

SHL2-06



# DARK MOONS RISING

A One-Round D&D<sup>®</sup> LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>®</sup>  
Shield Lands Regional Adventure

Version 1

by Rick LaRue and Claus Emmer

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Several months ago Pathfinders reestablished contact with the town of Ringland, long thought to have fallen to the Old One and his evil minions. Since then, regular communication has been established and troops, including Pathfinders have been sent to garrison the town's defenses. You have been ordered to relieve some of the Pathfinders currently in Ringland and spend one week under Lord Reyneld's command. An adventure for characters levels 3-10.

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

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This is an RPGA Network scenario for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Most sanctioned events delegate a four-hour time block for each round of this scenario, with actual playing time will around three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and reward distribution 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, print this scenario. This scenario was created to support double-sided printing, but printing it single sided works 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 running the event 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's 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 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. 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 both the players and the DM to keep track of who is playing what character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. But, as the DM, you can bar the use of even Core Rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, usually 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.

Text that appears in ***bold italics*** is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase as appropriate. Text in appendixes contains important DM notes, for you, offering insight to issues particular to the adventure. Monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form. Full monster statistics for standard monsters are provided in the *Monster Manual*, while statistics for unusual monster and unique individuals are profiled in the Appendix at the end

of the adventure. You should review all of these statistics before the game starts to refresh you memory of the creatures' abilities.

## 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 DMs 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 ([www.wizards.com/rpga](http://www.wizards.com/rpga)), 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 character participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

1) Determine the character level for each character participating in the adventure.

2) If characters bring animals that have been trained for combat (usually war horses and riding dogs), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars, a paladin's mounts, and so forth) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single character may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 and 1/6	0	0	1	
1/3 and 1/2	0	1	1	
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7

3) Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure-round up.

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

By following these four steps, you have determined the modified APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge that the characters 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 an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL that this adventure is played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that

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

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

1) Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.

2) Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. Characters who want their dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is usually a free action (see DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide Chapter 2: Characters) 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.

3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist an iconic." The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Miale, Lidda and Jozan are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to joint them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure set in the Shield Lands. All characters playing in region pay one Time Unit to participate in the adventure. Adventures' Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp, and Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp. Characters playing out of region pay double these amounts.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

In the months since contact with Ringland was reestablished, Pathfinder units have been stationed there to bolster the town's defenses and create a regular exchange of news. Being located so far inside occupied territory, Ringland has become an extremely important source of intelligence on enemy troop movements; particularly in recent months as Vayne and Waqunis attempt to consolidate their respective power bases in the northwest and southeast.

Powerful wizards and sorcerers allied to either the Arcanists' Society or the Rimwalkers, but sharing a familiarity with Ringland, have been brought in to teleport the Pathfinder units back and forth between Gensal and Ringland. The schedule of teleports is kept under extremely tight security and select Pathfinder units are only given a few minutes notice before being told to report for extended patrol duty within occupied lands.

At the command of the Lady Katarina and the Council of Lords, the characters are teleported to Ringland shortly after nightfall to relieve the current garrison of Pathfinders stationed there.

Upon arrival they discovered that little has changed since they were last here, assuming they have all played SHL2-01 *A Message from Ringland*. They are met by a lieutenant under Lord Reyneld's command and escorted to the Pathfinder barracks near Rendor Keep.

The characters are given a chance to rest and eat before being assigned an early morning patrol route outside the barrier. During the night, a lone banner of a black hand on a blood red field was found outside Ringland's protective barrier. The characters, accompanied by a scout named Ysaira are to investigate its presence.

About midmorning, they find another banner and Ysaira returns to Ringland to report their discovery, telling the characters to continue their patrol and find out more about the banners if they can.

A few hours later, the characters hear hoof beats approaching. The riders are a group of hobgoblins leading an emaciated human male carrying another banner. Closer inspection shows that the human is a Shield Lander slave being forced to act as some type of guide.

After a battle with the hobgoblins to rescue the slave and recover the banner, the characters learn from him that he was being forced, along with many others in different groups, to wander around with a hobgoblin patrol. His orders were to stick his banner in the ground and leave it behind as a marker if any of the hobgoblins started to act strangely. He has no idea why, other than his new masters are looking for something. When told he is safe and can come back with the characters, the slave refuses, explaining that his masters threatened to kill two slaves back in camp for every slave that fails to come back.

Hoping to help the slaves escape, the characters follow him back to his masters' camp and find a large enemy encampment full of hobgoblins and other humanoids, and nine slaves. Oddly, the camp does not fly the banners of Iuz, rather a banner with a black hand on a blood red field. After a fierce battle to rescue all the slaves, the characters cover their tracks and return to Ringland with the newly freed Shield Landers.

The next day the characters are ordered to patrol within the barrier along the southwestern border. Toward nightfall, the characters come across a set of tracks that cross the protective barrier near one of the small stone markers that form the outermost extent of the barrier. Following the tracks for a short distance, the characters find a small platinum coin of unfamiliar mint just as they lose the trail. The coin is buried in a shallow hole covered by some leaves. No amount of tracking or spellcasting finds the trail, but it is obvious that someone appeared about one-hundred yards outside the protective barrier, walked across and disappeared again about fifty yards inside, leaving only a few footprints and a coin to mark his or her passing.

The characters report back to Lieutenant Vallin and Lord Reyneld who both seem concerned by the tracks.

They order that patrols be sent out immediately within the protective barrier to search for the "visitor" and that at first light, patrols be sent out beyond the barrier to see if there are any enemy troops nearby.

The next morning, the characters awake to learn that the patrols were unable to find anyone within the barrier and while signs of heavy troop movements around Ringland were found, all fresh tracks lead away from the town.

The day's patrol takes the characters to the southern part of Ringland, within the barrier and close to the farm where the obelisk burst from the ground in SHL2-01 *A Message from Ringland*. Once again, the characters find tracks, which indicate someone has crossed the barrier.

After reporting, the characters are ordered to get some sleep and take the night shift at the obelisk. Since they possess a greater variety of skills than the typical Ringland town guardsman, Lord Reyneld hopes they are able to detect the "visitor" if he returns to the obelisk again during the night.

The characters' precautions pay off and they discover an invisible and silent visitor studying the obelisk in the moonlight. When confronted, he immediately surrenders and explains who he is and why he is in Ringland, though he does refuse any attempt to lay hands on him. Before the characters can do much more than question him, the mysterious stranger disappears.

After the characters' encounter with the visitor at the obelisk, little of interest happens in Ringland. Lord Reyneld considers their report and the reports of other scouts and patrols and concludes that whatever the visitor was after, he must have gotten because no sign of him has been found, and all but the expected patrols have moved on.

On Goodmonth 11<sup>th</sup>, during the full moon phases of both Luna and Celene the characters are on an overnight patrol along the southern perimeter of the barrier. One of their checkpoints is with the guards at the obelisk. When they arrive, all appears to be as it should be, but the guards at the obelisk act strangely. Rather than greet them with the proper code phrases, they simply wave at the characters from a distance.

The characters find that the whole area around the obelisk is enshrouded by a complex combination of illusion spells designed to trick any intruders into a false sense of security. The real guards are dead and the visitor from the other night has returned with a friend.

As soon as the characters approach, a large man in black armor appears and challenges them. Unknown to the characters, the "visitor" from the other night is performing a ritual on the obelisk. After a few rounds, the visitor finishes his ritual and the obelisk begins flooding the area with waves of intense pain. Only the character(s) who possess the 'Painless' certificate are unaffected. Noticing that the visitor is trying to reach the obelisk to touch it, the unaffected character hopefully beats him to it and touches it first, ending the obelisk's painful magical assault. Enraged at his failure, the visitor and his armored companion renew their attack.

The remaining time spent in Ringland by the characters is uneventful and unfortunately, they are unable to determine what happened to the obelisk, if anything. At the proper time, the characters are relieved by replacement Pathfinders from Gensal and teleported back.

## INTRODUCTION

Goodmonth 5<sup>th</sup>

Before beginning, ask the players if they have played SHL2-01 A Message from Ringland.

During this event, both moons are waning toward new. Both are new on Goodmonth 11<sup>th</sup> (see Encounter 7).

*You arrived in Gensal two days ago on the third day of Goodmonth. Your orders upon arrival were to keep your gear with you, check in with the duty officer at dawn and dusk, and be ready for an extended assignment at a moment's notice.*

*At dusk, the duty officer informs you that you have been summoned to the temporary headquarters of the Shield Lands Army in Gensal. Since most of the town was razed during the occupation, a temporary wooden outpost has been built near the old keep.*

*As you arrive at the outpost you can see the exterior is heavily guarded. The door guards exchange nods with you as you enter the makeshift command center of the Shield Lands Army. Inside you are guided into a common room and told to wait. A few other Pathfinders are waiting here as well.*

Give the players a chance to describe and introduce their characters, and then continue.

*After about ten minutes, a middle-age man wearing the rank of captain comes out and addresses you.*

*"Thank you for coming so quickly. For those of you who don't know me, I am Captain Hebrin. I hope you enjoyed your two days of rest. We wanted you well rested for your next mission. Before you're briefed, I need your word that what you learn will not be shared with anyone else. You must also understand that once you agree, there is no turning back."*

Give the characters a chance to agree or disagree. If they ask for more information, Captain Hebrin, who some characters may have met in SHL2-01 A Message from Ringland, tells them that he can share nothing more until he has their word and vow of secrecy. If any characters refuse, the event is over for them; continue the adventure with whoever is left.

*Captain Hebrin leads you to the remains of the nearly destroyed keep that once protected Gensal. Looking around you see that a simple wooden palisade has been added to reinforce the crumbling walls surrounding the town. Much has changed in Gensal since it was retaken, but it is still little more than a border outpost in a place where even a mighty castle would be at risk.*

*Your short walk ends outside a large tent. You recognize that this is one of many supply tents used to hold everything*

*from tools to barrels of fresh water. Before you can voice your confusion, Captain Hebrin opens the flap and motions you inside. The interior of the tent is dim, but you can easily see that it is completely empty except for a wooden hatch in the center of the floor.*

*Captain Hebrin moves to the hatch, quietly speaks a few words and opens it, again motioning to you to proceed. Beneath the hatch is a simple wooden ladder leading down to a lit tunnel below.*

A successful Listen check (DC 15) reveals to the character what Captain Hebrin said: "Ringland still stands!"

*At the base of the ladder about twenty feet down, a packed earth tunnel leads off to the north for about fifteen feet, opening into a well-lit room containing several figures.*

*Captain Hebrin hails the people in the room, who respond, "We're ready to begin, Captain. Bring them in."*

*At this point you are led into the room, which is about twenty-five feet square and dug from the raw earth. Wooden supports line the ceiling and walls. Although this underground room appears hastily constructed, it seems to be sound.*

*Besides yourselves and the captain, there are six others in this room. Three wear the colors of the Knights of Holy Shielding and stand fully armed around the room; one wears the emblem of the Town of Ringland; and the remaining two wear no insignia, but are undoubtedly wizards.*

*Captain Hebrin begins, "Several months ago, a group of Pathfinders reestablished contact with the town of Ringland deep in occupied territory. It seems they have escaped the worst of the Old One's invasion and are safe... for the moment. You are about to be teleported to Ringland to relieve the current garrison of Pathfinders stationed there. By accepting this assignment you have also agreed to never speak of Ringland to anyone other than the people you see here, the Council of Lords and obviously the people of Ringland. You may not even discuss this with other Pathfinders you may recognize after today. Ringland's survival depends on keeping its current situation a secret. Failing to keep this secret is considered treason, a crime punishable by death. Do you understand?"*

Ask the players to answer in character verbally, but to write down on a piece of paper what they really intend to do, and then continue.

*As you respond, you feel the eyes of the Shield Knights upon you.*

The Shield Knights are using *discern lies* (DC 17) to make sure the characters mean what they say. If any of the characters lied and missed their saves, read the following:

*One of the Shield Knights points at insert the name(s) of the character(s) who lied and says, "This one speaks falsely!"*

*All eyes turn to insert the name(s) of the character(s) who lied and Captain Hebrin asks in a surprised voice "Is this true?"*

Allow any guilty character(s) to respond. Unless they immediately and honestly recant and promise to keep silent, the Shield Knights arrest them. They are then brought up into the tent to await justice. Before even leaving the tent, a wizard from the Arcanists' Society casts

geas on them with the command to never speak of what they learned about Ringland. Since little harm was done, they are eventually released, but the process of ensuring the characters had no ulterior motives takes a week, so the character loses an extra time unit for this event for a total of 2 TU in region or 3 TU out of region.

If none of the characters refuse, or once those who do are removed, continue.

*The tension of the moment fades as the two wizards begin casting spells. The first one, an elven female points to three of you and says, "I am Arquen of the Rimwalkers. Please come closer and join hands with me. I will take you to Ringland."*

*The second, a well-dressed human with strange tattoos on his face and neck extends his hands and says, "And I am Kiraldan of the Arcanists' Society... the rest of you can come with me."*

*As the wizards complete their spells, you hear Captain Hebrin say, "Good luck Pathfinders!" In an instant, you are somewhere else.*

*You arrive, presumably in Ringland, near a bridge crossing a small stream. There are a number of people around you. Most are wearing the uniform and insignia of Ringland or deep green and brown field gear. Five Pathfinders stand off from the other group. They stand next to a cart containing something wrapped by a tarp and tied with hemp rope. From its shape you can see that the "something" is a dead body. A few of the Pathfinders are obviously wounded, and all look sad and tired.*

*Before you can speak with the Pathfinders, the two wizards who teleported you here call them over as they did you just minutes ago. Two burly Pathfinders with heavy armor and weapons pull the body from the cart and join hands with Arquen. In an instant, both wizards and the Pathfinders are gone.*

*A young man approaches you and introduces himself.*

*"I am Lt. Vallin. Lord Reyneld has sent me to welcome you to Ringland. It is late, if you'll come with me, I'll show you to the barracks and get you something to eat."*

*As you walk down the road toward town, Lt. Vallin explains "The Pathfinder unit that just left called themselves the "Old One's Bane." They were stationed here for the last two weeks. Just yesterday, a large bullette attacked the workers in the fields. The Pathfinders managed to kill it before it did too much damage, but not before it killed the group's leader. Too bad that, they were a nice bunch."*

*When you reach the barracks which is little more than a large tent sitting in the field below Rendor Keep, Lt. Vallin points out the mess hall, latrines and supply tents and gives you the schedules for mess and patrols.*

*"Tomorrow, you'll be on long patrol outside the barrier. One of our scouts will take you to the barrier one hour before sunrise. Head out about a mile, then circle the town to the north and east. Keep going until just before dark, then turn south until you get back to town. The scout who accompanies you will give you tomorrow's passwords so you can get back in when the sentries challenge you. While you're out there avoid contact with the enemy and keep your eyes open for sign of their passing. If you see them, get a quick look and turn back. If you're followed, don't come back here. Kill them, die trying, or hope you can make it to Gensal before they cut you down. I suggest you get some rest. Tomorrow will be a long day."*

*Lt. Vallin waits to answer any questions, and then goes about his business leaving you alone outside the barracks tent.*

## Development

If the characters ask if the tunnel under the supply tents is part of the same tunnel system they explored in SHL1-11 *The Invisible Hand*, tell them they are not the same. Those tunnels are directly under Gensal Keep; this is a new tunnel 100 feet outside the keep and dug within the last few months.

## ENCOUNTER 1: TESTING LIMITS

Goodmonth 6<sup>th</sup>

Throughout this event, the characters may have the opportunity to explore Ringland. Use the information in Appendix II to flesh out the town and it's people.

*In the morning, a young scout named Ysaira comes for you an hour before sunrise. She's a small woman in her late twenties with long brown hair twisted in an elaborate, but functional braid. Her ears are slightly pointed betraying her half-elven heritage.*

*"I am Ysaira. I'll be coming with you on your patrol today. I have news from last night's patrols. It seems one of them found a marker of some sort. It was a banner mounted on a pole. The banner bore the mark of a black hand on a blood red field. No one has recognized it, but we are to be on the look out for more, and to see if we can find out where it came from. If you are all ready, we should get moving."*

A successful Spot check (DC 15) by an elf or anyone raised around elves from Celene notices that the Ysaira's braid pattern is similar to one favored by female elven warriors of that nation.

Ysaira is a no-nonsense type of woman and has little patience for characters that are not ready to travel. She naturally gravitates toward elves and ranger types and is particularly interested in any Greycloaks. She's heard a lot about them and secretly wishes to become one.

The trip to the barrier takes about twenty-five minutes. Ysaira keeps a brisk pace, but makes a few detours to check in with other scouts and sentries. She doesn't stop to speak with them, just nods to them and continues. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that she's checking up on a few of the younger scouts and guards.

*At the barrier, Ysaira address you, "Remember our orders. Stay away from the enemy. Fight only if we must, but kill anything that sees us. We are to look for more of these banners. Also, Iuz's forces have taken to skirmishing lately. It's always between Vayne's hobgoblins and Waquonis' orcs, so we need to keep an eye out for either group. In case anything happens to me, there are two passwords you need to use today. When you return, you will be asked, "What news do you bring?" If all is well, reply, "The Silver Ring serves the best mead in the Shield Lands." This will tell the sentries that you are returning from outland patrol*

*and nothing is amiss. If there is something afoul and you want to alert the sentries to a problem, reply, "Master Dorgin's ale has spoiled!" They will know that something is not right and take the proper precautions.*

*Ysaira pauses, shrugs and says a bit awkwardly "Well... let's go." and heads out across the barrier.*

*It is still before sunrise when you begin your patrol. Setting out, you leave the protection of the barrier and head once again into occupied territory with the cool morning air forming wisps with each breath. Your patrol is not unlike the hundreds you've taken during your time as a Pathfinder.*

After about two hours, have the characters make Spot checks (DC 15) to spot another banner like the one Ysaira described. If they don't see it, she does. Read or paraphrase the following:

*About two hours into your patrol, you notice something in the distance. Something is flapping in the breeze toward where the barrier is. It's another banner just like Ysaira described; an open black hand, palm out on a blood red field.*

Allow the characters to investigate. A successful Track check (DC 15) reveals a number of hoof prints (from a horse) around the banner that lead off to the northwest. If the characters don't connect this banner with the other, proceed with the following:

*Looking concerned, Ysaira says, "It's the same as the other. Something is wrong. Someone is putting them here near the barrier... but why?"*

Let the characters discuss what it means. If none of them figure it out, have Ysaira suggest that someone is marking the barrier in an attempt to figure out where it begins, then proceed with the following:

*If our suspicions are correct, this could be very bad for Ringland. I must go back and report. We can't risk something happening and this information not getting back to Lord Reyneld. I want you to finish our patrol route and see if you can find any more or hopefully see who is leaving these things behind.*

Ysaira won't change her mind. She insists on going back alone and that the characters continue on. Once she leaves, continue.

*After watching Ysaira trudge back toward Ringland, you continue your patrol route with a new purpose, to find whomever is placing the banners and why. After a quick meal break, you continue, slowly turning east as you circle Ringland's protective barrier.*

Let the characters make Listen checks (DC 15) and continue if anyone succeeds:

*From the east over a small rise, you hear the unmistakable sound of galloping horses. Whoever it is seems to be in a bit of a hurry.*

Allow the characters to react. They have about 5 rounds before the riders are upon them. The terrain prevents the party and the riders from seeing each other until they are 350 ft. apart, unless the characters move toward the riders and up the nearby hill, or fail to try and hide at all. If it looks like the characters are going to avoid the encounter all together, each round have them make Move Silently and Hide checks against the hobgoblins' Spot and Listen checks. Remember distance modifiers for Spot and Listen checks.

When the characters can see the riders, read or paraphrase the following:

*There are four riders on horses, all humanoid and all moving at a swift pace. The lead rider is well armored and is astride a massive stallion. In formation on either side of him are two other horsemen with powerful looking bows. The last rider is carrying a large banner and his horse is tethered to another rider. The banner is blood red and has an open black hand (palm out) on it. It's obvious that of the four, he is the only one not well accustomed to being in the saddle.*

*As the riders get closer, you can see that the lead three are hobgoblins and the hapless rider with the banner is a human, most likely a slave.*

Allow the characters to react. When the hobgoblins can see the characters, read this:

*As soon as the riders see you they spur their mounts and burst into action. The lead rider couches his lance and charges forward. The other two break off in a shallow arc moving away from each other, but not before the one who is leading the human pulls a dagger from his boot and cuts the rope linking him to his captive. Meanwhile, the other seems to make a few hand motions and utters something you can't hear from this distance.*

Allow characters with Spellcraft a check to determine what spell is being cast.

#### APL 4 (EL 5)

- ☛ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr3; hp 31; see Appendix I.
- ☛ **Hobgoblins (2):** hp 9, 9; see *Monster Manual*.
- ☛ **Light Warhorse:** hp 22; see *Monster Manual*.
- ☛ **Light Horses (2):** hp 19, 19; see *Monster Manual*.

#### APL 6 (EL 7)

- ☛ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr5; hp 49; see Appendix I.
- ☛ **Naroth:** Male hobgoblin Ftr2; hp 20; see Appendix I.
- ☛ **Ghora:** Female hobgoblin Rgr1/Ftr1; hp 20; see Appendix I.
- ☛ **Heavy Warhorse:** hp 30; see *Monster Manual*.
- ☛ **Light Warhorses (2):** hp 22, 22; see *Monster Manual*.

#### APL 8 (EL 9)

- ☛ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr7; hp 67; see Appendix I.
- ☛ **Naroth:** Male hobgoblin Ftr4; hp 36; see Appendix I.

➤ **Ghora:** Female hobgoblin Rgr2/Ftr2; hp 36; see Appendix I.

➤ **Heavy Warhorse:** hp 30; see *Monster Manual*.

➤ **Light Warhorses (2):** hp 22, 22; see *Monster Manual*.

## APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr9; hp 85; see Appendix I.

➤ **Naroth:** Male hobgoblin Ftr7; hp 60; see Appendix I.

➤ **Ghora:** Female hobgoblin Rgr5/Ftr2; hp 60; see Appendix I.

➤ **Heavy Warhorse:** hp 30; see *Monster Manual*.

➤ **Light Warhorses (2):** hp 22, 22; see *Monster Manual*.

## ALL APLS

➤ **Jolias:** Male human Exp2; hp 10 (currently 4).

➤ **Light Horse:** hp 19; see *Monster Manual*.

**Tactics:** Except at APL 4, all three hobgoblins are well-trained riders and fight well from the saddle. At all APLs, the human Jolias, stops his horse, with some difficulty, and watches the battle. He cowers if approached by the characters.

At APL 4, all three hobgoblins charge into battle, but only Dúrgakh stays mounted, using his Ride-by-Attack feat to charge his opponents with his lance and keep away from them so they can't attack. He'll change opponents as needed to use his feats as often as possible. The other two fight together trying to get flanking positions.

At APL 6 and up, Naroth and Ghora keep their distance and fire at the characters with their bows, while Dúrgakh uses the same tactics as APL 4, but to greater effect due to more feats and better attack bonuses. All three riders keep moving on horseback at all times to keep away from the characters.

At APL 10, Ghora has spells. She casts *entangle* on her first round and then she and Naroth fire arrows while moving, at anyone casting spells (1<sup>st</sup>) or trying to get out of the *entangle* (2<sup>nd</sup>). Dúrgakh waits until the first character gets out of the *entangle* spell and charges them with couched lance, Spirited Charge and Ride-by-Attack.

If the battle turns against them, the riders break for the west and head toward the smoke the characters saw earlier.

**Treasure:** The hobgoblins have a number of rare coins. They are gold, but unlike anything the characters have probably seen before. Due to their rarity, they are worth 5 gp each. Dúrgakh has six coins and the others each have one.

**Development:** The characters have stumbled upon a patrol sent out by a group called the Black Hand. The Black Hand is a group of mercenaries who currently serve Iuz. They have commandeered a company of Iuz's forces loyal to Vayne, who hired them to search for Ringland. They are actually seeking the Obelisk in Ringland, but they have to find a way to mark the barrier before its magic scrambles their minds and turns them around.

To this end, the Black Hand has rounded up a group of Shield Lander slaves to act as a sort of guide. The slaves

have been ordered to accompany the patrols and stick the banner they carry in the ground if their patrol leaders start to act strangely. The leaders of the Black Hand have determined that Ringland's barrier only effects evil creatures, so they hope the non-evil slaves are not affected. In turn, they hope to use the banners as crude markers to where the barrier begins.

If questioned, the hobgoblins know that they usually serve Vayne and have recently moved north and west when Vayne was forced to leave Admundfort by Waquonis. A few weeks ago, a new group calling itself the "Back Hand" took command of their company, dragged them out here to the middle of nowhere, and are forcing them to ride around with slaves until something "odd" happens. They aren't amused by this and see no point in it. They do not know about Ringland or the obelisk. They are very afraid of their new commander, Nazrol the Black and his associates who are even more twisted and cruel than Iuz's clerics. The Black Hand gave the coins they carry to them as pay.

The slave is a human male in his late thirties named Jolias. He's been a slave for many years; he's not sure how long, but since the invasion for sure. However long ago that was, he's lost track of time. He was told to carry the banner and stick it in the ground if the hobgoblins started to act oddly. He has no idea why, but knows that if he doesn't do as he's told, the Black Hand starts killing slaves. In fact, he is angry at the characters for killing the hobgoblins if they do, and keeping him from returning. Now his wife, Balena, could be killed along with two others because he may not return when he was supposed to. If left unattended, he tries to get back on his horse and ride for the smoke column to beg for the life of his wife. Though he won't admit it, he happily betrays the characters if it saves his wife.

If the characters ask, Jolias, he can show them where the main camp is; it's the source of the smoke. He also knows that most of the troops are away now and the camp and other slaves are lightly guarded by whatever is appropriate to the APL in Encounter 2, though he won't know exact numbers.

If any of the hobgoblins escape, they return directly to camp and warn the camp guards from Encounter 2. If the characters attempt to rescue the slaves in Encounter 2, they do not get any chance to prepare.

At this point, the characters must make a choice; help free the slaves and ignore their orders or follow their orders and allow the slaves to die, or worse. If they go after the slaves proceed to Encounter 2 otherwise, continue to Encounter 3.

## ENCOUNTER 2: RESCUE

If the characters try to rescue the slaves, run this encounter.

*Jolias seems anxious to rescue his wife and fellow slaves, but part of you suspects he has doubts if you will succeed. Throughout the journey, he tries to hurry you along, repeating, "The patrols*

*always return at sundown... it we don't rescue them by then, it will be too late. There'll be far too many of them for you to face alone!"*

*The gradual rise and fall of the land should mask your approach until you are close enough to the camp to get a decent look.*

It takes about two hours to reach the camp. When the characters indicate they are going in for a closer look, read or paraphrase the following:

*Before you lay a large camp. The banners of both Wayne and the scarlet and black of the Black Hand whip in the stiff wind. The camp seems mostly unoccupied, but a large bon fire burns at the center. It is the obvious source of the smoke.*

*Around the fire are a number of humanoids and some much smaller figures cowering as far from their captors as their bonds will allow.*

*Two of the creatures stand on opposite sides of the fire tossing a living slave back and forth over, and through the flames of the pyre. With each scream from the slave, the humanoids, most likely giants of some kind, laugh louder and louder as do their companions who sit nearby. A few times, a bad throw nearly drops the pitiful slave in the fire.*

The humanoids at the fire are the only creatures in the camp. It's possible for the characters to get within 75 feet of the fire before the enemy sees them, if they're careful and quiet. A series of three Move Silently and Hide checks (DC 10), as the humanoids are very distracted by their "game," get the characters to the edge of the clearing around the fire pit. If the characters fail, any giants immediately start lobbing rocks at them.

#### APL 4 (EL 7)

➤ **Ogres (5):** hp 26, 26, 26, 26, 26; see *Monster Manual*.

#### APL 6 (EL 9)

➤ **Ogres (5):** hp 26, 26, 26, 26, 26; see *Monster Manual*.

➤ **Hill Giant:** hp 102; see *Monster Manual*.

#### APL 8 (EL 11)

➤ **Ogres (5):** hp 26, 26, 26, 26, 26; see *Monster Manual*.

➤ **Hill Giants (3):** hp 102, 102, 102; see *Monster Manual*.

#### APL 10 (EL 13)

➤ **Hill Giants (3):** hp 102, 102, 102; see *Monster Manual*.

➤ **Fire Giants (2):** hp 142, 142; see *Monster Manual*.

#### ALL APLS

➤ **Jolias:** Male human Exp2; hp 10 (currently 4).

➤ **Balena:** Female human Com1; hp 4 (currently 0).

➤ **Manel:** Male half-elf Com2; hp 10 (currently 5).

➤ **Alete:** Female dwarf Com1; hp 4 (currently 0).

➤ **Besel and Renstin:** Male human Com1; hp 5 (currently 4).

➤ **Senda & Seria:** Female human Com1; hp 4 (currently 2).

➤ **Darvin:** Male halfling Com2; hp 10 (currently 7).

➤ **Merion:** Female halfling Com1; hp 4 (currently 3).

➤ **Light Horses (4):** hp 19, 19; see *Monster Manual*.

**Tactics:** The enemy is very distracted by their game. They are well within Iuz controlled territory and are a bit overconfident about the general lack threats out here, despite the ongoing conflict between Wayne and Waquonis.

Any true giants use boulders until forced into melee, and then they lay waste to anything close to them with greatclubs or giant greatswords. They do not hesitate to threaten a slave to draw a character out of a good position into a vulnerable one.

**Treasure:** Like the hobgoblins from Encounter 1, these creatures all have the same odd coins. They are gold, but unlike anything the characters have probably seen before. Do to their rarity they are worth 5 gp each. Each creature present has six coins.

**Development:** Assuming the characters rescue them all, there are nine slaves besides Jolias. His wife Belena is here along with eight other Shield Landers. They are all fatigued and suffer from minor wounds, mostly from being beaten. They don't know much more than Jolias, but one of them overheard someone talking about a "black pillar" or something like that.

If the camp guards were alerted by an escaped hobgoblin from Encounter 1, they are alert and waiting for an attack. The characters do not have any time to prepare before facing them once they get within sight of the camp.

If the characters managed to defeat the hobgoblins in Encounter 1 with killing their horses, they can find four more in camp; that should be enough to transport the slaves back to Ringland.

## ENCOUNTER 3: DEBRIEFING

Depending on the outcome of Encounters 1 and 2, this encounter may run differently. If the characters did not rescue the slaves, read the following and move on to Encounter 4.

*As sundown approaches, you turn south to head back to Ringland. After a short time sentries hidden in the undergrowth challenge you.*

*"Halt! Who goes?" comes a call from somewhere ahead.*

Allow the characters a moment to use the proper pass phrase, and then continue if they get it right.

*After exchanging predetermined passwords, the sentries let you pass. Ysaira soon meets you and takes you to report to Lt. Vallin.*

If the characters tell Lt. Vallin about the slaves, he seems visibly disturbed that they didn't try to rescue them, but says, "You did the right thing."

*When you finish your report, the officer gives you the next days patrol route.*

*"Tomorrow you'll be inside the barrier along the south western edge. Start in the west and circle south. Check in with each sentry post. If there are hobgoblins about, it means that Vayne's troops are nearby. They may be the ones leaving the banners. Whoever it is, we should be ready. Go get a good meal and some sleep. Try not to think too much about the slaves. You did the right thing for Ringland by leaving them behind."*

If the characters return with any slaves, begin the Encounter here:

*As sundown approaches, you turn south to head back to Ringland. After a short time sentries hidden in the undergrowth challenge you.*

*"Halt! Who goes?" comes a call from somewhere ahead.*

Allow the characters a moment to use the proper pass phrase, and then continue if they get it right.

*After exchanging predetermined passwords, the sentries let you pass, but Ysaira breaks from the underbrush.*

*"Who the hell are these people!?" she demands, staring intently at you for an explanation.*

Allow the characters to explain, but halfway through have Ysaira interrupt them:

*"You were told not to engage the enemy! That included mounting rescue attempts! You have endangered Ringland you fools! Did you at least find out more about the banners?"*

*Spinning on her heels and without waiting to hear your response, she orders the sentries to take the slaves into custody until something can be done with them.*

*"Lord Reyneld will want to see you. Come with me!"*

*A fuming Ysaira takes you back to town and directly to Rendor Keep. Along the way she sends a runner for Lt. Vallin. Once inside the keep, she orders you to wait in the great hall while she reports.*

*About twenty minutes later, Ysaira, Lt. Vallin and Lord Reyneld enter. Ysaira is still angry and the lieutenant seems very serious. Lord Reyneld is unreadable. He speaks first.*

*"One of you tell me in your words what happened." He pauses to let you speak.*

Allow the characters to explain, then continue with the following.

*Reyneld considers your story for a moment, rubbing his eyes as if exhausted. "Speaking as the protector of Ringland and your superior, your actions were rash and may have endangered Ringland in the process, but the information you uncovered about the banners is very important. We now know someone is looking for us. What we don't know for sure is why. As for rescuing the slaves, I applaud what you did."*

*Immediately, Ysaira's eyes widen and she begins to object, but a sharp look from Lt. Vallin silences her. Lord Reyneld continues, "Had I been in your shoes, I would have done the same thing. No Shield Lander... no one should suffer in the chains of slavery. If we allow ourselves to become so concerned for our own safety that we allow others to suffer, we become no better than those who we seek to defeat. You defied orders for the best reason I can think of, to save the lives of innocent people. I commend you for your bravery and thank you."*

*Lord Reyneld stands "Double the patrols and barrier sentries until we're sure they weren't followed. Have the patrols look out for those banners and remove them if they find any. Make sure the men and women they rescued are cared for. In the morning, the town elders and I will meet with them and welcome them to Ringland. Dismissed!"*

*Before you leave, Lt. Vallin gives you the next day's patrol route, "Tomorrow you'll be inside the barrier along the south western edge. Start in the west and circle south. Check in with each sentry post. If there are hobgoblins about, it means that Vayne's troops are nearby. Your raid will rile them up and may lead them back here. Until they clear out, we should be ready. Go get a good meal and some sleep."*

## ENCOUNTER 4: PATROL

Goodmonth 7<sup>th</sup>

*Your patrol today has been quiet, and almost boring. Along the way, each sentry station challenges you with the pass phrases and you reply with the day's proper responses. None of the sentries you come across have seen anything amiss and you find nothing out of the ordinary yourselves.*

Let the characters making Track checks (DC 15) to find a set of tracks crossing their path.

*Late in the day as you are about to head back to town, you come across a set of tracks that seem to have been covered by someone.*

The tracks come from about 100 yards to the south across the border and end about 50 yards within, then abruptly disappear.

The characters have no way of knowing this, but the tracks were made by Ellurûs, on his first successful attempt to cross the barrier. He flew in using fly, landed about 100 yards from where he thought the barrier was, walked across and flew away. Before he left, he took time to bury a coin; the same type as the characters found on the hobgoblins and giants, if they encountered them. He plans to use the coin to find his way back to the barrier if he ever gets lost or turned around.

The characters can find the coin with a successful Track or Search check (DC 20) or successful Spot check (DC 30).

The rest of the patrol is uneventful. No amount of searching locates Ellurûs, as he is long gone, but let the characters try whatever they can think of. If they attempt to scry on him using the coin, he immediately knows it and casts *nondetection*. All the characters get is a brief glimpse of Ellurûs and Nazrol standing around a map of

the area around Ringland. Later attempts at scrying fail as he has *nondetection* running constantly from then on. Be sure to take that into account during the final battle in Encounter 7, since it reduces the number of spells he can cast.

A report to Lt. Vallin is met by concern and the characters are told that they can begin a larger search of the area tomorrow, picking up where tonight's patrols leave off.

## ENCOUNTER 5: INVESTIGATION

Goodmonth 8<sup>th</sup>

**It is the 8<sup>th</sup> of Goodmonth. The morning reports tell you the visitor wasn't caught and no further sign of his or her presence was found. Reports from outland patrols indicate that whatever troops had been in the area are leaving. The camp you raided was packed up and headed west.**

**During your assignment briefing, Lt. Vallin tells you "I'm leaving how you investigate what you found up to you. Keep me up to date on what you find."**

The characters are free to investigate and try to find the "visitor" as they please. They won't find any hard evidence. During the early morning hours of Goodmonth 7<sup>th</sup>, Ellurús headed straight for the obelisk after crossing the barrier, observed it from the air (using *fly*) and flew off. Last night, he returned for more observations.

Any time the characters go to the obelisk, the guards on duty challenge them with requests for the day's passwords, which the characters have (just make something up each day). If the characters question the guards on duty at the obelisk, they say that they saw no one, but heard some rustling in the trees. They checked it out, but didn't find anything. They figured it was an animal of some type. In fact, it was Ellurús; moving about studying the obelisk's runes.

If they investigate the obelisk at the farm outside of town, use the information in Appendix 4 to describe what they find.

Let the characters investigate as much as they like. If they don't suggest setting watch at the obelisk that night, have Lt. Vallin order them to.

## ENCOUNTER 6: GUARD DUTY

Whether by choice or orders the characters are spending the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup> of Goodmonth guarding the obelisk. Allow them to set up their watch however they like. Whoever is on duty at about 3am should make a Listen check (DC 17); the visitor has returned.

Ellurús is invisible and flying. He casts the spells from scrolls if he isn't high enough level to cast them. As soon as he arrives, he realizes that the Pathfinders guarding the obelisk are not the typical guards. He had planned on using a *scroll of project image* to get a closer look at the obelisk without actually getting too close himself.

Even with the party there he continues his plan. If they discover him, he drops the invisibility and calmly talks with the characters. Read or paraphrase the following when he does:

**Suddenly there is a man standing before the obelisk. He seems to be studying it. He is of average height and seems a bit frail. His skin is extremely pale and his hair limp and fine. His features seem sunken as if he was recently ill and still not fully recovered. Taking his attention from the obelisk, he greets you in a surprisingly strong voice despite his sickly appearance.**

**"I mean you no harm. I only wish to examine this wondrous monolith before me. Please, pay me no mind and continue your evening undisturbed."**

The characters no doubt have many questions. If a question cannot be answered by the following, then remember to be vague.

Q: Why are you here?

A: I was sent to investigate the Obelisk. (true)

Q: How did you know the Obelisk was here?

A: My superiors told me it was here. (true)

Q: How did your superiors know it was here?

A: I do not know. They are aware of many things I am not. (true)

Q: How did you come to town?

A: I flew. (true)

Q: Can you read the Obelisk?

A: I do not think so, but some of my associates will be able to. (false, he can read parts of it)

Q: Do you know what the Obelisk is?

A: No, that is what he is here to find out. (true)

Q: Do you have a theory?

A: Yes, many. Unfortunately, I cannot share them with you. (true)

Q: Who do you work for?

A: I cannot say at this time, but our association with Iuz is only so we may move freely in his lands. (true)

Q: Do you work for the Black Hand?

A: As I said, I cannot say at this time. (true)

Q: Is the obelisk dangerous?

A: Yes. (true)

### APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ Ellurús: Male human Sor5; hp 16; see Appendix I.

### APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ Ellurús: Male human Sor7; hp 22; see Appendix I.

## APL 8 (EL 9)

➔ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor9; hp 28; see Appendix I.

## APL 10 (EL 11)

➔ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor11; hp 34; see Appendix I.

**Development:** Ellurûs has no wish to fight, only study the obelisk. If the characters force a battle or make any attempt to capture him, he leaves, casting *teleport* from memory or scroll, as necessary. As he leaves, he says:

*"There is no need for us to be enemies. Remember that when next we meet."*

## ENCOUNTER 7: DARK MOONS

Goodmonth 11<sup>th</sup>

*It has been three days since your encounter with the visitor at the obelisk. For the first two nights afterward, Lt. Vallin had you guard the obelisk again. Tonight, he has asked you to patrol the area nearby. In that time, no one has seen the mysterious stranger again.*

*Tonight is a special night across of the Flanaess. Both moons, Celene and Luna, are new tonight, something that happens only once a year.*

*It is nearly midnight and you are supposed to check in with the guards at the obelisk. When you arrive, they are milling about like they normally do.*

When the characters move to where the guards can see them, continue.

*The guards turn at your approach and wave to you, but contrary to procedure, do not challenge you with requests for pass phrases. To the left about fifty feet the obelisk sits in darkness, its glowing runes missing on this moonless night.*

Things are not as they seem. The real guards are dead. The ones greeting the characters are a *programmed image* and require a successful Will save if interacted with (DC 22), set about 50 feet from the obelisk. The obelisk itself is shrouded in a *persistent image*, requiring a successful Will save if interacted with (DC 21), to cover Ellurûs and Nazrol ritual. At the moment, Ellurûs is invisible (if the APL is high enough) and stands before the obelisk performing the ritual he thinks unlocks its power. Much like the vision many received from the obelisk, the guards lay around the obelisk's base as sacrifices to its ancient power. Before the characters can get too close, Nazrol leaves the glammered area and confronts the characters.

*A massive man in deep black heavy armor suddenly appears before you. He is nearly seven feet tall and wears an elaborate dragon shaped helmet with wicked curved horns atop. In the flickering glow of the torchlight, you see this skin is as black as his armor and reptilian scales and ridges cover his exposed body.*

*"I am Nazrol the Black, loyal servant of the Bringer of Darkness. You are not wanted here! Be gone or fall to Nerull!"*

The characters have three rounds to stop Ellurûs from completing his ritual after which he joins the battle. Once he's finished, the illusions around the obelisk fade, revealing the true scene, dead guards and all. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The air suddenly goes cold as the scene changes around you. Where once there was only the massive servant of Nerull, there are now the bodies of the Ringland guards scattered about the obelisk, much like the visions some of you received from attempts to read its runes. Standing before the obelisk, is the mysterious stranger, his hands are raised above his head and a look of satisfaction is on his face. The runes on the obelisk flare to life in the moonless night air and begin to burn brightly, blurring into an overwhelming glare... and then the pain begins!*

*A wave of intense agony washes over you, making you stagger and nearly collapse. With each passing second the pain grows worse. Surprisingly, Nazrol and his companion seem to be just as affected as you and your companions.*

Have the characters make Fort saves (DC 25+APL). Anyone with the Painless certificate may add their +10 bonus to the saving throw. Anyone failing the save is effectively stunned and unable to act. Protection against stunning does not apply as they are wracked with pain, not actually stunned, but the effects are the same for purposes of this encounter. Anyone who makes the save is effectively exhausted. Protection against exhaustion does not apply as they are wracked with pain, not actually exhausted, but the effects are the same for purposes of this encounter, but with the added effect of forcing characters to make a Concentration check at -10 to cast spells. Read or paraphrase the following to any characters that fail their save:

*The agony continues to grow preventing you from acting. Through the veil of pain you see the mysterious visitor crawling towards the obelisk, his hand outstretched, grasping for his goal. Slowly he drags himself forward, tortuous inch by tortuous inch until he is close enough to lay his palm upon the obelisk's obsidian face.*

Read or paraphrase the following to anyone who makes their save:

*For a moment, the agony is blinding, but it fades slightly allowing you to think. You see the mysterious visitor crawling toward the obelisk, his hand outstretched, grasping for his goal. Acting is still difficult, but possible.*

Have the unaffected characters and Ellurûs roll new initiatives. Ellurûs goal is to touch the obelisk. He does nothing else until he does. The characters are wherever they were when the pain effect began. Ellurûs is 30 ft. to the east of the obelisk.

The pain effect ends as soon as anyone touches the obelisk or after 10 rounds, at which time the characters, and NPCs are no longer affected by the waves of pain.

## ELLURÛS TOUCHES THE OBELISK

If Ellurûs touches the obelisk, he gains the Painless effect. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The stranger slowly drags himself forward, tortuous inch by tortuous inch until he is close enough to lay his palm upon the obelisk's obsidian face.*

*The blinding glow of the runes spreads down his arm engulfing his body. Suddenly, he howls as if his soul were being torn to shreds and then, all is dark and silent.*

*The pain has stopped and your mind begins to clear. All is as it was. The bodies of the guards are still lying nearby and the obelisk has returned to normal. Your companions lay around you recovering from your ordeal and Nazrol, obviously shaken, is slowly climbing to his feet. The mysterious stranger is standing already, an expression of satisfaction on his face. Turning to Nazrol he says, "I have what I came for. Finish them!"*

## A CHARACTER TOUCHES THE OBELISK

If any character other than one with the Painless cert touches it, the obelisk returns to normal, but nothing else happens.

*The pain has stopped and your mind begins to clear. All is as it was. The bodies of the guards are still lying nearby and the obelisk has returned to normal. Your companions lay around you recovering from your ordeal and Nazrol, obviously shaken, is slowly climbing to his feet. The mysterious stranger is standing already, an expression of loss on his face. Turning to Nazrol he says, "They have ruined everything. Kill them all as punishment!"*

## A CHARACTER WITH THE PAINLESS CERTIFICATE TOUCHES THE OBELISK

If someone with the Painless certificate touches the obelisk, take him aside and read the following:

*Touching the obelisk soothes the horrible pain, allowing you to think clearly. Without words being spoken, you get the sense that you must make a choice. The obelisk is asking, for lack of a better term, if you wish to keep the gift it gave you months ago. In your heart, how do you answer?*

Allow the character to answer. If he decides to keep it, read this:

*You sense that the obelisk expected no less.*

If the character wishes to give up the Painless certificate, read this:

*The pain immediately returns, worse than before. You know that whatever dark power controls or lives within this obelisk is insulted by your rejection of its gift. Again without words, you are told that for your rejection you must now feel all the pain your gift has protected you from since the beginning!*

The character must make a Fort save at -2 per event he's played since SHL2-01 A Message from Ringland. If he fails, the character is reduced to 0 hit point minus one half the

modifier to the save. No character can be reduced to lower than -9 hit points this way, regardless of what their hit point total was before making the save. For example, if the character has participated in five events since SHL2-01 A Message from Ringland, the modifier to the save is -10 and he is reduced to -5 hit points if he fails. Regardless of the result of the save, the character loses the Painless certificate permanently. Read the following:

*Without warning, your body explodes in agonizing pain as if every nerve were on fire. Old scars reopen and mended bones break as a soul-wrenching scream escapes your bloody lips. It is all coming back to you now, every cut, every bruise, every bit of pain you have missed since you first touched the obelisk, and then, the void claims you.*

Do not tell the character what his current hit points are or whether he is alive. Just read this to the other characters:

*You see your companion touch the obelisk and even as your pain fades, [his/hers] begins. The blinding glow of the runes spreads down his arm engulfing [his/her] body. Wounds open across [his/her] body and a soul-wrenching scream escapes [his/her] now bloody lips. Then, [he/she] drops limply to the ground and lies still.*

If a character with the painless cert touched the obelisk and kept the certificate, read this:

*The pain has stopped and your mind begins to clear. All is as it was. The bodies of the guards are still lying nearby and the obelisk has returned to normal. Your companions lay around you recovering from your ordeal and Nazrol, obviously shaken, is slowly climbing to his feet. The mysterious stranger is standing already, an expression of rage on his face. Turning to Nazrol he screams "[He/She] has stolen what should have been mine! Kill them all as punishment!"*

If a character with the painless certificate touched the obelisk and gave up the cert, read this:

*The pain has stopped and your mind begins to clear. All is as it was. The bodies of the guards are still lying nearby and the obelisk has returned to normal. Your companions lay around you recovering from your ordeal and Nazrol, obviously shaken, is slowly climbing to his feet. The mysterious stranger is standing already, an expression of disgust on his face. Turning to Nazrol he says "[He/She] has refused the obelisk's gift and paid the price, but in the process prevented me from taking what is mine! Kill them all as punishment!"*

## APL 4 (EL 7)

☛ **Nazrol the Black:** Male half-dragon (black)/human Ftr1/Clr2 (Nerull); hp 29; see Appendix I.

☛ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor5; hp 16; see Appendix I.

## APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ **Nazrol the Black:** Male half-dragon (black)/human Ftr1/Clr4 (Nerull); hp 45; see Appendix I.

☛ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor7; hp 22; see Appendix I.

## APL 8 (EL 11)

➤ **Nazrol the Black:** Male half-dragon (black)/human FtrI/Clr6 (Nerull); hp 61; see Appendix I.

➤ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor9; hp 28; see Appendix I.

## APL 10 (EL 13)

➤ **Nazrol the Black:** Male half-dragon (black)/human FtrI/Clr8 (Nerull); hp 76; see Appendix I.

➤ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor11; hp 34; see Appendix I.

**Tactics:** Both Nazrol and Ellurûs have had time to prepare for battle. They have cast as many spells as possible before coming to the obelisk or on the way to it. Nazrol is there to protect Ellurûs and delay anyone from stopping the ritual. He is an intelligent and brutal warrior using the best combination of weapons and spells to drop as many foes as possible as fast as possible.

Ellurûs is quite the opposite. He hates battle, but fights well. He tends to stay out of melee combat and fights from whatever advantage he can gain. If all the characters fall, he stops Nazrol from killing them all.

**Treasure:** Nazrol and Ellurûs' belongings are listed in Appendix I: NPCs. All of Ellurûs' gold is made up of the same rare gold coins found on the hobgoblins and giants, as he is the one who has been paying them with these coins. He has thirty of these coins at all APLs (Value 150 gp total).

**Development:** Nazrol lives to kill in Nerull's name, but Ellurûs is not quite so bloodthirsty. If all the characters fall, he stops Nazrol from killing them.

## CONCLUSION

*The Pain effect was felt in town, but not nearly as strongly. Guards were dispatched as soon as possible and show up about ten minutes after the battle in Encounter 7 ends. Upon arrival, the guards secure the area and assist the characters however they can. Accompanying the guards is a cleric of Atroa who has a full compliment of spells. Eventually, you are escorted back to Ringland and a new guard is left at the obelisk.*

*Lord Reyneld, Lt. Vallin and even Ysaira intercept you on your way back, but Lord Reyneld asks that you wait until you reach Rendor Keep before explaining.*

*Once there, the town elders, Arvet, Anedhel of Atroa and Master Dorgin, meet you. In the great hall, one and all listen intently to your tale. As you finish, everyone tries to speak at once, but Lord Reyneld quiets the group and speaks.*

*"Ringland's survival is no longer as closely guarded a secret as we hoped. There are some who obviously know we are here, yet Iuz has not come crashing down upon us. Whoever this new foe is, seems more concerned with the obelisk than with us, so at least temporarily we may be safe. Regardless, we should continue to keep Ringland as much a secret as possible until we learn who these new foes are and what their goal is."*

*The following day after receiving thanks from the Ringlanders, you are returned to Gensal as planned. Captain Hebrin tells you that your vow of secrecy about Ringland is still*

*in effect, but you suspect that even your silence will not protect the town for long.*

The End

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

### Encounter 1: Testing Limits

Defeat the hobgoblins.

APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP

### Encounter 2: Rescue

Defeat the giants and rescue the slaves.

APL 4	210 XP
APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP

### Encounter 7: Dark Moons

Defeat Nazrol the Black and Ellurûs.

APL 4	210 XP
APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP

### Discretionary Roleplaying Award

APL 4	60 XP
APL 6	90 XP
APL 8	120 XP
APL 10	150 XP

### Total Possible Experience

APL 4	600 XP
APL 6	840 XP
APL 8	1050 XP
APL 10	1260 XP

## TREASURE SUMMARY

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

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 minute 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 (that is., 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 piece 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 treasures from each encounter add it up and that is 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.

## **TREASURE KEY:**

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

### **Encounter 1: Testing Limits**

Defeat the hobgoblins and strip them of their gear.

APL 4: L: 99 gp; C: 6 gp; M: 0

APL 6: L: 263 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 0

APL 8: L: 258 gp; C: 8 gp; M: +1 *chainmail armor* (Value 195 gp per character).

APL 10: L: 278 gp; C: 8 gp; M: +1 *chainmail armor* (Value 195 gp per character).

### **Encounter 2: Rescue**

Defeat the giants and strip them of their gear and coins.

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 30 gp; M: 0

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 36 gp; M: 0

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 48 gp; M: 0

APL 10: L: 40 gp; C: 30 gp; M: 0

### **Encounter 7: Dark Moons**

Defeat Nazrol the Black and Ellurûs, and strip them of their gear.

APL 4: L: 104 gp; C: 30 gp; M: *potion of cure light wounds* (Value 8 gp per character); *scroll of locate object* (Value 23 gp per character); *scroll of fly* (Value 56 gp per character).

APL 6: L: 119 gp; C: 30 gp; M: *potion of cure light wounds* (Value 8 gp per character); *scroll of locate object*

(Value 23 gp per character); *scroll of fly* (Value 56 gp per character); *bracers of armor +1* (Value 250 gp per character).

APL 8: L: 84 gp; C: 30 gp; M: *potion of cure light wounds* (Value 8 gp per character); *scroll of locate object* (Value 23 gp per character); *scroll of Evard's black tentacles* (Value 105 gp per character); *bracers of armor +1* (Value 250 gp per character); +1 *greatsword* (Value 353 gp per character).

APL 10: L: 9 gp; C: 30 gp; M: *potion of cure light wounds* (Value 8 gp per character); *scroll of locate object* (Value 23 gp per character); *scroll of Evard's black tentacles* (Value 105 gp per character); *bracers of armor +1* (Value 250 gp per character); +1 *greatsword* (Value 353 gp per character); +1 *full plate armor* (Value 398 gp per character).

## **Total Possible Treasure**

APL 4: 356 gp

APL 6: 693 gp

APL 8: 1262 gp

APL 10: 1626 gp

## **ADVENTURE CERTIFICATE ITEMS**

### **Geas**

For refusing to guard the secret of Ringland by remaining silent, you have been geased. The spell has been cast by a 13<sup>th</sup>-level cleric and worded so you must not speak of Ringland or any details you learned during this event to anyone. If you speak of Ringland, you suffer under the effects of the geas until you take actions to fix any damage you may have caused, if possible.

## APPENDIX I: NPCS

### ENCOUNTER 1: GOODMONTH 6<sup>TH</sup>

#### APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr3; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d10+9; hp 31; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 11, flat-footed 18); Atk +9 melee (1d8+4/x3, heavy lance) or +7 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +3, Listen +0, Ride +8; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy lance).

*Possessions:* longsword, masterwork heavy lance, banded mail armor, large steel shield, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle and saddlebags), 30 gp.

#### APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 5d10+15; hp 49; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 11, flat-footed 18); Atk +11 melee (1d8+6/x3, heavy lance) or +9 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +5, Listen +0, Ride +12; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Weapon Focus (heavy lance), Weapon Specialization (heavy lance).

*Possessions:* longsword, masterwork heavy lance, banded mail armor, large steel shield, heavy warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, saddlebags, and chainmail barding), 30 gp.

➤ **Naroth:** Male hobgoblin Ftr2; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +6 ranged (1d8+1/x3, mighty composite longbow) or +5 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +4, Ride +11, Spot +1; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot.

*Possessions:* longsword, mighty composite longbow (+1), 40 arrows, chainmail armor, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, and saddlebags), 5 gp.

➤ **Ghora:** Female hobgoblin Rgr1/Ftr1; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +6 ranged (1d8+1/x3, mighty composite longbow) or +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +2, Hide +6, Knowledge (nature) +3, Move Silently +8, Ride +8,

Wilderness Lore +4; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Track.

*Possessions:* longsword, mighty composite longbow (+1), 40 arrows, chainmail armor, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, and saddlebags), 5 gp.

#### APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr7; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 7d10+21; hp 67; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 12, flat-footed 18); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+6/x3, heavy lance) or +11/+6 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +5, Listen +1, Ride +14; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (heavy lance), Weapon Specialization (heavy lance).

*Possessions:* longsword, masterwork heavy lance, +1 chainmail armor, large steel shield, heavy warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, saddlebags, and chainmail barding), 30 gp.

➤ **Naroth:** Male hobgoblin Ftr4; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 4d10+8; hp 36; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +9 ranged (1d8+2/x3, mighty composite longbow) or +7 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +6, Ride +13, Spot +2; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow).

*Possessions:* longsword, mighty composite longbow (+2), 40 arrows, chainmail armor, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, and saddlebags), 5 gp.

➤ **Ghora:** Female hobgoblin Rgr2/Ftr2; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 4d10+8; hp 36; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +8 ranged (1d8+2/x3, mighty composite longbow) or +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

*Skills and Feats:* Handle Animal +4, Hide +6, Knowledge (nature) +4, Move Silently +8, Ride +10, Wilderness Lore +5; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Track.

*Possessions:* longsword, mighty composite longbow (+2), 40 arrows, chainmail armor, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, and saddlebags), 5 gp.

#### APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Dúrgakh:** Male hobgoblin Ftr9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 9d10+27; hp 85; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 12, flat-footed 18); Atk +15/+10

melee (1d8+6/19-20/x3, heavy lance) or +13/+8 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Handle Animal +5, Listen +2, Ride +17; Improved Critical (heavy lance), Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack, Spirited Charge, Trample, Weapon Focus (heavy lance), Weapon Specialization (heavy lance).

**Possessions:** longsword, masterwork heavy lance, +1 chainmail armor, large steel shield, heavy warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, saddlebags, and chainmail barding), 30 gp.

➤ **Naroth:** Male hobgoblin Ftr7; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +12/+7 ranged (1d8+5/x3, mighty composite longbow) or +10/+5 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Handle Animal +9, Ride +16, Spot +4; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Specialization (composite longbow).

**Possessions:** longsword, mighty composite longbow (+3), 40 arrows, chainmail armor, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, saddlebags, and leather barding), 5 gp.

➤ **Ghora:** Female hobgoblin Rgr5/Ftr2; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk +11/+6 ranged (1d8+3/x3, mighty composite longbow) or +9/+4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Handle Animal +5, Hide +9, Knowledge (nature) +5, Move Silently +11, Ride +13, Wilderness Lore +6; Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track.

**Possessions:** longsword, mighty composite longbow (+3), 40 arrows, +1 chainmail armor, light warhorse (bit and bridle, military saddle, and saddlebags), 5 gp.

**Spells Prepared** (1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 1<sup>st</sup> – entangle.

## ENCOUNTER 6: GUARD DUTY

### APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d4; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana)

+9, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Evocation).

**Possessions:** light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of locate object*, *scroll of fly*.

**Spells Known** (6/7/5; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*.

### APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor7; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid; HD 7d4; hp 22; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (touch 11, flat-footed 11); Atk +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +2 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation).

**Possessions:** light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *arcane scroll of locate object*, *scroll of fly*, *bracers of armor* +1.

**Spells Known** (6/7/7/5; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *fireball*, *haste*.

### APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d4; hp 28; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); Atk +6 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Spellcraft +13; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation).

**Possessions:** light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *arcane scroll of locate object*, *scroll of Evard's black tentacles*, *bracers of armor* +1.

**Spells Known** (6/7/7/7/5; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *fireball*, *fly*, *haste*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *ice storm*, *stoneskin*.

### APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Ellurûs:** Male human Sor11; CR 11; Medium-size humanoid; HD 11d4; hp 34; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); Atk +7 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA

Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Spellcraft +15; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation).

**Possessions:** light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *arcane scroll of locate object*, *scroll of Evard's black tentacles*, *bracers of armor* +1.

**Spells Known** (6/7/7/7/7/4; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *cat's grace*, *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *fly*, *haste*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *fire shield*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *dominate person*, *teleport*.

## Description

Ellurús is a frail and sickly looking human barely 5 ft. 6 inches tall and weighing only 140 pounds. His skin and eyes are both pale, though he is not an albino. His features are sunken and dark circles sit below eyes burning with intensity and intelligence. He wears no armor, only simple traveler's clothes and carries only some basic necessities and a few weapons.

Ellurús lives for arcane investigation and wholeheartedly supports the goals of the Union of Erudite Scholars, of which he is a member. He is extremely excited by what he suspects is the truth behind the obelisk and hopes he can unlock its power for himself (and his fellow union members, of course).

He does whatever is required to resist capture, including killing himself, and never willingly provides any information. If the battle in Encounter 7 turns against him, he flees by the most expedient method available.

More information on the Union of Erudite Scholars and their goals may be revealed in future Shield Lands regional events.

## ENCOUNTER 7: DARK MOONS

### APL 4 (EL 7)

☛ **Nazrol the Black:** Male half-dragon (black)/human Ftr1/Clr2 (Nerull); CR 5; Medium-size dragon; HD 1d10+2d8+9; hp 29; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 10, flat-footed 21); Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, bite) and +1 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) or +7 melee (2d6+6/19-20, greatsword) or +6 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +2 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Breath weapon, spells, rebuke undead; SQ Low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., sleep, paralysis, and acid immunity; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 18, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +0, Concentration +8, Jump +0, Knowledge (religion) +6, Ride +3, Swim –9; Combat Casting, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

**Possessions:** light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, dagger, morningstar, masterwork greatsword, half-plate armor

**Spells Prepared** (4/3+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance* (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane*, *endure elements*, *protection from good*\*, *shield of faith*.

\*Domain spell. **Domains:** Death (You may use a death touch once per day. Your death touch is a spell-like ability that is a death effect. You must succeed at a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 1d6 per your cleric level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies); Evil (You cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

☛ **Ellurús:** Male human Sor5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d4; hp 16; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +1 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

**Skills and Feats:** Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Evocation).

**Possessions:** light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *scroll of locate object*, *scroll of fly*.

**Spells Known** (6/7/5; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*.

### APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ **Nazrol the Black:** Male half-dragon (black)/human Ftr1/Clr4 (Nerull); CR 7; Medium-size dragon; HD 1d10+4d8+15; hp 45; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 10, flat-footed 21); Atk +8 melee (1d6+4, bite) and +3 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) or +9 melee (2d6+6/19-20, greatsword) or +8 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Breath weapon, spells, rebuke undead; SQ Low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., sleep, paralysis, and acid immunity; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +2, Concentration +10, Jump +2, Knowledge (religion) +8, Ride +3, Swim –9; Combat Casting, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

**Possessions:** light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, dagger, morningstar, masterwork greatsword, masterwork half-plate armor

**Spells Prepared** (5/4+1/3+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *resistance* (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane*, *doom*, *endure elements*, *protection from good*\*, *shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength*, *calm emotion*, *death knell*\*, *endurance*.

\*Domain spell. **Domains:** Death (You may use a death touch once per day. Your death touch is a spell-like ability that is a death effect. You must succeed at a

melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 1d6 per your cleric level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies); Evil (You cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

➤ **Ellurûs**: Male human Sor7; CR 7; Medium-size humanoid; HD 7d4; hp 22; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (touch 11, flat-footed 11); Atk +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +2 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats*: Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Possessions*: light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *arcane scroll of locate object*, *scroll of fly*, *bracers of armor +1*.

*Spells Known* (6/7/7/5; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *fireball*, *haste*.

#### APL 8 (EL 11)

➤ **Nazrol the Black**: Male half-dragon (black)/human Ftr1/Clr6 (Nerull); CR 9; Medium-size dragon; HD 1d10+6d8+21; hp 61; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 10, flat-footed 21); Atk +9 melee (1d6+4, bite) and +4 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) or +10 melee (2d6+7/19-20, greatsword) or +9 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +5 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Breath weapon, spells, rebuke undead; SQ Low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., sleep, paralysis, and acid immunity; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +3, Concentration +12, Jump +2, Knowledge (religion) +10, Ride +4, Swim –9; Combat Casting, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

*Possessions*: light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, dagger, morningstar, +1 greatsword, masterwork half-plate armor

*Spells Prepared* (5/4+1/4+1/3+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *resistance* (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane*, *doom*, *endure elements*, *protection from good\**, *shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength*, *calm emotion*, *death knell\**, *endurance*, *hold person*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead\**, *blindness/deafness*, *dispel magic*, *protection from elements*.

\*Domain spell. *Domains*: Death (You may use a death touch once per day. Your death touch is a spell-like ability that is a death effect. You must succeed at a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 1d6 per your cleric level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies); Evil (You cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

➤ **Ellurûs**: Male human Sor9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d4; hp 28; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); Atk +6 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow) or +3 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats*: Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Spellcraft +13; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Possessions*: light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *arcane scroll of locate object*, *scroll of Evard's black tentacles*, *bracers of armor +1*.

*Spells Known* (6/7/7/7/5; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *fireball*, *fly*, *haste*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *ice storm*, *stoneskin*.

#### APL 10 (EL 13)

➤ **Nazrol the Black**: Male half-dragon (black)/human Ftr1/Clr8 (Nerull); CR 11; Medium-size dragon; HD 1d10+8d8+27; hp 76; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23 (touch 10, flat-footed 23); Atk +11 melee (1d6+4, bite) and +6 melee (1d4+2, 2 claws) or +12/+7 melee (2d6+7/19-20, greatsword) or +11/+6 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +7 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Breath weapon, spells, rebuke undead; SQ Low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., sleep, paralysis, and acid immunity; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 20, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats*: Climb +4, Concentration +14, Jump +3, Knowledge (religion) +12, Ride +4, Swim –9; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

*Possessions*: light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, dagger, morningstar, +1 greatsword, +1 full plate armor

*Spells Prepared* (6/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1; base DC = 15 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *inflict minor wounds*, *resistance* (2); 1<sup>st</sup> – *bane*, *divine favor*, *doom*, *endure elements*, *protection from good\**, *shield of faith*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *bull's strength*, *calm emotion*, *death knell\**, *endurance*, *hold person*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *animate dead\**, *blindness/deafness*, *dispel magic*, *protection from elements* (2); 4<sup>th</sup> – *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *poison*, *unholy blight\**.

\*Domain spell. *Domains*: Death (You may use a death touch once per day. Your death touch is a spell-like ability that is a death effect. You must succeed at a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 1d6 per your cleric level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies); Evil (You cast evil spells at +1 caster level).

➤ **Ellurûs**: Male human Sor11; CR 11; Medium-size humanoid; HD 11d4; hp 34; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 12, flat-footed 11); Atk +7 ranged (1d8/19-20,

light crossbow) or +4 melee (1d4-1/19-20, dagger); SA Spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18.

*Skills and Feats:* Alchemy +3, Bluff +6, Concentration +14, Diplomacy +8, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Spellcraft +15; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Possessions:* light crossbow, dagger, 20 crossbow bolts, *potion of cure light wounds*, *arcane scroll of locate object*, *scroll of Evard's black tentacles*, *bracers of armor +1*.

*Spells Known* (6/7/7/7/7/4; base DC = 14 + spell level; 16 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0 – *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1<sup>st</sup> – *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*; 2<sup>nd</sup> – *cat's grace*, *flaming sphere*, *invisibility*, *nondetection*, *web*; 3<sup>rd</sup> – *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *fly*, *haste*; 4<sup>th</sup> – *fire shield*, *ice storm*, *stoneskin*; 5<sup>th</sup> – *dominate person*, *teleport*.

### **Description**

Nazrol is half human and half black dragon, nearly seven feet tall and well over 250 pounds. His skin is leathery and black much like a true dragon and his body covered by protective scales and ridges at vulnerable points. His helmet is designed in such a way as to allow his natural horns to stick out from the top as if part of the helmet. His black armor is engraved extensively with holy symbols of Nerull.

Nazrol the Black is a demented sadist and fanatical follower of Nerull. He staunchly believes that death is the blessing of Nerull and envies those he slaughters. He is somewhat reckless in battle as he hopes to die and receive this fell master's dark blessing. When striking down a foe with a killing blow, he always shouts, "Receive the Blessing of Nerull!"

Nazrol is a member of the mercenary band called the Black Hand and knows of the Union of Erudite Scholars. He does not allow himself to be captured, going as far as to kill himself at the first opportunity or forcing his captors to kill him. He never willingly reveals anything. If killed after being captured, he has taken precautions to ensure his return, as he believes that Nerull only grants his blessing (i.e., final death) if the half-dragon falls in honorable battle. His interpretation of "honorable" likely differs greatly from most others.

## APPENDIX II : RINGLAND

Ringland is a small town in the northeastern section of the Shield Lands; a location that is currently far behind enemy lines. In better times, Ringland was the ancestral seat of the Earl of Rendor, a small noble family with a seat on the Council of Lords. The family helped form the original Council of Lords back when the Shield Lands first claimed independence and has served honorably ever since.

Ringland's location far to the north and off the main trade roads kept the town from ever growing past its meager eight hundred inhabitants. The people were content to farm their lands, herd their flocks and live simple lives. What made this possible, even in the face of raids by the petty lords of the Bandit Kingdoms and marauders from the Horned Society was the presence of a magical barrier that protected the town from evil.

It is believed a powerful mage created the barrier early in the town's existence. Many believe the mage was one of the first Shield Mages, but none have ever proven that claim. Regardless, the barrier certainly exists and continues to protect the town even today. No small feat considering how deep in Iuz's territory the town now sits.

The border of the barrier is a series of small stone towers, no more than four feet high. The towers are made up of piled field stones, lacking any distinguishing markings other than the regularity with which they are placed, that being about two hundred feet apart. The ring of stone towers stands slightly more than four miles from roughly the center of Ringland, encompassing some sixty square miles. Each tower emanates faint Enchantment magic if detected for. The barrier itself seems undetectable by both normal and magical sense, but functions nonetheless.

Evil creatures attempting to pierce the barrier fall under the effect of a combination of extremely powerful versions of *antipathy* and *forget* spells. The *antipathy* spell dissuades evil creatures from traveling beyond the ring of towers, while the *forget* spell subtly alters their perceptions to convince them that nothing is out of the ordinary. Evil creatures are entitled to a Will save (DC 25) when attempting to move through the barrier. Those who fail turn and leave, seemingly of their own choice. If asked later to report what they saw, they simply say that all was as it should be, even going as far as to elaborate on various details to support their claims. As far as they are concerned, they speak the absolute truth, even if presented with proof to the contrary.

Amazingly, the barrier protected the town from attack during the occupation by the Hierarchs of the Horned Society and currently from Iuz's minions. Despite its position, it is the only town within the Shield Lands that has not suffered significant change or enemy occupation in the last twenty years.

The town itself is a pleasant place full of hard working, but simple people. Before his death during Iuz's invasion Earl Rendor was well-liked and shown much respect. Though a devoted follower of Heironeous and a Knight of Holy Shielding, the Earl allowed the people of Ringland to live their lives by their own beliefs so long as peace and prosperity followed. Being strongly linked to the earth, the townsfolk have always had a preference for the Oeridian agricultural gods, with Atroa currently being the most popular, due in great part to Anedhel's presence, to be sure. Today, a church dedicated to the Goddess of Spring is the only functioning religion in Ringland, aside from the private practices to Heironeous performed by Sir Reyneld and a handful of the town guards at Rendor Keep. Anedhel of Atroa, an older half-elf woman and town elder tend the needs of the faithful.

After the Hierarchs were driven from the Shield Lands, many of the nobles were flush with pride and overconfidence in the nation's ability to defend itself. When Iuz invaded, many felt that the Old One could be driven back much as the Hierarchs were. This proved to be incorrect. Earl Rendor was one of the nobles to learn a lesson in humility.

When word came that Iuz was on the attack, Earl Rendor took his only son and his entire contingent of knights and rode out to meet the invaders along side his fellow nobles and knights. Lady Rendor had died long since while giving birth to the heir. In his place, Earl Rendor left two young Knights of Holy Shielding to protect Ringland; Sir Janszen Reyneld and Sir Harmenn Deleven, both the sons of other noble houses.

Energized by the victories against the Hierarchs, Earl Rendor rushed to defend the Shield Lands against Iuz. His bravery (and some say arrogance) was not enough. Within days, the Earl, his son and every last one of his personal knights were dead on the field of battle.

When Earl Rendor failed to return and reports told of a massive retreat by Shield Lands' forces, the people of Ringland did what they had when the Hierarchs came; they pulled back from the ring of towers and waited. In the absence of Earl Rendor, the people of Ringland turned to the two young Shield Knights for leadership. Though highly criticized and debated at the time, the knights decided to stay in Ringland and hoped the protective barrier was enough to shelter them from Iuz. Luckily, the barrier held and Iuz's minions passed by the town unknowingly.

During the nearly eight years since, life has remained much the same in Ringland. The people still tend their crops and mind their flocks. Babies are born and the elderly pass on. Aside from its location, Ringland is the last remnant of what the Shield Lands were once like.

Without House Rendor to govern them, the people turned to the Shield Knights. Both knights took their vow to protect the town seriously, but knew that the situation called for caution. Being new to the town, the knights sought the advice of those who had spent their lives in Ringland, hoping to learn from them how best to govern the people. Eventually, the knights and the town elders joined together to form a different sort of rulership for the town; one based on both the feudal responsibilities of the past and a necessity for the people's needs and fears to be heard and considered.

Today, the council consists of Lord Reyneld (the default leader), Arvet (Earl Rendor's seneschal), Anedhel of Atroa and Master Dorgin the innkeeper. Sir Deleven sat on the council before his departure, as did Jessot the miller before his passing last winter.

During the early days of isolation, many arguments were had over whether to stay in Ringland or attempt escape. Each of the knights had their own opinion on which route to take, as did the town elders. As time passed and the town remained safe, most felt it better to remain and let the magical barrier protect them. Sir Deleven disagreed, convinced that it was only a matter of time before Iuz trampled Ringland beneath his heel, as he must have done to all of the Shield Lands, if not all of the Flanaess.

Finally, three years ago, Sir Deleven and five clerics of Rao, also trapped in Ringland at the time of the invasion while traveling home to Veluna, attempted to reach Furyondy. They took a small number of like-minded townsfolk, mostly brash youngsters and set out away from Ringland. No one has heard from them since.

A well-trained militia made up of all able-bodied townsfolk protects the town. Everyone is responsible for doing what needs to be done to protect the town, bring in the crops and tend the animals. Most of the homes close to the edge of the protective barrier have been abandoned so as not to attract attention to the town. Now, everyone lives within three miles of the town. The border is patrolled constantly and a series of way stations has been set up to transfer messages quickly. At the first sign of trouble, word is sent back to Lord Reyneld and a larger force of guardsmen and scouts is dispatched to deal with it.

Rendor Keep, the seat of House Rendor's power still sits above the town as it has for generations. Lord Reyneld, Arvet, and all of the regular Ringland soldiers currently occupy Rendor keep. The keep is well armed and provisioned and will act as the last defense if Iuz ever penetrates the barrier. All able townsfolk are required to train regularly under Lord Reyneld and his officers, as well as perform guard duties for the town in addition to their normal daily responsibilities.

Several months ago, a dragon was sighted in the skies over Ringland. In response, it was decided to try once again to make contact with allies beyond the barrier. Five messengers were sent out hoping to reach someone who could aid Ringland if the dragon attacked. Pathfinders found one of the messengers on patrol out side Gensal. The Pathfinders were sent to Ringland to reestablish contact and investigate the dragon sightings. Eventually the dragon reappeared and was killed by an unseen foe. Before his death, the dragon tried to reach something near a farm on the outskirts of Ringland. The dragon reached its goal, but died anyway. The Pathfinder in Ringland at the time investigated and found the dying dragon and a strange obelisk (see Appendix 4). Upon touching the obelisk, one of the Pathfinders was enchanted to never feel pain, an effect that was both a blessing and a curse. In the months since then, regular communication has been maintained between the Restored Holy Realm and the town. Recently, mages from the Arcanists' Society and Rimwalkers have been brought in to teleport Pathfinders back and forth between Gensal and Ringland to help facilitate communication and bolster the town's defenses. Elaborate procedures have been enacted to ensure Ringland's survival remains a secret from Iuz.

Commerce in Ringland has changed considerably. With no goods coming or going from the town, the people are forced to provide everything locally and produce only what they really need. This isn't a problem for food, water, clothing, and the basic necessities of life, but luxury items are almost non-existent. As is raw iron for forging and just about anything else the people can't grow, hunt or gather from the surrounding area. Since everything is produced locally, the people see little value in gold and silver now and barter for just about everything, be it goods or services.

Despite their isolation and constant fear, the people of Ringland are content, almost happy. Their lives have not changed for the worse so much that they would abandon their town or each other. They are certainly better off than the rest of the Shield Lands (though until the characters arrive they have no idea of this). Even if given the chance to leave, most would choose to stay in Ringland no matter what happens. Having had no newcomers in seven years that did not mean them harm, the people tend to be overly cautious at first, but soon warm to trustworthy visitors.

## **RINGLAND NPC DESCRIPTIONS**

**Lord Janszen Reyneld:** Male human Pal13 (Heironeous).

Sir Reyneld is the youngest of the town council, but many still look at him as the leader. He has red-brown hair, green eyes and very light skin. Though only in his late thirties, the man has seen more than his share of war, having spent the majority of his life in one conflict or another, but always in the service of the Shield Lands. A devoted follower of Heironeous, he sometimes sees things far too black and white for some other townsfolk likes, but he is wise enough to know not to force his viewpoints on everyone. Over the years he has learned to curb his impulsive nature, to the point of frustrating the young soldiers under his command with his "more patient than stone" attitude. In truth, this is a guise he keeps up to teach others what he feels he lacks; patience. Early on in Ringland's isolation, he allowed his restlessness to get the better of him and it cost five lives. He has since vowed to never allow that to happen again. Since contact with the Shield Lands has been reestablished, he has learned that most of his family perished during the Greyhawk Wars and he is now the Earl of Reyneld. Feeling duty bound to continue to protect Ringland as he originally promised Lord Rendor, he has temporarily refused his position on the Council of Lords and remained in Ringland indefinitely.

**Arvet (Seneschal of Lord Rendor prior to the occupation):** Male human Ari6.

Arvet is an older Oeridian man in his fifties with heavily graying dark hair. He is of average build and carries himself with dignity. He is always dressed meticulously, though not extravagantly. To those who don't know him, he can come off rather cold and self important, but this is due more to many years of dealing with the peculiarities of the nobility than any sense of self importance or distorted ego. He sees himself as carrying on for his fallen Lord, whom he respected greatly and saw as nearly a son. He becomes angry at any comment or suggestion that places the fallen Earl of Rendor in a negative light. He is uncomfortable as an elder of the community, preferring to advise those in command rather than make decisions himself.

**Anedhel of Atroa:** Female half-elf Clr7 (Atroa).

As a half-elf, Anedhel is longer lived than most humans. As such, she is quite a bit older than even Dorgin. Still, she looks much younger. Even now, she is very attractive suggesting a stunning beauty as a young woman. She has auburn hair and green eyes that compliment the earthy colors of her simple, functional clothing. The cleric truly cares for the people of Ringland, but as is common to many priests of her religion, she longs to travel again. She had come to Ringland ten years ago, originally planning on staying only a short time. If not for being the only cleric of respectable power in the town, she might have headed out on her own long ago.

**Dorgin (Innkeeper of the Silver Ring):** Male human Com5.

Dorgin is the typical jolly old innkeeper. He's well past his sixties and carries a large belly and even larger smile. His hair has long since gone white, but his eyes still shine a deep blue. He has a kind word for everyone who enters his establishment (the Silver Ring Inn, named for it's distinctive silver trimmed, circular bar) and takes great pride in having the best of everything. He tends to be harsh on those who make trouble, but dotes on his guests with almost fatherly attention. Once married, his beloved wife passed away five years ago and his children have grown and moved on before the bad times started in the Shield Lands. He still wonders what has happened to them since he last heard from them. Everyone in town calls him "Master Dorgin", a title of respect, which he enjoys, but feels is undeserved. He would never tell anyone that, for fear of hurting their feelings.

## **REFERENCES**

For more information on Ringland, see *Iuz the Evil*, pg 45. Information on Lord Reyneld and Sir Deleven can be found on pg 92 of the same book. Although a brief mention of Ringland is made in *Return to White Plume Mountain*, the information therein greatly contradicts the earlier information in *Iuz the Evil* and seems to ignore the fact that Iuz occupies the majority of the Shield Lands.

## APPENDIX 3: THE BLACK HAND

The Black Hand is a little known mercenary band that formed in the aftermath of the Greyhawk Wars. Little is known of their exact membership or who leads the group. They have a reputation for cruelty, efficiency, and success. What little is known about them indicates they are based out of Greyhawk City and have worked almost exclusively for an academic group known as the Union of Erudite Scholars. Their missions have been primarily recovery expeditions to various locations across the Flanaess. Very recently, reports had placed them in the employ of Vayne in Law's Forge, though nothing is available to link the Union of Erudite Scholars to his employ as well.

Unknown to anyone outside their order, the members of the Union of Erudite Scholars have learned of the obelisk in Ringland and are trying to locate it. To that end they have sent the Black Hand to Vayne to make an alliance. The Black Hand will serve Vayne for free if they are allowed free access to the occupied lands. Vayne obviously knows they have plans of their own, but cannot pass up the extra forces now that he has been displaced from Admundfort. The Union of Erudite Scholars has not told Vayne of the obelisk or of Ringland's survival. Prior to the beginning of this event, the Black Hand took command of a large group of Vayne's army and is using them to help them identify and breach the barrier around Ringland.

Unless the characters have Knowledge (Greyhawk City), and make a successful check (DC 25) it is very unlikely they know about the Black Hand or the Union of Erudite Scholars.

## APPENDIX 4: THE OBELISK

The obelisk is located about a mile south outside the town of Ringland, well within the protective barrier encircling the town. The obelisk seems to be made of jet-black obsidian and is thirty feet tall. It is about one foot wide at the tip, gradually widening to about four feet wide where it enters the ground. Simple digging can't find the base of it, so it must be set extremely deeply in the ground. In the moonlight, the obelisk seems to have strange writings on it that aren't visible in normal torch or sunlight.

Arcane spell casters within thirty feet per caster level of the obelisk can feel it calling to them quietly. The call has no real effect, but should get their attention if nothing else. Once they leave the area, they can no longer feel the obelisk's call.

The origin of the obelisk in Ringland is unknown. Investigations since its original discovery have discovered very little other than it is older than the time of the migrations, but how much older is unknown. Some scholars believe it may be related to the Old Faith, dragons or something more sinister. So far, the runes have defied translation.

Attempts to detect magic or read languages cause the caster to experience a strange prophetic dream. Read the following:

*As you finish your spell, your head swims with dizziness as images flood your mind. An elderly man, surrounded by dead bodies, stands before the obelisk, arms raised above his head. The barn and farm are gone and the land around the obelisk looks lush, almost primal. The man seems to be reading the writings on the obelisk out loud, but his words are only horse mutterings to your ears. The sound of his voice is painful to hear and echoes disturbingly in your mind. When he finishes, the obelisk opens and the old man takes something from it. As the obelisk closes, the image fades, leaving you confused and disoriented. You find that your spell has failed.*

### **Painless Effect**

As described in Encounter 7, touching the obelisk after the ritual has been completed has different effects for different people. Characters with the Painless certificate already know what the effect is for them. That effect is the same for Ellurûs if he touches it. The original certificate text is included below:

### **Painless Cert Text**

*This cert is not awarded during this event, and is included for reference purposes only*

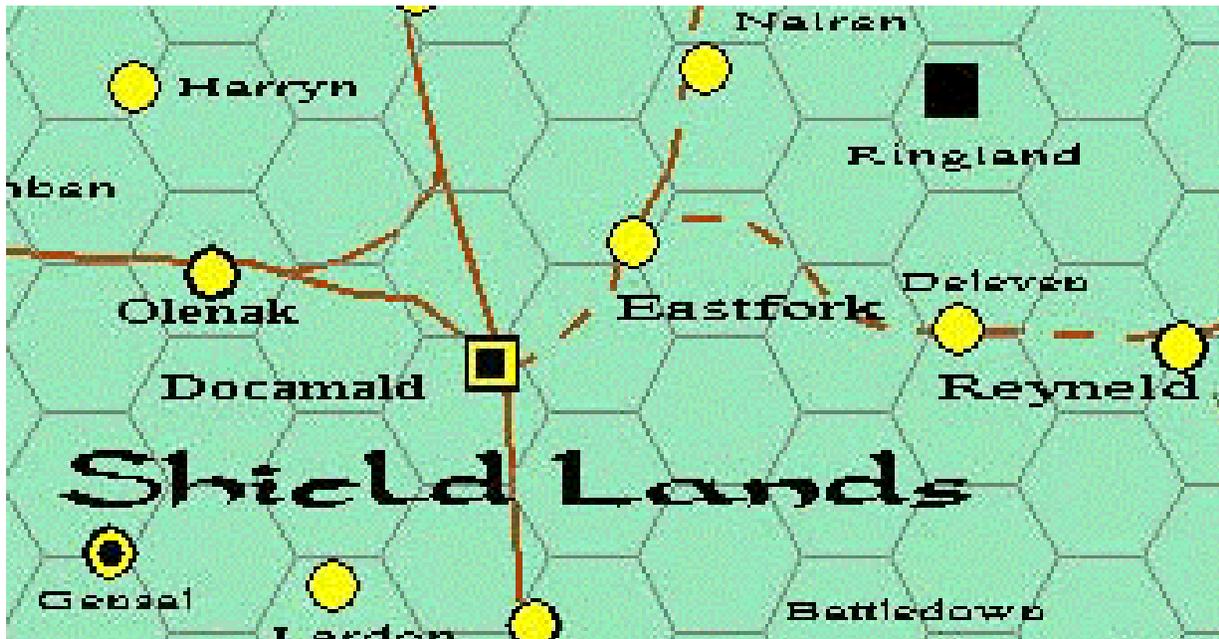
“For touching the dragon blood covered obelisk in Ringland, you have received a blessing from an unknown source. You are now highly resistant to pain, gaining a +10 circumstantial modifier to any roll to resist the effects of physical pain. Regardless of your pain resistance, you still take damage normally. You also retain your normal sense of touch.

Unfortunately, your resistance has a down side. Because you do not feel pain, you are unable to accurately gauge how wounded you are. At the beginning of each event you must tell the judge your current hit points. During the event, the judge will keep track of your hit points without telling you how many you lose with each attack. You will not know how badly you are wounded until you drop to -1 hit points or lower and fall unconscious.

You (or someone else with your cooperation) may take a full round action to make a Heal skill check (DC15) to determine how badly injured you are. On a successful roll, the judge will tell you how far below maximum hit points you are in increments of 25%. For example, if you normally have 24 hit points and receive 13 points of damage, the judge will tell you, you are below 50% of your maximum hit points.

You may check yourself as often as you like, but each attempt takes one full round for each person involved.”

# PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1: REGIONAL MAP OF RINGLAND



## ENLISTING THE ICONIC

☞ **Tordek, male dwarf Ftr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (dwarf); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 15 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atks +4 melee (1d10+2/x3, dwarven waraxe), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Dwarven traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +0, Jump +0; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

*Possessions:* Traveler's outfit, scale mail, large wooden shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack and flint and steel.

☞ **Mialee, female elf Wizr:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 1d4+3; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atks +0 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or -6 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) and -10 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Elven traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Listen +3, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3; Scribe Scroll (virtual), Toughness.

*Spells Prepared* (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, ray of frost, read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup>—*mage armor, sleep*.

*Spellbook:* 0—all of them; 1<sup>st</sup>—*charm person, mage armor, magic missile, sleep, summon monster I*.

*Possessions:* Traveler's outfit, quarterstaff, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 10 candles, map case, 3 pages parchment, ink and pen, spell pouch, spellbook.

☞ **Lidda, female halfling Rogr:** CR 1; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Atks +1 melee (1d6/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow), or +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Halfling traits; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +1, Hide +11, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +7, Search +6, Spot +4, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +1; Improved Initiative.

*Possessions:* Explorer's outfit, leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, dagger, Backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, thieves' tools hooded lantern, 3 pints of lantern oil.

☞ **Jozan, male human Clr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace), or -1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Turn Undead 4/day 2d6+2; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref -1; Will +4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Heal +6, Listen +4, Knowledge (religion) +0, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Scribe Scroll.

*Spells Prepared* (3/2+1; base DC 12 + spell level); 0—*detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup>—*bles, protection from evil\**, *shield of faith*.

\* Domain spell; *Deity:* Pelor; *Domains:* Good (good spells cast at +1 caster level) and Healing (healing spells cast at +1 caster level).

*Possessions:* Cleric's vestments, scale mail, large wooden shield, heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, backpack with waterskin, 1 day of trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, wooden holy symbol (sun disk of Pelor), 3 torches.