal creature.

"So," the masqueraded figure says. It is a throaty, feminine, sultry voice. "You've found me. I am the guildmistress of the Shadowdark, the thieves' guild here in Laketowne... and elsewhere. My name is not important. Sorry about the traps, but we respect our privacy and dislike visitors. Still, you've made it this far. Let's talk, shall we?"

ALL APLs (EL 14):

🦋 **Guildmistress Maressa Linth, Female Human Rog6/Shd4:** hp 65; see Appendix I.

Like many of the House of Linth, Maressa is extremely patient and manipulative to the extreme. She wants the characters to do the talking first, so she can weigh what they know and what they want before deciding on her course of action.

Once Maressa gets enough information from the PCs to make the connection between Milo Astra's attempt to hire Shadowdark assassins and the attempt on Estren's life, she will desire greatly to give the PCs all the

information she knows. (Showing Maressa the pendant Milo stole from her and mentioning that an attempt was made on Estren's life will do the trick.)

In the event that the PCs attack her, what happens next will depend on how much the PCs told her. If Maressa makes the connection that Milo Astra is the assassin, she will rush to tell her uncle and the assassination attempt will be averted, no thanks to the PCs. If they don't tell her, Milo's attempt to kill Estren will be successful. This will completely derail the negotiations, and Tam Kasi's predictions that Linth will be in flames by autumn will probably come true.

The PCs may ask some other questions of Maressa unrelated to the investigation. The DM should field these as needed, but keep in mind some general points:

- She will never reveal her true name, using only "Guildmistress."
- She will not reveal anything about the guild beyond its existence and confirmation that they are the cause of the reports of undead around the city at night.
- She will not reveal anything about the House of Linth beyond that which would be common knowledge.
- She won't ask for the pendant back. "Keep it in exchange for all the trouble that the traps outside gave you", she purrs.

When Maressa has been given enough information about what's going on to make the connection to Milo, read the following.

As you explain the situation to the guildmistress, her fist clenches. Clearly, she's just had some kind of revelation.

"How very... interesting," she murmurs. "A man came to us several nights ago. He met with me and discussed hiring a few of my ilk for a killing. We turned down the offer – we're a guild of thieves, not assassins – but I took an interest in the attempted hiring. I never got far enough into the negotiations for him to reveal the assassination's target; if he had, I would have immediately warned someone. Revolution is bad for business."

"After he left," she continues, "one of my novice guild members turned up dead, his corpse stripped of his pendant and his bodysuit. Our would-be employer must have stolen it. No matter. You will have his identity. And in exchange... I ask only for your...

discretion regarding my organization. Surely a small price to pay for heading off a civil war, no?"

"Now... he is a somewhat tall and stocky man, with long black hair tied in a braid ..." She continues to describe the man and as she does, you feel your jaw tighten. The man she describes is Milo Astra, the bodyguard and confidant of Estren!

Although her voice remains a purr, the woman's tension is evident in her body language. "If this man is alone with the rebel leader, you may already be too late, heroes."

At this point, the players should realize that if Milo is alone with Estren, he is in grave danger. Even if the PCs tell Maressa that they cannot agree to her terms, she will still give them the information; she won't wait for them to agree or not, as described above. She will be long gone by the time the authorities return here in any case.

Should the PCs decide to attack or attempt to arrest Maressa, she will make her escape. By triggering a catch on the arm of her throne, the chair will angle backwards on its back, providing total cover and sliding the occupant of the chair into a narrow crawlspace. The hole will close and the chair will tilt back upwards, covering the hole. The crawlspace leads into the remnant of a root cellar, where a series of crude handholds allows her to climb to a sewer grate and make her escape. The offending PC(s) will have earned the *Enmity of the Shadowdark Guildmistress* as listed on the AR for this module.

Maressa is an important NPC in later modules, and DMs should take full advantage of her abilities to ensure she is not captured or killed by overzealous PCs.

Encounter Eight: Endgame

The PCs should make haste back to the Inn. At this point, they have all the clues that they need; any further substantial hesitation on their part and they WILL arrive too late to save Estren.

Things can proceed a number of ways:

- *The PCs rush back to the Inn as a group:* The encounter plays out as described in the boxed text.
- *The party splits up with some members getting there ahead of others:* Milo is a powerful opponent. PCs who have some ability to get to the scene with great expedience (perhaps *shapechanging* or *teleporting* there) may not be able to hold off Milo alone while other party members arrive. This could mean serious injury or death for the PCs who confront him alone.

- *The PCs send word ahead to the inn of Milo's treachery:* The DM will need to make some on-the-fly adjustments. If the other members of the rebel entourage are warned, they realize they are unable to fight Milo and instead summon the Knights of the Watch from outside the inn. But the Watchers are no match for a warrior of Milo's caliber and he makes short work of them. The time he takes to fight the Watchers will allow the PCs to make it back to the Inn.
- *The PCs delay or do not go to the Inn immediately:* This is disastrous. Any substantial delay will ensure that the PCs arrive too late to save Estren. (What comprises this kind of delay is up to the DM, but it would include stopping to make a purchase, searching for Maressa, searching around the Shadowdark hideout, etc.) If this happens, summarize the tragedy and explain that Milo falls on his sword shortly after murdering Estren. Proceed to Conclusion B.

In any event, Averyn and the Earl are not present, having left the Inn to speak to the mayor of Laketowne (and giving Milo the perfect chance to strike).

Presently, Milo has barricaded himself in Estren's room, having stabbed him with a poisoned dagger and left the bard paralyzed. When the PCs show up, he is explaining regretfully to his friend why he has to die. The door will need to be bashed down or unlocked; Milo won't hurry the murder in response to any attempts to break down the door. In his state of mind, he feels that to kill Estren without explaining the need for his death will leave him to be harshly judged in the afterlife.

When the PCs confront Milo, read the following:

Milo Astra is standing over Estren, who lies crumpled in a heap in the center of the room. The warrior leans on his huge greatsword. A puncture wound can be seen on Estren's arm, and a green ichor discolors the wound. Milo is whispering something to Estren but stops and rises to face you.

He purses his lips sadly. "I need to kill you quickly... I need to finish explaining to my friend why he has to die. The Prophecy of Azmarender, my friends... many must die for the Lion to be saved."

The madman attacks. As he does so, he repeatedly utters what sounds like some cryptic prophecy.

The poison that leaves Estren paralyzed is of limited duration; Milo assumed he wouldn't need one that lasted longer. No other NPCs will interfere with the fight; they will be unwilling (Tam) or unable (Averyn and the Earl)

to do so. Milo will fight to the death and will stab himself with this dagger or hurl himself from the window to his death to keep from being captured.

Any PC within earshot of the battle will hear the Prophecy of Azmarender. The relevance of the Prophecy will be revealed in future Keoland regional modules in this series:

"In a dark house stained with Oerdian blood

Two women carry the fate of the Valley

The first by hate, consumed and was consumed

Beneath the fields, from a devil's womb

From within the darkness, it is darker still

She brought the artifact that sealed her doom

A curse was placed upon her House

The next Countess will slay the lion

She brings the Empire to ruin and flame

Keogh against Suel, peasant against lord

The curse ends only with the House."

APL 4 (EL 8)

✦ Milo Astra, Male Human Ftr8: hp 90; see Appendix II.

APL 6 (EL 10)

✦ Milo Astra, Male Human Ftr10: hp 102; see Appendix III.

APL 8 (EL 12)

✦ Milo Astra, Male Human Ftr12: hp 122; see Appendix IV.

APL 10 (EL 14)

✦ Milo Astra, Male Human Ftr14: hp 156; see Appendix V.

APL 12 (EL 16)

✦ Milo Astra, Male Human Ftr16: hp 178; see Appendix VI.

Tactics: Milo is a cunning fighter hardened by many battles. He will quickly figure out what foe is the greatest threat to him and dispatch him as quickly as possible. Powerful melee fighters may find Milo sundering their

weapons to neutralize their power, and he may also try this tactic against a cleric's holy symbol if the opportunity presents itself. A powerful mage will simply be cut to ribbons. He watches for rogues who attempt to flank and fight with his back against the wall or in a corner if it help.

After a hard fight, we can only hope that the PCs are triumphant!

Estren rises, his voice choking as strength returns to his muscles. "My thanks, my friends... I owe you my lives, and perhaps a great many more who live in the Earl's lands."

"Please, explain to me how you unraveled the plot." As Estren says this, the Earl comes into the room, followed closely by Averyn. He assesses the situation and looks at you, nodding in satisfaction.

Finish the adventure by reading Conclusion A. PCs who fail to stop the assassination should be read Conclusion B.

Treasure: Milo Astra's possessions can be taken.

APL 4: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+1 glamerred full plate* (471 gp), *+1 greatsword* (196 gp), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp), *2 potions of cure light wounds* (4 gp each).

APL 6: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 glamerred full plate* (888 gp), *+1 frost greatsword* (696 gp), *amulet of natural armor +1* (167 gp).

APL 8: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 glamerred full plate* (888 gp), *+1 frost greatsword* (696 gp), *amulet of natural armor +1* (167 gp), *cloak of resistance +1* (83 gp).

APL 10: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 glamerred full plate* (888 gp), *+1 chaotic frost greatsword* (2,696 gp), *bracers of health +2* (333 gp), *periapt of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp), *cloak of resistance +3* (750 gp).

APL 12: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 glamerred full plate* (888 gp), *+1 chaotic icy burst greatsword* (4,196 gp), *bracers of health +2* (333 gp), *periapt of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp), *cloak of resistance +3* (750 gp).

Conclusion A

A few days later, the negotiations have concluded. There is still a great deal to be done, and the Earl and the rebel elements in his lands can hardly be said to be close to an agreement. Still, both sides have agreed to continue a dialogue, and each side seems to have earned the grudging respect of the other. Having exposed the assassin, saved Estren and cleared the Earl's name, both sides have agreed to continue negotiations. The simmering cauldron of civil war cools – for now...

Conclusion B

With Estren's death, a cloud of suspicion hangs over the Earl. When the people hear of Estren's death, the residents of Laketowne openly take to the streets in defiance of their curfews. Fires break out in the poorest sections, and soon looting begins. A dozen Watchers take the Earl and Averyn out of the city as the city is soon plunged into chaos and civil unrest.

This anarchy soon spreads, faster than even the mysterious blight that afflicts the Earl's lands. The House of Linth sequester themselves in their ancestral manse as, all around them, the flames of revolt are fanned by the winds of change.

The Linth Civil War has begun.

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 One

Defeat the mob (by evasion, negotiation, or force)

APL 4 – 135 xp;
APL 6 – 180 xp;
APL 8 – 225 xp;
APL 10 – 270 xp;
APL 12 – 315 xp.

Encounter Five

Defeat the assassins

APL 4 – 240 xp;
APL 6 – 300 xp;
APL 8 – 360 xp;
APL 10 – 420 xp;
APL 12 – 480 xp.

Encounter Seven

Pass all of the traps and meet the Guildmistress

APL 4 – 60 xp;
APL 6 – 120 xp;
APL 8 – 180 xp;
APL 10 – 240 xp;
APL 12 – 300 xp.

Encounter Eight

Defeat Milo Astra and save Estren

APL 4 – 240 xp;
APL 6 – 300 xp;

APL 8 – 360 xp;
APL 10 – 420 xp;
APL 12 – 480 xp.

Total Possible Experience

APL 4 – 675 xp;
APL 6 – 900 xp;
APL 8 – 1,125 xp;
APL 10 – 1,350 xp;
APL 12 – 1,575 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. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to

practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter One:

All APLs: L: 1 gp; C: 50 gp; M: 0 gp.

Encounter Five:

All APLs: L: 139 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp.

Encounter Eight:

APL 4: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1,008 gp.

APL 6: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1,751 gp.

APL 8: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1,834 gp.

APL 10: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 5,333 gp.

APL 12: L: 26 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 6,833 gp.

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed)

APL 4: L: 166 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 1,008 gp - Total: 1,424 gp (600 gp).

APL 6: L: 166 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 1,751 gp - Total: 2,167 gp (800 gp).

APL 8: L: 166 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 1,834 gp - Total: 2,250 gp (1,250 gp).

APL 10: L: 166 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 5,333 gp - Total: 5,749 gp (2,100 gp).

APL 12: L: 166 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 6,833 gp - Total: 7,249 gp (3,000 gp).

Special

☛ *Favor of the Shadowdark Guildmistress*

The PC was respectful of the Guildmistress and used her information to foil the plot against the Earl. Being in the dark lady’s good graces may be helpful in future scenarios in the series.

☛ *Enmity of the Shadowdark Guildmistress*

The PC has offended the Guildmistress by attempting to attack or arrest her. Arousing dark lady’s ire will have negative ramifications in future scenarios in the series.

☛ *Knowledge of the Prophecy of Azmarender*

The PC has overheard the Prophecy, although its meaning may be unclear and neither research nor

magical divination currently sheds light upon it: “In a dark house stained with Oeridian blood / Two women carry the fate of the Valley / The first by hate, consumed and was consumed / Beneath the fields, from a devil’s womb / From within the darkness, it is darker still / She brought the artifact that sealed her doom / A curse was placed upon her House / The next Countess will slay the lion / She bring the Empire to ruin and flame / Keogh against Suel, peasant against lord / The curse ends only with the House.”

☞ *Life Chain*

Estren, rebel leader of the Keogh of Linth, offered one of these magical items to you. It is a finely wrought silver chain. This item takes an amulet slot. Once per day, when the wearer’s hit point total drops between –1 and –9, the chain will automatically cast a *cure* spell upon the wearer. This is done immediately and automatically, regardless of the wishes of the wearer, and this is the only time the item’s magic will be triggered. Once used, the item becomes dormant for seven days. There are two varieties of this item: *lesser* and *greater*. Upon activation, the *lesser life chain* casts a *cure minor wounds* spell on the user, while the *greater* variety casts a *cure light wounds* spell instead. The chain will not activate if the wearer intentionally damages itself to trigger it; it protects solely from hostile actions and accidents.

Lesser Life Chain. Caster Level: 1st; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *cure minor wounds*, *deathwatch*; Market Price: 600 gp; Weight: - lbs.

Greater Life Chain. Caster Level: 3rd; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *cure light wounds*, *deathwatch*; Market Price: 2,400 gp; Weight: - lbs.

☞ *Favor of Lucius, Earl of Linth*

By helping the Earldom of Linth during its time of crisis, you have earned the favor of the Earl. He will offer to commission a magic ring for the PCs. After any adventure, the PC may call in this favor. It grants the PC one-time access of “Any” to any one of the following magic rings from the *DMG* (at the APL played or lower) at the time the favor is spent (mark AR used here ____). The PC must pay for the usual cost of the item:

- APL 4: ☞ *Ring of Force Shield*
- APL 6: ☞ *Ring of Chameleon Power*
- APL 8: ☞ *Ring of Minor Elemental Resistance*
- APL 10: ☞ *Ring of Protection +3*
- APL 12: ☞ *Ring of Major Elemental Resistance*

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 4:

- ❖ +1 *Glamerd Full Plate* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Gauntlets of Ogre Power* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Life Chain, Lesser* (Adventure, see above)
- ❖ *Life Chain, Greater* (Adventure, see above)

APL 6/8 (APL 4 Items plus):

- ❖ +2 *Glamerd Full Plate* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ +1 *Frost Greatsword* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 10 (APL 4, 6/8 Items plus):

- ❖ +1 *Chaotic Frost Greatsword* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Bracers of Health +2* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Periapt of Wisdom +2* (Adventure, DMG)
- ❖ *Cloak of Resistance +3* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 12 (APL 4, 6/8, 10 Items plus):

- ❖ +1 *Chaotic Icy Burst Greatsword* (Adventure, DMG)

Appendix I

All APLs Encounters

Encounter One:

Peasant: Male and Female Human Com1; CR ½; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10 (touch 10, flat-footed 10); Atk +0 Melee (1d6, club); AL CG; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 10; Int 10; Wis 10; Dex 10; Con 10; Cha 10.

Encounter Seven:

Maressa Linth, Guildmistress of the Shadowdark of Laketowne: Female Human Rog6/ShD4; CR 10; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d8+6d6+20; hp 65; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 16, flat-footed 21) [+4 Dex, +5 armor, +2 ring]; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+2, +2 rapier); SA Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ Uncanny Dodge (retains AC if flat-footed, cannot be flanked except by Rogue level 10+, +1 to AC and Reflex saves against traps), Evasion, Hide in Plain Sight, Darkvision, Shadow Illusion, Summon Shadow, Shadow Jump; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +17, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Craft (trapmaking) +11, Diplomacy +12, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +8, Hide +27*, Listen +13, Move Silently +17, Open Lock +11, Perform +7, Search +15, Sense Motive +9, Spot +13, Tumble +17; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Improved Initiative, Iron Will. * Includes +10 bonus from *shadowed armor*.

Possessions: +2 rapier, cloak of resistance +4, +2 shadowed studded leather, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +2, boots of striding and springing.

New Feats

Close-Quarters Fighting (General)

(From *Sword & Fist*, Pages 5-6)

You are skilled at fighting at close range and resisting grapple attacks.

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +3

Benefit: You are entitled to make an attack of opportunity even if the attacking creature has the Improved Grab ability. When an enemy attempts to grapple you, any damage you inflict with a successful attack of opportunity provoked by the grapple attempt is added to your ensuing grapple check to avoid being grappled.

This feat does not provide you with additional attacks of opportunity, so if you do not have an attack of opportunity available when your enemy attempts to grapple you, you do not get any benefit from Close-Quarters Fighting.

For example, a dire bear strikes you with a claw attack. If you don't have this feat, the dire bear's Improved Grab ability allows it to immediately attempt a grapple check, provoking no attack of opportunity from you. However, with Close-Quarters Fighting, you are entitled to an attack of opportunity. If you hit and score 8 points of damage, you may add +8 (plus your attack bonus, strength bonus and size modifier) to your grapple check to resist the dire bear's grapple attempt.

Appendix II: APL 4 Encounters

Encounter Five:

Adjadi: Female Human Rogue 4; CR 4; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d6+8; hp 26; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +3 armor]; Atk +7 melee (1d6, mw rapier); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; SQ Uncanny Dodge (Not flat-footed except by Rogue level 8+); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Climb +5, Disable Device +11, Hide +10, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Knowledge (Local) +5, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +9, Search +9, Spot +7, Tumble +9, Use Rope +8; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Rapier).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork thieves' tools (bonuses included above), silver death's head pin.

Bertram: Male Human Fighter 4; CR 4; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d10+4; hp 33; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield]; Atk +9 melee (1d10+5, masterwork bastard sword); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Jump +6, Tumble +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard Sword), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (Bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (Bastard sword).

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, Masterwork chain shirt, Masterwork large steel shield.

Coyote: Male Human Sorcerer 4; CR 4; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d4+8; hp 21; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24* (touch 13, flat-footed 21) [+3 Dex, +7 *shield*, +4 *mage armor*]; Atk +6 melee (1d6-1, masterwork light mace); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Spellcraft +7, Tumble +6; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Light mace).

Possessions: Masterwork light mace, spell component pouches.

Spells Known (6/5*/4; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*Detect Magic*, *Light*, *Mage Hand*, *Open/Close*, *Read Magic*]; 1st—[*Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, *Shield*]; 2nd—[*Glitterdust*]. * Pre-cast *Mage Armor* and *Shield* spells.

Desdemona: Female Human Monk 4; CR 4; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d8+8; hp 31; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 12) [+2 Dex, +2 Wis]; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, unarmed strike); SA Flurry of blows, Stunning Attack (4 per day, Fort Save DC 14); SQ Improved Defenses (Wisdom bonus to AC), Evasion, Still Mind (Save at +2 v. enchantments), Slow fall (20'); AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +7, Hide +8, Jump +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Tumble +11; Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Possessions: 50' silk rope, grappling hook.

Encounter Eight:

Milo Astra: Male Human Ftr 8; CR 8; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 8d10+24; hp 90; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 19) [+9 armor, +1 Dex]; Atk +16/+11 melee (2d6+10, *Greatsword* +1) or +15/+10 melee (1d4+6, masterwork dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 22, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Handle Animal +12, Jump +12, Ride +14, Swim, +12; Close-Quarters Fighting*, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword). * This *Sword & Fist* feat is described at the end of Appendix I.

Possessions: +1 *glamered full plate*, +1 *greatsword*, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *potion of endurance* (expended before encounter, +2 to Con), 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, masterwork dagger.

DM Note: The effects of any magic items/effects have been included in the above stat block.

Appendix III: APL 6 Encounters

Encounter Five:

Adjadi: Female Human Rogue/Assassin 5/1; CR 6; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 6d6+12; hp 38; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +3 armor]; Atk +8 melee (1d6, rapier); SA Death Attack (Fort Save DC 12), Poison Use, Sneak Attack +3d6; SQ Poison Resistance (+1 to poison saves), Uncanny Dodge (Not flat-footed except by Rogue level 10+); AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Climb +5, Disable Device +12, Disguise +4, Hide +12, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Knowledge (Local) +5, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +11, Spot +9, Tumble +9, Use Rope +8; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork thieves' tools (bonuses included above), silver death's head pin.

Spells Prepared (0/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—[*Change Self*, *Spider Climb*].

Spellbook: 1st—[*Change Self*, *Spider Climb*].

Bertram: Male Human Fighter 6; CR 6; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 6d10+6; hp 48; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield]; Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10+5, masterwork bastard sword); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Jump +6, Tumble +7; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard Sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Cleave, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (Bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (Bastard sword).

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, Masterwork chain shirt, Masterwork large steel shield.

Coyote: Male Human Sorcerer 6; CR 6; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 6d4+12; hp 31; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24* (touch 13, flat-footed 21) [+3 Dex, +7 *shield*, +4 *mage armor*]; Atk +7 melee (1d6–1, masterwork light mace); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Spellcraft +8, Tumble +7; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Light mace), Still Spell.

Possessions: Masterwork light mace, spell component pouches.

Spells Known (6/5*/6/4; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*Detect Magic*, *Flare*, *Light*, *Mage Hand*, *Open/Close*, *Prestidigitation*, *Read Magic*]; 1st—[*Color Spray*, *Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, *Shield*]; 2nd—[*Glitterdust*, *See Invisibility*]; 3rd—[*Haste*]. * Accounts for pre-cast *Mage Armor* and *Shield* spells.

Desdemona: Female Human Monk 6; CR 6; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 6d8+12; hp 45; Init +6; Spd 50 ft.; AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 13) [+2 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 monk]; Atk +7/+4 melee (1d8+2, unarmed strike); SA Flurry of blows, Stunning Attack (6 per day, Fort Save DC 15); SQ Improved Defenses (Wisdom bonus to AC), Evasion, Purity of Body (Immune to disease), Still Mind (Save at +2 v. enchantments), Slow fall (30'); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +7, Escape Artist +7, Hide +11, Jump +9, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Tumble +11; Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Possessions: 50' silk rope, grappling hook.

Encounter Eight:

Milo Astra: Male Human Ftr 10; CR 10; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 10d10+20; hp 102; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (touch 12, flat-footed 21) [Armor +10, Dex +1, Natural Armor +1]; Atk +17/+12 melee (2d6+10 +1d6 (cold), Frost Greatsword +1) or +16/+11 (1d4+5, masterwork dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Handle Animal +14, Jump +12, Ride +16, Swim, +12; Close-Quarters Fighting*, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (Greatsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword). * This *Sword & Fist* feat is described at the end of Appendix I.

Possessions: Glamerd Full Plate +2, Frost Greatsword +1, Amulet of Natural Armor +1, masterwork dagger.

DM Note: The effects of any magic items/effects have been included in the above stat block.

Appendix IV: APL 8 Encounters

Encounter Five:

Adjadi: Female Human Rogue/Assassin 5/3; CR 8; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 8d6+16; hp 50; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 14, flat-footed 17) [+4 Dex, +3 armor]; Atk +11 melee (1d6, rapier); SA Death Attack (Fort Save DC 14), Poison Use, Sneak Attack +4d6; SQ Poison Resistance (+2 to poison saves), Uncanny Dodge (Not flat-footed except by Rogue level 12+); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +5, Disable Device +15, Disguise +4, Hide +15, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Knowledge (Local) +5, Listen +11, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +14, Search +13, Spot +11, Tumble +10, Use Rope +9; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork thieves' tools (bonuses included above), silver death's head pin.

Spells Prepared (0/2/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—[*Change Self*; *Spider Climb*]. 2nd—[*Darkness* x2].

Spellbook: 1st—[*Change Self*; *Spider Climb*]; 2nd—[*Darkness*, *Undetectable Alignment*].

Bertram: Male Human Fighter 8; CR 8; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 8d10+8; hp 63; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield]; Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+6, masterwork bastard sword); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Jump +9, Tumble +8; Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard Sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Cleave, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (Bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (Bastard sword).

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, Masterwork chain shirt, Masterwork large steel shield.

Coyote: Male Human Sorcerer 8; CR 8; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 8d4+24; hp 49; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24* (touch 13, flat-footed 21) [+3 Dex, +7 *shield*, +4 *mage armor*]; Atk +8 melee (1d6–1, masterwork light mace); AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Spellcraft +10, Tumble +8; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Light mace), Still Spell.

Possessions: Masterwork light mace, spell component pouches.

Spells Known (6/5*/7/6/3; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*Arcane Mark*, *Detect Magic*, *Flare*, *Light*, *Mage Hand*, *Open/Close*, *Prestidigitation*, *Read Magic*]; 1st—[*Burning Hands*, *Color Spray*, *Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, *Shield*]; 2nd—[*Glitterdust*, *Mirror Image*, *See Invisibility*]; 3rd—[*Haste*, *Hold Person*]; 4th—[*Ice Storm*]. * Accounts for pre-cast *Mage Armor* and *Shield* spells.

Desdemona: Female Human Monk 8; CR 8; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 8d8+16; hp 59; Init +7; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16 (touch 16, flat-footed 13) [+3 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 monk]; Atk +9/+6 melee (1d10+2, unarmed strike); SA Flurry of blows, Stunning Attack (8 per day, Fort Save DC 16); SQ Improved Defenses (Wisdom bonus to AC), Evasion, Leap of the Clouds (jumping distance not limited by height), Purity of Body (Immune to disease), Still Mind (Save at +2 v. enchantments), Slow fall (30'), Wholeness of Body (heal self for up to 18 hp per day); AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +10, Hide +14, Jump +9, Listen +13, Move Silently +14, Tumble +16; Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Possessions: 50' silk rope, grappling hook.

Encounter Eight:

Milo Astra: Male Human Ftr 12; CR 12; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 12d10+24; hp 122; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (touch 11, flat-footed 21) [Armor +10, Dex +1, Natural Armor +1]; Atk +19/+14/+9 melee (2d6+10 +1d6 (cold), Frost *Greatsword* +1) or +18/+13/+8 (1d4+5, masterwork dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +14, Jump +15, Ride +18, Swim, +13; Close-Quarters Fighting*, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Critical (Greatsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword). * This *Sword & Fist* feat is described at the end of this Appendix.

Possessions: Cloak of Resistance +1, Glamered Full Plate +2, Frost Greatsword +1, Amulet of Natural Armor +1, masterwork dagger.

DM Note: The effects of any magic items/effects have been included in the above stat block.

Appendix V: APL 10 Encounters

Encounter Five:

Adjadi: Female Human Rogue/Assassin 5/5; CR 10; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 10d6+20; hp 62; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 14, flat-footed 17) [+4 Dex, +3 armor]; Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6, rapier); SA Death Attack (Fort Save DC 16), Poison Use, Sneak Attack +5d6; SQ Poison Resistance (+3 to poison saves), Uncanny Dodge (Not flat-footed except by Rogue level 14+; +1 to AC and Reflex saves vs. traps); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +5, Disable Device +15, Disguise +4, Hide +17, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Knowledge (Local) +5, Listen +13, Move Silently +17, Open Lock +18, Search +15, Spot +13, Tumble +10, Use Rope +9; Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork thieves' tools (bonuses included above), silver death's head pin.

Spells Prepared (0/2/2/1; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—[*Change Self*, *Spider Climb*]; 2nd—[*Darkness* x2]; 3rd—[*Invisibility* x2].

Spellbook: 1st—[*Change Self*, *Spider Climb*]; 2nd—[*Darkness*, *Undetectable Alignment*]; 3rd—[*Invisibility*, *Misdirection*].

Bertram: Male Human Fighter 10; CR 10; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 10d10+10; hp 78; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield]; Atk +16/+11 melee (1d10+6, masterwork bastard sword); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Jump +10, Tumble +9; Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard Sword), Improved Critical (Bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Cleave, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (Bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (Bastard sword)

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, Masterwork chain shirt, Masterwork large steel shield.

Coyote: Male Human Sorcerer 10; CR 10; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 10d4+30; hp 61; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24* (touch 13, flat-footed 21) [+3 Dex, +7 *shield*, +4 *mage armor*]; Atk +9 melee (1d6–1, masterwork light mace); AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Spellcraft +11, Tumble +9; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Light mace), Maximize Spell, Still Spell.

Possessions: Masterwork light mace, spell component pouches.

Spells Known (6/5*/7/7/5/3; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*Arcane Mark*, *Daze*, *Detect Magic*, *Flare*, *Light*, *Mage Hand*, *Open/Close*, *Prestidigitation*, *Read Magic*]; 1st—[*Burning Hands*, *Color Spray*, *Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, *Shield*]; 2nd—[*Glitterdust*, *Melf's Acid Arrow*, *Mirror Image*, *See Invisibility*]; 3rd—[*Dispel Magic*, *Haste*, *Hold Person*]; 4th—[*Ice Storm*, *Stoneskin*]; 5th—[*Dominate Person*]. * Accounts for pre-cast *Mage Armor* and *Shield* spells.

Desdemona: Female Human Monk 10; CR 10; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 10d8+20; hp 73; Init +7; Spd 60 ft.; AC 17 (touch 17, flat-footed 14) [+3 Dex, +2 Wis, +2 monk]; Atk +10/+7/+4 melee (1d10+2, unarmed strike); SA Flurry of blows, Stunning Attack (10 per day, Fort Save DC 17); SQ Improved Defenses (Wisdom bonus to AC), Improved Evasion, *Ki* Strike (unarmed attacks considered to be +1 enhancement bonus), Leap of the Clouds (jumping distance not limited by height), Purity of Body (Immune to disease), Still Mind (Save at +2 v. enchantments), Slow fall (50'), Wholeness of Body (heal self for up to 20 hp per day); AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +14, Hide +16, Jump +9, Listen +17, Move Silently +16, Tumble +18; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Possessions: 50' silk rope, grappling hook.

Encounter Eight:

Milo Astra: Male Human Ftr 14; CR 14; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 14d10+42; hp 156; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (touch 12, flat-footed 21) [Armor +10, Deflection +1, Dex +1]; Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+11 1d6 (cold) +2d6 (vs.

lawful foes), *Chaotic Frost Greatsword +1*) or +21/+16/+11 (1d4+6, masterwork dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +11; Str 22, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +14, Jump +16, Listen +5, Ride +18, Spot +5, Swim, +14; Alertness, Blind-Fighting, Close-Quarters Fighting*, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Critical (Greatsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave, Sunder, Quick-Draw, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword). * This *Sword & Fist* feat is described at the end of Appendix I.

Possessions: *Cloak of Resistance +3*, *Glamered Full Plate +2*, *Chaotic Frost Greatsword +1*, *Gauntlets of Ogre Power*, *Bracers of Health +2*, *Periapt of Wisdom +2*, masterwork dagger.

DM Note: The effects of any magic items/effects have been included in the above stat block.

Appendix VI: APL 12 Encounters

Encounter Five:

Adjadi: Female Human Rogue/Assassin 5/7; CR 12; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 12d6+24; hp 74; Init +8; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 14, flat-footed 17) [+4 Dex, +3 armor]; Atk +14/+9 melee (1d6, rapier); SA Death Attack (Fort Save DC 16), Poison Use, Sneak Attack +6d6; SQ Poison Resistance (+4 to poison saves), Uncanny Dodge (Not flat-footed except by Rogue level 16+; +1 to AC and Reflex saves vs. traps); AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +13, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +5, Disable Device +15, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +10, Hide +17, Intimidate +1, Jump +5, Knowledge (Local) +5, Listen +15, Move Silently +19, Open Lock +18, Search +17, Spot +15, Tumble +10, Use Rope +9; Blind-Fight, Improved Critical (Rapier), Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse (Rapier), Weapon Focus (Rapier).

Possessions: Masterwork rapier, Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork thieves' tools (bonuses included above), silver death's head pin.

Spells Prepared (0/3/2/1/1; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—[*Change Self*, *Spider Climb*]; 2nd—[*Darkness x2*]; 3rd—[*Invisibility x2*]; 4th—[*Improved Invisibility*].

Spellbook: 1st—[*Change Self*, *Spider Climb*]; 2nd—[*Darkness*, *Undetectable Alignment*]; 3rd—[*Invisibility*, *Misdirection*]; 4th—[*Dimension Door*, *Improved Invisibility*].

Bertram: Male Human Fighter 12; CR 12; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 12d10+12; hp 93; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 16) [+3 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield]; Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d10+6, masterwork bastard sword); AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Jump +11, Tumble +10; Blind-Fight, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard sword), Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (Bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (Bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (Bastard sword).

Possessions: Masterwork bastard sword, Masterwork chain shirt, Masterwork large steel shield.

Coyote: Male Human Sorcerer 12; CR 12; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 12d4+36; hp 73; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 24* (touch 13, flat-footed 21) [+3 Dex, +7 shield, +4 mage armor]; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6–1, masterwork light mace); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +17, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Spellcraft +12, Tumble +10; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (Light mace), Maximize Spell, Quickened Spell, Still Spell.

Possessions: Masterwork light mace, spell component pouches.

Spells Known (6/5*/7/7/6/5/3; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*Arcane Mark*, *Daze*, *Detect Magic*, *Flare*, *Light*, *Mage Hand*, *Open/Close*, *Prestidigitation*, *Read Magic*]; 1st—[*Burning Hands*, *Color Spray*, *Mage Armor*, *Magic Missile*, *Shield*]; 2nd—[*Flaming Sphere*, *Glitterdust*, *Melf's Acid Arrow*, *Mirror Image*, *See Invisibility*]; 3rd—[*Blink*, *Dispel Magic*, *Hold Person*, *Lightning Bolt*]; 4th—[*Ice Storm*, *Minor Globe of Invulnerability*, *Stoneskin*]; 5th—[*Dominate Person*, *Teleport*]; 6th—[*Mass Haste*]. * Accounts for pre-cast *Mage Armor* and *Shield* spells.

Desdemona: Female Human Monk 12; CR 12; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 12d8+24; hp 87; Init +7; Spd 70 ft.; AC 17 (touch 17, flat-footed 14) [+3 Dex, +2 Wis, +2 monk]; Atk +12/+9/+6 melee (1d12+2, unarmed strike); SA Flurry of blows, Stunning Attack (12 per day, Fort Save DC 18); SQ Diamond Body (Immune to poison), Improved Defenses (Wisdom bonus to AC), Improved Evasion, *Ki* Strike (unarmed attacks considered to be +1 enhancement bonus), Leap of the Clouds (jumping distance not limited by height), Purity of Body (Immune to disease), Still Mind (Save at +2 v. enchantments), Slow fall (50'), Wholeness of Body (heal self for up to 24 hp per day); AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +10; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +10, Climb +7, Escape Artist +18, Hide +18, Jump +9, Listen +19, Move Silently +18, Tumble +20; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Improved Critical (Unarmed Strike), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Possessions: 50' silk rope, grappling hook.

Encounter Eight:

Milo Astra: Male Human Ftr 16; CR 16; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 16d10+48; hp 178; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23 (touch 13, flat-footed 21) [Armor +10, Deflection +2, Dex +1]; Atk +24/+19/+14 melee (2d6+11 +1d6/+1d10 (cold) +2d6 (vs. Lawful foes), *Chaotic Icy Burst Greatsword* +1) or +21/+16/+11 (1d4+6, masterwork dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 22, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

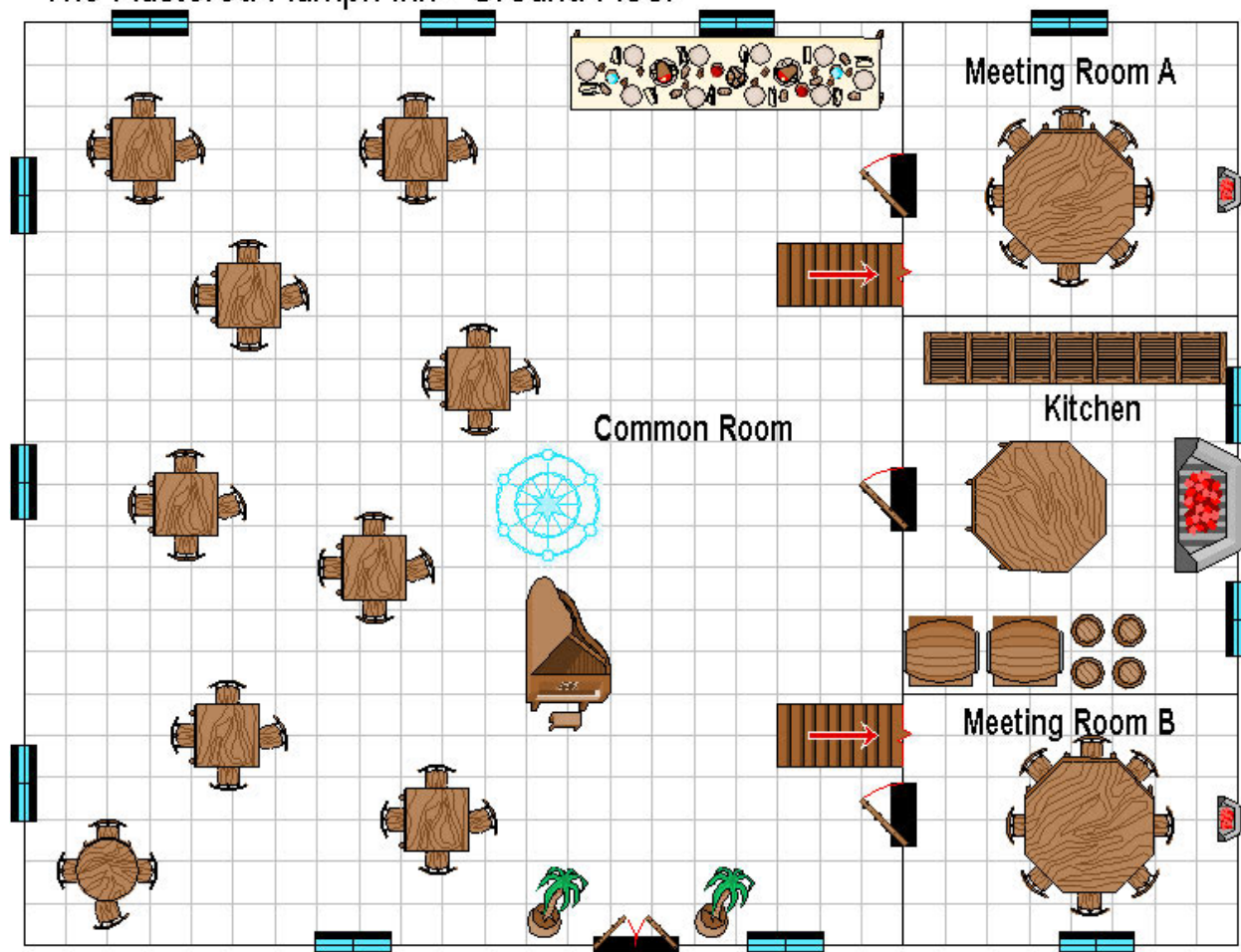
Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Handle Animal +14, Jump +16, Listen +7, Ride +18, Spot +7, Swim +14; Alertness, Blind-Fighting, Close-Quarters Fighting*, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (Greatsword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Cleave, Quick-Draw, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword). * This *Sword & Fist* feat is described at the end of Appendix I.

Possessions: *Cloak of Resistance* +3, *Chaotic Icy Burst Greatsword* +1, *Glamered Full Plate* +2, *Gauntlets of Ogre Power*, *Bracers of Health* +2, *Periapt of Wisdom* +2, masterwork dagger.

DM Note: The effects of any magic items/effects have been included in the above stat block.

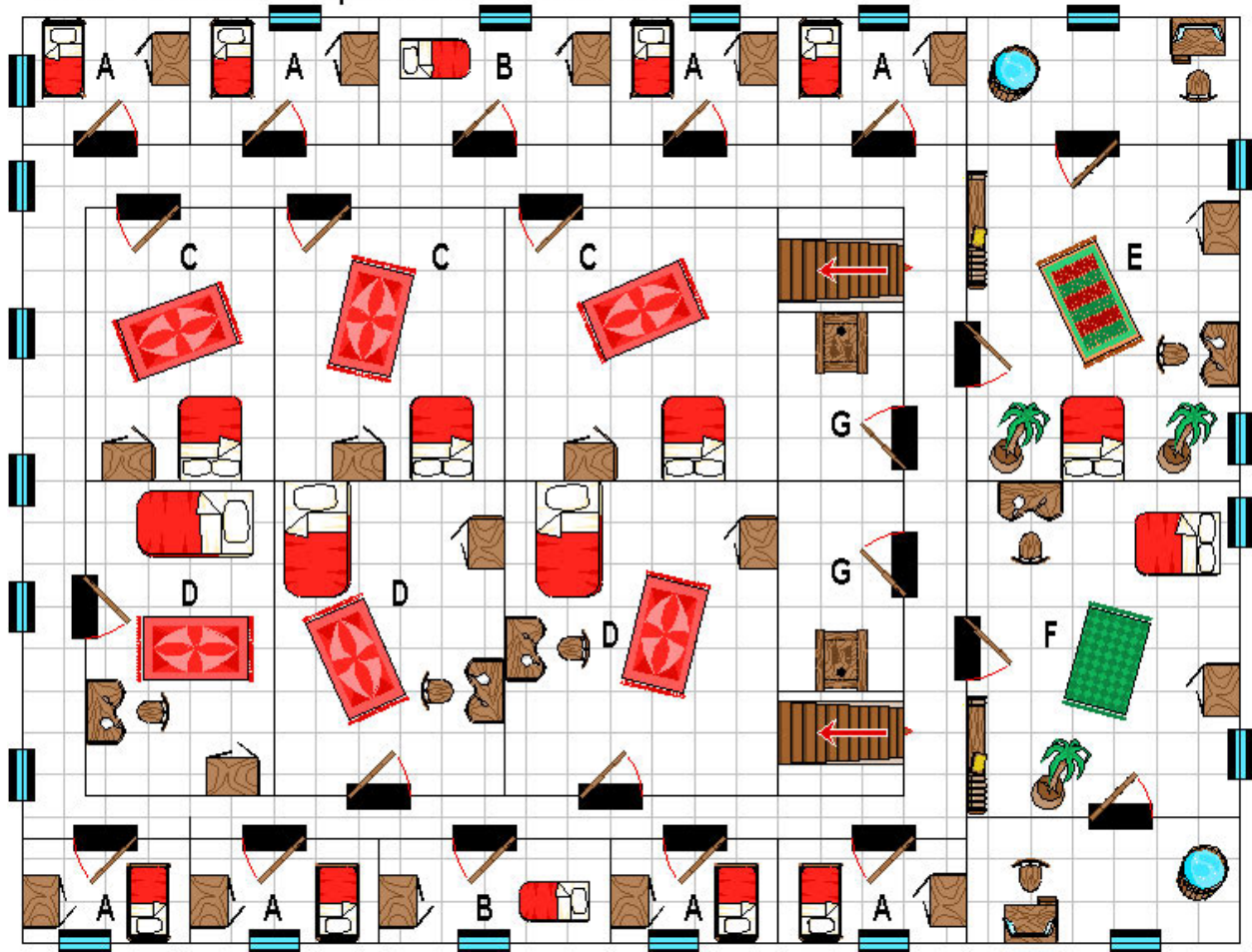
DM Aid #1

The Flustered Flumph Inn - Ground Floor

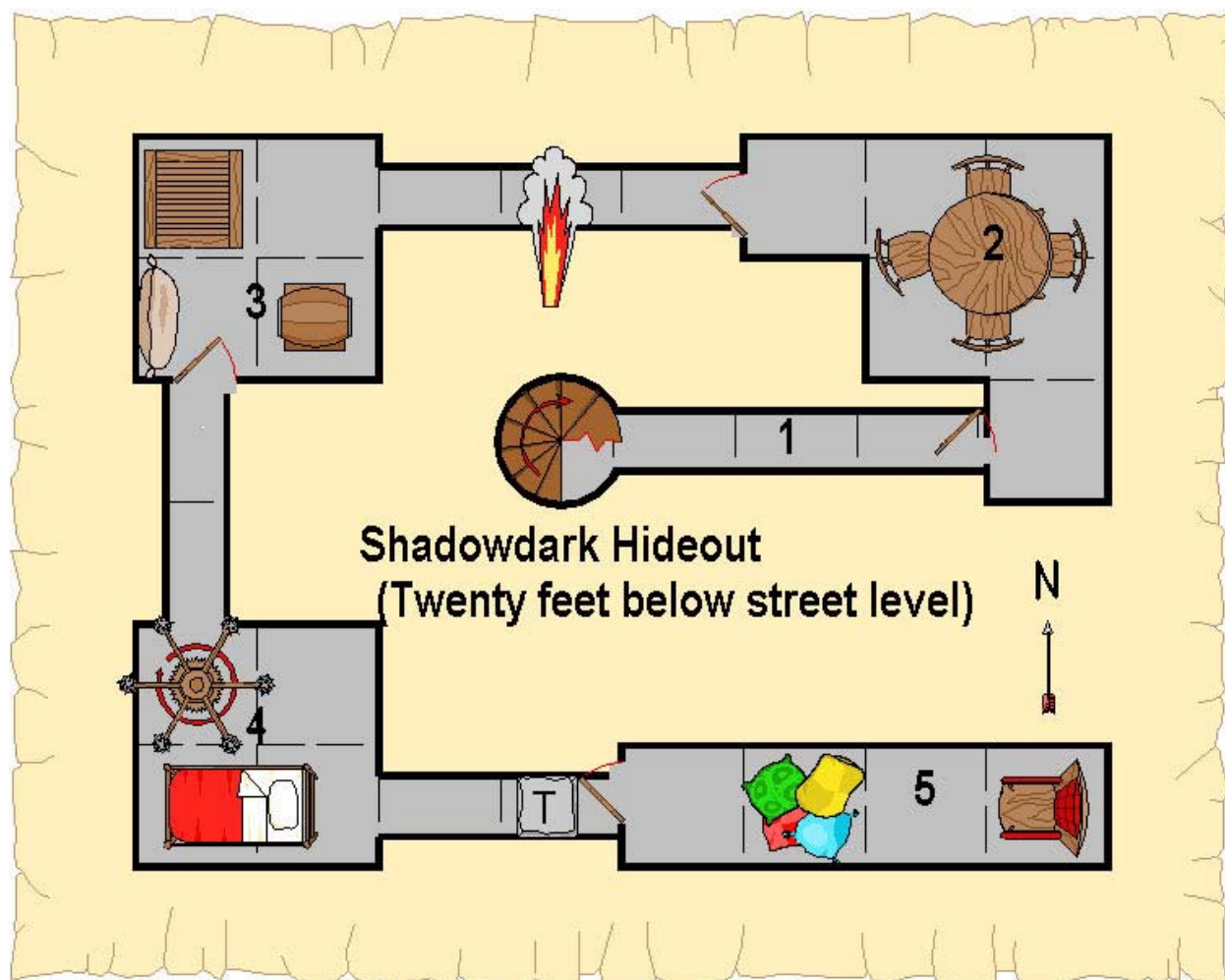


DM Aid #2

The Flustered Flumph Inn - Second Floor



DM Aid #3



DM Aid #4

NOTES ON THE MEMBERS AND POLITICS OF THE HOUSE OF LINTH

EARL LUCIUS LINTH

He is married to Katarina Linth (see below). The Earl had a fraternal twin brother, Gar, who was kidnapped and murdered when the two were children. He also has a younger sister, Antoinetta. Lucius and Katarina are the parents of Lady Hannah, their only child.

COUNTESS KATARINA LINTH

Sickly and frail, the Earl's wife has not been seen in public in a decade. She is rumored to suffer from a wasting illness. In her prime, she was a formidable priestess of Wee Jas. She often shuffles through the halls of the Linth ancestral manor, wailing for no apparent reason. Lucius and Katarina are the parents of Lady Hannah, their only child.

LADY ANTOINETTA LINTH

The sister of the Earl, and younger than he, she is also secretly her brother's mistress. Antoinetta is a sick, debauched woman with a taste for pleasures that range from the deviant to the decadent. Her first husband was a minor noble of Niole Dra named Sir Lokan Teth. Five years ago, she accused him of infidelity and stabbed him to death with a kitchen knife. The Earl chose to spare her life, and she has remained by his side ever since. Antoinetta has two children – Maressa Linth and Averyn Linth – by her deceased husband.

LADY MARESSA LINTH

Officially, Lady Maressa left Keoland two years ago to study in Greyhawk. In truth, she traveled to Laketowne and became the Guildmistress of the Shadowdark (the powerful thieves' guild within Linth). Maressa is cold and calculating, but honorable in her dealings with others. She is unmarried and has no children. She is the firstborn daughter of Lady Antoinetta Linth and Sire Lokan Teth.

SIR AVERYN LINTH

A bright light of goodness in a swirling sea of misery and evil within his own household, Averyn is a paladin of Rao. Much of his family and their deeds sicken him, but he hopes that by his own deeds the gods will see fit to take some mercy upon the members of House Linth. Averyn recently returned from Veluna after completing his time as a squire. Several Knights of the Watch escorted him through the Linth lands upon his return from Veluna a month ago. These Knights were ambushed and killed by an angry mob. The mob spared Averyn, knowing his honorable reputation as a paladin of Rao. Averyn is unmarried and has no children. He is the son of Lady Antoinetta Linth and Sire Lokan Teth.

LADY HANNAH LINTH

The Earl's only child, Lady Hannah stands to inherit his lands upon his death as the first ruling female Countess in many generations. The Lady Hannah is thirteen, and is rumored to be completely mad. She has never been seen in public, but tales come from servants within the House of Linth that claim she dances with ghosts only she can see and to music only she can hear. Lady Hannah wears white bedclothes and goes barefoot through the manor, keeping odd hours and talking into the air. She is rumored to enjoy capturing any small animals she can catch and torturing them to death.

OTHER NOTES

House Linth dislikes and distrusts House Neheli, mainly because of the Malagari. The Darkwatch have a great interest in unlocking the secrets of Linth sorcery, but the magical shields and wards upon the Linth ancestral manse are the products of generations of skilled dweomer-craft and acute paranoia. The Linth are viewed as supporters of the House of Rhola, mainly because they often side with them in disputes against the Neheli. Otherwise, the House of Linth are right-wing, with political views that could be best described as conservative and isolationist.

DM Aid #5

The Knights of the Watch in the Earldom and the *Nights of the Long Lances*

Wishing to move their operations out of an urban center and create a post to protect the western shores of the Sheldomar River, the mysterious Knights of the Watch received permission in 354 CY to establish a garrison-fort, *Goarada*, only a few miles from Segor.

At the time Goarada was founded, the ruling Earl was Rierdan Linth. Often looking pale and unsteady, barely able to lift the ceremonial rapier that hung from his belt, the Earl made up for his physical deficiencies with a keen mind and personal magnetism. In the generations following the Act of Segor, House Linth began to put pressure on the Oeridian majority over which they lorded. By the time of Earl Rierdan, most peasant Oeridians had been taxed into submission, barely able to eke out a subsistence living. The middle class fared somewhat better, but they could hardly be considered comfortable.

The charity and goodwill of the Knights was well known to the people of Keoland, who viewed the knights with such fanciful names with a degree of awe and curiosity. There was little protest to their presence within the Earldom. The leaders of the Knights decided to open up a dialogue with the noble family who lorded over their lands.

In the Linth camp, Earl Rierdan sought the beneficence of the Knight to solidify his control over the Oeridians. It had been the fear of every Earl of Linth that the Oeridians would someday rise up against their Suel lords. Rierdan realized that the Knights – not officially beholden to the Lion Throne – could be valuable allies if the worst should come. Rierdan began actively courting the favor of the commander of Goarada – Most Vengeful Ettin Nikos Barasta.

Ultimately Nikos and the Earl came to an agreement whereby the Knights of the Watch stationed in Goarada would act on the Earl's behalf in a variety of roles. The Knights would serve to police the region, collect the Earl's taxes, and protect the House in times of war. In exchange, the Knights would receive favored status and use of Goarada for the duration of the Linth legacy.

Needless to say, as the Knights of the Watch went about collecting the Earl's oppressive taxes, the populace's opinion of the Knights began to rapidly degenerate. Many were seen as little more than tools of the Suel nobles who ruled them. It did not help matters that most of the Knights stationed at Goarada were (at the Earl's request) predominantly Suel.

In 442 CY, the firstborn of the reigning Earl of Linth was announced to be a daughter named Magdaline. In 457 CY, when the Earl of Linth was announced to be on his deathbed, a commander in the Knights of the Watch known as Nils Perris tended his resignation to his second-in-command and rode towards the Linth's ancestral home. He was considered a friend of House Linth and was welcomed as always. When he entered, Lady Magdaline, who assumed he was there to inquire about her father's failing health, greeted him. Saying nothing, he drew his sword and beheaded the teenage girl with a single stroke. As her head tumbled wide-eyed to the floor, staining the rich carpets in crimson, the former Knight fell upon his own sword. The Earl died later that afternoon, leaving his youngest son the new Earl.

Disastrously for the Oeridians of the Earldom, Watcher Perris was one of the few Knights remaining of Goarada who was of Oeridian ancestry. The new young Earl, a boy of only thirteen, reacted to this with a demonstration of ham-handed force not yet seen in Linth. The Earl stoked the fires of panic among the other Suel nobles, painting the assassination of Lady Magdaline as an abortive *coup d'etat* against the House of Linth by its Oeridian subjects. The other Suel houses responded in turn, coming down harshly on the Oeridians in their counties and taking the chance to rid themselves of troublemakers.

Even the Knights were not immune to participating against the violent backlash against the Oeridians. They felt humiliated that one of their own was involved in such a treasonous act. The younger (and predominantly Suel) Knights scattered about the Earldom, looking for Oeridian "dissidents." Clashes between the Knights and peasants soon followed, further souring relations between the two groups.

In Linth, the Oeridians remember this time of chaos as "The Nights of Long Lances." This seven-day period commemorates when the Knights of the Watch (whose acts become more reviled with each subsequent generation's telling of the stories) punished the Oeridians for an assassination committed by one of *their* number. It is at this time that tempers flare, Oeridians cry for independence, and the flames of revolt burn in the hearts of the Keogh.

Player Handout #1

(A piece of the finest vellum with crisp calligraphic writing, penned in a firm and sure hand.)

Well met to you. Your exploits have reached my ears, and your prowess as adventurers is not unknown to me. I seek your aid in a delicate manner, but I need to parley with you in privacy.

I entreat you to meet me three blocks south of here, at dusk, at the intersection of Maynard and Evertime streets. I will arrive by carriage. We can discuss my proposal further in confidentiality therein.

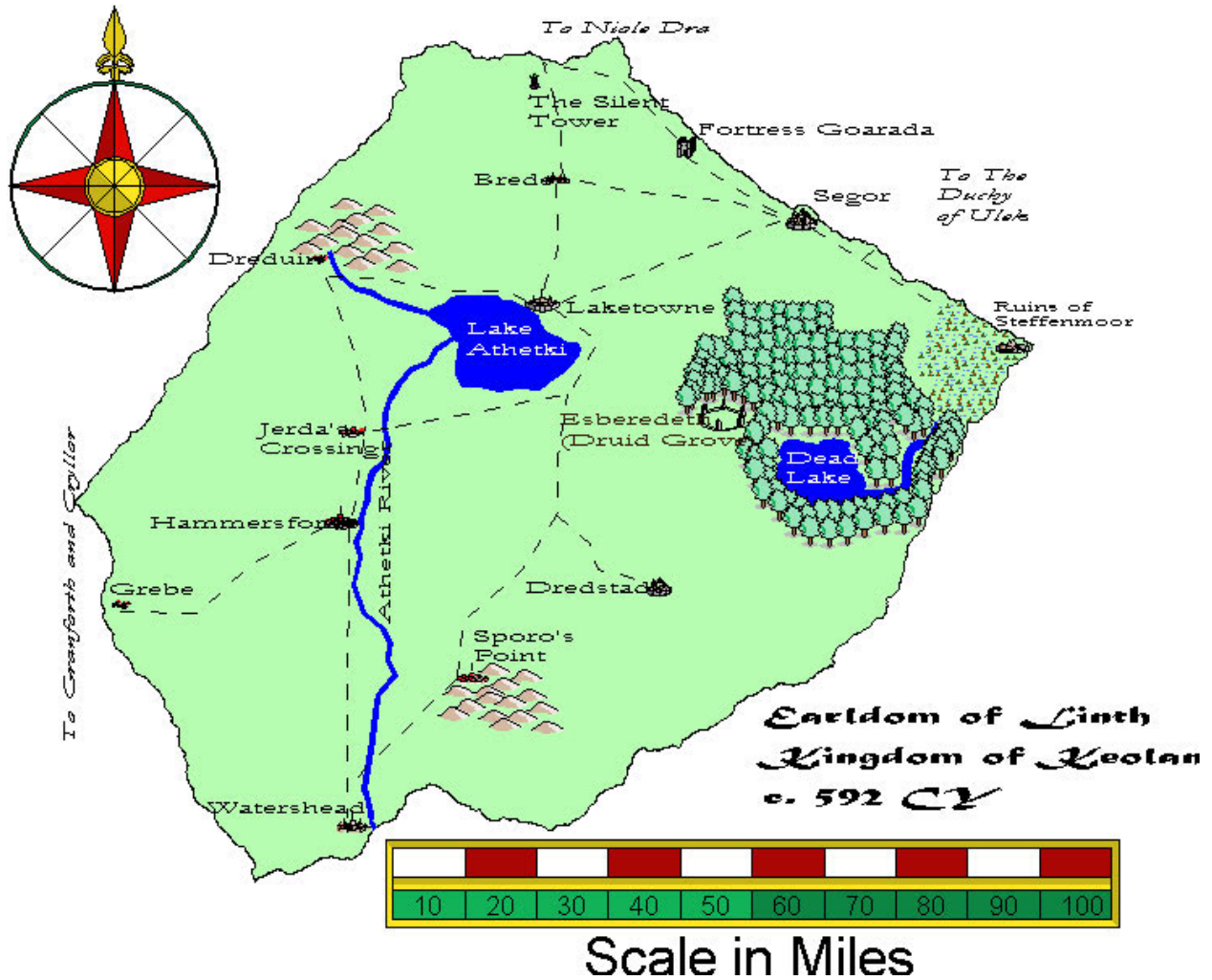
Sincerely,

L

Lucius, Earl of Linth

Player Handout #2

Map of the Earldom.



Player Handout #3

Random complaints from the dissatisfied about the situation in the Earldom of Linth:

- ❖ “We’ve nothing to eat! The blight that sickens our crops... It spreads like a plague across the land. Nothing can grow. I’ve heard some of the farmers who are too stubborn to leave their homesteads were making soup out of boiled water and wood bark to feed their children!”
- ❖ “So many animals have fled the Earl’s lands... but others sicken and die. That was the fate of most of our livestock. But some have... changed, into things not natural. My cousin swore that one night, on the road between Hammersford and Grebe, he saw a panther, with the tentacles of a squid!”
- ❖ “My uncle has lived in the town of Dredstadt for twenty years, good people. Everyone in that dark place knows about the strange goings-on within the Linth manse! It’s said that Lady Hannah, the Earl’s eldest, is able to see ghosts and dances with them. Oh, I best not continue lest the Malagari come for me!”
- ❖ “The Knights of the Watch are revered in other places in the Sheldomar, but in Linth they’re nothing more than thugs in service to the Earl. There’s not a good soul among that lot. They relish their duties as the Earl’s constabulary, and they single out anyone who’s especially ‘Oeridian’ for... special attention.”
- ❖ “There is a guild of thieves within the Earl’s lands. The wealthy are never touched, only the poor! Why target those with nothing? A month ago, in the middle of the night, I heard someone rummaging around through my home. I crept downstairs with a knife, ready to gut the thief. Like a shot, something ran in front of me, nearly knocking me over as it made for the door... it was a skeleton, I swear! A grinning, human skeleton! What manner of thieves use such creatures for their work?”
- ❖ “Priests use their divine magic to create food for the masses. Without them, half the town would starve! And what little food is raised gets sent to the nobles!”
- ❖ “I’ve not been able to find work, for the blight has driven farmers into the cities and towns. There isn’t enough work to go around! I’m not a learned man, and unskilled work is the hardest of all to come by.”
- ❖ “Oh, Laketowne is cleaned up all right. As soon as the Knights of the Watch heard their lord and master was in town, they swept ‘em right off the street! But when the Earl’s not in town, you can’t swing a dead cat without hitting a beggar or a harlot. I feel badly for the womenfolk that have nothing to sell but themselves. Damn the Earl! Damn this blight!”

Player Handout #4

Portions of the first night's negotiations overheard.

It's not difficult to tell that the negotiations are not going well. *Italicized* text is recognizable as the Earl's voice.

- ❖ "You look well-fed, Earl, but that's hardly surprising given that the nobles receive what little food can be found in your lands..."
- ❖ "... *proven time and again that historically, the Keogh have lacked the foresight to rule themselves...*"
- ❖ "... bully-boy tactics of the Knights against the people of this land have done naught but galvanize them more fully year after year against rule by the Suel."
- ❖ "*How dare you accuse me of involvement in the thieves' guild? The Suel nobles aren't victimized by thieves because we live in well-protected homes, that's all!*"
- ❖ "... make no mistake, Earl. This land is still at peace only because I have convinced Tam here to have one more go at peace. And he has many friends..."
- ❖ "... *don't know how you have the ear of the King, but House Linth resents being forced to the table when there is little to contemplate! Your demands for partial self-governance are Yeomanry fantasy...*"