

PAL1-04

PRELUDE TO THE PAST

A One-Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[®] Theocracy of the
Pale Regional Adventure

Version 1.0

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A servant of a mysterious wizard wants you to capture a fantastic beast alive. Will you accept the challenge? Germinations-Chapter One. *Germinations* is a series of Living Greyhawk adventures which reveal a common story line. Each chapter depicts a self-sufficient plot and need not be played sequentially to enjoy each adventure. However, playing each adventure in order will enable a full appreciation of the central story. An adventure for characters level 1-10

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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 hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

PREPARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCORING

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

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

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

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

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a Living™ adventure, it is expected that players will 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, a character sheet, and a LIVING GREYHAWK log sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

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

DETERMINING AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL (APL)

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 PC participating in the adventure.
 - 2) If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely 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 following 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.
- | CR | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|
| 1/4 and 1/6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1/3 and 1/2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 4 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
- 3) Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure—round up.
 - 4) If you are running a table of six 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.

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the

APL that this adventure is played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

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

- 1) Attempt to create a table of six 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 dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.
- 3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist an iconic." The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Miale, Lidda and Jozan are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to joint them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

If you are using a 591 CY adventure (campaign year 1) that uses the old Tiers, assume that the Tier multiplied by 2 is the APL suitable for that encounter.

IS IT A FULL MOON?

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

LIFESTYLE

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute: You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

Poor: You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

Common: You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

High: You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

Luxury: You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle Cost	Skill Modifier	
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

ABOUT GERMINATIONS

"Germinations" is a series of interrelated Living Greyhawk scenarios, developed for the Theocracy of the Pale region. Each scenario is a self-contained adventure that can be enjoyed in isolation from the others. However, there is a central story that is revealed over time within Germinations. To best appreciate this central story, the scenarios should be played in order.

Each scenario strives to provide enough information for DMs to successfully run the adventure, while also obscuring the overall story enough so that they could still have fun playing subsequent scenarios in the series. Thus, some threads revealed in each adventure may go seemingly unexplained, but their relevance will become apparent over time.

JUDGE INTRODUCTION

For several years, a mysterious wizard has lived within a lair hidden amongst the Raker Mountains, near the city

of Ogburg. Eighteen months ago, the Theocracy developed an informal relationship with this wizard, named Konrad Huber. Huber originally hailed from the Kingdom of Nyrond and still maintains a few obscure contacts within that land. Needing money to support his research, Huber entered into an agreement with the Theocracy whereby he would provide intelligence about Nyrond. Prelate Theoman Baslett of Landrigard negotiated the relationship. Huber provides infrequent but regular reports to the Church Militant in Ogburg, who distributes this information to Baslett and the rest of the Council of Nine.

Unbeknownst to the Theocracy, Konrad Huber is actually a double agent. He is a member of a loose affiliation of spies within the Pale known as The Freelancers. The Freelancers are gathering information about the Pale and providing it to a powerful group of thieves within Nyrond. The connection, if any, between these Nyrondal thieves and the Nyrond Throne is unclear. The Freelancers have, thus far, operated largely unnoticed by the Theocracy.

Though Huber provides information for The Freelancers, he spends most of his time researching the construction of magical beasts. Learning how to use magic to combine different species together is a topic that has fascinated him since childhood. The primary reason why he established his laboratory years ago was to pursue this dream. Huber and an assistant, Bjorn, capture magical beasts that inhabit the recesses of the Rakers for study.

A week ago, a strange event happened during the evening. Three shooting stars streaked across the sky in quick succession, appearing to crash somewhere within the Rakers. Many citizens across the Pale were astonished by this ambiguous omen. Huber and Bjorn traveled from their lair to see if they could find the crash site. They never found it, but they did encounter three very strange creatures, completely unknown to them. Seeing an opportunity for study, they attacked these star-shaped, plant-like creatures. Killing the two larger ones, they captured the weaker one (referred to from here on as "the Creature") that seemed to have been guarded by the other two.

Huber has been studying this Creature, and so far has been perplexed by its biology. For now, Huber has decided merely to observe it via non-invasive procedures. Not wanting to be distracted from studying this intriguing specimen, Huber does not wish to spend time collecting other beasts for study. So, Huber has sent Bjorn to Ogburg in order to hire some adventurers to capture a species of magical beast. In the days that Bjorn has been gone, the Creature has grown rapidly and is also developing very potent magical powers. Soon, it will break out of its cage, release the other beasts, and torture Huber.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure is broken up into a series of major parts of related encounters.

ENCOUNTER 1: PLAYER INTRODUCTION

One of the PCs is approached by Bjorn and asked to gather a group of adventurers to listen to a job offer. The PCs are scattered throughout a particular neighborhood of Ogburg, and may learn a few rumors while on their own. Once the PCs have gathered, Bjorn describes the job; to find and capture a magical beast in the woods south of Ogburg for study. The exact species of beast depends upon the party's APL.

ENCOUNTER 2: INVESTIGATING HUBER

Self-motivating PCs may realize that capturing and transporting dangerous beasts is not something that loyal Palish citizens should be doing. Instead of going after the beast, the PCs can investigate Huber or report him. If they do so, they eventually speak to a member of the Church Militant, Captain Amaris Viligant. Capt. Viligant thanks the PCs for reporting this activity and tells them that Konrad Huber is actually an associate working for the Pale to gather information on Nyrond. Capt. Viligant is concerned that Huber hasn't provided a status report that was due this past week, and the news that Huber is illegally dealing with dangerous monsters also worries her. She instructs the PCs to travel to Huber's lair to investigate, providing them a map to the area.

ENCOUNTER 3: CAPTURING THE BEAST

If the PCs accept the mission, they use the directions provided by Bjorn to find the beast's habitat. After a battle, they capture it and return it to the predefined meeting spot just outside Ogburg. Instead of meeting the party in person, Bjorn has left a note, giving PCs directions to a location nearby Konrad Huber's lair. In the distance, a scout for the Church Militant observes the PCs traveling with the captured monster.

ENCOUNTER 4: TRAVELING TO HUBER'S LAIR

The party eventually travels to the area nearby Huber's hidden lair. They may be following Bjorn's written instructions, bringing the captured beast along, or they may be acting under orders from Capt. Viligant. In either case, they have directions to the area near Huber's lair, but won't have enough information to pinpoint the specific location of the concealed entrance.

While looking around, the PCs encounter a party of NPC adventurers, the Four of Eltison. They are just returning from a mission on the far side of the Rakers, retrieving a tome from a sorcerer in Ratik for a powerful wizard in Ogburg. The Four are familiar with Huber and can provide specific instructions to find the entrance to

his lair. They also have some items they recovered on their adventure that they are willing to trade. While resting with the Four, one of the NPCs casts a divination to help the PCs prepare. In the midst of the divination, a female surrounded by a magical aura appears. She provides a cryptic warning, referring to the Creature within Huber's lair. As she disappears, she leaves an item necessary to kill the Creature.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE WIZARD'S LAIR

By the time the PCs reach Huber's lair, the Creature has escaped from its cage and attacked Huber. The attack has damaged the structure of the lair. The main entrance, concealed via an illusion, has collapsed. The PCs need to enter through an alternate entrance, of which Huber is unaware. Once within his lair, they find evidence of Huber's horribly cruel experiments and of his actions as a double agent working against the interests of the Pale.

The PCs eventually come to the main laboratory within the lair, where the Creature is torturing Huber. With the item obtained from the mysterious woman in Part Four, the party quickly dispatches the Creature. Other monsters, however, have been freed from their cages during the Creature's onslaught, and these beasts attack the PCs. As the PCs defeat these monsters, Huber escapes.

ENCOUNTER 6: CONCLUSION

The PCs return to Ogburg with evidence that Huber was a traitor to the Pale. After being debriefed by the Church Militant, they are thanked and dismissed.

If the PCs captured the beast for Huber in Part Three, the scout who observed them has reported this fact. The PCs are detained for Inquisition – to learn their true motivation, loyalty, and to educate them on how faithful citizens ought to behave. The Inquisition in this case isn't terribly traumatic, but does take an entire month of house arrest. The result is that the PCs are released with a warning and the adventure costs up to an extra 4 Time Units.

ENCOUNTER 1: PLAYER INTRODUCTION

The Player Introduction for *Prelude to the Past* is a bit more freeform than most. Ask all of the players to think of a reason why their PCs would be within the city of Ogburg, located in the eastern reaches of the Pale next to the mountain range known as the Rakers. With a population of 17,400, Ogburg is the third largest city in the Pale and is ruled by the progressive Prelate Maximillian Thace. Thace is one of the most respected members of the Council of Nine.

The adventure begins in the morning with the PCs wandering throughout the market section of Ogburg. If some PCs know each other already, they may be walking together. Otherwise, the PCs are alone. As they stroll about on their business, they may learn some interesting

rumors. It is not critical to the adventure that the PCs learn this information; so don't feel the need to force this information out if the PCs don't initiate conversation with NPCs in the marketplace.

- A week ago, three stars fell from the heavens, streaked across the sky, and seemed to crash somewhere in the Rakers. Many gossip about this, speculating conflicting meanings about the omen.
- One person talks about a dwarf that was attacked by a griffon last month. A strange wizard subdued the beast and saved the dwarf, though he left immediately thereafter. Bleeding quite heavily, the dwarf eventually made it back to Ogburg on his own.
- Spies from Nyrond are everywhere; watch your tongue!
- A wizard in Ogburg, who is an old woman of Baklunish descent, has been gathering several tomes of historical and magical knowledge. She has been paying a premium to people who possess books of interest to her.
- A group of Flan-blooded farmers are secretly worshipping pagan gods, sacrificing livestock in devil-worshipping ceremonies. Don't trust those yokels!

As you look over the PCs, look for one most likely to be interested in a job based solely on the promise of monetary compensation. A neutral rogue would probably be the most appropriate PC. Bjorn will approach this PC.

"Beautiful morning, good citizen," a man next to you says. Standing six feet tall and having shoulder-length blonde hair, he appears to perhaps descend from the Thillonrian barbarians. He smiles at you in a friendly manner. "You seem to be a capable sort, and I sure could use some help. My name is Bjorn – Pholtus be with you. I need the assistance of a small group of heroes. Would you be able to gather a fellowship of colleagues, and meet me back by the north gate? I promise that, at the very least, my proposition will be interesting to hear, and if you accept, hundreds of Gold Glories would be yours. Let's meet in, say, an hour?"

Bjorn tries to avoid providing details about the job. He'll be blunt and say that he doesn't want to repeat himself. If the PC is insistent, he mentions that he wants a group of courageous individuals to capture a vicious beast in a nearby wood. Needing to address other matters, Bjorn departs.

The PC who spoke with Bjorn must organize the party from the available players. Facilitate this, having the PC encounter each of the other PCs in short order. Allow the players to describe their PCs and make introductions as the party forms. Once the party is gathered, it is time to head to the north gate to meet Bjorn.

Nearby the north gate, a tall man with blonde hair waits, arms akimbo. The wind blows in his hair, and three ravens fly overhead and off into the distance. When he notices your party, he smiles and walks towards you.

"Light shines on you, good citizens! It's good to see you again, [insert the name of the PC he met] – thank you for gathering these colleagues to hear me out.

"Citizens, I am Bjorn and I am pleased to meet you all. You all look like people of stout character. I need the help of folk like you, a group who can work together towards success. You see, I need you to travel to a dense wood south of here and capture a vicious beast. You must capture this beast alive and return him to me. If you're successful, I'll pay you 500 Gold Glories.

I'm sure you're wondering what we might want with a beast captured alive? To be honest, these creatures are dangerous. A friend of mine and I study various monsters, look for their vulnerabilities, and hope to help defend the borders of the Pale. We live in the Rakers, and many threats to the Palish can be found entrenched within these mountains."

Bjorn then describes the monster he wants the party to capture, which depends upon their tier:

APL 2 & 4

"I need you to capture a strange monster known as a hippogriff. Highly aggressive, these beasts appear to be a combination of a horse and a giant eagle. It bears the torso and hindquarters of a horse, while the head, forelegs, and wings are of an eagle."

APL 6, 8, & 10

"I need you to capture a strange monster known as a chimera. This evil beast has three heads! One is from a large black goat, another is from a lion, and the third is of a black dragon. The hindquarters of the beast is of a goat, the forequarters of a lion, and it has a dragon's wings."

Bjorn will answer questions that the PCs have, giving the following additional information:

- If the PCs fail to capture the monster alive, and instead return its corpse, Bjorn will pay the party 200 gp.
- The monster lives within a dense wood to the south of Ogburg. If the PCs follow the stream called the Azureflow Stream, which descends from the Rakers to just outside Ogburg and then heads south, they will reach the woods within four miles.
- Bjorn can't provide too much detail on the beast, other than his assessment that the PCs can succeed by strength and wits.
- Bjorn provides the party a cart that they can use to transport the beast's bound body.
- If the party asks, he says that he only needs one beast. If they come across more than one, they can dispatch the others as they see fit.
- Bjorn explains that his partner is a wizard named Konrad Huber, a faithful servant to the Pale who lives within the Rakers.
- If the PCs question Bjorn about the legality of transporting dangerous monsters through the Pale, he becomes very evasive. If they persist, he becomes

defensive and suggests that he may need to hire more courageous heroes. Bjorn isn't certain that what he's suggesting is explicitly illegal, but he has no commitment to the laws of the Pale.

- Bjorn's interests are self-serving, but he attempts to appear to be acting in the best interests of the Pale. He pretends that his motivation is to help defend the Pale and that he is a faithful follower of Pholtus.
- Once the PCs capture the beast, they should meet him about a half-mile outside of the north gate. He has a room with a view of the area and will watch for them. He'll approach them within an hour of their arrival, and assumes that the PCs should bring the beast back sometime today. He cautions them not to bring the monster within the city.

♣ **Bjorn, male human Rog8:** Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 9 in.); HD 8d6; hp 34; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 17, flat-footed 16); Atks +12/+7 melee (1d6+2/18-20, *rapier* +1); SA sneak attack; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +1.

Str 14, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +5, Bluff +13, Diplomacy +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +9, Hide +15, Intimidate +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +8, Pickpocket +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Use Rope +8, Wilderness Lore +4.5; Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (Rapier), Track, Weapon Finesse (Rapier).

SA: Sneak Attack +4d6

SQ: *Evasion*: when spell allows Ref save for ½ dmg, Bjorn takes no dmg on successful save and full dmg on failed save. *Uncanny dodge*: Bjorn keeps Dex bonus to AC when flatfooted or struck by an invisible attacker. Bjorn cannot be flanked, except by a 12th lvl rogue.

Possessions: Explorer's outfit, backpack, bedroll, winter blanket, caltrops, 10 ft. chain, crowbar, punching dagger, flint and steel, grapple hook, inkpen, bullseye lantern, *leather armor* +1, 5 sheets of paper, 3 pitons, *rapier* +1, 5 days trail rations, *ring of protection* +3, 50 ft. silk rope, tent.

ENCOUNTER 2: INVESTIGATING HUBER

Astute and self-motivating PCs will question the wisdom and legality of transporting dangerous beasts through the Pale. Instead of going after the monster, if they choose to investigate Konrad Huber or Bjorn, they have many opportunities to learn about the pair. Only parties who take the initiative should go through this Part; don't lead them away from Part Three.

This Encounter should not be linear, as the party can check various sources for information and should lead themselves along. If the PCs refuse Bjorn's offer but don't investigate him, Captain Amaris Viligant (see below) approaches them to question them about the meeting they had with Bjorn.

While the PCs are walking through Ogburg, have them make 1 or 2 Spot checks (DC 25) to notice a cloaked

figure in the distance watching them. If noticed, the figure successfully eludes the PCs. Bjorn is tailing the PCs to determine if they are actually following through on the contract. If they're investigating Huber, Bjorn will notice this and he won't leave a map to Huber's laboratory as described at the end of Part Three. Bjorn will instead return to the lair, intending to wait a week before trying again to capture a monster for Huber.

ARCANISTS GUILD

Members of the Arcanists Guild can meet with their brothers and sisters. The Guild knows of Huber, and that he is licensed to practice magic within the Pale, but he is not a member of the Guild. The Guild knows that Huber is an agent working for the Church Militant, but is not privy to the nature of that relationship. They are not suspicious of Huber, since he is secluded within the Rakers and is working with the Church Militant. For more information about Huber, they recommend that the party talk to the Church Militant.

THE CHURCH AND OTHER GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The Church thanks the PCs for refusing the mission offered by Bjorn. Transporting dangerous creatures through the Pale is most certainly illegal. They are aware that there is a relationship between Konrad Huber and the Church Militant. They ask the PCs to immediately report their information to the Church Militant.

SAGES, BARDS, AND UNOFFICIAL INFORMATION SOURCES

The PCs may approach a variety of different people for information. Play the part of the NPC that the party seeks. The information that they can learn is vague:

Konrad Huber is a wizard that hides away somewhere within the Rakers, rarely seen by anyone other than his faithful servant Bjorn, who makes irregular trips into Ogburg. One person was rumored to have recently seen someone who may have been Huber. Some foul beast attacked a dwarf named Birinair Kornag, while he was wandering through the foothills of the Rakers. Huber apparently saved Kornag's life.

DIVINATIONS

By exercising favors or using their own abilities, PCs may be able to cast various divination spells to obtain some guidance. If they do so, depending on the power of the spell, they can hear some obscure message like:

"To defeat the Elder threat, seek the hidden enemy posing as an ally. As a prelude to the past, assistance will pave the way to success. The beginning will be the end."

BIRINAIR KORNAK

Kornag is a scruffy young dwarf who is greatly fascinated by magic. He refuses to reveal his homeland, but he has recently passed through the Flinty Hills from Nyronnd. The party can find him nursing a drink in a tavern known as “The Three Sheets.” If they offer to get him a full mug of ale, he’ll gladly tell his tale.

“Oy! So ye’ want t’ learn how I g’t this scar ‘ere?” the dwarf exclaims, unabashedly pulling up his shirt to reveal a long gash along his side. The human patrons at other tables take notice of this and roll their eyes in disgust.

“Well, ye’ see, I may not be that old, but I’ve always loved magic. I wanted t’ learn, so I sought out a wizard I heard o’ in th’ Rakers. I s’pose ‘t’was foolish to wander ‘round alone, ‘cause I’s attacked by a foul monster – ‘alf eagle, ‘alf lion. Near death, a wizard saved me. Must have been the one I sought. Subduing the beast, ‘e looked at me while my lifeblood flowed from me. ‘Teach me yer craft I whispered. Ach! ‘e scoffed at me and left me there bleedin’, carryin’ off the monster through means magical.

Fortunately, th’ gash in m’ side closed itself. It took me two days to crawl back ‘ere, wounded both in body an’ soul.”

Birinair has little else to say on the matter. He is fascinated by magic and will buy any non-cursed magic item from a PC for 125% of the listed value, up the maximum he has in his hotel room, 10,000gp.

🐉 **Birinair Kornag:** Male dwarf Rog3; AL N.
Possessions: 10,000gp in storage.

CHURCH MILITANT

The Church Militant manages the relationship with Konrad Huber. If the party contacts this organization, Captain Amaris Viligant meets with them. After listening to their story, she speaks:

The strong and handsome young woman stands before you, obviously concerned as she bites her lip. An aura of power almost seems to radiate from her commanding presence.

“Thank you for taking the initiative and refusing to commit an act which would threaten the populace of the Pale. Transporting dangerous beasts is not something loyal citizens should be doing.

“The man you met with, Bjorn, is a follower of a wizard with whom I have had dealings, Konrad Huber. I was expecting Huber to meet me here this past week, but he hasn’t appeared. I wish to know why.

“Good citizens, I direct you to seek out Huber in his lair. Instruct him to report to me here in Ogburg immediately. Also remind him that I will not overlook illegal activities on his part, and that he should not be transporting dangerous beasts within the Pale. I do not know the precise location of his lair, but here is a map to the area nearby.”

Give the players Player Handout – Map to Huber. Captain Viligant won’t reveal the details of her relationship with Huber, because the party does not need to know that information. Revealing that information would be a

breach of security. She just orders them to find Huber and instruct him to meet her in Ogburg posthaste. Huber failed to make his meeting because he wanted to focus his time studying the Creature. He didn’t anticipate that she would send people to fetch him.

🐉 **Captain Amaris Viligant:** Female human Ftr6; AL LG.

ENCOUNTER 3: CAPTURING THE BEAST

Following Bjorn instructions, you allow the Azureflow Stream to lead you to a dense wood. After pushing through the underbrush at the edge, you find that the thick canopy above limits the growth of plants near the forest floor, making travel easier. Moving forward cautiously, you pass a few clearings into which the radiant light of Pholtus shines from the sun down to the green grass.

After traveling a bit more, the party comes to yet another clearing. At this point, everyone must make a Listen check (DC 15) or be surprised by the monster(s).

APL 2 (EL 2)

🐉 **Hippogriff (1):** hp 25; see MONSTER MANUAL page 118.

APL 4 (EL 4)

🐉 **Hippogriff (2):** hp 25 each; see MONSTER MANUAL page 118.

APL 6 (EL 7)

🐉 **Chimera (1):** hp 76; see MONSTER MANUAL page 35.

APL 8 (EL 9)

🐉 **Chimera (2):** hp 76 each; see MONSTER MANUAL page 35.

APL 10 (EL 11)

🐉 **Chimera (4):** hp 76 each; see MONSTER MANUAL page 35.

TACTICS

At all APLs, the monsters swoop down from above the tree canopy into the clearing. They remain hidden as long as possible, and thus only a Listen check will avoid surprise. If a monster is reduced to less than 10% of its hit points, it attempts to flee.

Since the PCs are probably striking to subdue, review the section “Subdual Damage,” page 134 in the PLAYER’S HANDBOOK.

An unconscious or helpless monster can be securely bound and hoisted onto the cart without too much trouble. It will be difficult to transport a monster back to Ogburg on the cart, but with a lot of effort, it can be done without mishap.

While securing the beast, have the PCs make a Spot check (DC 25). If a PC succeeds, she sees a cloaked figure watching the party from afar. The figure immediately runs off and escapes. The figure was Bjorn ensuring that the PCs actually capture the monster.

When the party returns to the predefined location where they were supposed to meet Bjorn, they find a brief note and a map. The note merely says “*Please bring the package to this location.*” Bjorn has decided to let the PCs worry about transporting the beast into the Rakers and has already departed. Give the players *Map to Lab*.

As the PCs head out towards Huber’s lair, have each PC make a Spot check (DC 25). Any who succeed notice a scout from the Church Militant watching them from a half-mile away. This scout immediately rides off on horseback; the PCs will not be able to catch up to him.

ENCOUNTER 4: TRAVELING TO HUBER’S LAIR

Following the map, provided either by Bjorn or Captain Viligant, the PCs head into the Rakers. The trip initially is not strenuous, but gradually becomes more difficult, particularly if they are pulling a cart with a captured monster. At about this time, it ought to be getting dark, and unfortunately the map doesn’t provide directions specific enough to find the entrance to Huber’s lair.

You’ve followed the map to the best of your ability into the Rakers, but haven’t found any structure that might be Konrad Huber’s lair. The sun is going down, and it probably would be best to setup camp, continuing the search tomorrow. Just then, a half-elf appears before you, emerging from the foliage as though he teleported before you magically.

“Greetings, good citizen. My name is Silvestro the Fleet. What brings you to this remote location?”

Silvestro and his party, the Four of Eltison, are returning to the Pale from the far side of the Rakers. They have setup camp for the evening nearby, and while scouting out the area, Silvestro came across the PCs. After determining that they are friendly, Silvestro will invite the PCs to spend the evening with their group. The Rakers are a dangerous place, particularly after night, and they’ll all be safer spending the night together.

The Four of Eltison are: Silvestro the Fleet, a charming half-elf of silver eyes and tongue; Rosina Selynn, a female ranger that leads the group; Bartholome Festis, a timid wizard; and Envita Aldredheart, a brooding female warrior. The Four are detailed at the end of the adventure.

MAKING CAMP FOR THE NIGHT

Silvestro leads the PCs to the site of his camp, about half a mile away. He introduces them to his companions and allows them to get comfortable. Conversing with the Four, the PCs can learn the following pieces of information:

- The Four of Eltison have been adventuring together for years. They’ve done a few missions for the Church, but have actually spent most of their time outside of the Pale.
- They’re returning from the far side of the Rakers. A female wizard of Baklunish descent, who lives in Ogburg, hired them to bring a tome back from a sorcerer within the Rakers along the border of Ratik. If asked for the name of the wizard, the Four dodge the question, since they don’t want the PCs to approach her and take subsequent jobs away from them.
- While traveling through this area two weeks ago, on their way to obtain the book, Rosina observed a wizard wandering through this area. She followed him, and saw him pass right into a rock face. She approached cautiously and determined a tunnel was concealed by an illusion. She decided not to enter. That rock face is about three miles from here. Tomorrow morning, she can take them to that location before the Four depart.
- The Four saw the three shooting stars a week ago, just as they were making their way across the Rakers. They’re certain that the shooting stars crashed somewhere amidst the Rakers, somewhere northeast of their current location.

ITEMS FROM SILVESTRO

Once everyone gets settled, Silvestro will attempt to sell some minor magic that he possesses.

“You all look to be keen of eye and wise of mind. Magic is a very potent thing, and even the most basic enchanted trinket can save your life at just the right moment. I’ve got a few items here that I thought you might be interested in purchasing.

“The first is a charm that a friend gave me a few months back. It’s supposed to protect you from evil omens. I drew upon it the three shooting stars, covered over by the holy symbol of Pholtus, to protect me from whatever that strange event meant. We’re going to be departing from this area, so I don’t think I’ll need this charm anymore. I could sell it to you for, say, 100 Gold Glories?”

“The other thing I have to sell you is this strange rock. Black as night, and smooth like glass, I found it yesterday on the shore of a river we passed. I’ve never seen anything like it, and Bartholome tells me that there’s some form of magic contained within it. Perhaps you have the time to figure out what type of magic lies within, but I don’t. How about I give it to you for just 50 Gold Glories?”

Silvestro will bargain a bit, lowering his price at most by 20%. Depending on how the PCs choose to bargain, either a Bluff or Diplomacy check is warranted. The outcome is that for each point above DC 15, Silvestro will reduce the price by 4% to a maximum of 20% if the result is a 20.

ROSINA'S DIVINATION

Once everyone is settled around the campfire, finishing up the evening meal that Bartholome prepared, Rosina begins to speak, her eyes staring unblinkingly into the fire.

"The three shooting stars that appeared a week ago; they weigh on my mind. It could be an omen of great evil. Allow me to use the light of Pholtus to guide our journeys."

She pulls out a scroll and carefully unrolls it. At the top is a bold symbol of Pholtus. Rosina begins reading the words of an incantation, describing the various aspects of Pholtus and beseeching him for guidance.

PCs who make a Spellcraft check (DC 19) can determine that she is casting a divination spell.

At the end of the incantation, Rosina calls out "Oh, Pholtus of the Blinding Light, what knowledge can protect us from the evil that the shooting stars portend?"

At this point, something quite astonishing happens. A blue light glows several feet away, and a strange looking woman materializes. With darkly tanned skin and of about 20 years of age, an eye patch covers her right eye. She has long dark hair and wears loose fitting robes of azure and indigo. A long sash hangs from her neck and down her front, displaying strange gold lettering, perhaps glyphs from a language used long ago. The blue glow surrounds her. Her face showing bewilderment, she speaks in a stuttering voice.

"Evil. You will face great evil, almost unstoppable, almost invincible. But the Elder creature must be stopped. It is you," she says pointing to your party, "you who must face the Elder."

Cringing as if in pain, she holds her hand to keep you at bay. Looking up again, the woman appears much younger, barely an adolescent.

"I have not been given much time. The Elder is powerful, but it has a weakness: It lives for but three years and then dies. The star that burns twice as bright burns half as long. Smash this gem before the plant creature, the Elder. All nearby will be aged five years and the creature will die. If you don't, its vines will wrap tight around you and everything else here in the Flanness.

"A thousand years from this time, an Elder came and too long his power was allowed to grow. Do not let this episode from the past repeat itself."

With that the woman places a large red gem on the ground before her and then cowers in pain once more. A silver bracelet slips from her wrist and falls to the ground. Her form appears insubstantial and in a moment, she disappears, leaving only the fading echo of an infant crying.

Rosina will be at a loss to explain what this all means, but she thinks that Pholtus sent a sage from a far-off land to warn them of what lies ahead. She is sure that the words of the spirit Pholtus sent should be heeded.

When crushed, the red gem releases a cloud of gray mist. The cloud covers a radius of 30 feet and ages all caught within by 5 years. The effect is supernatural and as such, there is no save and protections that block spells do not prevent the aging.

Note: The information the PCs obtain from this strange spirit and the gem she provides is of great importance to the PCs later on in the adventure. Though Rosina's ritual seemed to summon her, this is not actually the case. Even if the PCs somehow avoid encountering Rosina, this spirit still appears before the PCs. In fact, if the PCs have gone far astray in the scenario, this apparition can serve to guide them back to Konrad Huber's lair.

Treasure

- shooting star charm
- strange black rock

ENCOUNTER 5: THE WIZARD'S LAIR

In the morning, Rosina will be able to quickly lead the PCs to the hidden laboratory. From a distance of several hundred yards, she points to the precise location where she found the concealed entrance. She then departs and rejoins her compatriots, after wishing the party luck.

The layout of Konrad Huber's laboratory is shown on the diagram DM's *Map of the Lab*. Soon after the wizard arrived in the Pale nine years ago; he determined it would be necessary to establish a laboratory in a secluded location in order to avoid creating attention with his experiments. With the assistance of a few workers, an engineer, and several *move earth* spells, he constructed this lair. The location proved to be ideal. From Ogburg, he could obtain supplies, while the Rakers concealed his efforts in addition to providing a source of beasts to study.

The wizard's goal is to create magical hybrid creatures, such as cockatrices, chimeras, and hippogriffs. Konrad's studies have progressed along two tracks. First, trapping local fauna, he has begun preliminary experiments to graft various animal appendages to his specimens. These experiments have met with mixed success. Second, to guide his experiments, Konrad has managed to capture a number of magical hybrid creatures and imprison them in large cells designed to hold them. He studies these creatures, eventually dissecting them to better understand their physiology. The beast that Bjorn asked the PCs to capture will be one to add to this collection.

After Konrad captured the Creature and placed it within a cell, the docile being matured over the next several days until it developed strength and its magical abilities. Prior to the PCs arrival, the Creature breaks out of its cell and attacks its captor. In its rage to subdue Konrad, the Creature knocked down a number of support columns and inflicted critical structural damage upon the laboratory. As a result, the main entrance has collapsed, the other cells have been weakened, and the whole laboratory will soon collapse.

AREA 1 – MAIN ENTRANCE

Carved out of a hill, the laboratory's entrance is disguised with a *permanent image* to look like part of the mountain. Inspecting the entrance, the party will find that the tunnel beyond the illusion has collapsed. At the edge of the rubble, the PCs find the corpse of Bjorn; when the Creature broke out, he unsuccessfully attempted to flee. There is nothing of value on his body.

Digging through the 100 feet of the collapse will require several days, and even powerful spells may be insufficient to bypass this obstacle. If the PCs do manage to get beyond the obstruction, merely jump to the areas beyond. While the climax is intended to occur in Area 11, if the party proceeds directly to this encounter, delay the collapse of the lab described therein until the party has had an opportunity to explore the lower level, Areas 4 through 10.

For each round the PCs search the rubble, have them make Listen checks. Whoever makes a DC 15 hears a bleating noise from outside, as though some small animal were in great pain.

AREA 2 – ALTERNATE ENTRANCE

Konrad's lab is connected to a natural cavern (Area 4) that he believes is secure. In fact, a long tunnel leaves the cavern and exits on the southern face of the mountain. This entrance is obscured from all except those who would search diligently.

From a distance, the PCs will hear the sound of a bleating animal. Approaching closer, they will find a dying rabbit, its forelegs replaced by those of an eagle. The creature is in great pain, but there is nothing the PCs can do to save it. If they comfort it, it eventually seems to calm just before it passes away.

If the PCs bypassed the encounter with the Four of Eltison, the bleating of the rabbit will lead them to this entrance.

AREA 3 – SUBTERRANEAN TUNNEL

This tunnel extends 320 yards north-northwest towards the lab. No light penetrates into the tunnel, so the party will need a light source. It is about 5 feet wide and varies between 5 and 7 feet tall. Near the end, the tunnel expands into two chambers. The first is 40 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 30 feet high. The second is 60 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 50 feet high. While walking along the tunnel, the PCs will occasionally hear rumbling caused by the shifting of unstable earth.

The tunnel ends in a pool of water. Underneath the surface of the water, a 4-foot diameter hole leads into Area 4. The party must go through this submerged hole to continue. They must leave large, bulky objects behind.

AREA 4 – REJECT CAVERN

Into this dark natural cavern, Konrad Huber discards all specimens that have failed to continue to produce data interesting to him. The door to his laboratory sits atop a 40-foot ledge, from which he occasionally lowers down

food to the trapped victims. The only use these beings have to Huber is to see how long they live before dying. Their existence is very short, but some have escaped through the pool on the eastern side of the cavern. Konrad is unaware that the pool connects to a tunnel exiting from the hill.

Within this cavern are ten animals and remains on the floor testify to the pitiful lives of about two dozen more. The animals include: a raccoon with the hind legs of a rabbit; a sheep with six legs; a kitten with the tails of two snakes slithering from its back; and a squirrel with bright green eyes and a frog's tongue. Extremely timid, the creatures will flee to the recesses of the cavern when the PCs approach. If provided any food, the demure animals will act very appreciative. Exceptional kindness will be met with an exceptionally thankful response from a most pathetic specimen.

The PCs may wish to help these animals, but their bodies will only survive for a few more weeks. There is nothing the PCs can do to heal or save these creatures. At best, the party might be able to find a druid somewhere who could make them comfortable for the last few days of their existence. If the party turns the creatures in to the Church, the clergy are sickened at what magic was wrought. They thank the PCs for bringing the abominations to their attention and preach that "these things that should not exist" demonstrate the evil that wizard craft can bring. The Church will dispose of the creatures behind the scenes.

At the base of the ledge is a skeleton of a human, wearing the tattered remains of a cleric of Pholtus. Examining the skeleton reveals that the man's body was picked clean by the creatures within the cavern. Nothing of value is on the body. This corpse is the remains of a cleric who decided to investigate Huber three months ago. Huber killed the cleric and disposed of his body here.

In the southeastern portion of the cavern, a hidden 1-foot diameter hole extends a few feet into the cavern wall. This hole can only be noticed if a PC successfully makes a Search check (DC 30) while looking at this area. At the end of the hole that twists downward is a small nest made by the animals. Within the nest is a small, silver amulet, which is *Laelithra's phylactery of piety*. If the PCs make efforts to care for the animals here, one of them will retrieve the phylactery and present it to the PCs as a sign of affection.

To enter the lab, the 40-foot ledge must be scaled. The surface has many handholds (Climb DC 15). The door atop the ledge is locked.

As the PCs are leaving this area, a significant tremor strikes. Part of the western wall collapses, enlarging the hole to Area 3. Now this cavern is connected to the tunnel by a six-foot high passage above the pool of water. The PCs can now escape the lair through this tunnel quite rapidly.

Treasure

- *Laelithra's phylactery of piety*

AREA 5 – CORRIDOR

This 5 foot wide corridor connects all of the rooms on the lower level of the laboratory. Like the rest of the lab proper (Areas 5 through 13), this corridor is lit by *continual flames*, that are contained within sconces every 20 feet or so. The sconces are built into the walls and cannot be removed. The doors are made of solid oak and gilded in bronze (hardness 5, 20 hp, break DC 23). The walls are of finely hewn stone, but dust falls from a number of recently formed cracks in the ceiling. Occasionally, the PCs will feel the vibrations of the surrounding stone shifting slightly. The use of an appropriate Profession skill (e.g. engineer, miner) with a DC of 10 can determine that while the structure of the lair is unsound, it is probably safe for at least the next hour.

AREA 6 – STORAGE ROOM AND BJORN'S BEDROOM

The door to this room is locked (DC 20). Within the room, Konrad Huber stores food and other mundane supplies for his lab. There are several barrels of fresh water, bags of dried goods, cured meats, and wheels of hard cheese. A basin in one corner is used to launder clothing.

Bjorn also sleeps within this bedroom. In one corner, a simple bed has been laid out. Next to it is a box with clothing and other mundane personal belongings. Within the box is a silver necklace worth 20gp.

Treasure

- silver necklace (20gp value)

AREA 7 – KITCHEN

Huber and Bjorn use this room to prepare their meals. Spare cabinets line the room. There is a small fireplace above a slender shaft that extends upwards to the surface. A modest table and two chairs stand in the center.

AREA 8 – BEDROOM

Since Konrad doesn't trust Bjorn, the door to this room is locked (DC 25). Konrad's living quarters contain a bed, a dresser, a plain rug, and a nightstand. Clothing, toiletries, and other ordinary items can be found within the dresser. On top of the nightstand is a very old book, *The Early Lives of Dwarven Heroes*.

Treasure

- Tome: *The Early Lives of Dwarven Heroes*

AREA 9 – WASHROOM

This simple washroom contains nothing of interest to the PCs.

AREA 10 – STUDY

Huber doesn't trust Bjorn, so he keeps the door to this room locked and trapped. Huber setup a diseased needle trap, the disease revealing itself only after an incubation period, because he wanted Bjorn to think that he had been unaffected by the trap. Only later would Bjorn begin to suffer and have his treachery revealed. If the door is not opened with the key, located in Area 11, the trap will be sprung.

APL 2

☞ **Diseased needle trap:** +10 ranged (no damage) + disease – shakes (Fort save to resist [DC13], incubation 1 day, 1d8 Dex damage); Search (DC20); Disable Device (DC18).

APL 4

☞ **Diseased needle trap:** +12 ranged (no damage) + disease – red ache (Fort save to resist [DC15], incubation 1d3 days, 1d6 Str damage); Search (DC24); Disable Device (DC21).

APL 6

☞ **Diseased needle trap:** +14 ranged (no damage) + disease – slimy doom (Fort save to resist [DC14], incubation 1 day, 1d4 Con damage, each time victim is damaged another Fort save must be made or 1 point of Con damage is permanent); Search (DC28); Disable Device (DC24).

APL 8

☞ **Diseased needle trap:** +16 ranged (no damage) + disease – blinding sickness (Fort save to resist [DC16], incubation 1d3 days, 1d4 Str damage, each time victim takes more than 1 point of Str damage another Fort save must be made or victim is permanently blinded); Search (DC32); Disable Device (DC27).

APL 10

☞ **Diseased needle trap:** +18 ranged (no damage) + disease – blinding sickness (Fort save to resist [DC16], incubation 1d3 days, 1d4 Str damage, each time victim takes more than 1 point of Str damage another Fort save must be made or victim is permanently blinded); Search (DC36); Disable Device (DC31).

Note: All diseases are fully detailed on page 75 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE.

Inside this room, Konrad Huber's study features a small bookshelf, a desk, and a regal painting of the wizard. A small aquarium on the bookshelf shattered during one of the tremors. The water from the aquarium has ruined all of the books. If someone were to spend some time looking through the remains, he would determine that the books covered a variety of esoteric topics of history, language, and fiction. They probably had little value.

The painting portrays Huber from the waist up, standing in a regal-looking pose with the city of Ogburg as the backdrop. He appears to be a lithe man in his early

50s, with platinum blond hair, a square jaw, sharp facial features, and blue eyes. In the pose, his left hand covers his right, which is wearing a tight black leather glove. The painting is of exceptional artistry and is signed by an unknown artist “Bahira.” It radiates magic from the illusion school. A brass plaque says simply, “Konrad Huber.” If his name is spoken aloud, magic within the painting activates and Konrad’s figure appears three dimensional in bas-relief. The affect is partially translucent and obviously illusionary to all who view it, though it is extremely intricate. The figment lasts for one round and can be activated twice per day.

While filled with writing implements, paper, wax, and other miscellany, the desk has three items of interest to the party.

First, in the center of the desk is a letter Huber recently penned. If the PCs open the envelope, give them the handout *Letter on Desk*. It describes some of the duplicitous acts of Huber and would be of great interest to the Church Militant.

Second, Huber keeps a notebook charting the progress of his experiments. If a PC spends at least 10 minutes skimming the notebook for interesting passages, present the handout appropriate for the party’s tier, all labeled *Notebook Excerpts*. These excerpts provide the PCs some information about the Creature and the other monsters that they will face in Area 11, giving them an opportunity to prepare for the final encounter.

Third, Huber has left one of his spellbooks on the desk. The rest of his spellbooks were within Area 11 and have been destroyed by the Creature.

Treasure

- painting of Konrad Huber
- Konrad Huber’s spell book

AREA 11 – LABORATORY

This large circular room is where Konrad Huber performs his devious experiments. Six pillars extend upwards to support the domed ceiling, 100 feet high at its apex. Each of these pillars is cracked. Someone with an appropriate Profession skill (e.g. engineer, miner) can determine that they will collapse very soon. A circular staircase descends 30 feet into this room from the corridor above. In the center of the room are several solid tables with thick granite surfaces. Various sharp, claw-like surgical instruments are strewn about amongst various noxious substances that could be used as spell components. Ten rats are trapped in small metal cages along the walls. The PCs will not have an opportunity to ponder these surroundings when they enter this room, however.

Standing within the domed room, you hear a scream echo off the imposing walls, amongst the tall columns, and into your startled ears. Trapped under rubble that fell from the cracked ceiling is the injured form of Konrad Huber. His left arm free, he shields his face from the horrible creature before him.

Standing nine feet tall, the strange being appears to be a star-shaped mass of plant-like limbs. Its deep green skin is covered in hundreds of delicate white flowers. Behind it, the twisted remains of two heavy iron doors attest to the strength of this being. One of its limbs turns away from the broken body of the wizard it has been torturing and faces you. With a menacing lack of intelligible expression, the beast approaches you.

The Creature is described in detail at the end of the adventure. In its current stage of development, the Creature is a fearsome opponent, even for high-level characters. The Creature has very high damage reduction, spell resistance, and saving throws. However, with the *red gem of aging* provided by the spirit described in *Rosina’s Divination*, the party has the means to defeat the Creature. The gas released from the gem is supernatural, which bypasses spell resistance, and provides no saving throw. The gas will age the monster beyond its maximum lifespan. The Creature will delay its action on the first round to size up its opponents, providing the PCs an immediate opportunity to defeat it.

Should the PCs hesitate to use the *red gem of aging*, the Creature will toy with the party, attempting to inflict damage without killing them outright. If the characters prove completely unwilling or unable to use the gem, the Creature will accidentally cause more structural damage to the lab with its *Bigby’s clenched fist*. The whole structure will begin to collapse and the PCs must flee immediately or be crushed.

Note: Under no circumstances should the Creature kill any PC. Run the scene within the parameters described above.

The Creature (1): CR 18; Large magical beast (8 ft. tall); HD 11d10+33; hp 100hp; Init +5; Spd 40ft.; AC 21 (touch 14, flat-footed 16); Atks +15 ranged (1d8, pellet); SA pellet spark, spell-like abilities; SQ blindsight, damage reduction 25/+5, extraordinary saves, improved evasion, regeneration 5; SR 25; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +17, Will +15.

Str 14, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 18.

Skills: Listen +20, Spot +20. *Feats:* Leadership.

For detail on the Special Attacks and Special Qualities of the Creature, see the detailed description of the monster at the end of the module.

Crushing the *red gem of aging* releases a cloud of gray gas in a 30 ft. radius. All caught within that cloud are aged 5 years. When the PCs throw the gem at the Creature, describe the scene:

The translucent red gem impacts the ground and smashes into a thousand tiny slivers. A cloud of thick gray smoke expands out quickly. Those caught within the cloud feel your hearts beat faster, skip a beat, and then your breath seems to be drawn out from you. The gas dissipates almost as rapidly as it appeared.

You see the sinister plant creature writhing, its limbs moving at a blinding speed. The myriads of small white flowers on its deep green skin fall to the ground. Almost instantly, others

bud and bloom in their place, only to wither and fall. The cycle continues. A strangled whisper of rage and frustration escapes from what looks like a mouth. It falls to the ground, its decaying body finally resting in a twisted clump of plant fiber and dried petals.

The powerful Creature has held the rest of the captured monsters in Area 14 at bay. Immediately after the PCs defeat the Creature, they will rush to attack the PCs. From reading the Notebook Excerpts, the party knows what they're up against and may have decided the monsters are too powerful to defeat. Do not discourage the PCs from fleeing at this point. A perfectly reasonable tactic is to quickly defeat the Creature and flee back the way the party came.

Three rounds after the combat ends, Huber's entire laboratory begins to collapse, giving them little opportunity to investigate the area. The PCs must leave immediately, probably back through the tunnel (Area 3), or die under tons of rock.

While the PCs are attacking the monsters, Konrad Huber will struggle to free himself enough to cast a *gaseous form* spell. Unless a PC specifically intends to watch Konrad, this will go unnoticed. On the third round of combat, he will successfully cast the spell and escape.

Next to Huber's body are the remains of various items of value collected by the Creature and then destroyed. Magic items and spellbooks are smashed, burnt, ripped, and crushed. Also within the rubble is a set of keys to all locks within the laboratory.

☛Konrad Huber, male human Wiz13: Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 13; hp 51 (currently 1); Init +7 (+4 dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (dex); Atks +6/+1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +11.

Str 7, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: Alchemy +10, Bluff +11, Concentration +5, Craft – Drawing +6, Diplomacy +9, Forgery +8, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +6, Heal +6, Knowledge, Arcana +14, Knowledge, Nature +12, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +10, Wilderness Lore +3. **Feats:** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/5/5/3/2/1, base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *daze*; 1st – *mage armor*, *shield*; 2nd – *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*; 3rd – *gaseous form*, *haste*; 4th *stoneskin*; 5th – none; 6th – none; 7th – none. (In the battle with the Creature, most of his spells were cast.)

Equipment: scholar's outfit.

Konrad Huber appears to be a trim man of about 50 years of age, though in actuality is significantly older. He has a square jaw with sharp features and piercing blue eyes. He has short platinum blond hair that stands on end. He always wears a single black glove over his right hand, concealing a terrible scar. Konrad relentlessly pursues all of his goals, and lets neither law nor moral code prevent him from reaching them. However, he does have the wisdom to conceal his activities and has worked hard to

cultivate the appearance that he is an honorable citizen of the Pale.

Note: If the slot is about to end and the PCs have yet to reach the lab, the Creature will seek them out. After dealing with the Creature, the whole structure will begin to collapse and they will need to escape immediately. Bypass the attack with the monsters below.

APL 2 (EL 3)

☛Griffon, maimed (1): hp 59; see MONSTER MANUAL page 113.

Note: This griffon has had its beak removed and thus has no bite attack. When describing this monster, make this clear to the PCs. They should understand that they are not fighting a griffon at it full strength. As described in the *Notebook Excerpts*, Huber removed the beast's beak for protection.

APL 4 (EL 6)

☛Griffon (1): hp 59; see MONSTER MANUAL page 113.

☛Leucrotta (1): CR 4; Large magical beast (9 ft. long); HD 6d10+24; hp 57; Init +1 (dex); Spd 50 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atks +9 melee (1d8+6/x3, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./ 5 ft.; SA bone bite; SQ immunities, mimicry, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +2.

Str 19, Dec 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: climb +12, hide +1, jump +8, move silently +3, search +3, spot +8, wilderness lore +8; dodge, improved bull rush, power attack.

SA: Bone bite (Ex): The leucrotta's mouth contains sharp ridges of super-hard bone. On a critical hit, the leucrotta's bite inflicts x3 damage and forces the target's armor or shield (determine randomly if the target has both) to make a save (DC16) to avoid being torn to pieces. (see Chapter 8 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE).

SQ: Immunities (Ex): Leucrotta's are immune to charm effects (including animal friendship) and compulsion effects such as the command and suggestion spells. **Mimicry:** Leucrotta speak Common, Draconic, and Giant; they also have the uncanny ability to mimic voices.

A leucrotta is a hideously ugly beast with the body and legs of a stag, the tail of a lion, and the head of a badger.

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛Dragonne (1): hp 76; see MONSTER MANUAL page 77.

☛Peryton (1): CR 5; Medium-size magical beast; HD 5d10+5; hp 32; Init +3 (dex); Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 13); Atks +8 melee (1d4+3, claws), +6 melee (1d3+1, 2 slams), +6 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA heart rip; SQ damage reduction 10/+1, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2.

Str 17, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

SA: Heart rip (Ex): Perytons usually save their claw and bite attacks for last because of their overwhelming

desire to consume their victims' hearts. Perytons always take the opportunity to deliver a coup de grace on a helpless opponent – one who is bound, held, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious. As a full round-action, the peryton delivers an automatic critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. If the coup de grace kills the defender, the peryton has eaten his heart. A character who has had his heart ripped out in this fashion can still be returned to life with a resurrection spell, but not with raise dead.

A peryton has the body of a giant eagle and the head of a demonic purple stag.

APL 8 (EL 11)

🐉 **Dragonone (2):** hp 76; see *MONSTER MANUAL* page 77.

🐉 **Peryton (4):** CR 5; Medium-size magical beast; HD 5d10+5; hp 32; Init +3 (dex); Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor); AC 16 (touch 13, flat-footed 13); Atks +8 melee (1d4+3, claws), +6 melee (1d3+1, 2 slams), +6 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA heart rip; SQ damage reduction 10/+1, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2.

Str 17, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10.

SA: Heart rip (Ex): Perytons usually save their claw and bite attacks for last because of their overwhelming desire to consume their victims' hearts. Perytons always take the opportunity to deliver a coup de grace on a helpless opponent – one who is bound, held, sleeping, paralyzed, or unconscious. As a full round-action, the peryton delivers an automatic critical hit. If the defender survives the damage, he must still make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die. If the coup de grace kills the defender, the peryton has eaten his heart. A character who has had his heart ripped out in this fashion can still be returned to life with a resurrection spell, but not with raise dead.

A peryton has the body of a giant eagle and the head of a demonic purple stag.

APL 10 (EL 13)

🐉 **Spirit Naga (3):** hp 76; see *MONSTER MANUAL* page 139. Spells (6/7/7/5; base DC = 13 + spell level), 0 lvl – daze, detect magic, flare, light, mage hand, read magic, resistance; 1st lvl – grease, expeditious retreat, magic missile, obscuring mist, shield; 2nd lvl – invisibility, levitate, see invisibility; 3rd lvl – dispel magic, lightning bolt.

🐉 **Dragonone (2):** hp 76; see *MONSTER MANUAL* page 77.

Tactics: All monsters will fight to the death, fearing the party intends to perpetuate their imprisonment. The monsters fight cooperatively, having a shared desire of freedom. Winged monsters attempt to use their flight abilities to their best advantage, but

in the confined space of the lab, they may be only able to swoop in for an initial attack.

AREA 12 – STABLE

The ceiling of this room has partially collapsed, ruining the wagon stored here and killing the horse that Konrad kept.

AREA 13 – EQUIPMENT ROOM

A variety of tools and other mundane implements are stored within this small room.

AREA 14 – MONSTER CELLS

The heavy metal doors to this area have been curled and twisted off their hinges. Konrad Huber used these six large cells to imprison the Creature and the variety of monsters he studied. While these monsters were dangerous, he was able to incapacitate them and keep them within these chambers. The bars on the cells were enchanted to keep them at bay. By studying these beasts, each a mélange of various animals, the wizards hoped to understand how to duplicate their creation. As the Creature matured over the week of its captivity, its power grew until it was able to break out of its cell yesterday. In its rage, it crushed the bars of the other cells and caused a great deal of structural damage to the laboratory.

AREA 15 – LIVESTOCK CHAMBER

Konrad keeps a number of goats and sheep in this room, primarily to feed the beasts he keeps. The animals mill about around the room, beneath the 5-foot high stage at the entrance. Since the laboratory will collapse soon after the monsters are defeated, it is unlikely that the PCs will find these animals and have a chance to rescue them.

ENCOUNTER 6: CONCLUSION

The PCs will need to quickly exit Konrad's laboratory since it begins to collapse soon after defeating the Creature. Unless they delay, the flight out through the lab and out the tunnel (Area 3) will proceed with just a few bumps and scratches.

Once the PCs return to Ogburg, a private from the Church Militant will bring them immediately to their headquarters. They will be brought before Captain Viligant. How this meeting proceeds depends upon what they accomplished during the module. She will interrogate them to learn what has transpired. Time permitting, roleplay this encounter out with the PCs in an interactive fashion. Viligant will pose different questions to different PCs, giving all a chance to participate in the resolution. Things that will be of particular interest to her include:

- If the PCs return the handout Letter on Desk, which provides evidence that Huber was acting as a double agent against the Pale, she will be very grateful for

their service to the Theocracy. She will explain Huber's role:

"Over a year ago, Prelate Theoman Baslett of Landrigard negotiated a deal with this wizard, Konrad Huber. Huber had fled Nyrond, but apparently still has some friends within that land. For a regular salary, Huber would provide the Church Militant with information on the dealing of Nyrond. While we are allied with Nyrond, I do not trust a weak nation so beset with pagan ideals. Apparently, Huber played us for fools. He will not get away with it."

- If the PCs apprehended Huber and turn him into the Militant, Viligant will be very proud of the PCs. Their puissance is eclipsed only by their dedication to the Theocracy. They will be provided a Favor of Pholtus.
- If the party captured a beast in Part Three, a scout for the Church Militant will have observed and reported this activity. The Theocracy may wish to press charges against the party for transporting a dangerous animal through the Pale.

If the PCs apprehended Huber, the Church Militant will be willing to overlook this incident. Clearly, the PCs apply their abilities in a way that greatly aids the Pale. However, no Favor of Pholtus will be awarded.

Otherwise, The Church Militant will place all PCs under house arrest until a High Legate can arrive to put the Question to each of them. The whole process will be harmless, though time consuming, as the High Legate will choose not to deal with this matter immediately. In addition to the normal Time Unit expenses, an additional 4 Time Units must be spent on this module; the process will be expedited if the PCs returned the Letter on Desk, requiring the cost of only an additional 2 Time Units.

The High Legate will question the PCs in a harsh, brusque manner to determine their intentions when agreeing to capture the beast and following through on that dangerous act. Their loyalty to the Pale and ability to judge right from wrong, order from disorder will be probed. Chaotic PCs will be treated with great disrespect all the while. Ultimately, the High Legate will proclaim that the PCs are free to go, provided they show better judgment in the future.

- Captain Viligant finds the PCs experiences with the strange woman, the gem, and the plant-creature very interesting. She probes them for details and promises to investigate the situation further. She can offer no insight into understanding the meaning of these things.

If the PCs revealed treachery of Huber but chose not to capture the beast in Part Three, Prelate Maximillian Thace wishes to say a few words to the party.

After stepping out of the office for a moment, Captain Viligant returns looking a bit nervous. She speaks, "For your service to the Theocracy, there is someone who wishes to speak with you."

In walks a regal man wearing white robes, trimmed with gold. Acolytes wearing beige robes shuffle behind him, their heads lowered. The man has light skin that contrasts with his very dark hair set atop his slender frame. The man turns to you, bearing a welcoming expression as he looks at you with violet eyes. You recognize Prelate Maximillian Thace of Ogburg.

"The Church Militant informed me of the noble service you performed for the Theocracy, faithful citizens. I wished to commend you for your courageous actions.

"Speaking candidly, I do not trust spies and I have never been comfortable with the agreement that my colleague, Prelate Baslett, negotiated with this Huber fellow. I am pleased that the treachery of this demon-worshiping wizard has been revealed, but I shudder to think what damage he caused to our nation.

"However, with valorous folks such as yourselves, I know that our nation of faithful and good people will persevere through whatever danger lies ahead."

With that, the Prelate turns and departs from your presence.

Treasure

- Favor of Pholtus (for each PC)

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 3

Capturing a beast alive	50 xp
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Encounter 5

Disabling the needle trap [Area 10]	25 xp
Killing the Creature [Area 11]	25 xp
Defeating the monsters [Area 11]	100 xp
Capturing Konrad Huber [Area 11]	50 xp

Encounter 6

Bringing Letter on Desk to Capt. Viligant	50 xp
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Total experience for objectives	300 xp
Discretionary roleplaying award	0-50 xp

Total possible experience	350 xp
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TREASURE SUMMARY

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g. armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items that are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things that it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter 4

- *shooting star charm*
- *strange black rock*
- *red gem of aging*
- silver bracelet from strange woman

Encounter 5

- *Laelithra's phylactery of piety* [Area 4]
- silver necklace [Area 6] (20gp value)
- Tome: *The Early Lives of Dwarven Heroes* [Area 8]
- painting of Konrad Huber [Area 10]
- Konrad Huber's spellbook [Area 10]

Encounter 6

- Favor of Pholtus (for each PC)
- *shooting star charm* (size: tiny; weight: *; materials: leather with spell components; value: 75 gp; use restriction: common; tradeable: yes): Silvestro the

Fleet, half-elven adventurer, had this simple charm. It is a small leather pouch, upon which has been drawn three shooting stars superimposed by a symbol of Pholtus. Inside the pouch are various magical components; opening the pouch destroys the charm. The charm is intended to protect the wearer from the omen of doom, the three shooting stars that passed over the Pale recently. The actual effect is that the charm provides a +1 morale bonus to save against *bane* spells. The charm is worn around the neck as an amulet. It has three charges.

- *strange black rock* (size: tiny; weight: *; materials: unknown; value: 100 gp [5 gp used]; use restriction: uncommon; tradeable: yes): Silvestro the Fleet, half-elven adventurer, found this strange black rock on the shore of a stream within the Rakers. Dark and lustrous as obsidian, the rock is slightly malleable like a precious metal.

If pressed to an open wound of another and held there for 5 rounds, a vaporous purple energy appears around the rock. The holder is healed 4d8 hit points, while the wounded character gains a negative level for 1d4 hours. The negative level behaves as described on p75-76 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, except that at the end of the duration the negative levels go away with no chance of reducing the character's actual level.

This power may be used only once. Afterwards, the only difference in the rock is that it is no longer malleable and is as hard as stone.

- *red gem of aging* (size: tiny; weight: *; materials: unknown; value: 50 gp; use restriction: rare; tradeable: yes): When crushed, the *red gem* releases a cloud of gray mist. The cloud covers a radius of 30 feet and ages all caught within by 5 years. The effect is supernatural and as such, there is no save and protections that block spells do not prevent the aging.

- silver bracelet from strange woman (size: tiny; weight: *; materials: silver; value: 20 gp; use restriction: rare; tradeable: yes): This bracelet belonged to a mysterious woman who magically appeared to provide the means to defeat a powerful plant-like creature. With darkly tanned skin and of about 20 years of age, an eye patch covered her right eye. She had long dark hair and wore loose fitting robes of azure and indigo. A long sash hung from her neck and down her front, displaying strange gold lettering, perhaps glyphs from a language used long ago. Curiously, before she disappeared, she seemed to becoming younger. The silver bracelet slipped from her wrist just as she disappeared.

- *Laelithra's phylactery of piety* (size: tiny; weight: *; materials: silver; value: 500gp; use restriction: uncommon; tradeable: yes): When worn by a cleric of Good alignment, the phylactery confers a +1

sacred bonus to Reflex saves. If worn with both *Laelithra's coif* and *ring*, the bonus increases to +2.

Many cultures throughout the Flanness have stories of a female cleric named Laelithra. She lived many centuries ago and worshiped a good god, but stories conflict as to which one. She helped defeat demons that were summoned to Oerth. Her most trusted followers wore magically enchanted phylacteries, rings, and coifs that have the simple symbol of an iris upon them.

- Tome: *The Early Lives of Dwarven Heroes* (size: small; weight: 2 lb.; materials: leather-bound paper; value: 25 gp; use restriction: rare; tradeable: yes): This book details the formative years of four dwarven heroes who lived many centuries ago. Written over 250 years ago, the book describes the early lives of the heroes, but only alludes to their later grandiose accomplishments. The dwarves within this book are: Valaim the Great, who slew a dragon that plagued the Lortmil Mountains; Koreth Orcsplitter, who defeated a great evil within the southern arm of the Griff Mountains; Noradak Wornhands, a dwarf who rose from humble beginnings to lead his house against an orcish horde; and Gimel of the Gifted Tongue, a dwarven warrior who reached even greater glory spreading the oral history of the dwarves.
- painting of Konrad Huber (size: medium; weight: 5 lb.; materials: canvas with wood frame; value: 30 gp; use restriction: uncommon; tradeable: yes): The painting portrays Huber from the waist up, standing in a regal-looking pose with the city of Ogburg as the backdrop. He appears to be a lithe man in his early 50s, with platinum blond hair, a square jaw, sharp facial features, and blue eyes. In the pose, his left hand covers his right, which is wearing a tight black leather glove. The painting is of exceptional artistry and is signed by an unknown artist "Bahira." It radiates magic from the illusion school. A gold plaque says simply, "Konrad Huber." If his name is spoken aloud, magic within the painting activates and Konrad's figure appears three dimensional in bas-relief. The affect is partially translucent and obviously illusionary to all who view it, though it is extremely intricate. The figment lasts for one round and can be activated twice per day.
- Konrad Huber's spellbook (size: medium; weight: 3 lb.; materials: leather-bound paper; value: 150 gp; use restriction: uncommon; tradeable: yes): This normal wizard's spellbook contains the following spells: 1st lvl – *burning hands, cause fear, charm person, color spray, comprehend languages, endure elements*.

THE FOUR OF ELTISON

The Four of Eltison are an adventuring group that has been working together for several years. They all grew up in the city of Eltison, north of Ogburg. They've performed a few missions for the Church, but have spent most of their time outside the Pale. In particular, they have spent a great deal of time in Tenh and the Bandit Kingdoms. They are all very familiar with each other, and act like a family – displaying the affection and tension within most families.

Rosina Selynn, female human Rgr4/Clr3 (Pholtus): Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 9 in. tall); HD 4d10+3d8+21; hp 64; Init +3 (dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (touch 14, flat-footed 17); Atks +12/+7 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword +2); SA favored enemy (goblinkind), two-weapon fighting, turn undead; SQ spells, spontaneous casting, domain spells; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +6.

Str 17, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +5, Heal +6, Intuit Direction +6, Knowledge, Religion +5, Knowledge, Nature +6, Listen +6, Search +8, Spellcraft +5, Spot +6, Swim -9, Wilderness Lore +12; Combat Reflexes, Focus: Longsword, Leadership, Power Attack, Track.

SQ: Law domain: Casts Law spells (marked in the spell list with (L)) at +1 caster level. Good domain: Casts Good Spells (marked in the spell list with (G)) at +1 caster level. Domain spells are marked with an asterisk.

Spells Prepared, Cleric (4/4/3, base DC = 12 + spell level): 0 – detect magic, detect poison, protection from chaos(L)*, protection from evil(G)*, purify food and drink, resistance; 1st – aid(G)*, bless, calm emotions(L)*, detect evil, endure elements, magic weapon; 2nd – augury, hold person, zone of truth.

Spells Prepared, Ranger (1, base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st – speak with animals.

Equipment: studded leather, buckler +2, longsword +2, dagger +1, ring of protection +1, backpack, bedroll, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, grappling hook, bullseye lantern, 3 pints of oil, 5 pitons, spyglass, rope, silk (50 ft), rations, trail (10 days), 150gp.

Rosina Selynn was a cleric of Pholtus, training within the Church, when she decided that its ideals were different than hers. She gathered some friends and formed the Four of Eltison. She has brown eyes and loosely curling black hair that reaches her shoulders, most likely of Flan blood. Rosina has a reserved and guarded nature, which distances her from strangers. Her friends, however, find her a stalwart companion and thus she holds the role of leader within the company. She is oblivious to the affections that Silvestro holds for her and is confused by the continual bristling of Envita.

Silvestro the Fleet, male half-elf Rog3/Ftr2: Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 3 in. tall); HD 3d6+3d10+6; hp 23; Init +3 (dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 12); Atks +10 melee (1d6-1/18-20, rapier +2); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1.

Str 9, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +6, Bluff +7, Climb +4, Decipher Script +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +5, Hide +2, Innuendo +1, Jump 0, Listen +3, Move Silently +1, Open Lock +5, Pickpocket +1, Search +4, Sense Motive +1, Spot +2, Swim -2; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Focus (Rapier), Weapon Finesse (Rapier).

SQ: Evasion—when spell allows Ref save for ½ dmg, Silvestro takes no dmg on successful save and full dmg on failed save.

Equipment: backpack, bedroll, caltrops, crowbar, dagger, explorer's outfit, leather, rapier +2, trail rations (5 days), thieves' tools.

Silvestro is an extremely charming gentleman, who often acts as spokesperson for the Four. While he always makes an effort to charm any fair lady he meets, he secretly holds strong desires for Rosina. An astute bargainer and quick thinker, Silvestro frequently gives counsel to her. He works hard to boost the spirits of the entire party.

Bartholome Festis, male human Wiz4: Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 4d4+4; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (touch 10, flat-footed 12); Atks +0 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Face/Reach list if other than 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ spells; AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +4.

Str 7, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 16, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +7, Concentration +6, Hide +3, Knowledge, Arcana +10, Spellcraft +10, Craft, Bookbinding +6, Knowledge, History +10; Combat Casting, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell.

Spells Prepared (4/3/2, base DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – daze, disrupt undead, ray of frost, read magic; 1st – comprehend languages, shield, magic missile; 2nd – levitate, web.

Equipment: traveler's outfit, bedroll, backpack, winter blanket, flint and steel, candle, ink, inkpen, parchment (5 sheets), trail rations (5 days), soap, spell book, bracers of armor +2, wand of color spray.

A timid man unsure of his abilities, Bartholome Festis seeks security amongst companions he can trust. His brown hair is cut short in a hairstyle that seems only to say how little he cares for his appearance. He appears to be of Oeridian descent. Bartholome speaks in a quiet, stuttering voice, and usually defers to the other members of the adventuring party.

Envita Aldredheart, female human Ftr3/Wiz5: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 3d10+5d4+24; hp 58; Init +8 (+4 dex, +4 improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atks +8 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ spells, illusion specialization; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4.

Str 17, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Concentration +14, Hide +9.5, Intimidate +2, Jump +7, Knowledge, Arcana +6, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +13; Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

SQ: Illusion specialization: Prepare one extra illusion spell at each level (marked in the spell list with (I)). Prohibited classes are: Divination and Necromancy.

Spells Prepared (5/5/4/3, base DC = 12 + spell level):
o – dancing lights(I), flare, ghost sound(I), mage hand, open/close, prestidigitation; 1st – change self(I), expeditious retreat, obscuring mist, silent image(I), ventriloquism(I); 2nd – alter self, invisibility(I), minor image(I), rope trick; 3rd – fly, hold person, major image(I).

Equipment: traveler's outfit, chain shirt, large steel shield, longsword, spellbook, bedroll, backpack, trail rations (5 days), ring of counterspells, ring of mind shielding.

Envita Aldredheart is a brooder. Originally honing her skills as an illusionist, she became frustrated and impatient with her studies. She now is attempting to determine if the sword is a more appropriate tool than the spell. She has tightly curled brown hair, blue eyes, and unremarkable features. The only thing remarkable about her appearance is her height and an ever-present scowl. Her spirits have been more morose as of late, mostly due to frustrated affections for her longtime companion Silvestro. She believes he and Rosina are having a covert relationship, at least partly to spite her.

The Creature

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 11d10+33 (100 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+5 Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 21 (-1 size, +5 Dex, +7 natural)

Attacks: Pellet +15

Damage: Pellet 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft

Special Attacks: Pellet spark, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Blindsight, damage reduction 25/+5, extraordinary saves, improved evasion, regeneration 5, SR 25

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +17, Will +15

Abilities: Str 14, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 18

Skills: Listen +20, Spot +20

Feats: Leadership

Climate/Terrain: Unknown

Organization: Unknown

Challenge Level: 14

Treasure: None

Alignment: Lawful evil

Advancement: Unknown

The Creature is a mobile plant life form whose body is approximately star shaped and 8 feet tall. Tiny white blossoms that seem to shimmer when it moves cover its dark green skin.

The Creature propels itself by walking along its branches. The branches end in suction cups, allowing it walk along vertical or inverted surfaces. Inside each suction cup are three small pseudopods that can be retracted, enabling the Creature to manipulate small objects. Its head is positioned on the end of a snake-like stalk protruding from the center of its body. The head can be coiled into the body or extended to a height of 9 feet. The head is roughly spherical with single orifice topped by three black bumps. These sensory organs allow the Creature to detect movement via vibration, smell, and infrared vision. The Creature is blind to the light range visible to humans.

Almost nothing about the Creature is known. It was found escorted by two similar creatures by the wizard Konrad Huber when it was merely 6 feet tall and only sparsely covered by flowers. These other creatures were generally similar in appearance, also 6 feet tall and covered in flowers of various colors. The Creature made no effort to defend itself while the other creatures protected it. Huber killed the other creatures and took this Creature captive. During the week of its captivity, the Creature grew to its full size and gained the abilities described here.

The Creature is able to ingest any form of nourishment, absorbing the food through an orifice underneath its body. The creature has a three-year lifespan, at the end of which it rapidly disintegrates into a rotting mass of plant matter.



produces a small spark upon impact that could possibly ignite highly flammable materials. The range increment of this pellet is 300 feet. When shooting the pellet, the Creature instinctively curls up its front branches.

Rather than shooting a pellet, the Creature can quickly extend its sticky tongue outward up to 30 feet to capture an opponent. This is a touch attack. To pull free of the tongue, the victim must succeed an opposed Strength roll, with a cumulative -1 penalty per round. The Creature will pull in an immobilized opponent, pinning the victim to the center of its body while using its branches to inflict an automatic 1d8 points of crushing damage per round.

Extraordinary Saves (Ex): As a function of its unusual physiology, the Creature has extremely high save bonuses.

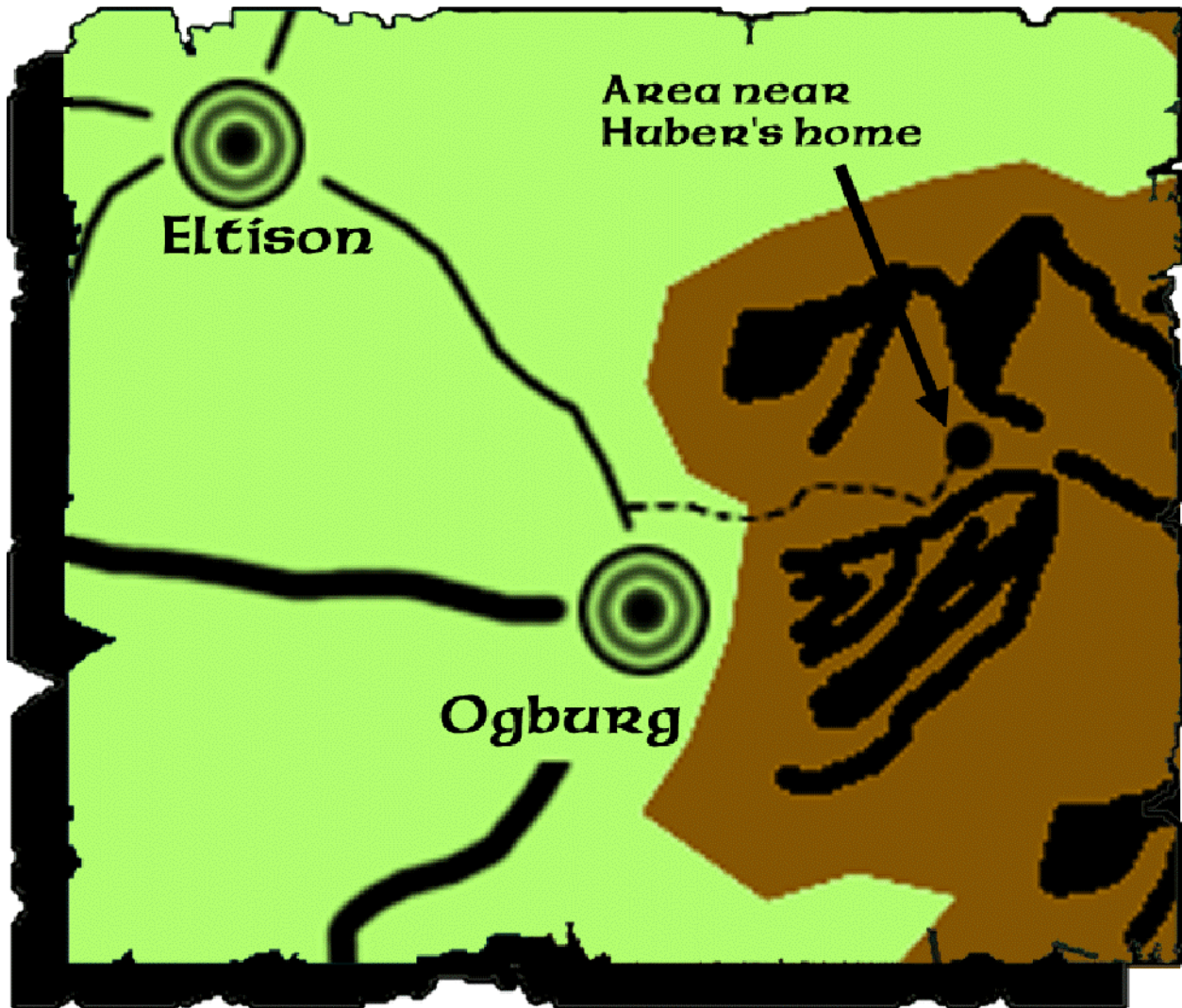
Regeneration (Ex): Silver weapons deal normal damage to the Creature.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day – *Antilife shell*, *Bigby's clenched fist*, and *Bigby's grasping hand*. In outdoor environments only, it also has the following additional abilities: 3/day - *control plants*, *control weather*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *mass invisibility*, *veil*, and *screen*. All of these abilities take effect as though cast by a 16th level wizard. The *Bigby* spells, rather than creating disembodied hands, bring forth large fist-like masses of plant matter.

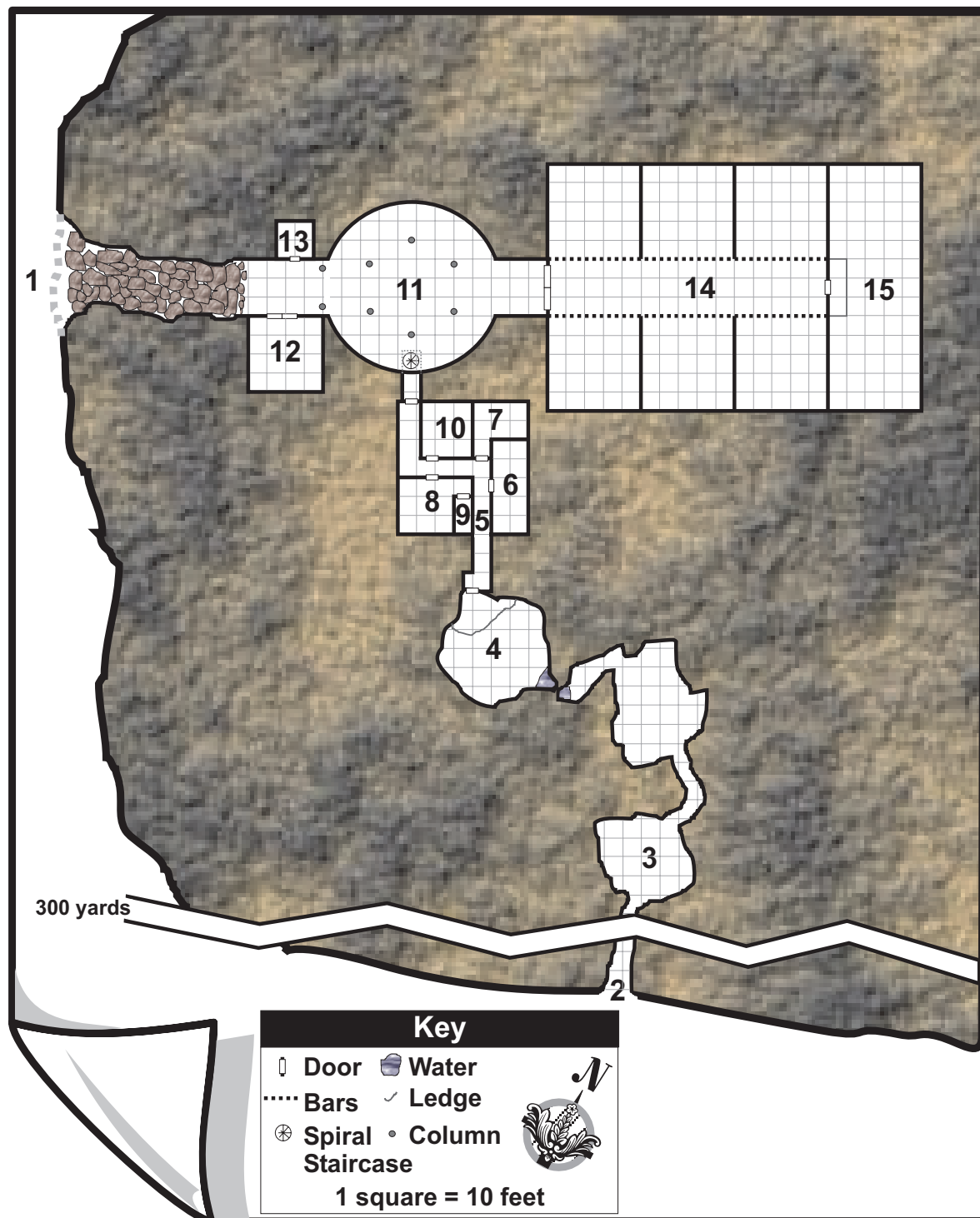
COMBAT

The Creature spits forth a secretion from the orifice in its head, solidifying upon contact with air to form a rock-hard pellet that causes 1d8 points of damage when it strikes. This pellet also

M ap to L ab



DM's Map of Lab



Letter on Desk

To E. and my other esteemed colleagues,

Our last correspondence left me greatly dissatisfied. I appreciate the fact that you are grateful for the information I have provided in the past, and I have been paid quite handsomely for my efforts, though they were undertaken at great personal risk.

My experiments are at a critical stage and the cessation of this steady stream of income will be a major setback. I anticipate that your forces will most certainly benefit from the fruits of my labor once they are realized.

To wit, I object to being cast away so casually. The intelligence I provided you about the Church Militant and the misinformation I feed into their government, played a critical role in bolstering your position. Without my help, you would not have gained the favor of your allies in Nyronde. Even in your current position I can be of great assistance - for I can continue to feed misinformation to serve as a distraction to the Militant. I am owed much more, and the information I am privy to could be very damaging to your cause if we don't work together to take steps to protect it.

Sincerely,

Konrad Huber

Notebook Excerpts - Tier 1

[Dated a week ago]

A most interesting find today. Three creatures of a nature I have never encountered before, appearing as the sketch to the right. Mobile, but definitely a species of plant. Two seemed to be protecting a rather docile third. I chose to capture one. The battle was difficult, as they exhibited some sort of regenerative ability, but a few acid arrows solved that. The third has been placed in a cell for observation. Perhaps I'll delay my meeting with Ivy.



[Dated two days ago]

The studies on the plant creature are both intriguing and frustrating. There seems to be so much to learn, but it will take so much time. I have decided to modify the routine and work on the other captive - the griffon.

The griffon provides a perfect example of the synthesis of disparate physiologies, in this instance that of the lion and the eagle. Its claws are quite effective in combat but its bite is far worse. After almost losing a few metacarpals, I decided to maim the beast and remove its beak, nullifying its ability to bite. The creature's sense of smell is extremely keen. When attacking prey, I speculate it would be able to use its hind claws in a devastating pounce attack.

I must say, I feel so fulfilled to be finally living my dream - to be working on bringing a new hybrid species to Earth. And to have my research unknowingly funded by the Church Militant!

[Dated yesterday]

The plant creature has grown significantly in size, at least three feet in stature, and just today sprouted white blossoms all over its green body. The once docile creature has recently become aggressive, banging on the cell walls and exhibiting other disconcerting behavior. I worry that I may need to euthanize it before fully studying it. It would be a shame.

Notebook Excerpts - Tier 2

[Dated a week ago]

A most interesting find today. Three creatures of a nature I have never encountered before, appearing as the sketch to the right. Mobile, but definitely a species of plant. Two seemed to be protecting a rather docile third. I chose to capture one. The battle was difficult, as they exhibited some sort of regenerative ability, but a few acid arrows solved that. The third has been placed in a cell for observation. Perhaps I'll delay my meeting with Ivy.



[Dated two days ago]

The studies on the plant creature are both intriguing and frustrating. There seems to be so much to learn, but it will take so much time. I have decided to modify the routine and work on the other captives - the griffon

and the leucrotta. The griffon provides a perfect example of the synthesis of disparate physiologies, in this instance that of the lion and the eagle. Its claws are quite effective in combat but its bite is far worse. The creature's sense of smell is extremely keen. When attacking prey, I speculate it would be able to use its hind claws in a devastating pounce attack. The leucrotta is a beautifully wretched beast, merging the stag, lion, and badger. Immune to magical charming, a keen sense of smell, and the ability to speak, and mimic another's voice - this is a fascinating creature. The jaws are so powerful, I'm sure they could sunder even the sturdiest plate armor. I must say, I feel so fulfilled to be finally living my dream - to be working on bringing a new hybrid species to Oerth. And to have my research unknowingly funded by the Church Militant!

[Dated yesterday]

The plant creature has grown significantly in size, at least three feet in stature, and just today sprouted white blossoms all over its green body. The once docile creature has recently become aggressive, banging on the cell walls and exhibiting other disconcerting behavior. I worry that I may need to euthanize it before fulfilling studying it. It would be a shame.

Notebook Excerpts - Tier 3

[Dated a week ago]

A most interesting find today. Three creatures of a nature I have never encountered before, appearing as the sketch to the right. Mobile, but definitely a species of plant. Two seemed to be protecting a rather docile third. I chose to capture one. The battle was difficult, as they exhibited some sort of regenerative ability, but a few acid arrows solved that. The third has been placed in a cell for observation. Perhaps I'll delay my meeting with Ivy.



[Dated two days ago]

The studies on the plant creature are both intriguing and frustrating. There seems to be so much to learn, but it will take so much time. I have decided to modify the routine and work on the other captives - the dragonne

and the peryton. The dragonne provides a perfect example of the synthesis of disparate physiologies, in this instance that of the lion and the brass dragon. Its claws are quite effective in combat but its bite is far worse. The creature's sense of smell is extremely keen. When capturing it, its roar almost deafened me; thankfully I was able to enchant its cell to prevent further such sonic assaults. The peryton is a beautifully wretched beast, merging the stag and the eagle. It attacks with two claws, two slams from its wings, and a bite - all at once - making it a fearsome foe. Before capturing it, I witnessed it pulling the beating heart from its prey - an attack that would be difficult to recover from. I must say, I feel so fulfilled to be finally living my dream - to be working on bringing a new hybrid species to Oerth. And to have my research unknowingly funded by the Church Militant!

[Dated yesterday]

The plant creature has grown significantly in size, at least three feet in stature, and just today sprouted white blossoms all over its green body. The once docile creature has recently become aggressive, banging on the cell walls and exhibiting other disconcerting behavior. I worry that I may need to euthanize it before fully studying it. It would be a shame.

Notebook Excerpts - Tier 4

[Dated a week ago]

A most interesting find today. Three creatures of a nature I have never encountered before, appearing as the sketch to the right. Mobile, but definitely a species of plant. Two seemed to be protecting a rather docile third. I chose to capture one. The battle was difficult, as they exhibited some sort of regenerative ability, but a few acid arrows solved that. The third has been placed in a cell for observation. Perhaps I'll delay my meeting with Ivy.



[Dated two days ago]

The studies on the plant creature are both intriguing and frustrating. There seems to be so much to learn, but it will take so much time. I have decided to modify the routine and work on the other captives - the dragonnes

and the perytons. The dragonne provides a perfect example of the synthesis of disparate physiologies, in this instance that of the lion and the brass dragon. Its claws are quite effective in combat but its bite is far worse. The creature's sense of smell is extremely keen. When capturing it, its roar almost deafened me; thankfully I was able to enchant its cell to prevent further such sonic assaults. The peryton is a beautifully wretched beast, merging the stag and the eagle. It attacks with two claws, two slams from its wings, and a bite - all at once - making it a fearsome foe. Before capturing it, I witnessed it pulling the beating heart from its prey - an attack that would be difficult to recover from. I must say, I feel so fulfilled to be finally living my dream - to be working on bringing a new hybrid species to Oerth. And to have my research unknowingly funded by the Church Militant!

[Dated yesterday]

The plant creature has grown significantly in size, at least three feet in stature, and just today sprouted white blossoms all over its green body. The once docile creature has recently become aggressive, banging on the cell walls and exhibiting other disconcerting behavior. I worry that I may need to euthanize it before fully studying it. It would be a shame.

Notebook Excerpts - Tier 5

[Dated a week ago]

A most interesting find today. Three creatures of a nature I have never encountered before, appearing as the sketch to the right. Mobile, but definitely a species of plant. Two seemed to be protecting a rather docile third. I chose to capture one. The battle was difficult, as they exhibited some sort of regenerative ability, but a few acid arrows solved that. The third has been placed in a cell for observation. Perhaps I'll delay my meeting with Ivy.



[Dated two days ago]

The studies on the plant creature are both intriguing and frustrating. There seems to be so much to learn, but it will take so much time. I have decided to modify the routine and work on the other captives - the dragonnes

and the spiritnagas. The dragonne provides a perfect example of the synthesis of disparate physiologies, in this instance that of the lion and the brass dragon. Its claws are quite effective in combat but its bite is far worse. The creature's sense of smell is extremely keen. When capturing it, its roar almost deafened me; thankfully I was able to enchant its cell to prevent further such sonic assaults. The spiritnaga has the body of a snake and the head of a woman. Its accurate bite delivers a potent poison, and its gaze charmed Bjorn when we captured it. It also casts spells like those wretched untrained sorcerers.

I was able to enchant the cells to prevent the nagas from using their spells against me. I must say, I feel so fulfilled to be finally living my dream - to be working on bringing a new hybrid species to Oerth. And to have my research unknowingly funded by the Church Militant!

[Dated yesterday]

The plant creature has grown significantly in size, at least three feet in stature, and just today sprouted white blossoms all over its green body. The once docile creature has recently become aggressive, banging on the cell walls and exhibiting other disconcerting behavior. I worry that I may need to euthanize it before fully studying it. It would be a shame.

ENLISTING THE ICONIC

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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