NYR4-01

Towers of the Abbor-Alz

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®
Nyrond Regional Adventure

Version 1

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Ancient towers in the Abbor-Alz may hold the key to the survival of the Kingdom of Nyrond. Can you succeed where the Nyrondese armies have failed? An adventure for the brave and the loyal for character levels 3-12.

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

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Introduction

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

Playing the Game

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

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the judge can bar the use of even core rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the Dungeon Master's Guide when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the Monster Manual when confronted with a monster.

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

Tracking

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and judge fill out the RPGA Tracking Sheet. The judge should complete the top of the form and list his name and RPGA number. The players should each list their name and RPGA number. After the form is filled out it should be given to the Event Coordinator.

LIVING GREYHAWK

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

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

LIVING GREYHAWK Levels of Play

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

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

heavy, with him in the adventure and it will not count toward the APL calculation.

3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.

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

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

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

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

Further, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the scenario unless the highest APL supported by the adventure is APL 12.

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

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.

2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a move action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If the animal is wounded or has taken any nonlethal damage or ability score damage, the DC increases to 12.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in the Kingdon of Nyrond. Characters native to the Kingdon of Nyrond pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

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

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

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

Adventure Background

Ancient History

(More information about Sulm is provided in Player Handout #4.)

Thousands of years ago, a Flannish Kingdom named Sulm ruled much of the lands that became the Bright Desert. Sulm would have very likely expanded their control into what are now Nyrondese lands had it survived. But the leaders of the Sulm were vain and power hungry and the Kingdom toppled after its final ruler entered into a pact with the evil god Tharizdun to acquire an artifact known as the Scorpion Crown.

Canimarr, a Sulmish scholar of the final days of Sulm, devoted his life to arcane knowledge. Desperate to

keep the existence of his arcane discoveries away from the rulers who would use it for improper purposes, he built a series of towers in the Abbor-Alz Mountains to hide away his research. Casting his most powerful spells, he permanently prevented the location from being found through magical and other means.

But Canimarr's female apprentice Beldion slew Canimarr when he was transformed to a manscorpion because of the curse of the Scorpion Crown. Beldion was not a native of Sulm, and was not affected by the curse. Fleeing to the east with several enchanted weapons, Beldion intended to bring an army to return to the towers and then on to the ruined lands of Sulm with the hope of restoring them.

But what happened to Beldion was far beyond her intentions. As she traveled to the East, Beldion learned of the extent of the destruction of Sulm and that the kingdom's destruction was the result of the terrible bargain with Tharizdun. Beldion found a shrine to Tharizdun and, making a sacrifice of blood, prayed to the God of Entropy and Malign Knowledge for the restoration of her homelands. She was answered:

"In the fields on which you stand shall rise a kingdom that will break free of another. When the unmarried woman who should be queen is sacrificed to me upon this altar, your descendants shall once again know the glory of Sulm."

Beldion changed her plans and gathered together what few human survivors that she could find who were dedicated to the restoration of Sulm. Together, they formed a cult that worshipped Tharizdun and lived nomadically in the Bright Desert. Because most of the initial survivors that Beldion gathered were women, a matriarchal society formed.

When the Kingdom of Nyrond broke away from the Great Kingdom, the Witches of the Sand realized that the almost-forgotten prophecy might soon come true. For years, they watched and waited, but Nyrond produced only princesses—never queens.

Recent History

It was in CY 586 that the Witches of the Sand realized that the opportunity was within their grasp. Archbold had abdicated the throne in favor of his oldest son after Sewarndt's failed assassination attempt. One of Lynwerd's first acts after deposing those disloyal to his father was to convene a secret council of lords and advisors who declared that Lady Astra Callistor--not Sewarndt--shall be Lynwerd's successor to the throne of Nyrond in the event of Lynwerd's death. Although the new act of succession was not widely publicized, a mole planted in Lady Astra's household learned of its promulgation.

The Witches of the Sand moved much of their operations into the Gnatmarsh shortly thereafter, and their existence was not unknown to the locals who sometimes referred to them as the Gnatmarsh Coven. The Witches of the Sand soon made the acquaintance of Prince Sewarndt. The Prince and the Coven began to work together. The death of King Lynwerd was in their mutual interest.

In CY 590, the mole in Lady Astra's household was able to take advantage of Lady Astra's scholarly and adventurous nature. The Lady began to dream of a series of towers in the Abbor-Alz. And she became determined to find them.

The Witches of the Sand did not disturb the towers that had been built by Canimarr so long ago. But they did activate a Crystal Hypnosis Ball that had been created by Canimarr prior to Astra's arrival at the towers. When Lady Astra gazed into the ball, the suggestion given to her was simple--"The secret to curing Lady Xenia's illness can be found in the Towers' ancient library". When her party left to return to Rel Mord, Lady Astra refused to accompany them and instead remained under the compulsion to complete her research. The compulsion was renewed as she gazed into the ball every day, and eventually the compulsion matured into a *geas* that she not leave the towers until she had found a cure for Lady Xenia's condition. The remainder of her party was slain as soon as they left the valley that was home to the towers.

And so the Witches of the Sand have kept the Lady Astra Callistor alive, waiting for their opportunity.

Approximately four months ago, adventurers in the Gnatmarsh uncovered an ancient artifact that provided a clue to the location of the towers. Almost three months ago, King Lynwerd dispatched a squadron of the Sixth Legion to investigate. A month later, having heard nothing from the squadron, he dispatched another. Another squadron was dispatched a month later. None of the squadrons have yet reported back.

Adventure Summary

Introduction

In which our heroes are summoned to the Royal Castle.

Encounter One – The Lady Vanishes

In which our heroes have an audience before Archbold III, former king of Nyrond and in which our heroes are assigned to retrieve Lady Astra Callistor from the Towers of the Abbor-Alz.

Encounter Two – To Catch a Thief

An optional encounter in which our heroes may decide to inquire with various organizations and institutions regarding what is known of the Towers of the Abbor-Alz.

Encounter Three – North By Northwest

In which our heroes discover the path leading into the Abbor-Alz that is believed to lead to the time-lost towers.

Encounter Four – Psycho

In which our heroes discover the remaining member of a military squadron that attempted to take the towers.

Encounter Five – Rope

In which our heroes either bypass or trigger a glyph of warding on the trail to the Towers of the Abbor-Alz.

Encounter Six – Torn Curtain

In which our heroes penetrate the illusion that obscures the sight of the Towers of the Abbor-Alz.

Encounter Seven – Suspicion

In which our heroes find themselves overlooking and exploring the valley where the Towers of the Abbor-Alz are located.

Encounter Eight – Vertigo

In which our heroes attempt to gain access to the Towers of the Abbor-Alz and are assaulted by a creature from the Elemental Plane of Air.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy

In which our heroes enter combat with a many-eyed aberration.

Encounter Ten – Spellbound

In which our heroes meet the Lady Astra Callistor and must convince her to leave the library in which she has ensconced herself.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious

In which our heroes defend the Lady Astra Callistor from a final attempt by the Witches of the Sand to keep her imprisoned within the towers.

Preparation for Play

Prior to beginning, you will want to do each of the following:

- Obtain each of the PCs' names and a short description of each. This will be used in Encounter One when Archbold introduces the PCs to each other.
- Ask the players about the primary motivation of their character. Archbold would know this information and might use it to convince reluctant PCs to participate in the mission.
- Determine where the PCs are taking their lodging in Rel Mord. (See the Introduction.)

Inasmuch as this is a mission offered by the royal family of Nyrond, there are some restrictions on what PCs will be permitted to participate in the scenario. PCs who have any expressed any sentiments critical of Nyrond will not be invited to participate. Additionally, PCs who are wanted for any crimes in any jurisdiction or PCs who have previously been convicted of a felony in any jurisdiction will not be able to participate in the adventure unless the judge believes that the circumstances behind the crime would not disqualify the PC. (For example, being wanted for a crime by the corrupt and evil officials of the Bandit Kingdoms probably would not affect a PC's qualification for the scenario.) King Archbold has some of the finest diviners in the Kingdom at his disposal and will not send a summons for the PC unless that PC is trustworthy and loyal.

Introduction

The adventure begins with the PCs staying in Rel Mord, the capital city of Nyrond. Prior to beginning play, determine where the PCs are taking their lodging. Many Nyrond citizens may have meta-organization connections that provide them housing in the city of Rel Mord or perhaps they are using the tried and true method of staying in an inn. After the players have had sufficient opportunity to prepare, please read or paraphrase the following:

It's another fine morning in Rel Mord, the capital city of the Kingdom of Nyrond. You have been in the walled fortress city for several days and have occupied yourself with various pursuits. Things seem slow all over the city, and only the dock areas seem immune from the calm that embraces the city.

With your morning preparations complete, you are preparing yourself for the business of the day when you are approached by a young man whose uniform is emblazoned with an insignia. "Would you mind informing this royal servant of your name?" he asks in an official tone.

If the PC does not provide his or her actual name, the servant will leave and the adventure is over for that PC. For PCs who may attempt to keep their true identity secret, the servant will ask for them by their true name.

The insignia on the servant's uniform is the royal crest of the Kingdom of Nyrond—an insignia that can only be worn legally by a servant of the Royal Family of Nyrond. The insignia is automatically recognizable by a citizen of Nyrond, and even many foreigners will be able to recognize it (Knowledge (Nobility) or Intelligence check of DC 10).

If the PC answers with their actual name, he or she will be provided with a scroll that reads simply, "*Friend of Nyrond, Your presence is required at the Royal Palace at noon tomorrow.*" If the PC decides not to respond, the scenario is over for them.

Any PC who succeeds at a Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty), Knowledge (Local), Bardic Knowledge, or a general Intelligence check (DC 10) will realize that a traveler's outfit or explorer's outfit is not considered

proper attire for the Royal Palace. Such PCs should be encouraged to purchase a suit of courtier's clothing or better prior to their appointment.

When the PC is prepared to respond to the summons, please proceed to Encounter One.

Encounter One – The Lady Vanishes

When the PCs are prepared to respond to the royal summons, please read or paraphrase the following:

The sun is high in the sky as you present yourself outside* the *great wall that surrounds the Royal Palace. The entire city of Rel Mord is built as a fortress city to protect the castle that is beyond these walls.

After making your way to the East Gate, the Royal Guardsman examines your summons closely and eventually satisfies himself that the letter is genuine. The heavily-fortified gate is soon opened and your assigned escort leads you across the grounds to the palace.

The palace grounds are expansive and dotted with several exterior buildings. One of the buildings obviously serves as a command post for the hundreds of troops who serve inside the palace walls. Yet not all of the grounds serve a military purpose. Lush botanical gardens that would please even the most persnickety follower of Ehlonna or Obad-Hai dominate much of the grounds.

You are lead past a contingent of guardsmen into the Royal Palace. Your escort leads you into a large receiving hall. The centerpiece of the room is a low dais upon which a sturdy throne rests. A number of chairs surround the dais. "Please be seated. His Majesty will be with you shortly." Your escort walks out of the room leaving you alone with several others.

Perhaps fifteen minutes elapse before a human woman with Oerdian features and coloring enters the room. "His Royal Highness, the Former King of Nyrond, Archbold the Third."

Behind her, two young well-armed men assist a human Oerdian male of advancing age. The man is physically frail and clearly depends on his escorts to provide support. His clothes are made of fine silks and are of classical style. His hair is thick and white while his skin is tanned and aged. His piercing brown eyes regard each of you carefully as he is helped to the top of the dais and into the waiting throne. Once he is seated, the two men stand at each side of the throne clearly watching the room carefully to anticipate any threat.

"Our Royal greetings, gentlebeings," he begins with a surprisingly strong voice. "Thank you for attending me. Perhaps you do not know each other. Permit me to make introductions."

At this point, Archbold will introduce each PC to every other PC by name with perhaps even a short descriptive phrase such as "trusted warrior of the Duchy of Almor" or "learned mage and student of the Royal University". Archbold has had his advisors research each of the PCs prior to summoning them, and his experience in the court has taught him that almost nothing is more flattering to one of his subjects than to be known by their (now former) king. And it suits Archbold's goals to have these PCs favorably disposed to him so that they might agree to undertake the mission that he intends to offer.

After the introductions are made, please continue by reading or paraphrasing the following boxed text. Archbold will become progressively more exhausted as he speaks to the PCs.

"We have asked you here to perform a mission on behalf of the Royal House of Nyrond. This is a mission of ultimate secrecy, but you would not even be here if We could not trust you to be discreet."

"Our niece Lady Astra Callistor has been missing for several years. We have known for some time that she led an expedition into the Abbor-Alz range of hills that encircle the Bright Desert to attempt to find a series of long-lost towers. She has not been seen since. Not even the most powerful of divination magic has been able to determine her location or even whether she is alive. Nor have any of Our search parties found any trace of her. And any notes that she left in her apartments regarding her destination have disappeared—if they ever existed at all."

"However, recently an artifact was recovered that has led some of our most learned scholars to believe that they have discovered the location of a set of ancient Flan towers in the Abbor-Alz. It is possible that this is the group of towers that Lady Astra left to explore."

"Naturally, Our son sent a squadron of his legionnaires to investigate immediately, but they did not return. When the duration of their absence became conspicuous, We divined that the entire squadron had been eliminated. A similar fate befell the next two squadrons that We sent into the Abbor-Alz."

"As you've probably deduced for yourself, We are hopeful that the [number of PCs] of you might succeed where Nyrond's armies have failed. You adventurers have proven yourself to be a resilient lot, and it is perhaps time to let seasoned explorers make the attempt."

"What say you? Can We count on your assistance?"

The PCs will likely have questions for Archbold. Allow only a very limited number before Archbold is overtaken by exhaustion and needs to be escorted out of the room. If the basics of the mission have not been explained by the time that Archbold leaves, the finer details will be hammered out by his personal aide Halana Dawnstep (the woman who announced his arrival to the PCs).

Archbold is one of the most important personages in the Kingdom, and will not tolerate insolence from any of the PCs. If, in the judge's discretion, any of the PCs behave in a manner that would offend or insult Archbold, he will have the PC dismissed. The scenario will then over for that PC and player.

Archbold's guards will not tolerate any spellcasting or possible violent behavior in Archbold's presence (such as the drawing of any weapons that might remain in the PC's possession). The guards will not allow the casting of any spells even if the PC explains that the spell has a benign nature. (The guards do not have any ranks of Spellcraft, but they know the casting of a spell when they see it.) If a PC declares that they are casting a spell or if the PC takes any action that might possibly be construed as violent, tell the PC that the guards look like leopards preparing to pounce as soon as they begin. If the PC persists, the guards will attack and beat the PC (don't bother to roll any dice), the PC will be killed and permanently removed from the campaign.

You may provide any PC who succeeds at a Knowledge (Local) check with a Nyrond and Her Environs emphasis (DC 11) or any PC whose home region is Nyrond a copy of Player Handout #1.

Not much is known about the area itself, so Archbold will reluctantly admit that he cannot provide any specifics about what they might expect to encounter. Sample answers of some other questions that the PCs might pose are as follows:

- How much does the mission pay?

"Our son has seen fit to open the Royal Treasury to the best of Our ability. Should you be successful, your reward shall be handsome as befits the nature of the service you perform for Us."

APL 4:	200 gold nobles per PC
APL 6:	200 gold nobles per PC
APL 8:	300 gold nobles per PC
APL 10:	500 gold nobles per PC
APL 12:	600 gold nobles per PC

- What is known of her disappearance?

"For over a year prior to her disappearance, Lady Astra was researching for a cure for the condition that has befallen Our son's fiancé. Then she suddenly expressed a desire to investigate a series of towers in the Abbor-Alz."

"Without much explanation, she closed her apartments and dismissed her staff. She hired a group of adventurers to accompany her on her journey. They were last seen in Beetu in the County of Brackenmoor, and never heard from again after leaving that town."

- How do we find the location?

"Our cartographer will be able to provide you with a map of where the squadrons of Our son's army entered the hills. You will have that map before you leave the Castle. We understand that Our wizards have been able to conjure an arcane representation of the landmark that once marked the trail into the Abbor-Alz."

- What was the relic?

"It was a location that projected an image of an ancient Flan wizard. We have taken the liberty of having her message transcribed for you"

Halana Dawnstep will provide the PCs with a copy of the message, and the judge may distribute Player Handout #2.

- Why us? We're not even Nyrondese!

"If any enemy of the Kingdom is responsible for Lady Astra's disappearance, they may be looking for Nyrondese rescuers. Perhaps a party that is not comprised entirely of citizens of Our Kingdom may succeed where Our Legions have failed."

When the PCs have agreed to undertake the mission and have all of their questions answered, Halana Dawnstep will escort them out of the castle—but not before providing them with a map to the area of the Abbor-Alz to which they are supposed to travel. She will also tell them that they are welcome to make their own inquiries into the matter, but that any such inquiries should be discreet.

If the PCs wish to ask any questions of any organizations or institutions, proceed to Encounter Two. If the PCs are prepared to start the expedition immediately, proceed to Encounter Three.

Encounter Two – To Catch a Thief

This is an optional Encounter. It is possible that the PCs will want to make some inquiries with various organizations, institutions, or important personages prior to leaving Rel Mord. The judge will largely have to improvise based on the PC destinations. While little information can be found at most stops, there are a few possible ways of gaining a bit of extra information. Some of the locations in which the PCs might gain such information are listed below.

If the PCs wish to go to any location other than those listed below, they will not learn any information of note.

If the judge determines that the players are becoming restless to roll dice, he or she should feel free to improvise a short, minor combat encounter. Perhaps a pickpocket fails to steal from one of the PCs or a thug has the temerity to insult a PC. If the judge improvises an encounter, he or she should use standard NPCs from the DMG for the opponent's statistics.

Knowledge Skills

As discussed below, any Knowledge checks made after studying for at least an hour at the Royal Annals of Rel Mord will receive a +5 Insight bonus.

Knowledge (Arcana)

DC 15: An obvious method to interfere with any method to divine Lady Astra's location would be to remove her from the Prime Material Plane. However, that would not stop a *discern location* spell from revealing her location.

DC 25: A number of ancient cultures are rumored to have powerful methods for blocking powerful divination spells. Such lore is most often associated with the Baklunish and Suloise people prior to the Twin Cataclysms, but some ancient Flannish writings have also linked the research with that race.

Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering)

DC 25: The peoples of the long lost Kingdom of Sulm used numerous free standing towers in their architecture.

Knowledge (Geography)

DC 15 (If specifically made regarding the Abbor-Alz): The Abbor-Alz is the name for the range of rocky hills of mostly granite that ring the Bright Desert. In the west, the highlands are actually a small mountain range joining the Cairn Hills to their north. Enclaves of dwarves and gnomes remain in the west, many having shifted from a life of mining to the perfection of craftwork. The hills of southern Urnst are rich with gems and mineral wealth, as well as bandits, manticores, wyverns, and worse. The hillfolk of the region surrounding the Bright Desert repel all attempts to learn more about them; the rare giants and ogres here are barely more dangerous.

DC 25 (if specifically made regarding Sulm): Provide the PC with a copy of Player Handout #4.

Knowledge (History)

DC 25 (if specifically made regarding either Sulm, the Abbor-Alz, or Canimarr): Provide the PC with a copy of Player Handout #3.

Knowledge (Religion)

DC 20 (if specifically made regarding Tharizdun): Tharizdun is an old and evil god of uncertain origin. His spheres of influence are Eternal Darkness, Decay, Entropy, Malign Knowledge, and Insanity. For many years, his religion was unheard from. In recent years, however, he has begun to attract worshippers.

DC 25 (if specifically made regarding Tharizdun): Tharizdun was imprisoned by all of the gods in a concerted effort over one thousand years ago. If freed, it is said that the gods would again unite to lock him away, for he wishes no less than to unravel the very fabric of the universe.

Other Knowledge Skills

Other Knowledge skills will not assist the PCs in researching this matter.

Bardic Knowledge

The information of this section is not the sort of knowledge that a bard would normally learn during the course of his career, but it is always possible that a stray story has reached the bard. For each piece of information provided above, allow the bard a separate Bardic Knowledge check with the DC set 10 higher than those listed above. Researching at the Royal Annals of Rel Mord will not add to the Bardic Knowledge check.

Royal Annals of Rel Mord

It is possible that the PCs will want to do some research in the Royal Annals of Rel Mord. Unless the PC has an alternative method of access, the fee that the PC must pay to research at the Royal Annals is 10 nobles (10 gp) per PC. Any PC who spends at least an hour researching at the Royal Annals of Rel Mord will receive a +5 Insight bonus to any Knowledge checks.

Caretaker Unwal Hytalp: Male human Wiz7/Lor10.

Some of these researching PCs may have access to the Annals via their meta-org. Others may have the Favor of the Royal Annals of Rel Mord from the BOOK WYRM scenario. They may even wish to use the one-time assistance of Caretaker Unwal Hytalp for this purpose. In the event that they use the favor, the particular benefit is listed on the cert that granted the favor.

If any of the PCs do speak to Caretaker Hytalp regarding Lady Astra Callistor, he will provide them with her background, and a copy of Player Handout #1 may be provided to the players if it has not already been provided. Caretaker Hytalp is a personal friend of Lady Astra's. Not only did she spend many hours researching the Annals, but they often attended the same Wizard's Guild events.

Divination Spells

The PCs may be able to cast a number of spells to attempt to find out information regarding their mission. The Towers and the areas immediately surrounding them are protected by a powerful and permanent form of the *nondetection* spell and the caster level check to penetrate the protection—which was cast by the Epic-level Canimarr—is too high for any PC caster to overcome. The protection on the area prevents its location and the location of anyone or anything located in the area from spells such as *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *scry*, *locate object*, and *detect* spells. Magic items such as *crystal balls* are also unable to prevent the protective wards.

The *augury* spell probably does not look far enough into the future to provide the PCs with any assistance, but *divination* could be useful if cast within the week prior to the PCs arrival at the Towers. The judge will have to determine an answer based on the specific question, but an answer of "*Perils both terrible and subtle must be overcome before she may depart,*" may be an appropriate response.

The use of a *commune* spell will need to be adjudicated on a case by case basis.

Army

The PCs may inquire at the local army barracks or with some army personnel. Only the highest ranking officers in Rel Mord are aware that adventures are being hired to send to the towers rather than another army squadron. Consequently, the PCs may find that they have inadvertently gaffed when they ask their questions of the army. Assume that the PCs will have to succeed at a Diplomacy check (DC 10+APL) before being allowed to Gather Information.

Although the fate of the members of the army who were initially sent to the Towers is unknown, none of the NPCs with which the PCs will interact is naïve enough to believe that there are any survivors. Because details of the mission were strictly given on a need-to-know basis, it is unlikely that the PCs will discover any useful information from the army.

His Majesties' Secret Service

The only contact that the PCs should have with His Majesties' Secret Service is if one of the PCs belongs to the organization. Otherwise, the PCs should have no in-game knowledge regarding how to contact the organization.

The member PC should be discreet about contacting the Service, lest the existence of the organization be revealed in-game to the other PCs. The PC's contact with the Service will be Zhenagia—a woman who uses a Rhenee fortuneteller's booth in the public market for a front. Zhenagia cannot provide the member PC with any additional information beyond confirming the information given by King Archbold III. She will likely complain loudly that the Service was not sent to investigate the towers prior to the army being sent in.

Should a member PC bring any nonmember PC into Zhenagia's presence, she will feign ignorance of the Service. Should the member PC fail to leave immediately in such instance, she will summon the City Guard.

The Royal Guard

The Royal Guard has not been informed of the potential finding of Lady Astra Callistor. Her disappearance is a significant disappointment to the organization and news that she may have been found will be greeted with a significant number of questions. The Guard cannot supply the PCs with any additional information.

The Grey Watch

The Grey Seer is unavailable to speak with members of the meta-org, but Imarron—one of his junior apprentices—will see any member PCs immediately. Although the Grey Watch has been completely informed and has supplied a great deal of information to the Army regarding the status of the investigation of the Towers of the Abbor-Alz, they do not have any additional information to provide. They have no information that has not already been shared with the party by King Archbold.

Rel Mord Wizard's Guild

Lady Astra Callistor was a ranking member of the Rel Mord Wizard's Guild. Even the most focused of the Guild's members realize that the absence of a member who was so highly placed in the Court is a devastating loss to the Guild. But many of the ranking Guild members consider Lady Astra to be a friendly acquaintance. Almost all of the members are very anxious for her return.

The few members who do not regret her absence are those who dogmatically believe that a wizard has no time for pursuits other than arcane knowledge. Lady Astra was a Mystic Theurge and servant of Boccob, and strongly presented her position that the pursuit of knowledge should not be myopically focused on arcane lore. Although Lady Astra's philosophy did not disappear in her absence, the focus of the Guild is slowly moving away from pursuits that the staunchest conservatives find abhorrent.

The PCs will not learn any information that can help them from the Wizard's Guild. However, they can learn of the schism in the organization regarding her philosophy regarding matters other than divine magic. This schism may become important in a future scenario.

Lady Astra's Friends

If the PCs inquire about any of Lady Astra's friends, they will be pointed to a Garina Teldun who is a courtier and is often seen in the Royal Palace. She was a friend of the Lady's, and will tell the PCs that she tried to talk Lady

Astra out of undertaking the journey. She is appalled that none of the Lady's personal staff was allowed to accompany her except for one handmaiden.

When the PCs are ready to proceed to the site on the Nesser River, please proceed to Encounter Three.

Encounter Three – North By Northwest

This Encounter bridges the events between the PCs leaving Rel Mord and starting up the trail into the Abbor-Alz range of hills. It should be largely descriptive in nature, although the judge is encouraged to interact with anything that the PCs may attempt.

The following text may be presented to the players, but may need to be largely modified depending on how the PCs accomplish their travel to the location on the Nesser:

Rain falls unrelentingly on you and your companions during your travel. Following the map that you were provided, you travel south around the Gnatmarsh and make your way north staying within a stone's throw of the range of hills known as the Abbor-Alz.

Yet your travel along the base of the Abbor-Alz merely seals the dampness and discomfort of your journey. It seems as if merely being within sight of the Gnatmarsh carries with it the doom of uncomfortable travel. If there is any glimmer of optimism, it is apparently that the wet weather has kept the legendary Gnatmarsh mosquitoes within the boundaries of that swamp and allowed you to travel in peace.

Eventually, you find the landmark that is shown on the map that you were provided. Ahead of you, you see a construct of glowing force that resembles a winged lion with the head and claws of an eagle. This is undoubtedly the arcane reconstruction of the griffon statue that stood here many years ago. However, what the griffon might be marking is not immediately evident. No trail into the hills presents itself.

Finding the trail should be easy for the PCs. A successful Search or Track check (DC 10) will find a narrow path that is perhaps 500 yards further into the hills beyond the location of the force griffon. It is an extremely rocky path, and barely qualifies to be called a path.

Any of the PCs who have brought a mount believe that it will be dangerous for the animal to travel on the path (this is particularly true for large animals such as horses). Nonetheless, an animal should be able to make its way through the hills if led.

Any comprehensive search of the area below the path will reveal that a squadron camped here within the last several months. Although no gear or shelters remain, some of the group's refuse can be found buried in the muck of the area.

When the PCs are ready to proceed into the Abbor-Alz, proceed to Encounter Four.

Encounter Four – Psycho

The PCs will have been on the trail for over a day by the time that this encounter occurs and that travel is reflected in the following boxed text. Barring unusual travel times by the PCs, the Encounter will occur at approximately midmorning on the second day of travel.

PCs who succeed at a Spot check (DC 10) will sense the presence of Legionnaire Gelvin Pyrtake. If none of the PCs succeed, then the PC with the highest Spot check will be the one to sense him. After determining which of the PCs spot the soldier, please read or paraphrase the following:

You have left the lands of Nyrond behind you and have begun to journey into the hills of the Abbor-Alz. The path that you travel can barely be called a path. Although it occasionally broadens to as wide as twenty-five feet, it is more often just broad enough to allow your group to proceed by single file. You cannot help but wonder whether your leap of faith in following this path will lead you to the location that you seek.

Your first night in the hills passes uneventfully. On midmorning of the second day, [one/some/all] of you realize that someone or something is lurking behind a rock just above the trail perhaps 50 feet ahead of the party and trying to stay out of sight.

Ask the player or players who succeeded at the Spot check whether or not their PC is informing the other party members, then ask all of the party members what they intend to do.

Legionnaire Gelvin Pyrtake: Male human War1.

Gelvin is the sole survivor of the first squadron of Legionnaires (from the Sixth Legion—the Eagles) who made the first attempt to recover Lady Astra. Most of the members of his squadron died when a protective glyph that was placed on the trail by the Witches of the Sand exploded in a fireball. He has been surviving on his own for approximately two and one-half months since his squadron was killed. He believed that the next squadron was sent to arrest him for desertion, and hid from it.

Gelvin is a young man with mixed features. His clothes are mostly rags, but it's evident that the tatters were once the uniform of a Legionnaire. He is unusually gaunt, and his hair and thick beard are largely unkempt.

Gelvin is a desperate man. Most of his squadron's equipment was destroyed in the fireball. He has been surviving on rainwater and what few bugs and small

creatures that he has been able to catch. He is also convinced that the party has been dispatched to execute him for subordination. Consequently, he is torn between approaching the party for food and fleeing for his life.

It is likely that the party will be expecting an attack, and that may color how they respond to Gelvin's lurking. If weapons are drawn on Gelvin, he will flee. However, if the party takes no hostile action, it is possible that they can talk Gelvin from his Unfriendly attitude to Indifferent or Friendly with a successful Diplomacy check (DC 15 and 25, respectively). If any of the PCs are obviously wearing a uniform or any indicia of any Nyrond Legion, this Diplomacy check will be made at a -5 penalty. If the PCs roleplay their diplomatic approach to Gelvin, the judge is encouraged to provide Circumstance bonuses to the check—particularly if the party offers Gelvin food or alcohol.

If befriended, Gelvin can tell the party the following:

- That his squadron was completely destroyed in an explosion of fire.
- The location of the explosion (see Encounter Five).
- That the second squadron of legionnaires (which he believes was seeking him) figured out where the explosion was going to occur because they saw the remnants of the first squadron, bypassed it, and disappeared deeper into the hills and he has not seen them since. He has not gone to see what happened to them because he is certain that they are hiding and waiting to arrest him.
- He knows nothing about the third squadron of legionnaires. (The Witches of the Sand killed them and removed the bodies before they had advanced more than a day into the hills.)

When the PCs are ready to proceed further into the hills, please proceed to Encounter Five.

Encounter Five – Rope

This is a minor and brief encounter that both explains what happened to the first squadron of legionnaires and in which the PCs encounter a magical trap. Please read or paraphrase the following:

As you continue along the trail, it widens to allow four to comfortably walk abreast. Proceeding further, you stop when you see a great deal of debris on the path ahead of you. Bodies of perhaps a half dozen beings litter the area. You quickly realize that what you thought was debris is the remains of this group's equipment. Evidence of a blast has been mostly washed away by weeks of rain, but some remaining marks can be detected.

A cursory examination of either the bodies or the equipment will reveal that the group was comprised of Nyrond Legionnaires.

A successful Spellcraft check (DC 23) will reveal that a *fireball* destroyed this squadron.

It is possible that the PCs either killed Gelvin or allowed him to escape in the prior Encounter and that they will not detect the glyph trap. In that case, the trap will explode as the first PC walks on the trail past it. The area of effect will be centered on the intruding PC.

Magical Self-Resetting Glyph Trap (Fireball): Damage 5d6; Reflex save halves damage (DC 14); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28); Creatures of evil alignment (or who radiate evil alignment from their person—not from items) may bypass the glyph without discharging it. The glyph will reset itself after approximately three days.

Gelvin knows that the trap can easily be bypassed by leaving the trail and scaling the walls of the hills for a short distance. However, he has only tried it himself twice—once to pass beyond the glyph and once to return. The hills will easily accommodate scaling if the PCs succeed at a Climb check (DC 10). The Difficulty check can be reduced to DC 0 if one of the PCs secures a rope on the far side of the trapped portion of the trail. By climbing with their body positioned between the rope and the wall of the hills, the PC can easily traverse the trapped portion of the trail.

Tracking beyond the glyph will not reveal any tracks because of the length of time since the second squadron passed.

When the PCs have bypassed the glyph, proceed to Encounter Six.

Encounter Six – Torn Curtain

When the PCs are ready to continue along the trail towards their destination, please read or paraphrase the following:

You continue along the rough path for several more hours. The path had once reached as wide as twenty feet, but it continues to narrow the farther that you travel. As you round a bend in the path, you realize that the path becomes sparser and sparser until it ends approximately one hundred fifty feet ahead of you.

The valley in which the Towers of the Abbor-Alz are located is hidden by a form of the *permanent illusion* spell. Approximately three hundred yards beyond where the path appears to come to an end, the PCs can encounter the veil that hides the valley.

If the veil is interacted with, a successful Will save (DC 21) will allow the PC to realize that the illusion is there. If the Will save is successful, it will not disappear completely. The PC will still perceive it as a translucent image.

It is possible that the PCs could stumble beyond the illusion and into the valley. If this happens, the affected PC or PCs can avoid falling down the incline described below by succeeding at a Balance check (DC 10). The affected PCs will take no more than 1d6 nonlethal damage before they are able to control their descent. Such damage can be reduced to nothing with a successful skilled Tumble check (DC 15).

When the PCs have penetrated the illusionary cover for the area, please proceed to Encounter Seven.

Encounter Seven – Suspicion

Please read or paraphrase the following:

You find yourself on the side of a steep hill overlooking a valley that is surrounded by all sides by other hills. Below you are the remnants of many ancient towers. Six of these still stand.

Each of the intact towers is built as a cylinder that stretches to the sky above. Four of them are topped by roofs and crenulations while the tops of the other two appear to have collapsed in ages gone by.

The path leading down into the valley is steep and direct.

No map of the valley is provided, and the judge should feel free to place the intact towers—including the main tower of Encounters Eight through Ten—anywhere on the battlemat.

Each of the towers is cylindrical in shape. The intact towers vary in size from 75 feet to 120 feet, and the main tower of Encounters Eight through Ten is 120 feet in height. None of them have doors at ground level, but each of them has openings approximately one-third up the tower's length (e.g., 40 feet up from the ground on a 120 ft. tower). Canimarr expected that his allies could fly and hoped that his enemies could not. A narrow walkway that is perhaps three feet wide with no protective rail encircles each of the towers at the level of the opening.

Other than the main tower of Encounters Eight through Ten, the towers are long abandoned. Each of the towers (including the main tower) has a spiral staircase inside the tower that winds down counterclockwise to the floor of the tower and winds up clockwise to a trapdoor. One complete spiral down on the staircase will bring the PCs to the tower floor. Two complete spirals up on the staircase will bring the PCs to the trapdoor. Opening the trapdoor will reveal a room with thin slats for windows on each side that overlook the valley.

Each of the towers that still stand has a subterranean complex of rooms that can be accessed by a staircase in the base of each tower. There are perhaps no more than seven rooms under any of the towers. The complex of rooms under the main tower is shown on DM Aid #A.

If any of the PCs succeed at a Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) check (DC 25), they will recognize some of the designs of the stonework inside the towers to be Ancient Flan.

If any of the PCs cast *detect magic*, they will find that the aura of magic emanating from the towers and even the entire valley is overwhelming. If they succeed at a Spellcraft check (DC 24), they will recognize that the magical auras are from the Abjuration and Illusion schools.

The second squadron of Legionnaires made it to this point, but were all killed by the elemental creature described in Encounter Eight. The creature has removed evidence of the bodies to improve its chances of taking any new intruders by surprise.

When the PCs are ready to enter the main tower, please proceed to Encounter Eight.

Encounter Eight – Vertigo

The main tower is 120 feet high, and the opening that serves as an entrance is 40 feet from the ground. A map of the main tower is provided as DM Aid #A, and the architecture of the main tower matches the description of the other towers provided in Encounter Seven with the exception that this tower is not abandoned.

Because of a pact with the long dead wizard Canimarr, a creature from the elemental plane of air guards this area from unwelcome parties. It roams the area outside the towers and will attempt to kill any intruders at the most inconvenient time possible. At APLs 4 and 6, the Air Elemental will be hiding behind a nearby tower (or nearby ruins) and spring forth to attack. At APLs 8 and higher, the Invisible Stalker will gain a surprise round on any PCs who do not succeed at a Spot check (DC 23).

If the PCs are attempting to enter the main tower using ropes to scale the tower, the creature will attack the third PC to scale the ropes. If the PC takes any damage while scaling the rope, he or she must succeed at a Climb check (DC 10 + damage taken) to continue to hold onto the rope.

If the PCs are flying, levitating, air walking or using similar means of magic to gain access to the tower, the creature will attack as soon as the PCs are within 20 feet of the main tower and will prefer to attack any PC who might be carrying another PC.

If the PCs are attempting to tunnel their way into the tower (the tower's statistics are presented below), the creature will attack shortly after the PCs begin to attack the tower walls.

The judge will have to determine when the creature attacks in other situations.

APL 4 (EL 5)

- **Medium Air Elemental, Advanced:** hp 44, See Appendix II.

APL 6 (EL 7)

- **Large Air Elemental, Advanced:** hp 80, See Appendix III.

APL 8 (EL 9)

- **Invisible Stalker, Advanced:** hp 104, See Appendix IV.

APL 10 (EL 11)

- **Invisible Stalker, Advanced:** hp 136, See Appendix V.

APL 12 (EL 13)

- **Invisible Stalker, Advanced:** hp 168, See Appendix VI.

Tactics: At APLs in which the creature has the Flyby Attack feat, it will hit the PCs on the run using reach and retreat to a safer location. After its initial attack, it will concentrate on spellcasters, archers, and other character that are able to damage it.

Note: Due to the circumstances in which the battle likely takes place that disadvantage the PCs, a +1 EL modifier has been added to this encounter.

Magically-Reinforced Stone Walls: 12 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 360; AC 5; Break DC 42.

When the PCs have all entered the tower or at such other time that the judge determines appropriate, please proceed to Encounter Nine.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy

Canimarr also made a pact with a dynasty of eye tyrants, and one or more of those guards the inside of the main tower. At every APL except APL 10, it heard the combat outside and ascended to the highest point in the tower, just below the trap door. If the PCs enter the tower simultaneously, it will descend to attack when the last PC has entered the tower at every APL except APL 10. At APL 10, it has descended the stone staircase at the tower floor and will set guard in the great hall described in the boxed text of Encounter Ten. Otherwise, the judge will have to determine when it attacks.

The main tower is 120 feet high, and the opening that serves as an entrance is 40 feet from the ground. A map of the main tower is provided as DM Aid #A, and the architecture of the main tower matches the description of the other towers provided in Encounter Seven with the exception that this tower is not abandoned.

Running and charging are not possible on the stairs. Otherwise, treat movement normally when on the staircase and do not reduce movement rate for vertical movement.

APL 4 (EL 7)

- **Gauth:** hp 45; See Monster Manual pages 25-26.

APL 6 (EL 9)

- **Gauths (2):** hp 46, 45, See Monster Manual pages 25-26.

APL 8 (EL 11)

- **Gauth, Advanced:** hp 162, See Appendix IV.

APL 10 (EL 13)

- **Beholder:** hp 93; See Monster Manual pages 25-27.

APL 12 (EL 15)

- **Beholder, Advanced:** hp 133, See Appendix VI.

The judge should familiarize herself or himself with the rules for using an eye tyrant's eyes in combat as described on page 25 of the Monster Manual. For the convenience of the judge, the following is suggested as the rays that the creature can use in each of the relevant directions:

<u>Gauth</u>

Front: Exhaustion
Sleep

Back: Dispel Magic
Scorching Ray

Right: Dispel Magic
Inflict Moderate Wounds

Left: Paralysis
Scorching Ray

Up: Paralysis
Sleep

Down: Exhaustion
Inflict Moderate Wounds

<u>Beholder</u>

Front: Charm Person
Fear
Sleep

Back: Charm Monster
Finger of Death
Inflict Moderate Wounds

Right: Flesh to Stone
Sleep
Telekinesis

Left: Charm Monster
Disintegrate
Fear

Up: Charm Person
Disintegrate
Slow

Down: Flesh to Stone
Inflict Moderate Wounds
Telekinesis

Note: Due to the circumstances in which the battle takes place that disadvantage the PCs, a +1 EL modifier has been added to this encounter at all APLs except APL 10. At APL 10, the beholder will not attack until the PCs have reached the great hall at the base of the stairs leading down from the staircase found at the floor of the tower.

On the floor of the tower, the PCs will find a heavy pick. At APLs 10 and higher, this will be an Adamantine Heavy Pick.

As described in Encounter Seven, there is a staircase on the floor of the tower. When the PCs are ready to descend the staircase, please proceed to Encounter Ten.

Treasure:

APL 4: L: 1 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 1 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 1 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 251 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 251 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

Encounter Ten – Spellbound

This area is detailed on the map in DM Aid #A. Please read or paraphrase the following:

As you descend the stone staircase, it is evident that this area is not abandoned. You have entered a great hall. It is still plushly decorated with textured rugs on the floor and dark tapestries of Flannish design on the walls. Across from the staircase that you have descended are great double doors of what appear to be reinforced oak. To each side of the staircase is a simple door.

At APL 10, the combat with the beholder will take place here.

The double doors lead to the library described below. The door to the right of the staircase (from the PCs' perspective as they descend) leads to a bedroom where Lady Astra takes her rest. The door to the left of the staircase leads to a storage room that contains a stock of food and wine for Lady Astra's consumption. A permanent *unseen servant* patrols this area and sees to many of Lady Astra's needs. It will not attack the PCs.

The double doors are unlocked but closed. When the PCs are prepared to enter the double doors, please read or paraphrase the following:

The doors swing open to reveal a library of impressive size. Sitting quietly at a table reading is a thin, olive-skinned woman with long, straight, disheveled brown hair. Her clothing appears tattered and threadbare. The woman looks up at you briefly revealing hollow brown eyes, but quickly returns to her reading without saying a word. A large pile of books stands near her on the table. Surrounding her on all of the walls are stacks upon stacks of books, scrolls, and loose sheaves of paper. In the center of the room is a pedestal upon which rests a ball of crystal.

Otherwise known as a crystal ball. Or, more accurately in this case, a Crystal Hypnosis Ball. The ball radiates moderate Divination magic if *detect magic* is cast.

♛ **Lady Astra Callistor, Female Human**: Clr3/Wiz3/MTh7: hp 60, See Appendix I.

As described in the background, Lady Astra is under a *geas* not to leave the towers until she has found a cure for Lady Xenia's condition in the library. Consequently, the dominant trait of her current personality is that she is compelled to study the books of the library. Her interaction with the PCs will be friendly and polite, but as brief as possible. She will consistently try to break off the conversation with the PCs and return to her studies. Eventually, she will probably ignore questions unless they can be answered with a brief "yes" or "no." Under no circumstances will she agree to accompany the PCs while the *geas* remains in effect.

It may be difficult for the PCs to determine how to get Lady Astra free from the enchantment. A successful Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 25) indicates that the PC knows of a cursed Crystal Ball that will implant a suggestion in one who gazes into it. If the PCs have no way of determining the source of Lady Astra's compulsion, they may have to wait until the following morning when they will see Lady Astra gaze into it as part of her morning routine.

There are a few ways to break the enchantment on Lady Astra:

- Breaking the Crystal Hypnosis Ball will break the enchantment.
- The spells *lesser wish*, *wish*, and *miracle* (and no other spells) will break the *geas*. You know, in case any of the PCs happen to have those spells handy.

It is also possible for the PCs to subdue Lady Astra and carry her out against her will.

Once the *geas* is released, Lady Astra will be very appreciative and her personality will begin to return to normal. She is friendly and polite, but somewhat regal. She will be able to tell the PCs the following:

- When she was still in Rel Mord, one of her handmaidens suggested that she might find the

answer to curing Lady Xenia in the ancient towers that were hidden in the Abbor-Alz. She immediately became possessed with the idea, and that her reaction was probably a form of magical compulsion. Had she been of her right mind, she undoubtedly would have questioned how a common maid would know of the Towers of the Abbor-Alz.

- After finding the towers, she gazed into the crystal ball in passing. What she knows now to be the person on the other side of the ball spoke to her and suggested that she stay in the library until she could find a cure to Lady Xenia's condition. The magical compulsion took effect and she decided to do so.
- She dismissed her companions to return to Rel Mord with news of her new location. She will be somewhat dismayed to discover that they never returned to Rel Mord.
- It is the Witches of the Sand who have kept her captive in the towers for they have visited her from time to time.
- Among the papers in the library, she found a few parchments relating a prophecy revealed to Beldion, a female apprentice to the wizard Canimarr. Canimarr apparently was turned into a manscorpion when the King of Sulm found the Scorpion Crown, but Beldion somehow survived. She apparently spent a long time away from the towers, but eventually returned.
- The prophecy read as follows:

  "*In the fields on which you stand shall rise a kingdom that will break free of another. When the unmarried woman who should be queen is sacrificed to me upon this altar, your descendants shall once again know the glory of Sulm.*"

- It was the forgotten god Tharizdun who tricked the King of Sulm into wearing the Scorpion Crown and causing the downfall of Sulm.
- Shortly after Prince Sewarndt's poisoning of Archbold and the ascension of Lynwerd to the throne, King Lynwerd signed a royal decree in secret that named Lady Astra as the successor to the throne in the event of his death. The Witches of the Sand apparently believe that she can fulfill the prophecy.

The Witches of the Sand have deprived Lady Astra of her spellbook and stolen her holy symbol of Boccob and spell component pouch. She will be unable to prepare any arcane spells unless she borrows a spellbook from one of the PCs (requiring a Spellcraft check of DC 15+spell level). She will only prepare spells that do not require a divine focus for casting unless one of the PCs can give her a holy symbol of Boccob. She will also need a spell component pouch to cast any spells with material components. Lady Astra's statblock in Appendix I assumes that she cannot prepare arcane spells and will only prepare divine spells that do not require a material component or divine focus. The judge will need to revise the spell selection if alternate methods of spell preparation or spell casting are provided by the PCs.

If any of the PCs were turned to stone by a beholder, Lady Astra will be able to pray for and cast *break enchantment* on the following day. That spell can be cast without a holy symbol.

The PCs may wish to retrieve some or all of the books from the library for scholarly or monetary purposes. Lady Astra will be anxious to leave the valley after the PCs have broken the enchantment, and she will demonstrate no desire to take any of the materials found in the library. Any PC that expresses the desire to return a book or books to the Sagacious Society should retain the "Recovery of Unique Tome" designation on their Adventure Record. The donation of a book to the Sagacious Society should not be suggested by the judge.

When the PCs are either ready to leave the valley or when the PCs are resting for the evening, please proceed to Encounter Eleven.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious

The witches have been using a *scry* spell to keep tabs on Lady Astra, and are alerted to the presence of the PCs when they interact with her. If the PCs rest and do not guard Lady Astra or the area where she sleeps, the witches will steal away in the night with her. Proceed to the Conclusion.

If the PCs spend the night in the Towers guarding Lady Astra or if they immediately leave the valley with her in tow, the witches will attack. In the former case, the witches will attack shortly after the PC's first watch commences. In the latter case, the witches will attack from hiding on the return trail at a point where the trail is merely 10 feet wide.

At higher APLs, it is possible that the PCs will be able to return Lady Astra immediately to Rel Mord via *teleport*, *wind walk*, or other spells. LIVING GREYHAWK rules prevent experience from being rewarded for this encounter if the battle were completely avoided in such a manner. If the judge believes that the players would be overly disappointed by losing the experience opportunity, he or she may choose to have the witches show up and disrupt such a spell with *dispel magic* or *greater dispelling*.

APL 4 (EL 6)

- **Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr5:** hp 41; See Appendix II.
- **Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr3:** hp 16; See Appendix II.

- **Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War1:** hp 10, 10; See Appendix II.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good* on herself, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The spellcasters will avoid targeting Lady Astra in area of effect spells if at all possible.

APL 6 (EL 8)

- **Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr7:** hp 53; See Appendix III.
- **Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr5:** hp 26; See Appendix III.
- **Shocker Lizard Familiar:** hp 13; See Appendix III.
- **Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War3:** hp 26, 26; See Appendix III

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good* on herself, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor* and *shield* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The spellcasters will avoid targeting Lady Astra in area of effect spells if at all possible.

APL 8 (EL 10)

- Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr9: hp 88; See Appendix IV.
- Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr7: hp 34; See Appendix IV.
- Shocker Lizard Familiar: hp 17, See Appendix IV.
- Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War5: hp 43; See Appendix IV.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *shield of faith*, *magic circle against good*, *bear's endurance*, and *freedom of movement* on herself, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor*, *resist energy* (*electricity*), *resist energy* (*fire*), *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The spellcasters will avoid targeting Lady Astra in area of effect spells if at all possible.

APL 10 (EL 12)

- Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr11: hp 105; See Appendix V.
- Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr9: hp 60; See Appendix V.
- Shocker Lizard Familiar: hp 30; See Appendix V.
- Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War7: hp 59, 59; See Appendix V.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good*, *bear's endurance*, and *freedom of movement* on herself and has cast *shield of faith* and *magic vestment* on herself and both of the witch thugs, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor*, *bear's* endurance, *resist energy* (*electricity*), *resist energy* (*fire*), *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The Witch Necromancer will attempt to surround Lady Astra in *otiluke's resilient sphere* in the first round of combat to prevent her from taking unnecessary damage. The cleric will wait to see whether the sphere is successful before casting any area of effect spells.

APL 12 (EL 14)

- Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr13: hp 130; See Appendix VI.
- Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr11: hp 78; See Appendix VI.
- Shocker Lizard Familiar: hp 39; See Appendix VI.
- Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War9: hp 93, 93; See Appendix VI.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good*, *bear's endurance*, and *freedom of movement* on herself and has cast *shield of faith* and *magic vestment* on herself and both of the witch thugs and has precast *greater magic weapon* on both of the Witch Thugs' spiked chains, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor*, *bear's* endurance, *resist energy* (*electricity*), *resist energy* (*fire*), *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The Witch Necromancer will attempt to surround Lady Astra in *otiluke's resilient sphere* in the first round of combat to prevent her from taking unnecessary damage. The cleric will wait to see whether the sphere is successful before casting any area of effect spells.

Treasure:

APL 4: L: 283 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 167 gp

APL 6: L: 284 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 500 gp

APL 8: L: 309 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 692 gp

APL 10: L: 727 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1,332 gp

APL 12: L: 282 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,211 gp

Conclusion

The PCs may wish to pick up Legionnaire Gelvin Pyrtake on their way back to Rel Mord. He has nothing to reward them, but will be greatly appreciative. Naturally, the army will not consider him a deserter.

Complete Success (Lady Astra Returned Alive)

If the PCs successfully return Lady Astra to Rel Mord, she will have a banquet held in their honor. Each of the

PCs will be rewarded with both the Favor of Archbold III, Former King of Nyrond and the Favor of Lady Astra Callistor. The PCs will also receive all of the promised treasure. Please read or paraphrase the following:

Upon your return to Rel Mord, a banquet is held at the Royal Palace to celebrate the return of Lady Astra Callistor to Rel Mord, and each of you are guests of honor at that banquet. In a public speech, Lady Astra honors you and promises her undying gratitude for the service that you have performed for her.

Your heroism is quickly overshadowed, however, when King Lynwerd makes his appearance. Commanding the attention of all in attendance, he proclaims, "All of us know well that the Kingdom of Nyrond has been a troubled land since the treachery of the traitor prince. Know Ye that Lady Astra Callistor has been proclaimed by Myself and My Council as the rightful and lawful heir to the throne of Nyrond. Until such time as I should sire an heir, should I be unable to continue as King, then Astra Callistor shall succeed me as your queen." Shouting at the top of its voice, the crowd answers "Long Live the King!"

Partial Success (PCs Lose Lady Astra)

If the Witches of the Sand remove Lady Astra because the PCs did not guard her during the night, the Grey Seer will be able to divine her location because the witches will have removed her from the valley. She will be recovered by the Nyrond Legions and returned to Rel Mord. The PCs will not obtain the Favor of Archbold III, but will retain the Favor of Lady Astra Callistor. The PCs will receive one-half of the promised treasure. Please read or paraphrase the following:

You return to Rel Mord with the news of your failure. Nevertheless, you soon hear the news that the Grey Seer has discovered Lady Astra's location and that the Legions of Nyrond have recovered her from the Witches of the Sand. Soon there is no other news in Nyrond but that Lady Astra Callistor has returned that that King Lynwerd publicly announced that she shall succeed him to the throne of Nyrond if he should not produce an heir. Nonetheless, Lady Astra sends message that she is grateful to you for forcing the witches to move her to a location where her location could be divined.

Partial Success (Lady Astra Killed But Body Returned to Rel Mord)

If Lady Astra is killed, but her body is returned to Rel Mord, she will be resurrected and she will return to her standing in Rel Mord. The PCs will gain neither of the favors on the Adventure Record. The PCs will receive one-half of the promised treasure. Please read or paraphrase the following:

You return to Rel Mord with Lady Astra's body and the news of your failure. Nevertheless, you soon hear the news that Durinken, High Priest of Rao, has resurrected Lady Astra. Soon there is no other news in Nyrond but that Lady Astra Callistor has returned that that King Lynwerd publicly announced that she shall succeed him to the throne of Nyrond if he should not produce an heir.

Complete Failure (Lady Astra Killed and Body Not Returned)

If Lady Astra is killed, and her body cannot be returned to Rel Mord, then the PCs will be berated by Halana Dawnstep. They will gain neither of the favors on the Adventure Record nor will they be rewarded any treasure.

Treasure:

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 500 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 600 gp; M: 0 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 (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Eight - Vertigo

Defeat the Elemental Creature

APL4	150 xp
APL6	210 xp
APL8	270 xp
APL10	330 xp
APL 12	390 xp

Encounter Nine - Frenzy

Defeat the Eye Tyrant

APL4	210 xp
APL6	270 xp
APL8	330 xp
APL10	390 xp
APL 12	450 xp

Encounter Eleven - Notorious

Defeat the Witches of the Sand

APL4	180 xp
APL6	240 xp
APL8	300 xp
APL10	360 xp
APL 12	420 xp

Story Award

Return Lady Astra Callistor unharmed to Rel Mord

APL4	90 xp
APL6	120 xp
APL8	150 xp
APL10	180 xp
APL 12	240 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL4	45 xp
APL6	60 xp
APL8	75 xp
APL10	90 xp
APL 12	105 xp

Total possible experience:

APL4	675 xp
APL6	900 xp
APL8	1,125 xp
APL10	1,350 xp
APL 12	1,575 xp

Treasure Summary

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

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

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

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

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

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter Nine - Frenzy

APL 4: L: 1 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 1 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 1 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 251 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 251 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

Encounter Eleven - Notorious

APL 4: L: 283 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 167 gp

APL 6: L: 284 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 500 gp

APL 8: L: 309 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 692 gp

APL 10: L: 727 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1,332 gp

APL 12: L: 282 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,211 gp

Conclusion

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 500 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 600 gp; M: 0 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 4: L: 284 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 167 gp - Total: 650 gp

APL 6: L: 285 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 500 gp - Total: 900 gp

APL 8: L: 310 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 692 gp - Total: 1,300 gp

APL 10: L: 928 gp; C: 500 gp; M: 1,332 gp - Total: 2,300 gp

APL 12: L: 533 gp; C: 600 gp; M: 2,211 gp - Total: 3,300 gp

Items for the Adventure Record

Favor of Archbold III, Former King of Nyrond: You have performed an important task at the request of Former King Archbold III, and he regards you favorably. The favor may be redeemed to obtain access to one of the following specific types of armor listed on Table 7-7 of the Dungeon Master's Guide: Dragonhide Plate (green), Dwarven Plate, or Plate Armor of the Deep. This favor is only good for the acquisition of one of such items, and counts only as access. The item must still be purchased normally. Until redeemed, this favor counts as a Royal influence point in the Kingdom of Nyrond.

Favor of Lady Astra Callistor: You have rescued the Lady Astra Callistor from her imprisonment in the Towers of the Abbor-Alz, and have won her gratitude. The favor may be redeemed to obtain access to the Mystic Theurge prestige class. This favor counts only as access to such class. Until redeemed, this favor counts as two Royal influence points in the Kingdom of Nyrond, as two influence points with the Temple of Boccob in the Kingdom of Nyrond, and as two influence points with the Rel Mord Wizard's Guild. After redemption, the favor still counts as one influence point with all of such parties.

Boots, Steadfast: These thick and heavy iron-toed boots help keep the wearer from getting knocked down. Someone wearing *steadfast boots* cannot be tripped or pushed back by a bull rush. As long as the wearer carries a melee weapon that is Medium-size or larger, she also counts as being set against a charge. The weapon does not have to have reach.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisite*: Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's strength*; *Market Price*: 6,000 gp; *Weight*: 1 lb.

Recovery of Unique Tome: The PC has recovered a unique tome from the library of the Towers of the Abbor-Alz. He or she has met the Sagacious Society's membership requirement for a Society Sage that such an item be recovered and donated to the Society.

Item Access

APL 6 and 8:

Boots, Steadfast (Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide)

APL 10 (all of APLs 6-8 plus the following):

Adamantine Heavy Pick (Adventure; DMG)

APL 12 (all of APLs 6-10 plus the following):

Amulet of Natural Armor, +2 (Adventure; DMG)

Bag of Holding Type II (Adventure; DMG)

Ring of Feather Falling (Adventure; DMG)

+2 Breastplate (Adventure; DMG)

Appendix I – Lady Astra Callistor

All APLs

Lady Astra Callistor: Female human (Oerdian) Clr3/Wiz3/MTh7; Medium humanoid; HD 3d4+3 and 3d8+3 and 7d4+7; hp 60; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10) [+1 Dex]; Atk +6 melee [1d6 damage, quarterstaff] or +7 ranged; AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +15; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +20 (includes Skill Focus but not Combat Casting), Craft (Alchemy) +7, Knowledge (Arcana) +20, Knowledge (History) +16, Knowledge (Local-NMR) +16, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +16, Knowledge (Religion) +20, Spellcraft +20; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Concentration), Spell Penetration.

Possessions: Explorer's Outfit (extremely tattered).

Arcane Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/4/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): No arcane spells prepared.

Divine Spells Prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/2+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor wounds*(*x4*)]; 1st—[*cure light wounds* (*x4*), *detect secret doors**, *remove fear*;] 2nd—[*cure moderate wounds* (*x4*), *detect secret doors**, *remove paralysis*]; 3rd—[*cure serious wounds, dispel magic**, *remove blindness, remove curse, remove disease*]; 4th—[*cure critical wounds* (*x4*), *dispel magic**, *second*]; 5th—[*dispel magic**, *break enchantment*].

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Knowledge (All knowledge skills are cleric class skills); Magic (May add ½ of cleric level to arcane caster level checks).

Appendix II – NPCs and Evil Nasties for APL 4

Encounter Eight – Vertigo (EL 5)

Medium Air Elemental, Advanced: CR 4; Medium elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 7d8+14; hp 44; Init +9; Spd fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (touch 15, flat-footed 13) [[+5 Dex, +3 natural]]; BAB/Grapple +5/+6 Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, slam), Full Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, slam); SA Air mastery, Whirlwind; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Elemental traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 21, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +5, Spot +5; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse.

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

Whirlwind (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlwind once every 10 minutes and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In this form, the elemental can move through the air or along a surface at its fly speed.

The whirlwind is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 30 feet wide at the top, and up to 50 feet tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 feet.

The elemental's movement while in whirlwind form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the whirlwind if it touches or enters the whirlwind, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the whirlwind (see the table below for details) and may be lifted into the air. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the whirlwind or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful winds, automatically taking the indicated damage each round. A creature that can fly is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the whirlwind. The creature still takes damage but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the whirlwind's effects varies with the elemental's size (see the table). The save DC is Strength based.

Creatures trapped in the whirlwind cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind.

Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the whirlwind at one time as will fit inside the whirlwind's volume.

The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the whirlwind happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the whirlwind's base touches the ground, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the whirlwind's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in whirlwind form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

Elemental Traits: Immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy (EL 7)

Gauth: hp 45; See Monster Manual pages 25-26.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious (EL 6)

Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr5 (Tharizdun), HD 5d8+13; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (touch 11, flat-footed 20) [+8 Armor, +2 Shield, +1 Nat, +1 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +3/+3; Atk +4 melee (1d8, masterwork morningstar), +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Knowledge (Religion) +9, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Skill Focus (Concentration), Toughness.

Spells Prepared: (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor wounds (x3), detect magic, light*]; 1st—[*bless, cause fear (x2), entropic shield, inflict light wounds**]; 2nd—[*cure moderate wounds, hold person, shatter**, *silence*]; 3rd—[*blindness/deafness, cure serious wounds, ~~magic circle against good*~~*].

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day--+4 bonus on attack, bonus equal to cleric's level on damage), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Masterwork Morningstar, Light Crossbow, 10 bolts, Spell Component Pouch, Silver

Holy Symbol, Wooden Holy Symbol (backup), .Amulet of Natural Armor, +1.

Note: The effect of Spell Focus (Concentration) is included in her Concentration bonus. The effect of *magic circle against good* is not reflected in her AC or in her saving throws.

Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr3; HD 3d4+6; hp 16; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14) [+4 Armor, +2 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +1/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Craft (Alchemy) +9, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Knowledge (History) +9, Knowledge (Religion) +9, Spellcraft +9; Skill Focus (Concentration), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*acid splash* (x2), *detect magic, ray of frost*]; 1st—[~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile* (x2), *ray of enfeeblement**]; 2nd—[*blindness/deafness*, scare*, *scorching ray*].

*Necromancy school spell.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, Spell Component Pouch.

Familiar: Rat.

Note: The effect of Spell Focus (Concentration) is included in her Concentration bonus. The bonus to her Fortitude save for the rat familiar is included. The effect of *mage armor* is reflected in her AC and should be eliminated if that spell is dispelled.

Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War1; HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+5 Armor, +3 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +1/+4; Atk +5 melee (2d4+4, masterwork spiked chain), +4 ranged (1d8, longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Jump +4; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Spiked Chain).

Possessions: Masterwork Spiked Chain, Longbow, 20 arrows, Club, Masterwork Breastplate, Potion of Enlarge Person.

If Enlarged: Size Large; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 14) [+5 Armor, +2 Dex, -1 Size]; Base Atk/Grapple: +1/+8; Atk +5 melee (2d6+6, masterwork spiked chain), +2 ranged (2d6, longbow); Reach 20 ft; SV Ref +2; Str 18, Dex 14.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good* on herself, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The spellcasters will avoid targeting Lady Astra in area of effect spells if at all possible.

Appendix III – NPCs and Evil Nasties for APL 6

Encounter Eight – Vertigo (EL 7)

Large Air Elemental, Advanced: CR 6; Large elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 12d8+36; hp 80; Init +12; Spd fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 21 (touch 17, flat-footed 13) [-1 size, +8 Dex, +4 natural]; BAB/Grapple +9/+15 Atk +16 melee (2d6+2, slam), Full Atk +16 melee (2d6+2, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10ft/10ft; SA Air mastery, Whirlwind; SQ Damage reduction 5/- , Darkvision 60 ft., Elemental traits; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +16, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 26, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +8; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse.

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

Whirlwind (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlwind once every 10 minutes and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In this form, the elemental can move through the air or along a surface at its fly speed.

The whirlwind is 5 feet wide at the base, up to 30 feet wide at the top, and up to 50 feet tall, depending on the elemental's size. The elemental controls the exact height, but it must be at least 10 feet.

The elemental's movement while in whirlwind form does not provoke attacks of opportunity, even if the elemental enters the space another creature occupies. Another creature might be caught in the whirlwind if it touches or enters the whirlwind, or if the elemental moves into or through the creature's space.

Creatures one or more size categories smaller than the elemental might take damage when caught in the whirlwind (see the table below for details) and may be lifted into the air. An affected creature must succeed on a Reflex save when it comes into contact with the whirlwind or take the indicated damage. It must also succeed on a second Reflex save or be picked up bodily and held suspended in the powerful winds, automatically taking the indicated damage each round. A creature that can fly is allowed a Reflex save each round to escape the whirlwind. The creature still takes damage but can leave if the save is successful. The DC for saves against the whirlwind's effects varies with the elemental's size (see the table). The save DC is Strength based.

Creatures trapped in the whirlwind cannot move except to go where the elemental carries them or to escape the whirlwind.

Creatures caught in the whirlwind can otherwise act normally, but must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell. Creatures caught in the whirlwind take a –4 penalty to Dexterity and a –2 penalty on attack rolls. The elemental can have only as many creatures trapped inside the whirlwind at one time as will fit inside the whirlwind's volume.

The elemental can eject any carried creatures whenever it wishes, depositing them wherever the whirlwind happens to be. A summoned elemental always ejects trapped creatures before returning to its home plane.

If the whirlwind's base touches the ground, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the whirlwind's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment, while those farther away have total concealment.

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell.

An elemental in whirlwind form cannot make slam attacks and does not threaten the area around it.

Elemental Traits: Immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy (EL 9)

Gauths (2): hp 46, 45, See Monster Manual pages 25-26.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious (EL 8)

Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr7 (Tharizdun), HD 7d8+17; hp 53; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 11, flat-footed 20) [+8 Armor, +2 Shield, +1 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +5/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d8, masterwork morningstar), +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +15, Knowledge (Religion) +11, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Concentration), Toughness.

Spells Prepared: (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor wounds (x4), detect magic, light*]; 1st—[*bless, divine favor, entropic shield, inflict light wounds*, magic weapon, remove fear*]; 2nd—[*cure moderate wounds, hold person, shatter*, silence, sound burst*]; 3rd—[*blindness/deafness, cure serious wounds, ~~magic circle against good*~~, searing light*]; 4th—[*cure critical wounds, unholy blight**].

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day--+4 bonus on attack, bonus equal to cleric's level on damage), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Masterwork Morningstar, Light Crossbow, 10 bolts, Spell Component Pouch, Silver Holy Symbol, Wooden Holy Symbol (backup), .Steadfast Boots.

Note: The effect of Spell Focus (Concentration) is included in her Concentration bonus. The effect of *magic circle against good* is not reflected in her AC or in her saving throws.

Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr5; HD 5d4+10; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 12, flat-footed 18) [+4 Armor, +4 Shield, +2 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +2/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +10, Craft (Alchemy) +11, Knowledge (Arcana) +11, Knowledge (History) +11, Knowledge (Religion) +11, Spellcraft +11; Improved Familiar, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Spells Prepared (4/4+1/3+1/2+1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—[*acid splash* (x2), *detect magic*, *ray of frost*]; 1st—[~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile* (x2), *ray of enfeeblement**, ~~*shield*~~]; 2nd—[*blindness/deafness**, *glitterdust*, *scare**, *scorching ray*]; 3rd—[*fireball*, *ray of exhaustion**, *slow*].

*Necromancy school spell.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, Spell Component Pouch.

Familiar: Shocker Lizard.

Note: The effects of *mage armor* and *shield* are included in her AC calculation and the corresponding effect or effects should be eliminated if dispelled.

Shocker Lizard Familiar: Small magical beast; hp 13; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+1 Size, +2 Dex, +4 natural]]; BAB/Grapple +2/-2 Atk +3 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stunning shock, Lethal shock; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Electricity sense, immunity to electricity, low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +10; Improved Initiative.

Stunning Shock (Su): Once per round, a shocker lizard can deliver an electrical shock to a single opponent within 5 feet. This attack deals 2d8 nonlethal damage to living opponents (Reflex save DC 12 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Electricity Sense (Ex): Shocker lizards automatically detect any electrical discharges within 100 feet.

Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War3; HD 3d8+6; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+5 Armor, +3 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +3/+6; Atk +8 melee (2d4+4, masterwork spiked chain), +6 ranged (1d8, longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Jump +6; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Spiked Chain), Weapon Focus (Spiked Chain).

Possessions: Masterwork Spiked Chain, Longbow, 20 arrows, Club, Masterwork Breastplate, Potion of Enlarge Person.

If Enlarged: Size Large; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 14) [+5 Armor, +2 Dex, -1 Size]; Base Atk/Grapple: +3/+11; Atk +8 melee (2d6+6, masterwork spiked chain), +4 ranged (2d6, longbow); Reach 20 ft; SV Ref +3; Str 18, Dex 14.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good* on herself, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor* and *shield* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The spellcasters will avoid targeting Lady Astra in area of effect spells if at all possible.

Appendix IV – NPCs and Evil Nasties for APL 8

Encounter Eight – Vertigo (EL 9)

Invisible Stalker, Advanced: CR 8; Huge elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 13d12+52; hp 104; Init +8; Spd 30 ft, fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 15) [-2 size, +4 Dex, +7 natural]; BAB/Grapple +9/+25; Atk +16 melee (3d6+8, slam), Full Atk +16 melee (3d6+8, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15ft/15ft; SQ Natural invisibility, Improved tracking, Darkvision 60 ft., Elemental traits; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +8; Str 26, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +17, Move Silently +19, Search +17, Spot +17, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (slam).

Natural Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing a stalker to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

Improved Tracking (Ex): An invisible stalker is a consummate tracker and makes Spot checks instead of the usual Survival checks to trace a creature's passage.

Elemental Traits: Immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy (EL 11)

Gauth, Advanced: CR 10; Large Aberration; HD 18d8+90; hp 162; Init +5; Spd 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good); AC 19 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+1 Dex, –1 size, +9 natural]; BAB/Grapple +13/+20; Atk +14 ranged touch (Eye rays) and bite +10 melee (1d8+3 bite); Full Atk +14 ranged touch (Eye rays) and bite +10 melee (1d8+3, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Eye rays, stunning gaze; SQ All-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., flight; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +13; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide +19, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Listen +4, Search +27, Spot +29, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (ray).

Eye Rays (Su): Each of a gauth's small eyes can produce a magical ray once per round as a free action. During a single round, a creature can aim only two eye rays at targets in any 90-degree arc (up, forward, backward, left, right, or down). The remaining eyes must aim at targets in other arcs, or not at all. A gauth can tilt and pan its body each round to change which rays it can bring to bear in any given arc.

Each eye's effect resembles a spell (caster level 8th level), but follows the rules for a ray (see Aiming a Spell, page 175 of the *Player's Handbook.*)

Each eye ray has a range of 100 feet, and this 18 Hit Dice Gauth's eye rays have a save DC of 22. The save DCs are Charisma-based. The six eye rays include:

Sleep: This works like the spell, except that it affects one creature with any number of Hit Dice (Will negates). Gauths like to use this ray against warriors and other physically powerful creatures.

Inflict Moderate Wounds: This works like the spell, causing 2d8+8 points of damage (Will half).

Dispel Magic: This works like the targeted dispel function of the spell. The gauth's dispel check is 1d20+8.

Scorching Ray: This works like the spell, dealing 4d6 points of fire damage (no save). A gauth creates only one fiery ray per use of this ability.

Paralysis: The target must succeed on a Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 2d10 minutes.

Exhaustion: This works like the spell *ray of exhaustion* (no save).

Stunning Gaze (Su): Stun for 1 round, 30 feet, Will DC 22 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based. Any creature meeting the gaze of the gauth's central eye is subject to its stunning gaze attack. Since the gauth can use its eye rays as a free action, the creature can use a standard action to focus its stunning gaze on an opponent and attack with all eye rays that bear on its foes at the same time.

All-around Vision (Ex): Gauths are exceptionally alert and circumspect. Their many eyes give them a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks, and they can't be flanked.

Flight (Ex): A gauth's body is naturally buoyant. This buoyancy allows it to fly at a speed of 20 feet. This buoyancy allows it to fly at a speed of 20 feet. This buoyancy also grants it a permanent feather fall effect (as the spell) with personal range.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious (EL 10)

Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr9 (Tharizdun), HD 9d8+39; hp 88; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27 (touch 14, flat-footed 26) [+10 Armor, +2 Shield, +1 Nat, +1 Dex, +3 Defl]; Base Atk/Grapple: +6/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d8, masterwork morningstar), +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8, masterwork morningstar), +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE;

SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +19, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +13; Greater Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Concentration), Toughness.

Spells Prepared: (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor wounds (x4), detect magic, light*]; 1st—[*bless, divine favor, entropic shield, inflict light wounds*, magic weapon, remove fear, ~~shield of faith~~*]; 2nd—[*~~bear's endurance~~, cure moderate wounds, hold person, shatter*, silence, sound burst*]; 3rd—[*blindness/deafness, cure serious wounds, ~~magic circle against good*~~, ~~magic vestment~~, searing light*]; 4th—[*cure critical wounds, divine power, ~~freedom of movement~~, unholy blight**]; 5th—[*flame strike, mass inflict light wounds**].

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day--+4 bonus on attack, bonus equal to cleric's level on damage), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Masterwork Morningstar, Light Crossbow, 10 bolts, Spell Component Pouch, Silver Holy Symbol, Wooden Holy Symbol (backup), .Steadfast Boots, Amulet of Natural Armor, +1.

Note: The effect of Spell Focus (Concentration) is included in her Concentration bonus. The effect of *magic circle against good* is not reflected in her saving throws. The effect of *shield of faith* is included in her AC; the effect of *bear's endurance* is reflected in her hit points, Fortitude save, Concentration skill, and Constitution stat; the effect of *magic vestment* is reflected in her hit points; and the effects of all of these spells may need to be eliminated if any or all of the spells are dispelled.

Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr7; HD 7d4+14; hp 34; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 12, flat-footed 18) [+4 Armor, +4 Shield, +2 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +3/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Craft (Alchemy) +13, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Knowledge (History) +13, Knowledge (Religion) +13, Spellcraft +13; Improved Familiar, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Spells Prepared (4/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 13 + spell level, or 14 + spell level if Necromancy): 0—[*acid splash (x2), detect magic, ray of frost*]; 1st—[*~~mage armor~~, magic missile (x2), ray of enfeeblement*(x2), ~~shield~~*]; 2nd—[*blindness/deafness*, ~~resist energy (electricity)~~, ~~resist energy (fire)~~, glitterdust, scorching ray*]; 3rd—[*dispel magic, fireball, ray of exhaustion*, slow*]; 4th—[*fear*, ~~stoneskin~~*]..

*Necromancy school spell.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, Spell Component Pouch, Potion of Cure Moderate Wounds.

Familiar: Shocker Lizard (see below).

Note: The effects of *mage armor* and *shield* are reflected in her AC calculation and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled.

Shocker Lizard Familiar: Small magical beast; hp 17; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 13, flat-footed 18) [+1 Size, +2 Dex, +7 natural]]; BAB/Grapple +3/-1 Atk +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stunning shock, Lethal shock; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Electricity sense, immunity to electricity, low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +10; Improved Initiative.

Stunning Shock (Su): Once per round, a shocker lizard can deliver an electrical shock to a single opponent within 5 feet. This attack deals 2d8 nonlethal damage to living opponents (Reflex save DC 12 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Electricity Sense (Ex): Shocker lizards automatically detect any electrical discharges within 100 feet.

Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War5; HD 5d8+15; hp 43; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+5 Armor, +3 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +5/+8; Atk +10 melee (2d4+4, masterwork spiked chain), +8 ranged (1d8, longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +8; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Spiked Chain), Weapon Focus (Spiked Chain).

Possessions: Masterwork Spiked Chain, Longbow, 20 arrows, Club, Masterwork Breastplate, Potion of Enlarge Person.

If Enlarged: Size Large; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 14) [+5 Armor, +2 Dex, -1 Size]; Base Atk/Grapple: +5/+13; Atk +10 melee (2d6+6, masterwork spiked chain), +6 ranged (2d6, longbow); Reach 20 ft; SV Ref +3; Str 18, Dex 14.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *shield of faith*, *magic circle against good*, *bear's endurance*, and *freedom of movement* on herself, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor*, *resist energy (electricity)*, *resist energy (fire)*, *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The spellcasters will avoid targeting Lady Astra in area of effect spells if at all possible.

Appendix V – NPCs and Evil Nasties for APL 10

Encounter Eight – Vertigo (EL 11)

Invisible Stalker, Advanced: CR 10; Huge elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 17d12+68; hp 136; Init +8; Spd 30 ft, fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 15) [-2 size, +4 Dex, +7 natural]; BAB/Grapple +12/+28; Atk +19 melee (3d6+8, slam), Full Atk +19 melee (3d6+8, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15ft/15ft; SQ Natural invisibility, Improved tracking, Darkvision 60 ft., Elemental traits; AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +16, Will +9; Str 26, Dex 19, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +21, Move Silently +23, Search +21, Spot +21, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam).

Natural Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing a stalker to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

Improved Tracking (Ex): An invisible stalker is a consummate tracker and makes Spot checks instead of the usual Survival checks to trace a creature's passage.

Elemental Traits: Immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy (EL 13)

Beholder: hp 93; See Monster Manual pages 25-27.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious (EL 12)

Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr11 (Tharizdun), HD 11d8+47; hp 105; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 28 (touch 14, flat-footed 27) [+10 Armor, +3 Shield, +1 Nat, +1 Dex, +3 Defl]; Base Atk/Grapple: +8/+8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+1, +1 morningstar), +9 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+1, +1 morningstar), +9 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +21, Knowledge (Religion) +15, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +15; Greater Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Concentration), Toughness.

Spells Prepared: (6/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor wounds (x4), detect magic, light*]; 1st—[*bless, divine favor, entropic shield, inflict light wounds*, remove fear,* ~~*shield of faith*~~*(x3)*]; 2nd—[~~*bear's endurance*~~*, cure moderate wounds, hold person, shatter*, silence, sound burst*]; 3rd—[*blindness/deafness,* ~~*magic circle against good**~~*,* ~~*magic vestment (x3)*~~*, searing light*]; 4th—[*cure critical wounds(x2), divine power,* ~~*freedom of movement*~~*, unholy blight**]; 5th—[*flame strike, mass inflict light wounds*, slay living*]; 6th—[*harm*, heal*].

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day--+4 bonus on attack, bonus equal to cleric's level on damage), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: +1 Morningstar, Full Plate Armor, +1 Heavy Steel Shield, Light Crossbow, 10 bolts, Spell Component Pouch, Silver Holy Symbol, Wooden Holy Symbol (backup), .Steadfast Boots, Amulet of Natural Armor, +1.

Note: The effect of Spell Focus (Concentration) is included in her Concentration bonus. The effect of *magic circle against good* is not reflected in her saving throws. The effect of *shield of faith* is included in her AC; the effect of *bear's endurance* is reflected in her hit points, Fortitude save, Concentration skill, and Constitution stat; the effect of *magic vestment* is reflected in her hit points; and the effects of all of these spells may need to be eliminated if any or all of the spells are dispelled.

Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr9; HD 9d4+36; hp 60; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 12, flat-footed 18) [+4 Armor, +4 Shield, +2 Dex]; Base Atk/Grapple: +4/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Craft (Alchemy) +15, Knowledge (Arcana) +15, Knowledge (History) +15, Knowledge (Local-NMR) +6, Knowledge (Religion) +15, Spellcraft +15; Improved Familiar, Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Spells Prepared (4/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level, or 16 + spell level if Necromancy): 0—[*acid splash (x2), detect magic, ray of frost*]; 1st—[~~*mage armor*~~*, magic missile (x2), ray of enfeeblement*(x2),* ~~*shield*~~]; 2nd—[~~*bear's endurance*~~*, blindness/deafness*,* ~~*resist energy (electricity)*~~*,* ~~*resist energy (fire)*~~*, glitterdust, scorching ray*]; 3rd—[*dispel magic, fireball (x2), ray of exhaustion*, slow*]; 4th—[*fear*(x2), otiluke's resilient sphere,* ~~*stoneskin*~~]; 5th—[*baleful polymorph, waves of fatigue**].

*Necromancy school spell.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, Spell Component Pouch.

Familiar: Shocker Lizard.

Note: The effects of *mage armor* and *shield* are reflected in her AC calculation and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled. The effects of *bear's endurance* are included in her hit points, Fortitude save, Constitution score, and Concentration skill

bonus; and should be eliminated if that spell is dispelled.

Shocker Lizard Familiar: Small magical beast; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 13, flat-footed 19) [+1 Size, +2 Dex, +8 natural]]; BAB/Grapple +4/+0 Atk +5 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stunning shock, Lethal shock; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Electricity sense, immunity to electricity, low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +10; Improved Initiative.

Stunning Shock (Su): Once per round, a shocker lizard can deliver an electrical shock to a single opponent within 5 feet. This attack deals 2d8 nonlethal damage to living opponents (Reflex save DC 12 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Electricity Sense (Ex): Shocker lizards automatically detect any electrical discharges within 100 feet.

Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War7; HD 7d8+21; hp 59; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23 (touch 16, flat-footed 20) [+7 Armor, +3 Dex, +3 Defl]; Base Atk/Grapple: +7/+10; Atk +11 melee (2d4+5, +1 spiked chain), +10 ranged (1d8, longbow); Atk +11/+6 melee (2d4+5, +1 spiked chain), +10/+5 ranged (1d8, longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Handle Animal +9, Jump +10, Ride +13, Swim +7; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Spiked Chain), Improved Trip.

Possessions: +1 Spiked Chain, Longbow, 20 arrows, Club, Masterwork Breastplate, Potion of Enlarge Person.

If Enlarged: Size Large; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 14, flat-footed 19) [+7 Armor, +2 Dex, +3 Defl, -1 Size]; Base Atk/Grapple: +7/+15; Atk +11 melee (2d6+7, +1 spiked chain), +8 ranged (2d6, longbow); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (2d6+7, +1 spiked chain), +8/+3 ranged (2d6, longbow); Reach 20 ft; SV Ref +4; Str 18, Dex 14.

Note: The effects of *magic vestment* and *shield of faith* that were cast by the cleric are included in their AC calculation and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good*, *bear's endurance*, and *freedom of movement* on herself and has cast *shield of faith* and *magic vestment* on herself and both of the witch thugs, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor*, *bear's* endurance, *resist energy* (*electricity*), *resist energy* (*fire*), *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The Witch Necromancer will attempt to surround Lady Astra in *otiluke's resilient sphere* in the first round of combat to prevent her from taking unnecessary damage. The cleric will wait to see whether the sphere is successful before casting any area of effect spells.

Appendix VI – NPCs and Evil Nasties for APL 12

Encounter Eight – Vertigo (EL 13)

Invisible Stalker, Advanced: CR 12; Huge elemental (air, extraplanar); HD 21d12+84; hp 168; Init +9; Spd 30 ft, fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [-2 size, +5 Dex, +7 natural]; BAB/Grapple +15/+31; Atk +21 melee (3d6+8, slam), Full Atk +21 melee (3d6+8, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15ft/15ft; SQ Natural invisibility, Improved tracking, Darkvision 60 ft., Elemental traits; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +19, Will +10; Str 26, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Listen +25, Move Silently +27, Search +25, Spot +25, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam).

Natural Invisibility (Su): This ability is constant, allowing a stalker to remain invisible even when attacking. This ability is inherent and not subject to the *invisibility purge* spell.

Improved Tracking (Ex): An invisible stalker is a consummate tracker and makes Spot checks instead of the usual Survival checks to trace a creature's passage.

Elemental Traits: Immune to poison, sleep effects, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits or flanking.

Encounter Nine – Frenzy (EL 15)

Beholder, Advanced: CR 14; Large Aberration; HD 16d8+64; hp 133; Init +6; Spd 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good); AC 26 (touch 11, flat-footed 24) [+2 Dex, –1 size, +15 natural]; BAB/Grapple +12/+16; Atk +13 ranged touch (Eye rays) and bite +6 melee (2d4, bite); Full Atk +13 ranged touch (Eye rays) and bite +6 melee (2d4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Eye rays; SQ Antimagic cone, All-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., flight; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Hide +17, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Listen +23, Search +26, Spot +27, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Eye Rays (Su): Each of a beholder's small eyes can produce a magical ray once per round as a free action. During a single round, a beholder can aim only three eye rays at targets in any 90-degree arc (up, forward, backward, left, right, or down). The remaining eyes must aim at targets in other arcs, or not at all. A beholder can tilt and pan its body each round to change which rays it can bring to bear in any given arc.

Each eye's effect resembles a spell (caster level 13th level), but follows the rules for a ray (see Aiming a Spell, page 175 of the *Player's Handbook*.)

Each eye ray has a range of 150 feet, and this 16 Hit Dice beholder's eye rays have a save DC of 21. The save DCs are Charisma-based. The ten eye rays include:

Charm Monster: The target must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by the spell. Beholders use this ray to confuse the opposition, usually using it early in a fight. The beholder generally instructs a *charmed* target to either restrain a comrade or stand aside.

Charm Person: The target must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by the spell. Beholders use this ray in the same manner as the *charm monster* ray.

Disintegrate: The target must succeed on a Fortitude save or be affected as though by the spell. The beholder likes to use this ray on any foe it considers a real threat.

Fear: This works like the spell, except that it targets one creature. The target must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by the spell. Beholders like to use this ray against warriors and other powerful creatures early in a fight, to break up the opposition.

Finger of Death: The target must succeed on a Fortitude save or be affected as though by the spell. The target takes 3d6+13 points of damage if its saving throw succeeds. Beholders use this ray to eliminate dangerous foes quickly.

Flesh to Stone: The target must succeed on a Fortitude save or be affected as though by the spell. Beholders like to aim this ray at enemy spellcasters. They also use it on any creature whose appearance they find interesting. (After the fight, the beholder takes the statue to its lair as a decoration.)

Inflict Moderate Wounds: This works like the spell, causing 2d8+10 points of damage (Will half).

Sleep: This works like the spell, except that it affects one creature with any number of Hit Dice (Will negates). Beholders like to use this ray against warriors and other physically powerful creatures. They know their foes can quickly awaken the sleepers, but they also know that doing so takes time and can delay an effective counterattack.

Slow: This works like the spell, except that it affects one creature. The target can make a Will save to negate the effect. Beholders like to use this ray against the same creature targeted by their *disintegrate*, *flesh to stone*, or *finger of death* ray. If one of the former rays fails to eliminate the foe, this ray might at least hamper it.

Telekinesis: A beholder can move objects or creatures that weigh up to 325 pounds, as though with a *telekinesis* spell. Creatures can resist the effect with a successful Will save.

Antimagic Cone (Su): A beholder's central eye continually produces a 150-foot cone of antimagic. This functions just like an *antimagic field* (caster level 13th). All magical and supernatural effects within the cone are suppressed—even the beholder's own eye rays. Once each round, during its turn, the beholder decides whether the antimagic cone is active or not (the beholder deactivates the cone by shutting its central eye).

All-around Vision (Ex): Beholders are exceptionally alert and circumspect. Their many eyes give them a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks, and they can't be flanked.

Flight (Ex): A beholder's body is naturally buoyant. This buoyancy allows it to fly at a speed of 20 feet. This buoyancy allows it to fly at a speed of 20 feet. This buoyancy also grants it a permanent feather fall effect (as the spell) with personal range.

Encounter Eleven – Notorious (EL 14)

Witch of the Sand, Female Human Clr13 (Tharizdun), HD 13d8+63; hp 130; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 30 (touch 15, flat-footed 29) [+11 Armor, +3 Shield, +1 Nat, +1 Dex, +4 Defl]; Base Atk/Grapple: +9/+9; Atk +10 melee (1d8+1, +1 morningstar), +10 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+1, +1 morningstar), +10 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 22, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +23, Knowledge (Religion) +17, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +17; Giant's Toughness, Greater Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Concentration), Toughness.

Spells Prepared: (6/7+1/7+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 16 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor wounds* (*x4*), *detect magic, light*]; 1st—[*bless, divine favor, entropic shield, inflict light wounds*, remove fear,* ~~*shield of faith*(*x3*)~~]; 2nd—[~~*bear's endurance*(*x3*)~~, *cure moderate wounds, hold person, shatter*, silence, sound burst*]; 3rd—[*blindness/deafness,* ~~*magic circle against good**~~, ~~*magic vestment* (*x3*)~~, *searing light*]; 4th—[*cure critical wounds, divine power,* ~~*freedom of movement*~~, ~~*greater magic weapon* (*x2*)~~, *unholy blight**]; 5th—[*flame strike*(*x2*), *mass cure light wounds, mass inflict light wounds*, slay living*]; 6th—[*greater dispel magic, harm**(*x2*), *heal*]; 7th—[*blasphemy, disintegrate**].

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (smite 1/day--+4 bonus on attack, bonus equal to cleric's level on damage), Evil (cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

Possessions: +1 Morningstar, Full Plate Armor, +1 Heavy Steel Shield, Light Crossbow, 10 bolts, Spell Component Pouch, Silver Holy Symbol, Wooden Holy Symbol (backup), .Steadfast Boots, Amulet of Natural Armor, +1, Ring of Feather Falling, Bag of Holding Type II.

Note: The effect of Spell Focus (Concentration) is included in her Concentration bonus. The effect of *magic circle against good* is not reflected in her saving throws. The effect of *shield of faith* is included in her AC; the effect of *bear's endurance* is reflected in her hit points, Fortitude save, Concentration skill, and Constitution stat; the effect of *magic vestment* is reflected in her hit points; and the effects of all of these spells may need to be eliminated if any or all of the spells are dispelled.

Witch Necromancer, Female Human Ncr11; HD 11d4+44; hp 78; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (touch 12, flat-footed 20) [+4 Armor, +4 Shield, +2 Dex, +2 Nat]; Base Atk/Grapple: +5/+5; Atk +5 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Craft (Alchemy) +17, Knowledge (Arcana) +17, Knowledge (History) +17, Knowledge (Local-NMR) +8, Knowledge (Religion) +17, Spellcraft +17; Improved Familiar, Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Spell Focus (Necromancy).

Spells Prepared (4/5+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level, or 16 + spell level if Necromancy): 0—[*acid splash* (*x2*), *detect magic, ray of frost*]; 1st—[~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile* (*x2*), *ray of enfeeblement**(*x2*), ~~*shield*~~]; 2nd—[~~*bear's endurance*~~, *blindness/deafness**, ~~*resist energy (electricity)*~~, ~~*resist energy (fire)*~~, *glitterdust, scorching ray*]; 3rd—[*blink, dispel magic, fireball* (*x2*), *ray of exhaustion**, *slow*]; 4th—[*enervation, fear**(*x2*), *otiluke's resilient sphere,* ~~*stoneskin*~~]; 5th—[*baleful polymorph, cone of cold, waves of fatigue**]; 6th—[*eyebite**, *flesh to stone*].

*Necromancy school spell.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, Spell Component Pouch, Amulet of Natural Armor, +2.

Familiar: Shocker Lizard.

Note: The effects of *mage armor* and *shield* are reflected in her AC calculation and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled. The effects of *bear's endurance* are included in her hit points, Fortitude save, Constitution score, and Concentration skill bonus; and should be eliminated if that spell is dispelled.

Shocker Lizard Familiar: Small magical beast; hp 39; Init +6; Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 22 (touch 13, flat-footed 20) [+1 Size, +2 Dex, +9 natural]];

BAB/Grapple +5/+1 Atk +6 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stunning shock, Lethal shock; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., Electricity sense, immunity to electricity, low-light vision; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +10; Improved Initiative.

Stunning Shock (Su): Once per round, a shocker lizard can deliver an electrical shock to a single opponent within 5 feet. This attack deals 2d8 nonlethal damage to living opponents (Reflex save DC 12 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Electricity Sense (Ex): Shocker lizards automatically detect any electrical discharges within 100 feet.

Witch Thugs (2), Female Human War9; HD 9d8+45; hp 93; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25 (touch 17, flat-footed 22) [+8 Armor, +3 Dex, +4 Defl]; Base Atk/Grapple: +9/+12; Atk +15 melee (2d4+7, +3 spiked chain), +12 ranged (1d8, longbow); Atk +15/+10 melee (2d4+7, +3 spiked chain), +12/+7 ranged (1d8, longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Handle Animal +11, Jump +12, Ride +15, Swim +9; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Spiked Chain), Improved Trip, Knock-Down.

Possessions: Masterwork Spiked Chain, Longbow, 20 arrows, Club, Masterwork Breastplate, Potion of Enlarge Person.

If Enlarged: Size Large; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23 (touch 15, flat-footed 21) [+8 Armor, +2 Dex, +4 Defl, -1 Size]; Base Atk/Grapple: +9/+18; Atk +15 melee (2d6+9, +3 spiked chain), +10 ranged (2d6, longbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+9, masterwork spiked chain), +10/+5 ranged (2d6, longbow); Reach 20 ft; SV Ref +5; Str 18, Dex 14.

Note: The effects of *magic vestment* and *shield of faith* that were cast by the cleric are included in their AC calculation and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled. The effects of *greater magic weapon* are included in the attack and damage calculations and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled. The effects of *bear's endurance* cast by the cleric are included in hit points and fortitude saves and should be eliminated if those spells are dispelled.

Tactics: The Witch of the Sand cleric has precast *magic circle against good*, *bear's endurance*, and *freedom of movement* on herself and has cast *shield of faith* and *magic vestment* on herself and both of the witch thugs and has precast *greater magic weapon* on both of the Witch Thugs' spiked chains, and the Witch Necromancer has precast *mage armor*, *bear's* endurance, *resist energy* (*electricity*), *resist energy* (*fire*), *shield*, and *stoneskin* on herself. The Witch Thugs will drink their potions of *enlarge person* in the first round of combat. The Witch Necromancer will attempt to surround Lady Astra in *otiluke's resilient sphere* in the first round of combat to prevent her from taking unnecessary damage. The cleric will wait to see whether the sphere is successful before casting any area of effect spells.

Appendix VII – New Rules

From Sword & Fist:

Knock-Down

Your mighty blows can knock foes off their feet.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, Improved Trip, Str 15+

Benefit: Whenever you deal 10 or more points of damage to your opponent in melee, you make a trip attack as a free action against the same target.

From Masters of the Wild:

Giant's Toughness [General]

You are amazingly tough.

Prerequisite: Base Fort save bonus +8.

Benefit: You gain +9 hit points.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times.

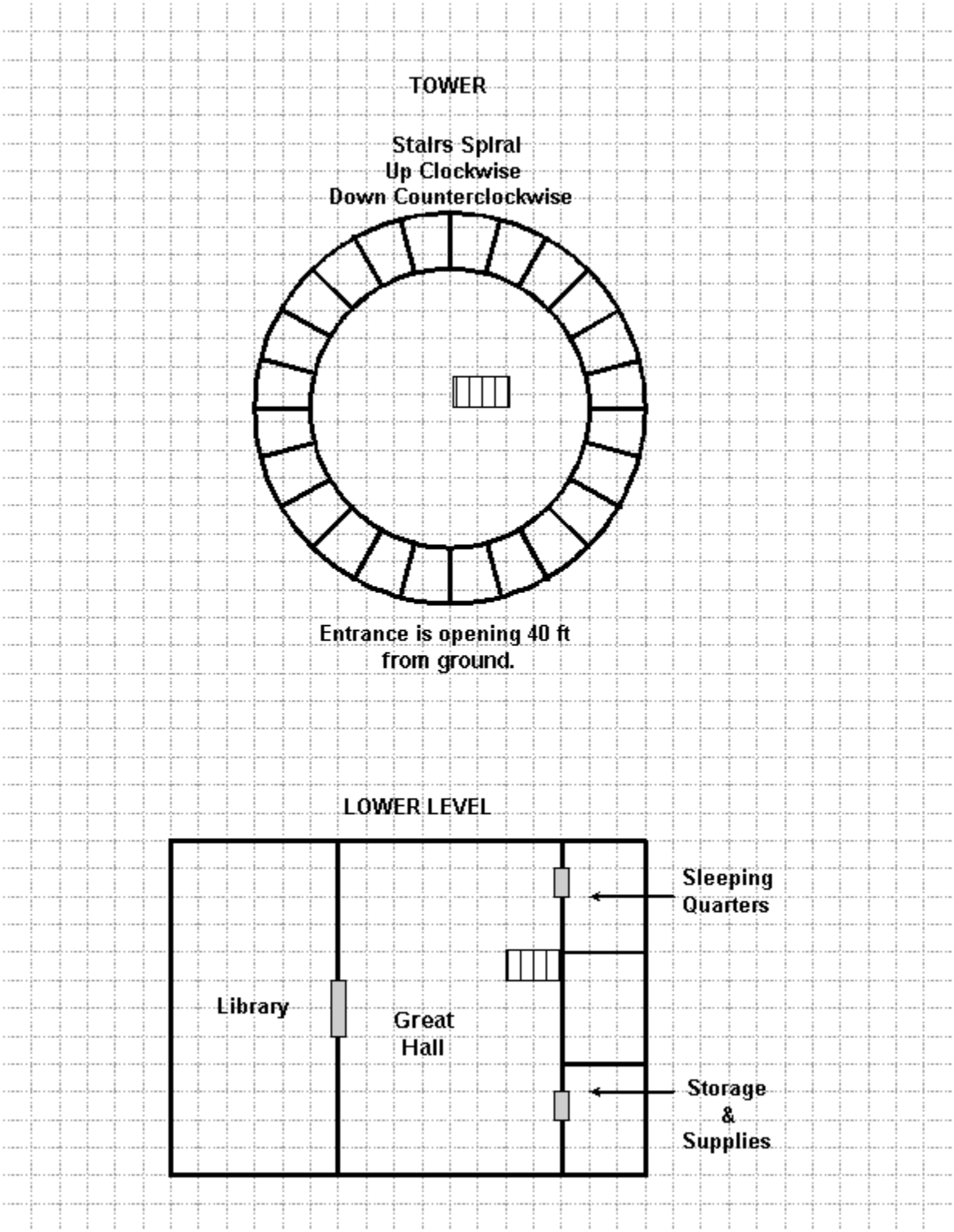
From Arms & Equipment Guide:

Boots, Steadfast: These thick and heavy iron-toed boots help keep the wearer from getting knocked down. Someone wearing *steadfast boots* cannot be tripped or pushed back by a bull rush. As long as the wearer carries a melee weapon that is Medium-size or larger, she also counts as being set against a charge. The weapon does not have to have reach.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisite*: Craft Wondrous Item, *bull's strength*; *Market Price*: 6,000 gp; *Weight*: 1 lb.

DM Aid #A

Map of the Main Tower



Player Handout #1

Lady Astra Callistor

Lady Astra Callistor is the first cousin of King Lynwerd I. Her mother was the sister of former King Archbold III. Lady Astra is approximately 5 years younger than King Lynwerd.

Although Lady Astra was a prominent royal person, she was never idle while she still resided in Rel Mord. She was a noted scholar of the Rel Mord Wizard's Guild and a leading member of the city's Temple of Boccob. It is said by many that the influence of Boccob's temple has waned considerably during her absence because few of its clerics understand or care about politics.

Lady Astra was a spellcaster of the type known as a Mystic Theurge. She was also a dedicated scholar, and reportedly irritated Archbold several times over by missing royal functions because she refused to leave her research at the Royal Annals of Rel Mord.

When Lynwerd's fiancé Lady Xenia Sallavarian collapsed in 589 CY, Lady Astra worked diligently to assist her recovery. She was considered to be instrumental to finding a cure to Lady Xenia's condition because of her considerable training in both the divine and arcane magicks.

Therefore it was a surprise to many when in the summer of 590 CY, Lady Astra set aside her search for a cure and assembled a party of adventurers. All that she would say about her destination is that she was traveling to a valley in the Abbor-Alz hills that was dominated by ancient, abandoned towers. She refused to provide any reason why she was undertaking the journey.

Lady Astra Callistor has not been seen since she departed the city of Beetu in the summer of 590 CY. Not a single member of the party that she led into the Abbor-Alz ever returned.

Rumors abound about what happened to Lady Astra. The most popular theory is that she had long been loyal to fellow spellcaster Prince Sewarndt and that she left to join his cause. Another popular theory is that the fellows of the Wizard's Guild of Rel Mord caused her to magically disappear because she was arguing for more liberal acceptance of non-wizardly magic within the Guild's halls. Yet another popular theory holds that she has secretly married the Archmage Rary as part of a peace treaty signed by Lynwerd.

Player Handout #2

Message from the Relic

Adventurers uncovered a strange message recently and turned it over to the Kingdom of Nyrond. The contents of the message were as follows:

"Greetings. I am Beldion, your employer. I regret that I have not been able to engage your employment personally, but circumstances call me farther east."

"I call on you to lay siege to the towers of Canimarr, my former master, and to secure his magical research. I know that you have been promised payment for your wages and to equip your mercenaries and, therefore, I have buried gems in areas surrounding this platform. You will find them here, . . here . . . and here."

"Canimarr's towers are located west of here in the Abbor-Alz mountain range. Their location is obscured by magic, but I have conjured a statue of a griffon that now stands at the base of the path that leads to the towers. You will find this griffon if you follow the Nesser River north from its base."

"It is important that you be wary. Canimarr will have set up protective spells that can easily decimate your army. And he has made a pact with a terrible aberration that will undoubtedly be protecting his magical research."

The message continued, but no one has yet been able to translate the remaining passages.

Player Handout #3

Canimarr's Towers

Although you are uncertain whether it is connected to the disappearance of Lady Astra, you find some information that seems relevant:

Thousands of years ago, a Flannish Kingdom named Sulm ruled much of the lands that became the Bright Desert. Sulm would have very likely expanded their control into what are now Nyrondese lands had it survived. But the leaders of the Sulm were vain and power hungry and the Kingdom toppled after its final ruler entered into a pact with the evil god Tharizdun to acquire an artifact known as the Scorpion Crown.

Canimarr, a Sulmish scholar of the final days of Sulm, devoted his life to arcane knowledge. Desperate to keep the existence of his arcane discoveries away from the rulers who would use it for improper purposes, he built a series of towers in the Abbor-Alz hills to hide away his research. Casting his most powerful spells, he permanently prevented the location from being found through magical and other means.

Player Handout #4

A Brief History of Sulm

Two millennia ago, Flan civilization reached its zenith on the arid grasslands of Sulm. Here, the Flan learned the secrets of agriculture, ironwork, and engineering, founded great cities, and raised majestic temples to their gods. In a series of swift, hard-fought campaigns, Sulm's neighbor states (Ronhas, Durha, Rhugha, and Truun) fell before the might of her iron-shod hosts. Continued aggression brought open warfare with an implacable enemy—Itar.

Situated in a rich coastal region southeast of Sulm, the valorous Sun Kingdom of Itar honored gods of light and progress and posed a serious military, financial, and ideological threat to Sulm. It wasn't enough. After three decades of open warfare, Sulm obliterated Itar's armies, mingling the blood of its soldiers with the ebbing lifeform of Vathris, an Itarian god of ingenuity who had manifested to aid his people on the field of battle only to be stricken down by dark Sulmish magics.

With Itar's destruction, the entire region fell under Sulmish hegemony. Her people grew proud and her leaders corrupt and arrogant as wealth and tribute poured into the great temple-city capital, Utaa, seat of Sulmish rule. Sulmish society stagnated for centuries as decadence and evil grew into the hearts of her people; simultaneously tendrils of insurrection crept among the subjugated folk of the hinterlands.

For all its might and wisdom, doom came suddenly to Sulm. The nation's rulers, desperate to stem the rising tide of civil unrest and rebellion, delved too deeply into the poisonous wellspring from which their civilization had sprung. The last of Sulm's rulers, an ambitious and undoubtedly mad sorcerer named Shattados, cried out to the Lords of Evil for aid and received a whispered promise in exchange. His divine patron, Tharizdun, granted Shattados a powerful magic artifact, the *Scorpion Crown*, that would allow him total control over his subjects. The greedy overlord thrust the crown upon his head and brought doom to the entire region.

The *Crown's* fell curse initiated an agonizing transformation in Sulm's citizens, who found themselves transforming into hideous "manscorpions," half-breed wretches magically bound to the wearer of the Scorpion Crown.

Within a decade the grasslands were dead, withered into nothingness by an unnatural heat that yet plagues the region or scoured from the face of Oerth by violent and prolonged storms sweeping in from the Gearnat. The small pockets of vegetation surviving these twin perils were finally buried beneath an insidious, unstoppable tide of sand issuing like a cancer from the cities and holy places of the fallen Sulmites. Soon the curse took hold throughout the area, and what had once been called Sulm became the Bright Desert.

And somewhere, deep within the darkest recesses of the Lower Planes, Tharizdun chuckled softly to himself.

(Excerpted from the article "Into the Bright Desert" by Creighton Broadhurst.)