

SHLI-10

THE PORTAL

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®
Shield Lands Regional Adventure

Version 1

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Someone has breached the ancient portal near Torkeep in an attempt to recover a dangerous item that could herald the end of the Shield Lands... or perhaps save it. You must enter the portal and stop them from reaching their goal. Before you're done you may have to choose between your duty and your conscience. An adventure for characters levels 2-8.

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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 rule books 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:

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.

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.

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.

LIVING GREYHAWK TIER STRUCTURE

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 th
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8 th
T4:	33-42	36-46	39-50	42-54	10 th

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

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.

Note: These costs are slightly higher than average for Living Greyhawk events. This is intended to simulate the effects of the Shield Lands' serious overpopulation problem on the local economy.

Lifestyle Cost	Skill Modifier	
Destitute	17 sp	-2
Poor	5 gp	-1
Common	15 gp	0
High	300 gp	+1
Luxury	600 gp	+2

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In SHL1-09 Lord Torkeep's Request, it was discovered that a portal somewhere near Torkeep was being guarded by an avoral. When an old scribe accidentally summoned the creature with a failed casting of a summoning scroll, the avoral was driven mad and the portal he defended was left unguarded. A group of pathfinders were trying to rescue the old scribe from Torkeep and helped him banish the creature. During the course of the adventure they learned of the danger of the portal, but not the details.

Shortly thereafter, the armies of the Shield Lands recovered Torkeep and now the Shield Lands enjoy their first taste of victory in over three years. Lord Torkeep has been placed in charge, reclaiming his birthright, and is fortifying his position as fast as possible. Many

pathfinder units have been assigned to patrol the border and defend the keep. The PCs' party is one of these units.

Unknown to anyone in Torkeep, the fortress was built near an ancient portal leading to a small demi-plane. The demi-plane is the resting place of a powerful magic item called the Rod of Elementals. The rod has the ability to transform humans and demi-humans into various types of elementals against their will. Once transformed, they are completely under the control of whoever holds the rod. Long ago (long before the formation of the Shield Lands) the rod was removed from the Flanaess because of its awful power. A guardian was placed at the portal to the demi-plane to stand guard and stop anyone from entering or leaving the demi-plane. He stood at his post until the miscast summoning spell tore him from his post. The pathfinders who tried to help undo the damage didn't realize that banishing the creature would have unforeseen consequences. Without the avoral, the portal was left unguarded.

Once reports of the events at Torkeep reached the Council of Lords, Lord Regent Natan Enarick of Bright Sentry started investigating stories he had run across in his adventuring youth. Lord Enarick used various means at his disposal to discover part of the story behind the portal and the rod. Believing he could use it to help the Shield Lands, he secretly sent a Knight of the Northern Guard to recover it. With the portal unguarded, the knight and his retinue passed through easily.

Now, the avoral (who has finally found a way to return to his post after being banished) needs someone to follow the knight across the portal and stop him from recovering the rod. The avoral won't tell the PCs who has gone through the portal, claiming ignorance (a lie). He will not tell the PCs anything about the Rod of Elementals, fearing that if they knew what it was capable of, they might foolishly try to use it themselves in hopes of controlling it for the good of the Shield Lands (just like Lord Enarick believes he can do). Before he allows them to cross the portal, he forces them to swear an oath that they find whoever is seeking the rod (which he calls the "item") and bring them back, leaving the "item" undisturbed.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

While the PCs are patrolling the border near the recently recovered Torkeep, a celestial creature called an avoral approaches them. PCs who ran through Lord Torkeep's Request recognize him as the same one they faced before.

He tells them that because the portal was left unguarded when its guardian was banished, someone has broken the seal and crossed through it. The only reason anyone would enter the portal is to recover a dangerous artifact imprisoned in the demi-plane beyond. He demands that the PCs make up for their mistake (or the mistakes of others of their "kind" if they didn't run through Lord Torkeep's Request) and stop the thieves before they can succeed. Once the PCs agree to cross the portal, find the would-be thieves and make sure the artifact remains

where it is, the avoral teleports them to a cavern deep beneath the earth near Torkeep. After a disorienting trip through the portal, the PCs find themselves in a new land.

Following the rough trail away from the portal, the PCs work their way around a large mountain lake and down a steep incline. At the bottom they find a magnificent waterfall and a beautiful pool. Amidst the spray of the falls they find an intelligent water elemental singing and playing. She is playful and inquisitive and the party learns some important information about the land they travel in and how to communicate with its natives.

After a day of travel, the PCs spot a town where they might find out more information about those they seek. The trip to the town is short and the party arrives in time to see the gates close and hear large bells being rung. The town is under attack by "sky demons" (actually belkers). The party helps fight off the attack and is welcomed inside the town as friends and heroes.

Once inside the walled town, the party learns more about the land they're in and its history. The information proves helpful in figuring out what's really going on and they learn that the item they seek may be located in the mountain to the west. They also learn that no one else has visited the town recently (or ever, for that matter). Unfortunately, going in to the western mountains is forbidden because venturing there angers the demons the natives fear. The townsfolk tell the party they are welcome to stay as long as they like, but if they insist on going in to the mountains, they have no choice but to stop them.

Faced with several options, the PCs decide to follow a sympathetic woman into the mountains to complete their mission. Her knowledge of the town and the surrounding terrain helps them find their way and make excellent time. Along the way they must avoid patrols sent out by the town, but eventually they reach their goal.

After a day of travel the PCs come across a sickening disaster. Someone has destroyed a small thorp. Investigations reveal evidence that suggests that the villains the PCs pursue may be to blame. Every building has burned to the ground, most with the inhabitants still inside and the few bodies found outside are badly burned as well. The PCs also find fresh tracks to follow.

Once in the mountains, the party finds a temple of sorts. Floating above the center is an ornate rod glowing with arcane power. Four pillars stand at the cardinal points, each in the shape of one of the four basic elements; air, earth, fire and water. As the party tries to cross the lines formed by the pillars, mephits spring up and attack. Eventually, the party is able to figure out the trick to entering the "temple" safely and investigate the area.

Before the party can really accomplish much investigating, they receive unexpected visitors. Surprisingly, the leader of the new arrivals is a Knight of the Northern Guard who claims the rod in the name of the Shield Lands and Lord Regent Natan Enarick of Bright Sentry. After a heated discussion, the players learn

the story behind the knight's mission and the truth behind the burned and ravaged thorp. They also learn that they cannot dissuade the determined knight from completing his mission regardless of the consequences, which he believes are exaggerations and lies made by those who would deprive the Shield Lands of the aid it so desperately needs.

The party continues to try to persuade the knight not to claim the rod but to no avail. The knight, desperate to prove the righteousness of his cause, grabs the rod. The knight and the rod struggle for control, but the knight looses and the evil artifact gains control. Using the knight like a puppet, the artifact changes the knight's retainers into various types of elementals and command them to destroy the party. The party fights off the transformed soldiers, but the artifact refuses to yield. It transforms the knight into a powerful elemental and attacks the party. After a terrible battle, the party is able to destroy the fallen knight and return the (now temporarily dormant) rod to its rightful place.

Returning through the portal, the party is met by the avoral (and a few of his friends). The party is told they have done an excellent job cleaning up the mess and the avorals are thankful. After an exchange of words and some wrap up explanations, the party is teleported back to where the avoral first approached them.

INTRODUCTION

Before beginning, ask the players if the characters they are using have gone through SHL1-09 Lord Torkeep's Request.

It is only days after the recovery of Torkeep and you find yourself on patrol once again. Lord Torkeep recently led a surprise assault on the keep and retook it from Iuz's minions. Now, nearly every Pathfinder in the Shield Lands is stationed at Torkeep now, waiting for Iuz to try to take back the stronghold. The recovery of Torkeep is the Shield Lands' first major victory in the War of Reclamation in over three years. Many feel that taking a poorly defended keep was nothing compared to the attack that is yet to come.

And the attack will come; of this there is no doubt, but what makes cold sweat drip down the backs of every man and woman is not knowing when it will come or how bad it will be when it arrives.

You do your best to stay focused and alert, but your mind can't help wandering to the impending battle. Will you survive? If the keep falls, will Iuz push on to Critwall and finally crush the Holy Realm? You shiver reflexively at the thought of loosing your homeland once again and make a silent vow that you won't let that happen!

For the better part of the day you and your fellow Pathfinders have been tracking a patrol of hobgoblins, most likely an advance scout for Iuz's forces coming to reclaim the keep.

So far your prey isn't aware of your pursuit. The terrain has allowed you to set up the perfect ambush. In a few minutes, a few less hobgoblins will plague the Shield Lands!

As the foul beast heads come into view, you ready your weapons and spells for the attack. Seconds before the call is given, a stranger appears in your midst.

If any of the players have played Lord Torkeep's Request using the characters they are playing in this event, read the following:

Floating soundlessly in mid air above you is a beautiful creature. He has the body of a tall, muscular human with wings in place of arms and hands at the midpoints. His lower legs end in strong talons and long, feathery vanes sprout from the backs of his calves. His face is more human than avian, but his hair is a feathery cowl and the eyes are bright gold. His face bears a proud and confident expression as he stares intently at your group. You instantly recognize him as the celestial creature you met at Torkeep several weeks ago.

The sudden appearance of the creature directly above your position spoils the ambush and alerts the hobgoblins, who raise the alarm and ready for battle.

If none of the players have played Lord Torkeep's Request, read the following instead:

Floating soundlessly in mid air above you is a beautiful creature the likes of which you have never seen before. He has the body of a tall, muscular human with wings in place of arms and hands at the midpoints. His lower legs end in strong talons and long, feathery vanes sprout from the backs of his calves. His face is more human than avian, but his hair is a feathery cowl and the eyes are bright gold. His face bears a proud and confident expression as he stares intently at your group.

The sudden appearance of the creature directly above your position spoils the ambush and alerts the hobgoblins, who raise the alarm and ready for battle.

Give the players a chance to react and then read the following in a deep voice:

"The portal lies unguarded... and the seal has been broken! You are to blame for the danger we now face. You must make amends."

As soon as the creature speaks, the hobgoblins turn and run deeper into the brush. Any chance of catching them now is certainly lost.

Again, give the players a chance to react and then read the following if any PC has been through Lord Torkeep's Request:

"The old fool's spell began this and your interference finished it when you returned me to my home in shame. Because of you, a great evil may walk the Oerth in the guise of an ally.

I cannot cross the portal, so you must go in my place. Thieves have already entered the place beyond and even now seek to retrieve the evil. Someone must stop them! Will you help me?"

Otherwise, read the following:

"An old fool's spell began this and the interference of others of your kind finished it when they returned me to my home in shame. Because of them, a great evil may walk the Oerth again in the guise of an ally.

I cannot cross the portal, so you must go in my place and atone for the mistakes of your kind. Thieves have already entered the place beyond and even now seek to retrieve the evil. Someone must stop them! Will you help me?"

If the players refuse, read the following:

"COWARDS! Your world is threatened and you let fear rule you. Time is too short, I must find others." With that, the creature flies away, leaving you to wonder what new danger faces the Shield Lands because of your refusal.

The adventure for them is now over. If the players agree, continue from here:

"Time grows short. Come!" With that, the creature waves his hand and a flash of light blinds you for what seems like an eternity. When your eyes clear, you are in an underground cavern about fifty feet in diameter. Above you looms what must be millions of tons of dirt and rock. Around the cavern are three more creatures almost identical to the one who brought you here.

Before you on one wall is a plain stone archway filled with shimmering water. Looking through the archway is like looking into a pool of gently rippling water, only that instead of seeing your reflection, you see another world.

The creature points to the archway and says "Cross the portal and stop those who seek to return the evil to this world. When you have succeeded, return to the portal and step through. Fail, and I will be forced to destroy any who try to return, but even that may not be enough to stop the evil from escaping."

"Stop the thieves however you wish, but let nothing from the other side cross into this world. Please go now, time is short!" and he points at the portal.

The PCs can back out at this point. If so, read the following:

"COWARD(S)! Your world is threatened and you let fear rule you." With that, you are blinded by another flash. When your vision clears you are back where you first encountered the creature. You are left to wonder what new danger faces the Shield Lands because of your refusal to help.

The adventure for them is now over. If any PCs remain and step through the portal, go to Encounter One.

ALL TIERS – ELI1

➤ **Avoral (Guardinal)** (4): hp 96 each (HD14d8+14); see *Monster Manual* page 29.

Development: By the time the PCs have finished speaking with the avoral, the hobgoblins have fled, ruining a day's worth of hunting.

If any of the PCs are stupid enough to turn this into a battle, the original avoral disappears saying "Time is short. I must find others who are willing to help!", leaving the

other avorals to deal with the PCs. There is no possible way any group of PCs can defeat three avorals, but let them try.

Many players will be full of questions about the nature of the thieves, the evil and all sorts of other things. The avoral needs their help, but isn't willing to divulge too much information. He will try to sidestep direct questions and when all else fails, he will lie, telling the PCs that he does not know who has gone through or what exactly they seek, only that they cannot be allowed to return through the portal with the evil artifact. The truth is, he does know, but he believes that telling the PCs will only complicate things. He will try to rush the PCs into deciding, repeatedly saying "Time is short!" or "You must act now!" and other things along those lines.

ENCOUNTER 1: A PORTAL WITH A VIEW

Stepping into the portal feels like stepping into warm water without getting wet. You can feel the liquid press in around your body, enveloping you completely. You take a step... then another and you emerge on the other side, slightly disoriented, but unharmed.

The first indication that you've left the Shield Lands comes from the smell, followed quickly by the cold. The air is filled with a deep, wet earthy odor tinged with ash and smoke. A strong breeze blows haphazardly, biting at you and making the cold even worse. It must be barely above freezing.

As long as the PCs have cloaks or blankets and keep moving, the cold won't affect them too badly. If they are completely unprepared see p. 86-88 of the DMG for weather effects. The temperature is 35 degrees Fahrenheit and the wind speed ranges from 5-20 mph.

The portal sits behind you on a sheer cliff top, its plain stone archway no different from the other side. As the last of your party steps through, the shimmering water begins to swirl, pulling itself apart from the center and disappearing. Beyond, you can see a crumbling, rocky edge and then nothing but open air. If you took a step back through the portal now, you would fall from the cliff into an endless abyss.

Give the players a chance to react. When they take a look around, read the following:

You stand high on a mountain peak, on a small ledge overlooking a precipice. On the edge of the precipice lies the portal through which you came. Twin suns ride high in the sky. On Oerth, it would be just after noon, but here, you can't be sure.

Facing away from the portal, the landscape stretches to the horizon. To your left, the mountains gradually drop to a massive lake or inland sea that eventually seems to fade into the sky.

To the right, the mountains continue to climb higher and higher. In the distance, dark smoke billows from the peaks of some of the mountains.

Opposite the portal, a path leads down into a large valley. It's hard to see clearly, but it is possible that a town or village of some sort sits on the valley floor on the shore of the great lake.

The only exit from the small ledge is the path leading towards the valley floor. The path is rough, but not dangerous and can be navigated easily if the PCs are careful.

Remind the PCs that the cold is making them shiver and unless they have protection, they'll probably risk hypothermia.

The portal is made of rough fieldstone. It has no markings and looks like a simple stone archway. If magic is detected for, it detects as overwhelming transmutation magic. If the PCs approach within one foot of the portal with the intent to return through it, it will activate.

PCs searching for tracks will find (DC15) clear sign of six humanoids, roughly human-size congregating around the Portal and then heading down the trail. The tracks are easy enough to follow until further down the trail (as described in later Encounters).

This plane is very "close" to the elemental planes and as a result, the elements tend to leak through. As the PCs begin to travel, be sure to describe the little oddities that occur around them. Things like oddly, yet randomly swirling clouds, fires that burn brighter and hotter than normal, water that bubbles and ripples as if disturbed when nothing has touched it and sand or dirt that forms barely noticeable patterns that are there one moment and gone the next. Feel free to add your own ideas, giving the players the idea that something is subtly different here.

ENCOUNTER 2: IT'S A NICE DAY FOR A SWIM

After several hours of travel, you are tired and in need of a cool drink. The temperature has risen a bit and you are no longer shivering in the cold wind. In fact, the bright sun is warm on your face and you are able to remove your cloak. In the distance, a mountain stream meanders down the rocky slopes, cutting towards your path. Eventually, the trail you follow meets the stream at the base of a large waterfall.

By this point, the wind has died down to a slight breeze and the temperature has risen to 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

Cold mountain water cascades from the hundred-foot falls into a pristine pool surrounded by deep mountain forest. The pool's banks are covered in deep moss and the spray from the falls chills your exposed skin. Beyond the pool, the stream continues down towards the valley floor, flanked on one side by a now, more gradually descending trail.

The scene is just what it appears, with one exception. It is the home of a friendly and intelligent water elemental. Alert PCs may hear it singing before they reach the pool (Listen, DC 20). Its song sounds like an accompaniment to the crashing of the waterfall (which is why it's easily

missed). The elemental stops singing as soon as the PCs reach the pool unless they are very quiet as they approach (the elemental has Listen +11).

The elemental has no name, but tends to be rather playful and inquisitive. If the PCs approach the pool, the elemental tries to surprise them by splashing water at them from below the surface. It continues to try and get the PCs to play with it, but if they seem uninterested, it takes a vaguely female humanoid form and sulks beneath the waterfalls (in plain sight of course so the PCs can't miss it).

The elemental can speak Aquan. If the PCs manage to talk to it, they can learn the following:

- The pool is its home. It doesn't get many visitors and it's lonely.
- It has no name for this place, but it says that it is a place that is close to the "four sources of life" (i.e. the four elements).
- Not all of the other things that live here are as friendly as it is. In fact, most are violent and unfriendly.
- It has been to the "great water" and it goes on forever. It enjoyed the visit, but prefers its pool.
- It doesn't know what the "smoking mountains" are because it can't go near them without feeling ill.
- Another group of travelers passed by a while ago, but they were too serious and it let them go past after they tried to hurt it. He doesn't remember what they looked like, but they were "like you are, not like I am".
- If the PCs search in the weeds and leaves at the base of the falls (DC 10), they find a jug of odd smelling liquid. A Spot check (DC 15) by an alert PC will also locate the jug if the PCs come anywhere near the pool. If asked, the elemental tells them that someone once left the jug near the pool and never came back for it. One sip from the jug will provide the same effects as a *tongues* spell cast by a 10th level bard. Unfortunately, the liquid is slightly poisonous (Fort save, DC12) causing mild nausea for twenty-four hours (-1 to attack, damage, saves and skill checks). There are twelve sips in the jug. If the jug is taken back through the Portal, the liquid becomes normal water.

By the time the PCs reach the pool, it is getting dark. The elemental (if they can communicate with it) welcomes them to stay and enjoy the pool's cool beauty. If they can't speak to it, it leaves them alone while they rest for the night (except for maybe a few playful splashes and a light-hearted attempt to put out their fire (if they light one).

ALL TIERS – EL5

☛ **Water Elemental, Large:** hp 68; see *Monster Manual* page 81.

Development: This isn't meant to be a combat encounter. If the PCs can find a way to communicate with the elemental, they can learn some helpful information. If the PCs hurt it, it tries to flee. If they insist on hunting it down, it protects itself.

The tracks the PCs have been following continue past the pool without stopping for long.

ENCOUNTER 3: HELP US! SKY DEMONS ARE ATTACKING THE VILLAGE!

For the next day and a half, the PCs travel into the valley passing through primal mountain forests. Wildlife and fresh water are abundant and the climate has evened out to a comfortable 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The nights are cool (about 50° F), but pleasant.

Eventually, the PCs come to the valley floor. From where they emerge they can see the lake and the walled town they saw from above. They can easily reach the town before nightfall.

Up until this point, following the tracks of your quarry was not difficult. As the trail opens up into the broad valley floor, the tracks abruptly disappear.

Let the PCs make a Wilderness Lore check to try and find the tracks again, but it automatically fails (don't tell them this of course). Their quarry's tracks have been removed by an evil earth elemental that began hunting the Sir Halesin's group when they entered the valley. Sir Halesin and his group were forced to fight the elemental as they tried to leave the valley on the other side.

If the PCs approach the town, read the following:

As you get closer to the town, you can see some of the townsfolk going about their business; working in the fields outside the walls, repairing fences and tending to flocks.

From this distance, the people look human and seem to be unarmed. The town walls are manned by a surprising number of watchmen and large ballista can be seen in each of the many towers.

Suddenly, the watchmen on the walls begin to point in your direction and shout in an unrecognizable language. In response, loud bells begin to chime and the townsfolk outside the walls begin to run towards the town gates.

The language is a strange cross between Aquan, Auran, Ignan and Terran, anyone who speaks any two of the four languages can make out enough to communicate basic ideas. Two or more PCs who know different elemental languages can work together to translate for the rest of the party, but only a PC who speaks all four languages can communicate easily with the townsfolk. The watchmen on the walls are yelling "Beware! Sky Demons! Run for safety!"

If they don't immediately say they're looking around, they're surprised by the attacking belkers behind them. Read the following:

For a moment, it seems as if the townsfolk are reacting to your presence, but the truth quickly makes itself known. Smoke-like creatures tear into your party and attack!

If the PCs are not surprised, read this to the PCs who turn around:

Spinning around to see what the townsfolk are afraid of, you see smoke-like creatures flying rapidly towards you. They do not look friendly.

Any of the PCs who are not surprised may roll initiative; the rest must wait until their surprise wears off.

Creatures: The attacking creatures are belkers. They are black-winged creatures composed of thick smoke that shifts and changes shape with every movement. They have a decidedly demonic appearance and are thoroughly evil.

TIER 2 (EL 8)

☛ **Belker** (2): hp 38 each; see *Monster Manual* page 26.

TIER 3 (EL 10)

☛ **Belker** (4): hp 38 each; see *Monster Manual* page 26.

TIER 4 (EL 12)

☛ **Belker** (8): hp 38 each; see *Monster Manual* page 26.

Tactics: The belkers' tactics are pretty straightforward. They assume smoke form and move in to attack using their smoke claws to kill their target. They focus on the weakest first. If they drop below 25% of their normal hit points they flee.

If the DM wants to make the encounter a bit more dramatic, have the belkers fly over the PCs' heads and head for a few defenseless townsfolk forcing the PCs to run after them to save the poor people.

The watchmen on the walls do not use the ballista if the PCs are engaged in battle with the belkers, until the creatures get within 100 feet of the walls. They don't know the PCs and saving the town is more important than saving strangers.

Development: If for some reason, the PCs don't go to town or ignore the attack on it, skip this encounter. If the townsfolk saw the PCs during the attack, but the PCs didn't bother to help they are a lot less friendly when/if the PCs eventually meet them.

ENCOUNTER 4: YOU'RE NOT FROM AROUND HERE, ARE YOU?

If the PCs approach the town after the battle with the belkers, they are met by closed gates and untrustworthy townsfolk. The townsfolk aren't aggressive, just cautious. As long as the PCs are friendly and make no threatening gestures, the townsfolk eventually let them in, welcoming them as friends.

The wooden ramparts of the town tower above you some thirty feet casting an impressive shadow on the ground before the ironbound wooden gates. Soldiers line the tops of the wall, most nervously aiming crossbows at you. One of the soldiers begins to shout at you in an unknown language. He keeps repeating the same phrase over and over and staring at you as if you were simpleminded for not responding.

Because of the odd language the townsfolk speak, the PCs may have a hard time communicating without the aid of spells or the jug from Encounter Two. As mentioned in Encounter Four, the PCs can recognize parts of the language and exchange basic ideas if they know one of the four elemental languages. Luckily, the people are smart and basic concepts can be communicated via gestures if all else fails.

Read the following when (or if) the PCs enter the town.

The large gates slowly open with a squeal of protest. Four soldiers struggle with the gates, while six others stand back a few feet with crossbows and spears ready, but not threatening. Beyond the soldiers, curious townsfolk can be seen trying to get a glimpse of the strangers from windows and alleyways.

The town itself looks no different than many in the Shield Lands (at least before the occupation) with a few exceptions. The walls themselves seem to be covered in some reddish-green liquid, probably intended to reduce the danger of fire or preserve the wood. Long wooden walkways wide enough for horse drawn carts, connect each building, which themselves are raised slightly above the ground on stilts. Though made almost exclusively of wood and smeared with the same reddish-green liquid, a slate roof caps each building.

Within minutes, a group of five older townsfolk, three males and two females, make their way towards you. Without a word, the crowd parts to let them through and they walk right up to you and bow graciously, speaking in the same strange language.

If the PCs can understand the town elders, read the following:

"Thank you for defeating the sky demon(s). We are in your debt. We have never had visitors before and welcome you in peace. Please, come this way we have many questions and wish to know you better."

Let the PCs react, and read the following only if the PCs can't understand the local language:

After an awkward pause, the five figures gesture for you to follow them.

If the PCs follow, they notice the guards follow a few paces behind. The elders lead the PCs to a meeting hall and offer them seats and a cool drink of water. From there, they begin to question the PCs.

The people of the town appear human and to initial appearances look like purebred Flan. They enjoy the same level of technology and medicine (such that it is) and live basically the same type of lives.

The town doesn't have a name that translates any better than "home near the great water". Each person has their own distinct name, which they share with the PCs if asked. Most townsfolk are curious, but stay well away from the "strangers" and let the town elders speak for them. A Spot check (DC 15) allows a PC to notice that one woman, a guard from the wall, pays very close attention to them. She is young, dressed like the other guards and openly stares at the PCs for as long as they are near her. If the PCs confront her, she becomes embarrassed and apologizes (and is chastised by Pari).

One thing the PCs can pick up on easily is that the townsfolk are very superstitious. A talisman hangs in almost every window and above every doorway. They avoid stepping in shadows (particularly those of another person or animal) and make elaborate gestures when the wind gusts, the fire pops, water spills or dirt or mud is tracked onto a clean floor (most people take their shoes off before entering a building to avoid this). Other oddities include chain mail-like curtains in front of all hearths, lids on water barrels and buckets, intricate wind chimes hanging from trees near buildings and wooden walkways between buildings. If asked about it, the townsfolk say these things "keep the demons away" (and then perform another ritual to chase away bad luck for mentioning the "demons").

The town elders lead the PCs to a sparsely appointed meetinghouse to interview them. The room quickly fills up as they allow as many townsfolk that can fit inside to watch. No matter where they go, the PCs are always followed by an equal number of guards. The guards are all 2nd level Warriors with leather armor, small metal shields, shortspears and short swords. The only time the PCs are left alone is when they go to the bathroom (when a guard escorts them to the outhouse, and waits outside) or they sleep (the guards stay outside). If the PCs noticed the girl watching them as they entered the gates, they see she is now one of their guards.

The townsfolk are lead by a council of elders consisting of five of the oldest and wisest townsfolk. The elders make all major decisions, and even the young seem content with the system.

The elders prefer if the PCs only talk to them, but if they push the issue, the PCs can talk to whomever they like. The elders will be very cautious and ask many

questions about the PCs and where they come from. In particular, they ask the following questions:

- Where did you come from?
- How did you get here?
- What is it like where you come from?
- Why are you here?
- Are you demons in disguise?
- Are you going to stay?
- Are others like you going to come here?

Whether from the elders or someone else, the PCs can learn the following:

- The elders names are Aaris, Baram, Ilso, Jatta and Pari.
- The name of the town translates as “home near the great water”
- The town has a population of about five hundred people. They live on the shore of the big lake, farming, fishing and gathering things from the valley. A few other villages and thorps exist within a few days travel, but this is the largest settlement.
- There are no wizards, sorcerers, druids, paladins or bards among them. Only a few clerics who worship the “four sources of life”.
- The town has been here for as long as anyone can remember.
- No other strangers have ever come to the town before, though there are other villages.
- The townsfolk live in fear of demons (like the belkers and others). They have found that as long as they live their lives a certain way and avoid angering the demons, they leave them alone.
- Several places are considered particularly taboo and no one is allowed to go there: “the ends of the world” (The ledge where the Portal the PCs came through is one, called the “eye of eternity” and the “temple of demons” is the other.) and the big lake beyond sight of the shore. Of the three, the “temple of demons” is considered the most dangerous and punishment for going there is death.

Creatures: Town Elders

🔮 **Aaris:** Male human – Aaris is the default leader of the elders, though Pari often challenges his authority. He is a slim, kindly old man, full of wisdom and compassion. He tends to be overly cautious and will choose to proceed in a way that best protects the town and it's people, even if it means unfairly restricting the freedom of others.

🔮 **Baram:** Male human – Baram is a rotund man with a round, jovial face and prominent jowls. Walking more than a few feet seems to tire the man and sweat drips from his brow even while seated. He tries to look contemplative by squinting his eyes and rubbing his fat

chin, but rarely offers an opinion or even speaks for that matter. He will react positively to the PCs only if they conduct themselves with manners and respect.

🔮 **Ilso:** Male human – Ilso is a weasely little man long ago broken by an overbearing wife (who recently passed away). He tends to raise his nose up to anything Pari disagrees with and openly scoffs at just about anything Baram says (which isn't much).

🔮 **Jatta:** Female human – Jatta is open and friendly. She is very interested in the PCs and smiles a lot while trying to get them to eat something or tell her more about themselves. If the PCs turn down her offers of friendship and food, she will react negatively to them.

🔮 **Pari:** Female human – Pari is a stern old woman with sharp features and an even sharper tongue. She makes no attempt to disguise her dislike for the PCs (or anyone else) and nothing will change her mind. If the PCs make the mistake of contradicting her, she will fly into a rage, spewing venom at them and blaming them for bringing the sky demons to the town.

Development: For helping fight off the “sky demons”, the PCs are offered room and board for as long as they stay. The food is tasty and has very rich flavors; the water is clear and fresh.

If the PCs ask about the “temple of demons” (and you can bet they will), the town elders seem extremely hesitant to discuss it. They say over and over again that it is “...an evil place and even speaking of it can anger the demons!” Pari in particular will bring this up and points out (as accusingly as possible) that the “demons had been quiet until the strangers arrived.” She'll suggest that it must be the PCs' presence that has angered the demons and the longer they stay, the more danger the town is in.

No matter how positive the other elders have been up until now, this sobers them to reality. They'll ask if there is any reason the “demons” might not want the PCs here and if they haven't told them why they're here yet, they ask what the PCs are going to do.

If the PCs even suggest going to the “temple of demons”, all the townsfolk present will become very upset. Pari will demand they be imprisoned before they can “bring the wrath of the demons down upon the town!” Once the PCs mention going to the temple, the townsfolk will be very hesitant to let them go. If the townsfolk know the PCs came through the “eye of eternity”, they will insist guards escort the PCs back to it when they leave. They will not allow the PCs to leave otherwise. The worst they do is lock them up in a building with no bars on the windows.

If the PCs didn't fight the belkers, or worse, the townsfolk saw them run away leaving the town to fight them off alone, this encounter runs much differently.

Approaching the town without fighting the belkers means the PCs will have a harder time getting through the gates. As long as they don't do anything stupid, they'll get inside and the elders will still talk to them, but they'll

get no automatic hospitality (and since the town gets no visitors, there's no Inn) and they'll be asked to stay outside the town walls (unless they bring up the temple, see above).

If the PCs ran from the fight with the belkers, they won't even get close to the walls. The watchmen warn them off with the ballista as soon as they get into range. This means the PCs won't get all the information they might get otherwise, but all is not lost. The same girl who normally takes an interest in them will still do so, but she'll approach them as described in Encounter Five except it will be at their camp the first night after attempting to gain entrance to the town.

ENCOUNTER 5: I CAN SHOW YOU THE WAY

This encounter can be run in one of two ways; with the PCs in town or with the PCs out of town. In both cases, the end result is the same.

The girl the PCs spot in Encounter 4 is intensely curious of the strangers (i.e., the PCs). To satisfy her curiosity she seeks out the PCs to learn more about them. If the PCs end up in town, she just happens to end up being one of their guards. If they bypass the town for some reason, but make their presence known to the townsfolk, she will sneak out of town at night and follow them. If they bypass the town completely, skip this encounter.

In either case, she will wait until all the PCs are asleep and sneak into the PCs' room (or camp) and start looking through their things (Move Silently +1). If the PCs post a guard, she tries to watch them from hiding (Hide +1). No matter what, eventually, she will slip up and make her presence known.

Once the PCs "meet" her, they can try to talk to her. She knows everything the elders do, but she's not afraid to go to the "temple of demons" and will be happy to show the PCs the way. She will insist on going with the PCs and refuses to tell them how to get out of town undetected (if the PCs are in town) or which way to go once outside the walls.

Creatures:

☞ **Eena:** Female human War3.

Eena is in her early twenties and is a surprisingly experienced warrior. She is average looking, somewhat pale and big boned. She is not shy and lacks the fanatical belief in the suppositious rituals the other townsfolk cling to (though she does still follow many of them out of habit). She tends to be blunt, a bit sarcastic and generally friendly. If there are any female PCs, she will focus her questions on her (and on the more warrior-like if there are more than one).

Development: Eena wants to get to know the PCs. She's a bit naïve and far too trusting, but she means no harm. She also knows a great deal about the region the PCs are

traveling through. She has even attempted to go to the temple of demons herself, but has always turned back in fear. Regardless, she knows the best route to take and will insist on guiding the PCs.

If the PCs allow Eena to accompany them, she will do her best to stop them from causing any harm to the patrol of town guards sent to find them in Encounter Seven. If the PCs insist on fighting the patrol, Eena will run away and try to warn her fellow townsmen. If forced into a fight between the PCs and the patrol, she will side with her people.

During the journey to the temple of demons, Eena will happily answer questions about herself and her people. If the PCs pay close attention (Spot, DC 10), they will see her perform certain rituals along the way. Any time a fire is lit, she places a small bowl or cup of water next to it. When they pass close to a water source larger than a puddle, she will light a candle. If someone breaks the soil (perhaps by unearthing a rock as they walk or digging a latrine) she kneels and blows upon the dirt. Finally, when the wind blows more strongly than a light breeze, she flings a bit of dirt high into the air. If asked, she says these things keep the demons at bay (which is true since the PCs can use these tricks to keep the mephitis from appearing in Encounter 8).

With Eena as their guide, the PCs will arrive at the temple via the main path. Otherwise they will arrive via the smaller path (see Encounter Nine).

ENCOUNTER 6: BURNED TO THE GROUND!

On the morning of the first day after leaving for the temple, read the following:

As soon as you wake up, you begin to smell the unmistakable aroma of wood smoke, tinged with the bitter stench of burning flesh. Looking around, you can see several plumes of dark smoke from farther up the trail, perhaps a half-day's travel up into the mountains.

Up the trail a small thorp of a half dozen buildings has been burned to the ground. The attack happened just before dawn, but by the time the PCs arrive, it's too late to help anyone. Read the following when they arrive:

The burnt ruins of six buildings are all that remain of a small thorp. The fires have mostly burned out, but hot embers still flare amidst the blackened rubble and smoke still rises from each of the buildings.

Wait until the players move closer and begin to search the thorp before continuing:

Closer inspection fails to improve the grizzly scene and in fact makes it far worse. Inside the buildings are the burnt remains of the thorp's inhabitants. A few managed to crawl from their burning homes, but succumbed to the flames nonetheless.

Whatever started the blaze must have been extremely hot as everything is nearly incinerated. Most of the buildings have fallen in upon themselves. Very little is left to examine, and none of it is free of the raging flames.

Development: The thorp is destroyed. Every man, woman, child and animal has been burnt to death, most in their homes or pens. Many tracks crisscross the muddy ground around the buildings. Most are from the villagers themselves, but a few (identified as different with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 3) by someone with the Track feat) do not match and head off up the trail. The tracks enter the thorp from the same direction as the PCs came from and wander around the village for a bit and then leave. If the Wilderness Lore roll used to find the tracks succeeded by two or more, they PC realize that the tracks leading up the trail are less than a day old.

If the PCs search the buildings closely, a Search check (DC25) reveals a few interesting facts. First, some of the rubble of the buildings has fallen into a hole of some sort. It's hard to tell without digging out the hole completely, but it looks as if something burrowed its way in from beneath at least three of the buildings. Even more curious is that the sides of the holes seem to have been subjected to extreme heat. The holes continue into the earth for various distances, but all collapse upon themselves after ten feet or so.

The truth behind the scene is that the thorp was attacked just before dawn by a three pairs of thoqqua (see MM p.175). They came in search of food (there is a particularly rich mineral deposit below the village) and destroyed the village in the process. Since most of the inhabitants were sleeping at the time, they got caught unaware and died. The thoqqua are long gone and the PCs do not encounter them.

The "thieves" the PCs are after did come this way, but about nine hours before the blaze. If the PCs don't make their Wilderness Lore rolls by enough (see above), they may not realize that the thieves just passed through the thorp. From the way the tracks are arranged (the thieves performed a quick recon of the thorp before moving on), it is possible to mistakenly believe they set fire to the buildings. The DM should not discourage this notion since it makes Encounter Eight all the more interesting.

ENCOUNTER 7: PURSUIT

This encounter is completely optional. The DM should only run it if you're doing very well on time, or the PCs are looking for a bit more of a challenge. Also, if the PCs did not play through Encounter Five, then this encounter does not occur at all since the townsfolk will have no reason to send out a patrol. The same is true if the PCs never told the townsfolk they intend to go to the temple of demons.

Once the PCs' departure has been noticed by the townsfolk, they will send out several patrols to look for the PCs (and Eena, who they will assume is a prisoner). The patrol will have the advantage of superior numbers

and a better general knowledge of the area (unless Eena is with the party).

As the party moves up the curving mountain trail on the second day of travel, they will reach a point where they have a good view of the lower parts of the trail. Have each player make a Spot check (DC15) to spot the patrol. The patrol is about an hour behind the PCs and moving fast. If the PCs do not find a way to slow their pursuers down, they will be overtaken by nightfall. Any reasonable plan should work, but let the players get creative.

This encounter is aimed at complicating the PCs' trip to the temple of demons. It's not intended to be a combat encounter, but particularly bloodthirsty PCs may force a battle. As described above, Eena will object to any attempt to harm the patrol.

Creatures: The patrol guards are equipped in leather armor, small wood shields, short swords, light crossbows and shortspears.

ALL TIERS

♣ **Patrol Guards:** (12): human, War2, hp 12 each, AC14.

Tactics: If the patrol catches up to the party, they will order the PCs to surrender their weapons and return with them to town. If a battle ensues, the patrol will retreat after loosing one quarter of their number. The guards are not evil and are only trying to protect their town. Killing them is an evil act.

ENCOUNTER 8: THE TEMPLE OF DEMONS

After a two-day journey into the mountains on the opposite side of the valley, Eena becomes excited and quickens her pace. You must be getting close.

The last part of the trail is very steep and rocky and you almost slip several times on the way up. Soon, the ground levels off and you can see a set of stairs leading up.

At the top of the smooth granite stairs looms a large, finely crafted outdoor structure, perhaps a temple or unfinished building. It stands in startling contrast to the pristine mountain landscape.

Four sets of stairs lead up to a raised marble platform. Upon the square platform, four large columns rest in each corner. Even from several yards away, the intricate detail on the columns is evident. Each is shaped in the semblance of one of the four primary elements: air, earth, fire and water. Each column is carved from a different type of marble, all white, but with varying swirls of different colors; light gray for air, dark brown for earth, vivid red for fire and deep blue for water.

At the center of the platform sits a raised dais, the sides of which are carved into the shape of an elemental wall of the column they are closest to. Floating in mid air above the dais is

a multi-colored nimbus of light surrounding an unidentifiable object.

The temple appears abandoned and is for the most part, but it is not unguarded. Anyone attempting to cross between the columns will summon the guardians and are surprised by their arrival. The guardians summoned are different depending on which two columns a PC steps between. If the PCs cross between more than one set of columns, multiple guardians will be summoned. Use the following chart to determine the correct guardian.

<u>Column Set</u>	<u>Guardian</u>
Air / Fire	Dust Mephitis
Fire / Earth	Salt Mephitis
Earth / Water	Ooze Mephitis
Water / Air	Steam Mephitis

The guardians are tasked with keeping intruders out and will fight to the death and continue attacking until destroyed (even if the intruders retreat). Each set of guardians may only be summoned twice per twenty-four hours. Once the rod is removed from its prison, crossing between the columns will no longer summon the mephitis. Summoned mephitis will remain for twelve hours or until slain.

Luckily, there is a way to bypass summoning the guardians. If the person attempting to pass between a set of columns performs a ritual similar to the one Eena performs when confronted by the four basic elements (as described in Encounter Five), the guardians will not be summoned. Each person passing between the columns must perform their own ritual or the guardians appear. Use the following table to determine with rituals need to be performed to pass between which two columns:

<u>Column Set</u>	<u>Ritual</u>
Air / Fire	Carry a container of water and throw dirt into the air
Fire / Earth	Carry a container of water and blow on a handful of dirt
Earth / Water	Blow on a handful of dirt and carry a lit candle
Water / Air	Carry a lit candle and throw dirt into the air

TIER 2 (EL 6)

☞ **Dust Mephitis** (3): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Ooze Mephitis** (3): hp 16; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Salt Mephitis** (3): hp 16; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Steam Mephitis** (3): hp 13; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

TIER 3 (EL 8)

☞ **Dust Mephitis** (6): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Ooze Mephitis** (6): hp 16; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Salt Mephitis** (6): hp 16; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Steam Mephitis** (6): hp 13; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

TIER 4 (EL 10)

☞ **Dust Mephitis** (12): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Ooze Mephitis** (12): hp 16; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Salt Mephitis** (12): hp 16; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Or

☞ **Steam Mephitis** (12): hp 13; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

Tactics: The mephitis attack in pairs, focusing on the character(s) who walked between the columns and then any other obvious threat. They will use their ability to fly to their advantage, flanking opponents and moving out of reach whenever possible. They will attempt to disable opponents with their breath weapons first and then move in with claw attacks.

Development: As soon as the first set of guardians appear, Eena panics and runs back down the trail.

ENCOUNTER 9: WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

Run this encounter right before the PCs attempt to investigate the glowing nimbus of light. Have everyone make a Listen check (DC15), then read the following:

Before you can take move closer to the glowing object, a commanding voice calls out to you from behind "Hold! I, Sir Halesin claim that prize in the name of the Shield Lands!"

Let the PCs react, then continue:

Standing before you is a man in gleaming chain mail armor wearing a tabard with the coat of arms of the Order of the Northern Guard on it and a shield with the symbol of the Shield Lands. With him, are four companions: an elf in simple clothing, a woman wearing the holy symbol of Pholtus and wielding a quarterstaff, a man in leather armor holding a short sword in one hand and a long dagger in the other and a burly female dwarf hefting a large hammer. All five look battered and bloodied, as though they've seen a lot of combat recently.

"I am Sir Halesin of the Shield Lands. Who are you?" the knight asks.

At this point let the players roleplay this encounter. Sir Halesin and his companions are here to claim the glowing object, which is the Rod of Elementals (see below). They came up the smaller trail to the left of the temple. He is completely unaware that the item is dangerous and intends to return it to the Shield Lands to use it in the War of Reclamation. His group originally consisted of six, but one (a ranger named Aldelin) fell in battle against and massive earth elemental.

Halesin and his friends are not evil, but they do not trust anyone who seems to be trying to stop them. As the two groups talk, Halesin and his allies will slowly move into position so Halesin can grab the rod.

To delay things, Halesin will explain why he's come and try to assure the PCs that whoever told them the rod was evil, is mistaken. He'll also try to convince them that they should be helping him retrieve it so its power can be used to save the Shield Lands. He is very charismatic and should be played as an honorable, truthful and likeable fellow. He honestly believes he is doing the right thing and that he can help the Shield Lands by returning the rod through the portal.

If the PCs force a battle, Halesin's companions will attempt to give him the chance to grab the item. This won't be too hard to do since the first thing Quelin will do is cast fly on the knight (who will hold his action until the spell effects him and then fly into the light and grab the rod). Once he grabs it, go to Encounter Nine.

If anyone tries to grab the rod (including Sir Halesin), the nimbus of light acts as combined and extremely powerful versions of *gust of wind* and *wall of fire* spells. Assume Sir Halesin makes his saves when grabbing the rod.

If a PC tries to grab the rod, read the following:

As you get closer to the glowing object you begin to feel the temperature rise and a stiff wind blows out from the light trying to force you away.

If they insist on touching the rod, continue:

The heat and wind become almost too much to bear. Your eyes sting from the vicious wind and your skin sears from the impossible heat. Ignoring the pain, you reach into the light and grab something. For an instant, you relish its coolness, but then the world is burst apart by a massive blast of burning hot wind.

Now is a good time for the PC to try a few saving throws.

TIER 2 – EL8

☞ **Protective Nimbus of Light:** CR 8; fire (6d6+10) within 5 ft.; Fort save resists wind (DC 25); Disable Device (magic only, DC 30).

TIER 3 – EL13

☞ **Protective Nimbus of Light:** CR 13; fire (10d6+15) within 5 ft.; Fort save resists wind (DC 35); Disable Device (magic only, DC 40).

TIER 4 – EL17

☞ **Protective Nimbus of Light:** CR 17; fire (14d6+20) within 5 ft.; Fort save resists wind (DC 45); Disable Device (magic only, DC 50).

If anyone else manages to grab the item, Sir Halesin (and his companions) will attempt to take it from them. Regardless, anyone touching the rod must resist its evil control (see item description below). If whoever grabs the rod falls unconscious from the effects of the nimbus, the rod floats silently back into the light.

ALL TIERS – EL13

☞ **Sir Halesin:** - Human male Ftr12 – See Appendix A.

☞ **Quelin:** - Elf male Wiz7 – See Appendix A.

☞ **Keina:** - Human female Clr6 (Pholtus) – See Appendix A.

☞ **Felaryon:** - Half-Elf male Rog6/Rgr1 – See Appendix A.

☞ **Gwillla:** - Dwarf female Ftr5 – See Appendix A.

Tactics: Sir Halesin and his companions have one goal: retrieve the rod and return home. They will not tolerate interference, but neither will they act dishonorably to achieve their goal. They are all of good alignments (or nearly so) and will act that way no matter what the PCs do. If the PCs insist on causing a battle, Halesin and his group will fight to disable them unless there is no other choice. They cannot be dissuaded from achieving their goal under any circumstances.

Development: The judge should do his or her best to make sure Halesin gets the rod and falls under its control, but if a player insists on having his character take the rod

by any means necessary, let him try and suffer the consequences.

It is possible the PCs will try to watch both trails and ambush Sir Halesin. That's fine, but you'll have to adapt the encounter to fit your particular situation. Regardless of how the two groups meet, Sir Halesin will say and do pretty much the same thing (within reason).

ENCOUNTER 10: A BURNING DESIRE

Sir Halesin (or [insert name if different]) *grabs the rod and is thrown back. The heat and force of the blast can be felt even from where you're standing. For a moment (s)he seems confused, stumbling around a bit and falling to one knee, his clothes and armor burned and blackened. When the weakness passes, Sir Halesin (or [insert name if different]) stands and looks directly at you.*

"We have much to accomplish. Follow me and we can rid your homeland of its enemies."

Give the players a round or two to interact, but if they attack or make any threatening gestures (casting spells, etc.) read the following:

"It saddens me that you refuse to accept my aid. I cannot allow that!"

Sir Halesin (or [insert name if different]) *then turns, points the rod at his four companions. Thin ray of multicolored light shoots from the tip and spreads to envelope the four. They seem surprised at their friend's actions, but the shock fades from their faces, replaced by pain and fear as their bodies transform. Each becomes a different type of elemental creature and moves to attack.*

Let the battle run for a few rounds, as soon as the PCs begin to gain the upper hand, but before they can hurt whomever holds the rod, the rod holder speaks the following:

"It appears you are stronger than I thought. Perhaps I will be forced to destroy you myself." And with that, the rod holder transforms in to a massive fire elemental larger than the other four creatures.

TIER 2 (EL8)

- 🔥 **Air Elemental, Medium:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Earth Elemental, Medium:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Fire Elemental, Medium:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Water Elemental, Medium:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Fire Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.

TIER 3 (EL 9)

- 🔥 **Air Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Earth Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Fire Elemental, Large (2):** See Appendix B.

🔥 **Water Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.

TIER 4 (EL 10)

- 🔥 **Air Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Earth Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Fire Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Water Elemental, Large:** See Appendix B.
- 🔥 **Fire Elemental, Huge:** See Appendix B.

As each transformed NPC is defeated, they return to human form, unconscious, but otherwise unharmed.

If the PCs defeat the transformed Sir Halesin, read the following:

As you strike the last blow against the transformed Sir Halesin, you see the knight's body amidst the flames. Rather than turning back into his human form as the others did, the flames are consuming him. You watch in horror as the brave knight is reduced to ash before your eyes.

As the last of the ash falls to the ground, the crackling flames are sucked back into the rod. The rod then floats silently back into the glowing nimbus of light above the dais.

Amidst the ashes lie only small bits of bone, a few teeth and a badly burnt steel shield bearing the scorched and blackened symbol of the Shield Lands.

Tactics: The elementals tactics are pretty straightforward. They try to protect the rod holder and kill the PCs by the most destructive means possible. They will focus on standing PCs first, returning to put survivors out of their misery once all immediate threats are removed from battle.

Development: Assume that Sir Halesin and his companions miss all their saving throws for resisting the effects of the rod's powers. Also assume that everyone but Halesin makes their saving throws to survive their transformation back to normal form. When the rod-bearing elemental is defeated, Sir Halesin's body (including his gear, except for his scorched shield) is consumed by the flames.

With the rod returned to its resting place and Halesin dead, the four surviving members of his group will follow the PCs back to the portal without an argument. They will insist that his shield is returned to the Order of the Northern Guard.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs stopped the controlled Sir Halesin from obtaining the rod, use this conclusion. If events transpired differently, you'll have to adapt things to fit your circumstances.

The trip back to the portal is uneventful. Along the way, you drop Eena off near the town, but you all agree it best to not risk reentering the town after visiting the "temple". At the waterfall,

you bid your farewells to the water creature and continue up the mountain.

At first, the portal is as lifeless as you left it, but as you approach it reactivates and pulses with arcane energy.

Wait until all the PCs have stepped into the portal and then continue:

On the other side, the avoral is waiting for you. He floats in mid air; his eyes burning into you like hot coals.

"Well?" he commands expectantly.

Pause here to allow the PCs to tell what happened.

After your tale, he softens a bit and speaks.

"You have done well. The price was high and you may never understand why this sacrifice was necessary, but trust that it was. If the item could so easily corrupt one of your knights, think of what it could have done to those less honorable."

"Your efforts will not go un-rewarded. Take these" he says as he holds out a handful of bright white feathers. (one for each PC)

"You have aided us in our need, now, those like us will aid you in yours. Burn the feather and a celestial creature will come to your aid."

The creature begins to prepare to depart when he pauses for a moment, then turns to you and speaks two final words. The words seem to catch on his tongue and come out as if they left a bitter taste, but finally he says "Thank you" and you are blinded by a bright flash.

When your vision clears, you are back where you were when the creature first contacted you. Several days passed for you while you were beyond the portal surely the hobgoblin scouts you were pursuing are long gone. As tired as you are, duty calls. Iuz's forces will be coming soon and with the loss of Sir Halesin the battle will be even more difficult.

The End

Development: If any of the PCs are under the control of the rod, things go a bit differently. If they manage to get rid of the item (i.e., return it to the temple), the portal will work, but the avoral is furious at their actions. If for any reason the PCs return with anyone under the control of the rod, the avoral and his brothers will attempt to destroy them.

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 Two

Get useful information from the water elemental without resorting to combat	50 xp
---	-------

Or

Defeating the water elemental in combat	0 xp
---	------

Encounter Three

Defeating the belkers	100 xp
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Encounter Four

Gaining entrance to the town without violence	25 xp
---	-------

Getting useful information from the townsfolk	25 xp
---	-------

Getting back out of town without violence	25 xp
---	-------

Encounter Five

Allowing Eena to help the party	25 xp
---------------------------------	-------

Encounter Six

Finding the thoqqua holes	50 xp
---------------------------	-------

Encounter Seven

Defeating one set of guardians	75 xp
--------------------------------	-------

Or

Defeating two sets of guardians	100 xp
---------------------------------	--------

Or

Defeating three sets of guardians	125 xp
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Or

Defeating four or more sets of guardians	150 xp
--	--------

Or

Bypassing the guardians without fighting them	100 xp
---	--------

Encounter Seven

Avoiding the patrol without resorting to combat	25 xp
---	-------

Encounter Eight

Trying to convince Halesin without resorting to combat	50 xp
--	-------

Encounter Ten

Defeating Halesin and his companions once they are possessed by the rod	175 xp
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Total experience for objectives	700 xp
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Discretionary roleplaying award	0-50 xp
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Total possible experience

750 xp

	Monster IV		
4	Summon	9	Celestial
	Monster V		Brown Bear
5	Summon	11	Celestial
	Monster VI		Unicorn

TREASURE SUMMARY

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

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.

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.

Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which 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 which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Conclusion

Celestial Feather

(300gp; Tiny; 1; Yes; Common; 0 lb.)

This normal appearing, large white feather has the power to summon celestial creatures when burned. Multiple feathers may be burned at once (maximum of five) to increase the power of the summoning spell as follows:

# of Feathers Burned	Equivalent Spell	Caster Level	Creature Summoned
1	Summon Monster II	3	Celestial Eagle
2	Summon Monster III	5	Celestial Black Bear
3	Summon	7	Celestial Lion

Burning a feather is a full round action. Summoned creatures are under the control of the character who burned the feathers.

THE ROD OF ELEMENTALS (MINOR ARTIFACT)

This four-foot long crystal rod seems to be composed of diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds fused together in swirling, irregular patterns. Although beautiful to behold, the rod is actually the home of a malignant intelligence.

The intelligence within the rod has one purpose: to transform all living creatures into one of the four types of elementals. It is neutral evil and cares little that the creature dies in the process as its life energy is used to create the new elemental. The rod has Int 23, Wis 21, Cha 18 and an Ego of 35. Besides masking its own alignment, the rod has the ability to transform humans and demi-humans into elementals. The type of elemental a transformed creature becomes is based on race. The level or hit dice of the transformed creature determines the size of the new elemental. Targets of the transformation are entitled to a Fortitude save (DC 25). Transformed creatures are under the complete control of the rod. The rod can transform 1d4 creatures per minute. If a transformed creature is reduced to negative hit points, they return to normal form, but must make a Fort save (DC20) or die.

Anyone grasping the rod must immediately make a Will save (DC35) to prevent the rod from gaining control. Each round the creature continues to hold the rod, another save needs to be made. Controlled creatures are subject to the same effects as a *Dominate Person* spell of unlimited duration. The rod can communicate telepathically.

Race	Type	Target Creature HD + 1d4	Elemental Size
Human or Half-Orc	Fire	1-3	Small
Dwarf or Gnome	Earth	4-7	Medium
Elf	Air	8-15	Large
Halfling or Half-Elf	Water	16-20	Huge

In the Living Greyhawk campaign, a PC who fails his Will save fails under the control of the rod (i.e. the character becomes an NPC controlled by the judge at the table) for the rest of the event. To break the control, the dominated character must be separated from the rod by more than 300 feet long enough for the character to make a successful Will save (DC 21). If control is not broken by the end of the event, the character receives one more saving throw to free himself. If he fails, the character is removed from play.

Caster Level: 20th; Weight: 3 lb.

CELESTIAL FEATHER (NEW MAGIC ITEM)

Celestial Feather

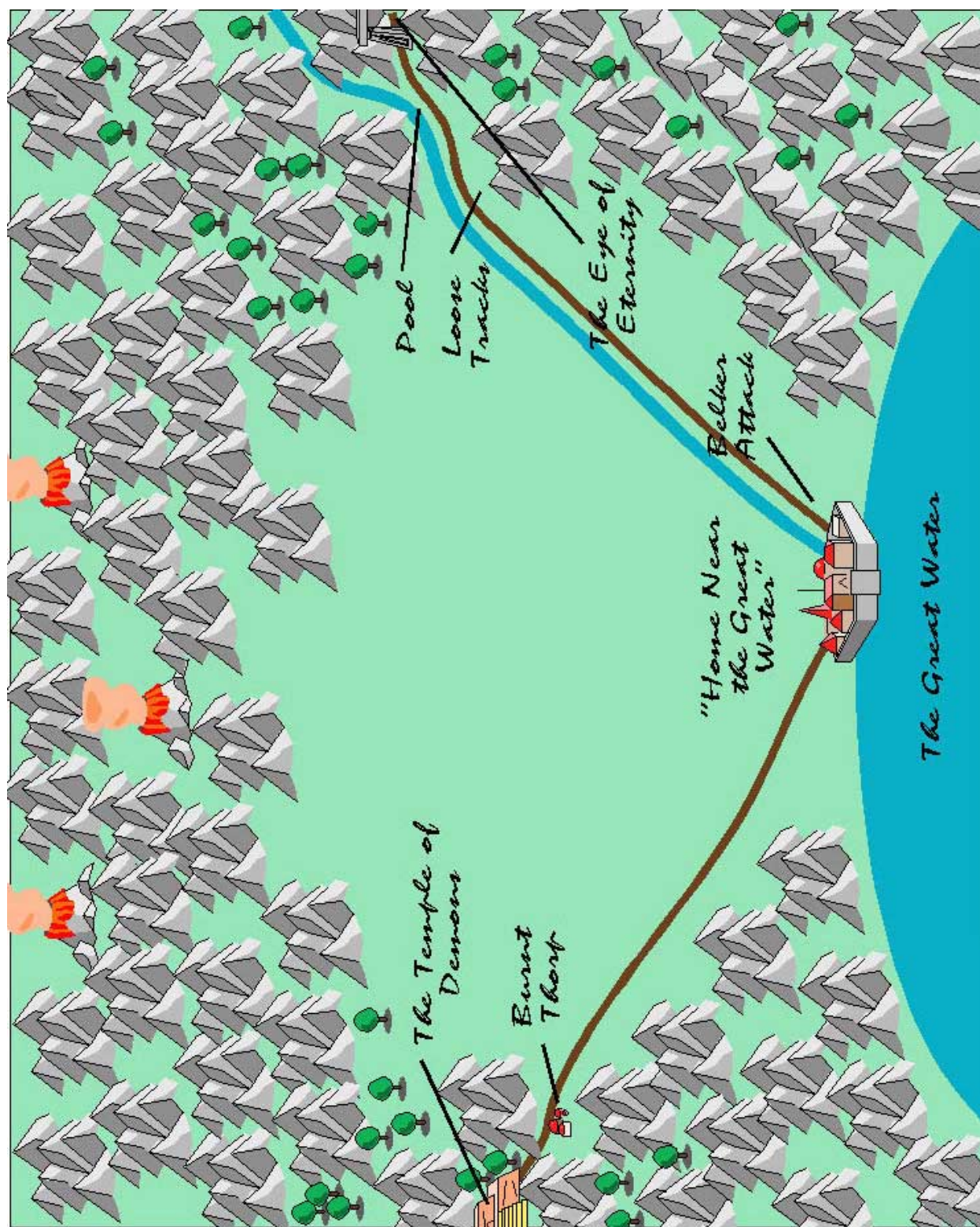
This normal appearing, large white feather has the power to summon celestial creatures when burned. Multiple feathers may be burned at once (maximum of five) to increase the power of the summoning spell as follows:

# of Feathers Burned	Equivalent Spell	Caster Level	Creature Summoned
1	Summon Monster II	3	Celestial Eagle
2	Summon Monster III	5	Celestial Black Bear
3	Summon Monster IV	7	Celestial Lion
4	Summon Monster V	9	Celestial Brown Bear
5	Summon Monster VI	11	Celestial Unicorn

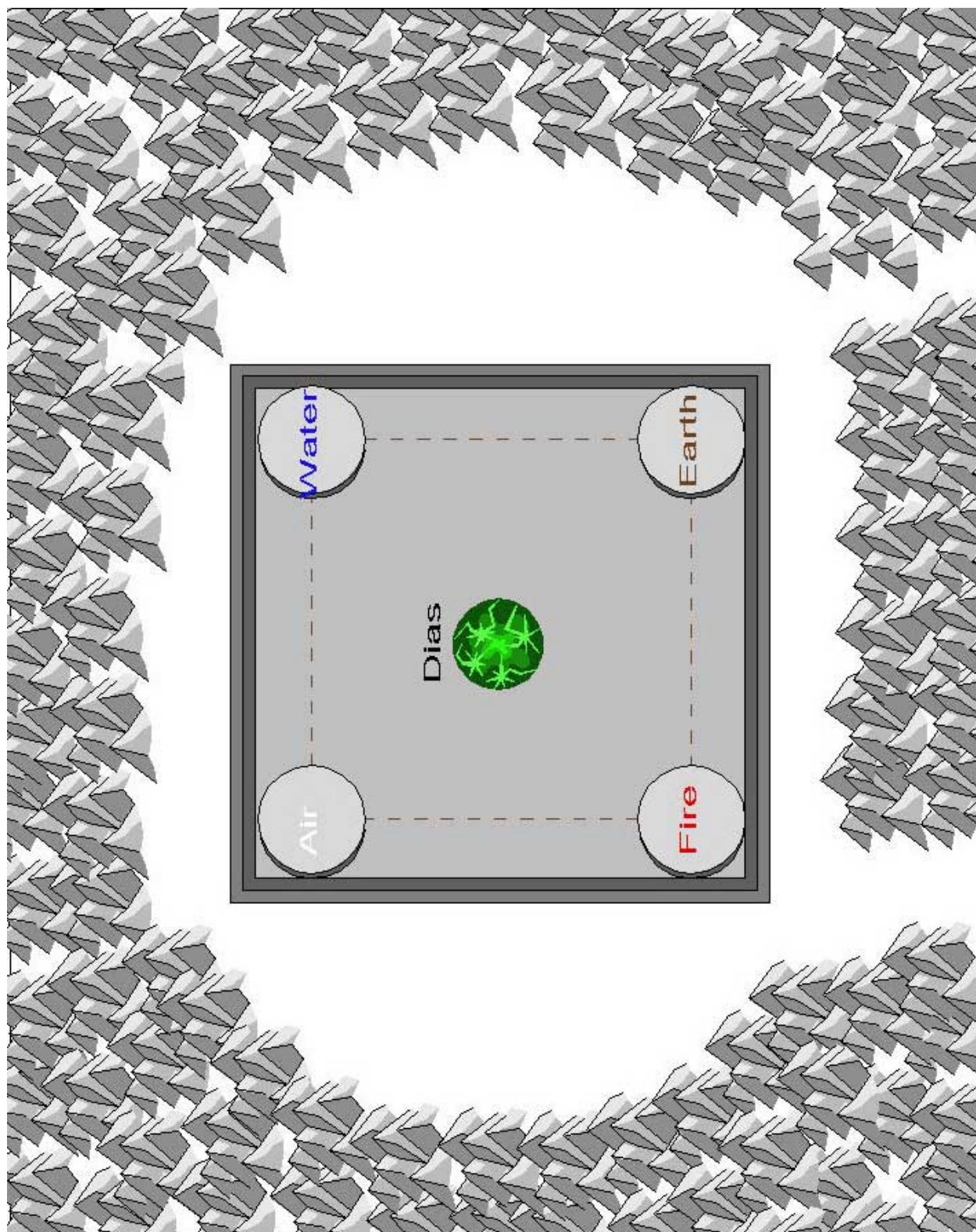
Burning a feather is a full round action. Summoned creatures are under the control of the character who burned the feathers.

Caster Level: Varies; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item; spellcasters level 3rd+; Market Price: 300gp

DM AID #1 – AREA MAP



DM AID #2 – TEMPLE OF DEMONS MAP



APPENDIX A – NPCs

☛ **Sir Halesin of the Northern Guard:** male human Ftr12; CR 12; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 12d10+24; hp 100; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft; AC 24 (+10 full plate, +3 large steel shield, +1 Dex); Atks +20/+15/+10 melee (1d10+9/crit 17-20, +2 bastard sword), or +17/+12/+7 melee (1d4+5/crit 19-20, dagger), or +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d8+2/crit x3, longbow); AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 17(21), Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 12. Height 6 ft.; Weight 180 lb..

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +4, Intuit Direction +2, Jump +5, Listen +3, Ride +11, Search +4, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2, Swim +5(-4), Use Rope +2, Wilderness Lore +1; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Bastard Sword), Weapon Focus (Bastard Sword), Great Cleave, Improved Critical (Bastard Sword), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Specialization (Bastard Sword), Sunder.

Possessions: Arrows (20), backpack, bedroll, dagger, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, mighty masterwork longbow (Str16), belt pouch, trail rations (1 day), 50 ft. silk rope, +2 bastard sword, torch (2), waterskin, whetstone, belt of giant strength +4, +2 full plate armor, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of cure light wounds, ring of warmth, +1 large steel shield.

Description: Sir Halesin is a large, muscular man of even temper and good humor. He has short brown hair and tanned skin. Honorable to a fault, he is a warrior who sees combat as the last resort and is willing to give an enemy (other than Iuz) a chance to reconsider. His honest, down to earth manner makes him a likeable fellow.

☛ **Quelin:** male Elf Wiz7; CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid (Elf); HD 7d4; hp 22; Init +7 (Dex +3, Improved Initiative +4); Spd 30 ft; AC 15 (+3 Dex, bracers of armor +2); Atks +2 melee (1d6-1, quarterstaff), or +2 melee (1d4-1/crit 19-20, dagger), or +6 ranged (1d4-1/crit 19-20, dagger), or +6 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); SA spells; SQ summon familiar (weasel); AL LN; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12. Height 5 ft. 1 in.; Weight 110 lb.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +11, Concentration +10, Knowledge (Arcana) +13, Listen +6, Search +3, Spellcraft +13, Spot +6; Scribe Scroll, Toughness, Combat Casting, Brew Potion, Improved Initiative.

Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3/1; base DC = 10 + spell level +3): 0 — Daze, Detect Magic (2), Light; 1st — Mage Armor, Magic Missile (2), Magic Weapon, Obscuring Mist; 2nd — Bull's Strength, Invisibility, Protection from Arrows, Web; 3rd — Fireball, Fly, Haste; 4th — Stoneskin.

Spellbook: 0 — Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance; 1st — Charm Person, Identify, Mage Armor, Magic Missile, Magic Weapon, Obscuring Mist, Shield, Sleep; 2nd — Bull's Strength, Invisibility, Protection from Arrows, Web; 3rd — Dispel Magic, Fireball, Fly, Haste; 4th — Ice Storm, Stoneskin.

Possessions: Quarterstaff, light crossbow, 10 bolts, dagger, traveler's outfit, bracers of armor +2, potion of cure light wounds (x2), potion of invisibility, arcane scroll (knock), arcane scroll (fly), wand of burning hands (15).

Description: Quelin is a dark-haired elf with deep green eyes and sharp features. Amongst non-elves, he is often sarcastic and blunt making him seem rude and disagreeable. When in the company of elves (even with other non-elves nearby), he is reserved and respectful and occasionally even mildly friendly.

☛ **Felaryon:** male half-elf Rog6/Rgr1; CR 7; Medium-size Humanoid (half-elf); HD 6d6+1d10+7; hp 39; Init +7 (Dex +3, Improved Initiative +4); Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+3 studded leather, +3 Dex); Atks +4 melee (1d6/crit 19-20, short sword), and +4 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger), or +8 ranged (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger), or +8 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); SA favored enemy (humans), sneak attack; SQ evasion, half-elfen traits, uncanny dodge; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14. Height 5 ft. 7 in.; Weight 184 lb.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Balance +5(+2), Bluff +6, Climb +4(-3), Decipher Script +6, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +5 (+2), Forgery +4, Gather Information +6, Hide +12(+9), Jump +2(-1), Listen +8, Move Silently +13(+10), Open Lock +8, Pickpocket +5(+2), Read Lips +3, Search +7, Sense Motive +2, Spot +8, Swim +1(-11), Tumble +12(+9), Use Magic Device +6, Use Rope +4, Wilderness Lore +1; Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Track.

SA - Sneak Attack (Ex): Felaryon deals +3d6 damage against an opponent with a discernable anatomy who is denied a Dex bonus.

SQ - Half-Elven Traits (Ex): Sleep immunity, +2 save vs. Enchantment, low-light vision, elven blood.

SQ - Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Dex bonus to AC.

Possessions: Backpack, bedroll, crossbow bolts (10), light crossbow, masterwork dagger, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, bullseye lantern, piton, belt pouch, trail rations (1 day), 50 ft. silk rope, sack, masterwork studded leather armor, short sword +1, thief's tools, waterskin, whetstone, potion of alter self, potion of cat's grace, potion of cure moderate wounds, ring of jumping.

Description: Felaryon is a slim half-elf with light skin, blonde hair and pale green eyes. He is a master of the “merchant's smile”, often saying one thing while meaning the exact opposite. He spends a lot of time trying to get others

to trust him (and does a fairly good job of it), yet rarely returns that trust. His slyness makes him someone to be watched, but his unquestionable efficiency makes him too valuable not to have around.

☛ **Keina of Pholtus:** female human Clr6; CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 6d8; hp 33; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft; AC 18 (+5 chainmail, +2 large steel shield, +1 Dex); Atks +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +4 melee (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger), or +5 ranged (1d4/crit 19-20, dagger), or +5 ranged (1d8/crit 19-20, light crossbow); SA spells, turn undead; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15. Height 5 ft. 7 in.; Weight 120 lb..

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9, Diplomacy +6, Heal +9(+11), Knowledge (Arcana) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +10, Spellcraft +6; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Extra Turning, Improved Initiative.

Spells Prepared (5/4+1/4+1/3+1; base DC = 10 + spell level +3): 0 — Detect Magic (2), Light, Resistance (2); 1st — *Protection from Chaos, Bless, Magic Weapon, Remove Fear, Shield of Faith; 2nd — *Heat Metal, Aid, Bull's Strength, Hold Person, Shield Other; 3rd — *Searing Light, Prayer, Magic Circle Against Evil, Summon Monster III.

* Domain spell.

Domains: Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level); Sun (perform greater turning 1/day).

SA - Turn Undead (Su): 9/day, Keina of Pholtus can attempt to turn undead creatures. She can turn undead with no more than (1d20+10)/3 HD. Each attempt, she turns 2d6+8 total HD. Undead with 3 or fewer HD are destroyed instead.

Possessions: Backpack, bedroll, light crossbow, crossbow bolts (10), quarterstaff, traveller's outfit, masterwork chainmail armor, cloak of resistance +1, dagger, flint and steel, neckless of prayer beads (blessing), potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of cure light wounds, belt pouch, trail rations (1 day), 50 ft. silk rope, sack, large steel shield +1, soap torch (2), wand of shocking grasp(22), waterskin, whetstone, silver holy symbol of Pholtus, healer's kit.

Description: Keina is a beautiful young woman with blue eyes and long blonde hair tied in a thick braid. Though a devoted priest of Pholtus, she has failed to embrace the fanaticism demonstrated by many of her order. This makes her both practical and serious without being condescending and ridged. Keina is one those few people who rarely says much, but when it is most helpful she will almost instinctually suggest a simple solution to an otherwise difficult problem.

☛ **Gwilla Deep-Hearth:** female dwarf Ftr5; CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (dwarf); HD 5d10+15; hp 49; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 20 (+1 Dex, Half-plate +7, Shield +3); Atks +8 melee (1d8+5, warhammer), or +6 ranged (1-8/crit 19-20 lt. Crossbow); SQ dwarven traits; AL LG; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10. Height 4 ft. 1 in.; Weight 148 lb.

Skills and Feats: Climb +1, Heal +1, Intuit Direction +1, Sense Motive +1, Swim +5, Craft (Stonemasonry) +11, Knowledge (Engineering) +3; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (Warhammer), Power Attack, Weapon Specialization (Warhammer).

SQ - Dwarven Traits (Ex): 60 foot darkvision, stonecunning, +2 save vs. poison, +2 save vs. spells or spell-like abilities, +1 attack vs. goblinoids or orcs, +4 dodge vs. giants, +2 craft with stone or metal.

Possessions: Backpack, bedroll, crossbow bolts (10), light crossbow, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, masterwork half-plate, piton (2), belt pouch, trail rations (1 day), 50 ft. silk rope, sack, soap, masterwork warhammer, waterskin, broach of shielding, handaxe, potion of cure moderate wounds, large steel shield +1.

Description: Gwilla is a stout and hardy woman with stone gray eyes and reddish-brown hair streaked with gray. Unlike many dwarves, she tends to be open and jovial while outside her clan's holdings, but like all dwarven mothers, she is nurturing and protective to those in her care (which in her case tends to be everyone she likes). Threatening one of her self-appointed charges is akin to insulting her directly and is almost always rewarded by a sharp hammer blow to the head.

APPENDIX B – ELEMENTALS

AIR

✦ **Air Elemental, Medium:** CR 3; Medium Elemental; HD 4d8+8 (26 hp); Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd Fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 18 (+5 Dex, +3 natural); Atk Slam +8 melee (1d6+1); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Air mastery, whirlwind; SQ Elemental; AL N; Fort +3; Ref +9; Wil +1; Str 12; Dex 21; Con 14; Int 4; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 8 ft.; Weight 2 lb.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam)

✦ **Air Elemental, Large:** CR 5; Large Elemental; HD 8d8+24 (60 hp); Init +11 (+7 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd Fly 100 ft. (perfect); AC 20 (-1 Size, +7 Dex, +4 natural); Atk Slam +12/+7 melee (2d6+3); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Air mastery, whirlwind; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1; AL N; Fort +5; Ref +13; Wil +2; Str 14; Dex 25; Con 16; Int 6; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 16 ft.; Weight 4 lb.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +11, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam)

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

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

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

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

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

If the whirlwind's base touches the ground, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the whirlwind's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have one-half concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. Those caught in the cloud must succeed at a Concentration check to cast a spell (DC equal to the Reflex save DC).

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

EARTH

➤ **Earth Elemental, Medium:** CR 3; Medium Elemental; HD 4d8+12 (30 hp); Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (-1 Dex, +9 natural); Atk Slam +8 melee (1d8+7); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Earth mastery, push; SQ Elemental; AL N; Fort +7; Ref +0; Wil +1; Str 21; Dex 8; Con 17; Int 4; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 8 ft.; Weight 750 lb.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7, Power Attack

➤ **Earth Elemental, Large:** CR 5; Large Elemental; HD 8d8+32 (68 hp); Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (-1 Dex, +9 natural); Atk Slam +12/+7 melee (2d8+10); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Earth mastery, push; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1; AL N; Fort +10; Ref +1; Wil +2; Str 25; Dex 8; Con 19; Int 6; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 16 ft.; Weight 6,000 lb.

Skills and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +11, Cleave, Power Attack

Earth Mastery (Ex): An earth elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and its foe touch the ground. If an opponent is airborne or waterborne, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.)

Push (Ex): An earth elemental can start a bull rush maneuver without provoking an attack of opportunity. The combat modifiers given in Earth Mastery, above, also apply to the elemental's opposed Strength checks.

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

FIRE

🔥 **Fire Elemental, Medium:** CR 3; Medium Elemental; HD 4d8+8 (26 hp); Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 16 (+0 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk Slam +6 melee (1d6+1 and 1d6 fire); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Elemental, fire subtype; AL N; Fort +3; Ref +7; Wil +1; Str 12; Dex 17; Con 14; Int 4; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 4 ft.; Weight 1 lb.

Skill and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam)

🔥 **Fire Elemental, Large:** CR 5; Large Elemental; HD 8d8+24 (60 hp); Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +5 Dex, +4 natural); Atk Slam +10/+5 melee (2d6+3 and 2d6 fire); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1, fire subtype; AL N; Fort +5; Ref +11; Wil +2; Str 14; Dex 21; Con 16; Int 6; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 16 ft.; Weight 4 lb.

Skill and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +11, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam)

🔥 **Fire Elemental, Huge:** CR 7; Huge Elemental; HD 16d8+64 (136 hp); Init +11 (+7 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 19 (-2 size, +7 Dex, +4 natural); Atk Slam +17/+12/+7 melee (2d8+6 and 2d8 fire); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 5 ft./15 ft.; SA Burn; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+2, fire subtype; AL N; Fort +9; Ref +17; Wil +5; Str 18; Dex 25; Con 18; Int 6; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 32 ft.; Weight 8 lb.

Skill and Feats: Listen +18, Spot +18, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse (slam)

Burn (Ex): Those hit by a fire elemental's slam attack must succeed at a Reflex save or catch fire. The flame burns for 1d4 rounds. The save DC varies with the elemental's size. A burning creature can take a move-equivalent action to put out the flame.

Creatures hitting a fire elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and also catch fire unless they succeed at a Reflex save.

Fire Subtype (Ex): Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful save.

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

WATER

➤ **Water Elemental, Medium:** CR 3; Medium Elemental; HD 4d8+12 (30 hp); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 19 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural); Atk Slam +6 melee (1d8+4); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Water Mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Elemental; AL N; Fort +7; Ref +2; Wil +1; Str 16; Dex 12; Con 17; Int 4; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 8 ft.; Weight 280 lb.

Skill and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7, Power Attack

➤ **Water Elemental, Large:** CR 5; Large Elemental; HD 8d8+32 (68 hp); Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., swim 90 ft.; AC 20 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural); Atk Slam +10/+5 (2d8+7); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.; SA Water Mastery, drench, vortex; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1; AL N; Fort +10; Ref +4; Wil +2; Str 20; Dex 14; Con 19; Int 10; Wis 11; Cha 11; Height 16 ft.; Weight 2250 lb.

Skill and Feats: Listen +11, Spot +11, Cleave, Power Attack

Water Mastery (Ex): A water elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and its opponent touch water. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. (These modifiers are not included in the statistics block.) A water elemental can be a serious threat to a ship that crosses its path. The elemental can easily overturn small craft (5 feet of length per Hit Die of the elemental) and stop larger vessels (10 feet long per HD). Even large ships (20 feet long per HD) can be slowed to half speed.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as dispel magic cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Vortex (Su): The elemental can transform itself into a whirlpool once every 10 minutes, provided it is underwater, and remain in that form for up to 1 round for every 2 HD it has. In vortex form, the elemental can move through the water or along the bottom at its swim speed.

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

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

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

If the vortex's base touches the bottom, it creates a swirling cloud of debris. This cloud is centered on the elemental and has a diameter equal to half the vortex's height. The cloud obscures all vision, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have one-half concealment, while those farther away have total concealment. Those caught in the cloud must succeed at a Concentration check to cast a spell (DC equal to the Reflex save DC).

Elemental: Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

APPENDIX C – THE ORDER OF THE NORTHERN GUARD

The Order of the Northern Guard is a secular knighthood led by Sir Arinson, a paladin of Heironeous. With Lady Katarina's support Arinson formed the order for heroes who did not necessarily follow Heironeous, but wished to serve the Shield Lands as honorable members of a knightly order nonetheless.

Over the past three years, Knight Commander Arinson has slowly been building the strength of the order, which has grown to over twenty knights. Sir Arinson was granted command of a single outpost from which the Order is based and constantly patrols the nebulous border with the Empire of the Iuz.

The Order of the Northern Guard is open to any loyal Shield Lander who lives up to the strict requirements, regardless of race, profession or religious beliefs.

CRITICAL EVENTS SUMMARY FOR THE PORTAL

Did any PCs refuse to help the avoral?	Yes / No
Did the PCs make friends with the water elemental at the pool?	Yes / No
Did the PCs find the jug?	Yes / No
Did the PCs fight the belkers?	Yes / No
Did the PCs go to the town?	Yes / No
Were the PCs able to communicate with the townsfolk?	Yes / No
Did the PCs have to escape the town?	Yes / No
Did the PCs accept Eena's help?	Yes / No
Did the PCs find the thoqua holes?	Yes / No
Did the PCs fight the guard patrol?	Yes / No
Did the PCs figure out how to bypass the mephitis?	Yes / No
Did any of the PCs try to grab the rod?	Yes / No
Did the PCs stop Sir Halesin from grabbing the rod?	Yes / No
Did the PCs defeat the possessed Sire Halesin and his transformed companions?	Yes / No
Did the PCs get the Celestial Feathers?	Yes / No
Did any PCs die? If so, how many?	Yes / No (# ____)
Please list any other notable or interesting things that occurred:	