

KET2-05



DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

A Two-Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[®]
Ket Regional Adventure

Version 1

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The last few days of travel on the road out of Polvar City have been rainy and unpleasant. Good thing there is an Inn up ahead. It marks the entrance into the Sarshon Shire. Could there be trouble in Sarshon? If so, then it must be a Godsdays. Part One of the *Ride in the Country* series. It's worth the ride to Sarshon. An adventure for characters level 3-8.

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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This is an RPGA Network scenario for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Most sanctioned events delegate a four-hour time block for each round of this scenario, with actual playing time will around three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and reward distribution 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, print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided works 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 running the event. 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's 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 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. 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 both the players and the DM to keep track of who is playing what character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. But, as the DM, you can bar the use of even Core Rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, usually 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.

Text that appears in ***bold italics*** is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase as appropriate. Text in appendixes contains important DM notes, for you, offering insight to issues particular to the adventure. Monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form. Full monster statistics for standard monsters are provided in

the *Monster Manual*, while statistics for unusual monster and unique individuals are profiled in the Appendix at the end of the adventure. You should review all of these statistics before the game starts to refresh your memory of the creatures' abilities.

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 DMs 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 (www.wizards.com/rpga), 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 character participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1) Determine the character level for each character participating in the adventure.

2) If characters bring animals that have been trained for combat (usually war horses and riding dogs), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars, a paladin's mounts, and so forth) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single character may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 and 1/6	0	0	0	1
1/3 and 1/2	0	0	1	1
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7

3) Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure-round up.

4) If you are running a table of six characters, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you have determined the modified APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge that the characters 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 an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL that this adventure is played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact 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-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. Characters who want their dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is usually a free action (see *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* Chapter 2: Characters) 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.

3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist an iconic." The stats for the 1st level versions of Tordek, Mialee, Lidda and Joza are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to join them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard two-round Regional adventure set in the Ket. All characters pay two Time Unit to participate in the adventure. Adventures' Standard Upkeep costs 24 gp. Rich Upkeep costs 100 gp, and Luxury Upkeep costs 200 gp.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

THE LOST GRAF

One hundred years ago, Graf Emad of Polvar was preparing to marry. As a custom, Nobles make a presentation at their wedding, to prove their worthwhile traits from those that their peers may have in doubt. Graf Emad had wealth and honor, that was for sure, but he felt that his peers perhaps did not think him a great warrior. The Graf and his men road in to the area, which was known at the time as the Sarshon Rough. Graf Emad had heard tales of fantastical beasts that roam this desolate place.

Against the warnings of the local noble, the Graf entered along with a local man who had survived an incursion here in his youth, who would act as a guide. Legend has it, it was the eve of the Graf's wedding, but the fact was, it was still several days before. Enough time to hunt a beast, and bring it back. A base camp was set up just on the edge of the Rough. The next day, a runner came from the Graf's party, carrying a message.

The note was for the Jalhy Kibeth, the local noble. The runner told a hasty tale of a discovery of treasure, and cut diamonds: A Sultan's ransom worth in diamonds. The runner then passed the note on to another runner at the base camp, and told him to deliver it to Lord Jalhy. The runner said they had fought several beasts, but they had wounded their trophy beast, and were stalking it for the final kill. He had to get back with fresh supplies.

So the runner took fresh horses, some men to help, and supplies for two days out in the field, and headed back into the rough. The Graf, his hunting party, the runner and the horses were never seen again.

The note was carried on to the Lord Jalhy. In the hurriedly scribed note, the Graf wrote of a cash of diamonds he had discovered (but did not go into details how or where) and demanded that Lord Jalhy personally lead his troops to act as an escort on his trip back to Polvar. The local noble waited with his troops at the base camp for two days.

After calling for some specialized help (clerics and a ranger) he entered the Rough in search of the Graf. The trail was not easy to follow. Dead beasts and the signs of combat were found along the hunting party's early, more traceable, trail. Among some ruins, the signs of the first campsite were found.

More tracks were found, and the Lord Jalhy felt sure to find the Graf. During this time, they had taken light casualties from the over sized vermin that inhabit the Rough. Some men were sent back due to poison. One man was turned to stone after an encounter with a basilisk. Then a beast that Lord Jalhy had only heard whispered tales about showed it's self to him.

The 'Beast of the Rough', mothers had called it, when telling their children to stay in bed at night. Now the search party faced it in a narrow passage of boulders. The mightiest gorgon this side of the Yantil Mountains snorted at them. It was madder than usual. Even gorgons can have grumpy days.

NOTE: When retelling this tale to the PCs as Walker Caspa, do not refer to it as a gorgon, or go into detail of what it looks like.

The bulk of the party should not have been so close together. Their Ranger scout never sent word back to them that there was something up ahead. The troops that weren't turned to stone should not have stayed to fight the beast and save their Lord. A few men did escaped on foot, wandering amongst the Rough. That pleased the vermin greatly.

The only man not to be wiped out was Atabak the Glimmering, a powerful mage and at the time guest of the Lord Jalhy. He had taken the opportunity to come along on the trip, in hopes of introductions to the Graf,

then later, for his rescue. Atabak became invisible at the first sign of trouble. While the Gorgon was making short work of the troops, Atabak turned the Lord Jalhy back into flesh, and then whisked them both away with a fly spell. This was done under the protest of the Lord Jalhy, but by the time they had gained some altitude and distance, it was too late to go back. Not that going back would have made much of a difference.

Once back to the safety of the base camp, Lord Jalhy fretted over what to do next. He sent one of his sons to report the happenings to the Graf's brother. Meanwhile, the Lord Jalhy gathered his resources, and searched out the best specialists among those of his lands. Clerics, rangers, two lesser mages, even the druid of Sarwood were contacted. All was for naught though.

A representative of the Graf's brother came to assess the situation. Diviners had declared the Graf dead, his mortal shell destroyed. The brother was now the new Graf and married his brother's wife-to-be. Lord Jalhy was ordered to not risk any more resources in the recovery of Graf's body. A shrine was erected at the base camp. Lord Jalhy did not like his new orders, but he obeyed them. He also issued a law, that no man may enter the Graf, without his permission. It was just too dangerous.

But still. It became a local tradition. When a man wants to prove himself, he enters the Rough. Others enter secretly to search for the famous diamond treasure that has grown in size with each telling of the story.

Who is the charismatic man?

Very little information will be given about the Charismatic Man, to avoid spoilers for future scenarios.

The Charismatic Man has yet to be heard giving his name. He is of seemingly Baklunish decent and his accent seems to place him from outside of Ket. He smiles a lot and has a captivating presence. He also has a habit of avoiding questions put to him and turning it around to answer his own questions.

He has an entourage of men with him. They carry no recognizable heraldry and the one man who seems to be a cleric, was very quiet and never displayed markings of his faith. The men seemed to be mostly veteran soldier types. All Baklunish or of mixed blood. One man with them, who could have been a mage of some sort, wore an orange robe with silver trimming.

As for the Charismatic Man, he seemed a veteran fighter type. On his back, he had a bejewel falchion. They all rode light warhorses.

If any NPC is asked, the above is the most information that can be given.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The weather has been raining on and off for several days. The PCs are traveling on the western road out of Polvar City. They are just entering Sarshon Shire when they come across a nice comfy inn. They meet Walker Caspa and his apprentice. Both are humble servants of Fharlanghn. Here the PCs will be regaled with stories of the Graf's Rough, a vermin infested zone of rocks and

death, as well as about adventurers who went in not too many days before.

The PCs are not at the inn very long before a boy from a nearby farm burst in to beg the PCs aid with the squashing of a spider. Speed is of the essence here. The PCs will be awarded bonus XP if they can reach the spider and defeat it, before it moves on to the next farm.

Once the spider is defeated, the PCs meet up with an outrider from Fort Dashin, located in the village of Sarshon. He gives word that another spider, but bigger, attacked the Geshtai church lands. Many soldiers were killed fighting it. The PCs can also choose to head back to the Inn for more information from Walker Caspa.

Though the PCs have a chance (a difficult one) to track the spider back into the rough where it came from, most likely they will prefer to go to Sarshon and seek out permission to enter the rough from Lord Nassif Kibeth, ruler of Sarshon Shire.

While with Lord Kibeth, the PCs will find out more about the spider attack on the Geshtai church lands, as well as more about Sarshon and its noble family. The PCs will be given permission to enter the Rough if they vow to find out what is going on and report it back to Lord Kibeth.

An interlude at the church lands of Geshtai gives a party of PCs who have no tracking skills to speak of, to pick up a tracker. This is also the much easier way to enter the Rough.

Once in the Rough, the PCs are stalked and attacked by one of the many basilisk that inhabit the Graf's Rough. If the PCs are taking longer than they should, they run the risk of attracting more basilisks. Eventually, the PCs will find a petrified colossal sized spider. It met a bad end at the hands of the Beast of the Rough, the resident gorgon.

Either continuing to track, or using the stone spider's rear end as a road sign, the PCs come across a small ring of ruined buildings. One of these is the lair of the gorgon. He is currently at home.

Also in this area, are clues to the adventurers that went into the rough a few days before. The other adventurers have dropped a few bags of treasure and lost a few horses and a man to the gorgon. These shattered stone bodies are near a gapping hole in the ground.

The hole in the ground leads to a cavern. This is where the spiders are coming from. Or were coming from, the other adventurers have sealed up the tunnel that allowed the spiders surface access. There are still two tombs left in the cavern. One of them has been plundered.

A thunderstorm approaches. Wise PCs will take shelter in the one building in the ruins that still has a roof. It was what the gorgon was using as a lair. It's big enough for six horses and six humans to camp in. In the courtyard of the ruins is a shrine of Old Oeridian origin. If the PCs sleep in the ruins, they risk having either a good dream or a nightmare. Both will provide them with clues to the story.

The yet to be plundered tomb in the cavern belongs to a priestess of Atroa. Her ghost waits inside to make a

request of the PCs. Her sister's soul is trapped by a creature of darkest evil in caves to the northwest. If the PCs are willing to enter a test of mettle and honor, she will give them a quest to save her sister (to be done in a later Scenario).

The test is a battle against a planar ally of the Sad Maiden. An honorable and proper hound archon awaits the PCs in a small arena. If they can defeat him on proper terms, the PCs each have a chance to take home a Heart Key (to be used in a later Scenario). If the PCs act completely honorable (according to the archon's rules) they are awarded bonus XP.

With the test over with, it's time for the PCs to head back home. On the way back home through the Rough, they hear screams for help from a young boy and the panicked noises of his horse. It's Beo, Walker Caspa's apprentice. He has followed the PCs out into the Rough hoping to join them in their grand adventures. He has quickly changed his mind.

If the PCs can rescue Beo from the angry large wasps that want him for dinner, then the PCs can get bonus XP.

Once back into Sarshon, the PCs can report back to Lord Kibeth. Assuming they have good news for him, the Lord will reward one skilled (lucky?) PC with a special light war horse (certed).

If the PCs can bring back an alive Beo to Walker Caspa, he will teach all whom wants it, how to use the Ranged Spell feat.

Then they all lived happily ever after. At least until the next Scenario in the series comes out.

Introduction: PCs first meet Walker Caspa, hear some tales of the Graf's Rough, then are summoned to fight a spider.

Encounter 1 A spider is about to attack another farmstead. Can the PCs make it there in time to stop it?

Encounter 2 An outrider meets up with the PCs and tells them of the spider attack on the northern Geshtai church lands. He also reminds the PCs that they will need permission before going into the Rough.

Encounter 3 In the village of Sarshon, the PCs can seek out Lord Nassif Kibeth for permission to enter the rough.

Encounter 4 Getting to know Geshtai. The PCs investigate the spider attack that happened here. If they don't already have one, they can gain a tracker here.

Encounter 5: Running the Rough. Basilisk hide around every corner. The better time the PCs make, the less likely extra basilisk will jump them.

Encounter 6 A petrified spider serves as a signpost incase the PCs have become lost.

Encounter 7 A scary battle with the 'Beast of the Rough', a tough gorgon.

Encounter 8: In a circle of ruined buildings, if the PCs camp out, they may have a dream, or they may have a nightmare. Both lead to clues about what is going on.

Encounter 9: There is a cavern that the spiders were coming out of. The spiders are sealed in now, but there are still two tombs accessible. One of them has already been plundered already.

Encounter 10: In the other tomb, a ghost of an Atroa cleric wishes to give the PCs a quest. That is, if they can pass the test. There is also a magical fountain that can ease some of the PCs more stiff pains.

Encounter 11: An arena fight with an honorable hound archon. If the PCs honorably defeat this being, then they gain bonus XP and the Heart Keys they need for the quest at hand.

Encounter 12: On the way back home, the PCs encounter young Beo, apprentice cleric to Walker Caspa. He is seeking out the PCs to join in their life of adventure. When the giant wasps attack, he realizes just how wrong he was to leave his own nest.

Conclusion: If the PCs have done things right, they are showered with riches. One can earn a talented horse, and the spell casters can learn a feat from Walker Caspa.

INTRODUCTION: THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN SARSHON

It has been raining lightly for two days now. The dark moonless night does not help improve the unpleasant conditions. This road has brought you west out of Polvar City. A sign some way's back, listed the next village to be Sarshon. It should not be too far off. Even in the dark, you can make out a small cluster of buildings up ahead. A torch shines outside the largest building, the rain not seeming to dampen it's light. It illuminates a large drawing of the symbol of Fharlanghn on the side of the building facing you. This might make a good place to stop for the night.

The PCs are on the east road into Sarshon as night is falling. The rain falls gently about them (its been raining gentle for several days now). It's a moonless night. Up ahead is an Inn and some small support buildings. Proudly displayed on the side of the Inn facing the PCs and the road, illuminated by a never burning torch, is a large picture of the holy symbol of Fharlanghn. Once closer to the Inn, a sign in both Common and Ancient Baklunish, listing the name of the Inn, and that all travelers are welcome. "The House of Fharlanghn Inn" is the name of the place.

Once inside, the PCs are greeted by an aging man dressed in brown robes and wearing a Fharlanghn holy symbol. The Cleric's name is Walker Caspa. He runs this Inn and wayside temple of Fharlanghn.

There are a few locals seeking shelter from the rain for the night. Out back is a small cemetery for those who died on the road. There is a barn and a tannery hut nearby as well.

Walker Caspa (Walker is a title) has no serving girls. He does have a young pupil whom he is training in the ways of the road, named Beo.

Beo doesn't seem to be baklunish, or at least not very much. He seems to be mostly oriedian blood.

Caspa has acted as teacher several times in the past, having apprenticed and sent out into the world five other fresh faced clerics of Fharlanghn. Beo will act in the stead of a serving girl, but will defer all questions to Walker Caspa.

The names of the past Apprentices (in order) are Armin, Shahin, Hans, Kallot, Rael and now Beo.

☛ **Walker Caspa:** Male human Clr9.NG

Spells Prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 4 + spell level): 0—create water (2), light (2), mending, purify food and drink; 1st expeditious retreat*, bless, comprehend languages, detect evil, summon monster I, endure elements; 2nd—locate object*, delay poison, gentle repose, lesser restoration (2), undetectable alignment; 3rd—fly*, magical vestment, remove blindness, remove disease (2); 4th—dimension door*, freedom of movement, restoration (2); 5th—teleport*, atonement

*Domain spell. Domains: [Travel (For a total time per day of 1 round per your cleric level, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement (similar to the effect of the spell freedom of movement) This effect occurs automatically soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day.); Protection (You can generate a protective ward, a spell-like ability to grant someone you touch a resistance bonus equal to your level on her next saving throw. Activating this power is a standard action. The protective ward is an abjuration effect with a duration of 1 hour that is usable once per day.)].

Caspa has undetectable alignment cast on himself. In his business, it's best not to be known for any extreme of good and evil, especially in Ket.

☛ **Beo:** Male human Clr1. NG

Beo takes the PCs horses and settle them in to the stables. He will undress the horses of gear and saddle then put on feedbags. Keep in mind the time it will take the horses to be geared up and barding put back on for later.

Tending to the PCs needs, Caspa looks them over. He sizes them up as adventurers. He will ask the PCs (in a friendly, wily manner) if they are after the Graf's Treasure, just like the last adventuring group to come through a few days back.

This should prompt questions from the PCs. He will go on to tell them the tale of the Graf's Rough (located in the Adventure Background), and also of the local custom of men venturing into the Rough to prove their manhood. It is very dangerous, so much, that those

wishing to enter the Rough, must first seek permission from Lord Kibeth, ruler of this shire.

He mentions that the last group of adventurers to enter the Rough did not seek out permission, even after he had warned them to do so. Now the Threshers have found out (not from Caspa), and are waiting for the adventurers to exit so they can be arrested. Caspa is supposed to give warning to the Threshers, should these adventurers come by again.

When the Charismatic Man was asking about the Rough, he allowed Walker Caspa to believe he was after the Graf's Treasure, instead of wanting information about the Rough itself, to aid in a search for another item.

After the talking is done, the PCs hear the sound of a lone horse finishing an exhausting run outside the Inn. A young boy bursts through the door with a torch in one hand. He declares that help is needed. That a monstrous spider is attacking his farmstead. It was last seen at Hutoxi's farmstead.

The door to the inn bursts open. A young boy with a torch hurries inside. He looks quite frantic. He pauses to catch his breath then bursts out, "ALARM! From the Rough, it must be! A spider, as big as a house is ravaging our stead". The crowd of locals seems quite shocked.

All the locals will be shocked. They've rarely heard of giant vermin leaving the Rough. Even then, those vermin have never been bigger than a horse, nor wander this close to the farmsteads.

The boy (named Hutoxi Jr) and the locals can give the PCs directions to Hutoxi's family farmstead. This will entail counting the number of offshoot side trails from the main road that lead to other farmsteads, and finding the right one.

The boy scans the gathering of people. His eyes quickly narrow in on your group. "My name Hutoxi Jr. Travelers, surely the Dweller has blessed this night, by bringing you here. Will you follow his will and travel down this road and save the lives of my parents and siblings?". The boy points west, "The third side road along the Sarshon Road, leads to my parents stead. Please hurry!".

Hutoxi Jr will accompany the party should they request it, otherwise, he will stay here and rest and follow later that night. The other locals will prefer to stay and await an outrider from Fort Dashin to give the all clear for the roads, before leaving the safety of the Inn.

Time will be critical. The PCs will be rewarded for saving the second farmstead before significant damage is done.

If asked, Walker Caspa will cast for free any of his spells that they PCs can justify for the situation. The PCs have to have appeared as good decent people. If they are acting like mercenaries, demanding 'what's in it for them' when the boy asks for help, then Caspa will refuse the free castings, but offer them at RUP prices. He will give out his *Protection Aura* for free to the first agreeable PC to ask for it. It lasts an hour.

Walker Caspa will not advertise his high level casting ability. Keep track of the amount of time it takes the PCs to obtain the spells (including conversation time). Add this to the time it takes the PCs to respond to the spider in Encounter One.

ENCOUNTER 1: NO, THIS ISN'T FROM THAT MOVIE

It is a dark and overcast night. The rain has yet to let up. The PCs only have approximately one mile on a road to get to Hutoxi's farmstead. At a hustle on a horse, with minimal time to navigate, a rider could make the trip in about ten minutes. On foot would take much longer.

Each side road has a sign displaying the head resident of that farm. Starting from the Inn, the names are Goberu, Alidad and Hutoxi. From the sign, it's another quarter mile down the side road to the farmstead. If overland movement is tried, double all travel times.

From the time Hutoxi Jr left to go for help to when he first arrived at the Inn, fifteen minutes have elapsed. Add to this the time it takes for the PCs to interrogate him and respond to his request for help then get their mounts from the stables. This could be as little as ten minutes if the PCs are swift in their reaction. Then add on the time it takes them to travel to the farmstead. Check Chapter 9 of the *Players Handbook* speeds and times.

If the above total time comes out to less than 55 minutes from when the PCs arrive at the Hutoxi farm, then the PCs will find the spider just finishing up its ingestion of the liquefied innards of the livestock and some laborers. The rest of the people are hiding in the basement of the main house.

The spider attack the PCs once they present themselves. If noise is made (keep in mind the horses) then the spider will hone in on it.

Creatures:

APL 4 (EL 6)

🕷️ **Huge Spider, Advanced (20 HD):** hp 110, See Appendix I.

APL6 (EL 8)

🕷️ **Gargantuan Spider, Advanced (36 HD):** hp 219, See appendix I.

APL8 (EL 11)

🕷️ **Colossal Spider, Advanced (64 HD):** hp 387, See appendix I.

Tactics: This spider is very aggressive. It fights to the death. Keep in mind this is a hunting spider, not a web spider. It has decent jump ability. Feel free to have it make jump checks to leap over (or onto) buildings or

over PCs and obstacles. The spider has a Speed of 40, so increase all checks by 1/3. When fighting an opponent on horseback, the spider finds it difficult to figure out if it's the horse or the rider doing the damage to it. Thus, the spider will attack the larger opponent first (the horse), before moving on to the rider when a choice needs to be made about targets. Also remember that for attacks of opportunity and reach, that the rider is a different target from the horse, and that the rider occupies the back square of the horse. Thus with a good reach, the spider can make such attacks against both the rider and the horse as it charges, but not in the same round, as the spider does not have Combat Reflexes.

If the spider has no new targets once the 55 minutes is up, it wanders eastward, finding itself at the Alidad farmstead. It takes the spider about ten minutes to find itself at the Alidad farm and start attacking. This spider is very aggressive.

PCs arriving late to the Hutoxi farm find the place a mess. The frightened survivors are in the root cellar and did not see the spider leave, though they can give a guess (time+10 minutes) to how long ago it might have left.

The area between farmsteads is mostly light forest. It is an overcast night with approximately an hour's worth of rainfall affecting the tracks. Still, the size of the spider makes tracking it easy. The tracking DC is APL4: 21, APL6: 18, APL8: 14.

Once the spider is at the Alidad farmstead, it needs only five minutes to do the most critical of damage. If this happens, the PCs do not receive the bonus XP for saving the farm.

The spider stays at the Alidad farmstead for several hours. It hunkers down between two buildings and gathers up the livestock victims it acquired from smashing a hole in the barn roof. It will spend this time digesting its meal in peace.

Even if the PCs are lost or just plain slow, they should eventually find the monster spider here. If the bonus XP deadline has passed by an hour or more, and the PCs still haven't found the spider, have a member of the Alidad family find the PCs and relay the monster's location.

Should this go on any longer, the spider moves on to the Goberu farm. Rinse and Repeat.

By morning, troops from Sarshon arrive to hunt down the spider themselves. They find it attacking the Caspa's Inn.

If the PCs are involved in the killing of the spider at this point, award only half XP. If the PCs leave it all or most to the troops, award no XP.

If the PCs track the source of the spider, they will find it leads to the main road then further on towards the Rough.

Carry on to Encounter Two.

ENCOUNTER 2: THE OUTRIDER

Once the PCs have dealt with the spider and head back to the road they will come across an outrider from Fort Dashin. Depending on how long the PCs took to battle the spider, this could be the first rider, or one of several that have rode up and down this section of road checking on the state of the Sarshon Shire.

For the following box text, assume that the PCs do not attempt to hide from the outrider. Otherwise, the outrider just passes by.

As you reach the main road, the sound of heavy hoof beats comes from around the bend in the road. Upon seeing you, a lone rider in military vestments stops his gallop and approaches you. "Hail travelers. Upon the authority of Lord Kibeth, state your business here in Sarshon".

Assuming the PCs are friendly or at least respectful, the soldier will briefly question them about what they are doing and if they have seen anything unusual.

If they tell him of the spider:

The soldier shakes his head in frustration. "Another one! What is happening this night? I have never heard of such a thing before. A spider just as you describe, but only much larger, was reported attacking the Holy Watershed of Geshtai a few hours ago. Most of the garrison was sent out to assist the Clerics and their own forces. I must be off now, I must check on Walker Caspa and any who may be sheltering there."

Unless the PCs have very pressing questions of the outrider and can beat him in an opposed diplomacy check to get him to stay and answer, he rides off eastwards.

Note: Members of Ket military meta-orgs have +2 circumstance bonuses to diplomacy with other members of the military. Consider these soldiers a part of the Paighan.

If the PCs ask about the Rough, the soldier will remind them that they to seek out permission before entering. Lord Kibeth can give permission. If it's an emergency, the Threshers can also give permission, but in this matter, then will direct the PCs to Lord Kibeth.

♣ **Soldier:** Male human War2.

At this point, the PCs have four obvious options. They can head north towards the rough (following the spider tracks or not), head back to Walker Caspa for more information, head into Sarshon or lastly, head to the Church lands of Geshtai (the Holy Watershed).

Heading into Sarshon: Encounter 3

Heading towards the Rough: Encounter 5a

Heading to the Holy Watershed: Encounter 4

If the PCs wish to consult with Walker Caspa, read on.

The PCs may wisely decide to go back to the Inn for more information. Walker Caspa will explain that things like this never happen. Vermin and beasts stay in the Rough and spiders that big have never been seen, even in the Rough.

Walker Caspa looks you up and down. “Come and let me close some of your wounds. I must say, in all the years I have been here, I have never seen something like this happen before. The giant vermin and other strange beasts almost always stay in side the Rough. Even then a spider as big as you say is unheard of. Not even in side the Rough have such beasts of that size been seen.”

Walker Caspa offers free healing at this point to any who would need it and are respectful and kind.

He will answer whatever questions the PCs have of him about the history of the rough, or about Sarshon.

On what monsters that Caspa knows to be common among the rough:

Walker Caspa rubs his head slightly, nods absentmindedly, and then begins to list fantastical monsters. “ Lets see, all sorts of giant vermin, such as scorpions, spiders, centipedes. In the northeast end of the rough, I’ve heard tales of giant wasps. But the true threats are the basilisks. The place is infested with them. They lay about sunning themselves on the rocks. Then of course, there is the Beast. Some say it’s the same one that wiped out the soldiers that went in search of the lost Graf, so many years ago. Descriptions of it are vague and contradictory. What is confirmed is that its breath turns flesh into stone. Of course, this could very well be just an old legend”.

Walker Caspa reminds the PCs that they need permission before heading into the Rough.

He can give accurate directions to any place in the shire (outside of the Rough’s borders).

If the PCs have not had an encounter with an outrider yet, have one stop by now, or meet them on the road as they leave the Inn.

ENCOUNTER 3: IT’S WORTH THE RIDE TO SARSHON

If the PCs are here, then they have decided to travel into Sarshon village. They most likely enter from on the eastern road. The first structure of note will be the fortified estate of House Kibeth that overlooks the eastern approach to the village.

Up head is the village of Sarshon. On the northern side of the road, is a fortified manor house overlooking the eastern approach. On the roof, flags flap at half-mast. A light warhorse, outfitted with combat dress and ceremonial looking chain shirt barding, stands tied up at the gate. It has a book tied to one of its stirrups. A lone soldier stands guard at the open gate to the estate.

The tied horse in full combat dress and a lone boot tied into a stirrup is a custom among nobility. It signifies that a family member from the estate has rode off into combat and is missing. The horse remains there during the day (stabled at night) either until the fate of the rider is known or until the next festival week, when a ritual of lose and remembrance is done during Godsday in the festival week.

Allow either a bardic knowledge, Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nobility) or if the PC is a Ket citizen, allow them an Intelligence check of DC 10 (listed skills apply) to recognize the above custom.

Who is the missing rider? Lord Nassif Kibeth’s eldest son, Taj.

Taj commands the local Calvary company (this is a company of Somb, who House Kibeth is the patron of) of Sarshon in the name of his father. He led the charge against the colossal spider but he took a devastating wound during the battle. His horse was spooked and ran off from the combat with Taj slumped in the saddle. It just wasn’t feasible to send another rider off after Taj, not with the spider right there.

Word was sent back to Lord Kibeth of his missing son, and that the spider had been defeated at great cost in men and horse. A Geshtai tracker was sent out to track down Taj and his horse, but so far, no word. The rest of the cavalry is out patrolling for more spiders.

If the PCs want to enter the estate they can. The lone guard will pass them through after a brief inspection and questioning. There is an obvious air of sadness about the guard and any household servants the PCs may encounter.

If asked about the horse, the guard replies:

Pointing to the boot, “ It’s one of the young masters old pairs. He’s been missing since nightfall, after the battle with the damned infernal spider. The horse will stay till he returns. But please, no more questions. Enter if you will. Lord Kibeth is in, though word of his mood, I can not say”. With that the guard waves you in.

Once inside the grounds, the PCs are free to approach the main building. A servant woman named Hetty meets them.

As you arrive at the door to the main house, a servant girl intercepts you. “ My name is Hetty, and if it is the Lord Kibeth you seek, I hope you bring good news. His mood needs the uplifting. He is in the garden around back of the estate. I shall announce you”.

Of course, should the PCs act hostile or suspicious, and then she yells for the guards instead, thus the PCs have some explaining to do.

Going around back, there is a small ornamental garden. An older man dressed in a suit of chainmail of high quality sits at a small table. Before him is a jug and a tankard. The smell of fermented goats milk whiffs about the air. He seems somewhat depressed. Resting against the table beside him is an ornamental cane. Hetty introduces you, and the man motions for you to stand before him.

Lord Nassif Kibeth is lame in his left leg. He requires a cane to move about effectively, though he still insists on wearing his master crafted armor during times like this. Though he can ride and fight in mounted combat, he has decided it best to stay here and watch over the village and await the return of his son.

Allow the players to introduce themselves again and explain their purpose. This should be either to enter the Rough and track down the spiders or offer to search for his son. A typical response will be;

Before replying Lord Kibeth finishes off his tankard. "My son. My son must be returned to me, no matter what state he is in. I do not know what is the cause of these spider attacks. I have heard of nothing like this before. Perhaps this is the last we will see of these spiders. For the here and now, what is important is retrieving me son. Once he is returned to me, then you may enter the Graf's Rough, if that is your wish. What ever treasure found there shall be yours to keep, but my son must be found".

Allow the PCs a few moments to have their say, then announce the following'

The servant girl Hetty comes running around the house. She is yelling, "He's home! He's Home!" Relieve washes over the face of Lord Kibeth. He picks up his cane and starts to hobble towards the front of the house. "Would you assist an old man?" he asks of you. Once around to the front of the house, before you is a battle worn horse and on the ground with a pillow propping his head, a young noblemen.

Lord Kibeth turns to you and says, "You may enter the Rough now. Crush what ever did this to my son".

After taking a bit of a side trip, Taj's horse has navigated itself back home, with its badly injured master on top. Taj has stabilized a ± 4 hit points, but has yet to regain conciseness. He also has a strength score of zero due to the spider venom.

He will be all right, but he will need plenty of bed rest.

Lord Kibeth: Male human Ftr8.LG

If the PCs ask about a reward, Lord Kibeth says;

"Yes, a humble reward can be arranged. You bring me proof of what is causing this outbreak of monstrous spiders and I shall reward you with my humble means, but I warn you, do not dally in the Rough. It is a dangerous place and fighting all the beasts that lay within is not your mission".

If the PCs mention the other 'adventurers' who went into the Rough some days before this, Lord Kibeth says;

" Yes, these men sound like trouble. I do not believe in coincidence. The Threshers are to arrest these men on sight, should they ever leave the Rough. Few men do. If they are the cause, find out what it is they did. I shall not send my troops or the Threshers into the Rough after them. It is too deadly of a place for large groups, as my ancestors have found out".

There is little else for the PCs to here. At the end of the adventure, they can return here for rewards should they have some sort of proof to show Lord Kibeth or at least an honest explanation.

Though the PCs have no need story wise to visit any other locations in the village, the important sites are highlighted here. It should be noted, that Sarshon and its locations are to be used in later adventures.

Sites about town:

The Bazaar: This small market place is where all the local farmers and craftsmen come to unload their extra goods. Smaller trade caravans often stop and pick up the local surplus and continue on to other large settlements. Mundane items over 200gp cannot be found for purchase here. Magic items are not sold here.

Small church of Blered and the town Smelter: This church and smelter complex used to handle all the ore of the shire region. But since one of the mines was shut down, business has been poor. Master Work armor of up to half-plate can be purchased here. Some potions and divine scrolls can be purchased here as well. No magical item greater than 300gp. Highest cleric level is 5th.

Shrine of Istus: A small shrine to the goddess of fate is located in the north part of the village. People pay their respects to it regularly, but it has no attending clergy.

Fort Dashin: Consists of the Thresher Barracks, The Courthouse and punishment area (Threshers Square). Also, the fort house's the regular military compliment for the shire. The fort stands watch on the western approach to the village. There is a resident Jurat who, along with Lord Kibeth, acts as the judicial branch of the law in Sarshon Shire.

The Temple Lands of the True Faith:

This is not actually in the village of Sarshon. It is eight miles away (six as the crow flies) along the north trail that leads into the foothills. This temple runs a copper mine and has permission to use official criminal slaves. The temple also has a handful of farms on its land. This temple is well known for taking in orphans and training them to be respectable citizens, or sometimes even Mullahs or Threshers. Highest Cleric level is 7th.

If PCs wish to journey there, remind them of the distance. Though there is a shrine to the true faith in the village that is used for prayer time, the only actual mullah that is in the village is the Jurat. He will not interfere with Lord Kibeth's authority, unless a strong moral point (with plenty of proof) can be raised.

A mullah from the temple to the north comes in to town every Godsdays to lead prayer. During festival weeks, on the Godsdays, a large precession goes from the village to the temple.

ENCOUNTER 4: GUMUS COMMANDS THEE!

A few miles to the northeast of Sarshon village are the Church lands of Geshtai. At the center of it is the Holy Watershed temple. Many small canals for irrigation spread about the lush farmland. This Geshtai Temple must make a pretty Helm off of these tennent farmers.

Some information on the Church lands of Geshtai. They encompass the entire western shore of Gumus Lake. They extend out by about a mile. There are two thorps (one in the north, the other at the south end) and many smaller farms spread all about. In the center, on the shore of the lake, is the Holy Watershed. It is the temple complex for this order of Geshtai Clerics.

The complex houses about ten actual clerics, with the highest being 7th level. They have many laymen, soldiers and other servants of the faith.

Those living on the land still worship the Baklunish pantheon (with Al'akbar at the head) but for the majority of them, Geshtai is their primary god of worship. The Clerics make sure the water flows into the entire shire, not just on their lands. They are fair and kind landlords.

The spider attack occurred just outside the northern thorp, not at the Holy Watershed.

PCs must first travel to the Holy Watershed for permission to conduct any type of business on these lands. All the paths and trails lead to the Holy Watershed. Any peasants stopped by the PCs will tell them that they need to seek out permission from the Tranquil Fountain (the head cleric of this order) to operate with in these borders.

Once the PCs arrive at the Holy Watershed:

Before you is what must be the Holy Watershed. Several stone buildings bask in the presence of the pristine and peaceful Lake Gumus. There are no fortifications or walls, but there is a moat that horseshoes the main building, connecting it to the lake. A stone bridge spans the moat. There are some guards about, but so far, no one has tried to stop you.

Standing on the bridge in contemplation, is Tranquil Fountain. He is whom the PCs need to speak with. The spider attack has him quite vexed. Once the PCs introduce themselves and have stated their case:

"This is acceptable to us. We wish this problem solved as well. If you swear to do no harm to these lands, then you have our blessing. Though we could supply you with a boat, I do not recommend entering the Rough that way. Should something happen to the boat, you would be trapped far in the Rough".

☞ **Tranquil Fountain:** Male human Clr7.

If the PCs have an influence point with Geshtai the church, or pay the costs, a Geshtai tracker can be provided (Clr1/Expt2) who will do the tracking, and provide minimal combat support, but other than that, she will be a very silent partner in the party while in the

Rough. It costs one hundred gold for her services in such a dangerous area, as the Rough is.

☞ **Galdette the Guide:** Female human Clr1/Exp2.

The PCs are directed to the location just outside of the northern thorp, where the combat took place. The bodies have all been cleared away, but blood and of course, the corpse of the colossal spider is still there in various pieces.

You have arrived at the location of the spider battle. It is just outside the northern thorp. The first thing to catch your eye is the colossal sized spider corpse. It appears that all human and horse bodies have been cleared out already. The ground is still soggy from the last few days of rain and the blood is floating on top, unable to sink into the already saturated ground.

This is where the PCs need to start tracking from, should they wish to have a decent chance of finding the correct location in the Rough or just surviving. The alternate path is to follow the first spider's tracks on the southeast side of the rough, but that will lead to a much more dangerous trip, as well as more difficult.

If the PCs start tracking here (or have the tracker do it for them) go to Encounter Five B.

ENCOUNTER 5: YOU TAKE THE HIGH ROAD...

Encounter Five A:

Note: experience can only be gained from either Encounter A or B, but not both. PCs are awarded XP only for the listed combat encounters, not any they may incur for taking too long in the Rough.

If the PCs are at this encounter, then they have chosen to track the 'farm' spider through the southeast edge of the Rough. This will be the more difficult journey than Encounter 5b.

Note: the rain lets up about two hours after the PCs first arrived at the Inn during the Introduction encounter. It is important to keep track of the number of extra days the PCs take before following the tracks. Every extra day adds +1 to the tracking DC. The storm listed in Encounter 10 does not begin in the story till the PCs reach that encounter.

About one-half mile north of the main road is the southern edge of the Grafts Rough. The trees and lush greenery stop and giant boulders and slabs of rock take their place, as if scattered by some divine hand. The ground itself is barren and hard, with only spotty tufts of green. The boulders and rock slabs seem to create in some areas a maze effect with corridors and high walls. Other areas seem more open, but still barren. Small pools of water seem to have collected. The ground does not seem to drain well. Strange animal sounds float across the landscape from great distances. None of them seem truly natural.

Though there could have been room in these rock corridors for the spider to move through, it preferred to

leap and move about the top of the rock outcroppings. No tracks of the spider can be found down on the ground. Unless the PCs climb up on the boulders (Climb DC 10, height ranges between 10ft and 30ft), they are be able to find the follow the tracks.

Horses can be taken into the flat and corridor areas of the rough, but it is not plausible to take a horse up top the stone slabs and boulders and then move from one then another other. The tracks up on the rocks go relatively straight. The corridors of rocks do not always follow the same path. This will reduce party overland movement speed to three-quarters, in addition to any other slow downs.

The DC to track depends on the APL (hard ground +20, +Size, +1 24hours, +6 Rain/Hour (light rain), +5 Jumping to hide tracks) and comes out to;

APL4: DC 30

APL6: DC 28

APL8: DC 24

Keep in mind any extra penalties or bonuses. Such as, tracking at night, or waiting extra days.

Though it has been raining for 24 hours, it has been light drizzle and is considered to be only six hours worth of rain.

The PCs are required to make tracking checks ever mile that they are following the trail. As the crow flies, the distance is only four miles, but on the ground, it comes out to five miles.

About one mile in to the Rough a basilisk attacks the PCs. It is on a low-lying ledge, laying in wait for prey. It retreats after taking $\frac{3}{4}$ of its hit points in damage and can be considered defeated.

While on this route, for every two hours the PCs are in the Rough, they will be attacked by another basilisk. These extra basilisks are of the APL 4 type, no matter what the party APL is. These basilisks always retreat after taking $\frac{1}{2}$ their hit points in damage. This represents the PCs overstaying their welcome in such hostile territory. Every time the PCs lose the trail, it takes them an hour before they can make another Track check.

The PCs are only awarded experience for the first basilisk defeated. Not for any others that show up because the PCs are taking too long.

If the PCs move at full speed while tracking (+5 to the Track DC) then they only attract additional basilisk encounters every four hours.

If the PCs are wondering where all the other wildlife is, it is the rain. They have all taken to caves and nooks in the rocks. The majority of them will wait for the pools of water to drain away.

Creatures:

APL 4 (EL 6)

🐉 **Basilisk:** hp 45, See *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 8)

🐉 **Basilisk, Advanced (18HD):** hp 154; See Appendix I.

APL8 (EL 11)

🐉 **Basilisk, Advanced (18HD) (2):** hp 153, 132; See Appendix I.

Encounter Five B:

If the PCs are here, then they have decided to enter the Rough from the north end of the lake. Once the attempt is made for the first Track check (the first check here is automatic success) read the following.

With all the recent rain and the proximity to the lake and river, the ground before you is rather muddy. For now, it is not difficult at all to spot the large holes that are the spider's footprints. The tracks seem to lead to the northeast, towards the river that feeds into Lake Gumus.

This is the easier route. Assuming the PCs have not delayed for too long, they should be able to do all of this with a spot check, in case no one in the party has tracking. Note, having an animal track the scent, will just bring them back to the spider corpse, not the origin of the trail.

Due to the softer ground, fresh rain and the size of the spider, the tracks are easier to follow. Also, the PCs will be in the Rough for less time.

The DC to track is the same for all APLs (+5 soft ground, -8 size, +1 24hours, +6 Rain/Hour (light rain) and comes out to DC 4. At Spot check is all that is required for the first two miles. This brings the PCs to the river, and border of the Rough.

Keep in mind any extra penalties or bonuses. Such as, tracking at night, or waiting extra days.

Though it has been raining for 24 hours, it has been light drizzle and is considered to be only six hours worth of rain.

The PCs are required to make Track checks every hour that they are following the trail. As the crow flies, the distance is only one mile to the river, but on the ground, it comes out to two miles.

From then on, the PCs must enter the Rough proper. This section of the Rough is lower in elevation than the rest and acts as a runoff area during times of rainfall. The ground here is largely layered dry mud on stone during the dry times. But after a few days of rain, a layer of sloppy mud forms between little streambeds of runoff water.

The PCs are required to make tracking checks every mile that they are following the trail. As the crow flies, the distance is only three miles, but on the ground, it comes out closer to four miles. This brings them to Encounter 6, where they find the petrified colossal spider.

About two miles in (past the river), the PCs are attacked by a basilisk. It is on a low lying ledge, laying in wait for prey. It will retreat after taking $\frac{3}{4}$ of its hit points in damage and can be considered defeated.

The ground is very muddy. Overland movement is halved. Combat speed is also halved for anyone with four legs or less. The basilisk is reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ speed. Though PCs can, horses cannot charge or run in the mud.

While on this route, for every six hours the PCs are in the Rough, they will be attacked by another basilisk. These extra basilisks are of the APL 4 type, no matter what the party APL is. These basilisks retreat after taking $\frac{1}{2}$ of their hit points in damage. This represents the PCs overstaying their welcome in such hostile territory. Every time the PCs lose the trail, it takes them an hour before they can make another Tracking check.

The PCs are only awarded experience for the first basilisk defeated. Not for any others that show up because the PCs are taking too long.

If the PCs move at full speed while tracking (+5 to the Track DC) then they only attract additional basilisk encounters every eight hours.

If the PCs are wondering where all the other wildlife is, it is the rain. They have all taken to caves and nooks in the rocks. The majority of them will wait for the pools of water to drain away.

Creatures:

APL 4 (EL 6)

🐉 **Basilisk:** hp 45, See *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 8)

🐉 **Basilisk, Advanced (18HD):** hp 154; See Appendix I.

APL 8 (EL 11)

🐉 **Basilisk, Advanced (18HD) (2):** hp 153, 132; See Appendix I.

Development: For both Encounters 5a and 5b, the tracks lead to Colossal petrified spider. Its back ends point towards the collapsed ruins. This is now all stone ground, with only a few small puddles. Go on to Encounter 6.

ENCOUNTER 6: THAT'S ONE BIG SUNDIAL!

As you are coming out of a particularly dense grouping of boulders, before you in a large clearing is a colossal sized gray spider. It is at least 40 feet in diameter. It's just standing there. On second glance, it's also made out of stone. It is very life like. Its front legs are reared up like it was recoiling from something. Centipedes the size of cats are nestled on top of it

This is the third spider to escape from the collapsed cave complex. The gorgon was on his way back to his lair when he ran into the spider. The gorgon got the drop on the spider, as well as the spider's failed saving throw. Thus the gorgon continued on to his lair. The back end of

the spider points the way to go, if PCs need another method of navigation other than tracking.

The vermin on the statue are not worth any experience points, and will simply run away.

With a successful Track check, the PCs can learn that three sets of giant spiders came from the north. The tracks then split up and went east, west and the last stayed right here. They can also pick up the tracks of the gorgon. Described the gorgon tracks (little more than scuff marks) as being possible made by a metal booted quadruped.

The Track DC is 18 (not including any special circumstances) to both know the above, and to follow the tracks for another mile. There are no random basilisk attacks in this area. They stay away from the gorgon's territory.

There are no tracks to the other adventurers that came by, for they approached from a slightly different route.

If the PCs wander directly along the path the stone spider is facing away from, they would eventually get to a spot where they can make out the ruins in Encounter 7 by sight.

ENCOUNTER 7: BREATHE, GORE, TRAMPLE

Up ahead, about 100 feet away are some ruined stone buildings. Also visible is a large stone slab like many of the others you have passed, but this one has a large gaping hole in the side of it. Between the hole and the ruins, are the remains of some broken statues. Several are clearly statues of horses.

The groupings of the ruined stone buildings are now the lair of the gorgon. The Beast of the Rough is in one of these buildings. He is going about his gorgon type business in his lair, but comes out charging as soon as the PCs make themselves known. This is done with listen checks. If a PC is sneaking into the area, then that PC gets a listen check for the gorgon going about his business (DC 12).

Once alerted, the gorgon fights to the death. It is defending its lair and in addition to that, it's just a jerk. The ruins do not have doors, and few have four walls and a roof. These are mostly small square buildings with nothing else of interest in them. But there is a shrine in the courtyard the border.

What has happened here?

Until recently, there was a carved mouth entrance in the side of the stone slab. The entrance had a magical form of protection that affected the mind of whom ever passed through the opening. From down in the caverns below, monstrous hunting spiders would emerge and populate the Rough. Though much larger sized spiders existed in the caverns, they could not escape through the small exit.

That was until the Charismatic Man and his troops arrived. They had been making their way through the Rough, searching for this spot. The Charismatic man knew that inside the carved mouth, in one of the three side tunnels, would be the prizes he was after.

To get around the magic of the mouth, the plunderers used druidic magic to collapse the stone around the entrance, sending it all falling down into the large chamber below. Thus they unknowingly made the entrance/exit big enough for the largest of spiders to escape.

With a single man left to guard the horses, the rest descended into the caverns to plunder what it was they had come for. The other two side passages were ignored and only a specific tomb was plundered.

During this time, the sound and smell of the horses attracted three very large spiders out of the cavern and out the hole. The lone guard was able to hide the horses in the ruins when he saw the spiders coming. The spiders kept searching for the horseflesh, but wandered a fair distance away in quick time (they are fast). Several things happened at this time.

The spiders on the run ran into the gorgon. He turned one to stone and scattered the other two. Then the gorgon raced home.

Meanwhile, the plunderers attained what they had come for plus several sacks of booty to make the trip profitable for the mortals, but they had some troubles. Several colossal spiders were pressing the plunderers hard. In a bid to escape, the group used more magic to collapse the large tunnel right on top of the spiders that threaten them. This totally blocked off the passageway to the largest cavern network.

The lone horse guard responded to the screams of his friends and brought forth the horses. The plunderers were climbing up just in time for the gorgon to arrive and cause some havoc.

In the ensuing combat, the already weakened plunderers tried to escape the best they could. Several bags of loot were dropped, as well as three horses turned to stone. In an effort to defend his friends and keep the horses calm, the horse guard left himself open and was also turned to stone. The angry gorgon eventually broke all the statues.

The rest of the plunderers doubled up on horses and retreated. Retreating saved their lives. Besides, killing beasts was not their goal. The retrieval of the item was.

What is happening up top now?

Upon closer inspection of the area, a gapping hole about twenty feet in diameter extends through both the rock slab, and the ground in front of the slab. Peering in, it leads to a large and deep cavern. It is about eighty feet down. The diameter of the cavern is approximately 150 feet. The broken remains of the stone mouth and the rock it was attached to lie at the bottom of the cavern.

The outcropping of rock in front of you has an oddly symmetrical slice taken out of it that seems to extend the ground in front of it. In total, the hole has a diameter of about twenty

feet. A shaft of light peers down, splitting the darkness of a large cavern. About eighty feet down is a pile of stone with some of it appearing to be carved. Some shuffles and pickaxes rest on the ground here.

Around the hole, traces of clay can be found around the edges. Pickaxes and shovels lay strewn about. Several blank parchments lay in a pile. A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC10) can identify these as spent scrolls, the spell is impossible to tell. Spellcraft applied to the edge of the hole (DC 22) to know it was caused by *soften stone to clay* spell.

About 15 feet away from the hole, are the smashed remains of the statues of three horses and a man. The horses had no barding, and the man wore a chain shirt with two short swords still in their sheaths. Four sacks of unharmed loot lay near here out in the open. This is made up mostly of silver coins and a stash of rough diamonds. As well as two magic items. The magic item's type depends on APL.

Track checks can be made to pick up the trail of the Charismatic Man and his party to see which way they went. A successful check of DC 26 can find the trail of five horses heading northwest (assuming the character can tell direction). Keep in mind any additional penalties, such as night (in addition to the soon to come overcast skies).

At about this time, the wind is starting to pick up and thunder can be heard in the distance. A Knowledge (nature) or Wilderness Lore (DC 10) can tell that a large storm is brewing and will be here in about a ½ hour. The sky is clear now, but once the storm arrives, the sky will remain overcast for the next six days.

The thunderstorm will last for four hours (see Chapter 6 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide) and should make the characters seek shelter. If any of the PCs decide not to seek shelter to wait out the storm, wearing metal armor has a 5% chance per hour of exposure to be struck by lightning (1d10 worth of 1d8's electrical damage). Non-metal armor has a 1% chance per hour.

Among the ruined buildings there is one with a roof that can fit six horses in it. This will be a good place to stable the PCs horses. There is also room for the PCs to lay out and sleep, protected from the wind and rain.

Once the PCs have searched around the ruins, they will discover a *ll* (excluding the above mentioned building) the buildings are almost completely ruined. In the center of the ruins is a courtyard with a shrine of sorts.

In a long ruined central courtyard is a shrine of sorts. It is about five feet long and three feet high. The carvings on the shrine seem to be acting out a stylized story. On one end, is what could be described as a ghastly man dressed in robes, surrounded by just as ghastly, but thin women. The male figure's hands are out stretched and seem to be affecting a power over the land.

On the other end of the carving is a woman of beauty with a bird on her shoulder. Her hands are also out stretched as if employing a power over the land, as well as combating the effects of the ghastly man. Upon closer inspection, carvings of people are also in the scene, but they seem to be much smaller scale, about

only half as tall as the other figures mentioned. The symbol of an inhuman eye is located near the man. The symbol of a heart with a rune in it is located near the women. There is a ring of text along the shrine.

The symbols and the figure associated with them are Incubulos and Atroa. The scene is depicting a spiritual battle between servants of the two divine powers. They are fighting over a tribe of Oeridians who settled north of here during the great migration. These ruins are the remains of those who stayed to guard 'what must be guarded'. On a successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) read the following. Allow a DC 10 check to recognize the eye symbol as that of Incubulos and a DC 14 check for the heart symbol as that of Atroa.

After spending some time trying to put meaning to the stylized religious depictions, you come to the following conclusions. The ghastly figure represents both a follower of Incubulos and the god's divine influence. The woman represents a follower of Atroa. The two faiths seem to be battling for influence in a community.

The text is written in Old Oeridian. If it is translated as:

Pity us. We are those who have stayed behind. We are the sons and daughters of those who crossed the plains and took what was not ours to take. Eastward more, we few will not go. We stay to beg forgiveness of you who chase us. We would return her heart to you, but it has been sealed from us. Darkness awaited us, in those deep caves. In that darkness, her heart awaits, out of our reach. We hold for you the he who stole her heart and imprisoned you, oh so long ago. Past the mouth, you shall find him to vent your wrath. He holds the key to attaining her heart from its dark confines. The door of the eye holds your relief.

Now leave us to dream of our past and lament our future.

The shrine detects as magical. Its aura is Strong and the schools are Enchantment and Abjuration.

Should someone wish to attempt to destroy the shrine, they are in for a surprise. Once the shrine is destroyed it detonates with a *fire trap*. The trap does 1d4+15 points of fire damage in a 5ft radius. Reflex DC 17 for half damage.

Note: The *fire trap* is placed inside the solid shrine. It cannot be detected (non-magically) or disarmed from the outside. It detonates as soon as the shrine is broken open. If the shrine is destroyed, then the dream effect will not take place.

If the PCs wish to explore the cavern then go to Encounter Nine. If they wish to shelter from the storm and sleep, go to Encounter Eight.

Creatures:

APL4 (EL 7)

🐉 **Gorgon, Decreased (7 HD):** hp 34; See Appendix I.

APL 6 (EL 8)

🐉 **Gorgon;** hp 68; See *Monster Manual*.

APL8 (EL 11)

🐉 **Gorgon, Advanced (18 HD):** hp 224; See Appendix I.

Tactics: The tactics for the gorgon are straightforward. Find things; kill things. It's an armored, snorting brute. At APL 6 and 8, it has its full resource of hit points and daily breath weapon uses. The gorgon will fight whoever is nearest. When one opponent goes down, and there is none others in charge range, it spends one round trampling the fallen prey, before moving on to find its next victim.

At APL4, the gorgon is still under the effects of its run in with the spider from the day before. The spider was able to injure the gorgon and in the struggle. The gorgon inhaled a large amount of silk. This is affecting its health and breath weapon. The stat block has been adjusted to reduce hit dice as well as temporary constitution damage on the gorgon. At this APL, the gorgon only has one breath weapon use per day.

Treasure: Consisting mostly of silver coins and rough-cut diamonds. Some mundane trinket items of zero value are mixed in with two magic items for APL6 and APL8.

APL 4: loot (0 gp), coin (700 gp),

APL 6: loot (0 gp), coin (700 gp), brooch of shielding- (225 gp), +1 bracers of armor-(150 gp).

APL 8: loot (0 gp), coin (700 gp), slippers of spider climbing-(300 gp), +2 bracers of armor-(600 gp).

ENCOUNTER EIGHT: I HAVE A DREAM...

If the PCs have decided to weather out the storm and get some sleep in the only intact building, read the following;

The wind howls through the desolate buildings that ring the courtyard. The gorgon's lair will provide suitable protection from the thunderstorm. There is room enough for six horses as well as six men to lay out, though it will be rather close. For those that seek t, sleep p come s surprisingl y easy , despit e th e nois e from outside.

Allow any PC a Wilderness Lore check (DC 10) for the following information

The gorgon is probably the prime predator for this area, and as long as other animals think he is alive, they will not prowl into his territory. In the storm, just about all animals will seek shelter themselves and not go hunting.

Most likely, the PCs will want to set watches. Nothing physical will happen through the night (or day, depending on when the PCs sleep) so unless PCs have

specific activities they wish to perform, just skip right to morning. As long as a PC enters sleep, they risk being effected by the dream effect once. If a PC goes to sleep, then gets up to do a watch, then goes back to sleep he does not risk the dream effect again. This resets over twenty-four hours.

If the dream effect is a negative one, the prevention of decent sleep affects them for the next twenty-four hours. If they wake, then go back to sleep, they have dream flashbacks that contributes to more unsatisfying sleep for that night.

This is a mind influencing, fear, and evil spell effect. Any bonus or negative to saving throws that a PC has for these four effects count here. Elves are immune to the dream effect, as they do not sleep, they meditate. If the PC has some sort of protection that would make him immune to the above three effects (for his entire sleep duration) and thus not have to roll the saving throw, makes him immune to the dream effect. A person not sleeping at all is not affected by the dream effect. A person must sleep within the boundary of the ruins to be effected.

What is the Dream Effect?

Once a PC has gone to sleep, they need to make a Will saving throw (assuming they have not been classified as immune, as per the above paragraph).

The DC depends on the following.

The base saving throw is DC 16.

- If a PC has a good in their alignment, -2 to DC.
- If a PC has Law or Chaos in their alignment, +1 to DC.
- If a PC is a Cleric of Atroa, then -4 to DC
- All modifiers are cumulative.

If a PC passes his saving throw, then he has a Good Dream (see entry below).

If a PC fails his saving throw, then he has a Nightmare (see entry below).

Good Dream:

Upon awaking and for the next twenty-four hours, the PC is considered to have the *bleed* spell cast on him. It affects only that PC and similar bonuses will not stack as per normal. The PC will also have the following dream. The PC cannot interact with the dream; he or she only experiences it.

As your tired eyes close, blissful sleep embraces you. A misty image comes before you. When it clears you are standing amongst strangers, yet you feel you have known them your entire life. They are your people, yet you have never seen them before. You know that you are asleep, yet it all seems so real. As if you are a silent player on a stage filled with performers, enacting a story you might have seen once before, long ago.

Looking around, you are on dry plains that stretch as far as your eyes can see. You are in a camp of some sort, settled around a pond with lush vegetation circling it. Horses, tents, children,

warriors, wagons, all these things and more whirl about as the people seem to be getting ready to strike camp.

Not far from you is an older man in chain armor and longsword at his side. He wears a circlet of mithral about his head. He is arguing with a young woman of great beauty. She is like you, not fully human. Her features delicate, her ears slightly pointed. Her mother, and yours, is dead. That man with the circlet of mithral, he is your father—the woman, your sister. You strain to make out the words they are saying, but the dream is starting to mist again. The image is going, but the sound is becoming clearer.

Your father is admonishing your sister for endangering the tribe—that her affair with the inhuman fiend could doom them all, if word gets back to its own people. She was foolish to bond her soul to his. She was not her own self to give to him. She was sworn to one of her father's choosing, a man of great powers. For her own good, she must be punished with a sleep that will last until spring, when she can conduct her duty as high priestess at the planting at their first harvest in a new home. You want to stand up for your sister, yell out that the man was not a fiend, but you are too fearful of your father's wrath. The sounds of the fateful argument fade as a new image appears out of the mists.

A potion and a ritual conducted by your proposed brother in law. You don't like him, such a dark hearted man. Your sister sleeps and is taken away by her attendants. In the tent, you lay hidden among items of arcane mystery. The dark hearted mage speaks with your father. They plot to do away with the fiend. That the tribe shall flee to the valley to the east. The dark hearted man shall stay behind with his minions and lay a trap for the fiend. It shall be imprisoned for stealing what does not belong to it. Imprisoned until one day, long after the tribe has fled to safety, he can be released by his own people.

LIES! All of it, you know the truth. He is NOT a fiend. Again, your muscles seem paralyzed by the dream, or else you would scream it out.

Your father is not an evil man. He wishes his daughter the ability to choose, once she has carried out her duties as priestess of the planting. She can return here to be with the strange being. If she so chooses, the betrothal will be canceled. You feel relief at your father's lack of full betrayal. The fiend must still be alive if she should return to him.

The dark-hearted man is standing very close to you. Your nose twitches at the odd smell of him. He assures your father that everything will be taken care of. He lies. You would call him a liar, but the mists take him away.

You are on the back of a horse now, your arms around that of a warrior commanding the horse to go faster. Turning your head around to steal a glance at your pursuers. They are in the air some distance back. You can only tell they are there by the glinting of the sun of their armor. You are filled with much fear. The whole tribe is fleeing. The tribe has wronged your pursuers. You know what was done, but the dream is misting again and you fail to recall the details.

Much time has passed. You stand atop of the wooden temple on a hill that overlooks the village cut out of the forest. Further above the village, the caves that were first used as shelter. The caves that the begot the evil that spreads out amongst the hearts of your people. Beside you, your sister weeps. Weeps like she did the day before, and the day before that. Her husband has proclaimed her lover dead, accidentally killed in the ambush. This is why the tribe lives in fear. His people will come again

some day, to wreak vengeance. Everyone knows this. Something must be done.

The dark hearted man has brought forth the worship of a powerful god. Evil waits deep in those caves. The demonic eye he wears about his neck. The creatures he has allied with. All these are feared and respected by a people who have known only terror these past seasons. The tribe builds for the dark hearted man a temple to his new god—new to you, ancient to others.

Darkness. Stars are in the sky, but they are blurred by smoke. Fire has struck the village. In the moonlight, men fly about. No, not men, a thing that looks like men. It is they who were wronged. They have surely come for revenge. But you have no time for them. The creature of the deep caves has abducted your sister and brought her into the caves. She is to be the price paid to his dark god, for our salvation.

All of it ruined. Dark powers have saved us from our enemies, but at the cost of ourselves. The people have sworn off this dark god, and gathered at the temple on the hill for renewal. The caves are to be sealed and amends made to our enemies who we have wronged. Some will stay behind to do this; the rest shall make their way out of this valley.

You can feel the dream fading, and morning approaching. Looking about, you still have several people to bless. For the first time, you focus on your reflect in the blessing pool. A young half elven woman stares back at you. Her face is a portrait of sorrow.

You wake.

Nightmare:

The PC experiences an effect similar to the spell *nightmare*. The PC spends the night tossing and turning and is prevented from restful sleep for the next twenty-four hours. One minute after failing the saving throw, the PC takes 1d10 points of damage. This leaves the PC tired out and unable to regain arcane spells for the next 24 hours. The PC is also considered fatigued as per normal rules. Dispel evil cast onto a PC effected during the night of sleep, or during the twenty-four hours after waking, will remove the effects.

Should the damage be enough to send a PC into negative hit points, they still have a chance to stabilize each round. Taking the damage does not have any extra noticeable effects for a person observing. It is completely possible that a PC could die in his sleep from the terror of the dream.

The PC also has the following nightmare. The PC cannot interact with the nightmare, he or she can only experience it.

As your tired eyes close, an uneasy sleep embraces you. A misty image comes before you. You are speaking to an old, weak man with armor and a longsword. This man tries to fool all around into thinking he is still strong, but the mithral circlet weighs heavy on his brow. It should be yours. Your minions all around, you could take it now, but that could falter. No, you shall bide your time, and go through with the plan you have fresh in your mind. If only you could focus your thoughts.

It is a dream. Your dream self stands before a mirror in a tent. A face that is not yours scowls back at you. Thoughts that are not your own echo about your head. They are like whispers.

You try to concentrate on one, then another, but the words do not become clear.

You have lied to the old man who leads this tribe. The creature he wants restrained for a year, you shall restrain for an eternity. It shall pay for stealing your bride to be, for bonding with her soul. Its fellows will never find the creature, nor will it escape. Soon, all will be yours. The dream landscape fades from the tent filled with arcane objects.

When the dream mist settles again, you are near an oasis. A cave mouth splits the flat land open. A minion of yours, disguised by your arts to look like your betrothed, leads the creature into the trap

Screams of agony. Those screams fill you with delight. All your spells have worked, your arcane items from times long past have done their intended task. This being that poses as a man, lays chained deep within the cave. You shall make it feel your displeasure. You shall give it something to remember you by, as it spends eternity secured in its magical bonds. Your maniacal laughter echoes as the mists close up around you again.

The air is stale. It's dark. Your heart is racing. Fear gives away to exhilaration. Around you is a cave. A cave no human has been through in a long time. At the edge of your weak light, a large figure twists and writhes. Her voice is like that of an evil taken form. She whispers to you. Promises of power. She shall teach you rites that shall ensure your enemies are destroyed. The vengeful creatures that hunt your tribe shall know the fear of your new god. But it will all come at a price, one you are more then willing to pay.

Screams! They are your own. Images flash before your eyes—all of them horrible and fiendish. Pain! Your body is being tested. This dream is a nightmare. The taste of blood fills your mouth. Your sight goes white from the sensations.

You stand in your temple, dedicated to your new divine dark master. Not too far away, the magical entrance to the true power of the temple. Only those of your keeping have the item needed to pass into that inner sanctum. Your skin shivers as the scene changes again.

In the shadows, she speaks to you. She wants your wife, the priest of the planting. That is the price you must pay to destroy the beings that threaten you and your village of minions—such a small price to pay.

The village is burning and you one-time minions are grappling at you. One rips the mithral circlet from your head. Your rage knows no ends as they put the chains on you.

Development: The Adventure Cert has three different entries. Dream, Nightmare and No Slumber. Check off the appropriate box for each PC. This will have bearing in a later adventure in this series.

ENCOUNTER 9: TWO DOORS DOWN

If the PCs are exploring the cavern, then they will need to get down to the ground eighty feet below them. Rope, climbing, magic and a head first dive can all accomplish this.

Due to the recent rainfall and lichen that grows on the walls, those walls are considered slippery. Climbing down with a knotted rope (remember, knots in the rope decrease its overall length) is DC 5. A normal rope will be DC 10. Climbing down without a rope is DC 20. Please consult the *Players Handbook* for climb speeds.

Once the PCs have decided how they are getting down, and then carry the plan out successfully, read the following:

The entrance to the surface juts open about eighty feet above you. The ceiling slopes away from the hole and drops about twenty feet towards the far end of the cavern. On the ground about you is the stone rubble that surely fell from above. A foot of water covers the cavern floor. Upon closer inspection of the rubble, it appears as if some of the rubble formed a carved 'mouth' like entrance.

A Search check of the rubble (DC 40) will find the remains of the markings of a *greater glyph of warding: quest* trap. Served well to ward off the few Oeridians who stumbled upon this place during the great migration into the Flanaess. So far, no Baklunish people have found this place. They have been much too sensible to wander this deep into the rough, or have been slain trying.

The glyph is longer functioning, as it affected only those who passed through the arch.

When it was whole, the archway was less than 5 feet in height and 4 feet in width. This was necessary to get it to fit with the bend in the ceiling/wall of the cavern.

The cavern is an oval and 180 feet at its widest. The foot of water is slowly draining out through the collapsed tunnel at the far end. There are small boulders and piles of rubble that have fallen from the ceiling over the caverns long life. There is nothing hostile in this cavern.

The Collapsed Tunnel

At the far end of the cavern is a twenty-foot wide passage that slopes downward. The Charismatic Man and his followers collapsed the tunnel roof with magic in order to facilitate their escape. Lying dead in the foot of water is a Colossal spider. Swords and spells killed it. Half sticking out of the boulders is the remains of a crushed colossal spider.

Heavy boulders seal the tunnel. It would be a very difficult and time-consuming task to safely remove enough material to fit through. If PCs truly wish to do this and have the tools and/or spells to accomplish it, charge them an extra time unit. Then start sending gargantuan spiders out at them. About one every ten minutes should give the right message. Don't send any more than five though. The network of tunnels is large and supports an ecosystem of its own for vermin. There is no treasure of note within those tunnels.

The Heart Door

This reinforced iron door with the heart-shaped symbol of Atroa on it leads to the tomb of Mayleen Ardentra, daughter of Chief Ardentra, last high priestess of Atroa for the Ardent people.

Before you is a reinforced iron door. It has no visible hinges or opening mechanisms. Presented in the middle of the door is a stylized heart symbol with a rune in the middle of it. Below that is a line of text.

Written in Old Oeridian are the following words:

"Welcome all of good heart. Declare thy faith in divine goodness to enter or least you beg of the Sad Maiden pity, so that you may seek renewal in her font."

There are four ways that a PC can pass this door.

The first is that if a cleric or paladin channels positive energy (as per turning) and can turn 3 HD, then the door magically opens. This must be positive energy. The cleric does not have to be of good alignment.

The second way to open the door is to make an appeal to the Sad Maiden. The PC does not need be worshipers of Atroa (or even have heard of her before). There is no specific list of words that must be said, but the player must roleplay a short plea to the divine power of Atroa. Then a charisma check is rolled. A DC 20 is needed to open the door.

Others, assuming they make some appropriate roleplaying actions, can assist this check. If a character has skill point levels in Knowledge Religion, then he may use them (but not the intelligence bonus) to add to the charisma check.

The third way is to cast a *knock* spell or some other spell that would allow travel through the stone wall or iron door.

The fourth way to open this door is to spend time bashing it open, or using magic to wedge the door out. These could take some time for the entire door to be destroyed enough to allow entry.

Iron Door: 4 in. thick; hardness 15; hp 100; AC 5; Break DC 30.

Past the heart door is Encounter 10.

The Eye Door

This stone door now lays submerged under the water of the cavern floor in several pieces. Great strength has been used to bash the stone. On the front of the door is the stylized eye symbol of Incabulos. Of course for the PCs to see this, they will have to lift up the pieces of the door. It is a search check (DC 10) to find notice and find the stone slabs in the water. Written in Old Oeridian are the words:

"Imprisoned here is the dark hearted man who has wronged you. We offer him to you in place of the one he took from you in our name. The treasures he collected through his life of evil are yours for the taking".

Just past the stone door is a room with a stone pedestal in the middle of it. The room is also under the effects of a

permanent (until dispelled) daylight spell. The light does not leak out into the cavern.

Past the opening before you, is a 60 feet in diameter chamber. In the middle of the room is a 5-foot high pedestal. The pedestal itself is 5ft in diameter. Two sets of thick chains with manacles on the end are attached to the top of the pedestal. In the each maniacal is either a foot or a forearm. The flesh seems to be slowly decaying. Other bits of decaying gore are spread about the pedestal. Not far away, is a head and a torso. Both decaying.

This was the ghastly form of the dark hearted man. He was imprisoned here on the pedestal, surrounded by various treasures. When the Charismatic Man entered, he destroyed the creature and his men gathered up the treasure. The bags found up above are part of the treasure that was here.

A Knowledge (undead) (DC 12) or Knowledge (arcana) (DC 18) can identify the remains as an undead.

A PC who experienced the nightmare or the dream can make an Intelligence check (DC 12) to recognize the face of the undead as being that of the dark-hearted man.

A Search check (DC 12) finds deep sword cuts in the top of the pedestal. This is from the rage of the charismatic man as he hacked away at the dark hearted man.

There is nothing else of interest in this room.

ENCOUNTER 10: THE SADDEST MAIDEN

Once the PCs have managed to get past the doors (by whatever means) read the following;

Before you is a distinctly heart shaped chamber. It has been painted with vibrant red and green paint. The ceiling is a mural of a blue sky with fluffy clouds. In the middle of the chamber, two book ending ramps lead down into a lower level where a sarcophagus lays, apparently sealed. The right side hump in the heart shaped room has a staircase leading down. The left hump has a highly crafted stone fountain. Though there is water in it, none of it is moving. The carved decorations on the fountain are of birds, hearts, ribbons and flowers.

Then the sound of a weeping woman fills the chamber. As if just noticing you, the weeping turns to "...oh, please, come in. It has been so long. Though I can not recall just how long". Then from the sarcophagus floats the image of a beautiful half-elven woman. About her ghostly neck is a heart shaped holy symbol. The room is lit by magical daylight.

The room is heart shaped, 40 feet in max length and 30 feet in max width. The stairs in the left 'hump' of the heart descend 30 feet at a 45-degree angle.

This is Mayleen Ardentra, daughter of Chief Ardentra, last high priestess of Atroa for the Ardent people. She is the woman from which the point of view was seen in the dream. Any PC who had the dream (but not the nightmare) can recognize her face from when the

dreamer looked in the water at the end of the dream. This is an intelligence check (DC12).

☠ **Mayleen:** Female ghost Clr12.

No matter what the PCs do, Mayleen does not attack the PCs. If they act hostile she will simply beg for them to stop. If they do not heed her pleas, she will sink back into her coffin and go ethereal. Mayleen has lost the ability to cast divine spells due to an infraction with Atroa Dogma. She sinned when she imprisoned the dark hearted one for the purposes of revenge. Mayleen's spirit will atone with the rescuing of her sister's spirit from its imprisonment deep within the old caves.

The ghost of Mayleen has a very choppy memory. Due to her partaking in the dream ritual, combined with her being a spirit, have messed with her memories and the ability to recall things from long ago. Any questions the PCs may ask that you (the Judge) are unsure of can be chalked up to this.

"My name is Mayleen Ardentra. Have you come to save my sister?" her ghostly visage stares at you expectantly.

The PCs will probably ask questions to try and confirm that it is a good (safe? profitable?) action to agree to rescue her sister. Here is what she can recall.

- Her sister's name is Lyreen Ardentra.
- They are both daughters of the chief of the Ardent tribe
- The tribe migrated from the west
- The tribe wronged a being and his people in plains to the west.
- The tribe lived in fear of being hunted down.
- The dark hearted one was responsible
- Those that hunted them were destroyed by dark powers controlled by the dark hearted one.
- The price of this was her sister's life, but her soul was bonded with the soul of her lover
- Her lover is the being that was wronged.
- A fiendish beast stole away her sister and though her body died, her spirit stays trapped.
- The caves are sealed
- The caves lay in the foothills to northwest.
- Two secret and warded passageways exist to enter the deep caves
- One entrance is in the temple of the Black Rider, and its key is with the dark hearted one.
- The other entrance is in the temple of the Sad Maiden and the key is here, but can only be obtained with a trial by combat.
- The fountain in the corner is called 'The Font of the Maiden' and its waters can be used to cure many ailments, but its powers only last while in this chamber. (See below for powers of the Font of the Maiden)
- Can explain how the Font of the Maiden works

Once the PCs have agreed to help, Maylee tells them about the trial by combat.

"Thank you for agreeing to help me. With my sister's soul freed, I shall be able to finally rest and atone to the Sad Maiden. But first I must explain what must be done by you. There is a temple of the Sad Maiden to the northwest, amongst the foothills. My mind is fogged of the exact location. But you shall need a key to pass the warded entrance. To gain this key, you must pass a custom of my people. You must prove your mettle and honor in combat against a champion. Those stairs lead to the champion I speak of. He shall explain the rest. Win, and a key shall be entrusted to each of you. Heal your selves now. Use the Font of the Maiden. Do what you must. But descending those stairs starts the challenge process. May the Sad Maiden be with you" with that, she floats back into her sarcophagus.

There is no treasure in her sarcophagus, nor is there any treasure in this room.

The Font of the Maiden

The Font has only a limited supply of water left in it. If that water leaves this tomb, it quickly loses all of its magical properties (within one hour). If the Font itself is removed from the tomb (it is moveable, but heavy) it and all the water in it loses all magical properties, until placed again in the tomb and sanctified by a cleric of Atroa. There are currently eight uses left.

To add more uses, only holy will work. It must be poured into the fountain. Once in, it is usable as per the Font's abilities.

To use the Font, a cup of its water must be drank, or poured over the target. Each use cures one of the following (targets choice). The target divinely knows which effects he can choose from. A silver mug rests nearby to be used for the Font, though any mug of the right size will do.

- Cure 2d8+10 hit points
- Cure blindness
- Cure deafness
- Stone to flesh
- Remove disease
- Neutralize poison
- Raise dead (no more than 48 hours since death)
- Restoration

ENCOUNTER 11: FROM THOSE OF US ABOUT TO DIE...

Descending the stairs 30 feet brings you into what can only be described as an arena, just without the ring of seats. The room is 50 feet in diameter with a curved roof about 20 feet high. At the far end from the stairs, is a wide marble bench. What at first looked like a man, but then revealed itself to have the upper body

of a dog, stands up from off the bench. It addresses you in a booming, otherworldly voice.

"Greetings mortals. I am Harlaktyon humble servant of the Sad Maiden. It is my task to test your mettle and your heart. Should you defeat me, you shall each be awarded a heart key. Use whatever honorable methods you have at your disposal. As long you are good and honorable, I shall draw no blood. Should you prove to be anything else, blood I will certainly draw. You have but one chance. Flee or be carried onto those stairs behind you, and you are out of the combat. If you all flee to those stairs, you have failed the test. May the Maiden's tears bless you. BEGIN!" With that, he draws a greatsword from his back.

Start initiative now. If the PCs wish to parlay with him more, he will list his rules of honor. Should while he is using his combat turns to talk, see a PC using his to prepare for battle (drink potions, cast spells) he will snarl, **"Stalling are you, consider this a free warning. To battle!"** and he will not stop to parley, except to practice battlefield courtesy.

Creatures:

APL 4 (EL 4)

🐾 **Hound Archon:** hp 33; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 6)

🐾 **Hound Archon, Advanced (12 HD):** hp 99; see Appendix I.

APL 8 (EL 8)

🐾 **Hound Archon, Advanced (18 HD):** hp 147; see appendix I.

Rules to Live By:

These are the few simple rules that the hound archon will consider the PCs as not fighting honorably or are committing bad acts.

- Lying
- Feints
- Channeling Negative Energy
- Attacking a Prone target
- Evil acts (even minor ones)
- Lacking battle field courtesy
- Sneak Attacks (but not invisibility)
- Charm like effects
- Cardinal Sin: Leaving the combat area and coming back, or continue to attack after fleeing

Tactics:

Honorable

As long as the PCs have broken no rules, the Hound Archon constantly smiles and acts like the best paladin on the field. He uses subdual damage, never attacks a prone opponent, offer badly wounded PCs a chance to

yield. He will not use some of his celestial qualities. These are menacing aura, *Magic Circle against evil* and *Teleport*.

At this point, if the hound archon is dropped to ten or less hit points, then he surrenders and congratulates the PCs on an honorable and well-fought fight. He offers them his gear and some gems from behind the marble bench. Out of thin air, there appears enough Heart Keys for all the PCs to have one each.

Naughty

Should the PCs break any of the normal rules, he stops smiling. He swings for real damage. He does not attack a prone opponent, knowingly strike down a badly wounded PC without first using a free action to offer a yield option (which the PC can respond to right then with a quick yes or no). He does not strike someone whom it is obvious is healing a downed person, nor use attacks of opportunity on someone who is healing a downed person. He does not strike a PC who is dragging another PC to safety. If a PC yields, that PC is expected to move directly towards the stairs and retire from combat. He uses all of his celestial qualities.

At this point, the hound archon fights to the last. Once he goes to negative hit points, his body disappears, leaving his gear for the PCs to salvage. Enough heart keys for all the PCs appear out of thin air. The PCs will find a small bag of gems behind the marble bench.

Down-Right Evil!

If the PCs should break the normal rules three times, or if they break the cardinal sin, then the hound archon will announce that they have truly proved themselves unworthy. The PCs have two turns each to retreat to the stairs. The Archon will be on full defense for these two rounds. After those two rounds, the hound archon activates all of his celestial qualities and attempts to do his best to kill any PC who remains in the arena or attacking him.

At this point, the hound archon fights to the last. Once he goes to negative hit points, his body disappears, leaving his gear for the PCs to salvage. The heart keys will NOT appear, but the PCs can find a small bag of gems behind the marble table.

The hound archon is not restricted to the arena. He just chooses not to leave it. Should the PCs start attacking him (like with ranged weapons or spells) from the stairs or the upper tomb, then the hound archon chases them there and fights in the upper tomb. He will not leave the tomb though. He could if he wanted to, he just doesn't want to.

At APL 8, the archon has the sunder feat. He uses this ability combined with power attack on enemy fighters first.

Treasure:

APL 4—loot (00 gp), coin-(100 gp),

APL 6—loot (00 gp), coin-(100 gp), magical +1 greatsword-(352 gp),

APL 8—loot (00 gp), coin-(100 gp), magical +1 greatsword-(352 gp), magical +1 chainshirt-(187 gp).

Development: If the PCs fight honorably, even if they loose, they gain the bonus XP listed in the XP summary.

If they were naughty or downright evil, then they gain no bonus XP.

There are enough keys for every PC in the party. Each heart key will cost 50 gp for the player to purchase on their adventure sheet. This key will be used in a later adventure in this series.

ENCOUNTER 12: ARE THEY YELLOW OR GREEN?

Once the PCs are finished with the cavern and the various tombs, it's time to leave the Rough and go home. If the PCs have left horses in the ruins, they are still safe. It will be a few days before monster start testing out the missing gorgon's territory.

You are carefully making your way out of the Rough. The weather seems to have gotten slightly better and who knows how this will affect the hunting patterns of the monsters. After having gone about a mile, you can hear the sounds of a panicked horse and a boy screaming for help. The sounds seem to be about 200 feet off, behind a grouping of boulders.

On the trip out of the Rough, set the random basilisk encounter to every ten hours. Everything else is similar to Encounter 5. The muddy areas of the Rough have dried enough that it will not effect the movement of the PCs or monsters.

No matter which way the PCs go, after a mile or so, they will hear in the distance a panicked horse, and the cries of help from a young boy.

This is young Beo, Walker Caspa's apprentice. Beo decided that he was ready for the road, so he borrowed a riding horse and used his tracking ability to follow the PCs into the Rough.

He is in trouble now that the monsters have come out after the rain. A group of giant wasps are hunting him down.

Beo and his horse are 200 feet away from the PCs, who are behind a grouping of boulders. When the PCs are 100 feet away (and will have visual) start initiative. The giant wasps attack the Beo's riding horse first. After that they move on to Beo. The wasps continue to attack Beo/his horse, until a PC attacks the wasp. Then the wasp turns and tries to kill that PC.

If the PCs retreat and leave the bodies of any companions, any remaining wasps will attempt to carry the body back to the nest where it is consumed.

Creatures:

APL 4 (EL 5)

🐝 **Giant Wasp (2):** hp 33, 33; see *Monster Manual*.

APL6 (EL 7)

Giant Wasp (4): hp 33, 33, 33, 33; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Giant Wasp (8):** hp 33; 33, 33, 33, 33, 33, 33, 33; see *Monster Manual*.

➤ **Beo:** Male human Clr1; hp 8; NG see Appendix I

Tactics: The wasps attack the last person to hit them in melee combat. If that person is down, or out of sight the wasp attacks the nearest person, starting with horses. If the PCs retreat, leaving any bodies (including horses) the wasps will not pursue, but instead swarm the body and carry them off to their underground nest. Any bodies taken away are considered lost.

Development: If they PCs manage to rescue Beo alive, they will be reward bonus XP. If they manage to return Beo's body to Walker Caspa, then the PCs are awarded half the listed bonus XP. If the body of Beo (or they never help him) is lost forever, then no bonus XP is awarded. This XP is in addition to the XP awarded for defeating the giant wasps.

If alive, Beo sees the error of his ways, and ask to be returned to Walker Caspa until he is ready for adventuring. Beo's rescue pleases Walker Caspa who offers a reward.

CONCLUSION

The weather is certainly improving, as well as your situation. You made it out of the Rough alive, and that is an accomplishment in of itself. Now the only thing left to do is wrap up a few loose ends. One day, when more rested and resupplied, you will be able to continue on the trail of the Charismatic Man. For now, just enjoy the sun that is breaking through the clouds.

Lord Kibeth

Lord Kibeth asked the PCs to bring back word on what was causing the spiders to leave the Rough.

If the PCs present their story to him, he shows great concern. He grants any who hold a Heart Key, permission to lead other adventurers on his lands in pursuit of this puzzle. The adventurers may keep whatever treasure they find, as long as they report what has happened directly to him.

To show his gratitude he gives the PCs each a bag of Lions. Assuming of course the PCs have not offended Lord Kibeth or broken laws that they have been caught for.

Treasure:

APL 4—loot (00 gp), coin-(50 gp),
APL 6—loot (00 gp), coin-(50 gp),
APL 8—loot (00 gp), coin-(50 gp)

Lord Kibeth has a special reward for one of the PCs. He asks the PCs who is the best combat rider among them. The Lord of Sarshon has a special light warhorse from his personal stables, that he wants to award to the PC who is best suited to ride her. This is a special light warhorse.

The process for deciding which PC gets the horse works as follows.

The PC with Mounted Combat gets the horse. If a tie, then the PC with the most Ride related feats gets the horse. If still tied, allow a direct roll off of ride skills checks from those who tied, as the PCs demonstrate their skill to Lord Kibeth. The winner of the roll off wins the horse.

If no character in the party has the ride skill, then all characters who wish to compete for the ownership of the horse can make a diplomacy check. The highest score has convinced Lord Kibeth to impart the horse to them.

Walker Caspa

If the PCs return a living Beo to him, Walker Caspa is overjoyed. He will offer to teach who ever wants to learn it, the Reach Spell Feat (from *Defenders of the Faith*).

Returning Beo alive will also warrants bonus mission XP for the PCs. Returning a dead Beo gains half this XP. Returning no Beo at all gains no Bonus XP.

That Geshtai Guy

Tranquil Fountain is relieved at knowing that no more colossal sized spiders will be eating his tenets, worshipers or clergy. He will reward the PCs with a small sum of Lances, assuming they have not offended him.

Treasure:

APL 4—loot (00 gp), coin-(50 gp),
APL 6—loot (00 gp), coin-(50 gp),
APL 8—loot (00 gp), coin-(50 gp)

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 to each character.

Encounter 1

Hunt down and kill spider
APL 4 180 XP; APL 6 240 XP; APL 8 330 XP.

Encounter 5

Surviving the basilisk attacks
APL 4 150 XP; APL 6 240 XP; APL 8 300 XP;

Encounter 7

Defeating the gorgon

APL 4 210 XP; APL 6 240 XP; APL 8 330 XP;

Encounter 11

APL 4 120 XP; APL 6 180 XP; APL 8 240 XP;

Encounter 12

APL 4 150 XP; APL 6 210 XP; APL 8 270 XP;

Story Award: Encounter 1

Saving the second farm from spider attack

APL 4 60 XP; APL 6 180 XP; APL 8 240 XP;

Story Award: Encounter 11

Not breaking the archon's honor rules

APL 4 120 XP; APL 6 180 XP; APL 8 240 XP;

Story Award: Encounter 12

Saving Beo from the wasps

APL 4 90 XP; APL 6 150 XP; APL 8 210 XP;

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 4 120 XP; APL 6 180 XP; APL 8 240 XP;

Total possible experience:

APL 4 1200 XP; APL 6 1800 XP; APL 8 2400 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 (that is, 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 piece 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 treasures from each encounter add it up and that is 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.

Encounter Seven

Defeating gorgon, or just picking up the bags

APL 4-700 gp; APL 8-1075 gp; APL 8-1600 gp.

Encounter Eleven

Defeating the Hound Archon

APL 4-100 gp; APL 6-452 gp; APL 8-639 gp.

Conclusion

Rewards from Lord Kibeth and that Geshtai Guy

APL 4-100 gp; APL 6-100 gp; APL 8-100 gp,

Adventure Maximums

APL 4-900 gp; APL 6-1627 gp; APL 8-2340 gp.

Kibeth War Horse

Mounts like these are rarely found for sale. They are kept for breeding stock or given as gifts when honor demands more than just coin.

This horse is named _____

Kibeth Light War Horse: CR 1; Large Animal; HD 3d8+12; 35 hp; Init +1 (+1 dex); Spd 60ft; AC 15 (Touch 10, Flat-footed 14) [-1 size, +2 dex, +4 natural]; Atk 2 hooves +4 melee (1d4 +3); b-i t melee (1d3+1); Face/Reach 5ft by 10ft/5ft; SQ Scent, Tricks; AL N; Fort +7; Ref +5; Wil +3; Str 16; Dex 14; Con 18; Int 2; Wis 14; Cha 7;

Skills: Listen +9, Spot +8;

SQ- Scent (Ex): See page 10 of the *Monster Manual*

SQ- Tricks (Ex): (1) Attack (2) Attack Unnatural Creatures (3) Come (4) Defend (5) Stay;

SQ- This horse is highly trained for war. It is an excellent example of superior kettish breeding.

GP Value: 450 gp

Weight: 1500lbs

Use Restriction: Uncommon

Tradable: No

The Following Three Entries are to be on the Adventure Cert;

Walker Caspa is so pleased that you brought back his apprentice alive, he offers to teach you a way to help others, while staying out of harms way.

This character may take the 'Reach Spell' feat when a free feat slot becomes available, or saved for a future slot.

Reach Spell [Metamagic] (Defenders of the Faith)
You can cast touch spells without touching the spell recipient.

Benefit: You may cast a spell that normally has a range of "touch" at any distance up to 30 feet. The spell effectively becomes a ray, so you must succeed at a ranged touch attack to bestow the spell upon the recipient. A reach spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

During the adventure, you may have slept and had a experience that will effect you in another scenario later on. Please select one.

- ☐ I had a Dream
 - ☐ I had a Nightmare
 - ☐ No slumber came to me
-

Your character may have come into possession of one of several copies of a special item vital to a future scenario.

It will cost the character 50GP to keep it

Heart Key 50gp
"This small red crystal shaped like a heart is said to be a key to a secret entrance at the bottom of a temple"

APPENDIX I: NPCS

ENCOUNTER 1

APL 4

➤ **Monstrous Spider, Huge Advanced:** CR 6; Huge Vermin; HD 20d8+20; 110 hp; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 8); Atk +17 melee (2d6+9 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 15 ft. by 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison; SQ Vermin; AL N; Fort +13; Ref +9; Will +6; Str 19; Dex 17; Con 12; Int -; Wis 10; Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +16, Hide +2, Jump +10, Spot +15.

Poison (Ex): Fort Save, DC 22. Initial and Secondary damage is 1d8 Str

APL 6

➤ **Monstrous Spider, Gargantuan Advanced:** CR 8; Gargantuan Vermin; HD 36d8+36; 219 hp; Init +3; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +30 melee (2d8+9 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison (Ex); SQ Vermin; AL N; Fort +21; Ref +14; Will +11; Str 23; Dex 17; Con 12; Int -; Wis 10; Cha 2;

Skills: Climb +18, Hide -2, Jump +12, Spot +15.

Poison (Ex): Fort Save, DC 31. Initial and Secondary damage is 2d6 Str.

APL 8

➤ **Monstrous Spider, Colossal Advanced:** CR 11; Colossal Vermin; HD 64d8+64; 387 hp; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 5, flat-footed 17); Atk +56 melee (4d6+12 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 40 ft. by 40 ft./15 ft.; SA Poison (Ex); SQ Vermin; AL N; Fort +37; Ref +23; Will +20; Str 27; Dex 17; Con 12; Int -; Wis 10; Cha 2;

Skills: Climb +20, Hide -6, Jump +14, Spot +15.

Poison (Ex): Fort Save, DC 35. Initial and Secondary damage is 2d8 Str.

ENCOUNTER 5

APL 6

➤ **Basilisk, Advanced:** CR 8; Large Magical Beast (Reptilian); HD 15d10+60; 154 hp; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 7, flat-footed 16); Atk +20 melee (2d6+9/19-20, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrifying gaze; AL N; Fort +15; Ref +7; Will +6; Str 23; Dex 6; Con 19; Int 2; Wis 12; Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide+1*, Listen +10, Spot +10 (+4 to hide when in natural settings); Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite).

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Turn to stone permanently, range 30 ft.; Fortitude negates. DC 19.

APL 8

➤ **Basilisk, Advanced (2):** CR 8; Large Magical Beast (reptilian); HD 15d10+60; hp 154, 154; Init -2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 7, flatfooted 16); Atk +20 melee

(2d6+9/19-20, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Petrifying gaze; AL N; Fort +15; Ref +7; Will +6; Str 23; Dex 6; Con 19; Int 2; Wis 12; Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide+1*, Listen +10, Spot +10 (+4 to hide when in natural settings); Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite).

Petrifying Gaze (Su): Turn to stone permanently, range 30 ft.; Fortitude negates. DC 19.

ENCOUNTER 7

APL 4

➤ **Gorgon, Decreased:** CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 8d10+8; 34 hp (injured); Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 9, flat-footed 18); Atk +12 melee (1d8+7, gore); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Breath weapon, trample; SQ Scent; AL N; Fort +7; Ref +6; Will +3; Str 21; Dex 10; Con 12; Int 2; Wis 12; Cha 9;

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Breath weapon (Su): Turn to stone permanently, cone, 30 ft., every 1d6+1 rounds (but no more than five times per day), Fortitude save (DC 14).

Note: this Gorgon inhaled spider web while in combat, and now has difficulties with its breath weapon, as well as its Con. It wheezes a lot.

Trample (Ex): A gorgon can trample Small or smaller creatures for 1d8 +7 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the gorgon can attempt a Reflex save (DC 23) to halve the damage.

Scent (Ex): Can detect presence within 30 ft., detect exact location within 5 ft.; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 8

➤ **Gorgon, Advanced (20 HD):** CR 11; Huge Magical Beast; HD 20d10+100; hp 224; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 7, flat-footed 19); Atk +28 melee (2d6+13/19-20, gore); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, trample; SQ Scent; AL N; Fort +17; Ref +11; Will +7; Str 29; Dex 8; Con 21; Int 2; Wis 12; Cha 9;

Skills and Feats: Listen+14, Spot+14; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (Gore), Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Breath Weapon (Su): Turn to stone permanently, cone, 60 ft., every 1d4 rounds (but no more than five times per day); Fortitude save (DC 27)

Trample (Ex): A gorgon can trample Medium or smaller creatures for 2d6 +13 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the gorgon can attempt a Reflex save (DC 31) to halve the damage.

Scent (Ex): Can detect presence within 30 ft., detect exact location within 5 ft.; see *Monster Manual*.

ENCOUNTER 11

APL 6

🐾 **Hound Archon, Advanced (12 HD):** CR 6; Large Outsider (good, lawful); HD 12d8+35; 99 hp; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20 (touch 8, flat-footed 20); Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d6+7/17-20, greatsword) and +12 melee (2d6+3, bite), or +17 melee (2d6+6, bite), or +12 melee (1d6+3, 3 slams); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 10/+1; celestial qualities, scent, alternate form; SR 16; AL LG; Fort +11; Ref +7; Will +9; Str 23; Dex 8; Con 17; Int 10; Wis 13; Cha 12; Height 8ft; Weight 400lbs.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Hide +5, Jump +21, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Wilderness Lore +5; Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Track;

Spell Like Abilities: At Will—*aid, continual flame, detect evil and message*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 6th-level sorcerer

Alternate Form (Su): Hound Archons can assume any canine form (except that of a werewolf or other lycanthrope) as a standard action. **NOTE:** In this encounter, the Hound Archon will NOT use this ability.

Celestial Qualities: Aura of menace (save DC16), *magic circle against evil*, Electricity and Petrification immunity, *teleport, tongues*, +4 save against poison

Possessions: +1 greatsword

APL8

🐾 **Hound Archon, Advanced (18HD):** CR 8; Large Outsider (good, lawful); HD 18d8+54; 147 hp; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 26 (touch 10, flat-footed 25); Atk +24/+19/+14/+10 melee (2d6+7/17-20, greatsword) and +18 melee (2d6+3, bite); or +23 melee (2d6+6, bite) and +18 melee (1d6+3, 4 slams); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Spell like abilities; SQ Damage reduction 10/+1; celestial qualities, scent, alternate form; SR 16; AL LG; Fort +14; Ref +12; Will +12; Str 23; Dex 12; Con 17; Int 10; Wis 13; Cha 12; Height 8ft; Weight 400lbs;

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Hide +5, Jump +21, Move Silently +5, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16, Wilderness Lore +5; Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Track;

Spell Like Abilities: At Will—*aid, continual flame, detect evil and message*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 6th-level sorcerer

Alternate Form (Su): Hound archons can assume any canine form (except that of a werewolf or other lycanthrope) as a standard action. **NOTE:** In this encounter, the Hound Archon will NOT use this ability.

Celestial Qualities: Aura of menace (save DC16), *Magic circle against evil*, Electricity and Petrification immunity, *teleport, tongues*, +4 save against poison.

Possessions: +1 greatsword, +1 chainshirt

ENCOUNTER TWELVE

All APLs

🧙 **Beo Human Male Cleric:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11, flatfooted 14); Atk quarter staff +1 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff); AL NG; Fort +2; Ref +0; Will +5; Str 12; Dex 12; Con 10; Int 10; Wis 16; Cha 14; Height 5 ft. 10 in, Weight 150lbs.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +6, Concentration +2, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Knowledge Religion +1, Wilderness Lore +5, Language (Old Oeridian), Language (Ancient Baklunish); Endurance, Track.

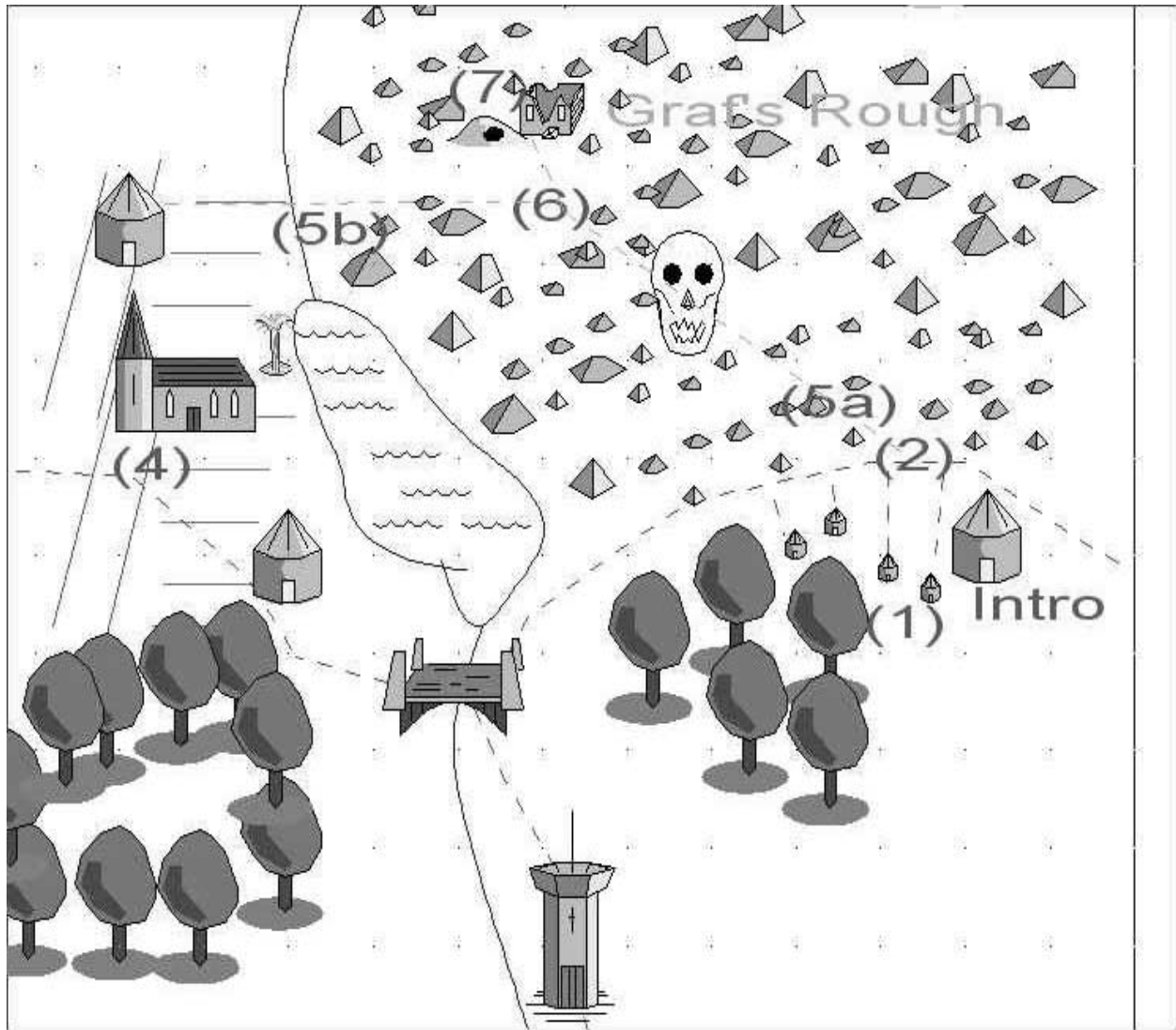
Possessions: quarterstaff, chain shirt, backpack, spell component pouch, holy symbol/

Spells Prepared (3/2+1; base DC = 3 + spell level):
0—*create water, light* (2) 1st—*expeditious retreat**, *bless* (2)

*Domain spell. **Domains:** [Travel (For a total time per day of 1 round per your cleric level, you can act normally regardless of magical effects that impede movement (similar to the effect of the spell *freedom of movement*) This effect occurs automatically soon as it applies, lasts until it runs out or is no longer needed, and can operate multiple times per day.); Protection (You can generate a protective ward, a spell-like ability to grant someone you touch a resistance bonus equal to your level on her next saving throw. Activating this power is a standard action. The protective ward is an abjuration effect with a duration of 1 hour that is usable once per day.)].

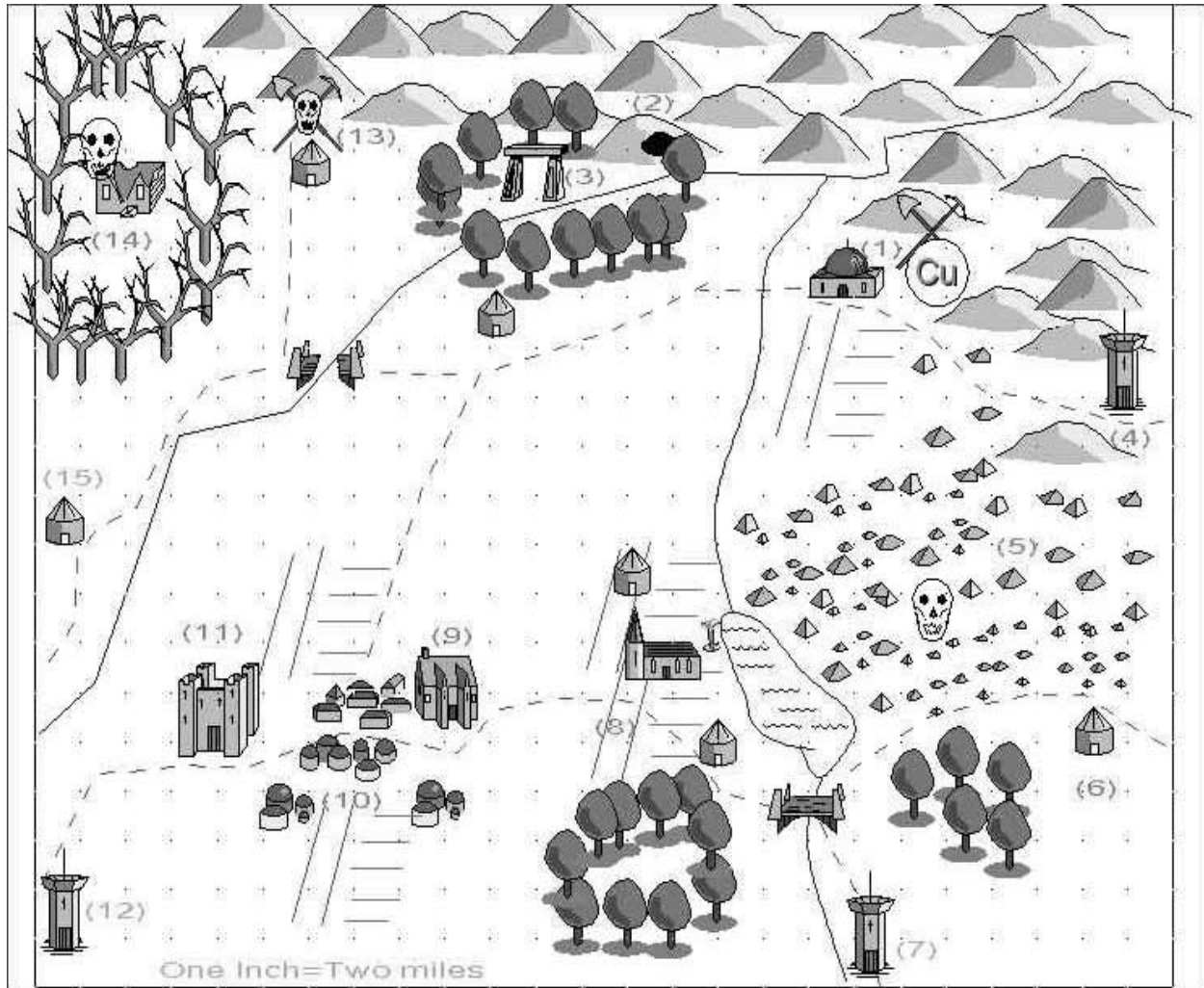
MAP 1

Zoomed in map section. The listed numbers are those of the encounter that takes place at that location. The trails marked inside the Graf's Rough are the tracks that can be followed.



MAP 2

A map of Sarshon Shire. The numbers shown corresponds with a map key listed below. If the map is printed correctly, the scale should be for ten miles directly from the middle of Sarshon Village and the House of Fharlanghn.



THE VILLAGE OF SARSHON AND SURROUNDING AREA

Ver 2

The area on this map is located just south of the small layer of foothills on the southern escarpment of the Yantils where it juts out west towards the Bramblewoods. This places it in the north part of the Polvar Province. West of Falwur.

- (1) **The Sarshon Temple:** This Temple is run by mullah's of the true faith. They own and run a medium sized copper mine. The mine is worked mostly by slaves who are supplied by careful agreement by the government. The temple occasionally picks up orphaned children and the children of the slave workers. If the children have committed no crimes, they are put to work as servants and (comparably) light labors to earn their keep. In exchange, the children are educated in both scholarly and religious matters. They are also taught some basic trades. Following the teachings of the four feet of the Dragon, orphans have no family, therefore are looked upon with scorn (or pity for those of good alignment). Corporal punishment is common and well resented by the majority of the young residents, though most come to except it and mirror the practices later in life. In addition to the copper mine, the temple has some fertile farmland that is worked by tenants. About 40 slaves are barracks near the mine. Another 15 are kept on the farmland to assist the tenants. The temple has about ten Mullahs and ten guards, with equal to that number in laypersons. Anywhere from 10-30 children can be found here. Some of these children grow up to become Mullahs themselves. The children are never sold off. The Lawful Neutral attitude of the Temple considers the children themselves victims of criminal parents. It is the duty of the Mullahs to raise them. Run away children (up to the age of 16) are hunted down and brought back to the care of the Mullahs.
- (2) **The Ardant Cave:** This cave was once home to what seems to have been an ancient Oeridian tribe that either moved on suddenly, or died even more suddenly. Though the cave system seems quite large, all of the back tunnels have been caved in and sealed tight for who knows how long. From what little writings remain in the cave, the tribe name seems to have been the Ardant. The front part of this cave was found when two escaped orphans ran from the Temple and followed the north fork of the river to the Sar Woods and had a bloody encounter with a bear. The two injured brothers traveled north out of the forest and into the edge of the foothills, where they found the cave. They were later recaptured and returned to the temple when buying supplies in town. Upon graduating from the temple, the two brothers returned and made the cave somewhat livable. Though they did not stay long.
- (3) **Sar Wood:** This is one of the more dense forested areas in the Sarshon Shire. Like many woods outside of the Bramblewood, it's small but dense. Few of the shire's residents come here. The wood is separated north and south by the river that runs through it. On the southern edge of the forest lives a Ranger of Obad-Hai. He has a mutual understanding with the noble house of Kibeth. He is the unofficial warden of the Sarshon Shire. He arranges for limited hunting for the upper class. With his guidance, they are allowed to hunt where the Ranger feels a herd needs to be culled. In exchange for this indulgence, the ranger of Sar Wood is required to scout from time to time on behalf of the Kibeth family and military. The ranger is an experienced middle-aged Baklunish male named Nyav. The north half of the Sar Wood is controlled by a lesser druid of Beory. She guards some scared ruins and monoliths deep in her range of the wood. She does not like trespassers, even the Ranger Nyav. She has a brown bear companion. So far, the ranger and everyone else stay clear of her remote section of wood.
- (4) **The Watch Tower of Mallah Pass:** The road that leads from the northeastern reaches of Polvar is a dangerous one. Monsters and bandits that lurk in the foothills and the Yatil Mountains have easy reach to this road. This watchtower is owned by the Graff but paid for in part by the Temple. A garrison of about ten regular soldiers and some accompanying clerics are found here. They are all infantry and Bowman. A signal fire can be seen from the top of the tower by the Temple should trouble approach. Also, the Clerics have magical but simple ways for communicating with the Temple and other nearby locations.
- (5) **The Graff's Rough:** This anomalies region is named after a Graff from the past who is said to have gone hunting here on the eve of his wedding. He never returned. This region is oddly barren and very rocky. Boulders and such type terrain litter the landscape at the bottom of the Yatil foothills. It looks like the area once was just as hilly, but the hills were smashed apart and the majority of it carried away. The locals keep away from the region. Though nothing ever emerges from the area, strange and dangerous creatures are known to lurk inside the rocky death flats. Reports of Basilisks and monstrous vermin creatures are common. Many local warriors use it as a testing ground for their prowess. So many good warriors have not returned that House Kibeth has placed a restriction upon entering the area. Those wishing to do so must first seek permission.
- (6) **House of Farlanghn:** This Inn is the establishment and church of Walker Caspa, brown robed servant of Farlanghn. It is from Walker Caspa that several adventuring clerics learned of Farlanghn and the message of

exploring the world and opening the roads. The Inn is a modest one, but favorite of caravans and travelers from the eastern regions. The road is said to be especially blessed by Farlangthn. Walker Caspa's traveling days are over and he has settled down to spread the word to those who pass by him. The Inn doubles as a traveler's church and a small graveyard out back is reserved for those who died on the road by were carried on. Walker Caspa is a kind man of mixed Baklunish/Oeridian decent. It is rumored that Walker Caspa has connections or is part of some secret organization that goes against the order of Ket, but the nature of it runs the gambit of rumors. If asked, Caspa will only laugh at such nonsensical ideas.

- (7) **River Watch Tower:** This watchtower holds a garrison of about ten infantry. They watch the river and road that approaches from the south. This is a local run garrison.
- (8) **Church lands of Geshtai:** This section of fertile farm land his owned by the church of Geshtai. A church complex controls the fields and the serfs as well as the Sour Wood just south of the farmlands. Only the clergy and invited guests are allowed to hunt or even enter this wood. The church has its own small troop of rangers and woodsmen to look after the Sour Wood, which gets under the skin of Ranger Nyav. The complex holds about eight clerics in total, who are in collaboration with a large surrounding area to provide blessings and services for those in need of Geshtai's favor.
- (9) **The Estate of House Kibeth.** This is the ruling minor noble house for this shire. They are loyal to the Graff and share some blood with him. Their income and influence is not what it was though. They now mostly sustain on the taxing of the copper profits from Temple mine and tolls from the road. Ever since the old Highpoint mine was shut down and abandoned (a long story involving a Mullah inquiry, heresy and a rival noble house, oh and evil monsters) the noble house's income have been nearly cut in half. The head of the household is Nassif Kibeth. His eldest son commands a unit of Calvary guards that protect the estate and patrol the surrounding region.
- (10) **Village of Sarshon:** This village is on the large side due to the good irrigation from both rivers and the presence of the Geshtai church. They are content and follow the True Faith. The village has an Inn, Tavern, Blacksmith, small bazaar and other minor amenities found in a large village. Small Temples and shrines of Istus, Farlangthn, Geshtai and Bleredd can be found here. There is a smelting facility here that has mostly closed down with the end of the Highpoint mine. Now the only smelting that is done is the copper from the Temple. The smelter is still run by clerics of Bleredd.
- (11) **Fort Dashin:** This fort, which houses the local troops of the Graff is named after the military commander to first bring this area into line with the local over power. His descendents are of House Kibeth. His tomb lies under the fort. The garrison here is mostly infantry with about one third Calvary This also doubles as Sarshon's Thresher Square. A small Thresher barracks is here, along with the stocks and the chamber used as the courthouse for serious offences. A mullah judge lives in the fort. There are about 40 troops and officers in all. Not including the eight threshers.
- (12) **South West Tower:** This is the watch tower that guards the south west approach to the town and shire. It houses about 10 men. Its signal fire can be seen from the Fort, incase trouble should come.
- (13) **Highpoint Mine:** This mine used to be owned by House Kibeth and run on there behalf by clerics of Bleredd, who also run the smelting plant in the village. The mine was shut down when foul monsters started to appear at the mine and an Inquiry taskforce of Mullah's arrived and declared the Bleredd clerics to be in league with the monsters. The mine was shut down and mostly sealed off. Rumors persist that a rival noble house to the Kibeths sponsored the Inquiry. Those Bleredd clerics found guilty were banished from the area, and their workers who were also found to be guilty of heresy, were put to work in the Temple of Al Akbar mine. Some buildings remain abandoned or sometimes used by small bandit groups. The rest are all burnt out. Some say the monsters still lurk in the deeper parts of the mines.
- (14) **Rot Wood;** This dense wood is said to be cursed. An aura of decay surrounds the wood and the trees and plants seem to be in a perpetual state of dying. Hideous creatures, many undead, are known to lurk with in the border of the wood. Rarely do these beasts make forays into the shire. The last time they did, they were massed together and controlled by evil forces. A battle took place on the bridge linking the shire with Highpoint Mine. The bridge was destroyed in the battle. Since the Highpoint mine was already shut down, there was no point in rebuilding the bridge. At the heart of the Rot Wood, lay ruins of unknown origins. The ruins presence has been documented by adventurers, but never fully explored.

(15) This Inn and small collection of farmsteads has been abandoned ever since the bridge was destroyed. The undead forces from Rot Wood killed many of the inhabitants of this town. Now these buildings serve as temporary housing for brigands and other social outcasts.

ENLISTING THE ICONIC

☛ **Tordek, male dwarf Ftr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (dwarf); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 15 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atks +4 melee (1d10+2/x3, dwarven waraxe), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Dwarven traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +0, Jump +0; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, scale mail, large wooden shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack and flint and steel.

☛ **Miale, female elf Wizr:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 1d4+3; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atks +0 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or –6 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) and –10 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Elven traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Listen +3, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3; Scribe Scroll (virtual), Toughness.

Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, sleep*.

Spellbook: 0—all of them; 1st—*charm person, mage armor, magic missile, sleep, summon monster I*.

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, quarterstaff, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 10 candles, map case, 3 pages parchment, ink and pen, spell pouch, spellbook.

☛ **Lidda, female halfling Rogr:** CR 1; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Atks +1 melee (1d6/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow), or +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Halfling traits; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +1, Hide +11, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +7, Search +6, Spot +4, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +1; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Explorer's outfit, leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, dagger, Backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, thieves' tools hooded lantern, 3 pints of lantern oil.

☛ **Jozan, male human Clr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace), or –1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Turn Undead 4/day 2d6+2; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref –1; Will +4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +6, Listen +4, Knowledge (religion) +0, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (3/2+1; base DC 12 + spell level); 0—*detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1st—*bless, protection from evil**, *shield of faith*.

* Domain spell; Deity: Pelor; Domains: Good (good spells cast at +1 caster level) and Healing (healing spells cast at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Cleric's vestments, scale mail, large wooden shield, heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, backpack with waterskin, 1 day of trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, wooden holy symbol (sun disk of Pelor), 3 torches.