

HIG3-03

# SIEGE

## A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK® Highfolk Regional Adventure

Version 1.0

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True darkness has fallen over Quaalsten in the heart of the Vesve Forest. Two armies of evil lay siege to it, and those in Highfolk and Flameflower struggle to provide aid to the beleaguered town, all the while preparing themselves for the inevitable conflict if it is lost. The minions of the Old One have waited long for this day, and it's up to a few brave souls to deny victory to the terror that stalks the ancient forest. An adventure for selfless, heroic PCs of levels 1-12. Blood on the Trees, Part 1.

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

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# Introduction

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

## Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1. No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

When using voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities. It's a good idea to have the players vote while you determine treasure and experience awards for the scenario.

After voting, give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin. Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer*.

### Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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

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

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the

adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1

there are two things that you can do to help even the score.

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1<sup>st</sup>-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

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	

### Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round regional adventure, set in Highfolk. Characters native to Highfolk pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

It has been several weeks since the town of Quaalsten, in the heart of the Vesve Forest, has been under siege. A force of undead, magically disguised as grugach, have positioned themselves outside of the forest town, and have made it difficult for any means of transportation, except for *teleport* spells and similar magics.

While this army keeps Quaalsten occupied and Highfolk worried, another army, a humanoid one, marches in from the northeast. The commander of the forces hailing from the lands of the Old One is unknown, but many suspect that Azrin is responsible. The second force has only recently arrived, but those in the southern Vesve and Highfolk town have become very alarmed at this dark turn of events. A call has gone out - a call to arms, to aid against the gathering of evil that, many say, seeks to eradicate one of the bastions of goodness in the Vesve, and swing the balance of power in its favor.

The heroes start out in Highfolk, being summoned to a gathering, where Tavin Ersteader, mayor of Highfolk, is addressing a crowd outside the Adventurer's Guildhall. He issues a call for brave heroes to journey to Quaalsten to aid the besieged town. Hopefully, the heroes are up to the challenge; if so, they are *teleported* to Quaalsten to report in.

At Quaalsten, they are soon asked to meet with Almeric Wilstone, the current leader of the Rangers of the Vesve (since the Lord Marshal Elrenn Walthair has been missing for quite some time). At the meeting, an assassination attempt is made, and the heroes must intervene.

Afterward, Almeric discusses the possibility of working as special agents for him. He tells the heroes to get some sleep, and report to his office in the morning, where they may receive some work.

At night, a disturbance brings the heroes out to the streets. There, some other creatures have been creating mayhem, and turn their attentions to the heroes.

In the morning, two missions are made available to the heroes. Someone or something has stolen important tactical plans; apparently, they took them to the humanoid camp. Also, one of the undead camps' command tents has been discovered - Almeric knows that a battle is soon in coming, and hopes that by striking at one of the Night Walker's lieutenants, he can potentially weaken their command structure.

Before the heroes can depart, a soldier reports that the north gate is being destroyed, and some of the heroes need to be dispatched to deal with the threat. Those heroes, instead of retrieving the plans, must seek and destroy the threat to the palisade.

Another group of heroes must dodge patrols in the humanoid camp in an attempt to locate the missing plans, and return to Quaalsten with them. However, a guardian has been posted, and they must effectively deal with him without alerting the rest of the camp to their presence.

Meanwhile, one other band of adventurers must neutralize the officer in the command tent. Therein, they find a horrible surprise ...

After the action ensues, a set of four blurred, hazy obelisks appear on the edges of Quaalsten. Very soon afterward, the evil armies begin their mustering in preparation for battle - earlier than expected by the forces of good. The heroes then have a choice - either stay within Quaalsten's gates and help defend the town from attack, or leave the area to bring the news elsewhere.

## RECOGNITIONS AND SUCH

Before the adventure begins, the DM should check the PCs certificates (for Year 1) and Adventure Certificates/Adventure Records (for Year 2) and look for the following items: Recognition of Rythen (from *HIG1-02*), Recognition of Cyrinith (from *HIG1-02*), Notice of Geldaskar Bel Inaren (from *HIG1-05*), Varian Greenpath's Masterwork Elven Thinblade (original only; not traded [it can be upgraded, though]) (from *HIG1-06*), Nelia's Ring of Sneaking (original only; not traded) (from *HIG1-06*), Recognition of the Knights of the High Forest (from *HIG2-02*), and Recognition of Nelia Gertrand (from *HIG2-08*). These may come into play in Encounter 2; see that encounter for more information.

## INTRODUCTION

*Tavin Ersteader, hero of the Greyhawk Wars, friend to the elf-king of Flameflower, and mayor of Highfolk, stands before the gathered assembly outside the new Adventurer's Guildhall. Heroes, patriots, and mercenaries have come here, to listen with heavy hearts to his speech, knowing that this moment in time would remain forever with them, resonating even with those not present at this meeting.*

*You have come as well, even though some among you have listened closely to the news brought back from the Vesve, and know that the situation there has become most dire. The wind blows cold on this dark Readyng afternoon, as the mayor begins.*

*"Adventurers of Highfolk and those from environs beyond, I thank you for answering my summons. As some of you are well aware, a dark storm has fallen upon our brethren in the Vesve*

*Forest. Quaalsten, a bastion of good lying at the center of the great wood has come under siege. Several weeks ago, a force hundreds strong of foul undead masked in powerful magic positioned themselves outside of the gates of the town. Alarmed, the Hearth of the Unicorn's Heart sent word to us of the situation. The town began preparations for battle, but as of this day, only a siege has been perpetuated by the evil army.*

*"Recently, another army has moved into the area from the Old One's lands. Comprised of orcs, gnolls, and worse, they have taken up position near Quaalsten as well, and seem to be allied with the undead force. Our friends in Quaalsten are now facing a battle against two armies, one that surely will be lost without assistance from brave souls such as you.*

*"I look out into the crowd today, and I see familiar faces ... some young, some old; some I have talked with in the halls of the Town Council, and others I have fought alongside a decade ago in the last test of our resolve. One thing is certain - this threat to our lands, our people, and our way of life must be stopped. Now. And you, standing here today, are the key to pushing back the tide of evil that now threatens our friends and family in the forest. Together, we can see an end to Old Wicked's nefarious plans. Together, we can bring lasting peace to the Vesve Forest. Together, we can free Quaalsten from the ever-tightening grip of terror that holds it. Together let us raise the green and white; for freedom we fight!*

*"If you wish to free Quaalsten, and aid the forces of good, a few arcanists from the Guildsmen of the High Art have agreed to teleport groups of you into the town. Once there, you will be interviewed by Almeric Wilstone, the current leader of the Rangers of the Vesve. He will assign you tasks as soon as the need arises. Good luck and may Fharlanghn's hand grant you a safe journey, my friends."*

The adventurers get themselves formed up into groups; the PCs are one such group. Character introductions should be made at this time. Once they are ready to depart, one of the wizards *teleports* them to Quaalsten. Proceed to Encounter 1.

While they are waiting around, gathering supplies, or talking to one another, the heroes may hear a few rumors about the situation in Quaalsten. The DM should feel free to drop any of these into the laps of the PCs, to let them know that things in the Vesve have become most dire.

- I hear that the undead forces are made completely of a powerful vampire's progeny. They can go anywhere they please, either as a mist or as bats. No one is safe.
- The orcs have allied themselves with gnolls and giants, and have brought along fiends to use as shock troops.
- Siege engines the likes of which have not been seen before are found in the humanoid camp. Some say that they spray alchemical substances that can eat away stone, and spew fire as hot as a dragon's breath.
- Many powerful spellcasters are performing some sort of ritual in the undead camp. It is said that the ritual, when completed, will summon a massive wave of negative energy that kills most living things outright.

## ENCOUNTER 1: MEETING WITH ALMERIC

*After a few moments of disorientation, your vision clears and you find yourselves standing just outside of a stable. Looking around, the town appears to be empty of the type of activity you would expect during the afternoon hours in Quaalsten. You can hear the sounds of hammers clanging on metal, and sharp voices giving orders to armed men and women. All around you, everyone seems to be preparing for war.*

*After a minute or so, a young male human with sandy blonde hair walks up to your group. "Welcome to Quaalsten. I'm Stelin. You're the adventurers from Highfolk, right? I saw you teleport in like the others. Come with me ... I'm sure that Almeric Wilstone will want to speak with you as soon as possible." He turns, and begins to walk towards the town wall.*

*Reaching the palisade, you notice the large array of troops gathered here; most seem to be no more than farmers and woodsmen from the forest and its outskirts. However, all seem somber and resolute, betrayed only by the hints of apprehension in their eyes. Stelin waves you over to a ladder; when you've all gathered, he bows his head slightly and exits back into the town streets. Climbing up the wooden ladder, you ascend a good spear's throw upward, until your feet land on a solid wooden catwalk that runs the length of this side of the wall. The resonance of booted footfalls makes you momentarily question the stability of your position, but after a bit, you relax.*

*You skirt the trees placed here and there to provide archer cover, and find a good vantage point to look out onto what may well soon be the field of battle. Gazing out into the dusky forest of late*

afternoon, you note that the camp below is devoid of light. No fires dot the sea of tents and other hasty shelters constructed on the forest floor. Then, a horrible choking odor wafts in from the breeze, causing your stomach to knot itself in rapid succession. It is the putrid stench of the dead, and as you stand there keeping the bile down in your throat, you wonder how these men and women have been able to endure the stink for so long.

A tall, graying human male approaches your group. To many of you, he is familiar. It is Almeric Wilstone, and he bears a shield, upon which is a tree on a blue field with three point up arrows in the boughs. His cloak clasp is that of a golden oak leaf. "Welcome, heroes. Thank you for making this journey." Almeric exchanges greetings with each of you, smiling warmly at those faces that he remembers from times past. "I assume you have noted the darkness that surrounds us. The camp on the northern end is full of wretched orcs and filthy gnolls, so you can see we've attracted much more unwanted attention than we normally could handle. It will only be a matter of a few days before the battle begins; I certainly hope we are prepared by that time."

As he is about to speak, several younger men shout in your direction from down the catwalk. They are moving vigorously towards Almeric, and one seems to have a packet of parchment in his hand. "Forest Captain! Tracker Wilstone! We have dreadful news for you!" The men approach, and Almeric hastily greets each of them by name. Apparently, they are Rangers of the Vesve as well. One of the men thrusts the package toward Almeric. He opens it, and from within, a beautifully crafted vine necklace falls to the walkway floor. Almeric stares numbly at the ground and his face turns pale. "Elrenn Walthair, Lord Marshal of the Vesve, is dead." As he reaches down to pick up the trinket, one of the young men remarks, "As you will be soon enough". Blades pop from hidden places as their deception becomes apparent.

These "men" are actually assassins sent by Azrin to murder Almeric Wilstone. Depending on APL, they are either humans disguised with *change self* spells, nimblewrights (a type of construct, described in the Appendix B), or a death slaad with a nimblewright entourage. In any case, the surprise round is theirs, unless a hero makes a successful Sense Motive check (DC 20), which tips them off with just enough time to react during the surprise. The only person who may not attempt a Sense Motive check to gain an action during surprise is Almeric.

Note that the walkway is 10 feet across, and stretches out for quite some ways (hundreds and hundreds of feet). The outside of the walkway runs right up against the wooden poles of the palisade, which are tall enough to prevent anyone from being knocked down to the forest floor. The inside of the walkway offers no such protection, and characters falling hit the street 40 feet below (note that for characters with slow fall abilities, the amount of ropes and ladders nearby suffices for meeting the requirement of having a wall near you). Every 60 feet or so, a tree's canopy hangs from just above the walkway. The canopies are about 20 feet in diameter.

☛ **Almeric Wilstone, male human Rgr9:** hp 76. See Appendix A for statistics.

### APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Almeric's assailants, male human Rog2/Wiz1 (2):** hp 13, 13. See Appendix A for statistics.

### APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Almeric's assailants, male human Rog3/Wiz2 (2):** hp 20, 20. See Appendix A for statistics.

### APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Nimblewright:** hp 55. See Appendix A for statistics. Note that this construct wears a *cloak of arachnida*.

### APL 8 (EL 9)

☛ **Nimblewrights (2):** hp 55, 55. See Appendix A for statistics. Note that one of the constructs wears a *cloak of arachnida*.

### APL 10 (EL 11)

☛ **Nimblewrights (4):** hp 55, 55, 55, 55. See Appendix A for statistics. Note that one of the constructs wears a *cloak of arachnida*; two others each carry one *bead of force*.

### APL 12 (EL 14)

☛ **Galoruug, death slaad:** hp 112. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics. Also, see Appendix A for equipment he carries.

☛ **Nimblewrights (2):** hp 55, 55. See Appendix A for statistics. Note that one of the constructs wears a *cloak of arachnida*; two others each carry one *bead of force*.

**Tactics:** At all APLs, the goal of the assailants is to kill Almeric Wilstone. The heroes are just in the way, and

the killers attempt to clear the area of them as quickly as possible (usually, this means shoving them over the edge). Almeric fights at all APLs; although at APLs 2-4, he falls to the ground during the initial attack, and has to take a move-equivalent action to get up during the normal initiative round. The nimblewright(s) attempt to use the *cloak of arachnida* to keep the heroes from their target, while at APL 12, Galoruug is ready to cast *implosion* at Almeric on his initiative. Also, Galoruug can turn himself *invisible* and then attempt to summon more slaad if things get too sticky. As a DM, you should do everything in your power to attempt to kill Almeric. Select one of the players to run Almeric during the combat in addition to their own PC. Once Almeric is dead, the assailants attempt to leave by throwing ropes over the outside of the palisade and scaling down to the ground.

**Development:** Within 8 rounds, four other town militia (see Appendix A for their statistics) come to the heroes' aid. If the assailants are escaping, several archers take bowshots at them as they make their way from the gates of Quaalsten into the undead camp. If the assailants are captured, they are under the strictest orders not to talk. Magical coercion, or *speak with dead* may provide some information from the humans or the death slaad, but the nimblewrights are unshakable. Those that can talk know the following:

- They were hired by a powerful orc chieftain named Urtalar, Torcher of Milik-Zel. He is the commander of the forces of evil humanoids camped to the north.
- Apparently, he is working directly for Field Marshal Azrin, some elven man in the service of Iuz.
- They know nothing about the undead camp, except that (supposedly) they are allied with the Old One's humanoids in some way.
- They were under orders to infiltrate the town, disguise themselves as comrades, and get close enough to deliver the package and kill Almeric.
- None of them have any idea what was in the package until Almeric opened it.
- The humans hail from the Bandit Kingdoms; the slaad came here from Limbo out of curiosity.

If Almeric is dead, **Kirilia Layften** (female human Rgr7; hp 53), a Woods Lieutenant of the Vesve, takes command. After a couple hours of questioning, she releases the heroes to go get a good night's rest, and report back to her in the morning with possible assignments. Kirilia urges the heroes not to discuss the possibility of Elrenn's demise until more details are known.

If Almeric is saved, he is very grateful for the heroes' presence. He tells them that he has a mission for them in the morning, and the heroes should report here just after dawn to receive the details. Almeric urges the heroes not to discuss the possibility of Elrenn's demise until more details are known.

**Treasure:** APL 2: L: 8 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *dusts of tracelessness* (21 gp per packet per character).

APL 4: L: 8 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *dusts of tracelessness* (20 gp per packet per character), 2 *potions of gaseous form* (62 gp per potion per character).

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *beads of force* (166 gp per bead per character), *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *beads of force* (166 gp per bead per character), *boots of speed* (666 gp per character), *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

No matter what the outcome, go to Encounter 2 when the fight is done and things have been resolved.

## ENCOUNTER 2: MERKWORT'S INN AND TAVERN

*The inn that has been reserved for you is near the south gate. Known as Merkwort's, it is a squat two-story building; its only readily identifiable feature is a long, twisting gray brick chimney. Inside, a well-built older human male is stoking the dying embers of a fire. The tables are sparsely dotted with patrons, but the pepper-bearded man stops fussing with the fire, turns to you and says in a Suloise accent, "Welcome, travelers. Name's Merkwort. This is my inn. I'll get you some rooms, if you wish. Rigella'll be with you shortly with some food and ale. Have a seat and relax."*

**Merkwort** (male human Ftr2/Exp3; hp 33) is a veteran of the Greyhawk Wars, and while accommodating, he wishes he could get out there and fight against the evil that surrounds the town. However, Almeric and other Rangers of the Vesve have convinced him to keep his establishment open to house, feed, and water incoming "irregulars" from Highfolk (such as the PCs). There is no real menu to select from (patrons get bread and a meat broth), and the choices of drink are limited to ale and water. Resources have been conserved since the siege began several weeks ago.

Talking with Merkwort and several of the other patrons here yields the following information, if the heroes ask around for it (give away small snippets of information, unless a player role-plays his PC gathering the information convincingly, or a Gather Information check [DC 10] is made for each bullet point of information):

- The town has been under siege for more than six weeks now. The undead arrived first, and the town was alerted to their presence by a group of adventurers that broke through their camp, and informed the Rangers of the Vesve and the Hearth of the Unicorn's Heart (temple to Ehlonna). Apparently, these creatures were masking their presence by appearing to be wood elves or grugach elves. A powerful illusion covered them all, and they went relatively unnoticed, as they did not scar the land around them as they moved towards Quaalsten. Many suspect that powerful *teleportation* magics were also used to move the forces.
- Soon after they arrived, a short and bloody skirmish broke out. After losing three dozen men to various undead monstrosities, including a giant shadow bat creature, the rest of the Rangers and other militia pulled back into Quaalsten. It was apparent that their resources were indeed vast, and we would need to build up a sizable army to have a chance at defeating them. Since then, they have taken up positions closer to the gates of the town, and have slain all those who have ventured close enough. The magic of the wizards from Highfolk keeps us supplied and our troops fresh; thank the gods for that.
- Apparently, rumor has it that a man of Baklunish decent with great unholy power commands this army. His motives for attacking Quaalsten are unknown, but it is now certain that he has allied with the minions of the Old One.
- Now, just about a week ago, another army made its way through from the northeast. This faction is composed of evil humanoids that fly the banners of their respective tribes, along with the symbols of Iuz himself. They have made camp outside the northern part of the town, and their commander is unknown, but several suspect a man known as Azrin. Apparently, he is some sort of elf traitor that has become a powerful ally of the Old One.
- Ever since the arrival of the humanoid camp, both armies have been preparing for an all-out attack on the town. I know that representatives from Highfolk and Flameflower have been here often enough, and the call went out recently to bolster our troops with adventurer reinforcements. An attack is

imminent; it's only a matter of a few days now. I hope that we'll be prepared when the time comes; although I don't know if we can stand up to the combined might of two armies in any case.

## MEETING WITH OSLEN

Review each PC's recognitions and things as addressed by the heading "Recognitions and Such" from the Adventure Summary. The hero with the most of the following items is contacted by one of the patrons during the course of the evening: Favor of Cyrinith, Notice of Geldaskar Bel Inaren, Varian Greenpath's Masterwork Elven Thinblade (original only; not traded [it can be upgraded/converted, though]), and Recognition of the Knights of the High Forest. If there are two or more PCs, with the same number of the above items, then all are contacted (modify the text below as appropriate). If none of the PCs possess any of the above, then this contact does not occur.

A half-elven man, dressed in fine supple leather, orders a tankard of ale for the selected hero, and waves him/her over to his seat. Once seated, he has the following to say to him/her:

*"Welcome to Quaalsten, my friend. You may not remember me, but I do you. I am Oslen Oakbough, Knight of the High Forest. You have shown your support of our order in the past, and I feel it is necessary to inform you of another troubling matter that has come to our attention of late. You have given us your aid and trust; and so I give it in return to you.*

*"While the adventurer contingent brought in from Highfolk and further afield should help us greatly, those in command here have been awaiting the arrival of the Furyondy forces from Ironstead. To date, they have not even begun to rally troops. Apparently, Commander Helmen Fannen wishes to keep his force at Ironstead and prepare them for a possible attack on his fort. This inaction endangers the future of both Quaalsten and the Vesve Forest.*

*"From what I know, the commander's demeanor has been very strange of late, and it seems to have influenced his decision-making skills. It is not known exactly how long he has been behaving as such, but some say that ever since his return after being kidnapped last year, he has acted a bit off. Most have claimed it was just the impressions of his harrowing experiences, but the Knights think there's much more to this than can be easily observed.*

*"This is where you come in. After you are done with your duty here, I would like you and some others selected by us to journey to Ironstead and find out exactly what is happening there. We have a*

*Knight there who is gathering information; he will inform you of his findings once you arrive. You do not have to accept this task, but I would like to know if you are interested in meeting with me once the imminent threat here has been dealt with. Tell no one of what was spoken between us; the matter involving the Furyondy garrison is not well known, and I wish to maintain secrecy in the selection of individuals for the task ahead. What say you?"*

Oslen Oakbough waits for an answer. Adventurers that ask for compensation are gently turned down by him. If the hero agrees to help, Oslen thanks the PC, informs him/her that he'll soon be in contact again, and leaves. The hero gains the Favor of Oslen Oakbough, listed on the Adventure Record. The DM should also record the player's character information on the Critical Events Summary, and submit it to the Highfolk Triad. If this event is being played after the first-run of the scenario at Conflagration IV in April 2003, but still before August 1, 2003, void the rest of the Critical Events Summary, but still submit the character information portion.

Should the hero inform others of the conversation he/she had with Oslen, the favor gained above is forfeit. If the character tells only the other PCs about it, the DM is free to adjudicate whether or not the favor is lost, based on the actions of the other PCs now "in the know".

## **MEETING WITH ETHRAM**

Review each PC's recognitions and things as addressed by the heading "Recognitions and Such" from the Adventure Summary. The hero with the most of the following items is contacted later that evening in his/her room: Recognition of Rythen, Nelia's Ring of Sneaking (original only; not traded), and Recognition of Nelia Gertrand. If there are two or more PCs, with the same number of the above items, then all are contacted (either separately or in the same room; modify the text below as appropriate). If none of the PCs possess any of the above, then this contact does not occur.

After the hero is asleep in his/her room, they are startled to consciousness by a cloaked form shrouded in darkness. The man makes certain any other heroes in the room are indeed unconscious (and they do not wake, since he has drugged them with knockout poison) before proceeding. How the man was able to gain access to the room is a mystery, but he was able to bypass any security the hero/heroes had set up, and speaks in a hushed voice throughout.

*"It is good to have the pleasure of finally meeting you. I am Ethram, and I represent a group of concerned individuals in Highfolk. You are familiar with some*

*of my associates, and they wish to offer you an opportunity to earn something more rewarding than mere gold or magic. It has come time for the infestation to be cleared from our happy home, and we need more exterminators. Perhaps you would be interested in ridding Highfolk town of a mutually annoying insect? This one has buried itself deep into the town's body, and will require both finesse and strength to pull out before the damage is irreparable.*

*"After you have finished with your task here, we will contact you and provide you with more information, assuming you're interested. So, how about cleaning up the Old One's mess there, once and for all?"*

Ethram waits for a response, and either acknowledges the acceptance with no more than a simple "good" or says nothing to a declination. In any case, he leaves as soon as possible, using *dimension door*. If the hero has agreed to help, he/she gains the Favor of Ethram, listed on the Adventure Record. The DM should also record the player's character information on the Critical Events Summary, and submit it to the Highfolk Triad. If this event is being played after the first-run of the scenario at Conflagration IV in April 2003, but still before August 1, 2003, void the rest of the Critical Events Summary, but still submit the character information portion.

## **ENCOUNTER 3: A GOOD NIGHT'S REST?**

For heroes at APL 2 and 4, skip this encounter and go to Encounter 4. For other heroes, read the following:

*Your restless slumber at Merkwort's is interrupted by the sounds of shouting and men fighting nearby outside. Looking out the window, you can see people moving about at the south wall. A voice rings out, "Someone help us! We're under attack!" The sounds of the dying soldiers dispel the last wisps of the cloud of sleep in your head, as you contemplate your next actions.*

Outside, near the south gate, creatures from the evil forces are killing the guardsmen positioned there. There are currently 10 guardsmen and 4 veteran guardsmen (see Appendix A for their statistics) alive near the gate; several others lay dead around them. The door on the inn is 200 feet from the south wall and gate. Resolve the combat against the guardsmen round-by-round until the heroes arrive; at that time, the monsters target the

characters instead. The monsters attack mercilessly, unless they are down to less than 10 hit points, upon which they attempt to flee.

### APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Invisible stalker:** hp 52. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Invisible stalkers (2):** hp 52, 56. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Invisible stalkers (4):** hp 48, 52, 52, 56. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### APL 12 (EL 14)

➤ **Nightshade (nightwing):** hp 110. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

**Tactics:** As described above, the monsters move to attack the heroes once they are spotted. They attack ferociously, attempting to kill all the heroes before going back to take out any of the guards. Once the heroes arrive, the guards let them fight, as their weapons and training are no match for the monsters that have come over the wall. If the heroes fight for more than 2 minutes, both **High Lady of the Glen Alysia Thanemantle** (female human Clr12 [Ehlonna]; hp 87; turns/destroys undead as a Clr16 [+4 to check]; has greater turning from Sun domain) and **Alila Meningrath** (female human Clr8 [Atroa]; hp 51; +2 to turn/destroy undead check; has Air domain [can rebuke creatures with the air descriptor]) arrive to use their turn abilities to deal with the situation.

**Development:** After the battle, the guards take stock of their losses, and the heroes are briefly questioned on what has happened. A search of the immediate area turns up nothing of significance. It is not yet midnight, but the PCs need to get to sleep soon if they are to get a good night's rest and regain any spells lost in the battle. If the heroes are able to interrogate the invisible stalkers, they can learn the following:

- A powerful man who is called the Night Walker brought them here from their home on his dread realm. It is a land of darkness, where a vast forest of evil looms; in its center is a walled town wherein lies the keep of the master.
- They were sent here to cause as much destruction and death as possible; once their lives were in

danger, they were to flee back to the camp of the walking dead.

APLs 6-8 should proceed to Encounter 5. APLs 10-12 should proceed to Encounter 6.

## ENCOUNTER 4: THE MISSION (RETRIEVE THE PLANS)

This encounter is for characters at APLs 2-4. If Almeric was slain the day before, Kirilia meets with the heroes. Alter the text below as appropriate.

*In the morning, you pack up your gear, leave the inn, and head over to the south wall. There, you see the troops more anxious than ever; apparently, last night, some creatures came over the gate, and slew quite a few men and women before being stopped by none other than the High Lady of the Glen and her company.*

*After chatting with several of the militia, you are informed by a Ranger of the Vesve to meet with Almeric in the guardhouse nearby. There, he sits at a small table peaked by creased maps of the area and the enemy camps.*

*"Thank you for joining me this morning. I hope you slept well enough, for I have a task of both importance and danger for you to undertake today." Almeric pulls one of the maps to the top of the pile, and motions for you to gather around him. "Last evening, very near this very guardhouse, several creatures came over the wall and killed a number of our guards. In the ensuing chaos, some of our supply plans have disappeared. While not the most critical of documents, the plans could be used by the enemy to hamper our ability to get necessities to our troops during the conflict. Through divination magic, we have discerned the location of the plans in the humanoid camp. Since it is daylight, the orcs, which make up the vast bulk of the forces from that army, are sleeping. The smaller gnoll contingent stands guard now. I need you to head to this tent here", Almeric stabs a finger toward the center of the massive camp, "and retrieve the plans found in the tent. Stealth is paramount to success.*

*"As such, when you reach the north gate, Ilvin Istamore, a wizard-friend of mine, will cloak you in invisibility spells to aid you in your task. It is hundreds of yards from the gate to the location of this tent, which you should be able to identify by the blood-red standard flying outside; on the ground below are numerous spears lodged point-down in the*

*earth." Almeric pulls the map off of the table and folds it up. "Take this with you in case you get lost. You should head out to the north gate as soon as possible. Good luck - for green and white."*

Almeric dismisses the heroes, and returns to his work. Once the characters decide to head to the north gate, read the following:

*The pungent, smoke-filled air betrays the nature of the camp that lies beyond the north wall. At the gate, you meet up with Ilvin, who casts his spell on each of you, and informs you that it will last one hour. You are lead out of the gate; now, only the expanse of the enemy camp awaits you.*

*Even though it is still obvious enough to you that humanoids are the primary occupants of the sprawl outside the gates, it seems as if they have taken some care to use the natural environment to their advantage. No doubt it is due to the ever-present line of archers that dot the palisade at Quaalsten; in fact, quite a bit of foliage has been removed directly outside the gates, creating a "kill zone" that makes sniping laughably easy. Of course, it works both ways to some degree; it's a good thing that you're invisible.*

The heroes should have some plan of attack for the retrieval of the plans. In addition, remember that they are *invisible*, and need to communicate to one another verbally, or in some other creative way, to pass ideas on to one another. Most of the orc troops are sleeping during this part of the day, but the gnolls stand guard and patrol in their absence.

Draw out several tents (10' by 10' and 10' by 20') and fire pits on a map as the heroes progress through the camp. Have gnoll patrols move back and forth from time to time, setting the initial encounter distance at line-of-sight (with the tents all around, this should be between 30 and 100 feet). Have them make Listen checks when appropriate. If the heroes manage to alert patrols by fighting with them before making off with the plans, feel free to add on more patrols, staggering their entry into combat by a few rounds each time. The heroes are supposed to use stealth and have little time to dawdle here; allow them reasonable opportunities for escape or misdirection if they are attempting to reach their goal.

## THE PATROLS

The standard gnoll patrols consist of 3-6 gnolls; every so often, a gnoll patrol includes a canine creature.

## APL 2 (EL 4)

### Standard Patrol

👉 Gnolls (3): hp 10, 11, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### Canine Patrol

👉 Gnolls (2): hp 10, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

👉 Worg: hp 30. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

## APL 4 (EL 6)

### Standard Patrol

👉 Gnolls (6): hp 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### Canine Patrol

👉 Gnolls (4): hp 10, 11, 11, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

👉 Howler: hp 39. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

## THE TENT

Once the heroes have had some close calls and interesting run-ins, read the following:

*Ahead, you see the tent you've been looking for - a tattered, blood red banner with a black spiked gauntlet hangs from a gnarled sapling, no doubt ripped from the forest on the journey here. All around the tent, shortspears are plunged into the dirt, the ends of their hafts dangling black feathers in the cool air.*

The tent is large, about 20 feet long by 20 feet wide. Inside the tent is Ulressk, a fiendish gnoll who is tasked with guarding the plans that were stolen from Quaalsten.

He is a towering creature, almost 8 feet tall, and his deep brown fur has been blackened by the raven feathers he has tied all about his body. His eyes glow with an eerie green aura, and his teeth are vampiric fangs that drip with venomous bile. If he hears the heroes outside, he takes his *ravenfeather spear* and walks outside to investigate. He attacks without mercy; after four rounds of fighting, another patrol comes to his aid (use the standard patrol, unless the heroes are doing well in the combat, then use the canine patrol).

## APL 2 (EL 4)

👉 Ulressk, male fiendish gnoll Brb1/Ftr1: hp 35. See Appendix A for statistics.

## APL 4 (EL 6)

➤ **Ulressk, male fiendish gnoll Brb2/Ftr2:** hp 52. See Appendix A for statistics.

**Tactics:** Ulressk seeks only to kill any intruders he finds in or around the tent area. He has strict orders to kill anyone trespassing, except for officers in his army. He begins any combat by raging, and attacks the strongest-looking character first. Ulressk does not flee if he is about to die; he would rather fall in bloody battle than disgrace himself by running away.

**Development:** After the defeat of the fiendish gnoll, a search of his body reveals two hollowed-out boot heels (Search check, DC 17). Inside, along with two beautifully cut diamonds, the heroes find a few more maps and plans - important strategic maps that weren't thought to be missing. In fact, the plans on Ulressk could be used by the enemy army to gain a significant advantage in the battle ahead. Inside the tent, the supply plans can be found. Also, the spear the fiendish gnoll was using detects as magic; once the first PC handles it, they pick up the curse it bears. The hero may not rid him/herself of the weapon; in fact, they prefer the weapon to the exclusion of all others. If it is ever discarded, within one minute, it appears again on that character's person, stowed away.

**Treasure:** Defeat/avoid the patrols.

APL 2: L: 22 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

APL 4: L: 45 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

Defeat the fiendish gnoll and return the plans to Quaalsten.

APL 2: L: 4 gp; C: 300 gp; M: *+1 ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (25 gp per character).

APL 4: L: 4 gp; C: 300 gp; M: *+1 ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp per character).

The heroes should attempt to exit the humanoid camp and make their way back to Quaalsten as soon as possible.

If they have not managed to get into conflict with one of the patrols, and if time allows, the DM may have a run-in with a patrol. The heroes need to move quickly through the camp, as more than likely, one or more of them have become visible again. The DM should be certain to have one encounter with a standard gnoll patrol at about 60 feet away. If the heroes manage to exit the area quickly, only one patrol gives pursuit. If the characters spend more than two rounds fighting, a gnoll canine patrol appears roughly 100 feet away. Every two rounds, alternate gnoll patrols and gnoll canine patrols, until the heroes decide enough is enough and begin to flee.

Have the chase continue for five rounds. As the heroes enter the kill zone established 200 feet from the gates, the gnolls stop their pursuit, and each fires arrow shots at the heroes until they reach the gate. In addition, the militia on the north wall (see Appendix A for statistics) begins to fire upon the gnolls. Resolve the conflict round by round until the heroes are safely to the gate. Once the heroes reach the gate, go to Encounter 7.

## ENCOUNTER 5: THE MISSION (STOP THE SAPPERS)

This encounter is for characters at APLs 6-8. If Almeric has been killed, Kirilia briefs the heroes for the mission. Adjust the following text if needed.

*In the morning, you pack up your gear, leave the inn, and head over to the south wall. There, you see the troops more anxious than ever; last night's harrowing battle has them on pins and needles.*

*After chatting with several of the militia, you are informed by a Ranger of the Vesve to meet with Almeric in the guardhouse nearby. There, he sits at a small table peaked by creased maps of the area and the enemy camps.*

*"Thank you for joining me this morning. I hope you were able to get some rest, for I have a task of both importance and danger for you to undertake today." Almeric pulls one of the maps to the top of the pile, and motions for you to gather around him. "Last evening, as you battled the invisible fiends that came over the wall, another force used this opportunity to gain a tactical advantage. In the ensuing chaos, some of our supply plans have disappeared." A half-elf man appears in the doorway as Almeric is talking; after a moment, the Forest Captain sends a scowl in his direction, as if to suggest his presence is not welcome.*

*"Tracker Wilstone! At the north gate ... strange creatures from the earth are destroying the wall! We need help at once!" Stunned, Almeric looks at you, his eyes resolute. "Please, go help the guards at the gate! If it falls ... all of our defenses against the northern army will be compromised! Go now; I'll have another group retrieve the plans. For green and white!"*

Almeric does not tolerate any discussion on the matter. Either the heroes go to the north gate, or they must leave the area. When the heroes decide to depart, read the following:

*You quickly wind through the busy streets of Quaasten, wondering what horror awaits at the north gate. As you get closer, you can see dozens of guards rushing up to the walls; several on the catwalk are firing arrows down on an unseen enemy. Then, you see the wall buckle as a gaping tear appears in the wood; several men and women tumble to the street below, a few land in crippling or life-ending positions. Emerging from the earth like a shark from the depths of the sea, a huge toothy maw envelops one of the guards, crushing bone and tearing flesh. Its bloated body is grayish and rough, like a huge boulder. Clawed arms flail in all manner of directions, no doubt expecting to catch on clothing, wood, or flesh. The creature is massive, and after a moment, its strange bulbous eyes blink, and turn in your direction.*

Each xorn takes down a 30-foot section of the wall every minute, until the PCs attack. Once this occurs, the creatures' attentions are focused on the heroes. In addition to the xorn, a fiendish orc wizard named Nargarm has come with them to scout out the area under the cover of *invisibility*.

### **APL 6 (EL 8)**

➤ **Elder xorn:** hp 127; AL NE. See the *Monster Manual*, pages 187-188, for statistics.

➤ **Nargarm, male fiendish orc Wiz3(Abj):** hp 16. See Appendix A for statistics.

### **APL 8 (EL 10)**

➤ **Elder xorns (2):** hp 127, 132; AL NE. See the *Monster Manual*, pages 187-188, for statistics.

➤ **Nargarm, male fiendish orc Wiz4(Abj):** hp 21. See Appendix A for statistics.

**Tactics:** Nargarm hangs in back, trying to stay out of combat, observing the actions of the heroes, assessing their capabilities. If he is somehow discovered, he attempts to flee using spells if it all possible. If he cannot escape, he fights with spells and his *ravenfeather spear*. Otherwise, he flees when the battle is over.

The elder xorn continue to attack the heroes until reduced to less than 10 hit points. Unfortunately for the heroes, these xorn are in league with the Old One, and cannot be convinced to turn from the path of evil.

**Development:** After the battle, the militia takes stock of their losses. As long as the heroes fought the xorn without much delay, the damage to the wall can be

repaired with the hard work of a few people in a matter of hours. If a section (or more) of the wall collapses from the xorn's attack, the holes are too large to be covered in time, and the forces of Quaasten are significantly impaired during the coming battle.

Also, the spear the fiendish orc was using detects as magic; once the first PC handles it, they pick up the curse it bears. The hero may not rid him/herself of the weapon; in fact, they prefer the weapon to the exclusion of all others. If it is ever discarded, within one minute, it appears again on that character's person, stowed away.

If he is captured and interrogated, Nargarm reveals the following under extreme coercion (Intimidate check, DC 23) or magical influence (such as *suggestion*):

- He was sent by his tribe's leader, Urtalar, Torcher of Milik-Zel, to scout out the defenses of the north wall.
- Their army is prepared for battle; Nargarm is certain that the call will come soon. They are waiting on some sort of sign, something big to happen to signal the beginning of the attack.

**Treasure:** APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: +2 *ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character), *scroll of fly* (31 gp per character), *scroll of magic missile (3rd level)* (6 gp per character), *scroll of web* (12 gp per character).

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: +2 *ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp per character), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character), *scroll of fly* (31 gp per character), *scroll of magic missile (3rd level)* (6 gp per character), *scroll of web* (12 gp per character).

Once the heroes have defeated the xorn, go to Encounter 7.

## **ENCOUNTER 6: THE MISSION (KILL THE LEADER)**

This encounter is for characters at APLs 10-12. If Almeric has been killed, Kirilia briefs the heroes for the mission. Adjust the following text if needed.

*In the morning, you pack up your gear, leave the inn, and head over to the south wall. There, you see the troops more anxious than ever; last night's harrowing battle has them on pins and needles.*

*After chatting with several of the militia, you are informed by a Ranger of the Vesve to meet with Almeric in the guardhouse nearby. There, he sits at a small table peaked by creased maps of the area and the enemy camps.*

*"Our diviners in the Hearth of the Unicorn's Heart have used scry spells on the enemy camp to the south rather extensively." Almeric pulls a map out from under some others, smooths it out, and motions you closer. He points at a location in the enemy camp, only a couple hundred yards from the gate. "We have determined that there is a command tent located not too far into the undead camp. There, we have found an undead creature that seems to be a high-ranking officer of sorts. We have seen many others in the camp reporting to him, and he seems to be a leader in discussions and planning sessions. We think he may be one of the Night Walker's progeny, and may be a critical figure in their tactical command.*

*"What we want you to do is infiltrate the camp, and destroy the creature that commands from that area. I know that these forces of evil are beginning to muster; the battle will come soon enough. We are fighting two armies, and we need every edge we can get. Here, take this map, although you shouldn't need it - the command tent is relatively easy to find, since it is so large. Report back as soon as your mission is complete. Good luck - for green and white!"*

Almeric dismisses the heroes to begin their mission. Any characters that do not wish to go on the mission must leave the area. When the heroes are ready to go, read the following:

*Outside the south gate, the gut-churning stench of death assaults your nose and mouth. The vast camp looks a bit less imposing in the cold daylight, but the eerie silence and lack of any fire still make you give pause. You can see forms moving about, some creatures still masked as elves, brandishing weapons no doubt taken from their rightful owners. Occasionally, a strange chirping sound carries its way to your ears, but after a short while, you relegate it to a background noise.*

Draw out a map of the camp. Tents are positioned every 30-40 feet, and they are generally of the 10' by 10' variety. Have the heroes take notice of the "elven" patrols (3-6 ghouls), and have a couple of close calls, if possible. The PCs are not spotted, however. In fact, this is a deception laid to draw powerful heroes out to be ambushed by one of the real commanders here, a bone naga named Zaanekral.

Zaanekral, along with several other commanders, has been engaging in a bit of counter-intelligence, *scrying*, and misdirection. It has given one of the ghosts in service to the Night Walker enough information to act as a proxy commander, and has observed the goings on behind the cover of *improved invisibility* when necessary. Its "tent" is actually a small stone mausoleum that has been covered in a *permanent image* spell. Zaanekral waits in an opportune position for the heroes to take the bait, and then attacks. Once the heroes have traveled into the camp a bit, read the following:

*Ahead is your destination. The large tent encompasses an area at least twice as big as other tents around it. On the outside, a symbol of a skull and scythe is painted above the opening in black paint.*

The area inside is 10 feet high, 25 feet long, and 25 feet wide. The stone walls are approximately 2 inches thick. Once the heroes are ready to enter, read the following:

*Inside the dark tent, a large table sits in the center; upon the table are many large pieces of parchment. Chairs are scattered about the area. In addition, there are a few beings that look much like wild elves - their bodies are covered in leaves, feathers and skin paints, standing toward the back of the tent. One of them wheels to face you; he carries a shortspear adorned with black feathers. He speaks in the elven tongue, his words laced with impending violence. "Who are you to dare enter my command area? I am Zaanekral, and I am your death!"*

The undead creatures move to attack the heroes; initiative should be rolled at this time. In addition, upon entering the tent (and on their initiative sequence), each hero needs to make a Will save (DC 22). Success allows the PC to see through the illusion and note the mausoleum's stone walls, floor, and the sarcophagus where the table once was present. Where the tent was open, a stone archway leading outside is present.

## **APL 10 (EL 12)**

➤ **Zaanekral, bone naga:** hp 97. See Appendix A for statistics.

➤ **Ghosts (2):** hp 26, 30. One of them bears the *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear* and *dust of tracelessness*. Another has a *medallion of thoughts* and a *potion of gaseous form*. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics. Also see Appendix A for the equipment they carry, and the modifications to the base ghost statistics.

## APL 12 (EL 14)

➤ **Zaaneekral, advanced bone naga:** hp 195. See Appendix A for statistics.

➤ **Ghasts (4):** hp 26, 28, 30, 32. One of them bears the *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear* and *dust of tracelessness*. Another has a *medallion of thoughts* and a *potion of gaseous form*. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics. Also see Appendix A for the equipment they carry, and the modifications to the base ghost statistics.

**Tactics:** The disguised undead, under command from the Night Walker, attack the heroes without regard to their own possible destruction. The true bone naga master of the mausoleum, the real Zaaneekral, lies hidden in an *improved invisibility* spell, fully prepared, ready to trap the heroes in an ambush. The constant *detect thoughts* has tipped him off to the heroes' presence, and it has many defensive spells already active, and he leads off his attack with a *wall of force* spell cast over the archway leading outside, effectively trapping the heroes in the mausoleum. Zaaneekral then unleashes its offensive fury upon the heroes, dropping *delayed blast fireball* spells on itself (counting on its *protection from fire* or, at APL 12, they are energy substituted with cold, from which it is immune). Zaaneekral does not surrender under any circumstance; however, it attempts to *teleport* away when it gets to 20 hit points, things appear grim, or both. It should be noted that since Zaaneekral can *detect thoughts* at will, it may alter its tactics to inflict the most amount of damage possible to the heroes. The DM should utilize the cruelty of this undead creature to its full extent.

**Development:** Once Zaaneekral is dead or defeated, the heroes should make back for the town of Quaalsten. After a few minutes, the undead camp begins to stir; it should be made clear that some sort of large gathering is taking place (the troops are beginning to muster). The ghost posing as Zaaneekral has a spear that detects as magic; once the first PC handles it, they pick up the curse it bears. The hero may not rid him/herself of the weapon; in fact, they prefer the weapon to the exclusion of all others. If it is ever discarded, within one minute, it appears again on that character's person, stowed away.

**Treasure:** APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *horn of blasting* (1000 gp per character), *brooch of shielding* (25 gp per character), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character).

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *horn of blasting* (1000 gp per character), *brooch of shielding* (25 gp per character), *dust*

*of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character).

After the heroes decide to head back into the town, proceed to Encounter 7.

## ENCOUNTER 7: THE BATTLE BEGINS

*Returning to Quaalsten, you inform the command of the details of your mission. They thank you once again for your bravery and service, and cannot stress enough the important role you have played in the defense of the forest town.*

*You are asked to rest up over at Merkwort's, and return at sundown to the south gate.*

The heroes may wish to get some rest and spend some time chatting amongst each other; if time allows, some more roleplaying can be done between the PCs at Merkwort's. They may even learn some information that they may have missed earlier in Encounter 2. When sundown comes, and the heroes head to the south wall, read the following (keeping in mind that if Almeric is dead, Kirilia should be substituted for him):

*You leave Merkwort's, and walk the short distance to the south wall. There, you see hundreds of men and women, all preparing for battle; checking over weapons, strapping on armor, and saying tear-filled goodbyes to their children and elders. Torches, some lit with fire, and others with magic, are being handed out and placed in niches all along the wall. One of the Woods Lieutenants, a dark blonde female human named Kirilia Layften, explains the situation to you.*

*"Both armies are beginning to muster. It looks like a full-on attack will happen in a matter of hours. The siege machines the northern army has assembled are being readied for use; the army outside these gates is engaging in some sort of mass ritual. Thankfully, we have contacted Highfolk town, and the mayor has agreed to send as many men and women as he can spare for our defense. This should at least double our compliment, and provide us with some time to gather our remaining allies. Apparently, we have also gotten word that a large number of woodsmen have formed themselves into a fighting force, and should be here soon. In addition, some of the Knights of the High Forest and their allies are making great speed to join our forces. Both of these armies will attack from without, while we attempt to hold from within. With great luck, and some solid planning, they should be*

able to break through and get into the gates via our teleportation specialists we have hired from the Wayfarer's Union.

"You may leave whenever you wish; your obligation to Quaalsten and the Vesve was served when you completed your mission earlier today. I will arrange for one of the wizards to teleport you home if you want. Or, you can stay and fight for the forest here; fight against the dark tide that threatens us all, and we can meet our fate together. It is your choice, and you will not be judged harshly if you decide to go."

Just then as the sun begins to set, a few wizards walk out from one of the guardhouses. As they trudge out into a clear space to work their magic, the remaining light in the sky is snuffed out like a dying candle. The sky above is almost as dark as night; you can see some sort of swirling pattern barely detectable in the sky, almost like viewing the surface while underneath the waves of the sea. Something has happened; the troops and wizards look around in shock and confusion. Out on the wall, the guards call down to the command, and they quickly climb up to the catwalk to observe. After a few moments, you follow; looking about, you note that the undead army is still visible, although you need to focus, as if you are looking through a haze. Then, an archer points to the northeast, and you see a dark obelisk rising up above the top of the wall, apparently composed of the same swirling darkness as the dome that surrounds the town. To each direction you look, and you see four obelisks in all. As you take in the strange sight, a crackling, thunderous sound shakes the entire town. After a moment of nervousness, it passes.

The wizards, more anxious than ever, begin to cast their teleport spells to bring the much-needed reinforcements from Highfolk to aid in the battle most assuredly to come. However, something is wrong - their spells fail, and they turn look at each other in utter revulsion as a horrible revelation dawns upon them. Whatever has occurred here has blocked their magic - Quaalsten's lifeline has been cut. There will be no more aid from Highfolk any time soon. The forest home of Quaal is alone against two armies of evil.

After some discussion and magical tests with the wizards, Almeric approaches your group. "Most dreadful news indeed, my friends. Whatever magical energy has been erected around the town has blocked all transportation magics, including teleportation and flying. Also, divinations for communication seem to be ineffective. It looks like we will have to stand alone, and hope our friends arrive with Fharlanghn's

alacrity. Our strength for the coming battle has been effectively halved.

"It is now a most difficult decision you face, and one you must each choose for yourselves. I am preparing an exit team to attempt to leave the town and break out to Flameflower and Highfolk with the news. You can choose to accompany them, and take the word back to the communities of the Vesve and Highvale in hopes of uniting the region against this power.

"Or, you can stand here and fight. The battle we are about to face will be long and bloody, and it very well may cost you your lives. Since our force is not nearly what we expected, adventurers with combat experience will be invaluable. In addition, should we survive, we'll most likely be cut off from any assistance for at least a few weeks. It will certainly test your resolve to its limits. My exit team will leave in ten minutes. You will only have one chance to make this choice, so think carefully." Almeric turns from you, and shouts to the troops, asking for volunteers to make the run outside the gates, leaving you to your fateful decision.

Ask the players to think long and hard about what choice they are going to make for their character. Also, remind them that they do not have to make the choice as a group; each PC can make his/her own decision on whether to leave or stay. Once everyone has decided, go to the Conclusion.

**Treasure:** Each character has the opportunity to pick up an *everburning torch* at the end of the scenario.

In addition, all heroes successful in their mission have the opportunity to upgrade any one masterwork suit of armor/shield and any one masterwork weapon they possess to a +1 version at the end of any Highfolk regional scenario (APLs 2-4), or upgrade any one +1 suit of armor/shield and any one +1 weapon they possess to a +2 version at the end of any Highfolk regional scenario (APLs 6-12). Once both items have been chosen, this benefit is void.

## CONCLUSION

### STAY AND FIGHT

For heroes deciding to stay and fight, read the following:

*You stand at the wall, watching the exit team slip outside the gates and fade from your sight, hoping that they'll make it through and get word to Highfolk and Flameflower. Momentarily, you wonder if you could've made a difference in their mission's success*

*or failure. Almeric stands on the catwalk, directly over the south gate, and addresses the troops. "Tonight, we fight for our homes, our families, our very lives. The battle will be hard, and in the morning, many of us will not be here to see the sunrise. I want you to all remember this moment, this time of courage and selfless bravery against a terrible evil. No matter what else may happen, no matter how dark the hour may seem, we will not let Quaalsten fall. If it is destroyed, the forces of the Old One will run rampant across the forest and the lands of our cousins. If we hold, our brethren will have enough time to gather their armies and come to our aid. We must see the night through - we must be the light for not only ourselves, but for all good folk of this ancient forest we call home. For green and white - for the Vesve this night!" A rousing cheer wells up from the farmers and shopkeepers made soldiers once again, as you prepare yourself for the longest night you've ever known - the Battle of Quaalsten is about to begin.*

Inform the players that those characters that decided to stay in Quaalsten to fight have the following restrictions/notes (summarize this information in the Play Notes area of the Adventure Record):

- The PC is considered out-of-play until *HIG3-05 Burn Away the Endless Night*, scheduled to premiere September 4-7, 2003, at Milwaukee Summer Revel. This event is a special scenario that is only playable by heroes that chose to stay in Quaalsten.
- There are two exceptions to the out-of-play status. Summer of 2003, there are three special events: Origins (June), Gen Con Indy (July), and Conflict in the Vesve in La Crosse, WI (August). The character may be played in one (and only one) of these special events.
- The second exception is only for judges (not players) at Gen Con Indy and Origins. If a player judges at one (or both) of those conventions, they are allowed to play the out-of-play character in the core scenarios premiering at those events as either slot zeros or at the convention itself. This only applies to the aforementioned conventions, and the player must judge at Gen Con to be eligible to play the Gen Con events with the character that decided to stay, and likewise for Origins.
- On September 4, characters may resume normal play, even if the player is not able to attend the premiere convention. They may play *HIG3-05 Burn Away the Endless Night* at any time thereafter, but this event must be comprised of a table of PCs that stayed in Quaalsten during *HIG3-03 Siege*.
- Once a character resumes normal play status, they may play any scenarios missed during the summer season that are still legally playable (i.e. non-special events).
- The character will be charged the normal Time Unit allotment for this scenario, as well as *HIG3-05 Burn Away the Endless Night*. At Dan's Con of the Vale IV, October 23-26, 2003, the hero will be charged 6 extra Time Units (either in- or out-of-region) during a special event. If the player is not able to attend DCV IV, the Time Unit cost must still be paid, and the player should contact Chris Tulach of the Highfolk Triad for determination of the game effects between the dates of November 1 - November 30, 2003.
- If this event is played after Conflagration 2003, the character must pay the normal Time Unit cost plus 6 Time Units for this scenario. They are then eligible to play *HIG3-05 Burn Away the Endless Night*. No further benefit is gained at DCV IV.
- This information will be posted on the Highfolk website ([www.moogoogablau.net/~highfolk](http://www.moogoogablau.net/~highfolk) or [www.highfolk.com](http://www.highfolk.com)) for reference.

## **MAKING A BREAK FOR IT**

*You gather up your gear, and prepare to leave the town of Quaalsten with several other volunteers. Invisibility spells are placed upon you, which should help immensely in your task. As you stand just outside the south gate, you look back on the swirling grey mass of the forest town, hoping that it is not the last time you see it standing as a bastion of good in the heart of the Vesve.*

*Your team moves swiftly, using stealth when possible, but attempting to leave the area before the real battle begins. After a tense hour's worth of travel, you clear the immediate area, and find relief in the obscuring tangle of the forest. After moving for a few hours southwest through the dense foliage, you stop to rest and eat in the cool night air. Maps of the Vesve and surrounding areas are passed around, and you agree to further divide yourselves after first light, so that you can report the news to as many communities as possible.*

*You make camp and get some rest, although you can't help but think about the fate of Quaalsten unfolding while you lie here miles away. When you wake up in the morning, what future will the night have made for Quaalsten, and indeed all of the Vesve Forest?*

Characters leaving the town pay normal Time Unit costs for this scenario, and may not participate in *HIG3-05*

*Burn Away the Endless Night.* They have no other restrictions.

## The End

# PASSWORD

At the conclusion of this event, you should give all the players the password to this scenario. Tell them to write it on their adventure certificates, and inform them that it will be used to unlock the adventure summary document that will be found on the Highfolk website ([www.moogoogablau.net/~highfolk](http://www.moogoogablau.net/~highfolk) or [www.highfolk.com](http://www.highfolk.com)), approximately two months from the conclusion of the premiere of this scenario. The password for this scenario is **almeric** (all lower case).

# 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 to each character.

### Encounter 1: Meeting with Almeric

Defeat the assailants.

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP
APL 12	420 XP

Saving Almeric Wilstone's life.

APL 2	30 XP
APL 4	75 XP
APL 6	90 XP
APL 8	120 XP
APL 10	150 XP
APL 12	180 XP

### Encounter 3: A Good Night's Rest?

Defeat the night creatures.

APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP
APL 12	420 XP

Save at least 6 guards from death.

APL 6	30 XP
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APL 8	45 XP
APL 10	60 XP
APL 12	75 XP

### Encounter 4: The Mission (Retrieve the Plans)

Defeat/avoid the patrols.

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP

Defeat the fiendish gnoll and return the plans to Quaalsten.

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	180 XP

### Encounter 5: The Mission (Stop the Sappers)

Defeat the elder xorn.

APL 6	240 XP
APL 8	300 XP

### Encounter 6: The Mission (Kill the Leader)

Defeat Zaanekral and his minions.

APL 10	360 XP
APL 12	420 XP

### Discretionary Award

Give out this award however you see fit - roleplaying, accomplishing goals, performing heroic actions, etc.

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	60 XP
APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	60 XP
APL 10	60 XP
APL 12	60 XP

### Total Possible Experience

<b>APL 2</b>	<b>450 XP</b>
<b>APL 4</b>	<b>675 XP</b>
<b>APL 6</b>	<b>840 XP</b>
<b>APL 8</b>	<b>1065 XP</b>
<b>APL 10</b>	<b>1290 XP</b>
<b>APL 12</b>	<b>1575 XP</b>

# 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.

## TREASURE KEY:

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, gems, jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic items. Figures expressed below are per character.

### Encounter 1: Meeting with Almeric

Defeat the assailants.

APL 2: L: 8 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *dusts of tracelessness* (21 gp per packet per character).

APL 4: L: 8 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *dusts of tracelessness* (20 gp per packet per character), 2 *potions of gaseous form* (62 gp per potion per character).

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *beads of force* (166 gp per bead per character), *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2 *beads of force* (166 gp per bead per character), *boots of speed* (666 gp per character), *cloak of arachnida* (500 gp per character).

### Encounter 4: The Mission (Retrieve the Plans)

Defeat/avoid the patrols.

APL 2: L: 22 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

APL 4: L: 45 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

Defeat the fiendish gnoll and return the plans to Qualsten.

APL 2: L: 4 gp; C: 300 gp; M: +1 *ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (25 gp per character).

APL 4: L: 4 gp; C: 300 gp; M: +1 *ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp per character).

### Encounter 5: The Mission (Stop the Sappers)

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: +2 *ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character), *scroll of fly* (31 gp per character), *scroll of magic missile (3rd level)* (6 gp per character), *scroll of web* (12 gp per character).

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: +2 *ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp per character), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character), *scroll of fly* (31 gp per character), *scroll of magic missile (3rd level)* (6 gp per character), *scroll of web* (12 gp per character).

### Encounter 6: The Mission (Kill the Leader)

Defeat Zaanekral and his minions.

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: +2 *thundering ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *medallion of thoughts* (1000 gp per character), *brooch of shielding* (25 gp per character), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character).

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: +2 *thundering ravenfeather spear* (0 gp), *medallion of thoughts* (1000 gp per character), *brooch of shielding* (25 gp per character), *dust of tracelessness* (20 gp per character), *potion of gaseous form* (62 gp per character).

### Total Possible Treasure

Note that a character cannot receive more than the maximum gold pieces allowed for their APL.

APL 2: 397 gp per character

APL 4: 558 gp per character

APL 6: 793 gp per character

APL 8: 1118 gp per character  
APL 10: 1939 gp per character  
APL 12: 2605 gp per character

## ITEMS FOUND DURING THE ADVENTURE

### APL 2

- *Dust of tracelessness* (Adventure, DMG)
- *+1 ravenfeather spear* (Curse, see above)
- *Everburning torch* (Region, DMG)

### APL 4 (All of APL 2 plus the following)

- *Potion of cure serious wounds* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Potion of gaseous form* (Adventure, DMG)

### APL 6 (All of APLs 2-4 plus the following)

- *+2 ravenfeather spear* (Replaces +1 version, curse, see above)
- *Cloak of arachnida* (Adventure, DMG)

### APL 8 (All of APLs 2-6 plus the following)

- *Brooch of shielding* (Adventure, DMG)

### APL 10 (All of APLs 2-8, except the *potion of cure serious wounds*, plus the following)

- *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear* (Replaces +2 version, curse, see above)
- *Medallion of thoughts* (Adventure, DMG)
- *Bead of force* (Adventure, DMG)

### APL 12 (All of APLs 2-10, except the *potion of cure serious wounds*, plus the following)

- *Boots of speed* (Adventure, DMG)

## SPECIAL (NEW ITEMS TO BE LISTED ON THE ADVENTURE RECORD)

Only one character may possess this item at the conclusion of the event; it is the character that initially picked up the weapon. Please cross this item off if this character did not receive the curse. The character that picked up this weapon may add this item to their Master Item List without purchasing it.

***Ravenfeather spear:*** This magical shortspear bears numerous black feathers tied around the haft of the weapon. It is said that the feathers come from the raven, a symbol of death and misfortune among many of the humanoid tribes. Indeed, this spear functions as a *cursed backbiter spear*; any time the user makes an attack roll with the weapon, and rolls very low (see below), it curls

around to strike the wielder for normal damage. If this spear is hurled, the damage is doubled.

In addition, the character is compelled to use the weapon in melee combat; any time the PC wishes to engage in melee combat, he/she must roll a Will save (DC 15); if it results in a failure, the character must use the spear throughout the combat when engaged in melee. The spear cannot be discarded normally; after one minute, it reappears stowed on the character that possesses this curse. If the curse is removed by a *remove curse* spell, the spear becomes a normal non-magical shortspear.

APLs 2-4: *+1 ravenfeather spear*; attacks owner on a natural 1.

APLs 6-8: *+2 ravenfeather spear*; attacks owner on a natural 1-2.

APLs 10-12: *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear*; attacks owner on a natural 1-3.

***Caster Level:*** 10th; ***Prerequisites:*** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bestow curse*, creator must be evil; ***Market Price:*** 0 gp (cursed item); ***Weight:*** 5 lb.

***Favor of Almeric Wilstone:*** You have succeeded in a very important mission for the Rangers of the Vesve, and Quaalsten. For your courage Almeric has arranged for a wizard friend of his to enchant your armor and a weapon. You have the opportunity to upgrade any one masterwork suit of armor/shield and any one masterwork weapon they possess to a +1 version at the end of any Highfolk regional scenario (APLs 2-4), or upgrade any one +1 suit of armor/shield and any one +1 weapon they possess to a +2 version at the end of any Highfolk regional scenario (APLs 6-12). The PC pays the difference in cost for the item's upgrade. Once both items have been chosen, write used across the above text.

***Favor of Oslen Oakbough:*** Only PCs selected may obtain this favor.

***Favor of Ethram:*** Only PCs selected may obtain this favor.

# APPENDIX A: NPCS AND MONSTERS

## ENCOUNTER 1

☛ **Typical Guardsman, War1:** Medium Humanoid (usually human, elven, or half-elven); HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 leather armor, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 12; Atks +1 melee (1d6, club), or +2 melee (1d6 [crit x3], halfspear), or +2 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], shortbow); AL Varies (usually CG, NG, or LG); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0.

Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +2 (+4 if human or elven), Spot +2 (+4 if human or elven); Weapon Focus (halfspear), Alertness (if human).

**Possessions:** Leather armor, club, halfspear, shortbow, 20 arrows.

☛ **Veteran Guardsman, War3:** Medium Humanoid; HD 3d8+3; hp 21; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 leather armor, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 12; Atks +4 melee (1d6+1, club), or +5 melee (1d6+1 [crit x3], halfspear), or +4 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], shortbow); AL Varies (usually CG, NG, or LG); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 13, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +3 (+5 if human or elven), Spot +3 (+5 if human or elven); Weapon Focus (halfspear), Alertness (if human).

**Possessions:** Leather armor, club, halfspear, shortbow, 20 arrows.

☛ **Almeric Wilstone, male human Rgr9:** Medium humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 9d10+18; hp 76; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 21 (+2 Dex, +5 +1 mithral shirt of spell resistance [SR 15], +4 +2 large steel shield), touch 12, flat-footed 19; Atks +13/+8 melee (1d8+4 [crit 15-20], +2 keen longsword), or +14/+9 ranged (1d8+5 + 1d6 frost [crit x3], +1 frost mighty composite longbow [+4]); SA Favored enemy (orcs, demons), spells; SQ Favored enemy (orcs, demons), spells; AL NG; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +5.

Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Hide +14, Languages (Common, Elven, Sylvan), Listen +14, Move Silently +14, Search +13, Spot +14, Wilderness Lore +14. **Feats:** Ambidexterity (in light or no armor), Blind-Fight, Improved Critical (longsword), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting (in light or no armor).

Equipment: +1 mithral shirt of spell resistance (SR 15), +2 large steel shield, +2 keen longsword, +1 frost mighty composite longbow (+4), 10 sleep arrows, 50 +1 shock arrows, 50 +2 arrows, +2 cloak of resistance, Heward's handy haversack, 4 potions of cure serious wounds.

Personality Traits: Resolute, irritable, forgiving.

## APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Almeric's assailants, male human Rog2/Wiz1 (2):** Medium-size Humanoid; HD 2d6 + 1d4; hp 13 each; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 mage armor), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Atks +2 melee (1d6+1 [crit 19-20], short sword) or +5 ranged (1d8 [crit 19-20], light crossbow with masterwork bolts); SA Sneak attack +1d6, spells; SQ Evasion, spells; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +4.

Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +8, Climb +6, Concentration +4, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +5, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Move Silently +8, Search +8, Spellcraft +7, Spot +5, Tumble +8; Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

**Possessions:** Short sword, light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, *dust of tracelessness*.

**Spells** (1st-level wizard; 3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*daze* (x2), *ray of frost*; 1st—*color spray*, *mage armor*.

## APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Almeric's assailants, male human Rog3/Wiz2 (2):** Medium-size Humanoid; HD 3d6 + 2d4; hp 20 each; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 mage armor), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Atks +4 melee (1d6+1 [crit 19-20], short sword) or +7 ranged (1d8 [crit 19-20], light crossbow with masterwork bolts); SA Sneak attack +2d6, spells, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); SQ Evasion, spells; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +6.

Str 12, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +9, Climb +7, Concentration +7, Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Listen +6, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Move Silently +9, Search +9, Spellcraft +10, Spot +6, Tumble +9; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll.

**Possessions:** Short sword, light crossbow, 10 masterwork bolts, *dust of tracelessness*, *potion of gaseous form*.

**Spells** (2nd-level wizard; 4/3; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*daze* (x2), *ray of frost* (x2); 1st—*cause fear*, *color spray*, *mage armor*.

#### APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Nimblewright:** CR 7; Medium-size Construct; HD 10d10; hp 55; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24 (+7 Dex, +7 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 17; Atks +11 melee (2d6+4 [crit 12-20], 2 rapier-hands); SA Spell-like abilities, tripping thrust; SQ Augmented critical, construct traits, SR 27, vulnerabilities; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6.

Str 19, Dex 24, Con -, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 19.

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Spring Attack.

**Possessions:** *Cloak of arachnida*.

**SA: Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*alter self, cat's grace, entropic shield, feather fall, haste*. Caster level 10th; save DC 14 + spell level.

**Tripping Thrust (Ex):** A nimblewright's rapier-hand attacks are powerful enough to push over creatures its own size or smaller. An opponent who is the target of a successful critical hit from a nimblewright must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or be knocked prone as if tripped.

**SQ: Augmented Critical (Ex):** A nimblewright threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 12-20. On a successful critical hit, its foe is subject to a tripping thrust attack (see above).

**Construct Traits:** A nimblewright 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 cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected. A nimblewright has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Vulnerabilities:** A cold effect *slows* a nimblewright for 3 rounds, and a fire effect stuns it for 1 round.

#### APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Nimblewrights (2):** CR 7; Medium-size Construct; HD 10d10; hp 55 each; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24 (+7 Dex, +7 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 17; Atks +11 melee (2d6+4 [crit 12-20], 2 rapier-hands); SA Spell-like abilities, tripping thrust; SQ Augmented critical, construct traits, SR 27, vulnerabilities; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6.

Str 19, Dex 24, Con -, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 19.

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Spring Attack.

**Possessions:** One has a *cloak of arachnida*.

**SA: Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*alter self, cat's grace, entropic shield, feather fall, haste*. Caster level 10th; save DC 14 + spell level.

**Tripping Thrust (Ex):** A nimblewright's rapier-hand attacks are powerful enough to push over creatures its own size or smaller. An opponent who is the target of a successful critical hit from a nimblewright must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or be knocked prone as if tripped.

**SQ: Augmented Critical (Ex):** A nimblewright threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 12-20. On a successful critical hit, its foe is subject to a tripping thrust attack (see above).

**Construct Traits:** A nimblewright 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 cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected. A nimblewright has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Vulnerabilities:** A cold effect *slows* a nimblewright for 3 rounds, and a fire effect stuns it for 1 round.

#### APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Nimblewrights (4):** CR 7; Medium-size Construct; HD 10d10; hp 55 each; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24 (+7 Dex, +7 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 17; Atks +11 melee (2d6+4 [crit 12-20], 2 rapier-hands); SA Spell-like abilities, tripping thrust; SQ Augmented critical, construct traits, SR 27, vulnerabilities; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6.

Str 19, Dex 24, Con -, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 19.

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Spring Attack.

**Possessions:** One has a *cloak of arachnida*; two others each carry one *bead of force*.

**SA: Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*alter self, cat's grace, entropic shield, feather fall, haste*. Caster level 10th; save DC 14 + spell level.

**Tripping Thrust (Ex):** A nimblewright's rapier-hand attacks are powerful enough to push over creatures its own size or smaller. An opponent who is the target of a successful critical hit from a nimblewright must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or be knocked prone as if tripped.

**SQ: Augmented Critical (Ex):** A nimblewright threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 12-20. On a successful critical hit, its foe is subject to a tripping thrust attack (see above).

**Construct Traits:** A nimblewright 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 cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected. A nimblewright has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Vulnerabilities:** A cold effect *slows* a nimblewright for 3 rounds, and a fire effect stuns it for 1 round.

#### APL 12 (EL 14)

☛ **Galoruug, death slaad:** CR 13; hp 112. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

**Possessions:** 2 beads of force, boots of speed.

☛ **Nimblewrights (2):** CR 7; Medium-size Construct; HD 10d10; hp 55 each; Init +7; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24 (+7 Dex, +7 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 17; Atks +11 melee (2d6+4 [crit 12-20], 2 rapier-hands); SA Spell-like abilities, tripping thrust; SQ Augmented critical, construct traits, SR 27, vulnerabilities; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6.

Str 19, Dex 24, Con -, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 19.

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Spring Attack.

**Possessions:** One has a *cloak of arachnida*.

**SA: Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*alter self*, *cat's grace*, *entropic shield*, *feather fall*, *haste*. Caster level 10th; save DC 14 + spell level.

**Tripping Thrust (Ex):** A nimblewright's rapier-hand attacks are powerful enough to push over creatures its own size or smaller. An opponent who is the target of a successful critical hit from a nimblewright must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or be knocked prone as if tripped.

**SQ: Augmented Critical (Ex):** A nimblewright threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 12-20. On a successful critical hit, its foe is subject to a tripping thrust attack (see above).

**Construct Traits:** A nimblewright 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 cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected. A nimblewright has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Vulnerabilities:** A cold effect *slows* a nimblewright for 3 rounds, and a fire effect stuns it for 1 round.

### ENCOUNTER 3

#### APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Invisible stalker:** hp 52. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

#### APL 8 (EL 9)

☛ **Invisible stalkers (2):** hp 52, 56. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

#### APL 10 (EL 11)

☛ **Invisible stalkers (4):** hp 48, 52, 52, 56. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

#### APL 12 (EL 14)

☛ **Nightshade (nightwing):** hp 110. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### ENCOUNTER 4

#### APL 2 (EL 4)

##### Standard Patrol

☛ **Gnolls (3):** hp 10, 11, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

##### Canine Patrol

☛ **Gnolls (2):** hp 10, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

☛ **Worg:** hp 30. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

#### APL 4 (EL 6)

##### Standard Patrol

☛ **Gnolls (6):** hp 10, 10, 11, 11, 12, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

##### Canine Patrol

☛ **Gnolls (4):** hp 10, 11, 11, 12. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

#### APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Ulressk, male fiendish gnoll Brb1/Ftr1:** CR 4; Medium-size Outsider; HD 2d8+4 + 2d10+4; hp 35; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather armor), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Atks +8 melee (1d8+5 [crit x3], +1 *ravenfeather spear*) or +4 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], shortbow); SA Rage 1/day, smite

good 1/day; SQ Cold resistance 10, DR 5/+1, darkvision 60 feet, fast movement, fire resistance 10, SR 8; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +0.

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +4, Jump +4, Intimidate +1, Listen +4, Spot +3; Power Attack, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

**Possessions:** +1 ravenfeather spear\*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, studded leather armor, shortbow, 20 arrows, 2 diamonds (each worth 900 gp).

**SA: Smite Good (Su):** Once per day the creature can make a normal attack to deal additional damage equal to its HD total (in this case, +4) against a good foe.

\*New item listed in Appendix B.

#### APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Ulressk, male fiendish gnoll Brb2/Ftr2:** CR 6; Medium-size Outsider; HD 2d8+4 + 4d10+8; hp 52; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +1 natural, +3 studded leather armor), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Atks +10 melee (1d8+5 [crit x3], +1 ravenfeather spear) or +6 ranged (1d6 [crit x3], shortbow); SA Rage 1/day, smite good 1/day; SQ Cold resistance 10, DR 5/+1, darkvision 60 feet, fire resistance 10, SR 12; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +1, Will +3.

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +6, Jump +6, Intimidate +2, Listen +5, Spot +4; Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (shortspear).

**Possessions:** +1 ravenfeather spear\*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, studded leather armor, shortbow, 20 arrows, 2 diamonds (each worth 900 gp).

**SA: Smite Good (Su):** Once per day the creature can make a normal attack to deal additional damage equal to its HD total (in this case, +4) against a good foe.

\*New item listed in Appendix B.

### ENCOUNTER 5

#### APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ **Elder xorn:** hp 127; AL NE. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

☛ **Nargarm, male fiendish orc Wiz3(Abj):** CR 3; Medium-size Outsider; HD 3d4+6; hp 16; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 *mage armor*), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Atks +4 melee (1d8+3 [crit x3], +2 ravenfeather spear); SA Smite good 1/day, spells; SQ Cold resistance 5, darkvision 60 feet, fire resistance 5, SR 6, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4.

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (local - Iuz-controlled Vesve Forest) +8, Spellcraft +8; Combat Casting, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Scribe Scroll.

**Possessions:** +2 ravenfeather spear\*, *dust of tracelessness*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of gaseous form*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of magic missile (3rd level)*, *scroll of web*, 600 gp in small gems in a pouch.

**SA: Smite Good (Su):** Once per day the creature can make a normal attack to deal additional damage equal to its HD total (in this case, +4) against a good foe.

**Spells** (3rd-level wizard (abjurer); 4/4/3; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze (x2)*, *detect magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*burning hands*, ~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd—~~*invisibility*~~, *protection from arrows*, *summon swarm*.

\*New item listed in Appendix B.

#### APL 8 (EL 10)

☛ **Elder xorns (2):** hp 127, 132; AL NE. See the *Monster Manual*, for statistics.

☛ **Nargarm, male fiendish orc Wiz4(Abj):** CR 5; Medium-size Outsider; HD 4d4+6; hp 21; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 *mage armor*), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Atks +5 melee (1d8+3 [crit x3], +2 ravenfeather spear); SA Smite good 1/day, spells; SQ Cold resistance 10, DR 5/+1, darkvision 60 feet, fire resistance 10, SR 8, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5.

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +9, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (local - Iuz-controlled Vesve Forest) +9, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Scribe Scroll.

**Possessions:** +2 ravenfeather spear\*, *brooch of shielding*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *scroll of fly*, *scroll of magic missile (3rd level)*, *scroll of web*, 1800 gp in beautifully cut small gems in a pouch.

**SA: Smite Good (Su):** Once per day the creature can make a normal attack to deal additional damage equal to its HD total (in this case, +4) against a good foe.

**Spells** (4th-level wizard (abjurer); 4/5/4; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze (x2)*, *detect magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*burning hands*, ~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile (x2)*, *shield*; 2nd—~~*invisibility*~~, *protection from arrows*, *summon monster II*, *summon swarm*.

\*New item listed in Appendix B.

## ENCOUNTER 6

### APL 10 (EL 12)

☛ **Zaaneekral, bone naga:** CR 11; Large Undead; HD 15d12; hp 97; Init +5; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural) touch 10, flat-footed 15; Atks +9 melee (2d4+3 + poison, sting) and +4 melee (1d4+1 + poison, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. by 5 ft. (coiled)/10 ft.; SA Poison, spells; SQ Detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immunities, SR 23, telepathy, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +11.

Str 16, Dex 13, Con -, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +11, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +3, Hide +11, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +12, Sense Motive +8, Spellcraft +14, Spot +12; Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy).

**Possessions:** *Brooch of shielding* hung from a necklace.

**SA: Poison (Ex):** A bone naga delivers its poison via successful bite or sting attacks. The poison from its bite (Fortitude save DC 17) has the same initial and secondary damage (1d4 points of Strength damage). The poison from its sting (Fortitude save DC 17) is more virulent; its initial damage is 1d4 points of Constitution drain, and the secondary damage is 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

**Spells:** A bone naga casts spells as a 14th-level sorcerer (spells known 9/5/5/4/4/3/2/1; spells/day 6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level).

**SQ: Detect Thoughts (Su):** A bone naga can continuously detect the thoughts of those around it. This ability functions like a *detect thoughts* spell (caster level 9th; Will save DC 15), and it is always active.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Because of their ability to shield their thoughts, bone nagas are immune to any form of mind-reading.

**Immunities (Ex):** Bone nagas are immune to cold. Also, because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing weapons.

**Telepathy (Su):** A bone naga can communicate telepathically with any creature within 250 feet that has a language.

**Undead Traits:** A bone naga 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. A bone naga cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Spells Known** (14th-level sorcerer; 6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; base DC = 13 + spell level, necromancy spells base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm person, color spray, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness, blur, mirror image, see invisibility, web*; 3rd—*fireball, haste, hold person, protection from elements*; 4th—*enervation, fear, improved invisibility, stonkskin*; 5th—*cone of cold, teleport, wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning, disintegrate*; 7th—*delayed blast fireball*.

☛ **Ghasts (2):** hp 26, 30. One of them bears the +2 *thundering ravenfeather spear* and *dust of tracelessness*. Another has a *medallion of thoughts* and a *potion of gaseous form*. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

### APL 12 (EL 14)

☛ **Zaaneekral, advanced bone naga:** CR 13; Huge Undead; HD 30d12; hp 195; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (-2 size, +0 Dex, +9 natural) touch 8, flat-footed 17; Atks +20 melee (2d6+7 + poison, sting) and +15 melee (1d6+3 + poison, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft. (coiled)/15 ft.; SA Poison, spells; SQ Detect thoughts, guarded thoughts, immunities, SR 23, telepathy, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +20.

Str 24, Dex 11, Con -, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +14, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +6, Hide +10, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Listen +15, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +18, Spot +15; Alertness, Arcane Preparation\*, Chain Spell\*, Combat Casting, Energy Substitution (cold)\*, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy).

**Possessions:** *Brooch of shielding* hung from a necklace.

**SA: Poison (Ex):** A bone naga delivers its poison via successful bite or sting attacks. The poison from its bite (Fortitude save DC 25) has the same initial and secondary damage (1d4 points of Strength damage). The poison from its sting (Fortitude save DC 25) is more virulent; its initial damage is 1d4 points of Constitution drain, and the secondary damage is 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

**Spells:** A bone naga casts spells as a 14th-level sorcerer (spells known 9/5/5/4/4/3/2/1; spells/day 6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level).

**SQ: Detect Thoughts (Su):** A bone naga can continuously detect the thoughts of those around it. This ability functions like a *detect thoughts* spell

(caster level 9th; Will save DC 15), and it is always active.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Because of their ability to shield their thoughts, bone nagas are immune to any form of mind-reading.

**Immunities (Ex):** Bone nagas are immune to cold. Also, because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing weapons.

**Telepathy (Su):** A bone naga can communicate telepathically with any creature within 250 feet that has a language.

**Undead Traits:** A bone naga 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. A bone naga cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Spells Known** (14th-level sorcerer; 6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3, with prepared spells 6/7/7/5/5/6/3/0); base DC = 13 + spell level, necromancy spells base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm person, color spray, mage armor, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness, blur, mirror image, see invisibility, web*; 3rd—*fireball, haste, hold person, protection from elements*; 4th—*enervation, fear, improved invisibility, stonkskin*; 5th—*cone of cold, teleport, wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning, disintegrate*; 7th—*delayed blast fireball*.

**Spells Prepared with Arcane Preparation:** 3rd—energy substituted (cold) *fireball* (x2); 4th—silent energy substituted (cold) *fireball*; 6th—chained *hold person*, silent *teleport*; 7th—energy substituted (cold) *delayed blast fireball*, chained *enervation* (x2).

\* Builder book feat listed in Appendix B.

☠ **Ghasts (2):** hp 26, 28, 30, 32. One of them bears the +2 *thundering ravenfeather spear* and *dust of tracelessness*. Another has a *medallion of thoughts* and a *potion of gaseous form*. See the *Monster Manual* for statistics.

## APPENDIX B: NEW RULES AND BUILDER BOOK ITEMS

### Arcane Preparation [General]

You can prepare an arcane spell ahead of time as a wizard does.

**Prerequisites:** You must be able to cast spells as a bard or sorcerer before you can take this feat.

**Benefit:** Each day, you are able to prepare one or more spells as a wizard does. If you are a sorcerer or bard, this means that you can prepare a spell with a metamagic feat ahead of time, instead of casting it as a full-round action.

The prepared spell remains in your mind and occupies one of your spell slots until you cast it or change it. A prepared spell uses a spell slot of the spell's normal level, modified by any other metamagic feats.

*Tome and Blood*, page 38.

### Chain Spell [Metamagic]

You can cast spells that arc to other targets in addition to the primary target.

**Prerequisites:** Any other metamagic feat.

**Benefit:** You can chain any spell that specifies a single target and has a range greater than touch. The chained spell affects that target (the primary target) normally, then arcs to a number of secondary targets equal to your caster level. Each arc affects one secondary target. You choose the secondary targets as you like, but they must all be within 30 feet of the primary target, and no target can be affected more than once. You can affect fewer secondary targets than the maximum.

If the chained spell deals damage, the secondary targets each take half as many dice of damage as the primary target (rounded down) and can attempt Reflex saving throws for half of the secondary damage. For spells that do not deal points of damage, the save DCs against arcing effects are reduced by 4. For example, a 10th-level wizard casts a chained *cause fear* on a nearby goblin and can specify up to ten secondary targets. The goblin, as primary target, must make a Will save against DC 14, while those affected by the secondary arcs save against DC 10.

A chained spell uses up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell's actual level.

*Tome and Blood*, page 39.

### Energy Substitution [Metamagic]

You can modify a spell that uses one type of energy to use another type of energy.

**Prerequisites:** Any other metamagic feat, 5 ranks in Knowledge (arcana).

**Benefit:** Choose one type of energy: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. You can modify a spell with an energy designator to use the chosen type of energy instead. A substituted spell works normally in all respects except the type of damage dealt.

A substituted spell uses a spell slot of the spell's normal level, modified by any other metamagic feats.

**Special:** You can gain this feat multiple times, each time it applies to a different type of energy.

*Tome and Blood*, page 40.

### Ravenfeather Spear

This magical shortspear bears numerous black feathers tied around the haft of the weapon. It is said that the feathers come from the raven, a symbol of death and misfortune among many of the humanoid tribes. Indeed, this spear functions as a *cursed backbiter spear*; any time the user makes an attack roll with the weapon, and rolls very low (see below), it curls around to strike the wielder for normal damage. If this spear is hurled, the damage is doubled.

In addition, the character is compelled to use the weapon in melee combat; any time the PC wishes to engage in melee combat, he/she must roll a Will save (DC 15); if it results in a failure, the character must use the spear throughout the combat when engaged in melee. The spear cannot be discarded normally; after one minute, it reappears stowed on the character that possesses this curse. If the curse is removed by a *remove curse* spell, the spear becomes a normal non-magical shortspear.

APLs 2-4: *+1 ravenfeather spear*; attacks owner on a natural 1.

APLs 6-8: *+2 ravenfeather spear*; attacks owner on a natural 1-2.

APLs 10-12: *+2 thundering ravenfeather spear*; attacks owner on a natural 1-3.

*Caster Level:* 10th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bestow curse*, creator must be evil; *Market Price:* 0 gp (cursed item); *Weight:* 5 lb.

New item created for this scenario.

# NIMBLEWRIGHT

## Medium-Size Construct

**Hit Dice:** 10d10 (55 hp)

**Initiative:** +7

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 24 (+7 Dex, +7 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 17

**Attacks:** 2 rapier-hands +11 melee

**Damage:** Rapier-hand 2d6+4/12-20

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Spell-like abilities, tripping thrust

**Special Qualities:** Augmented critical, construct traits, SR 27, vulnerabilities

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +10, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 24, Con -, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 19

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes (B), Dodge (B), Expertise (B), Improved Disarm (B), Mobility (B), Spring Attack (B)

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land or underground

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic

**Advancement:** 11-15 HD (Medium-size); 16-30 HD (Large)

Nimblewrights are rapier-wielding constructs that disguise themselves as living humanoids. They often serve as hired bodyguards, but many are employed to infiltrate organizations and secret societies or spy on individuals. Unlike most constructs, a nimblewright is created with intelligence and a distinct personality that allows for intuitive thinking and responsiveness. Like a golem, a nimblewright is a powerful creation that combines awesome magic with elemental forces. Its animating force is a spirit from the Elemental Plane of Water. The process of creating a nimblewright binds the unwilling spirit to the artificial body and subjects it to the will of its creator.

An undisguised nimblewright appears as a nondescript, steel-colored, mechanical human. When disguised, it wears clothes and uses spells to hide its true nature. In this way, it can appear as almost any Medium-size humanoid it wishes to become.

Nimblewrights speak Common, Elven, and Dwarven.

## COMBAT

A nimblewright is an extremely dexterous combatant. In battle, it brings to bear all of its special fighting skills to deprive opponents of their weapons before running them through. If a nimblewright has ample warning of a fight, it enhances its combat skills with *cat's grace* and *haste* before joining melee.

The monster fights with two rapiers that are actually parts of its body. These rapiers are treated as natural weapons. When not in use, the weapons fold into its forearms. A nimblewright can fully deploy both rapiers as a free action.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*alter self*, *cat's grace*, *entropic shield*, *feather fall*, *haste*. Caster level 10th; save DC 14 + spell level.

**Tripping Thrust (Ex):** A nimblewright's rapier-hand attacks are powerful enough to push over creatures its own size or smaller. An opponent who is the target of a successful critical hit from a nimblewright must make a Reflex save (DC 19) or be knocked prone as if tripped.

**Augmented Critical (Ex):** A nimblewright threatens a critical hit on a natural attack roll of 12-20. On a successful critical hit, its foe is subject to a tripping thrust attack (see above).

**Construct Traits:** A nimblewright 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 cannot heal itself but can be healed through repair. It cannot be raised or resurrected. A nimblewright has darkvision (60-foot range).

**Vulnerabilities:** A cold effect *slows* a nimblewright for 3 rounds, and a fire effect stuns it for 1 round.

## CONSTRUCTION

A nimblewright's body is a hollow humanoid shell made of flexible precious metal alloys weighing 500 pounds. It costs 35,000 gp to create, which includes 15,000 gp for the body. Assembling the body requires a successful Craft (sculpting) or Profession (mason) check (DC 16). The creator must be 18th level and able to cast arcane spells. Completing the ritual drains 1,600 XP from the creator and requires the *geas/quest*, *haste*, *limited wish*, and *polymorph any object* spells.

## BONE NAGA

### Large Undead

**Hit Dice:** 15d12 (97 hp)

**Initiative:** +5

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 16 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 15

**Attacks:** Sting +9 melee and bite +4 melee

**Damage:** Sting 2d4+3 plus poison, bite 1d4+1 plus poison

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft. by 5 ft. (coiled)/10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison, spells

**Special Qualities:** Detect thought, guarded thoughts, immunities, SR 23, telepathy, undead traits

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +11

**Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 13, Con -, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 17

**Feats:** Alertness, Combat Casting, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, metamagic feat (any one), Spell Focus (any one school)

**Climate/Terrain:** Temperate and warm land and underground

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 11

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement:** 16-21 HD (Large); 22-45 HD (Huge)

A bone naga was once a living dark naga. After its death, it was transformed into a skeletal undead creature by another dark naga through a horrific ritual.

A bone naga looks like a 12-foot long, serpentine skeleton. Its skull bears an eerie resemblance to that of a human, except that the bone naga sports long fangs that can deliver a debilitating poison. A cold, cruel light burns in the creature's eye sockets, giving it an air of unspeakable hatred and malice. Its tail ends in a vicious bone stinger which, like its teeth, delivers poison with every hit.

Though it despises its servitude, a bone naga unswervingly obeys its creator, attacking even other nagas if so commanded. Should its master die, a bone naga becomes free-willed and can choose its own destiny.

### COMBAT

Bone nagas under the control of masters are given explicit instructions on how to deal with enemies. Beyond that, these highly intelligent undead can make their own decisions about methods for defeating particular foes.

A bone naga typically uses its mind-reading abilities to determine its foes' strengths and weaknesses before joining combat. It often begins by trying to intimidate its enemies with telepathic taunts. Thereafter, it resorts to spellcasting to soften up the more powerful-looking opponents before entering melee. A bone naga is likely to focus its melee attacks on living opponents rather than undead or constructs, since the living are susceptible to its poison.

**Poison (Ex):** A bone naga delivers its poison via successful bite or sting attacks. The poison from its bite (Fortitude save DC 17) has the same initial and secondary damage (1d4 points of Strength damage). The poison from its sting (Fortitude save DC 17) is more virulent; its initial damage is 1d4 points of Constitution drain, and the secondary damage is 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

**Spells:** A bone naga casts spells as a 14th-level sorcerer (spells known 9/5/5/4/4/3/2/1; spells/day 6/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; save DC 13 + spell level).

**Detect Thoughts (Su):** A bone naga can continuously detect the thoughts of those around it. This ability functions like a *detect thoughts* spell (caster level 9th; Will save DC 15), and it is always active.

**Guarded Thoughts (Ex):** Because of their ability to shield their thoughts, bone nagas are immune to any form of mind-reading.

**Immunities (Ex):** Bone nagas are immune to cold. Also, because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing weapons.

**Telepathy (Su):** A bone naga can communicate telepathically with any creature within 250 feet that has a language.

**Undead Traits:** A bone naga 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. A bone naga cannot be raised, and resurrection works only if it is willing. The creature has darkvision (60-foot range).

