

COR5-14



ALL ROADS LEAD TO RAUXES

A Two-Round D&D[®] Living Greyhawk[™] Core Adventure

Version 1

By **Chris Chesher**

Editing: JD Wiker

Circle Reviewers: Creighton Broadhurst and Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Additional Greyhawk Source Material: Carl Sargent

Special Thanks To: Baris Pekerten, Gordon Smith, Scott McManus, Rob Barnett and Matt Koelbl

Play Testers: Russ Taylor, Ken Jenks, Peter Chen, Brayden Glad, Sam Shyamani, Maya Deva Kniese, Nick Barnes, Eph Unell, Nicoloeschja Kniese, Baris Pekerten, Bas Vermeulen

“When there is no more room in Acheron, the dead shall dwell upon the Oerth ...” —*Battle Hymns of the Herald*,
Scriptures of Hextor.

From the border barony of Stel, pursuit of the Footmen leads towards the magical wasteland that was once Rauxes, Capital of the Great Kingdom. To even penetrate the magical veil that surrounds the wasteland is a feat, thus it is not something you or your enemies would do lightly. Whatever waits on the other side will be extremely powerful and deadly, but answers and results never come free for a true (anti)hero.

A two-round adventure for APL 6-12 and not for the faint of heart.

Part five in the *Running with the Baatezu* 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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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

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

PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

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

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of

an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a *LIVING GREYHAWK* Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

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

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

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

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player

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

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

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

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

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard two-round Core adventure, set in the Great Kingdom of Northern Aerdy. All characters pay two Time Units per round (for a total of 4). There is an optional one TU extension.

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

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a 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 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

SOURCE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the text of this adventure, sentences, paragraphs and ideas have been borrowed (and expanded on) from the sourcebook "*Ivid the Undying*" by Carl Sargent.

The author of this adventure would like to express his thanks and praise to Mr. Sargent and acknowledge the original source material he created.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

All Roads Lead to Rauxes draws upon the previous adventures in the series: *COR3-17 When Orcs Attack*, *COR4-09 A Tiger? In Ahlissa?!*, *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu*, and *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyrond*.

COR5-14 ALL ROADS LEAD TO RAUXES

It has been about a month since the Footmen of the Spider Throne left the blue-turreted estate in Stel, and left Darrien the Knife to his wraith-filled fate; and a week or more since the PCs met up with Darrien and gave him his true and final fate.

During that time, the Footmen of the Spider Throne have made their way into the Shimmering Veil, through the planar badlands that is the Rauxes rift, and into the city itself via the undercity tunnels. At the end of that month, only one of the Footmen remains alive in Rauxes.

The Footmen have spent over a year learning and experimenting with the information given to them by Darrien the Knife, that he in turn learned from the Keeper of Secrets, a baatezu servant of Vecna. These secrets include a series of dances, stories, props and venues. According to the teachings of the Serpent, these could have an effect on planar boundaries.

The Footmen have long since had an aristocrat member who has kept the blue-turreted estate in Stel as a temple and meeting hall. When Rauxes became a living backlash, and the Footmen became displaced, many retreated to the Barony of Stel in the guise of performers. Thus, the Nightcloak Players were born.

Using the village square and common grounds of Stel, the Nightcloak Players performed and perfected their Serpent-inspired rituals that they were certain would open a door through the Shimmering Veil and later, open a portal to escape Rauxes.

Hidden within Rauxes is a book. It is the most prized possession of the cult. This book is a relic of Vecna called *The Tome of the Stilled Tongue*. Combining this book with the information and reagents acquired from the Keeper of Secrets, the cult could steal the great magical energy being generated by the Standing Stones of Medegia.

The Footmen do not know what the Standing Stones' true purpose is, nor do they care at this point. They are just fixated on stealing the energy for their own purpose. A slight drawback is that the Footmen haven't figured out what their own purpose is, and that's why they'll never be in the big leagues of evil.

The Footmen also find themselves short on some of the reagents they need, one of those components being a pair of twin horses. Not being able to find such an item, one of the Footmen mages turned a local pair of noble siblings into horses.

So the Footmen, in their guise of performers, gathered up their wagons, their troll servants (because they spook less than horses) and their flesh golems, and started off towards the Shimmering Veil.

Along the way, they found that the true Dawn Tiger and his troupe had been following them, and feel the

Footmen have been holding out on their allies. So the two groups once again cooperated.

Once the Footmen (and the tiger troupe) got into Rauxes, they saw just how bad things were and some started to have second thoughts. It was at about this time that the wagon train noticed a group of sword-obsessed mortals tracking them along the road.

The tiger troupe fell back to investigate who these people were that were following them, and it turned out to be more people from Oerth—Eastfair to be precise.

This was Stylus Rel, leader of the Barons of the Blade. They were on a quest of their own and were lost within behind the Shimmering Veil. They had sited the wagon train and hoped it would be friendly.

The Dawn Tiger, using his stealth and disguise, cased the unaware Kelanites, and eventually stole their precious text. This text, the Dawn Tiger hoped, would provide means of escape from the rift, as he had lost confidence in the Footmen surviving their trip to Rauxes.

The Footmen pressed on without their assassin allies, avoiding as many extraplanar denizens as they could.

The Footmen would have like to have visited some of their old haunts and lairs, but it became apparent that more powerful creatures had taken up residence in every structure within the rift.

Once outside the walls of Rauxes, the Footmen used a tunnel to gain entrance to the undercity. They needed to use a block-and-tackle to get their polymorphed horse twins down into the tunnels.

Braving their way through the undercity, the Footmen made their way to the Imperial Theatre, their old stomping grounds. To get to the theatre meant going through the extension of the Temple of Baalzy, the underground vomitorium.

The Footmen lost several minions (mostly trolls) getting past the Server in the house of vile acid, but it was worth it at the time.

Once in the theatre, the Footmen set up the markings for the ritual and laid out the props. They then proceeded to brave the streets of Rauxes to make their way to Oltary Park and the cache that was hidden in one of the crypts.

Walking the streets of Rauxes was their biggest mistake ever. The blood-crazed souls and outsiders that continuously riot up and down the avenues ripped the Footmen to shreds.

The only one to escape was a lesser recruiter named Floria. She is originally from Rauxes (before it went to Acheron) and knew the back streets well enough to escape. She took with her a handful of minions and the two twin horses.

Now Floria waits in the Imperial Theatre trying to figure out some way for her to get the ritual of escape to work with just the two horses and herself.

Meanwhile, all around her, every dawn, the population of Rauxes is reborn in whatever position they were during the last good day back in 585 CY.

Outside the city, among the countryside and noble estates, different extraplanar factions have at one other for countless causes.

In the very heart of Rauxes, is the stake that keeps the planar rift centered on Acheron, home plane of Hextor.

If that stake were to get pulled, who knows what power could take shape within the rift? As well, who knows what powers have that as their agendas?

THE FOOTMEN OF THE SPIDER THRONE

The Footmen of the Spider Throne are a collection of second-rate villains. They venerate Vecna and portray themselves as the new attendants and lords for his empire on Oerth, thus, his Footmen. Before the destruction of Rauxes, this cult would recruit its members from the black sheep of noble families from the area. Those who were adept at magic and obscure lore, yet did not fit in with the mainstream culture of the Great Kingdom. The Footmen have a twisted love for the theatre. While none of them are great performers or playwrights, they all profess knowledge for obscure references from inane works. When not plotting their evils schemes of regional domination, they are arguing the merits of theatrical characters that had not graced the stage in generations. Part of their evil is driven by the bitterness that only they find their knowledge important, as even most bards scoff at their critiques (and lack of personal talent).

In that past, the Footmen have tried various schemes to manipulate magic greater than themselves to give them great power. Their last great enterprise (before the fall of Rauxes) was an attempt to bind the great power of the dirawein roads (dirawaen roads) of the Great Kingdom to their will. They did not think their plans through far enough to figure out what they would do with the power once they had it. Thus, a small organization called the Fharlanghi thwarted the Footmen in their plans and scattered the evil cult back to tavern basements and theatre understages.

The fall of Rauxes was a slow resurgence for the Footmen. They were driven out of their individual lairs and forced together. It was not long before they had a new scheme. One of their members had stumbled upon references to a Keeper of the Secret, an imprisoned servant of Vecna, held beneath ruins not far from Eastfair. Surely this ally would hold secrets—secrets that could be stolen for their own gain.

And secret steal they did, though their theft was not quite as one-sided as they thought. From the Keeper of the Secret, they learned that the Standing Stones of Medegia were a source of great power. They cared little for the purpose for the stones and the focused weakness that would allow the power to be tapped and manipulated.

With their betrayal of the Keeper of the Secret, they obtained magical focuses, rituals and insight into the mysteries of the universe as well as whisperings of the

Serpent. Even with all these newfound gifts, the Footmen still needed their hidden stockpile of rare reagents and magic. This stockpile had been hidden away long ago in the graveyard of Rauxes. It's only a matter of going there, finding it again, and getting out of Rauxes alive again. One secret the Footmen know is that the Serpent has locked away Rauxes, but one way to get in and out is with the "dance" the Serpent foretold of. This "dance" ritual comes across as an odd stage play with arcane props, to manipulate the threads of the universe, and open and close portals.

The Footmen need only enter the Rauxes badlands with a ritual stage play, retrieve the hidden stockpile, and gather up the resources needed to perform an even more powerful ritual in order to actually leave the Rauxes badlands.

Unfortunately for the Footmen of the Spider Throne, Rauxes is Acheron on Oerth, so to speak. As the Footmen expeditions split up to gather the various items they need, they have almost all met with untimely ends.

THE NORTH KINGDOM

The Great Kingdom of Northern Aerdy is ruled by His Righteous and Transcendent Majesty, the Overking of Northern Aerdy, Herzog Grenell the First, Prince of House Naelax (LE male human [flan-oeridian] Clr 19—Hextor).

This is a nation of tyranny and oppression. Outside of the large cities, feudal lords hold godlike power over their small fiefdoms, only paying heed to the more powerful liege above them in the social order.

Inside the city, nobles and the others who are lucky enough to be above the salt practice a lifestyle of hedonistic indulgences and cruelty at the cost of those poor souls who fall below the salt.

The vast majority of the warlike noble families pledge their spiritual faith into the many hands of the Scourge of Battle, Hextor. Cavaliers of the darkest hearts, shiniest armor and most bloodthirsty mounts are a somewhat common sight in these lands—be they the clerics of Hextor, or the knightly lord of the local manor and village.

Though there are a number of small and rather ineffectual "cults" of good (usually in a chaotic form) that preach and practice rebellion against the oppression of the government and society in whole, finding them is rarely easy. And when they are found, they are crushed with an iron fist.

That is not to say there are no forces of good left within the North Kingdom. Once, not too long ago, this nation was a part of the truly Great Kingdom and the bastion of Oeridian culture.

Thus, as Hextor is a part of that culture, so are gods of good and neutrality. Those who would rebel against the tyranny of the lawful evil society (such as Trithereon) have long since been banished to all but the remotest pockets. Followers of gods who would urge its worshipers to a more direct opposition (such as the Arch-Paladin, Heironeous) have been equally purged.

This leaves the followers of good (and neutral) gods who have found a way to work their dogma within the oppressive bounds of the state religion of Hextor. An example of this are followers of the Gentle Hand, Zodal, running orphanages or churches of the Shining One, Pelor, taking care of the poor and sick within the ever-swelling slums of the cities.

The Lawful Evil nature of the society allows these small churches of good that do not practice rebellion as dogma, to operate and take care of those (poor and sick) that the government does not want to waste time on. The thinking is, "if they want to waste their resources on those types, and as long as they obey our laws, then let them. Besides, it's fun to bully them too, from time to time."

There are some religions that are accepted because they play an important niche roll. Examples of this are the churches of Zilchus, the Money Counter, and Fharlanghn, the Dweller on the Horizon, but the political influence of these sects is kept to a minimum. The only power they can express is that bought by coin and even that is limited.

Amongst the common people (with their heavily mixed Flan heritage) Beory, the Oerth Mother, is worshiped for nature related issues and to a lesser extent, so are the Oeridian agricultural gods. Even the different evil gods such as Nerull, the Reaper, and Incabulos, the Black Rider, are given small prayers and appeasement to ward off their callings, and hopefully push them onto the their neighbor, but not them.

Language

The peasants and serfs of the land all speak the Common tongue, with a heavy Oeridian accent and usually mixing in many words and expressions of Old Oeridian, though this by no means guarantees that the serf speaker can actually communicate fluently in Old Oeridian.

The nobility, clerics, sages, elite servants and anyone with education speak Old Oeridian as their primary language, but the Common tongue is known to all. Religious and legal issues are dealt with in Old Oeridian, as well as anything that is the domain of those above the salt.

THE FORSAKEN CITY OF RAUXES

For centuries, Rauxes stood as the capital of the Great Kingdom, bearing witness to both the empire's greatest glories and its most savage depravity. In 586 CY, Rauxes' long reign as imperial capital came to an end when Patriarch-General Pyrannden of Hextor announced to a stunned imperial court that Ivid V was no longer overking. Within minutes, a ferocious magical battle broke out on the streets of the imperial city as rival princes desperately vied for the Malachite Throne. What happened next none can say, but its effects are well known. Rauxes was cut off from the surrounding lands by a shimmering magical field that enveloped the city.

Since that day, debate has raged among the learned as to Rauxes' fate. Some say it has become a Fading Land, while others—including, it is whispered,

Mordenkainen—argue that the vast magical energies unleashed in Rauxes' death throes have torn a rent in the planes into which the city has fallen.

These scholarly arguments over the fate of the city have not troubled the fortune hunters attempting to plunder the legendary wealth of the overkings. However, of the many that have passed through the Shimmering Wall surrounding the city, none have returned—save perhaps one.

Dirawaen Roads: These magical thoroughfares were created in the younger days of the Great Kingdom and have been enchanted to resist the inclement affects of weather and to speed travel. They criss-cross the lands of the old Great Kingdom linking all the major cities together.

REMINDER TO THE DM

In this adventure, the box text represents the in-game word usage of the NPCs when referring to the names of gods. Due to the reverence (and sometimes fear) of these most divine and powerful beings in the North Kingdom, the NPCs do not use the true names of the gods in vain during idle conversation. Only when the god's power is truly being invoked (though not necessarily by a spell) is the true name used. It's a firm belief that to use the gods' true name invokes that being's attention.

For instance, when the NPCs in this scenario wish to refer to Nurell, they say, "The Reaper," in an attempt to avoid his attention. The same is true for all gods, both good and evil.

In play, refer to Zilchus as "The Money Counter"; Hextor as "The Herald of Hell" or "The Scourge of Battle"; Fharlanghn as "The Dweller (on the horizon)"; Pelor as "The Shining One"; Zodal as "The Gentle Hand"; Vecna as the "The Whispered One"; Atroa as "The Sad Maiden"; Delleb as "The Scholar"; Heironeous as "The Archpaladin"; Kurell as "The Bitter Hand"; Lirr as "The Lore Keeper"; Olidammara as the "Laughing Rogue"; Pholtus as "He of the Blinding Light"; Wenta as "The Alewife"; Kelanen as "The Lord of Swords". Though these gods have other names, these are what they are most commonly known as in and around Eastfair.

To give some examples of blessings and curses, to say, "Fharlanghn Rules the Roads" is a blessing, invoking the god's attention. To say "Zilchus be poor" is profanity.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The text of this adventure in many of the encounters lists example questions that trigger certain responses from the NPCs. These are by no means meant to be what the players must ask verbatim. As the Dungeon Master, you need to judge the intent of the question and decide if it's reasonable to trigger the listed response. The intent of this method is to stop NPCs from blurting out all they know, regardless of the context, in an adventure that is designed to be a mystery investigation (of sorts).

In addition, there is much information that can be passed on to inquisitive characters. Not all of this information is vital to the successful completion of this

adventure, but much of it gives insight into the series as a whole. For players that like to cut to the chase, they can do so, provided they ask the right line of questions. For players who like to absorb the whole experience, that has been provided as well. You should not read all the material if the characters are not asking for it or seem stuck. In addition, different parties getting different topics of non-crucial background information makes for varied adventure play.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Introduction: The PCs meet up in a small inn in the Barony of Stel. They spend their time researching captured materials (if they got them) until a messenger arrives asking them to have a chat with the local baron.

Encounter 1: The PCs meet the Baron of Stel and the wife of his missing court mage. Seems not all is right in Stel. Not only is the court mage missing, but the twin heirs of the Baron may have been kidnapped or perhaps run off with a local troupe of bizarre performers.

Encounter 2: The PCs arrive in the little thorp of Yillish. This thorp is also at the foot of the Shimmering Veil. The Footmen came here to perform the ritual of passage and the villagers have never been the same.

Encounter 3A: This is mostly for the DM to get himself and the players acquainted with being in an extraplanar rift with Acheron as a primary.

Encounter 3B (alternate to 3A): Not every party wants to go about a task the easy way. Instead of taking the road well traveled, they go wander the countryside.

Encounter 4: The army camp of Meya Astra, servant of the gods of good. This camp sits in the town of Wendern and is laying siege to Castle Triumph, and that's where the PCs might want to go. It might be a good idea for them to enlist.

Encounter 5: We're going to war! Enlistment has its privileges, and getting to kill baatezu is one of them. Another is that when the baatezu are killed, the PCs can loot a lair of the Footmen for valuable info.

Encounter 6: The undercity is the way to get into Rauxes, since the walls are too well guarded for mere mortals to penetrate. Deep beneath the city streets, the PCs run into a section of the Temple of Baalzy: the great vomitorium.

Encounter 7: The Imperial Theatre has only a few horses and golems on stage these days. Giving them direction is Floria, the last living Footman in Rauxes. The PCs can kill her or call a truce with her, and learn the ritual of escape. As well, Pro'grom, the mysterious inevitable of space and time, sits and watches from the audience. He has a deal to offer the PCs.

Encounter 8: An item needed for the ritual of escape has been stolen. Across the street from the theatre is a pub called the Retching Soul. The PCs need to do some old-fashioned head smashing on some demons to get the item back.

Encounter 9: The PCs travel to Oltary Park in Rauxes to find the cache of the Footmen, but only if they can get past the blood golems of Hextor.

Encounter 10: Still in Oltary Park, the PCs find the crypt that the cache of the Footmen is stored in and use the magic key to open it. Then it's just a matter of getting past a simple trap and looting the tome of the stilled tongue.

Encounter 11: Gathering everything the PCs have for the ritual, it is time to learn what they can. Performing the ritual is not a sure thing, so they need all the help they can get.

Encounter 12: This is the Extra TU mission, for worshippers of Kelanen and Honorary Bladers in particular. Meya Astra rewards those who served (if they worship Kelanen) with information about a lost temple of the Lord of Swords.

Conclusion: The PCs make it back to Oerth, but at what cost?

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

During this adventure series, the PCs have had opportunities to acquire objects. Many of these items don't become relevant until sometime after their acquisition.

The following is a checklist of things to ask of the PCs and make note of for later.

- Does at least one PC have the map and captured documents from the AR for *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*?
- Do any of the PCs have the Cook Book of Evil from *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu*?
- Are any of the PCs Honorary Bladers, as per the AR of *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu*?

ALTERNATE INTRODUCTION

While the primary introduction encounter deals with those PCs who have played the previous adventure in the series, this encounter deals with those who are new and require a reason to be on scene.

Welcome to the outermost recesses of the evil and tyrannical North Kingdom. In these outskirts regions, the evil is less dark and the tyranny is of a softer kind.

Rumors have been spreading across the lands that adventurers have uncovered a new dungeon complex, perhaps on the scale of Greyhawk Castle, just waiting to be plundered.

A journey to the backwater Barony of Stel has ended in disappointment, as the dungeon was not only rather small, but it has already collapsed in upon itself; destroyed by fire and acid. What few trinkets were left have already been scavenged by the local serfs.

Now you are left to sit in the Clenched Fist, the only Inn in town, and meet and greet with other adventurers like yourselves who need to find something to do with their time.

This introduction can be given to any individual PCs who have not played *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*. In that case, those PCs can be folded in with the "veteran" PCs, who are the ones who discovered the Blue Turreted Estate destroyed by acid and fire at the end of *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*.

This introduction can also be used for entire parties that never played *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*. In which case, they do not have access to Player Handout 1, which is obtained from AR access in *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*.

The plot would then center on the PCs being asked to retrieve the children of the baron and discovering the hard way what is really going on.

So while it's greatly preferred that at least one PC in the party have played *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*, it's not necessary in order to complete this adventure.

INTRODUCTION

The Inn of the Clenched Fist is the best of its kind that the backwater barony of Stel has to offer. Part of that is due to it being the only inn in these parts. On the upside, its close proximity to the now destroyed blue-turreted base of the Footmen of the Spider Throne has given you time to sit down and research the documents you captured whilst enjoying a flagon of ale.

The Clenching Fist Inn is indeed a small affair. Even at the height of the Great Kingdom, Stel had little to offer and therefore few people had need for a top quality inn here.

Now the proprietor, Davel the Innkeeper, does his best to serve his customers. He has little in the way of finery, so even if he wanted to splurge to impress a big spender, he couldn't.

It's assumed the PCs have been at the Clenched Fist for a few days, having recently come from the blue-turreted estate of the Footmen (as per *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*) where they collected a satchel full of hastily compiled documents. If this is not the case for the PCs, improvise the box text to suit their situation. Perhaps the PCs have reconvened here after other adventures in a bid to solve the mystery that these documents contain.

If at least one PC has the captured map and documents from the AR of *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyronnd*, give each player a copy of Player Handout 1. Encourage the players to read the handout and discuss it in character with each other.

It is assumed that the PCs have prepared these documents beforehand, using spells and talents. *Comprehend languages*, *mending*, glue, and a number of other minor effects could all be of use here.

In addition to the crude map (Player Handout 2), the satchel has an eclectic collection of paper scraps. These obviously come from different sources and have been recklessly stuffed into the satchel. The entire collection is badly damaged by fire and acid.

At this point, the PCs have been able to pick out the most relevant (or just intact) information from the multiple sources in the collection. All of these sections show signs of the former owners showing particular attention to the entries (in the form of quill marks, faded notations, extensive wear, etc.).

In the appendix, Dungeon Master Aid 1 gives an entry-by-entry breakdown of the Knowledge skills the PCs may attempt (per entry) and what information can be collected. As the PCs study the document, go through the entries with them as they attempt the skill checks listed.

DIVINATION MAGIC

Spellcasters of a high enough level may wish to use divination spells at this point. Here are some suggested replies.

- **How do we enter the Veil?:** “The attendants of the vile seat have danced their way through. You can do it too, but the time is not up to you.”
- **How do we leave Rauxes once we enter?:** “A new dance is what must be done, seek out the inevitable Pro’grom.”
- **Where are the twins?:** “The bonded two have changed their planar tact, exchanged a saddle for their packs.”

The planar inversion that borders Rauxes and its Shimmering Veil has the effect of limiting magic such as *scry*.

Any attempt to *scry* (or the use of a similar spell) on a person, place, or thing within the borders of the Rauxes badlands, meets with backlash and failure.

For example, the mirror component of a *scrying* spell magically flexes and warps, then resumes its normal shape unharmed as the spell fails. The water in a silver bowl (or pond) of the divine version of this spell ripples then explodes up as if a heavy object was dropped in, also ending the spell.

These effects do not permanently damage the magical focus, but they do give the indication that something very unusual is going on inside the Veil.

This does have one use though. A caster can use it to confirm whether their target is inside the Veil or not. If the spell doesn’t go wonky, then the person is not in the Veil.

Note, this is only the effect of trying to transverse the veil. Spells cast once inside the veil on targets already in the veil work as normal.

BARONS OF THE BLADE

Some of the PCs in the party might be worshipers of the hero god Kelenan and have joined the religious sect, the Baron’s of the Blade. This would have been done in *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu*.

If this is the case for any in the party, they receive an update from their sect in the form of Player Handout 3. This takes place sometime between the start of this adventure and the ending of the last adventure.

VISITING THE BLUE TURRETED ESTATE

Some PCs may wish to return to the blue-turreted estate that the Footmen used as a hideout, and that Darien was encountered at in the last adventure.

There is little point in returning. It is assumed that the PCs investigated it at the end of the last adventure and found nothing remaining after its destruction. In addition, the local peasantry has comprehensively scrounged through the area and has picked up anything of value.

OFF TO SEE THE WONDERFUL BARON OF STEL

Once the players have had a time to look over the handouts, discuss them and attempt any relevant skill checks, a messenger of sorts arrives at the inn.

This is the sergeant-at-arms for Sir Ramden, Baron of Stel. He’s been ordered to bring back these mercenaries to make them an offer they can’t refuse.

The sound of impatient toe-tapping comes from near the door of the inn. A sergeant-at-arms and three skinny crossbow-wielding youths await your attention.

The sergeant speaks: “Mercenaries, the Baron wishes to see you. The twins, his heirs, may have been kidnapped, and he needs types such as you to retrieve them.”

The sergeant is under the orders of his stern and grumpy baron. In the more northern fiefdoms, a guard force fifty strong would have come and dragged these sellswords to the feet of their liege, but in this backwater barony, the sergeant knows it’s a fine line between placating the adventurers and feeling his baron’s wrath.

The sergeant has little additional information he is willing to pass on to the adventurers, for he’s not been ordered to do so. He does tell them a little something, though, if it gets them moving.

- **Who wants to see us?:** “Sir Ramden, Baron of Stel. The liege lord of this fief.”
- **Why does he want to see us?:** “The baron’s heirs, the twins, have been gone for nearly a month. The baron will explain.”
- **Could you lead the way?:** “Yes. Follow me to the keep.”

♣ **Sergeant-at-Arms:** Male human Ftr 4, N.

♣ **Bowmen:** Male human War 1, N.

Development: Though the sergeant-at-arms has little choice but to wait for the adventurers to come along. Once they agree he takes them to see the baron in the main hall of the baronial keep atop the hill overlooking the town.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE WONDERFUL BARON OF STEL

PART A: A DIVINER DARKLY

The baronial keep sits atop a hill overlooking the village of Stel. The walls and bastions of the fortification are as run-down as the rest of baronial infrastructure. The sergeant-at-arms leads you into the main hall, where an old and decrepit man sits in a large chair.

“These are the ones you wished to see, my baron,” says the sergeant.

A handful of second-rate warriors guard the walls and occupy a nearby barracks. Once upon a time, this keep could have housed hundreds of soldiers within its barracks and in the surrounding fields, but now the Barony of Stel is lucky to have 50 full-time soldiers, most of whom come directly from peasant stock.

The sergeant-at-arms tries his best to facilitate what he knows could be uneasy conversation. He knows of the moody grumpiness of his liege, and at the same time perhaps even pities the knight's impedance to dominate situations as he once did.

Thus, the sergeant-at-arms leans in toward the PCs and whisper asides to them should the baron's statements need to be clarified, but does so in a manner not to further emasculate the baron's ego.

The walls of the main hall have the banners and devices typical to a baronial keep in the North Kingdom. It has dedications to Hextor and the Herzog, to the lineage of the barons and it professes support to the Naelex bloodline.

Sir Ramden, Baron of Stel, Ftr 8, LN.

Appearance. Perhaps in his early 60's, this noble is nearing the end of his years. His strength is gone as well as his constitution. His one elegant clothes are worn and stained. His facial expressions range from sneers to frowns.

Character. In his heyday, the baron was strong, fit and stern. His roar was enough to keep his soldiers in line and the waving of his clenched fist was enough to keep his serfs in line. But that was back in his prime, when he had married his young bride and finally came out of his father's shadow, as a true tyrant of Hextor.

Then his wife died of plague shortly after the birth of their twins and the economy turned sour with the collapsing of the old Great Kingdom. Though Death never got his full grip on the baron, he did poke him in the ribs a lot.

His daughter reminded himself of his wife, and his son reminded himself of all the shortcomings he himself had as a youth. And with the teaching of Hextor in his heart, he learned to hate his heirs for their weaknesses. But that hate faded with age, until it settled into the dark disappointment and displeasure he now shares for the twins.

The old man and his out-of-fashion noble garb wait for you to introduce yourself.

- **How may we be of service?:** “My heirs, such as they are, may have been kidnapped. They've been gone close to a month now. I want them returned to my possession.”
- **Why “may have been” kidnapped?:** “It's possible they left on their own accord, but it's also possible that they are too incompetent to make their way back, as well ... too feebleminded to avoid trouble.”
- **Who took them?:** “They ran off with those performers, the ones who occupied the blue-stone estate ... the ones who've been performing their absurd performances in the village square and common grounds. The Night Cloak Players.”
- **Who are the Night Cloak Players?:** “They are a troupe of actors and minstrels who had gathered at the old blue-stone estate the last three years or so. They perform in the name of the Uncaring One, the god of magic. Some minor Naelex princeling held the rights to the estate. At least he paid the taxes on time. Prince Gancent was his name. One of a thousand.”
- **Tell us about your heirs:** “Rammel and Ramette, brother and sister, twins. Their mother was beautiful, and I strong and fit. I had such high hopes. Instead I got two fools. Rammel is not fit to wield a sword or flail, and Ramette is much too aloof to ever be properly married off. After their mother died when they were three, Lady Hillian took to raising them and too soft she was. Even her husband, my long time court mage, Havervite of the Seeing Eye, thought they were too soft when he started their arcane training.”
- **How did your wife die?:** “She was killed by the plague when it swept through some fourteen years ago. Even with the magic of healing, people became re-infected and it spread too fast. Sarlyin was our greatest loss”.
- **What is The Seeing Eye?:** “That's his title, of sorts. He's a layman of the god of magic, The Uncaring One. I don't know more than that.” (Here the baron is referring to the god Boccob).
- **Can we speak with your court mage?:** “That's not possible right now. He's been missing for nearly three years now. I suspect he's gone off on one of his magical journeys. One day he just wasn't there, and the next day, his lab was cleared out as well. Just like in the old days. We'd drop everything and just head out, sending for what we needed later. He'll be back.”
- **Did he tell you where he was going?:** “No. He didn't actually tell me he was going at all. Just wasn't there one day, and his paraphernalia was

just gone the next. The ways of magic I suppose. Nothing like a strong reliable swing with a sword.”

- **Can we speak with Lady Hillian?:** “Yes you can. The sergeant-at-arms can bring you to her chambers. She dealt with the twins on a day-to-day basis.”
- **How old are your children?:** “They’re 17 years of age. More than old enough to know their proper place in life is here learning to be leaders instead of wearing jester outfits and spouting nonsense in a peasants’ fairground.”
- **Do you have any leads on where they are?:** “The Night Cloak Players left about a month ago and their wagon train went south.”
- **What kind of performance did these Night Cloak Players put on?:** “They performed here several times. Awful each time. Mumbo jumbo, about this and that. What ever happened to a good execution? They spent the rest of their time performing in the village commons. People stopped paying attention to them.”
- **Why did your heirs run away with these performers?:** “When my court mage left, the twins started spending time with the performers. I strongly discouraged this, as did lady Hillian. But to no avail.”
- **I think these performers are followers of the Whispered One!:** “In that case, hack them to pieces before you bring back what belongs to me. Make them feel my wrath.”
- **What’s in it for us?:** “Return my heirs to me and I shall give you an heirloom in exchange. Something my father picked up in his adventurous youth.”

♣ **Sir Ramden:** Male human Ftr 4/Ari 4 LN.

PART B: THE HAND AND EYE THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE

Upon request, the sergeant-at-arms brings the PCs to the chambers of Lady Hillian. These chambers also house the small magical laboratory of her husband and court mage, Havervite of the Seeing Eye.

An aging noblewoman puts down her knitting and greets you. “I take it you are the ones here to bring back the twins? That is good. I have missed them and fear trouble may be afoot.”

Lady Hillian was the long time friend and lady in waiting to Lady Sarlyin, the baron’s bride. Hillian became involved with the court mage soon after the two ladies’ arrival in Stel.

It was Lady Hillian who raised the twins after Lady Sarlyin died in during a plague outbreak. She loves them like they were her own. Much to the baron’s displeasure,

she does treat them too softly, as a noble in the North Kingdom needs a hard outer shell to survive.

While Hillian herself knows very little about magic and arcane ways, it was her insistence that got her husband to start the twins’ training in the arcane arts. The twins had too much potential to become merely thugs of the kingdom.

Then the day came, approximately three years ago, that her husband just disappeared. The baron insisted it was a habit from their youth, but Hillian suspects otherwise, though she secretly hopes the baron is right for once.

- **Tells us of the twins:** “Rammel and Ramette, brother and sister; twins. As children, they laughed and played. They were always curious about the world, about how things worked. They reminded me how my husband was when we first married, and of how he was in every story I ever heard about him from his youth. If it was a choice between swords and sorcery, then sorcery was the path.”
- **So the twins are powerful wizards?:** “The twins only had a few years of training. My husband tells me they started training too late in life, that it would take years for them to become competent in the eyes of the Uncaring One. Their training stopped with my husband’s disappearance.”
- **Tell us about his disappearance.**” He was here one day, and gone the next. I did not keep track of his daily movements. He spent most of his time in his lab, or training the twins, or out about the village gathering his potion ingredients. The twins would accompany him on those walks too. Then he just wasn’t around at the end of the day. By the end of the next day, most of the items in his lab were gone too. Only empty chairs and empty tables remained.”
- **Can we see his lab?:** “Yes, you may. I’ll take you there.”
- **What connection did the twins have with the performers?:** “The twins were curious about things. The performers were strange but mysterious. The twins were drawn to that. They cultivated friendships with the performers.”
- **How did your husband feel about the performers?:** “I don’t think he cared for these Night Cloak Players much. He spoke with them and observed them. Despite them and my husband sharing worship of the same god, there was a difference of sect, or some such thing. He started to keep the twins away from them. He said once, ‘What does the Archmage of the Gods need with bards?’”
- **So your husband disappeared after the Night Cloak Players arrived?:** “Yes, I guess he did. About six months after they first started showing up in numbers. Though from what I

understand, there's always been a few hanging out at the blue-stone estate."

- **Did the twins tell you where they were going?:** "Well, they knew very well my stance on their association with these Night Cloak people, so they kept those types of things from me. Though I did remember hearing mention of a performance in Yillish, wherever that is. They spoke to one another about being offered a part."
- **So you knew about them leaving?:** "Certainly not. Had I known they actually planned on leaving, I would have informed the baron and insisted he put a stop to it. They're not ready for this harsh world yet. They just snuck away. No one actually saw them leave with the troupe but the coincidence was too great."
- **Did they take anything with them?:** "They packed travel gear and extra clothing. They gathered up rations from the kitchen. Everything one might expect of a young person leaving for an excursion. Though they did leave their mounts behind. I suspect they were hidden away inside one of the wagons. I'd have preferred if that had taken their riding mounts, so they could return easier."
- **Do you have personal effects or pieces of them we can have?:** "I guess so. I have a brush with some hair on it and their rooms still have many of their personal effects. If it will help you, then please take them."
- **If we find your husband, what do we get?:** "My gratitude. Unless you like yarn, I have little to give you."
- **Anything important about his lab?:** "Havervite used to make potions and research arcane things. All that equipment is gone now. I rarely went in there. Sometimes when he had his mind on a task, I would bring him his meals there and we would eat together. He had disgusting things on some of the furniture, so in his own sweet way, he left one little table clean for the two of us to sit in and enjoy our meal."

The PCs can investigate the various apartments. They may wish to look in at the twins' chambers but the state of the rooms only confirms the statements given by Hillian. Personal effects for divinations purposes can be acquired here.

An important place to visit is the lab of Havervite of the Seeing Eye. While his lab no longer has any of the apparatus he used for potion making, or the notebooks and ledgers he used for research, it does have some empty chairs and empty tables.

One of these tables is of interest. The table that Havervite kept suitable for eating off of, is the one piece of furniture he expects his wife to keep or to interact with should something go wrong and he's no longer around. Thus he thought it would be the perfect place to

leave a note that she should only hear if he's in trouble—or in theory anyway. The plan didn't work out so well.

When the Footmen of the Spider Throne started to arrive in Stel under the guise of being the Night Cloak Players, bards of Boccob, Havervite welcomed fellow worshipers of the Uncaring One. But after interacting with them, he began to suspect that something just wasn't right.

He also noticed that the Night Cloak Players were taking an unhealthy interest in the twins. This interest was originally intended as a form of recruitment to replenish their numbers with new apprentices. But a few months ago, the Footmen used a *polymorph* spell and turned the twins into horses to fill a requirement for the rite they intend to perform in Rauxes.

Havervite planned to investigate the Night Cloak Players himself, but he was not sure how to proceed. Had he denounced them publicly to his baron, the old man would have used all his resources for a bloody fight that he could not win if they were truly what he suspected them to be. As well, if Havervite was mistaken, it would mean the slaughter of innocent fellow worshipers.

Havervite had to find out himself and then call for aid from his arcane contacts. But he never got the chance. He left a note to his wife where she could find it in case something went wrong, then he went to investigate and got caught.

He was tortured in the Hall of Whispered Enervations beneath the blue sandstone estate. Eventually he became a wraith there. The Footmen then snuck into the Keep and the lab and stole away with his lab apparatus to sow confusion about the fate of the court mage. As well, they looked for anything he may have written about them.

PCs searching the lab or those who specially say they are interacting or sitting in the eating table trigger a *magic mouth* spell left by Havervite for his wife.

Hillian never sat in the chair these three or so years, so she never triggered it (a miscalculation of Havervite's part) and the Footmen never triggered it, because they were invisible when they ransacked the room.

As the chair of the clean dining table is [moved/sat on/etc.], a mouth magically appears on the surface of the table and begins to speak.

"Hillian, something's not right. Keep the twins away from those actors. I suspect they're imposters. They've been practicing in the village square, but something's wrong.

Development: From this point, the PCs should have collected enough information to head south, out of the North Kingdom and into the old Naelex lands near the edge of the Shimmering Veil. The great dirawaen roads of the old Great Kingdom leads right past Yillish and into the magical badlands that is Rauxes.

The trip takes several uneventful days. For those parties who have not figured out that Yillish is the destination of the Footmen of the Spider Throne, all the PCs have to do is travel south and gather information

along the way. Several wagons being pulled by trolls in long coats and floppy hats and bizarre performers has a way of sticking in peoples' minds.

ENCOUNTER 2: YILLISH OF A PICKLE

Leaving the North Kingdom, the trip south along the dirawaen road takes several days. Suddenly, the clear horizon turns into a multicolored and opaque wall about a mile ahead. The shimmering wall ripples slightly and rises a mile up and a mile to either side. A small thorp is situated near the base of the obstruction.

The PCs are now in the Naelex lands (or middle province), the border area between the North Kingdom and Ahlissa.

Political control here is sporadic. The many villages, thorps and estates pay heed to whichever military force (be they bandits or local nobles) applies some foot pressure to them that week.

The shimmering, mile-high barrier the PCs are witnessing is indeed the Shimmer Veil that surrounds old territory of Rauxes.

In reality though, the veil is much higher than one mile. Same goes for its length. Its height (up and down) is infinite. What is happening is that from more than a mile away, the veil is invisible and the view past it is that of what the terrain looked like before the creation of the view (in 585 cy), minus the population. Thus, someone more than a mile off would see green fields, stone estates and humble cottages, just without any people or animals.

Once within a mile, the veil suddenly appears. A person in range can see a mile of veil in all directions (unless their line of sight is blocked).

Once within 100 feet of the veil, this view changes. Though the view is hazy and distorted, a short distance into the veil true state can be seen.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Yillish is a thorp of skittish peasants and serfs (much like the rest of the area's population). Their location on the dirawaen roads means many of those investigating the Shimmering Veil stop here first. This has led to some tense encounters with overbearing and powerful individuals (compared to these serfs) but none that had been overly deadly.

That all changed a month ago when the Nightcloak Players stopped in for a performance. All of the fears and insecurities of these simple people came to the forefront when they witnessed one of their more prominent citizens nearly ritually sacrificed.

Now the only greeting the PCs get from the 50 or so people of Yillish is a slammed door and bolted shutter. All negotiations are left up to the thorp's constable.

Yillish consists of a scattering of cottages and basic community facilities (fletcher, blacksmith, and so on). The village had a small shrine to Hextor at one point, but

it burned down one night and no one has been inclined to rebuild it. The thorp has no cleric.

The thorp does have a common ground for mass meetings, fairs and market days. An item of note in the common ground is a large tarpaulin covering a neatly placed pile of human skulls. This was left here by the Nightcloak Players (the Footmen) and the villagers don't want to risk disturbing it (other than to drape a tarp over it).

Once the PCs enter the thorp and the inhabitants shun them, the local constable comes out to greet and assess them.

A man clad in rusty chainmail and carrying a shortspear approaches you.

"Ello, 'ello, what's all this then? I'm the constable of Yillish. Are you more Veil Runners?"

The constable is putting on a brave front. Usually he just rolls over for whichever force is threatening the thorp at any given time; it's the safest way for him to stay alive.

Rolling over usually leads to safety, except for last month when the Nightcloak players came to town. The mere mention of that troupe breaks him out in a sweat.

- **What's a Veil Runner?:** "That's what we call those who come here investigating the shimmering barrier over there."
- **Tell me about these runners:** "Some are scholarly types who look around, poke, prod, and ask questions. Most of them wear purple and gold. Over the last ten years or so, we've had entire armies come through as Veil Runners. Through the veil they went, and not one has ever returned."
- **How do they get through the veil?:** "They just do. Same way things come out of it I suppose."
- **Things come out?:** "Horrible things. Fiendish, otherworldly things. It's not just our village either. Many who live near the veil have told stories of things calling out from the boundary, beckoning the young and the foolish. They usually disappear in a spray of blood. On some occasions, creatures, usually winged, have emerged from the veil and flown off. It's not something I want to think about."
- **Why are people so afraid?:** "We had a bad incident of late. We don't want to talk about it."
- **Have you seen some performers?:** "What? Yes ... er, NO! There are no Nightcloak Players here and there never were!"
- **Come on, tell me what you know!:** "It was horrible ... and that was just the performance. But it all turned into a nightmare in the third act!"
- **Tell me about this nightmare:** "They allowed our own local performer, Gilrest of Redford, to join them. Then they set up their props, and spoke some philosophical mumbo jumbo combined with a hard-to-follow plot. Don't ask

me what it was about, I've blanked it from my mind."

- **What happened in the third act?:** "Gilrest of Redford, he's our local story teller and entertainer. He was real excited to see a troupe here and was honored when they let him join in the performance. But when the third act came around, they held him tight and started to cut him with their knives. He screamed and his blood ran all over their props ... then the props started to move and scream too. It was a nightmare."
- **What happened after the performance?:** "When the props were chattering and screaming, the shadow they cast started to move on its own and headed for the veil. The troupe then quickly gathered their wagons, left Gilrest for dead, and traveled through the Veil where the shadow covered it. Shortly after that, the veil returned to normal."
- **Tell me about these performers:** "They came in wagons. They had a troll pulling each wagon instead of horses, and kept their two horses tied to the back of the middle wagon. There were about six actual performers and another ten or so helpers. It wasn't until later that we realized in addition to trolls, they also had giant zombies with them. We figured they were just stilt walkers."
- **Tell me more!:** "I can't. It's too horrible to think about. If you want to know more, go talk to Gilrest in his cabin. We managed to save him from death, but we fear he might have some magical plague or something. Who knows what kind of curse he could have contracted. We keep him stocked with liquid meals and he stays in the cabin."
- **Was there a set of twins with the performers?:** "I don't remember seeing any."
- **Were there twin horses?:** "They had two horses, yes. Don't recall what they looked like though. They just stayed tied up to one of the wagons."
- **Where the horses muzzled?:** "Um, maybe, I guess. I don't really remember if they had their feed bags on or not. It's not something I'd that attracted my interest."

♣ **Constable:** Male human War 4 N.

LIFE OF A SHUT-IN

Gilrest of Redford settled in this little thorp shortly after the veil went up. He was excited to see a real performing troupe finally come this way. He even had hopes of joining them.

He asked to participate in the performance and was delighted with a non-speaking role. In his eagerness, he watched with hawk-like detail every move made by every performer, with hopes of impressing the troupe.

Then came the third act and things went bad for Gilrest. He was traumatized by the betrayal and the bloodletting. Now he just sits in his little cabin, with the windows shuttered tight and his hand constantly gripping one of the cider jugs the peasants bring him.

He's become pasty-white from lack of sun and sickly thin from the loss of blood and liquid diet. Gilrest (like the rest of the thorp) feels he's been permanently scarred and debilitated by the event and can never be his old self again.

The PCs need Gilrest to teach them the moves and words required to reenact the performance that can open the veil. But before he is of a mind to do that, he needs to be brought back to health, change his ways, and be given a pep talk to get his spirits up again.

Inside the tiny tightly shut cabin is a pale and skinny man sitting in a chair. His right hand clings tightly to a jug of cider. He winces at the light from the open door.

- **Who are you?:** "I am Gilrest of Redford. I was once a minstrel and performer ... Now I'm a leper waiting to die."
- **What's wrong with you?:** "Can you not see my pale skin and sickly body? All of these scars are from where I was cut. My life force is gone and my flesh is cursed. Even the light of day causes pain to my eyes!"
- **How long have you been in this cabin?:** "For almost a month now. Since those accursed Night Cloak Players left me for dead and the villagers tended what they could of my wounds. Now they feed me cider to ease my pain as this magical sickness consumes my body ..."
- **Do you know the ritual that was performed?:** "I don't want to think about it. Those days are behind me. I'll never perform again. Just look at me, look at what they did to me!"

PCs making a DC 13 Heal check can ascertain that Gilrest has pale skin because he's been in the dark for nearly a month and is malnourished and has not replenished his blood supply. He's also drunk. He has no illness that some fresh air, head-dunking and a proper meal won't fix. Failing that, a *cure light wounds spell* or similar gets him back on his feet.

Gilrest needs his body brought back to health, but he needs more than that to be useful. He needs his mind and spirit brought back to health too.

Once his body is taken care of, the PCs need to use diplomacy to bring him back to the side of the caring. Only then does he train the PCs to replicate the ritual he saw.

At APL 6 the PCs require a DC 14 Diplomacy check. At APL 8 this rises to DC 17, DC 22 at APL 10, and DC 25 at APL 12.

Each PC may only attempt one check or assist other per day in regards to this check.

Time Limit: The ritual performance needs to be done during dusk. The lay lines are only in the proper position for another three days (including today). This gives the PCs a total of three days to persuade Gilrest to help them penetrate the veil.

Once Gilrest has been brought back to health and motivated to help the PCs, read the following.

“I see now that I must aid you in this task. These Night Cloak Players should not be suffered to live and perform again. From my interaction with them, I know that the performance needs to be done during dusk. As well, I studied every step, every line. I was hoping to impress them. But by the Lady Poet, they’re some of the worst performers I’ve ever seen. Even their basics are off. It’s step pivot turn, not step turn pivot!”

The PCs may ask some of the following questions:

- **So you can help us?:** “I believe I can. We only have about six hours until dusk, but if we all participate in the performance, I think I can train you in time”
- **Tell us about the performance:** “It will be easier to show you, but it’s centered around the pile of props they set out. It had six main performers who all cut me at the end, and then there’s the part I will replay. But I think the whole performance has a double meaning.”
- **What double meaning?:** “The steps, movements, and some of the words don’t match up with the story and the rest of the dialogue. It’s almost as if someone just came up with the steps then invented a plot to fit around it.”
- **What are these props I keep hearing about?:** “It’s a pile of about fifty human skulls, over there under the tarp. No one here wants to touch them for fear of some sort of curse. They’re still covered in my blood.”
- **What is the plot?:** “Oh, I won’t bore you with the details. You can pick those up as we learn the steps and lines. But it’s the story of a fallen cleric from The Pale seeking redemption. One of you will be a roamer in the night, another of you will play the light of Pholtus that blinds him. Two more of you will play a female earth elemental and her mage master. Another of you will play the deep-speaking fiend that comes from the east. The last of you shall play a ship captain who offers the main character transport. Like I said, it’s a weird combination.”
- **Is this an evil or necromantic ritual?:** “Not that I know of, though the whole jittering skulls and bloodletting is pretty disturbing.”
- **We don’t have six people willing to perform, is this a problem?:** “Not one that can’t be solved. I’m sure I can persuade a few of the villagers to help us out if their paid well. I can understand if some of you are jittery about it.”

- **What about the seventh person, the one who gets bled?:** “I’ll play that role myself. As long as you leave me something that the villagers can heal me with, perhaps a potion, I shall give this potential sacrifice to get back at those evil bards.”

◆ **Gilrest of Redford:** Male human Bard3 N.

Once the PCs are ready to start training, Gilrest does his best to teach them all where their marks are, what their cues are and what their lines are.

Gilrest coaches them over the hours until dusk arrives. At this time, the PCs simply perform the lines and moves as taught to them. It doesn’t have to be a good performance, since most of the lines and such mean nothing to the ritual.

As the final light of dusk settles over the performance, read the following:

The play is near its end. Six blades cut into a willing Gilrest, and his blood pours down over the pile of skulls. As the blood touches them, they begin to move and jitter. The jittering becomes wordless screams. Then the shadow cast by the pile begins to move and separate. It rapidly moves to the veil and forms a passage. Gilrest looks up at you in his weakened state, “Hurry, through the passage, it won’t stay long.”

At this point, the PCs should make haste through the portal.

ENCOUNTER 3A: IN THE BADLANDS

The land before you is bleak and deformed; a nightmare mockery of what this land once was. The flora is alien and cruel-looking. Instead of clouds, vast mile-wide swarms of blades fill the sky. Lightning bolts shoot upwards from geysers.

As if on cue, you are all thrown to the ground as the ground shakes and everything reverberates with the sound of metal clanging on metal.

The PCs are now within an extraplanar pocket. It is the convergence of many different outer planes. Normally, these planes would all be in flux.

It’s not any one plane, but it does take part of the plane with it. Entering the rift can be as easy as tripping into it, but getting out is a much bigger deal.

Normally, the rift would be a collage of the different outer planes, but not long after the creation of the rift, an artifact, the *screaming column* (combined with another artifact, the *unholy blood shield*) anchored the rift to the plane of Acheron.

Now the edges of the rift still flap into other planes and bring forth inhabitants, but Acheron stays the dominant plane until the stake gets pulled out.

The metal-on-metal clang and tremor that the PCs felt was a cube of Acheron colliding with another cube.

The dirawaen road that leads to Rauxes still exists here. It snakes its way through the badlands, avoiding most of the harmful climate.

It should be assumed that the PCs do their best to stay away from random encounters; otherwise they would be inundated with powerful fiends and extraplanar abominations, and never live to make it to Rauxes.

ESCAPING THE RAUXES BADLANDS

There are two listed methods of escape from this extraplanar rift within this adventure. One is through the ritual performance in the Imperial Theatre of Rauxes, and the other is through the lost temple of Kelanen.

These are not the only methods of escape from this area. Should the PCs for whatever reason miss out on using these two listed escape routes, then they may fall back on using the rules listed on page 46 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*. Namely, the PC is able to eventually return to Oerth but must pay 6 TU's and 1000 gp to do so.

Spells such as *plane shift* and *gate* do not work here. The same goes for spells such as *banishment*. Spells that summon a creature into the rift (such as the *summon monster* and *planar ally* spells) work normally and do not trap the creature in the rift.

Development: Now that the PCs are in the rift, they can follow the dirawaen road that leads to Rauxes, or they can go overland. Following the highway brings them past Wendern and they are intercepted by the air picket of the camp (see Encounter 4.1). The army camp is the more advantageous route for the PCs.

The PCs can also go overland. This route is not recommended and is extremely dangerous due to the planar effects. The PCs have only to look into the distance and they can see all sorts of doom and gloom. The road is clear; the meadows are not.

Check with Encounter 3B: The Other Way Around for as an alternate (though less fulfilling) solution to getting to (and inside) Rauxes.

Note that a lot of Encounter 3B is to replace other encounters, and doubling of monster encounters should be avoided.

ENCOUNTER 3B: THE OTHER WAY AROUND

This is a brief alternative encounter intended to help solve problems should the PCs desire to take the road less traveled.

This encounter is intended to replace the main encounters, not to be double up on them.

Off Road Travel

The PCs might feel that the dirawaen road that leads right to Rauxes is too open. There is normally validity to this logic.

But in this case, the magical nature of the highway within this extraplanar rift actually keeps most of the dangers away from the road.

This is not to say the PCs cannot be harmed on the road—far from it—but cosmic twists tend to be less prevalent.

For every hour the PCs spend off the road (including resting), roll a d6 and consult the following chart.

- 1: Nothing happens
- 2: Nothing happens
- 3: Elemental Geyser
- 4: Teleported
- 5: Teleported
- 6: Teleported

Elemental Geyser: Appearing suddenly and without prior warning (they rift in as the plane tears), a creature in the party (determined randomly between all PCs and creatures in party).

This effect happens only in a square (and affects all in that square). For creatures sharing a square (such as mounted PCs) treat them as one creature when randomly rolling.

When the geyser blows, all PCs in the affected square are hit with elemental damage. The type is determined randomly. 1) fire; 2) cold; 3) acid; 4) electricity; 5) sonic; 6) negative energy.

The damage is 1d6 times the APL (per round. Reflex save to avoid, DC equals APL+12.

Teleported: A rift storm envelopes the PCs. They are instantly transported much closer to Rauxes. They are within sight of the highway and the walls of Rauxes. They appear in the shadow of a large shard of malachite that has broken out of the ground (and goes deep). The stone ripples with magical energy.

If the PCs have not explored Encounters 4 and 5, below is an alternate way for them to get into Rauxes, as the PCs have been brought past Wendern.

DIRECTLY TO RAUXES

If for whatever reason, the PCs do not acquire the information needed to successfully navigate the undercity of Rauxes, this is an alternative.

This could be because the PCs did not explore Encounters 4 and 5, or they did so, but failed in their objectives.

If the PCs never fought the combat in Encounter 5, below is a replacement encounter.

If the PCs do not have the information from Encounter 5 to navigate Rauxes, below is an alternate guide.

Here, the PCs meet up with a patrol of baatezu who are out collecting mortals to use as slaves. At the moment,

they've caught one. Her name is Lassara and she is the same NPC as mentioned in Player Handout 1.

Her details are listed after the combat section.

These baatezu desire slaves and equipment. The PCs are obviously more than just peasants, so the baatezu accepts anyone who surrenders to them.

Anyone who doesn't surrender during the battle is to be killed and their equipment looted.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here. They begin inside the fort.

APL6 (EL 9)

☛ **Bearded Devils (4):** 45 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 52.

APL8 (EL 11)

☛ **Bearded Devils (4):** 45 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 52.

☛ **Lady of the Purple Shroud:** female erinyes; LE; 107 hp; Ftr 1 see appendix.

APL10 (EL 13)

☛ **Bearded Devils (8):** 45 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 52.

☛ **Lady of the Purple Shroud:** female erinyes; LE; 130 hp; Ftr 3 see appendix.

APL12 (EL15)

☛ **Mooks (8):** male bearded devils; LE; 78 hp (each); Ftr 2 see appendix.

☛ **Lady of the Purple Shroud:** female erinyes; LE; 164 hp; Ftr6 see appendix.

Treasure: This treasure is taken from the dead baatezu (assuming the Purple Lady doesn't escape).

APL 6: Loot—200 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—0 gp

APL 8: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) (750 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) (1583 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery* (416 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) (1583 gp each), *greater bracers of archery* (2083 gp each), *gloves of dexterity* +2 (333 gp each), *belt of giant strength* +4 (1333 gp each).

Lassara of Deleric

There are two ways of encountering Lassara. The first is if the PCs find her as a recently captured slave (see above).

The second is if the PCs don't have need for the alternative combat, but they are in need of finding a way into Rauxes. In this case, the PCs find her near the malachite stone, where those teleported get sent.

Lassara has been through a lot. She's been nearly killed countless times. She's had her brain infested with a

planar parasite. She's wandered around the undercity of Rauxes and escaped into open country.

She made the mistake of wandering too far off the road and was teleported back to the malachite rock (which is one of several points where random teleports get sent, depending on the area of the rift).

Due to all her trauma, her personality is on the down side. As well, her mind's not what it used to be. She usually just stares with a blank look, answering only when asked, but inside her head, her thoughts are going a mile a minute.

She has very little to tell the PCs, but what is of use is below.

- **Who are you?:** "I am Lassara of Deleric."
- **Did you come in with two other people?:** "Yes. We got separated. They're dead by now."
- **Are you alright?:** "Wounded ... and hungry ... so hungry ... please, do you have food? I have not eaten since I stole food from the hall of vomit. But that food made me feel ill."
- **Have you been to Rauxes?:** "Yes. It's a terrible place. I followed Talisar there to find escape. He led me through the undercity. That's how I escaped."
- **Who's Talisar?:** "He was a halfling with a tail. Powerful, too. But not powerful enough."
- **What's Rauxes like?:** "It's not safe. Not safe at all. Stay off the streets. The streets are death."
- **Is there a way out in Rauxes?:** "Talisar thought so. But he died. A pillar in a park. He ... that's where he brought us. The giant metal machines smooshed him."
- **Can you lead us through the undercity?:** "I think so. I know how to get back to the hall of vomit, the place with the table of food. I remember that path all too well. The rest is like a maze."
- **Will you fight for us?:** "I don't know ... I just don't know anymore."

☛ **Lassara:** female human; CN; 5 of 20 hp; Ftr 4.

Development: If the PCs agree, Lassara brings them to the start of Encounter 6: Murder in the Vomitorium.

Lassara has little in the way of equipment, and other than guiding the PCs through the undercity to the vomitorium, she has no useful contribution to the party. She stays out of the way of combat and has no relevant advice for them.

ENCOUNTER 4: ISN'T IT A LOVELY WAR?

PART 1: THE AIR PICKET

You come to the rise of a hill along the highway. About a mile or so ahead is a town, filled with tents and other

trappings of encampment. Many different banners fly over the camp. A screech comes from above and a human armed with a lance and wearing plate mail covered with a brown tabard lands his magnificent griffin in front of you.

“Approach no further if your heart contains the desire of evil, for this is the camp of Meya Astra. Evil, be it mortal or fiend, shall not be suffered to live,” says the griffin-riding knight.

The PCs most likely have questions. Some of the logical ones are listed below:

- **Who are you?:** “I am Sir Trachous of the Third Dothion Air Calvary, attached to the Meya Astra army.”
- **What do you do here?:** “I’m flying a patrol with the rest of my fellow Dothion knights.”
- **Who is Meya Astra?:** “She is a being of goodness and beauty. She leads this army to smite down wickedness in the form of fiends.”
- **Is that the town of Wendern ahead?:** “Yes it is. It is being used as the staging ground for our army.”
- **Is your griffin celestial?:** “Yes it is.”
- **Can I have a celestial griffin too?:** “No you may not, unless you go to Bytopia and rear one yourself.”
- **Can we enter the camp?:** “Only if you forsake all evil from your hearts. And you may only stay in the camp longer than an hour if you join up.”
- **Join up with what?:** “Our army. The Camp Warden will explain everything. Enter and ask for him.”
- **What is this army’s cause?:** “Good against evil!”
- **Have you seen a wagon train pulled by trolls come by?:** “Yes, about a month ago. They left the main road and steered clear of us. We had more important adversaries to deal with, and so did not give chase.”
- **What details on the wagon train can you give?:** “It had three wagons, each pulled by what I suspect was a troll. They were some large humanoid creatures draped in sheets walking on the flanks, and the middle wagon trailed two horses.”
- **But we don’t have time to serve in some extra planar morality conflict!:** “Look, I’m being nice here. You want in the camp for longer than an hour, you need to sign up and do your part to defeat evil. Talk to the Camp Warden. He’s got a green hat.”

With that, the griffin rider takes to the air and rejoins his flight mates.

♣ **Sir Trachous:** Male celestial human Pal 9 LG.

♣ **Wingmen (3):** Male celestial human Ftr 7 NG.

♣ **Celestial Griffin (4):** hp 59 (each); see *Monster Manual* page 139.

PART2: THE CAMP WARDEN

Walking through the streets of the town and the billets of the camp, many different flags and banners wave in the breeze. Almost all of the soldiers have either brown tabards or brown coats.

Everyone you ask gives a friendly point in the direction of the Camp Warden.

If the PCs go into the camp read the following:

Eventually you arrive in the presence of the Camp Warden. Before you is a beautiful, extremely tall, humanlike creature with long, feathery wings and a very supple and lithe body that glows with an inner power that makes it hard to look directly at it, let alone at its nifty green hat.

This is the Camp Warden, an astral deva pledged to the service of the planetar Meya Astra. Like all of the camp administration, he wears a green hat that denotes his rank and position.

As the PCs pass through the camp, they are scanned several times with *detect evil* and similar divination magic. The guards are always on the lookout for evil infiltrators.

He is here to recruit non-evil newcomers into the army of Meya Astra. Those who refuse to join the army are required to leave the camp (and its protection) within an hour of their entry, and to not enter again for a full day.

The camp warden has a muster sheet for each PC to fill out that enters them into contract with the army for a minimum of one day. The soldier can muster out at any time after that one day, but must do so through the proper channels. This is done so that the Camp Warden always knows how many soldiers they have.

Though many PCs are probably suspicious and suspect a catch, there is in fact no legal trickery involved. Yes, it’s a contract, but one the Camp Warden, and by extension Meya Astra, intends to be mutually agreeable.

- **Who are you?:** “I the Camp Warden. I am the head of the camp administration, and servant of Meya Astra. We are identified by our green hats, just as the soldiers are identified by their brown jackets.”
- **We are looking for Castle Triumph:** “It is less than a mile away. This camp is laying siege to the castle. It is controlled by Jourantia, a baatezu lord. Meya Astra has vowed its defeat.”
- **Who is Jourantia?:** “He is a pit fiend in the service of the Herald of Hell. His forces consist of numerous baatezu and mortal servants of the Scourge of Battle. His forces can be recognized by their purple tabards.”
- **So what is involved in signing up?:** “We will supply you with the safety of the camp, a billet, food, two pairs of socks, a brown jacket, basic

implements of war, if needed, and battlefield loot. As well, you'll qualify to be raised from the dead, assuming your body is returned intact."

- **My body intact?:** "Yes, the fiends take every opportunity to mutilate the bodies of the fallen to prevent them from being raised to fight another day. When a body is returned to the camp, it enters the queue to be raised."
- **How long does the queue take?:** "It could be many weeks after a large battle before all the dead can be raised. It is possible for that position to be moved up should the situation warrant it. Of course, if one has already mustered out, then an arrangement must be made to come to."
- **What must we do if we join up?:** "You'll be required to fill out this here form. Then there are the following requirements. You must serve for at least one day and before mustering out, you must report to a green hat camp administrator to have it logged. You must follow all moral orders given to you by a duly appointed superior. You must group with the unit you are assigned to and follow the objectives given."
- **What's on the form?:** "True name, preferred profession, deity of worship, foot and jacket size."
- **Do you know of a person named Mendalson?:** "One moment to recall ... Yes, he enlisted in 592 CY by your reckoning. He was rolled into Gregite's Pikemen and is currently a veteran sergeant in that unit. You can find him in their billet area."
- **What unit are we in?:** "You are to report to your billet and a green hat will come along and give you your assignment in approximately two hours."
- **Are there any Kelenites here?:** "Yes there are. There is a unit called the Barons of the Blade, led by a relative newcomer named Stylus Rel."
- **Who else serves in this army?:** "This army has many denominations and planar origins amongst it. It would take much time to list them all."

♣ **Camp Warden:** Male astral deva, NG.

After this encounter, the PCs have some decisions to make.

If they've decided not to join up, they still have the remainder of the hour to look around, though a discrete escort of hound archons follows them to ask the PCs to leave nicely come time and to make sure they're not causing mischief. The PCs can return to the camp and still decide to enlist if they choose, just be approaching a sentry and being escorted to the Camp Warden.

While in the camp, the PCs can visit the billet for the Barons of the Blade (part 3). Doing so leads the PCs to a personal meeting with Meya Astra (part 4).

They can also choose to visit Mendalson of Gregite's Pikemen (part 5). This can give the PCs some insight on what is going on around them.

The PCs have two hours to do the above encounters. At some point the PCs either go back to their own billet, or their officer comes looking for them and brings them to the mission briefing (part 6).

PART 3: THE BARONS OF THE BLADE

The following is an optional encounter for PCs that wish to follow up their connection with the Barons of the Blade and the quest for the Final Word swords.

This encounter opens up Part 4.

As you walk through the streets of Wendern and the rows of tents, the many flags and banners reveal a white background with a ring of inward-facing swords.

Stylus Rel is the leader of the Barons of the Blade, a sect of Kelanen that believes the Lord of Swords to be originally of the Oeridian pantheon, but who subsequently separated to show his neutrality.

Another prime tenet of the sect is the searching out of the Final Word swords that they feel can give them a special connection to their god, be it now or in the afterlife.

In *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu* the PCs met Stylus Rel in the Old City arena in Eastfair. Those who were interested were allowed to go through an initiation rite and join the Barons of the Blade. Thus, Stylus Rel knows and is friendly with those PCs who met him before.

While Stylus Rel is friendly, supportive and charismatic, he's not looking for more official recruits at this moment. Anyone wishing to fully join the rank of his sect needs to do so at the Old City arena in Eastfair where the proper rite can be performed and the special tattoo applied.

He happily takes on pledges who don't mind acting as associates, but they must swear upon their soul that they immediately take Kelanen, the Lord of Swords, as their divine patron, and learn and heed his laymen ways.

They must also pledge to bring the head of an enemy who has slain many back to the shrine in the Old City arena in Eastfair and undergo the rites at first opportunity.

Stylus tells the PCs that to break this pledge brings the PC under a terrible curse. In reality this is not true, but Stylus Rel truly believes that the power of Kelanen shall bring about ill fortune to their combat ability and their dexterity. The DM should feel free to roll some secret dice and nod apprehensively, yet vaguely, if the PC starts to break his oath (best done in combat, after the PC has made a roll himself).

This encounter opens up the possibility of the PCs taking on the extra TU encounter (see Encounter 12 for details).

The PCs are free to ask what they can. Stylus Rel answers their questions to the best of his ability. None of

the following answers are lies (though it's possible he's incorrect).

- **Who are you again?:** "I am Stylus Rel, Blade Master of the Barons of the Blade, head cleric of our sect and supplicant of the divine Lord of Swords."
- **How are things back in Eastfair?:** "Normal." (Recount any relevant information from the player's handout.)
- **Why are you here?:** "We have discovered text that suggests we need to be here. They are words that cannot be spoken, and I fear writing them down may have been wrong as well, for our copy disappeared soon after we entered here."
- **Why can't you tell us the text?:** "Because the text says not to speak it aloud. I don't know why."
- **What can you tell us of the text?:** "It involves questing for a temple or shrine that may be the resting place of a Final Word sword. It is cryptic and speaks of a future, which we believe is now. In our questing, we came across a stone marker bearing the sign of our Lord of Swords and it guided us to another marker that allowed us to penetrate the magical barrier that surrounds this land."
- **What is a Final Word sword?:** "They are relics of our faith. Blades blessed by Kelanen's hands and given power with his ascension. They have been scattered, and finding them shall give us answers, in this world or the next."
- **Why come here at all?:** "The text speaks of a place that is, but is not. Along with the marker, we believe this must be the place. As well, Meya Astra has confirmed that such a place can be found here and is willing to grant us the information that we seek, if we willingly serve in her army."
- **She's blackmailing you into service?:** "We are not being coerced. I suspect no deception from here at all. It's an agreement. We give service in battle, something we are glad to do in any regard. And upon our mustering out, she will supply us with the final information we need."
- **Would she supply us with such information as well?:** "That is possible. Perhaps I can arrange a meeting with her and you can discuss it."
- **We want to meet her:** "And so you shall, assuming you've signed up. She's picky about that. Give a little, get a little."
- **How did you lose your copy of the text?:** "After we entered this land of unbalanced strife, we fought many otherworldly creations. Each victory was a testament to our Lord of Swords, but unless they were tests, we had no further clues to seek out. Then we saw a wagon caravan come down the highway. It was in the distance

and we hurried to it. It could have been a sign. But we failed to reach it. Like gnats in the grass, we stirred up a storm of winged leeches. By the time we were prepared to move on, the wagons were out of sight."

- **Then what?:** "We used our magic and tracking to give further pursuit. Not long into the chase, we came upon a beggar standing in the road. Such a sight is odd, and here, odd is deadly. We exchanged pleasantries, with him asking us who we were and why we tracking the wagons. More knowledgeable than we would have liked. He somehow knew things about us, but he kept us in the dark about himself. Then he disappeared. We could not successfully track his movements."
- **Is there a point to this story?:** "The point is, we may have failed two challenges in our quest, or a being wishing us ill has taken an interest in us. Either way, after we had a much-needed rest, we discovered that our copy of the text was missing. I carried it personally and found its tube to be empty. Either a thief or divine punishment is the blame."
- **Can we join your unit?:** "Perhaps. I can make the request, but it's up to the green hats who goes where. There's a big battle tomorrow, a final push on the siege. Perhaps after that, I can get you reassigned to my unit."
- **I suspect the battle's not going to go well for you tomorrow!:** "Should I fall tomorrow, it will be because the Lord of Swords feels my death will make room for life, and bring a needed balance."
- **We ran into a little talking puppy that said it's a servant of Kelanen:** "Truly? Then you are blessed. It is a sign for sure. One you will need to unfold, for I have no answers to it."
- **How long will you keep serving?:** "We have awaited this coming battle. We've heard tales of this camp doing battle with fiends and mortals, but we have so far only dealt with raids and incursions. After this battle, we shall muster out and take Meya Astra up on her promise."

◆ **Stylus Rel:** Male human (oeridian) Ftr 3/Clr 9 of Kelanen; N.

◆ **Elite Bladers (19):** Male human (oeridian) Ftr 5; N.

If the PCs wish to take Stylus Rel up on his offer, he does indeed take them over to the main headquarters and uses his influence to get the PCs a brief audience with a rather busy Meya Astra (Part 4—but in this instance, the PCs do not require a Diplomacy check to gain entry).

PART 4: A PRIVATE AUDIENCE

There are two ways into this encounter. The easiest way is with the escort of Stylus Rel (who is on friendly terms

with Meya Astra, but quickly excuses himself back to his unit).

The harder way is to request an audience. Normally, Meya Astra would make time to speak with all of her soldiers should they seek her out. But with the final preparations for the coming push of the siege, she is very busy.

The PCs can speak with the phalanx of hound archons, or a green hat of celestial origins, at the main headquarters, and plead their case.

The party is allowed only one attempt at obtaining an audience before the battle (though their free to come back a few days after the battle if everything goes well).

To represent this, one of the PCs must pass a Diplomacy check on behalf of the group. The other PCs may assist as normal. At APLs 6 and 8 they must succeed on a DC 25 Diplomacy check. At APL 10 and 12 the DC increases to 35. This check is modified by the following conditions:

- If the main PC has not already signed up to the army, add +10 to the DC.
- If any member of the party is a worshiper of any of the Oeridian wind and agriculture gods (Atroa, Sotillion, Telchur, Velnius, or Wenta), subtract -2 per worshiper from the DC.
- If the main PC is of good alignment, subtract -5 from the DC.

When the PCs approach this area read the following:

This structure stands at the heart of Wendern probably served as the town hall, It's now surrounded by tents and workshops. A phalanx of dog-headed humanoids keep watch of the traffic going in and out.

Group and unit leaders come and go in this place. They are forming up for briefings and last-minute changes to their objectives for the next day's battle.

Security is tight in and around this structure. Evil and malign deception are quickly curtailed. Infiltrations and attacks have been tried before, and all have failed.

This is the same building that the PCs come to when they are summoned for their own briefings.

Once the PCs have been granted an audience, they are led to a meeting chamber, where Meya Astra joins them shortly after.

The curtains to the meeting room open and a creature that resembles a tall and massively muscular female human with smooth emerald skin, white-feathered wings and a bald head under a nifty green hat enters the room.

"Greetings, mortals. I do not have much time, as the battle preparations need my attention, but I shall say what I can. Know this: I shall tell you no lie, but I shall guard my tongue on what I cannot speak on."

- **Who are you?:** "I am Meya Astra, servant of good, enemy of evil."

- **Why are you here?:** "There is a crucial battle in the balance between good and evil. I am here to lean for good, as the many fiends pull and jump to bring evil to victory. The Herald of Hell has held far too much influence on Oerth. It has corrupted once-noble blood lines. A balance needs to be restored, but the Herald demands a contest, one held backwards and forwards in time and space."
- **Who do you serve?:** "I serve good. But I am here at the special request of three divine beings. The Sad Maiden (Atroa, lesser goddess of Spring, East Wind and Renewal) the Ale Wife (Wenta lesser goddess of Autumn, West Wind, Harvest and Brewing) and the Summer Queen (Sotillion lesser goddess of Summer, South Wind, Ease and Comfort)."
- **Can you say something not so cryptic?:** "I am cryptic for a reason. I am but one tiny player in a game of life and death. It's important not to bring about a fault that could spill the board."
- **Does this have something to do with these talking dogs we ran into?:** "Yes, it does. And know that enough of the line still lives and is in protection, but ask me no more."
- **What do Vecna cultists want with them?:** "I'm not aware of any connection between servants of the Whispered One and our plans, be it on the planes or on Oerth. That fouled soul is not part of our match."
- **Tell me about the Footmen of the Spider Throne:** "I do not know them. And if I do not know them, I doubt they are beings of true power."
- **Aid us to defeat the Vecna cultists we chased here:** "It is a worthy deed that you do. I wish you all the best, but my own burdens prevent me from doing your tasks for you."
- **Why attack this castle?:** "It is a fortification of evil. All evil must be purged before we march on Rauxes. I do not expect to attack Rauxes for another generation."
- **What is this place behind the Veil?:** "It is a planar convergence, a rip in space and time that serves our purpose well."
- **Why is this camp safe?:** "This place is near a planar overlay with several planes of good. During fluxes, we receive reinforcements here."
- **Can you help us escape?:** "Leaving this place is difficult, even for one such as I. Normal planar travel does not work. There are methods of escape, most of them perilous for mortals."
- **Name some ways of escape!:** "One way is through the planar shrine of the Lord of Swords. But I will not betray its location."
- **We serve Kelanen!:** "If you truly do seek what the Lord of Swords has sheathed, then come back to me after you have mustered out and the

battle has had time to be cleared, and I shall show you passage to what you seek.”

- **Is there a non-religious escape route?:** “For mortals such as yourselves, I’d suggest seeking out a man named Chavious. He is a servant of The Scribe and knows more than he lets on. He can be found in Oltary Park, in Rauxes.”
- **How do we get into Rauxes?:** “I don’t know. Powerful defenders and wards stop all those who try to go over or through the city walls. When the time comes, we shall assault its walls.”
- **Can we really get raised from the dead?:** “Yes, you can. Assuming your body is intact, we shall raise you from the dead without need for spell component or fee. It is part of your soldier’s pension, be you mustered in or out. If you require more than a simple raising, then we can provide that too, but you must supply the materials, for our supplies are very scarce.”
- **What happened to the people of Wendern?:** “I do not know. They were not here when we arrived, nor do they ever rematerialize come dawn. Something sinister must have happened to them either just before the Shimmer Veil went up or just after.”
- **What happened to the rest of the people who were in the Veil when it went up?:** “The souls that were caught within the backlash that created the Veil have become cursed. Cursed to fight and die, renewing their eternal battle from where they stood at the dawn of the backlash. Even the city itself repairs itself each dawn. Then, until the earliest hours of the morn, Rauxes burns anew as the mortal forces inside it do battle. Many planar beings have come to watch.”
- **How can this be stopped?:** “I won’t tell you that but I will tell you that Chavious in Oltary park can help weaken the Herald of Hell’s grasp on this planar rift.”

☞ **Meya Astra:** Female planetar, NG.

Price of Life

As promised, while inside the Veil, the camp of Meya Astra can help bring back the dead. Because of the limited resources of the camp, this tends to come at a premium.

If a PC has at some point belonged to Meya Astra’s army, then they have a pension in the form of free castings of *raise dead*. This comes from spell-like abilities, and thus there is no component cost. A PC may have a nominal wait (1d4-1 days), but at no additional TU cost.

A PC who never joined the army must pay one TU per casting of *raise dead*, but no component cost.

A PC who has the army pension can be granted a *resurrection* if they can provide the 10,000 gp from their character sheet. Since supplies (such as the diamonds

needed) are in short supply, thus the PCs can’t just sell loot to buy one while in the Veil.

The following spells can be provided for 1 TU each, *heal, regeneration, greater restoration*.

The additional TUs take the form of after adventure service and like a *planar ally* spell, can not be skipped out on.

PART 5: A SOLDIER’S TALE

This sub-encounter is for those wishing to seek out Mendalson, as referenced in the Player Handout.

The main purpose is to show the outcome of mortal’s of Oerth staying too long under the effects of Acheron.

With a few friendly directions, the billet of Gregite’s Pikemen is easy enough to find. A man sitting alone by a fire is said to be Mendalson. His eyes stare off into the flames as his hands drag his whetstone along his pike blade.

This is the same Mendalson as mentioned in the Player Handout. He was an adventuring companion of Finnadrel of Delaric and Lassara of Delaric. They came with their bardic friend through the veil, mostly by happenstance and became trapped.

He was always the black sheep of the family, never quite fitting in with the evil ways of the North Kingdom. He was always too soft. It was only a matter of time before he was corrupted and drawn to the side of good.

While his two childhood friends parted ways to search for a way out (and adventure), Mendalson sought out the cause of good, in a hope to make a difference in the grand scheme of things.

Now he’s been in Meya Astra’s army for over four years. As a side effect of the plane of Acheron on a mere mortal, he’s become fixated with conflict. His will and mind have been warped to fixate on the next battle—the final battle that’s just a pike thrust away.

In the back of his mind, a part that only surfaces during his moments of lucidity, he knows it’s the planer effects subverting his mortal self. He also suspects that removing the dominating effects of Acheron could set him free.

It should be noted that he’s not a prisoner here because of Meya Astra or the camp. He’s here because his soul demands he keep fighting, and that influence in turn comes from the planar traits of Acheron. This effect comes with time but is much less influential on the outsiders (that most are) in the camp.

For most of these questions, Mendalson keeps staring into the flame (or some other distant focus point) and sharpening his weapon. The only time when he actually makes eye contact with the PCs is during his moments of lucidity. Those entries are marked with an asterisk.

The DM should feel free to invoke these manic moments, even if not directly provoked by the PCs.

- **Who are you?:** “I am Veteran Sergeant Mendalson of Delaric.”

- **How did you get here?:** "I came through the veil. Finnadrel led the way."
- **Do you know how we can escape?:** "Victory. Victory is the only escape. We must win."
- ***Tell us about Finnadrel:** "I ... I can't remember. That was then, this is now. The now is war, the now is victory. The then was war too, family struggle. Delaric, slaves of the Herald of Hell."
- ***Tell us about your past and Delaric?:** "I can't remember it. It's a dream gone past. Now is the time for redemption. My family was wayward, devoted to evil. I must pay penance."
- **Tell us about Lassara?:** "Lassara is gone. She went to Rauxes. She's gone."
- **Is Meya Astra holding you here against your will?:** "Meya Astra is our leader. Meya Astra is good. Meya Astra is great."
- *** Do you want to escape?:** "There is no escape. It's this place. Acheron permeates it, but it doesn't have to be that way. The halfling with a tail, he told the others that the stake could be pulled from the sand, and we'd be free to blow away in the wind."
- ***So we can help you, how?:** "Pull the stake. Follow the halfling with a tail. Let this place be free to choose its plane."
- **Are you happy here?:** "Happy is our motto."
- ***Should we join up for a long stay?:** "No ... mortals of Oerth can't stand this. Don't become like me unless you have little to go back to."

☛ **Mendelson of Delaric:** Male human Ftr 6 LN.

PART6: THE MISSION BRIEFING

As the day comes to an end, after the PCs have either whiled away their time or sought out the various camp encounters, their new platoon officer comes looking for them.

A ball of glowing light floats towards you with a nifty green hat floating just above it. In a singsong voice it says, "Okay, you mortal maggots! Get in line. You're mine now. Welcome to the ranks of the skirmishers. Now get those knee's up and lets move. We have a briefing to attend. Hup-hup-hup!"

This lantern archon is the officer in charge of the secondary units that attack secondary targets during the battle tomorrow. These units do not engage in the main assault, but instead hold the rear guard and attack the static defenses of the castle.

The PCs have a chance to ask a few short questions of the archon while they travel to the headquarters (if not already there) to catch the tail end of the briefing.

- **Who are you?:** "I am the platoon officer of the unit you have been rolled into. From now on my word is law."

- **Where are we going?:** "You are late for the main briefing for tomorrow's engagement. Let's double-time so you can catch the tail end and have some clue as to what you're going to be doing. Don't want you marching the wrong way tomorrow."
- **How do I get out of this outfit?:** "Stow that talk."
- **Can I be a squad leader?:** "Yes, you can. You're now the squad leader. Now, so help me if your squad falls out of line!"

☛ **Skirmish Officer:** Male lantern archon Ftr 2.

Without further ado, the PCs arrive at the headquarters (the same building Meya Astra resides in).

The PCs are sat in the back of a room that somewhat resembles a small lecture hall. The only soldiers left are fellow second-rate skirmishers like the PCs.

The glowing ball of light seats you near the back of circular seating looking down at a pulpit. The other seats are filled with brown coats like you, eager to hear what the winged celestial down below has to say.

The winged celestial down below has a pointer stick and a small-scale model of tomorrow's battlefield. He has just finished droning on about the various objectives for the units present and of the grand overview. But now that the PCs have finally arrived, he'll give a quick recap and assign them to the only remaining objective.

The winged celestial address your officer, "Now that our stragglers have arrived, we can wrap up this briefing," which brings a glower your way from the ball of light.

"To recap, this is Castle Triumph, and this is our camp. While our main army marches on the castle and the purple-bodied baatezu guarding it. These are the approach towers that our main units will be circumventing, but this comes at the price of exposing our rears to withering ballista fire from the towers. You skirmishers will be tasked with taking these towers as quickly as possible and silencing those ballistae. Take and hold until relieved. Any questions?"

- **What tower is our unit attacking?:** "The only tower left unassigned is the eastern approach tower."
- **What is our opposition?:** "The Eastern approach tower is held in trust by a consort of Jourantia, know only as the Lady of the Purple Shroud. A small garrison of between eight to twenty bearded devils is known to barracks there."
- **What's with the purple?:** "This is the war markings of Jourantia the pit fiend. All his baatezu either color their torsos purple or wear clothing of that color to denote their loyalty. If you see markings of a different color, then its

evidence of baatezu loyal to a different faction, which could mean an alliance.”

- **Is an alliance a bad thing?:** “Yes, it is very bad. It could mean a major setback and reinforcements for the besieged castle.”
- **What’s the terrain look like?:** “You’ll need to cross 500 feet of open ground to reach the walls of the barracks that surrounds the tower. The ballistae will be firing from the top of the tower.”
- **What if things go badly?:** “Should the unthinkable happen and the assault fails, our units will fall back to the camp here, forfeiting what ground is necessary, including the towers. If the general retreat is sounded, then you may pull back and retreat from your position, if necessary. The camp is our point of last stand.”

After this, the briefing wraps up and the lantern archon escorts the PCs back to their assigned billets. He orders them to get some rest and be prepared for an early rise tomorrow. He also informs them not to worry about sentries, for the camp has that covered.

The PCs should take a few moments to decide what tactics they’ll want for tomorrow, including spell preparation, as they only have a short time to prepare once awakened.

Once it becomes dark, the rest of the camp settles in (except for the sentries of course). If the PCs stay awake chatting for too long, the soldiers billeted nearby yell at them to be quiet and go to sleep.

PART 7: THE ARMORY

Some PCs may have inquired about acquiring magical weapons and armor while here in the camp. This is possible, but the supply of weapons is scarce. Many magical weapons get destroyed and lesser magical weapons are quickly snatched up by officers and hero units.

J’neal Firecurls only has a few higher end magic weapons and armor available. He insists on coin up front and only coin brought into the rift from the prime plane. Seems he has a special interest for precious metals from the prime plane over those from the rift or from the outer planes.

As well, J’neal Firecurls has no interest in trade-ins. He only deals in his own creations or those of he knows.

The smith resembles a dwarf with hair of fire and a beard of flames. He has brass-colored skin and appears to have been forged from fire and metal.

It is important for the DM to keep the following in mind. All purchases must be made on the spot—that is, while in the camp and before the PCs leave the rift. The gold used for these particular purchases must come from the PCs’ AR, and not from over-cap gold. These items will be access: adventure on the AR, and any item not purchased needs to be crossed off.

The following items are for sale:

- *+2 Thinaun longsword* (CW 23,315 gp)
- *+1 Last Resort Thinaun dagger* (CW 18,302 gp)
- *Armor of the Unending Hunt* (CW 21,500 gp)
- *Dwarven Thrower* (DMG 60,312 gp)
- *+2 Adamantine Battle axe* (DMG 9,010 gp)
- *Flame Tongue* (DMG 20,715 gp)
- *Dwarven Plate* (DMG 16,500 gp)

☛ **J’neal Firecurls:** Male azer Rog 10, LG.

Treasure: None of the following are lootable treasure. It is only obtained if a PC purchases it with gold on hand from their last AR.

See appendix for items from CW (*Complete Warrior*).

All APLs: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+2 *Thinaun longsword* (no loot), *+1 Last Resort Thinaun dagger* (no loot), *Armor of the Unending Hunt* (no loot), *Dwarven Thrower* (no loot), *+2 Adamantine Battle axe* (no loot), *Flame Tongue* (no loot), *Dwarven Plate* (no loot).

Development: Not all PCs may want to join up with this army. Though less satisfactory, there are some alternatives for PCs to approach their problems.

Siege Too Early

Regardless of if they join the army or not, if the PCs attack the eastern tower before the start of the celestial attack, then the baatezu are not only allowed to use their *summon baatezu* ability, but it should be used at first opportunity. Note, normally, none of the baatezu uses their summoning ability in Encounter 5.1.

Dereliction of Duty

PCs who sign up for the army but grossly forsake their duty suffer the inevitable consequences. Such derelictions could include: leaving the base without mustering out, not fighting in the battle, extreme cowardice, and so on.

Those who do so are paid a visit by a squad of Kolyaruts (Inevitable). The PC(s) are asked nicely to return for punishment of 1d6 TU’s imprisonment. Refusal to do so means summary execution.

All APLs:

☛ **Kolyaruts (4):** 91 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 159.

What Else?

If something else arises, check Encounter 3B: The Other Way Around. It’s a short alternative for those PCs wishing to avoid possible trouble and head straight towards Rauxes.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE SIEGE

Morning arrives with a flight of trumpet archons playing reveille. The ball of light with the green hat floating above it comes for you during your preparations.

"Ok, this is the time. I'll escort you to your starting positions. You'll be under cover to start, but you'll need to cross 500 feet of open ground to get to the barracks and tower. Don't start till you hear the signal and for the love of the Archpaladin, take out those ballistae quickly. Our boys are counting on you!"

The PCs are then escorted to a place where some terrain protects them while they wait.

The rest of the army forms up; regiment upon regiment, mortals and celestials, infantry and cavalry. Then the horn sounds for the main army to start. As it does, explosive ammunition (detailed in *Complete Warrior*) fired from ballistae starts to rain down on the army from all of the approach towers within range.

Not long after that, the horn is blown for all of the skirmishers (including the PCs) to race out and take down their objectives.

The lantern archon officer goes off to supervise the unit as a whole, elsewhere.

PART I: BAATEZU IN A PURPLE DRESS

Five hundred feet in the distance, a small walled fort with a lone tower rains death down on the main army. The walls of the fort are covered in black obsidian thorns.

This small fort and tower (like the others that ring Castle Triumph) are meant to act as forward defenses and observation posts for the castle. It's not the best of designs, but then again, neither is the castle itself.

The eastern approach tower, the one the PCs are attacking, is the personal lair of The Lady of the Purple Shroud, an erinyes consort to the pit fiend that commands the castle.

On top of the tower is an open area that houses four animated ballistae loaded with explosive ammunition. (Explosive ammunition is detailed in *Complete Warrior*.) These animated siege weapons function on their own without need for a crew. They can even change firing positions unassisted.

The drawback to these weapons is their rules of engagement. In this encounter, the ballistae always focus their fire on the main body of the celestial army. Under no circumstances do they turn and engage the PCs. If the PCs can get into position, they can destroy these animated objects with ease.

The tower has a staircase running up to the roof and a hatch and ladder leading down to the cellar (where the entrance to the secret tunnel is located).

The PCs' objective is to attack this small fort, defeat the defenders, destroy the ballistae and hold the fort until relieved or until a general retreat is called.

During this time, the PCs can explore the tunnel in the basement. Or, for those lawful PCs who refuse to abandon their posts, they can wait until the general retreat is called, in which case, they have a number of rounds to wait, adjusted by how many rounds it took to destroy all the ballistae.

The first round of combat begins when the horn sounds with the charge order. From there, the PCs have 500 feet to go. At APL 8+, they'll have the Lady of the Purple Shroud firing upon them.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here. They begin inside the fort.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ **Bearded Devils (4):** 45 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 52.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ **Bearded Devils (4):** 45 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 52.

☛ **Lady of the Purple Shroud:** female erinyes; LE; 107 hp; Ftr 1 see appendix.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☛ **Bearded Devils (8):** 45 hp (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 52.

☛ **Lady of the Purple Shroud:** female erinyes; LE; 130 hp; Ftr 3 see appendix.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ **Mooks (8):** male bearded devils; LE; 78 hp (each); Ftr 2 see appendix.

☛ **Lady of the Purple Shroud:** female erinyes; LE; 164 hp; Ftr 6 see appendix.

ALL APLs

☛ **Animated Object (ballista), medium (4):** 31 hp (each), hardness 5; see *Monster Manual* pg 13.

☛ **Main Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 30; AC 5; Break DC 22. Barred from inside.

☛ **Tower doors/hatch:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 15. Not barred or locked.

Tactics: The Lady of the Purple Shroud and her foot soldiers are eager for battle. Unfortunately, some of their forces have been redistributed around the castle. At their height, they had twenty bearded devils here. Now they have only four or eight (depending on APL).

As well, at APL 6, the Lady of the Purple Shroud has been called away and is not present for the battle.

All APLs: At no time do any of the devils, regardless of APL, use their *summon baatezu* ability. It is just too costly for them in the long run here in the rift.

The devils use all their other abilities to the fullest. As well, all devils take any presented opportunity to administer a coup de grace. There is no mercy or prisoners on this battlefield.

At APL6 the bearded devils defend the fort from the battlements. They half have cover from the wall and are 10 feet up from the ground. Since they have no ranged attacks, if they get peppered by missile fire, they can either jump/charge down from the battlements or use their *teleport* ability to engage the PCs outside of the fort.

The devils make no special attempt to defend the ballistae, except to chase down PCs.

The bearded devils fight to the death.

APL 8+: At the upper APL ranges, the Lady of the Purple Shroud is present for the combat. She is the only combatant with a ranged attack, but uses it to devastating effect. She's an excellent archer and has the Far Shot feat at higher APLs.

The bearded devils are more inclined to defend the fort from its walls and let the erinyes fly around and rain death from 100 feet or more up in the air. If need be, though, the bearded devils come out of the fort and do battle in the open.

The bearded devils fight to the death, but the Lady of the Purple Shroud is inclined to *teleport* to safety (along with her loot) once she's down to less than 30 hit points.

Treasure: This treasure is taken from the dead baatezu (assuming the Purple Lady doesn't escape).

APL 6: Loot—200 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—0 gp

APL 8: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) (750 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) (1583 gp each), *lesser bracers of archery* (416 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) (1583 gp each), *greater bracers of archery* (2083 gp each), *gloves of dDexterity +2* (333 gp each), *belt of giant strength +4* (1333 gp each).

Development: Once the PCs hold the fort and tower, they can search the basement to find the entrance to the secret tunnel that leads to the abandoned lair of one of the Footmen cultists.

After the PCs have secured the fort, those who want to can look out at the ongoing battle. Some towers are just being taken but still raining explosive death into the rank and file of the celestials.

The main army is engaging the purple-designated baatezu and the pit fiend is doing battle with winged celestials.

All is going well enough, until a planar rift opens up to the flank of the celestial army and out of it a good-sized horde of yellow-marked baatezu start to march out. The fighting starts to get desperate and the general retreat is sounded. Somewhere the little lantern archon officer is cursing, "Darn it, that's the fifth time this year that that's happened! Next time though, next time!"

Now as to how this affects the PCs.

The PCs are going to find their fort is on the wrong side of the battle line. When the baatezu give chase back

to the celestial camp at Wendern, they'll be coming right past the eastern approach tower.

If any PCs are in sight and need rescuing, brave Sir Trachous of the Third Dotherion Air Calvary and his celestial griffon riders swoop in to lift them away.

From when the PCs started initiative to when the general retreat was called depends on how long it took the PCs to neutralize all four ballistae.

To calculate this use the following formula, where ten rounds equals a minute, start with 50 rounds as a base. For every round it took for the PCs to destroy the ballistae, subtract 1.5 rounds.

So for example, if it took 10 rounds from the start of the charge to the destruction of the ballistae (even if the devils were still alive), then multiply 10 by 1.5 = 15 rounds. Subtract that from 50, and in 35 rounds from the beginning of the combat, the general retreat is called.

It takes a number of rounds for the baatezu to chase the celestials off the field. This number is equal to 30 minus the number of rounds it took for the PCs to destroy the ballistae.

If the PCs are still inside enemy territory when the battle is lost, then the PCs are forced from the tower by overwhelming numbers.

During this time, the PCs need to get past the trap and the secret door (it's important to keep track of rounds), search the abandoned hideout, loot the treasure inside and escape the battlefield.

PCs who don't mind abandoning their posts can do this during the battle. PCs who refuse to abandon their posts can do this during the general retreat (for they have standing orders to abandon their position).

PART 2: THE WENDERN MINX

The cellar walls of the tower are decorated with small stone statues of animals. The granite eyes seem to noticeably track your movements.

The ladder from above comes down to the center of the cellar. In mortal times, this was a supply area, but the baatezu have no need to stock it.

Before the magical rift, these stone ornaments were just that. The statue of the wendern minx (a local tailless cat species) was used to hide the activation point for the secret door leading to the tunnel.

Now that wild magic has infused them, the statues have a bit of life to themselves. While still stone, they've taken on some of the characteristics of the animals they imitate.

There are four small statues. The north wall has a blunt-nosed raccoon, the south wall has a plumed duck, the west wall has a tailless cat and the east wall has a three-legged dog.

Though not how the secret door was originally intended to work, the magic of the rift has changed it to work as follows.

If a PC approaches within 5 feet of one of the statues, it starts to kick up a fuss. The cat hisses, the duck quacks,

the raccoon chatters, etc. The stone animals cannot leave their placement on the wall, but anyone attempting to interact with them physically (i.e., search them, examine them, etc) automatically takes 1 point of damage (no attack roll required) each round as the stone animal freaks out and flails around.

The only way to appease these statues is to succeed at a Handle Animal check or on an untrained Charisma check. Each attempt takes one round. Only one PC may attempt the check with a particular animal in a round, though aiding is allowed.

These DCs are APL-related and are listed below:

APL 6:	16
APL 8:	20
APL 10:	24
APL 12:	30

There is, however, a catch. Only the tailless cat activates the secret entrance to the tunnel. If the PCs become friendly with it, they can pet it and the entrance opens.

Should the PCs succeed with one of the checks listed above with any of the other three animals and then move in to interact with it (or physically interact within while attempting to win it over), a magical trap is set off.

The statues are easy to destroy, having only 1 hp each and a hardness of 1. But each time one of the four statues is destroyed, the trap is set off (and reset for the next trigger).

If the tailless cat is destroyed, its placement reveals both a trap trigger and the mechanism to open the secret door.

The actual secret door is well hidden, located near the tailless cat. While the PCs can find it with a tough search, the only way to actually open it is with the cat statue or to smash it open. Smashing through the door triggers the trap (only once).

🗝️ **Secret Stone Door:** 3 in. thick; hardness 15; hp 50; AC 5; Break DC 30. Search check DC 25+APL

Trap: The following trap is physically harmless to the PCs, but its unknown nature could create paranoia. The effects leave the skin slightly itchy and a benign green mold grows on the PCs' equipment. The effect lasts until the PCs leave the rift.

The effect just materializes above any PCs who are in the cellar. A DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check identifies it as a dead green slime. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies planar bacteria of unknown qualities within the green substance.

All APLs

🗝️ **Spoiled Ooze trap:** CR 0; magical device; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk area effect; spoiled ooze (harmless) Reflex save DC 25; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

PART 3: THE BACKUP LAIR

Once the secret door has been penetrated, a long winding tunnel is discovered. It has no lighting, and the walls are smooth as if crafted by magic.

The tunnel is 5 feet wide and 5 feet high and approximately 500 feet long. It leads under Castle Triumph. The lair has long been sealed off from the actual castle due to remodeling done in the castle and structural collapses.

The chamber at the far end of the tunnel is small and dusty. Archways and stairs suggest a larger complex beyond but all are caved in. A lone table occupies the room. A small locked chest sits upon the table.

🗝️ **Simple wooden chest:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 18. Open Lock DC 20.

Examining the Chest

The chest is not trapped and weighs 20 pounds. It contains the back-up key, directions for an apprentice to follow to the secret meeting place within Rauxes, and some magical treasure.

Once the chest is opened, read the following:

Inside the chest is a 12 inch black bobby-pin with the numbers 281 emblazoned on the head. As well, there is a short letter with some directions attached and a handful of magical scrolls.

The letter is a simple note to an unnamed apprentice. It gives instructions on how to enter Rauxes via a secret entrance to the undercity. This entrance is located less than a mile from the city walls. The map only directs to a place called "The Vomitorium", which then somehow leads into a place called "The Imperial Theatre." It's implied this is a backup meeting place should things go ever go wrong.

A DC 15 Knowledge (arcane) check reveals that the foot-long pin with the number on it is a key.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local-core) check reveals that the rod is a key to a numbered burial plot in the Oltary Park graveyard of Rauxes.

A DC 25 Bardic Knowledge check reveals that the rod is similar to those found in the crypts of low nobles in Rauxes.

Treasure: Key 281 is a plot specific item to this adventure. It, along with the rest of this treasure, comes from the chest.

APL 6: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance, mass* (138 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each), *scroll of bear's*

endurance, mass (138 gp each), *scroll of wall of iron* (141 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance, mass* (138 gp each), *scroll of wall of iron* (141 gp each), *scroll of delayed blast fireball* (190 gp each).

Detect Magic Results: *Key 281* (faint abjuration).

Development: The PCs need to grab the chest and its contents and escape the battlefield before time runs out.

Once back at the camp, they'll find that the celestials have regrouped (since the good planes have a bit of influence here) and the purple baatezu have retreated back to their original territory as their reinforcements drift away: just another day on an Acheron-influenced plane.

Most PCs likely want to muster out now and move on. The green hats are ready to help them on their way. If they don't muster out then the following days are spent recovering from the battle. No new battles take place while the PCs are still in the army.

For those of the Kelanen persuasion, Meya Astra is ready to live up to her end of the bargain. For further details on that, see the extra TU encounter.

Some sad news, Stylus Rel fell while leading a rearguard action. His mutilated body was recovered, but it is some time before he can be revived and is ready to move on. His unit stays around until he is raised. They suggest the PCs go on to the temple without them.

ENCOUNTER 6: MURDER IN THE VOMITORIUM

Note: Teleportation-type effects of all sorts in and out of the City of Rauxes is impossible for all but the most powerful of beings. This is an effect of the planar rifting.

PART 1: THE OUTER LIMIT

Following the dirawaen road and the crude map found in the chest beneath Castle Triumph, the PCs arrive at a collection of hovels a little less than a mile from the city walls of Rauxes.

This is where the Footmen wagon train came to. They were unpacking their goods when some local fiends came across them. The fiends were destroyed, but the wagons and a good portion of the supplies (including a few trolls) were destroyed.

In the distance, the walls of Rauxes are clearly visible. Every day at dawn, the city resets to its pristine state, as if it's just another peaceful dawn in the city-state of an evil overlord. But as the day progresses, all of its mortal (and some immortal) citizens start their day anew in what is best described as a sinister groundhog day.

The city starts to burn as thousands of cursed souls battle it out, killing each other, day after day. The streets are very dangerous because of those rioters, but they become even more dangerous from all the outsiders that have come to reside in the city.

The walls are guarded by all manners of CR 14+ creatures. A half-fiend very old red dragon is one of the members of the food chain in the city. Luckily for most, he prefers to just watch and scoop up the occasional morsel.

In short, going over or through the walls is suicide. The only relatively safe way in is through one of the entrances to the undercity.

When the PCs first see the remains of the wagons read the following:

Before you are the remains of three burned-out wagons and some rundown hovels, that no-doubt once housed peasants. A block and tackle is hooked up in the middle of one of the hovels.

It's easy to find that the block and tackle is above a 10-foot deep entrance shaft. It's a hole wide enough for a horse to be lowered in (which is exactly what the tackle was used for) and there is an old iron ladder leading down.

This is the starting point of the crude map provided for the nameless apprentice so many years ago. There are many twists and turns and unmarked passageways, many of them flooded. As long as the PCs stick to the crude map, they'll come out at the entrance to the underground Vomitorium of Baalzy.

PART 2: FINGER POKING GOOD

Note: This encounter resets every dawn. The PCs need to please the Server, kill him, or sneak past him if they come through here a second time (presuming the PCs know the way after the first time).

The tunnel opens up into a large, humid chamber. The air reeks of rot and acidity. A stone walkway leads to a raised dais with a lavish meal on it. Elsewhere, murky waters churn like cow cud, as sickly remnants drip from overhead channels.

A voice booms out, "Come forth. Dine at the table of Baalzy, or face his wrath."

This is the voice of the half-fiend otyugh caretaker of this place. Somewhere up top is the temple of Baalzy, the fake church front for an archdevil in league with the old overking. This place is the vomitorium; a place for the truly privileged to celebrate their gluttony. Lesser places like this funnel their partial digested food into this main shrine of decadence and waste.

Like everything in this city, the planar rift has given it a little extra touch.

This place is watched over by a creature (or two of them, at APL 12) called simply "the Server(s)". In addition to being a half-fiend the otyugh at higher APLs is advanced and also "of legend."

The chamber echoes his voice and he has plenty of places to hide. He stays in the deep acid baths (this acid only deals 1d4 damage per round, well below his resistance value). Eventually, the PCs are able to locate him as he converses with them.

The areas marked “acid vats” on the map are all 15 feet deep and deal 1d4 points of acid damage a round to a PC and his equipment when exposed.

There are many exits from this chamber, all with tunnels and staircases leading mostly to the surface and different buildings. One of those is the Imperial Theatre, the place the PCs need to go. All others lead to the extreme hostility of Rauxes in turmoil and certain doom.

The PCs’ map does not indicate which exit to use, but the Server can tell them, if they pass his test. Failing that, the PCs can kill him and just search around for evidence of the trail of the Footmen. Two horses tend to leave a bit of a trail.

A few words with the Server:

- **Who are you?:** “I am the Server.”
- **What is this place?:** “This is the joyous shrine of Baalzy, his bountiful vomitorium.”
- **Are we going to fight you?:** “You, like all the others before, wish to pass. To do so, you must partake in celebration or face the wrath of Baalzy.”
- **So, did some guys with horses come through here?:** “Yes, I know the ones you speak of. Some of them eventually proved their worth—enough to pass.”
- **Can you tell us which way they went?:** “If you succeed in the contest, then yes, I shall, and give you safe passage as well.”
- **Who’s Baalzy?:** “The great god of bounty and indulgence. The divine patron of this city. I am one of his chosen servers.”
- **Is this contest dangerous?:** “Yes. Yes it is.”
- **Is it poisoned?:** “Most of it, yes. But it’s delicious and filling. Though it does tend to give a little bit of gut rot.”
- **What if we fail this challenge?:** “Then I eat you in celebration!”
- **Can we cast spells before starting?:** “Yes, you may. But should you try to deceive or threaten me, the contest is off. Beware, Baalzy knows all in his chamber.”
- **What are the rules?:** “All food from the table must be consumed. When all food has been consumed, the contest is over. You may use your magic to aid you, but make no hostile gestures towards me.”

The Contest

The table in the middle of the chamber is magical. It’s akin to a cursed *heroes feast*, but with more of an angle on gluttony.

The PCs can either fight their way through, or they can take on the potentially lethal challenge on the Server’s terms and win the information and safe conduct.

There are ten seats at the table. All the PCs have to do is eat everything on the table and make it empty. The catch is that the food keeps reappearing. As well, most of

the food is mildly poisonous. The PCs find their stomachs filling up faster than they are clearing the table.

If the PCs can accomplish this nauseating feat, then the Server is true to his words. If the PCs refuse or attempt trickery and or deception, combat begins.

The Mechanics of the Contest

The table starts with 40+APL units of food. As food is taken away, it regenerates 1d10+1/2 APL units every round, but there are never more than 40+APL units on the table.

The PCs (and their companions, familiars, animal companions etc) can consume a certain amount of food per person each round, depending on size.

- Tiny = 1 unit
- Small = 1d4 units
- Medium = 1d8 units
- Large = 2d6 units
- Huge = 2d10 units

PCs may attempt to overeat in a round and roll an additional dice equal to one size smaller than their size would normally allow, but in doing so, the PC must pass a Constitution check equal to 5+APL or become nauseated for the next round (thus missing a turn of food consumption, and taking 2d8 points of non-lethal damage from dehydration). PCs who overeat but pass this Constitution check still take 1d4 points of non-lethal damage from the oddly expanding food.

Every PC who eats in a round must roll an additional 1d10. This is to determine any special effects of the food they’ve just consumed. Check the APL-dependant chart for what each food consumer risks.

Casting *purify food and water* on the food has an effect that lasts only one round. During that round all rolls of the 1d10 special effects (the following APL chart), are at –2. The spell could be cast each round.

Casting *neutralize poison* on the food directly destroys 1d4 units of food per caster level. The food simply melts away and is not replaced.

APL 6

1. No effect.
2. No effect.
3. No effect.
4. No effect.
5. Targeted *dispel magic*, caster level 8.
6. *Lesser restoration* spell.
7. *Poison* spell, Fort DC 14.
8. Broken glass, Ref DC 16 to avoid, 1d6+3 damage.
9. Poutine extract (poison), Fort DC 20 or nauseated for 1 round (no secondary effect).
10. Id Moss (poison), Fort DC 14, Initial 1d4 Int, Secondary 2d6 Int.

APL 8

1. No effect.
2. No effect.
3. Oil of Taggit, Fort DC 15 or unconsciousness for 1d3 hours. Add 2 foot units back to table.

4. Targeted *dispel magic*, caster level 10.
5. Targeted *dispel magic*, caster level 10.
6. *Lesser restoration* spell.
7. *Poison* spell, Fort DC 16.
8. Broken glass, Ref DC 18 to avoid, 1d6+5 damage.
9. Terinav Root, Fort DC 16, Initial 1d6 Dex< Secondary 2d6 Dex. Add 4 food units back to table.
10. Id Moss (poison), Fort DC 14, Initial 1d4 Int, Secondary 2d6 Int.

APL 10

1. No effect.
2. No effect.
3. Oil of Taggit, Fort DC 15 or unconsciousness for 1d3 hours. Add 2 food units back to table.
4. Targeted *dispel magic, greater*, caster level 12.
5. Targeted *dispel magic, greater*, caster level 12.
6. *Lesser restoration* spell.
7. *Poison* spell, Fort DC 18.
8. Broken glass, Ref DC 20 to avoid, 1d6+10 damage.
9. Dark reaver powder (poison), Fort DC 18, Initial 2d6 Con, Secondary 1d6 Con + 1d6 Str.
10. Lich dust (poison), Fort DC 17, Initial 2d6 Str, Secondary 1d6 Str.

APL 12

1. No effect.
2. No effect.
3. Oil of Taggit, Fort DC 15 or unconsciousness for 1d3 hours. Add 2 food units back to table.
4. Targeted *dispel magic, greater*, caster level 14.
5. Targeted *dispel magic, greater*, caster level 14.
6. *Restoration* spell.
7. *Poison* spell, Fort DC 20.
8. Tacks and razors, Ref DC 18 to avoid, 2d6+15 damage.
9. Dark reaver powder, enhanced (poison), Fort DC 20, Initial 2d6 Con, Secondary 1d6 Con + 1d6 Str.
10. Lich dust, enhanced (poison), Fort DC 19, Initial 2d6 Str, Secondary 1d6 Str.

There is no rule against the PCs having companions, or even summoned creatures, to help consume the food, but all food must be consumed from the table and in the immediate vicinity of the table (so its okay to throw scraps to floor-bound animals).

The contest goes on until, at the end of a round, all food produced by the table has been eaten (regardless where it's ended up). Uneaten food that's been disposed of into the acid pools automatically reforms on the table (not including vomited food).

PCs who magically increase their size, and thus use a larger die for eating, but they do not suffer and ill effects when they return to normal size.

All PCs need not participate, but the outcome still rests the same. The Server does not allow the PCs to pass

into any of the many archways until the contest has been won, or the Server is dead.

In fact, it might be advantageous for only some of the PCs to do the actual eating. Having a cleric standing back and casting healing/support spells, or having a mage summon forth monsters to do his eating for him, would all be a potentially better effort.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here.

APL6 (EL 8)

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh, Advanced (14HD):** 88 hp; see Appendix.

APL8 (EL 10)

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh of Legend:** 122 hp; see Appendix.

APL10 (EL 12)

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh, Advanced (10HD) of Legend:** 192 hp; see Appendix.

APL12 (EL14)

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh, Advanced (10HD) of Legend (male):** 192 hp; see Appendix.

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh, Advanced (10HD) of Legend (female):** 192 hp; see Appendix.

Tactics: Before combat starts (if it does start), the Server (the half-fiend Otyugh), keeps his distance from the PCs. Once combat does start, he does it because the gauntlet has been thrown down—or the PCs have broken the rules of the contest in some way—then he still tries to keep his distance while using his spell-like abilities.

Should he need to, he attempts to smash the PCs with his constriction ability and melee damage. He has no interest in leaving the acid pool.

Treasure: Deep in the gullet of the Server are some magic items. They help him digest. The beast needs to be cut open to retrieve them.

APL 6: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each), *lyre of building* (1083 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each), *lyre of building* (1083 gp).

Development: Once the PCs have passed the contest, the Server tells them which passage the party with the two horses used. He'll also mention that they had lots of trolls that didn't make it out of this chamber.

If the PCs instead battle the Server, they can spend a little more time investigating each of the many passageways. Eventually they'll find evidence of the Footmen passing through (most notably, horse droppings).

This brings the PCs to the backroom of the Imperial Theatre.

ENCOUNTER 7: ALL THE OERTH'S A STAGE

The PCs enter the Imperial Theatre from a secret passage off to one side. It was originally intended for the elite to sneak off to indulge themselves after a performance.

The only inhabitants of the theatre now are Floria of Rauxes- the last of the Footmen to return here, a few Footmen minions (trolls or golems, depending on APL), two young noble siblings polymorphed into horses, and an inevitable of time and space named Pro'grom.

Back in the days when Rauxes was just your run-of-the-mill city of evil, the Footmen of the Spider Throne would make pilgrimages from their rural havens to this theatre. All Footmen love the theatre and would so much love to be in the spotlight, but none of them have the true heart or the talent to be center stage.

Those who made it past all the dangers of the rift and the undercity regrouped here. They laid down the floor markings (to guide the feet in the ritual) and gathered together what props they needed.

They soon set off in force to make their way to the park where the cache of magic is hidden, but their arrogance lead to a massacre by the various denizens rioting in the streets of Rauxes.

Floria, being a native of Rauxes, knew the streets well enough to escape back to the theatre with the two horses and what few minions she could drag along.

Thankfully, the warding built into the theatre to keep the overkings safe during command performances have kept the chaos of the streets at bay. Floria's first order of business is to find a way out of this horrible place.

What frustrates her even more is the sudden appearance of a clockwork man with an hourglass motif. She doesn't truly understand what this inevitable of space and time is, and that frightens her. When it first appeared, she tried questioning it, bargaining with it, threatening it (but never attacking), but to no avail. Now she's moved on to ignoring it. And still Po'grom watches the stage from the seats.

PART 1: CURTAIN CALL

As the PCs near the exit of the tunnel, they can hear Floria screaming her frustration down at the poor hobbled horses on the stage.

A shrill women's voice echoes about from the chamber ahead. "NO! NO! NOT AT ALL! You must have gotten stupid horse brains too. Now try again, or so help me, I'll send you out into the streets."

Floria is yelling from a director's overhang, connected by catwalks above the main stage. Her minions are off to the sides of the stages keeping guard and being ready to move props and scenery around at her command.

She moves fully into desperation as she feebly attempts to change the ritual to work with just her and the two horses. There is no chance in this succeeding

☛ Floria of Rauxes

Personality: On the outside, she can be charming, always flashing a smile, just like many of her fellow Footmen. She's the type who professes an interest in doing someone a favor or a service to her public all for the greater good and selfless act.

But all of that is a sham. She merely imitates the good-hearted on the outside, for inside she boils over with jealousy and spite. She knows she could never be a great person; she'll always be a petty and small hack. She lacks the ability to comprehend why good people do good things, and that scares her.

These are traits she has in common with the rest of the Footmen, thus one of the reasons their kind have gravitated together.

She has a love of the theatre, obscure references of theatrical history and the culture it creates. She focuses more on it and besting others with these obscurities, because she can never create originals herself.

For those who haven't gotten to know her, she can be quite convincing and genuine. This has allowed her to excel at her evangelistic abilities.

She wants out of Rauxes. She doesn't care about the cache or the Footmen cause anymore, not while her selfish soul is at risk. On the other hand, she hates good people, for just being around them is a constant reminder of her shortcomings. This has a good chance for combat, but she might want to work together.

Appearance: Floria of Rauxes is of Oeridan decent with dark brown hair and a slim, distinguished face one might expect from over-bred nobility. When she's angry, she can sneer with the best of them, but most of the time her feelings are hidden by a fake smile.

This chamber is actually a grand theatre. These secret stairs come out near the seating section and the stage. Two horses, muzzled and hobbled, stand on the stage. Lumbering figures stand near the wings. A women stands among the catwalks and a bizarre clockwork man watches you from the seating.

If the PCs are willing to parley, then so is Floria. The PCs even have a chance to enter into an alliance with her (though many good PCs may object to this). But chances are, this all ends badly (for her).

Any attempt to interfere with the stage props, her minions, or the two horses (polymorphed twins), turns her hostile and combat begins.

- **Who are you?:** "I am Floria of Rauxes, last member of the Footmen of the Spider Throne, and you must be my assassins come to finish me off. More the shame."
- **Why is it a shame?:** "Because we shall fight and doom us all. Our circle will be complete."

- **Where are the others?:** “Dead. The chaos of the Rauxes streets has killed them. I am the only survivor.”
- **Why weren't you killed?:** “I know these streets all too well to die in them so easy.”
- **Can we join forces?:** “A truce? Perhaps. But why should I trust you? I know you do not trust me.” (See below for Floria's truce conditions.)
- **What's with the horses?:** “Those are my horses. They belong to me. Leave them alone.”
- **Surrender!:** “Never! You'll never take me alive.”
- **What's with the clockwork man?:** “He mocks me. Just watches, as if expecting me to fail at any minute. Damn him. If only he would say something. Anything!”
- **Tell us about the ritual:** “You're too late for the ritual. We never got to our cache, our source of true power. We need items from there. As well, one item we did have, a rod of carbon, was stolen from here.”
- **Who stole the rod?:** “Fiends have set up shop in the tavern across the way. They snuck in here, past my minions, and stole some of our goods and the carbon rod to go with it.”
- **Is the rod magic?:** “Its not magic in the way you think. It has its place in the universe and its place in the ritual.”
- **Will you teach us the ritual?:** “You are my enemies. Why give you that?”
- **Tell us everything!:** “No. I have no reason to trust you.”
- **Where is the key to open the secret cache?:** “I don't have it. It was lost in the street ambush. It's probably in the belly of a beast somewhere.”
- **Where is the cache?:** “That's my secret.”
- ***Tell the Footmen's plans!:** “Oh very well. Better you should hear it, lest no one ever hear our genius.
“I wasn't the one in charge, so don't blame me for all this. But the Footmen above me, the ringleaders, the guys who were torn to shreds out in the streets, they got a plan from somewhere. Seems some powerful ally told us how to siphon off very powerful magical energy from the Standing Stones of Medegia. They have some grand purpose, but we only need a little bit of their energy. That was step one. The final step was to use that magical energy to make us all-powerful. I'm not sure what the middle step was, we never got told that one.”
- ***So what's with the hearts that got cut out of clerics?:** “I'm not really sure. It has something to do with their divine connection. The link between us mortals and our divine masters. Somehow that link is similar to something in the Standing Stones. It wasn't my specialty. I'm in charge of morale.”
- ***So what are the Standing Stones for?:** “Sorry, I don't know. But from all the fuss, it must be something important.”
- ***What do you know about a little girl and some talking dogs?:** “That sounds like a great play. Maybe I can get the leading role!”
- ***Do you serve Prince Poxquand?:** “Prince Poxquand the Undying? No, we are not affiliated with him. I hear he's one blessed scholar. Though animuses are one undead the Whispered One never seemed to take a liking to. Or at least, that's what the others said.”
- **I thought Vecnites didn't talk about their secrets?:** “I have a large range. I can play many parts.”
- *** What happened to Havervite the court wizard?:** “The snoopy laymen of the Archmage of the Gods? Well, I guess my god knew the secret to his god's magic, because my superiors threw that feeble old man into the Hall of Whispered Enervation.”

*The above statements with asterisk beside them are only available if she is on friendly terms/Truce with the PCs.

Truce

It is possible, should the PCs be willing, to come to an agreement with Floria. Her terms are that she'll teach the ritual and give out enough of her secrets in exchange for her escape from Rauxes and the rift.

The PCs only have one shot at this. They can either attempt an opposed Diplomacy check (between a lead PC and Floria), or a Bluff check opposed by her Sense Motive check.

If it's a Diplomacy check, and it fails, no other attempts can be made to sway her, but she does not automatically become hostile; she can still talk to them.

Should the PCs fail a Bluff check, she becomes angry and turns hostile and combat begins.

If either the Diplomacy or Bluff check succeeds, she lets her guard down somewhat (ever watchful for a trick) and tries to cooperate for their mutual escape. She does not, however, wish to leave the safety of the theatre.

If the alliance is formed, and if directly asked, she agrees to lend one of her minions to the PCs (at their own risk) when they leave the theatre.

She also explains what she knows of the cache. That it's located in Oltary Park in a crypt marked with 281 and that a key is needed to enter. Inside the cache are cloaks that help protect the ritual casters. It also contains miscellaneous magic and components. She's never been to the cache, as she was just a new member at the time of its hiding.

If the PCs reveal themselves as plotting against her, she won't hesitate to fight them (perhaps even launching Convert the Unfaithful during the surprise round, if she can get someone in the right spot).

The Ritual

Similar to the ritual that got the PCs into the veil, this one also involves a lot of step work and words. Thankfully, there is no poorly-written story to go along with it. What this ritual does have a lot of, are props. Lots and lots of them.

Each prop looks mundane, but it has its own little history that fits in with what's needed for the ritual. There are about ten different trinket items (the DM should feel free to invent them as needed). Each one either has a place to be put on the stage, or a time to be wielded about.

The two noble twins are props themselves. The ritual calls for twin horses, but these two are a close enough fit.

The final props needed for the ritual are performance cloaks that can be found in the hidden cache. The ritual can still be performed without these cloaks, but the performers become open to the dangers of the dimensional crossing.

Floria is willing to share this information with the PCs should they come to a truce. Otherwise, this information can only be obtained by force (be it a *charm person* spell, or a *speak with dead* spell).

There is a minimum of four actual performers needed (not including the two polymorphed horses), but any number of willing people can be added to the choir section.

The ritual takes several days of constant practice to learn.

The Twins

Rammel and Ramette are the two kidnapped adult children of the baron of Stel. Part of the PCs' objectives is to rescue them.

These two were tricked into becoming friends with the Nightcloak Players, and had no knowledge of it being a Vecna cult. They were then tricked into becoming horses and were taken prisoner.

They are still in shock from their treatment and ordeal, but they have learned the following things.

- How to perform the ritual (though risky).
- That the rod of carbon is needed and was stolen by fiends who hole up across the street at a tavern called the Retching Soul.
- The Footmen were after a secret cache they hid in a burial chamber in Oltary Park. It has cloaks that make the ritual safer for those in it, and magical treasure.
- The Footmen were indeed ambushed horribly by all manners of unspeakable creatures and Floria grabbed their reigns and retreated with them down some back alleys to the theatre.
- The Footmen had another group of men with them before entering Rauxes, someone named the Dawn Tiger, but there was some sort of argument between the two groups, and they parted ways. The Tigermen felt the place was much too dangerous.

The Theatre

The theatre is sturdy and magically protected to some degree. This makes it one of the more safe places in Rauxes, as long as none of those crazed souls outside figure out there are people here.

The one danger that is very real to the theatre is fire. The curtains, floors, props and oil lamps are very susceptible to fire. A flame spell such as *burning hands* or *fireball* would set the building alight with ease. While it is easy to escape the building, the ritual setup on the stage would be destroyed (thus limiting the PCs' avenue of escape).

On the bright side, come dawn, the theatre rebuilds itself to its 585 CY state, just like every other building in Rauxes. Unfortunately, this would not include the ritual setup or the props.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here.

APL 6 (EL 9)

👉 **Trolls (2):** hp 63 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 247.

👉 **Floria:** female human Brd 2/Clr 3/Evangelist 3: hp 38; see appendix.

APL 8 (EL 11)

👉 **Troll:** hp 63; see *Monster Manual* pg 247.

👉 **Flesh Golem:** hp 79; see *Monster Manual* pg 135.

👉 **Floria:** female human Brd 2/Clr 3/Eva 5: hp 46; see appendix.

APL10 (EL 13)

👉 **Flesh Golems (3):** hp 79 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 135.

👉 **Floria:** female human Brd 2/Clr 5/Eva 5: hp56; see appendix.

APL 12 (EL15)

👉 **Flesh Golems, advanced (17 HD) (3):** construct; hp 123 (each); see appendix.

👉 **Floria:** female human Brd 2/Clr 7/Evangelist 5: hp 66; see appendix.

Tactics: Floria orders her minions if for the kill, but for her own defense, she prefers the help of others.

Using her evangelist Great Orator abilities, she'll try to keep within 30 feet of the PCs (from 20 feet above on the catwalks). Remember that these are full round actions.

(APL 8+) Her favorite tactic is to use her Convert the Unfaithful ability on unsuspecting (or those who look weak-willed) foes. She converts them to the worship of Vecna, even if just for a short time. By becoming NE, the victim is much more willing to do her evil bidding than if he remained his original alignment.

(APL 6+) Her second favorite to use is *Inflame the Righteous* on her allies. Since it is divine flame, she has no fear of setting the building on fire.

When all else fails, she can fall back on her clerical spells.

Once she's enraged, she fights to the death (or until she's captured and calms down).

Treasure: This treasure is found on Floria. It can be taken from her cold dead hands, or from her warm but captive hands.

APL 6: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of resistance +1* (166 gp each), *+1 chain shirt* (83 gp each), *+1 dagger* (177 gp each), *cloak of charisma +2* (333 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of resistance +1* (166 gp each), *+1 chain shirt* (83 gp each), *+1 deflecting dagger* (666 gp each), *cloak of charisma +2* (333 gp each), *ring of protection +1* (166 pg each).

APL 10: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of resistance +2* (333 gp each), *+2 chain shirt* (333 gp each), *+1 deflecting dagger* (666 gp each), *cloak of charisma +2* (333 gp each), *ring of protection +1* (166 pg each), *periapt of Wisdom +2* (333 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of resistance +3* (750 gp each), *+3 chain shirt* (750 gp each), *+1 deflecting dagger* (666 gp each), *cloak of charisma +4* (1333 gp each), *ring of protection +1* (166 pg each), *periapt of Wisdom +2* (333 gp each).

PART 2: THE MAN WITH A PLAN

Watching everything that is going on is Pro'grom. He's been here, just watching and waiting since just after the Footmen arrived in the theatre. He has no interest in communicating with Floria, but the PCs—these are the kind he's been waiting for.

Pro'grom is an inevitable of few words, and does not like to explain himself. When addressing the PCs, he knows all their names.

When speaking, his body tends to give off ticks and pseudo-nervous jerks. His voice is akin to an old music box, slightly out of tune.

- **Who are you?:** "I am called Pro'grom."
- **What are you?:** "I am a guardian."
- **Why are you here?:** "I'm awaiting an answer. The question is to be given now."
- **What's the question?:** "I wish to strike a bargain with you. When the time comes, do not disturb the Blood Shield. I can say no more on that. But in exchange, I shall assist you in your escape from this spatial rift, at a time of your choosing. I shall stabilize the rift during your passage and guarantee its success. I shall also aid you in retrieving what you will need to start the ritual."
- **Why?:** "I have seen what has gone past and I see what could become. Doing as I ask will ensure your destiny"
- **What blood shield?:** "You will know when the time comes. Leave it be."
- **How will you aid us with retrieval?:** "I know of the places you need to go to gather the missing items. I shall transport you to each place and

back. I will also transport you out of the city if you wish. But there is a limit to my aid."

- **What limit?:** "You shall know it when it happens."
- **What if we change our minds?:** "If you still disturb the Blood Shield, then I shall not aid you in the ritual back to Oerth. I shall still keep my word and transport you safely between the places you truly need to go."
- **Where must we go?:** "A rod of carbon rests in the hands of fiends. I shall provide you with safe passage across the street to their lair. In Oltary Park, a chest holds a cloaks and a book of evil."
- **What book of evil?:** "A book of praise for the god of secrets."
- **What do we do with the book?:** "That is not my concern."
- **Who do you serve?:** "I serve the universe—as do you."

True to his word, Pro'grom can and does provide safe passage to the tavern of the Retching Soul and to the entrance to Oltary Park.

This is done with a *mass teleport* spell. The Blood Shield is located in the Oltary Park encounter. If the PCs do disturb the shield (as NPCs there ask them to), then Pro'grom still shows up to *teleport* the PCs either out of the city, or back to the theatre.

Pro'grom does not enter combat to aid the PCs, nor does he cast spells on them, other than to transport them. What the PCs don't know is that he is using his powers of time to keep the big nasty creatures from coming for them while they deal with that Pro'grom feels are their destiny encounters.

He feels it very important they make the decisions for themselves.

Pro'grom cannot teach the PC the ritual of escape. He can only assist the energy transfer when the PCs attempt to escape. This makes it safer (for him).

To learn the ritual, the PCs need either Floria (the best option) or the twins (not as good) to teach them.

Another option of escape can be discovered at the screaming column.

Inevitable of Space and Time

Quaruts are among the most powerful of inevitables in existence. They protect two of the most precious and tenuous things of all: time and space. They use their uncanny sense of both temporal and spatial awareness to know when transgressions that disrupt the time-space continuum are taking place, and then they hunt down the perpetrators.

A quarut appears humanoid in form, though that is where the resemblance ends. Typical of most inevitables, a quarut has a clockwork body, complete with gears and pistons. Numerous small timepieces and hourglasses function within its body. A quarut wears extremely fine half-plate armor that is etched with various symbols related to time. In place of a head, it has a continually

flowing hourglass. Sometimes the sand inside the hourglass seems to be flowing up; no quarut has ever explained why this is so.

Quaruts are concerned about spellcasters who use such powerful magic as *limited wish*, *miracle*, *temporal stasis*, *time stop* and *wish*. In the eyes of a quarut, the use of these spells plays havoc with the universe and risks all beings. However, despite their displeasure with spellcasters who use these spells and abilities, quaruts employ most of these spells with impunity as part of their natural abilities.

All APLs

♣ **Pro'grom:** quarut, Inevitable of space and time; hp 119; see *Fiend Folio*.

ENCOUNTER 8: THE RETCHING SOUL

There's been a lot of talking in this adventure so far. Now its time for the bashers in the party to shine and mix it up with some ne'er-do-well tanar'ri.

This group of tanar'ri rifted in by accident, but now that they're here, they don't want to leave. They occupied a tavern, fittingly named The Retching Soul. Every dawn, the tavern repairs itself and the commoners who occupied it rematerialize.

Thus, each morning, the tanar'ri slaughter the commoners and feast upon them. As well, the fiends have developed a taste for the ale that keeps refreshing every day.

Being chaotic, they poke around the neighborhood once in a while. Even they find it a dangerous place. Not too long ago, they had a chance to steal themselves a new swizzle stick in the form of a carbon rod.

Whenever the devils want to leave the tavern, they just rip off the doorframe. But today, the demons have not yet been motivated to leave the tavern, so the door is still intact.

The tavern sign shows a picture of a bedsheet ghost spitting up a tankard of ale. In old Oeridian, the sign reads, "The Retching Soul." A glimpse through the nailed shutters shows a few fiends enjoying a tankard of ale.

The demons are spread about the room, being their chaotic selves. One of them is standing over a vat of corpse/ale mixture, stirring it with the stolen carbon rod.

If the PCs enter and give the devils enough time to say a few words:

The fiends stop what they're doing and look towards you, a mixture of glee and surprise on their inhuman faces. "What brings brave heroes to our little establishment?"

- **We come for the carbon rod you stole!** "What? You mean this? Why would a mortal throw his

life away for an inanimate carbon rod? It must be of value. We just wanted a stir stick."

- **What do you want for it?:** "Fresh meat. Your meat."

It's at about this time that the tanar'ri in the back tells everyone to attack.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here.

APL 6 (EL 9)

♣ **Babau (3):** hp 66 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 40.

APL 8 (EL 11)

♣ **Babau (3):** hp 66 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 40.

♣ **Vrock:** hp 115; see *Monster Manual* pg 48.

APL 10 (EL 13)

♣ **Vrock (3):** hp 115 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 48.

APL 12 (EL 15)

♣ **Vrock (4):** hp 115 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 48.

♣ **Hezrou:** hp 138 (each); see *Monster Manual* pg 44.

Tactics: The demons have a simple approach to this combat: destroy everything. They start out spaced randomly (as the DM sees fit) in the bar room.

The demons have no compulsion against destroying furniture, walls, doors, or PCs, to get their fix of battle lust.

The demons give chase out into the street if that's where the PCs lead them. They even follow the PCs back into the theatre, where Floria might be waiting as backup (if a truce has been made).

Treasure: The only treasure here is the rod of carbon the PCs need to complete the ritual. It has no monetary value.

ENCOUNTER 9: BLOOD RUSHING TO THE HEAD

"Oltary Park" reads the sign in both Common and Old Oeridian. Trees and grass fill out the gaps between monuments, crypts and paupers graves. A cobbled stone path leads from the main gates deeper into the park. Unholy screams can be heard in the distance.

This encounter features the stone pillar of animated heads known as the Screaming Column. Before the days of the rift, the column was normally stone, only becoming flesh for a few minutes at a time when activated by an artifact.

But now that artifact (the Blood Shield) is fused into the pillar, the heads writhe in agony constantly. They are all quite insane.

This action did not create the rift, but it is to blame for anchoring of Acheron as the dominate plane to this place. If the blood shield artifact is removed, then the rift becomes unstable.

The upside is that different planes have a chance to become dominate. The downside is that the entire rift becomes unstable with unknown cosmic effects.

Note: This is a repeating encounter. Every day at dawn, these blood golems refresh along with the rest of the cursed population.

PART 1: YOU HAVE THIRTY SECONDS TO COMPLY WITH HEXTOR.

Anyone entering the park sets off a mental alarm to the guardian(s) of the park. The blood golems become aware there are trespassers, but they need to search around for them.

Touching any tomb markers also signals to the golems the PCs' location to within a 30-foot area. This does not allow the golems to determine squares or see invisible characters. It just alerts them to which area of the park the interlopers are.

If alerted, the golems are not surprised in combat but a *non-detection* spell can by-pass this alert.

The golems concentrate their patrols around the Screaming Column. They're under orders not to let people interact with the heads.

The PCs are here for potentially two reasons. The first is to find the crypt marked with 281 that the key fits into.

The second reason is to speak with the heads. Clues have suggested they might want to investigate the column.

The graves and crypts are randomly spread out, so finding the number is a question of manually searching. This can lead to combat with the golem patrol.

If so, handle the golem fight here (unless the PCs are very careful about detection), then go to encounter 10.

If the PCs investigate the column, they need to face off with the golems protecting it.

Near the center of the park is a 20-foot high pillar of writhing and screaming heads. The sound of their mad screams echo across the park. [1-4] metal monstrosity with flails for arms and two metal firkins on their backs, guard the area around the pillar.

If the PCs want to interact with the column, they need to first defeat the blood golems of Hextor.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here.

APL6 (EL 8)

☛ Blood Golem: hp 130; see appendix.

APL8 (EL 10)

☛ Blood Golem (2): hp 130 (each); see appendix.

APL10 (EL 12)

☛ Blood Golem (4): hp 130 (each); see appendix.

APL12 (EL14)

☛ Blood Golems, advanced (18 HD) (4): construct; hp 210 (each); see appendix.

Tactics: Slice and dice. No mercy, no prisoners. Once all moving targets are gone or no longer moving, the golem starts to use its blood siphon ability to heal itself from the downed bodies.

Treasure: Due to the cursed nature of golems (along with most of the population) all of the equipment taken from the golems reform with its body the next dawn, therefore it cannot be taken as treasure, but their weapons can be used till next dawn (see appendix for weapon stats).

PART 2: THE FATE OF THE TALKING HEADS

Upon closer inspection, the heads are all bloody at the neck and magically attached to an interior stone column. A red metal shield with the symbol of Hextor fits prominently at the base of the pillar.

As described earlier, this is an insane mass of severed heads kept alive by powerful magic. They feel pain and trauma constantly.

All of these heads are here because they were executed for treason (in one form or another). Heads of all alignments and religions can be found shaking back and forth, dripping tears of agony.

The majority of the heads are evil and even more are just plain selfish. Their insanity has not made any of that better.

Anyone directing mind reading abilities (such as a *detect thoughts* spell) at the heads must make a Concentration check DC 30 or lose the spell. In addition, the caster has a 25% chance of being targeted by an insanity spell (DC 20 Will save to negate) per round. This is the power of an artifact.

It should be noted that Meya Astra has access to the *greater restoration*, and so can heal an afflicted PC.

Once the heads have become aware of the PCs, many of them start to address their moans towards them. Most are still just nonsense and gibbering, but some still have the wherewithal to know the source of their pain.

Some of heads start looking at you as they moan to you, " ... remove the shield ... for the love of all that is good and merciful, please remove the shield ... remove it ... "

The following is the conversation with the heads in general. Most of them say whatever they think the PCs want to hear. They just want to be turned back into stone for some relief.

- **Who are you all?:** "We are the betrayed, the executed. Sentenced for treason by the insane."
- **What do you want?:** "Free us from our agony. Remove the shield in the column! Set our spirits free."

- **How do I remove the shield, it won't budge!:** "It is an artifact, replace it with another. Spill your blood on both and touch the two."
- **What will you give me for freeing you?:** "We shall bless you forever with our great magic once released. We shall make you powerful!"
- **Will freeing you return Rauxes to Oerth?:** "Yes, immediately. Replace the shield with a different artifact and it will bring us all back to Oerth."
- **Where can I find an artifact?:** "We don't know."
- **Is there a Chavious of wizard cleric of Delleb here?:** "Yes, he's around back."

The heads in general don't know very much, other than that an artifact needs to be put in place of the shield in order to end the animation effect.

For those PCs who know to look for him, Chavious, wizard cleric of Delleb, can be brought to attention by calling out for him. He's just as insane as the rest, but his sanity is a touch more lucid.

- **Are you Chavious?:** "I certainly am. Tell all you know, write it down."
- **Why are you here?:** "I was an enemy of the state. I learned something they did not want to know. I read from the Book of Hours. Guess what I learned, guess what I learned!"
- **I give up, what did you learn?:** "Blue blood will lead to green! Our kingdom no longer mean!"
- **Green blood, we get invaded by algae?:** "Their time has come, when the stones they fall, I shall attend the royal ball."
- **I know you're insane and all, but please try to focus:** "Written down, the prophecy waits, the Book of Hours tells us the date. Three seasons nurture while the fourth slumbers, but soon heralds will find their days numbered."
- **How can we help you?:** "The artifact of Hextor, The Blood Shield. Its contact activates our animation. It needs to be removed. It was never meant to be fused to the column."
- **How do we remove it?:** "An item of artifact power needs to replace the shield. Spill your blood on both then merely touching the two artifacts together should be enough. But it can be dangerous."
- **How is it dangerous?:** "The energy released could spark a planar backlash. It could do nothing, it could just hurt you, or it could send you to the Scribe knows where. But if you don't, we'll stay in agony. But don't even attempt this unless you are willing to end your existence, because that is a possibility."
- **So this could be a method of escape?:** "Yes, it is possible that by removing the Blood Shield, the backlash could open a portal out of this rift. But its only a possibility."
- **Is the shield the connection to Acheron?:** "Yes, I believe it is. Remove the shield and the planar

grip will loosen. It may even destroy the rift and return Rauxes to Oerth, or it could send it farther into the planes. I don't know."

- **Where can we get an artifact?:** "I'm sorry, that I don't know. Rauxes is bound to have a few. But by the Scholar's pen, don't take any risks on my account. Places in this city are far too dangerous. Don't go too far looking for something to save me."
- **What do you know about the Footmen of the Spider Throne?:** "I've never heard of them. Sounds like a fringe group to me."
- **What do you know about the Standing Stones of Medegia?:** "They grow, then fall, and in that act, save us all. And all the while, the Walker standing tall, with evil forced to crawl."
- **I have this cookbook from "Sympathy for the Baatezu":** "I've heard of that, someone here once babbled on for a straight month about what he knew. I think his head is burnt out now. But it sounds like what he called a book of planar recipes, but I don't know what that means. It couldn't hurt to hold on to it when you remove the Blood Shield."

Removing the Blood Shield

Removing the *blood shield* is easy. All one has to do is touch another artifact to it. The column latches on to the new artifact and lets go of the *blood shield*.

The *blood shield* then drops to the ground and disappears as it is summoned back to its true holding place.

The artifact used on the column is then sealed into the solid stone that the Screaming Column becomes. The column itself is like an artifact and the PCs cannot affect it now that it's back to its original state.

The question is, where to get an artifact? The PCs are in luck. The secret magical cache of the Footmen, hidden in a nearby crypt, contains a *tome of the stilled tongue*.

This artifact of Vecna is evil and can only be used by a worshiper of that evil and vile god. But it's still good enough to replace the *blood shield* with.

As well, the vile book is connected the planar rift. It cannot leave the rift until the rift is destroyed (the book just doesn't leave).

On to the Lethality

The PCs have had a chance to be warned that removing the blood shield can have extremely adverse effects on them, including completely destroying them.

The following effect is for whoever's blood was used to sprinkle on both artifacts. If an NPC's blood is used, then they risk the effects.

When the exchange happens, regardless of the distance between the blood donor and the pillar, the following random effect happens instantly.

Roll 1d10 to determine the exact planar tide at the moment of touching, although luckily for the PCs at this

very moment the forces of good are in ascendance (those with Luck domains or similar abilities may re-roll this).

Before rolling, DM should inquire if ANY of the PCs have the *cookbook of evil* from *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu*. Any PC with that book within 100 feet of the column starts to feel a tingling sensation centered on the book when the exchange happens. As the exchange is completed the book bursts into flames as it is destroyed. (The flames deal no damage, but remove the book from the PCs' AR.) The owner is then also affected by a random effect of the exchange.

After those individual cookbook owners have rolled the 1d10, allow them to either add or subtract one from the number rolled. Tell them the results for the range of numbers they could have. Then allow the cookbook holders to choose which choice they like best of that range (as opposed to a normal donor who gets whatever he rolls).

1. The donor inherits the eladrin subtype (see below and AR).
2. The donor inherits the guardinal subtype (see below and AR).
3. The donor inherits the Half Silver Dragon template (see below).
4. The donor inherits the powers of a werebear. (see below).
5. The donor inherits the Celestial template (see below and AR).
6. The donor inherits the Half-Celestial template (see below and AR).
7. Death: (Will Save DC 10 + APL or death needing *resurrection*, *reincarnate* or *true resurrection*), a successful save still does 1d6 points of damage per APL. This is a death effect.
8. Life: The donor is healed of all injuries and ability damage, and for the rest of this adventure gains Fast Healing 10 (Su).
9. Gate: The donor can feel the fabric of the planes around him. He knows that at this one instance, he could open a portal and suck through everyone within 100 ft. of him back to Oerth. He has 10 rounds till this power subsides forever (go to conclusion if all PCs escape).
10. Insanity: As the spell, CL 15, Will DC 14+APL, duration lasts until PC leaves the rift or has it removed.

If the PCs decide to use the gate option when presented, they immediately and safely escape the rift. It is a one-way-trip as the method used to originally penetrate the veil is no longer functioning.

Inheriting Templates and Subtypes: Inform the PC that they feel their bodies being mixed with planar energy. They can attempt to resist it, or they can let it happen (but don't tell them what power or condition they may be inheriting unless they own a *cookbook of evil*).

If the PC decides to resist this he requires a DC 14 + APL Will save, as the energy is quite strong.

• **Inherited Template or Subtype:** As a result of your actions behind the shimmering veil you have inherited one of the following templates or subtypes. Tick one:

- Eladrin subtype
- Guardinal subtype
- Half Silver Dragon template
- Powers of a werebear
- Celestial template
- Half-Celestial template

You may now invoke these powers one time only. Doing so costs 1 TU, but you receive the benefits of the template for the remainder of the adventure in which you are participating (even if that adventure is a two-round event).

Invoking these powers makes you in all regards a creature of the appropriate subtype, template etc., except that your alignment does not change. Refer to the *Monster Manual* for more information on how to apply these conditions.

ENCOUNTER 10: IN THE PAUPER'S GRAVE

After some tedious searching, the PCs find a memorial marker with a slot marked 281 (there are many such slots on the different graves).

The PCs need only insert the key they should have acquired in Encounter 5. Without the key, the PCs can't find the hidden cache and have no access to the artifact or the ritual cloaks.

Sliding the key into the slot, a grinding noise some 30 feet away directs your attention to a large stone slab opening up and a staircase being revealed.

The staircase leads into rather plain room. Normally such a burial chamber would be better decorated but this one was put together in a hurry. The chamber is 40 feet below the surface. The chamber itself is a vault 40 feet on a side and 40 feet high, with stairs on one side and the altar on the opposite side.

On the far side of the room are three copper urns and an old faded closed book. The urns contain the remains of previous Footmen.

The urn on the right has a simple picture of a hand and is half full. The urn on the left has a simple picture of an eye and is half full. Neither of these urns can be removed from the room.

The middle urn is attached to plain stone altar. The urn is also empty. The point here is to pour the ashes from the two urns into the plain urn and thus reveal the cache.

The book is the trap. The book itself is blank and worthless, but interacting with it (such as moving it or opening it) sets off a magical trap.

Trap: The trap is magical in nature and is built into the plain altar setup (where the treasure cache is sealed up in).

The altar detects as magical (but not the items on top of it). The magic of the altar determines if the items on top of it are interacted with.

Each time the book is touched while it's on the altar sets off the trap. The book cannot be partially attached to the altar.

APL 6 (EL5)

Fireball Trap: CR 5; spell; touch trigger (book); automatic reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28;

APL 8 (EL7)

Chain Lightning Trap: CR 7; spell; touch trigger (book); automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target nearest center (book) area plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 19 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

APL 10 (EL9)

Summon Monster VIII Trap: CR 9; spell; touch trigger (book); automatic reset; spell effect (*summon monster VIII* 15th-level wizard, summons a vrock); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33;

APL 12 (EL11)

Incendiary Cloud Trap: CR 9; spell; touch trigger (book); automatic reset; spell effect (*incendiary cloud*, 15th-level wizard, 4d6/round for 15 rounds, DC 22 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33; (these two traps share the same trigger)

Summon Monster VIII Trap: CR 9; spell; touch trigger (book); automatic reset; spell effect (*summon monster VIII* 15th-level wizard, summons a vrock); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33;

Once the ashes are poured into the empty urn, the altar crumbles to dust revealing a casket. The casket is not locked or trapped.

Inside, instead of a body, are a variety of arcane ingredients and components. It also contains scrolls and magic items. Ten ritual cloaks are rolled up to one side. In a cloth, with a tongue sticking out, is a *tome of the stilled tongue*.

Treasure: The ritual cloaks are plot items and have no value. The *tome of the stilled tongue* cannot leave the rift or be used by the PCs, so is not listed.

The rare components are the loot.

APL 6: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each), *ring of evasion* (2083 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each), *ring of evasion* (2083 gp each), *rod of metamagic, quicken, lesser* (2916 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each), *ring of evasion* (2083 gp each), *rod of metamagic, quicken, lesser* (2916 gp each), *staff of conjuration* (5416 gp each).

Development: From here, the PCs can go back to the pillar of heads and use the tome to free the blood shield.

Or the PCs can call for Pro'grom and get taken back to the theatre for the ritual of escape.

ENCOUNTER 11: THE FINAL PERFORMANCE

In this encounter, the PCs attempt to use the ritual of escape, originally planned by the Footmen of the Spider Throne.

If the ritual fails, it can be attempted repeatedly.

Before this can happen, there are some things to consider. The following is a check list.

Stage Markings?

The stage started marked for placement of people and props. If these have been destroyed (such as the theatre catching fire and burning down) then it is impossible to complete the ritual, unless Floria redoes them.

If the markings were only disturbed but repaired (or attempted repair), apply a -5% penalty to the ritual.

Inanimate Props?

Without all of the props (ten of them) that were present when the PCs first arrived in the theatre, the ritual is impossible to complete.

The rod of carbon (found in the Retching Soul Tavern) is mandatory as well.

Animate Props?

The ritual requires a pair of twin horses. Failing that, a pair of twin humanoids polymorphed into horses suffice.

The twins need to be in horse form and alive for the ritual to work. If they are not in horse form or they are dead, the ritual does not work.

If by some chance, the PCs have replacement twins in horse-form, then that will do too.

Who teaches the ritual?

Only three people in the theatre know the ritual.

Floria has a decent knowledge of the ritual. She knows all the roles and the placement. She's not a great teacher though. This is all offset by the desire to escape the rift.

If Floria teaches the PCs the ritual there are no penalties.

The twins, who are currently turned into horses, have a limited understanding of the ritual. They have seen it practiced and have been drilled in their parts of it (as moving props). Being curious (and not much else to do), they've done their best to watch the whole thing.

If the twins teach the PCs the ritual apply a 20% penalty.

Condition of Performers?

All performers need to be unbound and able to move their entire body and use their voice. Anyone gagged or bound (perhaps Floria?) adds a 20% penalty to the final outcome of the ritual.

Hit point loss doesn't matter, but each performer needs at least 3 points in each ability score while the ritual is performed. Anyone with an ability score below 4, adds a 10% penalty to the final outcome of the ritual.

Unconscious performers cannot attempt the ritual.

The Ritual Cloaks?

The cloaks protect the PCs during the ritual transit. For every performer wearing a cloak, they are immune to the rift effects when the ritual succeeds.

Is Pro'grom Protecting Them?

If Pro'grom is helping the PCs, then they are immune to the rifting effects when the ritual succeeds (same as the cloaks).

The Ritual Mechanics

If the ritual is successful, everything on the stage is transported to a random location on Oerth. This includes all the participants and the props (including the horses). What no one realizes is that it is a dispersed pattern. The PCs are some distance from one another (as well as the horses and Floria if she is there).

Four main performers are needed. Floria volunteers to be one of them. Each of the four main performers must make a Perform check or a Dexterity check, their choice.

Take each performer's roll and divide by two and multiply by 100 to get a percent. Any roll higher than 100% is reduced to 100%.

Then add those four percents together and divide by four to get an average percent. This becomes the base number.

All performers in the choir (backup) must make an individual check as per above.

For each that gets more than 50%, add 1% to the base number.

For each that gets less than 50%, subtract 3% from the base.

Take the base number and combine all of the bonuses and penalties from the checklist.

If the total base number is:

- Less than 50%; All performers (but not props) take 8d6 points of damage.
- 51% to 69%: All performers (but not props) gain a negative level. A DC 14 Fortitude save removes this negative level.
- 70%+: The ritual succeeds.

If the ritual succeeds, there is still a danger. The rifting energy of the planes can be as severe as the tail of the serpent swats the PCs off into the cosmos.

With the final movements of the ritual complete, Pro'grom stands up from his seat in the audience and gives a slow, congratulatory clap. Then the lights fade to black. Your stomach feels like it's weightless, and the rest of your body goes along with it. Then something very large, rough, and scaly collides with you, and propels you sailing through the darkness.

The Final Backlash

Ignore this part if the characters either have the protection of Pro'grom, or each are wearing ritual cloaks.

Sailing through a channel made in part of the astral plane and the negative energy plane, the PCs feel the icy chill of the depths of their danger.

Every unprotected PC gains a negative level. This can be removed with a DC 20 Fortitude save.

Development

The PCs are back on Oerth proper. Head straight to the Conclusion.

Every person who is sent back to Oerth has all spell and spell-like effects obtained during this adventure canceled.

Magic items are not affected.

This means that the twins are back to their human forms when they arrive back on Oerth. It also means that Floria (if brought back) has all spell effects removed as well, including things like charms or restraining magic.

Continue on to the Conclusion encounter.

ENCOUNTER 12: EXTRA TU SIDE QUEST—FOUNTAINS AND COMBAT

This is an extra TU mission. In order to participate in it, the PCs must spend one additional TU. Doing so allows them to receive the secondary AR.

PART 1: BACK AT CAMP

True to her word, Meya Astra agrees to help you with your quest. She explains that the actual temple is on a pocket plane that was originally reachable from Oerth, but the entrance was brought to the rift with Rauxes. The entrance is located near some ruins in the countryside.

"I am needed here, but I shall have one of my lieutenants take you near the spot. We would not violate Kelenan's preferred neutrality unless specifically invited, so I cannot send agents to help you. I can only provide magical transportation to and fro. The secret is to slice the water with your blade and jump in."

What this comes down to is, a celestial agent of Meya Astra *teleports* the PCs to a location near the ruins. Then, when the PCs wish to return to the camp, they have only to yell really loudly and the agent returns for them.

This agent is not the personal caster for the PCs. He needs his resources for other noble deeds, though with a little goading, he casts some minor healing to help out the badly injured.

PART 2: SECOND PLACE

Stone ruins form the shape of a small amphitheatre. In the middle of the grounds is a pool of crystal clear water about 3 feet across. The water is perhaps six inches deep, with a stone basin bottom.

As Meya Astra said, all the PCs need do is slice the water open and hop in. When the water is sliced, it peels back like stretched flesh. It stays like this for one minute.

While the water is peeled back, someone jumping in all at once goes straight down, teleporting into the shrine.

Any sword, knife or dagger can cut the water. Once on the other side, the same action can be used to come back to the rift.

So What's Going On Here?

Stylus Rel brought with him a copy of the sacred texts they found back in Eastfair. Then Stylus met up with the real Dawn Tiger (the man who questioned them on the road), who was looking for another way out instead of going to Rauxes.

The Dawn Tiger investigated the possibility and snuck into the Baron's camp and stole the text right off of Stylus Rel.

The Dawn Tiger then took his troupe on a hunt to decipher the scrolls and find out if they were of value.

Along the way he met up with a magical being, one he did not know the true nature of, but still powerful and knowledgeable. Between the two of them, they deciphered the texts and found the shrine entrance. This mysterious being called himself simply Vrot.

They slaughtered the keepers of the shrine and looted the place. They just wanted to collect what they could and use the gate home that the text mentions. What they found was a relic, just waiting to be held aloft. True to form, evil cares little for evil, and the mysterious being betrayed the Dawn Tiger, stole the relic and escaped through the portal using the relic.

At the lower APLs, the Dawn Tiger was pulled along through the portal as the two struggled in combat and the Tiger's second in command is left to fight the PCs.

At APL 12, it was the second-in-command who was pulled through, and the Dawn Tiger himself ambushes the PCs.

Now the assassins bide their time, hoping and waiting that more Kelanites come along soon (like the ones they robbed) and have the item they need to open the portal.

The Dawn Tiger troupe have little interest in talking. They know from what Vrot told them that they need a true worshiper of Kelanen to channel positive or negative energy into a sword while it is sheathed in the stone statue.

PART 3: THE AMBUSH

After jumping through the pool, you find yourself standing next to a similar pool, but your location has changed. It's as if the amphitheatre was rebuilt during your trip through the water.

All around you, marble seats fill the dimly-lit stands. Ghostly figures fill the benches watching you closely, murmuring to one another.

Ahead of you on the arena floor, is a 4-foot high fountain, but instead of water, it flows oil. On top of the fountain is a statue of the Lord of Swords holding out an empty stone scabbard.

Behind you, a table is filled with food and drink.

The ghostly figures are the departed souls of the Kelanen faithful. They can't be interacted with. They just watch fight after fight. Their murmurings are completely unintelligible.

Unfortunately, the Dawn Tigers are using them along with the poor lighting, for concealment as they hide behind the benches and figures.

The Dawn Tigers are pretty much all laying down, resting while they wait in ambush.

Occasionally one gets up and gets food from the ever-replenishing table and bring it back to the others hiding around the stands.

Once the first PC comes through, the assassins start to become alert. The first thing the Dawn Tigers do is cast *invisibility* (or keep hidden if they do not have access to this spell).

They are all going to try to use their death attacks as stun attacks, for they want prisoners if possible. Someone needs to open that portal for them, even if that someone is barely alive.

Creatures: The following creatures are encountered here.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☠ **Dawn Cubs Rgr 2/Rog 3 (4):** male human; hp 30 (each); see appendix.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☠ **Dawn Cubs Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 2 (4):** male human; hp 40 (each); see appendix.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☠ **Dawn Cubs Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 4 (4):** male human; hp 50 (each); see appendix.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☠ **Dawn Cubs Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 4 (4):** male human; hp 50 (each); see appendix.

☠ **Dawn Tiger Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 9:** male human; hp 91 (each); see appendix.

Tactics: They want prisoners. No real death attacks, only stuns. Sneak up in mass, flank a lot, and use a couple of

non-lethal blows mixed with real wounds to take prisoners.

If possible, fall back, change position, then strike again. The cubs are trained to work in tandem.

Once the party is captured, physically force a Kelanite to sheath his sword in the empty stone scabbard and create the portal. Then slit everyone's throat.

The cubs (and the Tiger) are in a desperate situation. They know retreating back out into the rift is suicide, or maybe even worse than death. It is better to die in this pocket plane than to have their souls potentially lost in the rift. Therefore, they fight to the death (if given the chance).

Treasure: Defeat the Dawn Cubs and loot them.

APL 6: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri* (x8) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x16) (4 gp each), *+1 glamered chain shirt* (x4) (329 gp).

APL 8: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri* (x8) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x16) (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (x4) (125 gp), *+1 glamered chain shirt* (x4) (329 gp).

APL 10: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri* (x8) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x16) (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (x4) (125 gp), *dust of disappearance* (x8) (291 gp each), *+1 glamered chain shirt* (x4) (329 gp).

APL 12: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri* (x9) (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility* (x18) (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (x4) (125 gp), *dust of disappearance* (x8) (291 gp each), *+1 glamered chain shirt* (x5) (329 gp), *gloves of dexterity +2* (333 gp each), *amulet of health +2* (333 gp each), *+1 wounding kukri* (666 gp each), *+1 kukri* (166 gp each), *lesser silent metamagic rod* (250 gp each).

❖ **Improved Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen:** This upgrade is in addition to all stats and abilities of the Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen. As a bonus, this improvement has one of the following addition powers. The PC may pick one of these; cross off the other two.

☐ For 1 turn/rebuke attempt it activates *divine favor* at the cleric's caster level.

☐ For 2 turn/rebuke attempts it activates *true strike* at the cleric's caster level.

☐ For 3 turn/rebuke attempts it activates *stoneskin* at the cleric's caster level.

Access: Adventure; Caster Level 5th; Prerequisites: Upgrade not reproducible.; Weight- as per original; Base Cost: as per original.

Development: The relic that was housed here in the empty scabbard was taken through the portal. It was a longsword of old design (looking much like the swords of Kelanen's symbol).

The being called Vrot referred to it as a Final Word sword when conversing with the Dawn Tiger.

When Vrot (and any Tigers that came through while they struggled) came through the portal, he appeared in the shrine room of the under the arena in the Old City of Eastfair.

Suffice it to say, the disturbance caught the young acolytes tending the shrine room off-guard. All those coming through were able to use stealth during the confusion and escaped.

Unfortunately, the portal is one-way so the Bladers at the shrine could not investigate further.

Now the PCs have a chance to do exactly the same thing, but perhaps with less fighting and escaping.

The Call of the Blade

Any PC that stands before the fountain that owns a Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen (as found in *COR4-14 Sympathy for the Baatezu*), feels the blade call out to him. It wants to be put into the sheath.

Putting the greater holy symbol into the sheath (the sheath resizes to fit any type of sword), enchants the sword so that it comes out upgraded.

This is a free upgrade. At the time, the wielder of the blade can choose one of the listed free upgrades for the sword (see secondary AR for details).

This free upgrade is only for current wielders of the Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen. Those with normal swords do not gain this upgrade. As well, those who purchase a Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen AFTER encountering this shrine cannot use this particular opportunity to upgrade.

Dipping the Blade

The fountain cannot be removed. Oil taken away from the fountain loses any magical properties it once had. Drinking the oil causes 1 point of temporary Constitution damage.

Dipping a sword (any kind of sword) into the oil has a chance of giving it a temporary effect. Each time it is dipped, roll a 1d6 on the following chart.

Use the following modifiers: If the character is a Cleric of Kelanen +2; If the character is a worshiper of Kelanen +1; If the character has a True Neutral Alignment +1; If the character has an Alignment two steps away from True Neutral -4; If the character has acted disrespectfully in the presence of the shrine -2; If the character has previously tried to dip a weapon other than a sword -1; Repeated effect rolls are considered No Effect.

- **1 (or less):** The sword cannot be further magically enhanced in any way for the rest of this adventure, though it does not lose any enhancements it has normally. [Kelanen thinks you're getting greedy]
- **2-4:** No Effect
- **5:** The sword gains the *keen edges* enhancement for one hour, but no other oil (such as magical) can affect the sword.
- **6:** The sword gains the *defending* enhancement for one hour (treat as a +1 sword if no actual enhancement present).
- **7 (or more):** The sword gains the *speed* enhancement for one hour.

The character dipping the sword magically becomes aware of the new properties of the sword, but not the time limit.

This is an effect similar to that found in the Eastfair arena shrine. PCs unsure if this place truly is a sacred place to the Lord of Swords have only to compare the oil of this fountain, to that of the trough back in Eastfair.

The Table of Food

This magical effect creates fresh food and drink every hour (replacing anything that has been used or gone stale) with enough to feed eight people. Other than the obvious, this has additional effect.

Opening the Portal

A DC 20 search check of the statue reveals a small line of text written in Old Oeridian.

“Return to my workshop and learn of my task. Give me your prayers straight from your soul, brought forth from your hands to my sheath.”

A DC 30 Search check of the statue reveals an even smaller line of text written in Old Oeridian, and a different style than the first text.

“It’s a one-way trip my friends. Bring what food you need before dipping your blade and passing on to the next step of the journey.”

There are two ways to open the portal.

Both can only be performed by a true worshiper of Kelanen. Even hero gods know when someone is trying to trick them (so no Use Magic Device allowed to pretend to be a worshiper of Kelanen).

The first is to insert a sword (any kind of sword suffices) into the stone sheath that the statue is holding out. Then the inserter needs to channel positive or negative (whichever he does) and make a turn/rebuke check. If a Use Magic Device check is substituted, the DC is 25.

The second method is for non-clerics. The petitioner dips his sword in the oil of the fountain, inserts it into the stone sheath. The PC then makes a DC 20 Diplomacy check as he issues forth prayer to the Lord of Swords. The PC may add a +2 synergy bonus if he has more than 5 ranks of Knowledge (religion).

Once either method is successful, the space behind the altar opens as the fabric of the plane is sliced open and orange light spills forth. This split rolls open to 5 feet wide and 8 feet high. It stays open for ten rounds.

Passage through the portal is safe, but once through, there is no going back (even while it’s still open).

Back at the Eastfair Shrine

The portal opens up in the shrine room underneath the arena in the old city district of Eastfair. The PCs are greeted by several Bladers with watchful looks on their faces. They are led by Ecnal Tugim, the second in command of the Barons of the Blade.

Once the PCs have identified themselves (and if the PCs are coming through this portal, chances are good that Ecnal has already met them before during *COR4-14* Sympathy for the Baatezu), then everything is OK.

During the possible encounter with Stylus Rel, some PCs may have vowed to become members of the Barons of the Blade. To do this, the PC needs to tell Ecnal of their vow and present him with a severed head of proof of his combat abilities.

Once Ecnal is satisfied, the PC can be initiated into the ranks of the Barons of the Blade and receive the tattoo of an Honorary Blader (as per the AR).

The PC now also has access to purchase the Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen.

As well, all PC Honorary Bladers are asked if they accept the quest to retrieve the relic that was stolen from the shrine they just came from (as per the AR).

♣**Ecnal Tugim:** Male human (oeridian) Ftr 1/Clr 7 of Kelanen; LN.

Conclusion?

PCs who have traveled through the portal, cannot go back into the rift in this adventure.

This means that P’s who used the portal may have unintentionally burned their bridges for finishing the rest of the adventure.

Or some PCs may use route of escape after completely the majority of the adventure.

It’s also possible that the PCs intended to use the portal at some point (and visit Eastfair) but they ended up leaving the rift through one of the other methods. If this is the case, and the PCs have spent the One TU to do this mission, then they may still journey (without incident) to the old arena shrine of Kelanen in Eastfair. Once there, they may go about their business as if they used the portal to arrive.

Check the Conclusion encounter (below) as it has adventure wrap-up notes not covered here.

CONCLUSION

PART 1: BACK TO OERTH

Read this text for those PCs that used the ritual to escape. If the PCs used the Screaming Column to escape, use this text but remove the line about being alone (the group arrives whole).

The feel of firm but spongy ground collides with your feet just as the blackness is driven away by the bright light of the sun. Looking around, you are in a farmer’s field. Serfs working the land stop to stare at you—but not at your companions, for they are nowhere in sight.

The ritual has spread the PCs out over roughly two square miles. They’ve all landed in the fields of minor nobles as their serfs work the land.

Regardless of what time of day the PCs left the rift, it’s now almost noon on Oerth (but roughly the same number of days have passed).

All of the PCs are near a central location of a small village with an inn. This is the first place the serfs point to when the PCs ask for bearings.

The best answer these serfs can give is that this is Naelex land (they don't know if they are North Kingdom or if they are Ahlissian).

At the Inn

When the twins (now in human form) emerge together from the farm fields, they head off towards the assumed safety of the inn.

They wait there for the brave heroes that rescued them to come here as well and escort them back to their father.

In theory, individual PCs should eventually make their way to the inn. This may be after walking around (shouting perhaps?) trying to meet their companions. Eventually though (unless PC simple refuses) everyone meets up at the inn.

After the PCs have settled down, the following happens.

A passing barmaid spills a mug of ale and the liquid stops in mid air. The barmaid is equally still. The noise of the bar room has come to a complete silence, leaving only the sounds of yourselves. Everything is frozen in time except you.

From nowhere steps the clockwork man from the Rauxes theatre. The sands of his hour-glass head start to flow upwards and he speaks.

"You've done what you were intended to do. It has been noted within the rolls. The Footmen of the Spider Throne would have meddled in affairs they should not. They had no clue what disasters would have befallen this plane should they have succeeded in their petty attempt at power. The Stones of Medegia are safe now. Safe to continue their true purpose should that be the final outcome."

If the PCs followed Pro'grom's bargain and did not disturb the *blood shield*, read the following.

"The veil is put in place for a reason. It is tied to Acheron for a reason. All wounds need time to heal, and sometimes the medicine is bitter while the treatment risks scars. You have embraced your destiny, as I knew you would. Follow your path, embrace it. Know that you have a place in the universe and the universe has a plan. Time will tell if others have your wisdom when it comes to the Veil."

Or if the PCs did interfere with the *blood shield*, read the following.

"You have removed the stability of Acheron from dominance. Even now, the planes are fighting for dominance, fracturing, weaving, and bringing about chaos. Chaos brings danger. Acheron kept the path clear and steady. Chaos risks total destruction. It is only a

matter of time before this threatens Oerth. This is the choice you have made."

After Pro'grom has said what he had to say, he vanishes and time starts to move again.

If the PCs spoke to Pro'grom concerning the *blood shield* (when he offered them the deal) and the PCs did not remove the Blood Shield, then each PC receives the "I have a destiny" entry on the primary AR.

Where Are We Anyway?

The PCs are roughly 60 miles south east of Deleric (and about 40 miles south east of the Barony of Stel).

The PCs are in the politically neutral Naelex lands south of the North Kingdom.

What Happened to Floria?

Like the PCs, Floria appeared in one of the fields. If she was bound, an unknowing serf frees her and she makes good her escape.

If Floria arrives under her own power (after spells have been canceled on her), she again makes good her escape through various means (mostly mundane for her ability to cast could be compromised).

Unless the PCs have done a really good number on her somehow, she makes her escape, even if just by the skin of her teeth and the kindness of strangers.

PART 2: MISSION WRAP UPS

This second section contains headings for the different missions and rewards the PCs can wrap up at the end of the adventure.

Baron's Heirs

Traveling back to the Barony of Stel, the PCs have only to return the heirs to their father. The twins Rammel and Ramette, who once felt nothing but contempt for their lot in life, are now quite eager to get back to being lordlings.

They are also thankful of the PCs who saved them.

Baron Ramden is happy with the live return of his heirs. Well, perhaps not happy, but content. And when the baron's content, he gives people things.

In this case, its access to a ring his father found long ago and stored away to collect dust.

All APLs: *Ring of water walking* (1,250 gp each), Access Core.

Whatever Happened to the Court Wizard Havervite?

Havervite's wife is glad to have some closure if the PCs tell her that her husband is indeed dead, killed by the Footmen of the Spider Throne, and that in turn, the PCs have smashed the evil cult.

In fact, she's so relieved that she remembers and old walking stick own by her husband that might have some magic in it. She allows them to buy it if they want.

All APLs: *Staff of fire* (1,479 gp each), Access Core.

Rescue of Lassara

If the PCs meet up with Lassara and get her out alive of Rauxes, they can try to return her home. She comes from Delaric where her parents and family are servants in noble house of the leader of that city.

Her family have little to give, but perhaps can grant a small favor at some future point.

Favor in Delaric: This PC is owed a favor by a servant family of the leading noble household.

Rescue of Mendalson

Mendalsson of Delaric is the nephew of Montand, ruler of Delaric. Mendalsson is a bit of a black sheep of the family. His noble household would prefer to keep his return quiet, as well as where he has been.

But they'll owe the PCs a favor should they ever come through Delaric.

Blackmail in Delaric: The PCs have some dirt on the leading noble family in Delaric.

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 baatezu

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

Encounter 6

Defeat the Server or his table of food

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

Encounter 7

Kill, Capture or Truce with Floria

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

Encounter 8

Destroy the Tannar'i infestation

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

Encounter 9

Destroy the blood golems of Hextor

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

Encounter 10

Survive interaction with the trapped altar

APL 6	150 XP
APL 8	210 XP
APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	330 XP

Story Award

Return back to Oerth

APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	225 XP
APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	315 XP

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	225 XP

APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	315 XP

Total possible experience:

APL 2	1,800 XP
APL 4	2,250 XP
APL 6	2,700 XP
APL 8	3,150 XP

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY(SECONDARY AR)

Encounter 12

Defeat the Dawn Tiger Troupe

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

Total possible experience:

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

TREASURE SUMMARY

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

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

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

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast identify, analyze dweomer or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is

consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

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

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

Encounter 5.1: The Siege

APL 6: Loot—200 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—0 gp

APL 8: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *Flaming Composite Longbow* (+6 Str bonus)(750 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *Flaming Frost Composite Longbow* (+6 Str bonus)(1583 gp each), *Lesser Bracers of Archery* (416 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—400 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—+1 *Flaming Frost Composite Longbow* (+6 Str bonus)(1583 gp each), *Greater Bracers of Archery* (2083 gp each), *Gloves of Dexterity +2* (333 gp each), *Belt of Giant Strength +4* (1333 gp each).

Encounter 5.2: The Siege

APL 6: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance, mass* (138 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance, mass* (138 gp each), *scroll of wall of iron* (141 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Key 281* (10 gp each), *scroll of shadow conjuration, greater* (190 gp each), *dispel magic, greater* (94 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance, mass* (138 gp each), *scroll of wall of iron* (141 gp each), *scroll of delayed blast fireball* (190 gp each).

Encounter 6.2: Murder in the Vomitorium

APL 6: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each), *lyre of building* (1083 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*horn of fog* (166 gp each), *lyre of building* (1083 gp).

Encounter 7.1: All the Oerth's a Stage

APL 6: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of Resistance +1* (166 gp each), *+1 Chain Shirt* (83 gp each), *+1 Dagger* (177 gp each), *Cloak of Charisma +2* (333 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of Resistance +1* (166 gp each), *+1 Chain Shirt* (83 gp each), *+1 Deflecting Dagger* (666 gp each), *Cloak of Charisma +2* (333 gp each), *Ring of Protection +1* (166 pg each).

APL 10: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of Resistance +1* (166 gp each), *+2 Chain Shirt* (333 gp each), *+1 Deflecting Dagger* (666 gp each), *Cloak of Charisma +2* (333 gp each), *Ring of Protection +1* (166 pg each), *Periapt of Wisdom +2* (333 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—0 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*Vest of Resistance +3* (750 gp each), *+3 Chain Shirt* (750 gp each), *+1 Deflecting Dagger* (666 gp each), *Cloak of Charisma +4* (1333 gp each), *Ring of Protection +1* (166 pg each), *Periapt of Wisdom +2* (333 gp each).

Encounter 10: In the Pauper's Grave

APL 6: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each).

APL 8: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each), *ring of evasion* (2083 gp each).

APL 10: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each), *ring of evasion* (2083 gp each), *rod of metamagic, quicken, lesser* (2916 gp each).

APL 12: Loot—500 gp, Coin—0 gp, Magic—*ring of force shield* (708 gp each), *ring of evasion* (2083 gp each), *rod of metamagic, quicken, lesser* (2916 gp each), *staff of conjuration* (5416 gp each).

Total Possible Treasure (primary AR)

APL 6: 1,600 gp

APL 8: 2,500 gp

APL 10: 4,200 gp

APL 12: 6,000 gp

Encounter 12.2: Extra TU side quest—new Dawn

APL 6: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri (x8)* (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility (x16)* (4 gp each), *+1 glamered chain shirt (x4)* (329 gp).

APL 8: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri (x8)* (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility (x16)* (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding (x4)* (125 gp), *+1 glamered chain shirt (x4)* (329 gp).

APL 10: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri (x8)* (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility (x16)* (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding (x4)* (125 gp), *dust of disappearance (x8)* (291 gp each), *+1 glamered chain shirt (x4)* (329 gp).

APL 12: L: 16; C: 0; M: *Masterwork kukri (x9)* (51 gp each), *potion of invisibility (x18)* (4 gp each), *brooch of shielding (x4)* (125 gp), *dust of disappearance (x8)* (291 gp each), *+1 glamered chain shirt (x5)* (329 gp), *Gloves of Dexterity +2* (333 gp each), *Amulet of Health +2* (333 gp each), *+1 wounding kukri* (666 gp each), *+1 kukri* (166 gp each), *lesser silent metamagic rod* (250 gp each).

Total Possible Treasure (Secondary AR)

- APL 6: 400 gp
- APL 8: 625 gp
- APL 10: 1050 gp
- APL 12: 1500 gp

SPECIAL (PRIMARY AR)

I Have a Destiny! You have embraced your destiny, a knowledge that at some point, you will play a pivotal role in greatness. Now it's just a question of living that long.

☐ Once ever- re-roll any saving throw that would cause this PC to drop to or below -10 hp (death attack, full spell damage, etc).

Souvenirs of War: One coat, brown; 2 pair socks, brown. All embroidered with the small seasonal heraldic device of Meya Astra.

One Time Buy: The following could have been bought during one encounter during play, not after. Cross off any not purchased at that point.

- +2 *thinaun longsword* (CW 23,315 gp)
- +1 *Last Resort thinaun dagger* (CW 18,302 gp)
- armor of the unending hunt* (CW 21,500 gp)
- dwarven thrower* (DMG 60,312 gp)
- +2 *adamantine battle axe* (DMG 9,010 gp)
- flame tongue* (DMG 20,715 gp)
- dwarven Plate* (DMG 16,500 gp)

☛ **Inherited Template or Subtype:** As a result of your actions behind the shimmering veil you have inherited one of the following templates or subtypes. Tick one:

- Eladrin subtype
- Guardinal subtype
- Half Silver Dragon template
- Powers of a werebear
- Celestial template
- Half-Celestial template

You may now invoke these powers one time only. Doing so costs 1 TU but you receive the benefits of the template for the remainder of the adventure in which you are participating (even if that adventure is a two-round event).

Invoking these powers makes you in all regards a creature of the appropriate subtype, template etc., except that your alignment does not change. Refer to the *Monster Manual* for more information on how to apply these conditions.

☛ **Favor in Delaric:** This PC is owed a favor by a servant family of the leading noble household.

☛ **Blackmail in Delaric:** The PCs have some dirt on the leading noble family in Delaric.

SPECIAL (SECONDARY AR)

☛ **Improved Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen:** This upgrade is in addition to all stats and abilities of the Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen. As a bonus, this improvement has one of the following addition powers. The PC may pick one of these; cross off the other two.

- ☐ For 1 turn/rebuke attempt it activates *divine favor* at the cleric's caster level.
- ☐ For 2 turn/rebuke attempts it activates *true strike* at the cleric's caster level.
- ☐ For 3 turn/rebuke attempts it activates *stoneskin* at the cleric's caster level.

Access: Adventure; Caster Level 5th; Prerequisites: Upgrade not reproducible.; Weight- as per original; Base Cost: as per original.

☛ **Honorary Blader:** This character proved her worth and accepted *atonement* and conversion to this sub-sect of the Lord of Swords. The tattoo proves it. As long as this god is worshiped, once per adventure, this character can make a Smite attack equal to their character level -3 (as per the destruction domain). Switching gods removes the tattoo.

☛ **Greater Holy Symbol of Kelanen:** This particular magical blade is forged in the Eastfair shrine of Kelanen. The type of sword can be any martial sword. This *+1 sword* has the words "*Have Sword, Will Travel*" written in Old Oeridian on the blade. The sword can be used as a holy symbol of Kelanen. For the cost of 3 turn/rebuke attempts, it activates *keen edge* on the blade at the cleric's caster level. Only clerics of Kelanen may use this ability. This item can be upgraded as normal.

Access: Any; Caster Level 5th; Prerequisites: Craft Magic Arms and Armor and Craft Wondrous Item and either *keen edges* or *weapon of the deity* spell, must be a cleric of Kelanen; Weight- 4 lbs; Base Cost: 8000 gp.

☛ **Quest:** A relic is missing from the hidden extra planar shrine of Kelanen, taken by an unknown being. You have vowed to find that missing sword.

ITEMS FOR THE PRIMARY ADVENTURE RECORD

Item Access

- APL 6:
 - Wand of Cure Light Wounds (Adventure; DMG; 750 gp)
 - Staff of fire (Core; DMG; 17,750 gp)
 - Scroll of shadow conjuration, greater (Adventure; DMG; 2275 gp)
 - Scroll of dispel magic, greater (Adventure; DMG; 1650 gp)
 - Horn of fog (Adventure; DMG; 2000 gp)
 - Vest of Resistance +1 (Adventure; CA; 4000 gp)
 - Ring of force shield (Adventure; DMG; 8500 gp)

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

+1 Flaming Composite Longbow (+6 Str bonus)
(Adventure; DMG; 9000 gp)
Scroll of bear's endurance, mass (Adventure; DMG; 1,650
gp).
+1 Deflecting Dagger (Adventure; CV; 8000 gp)
Ring of evasion (Adventure; DMG; 25,000 gp)

APL 10 (all of APLs 6-8 plus the following):
Lesser Bracers of Archery (Adventure; DMG; 5000 gp)
+1 Flaming Frost Composite Longbow (+6 Str bonus)
(Adventure; DMG; 18,800 gp)
Scroll of wall of iron (Adventure; DMG; 1,700 gp)
Lyre of building (Adventure; DMG; 13,000 gp).
+2 Chain Shirt (Adventure; DMG; 4,250 gp)
Rod of metamagic, quicken, lesser (Adventure; DMG;
35,000 gp)

APL 12 (all of APLs 6-10 plus the following):
Belt of Giant Strength +4 (Adventure; DMG; 16,000 gp)
Scroll of delayed blast fireball (Adventure; DMG; 2,275
gp)
Vest of Resistance +3 (Adventure; DMG; 9000 gp)
+3 Chain Shirt (Adventure; DMG; 9,250 gp)
Staff of conjuration (Adventure; DMG; 65,000)

ITEMS FOR THE SECONDARY ADVENTURE RECORD

Item Access

APL 6:
+1 glamered chain shirt (Adventure; DMG; 4,250 gp)

APL 8 (all of APL 6 plus the following):
Brooch of shielding (Adventure; DMG; 1,500 gp)

APL 10 (all of APLs 6-8 plus the following):
Dust of disappearance (Adventure; DMG; 3,500 gp)

APL 12 (all of APLs 6-10 plus the following):
+1 wounding kukri (Adventure; DMG; 18,302 gp)
Lesser silent metamagic rod (Adventure; DMG; 3,000 gp)

APPENDIX 1: APL 6

ENCOUNTER 6:

MURDER IN THE VOMITORIUM

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh:** CR 9; Huge outsider (native); HD 10d8+43; hp 88; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +21; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6) or +12 melee (1d8+6, tentacle) +6 melee (2d6+3, bite); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+6, 2 tentacles) and +6 melee (2d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacle); SA constrict 1d8+6, disease, improved grab, smite good, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent, immunity to poison, DR 5/magic, resistance 10 to acid/cold/fire/electricity, SR 20; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +7, Climb +12, Hide +6*, Jump +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +5, Knowledge (engineering) +2, Listen +16, Speak Infernal, Spot +16.

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Constrict (Ex): An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 19, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD against one foe.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.

Spell-Like Abilities: *Darkness* 3/day, *desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 13), *poison* 3/day (DC 13), *contagion* (DC 13).

ENCOUNTER 7:

ALL THE OERTH'S A STAGE

☛ **Floria:** Female human Brd 2/Clr 3/Evangelist 3; CR 8; Medium human; HD 2d6 plus 3d8 plus 3d6; hp 38; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d4, 19-20/×2, +1 dagger); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4, 19-20/×2, +1 dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Balance +0, Bluff +16, Climb -2, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +0, Forgery +2, Gather Information +11, Heal +2, Hide +0, Intimidate +7, Jump -2, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +6, Move Silently +0, Perform (oratory) +14, Ride +1, Search +2, Sense Motive +13, Spot +2, Survival +2, Swim -3, Use Rope +1; Extra Music, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Persuasive.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): +6

Bardic Music: 2/day (Countersong, Fascinate, Inspire Courage +1)

Rebuke Undead: 6/day; Turning Check: +5; Turning Damage: 2d6+6

Great Orator (Su): Up to three times per day the Evangelist may use their oratory skills in a variety of ways:

Inspire Dread (Su): You can inspire hopelessness in all enemies within 30 feet, imposing a -4 penalty on Will saves to those affected. Delivering this oratory requires a full-round action to activate and requires concentration each round to continue the effect which lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter. Inspire Dread is a mind-affected ability.

Inflame the Righteous (Su): You can use this ability to wreath yourself and any of your allies within 30 feet in divine flame. Each beneficiary of this ability gains the benefit of a *fire shield* spell as cast by a level 5 sorcerer. The damage caused by this spell is, however, purely divine, and not subject to a creature's resistance or immunity to fire. This oratory requires a full-round action to perform and requires concentration each round to continue the effect. The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter.

Fast Talk (Ex): You may make a rushed Diplomacy check (in a single round) at a -5 penalty, rather than the normal -10.

Bard Spells Known: (3/1; save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*ghost sound*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*, 1st—*alarm*, *hypnotism*.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1); save DC 12 + spell level; 0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *read magic*, 1st—*protection from good**, *bane*, *cure light wounds*, *doom*. 2nd—*desecrate**, *hold person*, *sound burst*.

Domains*: Evil—All spells with the Evil modifier are +1 spell level. Dream—You are immune to fear effects.

Possessions: *Vest of resistance +1*, *+1 chain shirt*, *+1 dagger*, *cloak of Charisma +2*

ENCOUNTER EXTRA TU MISSION

☛ **Dawn Tiger:** Male human Rgr 2/Rog 3; CR 5; Medium human; HD 2d8+2 plus 3d6+3; hp 30; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +8 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +7 ranged (1d4+1, 19-20/×2, dagger); Full Atk +6/+6 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +7 ranged (1d4+1, 19-20/×2, dagger); SA 1st favored enemy (human), sneak attack +2d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Bluff +3, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide

+9, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +4, Search +6, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4; Combat Reflexes, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): The Dawn Tiger begins combat with a coating of large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Possessions: 3 daggers, 2 masterwork kukri, masterwork thieves' tools, +1 *glamered chain shirt*, *potion of invisibility*(×4), large scorpion venom poison (×2).

APPENDIX 2: APL 8

ENCOUNTER 5: THE SIEGE

☛ **Purple Shroud:** Female erinyes Ftr 1; CR 9; Medium outsider (Baatezu, Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful); HD 9d8+54 plus 1d10+6; hp 107; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +10; Grp +17; Atk +18 ranged (1d8+7 +1d6 fire, 19-20/×3, +1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) or +18 melee (1d10+10, 20/×3, masterwork glaive) or +17 melee (1d8+7, flail) or +17 ranged (entangle, rope) or +17 ranged (1d10, 19-20/×2, *heavy crossbow*); Full Atk +18/+13 ranged (1d8+7 +1d6 fire, 19-20/×3, +1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) or +18/+13 melee (1d10+10, 20/×3, masterwork glaive) or +17/+12 melee (1d8+7, flail) or +17 ranged (entangle, rope) or +17 ranged (1d10, 19-20/×2, *heavy crossbow*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with masterwork glaive); SA Entangle, spell-like abilities, *summon baatezu*, SQ DR 5/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 21, telepathy 100 ft., true seeing; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 25, Dex 24, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +19, Hide +19, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +19, Search +14, Sense Motive +15, Spot +16, Survival +3 (+5 when following tracks, +5 when not on Baator, +7 when following tracks not on Baator), Use Rope +7 (+9 with bindings); Dodge^B, Improved Critical (longbow), Mobility^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run.

Special Attacks: An erinyes' natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Entangle (Ex): Each erinyes carries a stout rope some 50 ft. long that entangles opponents of any size as an *animate rope* spell (caster level 16th). An erinyes can hurl its rope 30 ft. with no range penalty. Typically, an erinyes entangles a foe, lifts it into the air, and drops it from a great height.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *charm monster* (DC 20), *minor image* (DC 18), *unholy blight* (DC 20). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Baatezu (Sp): Once per day an erinyes can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures or 1d4 bearded devils with a 50% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell.

True Seeing (Su): Erinyes continuously use *true seeing*, as the spell (caster level 14th).

See in Darkness (Su): All baatezu can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Possessions: +1 *flaming composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus), 3 quivers of 20 arrows each, heavy crossbow, quiver with 10 bolts, masterwork glaive, flail, hempen rope (50 ft.).

ENCOUNTER 6:

MURDER IN THE VOMITORIUM

☛ **Half-Fiend Otyugh:** CR 10; Huge outsider (native); HD 14d8+59; hp 122; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +10; Grp +24; Atk +15 melee (1d8+6) or +9 melee (2d6+3, bite); Full Atk +15 melee (1d8+6, 2 tentacles) and +9 melee (2d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacle); SA constrict 1d8+6, disease, improved grab, smite good, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent, immunity to poison, natural weapons count as magical for DR, DR 5/magic, resistance 10 to acid/cold/fire/electricity; SR 24; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +14, Hide +10*, Jump +14, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (engineering) +2, Listen +20, Speak Infernal, Spot +20; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Constrict (Ex): An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 21, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD against one foe.

Spell-Like Abilities: *Darkness* 3/day, *desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 13), *poison* (DC 13) 3/day, *contagion* (DC 13), ~~*blasphemy*~~, *unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*.

ENCOUNTER 7:

ALL THE OERTH'S A STAGE

☛ **Floria:** Female human Brd 2/Clr 3/Evangelist 5; CR 10; Medium human; HD 2d6 plus 3d8 plus 5d6; hp 46; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +6; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d4; 19-20/×2, +1 *dagger*); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d4; 19-20/×2, +1 *dagger*); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +13; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Balance +0, Bluff +18, Climb -2, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +0, Forgery +2, Gather Information +11, Heal +2, Hide +0, Intimidate +10, Jump -2, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (religion) +8, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +16, Move Silently +0, Perform (oratory) +16,

Ride +1, Search +2, Sense Motive +15, Spot +2, Survival +2, Swim -3, Use Rope +1; Disguise Spell, Extra Music, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Persuasive.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): +6

Bardic Music: 2/day (Countersong, Fascinate, Inspire Courage +1)

Rebuke Undead: 6/day; Turning Check: +5; Turning Damage: 2d6+6

Great Orator (Su): Up to five times per day the Evangelist may use their oratory skills in a variety of ways:

Inspire Dread (Su): You can inspire hopelessness in all enemies within 30 feet, imposing a -4 penalty on Will saves to those affected. Delivering this oratory requires a full-round action to activate and requires concentration each round to continue the effect which lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter. Inspire Dread is a mind-affected ability.

Inflame the Righteous (Su): You can use this ability to wreath yourself and any of your allies within 30 feet in divine flame. Each beneficiary of this ability gains the benefit of a fire shield spell as cast by a level 5 sorcerer. The damage caused by this spell is, however, purely divine, and not subject to a creature's resistance or immunity to fire. This oratory requires a full-round action to perform and requires concentration each round to continue the effect. The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter.

Convert the Unfaithful (Su): You may attempt to convert a single enemy within 30 feet. As a full-round action you deliver an impassioned speech on the righteousness of your beliefs to a single enemy, who must attempt a Will save (DC 19—10 + P - Class level + Cha). If the creature succeeds, it is shaken for one round. If the creature fails its saving throw, it converts. Creatures with an alignment type are immune to this ability (such as angels and devils). A converted creature is effectively charmed by the evangelist (similar to *charm monster* spell). In addition, a converted creature temporarily assumes the alignment of the evangelist and acts accordingly. This may mean some of the creature's class abilities, spells, or other abilities are unavailable to it for the duration of the spell (a paladin converted to something other than lawful good, for example, loses her class abilities for the duration). When the duration elapses, the creature then has a choice: It can continue to act according to its new alignment, or it can shift back. If the creature chooses to permanently change its alignment to the evangelist's, it acts as if a cleric of the appropriate alignment had cast atonement on it. If the creature chooses to change back, it must make another saving throw (same DC). If it fails this saving throw its alignment changes back but it needs an atonement spell to gain back any abilities it lose due to its temporary alignment change.

The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter.

Fast Talk (Ex): You may make a rushed Diplomacy check (in a single round) at a -5 penalty, rather than the normal -10.

Skill Mastery (Ex): Select three skills from among Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Intimidate, and Sense Motive. When making a skill check with one of these selected skills, you may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent you from doing so.

Bard Spells Known (3/1; save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*ghost sound, message, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*alarm, hypnotism*.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; save DC 12 + spell level); 0—*detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1st—*protection from good*, bane, cure light wounds, doom*. 2nd—*desecrate*, hold person, sound burst*.

Domains*: Evil—All spells with the Evil modifier are +1 spell level. Dream—You are immune to fear effects.

Possessions: Vest of resistance +1, +1 chain shirt, +1 deflecting dagger, cloak of charisma +2, ring of protection +1.

ENCOUNTER EXTRA TU MISSION

Dawn Tiger: Male human Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 2; CR 7; medium human; HD 2d8+2 plus 3d6+3 plus 2d6+2; hp 40; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8 ranged (1d4+1, 19-20/×2, masterwork dagger); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8 ranged (1d4+1, 19-20/×2, masterwork dagger); SA death attack, poison use, spells, 1st favored enemy (human), sneak attack +3d6; SQ +1 save against poison, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +4, Disguise +6, Escape Artist +4, Hide +11, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +6, Search +6, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +7, Use Rope +4; Combat Reflexes, Quick Draw, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): The Dawn Tiger begins combat with a coating of large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Assassin Spells Known (4; DC = 11 + spell level); 1st—*true strike, sleep, disguises self*.

Possessions: 3 daggers, 2 masterwork kukri, masterwork thieves tools +1 *glamered chain shirt, brooch of shielding, potion of invisibility* (×4), large scorpion venom poison (×2)

APPENDIX 3: APL 10

ENCOUNTER 5: THE SIEGE

☛ **Purple Shroud:** Female erinyes Ftr 3; CR 11; Medium outsider (Baatezu, Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful); HD 9d8+54 plus 3d10+18; HP 130; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +12; Grp +20; Atk +21 ranged (1d8+7 +1d6 fire +1d6 cold/19-20/×3, +1 *flaming frost composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) or +21 melee (1d10+12, 20/×3, masterwork glaive) or +20 melee (1d8+8, flail) or +19 ranged (entangle, rope) or +19 ranged (1d10, 19-20/×2, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d8+7 +1d6 fire +1d6 cold, 19-20/×3, +1 *flaming frost composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) or +21/+16/+11 melee (1d10+12, 20/×3, masterwork glaive) or +20/+15/+10 melee (1d8+8, flail) or +19 ranged (entangle, rope) or +19 ranged (1d10, 19-20/×2, heavy crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with masterwork glaive); SA Entangle, spell-like abilities, *summon baatezu*, SQ DR 5/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 23, telepathy 100 ft., true seeing; AL LE; SV Fort +15, Ref +14, Will +10; Str 26, Dex 24, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +19, Hide +19, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +17, Move Silently +19, Search +14, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Survival +3 (+5 when following tracks, +5 when not on Baator, +7 when following tracks not on Baator), Use Rope +7 (+9 with bindings); Dodge^B, Far Shot, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Precise Shot, Mobility^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run.

Special Attacks: An erinyes' natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Entangle (Ex): Each erinyes carries a stout rope some 50 ft. long that entangles opponents of any size as an *animate rope* spell (caster level 16th). An erinyes can hurl its rope 30 ft. with no range penalty. Typically, an erinyes entangles a foe, lifts it into the air, and drops it from a great height.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *charm monster* (DC 20), *minor image* (DC 18), *unholy blight* (DC 20). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Baatezu (Sp): Once per day an erinyes can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures or 1d4 bearded devils with a 50% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd level spell.

True Seeing (Su): Erinyes continuously use true seeing, as the spell (caster level 14th).

See in Darkness (Su): All baatezu can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Possessions: +1 *flaming frost composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus), 3 quivers of 20 arrows each, heavy

crossbow, quiver with 10 bolts, masterwork glaive, flail, *lesser bracers of archery*, hempen rope (50 ft.).

ENCOUNTER 6:

MURDER IN THE VOMITORIUM

☛ **Legendary Half-Fiend Female Otyugh (1):** CR 12; Huge outsider (native); HD 14d8+129; hp 192; Init +8 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +10; Grp +29; Atk +20 melee (2d4+11) or +17 melee (2d6+5, bite); Full Atk or +20 melee (2d4+11, 2 tentacles) and +17 melee (2d6+5, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacle); SA constrict (2d4+11), disease, improved grab, smite good, spell-like abilities, raging blood; SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent, immunity to poison, mind effects, fear, natural weapons count as magical for DR, DR 10/magic, resistance 10 to acid, cold, fire, electricity, fast healing 5/round; SR 24; AL NE; SV Fort +18, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 33, Dex 18, Con 29, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +19, Hide +13*, Jump +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +1, Listen +21, Spot +21, Speak Infernal +1; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Constrict (Ex): An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 26, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD against one foe.

Raging Blood (Su): Each time damage is dealt to Muffin with a piercing or slashing attack, her blood sprays outward in a 5-foot cone dealing 1d4 points of acid damage to all within range (no saving throw). Muffin is not harmed by her own blood.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.

Spell-Like Abilities: *Darkness* 3/day, *desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 13), *poison* (DC 13) 3/day, *contagion* (DC 13), ~~*blasphemy*~~, *unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*.

ENCOUNTER 7:

ALL THE OERTH'S A STAGE

☛ **Floria:** Female human Brd 2/Clr 5/Evangelist 5; CR 12; Medium human; HD 2d6 plus 5d8 plus 5d6 +12 (Improved Toughness); hp 68; Init +5; Spd 30 ft./×4; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 17;; Base Atk +7; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d4, 19-20/×2, +1 *deflecting dagger*);

Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2, +1 *deflecting dagger*); AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +16; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Balance +0, Bluff +20, Climb -2, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +12, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +0, Forgery +2, Gather Information +11, Heal +3, Hide +0, Intimidate +10, Jump -2, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +17, Move Silently +0, Perform (oratory) +18, Ride +1, Search +2, Sense Motive +16, Spot +3, Survival +3, Swim -3, Use Rope +1; Disguise Spell, Extra Music, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Persuasive.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): +6

Bardic Music: 2/day (Countersong, Fascinate, Inspire Courage +1)

Rebuke Undead: 6/day; Turning Check: +5; Turning Damage: 2d6+8

Great Orator (Su): Up to five times per day the Evangelist may use their oratory skills in a variety of ways:

Inspire Dread (Su): You can inspire hopelessness in all enemies within 30 feet, imposing a -4 penalty on Will saves to those affected. Delivering this oratory requires a full-round action to activate and requires concentration each round to continue the effect which lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter. Inspire Dread is a mind-affecting ability.

Inflame the Righteous (Su): You can use this ability to wreath yourself and any of your allies within 30 feet in divine flame. Each beneficiary of this ability gains the benefit of a fire shield spell as cast by a level 5 sorcerer. The damage caused by this spell is, however, purely divine, and not subject to a creature's resistance or immunity to fire. This oratory requires a full-round action to perform and requires concentration each round to continue the effect. The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter.

Convert the Unfaithful (Su): You may attempt to convert a single enemy within 30 feet. As a full-round action you deliver an impassioned speech on the righteousness of your beliefs to a single enemy, who must attempt a Will save (DC 19—10 + P - Class level + Cha). If the creature succeeds, it is shaken for one round. If the creature fails its saving throw, it converts. Creatures with an alignment type are immune to this ability (such as angels and devils). A converted creature is effectively charmed by the evangelist (similar to *charm monster* spell). In addition, a converted creature temporarily assumes the alignment of the evangelist and acts accordingly. This may mean some of the creature's class abilities, spells, or other abilities are unavailable to it for the duration of the spell (a paladin converted to something other than lawful good, for example, loses her class abilities for the duration). When the duration elapses, the creature then has a choice: It can continue to act according to its new alignment, or it can shift back. If the creature chooses to permanently change its alignment to the

evangelist's, it acts as if a cleric of the appropriate alignment had cast atonement on it. If the creature chooses to change back, it must make another saving throw (same DC). If it fails this saving throw its alignment changes back but it needs an atonement spell to gain back any abilities it lose due to its temporary alignment change.

The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds there after.

Fast Talk (Ex): You may make a rushed Diplomacy check (in a single round) at a -5 penalty, rather than the normal -10.

Skill Mastery (Ex): Select three skills from among Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Intimidate, and Sense Motive. When making a skill check with one of these selected skills, you may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent you from doing so.

Bard Spells Known (3/1; save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*ghost sound, message, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*alarm, hypnotism*.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1/2+1; save DC 13 + spell level); 0—*detect magic* (x2), *detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1st—*protection from good**, *bane, cure light wounds, doom*. 2nd—*desecrate**, *cure moderate wounds, hold person, sound burst*; 3rd—*magic circle against good**, *blindness/deafness, prayer*.

Domains*: Evil—All spells with the Evil modifier are +1 spell level. Dream—You are immune to fear effects.

Possessions: *Vest of resistance +2, +2 chain shirt, +1 deflecting dagger, periapt of wisdom +2, cloak of charisma +2, ring of protection +1.*

ENCOUNTER EXTRA TU MISSION

Dawn Tiger: Male human Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 4; CR 9; Medium human; HD 2d8+2 plus 3d6+3 plus 4d6+4; hp 50; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +9/+4 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8/+3 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA death attack, poison use, spells, 1st favored enemy (human), sneak attack +4d6; SQ +2 save against poison, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +13, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +4, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +13, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +6, Search +6, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +4; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Quick Draw, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): The Dawn Tiger begins combat with a coating of large scorpion venom on his kukri blades.

Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str.
Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Assassin Spells Known (5/3 base DC = 11 + spell level); 1st- *feather fall, true strike, sleep, disguise self*; 2nd- *cat's grace, invisibility, pass without trace*.

Possessions: 3 daggers, 2 kukri, masterwork thieves' tools, +1 *glamered chain shirt, potion of invisibility* (×4), large scorpion venom poison (×2), *brooch of shielding, dust of disappearance* (×2).

APPENDIX 4: APL 12

ENCOUNTER 5: THE SIEGE

☛ **Purple Shroud:** Female erinyes Ftr 6; CR 14; Medium outsider (Baatezu, Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful); HD 9d8+54 plus 6d10+36; HP 164; Init +8; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +15; Grp +23; Atk +26 ranged (1d8+10 +1d6 fire +1d6 cold 19-20/×3, +1 *flaming frost composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) or +24 melee (1d10+12, 20/×3, masterwork glaive) or +23 melee (1d8+8, flail) or +24 ranged (entangle, rope) or +24 ranged (1d10 19-20/×2, heavy crossbow); Full Atk +26/+21/+16 ranged (1d8+10 +1d6 fire +1d6 cold 19-20/×3, +1 *flaming frost composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus) or +24/+19/+14 melee (1d10+12 20/×3, masterwork glaive) or +23/+18/+13 melee (1d8+8, flail) or +24 ranged (entangle, rope) or +24 ranged (1d10 19-20/×2, heavy crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with masterwork glaive); SA Entangle, spell-like abilities, *summon baatezu*, SQ DR 5/good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 26, telepathy 100 ft., true seeing; AL LE; SV Fort +17, Ref +16, Will +11; Str 26, Dex 26, Con 23, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +20, Hide +20, Knowledge (religion) +14, Knowledge (the planes) +16, Listen +19, Move Silently +20, Search +14, Sense Motive +15, Spot +19, Survival +3 (+5 when following tracks, +5 when not on Baator, +7 when following tracks not on Baator), Use Rope +8 (+9 with bindings); Dodge^B, Far Shot, Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Precise Shot, Manyshot, Mobility^B, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow).

Special Attacks: An erinyes' natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Entangle (Ex): Each erinyes carries a stout rope some 50 ft. long that entangles opponents of any size as an *animate rope* spell (caster level 16th). An erinyes can hurl its rope 30 ft. with no range penalty. Typically, an erinyes entangles a foe, lifts it into the air, and drops it from a great height.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *charm monster* (DC 20), *minor image* (DC 18), *unholy blight* (DC 20). Caster level 12th. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Summon Baatezu (Sp): Once per day an erinyes can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures or 1d4 bearded devils with a 50% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd level spell.

True Seeing (Su): Erinyes continuously use true seeing, as the spell (caster level 14th).

See in Darkness (Su): All baatezu can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Possessions: +1 *flaming frost composite longbow* (+6 Str bonus), 3 quivers of 20 arrows each, heavy crossbow, quiver with 10 bolts, masterwork glaive, flail, *greater bracers of archery*, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *belt of giant strength* +4, hempen rope (50 ft.).

☛ **Mook:** Male Bearded Devil Ftr 2; CR 7; Medium outsider (Baatezu, Evil, Extraplanar, Lawful); HD 6d8+30 plus 2d10+10; HP 78; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +8; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d10+7 plus infernal wound, 19-20/×3 masterwork glaive) or +13 melee (1d6+5, claw); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d10+7 plus infernal wound, 19-20/×3 masterwork glaive) or +13/+13 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft (10 ft. with masterwork glaive); SA Infernal wound, beard, battle frenzy, *summon baatezu*, SQ DR 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire and poison, resistance to acid 10 and cold 10, see in darkness, SR 19, telepathy 100 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +11; Ref +7; Will +5; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Diplomacy +10, Hide +11, Listen +9, Move Silently + 11, Sense Motive +9, Spot +9; Cleave, Improved Critical (glaive), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (glaive).

Special Attacks: A bearded devil's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Infernal Wound (Su): The damage a bearded devil deals with its glaive causes a persistent wound. An injured creature loses 2 additional hit points each round. The wound does not heal naturally and resists healing spells. The continuing hit point loss can be stopped by a DC 18 Heal check, a *cure* spell, or a *heal* spell. However, a character attempting to cast a *cure* spell or a *heal* spell on a creature damaged by a bearded devil's glaive must succeed on a DC 18 caster level check, or the spell has no effect on the injured character. A successful Heal check automatically stops the continuing hit point loss as well as restoring hit points. The infernal wound is a supernatural ability of the bearded devil, not of the weapon. The check DC is Constitution-based.

Beard (Ex): If a bearded devil hits a single opponent with both claw attacks, it automatically hits with its beard. The affected creature takes 1d8+2 points of damage and must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be infected with a vile disease known as devil chills (incubation period 1d4 days, damage 1d4 Str). Damage is dealt each day until the afflicted creature succeeds on three consecutive Fortitude saves, the disease is cured magically, or the creature dies. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Battle Frenzy (Ex): Twice per day, a bearded devil can work itself into a battle frenzy similar to the barbarian's rage (+4 Strength, +4 constitution, +2

morale bonus on Will saves, -2 AC penalty). The frenzy lasts for 6 rounds, and the bearded devil suffers no ill effect afterward.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). Caster level 12th.

Summon Baatezu (Sp): Once per day an erinyes can attempt to summon 2d10 with a 50% chance of success, or another bearded devil with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd level spell.

See in Darkness (Su): All baatezu can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, masterwork glaive

Power-Up Suite: With frenzy: HP 94; AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Grp +15; Atk +17 melee (1d10+10 plus infernal wound, 19-20/x3, masterwork glaive) or +15 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +17/+12 melee (1d10+10 plus infernal wound, 19-20/x3, masterwork glaive) or +15/+15 melee (1d6+7, 2 claws); SV Fort +13; Ref +7; Will +5; Str 24, Dex 17, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

ENCOUNTER 6:

MURDER IN THE VOMITORIUM

☛ **Legendary Half-Fiend Female Otyugh:** CR 12; Huge outsider (native); HD 14d8+129; hp 192; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 25; Base Atk +10; Grp +29; Atk +20 melee (2d4+11, tentacle) or +17 melee (2d6+5, bite); Full Atk +20 melee (2d4+11, 2 tentacles) or +17 melee (2d6+5, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacle); SA constrict 2d4+11, disease, improved grab, smite good, spell-like abilities, raging blood; SQ darkvision 60 ft., scent, immunity to poison, mind effects, fear, natural weapons count as magical for DR, DR 10/magic, resistance 10 to acid, cold, fire, electricity, fast healing 5/round; SR 24; AL NE; SV Fort +18, Ref +11, Will +14; Str 33, Dex 18, Con 29, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Balance +12, Climb +19, Jump +19, Hide +13*, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +1, Listen +21, Spot +21, Speak Infernal; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle).

Constrict (Ex): An otyugh deals automatic tentacle damage with a successful grapple check.

Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 26, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con. The save DC is Constitution based.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, an otyugh must hit with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD against one foe.

Raging Blood (Su): Each time damage is dealt to Muffin with a piercing or slashing attack, her blood sprays outward in a 5-foot cone dealing 1d4 points of acid damage to all within range (no saving throw). Muffin is not harmed by her own blood.

Skills: *An otyugh has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in its lair, due to its natural coloration.

Spell-Like Abilities: *Darkness* 3/day, *desecrate*, *unholy blight* (DC 15), *poison* (DC 15) 3/day, *contagion* (DC 15), *blasphemy*, *unholy aura* 3/day, *unhallow*.

ENCOUNTER 7:

ALL THE OERTH'S A STAGE

☛ **Floria:** Female human Brd 2/Clr 7/Evangelist 5; CR 14; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d6 plus 7d8 plus 5d6 +14 (Improved Toughness); hp 80; Init +5; Spd 30 ft./x4; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +9; Grp +8; Full Atk +9/+4 Dagger (1d4, 19-20/x2, +1 *deflecting dagger*); AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +10, Will +18; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 19.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Balance +0, Bluff +24, Climb -2, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +0, Forgery +2, Gather Information +12, Heal +3, Hide +0, Intimidate +11, Jump -2, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +17, Move Silently +0, Perform (oratory) +19, Ride +1, Search +2, Sense Motive +18, Spot +3, Survival +3, Swim -3, Use Rope +1; Disguise Spell, Extra Music, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Persuasive.

Bardic Knowledge (Ex): +6

Bardic Music: 2/day (Countersong, Fascinate, Inspire Courage +1)

Rebuke Undead: 7/day; Turning Check: +6; Turning Damage: 2d6+11

Great Orator (Su): Up to five times per day the Evangelist may use their oratory skills in a variety of ways:

Inspire Dread (Su): You can inspire hopelessness in all enemies within 30 feet, imposing a -4 penalty on Will saves to those affected. Delivering this oratory requires a full-round action to activate and requires concentration each round to continue the effect which lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter. Inspire Dread is a mind-affected ability.

Inflame the Righteous (Su): You can use this ability to wreath yourself and any of your allies within 30 feet in divine flame. Each beneficiary of this ability gains the benefit of a fire shield spell as cast by a level 5 sorcerer. The damage caused by this spell is, however, purely divine, and not subject to a creature's resistance or immunity to fire. This oratory requires a full-round action to perform and requires concentration each round to continue the effect. The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter.

Convert the Unfaithful (Su): You may attempt to convert a single enemy within 30 feet. As a full-round

action you deliver an impassioned speech on the righteousness of your beliefs to a single enemy, who must attempt a Will save (DC 19—10 + P - Class level + Cha). If the creature succeeds, it is shaken for one round. If the creature fails its saving throw, it converts. Creatures with an alignment type are immune to this ability (such as angels and devils). A converted creature is effectively charmed by the evangelist (similar to *charm monster* spell). In addition, a converted creature temporarily assumes the alignment of the evangelist and acts accordingly. This may mean some of the creature's class abilities, spells, or other abilities are unavailable to it for the duration of the spell (a paladin converted to something other than lawful good, for example, loses her class abilities for the duration). When the duration elapses, the creature then has a choice: It can continue to act according to its new alignment, or it can shift back. If the creature chooses to permanently change its alignment to the evangelist's, it acts as if a cleric of the appropriate alignment had cast atonement on it. If the creature chooses to change back, it must make another saving throw (same DC). If it fails this saving throw its alignment changes back but it needs an atonement spell to gain back any abilities it lose due to its temporary alignment change.

The effect lasts as long as you speak and for 3 rounds thereafter.

Fast Talk (Ex): You may make a rushed diplomacy check (in a single round) at a -5 penalty, rather than the normal -10.

Skill Mastery (Ex): Select three skills from among Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Intimidate, and Sense Motive. When making a skill check with one of these selected skills, you may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent you from doing so.

Bard Spells Known (3/1; save DC 14 + spell level); 0- *ghost sound, message, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance, 1st- alarm, hypnotism*.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; save DC 13 + spell level); 0- *detect magic (2), detect poison, guidance, read magic (2), 1st- protection from good*, bane, command, cure light wounds, doom, 2nd-desecrate*, cure moderate wounds, darkness, hold person, sound burst, 3rd- magic circle against good*, blindness/deafness, cure serious wounds, prayer, 4th-phantasmal killer*, poison*.

Domains*: Evil—All spells with the Evil modifier are +1 spell level. Dream—You are immune to fear effects.

Possessions: +1 deflecting dagger, +3 chain shirt, periapt of wisdom +2, cloak of charisma +4, ring of protection +1, vest of resistance +3.

☛ **Flesh Golem, Advanced (17 HD):** CR 9; Large construct; HD 17d10+30; hp 123; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (-1 size, +10 natural); touch 9; flat-footed 19; Base Slam +17; Grap +21; Atk +17 melee (2d8+6, slam); Full Atk +17 melee (2d8+6, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10

ft.; SA none; SQ darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, DR 5/adamantine, berserk, immunity to magic; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 22, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: None

Berserk (Ex): When a flesh golem enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its elemental spirit breaks free and the golem goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. The golem's creator, if within 60 feet, can try to regain control by speaking firmly and persuasively to the golem, which requires a DC 19 Charisma, check. It takes 1 minute of inactivity by the golem to reset the golem's berserk chance to 0%.

Immunity To Magic (Ex): A flesh golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition certain spells and effects function differently against the creature as noted below. A magical attack that deals cold or fire damage slows a flesh golem (as the slow spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throws. A magical attack that deals electricity damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a flesh golem hit by a lightning bolt heals 3 points of damage if the attack would have dealt 11 points of damage. A flesh golem gets no saving throw against attacks that deal electricity damage.

ENCOUNTER 9: BLOOD RUSHING TO THE HEAD

☛ **Advanced Blood Golem of Hextor:** CR 10; Large construct; HD 18d10+30; HP 129 (210 if supplied with blood); Init -1; Spd 20 ft. (can't run); AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +13; Grp +24; Atk +21 melee (2d6+8 [+2d6 vs. good], +1 *large unholy flail*) or +21 melee (2d6+8 [+2d6 vs. chaotic], +1 *large axiomatic flail*) or +20 melee (1d8+7, slam); Full Atk +21 melee (2d6+8 [+2d6 vs. good], +1 *large unholy flail*) and +21 melee (2d6+8 [+2d6 vs. chaotic], +1 *large axiomatic flail*), or +20 melee (1d8+7, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Blood siphon, whirlwind of death; SQ Blood dependency, blood reservoir, construct traits, DR 10/adamantine, Magic armor, immunity to magic, rust vulnerability; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 24, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Blood Siphon (Su): A blood golem can suck the blood out of a helpless creature or a body that has died within the past hour, dealing Constitution damage at the rate of 1 point per full round. Every Constitution point lost in this fashion heals the golem 5 hit points. (The golem usually restores hit points to maximum before filling its reservoirs so it can remain at full strength.) Both the golem and the victim must remain

motionless. Priests of Hextor often provide blood golems with bound or unconscious victims for this very purpose.

Whirlwind of Death (Ex): A blood golem can spin its upper body and cause its flails to rotate at high speed. This ability allows it to attack all creatures within its reach as if it had the Whirlwind Attack feat. In the round after the golem performs this maneuver, it can only take a single attack or move action. It can bring either of its flails to bear against a single opponent with this attack.

Blood Dependency (Ex): Because a blood golem constantly leaks its own vital fluid, it must absorb blood from other creatures to continue functioning. The golem loses 5 hit points per day, regardless whether it's engaged in physical activity or merely stands motionless for the entire day. If the golem's armor is removed or destroyed, this loss increases to 10 hit points per day. If the golem reaches 0 hit points from blood leakage, it is destroyed, leaving only its armor.

Blood Reservoir (Ex): The reservoirs in the golem's armor hold blood equivalent to 20 points of Constitution, which is about as much as the capacity of two average human bodies. The golem normally draws 1 point of Constitution from the reservoir every day to sate its blood dependency. It can draw blood from its reservoirs as a free action, and it often does so during combat.

Magic Armor (Ex): A blood golem is encased in a suit of full plate armor with an enhancement bonus of at least +1. If the golem is destroyed, the armor can be reused for another blood golem, but it does not resize to fit other creatures.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): A blood golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. A *gentle repose* spell acts as a *slow* spell for 3 rounds with no saving throw. *Regenerate* restores 1 hit point of damage per caster level. *Horrid wilting* does half or one-quarter damage if the golem fails or succeeds at its saving throw, respectively.

Rust Vulnerability (Ex): A blood golem's armor is vulnerable to rust attacks, such as from a rust monster or the *rusting grasp* spell. If its armor is destroyed in this manner, the golem's armor class drops and it makes slam attacks instead of flail attacks. Once its armor is gone, the golem loses its blood reservoir, and it loses hit points to blood leakage at the rate of 10 hit points per day instead of 5 per day.

Construct Traits: A blood golem is immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. The creature is not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It can heal itself only through the use of its blood siphon ability but it can be healed through repair. It cannot be

raised or resurrected. A blood golem has darkvision (60-foot range).

Possessions: +1 large unholy flail, +1 large axiomatic flail.

EXTRA TU MISSION

☞ Dawn Tiger: Male human Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 4; CR 9; Medium human; HD 2d8+2 plus 3d6+3 plus 4d6+4; hp 50; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); Full Atk +7/+7 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +9/+4 melee (1d4+1 plus poison, 18-20, masterwork kukri) or +8/+3 ranged (1d4+1/19-20, dagger); SA death attack, poison use, spells, 1st favored enemy (human), sneak attack +4d6; SQ +2 save against poison, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +13, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +2, Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +4, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +4, Gather Information +2, Hide +13, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +6, Search +6, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +9, Use Rope +4; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Quick Draw, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Defense, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): The Dawn Tiger begins combat with a coating of large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Assassin Spells Known (4/3; base DC = 11 + spell level); 1st—*feather fall*, *true strike*, *sleep*, *disguise self*; 2nd—*cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *pass without trace*.

Possessions: 3 daggers, 2 kukri, masterwork thieves' tools, +1 glamered chain shirt, *potion of invisibility* (×4), *brooch of shielding*, *dust of disappearance* (×2), large scorpion venom poison (×2).

☞ Dawn Tiger Master: Male human Rgr 2/Rog 3/Assassin 9; CR 14; Medium human; HD 2d8+4 plus 3d6+6 plus 9d6+18; hp 91; Init +5 (+5 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +10; Grp +11; Atk +16 melee (1d4+2 plus poison, 18-20/×2, +1 kukri of wounding) or +15 ranged (1d4+1, 19-20/×2, dagger); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d4+2 + poison, 18-20/×2, +1 kukri of wounding) and +14/+9 melee (1d4+2 + poison, 18-20/×2, +1 kukri) or +15 ranged (1d4+1, 19-20/×2, dagger); SA Death attack, poison use, spells, favored enemy (human +2), sneak attack +7d6; SQ +4 save against poison, evasion, trapfinding, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge, improved uncanny dodge, wild empathy; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +17, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Balance +11, Bluff +15, Climb +4, Concentrate +2, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +7, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +4,

Gather Information +2, Hide +13, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +4, Sense Motive +6, Search +6, Spot +6, Survival +6, Tumble +17, Use Rope +4; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse.

Poison (Ex): The Dawn Tiger begins combat with coatings of large scorpion venom on his kukri blades. Injury DC 18, Initial 1d6 Str. Secondary 1d6 Str. Poison lasts until the weapon scores a hit.

Death attack (Ex): Fortitude DC 21. See DMG p. 181.

Assassin Spells Known (5/5/4/3; base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*feather fall*, *true strike*, *critical strike*, *distract assailant*, 2nd—*cat's grace*, *invisibility*, *pass without trace*, *wraithstrike*, 3rd—*misdirection*, *nondetection*, *deeper darkness*, *false life*; 4th—*freedom of movement*, *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*.

Possessions: 3 daggers, masterwork silver kukri, masterwork cold iron kukri, masterwork thieves' tools, +1 *glamered chain shirt*, *potion of invisibility* (×2), large scorpion venom poison (×2), *dust of disappearance*, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *amulet of health* +2, +1 *wounding kukri*, +1 *kukri*, *possum pouch*, pouch containing 100 gp worth diamond dust (for nondetection), *lesser silent metamagic rod*.

DM AID 1

The following is a list of skill checks, DC's and information obtained, broken down by journal entry in Player Handout 1. For entries with a skill check that has multiple DC's, the information gained is cumulative.

[1]

Knowledge (religion):

- **DC 14:** This is a generic reference to the Hextorian afterlife. The truly faithful shall gain entry into the divine domain of Hextor called Scourgehold, centered around a giant combat arena, on a cube on the plane of Acheron.
- **DC 24:** This reference hints at a belief of some Hextorites that a great gathering on Oerth shall come and those worthy shall be the ones who win fight after fight, even if they fall in battle. Should these souls of Hextor win, it shall give the god power to reign on mortal Oerth. Or so the story goes. Few outside the Hextorian ranks believe this tale to be accurate.

[2]

Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC15:** The Serpent refers to an ancient magical philosophy that all of the universe is a giant dragon. Be it nature, arcane magic or simple physics. By manipulating one part of the universe, you can have an effect on another part, i.e. move part of the dragon. Hand gestures, items, words, locations, all are covered by this philosophy. Many primitive and/or ancient cultures such as humanoids and Ur-Flan embraced such philosophies over the more modern "Arcana Celestica" philosophy of a non-sentient energy-reactive universe and causality magic.
- **DC30:** Those who believe in the Serpent, say it is indeed sentient and has a will of its own and an agenda. Those of the ancient Ur-Flan embraced the Serpent because it chose them. Deals can be made with the Serpent if the individual is powerful enough to be granted a direct audience.
- **DC35:** It is rumored that Vecna and his top clerics have close ties and mastery of the understanding of the ways of the Serpent. Vecna used the Serpent to escape his imprisonment in the plane of Ravenloft.

Knowledge (the planes):

- **DC13:** Mungoth is the third layer of Gehenna.
- **DC15:** The Great Divide is a location on the Elemental Plane of Earth.

Wisdom Check:

- **DC15:** This passage seems to be more of an example or primer than a relevant ritual.

[3]

Knowledge (architecture and engineering):

- **DC12:** The building described is typical of a minor landed knight. The black thorns growing out of the walls are not part of the usual structure.

Knowledge (the planes):

- **DC15:** On some layers of the lawfully-aligned outer planes, magical weeds, in the form of a small vine that grows amongst cut stone and creates large black smooth thorns, infest the layers. These magical plants reproduce by draining the blood from those who get too close to their spikes.
- **DC20:** The plants are resistant to all energy except sonic and all physical force except for bludgeoning.

Bardic Knowledge:

- **DC20:** In Brewfest 593 CY, the bard Finnadrel of Delaric (CN male human Brd6) was pulled half-drowned from the Flamni near Orred. He claimed to have escaped what he called the, "War Without End," raging within the ruins of Rauxes. Though the bard painted a dramatic picture, doubt was cast on his account when it was discovered he was wanted in Delaric for defrauding investors in his last theatrical production in 591 CY.

Knowledge (local: Core):

- **DC15:** A bard named Finnadrel was wanted for defrauding his investors in the city of Delaric and escaped south. He later turned up in Orred claiming to have been on a wild adventure within Rauxes, claiming his new play to be called, "The War Without End".

[4]

Knowledge (the planes):

- **DC20:** The events described best fit some of the cubes of the plane of Acheron.

[5]

Knowledge (local-Core):

- **DC30:** Mendalsson of Delaric, adventurer nephew of Montand, ruler of Delaric. Said to have been lost on an adventure.

Knowledge (the planes):

- **DC25:** Meya Astra is a celestial servant of the powers of good, often associated with the intermediate and lesser gods of the Oeridian pantheon.
- **DC35:** Meya Astra is a Planetar dedicating to destroying fiends in the service of Hextor.

Knowledge (local-Core):

- **DC35:** Lassara of Delaric was the daughter of servants in the Montand household (ruler of Delaric). She later turned to the adventuring lifestyle when wealthy friends bankrolled her.

Knowledge (history):

- **DC15:** Rauxes was the second capital of the Great Kingdom. In 585 CY it was the point of a civil war for succession. A large magical battle was fought. And in the aftermath, the Shimmering Veil was formed. Rauxes is now sometimes known as the Forsaken City.

Knowledge (local—Core):

- **DC20:** Though the city hasn't been seen since 585 CY, at last known condition, it had high walls and five gates. All sorts of fiends and magic protected this city from penetration. Near its fall, people were not allowed to leave, but those few who did escape, usually did so through the treacherous, partially flooded, wererat infested Undercity.

[6]

Knowledge (local—Core):

- **DC20:** Within Rauxes there is a park among graves that has a column of stone that the heads of traitors are magical sealed up in. On great occasions, the heads can be animated back into flesh for a short time to reel in agony.
- **DC30:** The Screaming Column in Oltary Park. Oltary park is the place where the common people bury their dead and hope that the Overking does not have them dug up and animated. The Screaming Column only animates for a few minutes when the clerics of Hextor use an artifact to activate the column.

Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC20:** The Screaming Column was prepared for traitors and others the overking wished to have publicly, and especially unpleasantly, punished. It appears as a 30 ft. tall column some 8 ft. in diameter, made of red veined marble like stone. All around the column's circumference, faces are frozen in grimaces, screams, and expressions of dreadful anguish.
- **DC25:** When a new victim is to be cast into the column, he is publicly beheaded (with a blunt axe, often needing two or more strikes). The severed head is then magically treated by priests of Hextor using a powerful and unique enchantment (the unholy bloodshield artifact is vital to this). The head then becomes alive, sentient, and capable of experiencing pain. The officiating senior priest then plunges the head into the column, where it is frozen into the stony mass (not unlike a *meld into stone* spell).
- **DC30:** The heads so incarcerated are but driven mad by malign magic on the column. If any spell such *Speak with Dead* is used, the spellcaster has a chance of becoming insane immediately; the heads cannot be resurrected. Horribly, the unholy bloodshield can also be used to stimulate the column for a period of 2d6 minutes once per week, so that the entire structure is filled with writhing, screaming, gibbering faces. Simply witnessing this does wonders for discouraging treason among the people of Rauxes.

Bardic Knowledge:

- **DC20:** The Screaming Column. A device meant to imprison and torture the souls of traitors even after their death, by means of attaching their animated head and turning it to stone. A cleric/wizard of Delleb named Chavious is known for making a brave stand before meeting his gruesome fate. He said, "You may imprison

my head and perhaps my soul, but my knowledge of your treachery shall enbiggen us all. What has been written and read, can never be erased.”

[7]

Knowledge (religion):

- **DC11:** “Whispered One” is a term used for Vecna, lesser god of magic and secrets.
- **DC20:** As a god of secrets, prayers and spiritual confessions assume (dogmatically) that Vecna knows all and sees all, especially among his worshipers. Thus phrases such as, “You know”, or “Hear my thoughts and keep my secrets” are commonplace among Vecna’s worshipers.

Knowledge (history):

- **DC25:** When still living on Oerth, Vecna ruled a large kingdom. His seat of power was called the Spider Throne, and his attendants his Footmen.

Knowledge (nobility and royalty):

- **DC13:** House Naelax was the last rulers of the old Great Kingdom. The Overking came from their ranks. The lands in the center of the old Great Kingdom were owned by the various Naelax princelings. Like all of the major houses, the title of Prince was very common and overused, many have no lands of their own, only blood.

Knowledge (geography):

- **DC10:** The See of Medegia is located at the southwest corner of the old Great Kingdom. It was a religious province set apart until it was turned into a decimated wasteland by the evil of the crumbling Great Kingdom.

Knowledge (religion):

- **DC25:** The Keeper of Secrets was a Pit Fiend of unusual power loyal to Vecna, but was betrayed by his fellow Vecna worshipers and imprisoned.
- **DC35:** The Keeper of Secrets knew a secret that the others feared, but feared the secret’s destruction even more, so they imprisoned the Pit Fiend named Gryinanquil in a demi-shadow plane.

Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC 15:** Shimmering Veil is a magical barrier involves a planar boundary, created by great magical backlash and an expenditure of eldritch energy.
- **DC16:** The Standing Stones of Medegia are stones of unknown power.
- **DC20:** The Veil is a planar influx, involving the crossing of Oerth with another plane of existence.
- **DC30:** Inside the Veil, planar space/time has been shredded and several different planes are overlapping though currently Acheron seems to be dominated.
- **DC40:** Acheron is probably the dominate plane because some power magical force is acting like a stake through a towel on a beach on a windy day. Remove the stake and the towel flaps again.

[9]

Knowledge (local- Splintered Suns):

- **DC20:** The Dawn Tiger is a name known in dark alleys of the South Province for several generations. Said to be part man, part magical creature, he’s killed for price and favor.
- **DC30:** Some suggest the Dawn Tiger is more then one person, perhaps a master teaching a student and passing on the persona, from one generation to another.

Bardic Knowledge:

- **DC15:** The band of meddling adventurers are said to be a group of incompetent, corpse-looting backbiters, sniveling at the feet of their Zilchian pay masters.
- **DC17:** The Imperial is the grand theatre house of Rauxes.
- **DC30:** Hall of Whispered Enervations is an old Ur-Flan design for a torture chamber that imprisons the soul via wraiths.

Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC20:** Hall of Whispered Enervations is an old Ur-Flan design for a torture chamber that imprisons the soul via wraiths.

Knowledge (geography):

- **DC20:** Yilish is a thorp of about 50 people along the highway leading to Rauxes. It is also right at the edge of the Shimmering Veil.

[10]

Knowledge (religion):

- **DC13:** In the Old Oeridian language, Fharlanghni mean's "to be of, or one with, the given subject. In this case, Fharlanghn'.
- **DC25:** The Fharlanghni are an orthodox Fharlanghn sect that operates out of the regions of the old Great Kingdom, but tend to stretch all over the Flanaess. They use the clerical title of Walker.
- **DC40:** The Fharlanghni have a secretive branch that works among the rest of the sect, rumored to have its own agenda's.

Bardic Knowledge:

- **DC20:** The Fharlanghi are an orthodox sect of Fharlanghi clerics who call themselves Walkers and help and protect those who walk the roads.

[11]

Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC25:** In laymen's terms, the veil is getting much hard to cross and natural holes are dangerous to cross, even if one can be found near ground level, instead of say, miles up.

Knowledge (nobility and royalty):

- **DC25:** Manus the Wise is the son of the previous vassal who controlled that land Castle Triumph now sits on. The family's lands were reclaimed after strong arming by the Overking.

[12]

Knowledge (local-Core):

- **DC13:** The absurdly named castle, Triumph, is of very recent construction (as of 585 CY). There are stone quarries nearby, and Ivid commanded slave laborers, criminals, and serfs to toil night and day to build it. The castle walls bear great carvings showing Ivid's imagined military triumphs in the Nyronid campaign, but the castle itself was shoddily built (the laborers having no building skills), and one of the four towers is already beginning to show signs of collapse.
- **DC14:** Wendarn was important as a toll point on the junction of the dirawein roads, and as a tithe barn village. Tithed crops from local farms are stored in barns and warehouses here, and the "Wendarn minx" is a tailless species of feral cat much appreciated in the village for its work in keeping vermin out of the grain stores.
- **DC20:** The garrison commander, Gregern Damarain, is charged with assembling the villagers of Wendarn on the first Starday of each month to reenact some victory from the war, which Ivid views with a *crystal ball*. Gregern has learned from bitter experience that, however faithfully he tries to do this, Ivid usually dispatches a force of some 50 Companion Guard to execute some of the participants for not meeting his requirements.
- **DC21:** Rather surprisingly given the number of people used to pass through here, Wendarn folk were extremely insular and xenophobic. Inter-marriage over centuries has produced a population with a large number of enfeebled, half-witted, and even sociopathic peasants.
- **DC29:** The priest, Ratikinn Durvan, protects himself with a force of 10 orogs and 20 orcs who prowl around Triumph as if they own the place. The human soldiers here, some 300 in total, are close to mutinying and rising up to slay the orcs, but one initial abortive attempt to do this simply resulted in 22 slain soldiers and an extra defensive phalanx of zombies around the priest.

Bardic Knowledge:

- **DC15:** Along the roads leading to and from the village, "As like to meet a Wendarner with the right number of fingers" is a widely used expression meaning, roughly, "Once in a blue moon."

[13]

No relevant checks

[14]

Knowledge (local-Core):

- **DC13:** The Fiend-sage of Rel Astra is a powerful being that controls territory on the banks of the Solnor Ocean and is known for seeking out the most powerful and arcane mysteries.
- **DC14:** Prince Poxquand the Undying of Eastfair in an animus mage that is known for his interest in obscure knowledge.
- **DC15:** Rillikandren is the former high priest of Boccob in Rauxes. He left just before the backlash in 585 CY.

Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC20:** A book said to contain (among other things) prophecies.
- **DC30:** The Book of Hours is a prophetic work said to speak of the decline and fall of the House of Naelax, and who is destined to be the next Ruling Royal House.

[15]

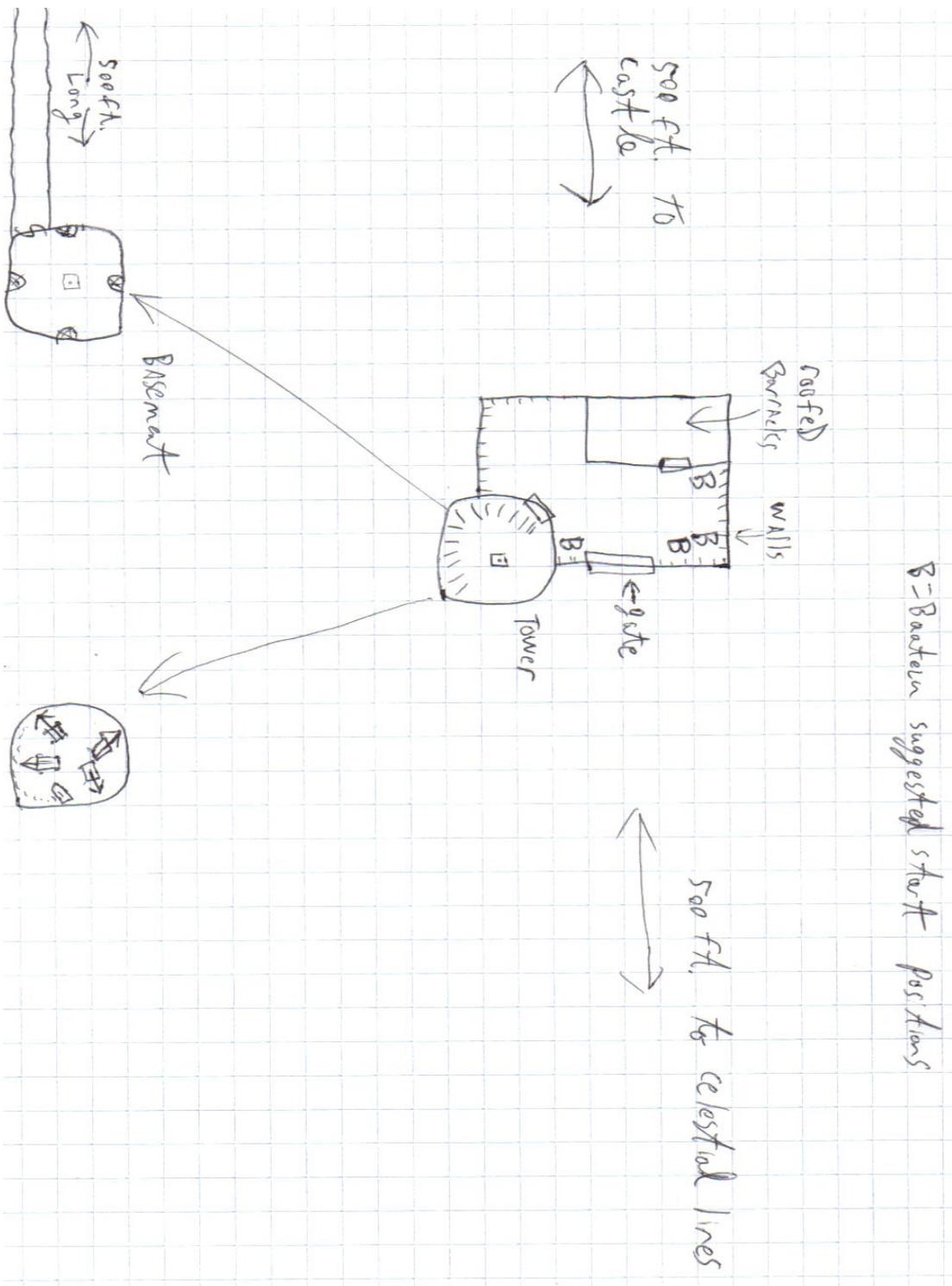
Knowledge (nature):

- **DC15:** The birth of twin horses is indeed very rare and as such considered a powerful sign.

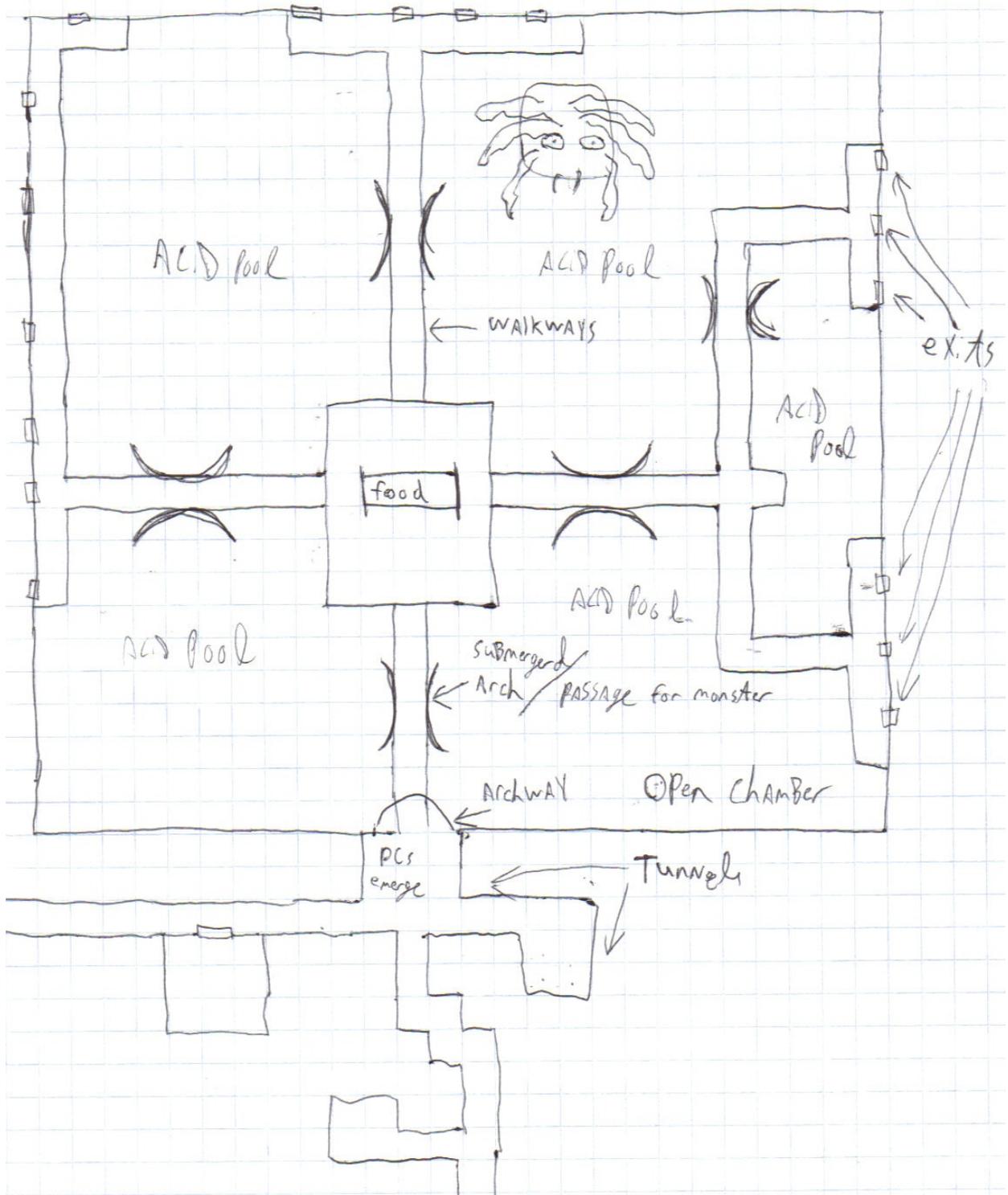
Knowledge (arcana):

- **DC15:** Ley lines are natural magical boundaries where fields of arcane power interact on a large scale.
- **DC20:** Ley lines move as the magical energies producing them change and flux. A ley line in one spot can have an effect that is totally different than if the same ley line was one foot to the left.
- **DC25:** When ley lines meet at the right angle and strength, they create weak points (and strong points) in planar barriers as well as large-scale magical effects. Finding such a key point can be very difficult and that location can change with the required application.

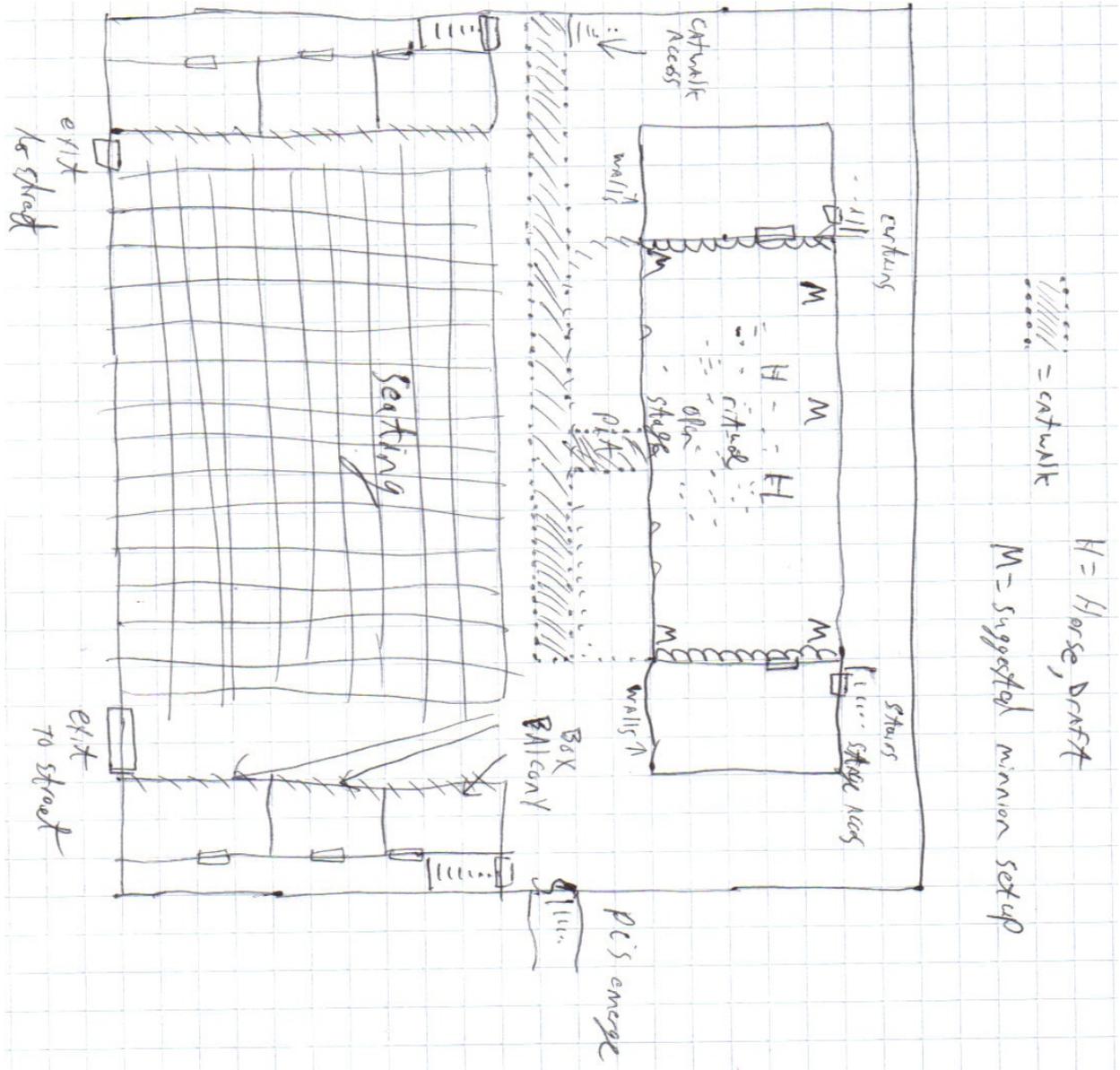
DM AID 2: ENCOUNTER 5



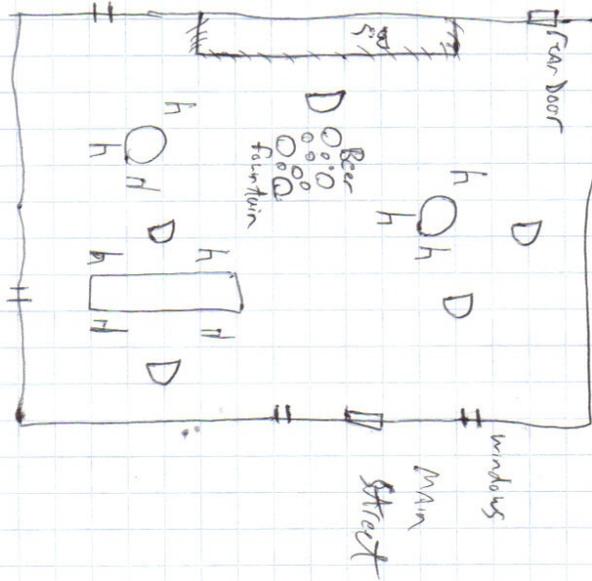
DM AID 3: ENCOUNTER 6



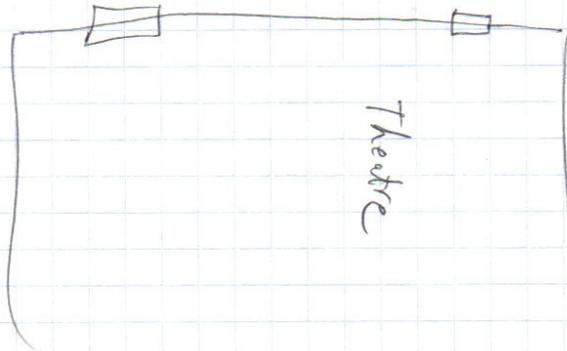
DM AID 4: ENCOUNTER 7



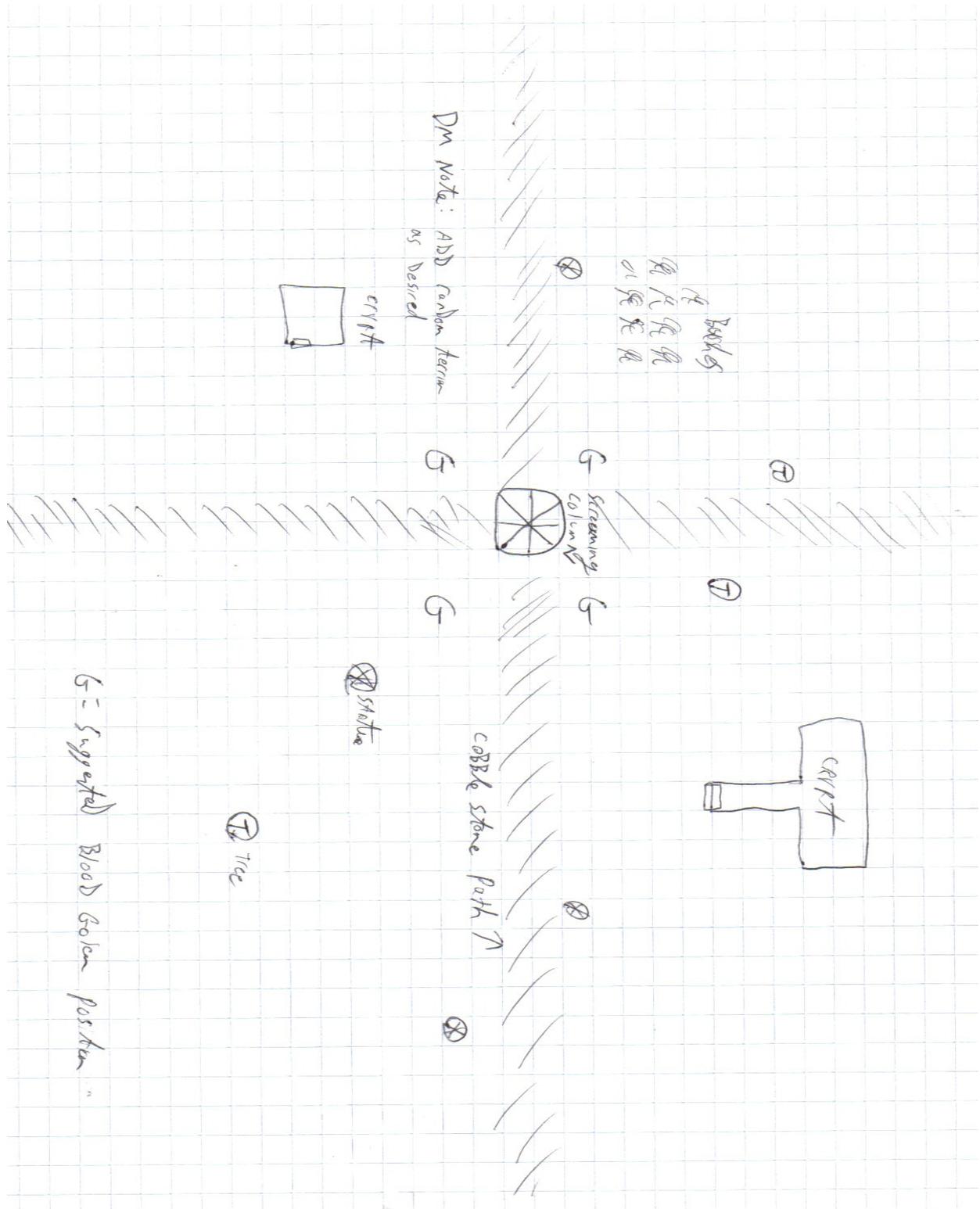
DM AID 5: ENCOUNTER 8



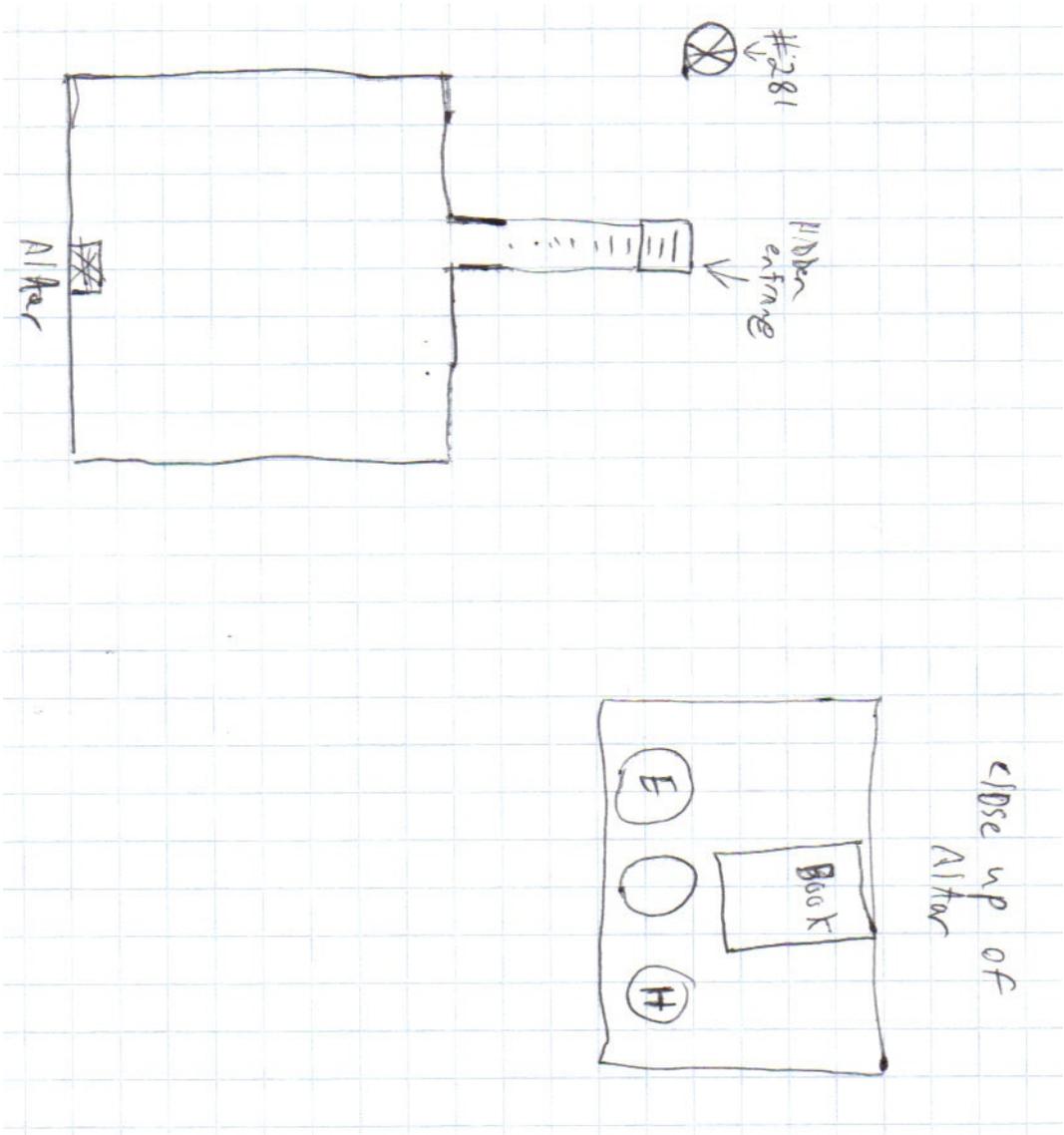
D = Suggested NPC Placement



DM AID 6: ENCOUNTER 9



DM AID 7: ENCOUNTER 10



PLAYER HANDOUT 1

The following is the compilation the tattered scraps of documents obtained from Darien the Knife in *COR4-18 It Never Rains in Nyron*, as indicated by the AR note.

The documents consist of journal pages, diatribes, poems and arcane research. None of the articles are complete and most of them are badly damaged from acid and fire. The topics vary and using all your research skills reveals the following relevant highlights.

[1]

"When there is no more room in Acheron, the dead shall dwell upon the Oerth and live their eternal war. Their entrance into Scourgehold shall be blocked and only the final victory shall allow them into the crowded glass and iron of the Great Coliseum. Give praise and sing, for the rest shall be set adrift from the cubes."

- "Battle Hymns of the Herald", Scriptures of Hextor.

[2]

"The Serpent's body sways and coils, a rhythmic dance that brings power with its interpretation. A cup for the novice is just a container to facilitate the drinking of liquid, but to the student of the Serpent, a cup made from clay drenched in the blood of a martyr and fired upon the 5th day of the last Ur-Flan holiday, filled with the precipitation of Mungoth and poured onto the Great Divide, can cause the Serpents tail to jerk wildly. It looks like a cup. It looks like water. It looks like a hole in the ground. But it doesn't look like it has a secret either. Of course, the same cup poured at your feet outside your local tavern on a winter day will just give you cold and wet feet. The Serpent is filled with these examples of secret connections. Look for them."

- A scribe's copy of a book page, noted as, "excerpt from Tome of the Stilled Tongue'.

[3]

"...and the walls danced with flames and sky had blades for clouds. The landmarks were as I remembered them from years ago, but twisted. A small knight's holding that was simple stone, was now covered in black pearl thorns that dripped with blood, but these thorns grew out of the stone of the keep. The livery-clad troops who once protected the fields were now impaled upon the thorns, and fiendish creatures of horror, beyond even my vast descriptive abilities, stalked the minor battlements."

-excerpt from the testimony of Finnadrel of Delaric, circa 591 to 593 cy.

[4]

"The battles entertained me for a while, giving me muse for great epics between men and fiends, abominations and the divine, and all manners else that could be brought into existence. But I came to realize each battle was a repeat of past events. Some men died, their souls absorbed by that place, new comers all. But other men, those who had borne witness to the folly of mortals- they fought their same battle each day, though their deaths were different, not that it mattered come the dawn. They had found their own war without end."

-excerpt from the testimony of Finnadrel of Delaric, circa 591 to 593 cy.

[5]

"...then I moved from one camp to another. With its army's defeat and their bodies torn asunder by their fiend foes, the camp would be overrun soon. With each flux, more recruits came to replace the losses, each ripple left deposits of beings, some human, many not, but all eager to fight on one side or another, one camp or the next. Mendalsson left to seek out the camp lead by the being called Meya Astra, but Lassara insisted we go with the little being we had found, into the city of Rauxes itself. It knew of a way past the walls. That scared me the most. The walls I knew could never be penetrated, nor passed over. The things I've seen perched on those giant battlements could topple kingdoms. Yet this little halfling with a tail knew of a way past. Despite the fear, you know, as they say, you only live thrice. It was the biggest mistake I ever made."

-excerpt from the testimony of Finnadrel of Delaric, circa 591 to 593 cy.

[6]

"He wanted to visit some talking heads in a park. Told me there be plenty of stories to hear and told Lassara that the crypts would have treasure for the taking. Of course, that little thiefling just wanted a way out of this hellhole, not that he wanted to let the rest of us in on that little secret. Heck, we didn't even make it to talk with the heads. The guardians of the park, they must have been 20 ft. high, turned our little guide into so much tenderized meat. Lassara and I agreed at that moment to find another way out and do it fast. With every new dawn, the burning buildings would become anew and the fighting would commence again."

-excerpt from the testimony of Finnadrel of Delaric, circa 591 to 593 cy.

[7]

“Whispered One, hear my thoughts and keep my secrets. As you know, we are on our way to victory. Where the leaders of our order have failed in the past, countless times, paying the price each time, we are finally so close. We shall rise to the greatness that we surely deserve. I shall throw away my past as a mere princeling of Naelax and take my place as the greatest leader the Footmen of your ancient throne have ever known.”

-Uncredited journal entry, (*dramatic handwriting)

[8]

“Whispered One, hear my thoughts and keep my secrets. As you know, Darien is doing his job wonderfully. He reports that he has obtained nearly all the hearts the ritual in Medegia calls for. He has learned much from your Keeper of Secrets. Perhaps too much, perhaps these items and texts he has sent us back from the Keeper's lair are only a smoke screen. Perhaps he keeps the real secrets for himself. It would make for an interesting production. We unknowing heroes prepare the rites to by-pass the Shimmering Veil, while the villain promises to deliver us the props needed to perform our final act on the Standing Stones of Medegia. But come the peak of the second act in Rauxes, he would turn on us. He would use the knowledge and power given to him by his new mentor, your Keeper of Secrets, and slay me as I retrieve the cache from its hiding place. That would be climatic!”

-Uncredited journal entry, (*dramatic handwriting)

[9]

“Whispered One, hear my thoughts and keep my secrets. As you know, the operation in Eastfair has fallen apart. The Dawn Tiger is angered at the loss of his agent. He blames me I am sure for this loss, but I know Darien purposely underestimated the threat that these meddling adventurers possessed. I should have balked when he said some foreign sell-swords had learned things they should not and that a simple assassination would muddy the waters enough to hide on the stream's bottom. When is an assassination ever simple? Now that little upstart is running back to us. He claims to have improved direction for ‘his plan’. He would be nowhere with out me. He's not even an original member! He's never even sat in the Imperial! Perhaps his improved direction is the backing of his new mentor. He means to take my place as head of the company. I won't allow him to upstage me. I'll have my own script to follow and he'll have a solo act within the Hall of Whispered Enervations. We'll take what he has and abandon him to his fate. The wraiths of the Hall shall leave his soul trapped there forever. His damnation shall be complete long before we arrive in Yilish.”

-Uncredited journal entry, (*dramatic handwriting)

[10]

“Whispered One, hear my thoughts and keep my secrets. As you know, we intercepted an agent of the Fharlanghni. We took him in his sleep and desecrated his camp. There will be no more reports for him to pass on. We allowed our humanoid minions to dispose of his body. I'm told the meat was quite tough and stringy.”

-Uncredited journal entry, (*dramatic handwriting)

[11]

“Though I've long suspected it, the peasants of Yilish have confirmed that I'm not the only sage who has shown repeated interest in the Shimmering Veil. They tell me men dressed like myself, true servants of the Uncaring One no doubt, have spent several days practicing their arts on the Veil. It would be arrogant to assume that we are the only ones with an interest in a safe and secure method of traversing the Veil. The natural holes in the Veil are diminishing in frequency and their placement shifts wildly. The planar sheer has also increased over the last year. And while I have confirmed that over the years, several companies of adventurers and mercenaries have waited and pass through these ground-level holes, this will no longer be feasible. The eldritch vertical ripple on the Veil has increasingly moved these holes (when they do appear) towards the upper heights. I must concur with Darien's proposal and the use of the rites supplied by the Keeper of Secrets. Only with a sharp jerk of the Serpent's Tail shall the Veil's arcane tensile strength be subjugated long enough for our company to pass through. Getting out is a question of faith. Are the rites and component list given by the Keeper to be trusted? As a side note, I have concerns about the conditions we will meet inside the Veil. If even half the stories these villagers tell are true, and mind you, I've seen some of the incidences myself, we shall not last long. Up close, looking through the Veil in the direction of my birthplace, I barely recognize the landscape. How Wendarn must have changed, let alone the castle.”

- An unaddressed letter, signed by Manus the Wise (a sturdy scholarly handwriting).

[12]

“ I will arrive back in Stel within a week. I realize that our plans are coming to fruition and that we tend to, shall we say, change our approach, during these times. The time that passed after your last letter could mean huge (but necessary, I'm sure) changes to our approach. I would just like to remind you that should we need to have a back-up plan, or perhaps even a back-up to our back-up plan, Wendarn is not too far from our entry point. The back-up key should still be there should we loose the primary. Even with all the planar warping that I've witnessed, my lair should still be intact beneath

Triumph. While the castle is of abysmal construction, the lair and secret tunnel to the east approach tower are of a sturdy magical nature. They survived the destruction of my family's keep and the construction of Triumph over it, then it can survive a magical planar influx. The inbred locals of my youth would never have found it and Raticinn Durvan was always too busy with Gregern to notice anything out of place. Let's hope the little minx I told you about is still around to let us in. "

- An unaddressed letter, signed by Manus the Wise (a sturdy scholarly handwriting).

[13]

"An addendum to my reports, for I feel it should be made clear sooner than later. I confirmed today that the Veil is indeed expanding, or perhaps just pulsating, but the net effect is an increase in boundary. This will lead to a change of lay lines and planar stress points, and thus change the rites, perhaps even nullifying them. Our window could be closing rapidly. We must make haste."

- An unaddressed letter, signed by Manus the Wise (a sturdy scholarly handwriting).

[14]

"When the eternal wanderer is at last at rest and the nexus is in conjunction with the Earth Stone the profane infestation of the accursed one will be scourged from the sacred lands." Note to self- the original scroll is reputedly to be over 1,100 years old and the Old Oerdian dialect it's written in reflects that. Many great powers are interested in these Standing Stones, and I am willing to take that as independent confirmation that the scheme of the Keeper of Secrets that Darien has championed is indeed the way to go. The stones true purpose is irrelevant to us, but the power we can extract from them shall make us like gods upon the Oerth. We shall have to double our efforts in secrecy to avoid detection of our interests. When the likes of the Fiend Sage of Rel Astra, Prince Poxquand of Eastfair and the great cleric of the Uncaring One, Rillikandren are involved, best not to gather their notice upon you. I suspect Rillikandren's interest is tied in with the Book of Hours. How I would love to have an hour alone with that tome. "

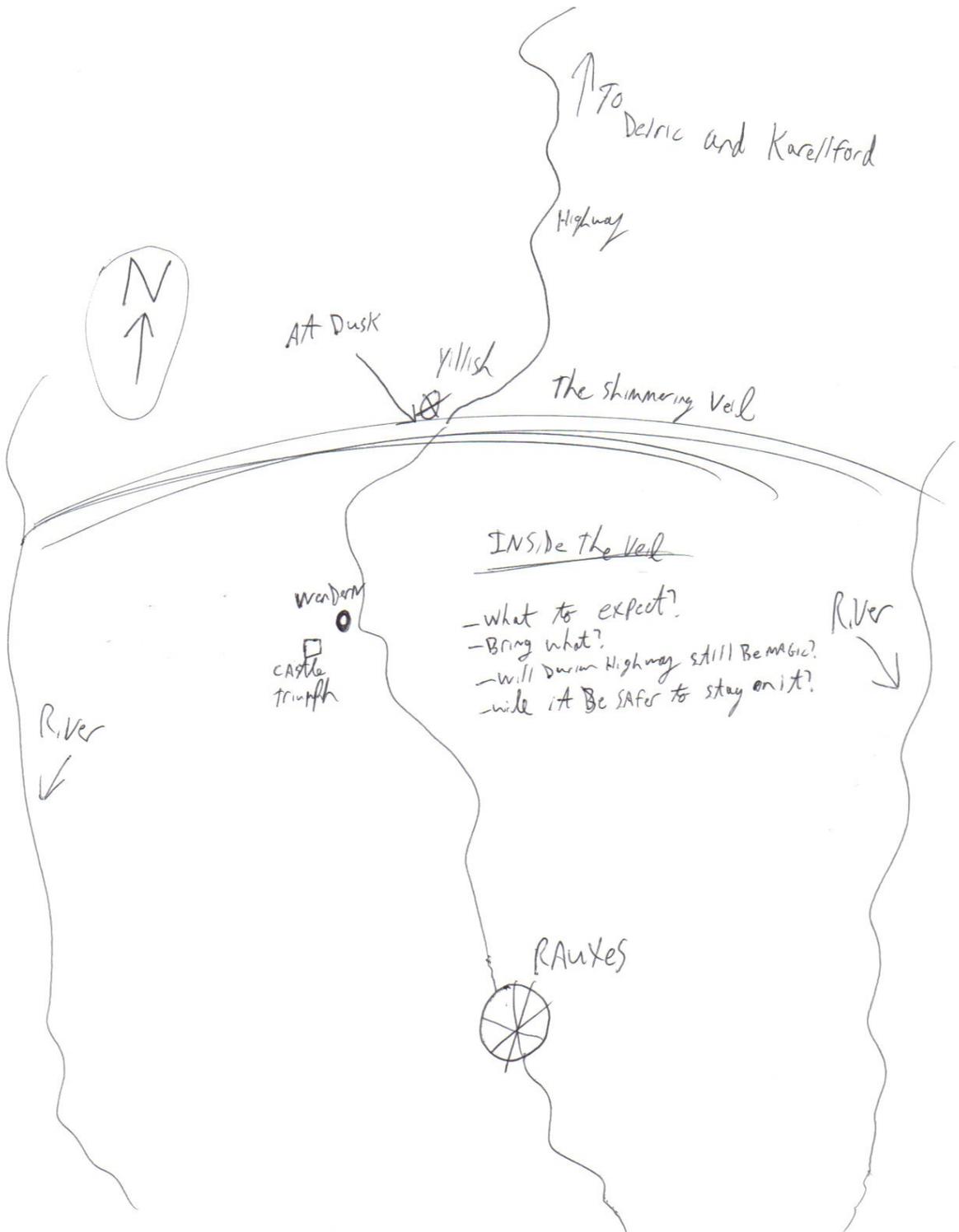
- Uncredited journal entry, (hastily scribed and sloppy).

[15]

"I'm not convinced as of yet. The plan has merit, but it has such great potential for failure. So much must be taken on trust. Is everything the Keeper of Secrets said true? Or did he suspect our betrayal of him and thus set us up? Even if Manus has lent intellectual support to the rite working to open the veil (granted, if done before the lay lines move again), even he is skeptical of the other rite getting us out again and on to Medegia. As the new quartermaster, I've had little trouble securing our mundane materials. Wagons and trolls to pull them as well as our sturdy roadie assistants. It's the components I've been having a difficult time with. The triangle was easy and our cache in Rauxes holds several robes that shall do the trick. But the other three items! I've still had no success with the horse breeder. He tells me twin births among horses are very rare, I'm not sure if he's just trying to up the price or what. I may have to come up with an alternative solution. "

- Uncredited journal entry, (written on the back of a blank ledger paper with halting but neat writing).

PLAYER HANDOUT 2



PLAYER HANDOUT 3

[This handout is for current members of the religious sub-sect of Kelenan, The Barons of the Blade.]

During your travels, not long before the start of this current adventure, a young acolyte of the Lord of Swords and member of the Barons of the Blade crossed your way and as commanded by his superiors, passed on to you the following news.

“All is well back at the Old City arena. The vampires were successfully repelled, or to be more specific, they fled on mass at first opportunity. They seemed to lose their resolve for the incursion. The motive behind it is still unclear, both the initial incursion and the subsequent retreat.”

“Inspired by your own discovery of a secret chamber within the complex under the arena, the Barons put forth their own detailed searches of the rooms and tunnels. What they discovered was of great interest and importance to the sect.

A secret chamber held the tomb of a priest dating back to the days of our shrines founding. To think, the remains of a man who not only knew the Lord of Swords, but learned his teachings first hand. The chamber also held a scroll filled with prophetic writing and mystic text.

Though the details of the scroll were kept to the upper levels of the sect, many quests have sprung from it. Our ranks have emptied from the Old City arena as our members set out in search of the contents hinted at in the scroll.

Our leader, Stylus Rel has left on such a quest. He has gained clues to the location of a lost temple of our Lord of Swords, but one that is a “here but not”. He travels south to the Shimmering Veil with a copy of the scroll. I believe the scroll has information that will allow him to penetrate the barrier. His entourage was quite excited about the journey. [Stylus Rel left 3 weeks before the current date]. “

“Ecnal Tugim currently oversees the arena and has taken to the crafting duties of the holy symbols.”

“All Barons of the Blade not tending the shrine are quested to seek out any of the 100 Blades touched by Kelenan and lost among Oerth and probably the outer planes as well. These blades are referred to in scripture as the Final Word and are what our holy symbols are derived from. Even clues to the locations or fates of these relics would be important and surely grant a place at Lord of Sword’s side when it comes time to sheath your blade for the last time. Thus this quest has been commanded.”

Out of Game Errata:

1. The Honorary Blader smite ability works as per the Destruction domain, not a Paladin’s smite.
2. The Greater Holy Symbol is a +2 weapon for upgrading purposes. +1 for base and +1 for its additional power. Its additional power is more than just the Keen Edge ability and will become apparent later.
3. All references to Kelanen as “Kelaren” in the modules are typographical errors on my part. For those who wish to explain it in-game, consider it a dialect variation from older Old Oeridian in to current Old Oeridian and Common. Kelanen is of course the correct spelling and the one that should be used.
4. The Barons of the Blades is a sub-sect of Kelanen. The *atonement* to join is mostly for roleplaying purposes. A PC who is already a cleric of Kelanen can still become a member of the Barons of the Blade. The rite is not meant to exclude these existing clerics, merely change their sect.

NEW RULES APPENDIX

Thinaun: This dark, glittering steel alloy holds an attraction to souls recently released from their bodies. Obviously, this has application for melee weapons. If a thinaun melee weapon is touching a creature when it dies, that creature's soul is sucked into the weapon rather than passing onto its final reward. The soul remains in the thinaun weapon until the weapon is destroyed or another creature dies while touching the thinaun weapon (the new soul displaces the old one). Raise dead, resurrection, and similar spells won't bring back a creature whose soul is trapped by a thinaun weapon unless the caster has the weapon in his possession. Because the soul is nearby, fewer material components are required for such spells: Reincarnation, raise dead, resurrection, and true resurrection require half as much of the relevant material component (unguents or diamonds) to cast if the soul is within a thinaun weapon.

A thinaun weapon captures a soul from anyone killed while touching the weapon. This means that if the thinaun weapon's wielder dies, her weapon captures her soul.

Only melee weapons made primarily of metal can be crafted as thinaun weapons.

Type of Thinaun Item	Item
Cost Modifier	
Light weapon	+10 000 gp
One-handed weapon or one head of a double weapon	+15 000 gp
Two-handed weapon or both heads of a double weapon	+20 000 gp

+1 Last Resort Thinaun dagger (CW 18,302 gp)

Last Resort: A melee weapon (usually a dagger) with the last resort ability is particularly effective in a grapple. Its wielder doesn't take the -4 penalty for attacking with a weapon while grappling, and the weapon deals an extra +1d6 damage in a grapple for every size category the target is bigger than the wielder. For example, a halfling armed with a +1 last resort dagger would deal an extra +2d6 points of damage when being grappled by an ogre.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor; *freedom of movement*; Price +1 bonus.

Armor of the Unending Hunt (CW 21,500 gp)

Armor of the Unending Hunt: This mithral +2 chainmail armor was built by the elves for rangers on long-range patrols. In addition to its protective qualities, it provides the wearer with immunity to fatigue and exhaustion.

Moderate Abjuration; CL 8th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor; *restoration*; Price 21,500 gp; Cost 10,900 gp + 848 XP; Weight 20 lb.

Blood Golem of Hextor

From the *Fiend Folio*, p. 84:

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 10d10 + 30 (130 hp if supplied with blood)

Initiative: -1

Speed: 20 ft. (cannot run)

AC: 26 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +9 natural, +9 (+1 full plate)), touch 8, ff 26

Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+17

Attack: Masterwork heavy flail +13 melee, or slam +12 melee (see text)

Full Attack: 2 Masterwork heavy flails +13 melee, or 2 slams +12 melee (see text)

Damage: +Masterwork Heavy Flail 1d10+6, slam 1d8+6 (see text)

Face/Reach: 10 ft. / 10 ft.

Special Attacks: Blood Siphon, Whirlwind of Death

Special Qualities: Blood Dependency, blood reservoir, construct traits, DR 10/+1, magic armor, magic immunity, rust vulnerability

Saves: Fortitude +3, Reflex +2, Will +3

Abilities: Str 22, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or Gang (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Large +1 full plate (does not resize)

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: 11-20 HD (Large); 21-30 HD (Huge)

The blood golems of Hextor are foul constructs made of the coagulated blood of sacrificial victims. Girded in magic armor and bearing magic weapons, they bring death to the enemies of the faith.

Without its armor, a blood golem looks like a vaguely humanoid shape made out of thickened red and black blood. It constantly leaks blood wherever it goes and is often surround by swarms of flies and other flying vermin that dine on its leavings. Although the church of Hextor once was satisfied with this raw form, recently the creators of these golems have added a final step in which they seal the golem in a custom-made suit of +1 full plate with masterwork heavy flails fused to each of its arms. This suit of armor includes two spherical reservoirs on the shoulders that store more blood to fuel the creature. Metal pipes and valves convey the creature's blood within the armor, but the seals are imperfect and it still leaks fluid.

Because it is a construct, a blood golem can remain motionless in one place for days, although it requires fresh blood on a regular basis. This requirement makes it a poor guardian for remote places that do not have many visitors.

Combat

A blood golem is straightforward in combat: It simply lashes out at its foes with its heavy flails, which are actually parts of its body. It is a cruel and malicious combatant, in that it apparently derives satisfaction

from slaying enemies despite its lack of true intelligence.

Blood Siphon (Su): A blood golem can suck the blood out of a helpless living creature or a body that has died with the past hour, dealing Constitution damage at the rate of 1 point per full round. Every Constitution point lost in this fashion heals the golem 5 hit points. (The golem usually restores its hit points to maximum before filling its reservoirs so that it can remain at full strength.) Both the golem and the victim must remain motionless. Priests of Hextor often provide blood golems with bound or unconscious victims for this very purpose.

Whirlwind of Death (Ex): A blood golem can spin its upper body and cause its flails to rotate at high speed. This ability allows it to attack all creatures within its reach as if it had the Whirlwind Attack feat. In the round after the golem performs this maneuver, it can take only a single attack or move action.

Blood Dependency (Ex): Because a Blood Golem constantly leaks its own vital fluid, it must absorb blood from other creatures to continue functioning. The golem loses 5 hit points per day, regardless whether it is engaged in physical activity or merely stands motionless for the entire day. If the golem's armor is removed or destroyed, this loss increases to 10 hit points per day. If the golem reaches 0 hit points from blood leakage, it is destroyed, leaving only its armor.

Blood Reservoir (Ex): The reservoirs in the golem's armor hold blood equivalent to 20 points of Constitution, which is about as much as the capacity of two average human bodies. The golem normally draws 1 point of Constitution from the reservoir every day to sate its blood dependency. It can draw blood from its reservoirs as a free action, and it often does so in combat.

Magic Armor: A blood golem is always encased in a suit of full plate armor with an enhancement bonus of at least +1. If the golem is destroyed, the armor may be reused for another blood golem, but it does not resize to fit other creatures.

Magic Immunity: A blood golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows: A gentle repose spell acts as a slow spell for 3 rounds with no saving throw. Regenerate restores 1 hit point of damage per caster level. Horrid wilting does half or one quarter damage if the golem fails or succeeds at its saving throw, respectively.

Rust Vulnerability (Ex): A blood golem's armor is vulnerable to rust attacks, such as from a rust monster or the rusting grasp spell. If its armor is destroyed in this manner, the golem's AC drops and it makes slam attacks instead of the flail attacks. Once its armor is gone, the golem loses its blood reservoir, and it loses to blood leakage at the rate of 10 hit points per day instead of 5 per day.

Critical Strike

CV p. 145:

Divination

Level: Assassin 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V

Casting time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

While this spell is in effect, your melee attacks are more likely to strike a foe's vital areas. Whenever you make a melee attack against a flanked foe or against a foe denied its Dexterity bonus, you deal an extra 1d6 points of damage, your weapon's threat range is doubled (as if under the effect of *keen edge*), and you gain a +4 insight bonus on rolls made to confirm critical hits. The increased threat range granted by this spell doesn't stack with any other effect that increases your weapon's threat range. Creatures immune to sneak attacks are immune to the extra damage dealt by your attacks.

Distract Assailant

CV p.146:

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Assassin 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting time: 1 swift action

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

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The subject of this spell is distracted, flinching at blows that seem to come from the shadows. A creature affected by this spell is flat-footed until the beginning of its next turn.

Material component: The dried wing of a fly.

Wrathstrike

CV p. 158:

Transmutation

Level: Assassin 2, sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S

Casting time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round

When you cast this spell, your melee weapons or natural weapons become ghostly and nearly transparent for a brief time. While this spell is in effect, your melee attacks are resolved as melee touch attacks rather than normal melee attacks.

Improved Toughness [General]

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.