

SHL5—Intro3



NO HONEST DEALINGS

An Introductory One–Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[®]
Shield Lands Regional Adventure

Version 3.5

By Joshua B. Grace

Bandits have been raiding merchant caravans just outside of Gensal. If the merchants grow too frightened to deliver supplies to outlying border holds, the Shield Lands might suffer a serious setback in their struggle against the forces of Old Wicked. An Introductory module for 1st-level PCs, set in the Shield Lands.

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

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For questions specific to this document please e-mail the Shield Lands Point of Contact at poc@shieldlands.net. For LIVING GREYHAWK campaign questions email rpgahq@wizards.com.

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Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table DM (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide, and the Monster Manual.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the

PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

- Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
- If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
- Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round up to the nearest whole number.
- If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

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

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

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

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

- 1 Enlist a sixth player.
- 2 Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

NOTE: This LIVING GREYHAWK adventure is designed for mid and higher-level characters. Since characters below 6th level are unlikely to have the skills and resources necessary to complete this adventure, players using lower-level characters should be advised that they are participating at great risk. This is not an adventure for beginning characters!

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Core adventure set in the Hold of the Sea Princes. All characters pay two Time Units. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

It's been a busy time for adventurers in the Shield Lands. After Old Wicked unleashed a new threat, the plague referred to as the Black Breath of Iuz, heroes throughout the realm have sought for a cure. One party traveled to Scragholme Island and rescued Lineene the Bear, who traveled to Critwall and, through her research, discovered that the plague's cure required the acquisition of three artifacts. Other brave adventurers recovered two of those

artifacts, and the Shield Lands prays once the third artifact is secured its leaders can deliver a cure.

While many adventurers throughout the Shield Lands have undertaken these quests to get rid of the Black Breath and to counter Iuz's newer machinations, craftsmen, laborers and merchants have begun to profit from the reconstruction of the lands near Gensal. However, while the army defends the land from Iuz's minions and seasoned adventurers look for a cure to the Black Breath, the merchant caravans hauling supplies to the new border posts outside of Gensal have to do without seasoned guards, and several have met with disaster.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs each respond to a written notice that the insurance agent, Quannothe Quimbleborn, is looking for adventurers. They begin at Quimbleborn's office where the insurance agent informs them that a number of merchant caravans have recently fallen to raids just outside of Gensal. The raids have cost Quimbleborn a pretty penny, and he wants the adventurers to find the raiders and bring an end to their interruptions. Quimbleborn directs the PCs to seek out the merchant Phinneus Welch in Gensal. The man was the sole survivor of the last raid. While other raids claimed one or two wagons each, the last raid was against a caravan of eight wagons, suggesting the raiders have grown bolder. Quimbleborn worries that he'll soon be ruined and hopes that Phinneus Welch can help the PCs find the culprits and, if possible, recover some of the merchandise.

The party travels to Gensal and spends some time and energy locating Phinneus Welch. When they find him, he informs them that the raids were conducted by goblins, orcs, and a bugbear, and he directs the PCs to the location where his caravan was raided.

Meanwhile, the party learns that a caravan of six wagons intends to set out in three days. The caravan has already hired some guards but is willing to spend a few gold to hire the PCs as well. Nonetheless, three days proves a long time to wait while the raiders remain at large.

When the party explores the location Welch's caravan was ambushed, they locate tracks leading into the woods.

Following the tracks, the party stumbles across a group of disgruntled goblins a short distance out from the raiders' hide-out. The goblins interrupt their rant against their orcish companions in order to attack the party.

After the party dispatches with the goblins, they find themselves free to continue stalking after the raiders' tracks to their temporary cave hide-out. They encounter a

couple of traps in the cave's mouth, then come face-to-face with a band of battle-ready orcs.

The party finds many, but not all, of the stolen goods stashed in the corners of the cave and a sheet of paper that leads, curiously enough, back to Phinneus Welch, but unfortunately for the PCs, the raiders' commanders arrive just after the party's battle with the orcs ends. Still wounded and winded, the party immediately turns to face both a bugbear and a sorceress.

The PCs travel back to Gensal with new questions for Phinneus Welch but find him missing. Some quick detective work allows them to pick up his trail, leading them once again to Critwall where he has just received insurance payments from Quimbleborn. Once again the party is called upon to perform some quick detective work in order to locate the missing merchant, and when they find him, Welch attempts to flee. When they subdue him and hand him over to the guards, the party earns Quimbleborn's thanks.

INTRODUCTION

The past few days in Critwall have passed slowly, but earlier this evening it seemed things might change. Nearly every tavern posted signs stating that the insurance agent, Quannoth Quimbleborn, needed the assistance of daring adventurers. The sun melted in the west as you reached a modest brick house with a sign out front, reading, "Quimbleborn's Insurance." Inside the front door was a cozy, wood-paneled room, decorated with tapestries and chairs and benches upholstered in leather and velvet. At a small table in the corner, a homely middle-aged woman with dun-colored hair pulled back into a tight knot looked up from her knitting and told you that Quimbleborn was currently in a meeting but should be available in just a moment.

Now, as you wait, a number of other adventurers enter the room, and Quimbleborn's secretary directs them to take a seat and wait. "He'll be with you shortly," she says, barely raising her eyes from her knitting. Then, she resumes, and her needles click and clack.

The DM should allow players the opportunity to introduce and describe their characters. Quimbleborn's secretary is Rosa Thornwood. She is extremely incurious about the adventurers and Quimbleborn's business as a whole and, therefore, knows rather little, except that Quimbleborn is upset about some lost wagons or something like that. She passes her time by knitting and humming folk songs.

Perhaps a half hour passes as you wait for Quimbleborn. The sky darkens and turns indigo.

Quimbleborn's secretary packs her knitting into a small handbag and pulls on a woolen sweater. At length, Quimbleborn's office door opens, and a fat, disgruntled merchant steps out, tugging at the corner of his handlebar moustache. He barely gives you a glance as he hurries out. Then Quimbleborn, himself, steps forward. He is a lavishly garbed gnome with a red silk blouse with silver buttons and stitching. His hair is slick on his head, and his smile glows white above a thick, dark, pointed beard. "You can go, Rosa," he says and waves away his secretary. Finally, he turns to you. "You must be my adventurers," he says. "I'm Quannoth Quimbleborn, a modest and humble insurance agent. And you are?"

Allow the PCs a chance to introduce themselves to Quimbleborn. He nods and smiles as the players introduce their characters, offering quick, facile compliments as befits them (e.g. to a wizard, "Excellent enunciation," or to a fighter, "I'm glad I'll never have to brawl with the likes of you," or to a rogue, "You look like quite the sly fellow").

After you finish your introductions, Quimbleborn fumbles about his breast pocket for a pair spectacles which he places atop the bridge of his nose. "Come into my office," he says. "You'll have to pardon the mess."

Quimbleborn grins as he turns around, but as you step into his office it becomes immediately apparent that his request for your pardon was not merely a polite formality. The room is truly a disaster area and looks as though it might have been decorated by drunken orcs. Papers lie strewn about a desk and all across the floor. Bookshelves line the walls but the books teeter in random stacks as do as old plates and mugs, many of which still hold the remnants of old meals. A flickering candle drips wax onto a pile of ledgers, and a broken spyglass lies in a heap of knick-knacks in the far corner.

Quimbleborn wades through the strewn papers to his chair, climbs up and props himself behind his desk. Again he smiles. "So," he says, "you're probably wondering why I've asked you here."

Before you can respond, he continues. "I insure merchant caravans, but lately things have gone badly for them—and for me. There have been a number of raids around Gensal, and they're costing me a pretty penny. All these fat merchants run from the first signs of a bandit attack and lose their wagons. At first, the merchants were able to return to the ambush site and find a couple wagons still intact, but now the bandits have become better organized and have started taking more and more

wagons. I just received word yesterday afternoon that the latest raid hit another of my merchant caravans and made off with everything. I'm at the end of my rope. I need you to find these bandits and deal with them. Also, I need you to recover as much as you can of the goods I've insured. What do you say?"

The PCs will likely have questions for Quimbleborn at this time. Quimbleborn is no fool and avoids giving the PCs any more information than they need. Nonetheless, he is an amiable fellow, though prone to droning on in legalese. He is a merchant formerly of Greyhawk who moved to Critwall when he suspected he might make a small fortune off reconstruction efforts in the Shield Lands. However, his plan currently looks as though it might have backfired. The raids have killed his profits and have begun to cut into his monetary reserves.

He has, meanwhile, gathered some details concerning the bandit raids. Four of the caravans he's insured have been raided, all within the past month. The first two caravans suffered losses of two wagons each, the third lost four wagons, and the fourth—the most recent—lost all six of its wagons. The bandits consist of goblins and orcs. The merchants in charge of the second and third caravans have left the Shield Lands, but the merchant in charge of the first and fourth caravans, Phinneus Welch, has not yet returned for the insurance money for the last raid. The messenger who brought news of the raid told Quimbleborn that Welch was in Gensal, at the Jousting Mug, recovering from his wounds.

He offers to pay the adventurers once they bring proof they've defeated the bandits, but he doesn't have any money to help them get started. If anyone asks, he'll be glad to write up a contract, but it will take him a quarter hour to reach a satisfactory composition, as he struggles with each term to avoid any possible misinterpretation.

Meanwhile, allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 15) to notice a new contract on the desk. It details Quimbleborn's agreement with the merchant who exited just before the PCs began their conversation with the insurance agent. It lists the number of wagons and goods to be insured as well as the scheduled departure and arrival dates, and it is signed by both Quimbleborn and the merchant. A Spot check (DC 20) also notices a list of merchants' names, gold pieces insured, and travel schedules. Nearly all of them stop at Gensal at one time or another, though some favor Torkeep. Each entry is signed by the merchant in charge of the caravan.

ENCOUNTER ONE: FINDING PHINNEUS

At this point, the PCs have little to do other than travel to Gensal and look for Phinneus Welch at the Jousting Mug. However, Phinneus has healed quite nicely since he sent his messenger to Critwall and isn't in the Jousting Mug when the PCs arrive.

The sky hangs a thick and foreboding grey overhead as you arrive at Gensal, one of the towns lost to the recent battles with the minions of Iuz. The majority of the town's buildings were obliterated and now lie in roughly stacked piles of stone and lumber. A dozen or more tents litter the central portion of town. Around the tents, dozens of men hammer at wooden frames and lay brick and mortar. Only two finished structures survived the Old One's assault, a shrine with a symbol depicting a flaming hammer and a tavern, the Jousting Mug. As you cross the rough streets, avoiding stray rubble, a drunken duo staggers out of the Jousting Mug, laughing and clapping each other on their shoulders.

The Jousting Mug

The Jousting Mug now forms the center of Gensal and currently serves as both tavern and makeshift town hall. The owner, Gandor Meadbow is a bull of a man and never without his falchion strapped into a scabbard on his back. He is obviously of mixed descent. His balding brown hair hangs in greasy strands around his head, his eyes are hard and almost cruel, and his hands are calloused slabs. Despite his appearances, he is generally friendly enough. However, if anyone looks like they are casting a spell (and he actually notices), he will point at a sign hanging above the fireplace that reads, "No Wizzies. This means you."

🗡 **Gandor Meadbow:** Male human Bbn1/Ftr1/Brd1

The Jousting Mug shelters roughly half a dozen customers at any point in the day, except during lunch and dinner times when its patronage swells to roughly two dozen. This is the center of gossip in town as well as Gensal's drinking hole. Lady Katarina named the tavern Gensal's interim seat of government when she ordered the beginning of the town's reconstruction. Twice a month, she sends a contingent of messengers and a representative of the Council to gather word of the reconstruction effort, send word of important decrees, and dispense justice. A number of papers, most in dreadfully boring legalese, hang tacked to the wall of the Jousting Mug near its door. A couple of them bear official

warnings to those merchants who would brave possible bandit raids to travel to the outlying guard posts. Lady Katarina's messengers and representative are not currently residing in the town.

During either of the dinner times, the village's workers often engage in song or gambling or arm wrestling to lift their spirits.

If the PCs ask, Gandor Meadbow tells them that Phinneus Welch had rented a room in the Jousting Mug while he was recovering from his wounds, but he hasn't seen Welch for two days. The last he'd heard, Welch was trying to sell the goods he'd salvaged from the attack on his caravan and find a horse to take him to Critwall. Meadbow will advise the PCs to talk to Joaquin Danforth at the new general store if they want more information.

The Shrine of Fortubo

This structure is set 200 yards southwest of the Jousting Mug, beyond the main crop of tents and near the relocated heaps of wood and broken rock that remain of the old village. It is a newer structure set into the side of a hill about 40 feet across. The outside of the structure is not much more than a set of stone blocks erected on either side of an entrance dug into the hill. The blocks are crossed by a stone beam 10 feet long and 2 feet thick. All of the blocks have tiny carvings related to the worship of Fortubo as well as prayers for those who have "gone to earth." Inside the hill is a hollowed out 20 by 20 foot area, big enough for only a handful of worshippers. It looks a touch unfinished. "Mother" Garla Gravelstone can be found here during the days, greeting the newly converted, mainly farmers from the outlying areas who converted to Fortubo or have started paying a secondary homage to Fortubo after "Mother" Gravelstone helped fight in the battle against the forces of Iuz. When the Iuzians came to Gensal, she and a few others rallied at the shrine, firing ranged weapons from the entry way until she used magic to shape the stones into a covering that protected them when the Iuzians moved toward the shrine. Many of those she saved stayed in the area and farm the outlying regions.

☛ **"Mother" Garla Gravelstone:** Male female Clr3

"Mother" Gravelstone will serve as a source of healing for the party (at the standard price) if they wish. If the party wishes her to cast a spell other than a *cure light wounds*, *cure moderate wounds* or *lesser restoration*, they will need to allow her a day to prepare new spells. She can cast one *lesser restoration* and/or *cure moderate wounds* per day.

Additionally, word has reached "Mother" Gravelstone regarding a few topics. A few months ago, there were a number of shady adventuring types who

traveled to the ruins of Gensal Keep, but as far as she knew, none ever entered until an adventuring party went in to reclaim a dark, magical book, rumored to be an artifact ("Mother" Gravelstone may remember some of the adventurers). Since the book was recovered, there's been little activity near the ruins other than excavation teams that have looted through the rubble for broken weapons to be reforged, ruined suits of armor to be repaired, other precious metals, and the sort. Master Joffrey of the Critwall Archaeologists' Society is said to be in charge of the operation, though there's very little order most of the time, as all manner of people go into the ruins to try to fetch a living.

She doesn't know of anyone named Phinneus Welch, and though she's the only cleric in town, no one has come to her for healing in the past week and a half.

The General Store

In the middle of a camp of smaller tents and half-finished framework buildings sits a large canvas tent flying two banners—Knowledge (local—both Core and Iuz Border States) or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or Knowledge (history) check (DC 10) to recognize them as belonging to both Dyvers and the Shield Lands. This is the general store, run (more than owned) by Joaquin Danforth, a slender, elegant, red-headed, middle-aged man and reputed (or so he claims) horse merchant from Dyvers. However, his store doesn't sell horses at this time, but the chance to serve as the central merchant in a key frontier town during its time of renewal was too promising for Joaquin to let it pass by. A dark, keen-eyed raven hops about on his desk, pecking at strips of animal flesh near a stack of paper and a jar of ink. At all times during the day, Joaquin's tent is visited by 2d4+2 villagers wandering the aisles of goods as well as 1d3+1 of Joaquin's hired guards (human War2). At night, Joaquin retires to a small, draped area he uses as a bedroom and leaves 1d3+2 guards to patrol the tent.

☛ **Joaquin Danforth:** Male human Rog5/Sor1 (Will +5; Appraise +8, Bluff +12, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +8, Sense Motive +9, Spot +11; *medallion of detect thoughts*, Will save DC 14)

Joaquin's business, though a store, is more of a warehouse and hub for all manners of trade. He supplies builders and merchants alike, as well as the soldiers who come to him for goods and "special needs" (a Sense Motive check [DC 10] allows the PCs to infer the soldiers' "special needs" may include drugs and prostitutes). Joaquin has networked well throughout the town and surrounding area, so that he buys goods (and services) directly from the farming families in the surrounding area as well as

negotiating discounted prices for goods from passing merchant caravans in whom he instills a healthy fear of the roving raiders. If he likes the PCs, or they deal with him appropriately, he can provide them with some valuable information.

Note: Joaquin knows more than he will initially let on, unless fully convinced by a successful Gather Information or Diplomacy check (and the accompanying gold). He's certain every piece of information has a price. (Allow PCs to bump their Gather Information or Diplomacy checks up by 1 for each gp beyond the minimum for the DC. For example, if a PC rolls a Gather Information check of 17, allow him or her to earn a 20 by spending 13 gp instead of 10.) Meanwhile, Joaquin uses his *medallion of detect thoughts* to gauge people's cunning and intent. His command word is "I" and should draw no attention unless a PC casts *detect magic*.

(1 gp) "Yeah, sure, I know Phinneus Welch, but I haven't seen him around here today."

(DC 10, 3 gp) "I think he's making plans to return to Critwall, but he's been spending a lot of time the last few days with Darby Dunrow's widow, Marta. He's probably there right now."

(DC 15, 6 gp) "Maybe I shouldn't say this, but you seem like nice people. If you ask me, there's something a little fishy about Phinneus. He came back into town after that bandit raid and had to recover from his wounds, he said, but he never saw that holy woman at the local shrine, just went to the Jousting Mug for a couple days or two and lay in bed."

(DC 20, 10 gp) "Normally, I might not think much about him staying in bed, except I know he managed to salvage enough goods from that raid to trade a bunch with me. I gave him over a thousand gold worth in coin and items. Seems to me if I was so badly hurt and had that much money, I'd get me some magic healing."

(DC 25, 15 gp) "Honestly, you people look like the kind that know how to keep secrets. I can't say exactly how I feel it, but I suspect Phinneus feels guilty about something. Maybe it's because he saw his men and horses slaughtered, but something dark's hanging over that guy."

The Archaeologists' Dig

Roughly a half-dozen tents lie outside the edge of the town, near the ruins of Gensal Keep. Here, a number of scholars, organized by Master Edwin Joffrey of the Critwall Archaeologists' Society (a largely informal, new, and relatively unknown department attached to the Arcanists' Society), scour the debris, fetching metal out of the rock, claiming much in the name of scholarship, even though they sell most of it for profit.

🦄 **Master Edwin Joffrey:** Male half-elf Ari1/Exp2

Master Joffrey robes himself in bright colors and scholars' clothes. He has spectacles and wears his long, silver hair drawn back into a ponytail, though it seems wisps of his bangs always escape and blow loose in the wind. He loves his ruins, and when he speaks, he often glances back to the rocks where metal rings against stone. He has little information to offer the PCs, except that the Archaeologists' Society has scoured the area and determined there are absolutely no places where bandits could hide. The only rooms hidden in the ruins were discovered about three months ago by a number of adventurers, the ones who found a famous magical book, and the Archaeologists' Society has since searched and researched and made extensive notes regarding the rooms in that hidden dungeon. In fact, it is, come to think of it, somewhat interesting to Joffrey that it seems a number of elves lived in the area before Gensal Keep was built. Also interesting is a room of amber, wherein a number of very life-like statues are frozen in a scene of great terror, as a number of demons in mid-shapechange seem to threaten some soldiers. The amber has receded over the past months, but only slightly. No one's quite certain what that means. His society has neither encountered nor seen bandits, nor do they wish to.

If the PCs press Joffrey and endure his ramblings about rock formations, rare minerals, arcane theories about geological forces he calls "seismic activity," new evidence supporting strange claims regarding ancient rituals, and other such brain-numbingly obscure scholastic drivel (DMs roleplay this at their discretion), he eventually remembers seeing a man and a woman holding a conversation at the edge of the ruins roughly a month earlier. Joffrey didn't think they looked like bandits, but he was a little surprised when the woman headed north into the wilds after the two finished their conversation. The man, he remembers, walked past the archaeologists' camp back toward the Jousting Mug.

The Guardsmen

A small tent serves as a barracks for Gensal's contingent of eight soldiers. Their leader is Captain Manfred Wort (male human Pal2/Ftr4), a pleasant and straightforward Heironean. He's responsible to oversee the safety of the town and coordinate the shifts of the guards stationed at the outposts. He knows a few pieces of information which he willingly offers the PCs:

- He never saw Phinneus Welch, nor did any of his men.
- The bandit raids strike him as too well-coordinated to be random.
- Not every caravan has been raided.

- Each caravan that was attacked came to Gensal from Critwall.
- If the party hopes to find someone, they ought to check the Jousting Mug since it's pretty much the heart of the town.

Phinneus Welch

After they get directions from Joaquin Danforth, the party finds Phinneus at the widow Dunrow's farm, chopping wood outside while Marta hangs linens to dry.

The sky still looms thick and grey as wool, and a cool, stiff breeze bends the grasses before you as you travel a couple miles back along the road to Critwall, then head south at a small crick as Joaquin Danforth instructed you. Two long, slow rolling hills rise and fall before you crest a third that overlooks the Dunrow farm. Rows of wheat and corn stretch out for acres, and in the distance you can make out a fence, a herd of cows grazing, a modest farm house, and a man standing at a chopping block. The sounds of his axe strokes come faintly to you on the breeze.

 **Phinneus Welch:** Male human Rog3; See Appendix One for stats.

Phinneus Welch is in his mid-twenties and handsome with blond hair, sharp blue eyes, and a perpetual five o'clock shadow. He wears a merchant's breeches and fine boots, but he stands bare-chested as he works, glistening with sweat. His shirt, vest, rings, and other jewelry lie on a stump behind him. PCs who look for Phinneus' injuries can make a Spot check (DC 10) to notice a number of faint red scars running down his shoulders and another small scar on his right abdomen. A Heal check (DC 15) suggests the small scar on his right abdomen was made by a small bladed weapon like a dagger while the scars on his shoulders were made by claws or nails. Additionally, a Heal check (DC 20) suggests the weapon wound on Phinneus' abdomen was never truly threatening.

Phinneus will look up and acknowledge the PCs as soon as he sees them, but will continue chopping wood until the party approaches close enough to engage him in casual conversation. Then he'll set down his axe, grab the towel next to his shirt, wipe his sweat, say hello, and ask what he can do for them. Phinneus is a bit of a ladies' man and will heartily greet any attractive female PC (Cha 14+) with a compliment: "Well, I've been waiting for the sky to break into rain, but never thought it'd break into sunshine like you."

The widow Marta Dunrow stands to the far left of the farm house, hanging linens on a line to dry. If the PCs approach Phinneus, she'll finish hanging linens and

then approach, giving the PCs a few moments to chat with Phinneus in private before Marta arrives. Marta is a plump, but pretty little red-headed farm girl in her early twenties. She has green eyes and a button nose. Her brother checks on her once a week to make certain she's managing well enough; otherwise, she's lived alone for the past year while she's been a widow. At times throughout the year, she would get lonely and travel to Gensal for supplies and dinner at the Jousting Mug, but she would typically sit in a corner and observe others rather than join in festivities or conversation. Her former husband, Darby Dunrow, was slain in the assault Iuz launched against Gensal. He was drunk at the time, and Marta holds that as a mark of shame. She loves Phinneus because she thinks he's handsome, and he doesn't seem to care about her dead husband's inglorious demise.

Phinneus and Marta met in the Jousting Mug while he was recovering from his wound. The dagger wound on his abdomen was the only one he suffered in the ambush. If the PCs ask about the scars on his shoulders while Marta is near, she'll blush and turn her face. Phinneus will say that sometimes life on the farm can get rough. The two say they fell for each other right away and will interrupt each other recounting the event as though it's still a shared, magical memory. Phinneus says he intends to give up being a merchant since he's never known happiness like that he's enjoyed with Marta, and he'll squeeze her tight.

When the PCs ask Phinneus about the raid, his face will cloud over before he begins his story. PCs who ask for a Sense Motive check can make one at a DC 23 to suspect that he's holding back some part of the truth.

Phinneus looks at you, then up at the sky, and when he looks back at you, it seems as though the dreary weather has seeped into his face. He sighs. "The ambush was a nightmare, that's the truth of it. I was lucky to get away with my life, but I can't say as much for the men I hired to help guide my wagons. One of them was just a boy, maybe fourteen, and I can still hear his laughter end, gurgling in his throat, as the first javelin felled him. There were goblins, half a dozen of them, a handful of orcs, and a bugbear. The bugbear was in charge. I've picked up a little goblin in my travels, not enough to hold a conversation, mind you, but they called him Crooktooth. He came with the orcs from the front, and the goblins set upon us from the rear, cutting off our escape. One of my men, Timor, begged for his life. He was down on his knees, holding his hands together in a prayer for mercy, and an orc chopped off his head. I tried to run for it, charging a goblin to make my retreat, but I took a javelin in my side." Phinneus points to a pink scar on the right side of

his abdomen. "I fell and bled and played dead. The monsters made quickly to haul away everything they could, and they broke the wagons they couldn't carry. They left me for dead, and I lay on the road pale and bleeding for what seemed like ages before I dared head back to Gensal."

Phinneus will give directions to the ambush site if the PCs ask and can even mark it on a map if the PCs have one. He will answer any other questions the PCs have, but he doesn't have a lot more information. He intends to collect his insurance money from Quimblehorn but says he's not in a rush since he's so happy with Marta. They plan to head to Critwall in a few weeks to buy her a nice dress and some exotic seeds, and he says he'll collect his money when they go together to the city. When the PCs plan to go, he'll wish them well and ask them to take vengeance for Timor, Wallen, and Jareth.

ENCOUNTER TWO: MERCHANTS AS DUMB AS THEY GET

After the PCs spend a day or two gathering information, they'll see a couple new merchants in the Jousting Mug, sitting down to their dinners or beer.

When you return to the Jousting Mug, you recognize some familiar faces, tired carpenters and drunken soldiers, but two unfamiliar men lean forward and speak in low voices at a table in the far corner. They wear fine woolen vests over silk shirts, and the flickering candlelight glints every now and then off gold and silver rings. One is portly and red-haired. The other is balding and has a hawkish nose and keen eyes, and as you stand near the doorway, he glances up at you. Immediately, he flashes a thin smile and sits back, seeming to relax.

The portly, red-haired merchant is Janos Renly. The balding, hawkish merchant is Pfifer Traistle. They just arrived in Gensal earlier that day and mean to transport a caravan of supplies to one of the outlying border posts under construction; however, they have also just learned about the raids on other caravans and hope to hire some bodyguards before they depart. If the PCs do not approach the merchants on their own, the merchants will quibble for a moment, until Traistle will approach the party with an offer of employment. He will introduce himself and Renly. Traistle is prepared to offer reasonable pay, but Renly is in charge and intends to keep a tight grip on his coin. He'll pay no more than 10 gp a person

and won't hire more than 6 bodyguards. As far as he's concerned, 10 gp is a fortune for the average person, and there's no guarantee that bandits will even attack his caravan. The PCs might be able to convince him to double his offer (to 20 gp a person) if they provide a convincing argument and succeed on a Diplomacy check (DC 25). Also, if anyone managed earlier to Spot Quimblehorn's ledger and the scheduled shipments therein, allow that PC an Intelligence check (DC 10) to recognize Janos Renly's name. Otherwise, the party may learn that Renly bought Quimblehorn's insurance if they simply ask him.

Meanwhile, Renly and Traistle plan to wait 3 days in Gensal while they hawk their wares. They carry finely crafted joints, keystones, candelabras, door hinges, and other such materials as could prove useful to the construction of a military stronghold. They also carry spices and decorations they might be able to trade in Gensal, and they intend to trade for raw building supplies, stone blocks and lumber, to haul to the border hold. Scheduled to leave in 3 days, they have no interest in leaving early, as they're reasonably frightened by the news of the bandits. In fact, if the PCs have some reason to convince the merchants to delay their travel, they're willing to do so if the PCs either pay 10 gp per day or succeed on a Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC 25).

DMs should play Renly as a moderately acerbic character. His tight-wad personality is meant to be slightly off-putting, though not directly antagonistic. If the PCs press for more money or cooperation, let Renly ask them about what great heroics the PCs have performed to deserve more than 10 gp for fools' work. Traistle will soften the edges and suggest that if the PCs don't wish to guard the caravan they might prove their heroism by clearing the road of bandits for all caravans. Traistle is meant to be diplomatic enough to keep this from becoming a rough encounter, and DMs should use him to help players consider their options: guard the caravan or scout ahead for bandits.

If the PCs initially agree to guard the merchants' caravan, allow the merchants to grow uneasy about their journey over the next day or two. Renly will grow visibly ill, pale and nauseous, from fear. Traistle will become slightly twitchy and might suggest to the party that they scout ahead, clear the road and then come back to guard the caravan. DMs shouldn't force the party to leave Gensal without the merchants but should try to make their days of waiting in the town somewhat dull and anxious and—if they spend much time with the merchants—full of worry and haggling about money.

ENCOUNTER THREE: STUMBLING RIGHT INTO THE THICK OF IT

If the PCs opt to guard the merchants' caravan, the party will end up facing the bandits en masse rather than as detailed in Encounters 5, 6, and 7. The bandits will have set up their ambush according to Quimbleborn's schedule in order to waylay the merchants on a muddy stretch of road, near a bridge, at the bottom of a valley. Marlys Ashblood and the goblins hide 60 feet back from the bridge and 30 feet off the trail into the woods. When the goblins or Marlys Ashblood spy the caravan entering the valley, she sends her familiar, Lysantra, to report the caravan's arrival to Crooktooth. At that time, he and the orcs who had hidden themselves behind the cover provided by the arc of the bridge stand and prepare for battle. Because of the mud, movement is reduced to half speed. The bridge is 15 feet wide and 30 feet long. The river runs 20 feet across and is 10 feet deep at its deepest (Swim check [DC 15]). The orcs and bugbear wait at the bridge while the goblins and sorceress hide in the woods in order to take the caravan from the rear.

The merchants Janos Renly and Pfifer Traistle wait for you anxiously the morning of your departure. For days, the skies have loomed a dark grey overhead, and today is no exception. Distant rumbles of thunder sound, and a chill breeze rustles through the grass and trees as you escort Renly, Traistle, and their six horses and wagons along a rutted clay path. Each cawing crow causes Renly to shiver and jump half out of his skin. Traistle's nerves are calmer, but not much; he casts his cold gaze from side to side and pauses every half mile or so to ask your party to investigate shadows in the woods. After a couple hours, Traistle manages to relax enough to relate what he assuredly considers fascinating stories about various deals he and Renly have conducted in the past, but his stories are mostly descriptions of exotic spices and strange, gnomish knick-knacks and lack any sense of plot.

Eventually, you leave the flat lands near Gensal and climb into a series of small, rolling hills. The path winds along and then descends into a valley. Below you, a stone bridge crosses a quick-moving stream. The river seems to have flooded its banks in recent history, for the land around it is muddy and slow-going. Renly and Traistle urge their horses through the mud when the sound of footsteps rings up the far side of the stone bridge. Then you see the

source of the footsteps, four orcs and something larger, a muscular, savage humanoid, standing roughly seven feet tall. Coarse hair covers most of its body. Its mouth is full of long, sharp fangs, and its nose is much like that of a bear.

Bandits:

APL2 (EL 5)

➤ **Goblins (4):** hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

➤ **Orcs (4):** hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 203.

➤ **Bugbear:** hp 19; see *Monster Manual* page 29.

➤ **Gunkel:** Male goblin Adp1; hp 5; see Appendix One.

➤ **Norbu:** Male goblin Adp1; hp 5; see Appendix One.

➤ **Marlys Ashblood:** Female human Sor1; hp 5; see Appendix One.

Tactics: If the PCs end up facing all these bandits at once, they're in a world of hurt. Try to limit the initial damage by splitting the bandits' attentions between the PCs, merchants, and wagons. Gunkel will try to catch the merchants with his sleep spell. Marlys will try to cause as many PCs to run in fear as possible, rather than press the attack any further, and Crooktooth, the bugbear, will direct the goblin warriors to secure the wagons as he and the orcs engage the PCs in melee combat. Of course, if the PCs choose to attack any of the bandits not directly engaged in combat, those bandits will try to defend themselves. Otherwise, the PCs can buy their safety and that of the merchants by simply handing over all their belongings. PCs can keep their gold, assuming that they don't have large, jangling purses immediately visible, but Crooktooth will expect them to hand over any easily visible weapons. If the PCs intend to hide any items, allow them a Sleight of Hand check opposed by Crooktooth's Spot check.

Treasure:

Loot – 50 gp, Coin – 7 gp, Magic – potion of cure light wounds x2 (16 gp), scroll of burning hands (4 gp), scroll of charm person (4 gp), scroll of color spray (4 gp), scroll of grease (4 gp), scroll of mirror image (25 gp)

Development: The PCs can Search the sorceress's body (DC 15) to find a handwritten note that lists a number of caravans, their worth in gold, and a schedule of their trips to the border posts outside of Gensal. If any PC spotted Quimbleborn's caravan schedule, allow him or her a Forgery or Intelligence check (DC 10) to vaguely recognize the handwriting. If a PC who spotted Quimbleborn's caravan schedule succeeds on a Forgery or Intelligence check (DC 20), he or she recognizes the

handwriting as that belonging to Phinneus Welch. Additionally, the PCs can make a Survival check (DC 7) to follow the bandits' tracks back to their lair. There they might encounter a couple traps (see Encounter Six) and find the merchants' missing loot.

ENCOUNTER FOUR: SCOUTING AHEAD

PCs who choose to investigate the site where Phinneus Welch's caravan was ambushed travel two hours out of Gensal until they come to a flat bend in the trail, a small clearing in the hills, roughly eighty feet in diameter.

For days, the skies have loomed a dark grey overhead, and today is no exception. Distant rumbles of thunder sound, and a chill breeze rustles through the grass and trees as you move along a rutted clay path. Eventually, you leave the flat lands near Gensal and climb into a series of small, rolling hills. At the bottom of one hill, a wide flat valley winds along a small stream no more than 5 feet wide. A wide stretch of grasses run to either side of the stream, and you can see in the distance, on the far side of the stream, the shadowy form of a broken wagon tucked several feet back into the woods.

A Search check (DC 13) near the wagon locates not only the telltale ruts of wagon wheels but a number of footprints leading into the forest. A Survival check (DC 13) identifies 12 different sets of footprints headed into the woods and allows the party to follow them. If the party succeeds on its Survival check, a separate Knowledge (nature) check (DC 18) identifies the footprints as belonging to 6 goblins, 4 orcs, a bugbear, and a human.

ENCOUNTER FIVE: DISGRUNTLED GOBLINS

The bandit tracks lead half an hour into the hills away from the ambush site before they come to a patch of dense forest.

After you follow the bandits' tracks a half-hour deeper into the hills and forest, the trail closes up, and you come to the edge of a grove of thin trees and thick underbrush. The darkness before you looks almost palpable as the forest's canopy shuts out much of the light that seeped through the thick veil of clouds. There's no doubt to it, though, the bandits'

footprints run right to the edge of the grove and then, most likely, into it.

The tracks lead deeper into the trees and underbrush, but the new conditions require a Survival check (DC 23) in order for the party to track the bandits' movement. Meanwhile, the grove is dark enough that the area is effectively in night-time conditions. PCs with normal vision are limited to 30 feet of normal visibility and 30 feet of shadowy illumination. Torches or other sources of light do not add to this range, and DMs should modify any Spot checks accordingly. The underbrush, meanwhile, makes it difficult for PCs to travel quietly through the woods.

Dry leaves and twigs snap beneath your feet, and tree branches continually threaten to scratch your face, arms and legs. Your journey takes you deeper into the premature twilight of the forest. Loose dirt makes it hard to walk quickly up or down hills, and the hills seem to grow larger and larger. The wind licks at your back, and yet another large hill looms before you.

PCs can move at full movement, but doing so requires a Balance check (DC 10). Otherwise, they are restricted to half-movement. At this point, the DM should have the PCs and goblins make opposed Listen checks. Apply a -5 modifier to any Move Silently attempts or a +5 modifier to the goblins' Listen checks as the PCs approach their temporary encampment which lies just on the other side of the hill's crest, some 100 feet away (a -10 modifier to Listen checks). The wind, too, conspires against the PCs as they feel it at their backs, and it carries their voices and footsteps toward the goblins and carries the goblins' voices away from the PCs; because of the wind, DMs should apply an additional -1 penalty to the PCs' Listen checks and +1 bonus to the goblins' Listen checks. When the goblins hear the PCs, the warriors will grab their weapons and spread out 30 feet to either side of Norbu to catch the PCs from each flank. Norbu will cast *bleed*, and Gunkel will hide in an advantageous spot from which to cast sleep.

If the PCs hear the goblins before the goblins hear the PCs, they can catch the end of an interesting conversation (in Goblin):

"Orcs all muscle, no brain."

"No fair they get good jobs. Norbu sick of carrying garbage."

"Crooktooth listen too much to human."

"If not for human, Norbu have strongest magic."

"Gunkel's magic stronger than Norbu's. Gunkel should be in charge."

"Norbu no think so."

"Crooktooth only think he so big because human woman get merchant schedule, but..."

"Shh! Do you hear?"

Creatures:

APL2 (EL 2)

➤ **Goblins (4):** hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

➤ **Gunkel:** Male goblin Adp1; hp 5; see Appendix One.

➤ **Norbu:** Male goblin Adp1; hp 5; see Appendix One.

Tactics: If the PCs manage to avoid the goblins' ambush, the goblin warriors will line up in-between their adepts and the PCs, throw their javelins and draw their morningstars. Gunkel will try to catch as many fighter-types as possible with a sleep spell, though he knows well enough to avoid targeting elves. Norbu will cast bless. In subsequent rounds, the warriors will continue to defend their spellcasters, targeting spellcasters when possible, as the casters will continue to use spells to target fighters. The goblins have spent a good deal of time participating in organized raids under the direction of Crooktooth and Marlys Ashblood and make use of average tactics. If three or more drop, the remaining goblins try to retreat to their secret lair where the orcs wait.

Treasure:

None.

Development: The PCs can make a new Survival check (DC 14) to track the goblins' recent tracks back to their lair. Otherwise, if the PCs capture one of the goblin adepts, the adept, knowing that their hide-out is currently guarded only by the orcs he detests, will gladly offer directions to the bandit lair in exchange for his life. A captured warrior will offer the same information, but only if the PCs can speak Goblin.

ENCOUNTER SIX: THE EVIL SECRET BANDIT LAIR OF DOOM

If the PCs defeat all the goblins, then the bandits' hide-out is currently occupied solely by four orcs, lounging about and feeding off food they've stolen from merchant caravans.

At length the tracks lead you to a small clearing around a hill, at the base of which is the mouth of a cave leading into a profound darkness. Wooden barrels and crates line the walls along the cave entrance, and you can see the glint of various metals

and can even make out a number of broken spades and hammers tossed carelessly to the ground at the edge of your vision.

The barrels and crates previously belonged to the merchant caravans that the bandits recently raided. They contain all manner of building supplies, tools, and other items that merchants might sell to guards at outposts under construction, such as salted fish, breads, wines, blankets, lanterns, and lantern oil. A Search or Survival check (DC 10) immediately outside the mouth of the cave reveals a large number of footprints and wagon tracks headed in almost every direction. The cave contains no light source, so PCs without darkvision will need to carry light of their own after the first two bends. See Appendix Two for the cave's layout.

The cave entrance turns quickly to the left, then starts a gradual ascent, and in the dim light you can make out a grisly sight. Two rows of spears thrust into the earth line either side of the tunnel, with an impaled human head atop each. Judging from the rotted jowls on some of them, these are the less fortunate of the merchants who tried to do business in the bandit-infested wilds. The tunnel continues forward, bending again to the left past empty boxes, a broken wagon wheel and a shattered mirror.

As the PCs move forward, they encounter a trap at Location A on the map.

Deeper Pit Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 25); DC 15 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 23; Market value 1300 gp

The pit trap is lined with strings holding up pots and pans and other metal objects that make a great clanging noise if anyone falls down. If the PCs manage to sneak through the hide-out's traps without making noise or toting a light source forward into the cave's darkness, they will overhear the orcs grumble about their meal (in Orc):

"You cooked food too long."

"Nuh-uh. Funny human spices make for burn taste."

"Me sick of human spices."

"Shut you. You no got good taste."

"Got plenty taste. Like raw cow."

"No cow. Just chicken guts."

"Me like chicken guts."

"Chicken guts no good with human spices."

A short set of roughly-hewn steps leads up into a large, unlit room. Long stalactites stretch down several feet long from a ceiling that reaches up out of sight. A foul stench wafts down the stairwell, and you hear a strange, thick bubbling noise.

APL2 (EL 3)

👉 **Orcs** (4): hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 203.

Tactics: The orcs rest in a large chamber at Location B on the map, up a short set of steps from the main tunnel. Their cook fire was extinguished long before the PCs enter the cave, but the kettle in which the orcs cooked their meals and the water in the kettle are both still boiling hot. If the orcs hear the PCs trigger the pit trap, they'll plan to pour the boiling water down the stairs as the PCs approach, effectively forcing everyone in a 5-ft. line, 15 ft. long to make Reflex saves (DC 10) or take 1d4 damage from the scalding heat (treat as fire damage in case any PC has resistance to fire). If the PCs managed to avoid triggering the pit trap, then the orcs don't take the time to set up their scalding water ambush. However, if the PCs carry any light source with them, the orcs will have plenty of time to draw their weapons and prepare to ambush from flanking positions. In the unlikely event the PCs manage to sneak up to the orcs without drawing their attention, they'll find the orcs strewn about the room, eating undercooked chicken guts.

Treasure:

None.

Development: After the PCs defeat the orcs, allow them to drop out of initiative. Let each character take an action, if he or she so desires, and then allow characters to make Listen checks (DC 10) to hear Crooktooth and Marlys Ashblood approaching. The PCs then have a second round to do as they wish before Crooktooth and Marlys Ashblood arrive and join them in combat.

ENCOUNTER SEVEN: RETURN OF THE BUGBEAR

As you stand over the bodies of the fallen orcs, you hear a thudding that grows louder and louder, rapidly approaching the stairwell. Then you see the source of the footsteps, a muscular, savage humanoid, standing roughly seven feet tall. Coarse hair covers most of its body. Its mouth is full of long, sharp fangs, and its nose is much like that of a bear. Behind it, draped in shadows and dressed in flowing black robes trimmed in gold, stands a dark-haired woman stunningly beautiful apart from the

cruel sneer that plays across her lips as she raises her hand, cloaked in a dark, glowing energy.

Bandit Leaders:

APL2 (EL 3)

👉 **Bugbear:** hp 19; see *Monster Manual* page 29.

👉 **Marlys Ashblood:** Female human Sor1; hp 5; see Appendix One.

Tactics: The bugbear, Crooktooth, rushes into melee, while Marlys Ashblood uses ray of enfeeblement to weaken those PCs that enter into melee with Crooktooth. As a rule, she'll try to maintain a healthy distance of 30 ft. from any melee combatant. If PCs approach her to enter into melee, she'll cast mirror image from her scroll, then use scrolls of charm person, color spray, and burning hands to defeat her foes. If the PCs manage to set an ambush for the bandit leaders, allow Crooktooth a Spot or Listen check as appropriate. The more cautious Marlys Ashblood generally stays too far back to detect ambushes against her bugbear companion, and, likewise, manages to avoid most ambushes. Finally, if the PCs have only one non-magical source of light, such as a torch or lantern, and the bubbling kettle of water has not been emptied down the stairwell, Crooktooth will try as soon as possible to disarm the torch and extinguish it in the kettle, giving him the advantage in the absolute darkness due to his darkvision.

Treasure:

Loot – 50 gp, Coin – 7 gp, Magic -- potion of cure light wounds x2 (16 gp), scroll of burning hands (4 gp), scroll of charm person (4 gp), scroll of color spray (4 gp), scroll of grease (4 gp), scroll of mirror image (25 gp)

Development: The PCs can Search the sorceress's body (DC 15) to find a handwritten note that lists a number of caravans, their worth in gold, and a schedule of their trips to the border posts outside of Gensal. If any PC spotted Quimbleborn's caravan schedule, allow him or her a Forgery or Intelligence check (DC 10) to vaguely recognize the handwriting. If a PC who spotted Quimbleborn's caravan schedule succeeds on a Forgery or Intelligence check (DC 20), he or she recognizes the handwriting as that belonging to Phinneus Welch. Additionally, the PCs will have the opportunity to gather proof they've defeated the bandits (though the handwritten note, itself, will suffice) and recover as much of the merchants' wares as they can carry.

ENCOUNTER EIGHT: PHINNEUS WELCH, PART DEUX

After they've defeated the bandits, two possible leads may bring the PCs back to Phinneus Welch. In the first case, they may have discovered the handwritten note on the sorceress's body and recognized it as Welch's work. If so, they are likely to look for him at the widow Dunrow's farm, but Welch is nowhere to be found. Marta, however, is heartbroken, and her face is puffy and red, betraying the tears she's shed. She can say that they were making plans to get married, and then he just disappeared in the night while she was asleep. He took all his things and didn't even leave a note. She tries to blame the PCs because Phinneus left the night that they came to speak to the couple, but her heart isn't in her accusation. If the PCs look for him in Gensal, a successful Gather Information check (DC 15) discovers that he's headed back to Critwall to claim his insurance money. In the second case, the PCs discover the handwritten note on the sorceress's body and present it to Quannoth Quimbleborn. Quimbleborn will wonder how the bandits had the information, and after the players and Quimbleborn have some time to roleplay the mystery, he will look at his ledgers and compare the handwriting of the note to the various signatures on his schedule until he decides the handwriting belongs to Phinneus Welch. Quimbleborn will moan and exclaim that he'd just paid Phinneus Welch no more than three hours earlier. He begs the PCs to look for the scoundrel and drag him to the authorities, but not before they give him a good beating for Quimbleborn.

If, however, the PCs do not discover the handwritten note, allow them to present Quimbleborn with whatever proof they have that they defeated the bandits, and proceed to the Conclusion.

PCs searching for Phinneus Welch, though, will have to Gather Information quickly before he slips out of the Shield Lands. The PCs have two days after their arrival in Critwall to track down Phinneus Welch and confront him. Otherwise, he escapes. Note to DMs: Phinneus doesn't use his real name in Critwall, so unless the PCs hunt for him by description, they're only going to get information at the taverns where a few individuals might have heard him use his real name during a previous visit. Otherwise, the responses the party gets will all sound alike: "No, I can't say I've ever heard of the guy."

The DC for the party's Gather Information check and the information they get depends on the day and location as indicated in the following chart:

Day One	Docks	DC 20	"I dunno. I'm busy. There's ships goin' everywhere, so if a man's looking to catch a ship, I'm sure he'll catch a ship."
Day One	Docks	DC 25	"The seediest ship's leaving the north pier, though. If I was some weasel looking to slip a trap, I'd head for the Kraken. Ship's going to Dyvers, and the only questions they ask is all answered in gold."
Day One	Taverns	DC 15	"Yeah, I saw the guy. Kind of a weasel if you ask me. Said he was looking for a ship to Dyvers."
Day One	Taverns	DC 20	"I told him to check with a guy named Rat near the north pier."
Day One	Tent Town	DC 20	"Did he do something bad? Is there reward money in it? Hard enough to feed ourselves. Don't know why even if I did know something I ought to starve myself so you can make your coin."
Day One	Tent Town	DC 25	"Come to think of it, though, if the guy's so good looking as you say, maybe that's why I saw some women clucking and cooing at one of the new tents not too far from here. If that's the case, I want nothing to do with him. I ain't messing with no man that's gonna get a horde of ladies mad at me."
Day Two	Docks	DC 10	"A guy like that was looking around yesterday for a ship to Dyvers."
Day Two	Docks	DC 15	"I told him he could find passage on the Kraken. They don't ask many questions, and the ones they do, you can answer with coin. If you're looking for him, you'd better hurry. That ship's a sailin' pretty soon."
Day Two	Taverns	DC 15	"We just knocked down one last drink for old times. Phinneus is a good man, but

			<i>seems something heavy was on his mind."</i>
Day	Taverns	DC	"Said he was going to catch a ship to Dyvers."
Two		20	
Day	Tent	DC	"I was with him last night. Didn't sleep much. That'll teach my parents to try marry me to a pig farmer. He left in a hurry this morning. Took only enough time to try to convince me to move to Dyvers with him."
Two	Town	15	
Day	Tent	DC	"Said he had passage on a ship called the Kraken and he could buy passage for me, but I had to make up my mind quick 'cause the ship was leaving later today. He was a sweetie all right, but a woman knows when a man's false."
Two	Town	20	

The PCs can try to snare Phinneus in one of two locations. If they follow the lead in Tent Town on Day One, they may try to find his tent and catch him as he begins to unwind for the night (still, however, dressed in his armor) and chatting with a skinny, dark-skinned, dark-haired, dark-eyed beauty of maybe 17 years. If they follow their leads to the north pier where the Kraken is docked, allow them to make Spot checks (DC 15) to find him talking to someone in an alley near a warehouse (see Appendix Two for a map) about 150 feet away. On Day Two, the PCs may only find Phinneus at the docks, as he's already left Tent Town for good. If the PCs fail a Spot check (DC 10) near the Kraken on Day Two, Phinneus escapes. If the PCs spot Phinneus, allow him a Spot check (DC 0, plus 1 per 10 feet of distance between Phinneus and the PCs) each round as they approach. The streets aren't crowded, but there are a good number of people milling about. If the PCs rush toward Phinneus, the crowd will scatter, and he'll be immediately alerted.

🔍 **Phinneus Welch:** Male human Rog3; See Appendix One for stats.

Tactics: Phinneus wants his life and his freedom. He would prefer not to fight and attempts to flee by climbing up to the roof of the warehouse, then jumping from rooftop to rooftop until he loses the PCs. The crowds of people on the far side of the alley hinder movement (half-speed). If the PCs give chase to Phinneus and gain on him, he'll try to convince them that he made an honest mistake. In truth, he didn't know exactly what sort of mess he'd arranged, though he knew it wasn't entirely

honest. If the PCs choose to speak with Phinneus he'll present them with a skewed and self-serving version of the actual course of events:

Phinneus had made a few runs from Gensal to the border posts for the standard, modest profit (he'll say "pittance, it's theft what little they pay") and had returned from one run to the Jousting Mug where he got drunk and complained about how little the Shield Lands paid for their supplies when a dark-haired woman approached him with a business proposition (he'll say she "seduced" him, taking advantage of his inebriation). She'd pay him for information regarding the comings and goings of merchant caravans to and from the border posts. Meanwhile, in his last trip to Critwall, Phinneus had learned of a gnome who had begun to offer insurance to merchants. Phinneus imagined that if the merchants were all repaid for whatever losses they suffered to bandits and brigands that was no harm done, and he agreed to woman's offer. He purchased insurance for his wagons and then memorized Quimbleborn's list and copied it for the woman. He never knew anyone would be killed (though naïve, that's the truth). Meanwhile, he was supposed to be able to sell his wagons to the bandits, rather than have them stolen, but in the last raid they not only killed his companions, but stole his wagons, to boot. He maintains that he was cheated as bad as anyone in the deal. Most importantly, he'll swear if he'd ever known it would come to anyone's harm he would never have made the deal (it's the truth), and he hopes to find a place in Dyvers to start over and play by the rules (partly true: he hopes to start over, but it's not likely he'll remain on the up and up). Finally, he'll offer to repay Quimbleborn's money if the PCs will turn him a blind eye. He will, in fact, hand over a bag containing the sum he received from Quimbleborn if the PCs agree to let him go.

If Phinneus is forced to fight, he'll try to escape to someplace safe where he can drink his potions before entering melee. Once in melee, he'll put his back to a wall if possible and use Combat Expertise for its full value as he gauges his opponents. He uses his Improved Feint to catch unarmored or lightly armored opponents flat-footed and take them down quickly before turning his attentions to people in heavier armor. If, at some point, he faces only people in armor heavy enough to limit their movement to less than 30 feet base speed, he flees.

Treasure:

Loot – 77 gp, Coin – 25 gp, Magic -- *potion of bull's strength* (50 gp), *potion of cat's grace* (50 gp), *potion of cure light wounds* x2 (50 gp), +1 studded leather armor (196 gp)

Development: Phinneus carries an unsealed letter to Marta Dunrow. It reads, "Sweet Marta, Maybe you'll

never forgive me, but I hope that someday you might be able to remember me fondly as I know I will you. I'd hoped to start a new life with you, but it seems my past caught up with me. I'm always stuck trying to outrun my past. But until I met you there was nothing to keep me looking back. Yours, Phinneus." If Phinneus is captured or allowed to go free, he'll ask the PCs to deliver it for him.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs caught or released Phinneus, read this first conclusion:

Quannoth Quimbleorn is busy scouring the sea of strewn papers about his desk when you arrive at his office. His hair, usually slicked back flat on his head, juts out at strange and irregular angles, his clothes are twisted and bunched about his body, and he kicks up loose sheets of paper as he storms in circles, so that it looks almost as though he is a miniature storm god laying waste to a disorderly land of snow and ice. An awkward silent moment passes as he lunges into the mess to grab a sheet of paper, then regains his knees and examines it only to toss it aside. Finally, he glances your way. With a strained composure, Quimbleorn stands straight, makes a small attempt to tidy his clothes and hair, and promptly announces, "I am ruined. It seems I invested too heavily and failed to keep good records of my reserve finances. My last payment to Welch, curse his soul, has left me with no more than twenty-three silver to my name, apart from the money I owe you. Unless you have some great discovery to present to me, it seems I'll have to retreat to Greyhawk where at least the bandits make their claims only once a month, and then rather politely."

Allow the PCs a moment to explain how they've recovered the payment Quimbleorn made to Welch. Once they do...

Quimbleorn listens to all you have to say, soaking it in, until his face suddenly explodes into a smile. Even in the dim light of his room, his eyes suddenly sparkle with glee. "Excellent, excellent! Well done, my new friends. I had no interest in returning to Greyhawk. The thieves there are all too cunning and organized. There's no honest dealings in that great city, just smarter ones and dumber ones. No, the Shield Lands suit me better—when I'm not losing money—with all these simp—er, true-hearted people with their clear views of right and wrong and no insurance to speak of except for mine."

If the PCs did NOT catch or release Phinneus, read this conclusion:

Quannoth Quimbleorn is busy scouring the sea of strewn papers about his desk when you arrive at his office. His hair, usually slicked back flat on his head, juts out at strange and irregular angles, his clothes are twisted and bunched about his body, and he kicks up loose sheets of paper as he storms in circles, so that it looks almost as though he is a miniature storm god laying waste to a disorderly land of snow and ice. An awkward silent moment passes as he lunges into the mess to grab a sheet of paper, then regains his knees and examines it only to toss it aside. Finally, he glances your way. With a strained composure, Quimbleorn stands straight, makes a small attempt to tidy his clothes and hair, and promptly announces, "I am ruined. It seems I invested too heavily and failed to keep good records of my reserve finances. My last payment to Welch, curse his untimely soul, has left me with no more than twenty-three silver to my name, apart from the money I owe you. It seems I'll have to retreat to Greyhawk where at least the bandits make their claims only once a month, and then rather politely. But at least it warms my little heart a touch to know you took care of those bandits. I only wish I could have stood there with you to stamp the heel of my boot into the big one's eye. Remember this, my friends, there's no honest dealings, just smarter ones and dumber ones."

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Three

Defeating the bandits:

APL2 150 XP

Encounter Five

Defeating the goblins:

APL2 60 XP

Encounter Six

Facing the pit trap:

APL2 30 XP

Encounter Six

Defeating the orcs:

APL2 90 XP

Encounter Seven

Defeating the bandit leaders:

APL2 90 XP

Encounter Eight

Confronting Phinneus Welch:

APL2 90 XP

Story Award

Recovering Quannoth Quimbleborn's goods:

APL2 45 XP

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL2 45 XP

Total possible experience:

APL2 450 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

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

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

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

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the

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

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

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

Encounter Three: Stumbling Right into the Thick of It

APL2: L— 50 gp; C— 7 gp; M— 57 gp

Encounter Seven: Return of the Bugbear

APL2: L— 50 gp; C— 7 gp; M— 57 gp

Encounter Eight: Phinneus Welch, Part Deux

APL2: L— 77 gp; C— 25 gp; M— 312 gp

Conclusion:

Reward from Quannoth Quiddich

APL2: L— 0 gp; C— 50 gp; M— 0 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL2: L: 127 gp; C: 82 gp; M: 369 gp - Total: 578 gp

APPENDIX 1: NPCs AND MONSTERS

ALL APLS

ENCOUNTER FIVE

☛ **Gunkel:** Male goblin Adp1; CR1/3; small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d6+1; 5 hp; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; touch 14; flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp -5; Atks +0 melee (1d6-1, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d4-1, javelin); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; ABL Str 8, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Hide +9, Move Silently +7, Ride +7, Spot +4; *Spell Focus* (enchantment)

Adept Spells Prepared: (3/2; save DC 12 + spell level); 0—*detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *touch of fatigue*; 1—*command* (DC 14), *sleep* (DC 14)

Possessions: None.

☛ **Norbu:** Male goblin Adp1; CR1/3; small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d6+1; 5 hp; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; touch 14; flat-footed 11; Base Atk +0; Grp -5; Atks +0 melee (1d6-1, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d4-1, javelin); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; ABL Str 8, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +5, Hide +10, Move Silently +8, Ride +8, Survival +6; *Improved Initiative*

Adept Spells Prepared: (3/2; save DC 12 + spell level); 0—*cure minor wounds*, *ghost sound*, *touch of fatigue*; 1—*bless*, *cause fear*

Possessions: None.

ENCOUNTER SEVEN

☛ **Marlys Ashblood:** Female human Sor1; CR 1; medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4+1; hp 5; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC* 16 (or 18 vs. Good); touch 12; flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -1; Atks +0 melee (1d6-1, masterwork light mace) or +2 ranged touch; SQ summon familiar; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3 (*against Good: Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5); ABL Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Concentration +5, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Spellcraft +2; *Point-blank Shot*, *Precise Shot*

Summon familiar: Marlys Ashblood has summoned a raven familiar named Lysantra. Whenever Marlys Ashblood is within arm's reach of Lysantra, she gains the *Alertness* feat, bringing her Spot and Listen scores each to +3.

Sorcerer Spells Per Day: (5/4; save DC = 12 + level)

Sorcerer Spells Known: (0—*daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *read magic*; 1—*ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*)

Possessions: masterwork light mace, *potion of cure light wounds* (2), ~~*potion of mage armor*~~, ~~*potion of protection from good*~~, scroll of burning hands, scroll of charm person, scroll of color spray, scroll of grease, scroll of mirror image, 45 GP

*Stats include bonuses from potions of *mage armor* and *protection from good*.

☛ **Lysantra:** Raven familiar; CR —; tiny magical beast; HD 1; 2 hp; Init +2; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 15; touch 14; flat-footed 13; Base Atk +0; Grp -13; Atks +4 (1d2-5, 2 claws); SQ low-light vision, improved evasion, share spells, empathic link; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +4; ABL Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +5; *Weapon Finesse*.

Improved evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Lysantra takes no damage if she makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

Share spells: At Marlys Ashblood's option, she may have any spell (but not any spell-like ability) she casts on herself also affect the familiar. Lysantra must be within 5 feet at the time of the casting to receive the benefit. If the spell or effect has a duration other than instantaneous, it stops affecting Lysantra if she moves farther than 5 feet away and will not affect her again even if she returns to Marlys before the spell expires.

Empathic link (Su): Marlys Ashblood has an empathic link with Lysantra out to a distance of up to 1 mile. Marlys can not see through Lysantra's eyes, but they can communicate empathically.

Possessions: None.

ENCOUNTER EIGHT

☛ **Phinneus Welch:** Male human Rog3; CR 3; medium humanoid (human); HD 3d6; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17; touch 12; flat-footed 15; Base Atk +2; Grp +3; Atks +4 melee (1d4+1, masterwork dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4+1, masterwork dagger); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ trapfinding, evasion; AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +0; ABL Str 12, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +3, Balance +10, Bluff +8, Climb +7, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +8,

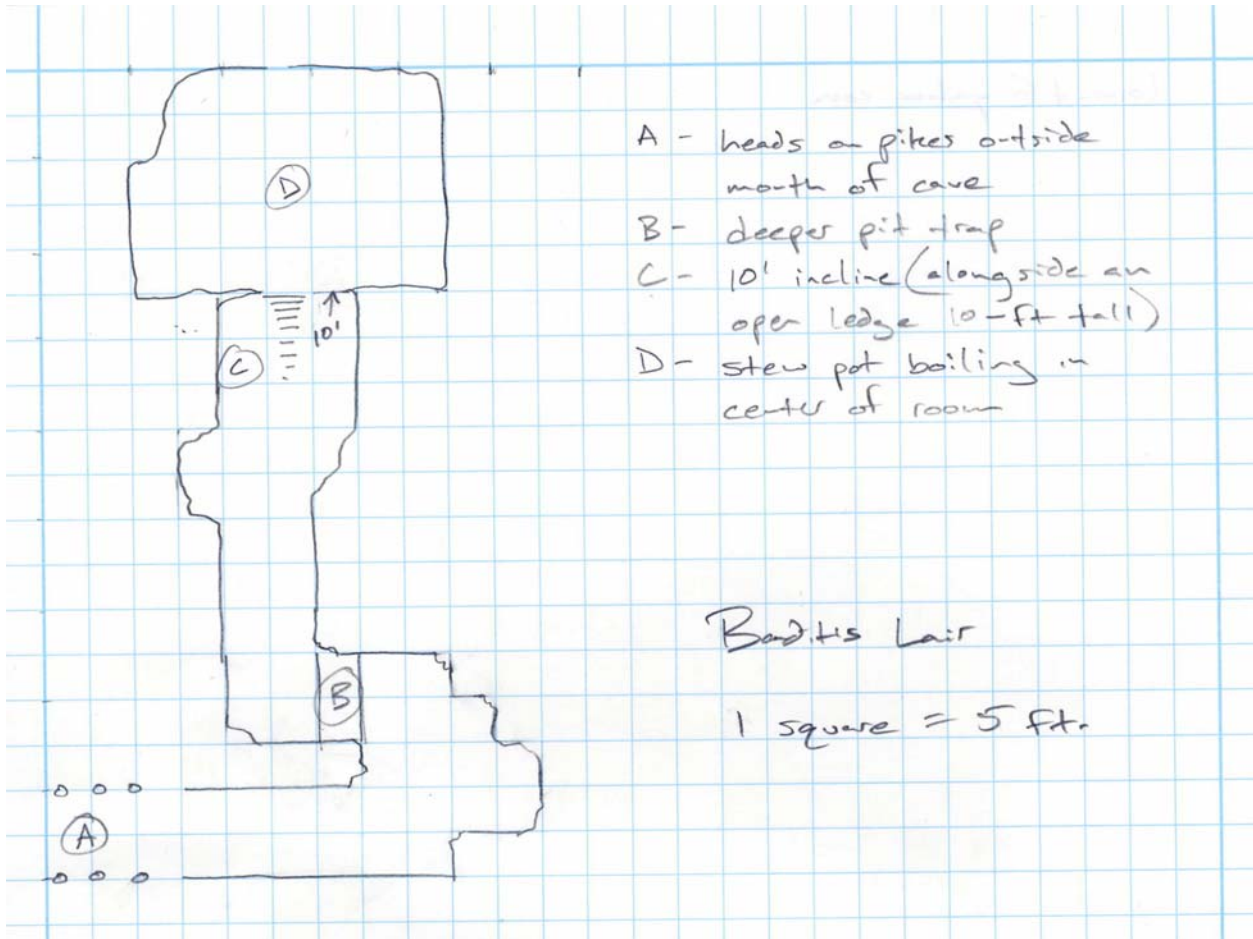
Jump +7, Profession (merchant) +0, Sense Motive +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +5, Tumble +10; Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Negotiator

Sneak attack (Ex): When Phinneus attacks an opponent who is flanked or denied its Dex bonus to AC, he deals an extra 2d6 damage.

Evasion (Ex): If Phinneus successfully makes a Ref saving throw that normally allows for half damage, he instead takes no damage.

Possessions: masterwork buckler, masterwork dagger, +1 *studded leather armor*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cat's grace*, *potion of cure light wounds* (2), 150 gp

APPENDIX 1: DM'S MAP 1



DM'S MAP 2

