

Storm Season

A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ VTF Metaregional Adventure set in Zeif

by Stephen Baker

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Special Thanks to Jeff Clare for Stephan!

The army of Ket has assembled at the behest of the Grand Mufti of the True Faith and marches on Ekbir to retrieve a lost pair of artifacts. Tusmit is split in terms of loyalty and Zeif stands alone in the Baklunish West, with no declared loyalties. An opportunity has arisen to possibly influence their stance, or perhaps simply do good in a region where something unnatural has taken hold. An adventure with some investigation for levels 4-15 (APL 6-14) and part of the Unity and Discord Series.

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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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2008.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

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

PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated

form in the adventure text. Refer to Appendix 1 for full information on NPCs and monsters. For your convenience, Appendix 1 is split by APL.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure record (AR). You need one copy of this for each participating player.

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the adventurers participating in the adventure. To calculate the Average Party Level (APL), follow the process below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure. Each PC may bring one animal, plus any creatures gained from class abilities to help in combat. (PCs can bring more creatures but they cannot help in combat). If you deem that the animal bestows a significant benefit in combat add the animal's CR to the level of the PC it is accompanying for calculating APL. (Animals gained from class abilities and one standard horse, warhorse, or riding dog for a PC with Mounted Combat do not affect APL).
2. Sum the results of step 1 and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
3. If you are running a table of six adventurers, add one to that average.

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

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. A player character more than three levels higher than the APL at which the adventure is played cannot participate. If a player character is more than two levels away from the APL at which the adventure is played, he suffers a 50% penalty to the amount of gold and XP gained in the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

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

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

These APL calculation rules are taken from *Living Greyhawk Campaign Standards* 7.1.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round VTF metaregional adventure set in Ket.

As of September 1, 2007, there is no Time Unit cost to play the adventure portion of this module; however, standard Time Unit costs still apply to crafting, magic item creation, performing or other non-adventure related activities or penalties. The cost for Standard Upkeep is 12 gp for PCs whose home region is located in the VTF, or 24 gp for out-of-metaregion characters. Both Rich Upkeep and Luxury Upkeep cost 75 gp regardless of home region.

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

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

More information about lifestyle and upkeep can be found in the Lifestyle and Upkeep section of Chapter 3 of *Living Greyhawk Campaign Standards* 7.1

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

DEDICARI DUST (EX)

Dedicari dust was originally a poison derived from an extra-planar plant, used to cause havoc in Ket by a typically misguided cultist. It caught the attention of the Temple of Elemental Evil (various factions) and they modified it to use in an attack on the capital of Ket itself,

hoping to spark a war with Tusmit (the latter goal which was successful) – this was detailed in VTF4-01 *Flicker*.

Dedicari dust, in the current incarnation, is not a poison. It is, as explained in VTF4-01 *Flicker*, more of an assault on the soul of the victim – it is powered by negative energy and any protection that serves to negate such attacks (completely, such as *death ward*) would work to safeguard against it. If a PC is subject to Dedicari dust before they receive protections, the protection serves to suppress the results for the duration of protection. Aside from death, no other means of removing the impact of the dust exists.

The cultists also modified the dust to damage the charisma of a victim, but this modification has lost potency over time and no longer functions.

Only arcane casters (of any type) may be subject to Dedicari Dust. If a PC does not have any Arcane abilities, they are automatically immune to the effects. Only those with actual spell slots or memorized spells are affected – those with spell-like abilities are also immune to the effects.

Exposure to the dust via touching the skin or breathing it in requires a Will save to resist the effects. The DC is based on 12+Arcane Caster Level of the target – the more versed in Arcane Caster levels a PC might be, the more likely they are to suffer from exposure. The effects last for 1 round per Arcane Caster Level of the target. The effect itself is identical to that of a *confusion*, lesser spell. If the subject is required to attack the caster, they attack a random target. Under the effects of Dedicari Dust, the PC or NPC always attempts to use the most damaging spells first and in order, rather than any other form of combat, if instructed to attack.

Any PC with **Dedicari Dust Influence** as an AR Award from VTF4-01 *Flicker* finds that their early exposure actually has had a beneficial impact and they receive a +4 bonus on all such pertinent Will saves.

INVESTIGATIVE ADVENTURE?

Is this an investigative adventure? Not really, the plotline progresses onward even if the PCs do absolutely nothing to make some effort to investigate, as the events are also being driven by outside factors.

Nevertheless, there is a distinct advantage to doing investigation – many benefits can accrue to the PCs in doing so and it is hoped that, as a result, they will have

some reason to investigate (even if they do not know it immediately).

THE FAITH OF AL'AKBAR

Al'Akbar was a holy man who led such an exemplary life in leading the Baklunish people back to the gods of their forefathers, that he ascended to deityhood himself, and took his place as a minor demi-god in the Baklunish pantheon. A Cup and Tasliman that had been given to him by Istus were passed on to his spiritual heirs as holy relics.

These relics were stolen from Ekbir some 300 years ago, leading to the present-day split in the church—the larger Exalted Faith, led by the Caliph of Ekbir, and found in most parts of the Baklunish West; and the smaller hard line True Faith, worshipped in Ket and northern parts of Tusmit and led by the Grand Mufti from his temple in the Yatil Mountains.

Followers of each faith pray to the same deity, but both believe the other is heretical. As with many religious arguments, feelings run deep.

HOW EVENTS LED UP TO THIS POINT

Unexpectedly, after having been lost to history for 300 years, the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar have turned up back in Ekbir, and reports have it that they have been given into the care of the Caliph of Ekbir, a notoriously corrupt man, although nominally the spiritual leader of the Exalted Faith.

This has outraged the leader of the True Faith, the Grand Mufti, and he has called for followers of the True Faith to rise up, march into Ekbir and seize the Cup and Talisman by force.

The Mullahs of Ket called upon the entire Ket army to march on Ekbir. After internal political developments, the army marched out under the command of the Black Arrow (brother of the now-deposed Beygraf Nadaid), uniting with a significant quantity of allies and sympathizers in Tusmit, not to mention the Grand Mufti himself. It now sits in southern Tusmit, re-organizing and readying for a march into Ekbir (or, at the very least, that is what all assume).

THE PLAINS OF THE SECOND

The Plains of the Second were ceded to Zeif by Tusmit recently during attempts to maintain Tusmite independence from Ekbir and find an adequate political balance with their powerful neighbors. They are named for a small range of hills that surround them and keep

them separate from the rest of the rolling lands in the area. Though there should be no real geographical distinction, the area is frequently blessed with a second bout of sunshine and gentle winds during the late fall, leading to a local belief in a “second summer”.

There is a single large town in the region, named Valsha, and the major export of the area is grains and some sheep. Given the extended growing and harvesting season, the farmers can frequently obtain at least two harvests in many years (they have grown accustomed to the tell-tale signs of a year with a “second summer”) and this has allowed many of them to become free holders. The area is rich but the locals cling to their rural culture fiercely and have resisted the tendency to spend such wealth on larger residences in cities or bigger towns.

STEPHAN OF THE FAR REALMS

Stephan is an adventurer, a mage of some great ability, and one promised an opportunity of an audience with Mordenkainen, Lord of the Obsidian Citadel and head of the Council of Eight. Quite frankly, Stephan would have preferred to meet Evard, but when presented with this chance he took it – there are not many occasions when the possibility of meeting an epic level mage come along.

His employers, the Moquollad Consortium, reneged on their deal. At least, that is how Stephan perceives the situation. He is incensed at the breach of trust and has decided to create a suitable environment for him to meet Mordenkainen on his own, without the assistance of the Consortium. As an alienist (PrC), his concept of a “suitable meeting place” is somewhat beyond the experience of most people...and far more dangerous. While not actually evil, Stephan certainly is unlikely to be considered sane by most individuals.

His “environment” is a Far Realms Outpost. He has used his rather substantial magical powers to create potions of alteration. These potions change the recipient to a pseudonatural being with a close connection to the Far Realms – at least, some of the time. His assistants, the half-far realms grell, advise that some 20% of candidates fail to reach the glory. Where possible, these “candidates” are not allowed to escape, but frequently these potions are slipped into meals and the like with large numbers. In such cases, many cannot be simply “removed”. For them, Stephan has added a modification to the potion, turning the eyes of those who make the saving throw bright blue (permanently). The potion is an ingested magical poison, DC 17 Fortitude (no secondary effect), save or gain the pseudonatural template and, if the creature was originally sentient, evil alignment).

The caravan that started this entire investigation was attacked and the members of the mission forcibly converted to get tools to build the underground complex.

The cavalry unit later noted as missing happened upon the Eltari farm estate (where Stephan has chosen to make his base) and was provided with potions of alteration in their meals – those that made the save against the change were just killed and eaten by the Grell. The Moqoullad Consortium agents came to investigate the farmhouse (they thought it was a ploy but it turned out to be accurate) and were captured. They have now been lashed to the portal crystals on the bottom level (see the Adventure for more details).

In actual fact, the Moqoullad cast a number of divinations and determined that the task was beyond that of any single individual (and mortally dangerous to boot). In their minds, the possibility no longer existed and they sought out a team of adventurers to perform the task for them (see VTF7-06 *Left Unsaid* for further details). Their explanations fell on deaf ears, however, and the current situation in the Plains of the Second now exists.

HALF-FARSPAWN GRELL

Grell are aberrations, with only one real goal in life – eating. They divide the universe into three different categories – those to be eaten, those to be feared and those far beyond them. Half-farspawn grell are borne or created in the Far Realms, a place of madness and fear. They gain powers (noted in their stat blocks) and physical strength, but are essentially insane. Finally, grell collect themselves into colonies (and consider themselves civilized) while those who grow a threat to the leadership are exiled or escape are considered feral – there is no real difference in intelligence level or the like, merely access to resources and support.

Stephan “befriended” two feral half-farspawn grell, Narg and Grev, in his quest to create a Far Realms Outpost. These grell promised to provide him with the means and power to create a portal to the Far Realms, though they had very little knowledge or care for such an opening. Though native to the Far Realms, they had long since traveled away and had no means of returning, nor any real desire to return.

Their reason for helping Stephan is simple – a ready supply of food for them. Narg was the more charismatic of the two (which is saying something...) and persuaded his companion not to attack the human immediately (the standard grell response).

When the mage discovered, quite by accident using a *detect thoughts* spell, that neither grell could actually help him construct a portal, he destroyed Grev in a fit of annoyance (he *disintegrated* him). Narg is now terrified and would flee the area, but Stephan has displayed quite a decent grasp of divination magic and the ability to use it achieve the means to his end...so Narg stays and defends the mage through fear.

SUMMARY OF ADVENTURE

Introduction: The True Faith, Exalted Faith or the Moqoullad Consortium hires the PCs to undertake a trip to the Plains of the Second. Each has their own political or other goal in mind, and the choice of employer is dependent on the mindset of the PCs.

1: Trip to Valsha: The PCs travel to the town of Valsha in the Plains of the Second.

2: The Town: The PCs can explore and investigate the situation in the town of Valsha, with numerous different possibilities to question and visit in the location.

3: Forced Messenger: A young girl approaches the PCs and requests that they come to a local farm, explaining that they are to be ambushed there by farmhands.

4: Farmhouse Surprise: The PCs may choose to visit the farmhouse and deal with the “ambush”, possibly saving the Cutter family from being changed into pseudonatural creatures at the same time. Further details are available about where the farmhands came from.

5: Bears...definitely bears: The PCs may explore the Eltari farm estate, eventually finding the complex itself, built into the barn on the estate. They may proceed down to the second level and encounter the first of the guardians, pseudonatural bears.

6: Far Realms Outpost: Continuing on at their own pace, the second set of guardians attempt to block the way in the second and final level below ground of the complex.

7: Final Defense: The PCs encounter the final room, where captive agents of the Moqoullad Consortium unwillingly power a faint and random portal to the Far Realms.

Conclusion: Depending on the various success levels of the PCs, various differing results are possible, ranging from complete success to failure.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

As with any LG adventure, the DM should ascertain all of the following before the adventure:

Is anyone crafting magic items? A MIC must be completed before the adventure begins.

- Does anyone have any non-class-related animals? If the DM feels these will be a significant factor in combat, the animal's CR should be added to the owner's level for purposes of calculating APL
- Does any PC have game effects such as curses, lycanthropy or play bonuses?
- Ask to see all spell lists.
- Will anyone be using out-of-game bonuses (Campaign cards, buttons or tokens) and if so, which ones?
- Check PCs' lifestyle and upkeep.

In addition, this adventure will also require the following information:

- Have any PCs played VTFIN7-01 *Storm Warning*? If so, they may have a Diplomatic bonus with members of the True or Exalted Faiths. This may prove useful in the town of Valsha.
- Do any of the PCs have the AR Award Dedicari Dust Influence from VTF4-01 *Flicker*? They may generate a later benefit in the adventure from this.

INTRODUCTION

Note: At the start of this adventure, the DM should determine if the PCs are interested in the True Faith, Exalted Faith or if they have no interest in either (by default, that will make them interested in the Mouqollad Consortium offer, it is to be hoped). Proceed to the appropriate Introduction.

TRUE FAITH

The summons was as terse as it was direct.

"Bring yourself and any you trust to the Camp of the Righteous south of Sefmur as soon as possible. Present this letter to the guards for admittance."

The summons is signed by the Black Arrow, general in command of the Army of the Restorer, the True Faith army that is being assembled in Tusmit for an assault to recover the lost artifacts of Al'Akbar from the Caliph of Ekbir.

Presuming the PCs choose to attend, their trip to the Camp is uneventful and they are immediately shown in for a meeting with Rashallah ibn Qarish, a high-ranking

captain in the Army of the Restorer (the army assembled by the True Faith) to re-take the Cup and Talisman from Ekbir). After quickly establishing the identities of the PCs, Rashallah comes right to the point – he desires that they travel to Zeif as representatives of the True Faith, and resolve an outstanding issue on the Zeif/Tusmit border. He is not entirely clear on the actual problem, merely that it is more serious than a simple act of banditry or thievery, but the Mouqollad Consortium has asked for assistance and the Army is only too happy to respond.

Along with this, Rashallah shares that normal operating procedure would be to send in their own scouts. Sadly, though, there are unconfirmed reports of a disaster in Ket, with the capital either razed to the ground by a surprise attack from Bissel, or some similar fantasy. All scouts save the bare minimum for the advance of the army have been sent back to investigate.

Instead, the Army must turn to those who might seek to curry favor with it, much as the army wishes to do with the Consortium. To clarify this last part, Rashallah emphasizes that Zeif has not yet chosen sides in the upcoming struggle for the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar. The True Faith would like the country to assist them but, at the very least, remain neutral rather than side with Ekbir and the Exalted Faith. By assisting both Zeif and a potent organization such as the Mouqollad Consortium, the True Faith hopes to set the stage for further diplomatic meetings. Rashallah will answer what questions he can as follows:

Where are we going?

First, the Golden Scimitar Inn in Sefmur. An agent of the Consortium waits there, with further details. She is expecting you and her name is Elaine the Viper. [Elaine has previously appeared in VTF7-01 *Glass Beads*]. From there, Zeif and somewhere on the border with Tusmit.

What are we to do?

Whatever it is that the Consortium asks. They have assured us they seek only law-abiding and honorable individuals and that nothing underhanded is planned. Our offer to send aid was gladly accepted, as they are apparently short of quality personnel at this time in the area.

Will we be paid for this?

The Consortium is providing compensation. The Army of the Restorer has a lot of expenses currently and we

have no funds for you, but success has a way of reaching the ears of the highest in the force here. [There is an AR favor for such people].

Should we report back to you or someone else after we have completed the task?

Yes, please return and relay all that takes place. I have very little information about what you are to do, and I do want to know what we have done in this case – or, rather, what you have done for us.

Once the PCs have exhausted their questions (and Rashallah really has little further information), they may head to Sefmur. Proceed to **“The Task at Hand”**.

EXALTED FAITH

The request was well-spoken but brief (even if it was more personal than it may have had the right to be under the circumstances).

“Dear friends, Please do me the favor of attending upon my encampment in Ekbir, with this messenger as a guide. The High Cleric guides all our steps and he has set forth a task for all of us. Your assistance in this endeavor is sought and I would ask you to consider this with me.”

The summons is signed by Hajar al'Qadi, an official in the Caliphate of Ekbir. The messenger and guide are dressed in the attire of a Qadi as well and say that his name is Sharif.

It is a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check, automatic for any PC from the Baklunish West, to know that al'Qadi signifies that the person is a cleric of the Exalted Faith of Al'Akbar.

Presuming the PCs choose to attend, their trip to the encampment encounters no difficulties. Their guide Sharif is polite and courteous for the entire journey but has no idea what it is that the Qadi desires.

Upon arriving at the encampment, they are met by Hajar al'Qadi and invited to partake in a meal in honor of the PCs. No matter their eagerness and questions, the polite showing of a meal first is required by social convention and the Qadi is adamant it proceed. It is delicious and highlights many delicacies from the West and beyond. Once it is finished, though, the Qadi gets down to business.

Hajar desires that the PCs travel to Zeif as representatives of the Exalted Faith, and resolve an outstanding issue on the Zeif/Tusmit border involving strange reports from

the Mouqollad Consortium of missing caravans. He is not entirely clear on the actual problem, merely that it is more serious than a simple act of banditry or thievery, but the Mouqollad Consortium has asked for assistance and the Exalted Faith wishes to assist.

This assistance is not merely a matter of good intent, the Qadi takes care to explain. Zeif has not yet chosen sides in the upcoming struggle for the Cup and Talisman of Al'Akbar, currently held by the Caliph in Ekbir. The Exalted Faith would like Zeif to come to their defense in this matter, as the True Faith appears ready to launch an all-out holy war. At the least, though, they would like to ensure that the country remains neutral rather than side with the Grand Mufti, head of the True Faith, and his army. By assisting both Zeif and the Mouqollad Consortium, the Exalted Faith hopes to set the stage for further diplomatic meetings. Hajar answers what questions he can as follows:

Where are we going?

First, the Golden Scimitar Inn in Sefmur. An agent of the Consortium awaits there, with further details. She is expecting you and her name is Elaine the Viper. [Elaine has previously appeared in VTF7-01 *Glass Beads*]. From there, Zeif and somewhere on the border with Tusmit.

What are we to do?

Whatever it is that the Consortium asks. They have assured us they seek only good and law-abiding individuals and that nothing underhanded is planned. Our offer to send aid was gladly accepted, as they are apparently short of personnel at this time in the area.

Will we be paid for this?

The Consortium is providing compensation. The Exalted Faith has not provided me with any funds for your troubles, but success has a way of reaching the ears of the highest in the church. [There is an AR favor for such people].

Should we report back to you or someone else after we have completed the task?

Yes, please return and relay all that takes place. I have very little information about what you are to do, and I do want to know what we have done in this case – or, rather, what you have done for us.

Once the PCs have exhausted their questions (and Hijar really has little further information), they may head to Sefmur. Proceed to “The Task at Hand”.

MOUQOLLAD CONSORTIUM

The invitation was short and to the point, if polite.

“Hello. I need your assistance for a matter important to the Mouqollad Consortium. I ask you to attend me here in Sefmur, at the Golden Scimitar Inn and hear my business proposal. We offer discrete compensation for your time and any dangers you might face. Present this letter to the innkeep for directions to my private quarters.”

The summons is signed by Elaine the Viper, a member of the Mouqollad Consortium. Sefmur is the capital of Tusmit. Some might be familiar with Elaine from VTF7-01 *Glass Beads*. If the PCs choose to attend, their journey to Sefmur is without any sort of incident. Proceed to “The Task at Hand.”

THE TASK AT HAND

Once the PCs reach Sefmur, they find the Inn with ease. Inside, Elaine sits at a large table and the PCs are directed to her presence, where they are invited to take seats. After a small meal, she gets to the point of their presence here.

“Thank you for coming. The Mouqollad Consortium has need of your assistance and we are willing to pay for such help. Let me be clear, though, that mere gold may not be sufficient compensation in this case. The Worthy Elders who run the Consortium in Zeif are considering greater rewards if you uncover anything highly unusual. I myself do not know what is meant by this, but I was to convey that and I have done so.

“Now, your task is straightforward, at least with the details I have. A small district is located on the border between Zeif and Tusmit, on the Zeif side of the river, called the Plains of the Second is your destination. It is a rich farming district and we frequently send caravans through the area.

“Two months ago, one of those caravans vanished, or at least that is what it appeared to us. One day it was reported to be traveling to Valsha, the only town in the area, the next day it was simply not heard of again. We suspected bandits or raiders from the Plains of the Paynim and sent in an investigative duo who work in our employ.

“Shalif and Namiya were to report back four weeks ago. Their first missive indicated they had found nothing out of the ordinary at all, but also absolutely any trace of the caravan. No attack, no debris, no goods, nothing. One week later, Shalif and Namiya disappeared – or, more precisely, they stopped communicating with us. For agents of impeccable loyalty and standing in our organization, this was unheard of. We began to suspect something more than mere bandits at this point.

“In addition, Shalif is particularly important. His father is a high-ranking official within the bureaucracy of Zeif and we cannot afford to have him hostile to us, even though his son chose his own way in life. Gratitude at seeing his son returned safely is a far more pleasing solution.

“Concerned now, we contacted the local military commander just north of the Plains, who owed us a favor for a debt in the past. He sent in a force of light cavalry, 20 strong, to sweep through the region and search for anything strange. As is customary, the unit split up into two squads to accomplish this task more efficiently – and only one of them, 10 in total, came back, some three weeks ago. Not a surprise to most of you, I am sure.

“Again, desertion is possible and so was bandit attack, but there were no signs anywhere of this, and the troops in question were long-serving and loyal, from all background checks we could make. A full column of 100 cavalry were sent back in and they came back out again with no information at all. Now the captain was worried and so were the local nobles in Zeif. This was only one week ago.

“Now we look to you. Zeif has not yet made any determination as to what is happening but is watching the situation closely. They are aware of our interest and we have indicated we will convey to them all results of any investigation we, or rather you, undertake.

“We would therefore ask that you go to Valsha, investigate the situation and find out what is causing these disappearances. If you can, deal with the situation, remembering that we would prefer to do so according to the laws of the land. In particular, recovering Shalif and Namiya, as well as the cavalry unit, is vital to showing our competence in this task.

“Our only remaining contact is Ifar, the taxidermist in Valsha, and a low-ranking member of the

Consortium. You may approach him initially for contacts and information. Presuming he too is not missing by the time you arrive...

"We have arranged for accommodation and meals for your journey. [Standard Lifestyle is covered for this adventure] Please do not delay, but do you have any questions?"

What will you pay us?

The Consortium offers payment for a successful completion of the task at hand. While I would prefer to haggle, the urgency means that I will offer you each [100 gp per APL] for such a success. No, none of that is up front – you must show us success to be paid.

How far is Valsha?

Valsha is located across the Tuflik river, some 120 miles from here. There are good road leading to a number of ferry crossings between here and there.

What does Ifar look like? Is he reliable?

Ifar is a long-standing member of the Mouqollad Consortium and considered quite reliable. I have never met him myself, but I am told his about 5 and half feet tall, with black hair and black eyes. He is said to favor a rather outlandish turban of black and purple and I would imagine you can use this to identify him.

What did your agents look like?

Shalif is about 5 feet 10 inches tall, with black hair and black eyes. He has a scar just below his right earlobe, from an attack by a crocodile down in Keoland. Namiya is just over 5 feet tall, with dark brown hair and black eyes. She speaks with a distinct northern accent, as she grew up with the Tiger Nomads.

How many people were in the caravan?

There were 20 in total, led by Jashra ibn Zethar, a good merchant. I cannot provide further descriptions, as I am afraid we did not retain that information.

Can we contact the military commander who did the sweeps?

Unfortunately, no. He has been recalled to Zeir-i-Zeif for "consultations". His troops were sent westward as part of a garrison shift and they are likewise not available. I do not know if this is being done to deliberately impede our

chances of resolving this matter, or if the government is upset by our use of influence.

Have you attempted any divinations?

Yes, that was considered and undertaken. Some were blocked, others were less than clear. Those that actually succeeded were replete with vague answers speaking of distant realms and unwitting pawns. The divinations did confirm that the area around Valsha was the key, however. The key to what remains to be determined...by you.

Do you have a map of the area? Can we get written authorization from you to investigate?

Yes, here it is. We have placed on it what we know of the area that might be considered important. It is also signed and our official seal is upon it, and therefore also acts proof that you are our agents in this matter.

What can you tell us about the Plains of the Second?

Refer to the Adventure Background. Elaine knows all the common details from her research.

What was in the caravan?

It contained building supplies, mostly high quality working tools. We planned to ship them to Tusmit initially, but there are reports that Veluna may have a much greater need for them. Something about building a wall across the Fals Gap.

Do you suspect anything at all?

[At this point, PCs need to attempt a DC 20 Sense Motive check. If they succeed, they note that Elaine is mildly disturbed by her own answer as if she feels she is not conveying the whole truth. If pressed, she conveys the information in brackets beneath this].

No, not really. The facts do not add up at this point but I think something unusual is happening. That is very unhelpful, I realize, but I simply have no other details.

[If the PCs succeeded at the above Sense Motive, they get the following additional detail:

There is one...discrepancy I have heard recently. I was asked to arrange for a meeting with a certain Stephan, a powerful mage, three months ago. He later met with the Worthy Elder Valqar, a powerful member of the Consortium, without me being present, but I hear reports

he was furious after the meeting. Valqar did not seem concerned at all but later let slip he had heard Stephan was headed to Valsha. When I questioned him on this after these events, he adamantly insisted he had never said that.

It is a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) or profession (merchant) check, automatic for any PC from the Baklunish West, to know that a Worthy Elder is a cleric of the faith of Mouqol, the Baklunish god of trade and commerce. If asked further, Elaine only knows that Stephan is a very powerful mage stronger than the adventurers. She was considering doing some research on him but decided it would be...imprudent.

If the PCs attempt research on Stephan, they can determine the following from Gather Information (standard time and cost):

DC 15 – Stephan is a Suel mage noted for having spent a good deal of time in Bissel at an early stage in his career and having an affinity for necromancy that came from that, or at least that is the rumor.

DC 20 – A powerful mage, he is also reputed to be a bit crazy, which most attribute to his alienist prestige class and the insanity that contact with the Far Realms invites.

DC 25 – Stephan has a pseudodragon familiar with him at all times. It was *imploded* by a death slaad in the not so distant past but has apparently made a full recovery...and he listens to it even when all other reason has fled.

DC 30 – Stephan has seen gates and portals opened to many other dimensions and has sworn he has the capability to do so as well, to his favored realm, the Far Realms. Few people doubt his word, as some of his displays of magic have been truly prodigious.

DC 35 – Stephan is far more interested in meeting with Evard, from Bissel, rather than the current fixation with Mordenkainen. As a mage, he is apparently enamored of the concept of tentacles, the namesake spell for Evard, and how these connect to his friends in insanity, the pseudonatural types he has gathered to him. There are also a few rumors that indicate he befriended some aberrations in the not so distant past, possibility illithid or grell.

Treasure (none – only paid on success)

DEVELOPMENT

Proceed to 1: *The Trip to Valsha* if the PCs wish to proceed.

1: THE TRIP TO VALSHA

The roads and byways to Valsha are relatively uneventful. Military squads, both infantry and cavalry, are marching to and fro, as the True Faith is apparently concentrating an army in Tusmit. Various supply wagons rumble by at all hours of the day and night but few people seem interested in your passage, preferring instead to concentrate on the great war that is apparently in the offing.

The trip to Valsha from Sefmur, is uneventful save for the busy roads. The presence of military units everywhere is certainly enough to keep any bandits or thugs from plying their trade on the road.

As promised, the lifestyle of the PCs (Standard) is covered by the Mouqollad Consortium for the entire journey. Each small inn seems already aware of their arrival, although nobody knows any specific names or the task of the PCs.

PCs may choose to cast any long-term buffs during the trip, which is 120 miles (and therefore takes as long as it would for the slowest member of the party to get to Valsha). Crossing the Tuflik river is without incident as well, accomplished at a reputable and respected river ferry location just south of Sefmur.

Divinations, though attempted by the Consortium (and they failed for them) are actually quite feasible at this point – the Consortium is unaware of this fact or they would have either tried themselves, or told the PCs. There is nothing at all blocking such efforts or limiting their use at this point. If it becomes clear to the DM that the PCs can avoid Valsha and head straight to their target, proceed accordingly.

Rapid transit to Valsha is quite feasible as well, depending on the resources of the PCs. This is their timetable and they can decide how fast or slow they want to go before approaching the area.

Crossing into Zeif reveals very tense and wary border guards. The country is not used to the concept that the entirety of the remaining countries in the Baklunish West are about to go to war. They are very cautious with visitors but have no real objections to anyone. Anyone claiming Ket, Ekbir or Tusmit as a home region will be questioned closely about their business in the area, and how long they plan to stay, but there are no actual means taken to prevent entry or limit travel. Anyone revealing the connection to the Mouqollad Consortium (their effective patron) finds that the questions end and they

are allowed to proceed without further harassment – the Consortium is based in Zeif and well-respected, so much so that this connection is sufficient to persuade the guards of the good intent of the PC in question.

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs chose to head to Valsha, proceed to 2: *The Town*. If they have determined where to head with magic or other means and do not want to head to the town, proceed to 4: *Farmhouse Surprise* or 5: *Bears...definitely Bears*, as required. If the PCs want to give up at this point and end the adventure, proceed to *Conclusion*.

2: THE TOWN

Note: The PCs may accrue a series of benefits by attempting to investigate the various locations in Valsha. They may also avoid them entirely and suffer no negative effects but do not gain these benefits. There is no right or wrong way to do this and all of the benefits can also be gained by role-playing, although having the appropriate skills will assist.

Passing alongside the Tuflik River is a pleasant trip, a cool breeze off the water providing a defense against the heat of a second coming of summer. Still a dozen miles from Valsha, the road veers inland, skirting a dense forest that the passersby indicate is both a hunting preserve for the local lords, and the source of firewood in the area. There is nothing out of the ordinary and soon Valsha comes into view, a small town with built up wooden palisades and a dry moat, clear reminders that the Paynim frequently raided this far north in the past.

Valsha is a very prosperous little town. Local laws and land taxes (onerous to new-comers without special dispensation) keep the size of the town relatively small at 700 odd inhabitants, serving the surrounding Plains of the Second as a capital and source of urban goods.

Anyone with Knowledge (architecture and engineering) automatically knows that the various buildings within the town are all uniformly expensive in terms of construction and material.

Dominating the town are two larger buildings. The first is the Temple. It would normally be dedicated to one of the Baklunish deities, or perhaps all of them, depending on the mood of the clergy assigned, but there is only a wandering priest in attendance currently and he has declared the sight open to all of both good and neutral

deities. The temple stands in the middle of town, to one side of the town square, and is built entirely of stone.

The second building is the wool mill. It sits at the western and southern edge of town, beside the small river/large stream that powers the mill. The Serenity River (named by the locals, not actually recognized by Zeifian authorities as a river) is some 30 miles long, coming from an underground source in the surrounding hills and emptying into the Tuflik River. The locals deliberately situated the mill south of town so that the water supply for the area would not be contaminated by the wool mill activities (just a water mill in any event).

The town is split into two distinct sections. The north section is all residential. The south section is strictly commercial, with nobody allowed to live in the area save in the inns. The town square and the main road divide the town into these two halves.

It is a DC 15 Knowledge (local – VTF) check to recall that the various significant commercial shops and business in Valsha are mandated at only one – an effective monopoly for each person. The Council running the town apparently reviews all their activities on a yearly basis, although there is some suspicion that at least a few of the commercial members bribe the Council for a more lenient review. A further DC 20 Knowledge (local – VTF) check also recalls that Valsha is unusual in that membership on the Council that runs the town can only be held by non-residents. This effectively gives control of the Council to the surrounding farmers and landholders, which is exactly as they intended it...

There are guards at the main entrance into the town (there are two entrances, one on the east and one on the west – with the western road leading out over a small bridge over the Serenity River. These guards are mostly interested in keeping the peace and have no questions or problems with the PCs so long as they are generally well-kept in appearance. Animals and companions, aside from obvious mounts, larger than medium-size get frowns but nobody stops their entrance.

GATHER INFORMATION

PCs may make standard Gather Information checks in town, taking the regular period of time. Results are as follows:

DC 5 The Inn and Tavern in town are the most likely spot to get both good drink and food, and also information about what is going in Valsha. There is a

stable attached to the Inn and they too are good talkers and listeners.

DC 10 A new priest took over in the temple a few weeks ago, after the local priestess departed on a quest. He is apparently not a worshipper of a Baklunish deity, but he knows all the proper rituals and people allow his strange worship to go unremarked...usually. A friendly sort, most people do talk to him quite a bit.

DC 15 Quite a number of people have been ordering new weapons and the like from Iron Tidings, the large blacksmithy in town. Not entirely unusual, but the smith in charge was heard to be muttering about strange styles. Apparently he consulted at the bookshop for drawing and diagrams on the style, so maybe Kari has heard of something too – she runs the shop.

DC 20 Business is down a bit in town. A decent amount of locals have recently headed out of Valsha on vacation, or seen fit to head to their relatives in the countryside.

DC 25 Two people, a man and woman, were asking questions about some missing caravan a few weeks ago. Nothing unusual there, that would get me curious too, but I could swear I saw the woman's eyes as she left town one morning, and they were a brilliant blue – and they had not been that color before! Then again, a few locals seem to be changing their eye color to that blue, which might be a new trend from Zeir-i-Zeif we have not yet all heard about.

DC 30 Two farmhands in town recently inquired about getting hold of some kegs of beer. Pretty tame for them, actually, but they were not talking about a party but about adding something to it...but then they just laughed it off and left, with the kegs.

DC 35 A Suel man was in town a while ago, asking questions about the Lord of the Obsidian Citadel, of all things! [Mordenkainen, head of the Circle of Eight and an epic level mage, for reference]. He seemed shocked that we did not know anything of the mage. Shocked and a bit angry...I was scared of that crazy man, with his constant darting to looks to either side. He left town one morning and headed west, good riddance to him!

AREAS WITH NO PERTINENT INFORMATION

Many parts of the town of Valsha have commercial endeavors and occupants but no real information to add to this investigation, as they simply have not heard or seen anything relevant. Nevertheless, PCs may insist on

visiting other areas and some details are present here for such contingencies:

Mill – The mill is designed for two purposes, with differing parts in a large stone building. One part processes grain and the like, the other serves to power a wool processing station. The owner is Vay Stash, a baklunish human with aspirations to join the Mouqollad Consortium at some point as a junior member.

Dyers Guild – The guild dyes the wool that the region produces and has a large shop in town for purchasing dyed bolts of wool. The guild head is Hilthi bint Fartiri, a baklunish woman from Zeir-i-Zeif originally.

Seamstresses – The town has four seamstresses, given the prevalence of wool and cloth in the area. They produce good quality clothing and quickly – six hours is usually enough for them to measure and make a full set of clothes. Any clothing available in the *Player's Handbook* can be purchased from any of them. Killri, Saniya, Sharifa and Ollqari are their names.

Central Square – The central square is home to many different stores and small stands. Fresh farm goods can be purchased here and any standard and alchemical goods from the PH. No magical items or holy water is for sale (the latter because there has not been a full-time priest in the town for more than a month).

BLUE EYES

Stephan has been slowly converting many people in the Plains of the Second to his new "Far Realm Outpost". His plan has not gone without adverse results, however, and quite a number of people have been resistant to his magical potions making the people pseudonatural. Those who resisted (and the resistance renders them immune to the change for at least six months) have bright blue eyes, as noted in the **Adventure Background**. The primary source of conversion has been mugs of ale or wine, where the alcohol serves to disguise the relatively bitter taste of the concoction. Several farmhands converted to pseudonatural states have been the primary instigators of these conversions.

PCs entering the town with specifically stated objectives of looking for anything out of the ordinary are allowed a DC 15 Spot or Sense Motive check. Those that succeed should be advised that, while nothing immediately jumps out at them as unusual, there are an awful lot of people in town with very bright blue eyes. There is no particular pattern to the presence of eyes. If the PCs want to do

something about this particular line of inquiry, refer to this Encounter for what is available in terms of answers.

In town, the PCs have any number of options open to them, some of which are not helpful. Many locations exist in town where no useful information can be gathered. If the PCs are especially persistent or in need of direction, the DM can provide the following details at their discretion:

- 1) The proprietor openly admits that very little of interest has happened in the past while, at least of which he is aware. Then again, he has not had the time to be at Senver's Despair, the inn, for a few weeks now and most information he gets about the town comes from that locale;
- 2) The most influential man in town is Yishallah, the owner of the stables and the only businessman on the Council of Valsha. He hears a lot, and sees even more;
- 3) If you want to ask questions of someone who has seen all of those in town, head to the Temple. Strange new priest of some foreign god there, but he is friendly and knows all the local rituals.
- 4) Looking for a cold drink and a place to just relax? Head to the Sheep's Return and don't mind the barkeep – he may appear gruff and harsh, but he keeps the peace with ease and he serves excellent drinks with no watering down.

FINDING AND TALKING TO IFAR (DAMAGE BONUS)

Ifar's shop, the "Denizens of the Woods", can be located with simple inquiries of the locals (everyone knows the various parts of town here). Alternatively, a DC 20 (Knowledge- Local/VTF) can provide this direction as well.

Inside the shop, Ifar works diligently, stuffing a pair of large foxes recently brought in by one of the local rich farmers. He is pleased to see any potential customers (as he assumes the PCs to be) and greets them warmly. Once apprised of their actual status, his demeanor does not change, although he is a bit disappointed.

Ifar knows the following and is free with this information. There is additional information he will provide to especially diplomatic parties:

- The other agents for the Consortium came to see him the night before they were not seen

again. They had heard of something unusual in one of the surrounding farmsteads and intended to follow up on it. As they indicated this was only a scouting expedition and likely a red herring, Ifar did not get the location from them;

- Shalif and Namiya, said agents, had discovered very little during their time here. Their only clue, or so he recalls, was a single tentacle discovered just off the road along which the Mouqollad Consortium caravan disappeared. Namiya, an expert in aberrations, thought she recognized it but she was going to consult with a Consortium expert in Zeir-i-Zeif before making any statements. As far as Ifar knows, the tentacle was in her possession when she disappeared;

- Many of the animals being brought to him in the past few months for mounting have had strange injuries. He cannot show any, as he works hard to cover up the signs for a better display, but he suspects some sort of disease at work, causing open sores and other cuts that seem to have nothing to do with how they were killed;
- Ifar's wife left to visit her sister in Sefmur three weeks ago, rather suddenly, and he has spent almost all of his time here in the shop, working to clear a backlog (and yes, these last two are the last bits).
- Some of the most recent foxes he worked upon had strangely damaged hearts and lungs. They appeared to be recent damage, and he suspects that the creatures would not have lasted much longer, but it is strange damage. He has no explanation for it and he has since disposed of the parts.

If at least one PC succeeds at a DC 30 Diplomacy check with Ifar, or expends one Influence point (total, not per PC) from the Mouqollad Consortium, or gave Ore to the Consortium on AR VTF7-01, he further reveals the following:

- Shalif seemed to be scratching himself on the right shoulder incessantly just before they left to investigate the farm. Namiya had put on sunglasses (she says she got them in Ket) but Ifar could swear that she had the most startlingly blue eyes all of a sudden – and they had been black the day before!

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Ifar, each gains a +2 on damage (unnamed bonus) in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Ifar, each gains a further +2 on damage (unnamed bonus, and stacks with the previous amount listed above) in this adventure.

Ifar is also quite interested in obtaining a sample of a live creature that is an aberration. In this fashion, he hopes to be able to assist the Mouqollad Consortium in identifying future problems of this nature (whatever this may be, as he is unfamiliar with this situation). The PCs may employ any number of innovative means of doing so and, if successful, are provided with the AR Award “Cleansing Rod”.

When Ifar is done with the PCs, he points them to the Inn, Tavern and Temple for more information. He also mentions the bookshop as Namiya apparently consulted there. The other locations do not immediately strike him as useful.

THE BOOKSHOP – OPEN BOOK (BONUS ON SR CHECKS)

The Open Book is a bookshop for the town, run by a young woman named Kari. She is bookish but friendly, more likely to lapse into long discussions about esoteric knowledge than most, but genuinely interested in her clientele. Kari does have bright blue eyes (one of the first to be subjected to the ale and made her save) but cannot recall when they changed – she has been researching such things with her books and library but come up with nothing to this point. She has entirely discounted the local “it must have something to do with the water” theory.

If asked, she can show her library to interested people and convey the following information:

- Yes, Namiya came in about four weeks ago to talk about various different topics. Aberrations seemed high on her list of interests, and Kari showed her a small selection of books that touched on the subject. Illithids, grell and aboleths were apparently of primary interest;
- One of Namiya's worries, it would appear, was that spells to detect and locate such creatures might not work if they had inherent spell resistances. They attempted to find out the most commonly accepted details on such resistances, but could not find any texts that agreed;
- The biggest concern Namiya had was that something might be building a nest or colony in

the area. She said that she had fired a few *magic missiles* at a tentacle the two agents had recovered (from a wand) but it showed no greater ability to resist magic than normal – but she theorized that with death, the resistance fades;

- Shal, the smith, came in about a month ago to get drawings for daggers in the style made in Greyhawk city. Unusual, but the gnome was pleased by the sale.

Kari also shares additional information with anyone who can succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (arcane), Profession (anything academic) or Knowledge (the planes) check.

- Shalif seemed particularly interested in books on daggers such as Shal viewed. They contained many esoteric styles, but one in particular intrigued him, being a ribbon dagger purportedly captured from a creature for the Far Realms, a plane of madness on the far edges of the planes. [Note: the ribbon dagger is a favored weapon of the kaorti, and unrelated to this adventure, but the Far Realms clue is important].

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Kari, each gains a +2 on caster level checks for spell resistance in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Ifar, each gains a further +2 on caster level checks for spell resistance in this adventure.

THE BLACKSMITHS – IRON TIDINGS (BONUS TO HIT)

In the southern district, this smithy run by a gnome by the name of Shal is the centre of most of the activity of the district. The smithy is large and well-built, putting to shame those in many larger towns and cities.

Shal (no last name) greets everyone new in the smithy. He is a relatively gruff gnome with absolutely no appreciation for the traditional illusions and bardic trappings of his people. His blacksmithing work is excellent and he is pleased to show anyone around.

If the PCs wish to purchase anything, any regular or cold iron simple or martial weapon, both ranged and melee, can be purchased here at regular cost. Anything more, including masterwork or exotic weapons, can be made, but it will take one week to get the necessary materials

and finish the job (all at the regular cost). Armor is something that Shal does not touch – he has a superstition about mixing weapons and armor together and forbids it. This leaves the single market for armor to the leatherworkers in town...a situation they do not care to alter.

Questioning Shal about the situation in the town and area reveals the following:

- A woman named Namiya did come by some time ago (he does not recall exactly when). She was specifically looking for arrows made from cold iron and alchemical silver. He arranged for a shipment from Zeir-i-Zeif of the silver variety, as he did not have it in stock. While he was reviewing the various dimensions of the arrows with her, she discussed hollow tubings in the arrows. He discounted this as mere speculation, because her concepts did not seem practical;
- One of the local farmer's sons, Hari Kolar, ordered a series of daggers made in a very particular style from Greyhawk City – Sefmur quality. They are all of superb (read masterwork) workmanship and Shal had them delivered out to the farm three days ago. Although not unusual in and of itself, the fact that 16 were ordered is a bit more than he would have expected. The money was paid in full, however, and was good gold [Note, the farmer's son is now in the complex and his family does not know where he is – but the smith can give directions to the original farm, which is four miles east of Valsha];
- Last night in the Sheep's Return (the local tavern), he was talking to a hunter who told him that some of the local wildlife seemed to be getting a bit strange. A rabbit actually attacked him at one point, though it was not apparently rabid, but it also lunged strangely even while it was dying. Shal agreed with Dev, the hunter, that burning the body was likely the best thing to have done;

If the PCs can persuade Shal that they are also smiths of good standing with a DC 25 Craft (blacksmithing, armorsmithing or weaponsmith) check, he adds the following:

- Two weeks ago he was asked to sharpen and take care of three great axes owned by a local landowner. They had apparently been used by the sons to chop down some spiked trees (trees killed deliberately with iron spikes into them)

after vandals struck near their orchard. The sons, being a bit overly enthusiastic, had damaged the weapons on the spikes themselves (which does beg the question as to why the sons did not remove them first...but they did not). When he examined the blades, however, the damage was not quite consistent with strikes on iron. Though he has very rarely seen it, the residue and damage was closer to mithral. As the landowner was noted for his temper, he kept this knowledge to himself but it has disturbed him since;

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Shal, each gains a +2 to hit (unnamed bonus) in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Shal, each gains a further +2 to hit (unnamed bonus, and stacks with the previous amount listed above) in this adventure.

SENVET'S DESPAIR – INN (BONUS TO AC)

There is only one Inn in town, again a monopoly, but it is large (two story but very long and wide) and reasonably priced. A very sizable stables adjoins, although it is run by a hostler instead of the inn (in a very mutually beneficial partnership).

Senvet's Despair is the name of the inn. Anyone can be asked about the origins of the name, or a DC 15 Knowledge (local-vtf) or Bardic Lore check reveals that it is a local story. As the story goes, a young man named Senvet wished to be a hero and armed himself to fight off a raid by Paynim. Knocked out by a glancing hoof from an attacking warhorse, he failed miserably. Although a hugely successful farmer and businessman for the rest of his life, to the extent that was feted on every Needfest for his generosity and care for his family and neighbors, he stayed bitter his entire life about the failure. Only on his deathbed did he see the folly in this and at last came to peace with himself in the presence of a local priestess of Istus.

Senvet's Despair is run by Allar and Urashi, a husband and wife from the countryside of the Plains of the Second who chose to inherit this as the eldest in their family rather than a large farm their father could have left to Urashi. Both are dedicated, although Urashi runs the main room and guest rooms, while Allar is the consummate chef and vintner (he runs a small business in wines from the basement, of excellent quality – this is common knowledge to PCs once they enter the inn).

There are seven maids and assistants in the Inn, all of whom live in their large common area on the main floor. The second floor has a common room and sixteen separate suites. Urashi and Allar live on the second floor as well, along with their family. The main floor is mostly taken up by the large eating area (though not officially an eating establishment, they are able to run this as part of their “inn” mandate.

Urashi is friendly and outgoing, a baklunish woman in her early 30's dressed in black and golden robes and looking very welcoming, with black eyes. She greets PCs warmly (as she was also warned of their arrival and had their accommodation paid by the Mouqollad Consortium), showing them to individual rooms. Anyone who pays for better lifestyle is certainly accorded more attention, but she is polite and friendly to all.

Questioning Urashi reveals the following (the unusual or specific in various other stories):

- The two agents of the Consortium stayed here, in two separate rooms. Shalif and Namiya paid for a week at a time. When they did not return, their rooms were cleaned up and tidied, but they did not leave any possessions behind;
- Five days ago, there was a friendly darts competition between some teamsters and local farmhands. It was a knock-out competition that eventually came down to one teamster and a local farmhand named Neftar. The teamster hit the bull's-eye perfectly – he was clearly skilled and lucky. Neftar, having last throw, could win by striking the dead centre as well. Urashi watched with interest as he prepared – and, just before he threw, she could swear that his eyes flashed. The dart flew unerringly and landed in the base of the first, giving the victory to Neftar. Nobody could believe it, but the inn eating room has a minor magical detection field built in, for card competitions (to prevent cheating) and it did not go off. Neftar grinned when congratulated but Urashi could swear he was actually angry (DM Note – Neftar was quite angry – his new *true strike* (Su) power was not supposed to be used in this petty manner and he was angry with himself) – the farmhands have not been back in town recently so she has not had a chance to question him about this;
- Urashi does not know which farm Neftar currently works on. As farmhands, they drift from one to another at this time of year, taking on odd jobs to supplement their other income;

If a PC has paid for a better lifestyle than Standard, or provides a bribe of 20 gp or more (10 gp with a DC 10 Sense Motive), they are provided with the following additional information:

- Although not commonly done, Urashi does have a very safe and small vault in the basement. Namiya came to her on the night before she left and asked to deposit a notebook in it. The next morning she gathered it again, though she let it sit on the desk before Urashi for a few minutes while they chatted. Urashi saw one page opened up, and the words “Grell” and “Illithid” underlined with question marks. When Namiya saw the curiosity of the innkeeper, she merely closed the book and said it was for a presentation in Sefmur – a clear lie that both Namiya and Urashi recognized as such and social convention prevented any further inquiry. (A DC 15 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check can indicate all details about Illithid (refer to the Monster Manual under mindflayer for details) while DC 20 is required for Grell (refer to the details in this adventure for said information).

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Urashi, each gain a +2 dodge bonus to their AC in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Shal, each gains a further +2 dodge bonus to their AC (stacks with the previous amount listed above) in this adventure.

THE SHEEP'S RETURN – TAVERN (BONUS TO SAVES)

As with other businesses, there is but one tavern in town, The Sheep's Return. During the day there is competition from a pair of drink stands in the market square, but by night this is the only drinking establishment in town (although there are two restaurants and the eating room of the inn as well where alcoholic drinks are served).

The Sheep's Return is run by Darkal Grim, a half-orc retired from the military (though which he has never revealed). Charismatic for a half-orc, he has shown himself to be of impeccable lawful demeanor and borne some early prejudice with great restraint. He took over the tavern as payment for a huge gambling debt by the previous owner, a fact that is commonly spread around

the town (and should be shared with the PCs when they enter). Gambling does take place on the premises but Darkal has personally broken the arms of five teamsters over the years for cheating and nobody attempts it anymore. That he could get away with such obvious assault seems strange, but each of the teamsters has sworn it was “accidental”...

Darkal is powerfully built, with black hair and polished tusks and speaks with an Eastern accent. Anyone from Dyvers or a neighboring region recognizes it immediately as being local to that region. Though he does not admit it, Darkal never denies being from Dyvers.

As a tavernkeeper, Darkal talks to all newcomers, both to be courteous and also to determine their intentions. He does know the two agents but they have not been here for some time. He reveals the following if asked (aside from local stories, these are the unusual details):

- Ten days ago, he caught a pair of local farmhands trying to spike one of his kegs of good local ale. A simple slap of his hands sent them packing but he swears they were more upset they were caught than the threat of his violence – this is not a reaction that is usual in town;
- Four of his regulars suddenly have blue eyes, bright blue. Most of them are blaming something in the water, but Darkal is not so sure. They are entirely normal and appear fine, but the change was so sudden...
- While he was cleaning out his mugs three nights ago, he found a foul residue in six of them. He tested it on a local stray (and shows no remorse about this if pressed by animal lovers) and the dog's eyes turned a bright blue within minutes. They glazed for a mere split-second before this happened then cleared entirely. Darkal has been subjected to truth poisons and the like in his time (he says no more than this on the topic) and he reasons the animal was hit by some drug or poison but made the save (in game terms). He cannot explain the blue eyes;
- He does not have any of the residue left over – it evaporated before he could save any more of it. He does have the dog still, a creature to which he is now growing rather attached (it is in back). It is called Blue. He does not allow any PCs to experiment or otherwise do anything damaging to the dog (use the riding dog stats from the Monster Manual for reference).

Should at least one PC belong to a military metaorg or have the Leadership feat, Darkal further reveals the following:

- Darkal casually (well, he says casually...but it seems a bit out of character for him) brought up the blue eyes with a regular who had drank one of the tampered beers the night before. The man dismissed the possibility, but was constantly rubbing his right leg, as if it had an itch he could not soothe. When the man offered to buy him a beer to make up for the waste of his time the night before (though this seemed a strange leap of logic to Darkal), the tavernkeeper refused. At that point, Darkal is convinced he saw a flash of madness and anger in the eyes of his regular, one that the former soldier has seen in many barbarians before their rage. The moment passed, however, but Darkal now keeps his favorite great axe leaning up against the bar, not in the back room...
- The regular took a trip out of town yesterday, to visit his mother on a farm just north of Valsha. Darkal dismisses this trip as a mere ruse although he has no evidence. Then again, he has no idea what is really going on but he is on his guard now.

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Darkal, each gains a +2 unnamed bonus to all saving throws in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Darkal, each gains a further +2 unnamed bonus on Will saves (stacks with the previous amount listed above) in this adventure.

THE TEMPLE – (BONUS TO INITIATIVE)

The temple in town is one of the two largest buildings and it is located directly on the main square in town. Normally, a priestess of Geshtai (the Baklunish goddess of rivers and travel) tends to the temple and ensures all local rituals and worship is carried out in an organized fashion. Two layclergy keep the faith of Al'Akbar prominent, but no one faith dominates in the town.

Currently, a wandering oeridian favored soul of Tsololandril has taken up residence in the temple. Marek Thievesbane agreed to tend to the affairs of Valsha while Hanna, the priestess of Geshtai, traveled on a quest (she did not state the goal). Identifying the god is a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. Tsololandril is an alien god

of wave motions (at least on the surface...) who followers are concerned predominantly about cause and effect and trying to understand the interconnectivity of everything.

Marek is very personable and quite the charmer. He fancies himself quite the lady's man, but is also very loyal to his current paramour, a local woman named Viiqari. He therefore flirts a bit, but not seriously. Marek is respectful of all religions and treats all equally in the Temple. Not a drinker, he does not frequent the tavern in town but is frequently present in the Inn for a good meal.

If the PCs ask about the situation around town, Marek can provide the following details:

- There were signs that a very small cult of Vecna was taking root in Valsha before he arrived. The priestess actually rooted them out and had them sent to the capital (Zeir-i-Zeif) on the pretext of military service. Marek has been keeping an eye out for more such worship but has seen no signs of it.
- The services in the morning have been as well-attended as ever, but the stablehands that used to pile in just before the evening meal have been avoiding the Temple. When he happened to meet a pair of them outside the temple, they were very hesitant and apologetic. He did notice, however, that they seemed to jerk their heads to the right a bit just before talking to him, a fact that was both a bit distracting to him and also slowed down their speech with Marek.
- He has noticed that there is an increase in the number of people in town with bright blue eyes. Prior to this, he could count those with blue eyes in town on one hand. Now there are at least 40. Every surreptitious test he has done reveals nothing unusual about these people.

If the PCs are favored souls themselves, worship Tsololandril or succeed at a DC 25 Knowledge (Religion) check, he reveals the following additional details:

- While out in the woods three weeks ago, a bear attacked him. Strange, as bears usually avoid people where they can, and he did not see any usual indicators (a mother and cub, hungry) that would indicate a reason for aggression. The creature was strangely covered in cuts and sores, which might otherwise have been the cause, but Marek later checked it and they were not causing any noticeable problems for the creature (yes, Marek actually

knocked it out with non-lethal damage). Marek does admit he took advantage of a momentary lapse on the part of the creature at the start of the fight to get in a few blows before it could react. He let it go after doing his best to remove the cuts and sores, although they were very resistant and did not fade for the most part. He has not seen the creature again.

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Marek, each gains a +2 unnamed bonus to all initiative checks in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Marek, each gains a further +2 unnamed bonus on initiative checks in this adventure.

THE STABLES – (BONUS TO SPOT/LISTEN)

The stables in Valsha is located directly beside the Inn, Senver's Despair. It is very large, capable of handling over 100 creatures, although it is rarely that full. The capacity is designed for the big trade caravans that come through town on occasion, heading toward Sefmur or further down into the Plains of the Paynim to the south.

The owner is a middle-aged baklunish man named Yishallah. He is a friendly sort and well-liked around town. Yishallah actually owns a small farm to the east of town, some quarter mile beyond the gates, and lives there. In this fashion, he is able to be on the City Council and also work in town, a status that is somewhat unique amongst many business owners. As a result, many people come to him to resolve business disputes or the like.

Yishallah is happy to talk to new-comers and those new to Valsha itself. He has an open dislike for worshippers of Oldimarra, whom he blames for a business deal gone wrong two decades ago – although social custom prevents him from refusing to serve them, he is cold and brusque with them. He informs the PCs of the following if asked:

- A few weeks ago, two agents of the Moqoullad Consortium introduced themselves to him and asked about goings-on about town. He told them all that he knew and asked for updates in return – they later left town without reporting back to him and he finds this strange, for they seemed quite honest in their dealings with him.
- These two agents stabled their horses with him. Pretty standard pair of riding horses but quality saddles. The black leather on the male's was polished to a perfect sheen, which was just

another thing that stood out. Funny thing, I could swear I saw a scabbard just yesterday in town, with that same sheen. When I looked closer, though, the man just pulled his robes around, like he knew I was watching him.

- I heard some very faint talk the other day from around back, near the outhouse for the stables. I stopped cleaning out the stones on the horse I was dealing with for a minute or two and switched to the brush, so I could listen better. The voices were a bit slurred, like a drunk, but they spoke of getting another keg of ale. I did not understand it all, but I lost interest when they started to talk about the length and sharpness of their daggers...

If a PC can succeed at a DC 20 Handle Animal check or has any favors or influence points with the Mouqollad Consortium (which are not expended, it is enough to simply have them), he shares the following:

- Namiya, the female agent, came to him the morning they headed out of town (and did not return). She was wearing darkened glasses and he thought she might have been hung over. Nevertheless, she whispered the words "Beware the tentacles" to him, or so he swears. When he asked her about this, startled, she glanced over at her partner so quickly, he was not even sure she had looked in hindsight. She laughed off the query and said he must have been hearing things...but he is sure that she did so.

If the PCs have obtained the basic information from Yishallah, each gains a +2 unnamed bonus to all Spot and Listen checks in this adventure.

If the PCs further obtained the additional information from Yishallah, each gains a further +2 unnamed bonus to all Spot and Listen checks in this adventure.

DEVELOPMENT

The PCs can return and question any of the various merchants and informants as they desire, until nightfall, after which only the tavern, inn and stables is open. At midnight, all such places close down for the night.

In the morning, the PCs may either employ magical means to find their quarry (the cause of all of the issues in town, and the person responsible for the disappearance of the agents) or proceed to 3: *Forced Messenger*.

INTERLUDE – CONVERTING THE PCS AND FINDING THE BASE

Stephan has no desire at all to meet or even encounter the PCs. He has a good idea they are in town, thanks to the word spread by locals and the like, and he is aware of their general capabilities (in other words, he knows what adventurers can frequently accomplish, not whatever the PCs in this adventure can actually do to him). As a result, he has pulled back all of his various agents and ordered the cessation of conversions until such time as the adventurers are gone.

This has not stopped all those who have picked up the pseudonatural template. Insanity is but one symptom of exposure to the Far Realms. With their own reasoning (if that is the word) at work, four pseudonatural farmhands departed the base location (see 5: *Bears...definitely Bears*) with the intention of cunningly ambushing the PCs. They do not comprehend the difference in sheer power between themselves and the PCs (they are at the low end...) nor do they even think that Stephan might have a good point with his instructions.

It is quite possible for PCs to avoid these encounters entirely, if they are intent on searching for the source of the problem and ignoring smaller issues such as this one. In that case, if they search in a reasonable manner, proceed to 5: *Bears...definitely Bears*.

3: FORCED MESSENGER

It is early morning and the sun has not crested the horizon for long when a young girl of perhaps 7 or 8 appears at the Inn, asking for any strangers in town with armor or weapons. She waits politely as the innkeep asks if you wish to be disturbed.

It is 8:00 am now and the sun has been up for 30 minutes. Anyone who has to refresh spells in some fashion by memorization or prayer is normally occupied during this time period. If asked, Zia certainly agrees to wait (she has been instructed that interrupting adults is a poor idea).

There is a distinct time implication in this Encounter and the next. The parents and brothers of the young girl mentioned here are gradually succumbing to the pseudonatural potion. In thirty minutes, that process is complete and irreversible but until then, it can be stopped or averted through various means. While the

PCs and Zia are unaware of this, it should be noted by the DM for the purposes of the Story Award under Experience for preventing this change.

Once the PCs see Zia (if they do) she has bright blue eyes (having recently made her save against conversion to pseudonatural).

When questioned about her business, Zia has the following answers:

What is your name?

My name is Zamiyah Cutter, but everyone calls me Zia.

How old are you?

I'm 7 years young.

Did you know that your eyes are a bright blue?

No, they are not. They are green and make me special. My mum told me so. [If the PCs insist on showing her that her eyes have changed color, or convince her of this, she breaks down and starts to cry. After five minutes, she pulls herself together, or if any PC can succeed at a DC 15 Diplomacy or Sense Motive check to calm her down).

Why are you here?

My dad told me to come to town and fetch the newcomers with weapons and armor. I figured you would be staying here at the inn.

Why did he want you to get us?

Four farmhands came by early this morning, before first light, to help work in the fields. My mum was getting some food ready for breakfast and they said they would help her. She was not sure what to make of it but she sounded scared. Then we were all called to eat the meal, in the house instead of the fields. The eggs tasted funny and everyone made silly noises after they were done, like they didn't like it but didn't want to say so.

Mum said she felt sick and went back up to bed, and also Vert and Trill, my brothers. Dad was also sick, but he talked to the farmhands for a bit. They kept pointing at me and then he came back to tell me to fetch you right away.

Do you have any idea why he wants us?

Yeah, the farmhands want to do something to you. I snuck back after running out of the house. They said I was "mune" or something like that. I wasn't right, according to them, but they would sort it out after surprising you folks. Two of them left after that, heading out toward the Small Woods, to get back-up at least that is what they said. They left two behind, and my father told them where they could hide best in the main room.

Where is your farm?

One and a half miles out of town, on the western road for the first mile, then up Cutter's Lane for half a mile. We're at the end of Cutter's Lane and my dad is Arthon Cutter, just like the road. [This is sufficient to enable the PCs to reach the farm]

How long did it take for you to get here?

I dunno, not long (about 20 minutes, but the PCs can only calculate this knowing her speed was 20 ft – she is small-sized still at this point – and hustled for the distance – if they do not figure this out, they can attempt a DC 10 Int check for the same result).

Where is the Small Woods?

It is just north of us. Our land goes for about 1000 feet past the house, which is what Vert keeps telling me, then you are in the Woods. Maybe 2000 feet more to the old quarry, but that's a guess because Vert gets bored in the Woods and loses count. We go there about once a month to cut stone, then the buyer from Valsha shows up and buys it. Good place for swimming in the summer, but Dad says there are monsters in the water so we always swim at noon, when he says they are sleeping.

Do you know the farmhands?

No. There are a lot in the area, and they get sent on when harvest is near or work is needed, by the farmers. Dad asked a neighbor about getting some last week, so I figured it was them.

Can you show me a layout of your home?

Yes (provide Map #3, the farmhouse, for the PCs. Zia can identify most of the aspects of the house but she does not know the age and the like.

Can you describe the taste in the eggs?

Like a mild black licorice. Not bad at first, but the taste would not go away and it started to make everything taste the same. Bad in the end.

What does your farm produce?

We have a large herd of sheep on most of our land, and a small orchard of apple and cherry trees. My dad started planting some grains a while back, after another type of food failed – never did know what it was. He sells most of it, though, to the mill here in town.

Did the farmhands have any weapons or special gear?

No, not that I saw. They had tunics and quarterstaves, which most of us take into the Small Woods. There are some foxes and at least one wolf there. Vert says he saw a bear once, but I don't believe him, I think he was just trying to scare me.

Who are your neighbors?

My granddad has the farm to the north of us, beside the Small Woods, like us. He and my grandma split up last winter, over some argument, and she is staying with her sister Tess over by the hills. On the other side, the place is empty, at least now. The Curran's lived there, or did until last month. They up and left one day, without talking to anyone. Dad was trying to figure it all out and thinking about doing their harvest. [There are only two direct neighbors. Both sets of land actually curve around the Cutter's property, meeting at Cutter's Lane and then the Small Woods].

DEVELOPMENT

It is up to the PCs to choose whether to investigate or not. Zia has no other options other than the PCs, as she had pretty specific instructions. Although not really wise, she could certainly lead the PCs back to the farmhouse (and intends to head back unless she is talked out of it – any reasonable argument keeps her in town).

If the PCs proceed to the farm, go to *4: Farmhouse Surprise*. Note the time it takes for them to arrive, for the purposes of the pseudonatural conversion of the Cutter family at the farmhouse.

If the PCs ignore this or have already determined to head to the source of the problem, head to *5: Bears...definitely Bears*.

If the PCs are not content with the information they obtained earlier, return to *2: The Town* for more details and activity.

4: FARMHOUSE SURPRISE

There is no box text for this Encounter. How the PCs approach the situation and what they do means that a large number of possibilities present themselves. The DM should adjudicate the situation using the following details:

- 1) Zeb and Dur intend to ambush the PCs. The father, Arthon, is tied up on a chair in the middle of the room, with Zeb holding a knife to him. Yes, believe it or not, despite the inanity of the general rules, Zeb is readying himself by considering himself threatened rounds before the PCs arrived. Note that Zeb is not proficient with the dagger nor does he actually want to harm Arthon (it is just a bluff – it is a DC 15 Sense Motive to recognize this fact);
- 2) Dur is hiding in the unused fireplace covered by one of the comfy chairs. Zia knows the location perfectly and, if asked, can certainly give exacting details as to the location and the like;
- 3) Arthon is unconscious, an after-effect of the potion. This is the case for three hours. After this point, he simply plays along, allowing the crazy voices in his head to convince him this is a good idea. Tied up as he is, he is helpless...
- 4) The two farmhands are no threat to any PC. Simply seeing them for the first time allows a DC 5 Int check to reveal to the PCs their approximate combat ability (that of first or second level commoners ... which they are). Their pseudonatural template does give them some minor protections but nothing to stop any determined PC in this adventure. Despite this, Zeb and Dur, being insane, believe they are fully in control. It is even debatable who believes themselves to be in charge;
- 5) The companion farmhands to Zeb and Dur have long since returned to the home base (see *5: Bears...definitely Bears*) and Stephan is aware of this ploy. Unwilling to send good minions after bad, he is sending nobody further to the farmhouse. Nevertheless, both Zeb and Dur firmly believe a strong contingent of creatures (they are no more specific than that) is coming to assist them shortly;

Tactics

Limited as this is from a combat perspective, here are their tactics – try to cause as much damage as possible. If they do even 1 hp of damage, consider it a moral victory. Arthon, though threatened by Zeb, is actually likely the safest in the room – Zeb does not attack him even though he is threatening this, it is just a ploy. It is a DC 15 Sense Motive check to realize he is faking the threat.

Neither Zeb or Dur voluntarily surrender but they can be easily captured or killed. There is no way to save or revert them to their original form (baklunish humans). Their legal status is murky, under the circumstances, but it would be proper to return them to the authorities for questioning and sentencing, either from a lawful or good perspective.

All APLs (EL 2)

Farmhands Zeb and Dur: Com1; Medium Outsider; hp 4 each; See Appendix One.

AFTER COMBAT

Zeb and Dur can be questioned after capturing or killing them (okay, spells will be needed if they are killed...). They can confirm the following (they are free with this information, now that they are captured, as part of their own little insanity...). It is a DC 5 Sense Motive check to confirm that these details are the truth as the farmhands know it:

- 1) They were regular farmhands until about two months ago, when they shared a drink late at night with a friendly Suel man. The next morning, they understood their true purpose in life and could talk to the voices from the Far Realms;
- 2) They know all about the caravan, scouts and two agents/victims, all as detailed in the Adventure Background;
- 3) After a brief discussion with the Suel man, who never shared his name, they realized that he was in charge of everything in their lives. They promptly quit their current job and found him on the Eltari farm estate. [If asked, they have no idea why they knew where to head – it was part of their madness and connection via the pseudonatural];
- 4) The estate has now been turned into the Suel man's abode. He calls himself Stephan of the Far Realms. The main house was abandoned last

week, when the underground complex was finally completed;

- 5) Creatures from the Far Realms are housed in the complex. The farmhands were never blessed with seeing them, but they know of this from rumors. Stephan is relying upon them to build something, but nobody is quite sure what;
- 6) Four-armed creatures guard the tunnels down to the lower complex, where Stephan lives. They wield daggers and have bows on their backs. The farmhands never see much of them, as they are always covered in robes and the like;
- 7) Stephan warned them to stay away from the adventurer's. They were trying to get into his good books by showing him how successful they could be...and they have failed. He knows now, through the connection to the pseudonatural;
- 8) The plan was to have the PCs drink some of the Far Realms potion they have on them (each has one vial, enough for two medium-sized individuals – if a PC drinks from this and fails the save, note the chances to save them following, or they get the AR Award “Lost”). The farmhands that left used one of their vials for the family. The farmhands would know if they had failed on anyone because the eyes of the person turn a bright blue;
- 9) The Eltari farm estate is just north of this one, through the Small Woods;

Examining Zeb and Dur confirms, with a DC 11 Knowledge (planes) that they are now pseudonatural creatures and quite likely insane – if not now, it will inevitably follow. A DC 10 Heal check confirms that the condition is permanent, but that it was initially more like a poison or disease, and could have been treated. A further DC 15 Heal check advises that the treatment must be delivered quickly, likely within minutes or hours.

If the PCs have managed to get to the farm and deal with the problem before the hour to convert the family is up, they have a chance to enact a cure on the various members. The mother and two sons are in respective beds upstairs, while the father is wherever the PCs left him downstairs. All are either comatose or close to it (part of the change – it is for this reason that Stephan and his other agents tried to get the potion delivered very late at night, so that the victims would just be seen to be sleeping).

It is a DC 10 Heal, Knowledge (nature), Craft (Alchemy) or Knowledge (planes) check to recognize the basic

elements of the change taking place. Using these skills untrained results in a -10 circumstance penalty to the check if attempted.

Once the basic elements are recognized, there are a few different options to consider (if the PCs actually want to save the family), all only possible within the first hour:

- 1) A *neutralize poison* or *remove disease* can reverse the change. It requires a Heal check that is based on the level of the character or NPC being affected, the stronger the person, the more difficult it is to reverse the change. [A DC 10+level Heal check makes the spell use or ability use successful – anything else is a failure];
- 2) A *delay poison* temporarily suppresses the change until the end of the spell;
- 3) A *resurgence* or similar granted ability/spell to re-roll a saving throw is allowed. The Fort DC for the potion is 15 and all members of this family have a +1 Fort save, barring other modifiers. Such an opportunity may only be granted once to a given PC or NPC;
- 4) A *heal* or *panacea* automatically cures the afflicted person without requiring any further checks;
- 5) Using natural remedies and shock treatment, it is possible to strengthen the immune system suddenly. This is very difficult to achieve, however – it requires a DC 30 Craft (alchemy), Heal or Knowledge (Nature) check. Any may be used to assist/aid one another. Anything less is failure as the immune system was unable to fight off the problem. Only one attempt may be made and there is a distinct penalty for failure (so no take 20);
- 6) There may be applicable favors the PC has on their ARs. If so, adjudicate the situation as fairly as possible, remembering to give them the benefit of the doubt if they are willing to use such benefits to help others.

The PCs therefore either save the family (note the XP reward for doing so in the Rewards) or allow them to succumb to their new status. The PCs may not actually have this choice, depending on timing, but the XP reward is dependent on success here.

If questioned afterward (should they be successful) the Cutter family knows very little beyond that already shared by Zia (any details she knows can be conveyed by them if she was not questioned or did not get asked certain questions) and the Farmhands.

Should the Cutter family be afflicted by the pseudonatural template, they are silent and catatonic, listening to the voices in their head. If forced through any number of means to answer questions, they know nothing beyond the fact that they are now different. Memories of their previous life seems vague to them, and disconnected (the afflicted get a better understanding of this over a few days, but initially it seems very far in the past).

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs are at a loss for how to proceed, Zia or a cured family member (if there are any) remind or advise that the two other farmhands who had shown up went north to the Small Woods for reinforcements and suggest heading that way. This reminder may be a while in coming if Zia was left behind in town.

Anyone who does want to follow these farm hands, or has already got an idea where to head (such as by questioning the farmhands) may proceed to *5: Bears...definitely Bears*.

If the PCs want to continue to gather information or the like, proceed as necessary back to Valsha or around the area.

5: BEARS...DEFINITELY BEARS

The farm is quite obviously of new construction. The shining walls of the main house still glisten in the sun and everything has an air of freshness that is unmistakable. What is strange is that the roof of both the main house and the stables beside it are missing, either never completed or stripped completely. A very large barn, part stone to the height of fifteen feet, stands without a roof as well, although it appears that a stone roof has been erected for it, though the stone is not the same as the walls.

A huge hill of dirt stands some 200 feet to one side of the large barn, covered in small saplings. There is no indication of the source, but two wagons beside the hill bear signs of use, covered in dirt.

There is no movement in any of the buildings or around them.

It is presumed that the PCs approach during daylight hours. Stephan has changed the habits of the people here, using their new darkvision to support a night time cycle instead. This is deliberate to avoid confrontation and outside interference as much as possible. If the PCs

approach during the night, the barn is full of activity, with even more dirt being hauled away to the hill.

During the day, 10 of the “people” are awake and shuffling around the main floor, doing chores. At night, all 60 are up and functioning, doing work on the main floor and going back and forth between the barn and the hill. All of the “people” have the same stats as the farmhands in *4: Farmhouse Surprise*, if needed. Any “people” captured by the PCs during this time can reveal all details described by the farmhands in *4: Farmhouse Surprise*.

The hill is the result of all the work beneath the barn, where the complex for Stephan and his grell is located. The saplings are the idea of Stephan, to keep the world green...

The barn was capped off with *walls of stone* that were tipped over and used to create a very rough roof, then smoothed out with *stone shape*. This was after the roof was entirely taken apart to act as wall and roof supports in the complex below. The main floor has one set of double doors at both ends allowing entry, and a single door at the end of one of the longer walls. Aside from a large sloping tunnel immediately visible, the rest of the main floor is devoted to bunk beds and cooking facilities for the pseudonatural former humans from Valsha and the region now working for Stephan. Cooking is very limited – they do not warm anything and eat a very dry gruel mashed up with some water. There is no explanation for this but their new template keeps them alive – it is possible that this is just some mad idea of Stephan’s as to their “needs”.

There is nobody in the houses or stables and they have been stripped of all items, as well as all the wood for the interior walls and roof for support beams for the complex.

A Survival check with the Track feat of DC 5 or higher reveals humanoid tracks in copious quantities. A further Survival check with the track feat of DC 15 or greater reveals a handful of large sized bears. Finally, a Survival check with the Track feat of DC 25 or greater reveals a very few large-sized dire weasel tracks. These checks need to be made within 500’ of the main house or barn.

THE BARN

The barn should become the choice for entry into the complex at some point. Refer to the map in **Appendix 3** for details on the layout.

Sneaking up or trying to get into the barn with stealth is not hard to do in this case – in fact, there is no possibility of failure. The “people” have never been told what the PCs look like and presume that everyone present is simply part of the new Far Realms outpost. They have no means of really identifying each other save by changing form and they are too crazy to usually think of this.

Unless the PCs make such blatantly obvious representations to the contrary, the occupants of the first level of the barn simply go about their business and let the PCs and any animal companions enter and wander around freely. They all assume the mass of tentacles at the bottom of the stairs are just more of them, not that they are modified bears.

A DC 20 Search check in this level of the complex (the barn level) discovers fabric remnants from the missing Zeifian military patrol (the actual patrol cavalry was eaten by the Grell...) and tools from the Mouqollad caravan (confirming these “people” had something to do with it). With evidence before them, any of the “people” can confirm their involvement in these matters.

TERRAIN FEATURES OF THE BARN AND COMPLEX / LIGHTING

The walls and ceiling of the main floor are all three feet thick stone, ten feet high. Doors are either five feet wide (single) or ten feet high (double) and can be both locked and barred from the inside, but are not unless there is something very unusual taking place.

From the sloping tunnel down, to all levels beneath the main floor of the barn, the tunnel is both 10 feet wide and tall. Wooden beams support the roof and walls. All rooms in the area are ten feet in height. Packed dirt forms the ground. Why he is digging down here, with a high water table...is just crazy. Water can be seen leaking on all sides as the PCs head down the tunnel. It is not enough to cause any real concern, but this complex will eventually collapse without a lot more work.

Yes, the removed left enough for a big hill...and you need a lot of wood to support it all.

There is no lighting in any part of the complex, save the room for Mordenkainen and the shaft down to the second floor – anyone carrying light sources except at the main floor level is automatically considered a threat and attacked.

BASEMENT LEVEL ONE GUARDIANS - BEARS

Seated at the bottom of the stairs is the first of the guardians for this place. It knows all the current residents and attacks anyone who is different unless they can turn into a mass of tentacles themselves...or Stephan, who has conditioned them to accept him. The mass sits just to the right of the sloping tunnel into the first level underground. It attacks to kill but does not harry or attack any creature that collapses to the ground (although it did get an Int increase as a result of the template, it still has huge limitations).

When it first spies any intruders, or senses them, it raises the alarm both audibly (via howls) and mentally (speaking to the voices from the Far Realms....which does not do anything at all in this case.)

TACTICS

The bears are slavishly dedicated to their duty as part of their current status. They benefit from a +10 circumstance modifier to any Will saves for spells or effects that would make them abandon or otherwise leave this area unguarded.

They attack whoever did the most damage to them in a given round, although they have no means of identifying spellcasters who drop spells on them for damage. If not damaged, they choose an opponent at the discretion of the DM, preferring the closest target. Although they have no desire to attack creatures that are already dead (which is also unconscious) they complete full attack sequences on all targets, regardless of their condition. It is only those with a starting condition that is unconscious or dead who are avoided.

APL 6 (EL 7)

Pseudonatural Elite Wandering Kodiak: Large outsider (augmented animal); hp 132; See *Appendix I*.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Pseudonatural Elite Wandering Kodiaks (2): Large outsider (augmented animal); hp 132 each; See *Appendix I*.

APL 10 (EL 11)

Pseudonatural Elite Dire Bear: Large outsider (augmented animal); hp 180; See *Appendix I*.

APL 12 (EL 13)

Pseudonatural Elite Dire Bears (2): Large outsider (augmented animal); hp 180 each; See *Appendix I*.

APL 14 (EL 15)

Pseudonatural Elite Advanced Dire Bears (2): Huge outsider (augmented animal); hp 270; See *Appendix I*.

THE FIRST LEVEL UNDERGROUND

After defeating the guardians (or bypassing them through a variety of means), the first basement level can be explored. It is, quite simply, comprised of only two rooms. One is a large, open area with chains and feeding bowls and is the terminus of the tunnel from the ground floor.

A DC 15 Survival check with the Track feat reveals that the creatures chained here are dire weasels, though particularly large and strong. A DC 15 Knowledge (Nature) check reveals the same details, while a DC 15 Knowledge (planes) check reveals that the creatures chained to the walls are pseudonatural in nature.

There is nothing else of interest or value in the first, larger room. Aside from housing the dire weasel pets, it also serves as a meeting chamber and gathering spot in the complex. Anyone told to "gather" by Stephan or Narg heads to this point.

The second room on the first basement level is a large (by the standards of a room of this nature) bedroom, lushly appointed and totally unused. The quality of the goods in here is superlative – layers of silk sheets on the bed, expertly crafted bed and wardrobes, a fancy Tusmite rug, an engraved and decorated bathtub and the like. A DC 20 Search check reveals that there are no hidden compartments or other hidden portions to this room. There is no explanation for this room, nor for the lack of use. Eight well-placed continual flame torches light the room perfectly.

This room was built to house Mordenkainen (and hopefully Evard). A further explanation for the purpose can be obtained from *7: Final Defense*, if the PCs choose to talk.

The value of Treasure from this Encounter comes exclusively from looting this room.

Treasure:

All APLs: Loot: 800 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

Development

If the guardian(s) were able to give a warning, all further creatures in the complex are warned (see their preparations if warned). Whether or not warned, the other creatures beyond hold position for ten minutes, then come forward to seek out the PCs. Refer to differing tactics for later Encounters for details.

If the PCs wish to proceed, continue to *6: Far Realms Outpost* via the shaft at the end of the larger room. If the PCs wish to retreat, they may do so but Stephan obtains another guardian twelve hours after this, restoring the guardian in the complex (there is no further xp awarded for defeating it again). Note that Stephan has a time limit he imposed on himself and is about to leave, as detailed in *7: Final Defense*.

6: FAR REALMS OUTPOST

The shaft heads straight down into the ground, lit by small glowing balls of light embedded into the dirt walls themselves. After fifty feet, a larger room opens up.

This level of the complex was built mostly by Stephan (using disintegrate spells) and the two half-farspawn Grell Narg and Grev. A detect magic spell or the like discovers the lingering aura of evocation magic throughout this level of the complex. Most of the magic is two or more weeks old but the base of the shaft has lingering evocation magic (Spellcraft DC 27 to identify) two days old (when Grev was destroyed by Stephan).

It is a DC 20 Climb check to head down the shaft without flying or other means.

HADRIMOI APPEARANCE

These Hadrimoi are four-armed creatures with strands of muscle and flesh that form striations over their entire body. As they are injured, these strands expand and provide them with additional energy and speed. For the purposes of trying to blend in (a failed attempt), these Hadrimoi wear large cloaks that cover their bodies, save for the face and arms. The bows on their back are quite ceremonial – they are not even proficient with them but they do like to sometimes give the appearance of Arrow Demons for the intimidation value

GUARDIANS

Just outside the view of the shaft from above is where the Hadrimoi guard the area – they have been seen a few times by those from the complex above when moving

after their shift is over, but they have actually been rarely seen for long periods of time. They were summoned by Stephan via a favor owed to him by a typically corrupt Greyhawk noble. Though they had no real tie to him, they have found an attraction to the steady supply of food and goods by the construction of the complex (and the conversion of regular people in the area to pseudonatural, when they lose their desire for material goods, allowing the Hadrimoi to take what they want). Just the past few days, however, Stephan tired of their greed and forcibly converted them to being pseudonatural.

As guardians, the Hadrimoi are the typical cowards of their race (even pseudonatural as they are, they are cowards), attempting to strike from cover or hiding. This does make Diplomacy noted below more difficult but it is still possible. While attacking, the Hadrimoi make as much noise as possible to warn those it guards in *7: Final Defense*.

DIPLOMACY

It is possible to convince the Hadrimoi that the PCs wish to simply talk with Stephan (or the owner of the complex if they do not know his name). It is a DC 20 Sense Motive check to see that the Hadrimoi is not entirely comfortable with fighting, only provided if the PCs ask for it.

It is a DC 50 Bluff or Diplomacy check to accomplish this, and PCs may aid one another in this attempt. There are some modifiers to this check (all of these are cumulative but only one bonus or negative of each category can be obtained):

- +8 bonus to anyone who obtained other bonuses to checks in this adventure (from the investigative component of the adventure);
- +4 bonus to anyone tasked by the True or Exalted Faiths to solve this problem (but only if they reveal this fact to the Hadrimoi);
- +4 bonus to anyone who offers the Hadrimoi a cash bribe of 100 gp or greater as part of negotiations;
- +4 bonus to anyone who obtained the name of Stephan earlier (by whatever means) as the owner of this complex, and who displays this knowledge;
- +4 bonus to anyone who indicates they were tasked to solve the disappearance of a caravan (the Hadrimoi now realize that there is likely to be more trouble);
- +4 bonus to anyone with class levels in Alienist;

- +4 bonus to anyone openly declaring themselves from Verbobonc or Dyvers (these are close enough to Greyhawk for the Hadrimoi to have some respect for them);
- +10 bonus if the PCs have attempted (whether successful or not) to cure the Hadrimoi of any damage they have taken in the combat already;
- -20 negative if the Hadrimoi (any of them) have been damaged before or during negotiations;

If the Hadrimoi are convinced to allow the PCs through, they do not simply let them walk in. They, instead, guide and escort them to 7: *Final Defense*. They do not, under any normal circumstances, reveal any details about Stephan and the half-farspawn Grell. Attempts to discern these magically suffer from a +16 circumstance modifier to their Will saves forced upon the creatures (only through actual magical coercion do they reveal anything) as a result of the insanity of the Far Realms ravaging their very existence.

If forced through various means to reveal details, they know all of the 1st and 2nd level spells that Stephan typically memorizes (having seen them all in play), as well as the fact that he has used *disintegrate* on occasion. They know that there are two half-farspawn grell but nothing else about them – they were too afraid to seek out any more details (and they do not know the 2nd was disintegrated two days ago, as they were off duty at that time).

The Hadrimoi are aware that the final room holding Stephan and his “portal” is full of a fine powder. As they cannot cast arcane spells, the effects of the Dedicari Dust are nil upon them and Stephan has seen no reason to share it.

The Hadrimoi can clearly describe the next room and where the occupants generally sit or stand (but this is likely to be of little use if the occupants have been warned). They are unaware of the trap built into the room, having never had a need or capability of seeing *delay death* cast.

TACTICS

The Hadrimoi hide themselves when typically on duty (which is most of the time as Stephan has, in his own insane way, assumed they are constructs...). They take 10 on such checks as a matter of course.

If the Hadrimoi are warned of the approach of the PCs by the guardians in 5: *Bears...definitely Bears*, they take further precautions and wait. In such cases, the

Hadrimoi take time with their preparations and are effectively taking 20 on their checks.

If the Hadrimoi gain surprise on the PCs, they choose to attack the weakest armored individuals from what they can see. Should the combat go against them, they seek to flee the area to that of 7: *Final Defense*. Quite frankly, they are unlikely to get the time in most cases to run away, but they try...

Effectively, at 25 or fewer hp, or if their attacks have been entirely ineffective, the Hadrimoi retreat as best as possible. At all times, they make as much noise as possible to warn 7: *Final Defense*.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Snivel: Medium outsider (Hadrimoi, MM V) Rog2; hp 96; See *Appendix I*.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Snivel and Slug: Medium outsider (Hadrimoi, MM V) Rog2; hp 96 each; See *Appendix I*.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Snivel and Slug: Medium outsider (Hadrimoi, MM V) Rog3; hp 103 each; See *Appendix I*.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Snivel and Slug: Medium outsider (Hadrimoi, MM V) Rog3/Scout1/Swashbuckler1; hp 119 each; See *Appendix I*.

APL 14 (EL 16)

Snivel, Slug, Enrico, Salmon: Medium outsider (Hadrimoi, MM V) Rog3/Scout1/Swashbuckler1; hp 119 each; See *Appendix I*.

TREASURE

APL 6: Loot: 104 gp; Coin: 50 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 8: Loot: 208 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 10: Loot: 8 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: +1 *dagger* * 8 (191 gp each * 8).

APL 12: Loot: 8 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: +1 *dagger* * 8 (191 gp each * 8), +2 *vest of resistance* * 2 (333 gp each * 2).

APL 14: Loot: 8 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: +1 *dagger* * 16 (191 gp each * 16), +2 *vest of resistance* * 4 (333 gp each * 4)

DEVELOPMENT

If the Hadrimoi are defeated or bypassed (or agree to escort them), the PCs may proceed to 7: *Final Defense*. Note that the room is sealed and hard to access in the regular course of events.

If the PCs retreat at this point, Stephan or Narg choose to pursue. Let the PCs make a camp for the night, and have Stephan/Narg attack from the cover of darkness.

Proceed to *Conclusion* if the PCs retreat at this point.

7: FINAL DEFENSE

TIMING

Stephan feels the pressure of the approaching adventurers, knowing something about them via divinations. He only stays in the complex for another 14 hours from the time of first entry on the part of the PCs. If they reach this area after that time, he and the creatures here are gone, and the portal non-operational. The two victims are still lashed to the crystals but they are now dead.

A circular door of iron is perfectly fit into the packed stone earth. The hinges are not visible and gleaming bands of energy hint at more than just earthen protection.

[If the occupants were warned] – *The door is sealed completely, a solid barrier to the outside world.*

[If the occupants were not warned] – *The door is ever so slightly ajar.*

Upon the door, writ large in common, are the words “Death may not be delayed or even stopped, but the Far Realms are forever”.

The door is not locked but simply closed.

Stephan and his regular “groupies” are present in this chamber. It is here that he planned to construct a portal to the Far Realms, as a clear indicator of his power to Mordenkainen (and eventually Evard). The fact that his promised source of such knowledge (the half-farspawn grell) turned out to not have any such ability or skill slowed him only momentarily. Shortly after this setback, he reasoned (if that is the word...) that clerics were so different from arcane casters, they must be the polar opposite of the Far Realms. That being the case, he took the two agents and directly tied them to a portal. The result is a strange portal, so say the least. The following is what is seen when the room is entered.

A large room, 70 feet long by 40 feet wide, is built so that the focus is the centre. There, two humans are lashed to a pair of spiral crystals. They are clearly

unconscious or dead and each is dressed in red and black (though their color choices are the reverse of each other). A tall Suel man stands beside a huge, brain-like creature with entirely too many tentacles, while large weasels lounge before the doorway into the room. Between the spiral crystals, pulses of purple, black and red energy emerge sporadically and shoot from one to another.

On the south wall, a rack of crystal vials and decanters gleam, with bubbling liquids steaming over some heated tubes.

AT APL 6 TO 10

The tall Suel man, suddenly active, steps forward and the energy pulses hit him. In an instant, he is literally torn apart and then an image of him appears, glancing around the room. The image is transparent and ghostly and he seems surprised.

AT APL 12

A grand gesture from the Suel man brings an immediate reaction from the creature beside him – it lurches into the pulsing energy and disappears, unseen now.

AT APL 12 OR 14 [IF THE ROOM WAS WARNED OR IF THEY PARTY HAS NO DEFENSES AGAINST BLINDSIGHT]

The tall Suel man turns and looks in your direction, surprise on his face. Just as rapidly, he smiles and bows his head toward you, along with a tentacle that appears over his right shoulder.

AT APL 12 OR 14 [IF THE ROOM WAS NOT WARNED OR THE PARTY HAS DEFENSES AGAINST BLINDSIGHT]

The tall Suel man mutters and turns to exit the room, clearly irritated. He does not appear to have noticed you.

GOAL OF THIS ENCOUNTER

Stephan must be stopped from his mad plan to open up a Far Realms Outpost. At APL 6 to 10, this means defeating his minions and then destroying the crystals. Rescue of the victims is secondary to this goal but important from an ethical perspective. At APL 12 or 14, Stephan himself must be defeated.

If the PCs retreat for more than a short (one minute) period of time, they fail in defeating Stephan and his

minions. The time allows them to either power the portal some more and “escape” or simply leave the area.

At APL 12, Narg is gone, having been ordered through the portal.

Blindsight is being provided by Stephan’s (the tall Suel man) familiar and the half-farspawn grell Narg (if present). Narg is in the center of the room and his senses reach to all parts of the room. Stephan’s familiar (a pseudo-pseudonatural dragon) is nesting above the doorway itself, and only reaches out part of the way into the room (60 ft and the DM will have to calculate as needed).

Should anyone approach the two humans lashed to the spirals, they may attempt a DC 15 Heal check. Success indicates that they are alive, if unconscious. A further DC 20 Heal check advises that parts of the spiral are actually driven into them and sudden movements or removal would cause death. Finally, a DC 20 Knowledge (planes) or DC 30 Knowledge (arcane) check indicates that the energies moving in and out of the spirals are powered by the souls of the two victims.

THE CRYSTAL VIALS

This is where the potions of alteration are produced. What is left now is very little, as Stephan has concluded he has enough people for his venture. There is no evidence of how he created the potions, but destroying them or confiscating them seems an appropriate choice!

THE PORTAL (SU)

Anyone with any ranks in Spellcraft, Knowledge (arcane or the planes) is automatically aware that the space between the pillars is a portal of some type, though it is weak and poorly defined (this latter means that the destination is likely random). Those without cannot identify it.

All of the NPCs avoid entering the area between the pillars. Any PCs entering must make a DC 30 Reflex Save to avoid being pulled into the portal. Failure results in transport to the Far Realms, naked, while their equipment falls off them and stays in the room (they do not lose any from their Magic Item Logsheet). They are out of the combat and provided with the AR Award “**Lost**”. Success at the Reflex save means they can pass through the area of the portal without it affecting them (they stay in the room, as a result). If they voluntarily fail the saving throw, they are affected as if they had failed normally.

Destroying one crystal or removing both victims ends the portal existence. No other means, save *Mordenkainen’s disjunction*, can accomplish this, although an *anti-magic field* can suppress it. See “**Rescuing the Victims**” for details on the crystals and removing the victims.

DIPLOMACY WITH STEPHAN

Stephan is insane but more than willing to talk, though he cannot be dissuaded from his actions by Diplomacy or Bluff checks (insanity tends to make its own rules). He grants the PCs 30 seconds to chat and discuss things with him, but he really has no interest in their obvious cover stories (he is also paranoid, thanks to his Far Realms connection). As his insanity is provided by his prestige class association, it cannot be healed by such spells as *heal*, though that may be attempted (he tries to resist).

Stephan talks even if he has been transported through the portal (APL 6 to 10) as a lingering image of him is available.

During the time, he speaks the following, one per round.

“I spent two years building up an immunity to...what was it? I don’t know, but it is amazing what a bit of poison does for your system!”

“Do not cross the marguerita line! That drink is evil, evil I tell you, and I can sense that you are in league with it. No smirking, that only confirms it!”

“I hate disappointing death. Let us not try to delay it, shall we?” [PCs are provided with a DC 20 Sense Motive check with this statement, as he glances at the right hand – southern - crystal pillar with a degree of amusement].

“Indigo is the new blue. Why have a color with just one syllable? That makes no sense.”

“Clerics. Can’t live with them...no, wait, that is the only way you do live. [sigh]. Oh well, time to make sure you don’t have one either.”

“You know what is amazing? I lived this long and...wait, I think I know you. Time to die, traitor!”

With that last statement, Stephan attacks and tries his best to kill the PCs. If he is just an image (at APL 6 to 10, there is no result but it triggers the rest of the combat...).

DIPLOMACY WITH NARG

This is just not possible. The PCs are mobile sources of food and he moves to attack immediately. There is, as a result, no warning about the Dedicari dust that is sometimes provided (with the right interpretation) above.

TRAP

The western pillar must be Searched to actually find and disable the trap, but it can be also destroyed and this will render the trap inert.

The trap is not deliberately damaging, but can certainly result in death depending on what the PCs are doing. It only functions at APL 12 and 14, as Stephan does not trust the Grell and did not activate it before stepping through his “portal”.

The crystals have a hardness of 12 and 100 hp each. Damaging them does not hurt the victims unless the PC chooses to do so deliberately (which would be an evil act...). Destroying a crystal does not free a victim (just cuts off the top of the crystal) but it does prevent the portal from being powered any further.

The trap senses magic and targets delay death spells, but only those within the portal room itself. It resets at the beginning of the round.

ALL APLs (EL 4)

Trap: Search Check DC 14, Disable Device 32, automatic reset, 1d4 rounds to disable, complex device, true seeing, casts *dispel magic, greater* (CL 15) targeting the spell *delay death* on one target, moderate abjuration.

THE TRAP IS BYPASSED AND CANNOT BE ACTIVATED AT APL 6 TO 10.

ENVIRONMENT

The first four squares in front of the doorway are covered in a fine powder (Stephan lays it down each day, as part of his delusion that he is immune to the effects). The Dedicari Dust (for that is what it is) can be noticed with a DC 25 Spot check. If the Dedicari Dust is noticed, refer to the later paragraph for possible actions.

It is slightly damp and does not normally turn into a cloud. In the presence of friction, however, it rapidly dries and spreads into the room – this has been modified by the strange abilities of the grell and defies certain types of logic. Anyone who spots the Dedicari dust is allowed a DC 28 check (Knowledge: The Planes) to identify the substance, with a +4 circumstance bonus if they have played VTF4-01 *Flicker*. Those who identify

the dust successfully know all aspects of it, as well as the environmental danger here.

If a PC recognizes the dust and wants to collect it, a DC 25 Reflex save for each of 1d4 rounds and an appropriate container can remove it from the floor and render it inert – presuming nobody disturbs it during that time. This dust can substitute for a live “aberration” sample requested by Ifar, as it is unique.

The Dedicari dust fills the entire level of the complex in one round with itself if heat or friction is applied - any spell that generates fire damage targeting these squares, any flaming weapons or the like wielded in these squares, or any similar activity activates this effect. Likewise, just moving into the squares can set it off – it requires a DC 20 Balance check to not do so. Once active and spread, the dust does not impede movement or sight in any fashion, nor does it grant any form of concealment. For five rounds after activation, all PCs are subject to saves if within it (and susceptible). At the end of that time, the dust becomes too dispersed and no longer has any effect. Stephan does not tell people where he stores the remaining dust but presumably it is somewhere far from here (as he uses *teleports* once a week to get more – this is the last dose). Nobody can obtain any further Dedicari Dust within the context of this adventure.

Dedicari dust, in the current incarnation, is not a poison. It is more of an assault on the soul of the victim – it is powered by negative energy and any protection that serves to negate such attacks (completely, such as *death ward*) would work to safeguard against it. If a PC is subject to Dedicari dust before they receive protections, the protection serves to suppress the results for the duration of protection (and could last longer than the impact of the dust, making it a safe means of getting through the exposure). Aside from death, no other means of removing the impact of the dust exists.

Only arcane casters (of any type) may be subject to Dedicari Dust. If a PC does not have any Arcane abilities, they are automatically immune to the effects. Only those with actual spell slots or memorized spells are affected – those with spell-like abilities are also immune to the effects.

Exposure to the dust via touching the skin or breathing it in requires a Will save to resist the effects. The DC is based on 12+Arcane Caster Level of the target – the more versed in Arcane Caster levels a PC might be, the more likely they are to suffer from exposure. The effects last for 1 round per Arcane Caster Level of the target. The effect itself is a *confusion, lesser* spell. If the subject is

required to attack the caster, they attack a random target. Under the effects of **Dedicari Dust**, the PC or NPC always attempts to use the most damaging spells first and in order, rather than any other form of combat, if instructed to attack.

Any PC with **Dedicari Dust Influence** as an AR Award from VTF4-01 *Flicker* finds that their early exposure actually has had a beneficial impact and they receive a +4 bonus on all such pertinent Will saves.

NOTE: Stephan likes to think he is immune to Dedicari dust, having tried to build up an immunity. He has a good saving throw, and that is what really has worked, for the most part. Any exposure to the dust also applies to him!

RESCUING THE VICTIMS

The two victims are Shalif and Namiya, the Mouqollad Consortium agents. Stephan, knowing how much people of the Baklunish West seem to love such things, has dressed them up in the garb of priests of the Exalted and True Faith (respectively).

Shalif is lashed to the western (trap) pillar, Namiya to the eastern pillar.

They typically have 40 hp each and are currently at -7, though stable. Removing them from the crystals without precautions causes them to begin to bleed again (and they die in three rounds, as they do not make the stabilization checks – this was pre-determined). The following precautions can be used:

- DC 25 Heal Check per individual, taking 1d4 rounds. Success stabilizes the victim and they can be removed from the crystal.

- Curative spell, ability or item. As long as the victim is restored to at least 1 hp, they can be removed safely.

Removing a victim from a crystal can be done in two fashions – fast or slow. Fast damages the victim some more (1d6 damage) while slow has no such risk. A fast removal takes 1 round and provokes attacks of opportunity. A slow removal takes 2d4 rounds and provokes attacks of opportunity.

A victim cannot be woken by any means while the crystal they are on is intact or the supernatural effect is not suppressed or destroyed as their soul is being attacked and they are unconscious as long as this continues.

The crystals have a hardness of 12 and 100 hp each. Damaging them does not hurt the victims unless the PC chooses to do so deliberately (which would be an evil act...). Destroying a crystal does not free a victim (just cuts off the top of the crystal) but it does prevent the portal from being powered any further.

Once one victim is removed or at least one crystal is damaged down to 0 hp, the portal ceases to function. It cannot be restarted in any fashion, and it fades out immediately at the conclusion of combat.

Both victims are exhausted, both mentally and physically, and can provide no assistance to the PCs. If questioned once rescued, they know everything about the situation here (they questioned a pseudonatural creature as well) and know full details about the portal (Stephan was given to raving, just a bit...).

TACTICS (HADRIMOI PRESENT)

The Hadrimoi move in immediately, more afraid of Stephan or the half-farspawn than their own mortality. They seek to disrupt the PCs by attacking weak members and generally slow things down for Stephan. As with the previous encounter, they seek to flee at 25 hp or fewer. They do not, however, run if their attacks are ineffective, seeking instead to switch targets or even just assist others.

TACTICS (APL 6 TO 10)

The pseudonatural dire weasel moves toward the target with the least armor, provoking Attacks of Opportunity if required to get there. It uses (or many of them do) their *true strike* on their first attack to latch on as best as possible. All of them attack a single target if possible. Should this not be viable, their targets are the least armored, and then the ones with the heaviest weapons.

Narg attempts to get closed to anyone grappled by the dire weasels, then attack repeatedly, although he is just as good with attacking front-line fighters. He seeks to kill, so as to ensure his food supply. His first target are divine casters, as he is aware of their ability to keep the others up.

TACTICS (APL 12)

Stephan attempts to flee through the portal when down to 35 hp or less. The dire weasels fight to the death, knowing little else in life.

Stephan immediately attempts to control the battle with crowd control spells – a quickened *evard's black tentacles*, followed by a *maze* spell on anyone who

avoided the spell or seems like a big, dumb fighter or cleric. The next round he starts to summon creatures to put between himself and danger (if needed), and then adds in damaging spells as possible.

Stephan avoids damaging the victims on the crystals as he wants to keep the portal open.

TACTICS (APL 14)

Stephan attempts to flee through the portal when down to 35 hp or less. The dire weasels fight to the death, knowing little else in life. Narg follows (or attempts to follow) Stephan 2 rounds after the mage moves through the portal – if Stephan is killed or otherwise removed from combat, Narg immediately (on his next action) attempts to get to the portal and go through it.

He follows the tactics for APL 12, save that with more of his troops present, he is more likely to do damaging spells rather than summon immediately.

As with APL 12, Stephan avoids damaging the victims on the crystals.

APL 6 (EL 9, +1 for room circumstances)

Narg: Half-Farspawn Grell Ftr2; Medium outsider (Grell, LoM); hp 73; See *Appendix 1*.

Pseudonatural Dire Weasel: Large outsider; hp 100; See *Appendix 1*.

APL 8 (EL 11, +1 for room circumstance)

Narg: Half-Farspawn Grell Ftr4/ Swashbuckler1; Medium outsider (Grell, LoM); hp 138; See *Appendix 1*.

Pseudonatural Dire Weasels (2): Large outsider; hp 100 each; See *Appendix 1*.

APL 10 (EL 13, +1 for room circumstance)

Narg: Half-Farspawn Grell Ftr4/ Swashbuckler3; Medium outsider (Grell, LoM); hp 167; See *Appendix 1*.

Elite Pseudonatural Dire Weasels (3): Large outsider; hp 118 each; See *Appendix 1*.

APL 12 (EL 15, -1 for tactical retreat options, CR 11 calculated for environment and trap)

Stephan: Medium outsider Wiz5/Alienist10/War1; hp 143; See *Appendix 1*.

Elite Pseudonatural Dire Weasels (4): Large outsider; hp 118 each; See *Appendix 1*.

APL 14 (EL 17, -1 for tactical retreat options, CR 11 calculated for environment and trap)

Stephan: Medium outsider Wiz5/Alienist10; hp 119 each; See *Appendix 1*.

Narg: Half-Farspawn Grell Ftr4/ Swashbuckler3; Medium outsider (Grell, LoM); hp 167; See *Appendix 1*.

Elite Pseudonatural Dire Weasels (7): Large outsider; hp 118 each; See *Appendix 1*.

TREASURE (THE COST OF REMOVING THE FAR REALMS TAINT PROVIDES FOR NO CASH REWARD, BUT SOME ITEM ACCESS IS PROVIDED)

DEVELOPMENT

The PCs have one shot at this room in most circumstances. If they defeat Stephan and stop him (as noted earlier), they can proceed to the *Conclusion*.

If the PCs retreat for more than a minute, or if the party took more than 14 hours to reach this room after first entering the complex, when they arrive their opponents are gone. If the portal was destroyed in the interim, Stephan or a friend of his (if the wizard is dead) arrived via a teleport or other means and removed all the remaining NPCs. If the PCs come back with less than a minute expended, the fight continues with no difference.

Once the final outcome of the room is determined, proceed to *Conclusion*.

CONCLUSION

DID NOT REACH 7: FINAL DEFENSE

If the PCs did not reach 7: *Final Defense*, use the following text.

Your actions may or may not have helped the people of the Plains of the Second in Zeif. At least you tried to do something, but there is little to show for your results. The Consortium has some money for you, but there is not much else that is forthcoming.

RESCUED THE VICTIM(S) FROM 7: FINAL DEFENSE

If the PCs rescued one or both victims, regardless of their ultimate success, from 7: *Final Defense*, use this text.

"The gratitude of both the victims on the portal crystals and the Mouqollad Consortium is palpable, as is the feeling amongst the inhabitants of the Plains of the Second that you have made a real and positive difference. Whether this has any further impact is a matter for conjecture but, for today, a great deal of good has been done."

DID NOT RESCUE THE VICTIM(S) FROM 7: FINAL DEFENSE, BUT REACHED THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs did not rescue at least one of the victims from 7: *Final Defense* but did reach the Encounter, regardless of success, use this text.

"The ultimate source of the strange events has now been identified. The Mouqollad Consortium is grateful, though clearly your success was not complete. Regardless of that, however, there is a feeling amongst the inhabitants of the Plains of the Second that you have made a difference. Whether this has any further impact is a matter for conjecture but, for today, at least some good has been done."

ALL PCS

For any PC who reached 7: *Final Defense*, the energies and exposure to the crystals of the portal provide some new "logic" paths. The PCs are provided the AR Award "**Far Realms Logic**" if they desire it.

If any PC drinks from the pseudonatural concoctions and failed the saving throw, they are provided with the AR Award "**Lost**".

Any PC who was forced to make a saving throw against Dedicari Dust in 7: *Final Defense* is provided with the AR Award "**Immune**" regardless of the outcome of the save.

Any PC in a group that brought back live samples to Ifar (the taxidermist in Valsha and their contact provided by the Mouqollad Consortium) of a pseudonatural creature (many methods possible) is provide with AR Item Access to "**Cleansing Rod**". Cross this item out if this condition is not met.

All PCs participating in this adventure are given the AR Award "**Influence Peddling**" as the Mouqollad attempts to gather influence for itself.

All PC's, regardless of how far they got in the adventure, get access to all items without an "M" for their APL, as the Consortium makes them available even if they were not found.

Success levels for the awards below are determined as follows:

- 1) Complete Success – Stephan was stopped, through whatever means necessary, and the Cutter Family was saved from transformation;
- 2) Partial Success – Either Stephan was stopped, through whatever means necessary, or the Cutter Family was saved from transformation, but not both;
- 3) Failure – Stephan was not stopped and the Cutter Family was not saved.

CONCLUSION (COMPLETE SUCCESS)

The PCs are all provided with the AR Award (circle the appropriate organization) **Worked for the True Faith / Exalted Faith / Mouqollad Consortium**

Any PC who actively worked to save the Cutter Family (4: *Farmhouse Surprise*) and succeeded is provided with the AR Award "**Saving Grace**".

All PCs are provided with their promised gold payment as noted below and the AR Award "**Good Deeds**".

CONCLUSION (PARTIAL SUCCESS)

The PCs are all provided with the AR Award (circle the appropriate organization) **Worked for the True Faith / Exalted Faith / Mouqollad Consortium**.

Any PC who actively worked to save the Cutter Family (4: *Farmhouse Surprise*) and succeeded is provided with the AR Award "**Saving Grace**".

If the PCs saved at least one of the two agents/victims, they are provided with the AR Award "**Good Deeds**".

All PCs are provided with their promised gold payment as noted below.

CONCLUSION (FAILURE)

All PCs are provided with half of the promised gold payment as noted below, as the Consortium does not like disappointed adventurers wandering around (and hopes this keeps them somewhat beholden to them, faint as that hope is in this case).

Treasure:

APL 6: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 600 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 8: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 800 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 10: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 1000 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 12: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 1200 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 14: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 1400 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

Encounter 5

Defeat the guardians

APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP
APL 12	390 XP
APL 14	450 XP

Encounter 6

Defeat or Diplomacize past the hadrimoi

APL 6	240 XP
APL 8	300 XP
APL 10	360 XP
APL 12	420 XP
APL 14	480 XP

Encounter 7

Defeat the final defenders

APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP
APL 12	450 XP
APL 14	510 XP

Story Award

For saving the Cutter family and restoring them to human from pseudonatural

APL 6	45 XP
APL 8	60 XP
APL 10	75 XP
APL 12	80 XP
APL 14	90 XP

Story Award

For discovering the fabric and remnants of tools in the barn from 5: *Bears...definitely Bears*

APL 6	45 XP
APL 8	55 XP
APL 10	60 XP

APL 12	80 XP
APL 14	90 XP

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 6	90 XP
APL 8	115 XP
APL 10	135 XP
APL 12	160 XP
APL 14	180 XP

Total possible experience:

APL 6	900 XP
APL 8	1125 XP
APL 10	1350 XP
APL 12	1575 XP
APL 14	1800 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.

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

Encounter 5: Bears...definitely Bears

All APLs: Loot: 800 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

Encounter 6 Far Realms Outpost:

APL 6: Loot: 104 gp; Coin: 50 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 8: Loot: 208 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 10: Loot: 8 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: *+1 dagger* * 8 (191 gp each * 8).

APL 12: Loot: 8 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: *+1 dagger* * 8 (191 gp each * 8), *+2 vest of resistance* * 2 (333 gp each * 2).

APL 14: Loot: 8 gp; Coin: 100 gp; Magic: *+1 dagger* * 16 (191 gp each * 16), *+2 vest of resistance* * 4 (333 gp each * 4)

Conclusion:

APL 6: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 600 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 8: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 800 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 10: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 1000 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 12: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 1200 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

APL 14: Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 1400 gp; Magic: 0 gp.

Total Possible Treasure

APL 6: Loot: 904 gp; Coin: 650 gp; Magic: 0 gp - (Max 900 gp)

APL 8: Loot: 1008 gp; Coin: 900 gp; Magic: 0 gp - (Max 1300 gp)

APL 10: Loot: 808 gp; Coin: 1100 gp; Magic: 1528 gp - (Max 2300 gp)

APL 12: Loot: 808 gp; Coin: 1300 gp; Magic: 2194 gp - (Max 3300 gp)

APL 14: Loot: 808 gp; Coin: 1500 gp; Magic: 4388 gp - (Max 6600 gp)

AR Special Items

Worked for the True Faith / Exalted Faith / Mouqollad Consortium (circle one): The PCs worked for this organization and there may be further benefits in future.

Far Realms Logic (Su): This PC was exposed to the strange logic of the Far Realms. The PC may choose to employ this for themselves alone on one future Will save as an immediate action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity, before being told if they have succeeded or

failed. The PC may then attempt a second roll, with a +10 unnamed bonus to the check. If employed, however, all further Will saves for the PC in that adventure suffer a -4 circumstance penalty. This favor lasts for the next 4 ARs.

Saving Grace: You saved the Cutter family. The people of the Plains of the Second offer you a mansion and 1,000 acres of farmland for retirement. There is no title included, as that is the domain of the Sultan, but the locals respect you! This has no actual in-game benefit but is a nice place to retire...

Cleansing Rod: Three times a day, it may be activated to clean a PC's clothing, armor and exposed skin thoroughly and safely, taking one minute for the task. The command work is "sqwik". [CL 1, faint transmutation, *prestidigitation*, *permanency*, 275 gp]

Good deeds: The Mouqollad Consortium is pleased with you. Not only do they provide cash compensation, they make items available to you on the AR Item Access noted with an "M".

Lost: Your PC was lost in the Far Realms for a long time. You lose 52 TU and the PC cannot be played for 3 months of real time from the date of this AR, at which point you return to the Oerth. You do, however, gain something from your experience. For one year from the date of this AR, you gain the Toughness Feat as a bonus feat.

Influence Peddling: The Mouqollad Consortium would like to use your influence. For each point of Influence in any VTF region permanently expended, to a maximum of 5 points, you may reduce the cost of one magical item purchase (not creation) by 4%. Cross out this favor when used. Influence points from membership in Metaorgs may not be used for this purpose.

Immune: You are now immune to the effects of Dedicari Dust.

AR Item Access:

APL 6 to 10

^M*Rock boots or acrobat boots* (Adv, MIC)

^M*Potion of greater mage armor* (Adv, SpC)

^M*Truedeath crystal, least or lesser* (Adv, MIC)

Ring of counterspells or force shield (Adv, DMG)

^M*Monk's belt* (Adv, DMG)

Horseshoes of a zephyr or speed (Adv, DMG)

+1 or +2 mithral chain shirt barding (Adv, DMG)

+1 or +2 mithral chain shirt (Adv, DMG)

Pearl of power, 1st, 2nd, or 3rd level (Adv, DMG)

Diamondskin decanter (Adv, MIC)

Aberrant sphere (Adv, MIC)

Cleansing rod (Metaregional, See Above)

^M *Rod of empower or enlarge* (Metaregional, DMG)

^M *Stone of good luck* (Metaregional, DMG)

APL 12 and 14 (Including APL 6 to 10)

^M *Truedeath crystal, greater* (Adv, MIC)

^M *Ring of energy resistance (acid or electricity)*, (Adv, DMG)

+3 or +4 mithral chain shirt (Adv, DMG)

Pearl of power, 4th, 5th or 6th level (Adv, DMG)

Wings of flying (Adv, DMG)

^M *Rod of maximize or quicken* (Metaregional, DMG)

^M *Boots of speed or winged boots* (Metaregional, DMG)

INTRODUCTION

4: FARMHOUSE SURPRISE

ZEB AND DUR, COM1 CR 1/2

NE Medium outsider

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60'; Listen +1, Spot +3

Languages: Common

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11
(+1 armor)

hp 4 (1 HD); spell resistance 11

Resistances electricity, acid 5

Fort +1, **Ref** +0, **Will** -1

Speed 30 ft. in padded armor (6 squares)

Melee quarterstaff +1 (1d6+1)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1

Special Actions true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 12, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 9

SQ true strike, alternate form

Feats Toughness, Weapon Proficiency (quarterstaff)^b

Skills: Handle Animal +3, Profession (farmer) +3

Possessions combat gear plus padded armor,
dagger, quarterstaff, backpack. (Encumbrance –
Light).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

5: BEARS...DEFINITELY BEARS**PSEUDONATURAL ELITE WANDERING KODIAK (BASE POLAR BEAR, MM)****CR 7**

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +6, **Spot** +11**AC** 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18

(-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +2 dex)

hp 132 (11 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 21**Resist** electricity, acid 10**Fort** +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5**Speed** 40 ft. in nothing (6 squares); swim 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +16 (1d8+10) and bite +11 (2d6+5)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +8; **Grp** +22**Special Actions** improved grab, true strike, alternate form**Abilities** Str 31, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 4**Feats** Endurance, Light Armor Proficiency, Run, Track**Special Qualities** improved grab, true strike, alternate form.**Skills:** Hide -1 (+11 in woodlands environment), **Listen** +6, **Spot** +11, **Swim** +18**Possessions** combat gear plus nothing. (Encumbrance – Light).**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a kodiak must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.**Alternate Form (Su):** As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.**6: FAR REALMS OUTPOST****SNIVEL****CR 8**Pseudonatural Hadrimoi (*Monster Manual* V) Rog2 NE Medium outsider (ushemoi)**Init** +10; **Senses** dark vision 60 ft, low light vision; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +14**Languages** Common, Undercommon**AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14

(+6 dexterity, +4 mage armor)

hp 96 (11 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **DR** 10/slashing or piercing, **SR** 21**Resistance:** acid, electricity 10**Fort** +6, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8**Speed** 30 ft. in *mage armor* (6 squares);**Melee** 4 masterwork cold iron daggers +17 (1d4+3) with perfect symmetry**Ranged** dagger +16/+11 (1d4+3)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +13**Deity** Vecna**Combat gear** *potion of mage armor* (CL 1)(consumed), *potion of cure serious wounds***Atk Options** dagger dance, speed from pain, evasion, sneak attack +1d6, true strike, alternate form**Abilities** Str 17, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse**SQ** speed from pain, falling courage, perfect symmetry, dagger dance, trap sense, sneak attack +1d6, evasion, true strike, alternate form**Skills:** Hide +15, Jump +9, **Listen** +5, Move Silently +15, Sleight of Hand +12, **Spot** +14, Tumble +15**Possessions** combat gear plus 4 masterwork cold iron daggers, composite longbow, 20 arrows, 16 daggers, backpack. (Encumbrance – Light)**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.**Speed from Pain (Ex):** Each time a hadrimoi takes damage, the fibrous tendrils that make up its body become increasingly elastic and responsive. The hadrimoi gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +1 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +10-foot bonus to its land speed. These benefits last for 1 minute starting in the round during which a hadrimoi first takes damage in the encounter.**Bonuses** stack each time a hadrimoi takes damage, to a maximum of a +10 dodge bonus to AC, a +5 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +50 foot bonus to land speed. These bonuses accrue each time a hadrimoi takes damage during that minute, even from multiple attacks in the same round. At the end of that minute, all these bonuses disappear. They could begin accumulating again if the hadrimoi takes more damage.**Falling Courage (Ex):** A hadrimoi whose bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher takes a -4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, when in this state, a

hadrimoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.

Perfect Symmetry (Ex): As a full attack, a hadrimoi can attack with up to four light weapons with no penalty on attack rolls. If it tries to use heavier weapons, it can make multiple attacks only according to its base attack bonus, and it take the normal penalties for attacking with two or more weapons.

Dagger Dance (Ex): As a hadrimoi converts its pain to superior agility, it can perform a deadly attack. When a hadrimoi's bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher, the creature can move up to its speed as part of a full attack. It can move before, after, or between each of its attacks, as long as its total movement in the round does not exceed its speed.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

7: FINAL DEFENSE

NARG – HALF-FARSPAWN GRELL FTR2 CR 6

NE Medium outsider

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft, sightless; Listen +7, Spot +11

Languages grell (non-auditory), common, baklunish, uncommon (understood not spoken)

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22
(+7 natural, +5 +1 *chain shirt barding*, +4 dex)

hp 73 (7 HD); DR 5/magic, SR 17

Resist acid 10

Immunity electricity, poison, paralysis

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Speed 5 ft. in chain shirt barding (1 square); 30 ft fly (perfect)

Melee 10 tentacles +10 (1d6+3+paralyzation) and 2 tentacles +8 (1d6+3) and bite +7 (1d6+1)

Ranged lighting lance +9 touch (3d6 electricity)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with primary tentacles)

Base Atk +5; **Gp** +18

Special Actions constrict 1d6+4, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis (DC Fort Special, see below, 2d4 rounds)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 7):

1/day – *touch of idiocy* (DC 11), *stinking cloud* (DC 12)

3/day – *blink*, *blur*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 19, Con 24, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Multi-attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

SQ constrict 1d6+4, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide +14, Knowledge (Arcane) +7, Knowledge (Planes) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +8, Spot +14, Tumble +8

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *chain shirt barding*, *lightning lance*. (Encumbrance – Light).

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a grell deals 1d6+3 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Change Shape(Su): As a standard action, a half-farspawn can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. This ability functions as described for the change shape ability. Except as follows:

- movement modes do not change;
- it retains all tentacle attacks granted by this template, and gains two additional tentacle attacks when making a full attack;
- the creature becomes amorphous. It cannot be flanked, and is not subject to extra damage from critical hits;
- Creatures native the Material Plane take a -1 morale penalty on attack rolls against a half-farspawn in its amorphous form.

Expert Grappler (Ex): A grell that chooses to grapple with one tentacle and remain ungrappled itself takes a -10 penalty on its grapple checks instead of the normal -20 penalty.

Grell other than hatchlings have a +10 racial bonus on grapple checks. (Paralyzed foes automatically lose grapple checks.)

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a grell must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with a primary tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapples check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Paralysis (Ex): A grell's primary tentacles are lined with small spiny barbs, much like a squid's. Any creature hit by a grell's tentacle must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a -4 racial penalty.

Creatures struck by multiple primary tentacle attacks in the same round do not make multiple saving throws; instead, they make a single saving throw, but the DC increases by 1 for every additional tentacle that hit in the same round.

Blindsight (Ex): A grell is blind, but it maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature by using scent and vibration to ascertain its surroundings. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within 60 feet. The grell does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight.

Both the hearing and electrical sense of a grell must be impaired for it to lose the blindsight. Hearing is something that standard means might eliminate, but the electrical sense is very different. Powerful

discharges of electricity are necessary – 20 points or more of electricity damage in a round (if the grell were not immune, it would have taken them) forces a DC 15 Fortitude save or the grell loses its electrical sense 1d4 rounds. If the damage would be 40 or more, the DC is increased to 20 and the time lost is 2d4 rounds.

Flight (Ex): A grell's body is unusually buoyant. The creature continuously produces an effect like that of a *fly* spell, which it can use to move at a speed of 30 feet (perfect). The buoyancy also grants the grell a permanent *feather fall* effect with personal range.

Sightless (Ex): A grell is immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Skills: A grell gains a +2 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Tentacles: The tentacles of a grell may be sundered as if they were weapons. They have 5 hit points each. As long as the grell has one tentacle free, it may use that for the attack of opportunity. Severing a limb does 2 points of damage to the grell. The creature regrows severed tentacles in 1d6 days.

remains attached (The turn it attacks and latches on it does not drain blood).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

PSEUDONATURAL DIRE WEASEL

CR 6

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +15

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 18

(-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +4 dex)

hp 100 (9 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 19

Resistances electricity, acid 10

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. in chain shirt barding (8 squares);

Melee bite +11 (2d6+9)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +16

Special Actions attach, blood drain, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 22, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11

Feats Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness*, Weapon Finesse^b

SQ blood drain, attach, true strike, alternate form.

Skills Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +15

Possessions combat gear plus chain shirt barding. (Encumbrance – Light).

Attach (Ex): A dire weasel that hits with its bite attack latches onto the opponent's body with its powerful jaws. An attached dire weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and thus has an AC of 18.

An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached dire weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

Blood Drain (Ex): A dire weasel drains blood for 1d6 points of Constitution damage each round it

5: BEARS...DEFINITELY BEARS

PSEUDONATURAL ELITE WANDERING KODIAKS (2) (BASE POLAR BEAR, MM) CR 7

N Large outsider (augmented animal)
Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +11

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 18
 (-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +2 dex)
hp 132 (11 HD); **DR** 5/magic, SR 21
Resist electricity, acid 10
Fort +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Speed 40 ft. in nothing (6 squares); swim 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +16 (1d8+10) and bite +11 (2d6+5)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +22
Special Actions improved grab, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 31, Dex 15, Con 23, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 4
Feats Endurance, Light Armor Proficiency, Run, Track

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.
Skills: Hide -1 (+11 in woodlands environment), Listen +6, Spot +11, Swim +18

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
 (Encumbrance – Light).

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

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

6: FAR REALMS OUTPOST

SNIVEL AND SLUG CR 8

Pseudonatural Hadrimoi (MM V) Rog2
 NE Medium outsider (ushemioi)
Init +10; **Senses** dark vision 60 ft, low light vision; Listen +5, Spot +14

Languages Common, Undercommon

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14
 (+6 dexterity, +4 mage armor)
hp 96 (11 HD); **DR** 5/magic, DR 10/slashing or piercing, SR 21
Resist acid, electricity 10
Fort +6, **Ref** +15, **Will** +8

Speed 30 ft. in *mage armor* (6 squares);
Melee 4 masterwork cold iron daggers +17 (1d4+3) with perfect symmetry

Ranged dagger +16/+11 (1d4+3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +13

Deity: Vecna

Combat gear *potion of mage armor* (CL 1) (consumed), *potion of cure serious wounds*

Atk Options dagger dance, speed from pain, evasion, sneak attack +1d6, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 17, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse

SQ speed from pain, falling courage, perfect symmetry, dagger dance, trap sense, sneak attack +1d6, evasion, true strike, alternate form

Skills Hide +15, Jump +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +15, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +14, Tumble +15

Possessions combat gear plus 4 masterwork cold iron daggers, composite longbow, 20 arrows, 16 daggers, backpack. (Encumbrance – Light)

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Speed from Pain (Ex): Each time a hadrimoi takes damage, the fibrous tendrils that make up its body become increasingly elastic and responsive. The hadrimoi gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +1 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +10-foot bonus to its land speed. These benefits last for 1 minute starting in the round during which a hadrimoi first takes damage in the encounter.

Bonuses stack each time a hadrimoi takes damage, to a maximum of a +10 dodge bonus to AC, a +5 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +50 foot bonus to land speed. These bonuses accrue each time a hadrimoi takes damage during that minute, even from multiple attacks in the same round. At the end of that minute, all these bonuses disappear. They could begin accumulating again if the hadrimoi takes more damage.

Falling Courage (Ex): A hadrimoi whose bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher takes a -4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, when in this state, a hadrimoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.

Perfect Symmetry (Ex): As a full attack, a hadrimoi can attack with up to four light weapons with no penalty on attack rolls. If it tries to use heavier weapons, it can make multiple attacks only according to its base attack bonus, and it take the

normal penalties for attacking with two or more weapons.

Dagger Dance (Ex): As a hadrimoi converts its pain to superior agility, it can perform a deadly attack. When a hadrimoi's bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher, the creature can move up to its speed as part of a full attack. It can move before, after, or between each of its attacks, as long as its total movement in the round does not exceed its speed.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

7: FINAL DEFENSE

NARG - HALF-FARSPAWN GRELL

FTR4/SWASHBUCKLER1 CR 8

NE Medium outsider

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., sightless; **Listen** +11, **Spot** +16

Languages grell (non-auditory), baklunish, common, undercommon (understood not spoken)

AC 27, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 22

(+7 natural, +5 +1 chain shirt barding, +5 dex)

hp 138 (10 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 20

Resist acid 10

Immunity electricity, poison, paralysis

Fort +14, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

Speed 5 ft. in chain shirt barding (1 square); 30 ft fly (perfect)

Melee 10 tentacles +15 (1d6+7+paralyzation) and 2 tentacles +13 (1d6+7) and bite +12 (1d6+1)

Ranged lighting lance +13 touch (3d6 electricity)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with primary tentacles)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +21

Special Actions constrict 1d6+4, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis (DC Fort Special, see below, 2d4 rounds)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 10):

1/day – *greater invisibility*, *touch of idiocy* (DC 11), *stinking cloud* (DC 12)

3/day – *blink*, *blur*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 20, Con 24, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Melee Weapon Mastery (bludgeoning), Mobility, Multi-attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (tentacle), Weapon Specialization (tentacle).

SQ constrict 1d6+4, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide +15, Knowledge (Arcane) +7, Knowledge (Planes) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +10, Spot +16, Tumble +15

Possessions combat gear plus *ring of counterspells* (*dispel magic*), +1 chain shirt barding, lightning lance. (Encumbrance – Light).

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a grell deals 1d6+5 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Change Shape(Su): As a standard action, a half-farspawn can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. This ability functions as described for the change shape ability. Except as follows:

- movement modes do not change;
- it retains all tentacle attacks granted by this template, and gains two additional tentacle attacks when making a full attack;
- the creature becomes amorphous. It cannot be flanked, and is not subject to extra damage from critical hits;
- Creatures native the Material Plane take a -1 morale penalty on attack rolls against a half-farspawn in its amorphous form.

Expert Grappler (Ex): A grell that chooses to grapple with one tentacle and remain ungrappled itself takes a -10 penalty on its grapple checks instead of the normal -20 penalty.

Grell other than hatchlings have a +10 racial bonus on grapple checks. (Paralyzed foes automatically lose grapple checks.)

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a grell must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with a primary tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapples check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Paralysis (Ex): A grell's primary tentacles are lined with small spiny barbs, much like a squid's. Any creature hit by a grell's tentacle must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a -4 racial penalty.

Creatures struck by multiple primary tentacle attacks in the same round do not make multiple saving throws; instead, they make a single saving throw, but the DC increases by 1 for every additional tentacle that hit in the same round.

Blindsight (Ex): A grell is blind, but it maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature by using scent and vibration to ascertain its surroundings. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within 60 feet. The grell does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight.

Both the hearing and electrical sense of a grell must be impaired for it to lose the blindsight. Hearing is something that standard means might eliminate, but the electrical sense is very different. Powerful discharges of electricity are necessary – 20 points or more of electricity damage in a round (if the grell were not immune, it would have taken them) forces a DC 15 Fortitude save or the grell loses its electrical sense 1d4 rounds. If the damage would

be 40 or more, the DC is increased to 20 and the time lost is 2d4 rounds.

Flight (Ex): A grell's body is unusually buoyant. The creature continuously produces an effect like that of a *fly* spell, which it can use to move at a speed of 30 feet (perfect). The buoyancy also grants the grell a permanent *feather fall* effect with personal range.

Sightless (Ex): A grell is immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Skills: A grell gains a +2 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Tentacles: The tentacles of a grell may be sundered as if they were weapons. They have 5 hit points each. As long as the grell has one tentacle free, it may use that for the attack of opportunity. Severing a limb does 2 points of damage to the grell. The creature regrows severed tentacles in 1d6 days.

chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

PSEUDONATURAL DIRE WEASELS (2) CR 6

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +3, **Spot** +15

AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 18

(-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +4 dex)

hp 100 (9 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 19

Resist electricity, acid 10

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. in chain shirt barding (8 squares);

Melee bite +11 (2d6+9)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +16

Special Actions attach, blood drain, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 22, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11

Feats Alertness, Armor Proficiency (Light), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness*, Weapon Finesse^b

SQ blood drain, attach, true strike, alternate form.

Skills Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +15

Possessions combat gear plus chain shirt barding. (Encumbrance – Light).

Attach (Ex): A dire weasel that hits with its bite attack latches onto the opponent's body with its powerful jaws. An attached dire weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and thus has an AC of 18.

An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached dire weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

Blood Drain (Ex): A dire weasel drains blood for 1d6 points of Constitution damage each round it remains attached (The turn it attacks and latches on it does not drain blood).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss

5: BEARS...DEFINITELY BEARS**PSEUDONATURAL ELITE DIRE BEAR****CR 11**

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +11, **Spot** +14**AC** 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20

(-1 size, +7 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +3 dex)

hp 180 (15 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 25**Resist** electricity, acid 15**Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11**Speed** 40 ft. in nothing (6 squares)**Melee** 2 claws +23 (2d6+12) and bite +17 (2d8+6)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +11; **Grp** +27**Special Actions** improved grab, true strike, alternate form**Abilities** Str 35, Dex 16, Con 23, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 8**Feats** Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural attack (claw), Light Armor Proficiency, Run, Weapon Focus (claw)**SQ** improved grab, true strike, alternate form.**Skills** Listen +11, Spot +14, Swim +15**Possessions** combat gear plus nothing. (Encumbrance – Light).**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a dire bear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.**Alternate Form (Su):** As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.**6: FAR REALMS OUTPOST****SNIVEL AND SLUG****CR 10**

Pseudonatural Hadrimoi (MM V) Rog3

NE Medium outsider (ushemioi)

Init +10; **Senses** dark vision 60 ft, low light vision; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +17**Languages** Common, Undercommon**AC** 22, touch 16, flat-footed 16

(+6 dexterity, +6 greater mage armor)

hp 103 (12 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **DR** 10/slashing or piercing, **SR** 22**Resist** acid, electricity 15**Fort** +7, **Ref** +15, **Will** +9**Speed** 30 ft. in *greater mage armor* (6 squares); 60 ft fly (good)**Melee** 4 +1 *daggers* +18 (1d4+5) with perfect symmetry**Ranged** dagger +17/+12/+7 (1d4+4)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +11; **Grp** +15**Deity** Vecna**Combat gear** potion of *greater mage armor* (CL 5) (consumed), *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of fly* (CL 15) (consumed)**Atk Options** dagger dance, speed from pain, evasion, sneak attack +2d6, true strike, alternate form**Abilities** Str 18, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9**Feats** Dodge, Elusive Target*, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse**SQ** speed from pain, falling courage, perfect symmetry, dagger dance, trap sense, sneak attack +2d6, evasion, true strike, alternate form**Skills:** Hide +15, Jump +9, Listen +5, Move Silently +15, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +17, Tumble +21**Possessions** combat gear plus 4 +1 *daggers*, 16 daggers, composite longbow, 20 arrows, backpack. (Encumbrance – Light)**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.**Speed from Pain (Ex):** Each time a hadrimoi takes damage, the fibrous tendrils that make up its body become increasingly elastic and responsive. The hadrimoi gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +1 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +10-foot bonus to its land speed. These benefits last for 1 minute starting in the round during which a hadrimoi first takes damage in the encounter.

Bonuses stack each time a hadrimoi takes damage, to a maximum of a +10 dodge bonus to AC, a +5 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +50 foot bonus to land speed. These bonuses accrue each time a hadrimoi takes damage during that minute, even from multiple attacks in the same round. At the end of that minute, all these bonuses disappear. They could begin accumulating again if the hadrimoi takes more damage.

Falling Courage (Ex): A hadrimoi whose bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher takes a -4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, when in this state, a hadrimoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.**Perfect Symmetry (Ex):** As a full attack, a hadrimoi can attack with up to four light weapons with no penalty on attack rolls. If it tries to use heavier

weapons, it can make multiple attacks only according to its base attack bonus, and it takes the normal penalties for attacking with two or more weapons.

Dagger Dance (Ex): As a hadrimoi converts its pain to superior agility, it can perform a deadly attack. When a hadrimoi's bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher, the creature can move up to its speed as part of a full attack. It can move before, after, or between each of its attacks, as long as its total movement in the round does not exceed its speed.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

7: FINAL DEFENSE

NARG - HALF-FARSPAWN GRELL

FTR4/SWASHBUCKLER3

CR 10

NE Medium outsider

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., sightless; **Listen** +11, **Spot** +18

Languages grell (non-auditory), baklunish, common, uncommon (understood not spoken)

AC 31, touch 17, flat-footed 26

(+7 natural, +5 +1 *chain shirt barding*, +2 *ring of protection*, +2 *force shield*, +5 Dex)

hp 167 (12 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 22

Resist acid 10

Immunity electricity, poison, paralysis

Fort +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Speed 5 ft. in chain shirt barding (1 square); 30 ft fly (perfect)

Melee 10 tentacles +17 (1d6+9+paralyzation) and 2 tentacles +15 (1d6+9) and bite +14 (1d6+3)

Ranged lightning lance +15 touch (3d6 electricity)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with primary tentacles)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +23

Special Actions constrict 1d6+6, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis (DC Fort Special, see below, 2d4 rounds)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12):

1/day – *greater invisibility*, *touch of idiocy* (DC 11), *stinking cloud* (DC 12), *telekinesis*

3/day – *blink*, *blur*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 21, Con 24, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Dodge, Elusive Target*, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Melee Weapon Mastery (bludgeoning), Mobility, Multi-attack, Weapon Finesse^b, Weapon Focus (tentacle), Weapon Specialization (tentacle).

SQ constrict 1d6+6, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis, true strike, alternate form, grace, insightful strike.

Skills: Hide +15, Knowledge (Arcane) +7, Knowledge (Planes) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +18, Tumble +20

Possessions combat gear plus *ring of counterspells (dispel magic)*, +1 *chain shirt barding*, *lightning lance*, *ring of force shield*, +2 *ring of protection*. (Encumbrance – Light), also note that grell can use up to four rings at the same time.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a grell deals 1d6+5 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Change Shape(Su): As a standard action, a half-farspawn can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. This ability functions as described for the change shape ability. Except as follows:

- movement modes do not change;
- it retains all tentacle attacks granted by this template, and gains two additional tentacle attacks when making a full attack;
- the creature becomes amorphous. It cannot be flanked, and is not subject to extra damage from critical hits;
- Creatures native the Material Plane take a -1 morale penalty on attack rolls against a half-farspawn in its amorphous form.

Expert Grappler (Ex): A grell that chooses to grapple with one tentacle and remain ungrappled itself takes a -10 penalty on its grapple checks instead of the normal -20 penalty.

Grell other than hatchlings have a +10 racial bonus on grapple checks. (Paralyzed foes automatically lose grapple checks.)

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a grell must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with a primary tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapples check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Paralysis (Ex): A grell's primary tentacles are lined with small spiny barbs, much like a squid's. Any creature hit by a grell's tentacle must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a -4 racial penalty.

Creatures struck by multiple primary tentacle attacks in the same round do not make multiple saving throws; instead, they make a single saving throw, but the DC increases by 1 for every additional tentacle that hit in the same round.

Blindsight (Ex): A grell is blind, but it maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature by using scent and vibration to ascertain its surroundings. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within 60 feet. The grell does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight.

Both the hearing and electrical sense of a grell must be impaired for it to lose the blindsight. Hearing is something that standard means might eliminate, but the electrical sense is very different. Powerful discharges of electricity are necessary – 20 points or more of electricity damage in a round (if the grell were not immune, it would have taken them) forces a DC 15 Fortitude save or the grell loses its electrical sense 1d4 rounds. If the damage would be 40 or more, the DC is increased to 20 and the time lost is 2d4 rounds.

Flight (Ex): A grell's body is unusually buoyant. The creature continuously produces an effect like that of a *fly* spell, which it can use to move at a speed of 30 feet (perfect). The buoyancy also grants the grell a permanent *feather fall* effect with personal range.

Sightless (Ex): A grell is immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Skills: A grell gains a +2 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Tentacles: The tentacles of a grell may be sundered as if they were weapons. They have 5 hit points each. As long as the grell has one tentacle free, it may use that for the attack of opportunity. Severing a limb does 2 points of damage to the grell. The creature regrows severed tentacles in 1d6 days.

Grace (Ex): A swashbuckler gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex Saves at 2nd level. This bonus increases to +2 at 11th level and to +3 at 20th level. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex): At 3rd level, a swashbuckler becomes able to place her finesse attacks where they deal greater damage. She applies her Intelligence bonus (if any) as a bonus on damage rolls (in addition to any Strength bonus she may have) with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse, such as a rapier, whip or spiked chain. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to a swashbuckler's insightful strike. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

ELITE PSEUDONATURAL DIRE WEASEL (3) CR 7

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +17

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 18
(-1 size, +5 natural, +4 mithral chain shirt barding, +5 dex)

hp 118 (9 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 19

Resist electricity, acid 10

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Speed 40 ft. in chain shirt barding (8 squares);

Melee bite +12 (2d6+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +17

Special Actions attach, blood drain, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fighting, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness*, Weapon Finesse^b

SQ blood drain, attach, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +17

Possessions combat gear plus mithral chain shirt barding. (Encumbrance – Light).

Attach (Ex): A dire weasel that hits with its bite attack latches onto the opponent's body with its powerful jaws. An attached dire weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and thus has an AC of 18.

An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached dire weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

Blood Drain (Ex): A dire weasel drains blood for 1d6 points of Constitution damage each round it remains attached (The turn it attacks and latches on it does not drain blood).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

5: BEARS...DEFINITELY BEARS

PSEUDONATURAL ELITE DIRE BEARS (2)

CR

11

N Large outsider (augmented animal)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +11, **Spot** +14

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20
(-1 size, +7 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +3 dex)

hp 180 (15 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 25

Resist electricity, acid 15

Fort +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

Speed 40 ft. in nothing (6 squares)

Melee 2 claws +23 (2d6+12) and bite +17 (2d8+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +27

Special Actions improved grab, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 35, Dex 16, Con 23, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Endurance, Improved Natural attack (claw), Light Armor Proficiency, Run, Weapon Focus (claw)

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: **Listen** +11, **Spot** +14, **Swim** +15

Possessions combat gear plus nothing. (Encumbrance – Light).

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

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

6: FAR REALMS OUTPOST

SNIVEL AND SLUG

CR

12

Pseudonatural Hadrimoi (*Monster Manual* V)
Rog3/Scout1/Swashbuckler1

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (ushemioi)

Init +10; **Senses** dark vision 60 ft, low light vision; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +19

Languages Common, Undercommon

AC 25, touch 19, flat-footed 19

(+6 dexterity, +6 *greater mage armor*, +3 deflection)

hp 119 (14 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **DR** 10/slashing or piercing, **SR** 24

Resistance: acid, electricity 15

Fort +11, **Ref** +19, **Will** +11

Speed 30 ft. in *greater mage armor* (6 squares); 60 ft fly (good)

Melee 4 +1 *daggers* +19 (1d4+5, 17-20) with perfect symmetry

Ranged dagger +17/+12/+7 (1d4+4, 17-20)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +16

Deity Vecna

Combat gear *potion of shield of faith* (CL 10) (consumed), *potion of greater mage armor**

(CL 15) (consumed), *potion of cure serious wounds* (3), *potion of fly* (CL 15) (consumed)

Atk Options dagger dance, speed from pain, evasion, sneak attack +2d6, true strike, alternate form, skirmish +1d6

Abilities Str 18, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9

Feats Dodge, Elusive Target*, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse^b

SQ speed from pain, falling courage, perfect symmetry, dagger dance, trap sense, sneak attack +1d6, evasion, true strike, alternate form

Skills: **Balance** +11, **Hide** +17, **Jump** +11, **Listen** +5, **Move Silently** +15, **Sleight of Hand** +12, **Spot** +19, **Tumble** +27

Possessions combat gear plus 4 +1 *daggers*, +2 *vest of resistance*, 16 daggers, composite longbow, 20 arrows, backpack. (Encumbrance – Light)

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Speed from Pain (Ex): Each time a hadrimoi takes damage, the fibrous tendrils that make up its body become increasingly elastic and responsive. The hadrimoi gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +1 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +10-foot bonus to its land speed. These benefits last for 1 minute starting in the round during which a hadrimoi first takes damage in the encounter.

Bonuses stack each time a hadrimoi takes damage, to a maximum of a +10 dodge bonus to AC, a +5 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +50 foot bonus to land speed. These bonuses accrue each time a hadrimoi

takes damage during that minute, even from multiple attacks in the same round. At the end of that minute, all these bonuses disappear. They could begin accumulating again if the hadrimoi takes more damage.

Falling Courage (Ex): A hadrimoi whose bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher takes a -4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, when in this state, a hadrimoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.

Perfect Symmetry (Ex): As a full attack, a hadrimoi can attack with up to four light weapons with no penalty on attack rolls. If it tries to use heavier weapons, it can make multiple attacks only according to its base attack bonus, and it take the normal penalties for attacking with two or more weapons.

Dagger Dance (Ex): As a hadrimoi converts its pain to superior agility, it can perform a deadly attack. When a hadrimoi's bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher, the creature can move up to its speed as part of a full attack. It can move before, after, or between each of its attacks, as long as its total movement in the round does not exceed its speed.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

Skirmish (Ex): A scout relies on mobility to deal extra damage and improve her defense. She deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on all attacks she makes during any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. The extra damage applies only to attacks take during the scout's turn. This extra damage increases by 1d6 for ever four levels gain above 1st.

The extra damage only applies against living creatures that have a discernible anatomy. Undead, constructs, oozes, plants, incorporeal creatures and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are not vulnerable to this additional damage. The scout must be able to be able to reach such a spot. Scouts can apply this extra damage to ranged attacks made while skirmishing, but only if the target is within 30 feet.

At 3rd level, a scout gains a +1 competence to Armor class during any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. The bonus applies as soon as the scout has moved 10 feet, and lasts until the start of her next turn. This bonus improves by 1 for every four levels gained above 3rd.

A scout loses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load. If she gains the skirmish ability from another class, the bonuses stack.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

STEPHAN OF THE FAR REALMS CR

15

Suel Human descent Wiz5/Alienist10/War1
(Conjurer – no divination or necromancy)

CN Medium outsider

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Baklunish, Common, Draconic, Elven, Suel

AC 33, touch 18, flat-footed 29

(+4 dexterity, +4 shield, +6 greater mage armor, +5 natural, +4 deflection)

hp 143 (16 HD); DR 10/magic, 10/adamantine (150 hp)

Resist acid 10, cold 30, electricity 10, fire 30

Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +20

Speed 60 ft. in nothing (6 squares); fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee cold iron dagger +9 (1d4+1)

Ranged touch +12

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9

Wizard Spells (S – specialist school spell):

8th – *maze*, *quickened Evard's black tentacles*, *summon monster VIII*, *Rapid summon monster VII^s*

7th – *power word blind*, *prismatic spray* (DC 26), *Quickened Sculpted glitterdust* (DC 23), *Rapid summon monster VI^s*

6th – *Empowered wall of fire*, *repulsion* (DC 25), *Rapid summon monster V*, *summon monster VI^s*

5th – *arc of lightning^{as}* (DC 24), *cone of cold* (DC 24), *Empowered fireball* (DC 22), *Quickened magic missile*, *summon monster V*

4th – *Empowered scorching ray*, *Sculpted glitterdust^s* (DC 22), *Sculpted dispel magic*, *Sculpted fireball* (DC 22), *summon monster IV +1*

3rd – *dispel magic*, *Sculpted glitterdust* (DC 23), *Transdimensional web* (DC 22), *summon monster III^s*

2nd – *scorching ray*, *Rapid summon monster I^s*

1st – *grease^s* (DC 21), *magic missile* * 4

0 – *acid splash^s*, *ray of frost**4

Deity: The Far Realms

Pre-Cast or consumed (CL 15, 9 rounds gone on all round/level spells): *anticipate*

teleport (from scroll)*, *bull's strength*, *contingency (dimension door up 800 feet)*, *blink of the eyes*, *expeditious retreat*, *maximized potion of false life*, *freedom of movement (from an elixir)*, *barkskin (potion)*, *greater mage armor (extended)*, *haste (extended)*, *owl's wisdom*, *overland flight*, *resist energy*

(cold), resist energy (fire), see invisibility, shield (extended), shield of faith (potion), stonewall, true seeing

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 28, Wis 16, Cha 8

Feats Augment Summoning, Craft Wondrous^b, Empower Spell, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scrolls^b, Sculpt Spell^b, Spell Focus: Conjuratation, Quicken Spell^b, Rapid Spell, Transdimensional Spell*.

Special Qualities: familiar (as 15th level wizard), summon alien, alien blessing, mad certainty, pseudonatural familiar, extra summoning, insane certainty, timeless body, alien transcendence.

Skills: Concentration +22, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcane) +29, Knowledge (local-vtf) +28, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Knowledge (nature) +14, Profession (Gambler) +13, Spellcraft +30.

Possessions combat gear plus +5 vest of resistance, +6 headband of intellect, belt of battle, +4 gloves of dexterity, +4 amulet of health, ring of evasion, ring of counterspells (dispel magic, greater), rod of extend, lesser (used for the day), rod of silence, greater, mantle of second chances*, cold iron dagger, alchemical silver dagger, daggers (2), adventurer's outfit, spell component pouch. (Encumbrance – Light).

Summon Alien: Whenever an alienist would use any summon monster spell to summon a celestial or fiendish creature, she instead summons a pseudonatural version of that creature. An alienist gives up the ability to summon nonpseudonatural creatures with a *summon monster* spell.

Alien Blessing (Ex): An alienist who attains 2nd level gains a +1 insight bonus on all saving throws, but she permanently loses 2 points of Wisdom.

Mad Certainty (Ex): At 4th level, an alienist's mad certainty in the power of entities beyond the reach of normal space and time lend her an unnatural fortitude., granting her an additional 3 hit points. However, constantly dwelling on such beings is mentally corrosive, and the alienist's mind begins to fracture. She now takes a -4 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Handle Animal checks made to influence nonpseudonatural creatures.

Pseudonatural Familiar: The familiar gains the pseudonatural template.

Extra Summoning: From 6th level on, an alienist gains one extra spell slot at her highest level. This slot can be used only for a summon monster spell. As an alienist becomes able to learn higher-level spells, the extra slot migrates up to the new highest level.

Insane Certainty (Ex): At 8th level, an alienist's mad certainty crystallizes into a truly chilling mania. She gains an additional 3 hit points, but her mental faculties continue to degrade. She now takes a -10 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Handle Animal checks made to influence nonpseudonatural creatures.

Timeless Body (Ex): At 9th level, an alienist learns the secret of perpetual youth. She no longer takes ability penalties for aging. When her time is up, she is simply taken away by horrible entities from the Far Realms and never seen again.

Alien Transcendence (Su): A 10th-level alienist, because of long association with alien entities and intense study of insane secrets, transcends her mortal form and becomes an alien creature. Her type changes to outsider. Additionally, she gains damage reduction 10/magic and resistance to acid 10 and electricity 10.

Upon achieving alien transcendence, an alienist undergoes a minor physical change (extra tentacle on the back in this case). An alienist can hide this abnormality in a robe or hood, but the alien growth is not under the alienist's control and sometimes moves, twitches, opens, or otherwise animates of its own accord. This applies a -4 penalty on Disguise checks an alienist makes to conceal her true nature.

Anyone who shares an alienist's predilection for study of the Far Realms immediately recognizes her transcendent nature, and she gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks and ability checks when interacting with such beings. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks involving any other creatures to whom she reveals her abnormal nature.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

SURI, PSEUDONATURAL

PSEUDODRAGON (FAMILIAR)

CN Tiny outsider

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft, darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +6

Languages: Telepathy, 60 ft, with Common, Sylvan

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 20

(+2 size, +4 *mage armor*, +4 natural, +4 dex)

hp 68 (16 HD); DR 10/magic, SR 25

Resist electricity, acid 5

Immunity: *sleep*, paralysis

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

Speed 15 ft. in nothing (3 squares), fly 60 ft (good)

Melee Sting +14 (1d3-2 and poison) and bite +9 (1)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** -2

Special Actions poison, true strike, alternate form

Pre-Cast (CL 15): *bear's endurance, cat's grace, mage armor*

Abilities Str 6, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Weapon Finesse

Special Qualities: improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, scry on familiar, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: As Stephan

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
(Encumbrance – Light).

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 23, initial damage sleep for 1 minute, secondary damage sleep for 1d3 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus..

Blindsense (Ex): A pseudodragon can locate creatures within 60 ft by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

SUMMONED PSEUDONATURAL GIRALLON (*SUMMON MONSTER VII*)

N Large outsider

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +1, **Spot** +6

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 13
(-1 size, +4 natural, +3 dex)

hp 86 (7 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 17

Resist electricity, acid 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Speed 40 ft. in nothing (8 squares), climb 40 ft

Melee 4 claws +14 (1d4+8) and bite +9 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +19

Special Actions rend 2d4+12, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 26, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7

Feats Iron Will, Toughness (2)

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Climb +16, Listen +1, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
(Encumbrance – Light).

Rend (Ex): A girallon that hits with two or more claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d4+12 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

SUMMONED PSEUDONATURAL POLAR BEAR) *SUMMON MONSTER VI*

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +6, **Spot** +11

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14
(-1 size, +5 natural, +1 dex)

hp 48 (8 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 18

Resist electricity, acid 10

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Speed 40 ft. in nothing (8 squares); swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d8+10) and bite +10
(2d6+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +20

Special Actions improved grab, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 31, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Endurance, Run, Track

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide -2 (+10 in woodlands environment), Listen +5, Spot +7, Swim +18

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
(Encumbrance – Light).

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

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their

attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

SUMMONED PSEUDONATURAL DIRE APE (SUMMON MONSTER V)

N Large outsider

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +6

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13

(-1 size, +4 natural, +2 dex)

hp 53 (5 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 15

Resist electricity, acid 5

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. in nothing (6 squares), climb 15 ft

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d6+8) and bite +5 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +15

Special Actions rend 2d6+12, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 26, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7

Feats Alertness, Toughness

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Climb +16, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +6

Possessions combat gear plus nothing. (Encumbrance – Light).

Rend (Ex): A dire ape that hits with two or more claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d6+12 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

ELITE PSEUDONATURAL DIRE WEASEL (4) CR 7

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +17

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 18

(-1 size, +5 natural, +4 mithral chain shirt barding, +5 dex)

hp 118 (9 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 19

Resist electricity, acid 10

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Speed 40 ft. in chain shirt barding (8 squares);

Melee bite +12 (2d6+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +17

Special Actions attach, blood drain, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fighting, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness*, Weapon Finesse^b

SQ blood drain, attach, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +17

Possessions combat gear plus mithral chain shirt barding. (Encumbrance – Light).

Attach (Ex): A dire weasel that hits with its bite attack latches onto the opponent's body with its powerful jaws. An attached dire weasel loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and thus has an AC of 18.

An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached dire weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

Blood Drain (Ex): A dire weasel drains blood for 1d6 points of Constitution damage each round it remains attached (The turn it attacks and latches on it does not drain blood).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

5: BEARS...DEFINITELY BEARS**PSEUDONATURAL ELITE ADVANCED****DIRE BEARS (2) CR 13**

N Huge outsider (augmented animal)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +11, **Spot** +17**AC** 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22

(-2 size, +10 natural, +4 chain shirt barding, +2 dex)

hp 270 (18 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 25**Resist** electricity, acid 15**Fort** +19, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13**Speed** 40 ft. in nothing (6 squares)**Melee** 2 claws +28 (3d6+16, 19-20 crit) and bite +22 (3d8+8)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Base Atk** +13; **Grp** +37**Special Actions** improved grab, true strike, alternate form**Abilities** Str 43, Dex 14, Con 28, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 8**Feats** Alertness, Endurance, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Natural attack (claw), Light Armor Proficiency, Run, Weapon Focus (claw)**SQ** improved grab, true strike, alternate form.**Skills:** **Listen** +11, **Spot** +17, **Swim** +15**Possessions** combat gear plus nothing. (Encumbrance – Light).**Improved Grab (Ex):** To use this ability, a dire bear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.**Alternate Form (Su):** As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.**6: FAR REALMS OUTPOST****SNIVEL, SLUG, ENRICO, SALMON CR 12**Pseudonatural Hadrimei (*Monster Manual V*)
Rog3/Scout1/Swashbuckler1

NE Medium monstrous humanoid (ushemioi)

Init +10; **Senses** dark vision 60 ft, low light vision; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +19**Languages** Common, Undercommon**AC** 25, touch 19, flat-footed 19(+6 dexterity, +6 *greater mage armor*, +3 deflection)**hp** 119 (14 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 24**Resist** acid, electricity 15**Fort** +11, **Ref** +19, **Will** +11**Speed** 30 ft. in *greater mage armor* (6 squares); 60 ft fly (good)**Melee** 4 +1 *daggers* +19 (1d4+5, 17-20) with perfect symmetry**Ranged** dagger +17/+12/+7 (1d4+4, 17-20)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Base Atk** +12; **Grp** +16**Deity** Vecna**Combat gear** *potion of shield of faith* (CL 10) (consumed), *potion of greater mage armor** (CL 15) (consumed), *potion of cure serious wounds* (3), *potion of fly* (CL 15) (consumed)**Atk Options** dagger dance, speed from pain, evasion, sneak attack +2d6, true strike, alternate form, skirmish +1d6**Abilities** Str 18, Dex 22, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9**Feats** Dodge, Elusive Target*, Improved Critical (dagger), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Weapon Finesse^b**SQ** speed from pain, falling courage, perfect symmetry, dagger dance, trap sense, sneak attack +2d6, evasion, true strike, alternate form**Skills:** **Balance** +11, **Hide** +17, **Jump** +11, **Listen** +5, **Move Silently** +15, **Sleight of Hand** +12, **Spot** +19, **Tumble** +27**Possessions** combat gear plus 4 +1 *daggers*, +2 *vest of resistance*, 16 daggers, composite longbow, 20 arrows, backpack. (Encumbrance – Light)**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.**Speed from Pain (Ex):** Each time a hadrimoi takes damage, the fibrous tendrils that make up its body become increasingly elastic and responsive. The hadrimoi gains a +2 dodge bonus to AC, a +1 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +10-foot bonus to its land speed. These benefits last for 1 minute starting in the round during which a hadrimoi first takes damage in the encounter.

Bonuses stack each time a hadrimoi takes damage, to a maximum of a +10 dodge bonus to AC, a +5 bonus on attack rolls and Reflex saves, and a +50 foot bonus to land speed. These bonuses accrue each time a hadrimoi

takes damage during that minute, even from multiple attacks in the same round. At the end of that minute, all these bonuses disappear. They could begin accumulating again if the hadrimoi takes more damage.

Falling Courage (Ex): A hadrimoi whose bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher takes a -4 penalty on saves against fear effects and on the level check made to oppose an Intimidate check. In addition, when in this state, a hadrimoi can be affected by fear effects that do not normally affect creatures of its Hit Dice.

Perfect Symmetry (Ex): As a full attack, a hadrimoi can attack with up to four light weapons with no penalty on attack rolls. If it tries to use heavier weapons, it can make multiple attacks only according to its base attack bonus, and it take the normal penalties for attacking with two or more weapons.

Dagger Dance (Ex): As a hadrimoi converts its pain to superior agility, it can perform a deadly attack. When a hadrimoi's bonus to speed from its speed from pain ability is +30 feet or higher, the creature can move up to its speed as part of a full attack. It can move before, after, or between each of its attacks, as long as its total movement in the round does not exceed its speed.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

Skirmish (Ex): A scout relies on mobility to deal extra damage and improve her defense. She deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on all attacks she makes during any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. The extra damage applies only to attacks take during the scout's turn. This extra damage increases by 1d6 for ever four levels gain above 1st.

The extra damage only applies against living creatures that have a discernible anatomy. Undead, constructs, oozes, plants, incorporeal creatures and creatures immune to extra damage from critical hits are not vulnerable to this additional damage. The scout must be able to be able to reach such a spot. Scouts can apply this extra damage to ranged attacks made while skirmishing, but only if the target is within 30 feet.

At 3rd level, a scout gains a +1 competence to Armor class during any round in which she moves at least 10 feet. The bonus applies as soon as the scout has moved 10 feet, and lasts until the start of her next turn. This bonus improves by 1 for every four levels gained above 3rd.

A scout loses this ability when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load. If she gains the skirmish ability from another class, the bonuses stack.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

7: FINAL DEFENSE

STEPHAN OF THE FAR REALMS CR

15

Suel Human descent Wiz5/Alienist10/War1
(Conjurer – no divination or necromancy)

CN Medium outsider

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Baklunish, Common, Draconic, Elven, Suel

AC 33, touch 18, flat-footed 29

(+4 dexterity, +4 shield, +6 greater mage armor, +5 natural, +4 deflection)

hp 143 (16 HD); **DR** 10/magic, 10/adamantine (150 hp)

Resist acid 10, cold 30, electricity 10, fire 30

Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +20

Speed 60 ft. in nothing (6 squares); fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee cold iron dagger +9 (1d4+1)

Ranged touch +12

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9

Wizard Spells (S – specialist school spell):

8th – *maze*, *Quickened evard's black tentacles*, *summon monster VIII*, *Rapid summon monster VII^s*

7th – *power word blind*, *prismatic spray* (DC 26), *Quickened Sculpted glitterdust* (DC 23), *Rapid summon monster VI^s*

6th – *Empowered wall of fire*, *repulsion* (DC 25), *Rapid summon monster V*, *summon monster VI^s*

5th – *arc of lightning^{as}* (DC 24), *cone of cold* (DC 24), *Empowered fireball* (DC 22), *Quickened magic missile*, *summon monster V*

4th – *Empowered scorching ray*, *Sculpted glitterdust^s* (DC 22), *Sculpted dispel magic*, *Sculpted fireball* (DC 22), *summon monster IV +1*

3rd – *dispel magic*, *Sculpted glitterdust* (DC 23), *Transdimensional web* (DC 22), *summon monster III^s*

2nd – *scorching ray*, *Rapid summon monster I^s*

1st – *grease^s* (DC 21), *magic missile* * 4

0 – *acid splash^s*, *ray of frost**4

Deity The Far Realms

Pre-Cast or consumed (CL 15, 9 rounds gone on all round/level spells): *anticipate*

teleport (from scroll)*, *bull's strength*, *contingency (dimension door up 800 feet, blink of the eyes)*, *expeditious retreat*, *maximized potion of false life*, *freedom of movement (from an elixir)*, *barkskin (potion)*, *greater*

mage armor (extended), haste (extended), owl's wisdom, overland flight, resist energy (cold), resist energy (fire), see invisibility, shield (extended), shield of faith (potion), stonewalk, true seeing

Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 18, Int 28, Wis 16, Cha 8

Feats Augment Summoning, Craft Wondrous^b, Empower Spell, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scrolls^b, Sculpt Spell^b, Spell Focus: Conjuraton, Quicken Spell^b, Rapid Spell*, Transdimensional Spell*.

SQ familiar (as 15th level wizard), summon alien, alien blessing, mad certainty, pseudonatural familiar, extra summoning, insane certainty, timeless body, alien transcendence.

Skills: Concentration +22, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcane) +29, Knowledge (local-vtf) +28, Knowledge (the planes) +28, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +14, Knowledge (nature) +14, Profession (Gambler) +13, Spellcraft +30.

Possessions combat gear plus +5 vest of resistance, +6 headband of intellect, belt of battle*, +4 gloves of dexterity, +4 amulet of health, ring of evasion, ring of counterspells (dispel magic, greater), rod of extend, lesser (used for the day), rod of silence, greater, mantle of second chances*, cold iron dagger, alchemical silver dagger, daggers (2), adventurer's outfit, spell component pouch. (Encumbrance – Light).

Summon Alien: Whenever an alienist would use any summon monster spell to summon a celestial or fiendish creature, she instead summons a pseudonatural version of that creature. An alienist gives up the ability to summon nonpseudonatural creatures with a *summon monster* spell.

Alien Blessing (Ex): An alienist who attains 2nd level gains a +1 insight bonus on all saving throws, but she permanently loses 2 points of Wisdom.

Mad Certainty (Ex): At 4th level, an alienist's mad certainty in the power of entities beyond the reach of normal space and time lend her an unnatural fortitude., granting her an additional 3 hit points. However, constantly dwelling on such beings is mentally corrosive, and the alienist's mind begins to fracture. She now takes a -4 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Handle Animal checks made to influence nonpseudonatural creatures.

Pseudonatural Familiar: The familiar gains the pseudonatural template.

Extra Summoning: From 6th level on, an alienist gains one extra spell slot at her highest level. This slot can be used only for a summon monster spell. As an alienist becomes able to learn higher-level spells, the extra slot migrates up to the new highest level.

Insane Certainty (Ex): At 8th level, an alienist's mad certainty crystallizes into a truly chilling mania. She gains an additional 3 hit points, but her mental faculties continue to degrade. She now takes a -10 penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy and Handle Animal checks made to influence nonpseudonatural creatures.

Timeless Body (Ex): At 9th level, an alienist learns the secret of perpetual youth. She no longer takes ability penalties for aging. When her time is up, she is simply taken away by horrible entities from the Far Realms and never seen again.

Alien Transcendence (Su): A 10th-level alienist, because of long association with alien entities and intense study of insane secrets, transcends her mortal form and becomes an alien creature. Her type changes to outsider. Additionally, she gains damage reduction 10/magic and resistance to acid 10 and electricity 10.

Upon achieving alien transcendence, an alienist undergoes a minor physical change (extra tentacle on the back in this case). An alienist can hide this abnormality in a robe or hood, but the alien growth is not under the alienist's control and sometimes moves, twitches, opens, or otherwise animates of its own accord. This applies a -4 penalty on Disguise checks an alienist makes to conceal her true nature.

Anyone who shares an alienist's predilection for study of the Far Realms immediately recognizes her transcendent nature, and she gains a +2 circumstance bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks and ability checks when interacting with such beings. She gains a +2 circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks involving any other creatures to whom she reveals her abnormal nature.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

SURI, PSEUDONATURAL PSEUDODRAGON (FAMILIAR)

CN Tiny outsider

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft, darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +6

Languages: Telepathy, 60 ft, with Common, Sylvan

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 20

(+2 size, +4 *mage armor*, +4 natural, +4 dex)

hp 68 (16 HD); DR 10/magic, SR 25

Resist electricity, acid 5

Immunity *sleep*, paralysis

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

Speed 15 ft. in nothing (3 squares), fly 60 ft (good)

Melee Sting +14 (1d3-2 and poison) and bite +9 (1)

Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** -2

Special Actions poison, true strike, alternate form

Pre-Cast (CL 15): *bear's endurance, cat's grace, mage armor*

Abilities Str 6, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Weapon Finesse

SQ improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, deliver touch spells, speak with master, speak with animals of its kind, scry on familiar, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: As Stephan

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
(Encumbrance – Light).

Poison (Ex): Injury, Fortitude DC 23, initial damage sleep for 1 minute, secondary damage sleep for 1d3 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus..

Blindsense (Ex): A pseudodragon can locate creatures within 60 ft by nonvisual means (mostly hearing and scent, but also by noticing vibration and other environmental clues).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

SUMMONED PSEUDONATURAL GIRALLON (*SUMMON MONSTER VII*)

N Large outsider

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +1, **Spot** +6

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 13
(-1 size, +4 natural, +3 dex)

hp 86 (7 HD); DR 5/magic, SR 17

Resist electricity, acid 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +5

Speed 40 ft. in nothing (8 squares), climb 40 ft

Melee 4 claws +14 (1d4+8) and bite +9 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +19

Special Actions rend 2d4+12, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 26, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7

Feats Iron Will, Toughness (2)

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Climb +16, Listen +1, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
(Encumbrance – Light).

Rend (Ex): A girallon that hits with two or more claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d4+12 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

SUMMONED PSEUDONATURAL POLAR BEAR (*SUMMON MONSTER VI*)

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +6, **Spot** +11

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14
(-1 size, +5 natural, +1 dex)

hp 48 (8 HD); DR 10/magic, SR 18

Resistances electricity, acid 10

Fort +12, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Speed 40 ft. in nothing (8 squares); swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +15 (1d8+10) and bite +10
(2d6+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +20

Special Actions improved grab, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 31, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6

Feats Endurance, Run, Track

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide -2 (+10 in woodlands environment), Listen +5, Spot +7, Swim +18

Possessions combat gear plus nothing.
(Encumbrance – Light).

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

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their

attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

SUMMONED PSEUDONATURAL DIRE APE (SUMMON MONSTER V)

N Large outsider

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +6

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13

(-1 size, +4 natural, +2 dex)

hp 53 (5 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 15

Resist electricity, acid 5

Fort +8, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. in nothing (6 squares), climb 15 ft

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d6+8) and bite +5 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +15

Special Actions rend 2d6+12, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 26, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7

Feats Alertness, Toughness

SQ improved grab, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Climb +16, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +6

Possessions combat gear plus nothing. (Encumbrance – Light).

Rend (Ex): A dire ape that hits with two or more claw attacks latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This automatically deals an extra 2d6+12 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

NARG - HALF-FARSPAWN GRELL FTR4/SWASHBUCKLER3 CR 10

NE Medium outsider

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., sightless; **Listen** +11, **Spot** +18

Languages grell (non-auditory), baklunish, common, uncommon (understood not spoken)

AC 34, touch 17, flat-footed 29

(+7 natural, +8 +4 *chain shirt barding*, +2 *ring of protection*, +2 *force shield*, +5 dex)

hp 167 (12 HD); **DR** 10/magic, **SR** 22

Resist acid 10

Immunity electricity, poison, paralysis

Fort +14, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

Speed 5 ft. in chain shirt barding (1 square); 30 ft fly (perfect)

Melee 10 tentacles +17 (1d6+9+paralyzation) and 2 tentacles +15 (1d6+9) and bite +14 (1d6+3)

Ranged lighting lance +15 touch (3d6 electricity)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with primary tentacles)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +23

Special Actions constrict 1d6+6, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis (DC Fort Special, see below, 2d4 rounds)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12):

1/day – *greater invisibility*, *touch of idiocy* (DC 11), *stinking cloud* (DC 12), *telekinesis*

3/day – *blink*, *blur*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 21, Con 24, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Dodge, Elusive Target*, Improved Natural Attack (tentacle), Melee Weapon Mastery (bludgeoning), Mobility, Multi-attack, Weapon Finesse^b, Weapon Focus (tentacle), Weapon Specialization (tentacle).

SQ constrict 1d6+6, expert grappler, improved grab, paralysis, true strike, alternate form, grace, insightful strike.

Skills: Hide +15, Knowledge (Arcane) +7, Knowledge (Planes) +7, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +18, Tumble +20

Possessions combat gear plus *ring of counterspells (dispel magic)*, +4 *chain shirt barding (greater magic vestment* at CL 16, normally +1), *lightning lance*, *ring of force shield*, +2 *ring of protection*. (Encumbrance – Light), also note that grell can use up to four rings at the same time.

Constrict (Ex): On a successful grapple check, a grell deals 1d6+5 points of damage.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Change Shape(Su): As a standard action, a half-farspawn can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. This ability functions as described for the change shape ability. Except as follows:

- movement modes do not change;
- it retains all tentacle attacks granted by this template, and gains two additional tentacle attacks when making a full attack;
- the creature becomes amorphous. It cannot be flanked, and is not subject to extra damage from critical hits;
- Creatures native the Material Plane take a -1 morale penalty on attack rolls

against a half-farspawn in its amorphous form.

Expert Grappler (Ex): A grell that chooses to grapple with one tentacle and remain ungrappled itself takes a -10 penalty on its grapple checks instead of the normal -20 penalty.

Grell other than hatchlings have a +10 racial bonus on grapple checks. (Paralyzed foes automatically lose grapple checks.)

Improved grab (Ex): To us this ability, a grell must hit an opponent of its size or smaller with a primary tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapples check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Paralysis (Ex): A grell's primary tentacles are lined with small spiny barbs, much like a squid's. Any creature hit by a grell's tentacle must make a DC 12 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a -4 racial penalty.

Creatures struck by multiple primary tentacle attacks in the same round do not make multiple saving throws; instead, they make a single saving throw, but the DC increases by 1 for every additional tentacle that hit in the same round.

Blindsight (Ex): A grell is blind, but it maneuvers and fights as well as a sighted creature by using scent and vibration to ascertain its surroundings. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within 60 feet. The grell does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight.

Both the hearing and electrical sense of a grell must be impaired for it to lose the blindsight. Hearing is something that standard means might eliminate, but the electrical sense is very different. Powerful discharges of electricity are necessary – 20 points or more of electricity damage in a round (if the grell were not immune, it would have taken them) forces a DC 15 Fortitude save or the grell loses its electrical sense 1d4 rounds. If the damage would be 40 or more, the DC is increased to 20 and the time lost is 2d4 rounds.

Flight (Ex): A grell's body is unusually buoyant. The creature continuously produces an effect like that of a *fly* spell, which it can use to move at a speed of 30 feet (perfect). The buoyancy also grants the grell a permanent *feather fall* effect with personal range.

Sightless (Ex): A grell is immune to gaze attacks, visual effects, illusions, and other attack forms that rely on sight.

Skills: A grell gains a +2 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks.

Tentacles: The tentacles of a grell may be sundered as if they were weapons. They have 5 hit points each. As long as the grell has one tentacle free, it may use that for the attack of opportunity. Severing a limb does 2 points of damage to the grell. The creature regrows severed tentacles in 1d6 days.

Grace (Ex): A swashbuckler gains a +1 competence bonus on Reflex Saves at 2nd level. This bonus increases to +2 at 11th level and to +3 at 20th level. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

Insightful Strike (Ex): At 3rd level, a swashbuckler becomes able to place her finesse attacks where they deal greater damage. She applies her Intelligence bonus (if any) as a bonus on damage rolls (in addition to any Strength bonus she may have) with any light weapon, as well as any other weapon that can be used with Weapon Finesse, such as a rapier, whip or spiked chain. Targets immune to sneak attacks or critical hits are immune to a swashbuckler's insightful strike. A swashbuckler loses this bonus when wearing medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

ELITE PSEUDONATURAL DIRE WEASEL (7) CR 7

N Large outsider (augmented animal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft, low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +17

AC 23, touch 14, flat-footed 18

(-1 size, +5 natural, +4 mithral chain shirt barding, +5 dex)

hp 118 (9 HD); **DR** 5/magic, **SR** 19

Resist electricity, acid 10

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Speed 40 ft. in chain shirt barding (8 squares);

Melee bite +12 (2d6+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +17

Special Actions attach, blood drain, true strike, alternate form

Abilities Str 24, Dex 20, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 9

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fighting, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Toughness*, Weapon Finesse^b

SQ blood drain, attach, true strike, alternate form.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Spot +17

Possessions combat gear plus mithral chain shirt barding. (Encumbrance – Light).

Attach (Ex): A dire weasel that hits with its bite attack latches onto the opponent's body with its powerful jaws. An attached dire weasel

loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and thus has an AC of 18.

An attached dire weasel can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached dire weasel through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

Blood Drain (Ex): A dire weasel drains blood for 1d6 points of Constitution damage each round it remains attached (The turn it attacks and latches on it does not drain blood).

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a pseudonatural creature can gain a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. In addition, the creature suffers no miss chance against a target that has concealment or total concealment when making this attack.

Alternate Form (Su): As a standard action, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass. Despite the appearance, its abilities remain unchanged. Other creatures receive a -1 penalty on their attack rolls against a pseudonatural creature when it is in this alternate form.

*See Appendix Two: New Rules Items

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES

Elusive Target [Tactical] as presented in *Complete Warrior*

Trying to land a blow against you can be a maddening experience.

Prerequisites: Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: The Elusive Target feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers.

Negate Power Attack: To use this maneuver, you must designate a specific foe to be affected by your Dodge feat. If that foe uses the Power Attack feat against you, the foe gains no bonus on the damage roll but still takes the corresponding penalty on the attack roll.

Diverting Defense: To use this maneuver, you must be flanked and you must designate one of the flanking attackers to be affected by your Dodge feat. The first attack of the round from the designated attacker automatically misses you and may strike the other flanking foe instead; the attacking creature makes an attack roll normally, and its ally is considered flat-footed. If the designated attacker is making a full attack against you, its second and subsequent attacks function normally.

Cause Overreach: To use this maneuver, you must provoke an attack of opportunity from a foe by move out of a threatened square. If the foe misses you, you can make a free trip attempt against this foe, and the foe does not get a chance to trip you if your attempt fails.

Improved Toughness [General] as presented in *Complete Warrior*

You are significantly tougher than normal.

Prerequisites: Base Fortitude save bonus +2.

Benefit: You gain a number of hit points equal to your current Hit Dice. Each time you gain a HD (such as by gaining a level), you gain 1 additional hit point. If you lose a HD (such as by losing a level), you lose 1 hit point permanently.

Special: A fighter may select Improved Toughness as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Rapid Spell [Metamagic] as presented in *Complete Divine*

You can cast spells with long casting times more quickly.

Benefit: Only spells with a casting time greater than 1 standard action can be made rapid. A rapid spell with a casting time of 1 full round

can be cast as a standard action. A rapid spell with a casting time measured in rounds can be cast in 1 full round. Rapid spells with casting times measure in minutes can be cast in 1 minute, and rapid spells with casting times measured in hours can be cast in 1 hour. A rapid spell uses up a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

Special: A spell can be made rapid and quickened only if its original casting time was 1 full round. This feat can be applied to a spell cast spontaneously so long as its original casting time was longer than 1 full round.

Sculpt Spell [Metamagic] as presented in *Complete Arcane*

You can alter the area of your spells.

Prerequisites: Any Metamagic feat.

Benefit: You can modify an area spell by changing the area's shape to either a cylinder (10-foot radius, 30 feet high), a 40-foot cone, four 10-foot cubes, a ball (20-foot-radius spread), or a 120-foot line. The sculpted spell works normally in all respects except for its shape. For example, a *lightning bolt* whose area is changed to a ball deals the same amount of damage, but affects a 20-foot-radius spread.

A sculpted spell uses a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

Transdimensional Spell [Metamagic] as presented in *Complete Divine*

You can cast spells that affect targets lurking in coexistent planes and extradimensional spaces whose entrances fall within the spell's area.

Benefit: A transdimensional spell has full, normal effect upon incorporeal creatures, creatures on the Ethereal Plane or Plane of Shadow, and creatures within an extradimensional space in the spell's area. Such creatures include ethereal creatures, creatures that are *blinking* or shadow walking, manifested ghosts, and creatures within the extradimensional space of a *rope trick* or *portable hole*.

You must be able to perceive a creature to target it with a spell, but you do not need to perceive a creature to catch it in the area. A transdimensional spell uses a spell slot one level higher than the spell's actual level.

Normal: Only force spells and effects can affect ethereal creatures, and no Material Plane attack affects creatures on the Plane of Shadow or

in an enclosed extradimensional space. There is a 50% chance that any spell other than a force effect fails against an incorporeal creature.

You can modify an area spell by changing the area's shape to either a cylinder (10-foot radius, 30 feet high), a 40-foot cone, four 10-foot cubes, a ball (20-foot-radius spread), or a 120-foot line. The sculpted spell works normally in all respects except for its shape. For example, a *lightning bolt* whose area is changed to a ball deals the same amount of damage, but affects a 20-foot-radius spread.

A sculpted spell uses a spell slot one level high than the spell's actual level.

NEW ITEMS

Belt of Battle as presented in the *Magic Item Compendium* (p 73)

Price (Items Level): 12,000gp (13th)

Body Slot: Waist

Caster Level: 9th

Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) transmutation

Activation: - and swift (mental)

Weight: -

This leather belt bears a platinum buckle set with three small black pearls.

A *belt of battle* helps you avoid being caught off guard in combat and allow occasional bursts of extra activity. While worn, it grants you a +2 competence bonus on initiative checks. This is a continuous effect and requires no activation.

In addition, a *belt of battle* has 3 charges, which are renewed each day at dawn. Each time you activate the belt, one of the black pearls set into its buckle turns white. The pearls return to normal when the ring's charges renew. Spending 1 or more charges grants you an extra action, which must be taken immediately (before you take any other action).

1 charge: 1 move action

2 charges: 1 standard action

3 charges: 1 full-round action.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *haste*.

Cost to Create: 6,000 gp, 480 xp, 12 days.

Anticipate Teleportation

Abjuration

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: One willing creature touched

Area: 5-ft. /level radius emanation from touched creature

Duration: 24 hours

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

The subject of the spell is surrounded with an invisible aura that anticipates and delays the teleportation of any creature into the spell's area. Any teleportation spell or effect (including all spells with the teleportation descriptor) can be anticipated, making the spell's recipient instantly aware of the exact location where the teleporting creature will arrive (subject to the restrictions below), the creature's size, and how many other creatures (and their sizes) are arriving with the teleporting creature. The spell also delays the arrival of the teleporting creature by 1 round (so that it arrives on its initiative count immediately before its next turn), generally giving the recipient of the spell and anyone else made aware of the information 1 round to act or ready actions. The teleporting creature does not perceive this delay.

Since a teleporting creature doesn't necessarily arrive at the precise location it intends, the spell also functions against a creature that arrives in range even though its intended destination was elsewhere. For a creature that intends to teleport into range but inadvertently arrives outside the spell's area, the spell gives the recipient awareness that a creature has attempted to teleport into range and delays the creature as normal, but doesn't give any awareness as to the actual location of its imminent arrival.

The spell has no effect on creatures attempting to teleport away from the spell's area, although if their destination is within the area, the spell will affect their reentry as normal.

Focus: A tiny hourglass of platinum and crystal costing at least 500 gp, which must be carried or worn by the spell's recipient while the spell is in effect.

Arc of Lightning

Conjuration (Creation) [Electricity]

Level: Druid 4, Sorcerer/wizard 5, Windstorm 5

Components: V, S, M/DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Area: A line between two creatures

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex Half

Spell Resistance: No

This bolt deals 1d6 points of electricity damage per caster level (maximum 15d6) to both creatures and to anything in the line between them. Both creatures must be in range, and you must be able to target them both (as if this spell had them as its targets). Draw the line from any corner in one creature's space to any other corner in the other's space. This bolt affects all squares in this line.

Arcane Material Component: Two small iron rods.

Mage Armor, Greater

Conjuration (Creation) [Force]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S

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

Mantle of Second Chances as presented in the *Magic Item Compendium* (p 115)

Price (Item Level): 12,000gp (13th)

Body Slot: Shoulders

Caster Level: 10th

Aura: Moderate; (DC 20) divination

Activation: immediate (mental)

Weight: -

This mantle is made of brilliant blue cloth that is smooth to the touch, like silk. Symbols representing various elements of good fortune are embroidered along its hem in white and silver.

Once per day you can tap into the power of good fortune. When you do so, you can reroll one roll that you have just made before the DM declares whether it resulted in success or failure. You must accept the result of the reroll, even if it's worse than the original roll. You can access the mantle's power even if you already have a similar ability from a class feature (such as the granted power of the Luck domain).

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, Luck domain.

Cost to Create: 6,000 gp, 480 xp, 12 days.

APPENDIX THREE: MAPS

