

IUZ6-03

The Cup Runs Dry

A one-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®] Iuz's Border States Metaregional Adventure

Version 1.0

by Theo Judd

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A desperate individual from a mysterious organization that opposes the Lord of Pain has magically contacted you. His organization is under assault and if you do not move quickly, all they have worked for over the last ten years will be gone. To make matters worse, it appears the powerful and enigmatic leader of the organization may be a traitor to the cause. An Iuz's Border States Metaregional Adventure for APLs 10-16.

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 and your region, please e-mail your triad point of contact (POC) at dragotha@gmail.com ; 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 Dungeon Master (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.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2007.

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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:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely 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

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 and 1/6	0	0	0	1
1/3 and 1/2	0	0	1	1
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	5	6	7
4	4	6	7	8
5	5	7	8	9
6	6	8	9	10
7	7	9	10	11

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. Animals with different CRs are determined separately using the chart; then, take the highest CR animal (or animals), and add 2 (drop fractions). This result is the effective character level for a mixed-CR group of animals. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type.

3. 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.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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.

Furthermore, 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.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round regional adventure, set in the Bandit Kingdoms. Characters native to the Bandit Kingdoms pay one Time Unit per round; all others pay two Time Units per round.

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

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

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of

Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

Adventure Background

Iuz, the Lord of Pain, has finally had enough of the organization known as the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight. Up until late last year, they had been but a gnat buzzing at his ear. But ever since their direct involvement and intervention with his scheme to capture Torremor, their presence has pained the Old One like an angry bee's sting. Therefore, Iuz has taken the most logical course of action; that course being the eradication of the Drinkers and anyone associated with them.

Working for the Lord of Pain is a secretive group of assassins known as the Boneshadow. No member of the Boneshadow individually knows who the other members are, although Iuz has had them inadvertently working together (and against each other) in the past.

The task of purging the Drinkers from Oerth has fallen upon the deranged elf mage Keak, one of the vilest and most ruthless of the Boneshadow's despicable members. For several months, Keak has been gathering information on the Drinkers. Due to the quiet nature of the organization, the elf has managed to locate and eliminate every single cell and every single member without causing much of a furor, all members but one that is. The elusive leader of the organization, who calls herself the Shade, has managed to evade Keak at every turn and quite frankly, it has him a bit peeved.

Part of the reason for the Shade's successful evasion of Keak rests upon her alliance with a powerful wizard whose identity is unknown. The wizard is a secret sponsor of the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight and he has long been friends with the Shade. To help the Shade avoid detection and survive the inevitable attempts on her life, the wizard has helped her construct several magical lairs with magical traps throughout the northwestern Flanaess. He has also placed several permanent spells of protection upon her.

Additionally, the Shade holds one ace up her sleeve. For all practical purposes, she appears to be human and all her aliases are human aliases. However, she is actually a shifty, a planetouched creature with distant ethereal ancestry. Besides her location, this is the one piece of information Keak has been unable to learn about her. In fact, Keak has been close to her before without realizing it, but she has escaped using her *ethereal jaunt* ability. Unfortunately for her, the Shade was never able to discern exactly who has been pursuing her, and she has not been able to contact her wizard ally for several weeks for his aid, which has put her at wit's end.

Nevertheless, Keak has learned a lot about the Shade and finally accepted the fact that she is not going to be as easy to fool as her pathetic underlings, so he has hatched a plan to bring her associates to him in hopes that they will lead him to her. In several of the chapter houses, Keak managed to locate the names, addresses, aliases, and backgrounds of a number of adventurers who have worked with the Shade over the years (assume they have details on other adventurers as well, if the PCs you are judging have never played in this series of adventures). Keak is now posing as a Drinker, an elf bladesinger named Raniel. Under this alias he has sent out a desperate plea to these would-be heroes, hoping that they will have the means to deliver the Shade to him.

Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling back from their previous adventure or relaxing at their homes (if they have any) or an inn. The PCs receive an urgent *sending* spell from an individual who calls himself Raniel, stating that the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight are under attack. He asks them to come to their aid immediately.

Encounter One: The PCs respond to Raniel's call and travel to the Shield Lands. Raniel says he is in hiding and attempts to manipulate the PCs into helping him locate the Shade. If they do, they discover she is in the thorp of Rhodalf's Hill, due south of Crockport. Raniel suggests the journey begin the next day.

Encounter Two: The PCs travel to Furyondy on Raniel's heels and begin the short trek to Rhodalf's Hill. En route they discover a cadaver collector or two scouring a recent battlefield.

Encounter Three: The PCs arrive at Rhodalf's Hill and find the village to be under attack by humanoids and giants. After the PCs dispatch the invaders, they find that the Shade is safe. However, if they wish to press on for more answers, they learn a cryptic clue to her whereabouts from a small child.

Encounter Five: Deciphering the clue, the PCs trek into a small forest glade, where they find a cozy cottage inhabited by an old woman. The old woman invites them in, revealing herself to be the Shade and assaulting the PCs with a deadly series of traps. At that point she demands to know who they really are.

Encounter Six: Keak arrives on the scene (possibly with demonic aid) and congratulates the PCs for finding the Shade for him. At that point, he attempts to kill the Shade if the PCs haven't already. The PCs may stay and fight, but the Shade is only interested in getting away (except at APL 10 where she is willing to help the PCs; they will need it).

Conclusion: The Shade survives (or her corpse is recovered and she is raised) and thanks the PCs for their aid. She plans to adopt a new cover identity in a new locale to replace the one she lost in Furyondy. If the PCs performed the optional encounter and either defeated or routed Keak, they may take the Shade to their region, where she asks for aid in rebuilding the organization. The Shade may be dead, in which case Keak thanks the PCs in person and teleports away, leaving a token of his gratitude.

Preparation for Play

As a member of the Boneshadow, Keak is an elite opponent easily the better of any individual PC. Although he is fairly mad, he is nevertheless a brilliant adversary. It would be impossible to expect any judge beneath quasi-deity status to be truly capable of properly roleplaying a character with an Intelligence score of 35. It is, therefore recommended that you give Keak an edge to simulate his massive intellect. You should assume he easily deduces strategies the PCs plan to employ and adjusts his agenda accordingly. Players tend to say a lot of things out of character that NPCs, strictly speaking, cannot hear. However in the case of Keak, it would be fair to make an exception. It should seem to the PCs as if Keak has always out-thought them and considered every possible contingency or gambit they might attempt. You should feel free to adjust his spell list according to PC tactics; although you might not have realized something, Keak undoubtedly would have prepared for it. Keak has access to all Sorcerer/Wizard spells in the *Player's Handbook* of 7th level and below. However, do not change his spell list at any point after combat with him has begun since that crosses the line of giving him an unfair advantage.

A second part of roleplaying Keak effectively is to be intimately familiar with his abilities. Before you run this event, it is *highly recommended* that you play out a battle between Keak and some generic PCs, possibly even with players from your home game. In this way you will learn how to effectively manage Keak's cumbersome and detailed stat block and learn how to use some of his more esoteric spells. As a very accomplished spellcaster, Keak uses a number of spells from the *Spell Compendium* and knows several feats from *Complete Arcane* that you may not be familiar with. You should therefore review these carefully in *Appendix Four* before running this event.

With that said, defeating Keak in combat is not impossible. In any encounter with him, he will typically be outnumbered by the PCs, which is a great advantage for them. PCs who work with each other regularly and have synergistic abilities may actually find themselves on even footing with Keak. If so, they may be capable of

defeating or at least routing him. Nevertheless, you should not pull any punches. When the PCs engage in battle **DO NOT SOFTBALL KEAK!** Remember that as a Boneshadow, he is one of Iuz's most powerful minions and he should be represented in that way.

Throughout most of this adventure, Keak will usually be referred to by his alias, "Raniel." This is because some players may be familiar with Greyhawk lore and recognize the name "Keak" from novels like *Saga of Old City* or sourcebooks like *WGR5 Iuz the Evil*. Keak's nefarious reputation precedes him in a lot of canon Greyhawk materials and it could cause players to meta-game if they know Raniel is actually Keak. It's hard for all of us to avoid wandering eyes so this precaution has been taken to make your job at preventing meta-gaming a little easier.

Some players may be intimate with Greyhawk canon and recognize Keak fairly quickly using out-of-character knowledge. Although there is nothing you can do to prevent this, you should encourage players, without saying anything about Keak's identity, not to meta-game. It is very unlikely that any PCs playing this adventure have ever heard of, let alone met Keak in character. In the event that PCs receive information *in character* that leads them to believe Keak is an assassin and they wish to use the Knowledge skill to learn more about him you may, at your option, allow them a shred of information. In this case it is suggested you limit this information to vague hints and base them on a very high Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) or Bardic Knowledge check, preferably only results of 30 or higher. You should not allow PCs using out-of-character information to use the Knowledge skill for this purpose and such should be considered cheating.

At APLs 14 and 16, prior to the adventure, Keak takes an extra precaution. He acquires one or two *scrolls of gate* and makes a pact with a demon or two (the number depends on APL). These fiends are known as V'lordd and Gassane'eizk. The two are an infamous pair of assassins and shock troopers in service of the demon prince Fraz-Urb'luu. He offers them an item he recovered from an ancient Suel Imperium site a few months ago in exchange for their services.

The demons disguise themselves as half-ogres for their journey to the Prime Material Plane and remain in that guise the entire duration. The disguise is good enough to avoid detection most places. They take 10 on their Disguise check, giving them a 30 (includes a -2 penalty for being a different race and an *ad hoc* -2 penalty for the difficulty in concealing their babau slime).

You might note that Keak has a *strand of prayer beads*. Keak is not a divine caster, but he has learned how to use the *strand of prayer beads* because a cleric of Iuz has cast *imbue with spell ability* before. This allowed him

to cast divine spells and see how the *strand of prayer beads* worked.

Introduction

The adventure begins as Raniel attempts to contact the PCs. Any PCs who traveled together during their last adventure may be together at the start of this adventure; otherwise, each PC is alone.

In order to introduce the PCs to this adventure, you have a few options. If you are running this event on a strict convention schedule or you simply feel you are not up to the task of ad-libbing, use the following read aloud text to move things along:

You are sitting around a tavern one day enjoying your favorite brew or a delicious meal when you are suddenly startled by a voice in your head, "I need your help. The Cup has run dry. We, enemies of the Old One, are under attack! Please come to Critwall with all haste!"

A DC 25 Spellcraft check determines the message is the result of a *sending* spell. The phrase, "The Cup has run dry," is innuendo suggesting that the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight organization has been decimated; PCs who have played other adventures in the Confluence Chain automatically recognize this. PCs that have had no interaction with the organization (like out-of-region PCs) may make a DC 25 Sense Motive check to recognize this. The PCs may respond to this however they wish but there will be no further contact until the PCs go to Critwall. None of the PCs will recognize the sender. (Do not allow a Sense Motive check to determine whether the sender is being truthful since the PCs do not have the luxury of observing the caster for 1 minute as required; they can't observe the caster at all!).

Development: Some PCs may wish to cast divination spells like *commune* or *divination* to ask about the situation. Some tricky questions and sample answers are provided below to aid you in providing the PCs with such information. Be careful to word your answers as to give PCs hints but try to make them cryptic enough that it doesn't give the whole story away. Remember to dock appropriate XP and material component costs for these spells.

Sample *Divination* Spell Results

- If I go to Critwall will I be led into a trap? ***There are times when the maw of the lion is the only place to find the tail of the mouse.***

- Will answering this plea allow me to aid the Drinkers? *Those who aid good do evil whilst those who aid evil do good.*
- Can I trust the caster (of the *sending* spell)? *Embracing madness shall lead to a walk with a shadow.*
- Can I expect to stop the Drinkers from being destroyed? *Though the leaves, branches, and bark be stripped, the tree may grow anew if planted in a fresh grove.*

Sample *Commune* Spell Results

- Have the Drinkers been destroyed? *All but one.*
- Is Iuz somehow responsible for this? *Yes.*
- Is the Shade/leader alive? *Yes.*
- Is the Shade/leader in danger? *Unclear.* (that is, she is only in danger if the PCs help Raniel, and that has not yet occurred)
- Is the caster (of the *sending* spell) in danger? *Unclear.*
- Is answering this call stepping into a trap? *Unclear.*
- Should I go to Critwall? *Yes.* (Most deities will answer yes, although if the PC worships a morally ambivalent deity such as Ralishaz, an answer of *Unclear* is more appropriate.)
- Many questions the PCs ask with *commune* will be much easier to answer so they are not provided here in the interest of brevity.

If the PCs ignore the *sending*, ask them if they are sure they want to do that. If they insist, then act as if you are about to hand out ARs; that should get them back on track.

Encounter One: Answering the Call

One way or another, the PCs should make an effort to get to Critwall if they want to continue the adventure. Some PCs (particularly those whose home region is the Shield Lands) may already be in Critwall if their last adventure took place there. However they get there, it should be engineered so that they all arrive on the same date at roughly the same time of day (meaning that some *sending* spells may be sent on different days). Raniel has pre-calculated their most probable means of travel and manipulated events so that the PCs all arrive at roughly the same time.

The PCs all arrive on the evening of the 11th of Planting, 596 CY, during the celebration of Tanabat (see *Player Handout One* for details on the holiday). Because of this, Critwall is crowded with vineyard farmers, their

families, and their servants, as well as travelers who love to indulge in good wine. Not that the Shield Lands is particularly the best place for such an enterprise, but agriculture has been doing well in the recent years and farmers are diversifying their lots.

Since it is late when the PCs arrive, they are likely tired. Emphasize that it is late and that they are probably somewhat weary from the journey or the exhaustion that accompanies teleportation magic. If the PCs ask around about places to stay, most of the typical inns are full to capacity. They will be directed to the Bright Dawn Inn, a fine establishment that is reserved almost exclusively for the merchant class and, thus, out of the price range of most of the festival celebrants.

Located along the border between Market and Visitor's Squares, this posh inn caters to the wealthy, usually visiting merchants from Furyondy. Its innkeeper, Emripes is known for his strict rule of confidentiality toward his patrons and never reveals any information regarding who is at the inn or what room they stay in. No one paying less than Rich upkeep is allowed entrance, although the PCs are an exception since Raniel has already paid their way. As the PCs enter the Bright Dawn Inn, read or paraphrase the following:

The hour has grown late and still your mysterious contact has yet to approach you. You have found respite at the Bright Dawn Inn, which is bustling with activity. Though you have been warned that the innkeeper, a snooty fellow named Emripes, is very picky about his clientele, it seems even this locale has its fair share of patrons for the Tanabat celebration. As you check in at the front desk, you are surprised to see that a room has already been reserved in your name.

If the PCs ask, the rooms are all on different floors; the innkeeper apologizes but says this was the best that could be arranged due to the influx of people for the holiday (actually Raniel did this intentionally, but the innkeeper doesn't remember the details of the transaction with Raniel and is just assuming that's why they are on different floors). The PCs may do whatever they wish at this point, but whatever they do, they should take the time to make character introductions if they are not already familiar with each other. It seems they are all in a similar position and have been contacted with the same information. Some PCs may have more information (possibly from divination spells) and wish to share it with the others.

Raniel uses this time to make some preparations. First of all, he scouts the PCs. Second, he has made some modifications to his typical spell list. Use the following spell list instead of the printed one in *Appendix Three*

(note he has had to use some higher spell slots than necessary to get all the lower level spells he wants; this is not an error). Before meeting with the PCs, Raniel casts (out of sight/earshot) *limited wish* to replicate *glibness*.

Spells Prepared (4/7/7/7/7/5/4/3; caster level 17th): 0—*arcane mark, light, mage hand, ray of frost*, 1st—*charm person* (DC 25), *magic missile* (2), *nerveskitter**, *ray of enfeeblement, shield, unseen servant*, 2nd—*invisibility, resist energy* (4), *spider climb, Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 26); 3rd—*chain missile** (2), *displacement, extended false life, fireball* (DC 25), *fly, lightning bolt* (DC 25); 4th—*dimension door, extended deeper darkvision* (3), *extended greater magic weapon* (3); 5th—*dominate person* (DC 29), *extended greater mage armor, extended overland flight, greater blink**, quickened *buzzing bee** (DC 23); 6th—*extended greater resistance* (2), *extended dragonsight, greater dispel magic*; 7th—*limited wish* (3).

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in *Appendix Four*.

After the PCs have had enough time to introduce themselves and discuss the matter at hand briefly, read or paraphrase the following:

Although the rooms reserved in your name indicate someone is expecting you, it is late by the time you are contacted. An almost comical looking character maneuvers into the inn long after most patrons have left or gone up to their rooms. The fellow is clearly an elf, although a roughshod attempt has been made to hide the points of his ears underneath a top hat. He sports a bushy mustache that, among other inconsistencies with his appearance, does not match the color of his blond hair. His gait is careful and calculated and his eyes dart rapidly around the room before fixing their gaze intently upon your party. Looking quickly all about him, he picks up his pace a notch and moves to insinuate himself within your group at the table.

Raniel/Keak: Male elf (grey); Bluff +55; see *Appendix Three*.

This foppish character is Raniel. His behavior and poor disguise are part of an effort on his part to project foolishness, but they are also partly a by-product of his madness. He hopes the PCs will not consider him a threat in any form or fashion. Should they attempt to use the Assess Opponent action (see *Complete Adventurer* page 102) and fail the opposed roll (likely since Raniel's Bluff modifier is +55 with *glibness*), then treat the results as if Raniel was a 7th-level character.

Raniel explains the following to the PCs (using the Bluff skill to lie about practically everything):

- His name is Raniel, and he is a bladesinger working for the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight.
- He is on the run. He is a native of Highfolk where his Drinker cell was located.
- Several weeks ago, an insane Suloise monk in red robes who called himself Ekak (actually an anagram of Keak) infiltrated and assaulted the cell, single-handedly slaying every other member within the cell. (Raniel doesn't say as much, but he hopes the PCs will make the erroneous conclusion that the Scarlet Brotherhood is behind this.)
- Raniel was the only one lucky enough to escape through use of a *scroll of dimension door* he kept for just such an emergency.
- He is certain any trace of his cell has been eradicated.
- He first attempted to flee to another cell in Littleberg, but upon arriving, discovered it, too (the cell, not the city), had been eradicated.
- He then traveled to Willip, where he arrived at another Drinker cell just in time to see the monk Ekak cracking the neck of the cell's leader, a well known loremaster named Kavrinsted. He just barely managed to escape Ekak with an *expeditious retreat* spell which got him out of sight long enough to cast *disguise self* and blend into the crowds of the street.
- He has tried to contact numerous other members of his organization but none of them have responded.
- Before fleeing his cell, he grabbed a handful of *scrolls of sending* and a cache of documents full of contacts. He found information about some of the PCs there. (If the PCs have participated in other adventures involving the Drinkers, the documents contain descriptions of these exploits).
- After arriving in Critwall to find its cell also eliminated, he decided to use his remaining scrolls to contact the PCs in hopes that they might be willing to help. He provides the documents if the PCs wish to see them. (Note Raniel stole these documents so they are genuine. Divination/Forgery can be used to verify this.) These will vary by PC so no handout has been provided of these documents.
- He knows of a few more Drinker cells but he dare not approach them lest he run into Ekak again.
- To make matters worse, he found hidden documents that Ekak apparently missed among the remains of Critwall's cell. The documents bear chilling news. They suggest the Shade had just recently made a new ally; the ally's name is Ekak. (He can also produce these documents if the PCs ask. They are in the form of a journal of the leader of the Critwall cell who mentions the alliance in his last entry. The journal is legit, except for the last entry, which Keak forged

himself with the aid of a *stylus of the masterful hand*, *papyrus of deception*, and a *limited wish* spell to replicate *divine insight*. The forgery is exceptional; DC 47 Forgery check to recognize as fake). The journal is included as *Player Handout Two*.

- Raniel fears that this pairing has led to the organization's demise. Obviously, he thinks, the Shade would deny this, and as a master spy it would be difficult to catch her in a bluff. But there is simply no way that all of the Drinker cells could have been located so easily without the Shade's complicity. (Saying this inflates Raniel's ego a bit as taking out the cells without the Shade's help is exactly what he did. He tries to play up how impossible it is to locate Drinker cells so that the PCs, and others, will think him all the more talented when they learn of his accomplishment.)
- He has attempted to contact the Shade himself using one of the scrolls, but she has not responded. He theorizes this is because she has never met him as not all Drinkers are so honored as to meet her in person. He claims he knows her only by name and reputation. (Unlike most of Raniel's story, this is entirely true. What Raniel doesn't realize is that the Shade knows who he is. As a highly accomplished spy she knows the identity of several of Iuz's Boneshadow, including Raniel. She recognized him immediately upon receiving the *sending* spell and knew it was a ruse. It is in this manner alone that the Shade has out-manuevered Raniel.)
- Raniel suggests that the PCs come up with a ploy to locate the Shade. He has possession of a relic that his cell recently recovered from a temple of Iuz (the *blood skull pendant*). The PCs can contact the Shade telling her they have recovered the relic and request to meet with her. The PCs can meet with her and determine her true loyalties, and then either eliminate her or sort matters out. Raniel has one last *scroll of sending* for the PCs to use for this purpose.

The *blood skull pendant* actually is a relic of Iuz, although Raniel took it from an Iuzian temple himself to use it for just this purpose. As a relic, it can only be used by divine spellcasters of Iuz or characters with the True Believer (Iuz) feat so the PCs can cast whatever divinations they want on it (*detect magic*, *legend lore*, and the like) but they won't be able to use it so feel free to ad-lib the results to the divinations. It has a moderate aura of necromancy magic on it and a moderate evil aura. Note that it is impossible to use the Use Magic Device skill to emulate a patron deity or a feat so even Use Magic Device will not allow the PCs to use the relic.

If a PC uses the *scroll of sending* to contact the Shade she replies the same regardless of what the PC says:

"Rhodalf's Hill due south of Crockport. Bring only those you trust with your life. Otherwise come alone."

With a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) check, the PC knows that Rhodalf's Hill is a thorp about 10 miles south of Crockport on the road to Redoubt.

After the Shade's response is received, Raniel claims that he always knew there was a Drinker cell near Crockport (another lie). It seems to him that Rhodalf's Hill must be the location of that cell and that the Shade is still alive. He suggests that since the Shade wants the PCs to come alone that things will be up to them from this point on. He says he plans to lay low until he receives word that it is safe to come out of hiding.

Raniel has reserved lodgings for the PCs for the night at the Bright Dawn Inn. He suggests they rest up and prepare for the journey. They need only pay the bill in the morning when they leave.

Since time is of the essence, Raniel suggests the PCs use *teleport* to travel to Furyondy. For PCs who have not been to Crockport before, Keak points them to the local chapterhouse of the Wayfarer's Union. A contract for one-way transport to Crockport with the Wayfarer's Union can be acquired for the modest sum of 900 gp (total, this is not a per PC charge). Details of the Wayfarer's Union and their charges can be found on page 184 of *Complete Arcane*. Raniel is just trying to be thorough in his deception here (if Raniel were a Drinker would make sense for him to want the PCs to move quickly). He is confident that he can find what he needs before the PCs arrive or deal with them if necessary.

Development: Time really is of the essence. If the PCs dally around for more than a day before teleporting to Furyondy, then Raniel succeeds. He arrives in Rhodalf's Hill with mercenaries and tears it apart. He eventually finds the only individual in the town who knows the location of the Shade (the child) and tortures the information out of him. Finding the Shade is academic after that and when the PCs arrive in Rhodalf's Hill they find only a smoldering ruin and a sarcastic note from Raniel thanking them for their help.

If the PCs know (from divination) that only one Drinker remains and mention this to Raniel, he gulps, and his eyes grow wide. Obviously this proves the Shade is a traitor (and thus no longer a Drinker), as he is clearly the sole surviving member of his organization. (Of course, this is untrue. Although it is true that Raniel has

been so efficient that he has slain every single Drinker *except* the Shade.)

Some PCs may attempt to cast *detect magic* on Raniel, or they may have an *arcane sight* or *greater arcane sight* spell up. Raniel pretends not to notice if they do. Note that he does not really have that many magic items, but a lot of active spells. If any of the PCs become suspicious of the large number of magical auras upon him, he passes it off as part of his paranoia at being hunted by this psychotic monk. If the PCs beat his Bluff with a Sense Motive check they realize he is fibbing, but this is unlikely. PCs can't get anything more out of him on the subject. If they press the issue and refuse to move on until he explains himself, he tries to convince them to forget it, but if he can't and it seems they will not move on without a better explanation he gets fed up and attacks them as detailed below.

It is very unlikely, but should the PCs see through Raniel's deception or refuse to provide him with the Shade's location for some reason, he hangs around only long enough to locate the Shade. He would prefer to accomplish his task through duplicity, but if he is attacked or if he is stymied before learning the Shade's location he attempts to salvage the situation by kidnapping one of the PCs.

In a battle, his contingent spells should keep him alive long enough for him to act. If his expert evaluation of the PCs thus far (remember he has a decent Sense Motive bonus and supra-genius Intelligence) indicates that they might be susceptible to his enchantments, he targets them with *mass hold person*, hoping to incapacitate them. He targets an unaffected PC the next round with *dominate person*. If the PC fails the save the two of them use *teleport* to get to safety (their destination is Izlen, the demesne of the Boneheart Panshazek). He then has that PC use a *stone of sending* (single use magic item that replicates a *sending* spell, similar to a scroll, only it can be used by anyone, not just those with *sending* on their spell list) to contact the Shade. After learning the Shade's location, he casts *limited wish* (to replicate *modify memory*) to make the PC forget how he got to Izlen and that he contacted the Shade and then sends the PC on a pointless quest that results in 2 TUs wasted until the *dominate person* spell wears off. Raniel then goes to Rhodalf's Hill to complete his mission.

If all this comes to pass, the other PCs will have to figure out the rest for themselves. They may attempt to recover their wayward companion; don't let this sidetrack things too much, but it would involve *scrying* the PC, teleporting to Izlen, and teleporting back out. Feel free to scare the PCs with depictions of demonic hordes coming to get them during their brief stay in Izlen, but don't waste time playing this out. The recovered PC, his memory having been modified, will be of little help so

they will probably need to cast *sending* themselves and try to beat Raniel to her. He has a bigger head-start but it should be enough to play out the rest of the adventure relatively unchanged.

If a PC wants to get a "hunch" about the situation, they can do so with Sense Motive. This only tells them that something is odd about Raniel, nothing more. This use of the skill can't give them any more details.

At night, Raniel casts *invisibility* on his familiar and sends it to scout the PCs in their rooms. They should be lodged two to a room. If he finds a room with no one on guard, he first casts *limited wish* to replicate *silence* on his *rod of silent metamagic* and then uses *dimension door* to get into their room undetected. After that, he uses his *rod of silent metamagic* to cast *dominate person* on one of the PCs, followed by *charm person* or *charm monster* on the other PC. Assuming his spells succeed, he gives a mental order to the *dominated* PC to act normally (i.e. keep sleeping and go about the mission with his comrades in the morning). He then casts *fly* and bolts out the window and back to his own room, making sure to close the window on his way out.

The PCs in the room get no Listen check to hear anything due to the *silence* spell. However, feel free to give a DC 15 Wisdom check to PCs with the blindsense or blindsight special ability to notice the intruder in their room. The PCs may have even placed a mental *alarm* spell in place within the room, although an audible *alarm* spell has no effect due to the *silence* spell. A PC with blindsense or blindsight ability who succeeds the Wisdom check or a mental *alarm* spell causes the respective PC to awaken. If so, you will need to roll for initiative. If Keak wins, he proceeds with the *dominate person* spell targeting the awakened character first, then proceeds as normal. Raniel telepathically tells any *dominated* PC to forget this ever happened and continue acting normally (i.e. go back to sleep).

If both PCs somehow awake, he dominates one in the first round and uses that PC to overpower the second one so he can place a *charm person* spell on the other PC. If the other PC is charmed, Raniel dismisses the *silence* spell and whispers for the PC to be quiet. He then tells the PC that he will cast a spell on him to help him sleep better so he should lie back down and relax. He then casts *limited wish* (this can't be silenced by his rod but no one else in the inn is likely to care or notice the spellcasting) to replicate *modify memory*. Through this spell, he has the charmed PC forget he was ever here; a cat on the windowsill woke him up, then he decided it was nothing and tried to go back to sleep. If the other PC is not charmed he makes sure the PC is knocked out, then he casts *limited wish* to replicate *dominate person* on the unconscious PC after dismissing his *silence* spell.

Failing that, he pulls out his *scroll of limited wish* and tries again. Hopefully it doesn't go any farther, but if it does, Keak decides to make the best of the situation and tries to abduct the PC. The PC is sent to work in Iuz's slave mines but escapes with all his equipment after losing 8 TUs.

Raniel does this to gain an ally in case he is ever confronted with the PCs again in the next couple weeks. Due to all of his precautions (putting them in rooms on separate floors, using the rod, modifying memories, etc.), this is likely to occur without any detection whatsoever. It is suggested you run this encounter giving the PCs as little out-of-character knowledge as possible. Take the indicated PCs aside and have them roll Will saves. Next, give them Listen checks to hear Raniel leaving. If they fail all these rolls, it is unnecessary for you to tell them anything more (until it becomes necessary of course, such as the first time they engage Raniel in combat). Even if the *dominated* or *charmed* PC steps into the area of a *magic circle against evil* for a while, the effect is suppressed but doesn't cause the PC to behave any differently so it is likely no one will ever notice. If at any point in this endeavor Raniel fails to accomplish his intended task (for instance, the PCs pass their saves against his *dominate* and *charm* spells), he simply abandons the plot. It isn't vital to his plans.

The PCs will not hear from Raniel again for a while. He is not staying at the Bright Dawn Inn. The night before departing, Raniel casts each of his extended spells (except *greater resistance*) on himself once. He casts his remaining extended spells (*deeper darkvision*, *greater magic weapon* and *greater resistance*) on his demon companions (APLs 14 and 16 only), who are waiting in his rental flat. He leaves for Rhodalf's Hill first thing in the morning after memorizing new spells (and leaving his flat a mess without paying rent). He uses his *scroll of greater teleport* to journey quickly to the Vesve to pick up giant and humanoid mercenaries and then uses his *scroll of teleportation circle* to allow them to teleport directly to the outskirts of Rhodalf's Hill. In this manner, he will likely beat the PCs to the town.

Encounter Two: A Horde of Bones Upon a Field of Death

Teleporting into Furyondy is a fairly mundane affair. Crockport is the best choice, as it is directly north of Rhodalf's Hill and only a half-day's travel away. Plus, it is the most likely nearby location to which the PCs may have traveled before. The PCs can either *teleport* themselves (if they're familiar with the location) or they can use the Wayfarer's Union (as described in *Encounter One*). They can place themselves anywhere they've been

in the city if they *teleport* themselves. The Wayfarer's Union transports them to their recently established chapterhouse in Crockport.

Baroness Jelleneth, a righteous and hot-headed Trithereonite, rules this region from her castle at Redoubt. Although Crockport was recaptured in Furyondy's Great Northern Crusade, it was recently the site of a major attack by the forces of Iuz. The surrounding countryside is torn by war and the city itself is not in spectacular condition. Try to dissuade the PCs from roleplaying around the city; it is not the focus of this adventure.

When the PCs arrive, the weather is taking a turn for the worst. A nasty spring storm has been brewing and is about to unleash its full fury. Describe the dark clouds coming in from the north and the windy conditions. Shortly after the PCs set out, the storm hits them in full force (see below for details on thunderstorm conditions).

Rhodalf's Hill is 10 miles south of Crockport and it shouldn't take the PCs long to get there. As the PCs make their way across the Furyondian countryside, they see evidence of the Old One's recent assault on Crockport. On one particularly bloody battlefield, the site of a recent skirmish between the forces of Furyondy and Iuz, they spy a roving construct gathering corpses from off the ground.

The creatures the PCs behold are cadaver collectors, powerful constructs created to gather corpses from the battlefield. Iuz still sends armed bands of scouts into Furyondian territory. Some of his scouts recently ambushed a Furyondian patrol near Crockport where the PCs are passing by (there were no survivors). These particular cadaver collectors were delivered by minions of Iuz wishing to bring back some corpses to be used as undead and to stir up trouble in Furyondy.

The Furyondian countryside is decimated. Everywhere you go there are signs of scorched earth, bloody fields, and ruined dwellings. As you march across the plains you hear a raucous thunder roll across the land, and then the dark clouds unleash a torrent of rain, obscuring your vision and checking your progress. The entire countryside is cloaked in the creepy calamity of the storm. Yet you press on.

As you crest the next hill the storm reaches a crescendo with lightning arcing across the sky and illuminating the landscape in a beautiful, natural brilliance for a brief moment. In that moment, you note what seems to be a crenellated tower, yet to your astonishment it appears to be moving. Unfortunately, the downpour prevents you from immediately getting a proper view.

As you move closer, you realize that it is not a tower at all, but a massive, hunched creature built of

stone and metal looming over you. Its long, heavily plated arms nearly drag on the ground from its shoulders flanking a flat-featured, oblong head, but its back draws your eye. Spikes of various sizes—all barbed and covered in gore, dried and fresh—sprout from the plates of metal on its back. A few bodies remain impaled on the spikes, their mouths open in silent screams.

Then, for APLs 12 and 16:

To your horror, as soon as the first comes in view, a second appears in the distance. There are two of these monstrosities!

Unless the PCs use *control weather* or similar magic to end the storm, this encounter takes place under **thunderstorm** conditions (see page 94 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). This reduces visibility by three quarters and imposes a -8 penalty on Spot, Listen, and Search checks. Ranged attacks are impossible during a thunderstorm. The encounter takes place on **temperate plains**, so the maximum starting distance for this encounter is **4d6x10 feet** (this has already been reduced by three quarters to account for the storm). Wind speeds in a thunderstorm are **severe**, meaning Medium-sized or smaller characters must make a DC 15 Fortitude save each round or have their movement hindered (see *Table 3-24 Wind Effects* on page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). Medium-sized characters are checked and cannot move from their square if they fail the save and Small characters are knocked down and cannot move from their square. Large or larger creatures are not affected. Spellcasters must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + spell level) while in the thunderstorm or lose the spell. Flying creatures are treated as one size category lower for how they are affected by wind.

An additional hazard is present during the thunderstorm: lightning. At the beginning of every round, roll d%. There is a 10% chance each round of lightning striking a character. Determine the target randomly, counting characters in metal armor and each cadaver collector three times (e. g. if there are 5 PCs and one cadaver collector and none of the PCs are wearing metal armor, each PC has a 1 in 8 chance of being the target while the cadaver collector has a 3 in 8 chance). To determine damage from the lightning bolt, roll 1d10 and roll than many d8s. The total is the amount of electricity damage the character takes. There is no saving throw to avoid or reduce this effect and spell resistance does not apply since it is natural lightning. The lightning continues no more than 5 minutes.

APL 10 (EL 13*)

Cadaver Collector: hp 123; see *Appendix One*.

APL 12 (EL 15*)

Cadaver Collector (2): hp 123 each; see *Appendix One*.

APL 14 (EL 17*)

Advanced Cadaver Collector: hp 211; see *Appendix Two*.

APL 16 (EL 19*)

Advanced Cadaver Collector (2): hp 211; see *Appendix Two*.

*The EL of this encounter has been raised by 1 to account for the hazardous thunderstorm conditions.

Tactics: The cadaver collectors simply attack the PCs, attempting to grapple and impale them one by one. Ranged attacks against them are impossible unless the PCs are somehow magically controlling the weather. If the PCs just fly around outside their reach they are likely to get blown away. Chances are they will eventually be forced into melee unless they wish to flee altogether. A cadaver collector will not pursue them if they take such a cowardly course of action unless it is trying to catch a PC who escaped being impaled.

Development: It may be tempting to the PCs to simply avoid the cadaver collectors; it's certainly easy enough as long as they can outrun the constructs or deal with the effects of wind on flying creatures (although they receive no XP for the encounter). But defeating them grants them a boon from the Baroness of Kalinstren, many of whose towns are saved from the cadaver collectors' devastation. Parties that destroy the cadaver collectors will earn a summons from the Baroness at the *Conclusion* delivered by a knight of Furyondy.

Encounter Three: Scouting Party

The journey to Rhodalf's Hill should not take long for seasoned adventurers with magic at their disposal, even under thunderstorm conditions. The thunderstorm subsides after about 5 hours, possibly letting up just as the PCs arrive. When the PCs arrive at Rhodalf's Hill, read or paraphrase the following:

As you near your destination, a din rises above the gentle pitter-patter of rain. Not far ahead, you can hear the unmistakable sounds of battle!

The storm should be subsiding by the time the PCs arrive. Raniel has already made it to the village and it is under attack by his mercenaries while he looks for the Shade. Before the PCs get within view of the village, they are engaged by a group of Raniel's scouts hiding nearby.

APL 10 (EL 10)

Gnoll Mercenary (2): hp 75 each; Hide +25; see *Appendix One*.

Ape (2): hp 29 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 268.

APL 12 (EL 12)

Gnoll Mercenary (4): hp 75 each; Hide +25; see *Appendix One*.

Ape (4): hp 29 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 268.

APL 14 (EL 14)

Gnoll Mercenary (2): hp 107 each; Hide +29; see *Appendix Two*.

Dire Ape (2): hp 35 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 62.

APL 16 (EL 16)

Gnoll Mercenary (4): hp 107 each; Hide +29; see *Appendix Two*.

Dire Ape (4): hp 35 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 62.

A battle map for this encounter should be fairly simple. There is a rocky outcropping near the hill the PCs are cresting behind which the gnolls are hiding. This outcropping should be roughly 50 feet wide with a 3-4 gaps in between. Slabs of rock (capable of providing cover) should each be around 5 ft. by 15 ft. or 5 ft. by 20 ft. and about 25% of all squares within 20 feet of the outcropping should include rubble (difficult terrain; half movement; +2 to Balance and Tumble DCs).

Tactics: The gnolls are using *camouflage*, giving them a +10 bonus to their Hide check. They make Hide checks to hide behind the rocks. Their animal companions crouch behind the rocks to gain total cover (so they don't need a Hide check). Roll the gnolls' Hide checks opposed by the PCs' Spot checks to check for surprise. If the gnolls gain surprise, they attack once the PCs are within 30 feet to use their Manyshot feat, and then their animal companions climb over the rocks to provide their masters cover.

The gnolls try to maintain ranged superiority by using ranged attacks from behind cover. Once the PCs close to melee, they pull out melee weapons if backed up against a wall.

The gnolls' animal companions ready actions to aid their masters' ACs. If their masters are engaged in melee,

they start aiding their masters' attacks. If a PC archer or spellcaster is ever in an exposed position, one of the gnolls may send his animal companion to attack and try to grapple that PC.

Treasure: The PCs can loot the gnolls after defeating them.

APL 10: Loot: 17 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,194 gp – +1 studded leather armor (2 @ 97 gp each), +1 battleaxe (2 @ 192 each), +1 composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) (2 @ 233 gp each), oil of ghost touch armor (2 @ 25 gp each), potion of cure moderate wounds (2 @ 25 gp each), potion of scent (2 @ 25 gp each)

APL 12: Loot: 34 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 2,388 gp – +1 studded leather armor (4 @ 97 gp each), +1 battleaxe (4 @ 192 each), +1 composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) (4 @ 233 gp each), oil of ghost touch armor (4 @ 25 gp each), potion of cure moderate wounds (4 @ 25 gp each), potion of scent (4 @ 25 gp each)

APL 14: L: 17 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 3,442 gp – +2 studded leather armor (2 @ 347 gp each), +1 battleaxe (2 @ 192 each), +1 composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) (2 @ 233 gp each), gloves of dexterity +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), lesser bracers of archery (2 @ 416 gp each), brooch of shielding (2 @ 125 gp each), oil of ghost touch armor (2 @ 25 gp each), potion of cure moderate wounds (2 @ 25 gp each), potion of scent (2 @ 25 gp each)

APL 16: L: 34 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 6,884 gp – +2 studded leather armor (4 @ 347 gp each), +1 battleaxe (4 @ 192 each), +1 composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) (4 @ 233 gp each), gloves of dexterity +2 (4 @ 333 gp each), lesser bracers of archery (4 @ 416 gp each), brooch of shielding (4 @ 125 gp each), oil of ghost touch armor (4 @ 25 gp each), potion of cure moderate wounds (4 @ 25 gp each), potion of scent (4 @ 25 gp each)

Encounter Four: A Village Under Siege

After dealing with the scouts, the PCs spot the village of Rhodalf's Hill **4d6x40 feet** away. At APLs 14 and 16, the gnoll priests have cast *screen* over the village to mask the attacking forces. It will appear to the PCs as if villagers are being chased but nothing appears to be chasing them. Some villagers will be cut down with no attacker visible. Buildings get smashed but no smashing implement is visible. Roofs get lifted off seemingly by themselves and tossed haphazardly onto the ground. Since this image obviously disagrees with what they are seeing, give them each a DC 23 Will save (they must make two successful saves at APL 16 since there are two spells in effect doing the same thing) to see the scene for what it really is. A *see invisibility* spell does not penetrate a *screen* spell

although *true seeing* does. Read or paraphrase the following when they can see the battle:

A chaotic scene unfolds before your eyes. The village of Rhodalf's Hill is under attack by a handful of humanoids and giants led by a pair of red-robed men. Villagers flee in panic as the bloodied invaders cut them down.

Give the PCs a DC 30 Spot check. Read the following for those that succeed:

Amidst the attackers, you pick out one who seems to be directing the action. A human-sized figure of slight build in scarlet robes points to a building and a giant smashes it with relish using a heavy implement. However, the figure turns his head to face your group. Although it is difficult to tell at this distance, you can almost make out a sneer as the figure points your direction, shouts out an order and then disappears in the blink of an eye.

To keep up the ruse of a Scarlet Brotherhood monk being responsible, Raniel has dressed himself in red robes and is the figure the PCs who pass the Spot check see. He is currently directing a group of mercenary giants and humanoids to sack the village searching for the Shade. When he notices the PCs, he points them out to his mercenary squad and orders them killed. He then puts as much distance as he can between himself and the PCs using *dimension door*.

The two gnoll priests have cast *disguise self* to appear like Scarlet Brotherhood priests of Pyremius. They appear as Suloise humans in red robes with a symbol of a demonic face with ears like a bat's wings. A successful DC 0 Spot check followed by a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check indicates that this is the symbol of Pyremius, god of fire and assassins (the Spot check is actually going to be difficult early on because of the distance penalty). They do not appear to be armored although they are armed with morningstars and shields. Their Disguise modifier is not that great (+11 at all APLs), even with *disguise self*, but given the distance penalties early on and the fact that the PCs are unlikely to waste a move action on a Spot check means PCs without *true seeing* will probably not realize the truth until after the battle or one of the priests dies.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Stone Giant (2): hp 124 each; see *Monster Manual* page 122.

Gnoll Priest: hp 82; Disguise +11; see *Appendix One*.

Gnoll Mercenary (2): hp 75 each; see *Appendix One*.

Ape (2): hp 29 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 268.

APL 12 (EL 15)

Fire Giant (2): hp 142 each; see *Monster Manual* page 121.

Gnoll Priest (2): hp 82 each; Disguise +11; see *Appendix One*.

Gnoll Mercenary (4): hp 75 each; see *Appendix One*.

Ape (4): hp 29 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 268.

APL 14 (EL 17)

Cloud Giant (3): hp 178 each; AL NE; see *Monster Manual* page 120.

Gnoll Priest: hp 151; Disguise +11; see *Appendix Two*.

Gnoll Mercenary (2): hp 107 each; see *Appendix Two*.

Dire Ape (2): hp 35 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 62.

APL 16 (EL 19)

Storm Giant (3): hp 178 each; AL CE; see *Monster Manual* page 120.

Gnoll Priest (2): hp 151 each; Disguise +11; see *Appendix Two*.

Gnoll Mercenary (4): hp 107 each; see *Appendix Two*.

Dire Ape (4): hp 35 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 62.

The town includes 9 buildings in a rough U shape with a courthouse/townhall at the apex. The town hall is 20 ft. by 40 ft. in area. Half of the other buildings are 15 ft. by 25 ft. and the other half are 10 ft. by 20 ft. The creatures and townsfolk are dispersed about randomly through the town. The townsfolk are paralyzed with fear and don't move unless the PCs forcibly move them (i.e. bull rush or grapple) until the battle is over.

Tactics: The gnolls don't speak the same language as the giants so they can't cooperate in battle. The gnoll priests are under the effect of a *disguise self* spell and are disguised as Scarlet Brotherhood priests. The PCs get no bonuses to recognize them.

The gnoll rangers pellet the PCs with arrows from a distance until they close, at which point a few of them draw swords to defend the priest(s). Their animal companions defend them by helping flank and attacking to aid their master's AC or to aid their master's attack roll.

The priests cast spells like *prayer*, *invisibility*, *divine power*, *blade barrier*, and *windwall* as the PCs make their approach. Once the PCs are in range, they hit the PCs with maximized *flame strike* as many times as possible using Divine Metamagic to maximize their spells. If the PCs prove exceedingly powerful, they use their *scroll of brilliant aura* to enhance all of their allies' weapons (including the giants).

The giants hurl stones at the PCs until they get within charging range, at which point they wade into melee with relish.

If the PCs appear to have significantly superior ranged attacks or spell power, the monsters begin taking total cover behind buildings and healing up. Some of them grab citizens of the town and use them as cover to dissuade the PCs from attacking. Any attack that misses a monster due to cover from a citizen hits the citizen instead (AC 10, hp 4 each). They hold the citizens hostage until the PCs get close enough for them to attack in melee at which point they dive back into battle.

Note that PCs unable to see through the *screen* spell cannot target opponents within the illusion area by sight. They must use Listen checks to pinpoint their quarry or force them out of the area of the spell in order to target them.

Treasure: The PCs can loot the attackers after defeating them. The villagers even offer to help them if the PCs look to the villagers' needs first. The priests' equipment is marked with a *. The mercenaries' equipment is marked with a †. Items the PCs find in the giants' bags is marked with a ‡.

APL 10: Loot: 54 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 2,303 gp – +1 *full plate**(220 gp), +1 *heavy steel shield**(97 gp), *ring of protection* +1*(166 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2*(333 gp), *scroll of brilliant aura**(250 gp), +1 *studded leather armor*† (2 @ 97 gp each), +1 *battleaxe*† (2 @ 192 each), +1 *composite longbow*(+4 Str bonus)† (2 @ 233 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor*† (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds*† (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent*† (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2‡ (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask*‡ (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword*‡ (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone*‡ (12 gp)

APL 12: Loot: 337 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 4,567 gp – +1 *full plate**(2 @ 220 gp each), +1 *heavy steel shield**(2 @ 97 gp each), *ring of protection* +1*(2 @ 166 gp each), *cloak of charisma* +2*(2 @ 333 gp each), *scroll of brilliant aura**(2 @ 250 gp each), +1 *studded leather armor*† (4 @ 97 gp each), +1 *battleaxe*† (4 @ 192 each), +1 *composite longbow*(+4 Str bonus)† (4 @ 233 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor*† (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds*† (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent*† (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2‡ (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask*‡ (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword*‡ (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone*‡ (12 gp)

APL 14: Loot: 128 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 7,325 gp – +1 *full plate**(220 gp), +1 *heavy steel shield**(97 gp), *ring of protection* +1*(166 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2*(333 gp), *gloves of dexterity* +2*(333 gp), *periapt of wisdom* +2*(333 gp), *boots of speed**(1,000 gp), *pearl of power* (1st)* (83 gp), *scroll of brilliant aura**(250 gp), +1 *morningstar**(192 gp), +2 *studded leather armor*† (2 @ 347 gp each), +1

battleaxe† (2 @ 192 each), +1 *composite longbow*(+4 Str bonus)† (2 @ 233 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2‡ (2 @ 333 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery*† (2 @ 416 gp each), *brooch of shielding*† (2 @ 125 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor*† (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds*† (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent*† (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2‡ (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask*‡ (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword*‡ (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone*‡ (12 gp), *ring of improved swimming*‡ (833 gp)

APL 16: Loot: 690 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 13,774 gp – +1 *full plate**(2 @ 220 gp each), +1 *heavy steel shield**(2 @ 97 gp each), *ring of protection* +1*(2 @ 166 gp each), *cloak of charisma* +2*(2 @ 333 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2*(2 @ 333 gp each), *periapt of wisdom* +2*(2 @ 333 gp each), *boots of speed**(2 @ 1,000 gp each), *pearl of power* (1st)* (2 @ 83 gp each), *scroll of brilliant aura**(2 @ 250 gp each), +1 *morningstar**(2 @ 192 gp each), +2 *studded leather armor*† (4 @ 347 gp each), +1 *battleaxe*† (4 @ 192 each), +1 *composite longbow*(+4 Str bonus)† (4 @ 233 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2‡ (4 @ 333 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery*† (4 @ 416 gp each), *brooch of shielding*† (4 @ 125 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor*† (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds*† (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent*† (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2‡ (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask*‡ (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword*‡ (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone*‡ (12 gp), *ring of improved swimming*‡ (833 gp)

Development: Once the PCs have successfully defeated the attackers, the village is saved. If the PCs question the villagers about what happened, they all say they were going about their business when they were attacked. They had no idea such creatures were in the area or they would have fled to Redoubt for shelter. They say the attackers were led by a man with blond hair and blue eyes dressed in scarlet robes. The man did nothing but order his troops to scour buildings and instruct them to look for something. Only one fellow, an older veteran named Jerit (LN male human, Ftr2), understands the Giant language. He can tell the PCs that the leader was telling the giants to look for “her.” Who “she” is, the Jerit and the villagers have no idea. If asked about the Shade, the villagers say they should sit under a tree or something, but it is clear that they don't understand what the PCs are talking about. (The Shade used an assumed identity while living here.)

The mercenaries might provide clues about the man leading them if taken prisoner. It requires a successful Intimidate check against one of the mercenaries to get them to talk. To communicate with them, the PCs must speak either Giant or Gnoll (respective to the creatures). The mercenaries can tell the PCs a bit about the man in scarlet robes. They say they've worked with him before

raiding targets in the Vesve, but that they don't know much about him except that he claims to be from far away. He pays well and that's enough for them. They think he may be able to cast spells of some kind, but they don't know much about such things as Spellcraft. The man rarely takes part in attacks himself. In fact, he usually disappears shortly after ordering the attack and only returns to pay them afterwards. If asked if there is anything unusual about his appearance, they say they never noticed anything of the sort, besides him being an ugly, pale-fleshed human.

If asked why they are impersonating Scarlet Brotherhood priests, they say they are just trying to look intimidating and for some reason people seemed to fear the Scarlet sign. They've modeled their appearances after the man who pays them.

The mercenaries are not sure exactly what the man was looking for. But they are pretty sure he was looking for a woman. It seemed to them that he was mad at her for some reason, and they think she might have slighted him in the past.

Of course, the man in scarlet is Raniel in disguise. He dons this persona often when using mercenaries and assassinating people since he finds the terror that the Scarlet Sign evokes from people funny. However, at this point, Raniel is at an impasse. The PCs arrived just in time to distract Raniel from the attack and the Shade was able to get away to her defensible cottage. He doesn't know where the Shade went and has no other way to track her down.

While the PCs are discussing what to do, have a small child of no more than 5 years comes up to the PCs and says, ***"Da shady lady say dank you. She say if you smart you not twy to follow her cuz she be safe now. She want you to have dis as a bye-bye pwesent."*** The child then presents each PC with a small token shaped like a grinning mask (the symbol of Olidammara).

This child is the only character in the entire village who actually knows anything about the Shade. The Shade did this because she assumed no one would ever bother to interrogate a child and no one would take the child seriously if they did.

At this point, the adventure is over. The PCs have headed Raniel off and prevented him from destroying the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight completely. However, tell the PCs none of this. Indeed, some parties may be very battered up by this point and have no desire to go further. They may still be unsure if the Shade is truly loyal to her organization, plus information they may have learned about Raniel may lead them to be suspicious. Whether or not to act on their suspicions is up to them. If the PCs leave at this point, head to the *Conclusion A*. If the PCs were defeated, go to *Conclusion B*.

However, if the PCs wish to know more, then inform them that pursuing the Shade is an optional encounter. This requires the PCs spend one extra TU (two if out-of-region), but they may earn additional gp and XP above the normal cap. If the PCs want to go after the Shade, the small child steps up to them and says, ***"dere's only one pwace to find shade awound here; dat's da gwove of twees over dat way."*** The child points to the west where, on a distant hill, there appears to be a small forest.

If the PCs want to know more about the child, he will say his named is Rirby, but little else. He isn't very talkative except as described above. The child is a very unique individual, but the child is not the focus of this adventure. If the PCs question him too much, he starts crying and flees to the arms of his mother who scolds the PCs for berating her child with pointless questions. Divinations about the child reveal only that he is special, nothing more.

Encounter Five: The Shady Old Hag (Optional)

PCs continuing on the optional encounter should get the hint from the child that the Shade is hiding in the forest to the west. The trees are only about a mile away, but once inside, the forest seems much larger than it should be. This is the result of a powerful illusion spell intended to disorient any who enter except those keyed to the spell (namely the Shade and her powerful wizard ally). A DC 29 Spellcraft check is enough to know that only the most powerful mages can create such an effect and the spell is unknown to the character. Casters attempting to scry within the area of the forest must succeed on a caster level check against DC 29 or the spell fails.

The PCs wander around the forest for a day before having to make camp. In the morning they can begin their search anew; do not give them any indication that they are any closer to finding their quarry however. Make it seem like searching this forest exhaustively might take days. There are no signs of tracks or anything resembling anything but mundane animal life, although actual animals are noticeably present. As they are poking around the trees, read the following:

The sun breaks slowly through the treetops and a rainbow can be seen far away on the horizon. The storm has finally passed, but you seem to be no better off. The forest appears thoroughly deserted. A worn path has been turned to mud by the rain and your boots are ankle-deep in the muck as you trudge through the trees looking for any sign of life, or of the Shade.

Suddenly, almost as if by magic, you see a small cottage ahead of you. As you ready weapons and spells in case of a threat, you behold a crotchety old hag with a ragged shawl draped over her head walk up from around the back of the cottage. She squints at you as though having difficulty seeing and says, "You younguns' are goin' to catch your death of cold out here. Why don't you come dry your feet by my fire? It may not be much, but at least it provides ample shade from that bright sun that's burnin' my eyes out."

This is the Shade; PCs who beat her Disguise check (+21 modifier, includes -2 for age category difference) with a Spot check (remember the PCs must ask for such a Spot check) recognize her if they have seen her before, otherwise they simply realize it is a young woman disguised as an older woman. PCs who have met the Shade before get a +4 bonus (*Player's Handbook*, page 73) to see through the disguise.

If the PCs don't get the hint then you may wish to allow them a Sense Motive check (DC 20) to understand the innuendo that she is the Shade. In a sense however, the Shade is leading the PCs into a trap. She knows someone has eradicated her organization and she's not about to trust anyone, even the PCs. For all she knows, they could be assassins in very excellent disguises.

If the PCs mention they are suspicious, allow them a Sense Motive check. If they succeed on a DC 20 check (a "hunch"), then they realize something is not right. If they beat her opposed Bluff check (+32 modifier), then they realize she is hiding something, she is nervous, and that there is the possibility of danger inside the cabin.

As the PCs enter the Shade's home, she bypasses a system of traps designed to ward the room. Although the Shade knows how to bypass the traps, the PCs are not so well informed. The traps have an onset delay of three rounds, which should be enough for the PCs to all enter the room. PCs with the Quick Reconnoiter feat or those who state they are keeping a close eye on the Shade may make a Spot check opposed by her Sleight of Hand (+29 modifier) to notice her bypassing the traps.

All traps are masked with a permanent *Nystul's magic aura* (CL 18) to hide their magical auras, making detection with *arcane sight* or *detect magic* virtually impossible. Read the following once the PCs are inside:

The old hag's domicile is small, but cozy. A warm fire burns in a stove in the corner. The hag hobbles over to a cupboard and fetches a kettle, "I fancy you wouldn't mind some tea to warm you up," she says, filling the kettle with water and placing it on the stove.

The cottage is 25 ft. by 25 ft., small enough that a 20-ft. radius burst (such as the one created by *dispel magic*) can fill the entire room save one corner square. These traps have been calibrated to cover the entire cottage EXCEPT the square where the old woman is conveniently standing in the corner by the stove. The traps of *dispel magic*/*greater dispel magic* go off first, followed by the *enervation/energy drain* traps. Roll randomly to determine the targets of the *enervation/energy drain* traps.

APL 10 (EL 6)

Dispel Magic Trap (2): CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; spell effect (*dispel magic*, 10th-level wizard, area dispel); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

APL 12 (EL 9)

Dispel Magic Trap (3): CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; spell effect (*dispel magic*, 10th-level wizard, area dispel); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Enervation Trap (2): CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; Atk +5 ranged touch; spell effect (*enervation*, 7th-level wizard, 1d4 negative levels for 7 hours); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

APL 14 (EL 12)

Greater Dispel Magic Trap (4): CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; spell effect (*greater dispel magic*, 17th-level wizard, area dispel); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Enervation Trap (4): CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; Atk +5 ranged touch; spell effect (*enervation*, 7th-level wizard, 1d4 negative levels for 7 hours); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

APL 16 (EL 14)

Greater Dispel Magic Trap (6): CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; spell effect (*greater dispel magic*, 17th-level wizard, area dispel); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Enervation Trap (6): CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; Atk +5 ranged touch; spell effect (*enervation*, 7th-level wizard, 1d4 negative levels for 7 hours); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

Energy Drain Trap: CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; hidden switch bypass; Atk +8 ranged touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours, after 24 hours DC 23 Fortitude save negates); onset delay (3 rounds); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

If the PCs notice the Shade bypassing the traps or happen to notice the traps with a Search check, she quickly realizes the jig is up. Once the traps go off, or once the Shade has failed to persuade the PCs to enter, read the following:

Suddenly the old hag displays a surprising burst of agility as she whips around to face you, a pair of glistening daggers in her hands.

“Alright, I told you not to follow and you did, assassin Scum” she says in a soft but chilling voice, “who in the Nine Hells are you really and who sent you? I warn you; I’m not playing any games here and I will slit each of your throats in a second if you don’t answer truthfully.”

All APLs (EL16)

The Shade: Female human
Rog5/Spymaster7/Shadowdancer4; hp 80; see *Appendix Three*.
Shadow: hp 19; see *Monster Manual*, page 221.

Tactics: The Shade is unequivocally hostile towards the PCs. She is prepared to go out in a blaze of glory if she has to. In fact, with the way things have been going for her recently she expects to die in the coming fight, but she’s going to take as many of her assassins out with her that she can. Convincing her they mean no threat to her will take more than a good Diplomacy check.

In battle, she relies on her high AC and Tumble skill to slip away from dangerous melee combatants and take out spellcasters first. Her shadow helps by with flanking and sucking Strength from her target. She works one target at a time until that target *teleports* away or is dead (as in -10 hit points dead, she knows fallen foes can be healed and isn’t beneath using one of her attacks to finish the job). If the situation looks extremely bleak, she tries to escape using her *ethereal jaunt* ability.

Overall, a lone enemy like the Shade isn’t an incredibly challenging fight. In fact, the only thing that might make it a challenge is that the PCs probably have several of their most powerful spells removed and drained several levels. Lower APL tables may be outclassed and forced to retreat, especially if she managed to get rid of a lot of their spells and drain a lot of levels with her traps. But higher APL tables should have little difficulty, even considering the circumstances.

The PCs have inadvertently led Raniel to the Shade by seeking her out. And he is ready to make the lives of everyone in the room a living hell. While the PCs are talking with the Shade, Raniel and his gnoll mercenary tracker catch up to the PCs and notice the cottage. They stay 100 feet back and make Hide checks (in case any PCs are looking out the windows).

While they are hiding, Raniel casts *invisibility* on his familiar and sends it to slip inside the cottage and spy on the characters inside while he casts additional defensive spells on himself (*displacement*, *heroism*, *spider climb*, and *resist energy* against each element [fire, acid, electricity, and cold], in that order).

For each spell Raniel casts (including *invisibility*), the PCs get a DC 0 Listen check to hear spellcasting outside (if they beat the DC by 10, they can make a Spellcraft check to identify the spell). However, the intervening walls of the cottage and the 100 feet of distance impose a net penalty of -30 to their Listen check (-10 for the wall, -20 for the distance; note the DC of a Listen check is increased by 2 for every 10 feet in a forest due to ambient noise). Effectively, this is a DC 30 Listen check, DC 40 to understand that it is spellcasting and receive a Spellcraft check to identify the spell being cast.

If any of the PCs react to the spellcasting outside, Raniel’s familiar warns him telepathically and he stops his spellcasting regimen (after casting whatever spell it was the PCs reacted to) to use *dimension door* to invade the room. At this point, all other bets are off and you should go to *Encounter Six (b)*.

Once Raniel has finished casting prep spells, he watches this entire episode with keen interest by *scrying* on his familiar. His familiar is invisible and hiding (Hide check modifier +15 if the PCs can see invisible creatures and are keeping an eye out for an ambush). If the PCs seem intent on taking the Shade out, he doesn’t stop them. If the PCs defeat the Shade, allow them a few rounds to heal, and then begin *Encounter Six (a)*.

Development: If the PCs have been convinced by Raniel’s “evidence” that the Shade is in cahoots with a scarlet brotherhood agent then this could be a fairly anti-climactic ending as the Shade is not incredibly difficult (spymasters do not make a very effective combat challenge). The wiser thing for the PCs to do is negotiate, but doing so means they must persuade the Shade that they mean her no harm. Such a thing can be inordinately difficult.

First of all, the PCs must provide conclusive evidence that they are who they say they are. The PCs will have to be creative here; the Shade knows a lot about the adventurers that have worked for her and a number of others besides, but she isn’t omniscient and the

evidence has to be sound. Use your judgment to decide whether the evidence they produce is sufficient. At any rate, if the PCs present good evidence, don't appear to be lying after she makes a Sense Motive check, and they are not making any hostile moves, then the PCs get past the first step.

Second, the PCs will need to improve her attitude with Diplomacy (see *Influencing NPC Attitudes* on page 72 of the *Player's Handbook*). The Shade assesses the strength of the PCs with Sense Motive and gives them time for the Diplomacy based on how much of a threat she deems them to be. At APL 10, she gives them a full minute. At APL 12, she gives them half a minute (-5 penalty to Diplomacy checks). At APL 14 and 16 she only gives them time for a rushed Diplomacy check (-10 penalty). Other PCs/cohorts may aid the check.

The PC making the check gains a cumulative circumstance modifier of +2 for each favor the party has with the Drinkers or the Shade. Additionally, if the PC has managed to provide conclusive proof of their identity feel free to award them up to a +10 circumstance bonus depending on the quality of the evidence.

The Shade proceeds to attack as long as her attitude is at **Hostile** or **Unfriendly**. If she is **Indifferent**, she demands that they leave immediately and continues to attack if they do not. The Shade's attitude must be at least **Friendly** before she will even be willing to speak with the PCs further. If **Friendly** or **Helpful**, she lowers her guard a bit, calls off her shadow, and begins to parlay. At this point you may move to *Encounter Six (b)*. However, should the Shade defeat the PCs in combat, move to *Conclusion D*.

Note: Players who live in the Iuz's Border States Metaregion will probably have an easier time convincing the Shade that their characters are her allies since they are more likely to have played in events where they can earn the favor of her and her now-dead organization. Because of this, you shouldn't pull any punches or fudge any rolls with Diplomacy for these players. However, players who have never or rarely played in the Metaregion are likely to have more difficulty with this encounter due to a lack of such favors. For such players, you should feel free to grant them larger "roleplaying" bonuses or possibly set the Shade's starting attitude at **Unfriendly** to make Diplomacy a more viable option.

Treasure: If the PCs kill the Shade in this encounter, they may loot her equipment since Keak shows up only to take her body.

All APLs: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 14,271 gp – *bracers of armor* +5 (2,083 gp), *ring of protection* +2 (666 gp), *wraithblade* (4,333 gp), +1 *returning dagger* (691 gp), *boots of big stepping** (933 gp), *gloves of dexterity* +6

(3,000 gp), *greater choker of eloquence** (2,000 gp), *stylus of the masterful hand** (250 gp), *potion of barkskin* +3 (50 gp), *potion of cure light wounds* (4 gp), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2 @ 62 gp each), *potion of haste* (62 gp), *potion of shield of faith* +5 (75 gp)

Encounter Six (a): The Last Drop in the Cup Runs Dry (Optional)

This encounter assumes the PCs defeated the Shade in combat. Adjust this encounter as necessary if the PCs found a way to trap her, take her alive, or defeat her through the use of *charm* or *dominate*.

Raniel manages to accomplish all of the following tasks in the read aloud text with two rounds worth of actions. If the players give no indication that they wish to interrupt continue with the read aloud text as written. However if they do attempt to interrupt, you may need to roll initiative. If this happens, Raniel casts *nervekitter* as an immediate action just before combat and leaves with the Shade post-haste on his first action. In this event, disregard the description of the rune if Raniel hasn't cast it yet.

The Shade has been defeated. The Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight are no more. As you stand in the room contemplating the consequences of what has happened, you hear a 'pop' sound and look over to see Raniel standing next to the woman you have just beaten. "Congratulations, chaps!" he exclaims, "You've done mighty well indeed. It's always a pleasure to have others do my work for me. Oh, I'm not ungrateful at all. In fact, I shall reward you like no other can. Help yourself to all of this pathetic woman's items, they won't help her any longer where she's going. And I'll be sure to put in a good word for you with the Old Man. He's likely to be quite pleased with the turnout of this little escapade. I'd love to stay and chat more, but I really must be moving on to other things."

With that, Raniel etches a quick rune upon the wall, "It's been lovely working with you. Hope to do it again some time. Ta ta!" At that he speaks words of power from a scroll and touches the Shade. A faint shimmer falls over the two and suddenly they both vanish, leaving nothing behind but the Shade's possessions, a scroll case, and a rune on the wall that looks almost as if it was written in blood. It says, "Keak was here."

If the PCs have already defeated the Shade, Raniel won't attack them unless they force him to, such as by taking the Shade and *teleporting* away before he gets to act. In such a case, Raniel goes berserk and attempts to hunt down and slay each and every one of them with no mercy, using the tactics outlined in *Encounter Six (b)*. Any PCs that survive his onslaught earn the *Enmity of the Boneshadow* (see *Conclusion*).

Once Raniel is gone with the Shade or the PCs have fled the scene, proceed to *Conclusion C* (adapting if necessary in the event the PCs have fled).

Encounter Six (b): The Coup De Grace (Optional)

At this point, the PCs manage to parlay with the Shade. She (truthfully) denies having any association with a member of the Scarlet Brotherhood. She actually claims ignorance of any such individual (she knows more than she is letting on, but due to her Chaotic Neutral alignment, she believes this lie will get her further with the PCs; roll her Bluff check opposed by their Sense Motive checks if they are suspicious).

The negotiation should be tense because the Shade is probably still at least a little distrustful, but eventually the story the PCs can weave for her combined with information she already knows about what has happened to other Drinker cells finally gives her a haunting epiphany. Read the following:

As you are parlaying with the Shade, she suddenly gets a dour look on her face, "Oh no," she professes, "I never expected it was this serious. The Old One has sent one of his vilest assassins after my organization. If what you say is true then..."

She is unexpectedly interrupted as you jerk your head up and do a double take. Another person is standing in the room; it is Raniel. "...then you are being hunted by a Boneshadow. How correct you are madam.

"Keak the Magnificently Malevolent, the Notoriously Nasty, the Adamantly Appalling, Viciously Vile, and Eternally Entertaining at your service!" he exclaims with a slight bow.

If the PCs make no move to attack, he begins his archetypal villain monologue (stopping only if the PCs initiate combat). Continue with the following:

"My old patron would like to extend to you his congratulations at thoroughly botching up that little affair in birdyland. No doubt it was a monstrous effort. Too bad you ultimately failed. Ah well, such is

life, right? One day you're hunting demons and trying to stop the world from ending, the next they are hunting you and trying to stop the world from healing."

Judge's Note: Keak refers here to the mission the PCs undertook for the Drinkers in *IUZ5-07 Tides of War*. He actually does not know whether this effort failed, but he is saying so to try and demoralize the Shade and the PCs. Continue:

"Of course despite your ineptitude my lord has fallen into a bit of a fit at your involvement in what he considered a private affair and consequently requested I present you with an invitation to visit him at his fine palace in the City of Skulls to be his most honored guest," as the elf who calls himself Keak says this, he produces a gold-trimmed letter from within his robe and holds it out for the Shade. She simply glares at him woodenly.

"You don't want to read my master's invitation? I am offended, my good lady. Pity, I guess I shall have to," he says, releasing the letter into the air. It stays aloft by its own magic, and then unfolds itself presenting the text for Keak's eyes. He then reads, "By order of the Most Exalted, Profane, and Blasphemous Lord of Pain, the presence of the individual who calls herself the Shade is cordially requested within the court of Dorakaa to answer to the charge of mutiny against the rightful ruler of Oerth..."

"You son of a barbazul!" the Shade declares, "I'm not going to play your little game, Keak. I may not defeat you, but I'll at least make you sing for your supper," she growls, brandishing her dagger menacingly.

Raniel has a look of utter dejection and despondence upon his face as he replies gloomily, "Oh drat it all. I had hoped we could resolve this matter without resorting to fisticuffs, but since you insist. Raniel might have stepped aside, but Keak is not going to let you muck this up."

He readies as if to begin casting a spell, while making a quick nod in your direction, "You might want to stand back. There's likely to be a LOT of collateral damage."

At this point, Raniel/Keak attacks and there is no going back. All Diplomacy checks to improve his attitude automatically fail. Roll initiative.

APL 10 (EL 16*)

Raniel/Keak: Male elf (grey)
Ftr3/Wiz12/Mindbender2; hp 129 (144 with *false life*);
see *Appendix Three*.

APL 12 (EL 17)

Raniel/Keak: Male elf (grey)
Ftr3/Wiz12/Mindbender2; hp 129 (144 with *false life*);
see *Appendix Three*.

APL 14 (EL 18)

Raniel/Keak: Male elf (grey)
Ftr3/Wiz12/Mindbender2; hp 129 (144 with *false life*);
see *Appendix Three*.
V'lordd: Male advanced babau Bbn3/Exotic Weapon
Master2; hp 264 each; see *Appendix Three*.

APL 16 (EL 19)

Raniel/Keak: Male elf (grey)
Ftr3/Wiz12/Mindbender2; hp 129 (144 with *false life*);
see *Appendix Three*.
V'lordd and Gassane'eizk: Male advanced babau
Bbn3/Exotic Weapon Master2; hp 264 each; see
Appendix Three.

*The EL of this encounter has been reduced by 1 to account for the Shade's assistance.

Tactics (General): The Shade sees an opportunity here. She realizes while the PCs are present, Keak probably cannot simply ignore them, except at APL 10, where they pose him little threat. At APLs 12 and higher, the Shade's first action, assuming she isn't incapacitated by Keak somehow first, is to use her *ethereal jaunt* ability to escape. At APL 10, she realizes the PCs would not provide much more than a minor inconvenience to Keak and decides that her best course of action is to aid them. However, she strongly recommends to them that they teleport (with her along of course) far away to somewhere that can't be easily scryed immediately rather than face Keak. (If the PCs do fight Keak at APL 10, they are in for a rough ride so do your best to convince them of this before it's too late.)

Raniel/Keak is an incredibly complex character and difficult to run effectively. So brace yourself; this could get tough. Keak's tactics vary according to APL but a few things remain constant.

First, a number of defensive spells come into effect as soon as Keak is attacked so consult the **powered-up suite** in his stat block to track them. Particularly potent is the *blacklight* spell which effectively makes all opponents within 20 feet of him blind with no save; Keak uses this in conjunction with *spider climb* to cast spells while on a wall or a ceiling, reducing the chance of PCs who are looking for him on the ground finding him.

Additionally, any time he is hit, his attacker will take 30 points of acid damage from *acid sheath* (note this also adds one point of damage per die to his *acid storm* spell which is particularly effective, especially when empowered or maximized).

Second, unless the PCs took special care to set a guard outside or conceal their tracks (which is a setback for Keak, forcing him and his gnoll tracker to take more time to find the tracks) he has prepared himself outside by casting *displacement*, *heroism*, *resist energy* (one for each energy type), and *spider climb*. If Keak manages to get these extra spells up outside the cottage without the PCs noticing, consult the **bonus powered-up suite** for Keak's statistics. This incorporates his powered-up suite statistics as well.

Additionally, Keak always uses *nervekitter* at the beginning of the battle to give himself +5 to his Initiative check. This is an immediate action however, so it will prevent him from using any swift actions (i.e. quickened spells) during the first round. It also prevents him from being able to use *duelward* to counterspell until he has acted in the first round.

Finally, he saves at least one of his *greater dispel magic* spells to use as a counterspell through *duelward* if a particularly nasty spell that he has little or no defense against or that gravely threatens him is leveled against him (spells that cause instant death for example).

If he has previously succeeded in dominating another character in *Encounter One*, he uses that character as a ward to stand between him and other foes.

APL 10 Tactics: Keak's first action is to cast *greater dispel magic* on the Shade, knowing that her wizard ally has placed several permanent spells on her. He also takes a move action to draw his sword so that he threatens enemies. The following round, he attempts to finish the job in one fell swoop, casting *spell enhancer* (a swift action) to boost his caster level by 2 and save DC by 1 and then casting maximized *disintegrate* (using his Sudden Maximize feat) on the Shade. If the Shade fails her save, the 228 points of damage does her in. On the following round, Keak casts *unseen servant* to gather her ashes into a sack unless the PCs have demonstrated themselves to be a bigger threat than he thought, in which case he turns on them with area effects like *radiant assault*, *mass hold person*, and *fireball*. He saves his Sudden Empower feat unless it appears the battle is turning against him, at which point he uses it with a particularly devastating area effect (such as *acid storm*). It takes his *unseen servant* three rounds to gather the Shade's dust and return to Keak. At that point Keak pockets the dust, opens a *scroll of greater teleport*, and transports himself back to Dorakaa.

APL 12 Tactics: At this APL Keak considers the PCs more of a threat. He opens with *confusion* to try to sow disarray within the ranks of the PCs. The Shade, assuming she is not affected by the spell, uses this opportunity to escape, as detailed in *APL 10 Tactics* above, otherwise she has to use *slipper mind* to try to escape the spell.

If the PCs prove particularly resilient to the *confusion* spell, Keak decides to take them more seriously and takes his mind off the Shade temporarily to hit them with a *radiant assault* and possibly a quickened *chain missile* or quickened *buzzing bee* targeted at a troublesome spellcaster. This is especially true if the PCs somehow managed to target him with a potentially devastating spell like *finger of death* or *disintegrate* during the last round (spells he is likely to counterspell with as an immediate action with *duelward*).

If at any point the PCs are proving themselves incapable of seriously threatening Keak, he proceeds to ignore them and focuses on the Shade as described above, chasing her down if she is already ethereal.

APL 14 & 16 Tactics: This is a much different story. The PCs are definitely a bigger combat threat than the Shade at these APLs, therefore, he allows the Shade to escape, for now.

He should open with a maximized *radiant assault* (using Sudden Maximize). He hopes this puts the PCs on the defensive and possibly dazes a number of them. In the rounds after that, he will quickly evaluate the situation and act accordingly.

If most targets saved against the daze effect of *radiant assault* then he will attempt another area effect to incapacitate his foes such as *mass hold person* or *Evard's black tentacles* (although he avoids the latter if he notices, through *greater arcane sight*, that a number of PCs have *freedom of movement* active). If, after a few area effects he has noticed his defenses need significant boosting, he will cast *greater blink* so that he can avoid about half of his enemies' attacks, unless of course *displacement* is already accomplishing that for him.

Once he is down to only a few foes, the battlefield becomes more manageable and he begins taking his enemies out one at a time. His primary targets are arcane spellcasters; being one himself he knows what devastation they can cause. If one of the few remaining foes is an arcane caster then a *disintegrate* spell (possibly empowered if it is a dwarf or a gnome) is probably an effective means of eliminating that target. This spell, as well as other instant-kill spells, is a good candidate for one of Keak's *spell enhancer* spells.

Keak's best spells are enchantments, however, and if he sees a big brute of a character who appears weak of will, he may choose to target that character with a

dominate person and gain a fast ally, but only if there are no *magic circles* in the area that would easily disrupt such a plan.

Using *greater arcane sight*, he can determine which of his remaining opponents are most heavily enhanced and whether that opponent is enhanced enough to warrant a targeted *greater dispel magic*. If he notices a number of spells that grant bonuses to saves, attack rolls, skill checks, and temporary hit points then this may be his best bet when targeting such a character. On the other hand, an enemy with a large number of active spells may also be a prime target for a *reciprocal gyre* instead, possibly sudden empowered for improved effect.

He knows that clerics and rogues tend to be difficult to kill so he prefers to incapacitate them with spells like *confusion* or *Evard's black tentacles* and deal with them once the warriors and mages have been taken care of.

If Keak is ever in the area of a *holy word* or *dictum* spell, he is suddenly surrounded by a contingent *silence* spell. This doesn't bother him in the slightest; he can communicate telepathically with his allies plus he has a *rod of silent metamagic* that he can use to cast almost any spell on his list as a silent spell.

Remember that Keak is a genius and would probably know things about the PCs that even you don't know as the judge. He can probably deduce a number of things logically that would normally be considered meta-gaming. His brilliance allows for even the slightest hint to give him vast quantities of information about his enemies so feel free to "meta-game" this information as long as you can find the slightest justification for Keak to figure it out.

Fortunately for the PCs, when it comes down to it, Keak is a coward. If the chips are ever seriously down, he will flee. But he is equally arrogant so he will not do this unless he is fairly certain that defeat is eminent. For example, knowing a cleric is about to cast a high caster level *holy word* when there are no contingent *silence* spells to hide within would scare him enough to flee.

Nevertheless, though he lacks bravery, he is completely and utterly ruthless. He is an efficient assassin and never leaves a mess behind. He always makes sure to recover his victims' remains to prevent resurrection by any means short of *true resurrection* and he never leaves witnesses who might possibly threaten him later.

Also at these APLs, Keak has made a pact or two with outsiders for additional aid, knowing the PCs are quite powerful. These creatures are standing by to aid Keak should he call them (which he does if he notices the PCs making peace with the Shade, hence why it takes him a few rounds to show up).

The babaus V'lordd and Gassane'eizk are particularly nasty examples of their kind. Keak has helped them in

the past and the slimy demons owe him a favor; plus he has agreed to throw in an ancient Suloise artifact for their assistance.

The demons dive into melee with relish and take on the toughest looking warriors in the group. Their spiked chains let them control an enormous portion of the battlefield, especially if the battle remains in the small confines of the cottage. They attempt to trip their immediate foes with their spiked chains while using their stunning blow ability to try to stun arcane spellcasters in reach (note that because of their exotic reach special ability, such characters cannot benefit from anything less than total cover, making hiding behind other characters useless). They only use power attack against lightly armored opponents or if they appear to be having an easy time hitting.

Development: The PCs have two options for dealing with this encounter. They can try to defeat Keak (earning full XP and possibly gold) or they can try to escape with the Shade (earning half XP and no gold).

If the PCs opt to escape, they had better do so with the Shade. Otherwise she dies, as Keak easily finishes her off and they gain no XP for the encounter. In the event that the PCs bring her along, they must transport the Shade to a location where she will be safe from *scrying* (an *antimagic field* is the best temporary solution until the PCs can take her to a temple or organization capable of using more permanent magic or until the PCs can create more permanent magic themselves).

Once the PCs are gone, Keak immediately attempts to *scry* on the Shade by borrowing a *staff of greater divination* after teleporting back to Dorakaa and is probably successful (DC 26 Will save); this gives the PCs 1 hour to get her to a safe location before Keak finishes the casting. If the PCs just teleport away again, Keak repeats the process. He has access to enough resources (like scrolls and magic items) that he can keep this up for days so the PCs will eventually have to transport the Shade to a place warded against *scrying*. If the PCs successfully escape with the Shade, they get half XP. Go to *Conclusion E* once the Shade is safe.

If they defeat Keak, they get full XP, plus they can loot Keak's equipment if they manage to keep his body from teleporting to Dorakaa. If the PCs defeat Keak, go to *Conclusion F*.

Treasure: If the PCs manage to defeat Keak AND prevent him from being teleported to Dorakaa, they can loot his corpse. The demons leave their equipment and their corpses on the Material Plane when they die since they are called, not summoned. For APLs 14 & 16, the Keak's equipment is marked with a * and the demons' equipment is marked with a †.

APLs 10 & 12: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 11,130 gp – +2 *spell storing longsword* (692 gp), *boots of levitation* (625 gp), *headband of intellect* +6 (3,000 gp), *ring of counterspells* (333 gp), *ring of protection* +2 (666 gp), *scroll of limited wish* (314 gp), *scroll of greater teleport* (189 gp), *rod of silent metamagic* (916 gp), *strand of prayer beads* (3,816 gp), *Keak's spellbooks* (579 gp)

APL 14: Loot: 29 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 11,428 gp – +2 *spell storing longsword** (692 gp), *boots of levitation** (625 gp), *headband of intellect* +6* (3,000 gp), *ring of counterspells** (333 gp), *ring of protection* +2* (666 gp), *scroll of limited wish** (314 gp), *scroll of greater teleport** (189 gp), *rod of silent metamagic** (916 gp), *strand of prayer beads** (3,816 gp), *Keak's spellbooks** (579 gp), large +1 *chain shirt*† (112 gp), *potion of cure serious wounds*† (62 gp), *potion of haste*† (62 gp), *potion of heroism*† (62 gp).

APL 16: Loot: 59 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 11,726 gp – +2 *spell storing longsword** (692 gp), *boots of levitation** (625 gp), *headband of intellect* +6* (3,000 gp), *ring of counterspells** (333 gp), *ring of protection* +2* (666 gp), *scroll of limited wish** (314 gp), *scroll of greater teleport** (189 gp), *rod of silent metamagic** (916 gp), *strand of prayer beads** (3,816 gp), *Keak's spellbooks** (579 gp), large +1 *chain shirt*† (2 @ 112 gp each), *potion of cure serious wounds*† (2 @ 62 gp each), *potion of haste*† (2 @ 62 gp each), *potion of heroism*† (2 @ 62 gp each).

Conclusion A

Read the following if the PCs manage to stop the attack on Rhodalf's Hill but DO NOT pursue the Shade:

The Shade has survived due to your heroic effort and the town of Rhodalf's Hill is safe. The people of the town have sent runners to Lady Jelleneth to inform her of your noble deed. Meanwhile a celebration is planned in your honor.

The next several days are full of work rebuilding the town while feasting and festivities fill the nights. Shortly after the defeat of the attackers, a cadre of knights from Redoubt arrives: it is Lady Jelleneth's honor guard. The commanding knight praises your efforts publicly and awards each of you the Furryondy Medal of Bravery.

There is much to be thankful for, but the celebration ends on a sour note. Shortly after the arrival of the knights, a young messenger rides into town. He rides up to your group, both he and his mount appearing tired beyond mention. After dismounting, he saunters up to you and retrieves a parchment from his inner jacket, unfolding it as if to begin reading. As soon as his lips begin to move, the

parchment explodes into a brilliant fireball scorching you and injuring several nearby watchers.

This messenger was dominated by Keak and sent to read a message written with the messenger's own blood and subsequently trapped with *explosive runes*. All bystanders take 6d6 points of damage, but this is probably immaterial. Keak has also treated the message surviving in the scroll case mentioned below alchemically so that it dissolves shortly after being exposed to air. Continue reading:

As the knights move quickly to aid those injured by the blast you note that there is nothing but smoking flesh where the messenger once stood, that, and a scroll case that seems to have survived the explosion. Ascertaining that there is no harmful magic on or within the case, you pry it open and retrieve the scroll within. The script is written in blood. It reads:

"This pitiful soul was weak of will and suffered accordingly. I find it merciful for one such as him. So much greater will be the wrath I visit upon you for your insolence. You cannot get in my way and expect to avoid judgment. Beware, meddlers! My punishment shall be difficult to escape. Signed – Keak, Greatest of Iuz's Boneshadow."

Almost as soon as you finish reading the script the parchment begins to dissolve in your hands until there is nothing left but ashes.

You have been left with a grim warning. You will have to step carefully from now on. Whoever this Keak is, it seems he was responsible for the attack on the village and was probably also the one looking for the Shade. Fortunately, the Shade is safe for now, and you hope she will make contact with you soon so that you can help her further.

PCs that destroy the cadaver collectors receive the *Medal of Bravery*. PCs that save Rhodalf's Hill receive the *Medal of Valor*, *Enmity of the Boneshadow*, and *Midnight Cup Token*.

Conclusion B

Read the following if the PCs fail to save Rhodalf's Hill:

The village of Rhodalf's Hill lies in ruins. There is no trace of the Shade. It seems likely she has been completely destroyed, along with her organization.

Your adventure has ended on a grim note. One of the most important organizations in the fight against the Old One has been destroyed and wiped from the face of Oerth. As you make preparations to head out

for your next adventure, you silently pray that this is not a harbinger of worse things to come.

PCs that destroy the cadaver collectors receive the *Medal of Bravery*.

Conclusion C

Read the following if the PCs defeat the Shade in combat:

The Shade has been destroyed and you are directly responsible. Somehow, this Keak managed to deceive you into leading him to her and now you are blessed by darkness as evidence of your act.

Your adventure has ended on a grim note. One of the most important organizations in the fight against the Old One has been destroyed and wiped from the face of Oerth. As you make preparations to head out for your next adventure, you silently pray that this is not a harbinger of worse things to come.

PCs that destroy the cadaver collectors receive the *Medal of Bravery*. PCs that save Rhodalf's Hill receive the *Medal of Valor*. PCs that aid in defeating the Shade receive *Blessing of Iuz* and access to the Shade's equipment, but NOT Keak's equipment.

Conclusion D

Read the following if the PCs attempt to kill the Shade but fail:

As the last of your party falls, you are struck with a powerful sensation; some bright flash of light, shouting, and then quiet followed by a dark sense of foreboding. You awake to find your companions with you. You are still inside the Shade's cottage but none of you are suffering wounds, and those who died in battle with her are as good as if you had never suffered a wound at all. In the center of the room is a small sealed envelope. The seal is that of a blade eclipsing a skull.

Opening the envelope, you find a letter. It reads: "I know you tried, and that's what matters isn't it? At any rate, my lord is pleased with your work and desires that you be rewarded as only he can. Please accept my thanks on his behalf and know that he watches you now. Signed – K."

Upon the wall a rune is etched, appearing as if made in blood: "Keak was here!"

The Shade has been destroyed and you are responsible. Somehow, this Keak managed to deceive you into leading him to her and now you are marked by darkness as evidence of your act.

Your adventure has ended on a grim note. One of the most important organizations in the fight against the Old One has been destroyed and wiped from the face of Oerth. As you make preparations to head out for your next adventure, you silently pray that this is not a harbinger of worse things to come.

PCs that destroy the cadaver collectors receive the *Medal of Bravery*. PCs that save Rhodalf's Hill receive the *Medal of Valor*. PCs that aid in defeating the Shade receive *Blessing of Iuz* but they DO NOT receive access to either the Shade's or Keak's equipment.

Conclusion E

Read the following if the PCs pursue the Shade and manage to transport her to a safe location, but DO NOT kill Keak:

The Shade has survived due to your heroic effort and the town of Rhodalf's Hill is safe. The Shade thanks you for your efforts and promises to reward you. Now that the cup has run dry, she will need talented adventurers to refill it.

Eventually you are contacted by a knight from Furyondy: it is a member of Lady Jelleneth's honor guard. The knight praises your efforts awards each of you the Furyondy Medal of Bravery and Medal of Valor.

There is much to be thankful for, but your adventure ends on a sour note. Shortly after the arrival of the knight, a young messenger approaches you. He rides up to your group, both he and his mount appearing tired beyond mention. After dismounting, he saunters up to you and retrieves a parchment from his inner jacket, unfolding it as if to begin reading. As soon as his lips begin to move, the parchment explodes into a brilliant fireball scorching you and injuring several nearby watchers.

This messenger was dominated by Keak and sent to read a message written with the messenger's own blood and subsequently trapped with *explosive runes*. All bystanders take 6d6 points of damage, but this is probably immaterial. Keak has also treated the message surviving in the scroll case mentioned below alchemically so that it dissolves shortly after being exposed to air. Continue reading:

As the knight moves quickly to aid those injured by the blast you note that there is nothing but smoking flesh where the messenger once stood, that, and a scroll case that seems to have survived the explosion. Ascertaining that there is no harmful magic on or

within the case, you pry it open and retrieve the scroll within. The script is written in blood. It reads:

"This pitiful soul was weak of will and suffered accordingly. I find it merciful for one such as him. So much greater will be the wrath I visit upon you for your insolence. You cannot get in my way and expect to avoid judgment. Beware, meddlers! My punishment shall be difficult to escape. Signed – Keak, Greatest of Iuz's Boneshadow."

Almost as soon as you finish reading the script the parchment begins to dissolve in your hands until there is nothing left but ashes.

You have been left with a grim warning. You will have to step carefully from now on. The Boneshadow Keak is looking for the Shade, and for you! Fortunately, the Shade is safe for now, and having faced Keak once, you know you will be better prepared the next time you face him.

PCs that destroy the cadaver collectors receive the *Medal of Bravery*. PCs that save Rhodalf's Hill receive the *Medal of Valor*, *Enmity of the Boneshadow*, and *Midnight Cup Token*. PCs that face Keak in battle receive *A Proven Hero*. They DO NOT receive access to either the Shade's or Keak's equipment unless they somehow managed to filch something without notice.

Conclusion F

Read the following if the PCs pursue the Shade and manage kill Keak:

The villain Keak is dead, the Shade has survived due to your heroic effort and the town of Rhodalf's Hill is safe. The people of the town have sent runners to Lady Jelleneth to inform her of your noble deed. Meanwhile a celebration is planned in your honor.

The next several days are full of work rebuilding the town while feasting and festivities fill the nights. Shortly after the defeat of the attackers, a cadre of knights from Redoubt arrives: it is Lady Jelleneth's honor guard. The commanding knight praises your efforts publicly and awards each of you the Furyondy Medal of Bravery, Medal of Valor, and the most highly esteemed award of all, the Furyondy Medal of Honor.

If the PCs manage to prevent Keak's body from being returned to Dorakaa, then stop here. In this event Iuz is most displeased with Keak's failure and does not see fit to resurrect him; thus, Keak is no longer around to hunt for the PCs. Instead, Iuz promotes one of his other assassins to the rank of Boneshadow with the warning not to fail him as Keak did. Otherwise, continue:

There is much to be thankful for, but the celebration ends on a sour note. Shortly after the arrival of the knights, a young messenger rides into town. He rides up to your group, both he and his mount appearing tired beyond mention. After dismounting, he saunters up to you and retrieves a parchment from his inner jacket, unfolding it as if to begin reading. As soon as his lips begin to move, the parchment explodes into a brilliant fireball scorching you and injuring several nearby watchers.

This messenger was dominated by Keak and sent to read a message written with the messenger's own blood and subsequently trapped with *explosive runes*. All bystanders take 6d6 points of damage, but this is probably immaterial. Keak has also treated the message surviving in the scroll case mentioned below alchemically so that it dissolves shortly after being exposed to air. Continue reading:

As the knights move quickly to aid those injured by the blast you note that there is nothing but smoking flesh where the messenger once stood, that, and a scroll case that seems to have survived the explosion. Ascertaining that there is no harmful magic on or within the case, you pry it open and retrieve the scroll within. The script is written in blood. It reads:

"This pitiful soul was weak of will and suffered accordingly. I find it merciful for one such as him. So much greater will be the wrath I visit upon you for your insolence. You cannot claim my life and expect to avoid my judgment. Beware, meddlers! My punishment shall be difficult to escape. Signed – Keak, Greatest of Iuz's Boneshadow."

Almost as soon as you finish reading the script the parchment begins to dissolve in your hands until there is nothing left but ashes.

You have been left with a grim warning. You will have to step carefully from now on. Whoever this Keak is, it seems he was responsible for the attack on the village and was probably also the one looking for the Shade. Fortunately, the Shade is safe for now, and you hope she will make contact with you soon so that you can help her further.

PCs that destroy the cadaver collectors receive the *Medal of Bravery*. PCs that save Rhodalf's Hill receive the *Medal of Valor* and *Midnight Cup Token*. PCs that slay Keak in battle receive the *Medal of Honor* and *A Proven Hero*. PCs that manage to PREVENT Keak's body from being returned to Dorakaa receive *A Legendary Hero* and access to Keak's equipment and spellbooks, plus they DO NOT receive *Enmity of the Boneshadow* (good for them,

but bear in mind this should be VERY difficult to accomplish). If Keak's body is transported to Dorakaa, they receive *Enmity of the Boneshadow*, and they DO NOT receive access to his equipment and spellbooks unless they somehow managed to filch something from him without him noticing. They DO NOT receive access to the Shade's equipment either.

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 Two

Defeat the cadaver collector(s)

APL10 390 xp

APL12 450 xp

APL14 510 xp

APL16 570 xp

Encounter Three

Defeat the gnoll scouting party

APL10 300 xp

APL12 360 xp

APL14 420 xp

APL16 480 xp

Encounter Four

Defeat the mercenaries

APL10 390 xp

APL12 450 xp

APL14 510 xp

APL16 570 xp

Story Award

Avoid telling Keak directly about the Shade's location

APL10 90 xp

APL12 105 xp

APL14 120 xp

APL16 135 xp

Avoid having a party member dominated by Keak

APL10 90 xp

APL12 105 xp

APL14 120 xp

APL16 135 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL10 90 xp

APL12 105 xp
APL14 120 xp
APL16 135 xp

Total possible experience:

APL10 1,350 xp
APL12 1,575 xp
APL14 1,800 xp
APL16 2,025 xp

Optional Encounters Experience Point Summary

Encounter Five

Survive or disarm the Shade's traps

APL10 180 xp
APL12 270 xp
APL14 360 xp
APL16 420 xp

Defeat the Shade

All APLs 480 xp

Encounter Six

Defeat Keak (and his minions)

APL10 480 xp
APL12 510 xp
APL14 540 xp
APL16 570 xp

-OR-

Rescue the Shade but do not defeat Keak

APL10 240 xp
APL12 255 xp
APL14 270 xp
APL16 285 xp

Total possible experience:

APL10 660 xp
APL12 780 xp
APL14 900 xp
APL16 990 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 items are 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.

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

Encounter Three: Scouting Party

APL 10: Loot: 17 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,194 gp – *+1 studded leather armor* (2 @ 97 gp each), *+1 battleaxe* (2 @ 192 each), *+1 composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (2 @ 233 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (2 @ 25 gp each)

APL 12: Loot: 34 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 2,388 gp – *+1 studded leather armor* (4 @ 97 gp each), *+1 battleaxe* (4 @ 192 each), *+1 composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (4 @ 233 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (4 @ 25 gp each)

APL 14: L: 17 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 3,442 gp – +2 *studded leather armor* (2 @ 347 gp each), +1 *battleaxe* (2 @ 192 gp each), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (2 @ 233 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery* (2 @ 416 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (2 @ 125 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (2 @ 25 gp each)

APL 16: L: 34 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 6,884 gp – +2 *studded leather armor* (4 @ 347 gp each), +1 *battleaxe* (4 @ 192 gp each), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (4 @ 233 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (4 @ 333 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery* (4 @ 416 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (4 @ 125 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (4 @ 25 gp each)

Encounter Four: A Village Under Siege

APL 10: Loot: 54 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 2,303 gp – +1 *full plate* (220 gp), +1 *heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2 (333 gp), *scroll of brilliant aura* (250 gp), +1 *studded leather armor* (2 @ 97 gp each), +1 *battleaxe* (2 @ 192 gp each), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (2 @ 233 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2 (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask* (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword* (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone* (12 gp)

APL 12: Loot: 337 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 4,567 gp – +1 *full plate* (2 @ 220 gp each), +1 *heavy steel shield* (2 @ 97 gp each), *ring of protection* +1 (2 @ 166 gp each), *cloak of charisma* +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), *scroll of brilliant aura* (2 @ 250 gp each), +1 *studded leather armor* (4 @ 97 gp each), +1 *battleaxe* (4 @ 192 gp each), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (4 @ 233 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2 (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask* (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword* (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone* (12 gp)

APL 14: Loot: 128 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 7,325 gp – +1 *full plate* (220 gp), +1 *heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2 (333 gp), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (333 gp), *periapt of wisdom* +2 (333 gp), *boots of speed* (1,000 gp), *pearl of power* (1st) (83 gp), *scroll of brilliant aura* (250 gp), +1 *morningstar* (192 gp), +2 *studded leather armor* (2 @ 347 gp each), +1 *battleaxe* (2 @ 192 gp each), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (2 @ 233 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery* (2 @ 416 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (2 @ 125 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2 @ 25

gp each), *potion of scent* (2 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2 (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask* (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword* (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone* (12 gp), *ring of improved swimming* (833 gp)

APL 16: Loot: 690 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 13,774 gp – +1 *full plate* (2 @ 220 gp each), +1 *heavy steel shield* (2 @ 97 gp each), *ring of protection* +1 (2 @ 166 gp each), *cloak of charisma* +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), *periapt of wisdom* +2 (2 @ 333 gp each), *boots of speed* (2 @ 1,000 gp each), *pearl of power* (1st) (2 @ 83 gp each), *scroll of brilliant aura* (2 @ 250 gp each), +1 *morningstar* (2 @ 192 gp each), +2 *studded leather armor* (4 @ 347 gp each), +1 *battleaxe* (4 @ 192 gp each), +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus) (4 @ 233 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (4 @ 333 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery* (4 @ 416 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (4 @ 125 gp each), *oil of ghost touch armor* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of scent* (4 @ 25 gp each), *potion of conviction* +2 (4 gp), *potion of shadow mask* (25 gp), *scroll of burning sword* (2 gp), *scroll of hail of stone* (12 gp), *ring of improved swimming* (833 gp)

Total Possible Treasure

APL 10: Loot: 71 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 3,497 gp
Total: 2,300 gp (1,268 gp over the cap)

APL 12: Loot: 371 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 6,955 gp
Total: 3,300 gp (4,026 gp over the cap)

APL 14: Loot: 145 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 10,767 gp
Total: 6,600 gp (4,312 gp over the cap)

APL 16: Loot: 724 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 20,658 gp
Total: 9,900 gp (11,482 gp over the cap)

Optional Encounters Treasure Summary

Encounter Five: The Shady Old Hag

All APLs: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 14,271 gp – *bracers of armor* +5 (2,083 gp), *ring of protection* +2 (666 gp), *wraithblade* (4,333 gp), +1 *returning dagger* (691 gp), *boots of big stepping** (933 gp), *gloves of dexterity* +6 (3,000 gp), *greater choker of eloquence** (2,000 gp), *stylus of the masterful hand** (250 gp), *potion of barkskin* +3 (50 gp), *potion of cure light wounds* (4 gp), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2 @ 62 gp each), *potion of haste* (62 gp), *potion of shield of faith* +5 (75 gp)

Encounter Six: The Coup De Grace

APLs 10 & 12: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 11,130 gp – +2 *spell storing longsword* (692 gp), *boots of levitation* (625 gp), *headband of intellect* +6 (3,000 gp), *ring of counterspells* (333 gp), *ring of protection* +2 (666

gp), *scroll of limited wish* (314 gp), *scroll of greater teleport* (189 gp), *rod of silent metamagic* (916 gp), *strand of prayer beads* (3,816 gp), *Keak's spellbooks* (579 gp)

APL 14: Loot: 29 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 11,428 gp – +2 *spell storing longsword* (692 gp), *boots of levitation* (625 gp), *headband of intellect +6* (3,000 gp), *ring of counterspells* (333 gp), *ring of protection +2* (666 gp), *scroll of limited wish* (314 gp), *scroll of greater teleport* (189 gp), *rod of silent metamagic* (916 gp), *strand of prayer beads* (3,816 gp), *Keak's spellbooks* (579 gp), large +1 *chain shirt* (112 gp), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp), *potion of haste* (62 gp), *potion of heroism* (62 gp).

APL 16: Loot: 59 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 11,726 gp – +2 *spell storing longsword* (692 gp), *boots of levitation* (625 gp), *headband of intellect +6* (3,000 gp), *ring of counterspells* (333 gp), *ring of protection +2* (666 gp), *scroll of limited wish* (314 gp), *scroll of greater teleport* (189 gp), *rod of silent metamagic* (916 gp), *strand of prayer beads* (3,816 gp), *Keak's spellbooks* (579 gp), large +1 *chain shirt* (2 @ 112 gp each), *potion of cure serious wounds* (2 @ 62 gp each), *potion of haste* (2 @ 62 gp each), *potion of heroism* (2 @ 62 gp each).

Total Possible Treasure

APL 10: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 14,271 gp
Total: 1,150 gp (13,121 gp over the cap)

APL 12: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 14,271 gp
Total: 1,650 gp (12,621 gp over the cap)

APL 14: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 14,271 gp
Total: 3,300 gp (10,971 gp over the cap)

APL 16: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 14,271 gp
Total: 4,950 gp (9,321 gp over the cap)

Special

Medal of Bravery: Baroness Kalinstren has awarded you this medal for destroying the cadaver collectors of Iuz. You gain Iuz's Border States metaregional access to one of the following: *monk's belt*, *standard of courage*^{CW}, *lesser beautiful staff*^{ED}, *rod of lesser sculpting metamagic*^{CA}, *songblade*^{CAd}, or *wand of golemstrike*^{CAd}.

Medal of Valor: Baroness Kalinstren has awarded you this medal for defeating the attackers of Rhodalf's Hill. You gain one Influence Point with the Kalinstren family and Iuz's Border States metaregional access to one of the following: *amulet of mighty fists +2*, *standard of heroism*^{CW}, *true belief staff*^{ED}, *ring of arcane might*^{CA}, *lute of the wandering minstrel*^{FA}, or *guerilla spear*^{CAd}.

Enmity of the Boneshadow: You have interfered in the assassination attempt upon the Shade so you are now being hunted. From now on, at the beginning of each

metaregional adventure taking place within the Iuz's Border States metaregion, you must roll a DC 27 Will save. Failure means that all of your upkeep costs for this adventure are quadrupled as you find it increasingly difficult to find places to stay and must pay off numerous individuals to keep them from mentioning your name. Additionally, you find it difficult to keep a low profile as there always seems to be someone watching you. You suffer a -4 circumstance penalty to Hide and Move Silently checks for this adventure. Characters immune to *scrying* are immune to these effects, but it cannot be prevented in any other way. This plot point may have additional consequences in the future.

Midnight Cup Token: You have saved the village of Rhodalf's Hill and prevented the Shade's assassination by the Boneshadow. This allows you to ignore the perquisites of the 1st (lowest) tier when you join the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight metaregional meta-organization.

Items for the Adventure Record

APLs 10 & 12:

- *Adamantine arrows* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Oil of ghost touch armor* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)
- *Potion of conviction +2* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)
- *Potion of scent* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)
- *Potion of shadow mask* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)
- *Scroll of brilliant aura* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)
- *Scroll of hail of stone* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)
- *Scroll of burning sword* (Adventure, Spell Compendium)

APLs 14 & 16 (all of APLs 10 & 12 plus the following):

- *Boots of speed* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Lesser bracers of archery* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Pearl of power (1st)* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Ring of improved swimming* (Adventure, DMG)
- *+2 studded leather armor* (Adventure, DMG)

Special (Optional AR)

Blessing of Iuz: You may call upon Iuz to re-roll one failed saving throw as an immediate action. Using this favor is an evil act. Usable once only.

Medal of Honor: For slaying the Boneshadow Keak, you receive a +2 Great Renown bonus to your Leadership score and Iuz's Border States metaregional access to one of the following: *amulet of mighty fists* +4, *standard of no retreat*^{CW}, *greater beautiful staff*^{ED}, *ring of spell-battle*^{CA}, *bow of songs*^{CAd}, or *dagger of defense*^{CAd}.

A Proven Hero: You bravely faced the Boneshadow Keak and relocated the Shade. This satisfies all favor and time requirements for the 2nd tier of membership in the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight metaregional meta-organization.

A Legendary Hero: You have decisively defeated the nefarious Boneshadow Keak. This satisfies all favor and time requirements for the 3rd tier of membership in the Drinkers of the Cup of Midnight metaregional meta-organization.

Keak's Lesser Spellbook: 0—*arcane mark, light, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st—*buzzing bee**, *charm person, magic missile, nerveskitter**, *ray of enfeeblement, shield, unseen servant*; 2nd—*false life, invisibility, resist energy, spider climb, Tasha's hideous laughter*; 3rd—*chain missile**, *deeper darkvision**, *displacement, fireball, fly, greater mage armor**, *greater magic weapon, heroism, lightning bolt*; 4th—*charm monster, confusion, dimension door, Evard's black tentacles, greater invisibility, greater resistance**, *overland flight, spell enhancer**; Price: 4,000 gp.

Keak's Greater Spellbook: 5th—*dominate person, dragonsight**, *greater blink**, *reciprocal gyre**; 6th—*acid storm**, *disintegrate, greater dispel magic*; 7th—*limited wish, mass hold person, radiant assault**; Price: 2,950 gp.

*This spell is detailed in the *Spell Compendium*.

Wraithblade: When this +1 *ghost touch wounding dagger* is used in combat it appears almost insubstantial in the wielder's hand. Once per day, as a swift action, the wielder can make attacks with a *wraithblade* as touch attacks, although force effects grant the full armor bonus against a *wraithblade*. *Ghost touch* armor and shields also use their full armor bonus against attacks from a *wraithblade*. This effect lasts for one round.

Strong conjuration; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *ghost touch weapon*; Price 50,302 gp.

Keak's items are marked with a *. The Shade's items are marked with a †.

APLs 10 & 12:

- *Boots of big stepping*† (Adventure, Miniatures Handbook)
- *Boots of levitation** (Adventure, DMG)
- *Bracers of armor* +5† (Adventure, DMG)
- *Choker of eloquence, greater*† (Adventure, Complete Adventurer)
- *Gloves of dexterity* +6† (Adventure, DMG)
- *Headband of intellect* +6* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Keak's spellbooks** (Adventure, see above)
- *Potion of shield of faith* +5† (Adventure, DMG)
- *+1 returning dagger*† (Adventure, DMG)
- *Ring of counterspells** (Adventure, DMG)
- *Ring of protection* +2*† (Adventure, DMG)
- *Rod of silent metamagic** (Adventure, DMG)
- *Scroll of greater teleport** (Adventure, DMG)
- *Scroll of limited wish** (Adventure, DMG)
- *+2 spell storing longsword** (Adventure, DMG)
- *Strand of prayer beads** (Adventure, DMG)
- *Stylus of the masterful hand*† (Adventure, Complete Adventurer)
- *Wraithblade*† (Adventure, see above)

APLs 14 & 16 (all of APLs 10 & 12 plus the following):

- Large +1 *chain shirt* (Adventure, DMG)
- Large masterwork spiked chain (Adventure, DMG)

Items for the Optional Adventure Record

Appendix One – APL 10 & 12

damage to such opponents by grinding them into its back spikes with a successful grapple check once it has them grappled.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a cadaver collector must hit with a slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to impale the following round.

Trample (Ex): Reflex DC 28 half. The save DC is Strength-based.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): Like golems, cadaver collectors are especially resilient to magic. However this resilience takes a slightly different form in the cadaver collector.

A cadaver collector is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, spells of 3rd level or lower that target a cadaver collector automatically rebound back at the caster as if the collector were under the effects of an unbeatable *spell turning* effect. This effect cannot be dispelled or suppressed, except against spells that deal electricity damage (see below). Spells that deal rust damage or alter stone penetrate the immunity to magic. Other spells and effects function differently against the creature, see below.

A magical attack that deals sonic damage slows a cadaver collector (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw. Sonic spells of 3rd level or lower are absorbed by the collector and not reflected.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage is absorbed rather than reflected. Such an attack breaks any *slow* effect on the collector and heals 1d6 points of damage for every 6 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the collector to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points.

A cadaver collector is affected normally by rust attacks. In addition, magical attacks that alter stone, such as *transmute rock to mud*, deal 1d6 points of damage per spell level to the cadaver collector.

Encounter Three & Four

Gnoll Priest: Male gnoll Clr9 (Erythnul); CR 10; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 11d8+33; hp 85; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 27, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (-1 Dex, +10 +2 *full plate*, +4 +2 *heavy steel shield*, +1 natural, +3 *shield of faith* or +1 *ring of protection* +1); BAB/Grp +7/+10; Atk +14 melee (1d8+5, +2 *morningstar*) or +8 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+5, +2 *morningstar*); SA rebuke undead

Encounter Two

Cadaver Collector: CR 12; Large construct; HD 17d10+30; hp 123; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 29 (-1 Dex, +20 natural); BAB/Grp: +12/+26; Atk +22 melee (4d8+10, slam); Full Atk +22/+22 melee (4d8+10, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, impale, improved grab, trample 4d8+15; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 31, Dex 10, Con —, Int 5, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Listen +15, Spot +15; Alertness, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam).

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, paralyzing gas, Reflex DC 18 negates. The duration of the paralysis is 1 minute, or until the paralyzed creature takes lethal damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Impale (Ex): If a cadaver collector has successfully grappled a Medium or smaller creature, it can attempt to impale the creature on its back spikes by making a successful grapple check. Doing so is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the collector successfully impales a creature, the creature takes 4d8+15 points of damage and is considered pinned. Each round, the creature takes another 2d8 points of damage as the movement of the cadaver collector causes additional pain to the impaled creature.

The creature cannot break free unless it makes a DC 28 Strength check. Success indicates the creature is free of the spike but takes an additional 2d8 points of damage in the process. Failure means the creature takes 4d8 points of damage and remains pinned in place. An ally can try to free an impaled creature with a DC 20 Strength check.

Once a cadaver collector has a creature or creatures impaled on its back spikes, it is no longer considered to be in a grapple and can attack other opponents without penalty. It cannot use its slam attacks against impaled opponents. Creatures that get free of a cadaver collector become its immediate and most urgent targets. It typically pursues such creatures exclusively if it has any chance of catching and impaling them again.

A cadaver collector's back spikes can hold up to 4 Medium creatures, 16 Small creatures, or 64 Tiny creatures. Creatures smaller than Tiny are too miniscule to be impaled on the collector's back spikes, although the collector can still deal 4d8+15 points of

12/day; SQ darkvision 60 ft., resistance to fire 20, immunity to *enervation* and *fireball*; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +14 (+15 vs. fear); Str 17, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 21, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Listen +10; Maximize Spell, Divine Metamagic (Maximize Spell)*, Extra Turning (2), Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Languages: Gnoll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/6/6/5/3/2): 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—~~*bless*~~, ~~*blessed aim*~~*, ~~*conviction*~~*, *cure light wounds*, ~~*disguise self*~~^p, ~~*shield of faith*~~; 2nd—*invisibility*^p, ~~*owl's wisdom*~~, ~~*resist energy*~~, *silence*, *sound burst* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon* (+12/+7, 1d8+3); 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, ~~*magic vestment*~~^p (2), *prayer*, *wind wall*; 4th—*divine power*^p, ~~*greater magic weapon*~~, ~~*spell immunity*~~; 5th—*flame strike*^p (2) (DC 20).

^pDomain spell. **Domains:** Trickery (add Bluff, Disguise, and Hide to class skills), War (Weapon Focus with deity's weapon).

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, ring of protection +1, cloak of charisma +2, scroll of brilliant aura*, mwk morningstar, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

Active Spells: *bless* (CL 9), *blessed aim* (CL 9), *conviction* (CL 9), *disguise self* (CL 9), *greater magic weapon* (CL 9; morningstar), *magic vestment* (CL 9; armor), *magic vestment* (CL 9; shield), *owl's wisdom* (CL 9), *resist energy* (fire) (CL 9), *shield of faith* (CL 9), *spell immunity* (*enervation* and *fireball*) (CL 9).

Gnoll Priest (powered-down suite): AC 23, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (-1 Dex, +9 +1 full plate, +3 +1 heavy steel shield, +1 natural, +1 ring of protection +1); Atk +12 melee (1d8+3, mwk morningstar) or +6 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+3, mwk morningstar); SV Fort +12, Ref +2, Will +9; Wis 17.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8.

Cleric Spells Prepared: 2nd—*sound burst* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon* (+10/+5, 1d8+3); 5th—*flame strike*^p (2) (DC 18).

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in *Appendix Four*.

Gnoll Mercenary: Male gnoll Rgr7; CR 8; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 9d8+27; hp 75; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+3 Dex, +4 +1 studded leather armor, +1 natural); BAB/Grp +8/+12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 battleaxe) or +14 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 composite longbow) or +10 ranged (2d8+10/x3, +1 composite longbow); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 battleaxe) or +14/+9 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 composite longbow) or +12/+12/+7

ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 composite longbow); SQ animal companion (ape), darkvision 60 ft., favored enemy (human) +4 (+7 damage), favored enemy (elf) +2 (+5 damage), woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +3 (+4 vs. fear); Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +25, Listen +6, Move Silently +13, Spot +7, Survival +8; Endurance^B, Improved Favored Enemy*, Manyshot^B, Natural Bond*, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot^B, Track^B.

Languages: Gnoll.

Spells Prepared (2): 1st—~~*camouflage*~~*, *guided shot**.

Possessions: +1 studded leather armor, +1 battleaxe, +1 composite longbow (+4 Str bonus), 40 normal arrows, 20 cold iron arrows, 20 silver arrows, 10 adamantite arrows, *oil of ghost touch armor**, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of scent**.

Active Spells: *bless* (CL 9), *blessed aim** (CL 9), *camouflage** (CL 3).

Gnoll Mercenary (powered-down suite): Atk +13 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 battleaxe) or +12 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 composite longbow) or +8 ranged (2d8+10/x3, +1 composite longbow); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 battleaxe) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 composite longbow) or +10/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 composite longbow); Will +3.

Skills and Feats: Hide +15.

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in *Appendix Four*.

Encounter Two

Advanced Cadaver Collector: CR 16; Large construct; HD 33d10+30; hp 211; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 34, touch 9, flat-footed 34 (-1 Dex, +25 natural); BAB/Grp: +24/+36; Atk +36 melee (4d8+12, slam); Full Atk +36/+36 melee (4d8+12, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, impale, improved grab, trample 4d8+18; SQ construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60ft., immunity to magic, low-light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 35, Dex 10, Con —, Int 5, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Listen +23, Spot +23; Alertness, Awesome Blow, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor (5), Improved Natural Attack (slam), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam).

Breath Weapon (Su): 30-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, paralyzing gas, Reflex DC 26 negates. The duration of the paralysis is 1 minute, or until the paralyzed creature takes lethal damage. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Impale (Ex): If a cadaver collector has successfully grappled a Medium or smaller creature, it can attempt to impale the creature on its back spikes by making a successful grapple check. Doing so is a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the collector successfully impales a creature, the creature takes 4d8+18 points of damage and is considered pinned. Each round, the creature takes another 2d8 points of damage as the movement of the cadaver collector causes additional pain to the impaled creature.

The creature cannot break free unless it makes a DC 28 Strength check. Success indicates the creature is free of the spike but takes an additional 2d8 points of damage in the process. Failure means the creature takes 4d8 points of damage and remains pinned in place. An ally can try to free an impaled creature with a DC 20 Strength check.

Once a cadaver collector has a creature or creatures impaled on its back spikes, it is no longer considered to be in a grapple and can attack other opponents without penalty. It cannot use its slam attacks against impaled opponents. Creatures that get free of a cadaver collector become its immediate and most urgent targets. It typically pursues such creatures exclusively if it has any chance of catching and impaling them again.

A cadaver collector's back spikes can hold up to 4 Medium creatures, 16 Small creatures, or 64 Tiny creatures. Creatures smaller than Tiny are too miniscule to be impaled on the collector's back spikes,

Appendix Two – APL 14 & 16

although the collector can still deal 4d8+15 points of damage to such opponents by grinding them into its back spikes with a successful grapple check once it has them grappled.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a cadaver collector must hit with a slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to impale the following round.

Trample (Ex): Reflex DC 38 half. The save DC is Strength-based.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): Like golems, cadaver collectors are especially resilient to magic. However this resilience takes a slightly different form in the cadaver collector.

A cadaver collector is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, spells of 3rd level or lower that target a cadaver collector automatically rebound back at the caster as if the collector were under the effects of an unbeatable *spell turning* effect. This effect cannot be dispelled or suppressed, except against spells that deal electricity damage (see below). Spells that deal rust damage or alter stone penetrate the immunity to magic. Other spells and effects function differently against the creature, see below.

A magical attack that deals sonic damage slows a cadaver collector (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw. Sonic spells of 3rd level or lower are absorbed by the collector and not reflected.

A magical attack that deals electricity damage is absorbed rather than reflected. Such an attack breaks any *slow* effect on the collector and heals 1d6 points of damage for every 6 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the collector to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points.

A cadaver collector is affected normally by rust attacks. In addition, magical attacks that alter stone, such as *transmute rock to mud*, deal 1d6 points of damage per spell level to the cadaver collector.

Encounter Three & Four

Gnoll Priest: Male gnoll Clr13 (Erythnul); CR 14; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 15d8+75; hp 145 (+10 temporary); Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 31, touch 14, flat-footed 31 (+11 +3 *full plate*, +5 +3 *heavy steel shield*, +1 natural, +4 *shield of faith* or +1 *ring of protection* +1); BAB/Grp +10/+13; Atk +18 melee (1d8+6, +3 *morningstar*) or +11 ranged (1d8/19-20, light

crossbow); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (1d8+6, +3 *morningstar*); SA rebuke undead 16/day; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to *enervation*, fear, *fireball*, *lightning bolt* and poison, resistance to fire 30, spell resistance 25; AL CE; SV Fort +23, Ref +11, Will +23; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 22, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Listen +11; Maximize Spell, Divine Metamagic (Maximize Spell)*, Extra Turning (3), Quicken Spell, Weapon Focus (*morningstar*).

Languages: Gnoll.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/8/7/6/6/5/3/2): 0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, 1st—~~*bless*~~, ~~*blessed aim*~~^{*}, ~~*conviction*~~^{*}, *cure light wounds* (2), ~~*disguise self*~~^p, ~~*entropic shield*~~, ~~*shield of faith*~~, 2nd—~~*bear's endurance*~~, *invisibility*^p, ~~*owl's wisdom*~~, ~~*resist energy*~~, *silence*, *sound burst* (DC 18), *spiritual weapon* (+16/+11, 1d8+4); 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, ~~*magic vestment*~~^p (2), *prayer*, *wind wall*, 4th—*cure critical wounds*, *divine power*^p, ~~*freedom of movement*~~, ~~*greater magic weapon*~~, ~~*greater resistance*~~^{*}, ~~*spell immunity*~~, 5th—*flame strike*^p (2) (DC 21), quickened *cure light wounds* (2), ~~*spell resistance*~~, 6th—*blade barrier*^p (DC 22), ~~*heroes' feast*~~, quickened *sound burst* (DC 18); 7th—~~*screen*~~^p (DC 23), quickened *cure serious wounds*.

^pDomain spell. **Domains:** Trickery (add Bluff, Disguise, and Hide to class skills), War (Weapon Focus with deity's weapon).

Possessions: +1 *full plate*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, *ring of protection* +1, *cloak of charisma* +2, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *periapt of wisdom* +2, *boots of speed*, *pearl of power* (1st), *scroll of brilliant aura*^{*}, +1 *morningstar*, light crossbow, 10 bolts.

Active Spells: *bear's endurance* (CL 13), *bless* (CL 13), *blessed aim*^{*} (CL 13), *conviction* (CL 13), *disguise self* (CL 13), *entropic shield* (CL 13), *freedom of movement* (CL 13), *greater magic weapon* (CL 13; *morningstar*), *greater resistance* (CL 13), *heroes' feast* (CL 13), *magic vestment* (CL 13; armor), *magic vestment* (CL 13; shield), *owl's wisdom* (CL 13), *resist energy* (fire) (CL 13), *shield of faith* (CL 13), *spell immunity* (*enervation*, *fireball*, and *lightning bolt*) (CL 13), *spell resistance* (CL 13).

Gnoll Priest (powered-down suite): hp 119; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+9 +1 *full plate*, +3 +1 *heavy steel shield*, +1 natural, +1 *ring of protection* +1); Atk +15 melee (1d8+4, +1 *morningstar*) or +9 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+4, +1 *morningstar*); SV Fort +17, Ref +7, Will +18; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 20, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Listen +10.

Cleric Spells Prepared: 2nd—*sound burst* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon* (+15/+10, 1d8+4); 5th—*flame strike*^p (2) (DC 20); 6th—*blade barrier*^p (DC 21), quickened *sound burst* (DC 17); 7th—~~*screen*~~^p (DC 22).

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in Appendix Four.

Gnoll Mercenary: Male gnoll Rgr11; CR 12; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 13d8+39; hp 107 (+10 temporary); Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+4 Dex, +5 +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 natural); BAB/Grp +12/+16; Atk +18 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 *battleaxe*) or +19 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*) or +15 ranged (3d8+15/x3, +1 *composite longbow*); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 *battleaxe*) or +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*) or +17/+17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*); SQ animal companion (dire wolf), darkvision 60 ft., evasion, favored enemy (human) +4 (+7 damage), favored enemy (elf) +4 (+7 damage), favored enemy (dwarf) +2 (+5 damage), immunity to fear and poison, woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +4 (+5 vs. fear); Str 18, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +29, Listen +9, Move Silently +19, Spot +10, Survival +12; Endurance^B, Improved Favored Enemy^{*}, Improved Precise Shot^B, Manyshot^B, Natural Bond^{*}, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot^B, Track^B, Woodland Archer^{B*}.

Languages: Gnoll.

Spells Prepared (2/1): 1st—~~*camouflage*~~^{*}, *guided shot*^{*}; 2nd—*swift haste*^{*}.

Possessions: +2 *studded leather armor*, +1 *battleaxe*, +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus), *gloves of dexterity* +2, *lesser bracers of archery*, *brooch of shielding*, 40 normal arrows, 20 cold iron arrows, 20 silver arrows, 10 adamantite arrows, *oil of ghost touch armor*^{*}, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of scent*^{*}.

Active Spells: *bless* (CL 13), *blessed aim*^{*} (CL 13), *camouflage*^{*} (CL 5), *heroes' feast* (CL 13).

Gnoll Mercenary (powered-down suite): hp 107; Atk +17 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 *battleaxe*) or +17 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*) or +13 ranged (3d8+15/x3, +1 *composite longbow*); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+7/x3, +1 *battleaxe*) or +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*) or +15/+15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+5/x3, +1 *composite longbow*); Will +4.

Skills and Feats: Hide +19.

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in Appendix Four.

Appendix Three – NPCs

Encounter One

Keak: Male elf (grey) Ftr3/Wiz12/Mindbender2; CR 17; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 3d10+12 plus 14d4+56; hp 129 (+15 temporary); Init +7; Spd 30 ft. or fly 40 ft. (average); AC 25, touch 19, flat-footed 18 (+7 Dex, +6 *greater mage armor*, +2 *ring of protection* +2); BAB/Grp +10/+10; Atk +15 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +5 *spell storing longsword*) or +10 melee (spell) or +17 ranged (spell); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +5 *spell storing longsword*); SA *push the weak mind* 1/day; SQ blindsense 85 ft., darkvision 170 ft., elf racial traits, snake familiar, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE (appears N to divination); SV Fort +20, Ref +18, Will +20; Str 10, Dex 24*, Con 18*, Int 35*, Wis 14, Cha 15.

*Keak has a +5 inherent bonus to this ability score.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +25, Concentration +24, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +32, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +22, Knowledge (the planes) +29, Knowledge (religion) +29, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +34; Craft Contingent Spell*, Extend Spell^B, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Practiced Spellcaster*, Quicken Spell^B, Scribe Scroll^B, Spell Focus (enchantment), Sudden Empower*, Sudden Maximize*.

Languages: Common, Elven, Ancient Suloise, Flan, Giant, Gnomish, Old Oeridian.

Telepathy (Su): Keak can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

Push the Weak Mind (Sp): Keak can influence the actions of a living creature of Large or smaller size once per day. This ability functions like a *suggestion* spell, except that the range is 100 feet and the duration is 5 hours plus 1 hour per class level. He can communicate the suggested course of action telepathically if he chooses, which allows him to use the effect regardless of the target's language. A successful Will save (DC 23) negates this effect.

Skill Boost (Ex): Keak is a consummate student of manipulation, be it magical or mundane. He adds 1/2 his mindbender class level as a competence bonus on Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks. This has already been figured into his skills above.

Spells Prepared (4/7/7/7/7/5/4/3; caster level 17th): 0—*arcane mark*, *light*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*; 1st—*charm person* (DC 25), *magic missile* (2), *nerveskitter**, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*invisibility*, *resist energy* (4), *spider climb*, *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 26); 3rd—*chain missile** (2), *displacement*, *fireball* (DC 25), *fly*,

heroism, *lightning bolt* (DC 25); 4th—*charm monster* (DC 28), *confusion* (DC 28), *dimension door* (2), *greater invisibility*, *spell enhancer** (2); 5th—*dominate person* (DC 29), extended *Evard's black tentacles*, *greater blink**, quickened *buzzing bee** (DC 23), *reciprocal gyre** (DC 27); 6th—*acid storm** (DC 28), *disintegrate* (DC 28), *greater dispel magic* (2); 7th—*mass hold person* (DC 31), quickened *chain missile**, *radiant assault** (DC 29).

Possessions: +2 (+5 with *greater magic weapon*) *spell storing longsword* (hold person), *boots of levitation*, *headband of intellect* +6, *ring of counterspells* (*greater dispel magic*), *ring of protection* +2, *scroll of limited wish*, *scroll of greater teleport* (2), *scroll of teleportation circle*, *silent metamagic rod*, *strand of prayer beads* (*healing*, *karma*, *smiting*), *blood skull pendant*.

Physical Description: This tall skinny grey elf appears high-strung and twitchy. His eyes are cold and his countenance is calculating, as if he is always pondering some deep mystery or strategy.

Active Spells: extended *contingency* (CL 21; if Keak is attacked, he is the target of an *acid sheath** spell), extended *deeper darkvision** (CL 21), *detect magic* (CL 21; permanent), extended *dragonsight** (CL 21), extended *false life* (CL 21), extended *greater mage armor** (CL 21), extended *greater magic weapon* (CL 21), *greater arcane sight* (permanent; CL 21), extended *overland flight* (CL 21), *see invisibility* (CL 21; permanent), *superior resistance** (CL 21; permanent), *undetectable alignment* (CL 21; permanent).

Contingent Spells: *bear's endurance* (CL 3; if Keak is attacked), *blacklight** (CL 5; if Keak is attacked, *blacklight* targeted on Keak), *cat's grace* (CL 3; if Keak is attacked), *cure critical wounds* (CL 17; if Keak's hit points fall below half his total), *death ward* (CL 7; if Keak is subjected to energy drain), *duelward** (CL 10; if Keak is attacked), *freedom of movement* (CL 7; if Keak is grappled), *greater dispel magic* (CL 11; if Keak's *ring of counterspells* loses its stored spell, *greater dispel magic* is cast into it), *heal* (CL 14; if Keak falls unconscious), *mirror image* (CL 15; if Keak is attacked), *nondetection* (CL 17; if Keak is the target of a *scrying* effect), *protection from energy* (CL 10; if Keak takes energy damage, protects against that energy), *restoration* (CL 7; if Keak suffers ability drain), *shield* (CL 3; if Keak is attacked), *silence* (CL 5; if Keak is in the area of *holy word*, *silence* centered on his square), *silence* (CL 5; if Keak is in the area of *dictum*, *silence* centered on his square), *greater teleport* (CL 17; if Keak is killed, his remains *teleport* to Dorakaa).

Keak (powered-up suite): HD 3d10+18 plus 14d4+84; hp 163 (+15 temporary); Init +14; AC 31, touch 21, flat-footed 22 [+9 Dex, +6 *greater mage armor*, +2 *ring of protection* +2, +4 *shield*]; SQ 1d4+5 *mirror images*; SV Fort +22, Ref +18; Dex 28, Con 22.

Skills: Concentration +26, Spellcraft +34 (+38 to identify spells being cast).

Additional Active Spells: *acid sheath** (CL 21), *bear's endurance* (CL 3), *blacklight** (CL 5), *cat's grace* (CL 3), *duelward** (CL 10), *mirror image* (CL 15), *nerveskitter** (CL 17), *shield* (CL 3).

Keak (bonus powered-up suite): HD 3d10+18 plus 14d4+84; hp 163 (+15 temporary); Init +14; Spd climb 20 ft.; AC 31, touch 21, flat-footed 22 [+9 Dex, +6 *greater mage armor*, +2 *ring of protection* +2, +4 *shield*]; Atk +17 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +5 *spell storing longsword*) or +12 melee (spell) or +19 ranged (spell); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +5 *spell storing longsword*); SQ *displacement*, 1d4+5 *mirror images*, resistance to acid, cold, electricity and fire 30; SV Fort +24, Ref +20, Will +22; Dex 28, Con 22.

Skills: Concentration +28, Spellcraft +36 (+40 to identify spells being cast).

Additional Active Spells: *acid sheath** (CL 21), *bear's endurance* (CL 3), *blacklight** (CL 5), *cat's grace* (CL 3), *displacement* (CL 17), *duelward** (CL 10), *heroism* (CL 17), *mirror image* (CL 15), *nerveskitter** (CL 17), *resist energy (acid)* (CL 17), *resist energy (cold)* (CL 17), *resist energy (electricity)* (CL 17), *resist energy (fire)* (CL 17), *spider climb* (CL 17), *shield* (CL 3).

Keak (powered-down suite): hp 129; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+7 Dex, +2 *ring of protection* +2); Atk +12 melee (1d8+2/19-20, +2 *spell storing longsword*); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+2/19-20, +2 *spell storing longsword*); AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +14.

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in *Appendix Four*.

Encounter Five

The	Shade:	Female	shyft
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Rog5/Spymaster7/Shadowdancer3; CR 16; Medium outsider (native); HD 12d6+12 plus 3d8+3; hp 80; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 21, flat-footed 17 (+9 Dex, +5 *bracers of armor* +5, +2 *ring of protection* +2); BAB/Grp +10/+10; Atk +20 melee (1d4 plus 1 Con/19-20, *wraithblade*) or +20 ranged (1d4/19-20, +1 *returning dagger*); Full Atk +20/+15 melee (1d4 plus 1 Con/19-20, *wraithblade*) or +18/+13 melee (1d4 plus 1 Con/19-20, *wraithblade*) and +18 melee (1d4/19-20, +1 *returning dagger*); SA sneak attack +5d6; SQ cover identity, darkvision 60 ft., deep cover, dispel scrying,

ethereal jaunt, evasion, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, improved uncanny dodge, *magic aura*, quick change, resist cold 5, fire 5, and sonic 5, scrying defense, *shadow illusion*, slippery mind, summon shadow, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, undetectable alignment; AL CN; SV Fort +8, Ref +24, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 28, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Bluff +32, Diplomacy +19, Disguise +19 (+21 in character, +23 under cover identity), Forgery +22, Gather Information +18 (+20 under cover identity), Hide +31, Intimidate +3, Jump +1, Knowledge (local: Iuz's Border States) +17, Listen +6, Move Silently +31, Perform (dance) +6, Perform (sing) +11, Sense Motive +7, Sleight of Hand +29, Spot +5, Tumble +27; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Bluff), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven.

Cover Identity (Ex): The Shade has three cover identities. While operating in one of these cover identities, she gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks and a +2 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Gather Information checks.

Cover identities do not in themselves provide the Shade with additional skills, proficiencies, or class features that others might expect of the professions pretended. Thus, a spymaster must be careful to choose identities that can withstand ordinary scrutiny.

Darkvision (Su): The Shade can see in the dark as though she were permanently under the effect of a *darkvision* spell (note that as an outsider, this ability is fairly irrelevant for her).

Deep Cover (Ex): The Shade is able to quiet her mind and completely immerse herself in her cover identity. While she operates under deep cover, divination spells detect only information appropriate to her cover identity; they reveal nothing relating to her spymaster persona.

Dispel Scrying (Su): The Shade can dispel a scrying sensor as if casting a targeted *greater dispel magic*. Her caster level is 17th. She can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + her Intelligence modifier (usually 5/day).

Ethereal Jaunt (Sp): Once per day, the Shade can make an *ethereal jaunt* as if by a cleric of 15th level.

Hide in Plain Sight (Su): The Shade can use the Hide skill, even while being observed. As long as she is within 10 feet of some sort of shadow, she can hide herself from view in the open without anything to actually hide behind. She cannot, however, hide in her own shadow.

Magic Aura (Sp): The Shade can use *Nystul's magic aura* at will as a 7th level caster. She usually uses this to mask her own magic items from detection.

Quick Change (Ex): The Shade can don a disguise in one-tenth the normal time (1d3 minutes) and don or remove armor in one-half the normal time.

Scrying Defense (Ex): The Shade adds her class level (7th) to Will saves against divination (scrying) spells, as well as to Spot checks made to notice sensors created by such spells.

Shadow Illusion (Sp): The Shade can create visual illusions from surrounding shadows. This ability's effect is identical to that of the arcane spell *silent image* and may be employed once per day.

Slippery Mind (Ex): The Shade has a second chance to wriggle free from any enchantment spells and effects. See the rogue class feature, page 51 of the *Player's Handbook*.

Summon Shadow (Su): The Shade can summon a shadow, an undead shade (see the *Monster Manual* for the shadow's statistics). Unlike a normal shadow, his shadow's alignment matches that of the Shade (Chaotic Neutral), and the creature cannot create spawn. The summoned shadow cannot be turned, rebuked, or commanded by any third party. This shadow serves as a companion to the Shade and can communicate intelligibly with her.

Undetectable Alignment (Ex): The web of different identities and agendas inside a spymaster's mind makes it impossible for others to detect her alignment by means of any form of divination. This ability functions like an *undetectable alignment* spell, except that it is always active.

Skills: Shyfts have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Possessions: *bracers of armor +5, ring of protection +2, wraithblade*, +1 returning dagger, boots of big stepping*, gloves of dexterity +6, greater choker of eloquence*, stylus of the masterful hand*, potion of barkskin +3, potion of cure light wounds, potion of cure serious wounds (2), potion of haste, potion of shield of faith +5.*

Active Spells: *greater resistance** (CL 18; permanent), *Rary's telepathic bond* (CL 18; permanent; bonded with wizard ally).

Contingent Spells: *break enchantment* (CL 18; if the Shade is turned to stone), *break enchantment* (CL 18; if the Shade fails her second saving throw against a spell of the enchantment school), *feather fall* (CL 1; if the Shade falls more than 10 feet), *haste* (CL 10; if the Shade is attacked), *protection from energy* (CL 10; if the Shade takes damage from an energy attack), *remove blindness/deafness* (CL 5; if the Shade is blinded), *see invisibility* (CL 3; if the Shade is attacked by an invisible foe), *water breathing* (CL 5; if the Shade has been immersed in water more than 1 minute).

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in *Appendix Four*.

V'lordd and Gassane'eizk: Male babau Bbn3/Exotic Weapon Master2; CR 15; Large outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri); HD 14d8+126 plus 2d10+18 plus 3d12+27; hp 264 each; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural armor, +5 +1 *chain shirt*); BA/G +19/+35; Atk +36 melee (2d6+23, +5 *spiked chain*); Full Atk +36/+31/+26/+21 melee (2d6+23, +5 *spiked chain*) or +30/+30 melee (1d8+12, 2 claws) and +25 melee (1d8+6, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with spiked chain); SA exotic reach, rage 1/day, sneak attack +2d6, spell-like abilities, stunning blow, *summon tanar'ri*, SQ damage reduction 10/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, protective slime, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, spell resistance 14, stunning fist 4/day (DC 20), telepathy 100 ft., trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +27, Ref +15, Will +15; Str 35, Dex 14, Con 28, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Climb +29, Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Disable Device +19, Disguise +24, Escape Artist +19, Hide +26, Listen +32, Move Silently +27, Open Lock +19, Search +27, Sleight of Hand +19, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Use Rope +2 (+4 with bindings); Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Stunning Fist, Weapon Focus (spiked chain).

Languages: Abyssal, Celestial, and Draconic.

Sneak Attack (Ex): A babau can make a sneak attack like a rogue, dealing an extra 2d6 points of damage whenever a foe is denied his or her Dexterity bonus, or when the babau is flanking.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*darkness, dispel magic, see invisibility, greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). Caster level 7th.

Protective Slime (Su): A slimy red jelly coats the babau's skin. Any weapon that touches it takes 1d8 points of acid damage from the corrosive goo, and the weapon's hardness does not reduce this damage. A magic weapon may attempt a DC 26 Reflex save to avoid taking this damage. A creature who strikes a babau with an unarmed attack, unarmed strike, touch spell, or natural weapon takes this damage as well but can negate the damage with a DC 26 Reflex save. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day a babau can attempt to summon 1 babau with a 40% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

Skills: Babaus have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Search checks.

Possessions: large *+1 chain shirt*, large mwk spiked chain (+5 with *greater magic weapon*), 4 javelins, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of haste*, *potion of heroism*.

Active Spells: extended *deeper darkvision** (CL 21), extended *greater magic weapon* (CL 21), extended *greater resistance** (CL 21), *see invisibility* (CL 7).

*New rules items. Details on this item appear in *Appendix Four*.

V'lordd and Gassane'eizk (rage suite): HD 14d8+154 plus 2d10+22 plus 3d12+33; hp 302 each; AC 24, touch 9, flat-footed 24 [-2 rage, 1 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural armor, +5 *+1 chain shirt*]; BA/G +19/+37; Atk +38 melee (2d6+26, *+5 spiked chain*); Full Atk +38/+33/+28/+23 melee (2d6+26, *+5 spiked chain*) or +32/+32 melee (1d8+14, 2 claws) and +27 melee (1d8+7, bite); SV Fort +32, Will +20; Str 39, Con 32.

Skills and Feats: Climb +31.

Protective Slime (Su): Reflex DC 28.

Appendix Four: New Rules

NEW FEATS

Craft Contingent Spell [Item Creation]

You know how to attach semipermanent spells to a creature and set them to activate under certain conditions.

Prerequisites: Caster level 11th.

Benefit: You can make contingent any spell that you know. Crafting a contingent spell takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price (spell level x caster level x 100 gp). To craft a contingent spell, you must spend 1/25 of this base price. Some spells incur extra costs in material components or XP (as noted in their descriptions), which must be paid when the contingent spell is created.

See Contingent Spells, below, for more information.

Source: *Complete Arcane*, p. 77

Divine Metamagic [Divine]

You can channel energy into some of your divine spells to make them more powerful.

Prerequisites: Ability to turn undead or rebuke undead.

Benefit: When you take this feat, choose a metamagic feat. This feat applies only to that metamagic feat. As a free action, you can take the energy from turning or rebuking undead and use it to apply a metamagic feat to spells that you know. You must spend one turn or rebuke attempt, plus an additional attempt for each level increase in the metamagic feat you're using. For example, Jozan the cleric could sacrifice three turn attempts to empower a *holy smite* he's casting. Because you're using positive or negative energy to augment your spells, the spell slot for the spell doesn't change.

Special: This feat may be taken multiple times. Each time you take this feat choose a different metamagic feat to which to apply it.

Source: *Complete Divine*, p. 80

Improved Favored Enemy [General]

You know how to hit your favored enemies where it hurts.

Prerequisites: Favored enemy ability, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: You deal an extra 3 points of damage to your favored enemies. This benefit stacks with any existing favored enemy bonus gained from another class.

Source: *Complete Warrior*, p. 101

Natural Bond

Your bond with your animal companion is exceptionally strong.

Prerequisites: Animal companion.

Benefit: Add three to your effective druid level for the purpose of determining the bonus Hit Dice, extra tricks, special abilities, and other bonuses that your animal companion receives (see page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*). This bonus can never make your effective druid level exceed your character level.

Source: *Complete Adventurer*, p. 111

Practiced Spellcaster

Chose a spellcasting class that you possess. Your spells cast from that class are more powerful.

Prerequisites: Spellcraft 4 ranks.

Benefit: Your caster level for the chosen spellcasting class increases by 4. This benefit can't increase your caster level to higher than your Hit Dice. However, even if you can't benefit from the full bonus immediately, if you later gain Hit Dice in levels of non-spellcasting classes, you might be able to apply the rest of the bonus.

For example, a human 5th-level sorcerer/3rd-level fighter who selects this feat would increase his sorcerer caster level from 5th to 8th since he has 8 Hit Dice). If he later gained a fighter level, he would gain the remainder of the bonus and his sorcerer caster level would become 9th (since he now has 9 Hit Dice).

A character with two or more spellcasting classes (such as a bard/sorcerer or a ranger/druid) must choose which class gains the feat's effect.

This feat does not affect your spells per day or spells known. It increases you caster level only, which would help you penetrate spell resistance and increase the duration and other effects of your spells.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you choose it, you must apply it to a different spellcasting class. For instance, a 4th-level cleric/5th-level wizard who had selected this feat twice would cast cleric spells as an 8th-level caster and wizard spells as a 9th-level caster.

Source: *Complete Arcane*, p. 82

Sudden Empower [Metamagic]

You can cast a spell to greater effect without special preparation.

Prerequisites: Any metamagic feat.

Benefit: Once per day, you can apply the effect of the Empower Spell feat to any spell you cast without

increased the level of the spell or specially preparing it ahead of time. You can still use Empower Spell normally if you have it.

Source: *Complete Arcane*, p. 83

Sudden Maximize [Metamagic]

You can cast a spell to maximum effect without special preparation.

Prerequisites: Any metamagic feat.

Benefit: Once per day, you can apply the effect of the Maximize Spell feat to any spell you cast without increased the level of the spell or specially preparing it ahead of time. You can still use Maximize Spell normally if you have it.

Source: *Complete Arcane*, p. 83

Woodland Archer [Tactical]

You have honed your archery ability in the wilds of the forest.

Prerequisites: Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: The woodland archer feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers.

Adjust for Range: To use this maneuver, you must shoot a projectile weapon against a foe and miss. Subsequent shots you take against that foe this round gain a +4 bonus, because you're able to quickly adjust your aim to compensate.

Pierce the Foliage: To use this maneuver, you must hit a foe with a ranged attack despite the miss chance caused by concealment. Shots you take against that foe in the next round don't incur the miss chance because you're able to exactly duplicate your draw and aim.

Moving Sniper: To use this maneuver, you must succeed on a sniping attack (see the Hide skill description, page 76 of the *Player's Handbook*), both hitting your intended target and successfully hiding thereafter. If no one sees you, you can make a sniping attack again in the following round, taking a single move after your attack and before you hide (characters without this feat can only shoot and hide, not move as well). As long as you continue to hit the target and avoid detection from an enemy, you can make a sniping attack on the move each round.

Special: A fighter may select Woodland Archer as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Source: *Races of the Wild*, p. 155

CONTINGENT SPELLS

A contingent spell is a single-use, one-spell magical effect instilled within a specific willing creature. It doesn't take up space on the body or have a physical

form, and it remains inactive until triggered (similar to the effect created by a *contingency* spell). Once triggered, a contingent spell takes immediate effect upon the bearer (or is centered in the bearer's square if the spell affects an area). A character must have the Craft Contingent Spell feat (see above) to create contingent spells.

Triggers for contingent spells are usually events that happen to the bearer of the spell, and can include death, contracting disease, exposure to a breath weapon or to energy damage, falling, exposure to poison, exposure to a dangerous environment (trapped by fire, plunged underwater, and so forth), succumbing to sleep or fear effects, gaining negative levels, or being rendered helpless, deafened, or blinded.

The market price of a contingent spell is spell level x caster level x 100 gp. A contingent spell must be prepared in the presence of the person to bear it, and the bearer is subject to the same restrictions as the creator (unable to cast any other spells while the contingent spell is being prepared, must be present for 8 hours each day, and so on). Once assigned to a bearer, a contingent spell cannot be transferred to another creature although it can be destroyed (see below). A contingent spell is tied to the bearer's body, alive or dead, and stories circulate among adventurers of contingent spells remaining quiet for hundreds of years on a slain bearer's remains, only to suddenly activated when the proper trigger condition arises.

If the bearer of a contingent spell is the target of *dispel magic*, the contingent spell might be permanently dispelled (but not triggered), as if it were an active spell in effect on the target creature. In an *antimagic field*, contingent spell are temporarily suppressed as all other magic items are.

At any one time, a creature can bear a number of contingent spells equal to its Hit Dice. Attempts to apply additional contingent spells beyond this limit simply fail.

NEW SPELLS

Acid Sheath

Conjuration (Creation) [Acid]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 5

Components: V, S, M, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level

You crush the fire ants between your fingers and rub the smashed mixture over your exposed flesh. The

smashed ants liquefy, and the liquid covers your body in a thick, translucent sheath.

You enclose yourself in a fluid sheath of acid that does not harm you. You can breathe normally and cast spells while the acid sheath is present. Any creature striking you deals normal damage, but at the same time the attacker takes 2 points of acid damage per caster level (maximum 30 points). Reach weapons, such as longswords, do not endanger their users in this way. The acid sheath does not protect you against other attack forms, such as fire.

If you are in a grapple, other creatures in the grapple take acid damage once per round at the beginning of their turn.

Any spell you cast with the acid descriptor while the sheath surrounds you deals an extra 1 point of damage per die.

Material Component: A handful of fire ants (alive or dead).

Focus: A glass sculpture of a humanoid (worth 50 gp).

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 7

Acid Storm

Conjuration (Creation) [Acid]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: Cylinder (20 ft. radius, 20 ft. high)

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: No

A dark green cloud whirls into being before unleashing a shower of foul-smelling, yellow-green rain.

Acid rain deals 1d6 points of acid damage per caster level (maximum 15d6) to each creature in the area.

Material Component: A flask of acid (10 gp).

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 7

Blacklight

Evocation [Darkness]

Level: Darkness 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Area: A 20-ft.-radius emanation centered on a creature, object, or point in space

Duration: 1 round/level (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates or none (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes or no (object)

With a few short words of power, you draw the light from the surrounding area. Within just a few seconds, the light dims to utter darkness.

You create an area of total darkness. The darkness is impenetrable to normal vision and darkvision, but you can see normally within the blacklit area. Creatures outside the spell's area, even you, cannot see through it.

You can cast the spell on a point in space, but the effect is stationary unless you cast it on a mobile object. You can cast the spell on a creature, and the effect then radiates from the creature and moves as it moves. Unattended objects and points in space do not get saving throws or benefit from spell resistance.

Blacklight counters or dispels any light spell of equal or lower level, such as *daylight*.

Material Component: A piece of coal and the dried eyeball of any creature.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 30

Blessed Aim

Divination

Level: Blackguard 1, cleric 1, paladin 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 50 ft.

Area: 50-ft.-radius spread centered on you

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

With the blessing of your deity, you bolster your allies' aim with an exhortation.

This spell grants your allies within the spread a +2 morale bonus on ranged attack rolls.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 31

Blink, Greater

Transmutation

Level: Bard 5, Celerity 8, sorcerer/wizard 5

An immaterial fog descends over your eyes as you complete the spell. You perceive the closeness of a parallel, ethereal reality, and you know that you can pass freely between that world and the one upon which you stand.

This spell functions like *blink* (PH 206), except that you have control over the timing of your "blinking"

back and forth between the Ethereal Plane and the Material Plane. You can also ready an action to blink away from any physical or magical attack. The attack misses automatically unless it also affects ethereal creatures (as a force effect does). While blinking, you have no chance of interfering with your own attacks or your own spells. When moving through solid objects, you do not risk materializing inside one unless you actually end your movement there, in which case you materialize and are shunted off to the nearest open space, taking 1d6 points of damage per 5 feet traveled in this manner.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 32

Brilliant Aura

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 8, druid 8, sorcerer/wizard 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Weapons carried by one creature/2 levels, no two of which are more than 30 ft. apart

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

Taking fresh insight from contemplation of light, you cast the spell and set your allies aglow with white brilliance.

You transform all weapons, natural weapons, thrown weapons, and projectiles of the subject creatures into weapons with the brilliant energy special ability (*DMG* 224). If this spell is cast on arrows or crossbow bolts, the effect on a particular projectile ends after one use, whether or not the missile strikes its intended target. Treat shuriken as arrows, rather than as thrown as thrown weapons, for the purpose of this spell

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 39

Buzzing Bee

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

A small but extremely loud be appears, buzzing around the head of the designated target.

This spell creates an unnerving noise that disrupts the subject's concentration. The subject is distracted and takes a -10 penalty on Move Silently checks. Creatures that can't hear are not distracted. The DC of the Concentration checks to cast spells or maintain concentration while distracted is equal to this spell's DC + the level of the spell being cast.

The bee has a fly speed of 180 feet (perfect). It remains near the subject in spite of darkness, invisibility, polymorph, cover, concealment, or any other attempt at disguising or hiding. The bee remains until the spell's duration expires or the subject moves out of range.

The bee can't attack, but it can be dispelled.

Material Component: A dab of honey.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 41

Camouflage

Transmutation

Level: Druid 1, ranger 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Upon finishing the spell, your skin and clothing change color, warping tint and hue to match your surroundings.

Throughout the duration of the spell, your coloration changes instantly to match the background of any new environment you enter with no effort on your part. This effect grants you a +10 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 43

Chain Missile

Evocation [Force]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Target: One creature, plus one more creature/2 levels (each of which must be within 30 ft. of the primary target)

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

Bolts of pale blue energy spring forth from your finger and slam into the desired target. An instant later, the

bolts bounce away toward other creatures, slamming into each one.

Missiles of magical energy dart from your fingertip to unerringly strike one creature initially, then spring to other targets. Each missile deals 1d4+1 points of force damage. One missile strikes the primary target per two caster levels, to a maximum of ten missiles (dealing 10d4+10 points of damage). After the missiles strike, they ricochet to a number of targets up to the number of missiles created by the spell. Each secondary target takes 1d4+1 points of damage, as if struck by a single *magic missile*. You choose secondary targets as you like, but they must all be within 30 feet of the primary target, and no secondary target can be struck more than once. You can choose to affect fewer secondary targets than the maximum (to avoid allies in the area, for example). Missiles without a secondary target do not ricochet off the primary target.

Spells, magic items, and abilities that protect against *magic missile* (such as the *shield* spell or a *brooch of shielding*) also protect against this spell. If the primary target has that sort of protection, the spell has no effect against it but still springs to all secondary targets. (A *brooch of shielding* loses a number of charges equal to the number of missiles hitting the creature—up to ten missiles.) If spell resistance causes the spell to fail to harm the primary target, the spell fails and missiles do not ricochet to additional targets.

The missiles strike unerringly, even if the targets are in melee or have anything less than total cover or concealment. You cannot single out specific parts of a creature to strike. This spell cannot target or damage inanimate objects.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 44

Conviction

Abjuration

Level: Cleric 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You hold the holy passage in your hand and touch your ally, intoning the spell. A sea-blue nimbus of light blossoms about his head and shoulder, strengthening his resolve.

This spell bolsters the mental, physical, and spiritual strength of the creature touched. The spell grants the subject a +2 morale bonus on saving throws, with an additional +1 to the bonus for every six caster levels you have (maximum +5 morale bonus at 18th level).

Material Component: A small parchment with a bit of holy text written upon it.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 52

Deeper Darkvision

Transmutation

Level: Ranger 4, sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You toss the powdered dried carrot into the air as you cast this spell, and it vanishes. You choose yourself as the spell's recipient and your eyes begin to glow with an alien purple luster.

The subject gains the ability to see 90 feet in total darkness and ignores the 20% miss chance normally present in shadowy illumination (such as might be created by a *darkness* spell). *Deeper darkvision* is black and white only but otherwise similar to normal sight.

Material Component: A pinch of dried carrot or an agate.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 62

Dragonsight

Transmutation

Level: Bard 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level (D)

You cast this spell and your eyes enlarge and turn yellow and catlike, like those of a dragon.

You gain the visual acuity of a dragon, including low-light vision, darkvision, and blindsense.

You can see four times as well as a normal human in low-light conditions and twice as well in normal light. Your darkvision is effective out to 10 feet per caster level. You take half the normal penalties for distance on Spot checks.

You blindsense has a range of 5 feet per caster level.

None of these effects stack with any low-light vision, darkvision, or blindsense you might already have.

Focus: A dragon's eye.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 73

Duelward

Abjuration

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged (D)

The air around you crackles with magical energy as you finish uttering the last syllables of the spell's formula. You immediately feel as if your link to the arcane somehow has increased, filling you with confidence and a sense of security.

While a *duelward* spell is in effect, counterspelling is an immediate action for you, allowing you to counterspell even when it is not your turn without having previously readied an action. You also gain a +4 competence bonus on Spellcraft checks made to identify spells being cast.

The first time you successfully counterspell while the spell is in effect (whether you counterspell as an immediate action or not), *duelward* is discharged.

Material Component: A miniature silk glove.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 74

Ghost Touch Armor

Transmutation

Level: Cleric 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Armor of creature touched

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Confronted with incorporeal enemies, you give the armor you touch the power to defend against such foes.

The subject's armor gains the ghost touch special ability (*DMG* 219).

Material Component: A tiny shield made of resin.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 103

Guided Shot

Divination

Level: Ranger 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

With a guttural utterance made with unmoving lips, you magically focus your attention on a distant foe. Upon aiming your weapon, you note how clearly defined your intended target is.

While this spell is in effect, your ranged attacks do not take a penalty due to distance. In addition, your ranged attacks ignore the AC bonus granted to targets by anything less than total cover, and also ignore the miss chance granted to targets by anything less than total concealment.

This spell does not provide any ability to exceed the maximum range of the weapon with which you are attacking, nor does it confer any ability to attack targets protected by total cover.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 108

Haste, Swift

Transmutation

Level: Ranger 2

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1d4 rounds

Two quick syllables release the power of the spell, and the world moves a bit slower about you.

This spell functions like *haste* (*PH* 239), except as noted above. This spell counters and dispels any *slow* effect on you.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 110

Mage Armor, Greater

Conjuration (Creation) [Force]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: No

An invisible sheen of armor-shaped force surrounds you.

This spell functions like *mage armor* (PH 249), except that it requires no material component and its tangible field of force provides a +6 armor bonus to Armor Class.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 136

Nerveskitter

Transmutation

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 immediate action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: None (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You suffuse your ally with a brief, blue glow. He jerks away from you, as if he can anticipate your next action.

You cast this spell when you and your party roll for initiative. You enhance the subject's reactions in combat, granting it a +5 bonus on its initiative check for the current encounter. If the subject does not make an initiative check within 1 round, this spell has no effect.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 146

Radiant Assault

Evocation [Light]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 7

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)

Area: 20-ft.-radius burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

With outstretched hand, you gesture toward the area where the spell will come into effect. An instant later a blast of multicolored light fills that area.

This spell releases energy in the form of a multitude of rainbow-colored beams that erupt in every direction within the area designated by you. This kaleidoscopic burst of energy deals 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 15d6), and all creatures within the

burst are dazed for 1d6 rounds. Those that succeed on a Will save take only half normal damage and are dazzled for 1d6 rounds instead.

Sightless creatures are unaffected by this spell.

Focus: An eye from any outsider that has 4 or more Hit Dice.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 164

Resistance, Greater

Abjuration

Level: Bard 4, cleric 4, druid 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Duration: 24 hours

Just as you touch the spell's subject, a feeling of peace and watchful guardianship fills your being.

This spell functions like *resistance* (PH 272), except as noted here. You grant the subject a +3 resistance bonus on saves.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 174

Resistance, Superior

Abjuration

Level: Bard 6, cleric 6, druid 6, sorcerer/wizard 4

Duration: 24 hours

As you finish casting the spell, you feel imbued with the feeling that something greater than yourself is protecting you. When you touch your intended subject and release the spell, the feeling disappears.

This spell functions like *resistance* (PH 272), except as noted here. You grant the subject a +6 resistance bonus on saves.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 174

Scent

Transmutation

Level: Druid 2, ranger 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

At your touch, the creature inhales deeply, experiencing a new world of sensory input.

You give the creature touched the scent ability (MM 314).

Material Component: A sprinkle of mustard and pepper.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 180

Spell Enhancer

Transmutation

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

You utter an ancient word tied to the fundamental principles of magic and immediately begin casting another spell.

This spell enhances the next spell you cast, making it more difficult for targets to resist. The next spell you cast this round is cast at +2 caster level, and its save DC increases by 1.

Source: *Spell Compendium*, p. 198

NEW ITEMS

Boots of Big Stepping

The spirit of the blink dog has been harnessed within this wolfhide boots. Once per day, as a standard action, the wearer can use *dimension door*. The boots can be used only after being worn continuously for 24 hours. If they are taken off, they become inactive until they are again donned and worn for a full 24 hours.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *dimension door*; Price 11,200 gp.

Source: *Miniatures Handbook*, p. 42

Greater Choker of Eloquence

Coveted by bards, singers, and public speakers, this beautiful necklace is carved from ivory and jade. A *greater choker of eloquence* grants a +10 competence bonus on Diplomacy, Bluff, and Perform (sing) checks.

Moderate transmutation; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be a spellcaster of at least 6th level; Price 24,000 gp.

Source: *Complete Adventurer*, p. 132

Stylus of the Masterful Hand

This elegant but sturdy metal stylus grants a +5 competence bonus on Forgery checks. On command, a *stylus of the masterful hand* can also remember up to three different types of handwriting, which allows a later attempt to create a forgery of a document without requiring the forger to have a sample of the

handwriting (see Forgery, page 74 of the *Player's Handbook*). The DC to reproduce that handwriting is fixed at whatever check result was achieved during the attempt 1 which the sample was collected. A second command word allows the user to erase a sample of handwriting stored in a stylus.

Faint divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *read magic*; Price 3,000 gp.

Source: *Complete Adventurer*, p. 136

Wraithblade

When this +1 *ghost touch wounding dagger* is used in combat it appears almost insubstantial in the wielder's hand. Attacks made with a *wraithblade* are treated as touch attacks, although force effects grant the full armor bonus against a *wraithblade*. *Ghost touch* armor and shields also use their full armor bonus against attacks from a *wraithblade*.

Strong conjuration; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *ghost touch weapon*; Price 50,302 gp.

Player Handout One: Tanabat

Tanabat is a spring holiday celebrated on the 11th of Planting every year in the Flanaess. It is also known as the Seven Sisters Festival. Legend has it that Olidammara was entertained on this day by seven lovely sisters, who welcomed him in his guise as a minstrel and treated him royally. So impressed was he by their treatment and their wine that he revealed himself and offered to transport them to his halls, there to live in bliss forever. Though the vineyard's exact location is a mystery, the legend is widespread, and many grape-growing regions claim that the Seven Sisters came from their lands. At night, therefore, the story is acted out and people head out to the grape arbors, listening for echoes of the sisters' laughter as they ascended to paradise. The rest of the holiday is a celebration of the grape and its byproducts and features prayers for a good vintage in the coming year, as well as much celebration and sampling of the previous year's wines. It is especially sacred to followers of the Laughing Rogue, though followers of other nature deities often officiate as well.

Player Handout Two: Jaedric's Journal

20 Ready'ing, 593

The Shade has sent us ill news. One of our operatives in Dorakaa is in trouble. She has decided to branch out and begin recruiting adventurers to our cause. She intends to send such adventurers to recover our operative.

5 Flocktime, 593

The Shade sent an adventuring party to "escort" Halon and myself on a "merchant" mission. The heroes unwittingly helped us uncover some odd signs of experimentation by one of the Old One's mages. Apparently the wizard was conducting experiments on young children, but for what purpose we cannot determine.

26 Harvester, 593

A foray into the Burning Cliffs by another group of heroes uncovered massive stores of cold iron ore. The Shade arranged to have a sample of this ore shipped our way for evaluation. It seems like it is being magically treated in preparation for some kind of magical construction effort.

13 Ready'reat, 593

The Shade has informed us to watch our backs. Apparently a group of adventurers were duped into thinking she had contacted them and wound up being sent to the Abyss, a place called the Castle of Foul Breezes. Luckily they survived, but it seems as if some information about our organization might have been pried out. By whom, we are unsure at this time.

22 Coldeven, 594

Very disturbing news has reached us. I just spoke with some foolish adventurers whom the Shade and I managed to convince to travel to Dorakaa. Unbelievably, most of them survived. What is chilling is the news they bring. The Boneheart Null is at work creating an army of some kind of undead. The heroes saw hundreds, maybe thousands of them. If these are anything like the creatures encountered about a year ago, I fear what plans he has for them. We are working double time to attempt to ascertain their weaknesses.

10 Patchwall, 594

The drow seer, Kaquizel, has defected to our cause, thanks to the recovery efforts of a group of adventurers. His information on Iuz's portals has been invaluable and we believe we may have the keys we need to start formulating a counter-measure to whatever plan the Old One has up his sleeve.

27 Ready'reat, 594

Spies in the Vesve have informed us that a group of adventurers recently came out of an inn in a bit of a shock. They appeared to have endured some fantastic trial. Divinations about this event revealed that the adventurers had been to Acheron and gleaned information on the Old One from the Ruby Sorceress herself! One of our spies managed to copy a page of the journal of one of these adventurers while he was drunk on wine and passed out. Apparently the Old One intends to invade Torremor, the demesne of Pazrael. If successful, he will become more powerful than ever!

19 Sunsebb, 594

Some brave heroes have rescued one of our gnome spies who was captured by the death giant Folcrunar. They also managed to retrieve the information possessed by another gnome who died. The information our spies held is incredible. We now know the number and location of the Old One's Blood Gates to the Abyss!

1 Planting, 595

*A bandit lord who styles himself "Prince" Zeech apparently holds conflicting loyalties. We are unsure whether or not he can be trusted at this time, but he has had a party of adventurers retrieve some interesting information for him regarding the progress of the Old One's newly created undead, now known as the demundead or *criança*. The Lord of Pain attempted to test his creations in the field. Thankfully, the adventurers Zeech hired managed to destroy them.*

8 Flocktime, 595

A rash of disappearances has had many states bordering the Old One's realm concerned. A group of adventurers managed to recover a wizard from Perrenland in one of the Old One's prisons. It is still a mystery why individuals such as him are being captured. Arcane experiments perhaps? At least now we know the Old One's war in Torremor is underway. Time is running short.

17 Harvester, 595

Thank the gods! "Little Voice" has been recovered. Some brave heroes scraped him out of the Groaning Mines and he is now recovering. His information on the special material the Old One is mining there should prove invaluable to our efforts to stymie his campaign in Torremor.

10 Ready'reat, 595

A fellow of ours named Ansul has hired some adventurers to free a captured cleric of the Dweller on the Horizon from the Old One's slave pits. The Shade confided in me that she was going to meet with the adventurers privately after Ansul had spoken with them. She wished another individual rescued from the pits but she did not tell me why. I suppose even our illustrious leader has her own secrets.

25 Sunsebb, 595

The Shade has once again left on a secretive mission. She didn't tell me much, but she did say that she was headed east. Although I wish I could say I trust her completely, I must confess I do not know much about the woman though I have known her for years. I do not even know where she grew up or her real name. I had some of my agents look up on her. They stowed away on a ship in the Nyr Dyv where they informed me the Shade was meeting with some adventurers and sending them into the Abyss. It seemed the ineffable "Prince" Zeech was somehow present as well, but I don't know the details as my stowaways had a lot of difficulty breaching the anti-scrying magic in place.

18 Fireseek, 596

The Shade has noticed my apprehension around her recently. I admitted to spying upon her since it was fairly obvious she had figured it out anyway. Surprisingly, she took it well. She told me not to worry. She said events had been set in motion that would forever change our organization. I feel a bit better after meeting with her, but I don't know why she is being so secretive. I am supposed to be her right hand and yet she withholds things from me. I gather her statement has something to do with the Old One's war in Torremor. Perhaps he was stopped? Perhaps something else... Time will tell.

3 Planting, 596

Now I am truly concerned. The Shade visited me recently and we spoke at great length of many things. But it was her parting words that bring me consternation. She claimed she has made a new ally for our organization, someone she called Ekak. I have never heard of this individual before and know nothing of him, but she says that he will usher our organization into a completely new era. We are to be expecting a visit from him soon. Why am I so uneasy?