

SHL4-08

May the Axe Grow Great

Part Three of The Rescue Series

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

Version 1.0

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Troubles in the Shield Lands have divided the nation. Traitorous doubles may have infiltrated all levels of Shield Lands society. Now the Council of Lords faces its greatest challenge, determining who is loyal and who is not. Unfortunately, the information that would reveal that has disappeared. Rumors have now come forward that an ancient artifact, the Helm of Heironeous, lies behind enemy lines. These events are tied together in the conclusion of The Rescue Series. It is recommended that players have first completed the other modules in this series before playing this module (although not necessarily with the same character): SHLo4-02 "In the Service of the Lady", "SHLo4-03 "End of the Path", "SHLo4-06 "Banners of Torkeep" and "SHLo4-07 "Better Off Dead". This module is for APL 6 through 12.

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

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Introduction

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. Complete the RPGA scoring grid with names and RPGA numbers only, and the event information at the top. RPGA no longer uses voting for any reported results. Give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

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

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

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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

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

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

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

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

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their

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

dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free

action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in the Shield Lands. Characters native to the Shield Lands 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.

Adventure Background

Author's Notes: This adventure concludes a story that is over a year in the telling. It all began, quite accidentally, at the Shield Lands Interactive "Amidst the Smoke and Flames". An NPC, Shelton Halfhand, was introduced, mostly as an afterthought. He was put in as a snide, Council of Lords loving, Lady Katarina hating, Adventurer loathing toady to balance all the "we love the adventurers" types showing up. Jeremy Vosberg, who played Shelton, told me "I think I played him TOO well." It turns out he struck a nerve. Players LOVED to hate him and he raised his ugly anti-pathfinder xenophobia over and over during the next modules. I actually got emails claiming how much players hate this guy! Characters insulted him, took swings at him and even made an (in his view) attempt on his life!

During all his meetings with the adventurers, Shelton has always been a Lawful Good Cleric of Heironeous, albeit a very narrow-minded one. None the less, every good villain needs to be confronted and this adventure gives all of his 'fans' their opportunity to do so.

The story to date is as follows: Shelton was raised by a poor farm family near Lardon. His mother met a poor fate as an adventurer leaving his father to raise him. His father inbred a constant distrust for adventurous types. This distrust became more and more a loathing as the years passed Shelton by. He saw hard working men and women get no glory for their efforts while, in a matter of moments, some sell-sword makes a name for themselves! Where is the glory for the blacksmith who forged the sword? Where is praise for the Scribe whose careful research revealed the insidious plot?

About 15 years ago, Shelton had become noteworthy enough in the Church of Holy Shielding to be assigned to Katarina Walworth's company. Initially, they hit it off quite well. However, Shelton began to have feelings for her, feelings he knew that she could never return due to

her position in society. Then, on one night, Katarina appeared to him and professed her love for him. She begged him to proclaim his love for her openly at court and if he would do that, she would renounce her position and join him. What he did not know is that it was NOT Katarina Walworth before him but Black Hearted Zhayne, a vile succubus (See SHLo4-06 Banners of Torkeep).

Needless to say, Shelton made a fool of himself. He never quite figured out what happened. Zhayne appeared to him over and over after that, but never as Katarina, and always as other confidantes. She slowly but surely poisoned his mind against adventurers. What were her motives? Simply because she could and for the love of the Evil and Chaos she knew it would sow.

Eventually Shelton fell into the graces of Lord Natan Enerick. Although a Pholtite, Lord Enerick was of a similar mind to Shelton: Both were tired of the “Adventurer” mindset. Shelton, influenced both by the charismatic Enerick as well as the manipulations of Zhayne, and combined now with his hatred for Katarina (who he believes purposely humiliated him for no good reason), is at a point where he believes that what ever Katarina proposes is the opposite of what should be done.

Adventure Summary

Introduction: This adventure begins without the party's presence. It starts with Lady Katarina's body going to be put to the torch. She wakes up and is a little upset about the entire set of events. She takes out some well deserved vengeance on some vile types in the crowd and then steps forward to get to work,

MEANWHILE the party begins in Torkeep. Those that are Pathfinders are doing their daily routine. Those that are Soldiers of the Standing Army are billeted outside the keep. The famous Greycloak, Quatain the cold, rides into camp, literally dead on his feet. The party gets to save his life and talk with him, learning of Katarina's fate and her need for adventurers.

Encounter One

The party races to Critwall while Iuzians march on Torkeep. In Critwall, they learn that Shelton Halfhand is not dead but has left on a secret mission, apparently to recover the artifact known as the Helm of Heironeous. He has taken with him valuable notes on who is or is not a spy in the Shield Lands. What the party does not know is that Shelton was tricked into this adventure. The book he “found” was planted by none other than Black Hearted Zhayne, a succubus that is plaguing the Shield Lands.

Encounter Two

The party infiltrates the lands of Iuz and must make their way to the abandoned temple of Heironeous.

Encounter Three

The party discovers a cave during their travels. It is the home of some very large owlbeats.

Encounter Four

The party explores the devastated temple of Heironeous.

Encounter Five

The party discovers the room of horrors and must face some skeletal balors. In the room are victims of a plague (although that may not be obvious). These slaves were gated in for Shelton to play with after he became evil. This was all part of an Iuzian plan to ultimately infect someone with the Breath of Iuz, an unbelievably devastating and nearly unstoppable plague. This was first hinted at in “The Invisible Hand” (SHLo1-11).

Encounter Six

The party must now face the evil Shelton Halfhand, reborn as Shelton Plaguebringer. Upon arriving at the temple, he discovered a *helm of opposite alignment* planted here by Black Hearted Zhayne. Sadly, it consumed him and he became evil. Working with his new masters, Shelton performed vile experiments on some slaves (See Encounter Five) which left him filled with disease, including the Breath of Iuz. What neither he or anyone else knew, is that the original Helm of Heironeous is still here! The party can find it in its original hiding place.

But why does a Lawful Good church have a helm of opposite alignment? Centuries ago, the Order of clerics who live here were slowly becoming possessed by an evil force. Praying for salvation, their god heard them and allowed them to capture some of their former pure of heart now turn coat brethren. Their deity conveyed on them some helms to ‘cure’ their brethren of their evil ways. Why this church fell under such hard times is possibly lost to time.

Conclusion

The party returns to Critwall where they are rewarded for their efforts.

Introduction – The Banners of Torkeep

INTRODUCTION PART ONE – Noble Intentions

NOTE: This is copied in the Appendix as Player Handout One. The Dungeon Master may read or paraphrase the following, or hand out the attachment to the party.

The following takes place in Critwall. The party is not present for these events:

Dark clouds blanket the city of Critwall. No light from the morning sun makes its way to the streets and all is a gloomy shade of gray.

Today is the day that Katarina Walworth, Knight Commander of the Shield Lands, is taken from her glass coffin and put to the torch, releasing her body to join her soul. For the last two weeks, the population has been beside itself with grief. With each passing day, that grief has become more tangible.

Normally, paladins of Heironeous in general, and citizens of standing in particular, are buried. Since the occupation by Iuz, however, more times than not the torch rather than the shovel becomes the ultimate burial tool to keep the body from being later animated by evil.

The crowd around Critwall Keep is massive. One can only wonder if there is ANYONE not attending the ritual? Soldiers of the Standing Army stand at attention. Commoners crowd as close as they dare. Merchants stand shoulder to shoulder with Tent Town residents.

A carved wooden bed has been made, resting on stacks of oiled logs. The Lady's body, as beautiful as ever, has been laid upon the funeral pyre. To the side stand members of the Church of Holy Shielding. At the appropriate moment, they will cause a pillar of flame to consume the bed, the logs, and the Lady...

The Council of Lords (absent Torkeep – he sent notice that her body could be buried on his family estates, a request rejected by the Church) is in attendance. One by one, the Council gives Lady Katarina words of remembrance and words of praise. All of this is taken down by the council's secretary, Shelton Halfhand. Then the Church of Holy Shielding takes the dais. They chant prayers, sing hymns and lecture the crowd on the virtues of the Lady's life.

The moment finally arrives. All is silent save for the secretary's scratchings on parchment resting on a stone writing tablet. Lord Enerick, Leader of the Council Temperi (Temperi is an old Suloise term for 'temporary') steps to the dias and raises his hand. When it falls, so to will fall the fires from the heavens itself.

And then, just as Lord Enerick's hand is about to descend, Lady Katarina sits up! Some in the crowd scream, other's faint, most cheer. Looking around at her surroundings, she seems confused for but a moment. Then, dryly, she looks at the clerics and says with just a hint of a smile "It seems I'm feeling better. Your services will not be necessary..."

With that, she stands up and looks out at the crowd. She straightens the lines of her funeral dress and announces "My friends! Hear me please!" The

crowd's din turns to a low murmur. "I have been the victim of a foul plot. My very soul was stolen from me. I do not know how long I have been away, but when I was gone, I learned much. I have returned and..." With that she stops, hesitating for a moment. She looks at the council. With a leap from her pyre she jumps towards the council dais. Grabbing an axe from an amazed soldier she points it at the council "You there! Surrender!"

What happened next is the stuff of legends. Six of the Council Members, and the secretary, Shelton Halfhand, had their forms ripple and twist. The very force of the Lady's voice causing their true doppelganger forms to be revealed. With a cry the foul beasts attacked but they were no match for the Lady's fury. With the assistance of the Soldiers, the beasts were soon dead. "It seems" the Lady says "much has changed while I have been away..."

INTRODUCTION PART TWO – A Chink in the Armor
Realize that party members either will have just completed SHLo4-07 or not. Those that have can be considered to have hastened to Torkeep after their adventures, with word of an imminent attack on the keep from the lands of Iuz. Those that did not yet participate in those adventures will be in Torkeep either "on patrol" if they are Pathfinders, or "assigned to duty" if members of the Standing Army of the Shield Lands.

The Pathfinders currently answer to Sir Daris Goodkin, a paladin of Heironeous and the leader of Torkeep's Twenty (a cavalry unit), Daris is a kind man who is slow to anger and tends to think whatever the party might say is a bit funny. He is just a genuinely good humored fellow! Players may have met him in SHLo3-Intro1 "Final Respects". Pathfinders are free to enter and leave Torkeep as they like. However....

Members of the Standing Army of the Shield Lands are not allowed inside Torkeep (at this time). They are under the command of Captain Ysairae. She's a small woman in her late twenties with long brown hair twisted in an elaborate, but functional braid. Her ears are slightly pointed betraying her half-elven heritage. She was last seen in SHLo2-06 "Dark Moons Rising". At that time she was stationed in Ringland under Captain Hebrin. Her distaste for adventurers ("they just can't properly follow orders") and her agreement with Lord Lardon's policies made her a quick political appointment to the garrison at Torkeep. She cannot stand Lord Torkeep in any way shape or form...

Based on the above information, read or paraphrase the following to the party:

You are currently at Torkeep. The mighty stone walls seem somehow a pillar of strength in these troubled times. Inside the walls, Pathfinders work with Lord Torkeep's loyal forces to keep the region free from danger. Outside the walls, the Twelfth Company of the Standing Army of the Shield Lands is camped. There is no love lost between these two opposing forces.

At face value, the soldiers are stated as being there to guard against an Iuzian invasion, but insomuch as they stop any merchant shipments in or out of Torkeep and take a 75% "soldier's requisition", at the council's command, Torkeep's loyalists claim the army is actually there to lay siege.

Tensions are especially tight as rumors fly of an imminent Iuzian invasion. However, none of these rumors have materialized.

You are patrolling the zone between the keep and the army when a rider comes racing into camp. You realize the man is none other than Quatain the Cold, a Greycloak of no small skill. An ugly looking orc arrow sticks deeply into his back. As his horse nears you, it staggers, throwing Quatain from its back, and then collapsing.

Note on the impending horde: At the end of SHL04-07, it is made to appear as if the Iuzians are actually at the gates of Lord Torkeep's. This was in fact, information that was not completely inaccurate. If players ask, they will discover that both the army and the forces of the keep recently (a week ago) fought off a small expeditionary force (perhaps 200 orcs).

APL AII (EL -)

♠ **Quatain the Cold:** male human, Brd3/Ftr2/Rgr8

Development: The player characters will be closest to Quatain, being within 40 feet when his horse collapses and they can react as they desire. If they check on him, he is at -7 hit points. The horse is dead, having literally been run into the ground. Quatain has no gear, other than a suit of studded leather, possibly last owned by an orc, and a bloody, rusty falchion. The horse bears cruel whip marks over most of its body. A successful Knowledge Local – Iuz's Border States or Knowledge Nature check (DC 20 or 25, respectfully) will reveal the horse was probably trained by orcs (who use nasty whips to train their steeds). SPECIAL NOTE: Quatain formerly appeared in both SHL02-01 "A Message from Ringland" and SHL04-07 "Noble Intentions".

If the party does not react, others in the area will rush over and bandage his wounds. If Quatain is brought around to consciousness, both Torkeep Loyalists and Soldiers will cheer for the rescuers.

In a rasping breath, Quatain will say "Get me Torkeep and whoever is running the damn army" and then pass out, thoroughly exhausted.

The party can send for the two local leaders, administer magics to cure the exhaustion, etc. Alternatively, the locals will quickly fetch their respective leaders and clerics attached to the local forces will tend to his needs, bringing him back to consciousness.

Within a few minutes, you find yourself in the company of Lord Torkeep, Captain Ysairae and Quatain in Lord Torkeep's dining room. Quatain looks as if death itself would be a blessing, despite his recent healings. Nursing an ale, he looks up darkly at Franz Torkeep.

"They are coming Franz. Make no mistake about it... Iuzians, hundreds of them." He takes a swallow (more of a gulp) of his ale and continues. "I remember you Captain", he says glancing at Ysairae, "You have two choices: Continue to siege Lord Torkeep or start building defenses."

To her credit, Ysairae does not even blanch at his admonishment. "I agree" she says, "As much as I've enjoyed enforcing the Council's edict against Lord Torkeep - no offense - I'm sure I can find common ground with Lord Torkeep in slaughtering orcs"

"Good to hear it! Common sense at last..." thunders Torkeep.

But before he can begin to say another word, Captain Ysairae interjects "we will get the details on the approaching army soon enough, but shortly before your arrival, good Quatain, news reached us earlier today, along with an order from the council. It seems Lady Katarina is alive and is once again Knight Commander!"

Torkeep and Quatain look at her, completely stunned...

The party can ask any questions they like. If they don't, Torkeep, Ysairae and Quatain will converse in front of the party, exchanging the following information:

Quatain:

- 1) What happened to you? He was scouting and got captured by a hunter-killer group. They were going to cut off his hand but thought

instead to bring him in for questioning. He was brought to their camp where he managed to escape.

- 2) What did you learn? An Iuzian army has been gathered, and it is headed towards Torkeep. It is approaching from the North-west and should arrive within 7 to 10 days.
- 3) What is the make up of the forces? Orcs, goblinoids, bugbears and similar, but lots of them. He overheard they were going to join with an army of undead. He did not see who the commander was and the flag being flown was a new one to him: An Iuzian skull with a set of bloody crossed spears as a background.
- 4) What can be done? If some raids can be made on the supply lines, the army can be slowed for up to 3 more days.

Ysairae:

- 1) What sort of forces are at your command? She currently has 75 infantry with standard kits (The Shield Lands Meta Org book for the Standing Army of the Shield Lands defines a "kit" as including a backpack, bedroll, flint and steel, shovel, battle axe, heavy steel shield, a suit of scale mail and a soldier's uniform) and some assorted commanders. There are a few company clerics and two battle mages from the Arcanists of middling levels.
- 2) What sort of defenses can you bring? Her troops are trained in basic defense work. She can set up some out lying walls and trenches that the enemy would have to fight to get across. They also have about 2 months worth of food supplies.
- 3) What is the "order"? In the note she received, Lady Katarina has issued an order for up to six reliable Pathfinders to attend to her immediately on matters of "great importance to the security of the Shield Lands". If any of the characters are Soldiers instead of Pathfinders, Ysairae will order them to join in as "army representatives".
- 4) How did Lady Katarina become revived? She will relay the information relayed to her: essentially that information given in the player's handout, as previously discussed. Torkeep will be overjoyed at this news. Quatain will be very bemused. The players may have had a hand in her recovery... See SHL04-07 .
- 5) Why didn't she bring this IMMEDIATELY to the attention of Torkeep? She only learned this information perhaps 10 minutes before Quatain had shown up. She was making her preparations when the news of his arrival hit the camp.

Torkeep

- 1) What sorts of forces are available to the defense? Lord Torkeep has 20 heavy cavalry, 140 infantry (40 of which double as crossbow troops), plus about 30 pathfinders.
- 2) What defenses are available? With delaying actions as suggested by Quatain, trenchworks could be established to further slow down the horde outside of the keep. Additionally, Critwall may be able to send additional troops.
- 3) What can we do? First, see what Lady Katarina wants. Second, ask her for additional help!
- 4) Why can't we do the harassing actions against the Iuzians? Torkeep has some other persons in mind for that job. He'd personally appreciate their responding to Lady Katarina's request.

At this point the party is free to make whatever preparations they want, and then leave for Critwall. See Encounter One.

Encounter One – In the Service of the Lady

Lord Torkeep will give the party any horses they may need. Depending on the party's level and abilities, they may reach Critwall a number of ways:

- 1) By foot. This will take three days. Unless the party can demonstrate some unusual foot speed (100% barbarians, lightly armored, for example), Torkeep will strongly discourage this! If the party insists on hoofing it, he will send a different party to the lady's response. This is a time for seriousness!
- 2) By horse. This will take 24 hours non-stop or 36 hours with a rest. Each party member will be given 2 horses. Each horse has 50/50 chance of dying on the way if it ridden full out. Party members will be completely exhausted from this sort of travel. SEE Exhausted in the PHB.
- 3) By magic. Who knows? It could be instantaneous! Using flying a party could probably arrive within 8 hours.

Based on exactly how the party travels read or paraphrase the following:

You passed through the walls of Critwall with little incident. The soldiers at the gate mad note of whether you were in the army or not but gave you no other troubles.

Traveling the streets of Critwall you can determine a different attitude to its residents. When you last visited (or had word of) Critwall, a cloud of

despair was tangible over the entire city. Now, it is as if sunshine has penetrated the very soul of those living here. Banners and ribbons hang from walls and buildings, obviously remnants of celebrating the Lady's return.

Eventually you are able to make your way to Critwall Keep. Across from it stand the Church of Holy Shielding. You can see that in front of the temple there is a small crowd. There are two knights wearing armor with Herioneous' markings upon them, four soldiers of the army, two clerics and Lady Katarina!

The party may (and should) approach Lady Katarina. If they go to Castle Critwall, the guards will tell the party the Lady is at a meeting at the Church of Holy Shielding and should seek her there.

When the party approaches Lady Katarina, two of the soldiers will step between her and the players and tell them to halt. Players will notice a very dramatic difference in the Lady. Before her loss, she was always patient, ever smiling, and perhaps almost simple-minded in her kindness. Now she is much more business-like. While still kind, after a fashion, she is much more practical in nature. She no longer has time for fanciful stories or weak thinking.

One of the soldiers barks "State your business or move along".

The party should explain they are from Torkeep at the Lady's request. The Lady will then thank them for attending and the soldiers will relax their guard. Note that it is proper to bow before the Nobles in the Shield Lands with empty hands held out to the sides (Knowledge Nobility or Knowledge Local: Iuzian Metaregion check to know this, DC 10).

APL AII (EL -)

☞ **Lady Katarina Walworth:** female human, Pal10/KoHS7

☞ **Soldiers of the Army of the Shield Lands:** male human x2, female human x2, Ftr (APL)

☞ **Ritherian:** male human, Clr 8

☞ **Wilton Gammet:** male human, Clr3.

☞ **Brenton Arbas:** human male, Pal3/Ftr3, KoHS1

☞ **Gizor Ripbane and Egder Walworth:** human female and human male, respectively, Pal 4/Pal 8

Lady Katarina is dressed in formal robes of state: blue with white trim. She wears a tunic over the robes with the symbol of the Shield Lands, except hers is bordered in gold. Her blue eyes, blonde hair, and quick smile are overshadowed by a distracted, if not haunted, look to her.

Ritherian has aged poorly over the last few years. Players may remember him from "Lifeline" (SHLOI-01). He is middle aged with prematurely graying brown hair. His eyes are strong and piercing. However, lines of worry have added to the minor wrinkles of middle-age, making him appear older than he is.

Brenton Arbas is a young man, likely not past his 30th year, with bright blue eyes and shoulder length blond hair. He was last seen in SHLOI-04 "In the Name of the Father". Since the events in that adventure, he has given up his vows as a paladin. Still he has forged his own way and is now a Knight of Holy Shielding.

Wilton Gammet appeared as a mentor to Brenton in "In the Name of the Father". He is a grandfatherly fellow dressed in grey-blue robes of Heironeous. He is technically retired from the church but still is called upon for important matters.

The two knights are Gizor Ripbane and Egder Walworth (a very distant cousin to Lady Katarina, many times removed).

The Lady will introduce the party. There are basically two conversations she is interested in conducting and one that she is not. Specifically, she is interested in the military position of the nation (and Torkeep's current problem in particular) and the current problem for which the party was summoned. She is not interested, at this point in time with all of the various persons standing around, of discussing her recent death and rescue unless it specifically ties in to the other two topics.

She will state a brief story of what had happened:

- 1) She and her guard were traveling to Critwall after investing Tent-Towners with land near Gensal.
- 2) The ground rumbled and some earth elementals appeared. They fought them off when the ground rumbled again and some Pathfinders she recognized appeared. Suddenly the Pathfinders attacked and that was all she remembered of the trip home.
- 3) Then there was an eternity of darkness and pain, of wanting to be home. She wanted to speak but could not. However, there was hope. She kept hearing a voice which reassured her there was

power in dreams and she should dream of escape.

- 4) Then, suddenly, she was floating! She could see all the lands of Oerth and then she was falling at a rapid rate. The Nyr Dyv grew closer and closer and then she saw she was going not to the waters but to the city nearby: Critwall! And then...
- 5) She woke up! A nagging feeling filled her and looking around, she could see that not all of the council members were who they appearing to be ~ they were doppelgangers! She attacked them and prevailed against them. One of the doppelgangers was Shelton Halfhand.
- 6) However, this one appeared to be a recent addition (or substitution).

At this point, Wilton will suggest he may be able to fill in the story a bit better...

- 1) Shelton was an acolyte in the church years ago.
- 2) Wilton helped him in his initial studies after his admission to the church. Wilton also gave him his initial vows upon becoming a cleric. Finally, Wilton was there for him when his father finally died in the invasion of the Shield Lands (if asked, the father was part of two groups being attacked by orcs and when some adventurers showed on the scene. The adventurers helped the other group and Shelton's father's group sustained horrible losses).
- 3) When the Church of Holy Shielding was reclaimed, a false floor was found in its ruins, and in the false floor, boxes of ancient church records were found.
- 4) Shelton had been going over the categorizing of the documents. He recently advised he found some old parchments he had not seen in his initial inventory.
- 5) He began work on translating their meaning and discovered they were very old and mentioned an artifact "The Helm of Heironeous".
- 6) Two days before the Lady's return, he had become quite excited, claiming he "found the Helm", but he would not explain his meaning further. However he did request two weeks leave and was granted it.

At this point Ritherian will speak up:

- 1) The timing of Shelton's request was unfortunate... He had been working on collating recent information regarding espionage activity in the Shield Lands (See "A Chink in the Armor" SHLo3-06).

- 2) Ritherian had been working with him but Shelton took the lead on it. Shelton had mentioned that he thought he saw a pattern in the information presented and may know who was a spy and who was not.
- 3) After the Lady's return, Ritherian and others had gone to Shelton's room. It had recently been rifled through! Further, certain papers found in Shelton's room at the church suggest Shelton actually left town just before the Lady's return.
- 4) They think Shelton took his notes on the espionage to work on while he traveled. It is believed that he has gone to try to recover this so-called "Helm of Heironeous" from a fallen temple of Heironeous inside the Iuzian borders.
- 5) It is further believed that Shelton was only replaced after he left on his secret quest as he was known to always favor a portable writing desk. At the ceremony, however, he was using a stone tablet and the special desk has not been found.

The party can ask questions, but not much more information than what appears above is available. The party can get the player's handout 2 which contains various notes and papers found in Shelton's room. Of especial importance is the scrap of paper from the Book of Hyanze. This is the book that described the "Helm of Heironeous" and its location. A successful Forgery check (DC 20) will reveal it is a clever forgery. If a character has 5 or more ranks in Knowledge Religion they will get a +1 circumstance bonus on this check. This bonus increases to +2 if the character is a follower of Heironeous.

AS TO MILITARY MATTERS, it appears that Iuz has finally decided enough is enough. There are reports of Gensal, South Keep and Bright Sentry all seeing military activity. Bright Sentry itself is currently under a siege, one that could choke off trade! Still, the potential assault on Torkeep is very bad news. Torkeep controls access to the Ritensa river as well as roads that allow for quick support of activity against Gensal and Critwall.

Katarina is going to act on the message the Pathfinders have brought her regarding Torkeep. She will make sure to provide Torkeep with troops. HOWEVER the danger is that she does not know who she can trust. The pathfinders need to find Shelton Halfhand and recover his notes on spy activity. Further, his help is greatly needed right now. They should convince him to return so the recent events can be properly straightened out. Finally, she doesn't care if the document is a forgery or not: There is a temple of Heironeous located within a few days of the border. If the party discovers any items or funds that can be used to

assist in the defense of the Shield Lands, they should try to recover them as well.

There are the following documents found in Shelton's room (See Player's Handout Two) along with notes on each:

- 1) From the Diary of Shelton Halfhand (about two weeks after the recapture of South Keep): "I cannot believe the accolades layered on Kate. I know she is Knight Commander, but for the love of morning vespers, the woman attracts praise like garbage attracts flies. What of the soldiers? What of the commanders? What of the devotees? These are the true heroes of the day! And those cursed pathfinders! I am amazed they are not arrested or exiled. The chaos they bring to this region only attracts more chaos! It is clear to me. Strange events and dire deeds do not happen to the common folk... The average citizen, merchant, or lord does not find themselves embattled against invisible elves or traveling beneath the Nyr Dyv."
- 2) Players can recall this entry must have taken place just after the events of SHLo3-06 "A Chink in the Armor" and SHLo3INT-03 "Top Secret".
- 3) From the Diary of Shelton Halfhand, dated 2 days before the settlers left Tent Town to repopulate Gensal: "I have finally stumbled on a clever plan. I would never do evil against Kate, but if I can show her, personally, the errors of her ways, perhaps then she will denounce this chaos that is the pathfinders. I will arrange for some of those lack-jobs to be summoned to the keep. I know Kate will not be able to refuse inviting them on her little adventure once she sees them. But how to do it? I believe I will send them a note at a local pub to come immediately to the keep. These so-called heroes cannot resist a mystery!"
Players may recall in the adventure SHLo4-02 "In the Service of the Lady" receiving a mysterious note at Dewey's. Characters who played in that module can NOW make a Sense Motive check (DC15) to realize that when Shelton protested their going on the march with the Lady, that perhaps he protested too much...
- 4) From the Diary of Shelton Half hand, dated 1 month ago: "She was right. There WAS one more box in the library. The ruins must have truly been filled with a treasure trove of knowledge in their time. I glanced through the box and, though most of the tomes were damaged and of little use, there was, unbelievably, a highly damaged but still legible copy of the Libram Del Vasgoth!, a work of great

age. It relayed details on an artifact of great power that saved the Church of Heironeous from evil in the past. As loathsome as it may seem, if I can recover this item, it will bring glory to the church and its teachings and away from those cursed Pathfinders. MAY THE AXE GROW GREAT!"

- 5) Players can use some of the following skills on the information contained in the note: A Knowledge Arcana check DC 35 will reveal Vasgoth as the name of a Solar. A Knowledge Religion check DC 25 (with a +2 circumstance modifier for characters who are devotees of Heironeous) reveals the Lilbram Del Vasgoth was a legendary book wherein Heironeous sent a messenger to Oerth and some of his prophecies and words were written down. The book then became somewhat of an object of desire by both good and evil forces that sought to reclaim it. Legend has it that the clerics protecting the book made copies of it, and then put in their own notes of the event of the times. No known copies are said to have survived. A Bardic Knowledge check, or an appropriate Knowledge check (DC 30 for either) would reveal the same information with devotees of Heironeous getting a +2 circumstance modifier to the die roll.
- 6) A note written on a scrap of paper: "Remember the key is the old Brightblade region. According to Merchant Guild maps, this would be two days march past the border along Horseman's Trail."
- 7) A Knowledge Geography check DC 15 reveals the "Brightblade region" is that area controlled by Iuz just across the Ritensa river. It is common knowledge that "Horseman's Trail" is an offshoot of the road to Torkeep that crosses the Ritensa into the lands of Iuz.
- 8) A scrap of ancient parchment, torn at the upper corner: "...and forsooth, the Helm verily did save us from that evil most foul. In reverence thereof it was with due haste put in eternal safety in the vaults of Kier-doon."
- 9) This note is a forgery. Players may have other ways to learn this, but the typical method is a successful Forgery check DC 26. That said, just because the note is a forgery, and a very recent one at that, does not mean that it contains useless information...
- 10) A Bardic Knowledge check DC 30 or Knowledge Religion check DC 30 (with a +2 circumstance modifier to either check for followers of Heironeous) will reveal there was an object of legend known as the *Helm of*

Heironeous. Apparently there was a temple of Heironeous that was besieged by evil forces. The temple would have been destroyed, but for the appearance of the Helm. Using the power of the helm, the clerics were able to save themselves from this evil.

- 11) A Bardic Knowledge check DC 25, or Knowledge Religion check DC 25, or Knowledge History check DC 20 would reveal there was a temple dedicated to Heironeous named Kier's Bane. Keir-Doon is ancient Suel for Death of Kier.

The party can discuss this matter with The Lady and the others present. Give the players every chance to be the heroes and discover the information for themselves. If they cannot do so, have one of the clerics state there was a tome or two they could consult on such matters. It would take a day to decipher the information.

Depending on whether the party figures this out for themselves, or if they need the help of the NPCs, they will have the information they need to track down Shelton immediately or the very next day. Lady Katarina will offer them whatever horses they would need for this travel. She will import to them that time is of the essence. She will also send Ritherian to the Greycloaks for a recent map of the region.

Before the party goes on their journey, the clerics will ask the party to join them in the church for prayers for success. Any party member who does so will gain the benefit of a *Guidance* spell usable once per day for the rest of this adventure. SPECIAL NOTE FOR CHARACTERS WITH THE BRAND OF HEIRONEOUS: This mark was given out in SHLOI-09 "Lord Torkeep's Request". Characters with this mark will NOT receive the benefit described above. Instead, the clerics will give the character one chance and one chance only to beg for forgiveness from Heironeous (do not humiliate the player by making them role-play the begging unless the player wants to). If the character does so, they will have the Brand removed by the church. If they refuse to repent by humbling themselves before Heironeous, the clerics will pray (after the party leaves) for the player to receive the vengeance of Heironeous. During the player's first die roll each day, it will automatically come up a "1" (although do not let the player know that is what has happened).

Encounter 2 – The Good Oerth

The party is free to begin following, more or less, the map they have. Their journey should primarily be by foot (horse), although they can travel magically. The party is technically not on any deadline for purposes of this

module. THEY however should not know this. They need to wonder "If we delay, what is happening to Torkeep?"

Although no NPC will mention it, many of the characters may have participated in various modules set in the realm of Iuz, including IUZ3-01 "Across the Border" and IUZ4-01 "Doraaka". In both of those modules, mention is made of the various odd effects that exist in the lands of Iuz. Essentially, no one can guarantee what travel into such evil and chaos infested lands will have on travel! Players who discuss this may make Knowledge Arcana checks (DC 15) or Knowledge Religion checks (DC 20) to reveal there may be non-standard effects on magic travel and spells within the lands of Iuz. Here are the rules for travel into the lands of Iuz during this module:

- 1) Parties that travel via *teleport* or *teleport circle* must roll twice for failure and accept the worse result. Parties that travel via *teleport, greater* will have to roll once for failure (normally there is not a roll at all) but may do so on the "Studied Carefully" chart.
- 2) Parties that travel via *wind walk* or *feathers* or other flying spells will discover there is very low and thick cloud cover. As such, it is virtually impossible to know exactly where they party is in relationship to the ground at any given time. Presuming successful Survival checks to discern the correct direction of travel, parties will still land 1d6 miles off of where they want to be.
- 3) The air in the lands of Iuz feels gloomy.
- 4) Conjured foods do not taste good. They are vile in taste and have little apparent nutritional value. As such, conjured food provides no food value.
- 5) Conjured water tastes slimy and has a definite swamp gas smell to it. As such, conjured water provides no sustenance at all.
- 6) The lands of Iuz are filled with malevolent spirits looking for hosts. Normally, they are too weak to be of much threat. However, players who are traveling without a soul, such as those using a *Magic Jar*, will have a 10% chance per day of having their soulless body inhabited by such a spirit. Treat this as an attack by the Sample Ghost Fighter. If possessed, the spirit will attempt to flee the party and make its way to Doraaka where it can serve its terrible master, IUZ!!!! This encounter is not tiered and may be encountered multiple times.

APL All (EL 7)

☛ **Ghost Fighter (1):** hp 32. See Monster Manual page

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Tactics: The ghost ONLY appears if the party has a soulless person in their midst, such as one using magic jar. The ghost will then try to possess the body and leave the party as quietly as possible, fleeing to its master IUZ!

Development: A character possessed by the ghost will flee towards Doraaka. While typically this would spell death for any character, in this unique case, the ghost is very weak and will lose control over the body after a few weeks. At such time, the soul will rejoin with the body. Thus, the character will ultimately escape and return for a cost of 2 TU but will be out of the rest of this adventure.

Treasure: none. All of its possessions are ethereal.

- 7) The sky changes as soon as the party crosses into the lands of Iuz. A thick haze covers everything. Consequently, party members are able to see perhaps 200 yards to 300 yards in front of them at any given moment, and flying characters cannot see anything on the ground if they are more than 1D10 x 10 feet above the ground.

The party can travel from Critwall to the Ritensa with no difficulties. It is 1 day to the crossing at the Horseman's Trail. The party can camp on either side of the river. Read or paraphrase the following, based on the party's actions:

You reached the Ritensa with little difficulties. The river was of little consequence to your powers and skills and was crossed with ease. You are now in the lands controlled unquestionably by Iuz.

You have no immediate belief that your travels here have been noted. Conversely, you have no proof your presence here is undetected.

While the sky was only dotted with the occasional cloud while across the river, now that you physically entered the realm of Iuz, the sky is immediately different. A thick haze covers everything. You are able to see perhaps 200 yards to 300 yards in front of you at any given moment.

The travel to the temple will take two days. The party can reach it easily by following Horseman's trail.

The party can proceed without danger during the first and second day, save for Encounter 3, detailed below. If traveling by foot, they will have Encounter 3 at the end of the first day of travel. If they travel by magic, they will have Encounter 3 upon landing/appearing near the temple.

Tracking attempts will reveal many, many humanoid boot and foot prints in the area. Some are individuals, some appear to be armies. All the tracks lead north, along the Ritensa (and towards Torkeep).

Even though the party can travel without danger, they do not know that... read the following text to the party when indicated:

An hour after traveling past the Ritensa:

Your travel has been fairly easy so far. The hilly area you are in is covered with tough prairie grass, scrub cactus and bramble bushes. Occasionally, you will come upon a lone figure on one side of the road or the other, a blasted tree trunk, starved of life. These trees are full of crows: dozens upon dozens of them. They watch you with red eyes as you go past.

The crows are Fiendish Crows but they will not attack and if attacked, will fly off cawing. After this encounter, inform the party they have not seen any other signs of life, other than the crows.

APL ALL (EL –)

👉 **Fiendish Crows (24):** hp 4 each. See Monster Manual for Crows and Fiendish templates.

Tactics: These monsters are not intended to be fought and will flee at any sign of trouble. Their statistics are therefore not included in this module.

Development: The crows are there only to add to the creepy atmosphere of traveling in the lands of Iuz! They will flee at the first sign of trouble.

Treasure: None.

About 6 hours after traveling past the Ritensa:

The hill lands have flattened out. You now notice the road is slowly, almost imperceptibly, going lower. The air is damper, the mist thicker, and there is a smell of rotting cabbage. The insects are thick and very annoying as they cluster about you, at times obscuring your vision or landing on you for a quick bite.

The party will discover they are moving into some marsh lands. These marshes are very dangerous and party members should not go off of the road. These marshes have chest high rushes and brush everywhere, making visibility even poorer than it was before. Compared to the hill lands, there are plenty signs of life. Many strange animal sounds (croaking, howls, squeaks, caws, etc.) can be heard as well as the random splashes and bubbling noises water can make.

Party members that travel off of the roadway will encounter bogs every 3D6 x 5 feet. These bogs can be found easily if tested for (using a walking stick, staff, etc.) but are difficult to Spot (DC 20).

A character stepping in a bog will immediately sink in over their head. While they can be easily rescued, players going into the bog have to save to avoid being diseased. Roll 1D6 for the type of disease encountered (presume such a character swallowed a small amount of the water, was bitten by some tiny water bug, etc.). REMEMBER – PLAYERS THAT STAY ON THE ROAD DO NOT HAVE ANY CHANCE OF BEING DISEASED. See the DMG page 292 for more information:

D6	Infection	DC	Incubation	Damage
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1	Blinding Sickness	16	1d3 days	1d4 Str
2	Cackle Fever	16	1 day	1d6 Wis
3	Filth Fever	12	1d3 days	1d3 Dex 1d3 Con
4	Mindfire	12	1 day	1d4 Int
5	Red Ache	15	1 day	1d6 Str
6	Slimy Doom	14	1 day	1d4 Con

The following occurs around noon of the second day of travel:

Your travel through the marshes has continued for much of the morning, but now, after four hours of travel you found yourself coming out of the marshes and back into hill lands. Unlike the original hills, just across the Ritensa, these are filled with groves of diseased and rotten trees, struggling for life.

The party will again hear the occasional twig snap or grass rustle, but never see any animal. Characters who use tracking can discover some information. A Survival check DC 15 will reveal heavy booted humanoids, possibly orcs, moving to the east (towards the Torkeep region). If the check was 25 or larger, they will discover two sets of enormous bear tracks, possibly of a black bear, but one of huge size.

The following occurs around 3 p.m. of the second day of travel:

As you rise through the hills, the visibility from the mist seems to become a bit less. You can now see maybe 300 to 400 yards in front of you at any given time. Moving along the old road, you begin to notice the horizon is dark, as if a vast wall was there. As you get closer you see the darkness stretches as far as you can see to the left and right. It is, in fact, a massive cliff face of rock sticking out of the ground, its upper reaches obscured in mist. The ground looks as if the ground you are walking on was pushed down while the land ahead was pushed up.

The party will discover the rock wall is a cliff, approximately 100' tall. The road does wind along the cliff face, eventually reaching the top. While there is not a danger to parties (unless they are truly acting foolish), advise the party as they begin their ascent the winds are picking up and are approaching the 30 mile per hour mark. When the party reaches the upper level, the winds will abruptly stop. Presuming continual travel, the party will reach the temple around 6 p.m. of the second day of travel. See Encounter 4.

Encounter 3 – A Chink in the Armor

This next encounter will happen regardless of how the party is traveling. If traveling by land it happens on the 2nd day of traveling (out of 6) just before the party sets up camp. Otherwise, the encounter occurs just before the walls of the ruined temple, approximately 100 yards from its front entrance.

Either way, the party needs to believe their decision was the correct decision. Make the party feel like heroes, albeit heroes with a very real chance of getting in some serious trouble. The big difference in the encounters is that the party will have a chance to rest between encounters if they traveled by foot.

If the party traveled by land read or paraphrase the following:

The lands of Iuz have been rough traveling, but nothing like today. Your travels have been in a marshy area where the grasses and shrubs have grown to nearly 5 feet in height. Fortunately for you, the road you are on is dry and steady. This has allowed you to make good time, even though your visibility is limited to virtually what you see on the roadway.

But then, towards evening, the grasses and brushes have started to recede from the road area. You see that you are coming out of the marshlands into some low hills. Ahead of you, the road twists around an especially large hill. From where you stand, a cave can be seen facing you.

If the party used magic to teleport to the temple, or used other magic to arrive nearby, read or paraphrase the following:

Using your magic, you have arrived within 100 yards of the ruined temple of Heironeous. Heavy shrubbery and brushes fill the countryside save for the clearing you are in. The only other terrain feature is a low hill to the between you and the temple, and just to the left. A cave entrance can be seen in the front of it.

The cave is the lair of a/some monstrously huge owlbear(s). The owlbear(s) is NOT/are NOT in the lair, but is on the way back, traveling through the heavy brush with a silence that belies their size. These owlbears are advanced and quite powerful. See the tactics section, below, for information on how they will interact with the party.

The cave entrance is approximately 15' wide and winds down into the darkness. It is silent within, perhaps too silent. A sickly sweet smell hangs heavy in the air.

A character can use the Tracking to make a Survival check (DC 20) to find numerous bear tracks of incredible size leading in and out of the hard earth floor.

Anyone entering into the lair will find the tunnel (which is 20' tall) widening to 30' wide. It curves and ends in a 60' by 60' chamber. The chamber is filled with bones of humanoid (orc/bugbear/goblin) and not so humanoid nature (mostly unidentifiable except for a wyvern skull). The smell comes from the rotting carcass of a deer. There will be an obvious nest made of the skin of killed animals, branches, and the like. In the nest will be a number of round spheres, each about the size of a human head. They are dark brown and almost scale like in texture. These are griffon eggs and the number available will depend on the APL. The owlbear(s) raided a nest and brought some eggs back to their lair to snack on. See Treasure, below.

APL 6 (EL 8)

🦉 Owlbear, Advanced (1): hp 216; see *Appendix A*.

APL 8 (EL 10)

🦉 Owlbear, Advanced (2): hp 216 each; see *Appendix A*.

APL 10 (EL 12)

🦉 Owlbear, Fiendish Advanced (2): hp 216 each; see *Appendix A*.

APL 12 (EL 14)

🦉 Owlbear, Fiendish Advanced (4): hp 216 each; see *Appendix A*.

Tactics: In order to survive, these owlbeats have grown enormously huge living in the foul lands of Iuz. They are not stupid and are in fact quite canny. They are currently on the other side of the hill, wandering back to their lair.

They are moving as silently as possible (+0 Move Silent for the Advanced Owlbeats and +15 for the Monster of Legend Owlbeats) as they are a bit nervous about the recent activity in the area (army activity if encountered on day two – I.E. the party traveled by land, or activity within the temple if encountered at the temple – I.E. the party traveled by magic).

If the party goes to investigate the cave, the owlbeats will return to the area about 6 rounds after the party has entered the cave. This means that some party members may in fact be outside the lair, with others inside the lair! Additionally, if some party members go forward to scout around the hill, they may be caught unawares by the owlbeats, who happen to have the Scent ability! These monsters are real killers and will mercilessly and ruthlessly fight for their home.

Development: Defeating the owlbeats will allow the party to easily loot the lair of these monsters.

Treasure: A clutch of griffon eggs. At APL 6 there will be 1 egg, at APL 8, 2 eggs. At APL 10 there will be 3 eggs and

at APL 12 4 eggs. These are oddly colored and will be worth substantially less than normal to collectors, fetching only 1200 gp each.

APL 6: *griffon egg*, 200 gp

APL 8: 2 *griffon eggs*, 400 gp

APL 10: 3 *griffon eggs*, 600 gp

APL 12: 4 *griffon eggs*, 800 gp.

Encounter 4 – Better Off Dead

The area in front of the temple proper is dry cracked land, as if it was hit by massive amounts of fire. Only the occasional weed or sickly bush manages to poke through the ground. The temple is set with its back butted up against a hill. The area in front of it is about 300 feet in diameter.

Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

The blasted lands in front of you, perhaps 300 feet across, are baked, as if from a great heat. Occasionally you will notice a weed or brush trying to grow from the otherwise desiccated ground. The entire area seems almost as if someone wanted to punish it merely for existing. But the land, however, seems to have gotten off easy.

The temple itself has been ruined beyond words. Around the temple grounds, the skeleton of a wrought iron fence can be seen; boxing in what must have been a 100' by 100' square courtyard or garden. Much of the iron is melted and twisted from some immeasurable heat, and then, with more than a hint of malevolence, reworked. A pattern has been formed on both sides of the gate area: out of the rusted hunks of iron you can clearly see the laughing skull holy symbol of Iuz.

The walls of the temple behind are smashed. Some of the sections stand perhaps 6 to 8 feet high, its granite walls covered with scorch marks, but most are just rubble. Of the four statues to Heironeous that at one time must have stood in the courtyard area, only one remains nearly intact. Even so, the head is missing as well as the metal weapon it must have held.

Between the gate area and the temple itself, there is a path of white stones, pounded into the ground.

The party can investigate this area. Characters with tracking can learn with a successful Survival check (DC 25) that a single human has gone into the temple area in the last week. It looks as if the foot traffic indicates the person went around the courtyard (including near the statue if anyone asks). There is no other side of life.

When the party approaches the path from the garden to the temple read or paraphrase the following:

Approaching the stone path reveals the path is not made of stone at all. Instead the road surface is

that of skulls, hundreds upon hundreds of skulls, all sunk deep into the ground.

If the party digs up any of the skulls, an even more horrible discovery will be made. The entire corpse was apparently buried beneath the surface! Due to the horrible twisting of the skeletons, it is likely these were people who were buried alive... As to the statues, a Knowledge Architecture and Engineering, Knowledge History, Knowledge Religion, or Bardic Knowledge check DC 25 (with a +2 circumstance modifier for followers of Heironeous) will reveal that it was common, given the age of the structure (over 100 years old) for there to have been four statues to Heironeous: Heironeous the Warrior (holding a battle axe), Heironeous the Just (holding a sword), Heironeous the Defender (carrying a shield) and Heironeous the Good (carrying nothing, but with outstretched hands in a manner similar to a paladin laying on hands). The intact statue was probably either The Warrior or the Just.

Once the party enters the temple area, read or paraphrase the following:

The area where the temple was is nothing but a rubble filled box. Outlines where walls must have been are suggested by some of the masses of stone. The force used to destroy this holy site must have been overwhelming.

The party can search the area, but no skill check is required to find a clearing in the rubble. It is at the far rear of the temple (where the library must have been). In the center of the cleared area is a stone slab, moved to one side of a opening in the earth. It is shaped like an octagon and each edge is five feet long. The heavy slab must weigh 75 pounds! Looking down the hole will reveal a simple passage leading down a stone spiral staircase into the catacombs below.

Encounter Five: Noble Intentions

Traversing the narrow spiral staircase leads your party down deep into the darkness. Empty torch sconces appear once every 15, their iron forms mute sentinels to your travels. By conservative estimations, the stairs, which must have been carved from the very earth and stone beneath the old abbey, descend nearly 100 feet.

Upon reaching the bottom, the stairs spill out into a man-made cavern forty feet in diameter. The walls are carved with images of the god Heironeous engaged in various acts of selfless heroism. All of the images have recently been defaced. There is a low buzzing noise in the air, which you realize is coming from a few small black flies.

Upon examination, the room is revealed to have 8 passages leading off from it, each merely 5' in width and 10' high. Seven of the tunnels are choked with dust and webbing. One of the hallways, while not clear of such debris, has been traveled recently. A clear set of human sized boot prints goes forward into the darkness.

All of these passages are twisty, and except for the traveled passage, intersect at odd locations. At 10 foot intervals there are alcoves where the inhabitants used to bury their dead. All told, there are perhaps 100 to 150 bodies (down the 8th traveled passage there are only 4 such alcoves, containing a total of 20 bodies), all wrapped in burial cloths of a deep blue material with silver trim. The cloth is old and rotting due to age. The bodies are mere skeletons. Around each of their necks hangs a silver holy symbol of Heironeous. There is nothing else of value. Anyone who removes a holy symbol from a body earns a curse from Heironeous for disturbing the rest of his faithful followers (and gains the Brand of Heironeous). If a character already has the Brand of Heironeous, that character will gain "Shunned by Heironeous". These holy symbols are worth nearly nothing (12 gp each).

When the party moves down the last corridor, read or paraphrase the following to them:

This corridor is five feet wide and ten feet tall. The dust and cobwebs are less here, as if recently brushed aside. A clear set of human footprints leads into the darkness. The buzzing sound has increased, as have the number of flies.

The eighth (traveled passage) is approximately 100' long. At the 20' and 70' mark there will be a burial alcove on either side of the passageway (See above). About 40' down on the left is a small 5'x 5' alcove. Inside is a shrine to Heironeous. There is a small altar and the tatters remains of a blue pillar.

The shrine is both a reminder for the faithful to pray, as well as the trigger mechanism for a trap. The next two five foot sections of the hallway after the shrine contain pit traps. A pressure plate rests beneath the area where the pillow was sitting. Kneeling on the pillow while praying would deactivate the pressure plate for one hours of time (after which it would reset). Fortunately for the party, the trap doors covering the pits have long since crumbled away, leaving gaping holes in the earth. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

Just past the shrine are two gaping holes in the passageway. Each is five foot across and quite deep. They are separated by a thin stone wall.

The first pit is 20 feet deep. At the bottom is the wreckage of the trap lid and mechanism. A number of metal gears as well as some rotted wood with thin slats of stone glued to it lie at the bottom of the pit.

The second pit is 100 feet deep. At the

bottom of this pit are the remains of the trap lid and mechanism (see above) as well as the skeletal corpses of two half-orcs (temple raiders who did not know about this trap, apparently...).

At the end of the hallway is 15' wide alcove. It is 15' across. Set into the far wall is a pair of iron doors. The walls here are carved with all sorts of Heironean images. There are images of the god feeding the poor, punishing the wicked, fighting against hordes of foes, healing the infirm, that sort of thing. All of these images have recently been defaced. It appears as if they have been clawed as well as hacked into. If a player uses Knowledge Planes, they may make a skill check (DC 30) to realize the claw marks are of some sort of demonic origin.

The buzzing of the flies is louder and the ceiling actually has a number of small clouds of the black flies. There is a long black line separating the two iron doors. Close inspection reveals the line is a vast number of the small black flies, clustered along the dividing line.

The doors are not locked. When the party opens the doors, read or paraphrase the following to the party.

With the doors open, an image born of nightmare can be seen. In front of you is a vast domed chamber, 20 feet on each side and perhaps 30 feet tall at the center. The room is 60 feet across. On the opposite side is a single door of iron. This room was once a hidden refuge for the cloistered clerics to meditate and worship Heironeous without any interference. Now it is a slaughter house. Despite the singular footprints you saw in the corridor leading here, the corners of the room are filled with corpses of humanoids, all mangled beyond recognition. The floor is sticky with dried blood and the bodies have been used to paint symbols and oaths to Iuz on the walls, including the vile words "Iuz save us!" The buzzing of flies in this room is nearly overwhelming, and the areas over the bodies can truly be called "clouds of flies".

However, none of this can compare to the rooms skeletal inhabitant. A dark aura of power surrounds the towering humanoid skeleton with huge skeletal bat wings. Lurid flames dance from its bones. In one clawed hand of bone it carries a black sword whose surfaces is kissed with flames. In the other hand, it bears a whip licked by tongues of flame.

These monsters are skeletal balors. They were a gift to the new master of the temple. See the Adventure Summary above for more information.

At APL 8 and above add

Also, shambling from the pile of corpses comes a (some) gaunt skeletal corpse(s), the rib cage(s) filled with horrid, writhing viscera.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ **Skeletal Balor, Flaming Sword (1):** hp 130; see *Appendix A*.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ **Skeletal Balor, Flaming Sword (1):** hp 130; see *Appendix A*.

☛ **Mohrg (1):** hp 91; See *Monster Manual* page 189.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☛ **Skeletal Balor, Vorpal Sword (1):** hp 130; see *Appendix A*.

☛ **Mohrg (3):** hp 91; See *Monster Manual* page 189.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ **Skeletal Balor, Vorpal Sword (1):** hp 130; see *Appendix A*.

☛ **Mohrg (7):** hp 91; See *Monster Manual* page 189.

NOTE: The EL's for this encounter are enhanced because the new master of the temple has cast spells into this area. Even though those spells are taken from his available spells for the day, it is believed these spells change the encounter significantly enough to warrant a +1 EL.

Tactic: The undead will try not to be lured out of the room but will be merciless in attempting to destroy anyone who enters the room. The skeletal balor has an excellent chance of pulling someone through the doorway using the flaming whip. The undead are instructed to guard the room against intruders.

The undead work quite well together: The mohrg will act to a limited extent as screeners for the skeletal balor who has a better reach. Further, the mohrg will tend to stick to paralyzing attacks as much as initially possible, giving the skeletal balor easier targets.

The room itself has been enhanced by the new master of the temple (See encounter 9, below). The following spell enhancements have been placed on the room. All of these enhancements are recent, reducing the new master's spells available.

APL 6: *desecrate*, caster level 8. This area is not treated as a "permanent shrine". This gives the skeletal balor an additional +20 hp, and a +1 profane bonus on

attack, damage and savings throws. Turning attempts suffer a -3 profane penalty.

APL 8: *Desecrate*, caster level 10. This area is not treated as a “permanent shrine”. This gives the skeletal balor +20 hp, the mohrg +14 hp, and a +1 profane bonus on attack, damage and savings throws. Turning attempts suffer a -3 profane penalty.

Unhallow, caster level 10. This area is now an unholy site. Turning attempts suffer a -4 unnamed penalty. The entire room is under the effect of a *magic circle against good* spell (All evil creatures within gain +2 deflection bonus to AC and a +2 resistance bonus to saves versus attacks and spells from good creatures. Evil creatures in the area cannot be possessed. Good summoned creatures cannot enter the room unless it succeeds on a spell resistance check.). The spell *invisibility purge* is tied to the room via the *unhallow* spell.

APL 10: *Desecrate*, caster level 12. This area is not treated as a “permanent shrine”. This gives the skeletal balor +20 hp, the mohrg +14 hp, and a +1 profane bonus on attack, damage and savings throws. Turning attempts suffer a -3 profane penalty.

Unhallow, caster level 12. This area is now an unholy site. Turning attempts suffer a -4 unnamed penalty. The entire room is under the effect of a *magic circle against good* spell (All evil creatures within gain +2 deflection bonus to AC and a +2 resistance bonus to saves versus attacks and spells from good creatures. Evil creatures in the area cannot be possessed. Good summoned creatures cannot enter the room unless it succeeds on a spell resistance check.). The spell *invisibility purge* is tied to the room via the *unhallow* spell.

Forbiddance, caster level 11. This spell will do 6d6 points of damage to creatures who are not chaotic and 6d6 points of damage to creatures who are not evil (12d6 points of damage to creatures neither chaotic nor evil). There is a Will save for ½ damage (DC 21). The password to avoid this damage is “Iuz save us”, just as is written on the walls in blood. Dispel magic will not get rid of this spell unless the caster level is higher than level 12. Note: An especially evil tactic is to drag a party member into the room with the skeletal balor’s flaming whip, triggering this effect...

APL 12: *Desecrate*, caster level 14. This area is treated as a “permanent shrine”. This gives the skeletal balor +40 hp, the mohrg +28 hp, and a +2 profane bonus on attack, damage and savings throws. Turning attempts suffer a -6 profane penalty.

Unhallow, caster level 14. This area is now an unholy site. Turning attempts suffer a -4 unnamed penalty. The entire room is under the effect of a *magic circle against good* spell (All evil creatures within gain +2

deflection bonus to AC and a +2 resistance bonus to saves versus attacks and spells from good creatures. Evil creatures in the area cannot be possessed. Good summoned creatures cannot enter the room unless it succeeds on a spell resistance check.). The spell *invisibility purge* is tied to the room via the *unhallow* spell.

Forbiddance, caster level 13. This spell will do 6d6 points of damage to creatures who are not chaotic and 6d6 points of damage to creatures who are not evil (12d6 points of damage to creatures neither chaotic nor evil). There is a Will save for ½ damage (DC 21). The password to avoid this damage is “Iuz save us”, just as is written on the walls in blood. Dispel magic will not get rid of this spell unless the caster level is higher than level 14.

Development: With the undead destroyed, the party is free to move on to the final set of doors. The skeletal balor will dissolve into a cloud of steam upon its destruction. The bodies are of human and demihumans. They were apparently ripped to shreds and piled in the corners, apparently by the skeletal balor. The mohrg was apparently created through the extreme tortures they endured. Characters should wonder, though, where did these bodies come from? A successful Heal check (DC 20) will reveal the victims actually died from some sort of disease!

Treasure: None. The possessions of a skeletal balor turn to smoke and slag with the destruction of the balor.

Upon destroying the last of the undead, or if the party during combat takes any time at all to really look at their surroundings, read or paraphrase the following to the party:

On the far side of the chamber of horrors is a single door made of iron. A vile symbol of magic is scribed into its surface. Wisps of smoke can be seen curling from under its edges. The smoke has the hint of a burnt paper smell.

The symbol is a glyph of warding (caster level is 8, 10, 12 or 14 depending on the APL. See the room’s spell effects above). It is a blast glyph and will deal 4d8 of cold damage at APL 6, and 5d8 damage at all other APLs. The password for the glyph is “Glory to Iuz” in any language.

Encounter Six: May the Axe Grow Great

Beyond the door is a stone chamber 40 feet square. Note that some of the spell effects from Encounter Five may extend to this room. The inhabitant of the room is none other than Shelton Halfhand, now known as Shelton Plaguebringer, Master of the Temple.

The room is set up as a shrine to Iuz in his (lesser known) aspect as plague god.

Upon opening the doors, read or paraphrase the following:

As the door opens, a few rats scurry to the far corners of a room obviously dedicated to the evil that is Iuz. The room is splattered with blood, staining the walls a rusty red. Thick smoke comes from the center of the floor, where a fire is slowly dwindling in a censer of brass. Against the far wall is a stone sarcophagus, its stone cover shattered on the floor.

Standing in the room is a sickly figure. His brown hair hangs in oily strands, his once piercing eyes watery and yellowed. His skin, once fair is now covered with open sores and purplish marks. Unbelievably, the man before you is none other than Shelton Halfhand! His robes are ripped and died a sticky looking red. In one of his hands he drags a rusty greatsword, bits of granite stuck to its handle. His holy symbol to Heironeous has been beaten to a pulp and reworked into the grinning evil skull of Iuz. On his head is a crown of blackened silver.

He looks at you and sneers "So, you meddling fools just could not leave well enough alone! That's fine by me. You've saved me the trouble of tracking you down as gifts to my new master!"

APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Shelton Plaguebringer:** hp 50; see *Appendix A*.

APL 8 (EL 9)

☛ **Shelton Plaguebringer:** hp 62; see *Appendix A*.

APL 10 (EL 11)

☛ **Shelton Plaguebringer:** hp 74; see *Appendix A*.

APL 12 (EL 13)

☛ **Shelton Plaguebringer:** hp 86; see *Appendix A*.

Tactics: Shelton is thoroughly insane with hatred for the pathfinders. He is especially hateful of those that are "Wanted by the Council". Against such characters he has a +1 morale bonus to hit and to damage. Characters that are "Wanted by the Council" will undoubtedly also feel a sense of rage at this man. They will gain a +1 morale bonus to hit and damage him. See the Shield Lands Metaorganization book for more information on "Wanted by the Council".

Shelton will be able to hear any loud fighting noises from the other room. The iron door is only a -4 modifier to listen checks. After the first round of fighting, he will

have one round to cast preparatory spells for each round the party is fighting. He has many "buff" spells lasting minutes, such as *bull's strength* and *bear's endurance* that will enhance his abilities. He also, at higher levels, has an additional *glyph of warding* that he can place on the ground between himself and the door (but not so close that it would be triggered by any of his summoned monsters). Shelton is also infected by disease. His sword (stolen from the statue outside) is caked with blood – some of which is Shelton's. As a result, any time he hits a character and damages them, there is a chance they become diseased (See Appendix A). Finally, there are a few (5) ordinary rats in the room that could be targets of a *giant vermin* spell.

Treasure: None. His greatsword is rusted junk (It was busted off of one of the statues outside – See Encounter Four, above). Its amazing it survived the fight. His armor has been trashed by carving Iuzian holy symbols in it to the point where its not worth much more than merely melting it down for raw iron. As to the helm, it does not radiate magic at all and upon inspection appears to be cheaply made of iron and tin and worth virtually nothing. The burned out censer is old and brittle and has seen one too many fire.

Development: When Shelton dies, his body will puff out, expanding for just a moment and then explode in a 40 foot radius. Any character caught within the blast may become infected with the disease "Breath of Iuz". The Fortitude save is DC 11 + ½ APL. Thus, at APL 6 the DC is 14, at APL 8, the DC is 15, at APL 10 the DC is 16, and at APL 12 the DC is 17. See the section "Items for the Adventure Record" for more information.

Searching the ashes of the brass censer will reveal just enough scraps of paper to confirm the worst: Shelton has burned all his notes on the spies in Critwall. *Mending* or *make whole* won't recover the notes, but will reconstitute the paper itself...

The sarcophagus is man-sized and covered with carvings dedicated to Heironeous as the protector. Looking inside will reveal rotted cloths. There is crown sized ring indentation in the very center of them. If the cloths are picked up, the bottom may be examined for a false bottom: search check (DC 20). In the false bottom is the "Helm of Heironeous", as well as a bag of gems (a mixture of rubies, diamonds and sapphires) and a true copy of the book "Lilbram Del Vagoth". The book itself is a holy relic and has no gold piece value. Players who want to keep the book will find its rarity almost a curse as no responsible book seller will dare to purchase it and any church will demand it be turned over to them as a holy relic (either to be studied or destroyed depending on how they view the church of Heironeous).

The helm is silver with diamond, ruby and sapphire insets. The shape of it is really more of an elaborate bowl-

shaped helmet with a ring of spikes sticking out of. It is covered with intricate interlocking rings carved over the entire surface, giving the illusion it is made of fine chainmail.

The helm is a *helm of opposite alignment*. Putting on the helm incurs a will save DC 15 to avoid having the player's alignment irrevocably exchanged to as opposite of an alignment as possible. Once the helm has successfully altered an alignment, it loses all of its magic and takes on the appearance of worthless junk.

Reading the Libram Del Vagoth would take months. The writings in it appear in faded ink, smudged ink, crumbling pages, and worse. That said, careful perusal, looking for entries regarding the Helm of Heironeous, is possible. A successful Profession Scribe check (DC 20) or Knowledge Religion check (DC 25) (with a +2 circumstance bonus for followers of Heironeous) will provide Player's Handout Three after only 8 hours of study.

Treasure:

APL All – *helm of opposite alignment*, 333 gp.

APL 6 – bag of gems, 200 gp

APL 8 – bag of gems, 400 gp

APL 10 – bag of gems, 800 gp

APL 12 – bag of gems, 1200 gp

Conclusion –The Rescue

Depending on how the party manages to escape the temple and return to Critwall, read or paraphrase the following:

Your return to Critwall was a question filled journey. What had happened during your absence? The borders near the Ritensa river remain quiet, and, except for proving your credentials to some Greycloaks scouting the region, you are able to make your way back to the capital.

There you are unable to meet with Lady Katarina. You learn she has taken soldiers and has ridden off to the aid of Lord Torkeep. Rumors on the street is that Iuzians have invaded and are laying siege to the keep earlier than expected. No one knows if the Lady will be in time.

On your way to the Church of Holy Shielding, you run into Knight Arbas. He asks if you heard the news. "The Lady met with the council. She told them she is reinstating the original charter! This makes the council advisory to the Knight Commander. It is Lady Katarina who will nominate vacant positions on the council. It is our Lady who will make final decisions on affairs of state, based on the council's advice! It

seems her death becomes her. She is truly a leader now."

Ritherian and Wilton Gammet do meet with you to hear your report. Both are terribly saddened by the loss of Shelton's information and even more so at the loss of Shelton. With a tear in one eye, Wilton says "He had noble intentions. Feel no remorse for your deeds for it was his own pride that killed him."

They take, with amazement, the ancient book. It is a treasure they could never have expected and its contents may reveal much knowledge that could help the Shield Lands in its time of troubles. Ritherian tells you "You should be proud of your accomplishments. Through you, the Shield Lands has real hope. Your willingness to risk your lives for others is the heart and soul of our land. You have our most humble thanks. As a small token, make sure you examine the stores of weapons and items held by the church. There may be something there you find useful."

Leaving the church you see the streets in front of you: each a road heading in a different direction. You know that whatever road you take will lead to adventure as long as you remain a hero of the Shield Lands!

The End

Experience Point Summary

Encounter Three

Defeat the Owlbeats

APL6 240 xp; APL8 300 xp; APL10 360 xp;

APL12 420 xp.

Encounter Five

Defeat the Skeletal Balors

APL6 270 xp; APL8 330 xp; APL10 390 xp;

APL12 450 xp.

Encounter Six

Defeat the Shelton Plaguebringer

APL6 210 xp; APL8 270 xp; APL10 330 xp;

APL12 390 xp.

Story Award

Objective(s) met: For successfully going to the lands of Iuz and filing a complete report with the Church of Holy Shielding.

APL6 180 xp; APL8 225 xp; APL10 270 xp;

APL12 315 xp.

Total possible experience:

APL6 900 xp; APL8 1125 xp; APL10 1350 xp;
APL12 1575 xp.

Treasure Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

Encounter Three:

APL 6: L: 200 gp
APL 8: L: 400 gp
APL 10: L: 600 gp
APL 12: L: 800 gp

Encounter Six:

APL 6: C: 200 gp, M: 333 gp
APL 8: C: 400 gp, M: 333 gp
APL 10: C 800 gp, M: 333 gp
APL 12: C 1200 gp, M: 333 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 6: L:200 gp, C: 200 gp, M: 333 gp.
Total = 733 gp
APL 8: L: 400 gp, C: 400 gp, M: 333 gp
Total = 1133 gp
APL 10: L: 600 gp, C 800 gp, M: 333 gp
Total = 1733 gp
APL 12: L: 800 gp, C 1200 gp, M: 333 gp
Total = 2333 gp

Items for the Adventure Record

Griffon Egg: You may purchase a single Griffon egg for 200 gp. You must have 5 ranks in Handle Animal or have Wild Empathy in order to do this. The access to this is regional but expires after you either purchase a single egg, or 1 year from the date of this AR has passed. After you have owned it for four adventures, and paid 2,000 gp for special training, you may write the triad to receive a young griffon.

The Breath of Iuz: You were within 40 feet of Shelton when he died. You have a magical disease. It may only be cured magically, but to do so requires a DC 35 caster check. If you have it for 52 TU it goes away. If you special receive campaign documentation it goes away. At the start of each adventure, roll 1d6. On a 1 your Strength is reduced by 2 for the adventure. On a 2 your Dexterity is reduced by 2 for the adventure. On a 3 your Constitution is reduced by 2 for the adventure. On a 4 your Intelligence is reduced by 2 for the adventure. On a 5 your Wisdom is reduced by 2 for the adventure. On a 6 your Charisma is reduced by 2 for the adventure. Your visage is pale with skull-like blotches over your entire body, and your voice is raspy, like bony claws on the inside of a casket's lid...

Gold or Glory: You may choose to keep the gems in which case you get the gold for it. If you turn the gems over to the church, you lose the gold for it but for the next 3 adventures you may invoke once per adventure, as a free action, the blessings of Heironeous. This gives you the effects of an *aid* spell at caster level 5.

Brand of Heironeous: As punishment for stealing from the dead, Heironeous has marked you as a thief. Your brand is invisible to all save clerics and paladins of Heironeous, who see it blazing clearly upon your forehead, even if covered. Because you are marked as a criminal, you receive a situational penalty of -10 when attempting to use Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Hide or Perform against clerics and paladins of the Archpaladin. Only a *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse* or *wish* spell cast by a 12th or higher level spellcaster can remove the brand from your brow.

Shunned by Heironeous: As punishment for repeatedly stealing from the dead, Heironeous has marked you as a thief. You retain all the effects of the Brand of Heironeous. Further, healing spells and abilities of devotees of Heironeous will not affect you. You lose all influence you hold with any Heironean church. This may only be removed by donating 1000 gp to the Church of Heironeous and by acquiring an *atonement*.

Item Access

APL 6:

Potion of Keen Edge (oil) (Frequency Adventure, DMG)
+1 Crossbow of Reloading (Frequency Adventure, MH)
Masterwork dwarven buckler axe (Frequency Regional, CW)
Masterwork maul (Frequency Region, CW)
Horn of Volume (Frequency Adventure, MH)

APL 8: (All of APL 6 plus the following)

Tan Bag of Tricks (Frequency Adventure, DMG)
Standard of Courage (Frequency Regional, CW)

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

Ring of Protection +3 (Frequency Adventure, DMG)
Divine scroll of summon monster IX (Frequency Adventure, DMG)

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

Dwarven Plate (Frequency Adventure, DMG)
Lance of the Last Rider (Frequency Regional, MH)

Appendix A

OWLBEAR (Advanced to 15 hit dice)

Huge Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 15d10+120 (216 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (-2 size, +8 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +23/+31

Attack: Claw +23 melee (2d6+10)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +23 melee (2d6+10) and bite +21 melee (3d6+5)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab

Special Qualities: Scent

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +9, Will +6

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 10, Con 26, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +6

Feats: Alertness, Track, Improved Natural Attack (Bite), Improved Natural Attack (Claws), Multiattack

Environment: Temperate Forests

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 13-15 (Huge)

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this special ability, an owlbear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Scent: The monster can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, this increases to 60 feet. If the opponent is downwind, this drops to 15 feet. It can pinpoint the source of a scent within 5 feet. Further it can Track using its Survival skill. See Monster Manual page 314.

FIENDISH OWLBEAR (Advanced to 15 hit dice)

Huge Extra-Planar Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 15d10+120 (216 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 16 (-2 size, +8 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 16

Base Attack/Grapple: +23/+31

Attack: Claw +23 melee (2d6+10)

Full Attack: 2 Claws +23 melee (2d6+10) and bite +21 melee (3d6+5)

Space/Reach: 15 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Improved Grab, Smite Good +15

Special Qualities: Scent, Darkvision 60', Damage Reduction 10/magic, Cold Resistance 10, Fire Resistance 10, Spell Resistance 20.

Saves: Fort +17, Ref +9, Will +6

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 10, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +10, Survival +6, Move Silent +15

Feats: Alertness, Track, Improved Natural Attack (Bite), Improved Natural Attack (Claws), Multiattack

Environment: Temperate Forests

Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3-8)

Challenge Rating: 10

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 13-15 (Huge)

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this special ability, an owlbear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Scent: The monster can detect opponents within 30 feet by sense of smell. If the opponent is upwind, this increases to 60 feet. If the opponent is downwind, this drops to 15 feet. It can pinpoint the source of a scent within 5 feet. Further it can Track using its Survival skill. See Monster Manual page 314.

UNDEAD BALOR (Skeletal)

Large Outsider: (Undead, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 20d12 (130 hp)

Initiative: +12 (+8 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (-1 size, +7 Dex, +2 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+26

Attack: +1 *flaming longsword* +22 melee (APL 6 and 8), +1 *vorpal longsword* +22 (APL 10 and 12)

Full Attack: +1 *flaming longsword* +22/+17 melee (2d6+13 + 1d6 fire/19-20) (at APL 6 and 8), +1 *vorpal longsword* +22/+17 (APL 10 and 12); or +1 *flaming whip* +22/+17 melee (1d4+4 plus 1d6 fire plus entangle); or two claws +19 melee (1d6+12)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. (20 ft. with +1 *flaming whip*)

Special Attacks: Entangle, flaming sword

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60', immunity to cold, mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, and death effects, not subject to critical hits, not subject to damage to its physical (str, dex, con) ability scores, flaming body

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +14, Will +12

Abilities: Str 35, Dex 27, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Skills: Listen +8, Spot +8

Feats: Improved Initiative

Environment: Areas of great evil such as a desecrated temple

Organization: Solitary or as created

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: none

Alignment: neutral evil

Advancement: 21-30 HD (Large); 31-60 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: -

A dark aura of power surrounds this towering humanoid skeleton with huge skeletal bat wings. Lurid flames dance from its bones. In one clawed hand of bone it carries a black sword whose surface is kissed with flames. In the other hand, it bears a whip licked by tongues of flame.

An undead balor is created through only the most powerful of magics. Typically an extremely high level mage or cleric must first summon and defeat a balor, and then, before its defeated body can be returned (explosively) to the abyss from which it came, capture its fleeting form for the necessary necromantic rituals. These fearsome creatures tend to make excellent guardians. In the present case, this was created in Doraaka by the dark wizards and clerics in the Old One's employ. It is a gift to the new pride and joy of the dark empire: Shelton Plaguebringer!

An undead balor's natural weapons, in addition to any weapon it wields, are treated as evil-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

Entangle (Ex): An undead balor's *+1 flaming whip* is a long, flexible weapon with many tails tipped with hooks, spikes, and balls. The weapon deals bludgeoning and slashing damage in addition to fire damage and can damage opponents wearing armor. It entangles foes much like an attack with a net. The whip has 20 hit points. The whip needs no folding. If it hits, the target and the undead balor immediately make opposed Strength checks; if the undead balor wins, it drags the target against its flaming body (see below). The target remains anchored against the undead balor's body until it escapes the whip, taking the fire damage from the whip (1D6) each round. Upon the destruction of the undead balor, the whip turns to ash.

Flaming Sword (Su): (APL 6 and 8) Every undead balor carries a *+1 flaming sword*. This weapon is like a black iron spike with a cruel looking black metal hilt. Flames ripple from its blade. Upon destruction of the undead balor, the sword turns to melted slag.

Flaming Body (Su): The body of an undead balor is wreathed in flame (though ever so slightly less hot as those it generated when alive). Anyone grappling an undead balor (or entangled against its body – in which case it also takes fire damage from the whip, see above) takes fire damage each round:

At APL 6, this amount is 4d4.

At APL 8, this amount is 5d4.

At APL 10 and 12 this amount is 6d4.

Skills: Undead balors retain their +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Vorpal Sword (Su): (APL 10 and 12) Every undead balor carries a +1 vorpal sword. This weapon is like a black iron spike with a cruel looking black metal hilt. On the roll of a natural 20 to hit, followed by a successful confirmation, the sword will cut off the head of the target. Upon destruction of the balor, the sword turns to melted slag.

Second Wind (from Miniatures Handbook)

You can shrug off minor wounds with ease.

Benefit: Once per day, as a free action, you can heal yourself of a number of points of damage equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum 1).

Appendix B

APL 6 (EL 7)

Shelton Plaguebringer: male human clr 7; CR 7; medium human (suloise); HD 7d8+7 (clr): hp 50; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+7 Half Plate]; BA/G +5/+6; Atk +7 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); SA Plague Infested SQ Evil Domain, Trickery Domain; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +11; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11, Knowledge Religion +5, Knowledge Nobility +4, Profession Scribe +6, Spellcraft +11; Iron Will, Weapon Focus Greatsword, Weapon Proficiency Greatsword.

Special Attacks: Plague Infested. Any attack that hits from Shelton carries Filth Fever (see DMG page 292). The save DC is 13 and is constitution based.

Spells Prepared (6/6/5/4/3; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—[*detect magic* x2, *guidance* x2, *resistance* x2]; 1st—*doom**, *bane*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*invisibility**, *desecrate*, *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *silence*, 3rd—*nondetection**, *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, 4th—*confusion**, *divine power*, *giant vermin*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil Domain (evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery Domain (add bluff, disguise and hide to class skills).

Possessions: Half Plate, Greatsword, False Helm of Heironeous.

Physical Description: A balding man of moderate height. He has a full brown beard, streaked with grey, but no mustache. At one time he was handsome but now he is covered with open sores.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Shelton Plaguebringer: male human clr 9; CR 9; medium human (suloise); HD 9d8+9 (clr): hp 62; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+7 Half Plate]; BA/G +6/+1/+6 grapple; Atk +8 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); SA Plague Infested SQ Evil Domain, Pestilence Domain; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 19, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +13, Knowledge Religion +5, Knowledge Nobility +5, Profession Scribe +6, Spellcraft +13; Iron Will, Second Wind, Weapon Focus Greatsword, Weapon Proficiency Greatsword.

Special Attacks: Plague Infested. Any attack that hits from Shelton carries Filth Fever (see DMG page 292). The save DC is 13 and is constitution based.

Spells Prepared (6/6/6/5/4/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—[*detect magic* x2, *guidance* x2, *resistance* x2]; 1st—*doom**, *bane*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*invisibility**, *desecrate*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *silence*, 3rd—*nondetection**, *bestow curse*, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *glyph of warding*, 4th—*confusion**, *divine power*, *giant vermin*, *summon monster IV*; 5th—*dispel good**, *unhallow*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil Domain (evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery Domain (add bluff, disguise and hide to class skills).

Possessions: Half Plate, Greatsword, False Helm of Heironeous.

Physical Description: A balding man of moderate height. He has a full brown beard, streaked with grey, but no mustache. At one time he was handsome but now he is covered with open sores.

APL 10 (EL 11)

Shelton Plaguebringer: male human clr 10; CR 11; medium human (suloise); HD 11d8+11 (clr): hp 74; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+7 Half Plate]; BA/G +8/+3/+9 grapple; Atk +10 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); SA Plague Infested SQ Evil Domain, Pestilence Domain; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 19, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Knowledge Religion +5, Knowledge Nobility +5, Profession Scribe +6, Spellcraft +14; Iron Will, Second Wind, Weapon Focus Greatsword, Weapon Proficiency Greatsword.

Special Attacks: Plague Infested. Any attack that hits from Shelton carries Filth Fever (see DMG page 292). The save DC is 13 and is constitution based.

Spells Prepared (6/7/6/6/5/3/2; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0—[*detect magic* x2, *guidance* x2, *resistance* x2]; 1st—*doom**, *bane*, *divine favor*, *doom*, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*invisibility**, *desecrate*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *silence*, 3rd—*nondetection**, *bestow curse* x2, *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *glyph of warding*, 4th—*confusion**, *divine power*, *giant vermin* x2, *summon monster IV*; 5th—*dispel good**, *slay living*, *unhallow*. 6th—*mislead**, *forbiddance*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil Domain (evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery Domain (add bluff, disguise and hide to class skills). *Possessions:* Half Plate, Greatsword, False Helm of Heironeous.

Physical Description: A balding man of moderate height. He has a full brown beard, streaked with grey, but no mustache. At one time he was handsome but now he is covered with open sores.

APL 12 (EL 13)

Shelton Plaguebringer: male human clr 10; CR 11; medium human (suloise); HD 13d8+13 (clr): hp 86; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+7 Half Plate]; BA/G +9/+4/+10 grapple; Atk +11 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10 +1, greatsword); SA Plague Infested SQ Evil Domain, Pestilence Domain; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +14; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 20, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +16, Heal +7 Knowledge Religion +5, Knowledge Nobility +5, Profession Scribe +7, Spellcraft +16; Iron Will, Second Wind, Spell Focus Necromancy, Weapon Focus Greatsword, Weapon Proficiency Greatsword.

Special Attacks: Plague Infested. Any attack that hits from Shelton carries Filth Fever (see DMG page 292). The save DC is 13 and is constitution based.

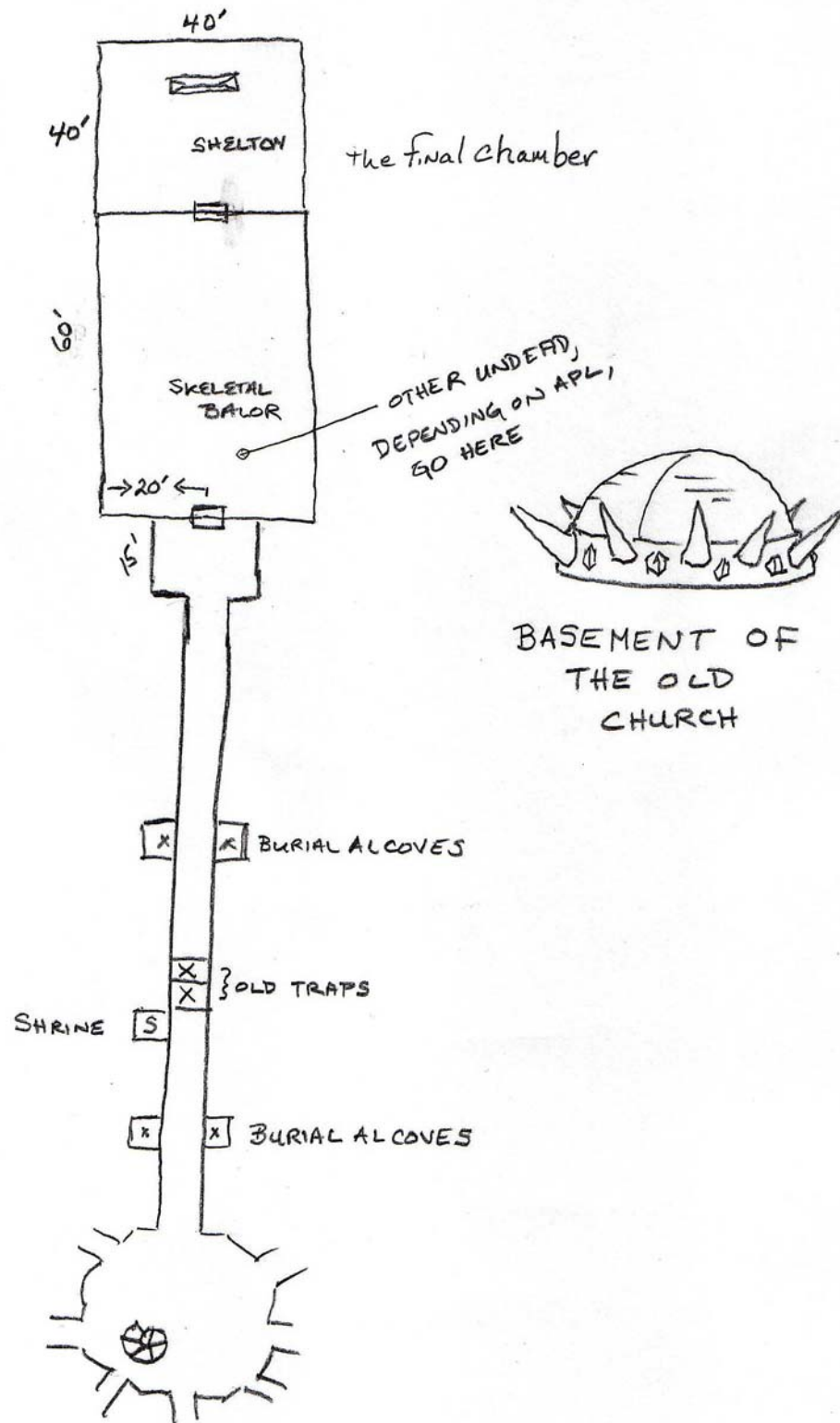
Spells Prepared (6/8/7/6/6/5/3/2; base DC = 14 + spell level +1 for necromantic spells): 0—[*detect magic* x2, *guidance* x2, *resistance* x2]; 1st—*doom**, *bane*, *divine favor*, *doom* x2, *entropic shield*, *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*invisibility**, ~~*desecrate*~~, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *darkness*, *owl's wisdom*, *silence*; 3rd—*nondetection**, *bestow curse* x2 *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, ~~*glyph of warding*~~; 4th—*confusion**, *divine power*, *giant vermin* x2, *poison*, *summon monster* IV; 5th—*dispel good**, *flame strike*, *slay living* x2, ~~*unhallow*~~; 6th—*mislead**, ~~*forbiddance*~~, *harm*; 7th—*blasphemy**, *inflict mass serious wounds*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil Domain (evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery Domain (add bluff, disguise and hide to class skills).

Possessions: Half Plate, Greatsword, False Helm of Heironeous.

Physical Description: A balding man of moderate height. He has a full brown beard, streaked with grey, but no mustache. At one time he was handsome but now he is covered with open sores.

Map



Player Handout One

The following takes place in Critwall. The party is not present for these events:

Dark clouds blanket the city of Critwall. No light from the morning sun makes its way to the streets and all is a gloomy shade of gray.

Today is the day that Katarina Walworth, Knight Commander of the Shield Lands, is taken from her glass coffin and put to the torch, releasing her body to join her soul. For the last two weeks, the population has been beside itself with grief. With each passing day, that grief has become more tangible.

Normally, paladins of Heironeous in general, and citizens of standing in particular, are buried. Since the occupation by Iuz, however, more times than not the torch rather than the shovel becomes the ultimate burial tool to keep the body from being later animated by evil.

The crowd around Critwall Keep is massive. One can only wonder if there is ANYONE not attending the ritual? Soldiers of the Standing Army stand at attention. Commoners crowd as close as they dare. Merchants stand shoulder to shoulder with Tent Town residents.

A carved wooden bed has been made, resting on stacks of oiled logs. The Lady's body, as beautiful as ever, has been laid upon the funeral pyre. To the side stands members of the Church of Holy Shielding. At the appropriate moment, they will cause a pillar of flame to consume the bed, the logs, and the Lady...

The Council of Lords (absent Torkeep – he sent notice that her body could be buried on his family estates, a request rejected by the Church) is in attendance. One by one, the Council gives Lady Katarina words of remembrance and words of praise. All of this is taken down by the council's secretary, Shelton Halfhand. Then the Church of Holy Shielding takes the dais. They chant prayers, sign hymns and lecture the crowd on the virtues of the Lady's life.

The moment finally arrives. All is silent save for the secretary's scratchings on parchment resting on stone writing tablet. Lord Enerick, Leader of the Council Temperi (Tempori is an old suloise term for temporary) steps to the dais and raises his hand. When it falls, so to will fall the fires from the heavens itself.

And then, just as Lord Enerick's hand is about to descend, Lady Katarina sits up! Some in the crowd scream, other's faint, most cheer. Looking around at her surroundings, she seems confused for but a moment. Then, dryly, she looks at the clerics and says with just a hint of a smile "It seems I'm feeling better. Your services will not be necessary..."

With that, she stands up and looks out at the crowd. She straightens the lines of her funeral dress and announces "My friends! Hear me please!" The crowd's din turns to a low murmur. "I have been the victim of a foul plot. My very soul was stolen from me. I do not know how long I have been away, but when I was gone, I learned much. I have returned and..." With that she stops, hesitating for a moment. She looks at the council. With a leap from her pyre she jumps towards the council dais. Grabbing an axe from an amazed soldier she points it at the council "You there! Surrender!"

What happened next is the stuff of legends. Six of the Council Members, and the secretary, Shelton Halfhand, had their forms ripple and twist. The very force of the Lady's voice causing their true doppelganger forms to be revealed. With a cry the foul beasts attacked but they were no match for the Lady's fury. With the assistance of the Soldiers, the beasts were soon dead. "It seems" the Lady says "much has changed while I have been away..."

Player's Handout Two

These are random scraps of paper discovered in the room of Shelton Halfhand. The books, scrolls or writings they may have come from are missing. The room was in complete disarray, standing in stark contrast to the orderly life Shelton led.

From the Diary of Shelton Halfhand (about two weeks after the recapture of South Keep):

I cannot believe the accolades layered on Kate. I know she is Knight Commander, but for the love of morning vespers, the woman attracts praise like garbage attracts flies. What of the soldiers? What of the commanders? What of the devotees? These are the true heroes of the day! And those cursed pathfinders! I am amazed they are not arrested or exiled. The chaos they bring to this region only attracts more chaos! It is clear to me. Strange events and dire deeds do not happen to the common folk... The average citizen, merchant, or lord does not find themselves embattled against invisible elves or traveling beneath the Nyr Dyv.

From the Diary of Shelton Halfhand, dated 2 days before the settlers left Tent Town to repopulate Gensal.

I have finally stumbled on a clever plan. I would never do evil against Kate, but if I can show her, personally, the errors of her ways, perhaps then she will denounce this chaos that is the pathfinders. I will arrange for some of those lack-jobs to be summoned to the keep. I know Kate will not be able to refuse inviting them on her little adventure once she sees them. But how to do it? I believe I will send them a note at a local pub to come immediately to the keep. These so-called heroes cannot resist a mystery!

From the Diary of Shelton Halfhand, dated 1 month ago.

She was right. There WAS one more box in the library. The ruins must have truly been filled with a treasure trove of knowledge in their time. I glanced through the box and, though most of the tomes were damaged and of little use, there was the Libram Del Vagoth, a work of great age. It relayed details on an artifact of great power that saved the Church of Heironeous from evil in the past. As loathsome as it may seem, if I can recover this item, it will bring glory to the church and its teachings and away from those cursed Pathfinders. MAY THE AXE GROW GREAT!

A note written on a scrap of paper:

Remember the key is the old Brightblade region. According to Merchant Guild maps, this would be two days march past the border along Horseman's Trail.

A scrap of ancient parchment, torn at the upper corner.

...and forsooth, the Helm verily did save us from that evil most foul. In reverence thereof it was with due haste put in eternal safety in the vaults of Kier-doon.

Player's Handout Three

Yea, verily, but the temple was under siege. But t'was no mortal source but a source burrowed deep within that assailed the noble ones. One by one the pious fell to its horrific malevolence. One by one they were consumed. Brother eyed brother with suspicion. Where they tainted by evil? Where they pure? None dared walk alone for fear of their neighbor.

The still devout prayed for a sign. They prayed for a miracle. They prayed for salvation. A sign was given, a miracle was performed. Salvation was provided. A commune from the heavens revealed that of the 12 remaining brothers, 9 were still pure and three were vile. The three were lit with fire and held by powers none of the devout could comprehend. Then the divine one, whose wings were the beating of a hurricane and whose voice was thunder appeared to the devout. With it were three of its celestial kin. Each presented the devout with a pillow of clouds. Resting on each was a silvered helm richly inlaid. Three times the helms were placed on the crowns of the lost. Three times the lost were found. The last helm was placed for safe keeping in the vaults of the temple, for use when times were dark once again.