

SHL4-01

The Good Oerth

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

Version 1.0

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The PCs must journey to a legendary place to avenge the death of a comrade and prevent the forces of the Old One from gaining an unexplained but valuable weapon. Untested allies spread their wings and strange bedfellows are made. By the adventure's end, lives may be traded for answers in the unraveling of the mystery of pure earth.

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

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Introduction

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

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

Scoring

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

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

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

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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

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

3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

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

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

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

Time Units and Upkeep

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

Adventure Background

For several years, Iuz has tasked the mercenary band called the Free Reavers with collecting a mysterious substance called pure earth. Where this stuff came from and what could be done with it, none knew. But if the Old One wanted it so badly that he assigned a band of murderous psychopaths to collect it, it couldn't be good.

Meanwhile, to the northeast of the Shield Lands, a legendary place looms: White Plume Mountain. Many epic events occurred there, from the research and experiments of Keraptis, the insane wizard, to the conquering of his dungeon by a party of brave adventurers. But deep under the mountain, one of Keraptis' tormented and bound creatures struggled for freedom. She eventually accepted her fate, and became a protector of the land about her. In so doing, she gained the loyalty of a local gnoll druid. A decade ago, when the spells binding her began to erode her sanity, it was this gnoll druid who helped her go into dormancy, to be wakened in times of dire need. Such a time is now upon us.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are on a routine patrol in Ringland when they receive an urgent message for help from a greycloak . . . several hours too late. They hurry to her last known location, only to find her dead and turned to stone. She had infiltrated an encampment of Free Reavers that she had feared were heading towards Ringland. The PCs track the Reavers' caravan and, both to protect Ringland and to avenge the death of the greycloak, they destroy it. Looking through the journal of the caravan's leader, it becomes apparent that the caravan was hunting for pure earth, a mysterious substance that Iuz seems to want desperately. Mention is made of an earth guardian that must be destroyed before the pure earth can be collected, but this remains unclear. The caravan's destination: White Plume Mountain.

The PCs must reach White Plume Mountain before the Free Reavers' other caravans do, and must prevent those already there from destroying the earth guardian. In order to make it in time, they are given the loan of a handful of hippogriffs, Ringland's aerial cavalry-in-training. After fending off hungry or territorial aerial predators, the PCs land at the base of White Plume Mountain. They are met there by a local gnoll druid, the aging leader of the tribe of gnolls that live among the poisonous thickets around White Plume. He tells the PCs that the tunnel to the earth guardian, who he both loves and worships, is blocked, and that the Free Reavers are already below,

performing a ritual to destroy her. He offers the PCs a deal: his tribe, which hates the Old One more than it hates Shield Landers, will delay and harry the incoming caravans, as well as dig out the blocked cave entrance, if the PCs will journey into the mountain and save the guardian. As part of the bargain, he gives them a magic boon that will bring the guardian out of dormancy.

The PCs probably take the night to rest, while one of the gnoll's sons leads a force to stop the oncoming caravans and others begin to clear the cave entrance. By morning, the caravans have been ambushed and at least delayed, and the cave has been cleared. Unbeknownst to the PCs, one of the gnoll druid's sons has also journeyed into the mountain using some of the pure earth the Free Reavers had given him, and warned them of the PCs' approach.

The PCs delve through a few ruined rooms of the White Plume Mountain dungeon complex before entering a chamber in which the traitorous gnoll son and an advance vanguard of the Free Reavers is waiting, on guard. The PCs fight the Reavers and the gnoll cleric and gain a key to get them into the earth guardian chamber. With his remaining pure earth, Bloodspitter makes his escape.

Iuzian wizards are in the chamber, enacting a ritual to awaken and then destroy the earth guardian, an ancient and powerful earth weird (see MM2). The boon the PCs carry awakens her automatically, and she immediately destroys the wizards. She thanks her rescuers and explains some of what the pure earth does, and almost as importantly, how it is made: it is what remains after the death of an earth elemental that is native to this plane.

To the PCs' chagrin, her years of imprisonment and the various spells of binding laid upon her by an evil wizard have made her mentally unstable. She begins to prophesize, and her predictions may save countless lives in the Shield Lands . . . but the longer the PCs stay to listen, the greater the chance that she will lash out at them with destructive force.

After escaping the collapsing cave, the PCs may make a pact of truce with the gnolls on behalf of the Shield Lands, and head home.

Introduction

The winter has been harsh thus far, but the cold winds of Telchur are welcomed this year, as they make the Old One's orcs and hobgoblins anxious and lazy, and unwilling to march on their foes. Reports come in from the greycloaks that a mobilization to retake Southkeep fell apart before it started, so all is well on the front, and the trouble

brewing in Critwall has been settled for the time being, so all is quiet in the capital, as well. Life, as much as it can ever be in these dark times, has returned to normal.

A normal life is not your fate, however; it evades you as easily as a magsman in the path of a lightning bolt. While the other pathfinders are bundled in their blankets at the border forts, you've been given the unique honor of "disappearing" for a few weeks.

What no one knows, and cannot know, is that you remain within the Shield Lands . . . in fact, deep within the Shield Lands. You have been assigned to the garrison at Ringland, a small settlement that by cause of unique and ancient magics has avoided detection by the Old One's forces. It lies in the open, for all to see, but any of evil intent that approach its 60 square miles seem to become . . . confused, and forgetful, and wander away never knowing of the town.

You have been chosen to populate the garrison either because you are one of the few who knows of Ringland, having been assigned to the place before, or because you were deemed trustworthy and your skills needed by the commanders there.

Needless to say, any who breaks the trust of the Knights of Holy Shielding, and reveals the status of Ringland <to anyone, even other pathfinders,> will be dealt with quite harshly.

Ask the players if their characters, in all honesty, would reveal any such information to any party. If they say yes, they must make a DC 20 Will save or their intentions will be detected by a *discern lies* during their briefing. They will then be *geased* by a wizard from the Arcanists' Guild never to speak of Ringland to anyone but the council of lords or the attache to Ringland, Captain Hebrin. If they refuse to be *geased*, the adventure is over for them.

Ringland is a very different place than the confused, desperate village that a group of pathfinders discovered two years ago. While none have been allowed to leave for security reasons, many have been allowed to come here to rejoin lost family members and loved ones. The garrison has more than quadrupled in size, and there is talk of Ringland becoming a staging point for not only sending scouts and spies into the Old One's lands, but even mounted strike forces of Knights and, outlandish as it may seem, windriders. But for now, feet and unwinged hooves will work for your group. With the rising of the sun, you are headed

out to the western-most edge of Ringland's mystic protective barrier to relieve an evening guard.

Along with you comes Priestess Anedhel of Atroa, a lovely young half-elven woman. While mature and responsible, she seems somewhat restless; when she happened upon you on returning from morning prayers, she nearly leapt at the excuse to travel a few miles outside of town. Only talk of her windriders seems to keep her in the here and now.

If the PCs express interest in this topic, read Appendix 2a: Windriders of Ringland, as if Anedhel is speaking to the PCs. If they do not, she will give them this information soon enough.

Anedhel is quite vocal on the short walk to the outpost, not following the normal pathfinder tenet of "sharp eyes, strong arms, and silent steps" while on patrol. It seems she has become quite used to being safe when roaming within the bounds of Ringland, and assumes she has little to fear. Her assumptions prove invalid, however, as you approach the guard outpost . . . and see that it is abandoned.

Let the PCs react. The outpost is not much, merely a 10 ft. by 10 ft. wooden blind with high grasses camouflaging its exterior and reinforced with loosely mortared stones in case it should need to be defended. PCs may make easy Track or Search checks to see that it was very recently occupied, and that there is no sign of a conflict. They will note, however, that the floor is quite muddy and even sustains puddles in some areas; whoever built this blind accidentally placed it in a drainage spot.

Most obvious of all, however, is the silver raven that fly-hops forward out of the tall grass as soon as the PCs approach. It heads to the PC most like its master, using the following traits as criteria, in this order: greycloak, half-elven, elven, ranger, druid. This PC may receive a special boon on her AR. If none fulfill these criteria, the raven approaches Anedhel instead. Read the following, directing uses of "you" to the PC it approaches:

As you puzzle out what might have occurred, your alert senses detect movement in the tall grass near the blind. You're prepared for anything . . . except perhaps the shining silver raven that hop-flies forward, landing at your feet. It has intricate vine-leaf and braid engravings on its metallic wings and back. It caws at you querulously and holds forth one leg, to which is bound a tiny rolled scroll.

Just as you reach for the message, the brush rustles again and the guards you are meant to relieve, whole and unharmed, emerge from the grasses. Their leader, an eager and bright-eyed young man, waves and smiles, giving the code of "Telchur's winds chill our bones," and awaits the answer of "but warm our spirits." Instead, he receives an angry glare from Anedhel. As she berates he and his team for leaving their post, you read the note.

Give them **Player's Handout #1**. After they read it, remind any players who played Dark Moons Rising that they will have adventured with Ysaira before; she was then a young scout hoping to become a greycloak. As they finish reading the note, the silver raven freezes and shrinks somewhat, return to its statuette form.

Horror dawns on the guards' faces as they realize that Ysaira's message must've arrived just after their shift began . . . and that they weren't there to receive it. "We, uh, we were scouting about, we thought it more useful to range and eye a whole length of the barrier . . . we never thought to check back in at the blind, as we saw no sign of enemies . . ."

"Well, your ineptitude," Anedhel says with barely restrained fury, "may have cost the life of a greycloak sworn to protect us!"

She turns to you with a beseeching expression. "Please, she must have feared that this caravan was heading towards Ringland, though she did not say it in her note for fear of it being intercepted. I do not doubt that she will have attempted her raid. Will you go and attempt to find her? If the caravan is indeed coming this way, you must deter them; go, with all haste. I will follow you and cover your tracks so that none may follow them here. These fools," she looks over her shoulder, glaring at the guards, "will return to town to muster a defense, should it come to that."

The chase is on. If the PCs accept the mission, proceed to Encounter One.

Encounter One

PCs may make Knowledge (Geography—Iuz States) DC 10 checks to determine that the easiest way to zero in on Ysaira's location would be to head due east, intercept the Yarpick River, and then follow it north. If the PCs succeed at this, they will find Ysaira quite easily. If they do not, they will spend an additional 2 hours trying to find the mouth of the river, and will be unable to cut off the caravan (see below). The module

assumes that the PCs take Anedhel's advice and hurry; if they do not, and seem uncaring of Ysaira's plight, they may very well fail at the module's main mission.

PCs that think to animate the raven (the command word is inscribed on its chest in sylvan, and is also the creature's name: Shining Hope) may have it lead them directly back to Ysaira's location, as it can animate twice per week for up to 6 hours.

When the PCs find Ysaira's location, read the following aloud:

The mouth of the rolling Yarpick River eases forth from a copse of trees bisected by a rutted old wagon path. The remains of a camp are evident: flattened patches of high grass where beasts of burden and humanoids laid, pits of mud where wagon wheels settled deeply overnight and then churned to emerge, and several still smoking fire rings. The wagon ruts head quite visibly to the northeast. To your relief, the path seems to head a good ways north of Ringland, and will not come in danger of intersecting its protective field. That happy realization is countered, however, by a minor detail in the center of the camp below: it is a figure, lying on the ground; a young woman.

If the PCs approach, continue:

As you near Ysaira's body, for this is surely her, you realize that her clothing, skin, hair . . . all are a dusty grey color, as of ash. A closer inspection reveals that her body is pocked and pitted with chips and mars . . . she has been turned to stone.

Her face betrays a horror, as if she died in pain, her mouth open slightly and the remains of an arm reaching up as if ward off something being thrust at her. The rest of that arm is nowhere to be seen, but both legs and part of her skull lie in large pieces about her. It seems that whoever did this first stripped her of weapons, armor, and anything else of value, leaving her only her garments.

PCs that make Track checks can determine the following information about what occurred here. The information is cumulative for high rolls.

DC 5: Ysaira waited until a bit before dawn, then proceeded from her hiding place at the mouth of the river and made her way towards the camp. There were 3 wagons here, and several mounted caravan guards.

DC 10: She passed unnoticed within 10 feet of a humanoid guard. There were at least 2 mounted caravan guards, and at least one of the wagon drivers or guards was quite large and heavy for a Medium creature.

DC 15: Ysaira made it to the edge of one of the wagons, and then was attacked by something, presumably from within the wagon, as there are no prints near hers; just the scuffed marks of her assuming a fighting stance and backing away.

DC 20: She seems to disappear from that location and next shows up in the middle of the camp; the tracks between are obscured by wagon tracks and booted feet. She was surrounded by several humans. Members of the caravan appear to have been human.

DC 25: She was pushed about and toyed with for some time in the center of the ring of attackers before being grappled and stripped of her gear. Then it appears she was forced to eat some poisonous substance. After that, she was somehow petrified and her stone body defaced.

DC 30: The largest human took all of her gear and strode (with some excitement) to a rock 100 ft. from the camp, and there smashed, rent, burned, and pulverized her gear. Its destroyed remains litter the ground around the rock. Her greycloak pin is nowhere to be seen, however.

The truth is that she approached, made it as far as the lead wagon, and when she peered in, was greeted by the shriek of a guardian gargoyle. That beast attacked her ferociously, driving her towards the center of camp, where she was set upon by the human guards. Grignar eagerly stripped her of her magic gear so he could smash it later; this act means his spell resistance is in effect when the PCs encounter him later that day (see Appendix 3: Forsaker prestige class). Before that, however, he rids of himself of the hated “magic dirt,” sates his curiosity about the stuff, and exercises his sadistic nature, all at once: he inflicts a grievous chest wound, then forces the dirt down her throat, simply to see if she will choke to death, die of blood loss, or if something else will happen. It does: she is turned to stone.

The truly horrible part of his act is that, even if the PCs have the means to return her to flesh, she is doomed. If she is turned back to flesh, the extent of her injuries, heretofore hidden by the layer of stone clothing over her stone flesh, become apparent: just before forcing the dirt down her throat, Grignar actually reached into the chest wound he inflicted and pulled out her lungs. As she returns to flesh, a wheezing gurgle escapes her throat, a look of shock and pain ravage her face, and she dies. If the PCs attempt to use *raise dead* or other rejuvenating magics on her, her spirit understandably refuses to return to her body. She has moved on from this painful existence.

Grignar, having seen Iuzians do the same with other greycloaks, has taken her stony arm as a trophy, and wields it as a club when in a pinch.

If the PCs hurried and did not lose time searching for the mouth of the river, they may easily overtake the wagons and lay an ambush for them. Assume the terrain is slightly rolling hills, no higher than 15 feet with gradual slopes. The wagon path is 20 feet wide and is at the bottom of a slight dip, and the PCs should have no trouble getting the drop on the Free Reavers if they use local grasses to purposefully hide themselves (+5 circumstance bonus to Hide checks, and may take 10 to hide in the grasses). If they do not specifically mention that they are attempting to hide from aerial attackers, they do not gain the +5 circumstance bonus against the gargoyle scout flying 50 feet above the caravan (though he will have a -5 to spot checks for distance).

If the PCs gain surprise, they may determine the distance at which the encounter begins. Ranged attacks may only get good shots at the caravan from within 50 feet on either side of the road, or 200 feet if on the road, due to the rolling terrain. If they are spotted by one of the advance riding Free Reavers or the gargoyle, the encounter begins with the caravan 10 feet back on the trail for every point by which the enemy beat a PC's Hide check.

If the PCs lost time searching for the river, they will be hard pressed to get ahead of the wagon train, and must hurry down the main road in order to catch up. The gargoyle will spot the PCs from 400 ft. away, and raise an alarm; otherwise, the mounted rear guards of the wagon train will spot PCs on the path when they are 200 ft. away. In either case, the encounter begins at that distance.

Creatures: The 3 wagons each have two noncombatant drivers, who are also employed as laborers for digging when the caravan reaches its eventual destination. The gargoyles take turns flying as scouts, each resting while the other circles above. The resting gargoyle crouches under a tarp in the middle wagon.

The 4 mounted Free Reavers ride in pairs, one archery and one melee per pair, 50 feet ahead of the train and 50 feet behind. Grignar acts as an outrider, jogging tirelessly up and down the caravan and along the hillsides to the east or west. Roll randomly on a d12 when the PCs encounter the caravan to determine what “o'clock” he is at, and a d10 to determine how far, between 10 and 100 feet, he is out from the caravan.

APL6 (EL 9)

➤ **Grignar, Bar3/Forsaker 2:** see Appendix 1.

- **Gargoyles (2):** *see Monster Manual.*
- **Mounted Free Reavers (4):** *see Appendix 1.*

APL8 (EL 11)

- **Grignar, Bar3/Forsaker 4:** *see Appendix 1.*
- **Advanced Gargoyles (2):** *see Appendix 1.*
- **Mounted Free Reavers (4):** *see Appendix 1.*

APL10 (EL 13)

- **Grignar, Bar3/Forsaker 7:** *see Appendix 1.*
- **Advanced Gargoyles (2):** *see Appendix 1.*
- **Mounted Free Reavers (4):** *see Appendix 1.*

APL12 (EL 15)

- **Grignar, Bar3/Forsaker 9:** *see Appendix 1.*
- **Advanced Gargoyles (2):** *see Appendix 1.*
- **Mounted Free Reavers (4):** *see Appendix 1.*

Tactics: If an attack occurs, the resting gargoyle emerges from under the tarp, using a charge action to head directly toward a foe; both gargoyles gang up on a flying foe or a PC with ranged combat abilities before any others.

The mounted archers attack remaining flyers or ranged attackers that the gargoyles have not engaged, specifically looking for spellcasters. The mounted melee Reavers charge foes that are on the path, if possible; non-path squares on the battlemat count as two squares worth of movement for horses, thanks to the high grasses and uneven terrain.

Unmounted characters may move normally through these squares, which is precisely what Grignar does, charging whichever PCs are nearest. He will not go so far as to break from one foe to attack another just because of the use of an obviously magical weapon, but it definitely influences his decision on who to initially engage.

All combatants fight to the death. The wagon drivers will do whatever the PCs tell them to.

Treasure: If the PCs loot the bodies, they will find Grignar's journal (**Player's Handout #2**) in a sack tied around his midsection . . . along with a nasty surprise. The journal is liberally dusted with a poison that Grignar learned to make by boiling down magic potions and mixing the residue with the ash of burnt enemies. Over the years, Grignar has built an immunity to the stuff; in game terms, he can only fail the Fort save on a 1 and, since the poison is magical, his SR kicks in as well.

➤ **Distilled Arcanepowder:** CR 1; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (automatic). Fortitude save DC 13, initial damage paralysis for 2d6 minutes, secondary

damage 1d6 Con. Unless the PC who is looting the bodies specifically says he is searching for traps, it affects him; he may gain anywhere a bonus to the save depending on how much his hands are covered (from a +1 if wearing cloth gloves, like the kind worn under metal gauntlets, to a +4 if wearing leather gloves that extend to the elbow). The journal is too small and warped, its pages too sticky and creased, to open while wearing full gauntlets.

APL6 – loot (178 gp), coin - (14 gp)

APL8 – loot (178 gp), coin - (14 gp), mighty composite longbow [+5] (300 gp)

APL10 – loot (178 gp), coin - (14 gp), mighty composite longbow [+6] (350 gp), *adamantine chain shirt* (165 gp)

APL12 – loot (178 gp), coin - (14 gp), mighty composite longbow [+6] (350 gp), *adamantine breastplate* (780 gp)

Development: After the PCs read **Player's Handout #2**, inform them that it is the 9th day of Sunsebb, one day before the other Free Reaver caravan is due to arrive at White Plume Mountain. PCs that make DC 10 Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local – Iuz's Border States) know that White Plume Mountain is over 60 miles to the east; that the terrain for 10 of those miles has been purposely flooded by the Ringlanders to discourage nearby troop movement; that, to the east of Ringland, Iuz's troops ride regular patrols; and finally, that the last 20 miles of the journey involve crossing a heavily traveled road and finding unguarded crossing points for two branches of a river that, in winter, is swollen, icy cold, and very fast and strong. In other words, it would be very hard to get to White Plume Mountain in time to stop the caravan, at least by conventional means.

PCs that make DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) checks will remember having heard that White Plume is one of those rare places of "strong physical and magical energy" that makes teleportation impossible (see PHB, *teleport* spell description). If they try anyway, they disappear for a moment and end up right back where they started.

As the PCs discuss their options, Anedhel will catch up with them, a team of rangers in tow, their counter-tracking complete. After hearing the quick version of what the PCs have learned, she has a suggestion . . .

Encounter Two

If she did not do so on the way to the guard post, Anedhel will now explain that Ringland has a stable of

aerial mounts, and several mounted riders in training. Read Appendix 2a as if she is speaking to the PCs.

While protective of the mounts, she is also eager that they prove their worth and all of the effort thus far spent in bringing them here. She suggests that the PCs use the hippogriffs to depart immediately; if they leave now and fly directly northeast, they should be able to make it to White Plume Mountain by early evening.

If the PCs have some other method of travel, such as wind walk or feathers, there are a few options. First verify that it was memorized this morning; after all, there's no time to lose! Second, one of the rangers can tell the PCs that White Plume gets its name from the plume of volcanic steam that erupts from it almost constantly; he says that he's heard tales from before the invasion of adventurers using spells to fly there, and that the tales go that, if anyone used magic to fly anywhere near the thing, the plume seemed to . . . follow them . . . and *swallow* them. If, despite all this, they use one of the above spells or have some means of avoiding the aerial encounter, simply have them attacked by the flying beasts when they land at the cave entrance, below.

If the PCs consider using teleport or similar magics to report back to Knights of Holy Shielding or the Council of Lords, remind them that Shelton Halfhand lately seems to have tied everything up in bureaucratic red tape; the PC might not be allowed to return! Regardless, any attempts to report to commanding officers or the Council are stymied (he's not here, wait a few hours) or simply ineffective (after much hemming and hawing, the officer in question simply says "I'll have to ask my superior . . . but use your best judgment, for now").

If the PCs accept Anedhel's offer to use the hippogriffs, read the following: The journey back to town is at better than a hustle. No one doubts the seriousness of your mission; there is not a moment to lose. So as not to reveal the location of Ringland, the caravan and slaves are left in the care of the rangers for the time being.

Sir Harmenn, the local commanding officer and a veteran Knight of the Holy Shielding that oversaw the protection of Ringland for the many years it was cut off from the forces of good, joins you when you reach the edge of town. When you explain what you learned, and of the death of Ysaira, he looks quite troubled. Jogging along beside you, he says "this pure earth has been moving about the Shield Lands for some time, I hear. It's either very valuable or very dangerous, or both. We can neither afford the Free Reavers getting their hands on a large quantity of it, nor can

we pass up an opportunity to learn more about its use and purposes. Pathfinders, I want you to . . . " seeing where you're headed, and the look on Anedhel's face, a smile cracks through the grief and worry on his face. "Well," he says, throwing open the gate of the stables, "I guess I want you to do what you had decided to do anyway! Good luck, pathfinders . . . and good hunting."

Anedhel hurriedly leads you through the stables, shouting orders to the stable boys and hippogriff riders alike to get the beasts harnessed up, saddled, and ready. Then she turns to you.

"We'll have to go alone, on this, I fear . . . we have not many more mounts than one for each of us, and besides, I don't know what good our boys would do you. They're not seasoned warriors yet, that's for sure. I'm guessing none of you have ever ridden a hippogriff before, so it won't be easy. I'd recommend lashing into the saddle so you don't fall off, for one thing. They travel in packs, though, so as long as I have the lead 'griff in front, they shouldn't give you too much trouble. I can also prepare you a bit for the ride."

Facing to the east, Anedhel reaches her arms skyward and begins chanting. Within seconds, you feel yourselves insulated by a cushion of warm air. Then she turns to you and asks simply, "now then . . . of those who cannot cast healing magic, who's the most responsible of you?"

Anedhel just cast endure elements on herself and the entire party, so they will suffer no ill effects from the cold winter air on their journey. Whomever the party decides to be will then be the recipient of an imbue with spell ability, which will include two cure light wounds and a cure moderate wounds, to be used on the group's mounts if they should get into trouble. Once the PCs are ready, read the following:

Your preparations complete, the future windriders each lead their mounts out for you to take. They are magnificent beasts, with the heads, forelegs, and wings of giant eagles, and the bodies and hindquarters of well-bred steeds. Their feathers range from a rich brown to burnished gold, and their beaks are sharp, their eyes intelligent and keen. The young trainers hand over the reins to you proudly, yet with some hesitation. While they are glad to have their feathered companions serve the Shield Lands at last, each of them wonders if this is the last they'll see of their mount.

The mounts are not named, but each has a distinguishing characteristic: 1) Smelly 2) Has a strong,

well-muscled neck 3) Looks over its shoulder at its rider constantly 4) Chews some kind of cud 5) Has brilliant plumage 6) Is quite barrel-chested 7) Is small and lithe compared to the others. Anedhel takes number 2, and lets the party choose from the rest.

The hippogriffs (see MM) have normal tack and military saddles, so it shouldn't be difficult for most PCs to remain in the saddle (Ride check DC 5, +2 for the saddle). Those that wish may be lashed into the saddle, making their chances of falling out zero, but it takes 5 rounds to untie themselves or a full-round action to cut through the ropes. Remember that the Ride skill applies equally to any mount, so the characters incur no penalty for their unfamiliarity with flying mounts.

The creatures are trained for war, and respond to whatever direction the PCs give them. Once the PCs are underway, let them role-play being airborne on a winged creature, as this may be the first time for some of them.

Encounter Three

When they have finished any desired in-character dialogue, read the following:

Your mounts had lifted off jerkily from the ground, their 20-foot-wingspans sending dust and pebbles flying about the stable yard. Anedhel's beast lifted off first, and the others followed it in a loose V-formation. Once airborne, the hippogriffs ascended slowly, circling above the town. Anedhel occasionally gestured and summoned forth mists from the air, or cast what you think must be illusionary magic as you and your mount darkened for a few minutes and seemed to become a less distinct shape. She explains by sweeping her arm wide at the horizon, and then covering her eyes with her hand . . . while enemies cannot find their way into Ringland, they can see above it. She must be masking your ascent from outside eyes.

Within minutes, your squad has reached cloud cover. Anedhel's spell shields you from the icy mist that your hippogriffs shrug off; even in summer it must be cold as the Old One's heart this high in the air, and it being the dead of winter doesn't make things any easier. Luckily, your mounts are used to the cold, their wild counterparts choosing the loftiest mountain peaks for their aeries.

The journey progresses for several hours, your group always staying within cloud cover where possible, dashing quickly over the expanses of open sky where you must. Though the clouds are beneficial and keep your group from the dull eyes

of the enemy below, you cannot help but feel somewhat unnerved by them. While warm, they are sometimes acrid, and occasionally, though it must simply be the vertigo or your imagination . . . occasionally, you are SURE you can make out a face in the clouds.

Your reverie is punctuated, however, with a shudder by your hippogriff. It has spotted something it doesn't like, and moments later, you do too: a shadow much thicker and faster than any cloud passes over your group, and with a hideous cry that is part territorial declaration, part hunting call, a flock of aerial predators bursts from the mist above you, diving at your group with wings folded back and beaks and talons outstretched.

Creatures: The encounter begins with the creatures 120 ft. above the PCs, a point that should allow them to attack at the end of a dive (see Appendix 3 for aerial combat rules). The foes use harrying and flyby attacks as much as possible. Enemies target the PCs when they are attacking from above and their mounts when they are attacking from below. Savvy PCs (Wis or Int check or Knowledge (nature) DC 15 + APL) will notice this, and may encourage the party to stay below the attackers as much as possible, as the hippogriffs are definitely the weak link in the scenario. Remember, however, that due to rushing wind, communication is difficult. Only PCs whose mounts are adjacent should be able to speak with one another . . . the rest must use hand signals. If the PCs haven't thought of the "stay below them" tactic by the end of the 3rd round, Anedhel will use her lead mount on her turn and every round thereafter to guide the squad below the attackers.

The exception to the "PCs from above, hippogriffs from below" rule is the APL 12 encounter. The elder arrowhawks are intelligent enough to realize that the hippogriffs are the weaker link, and that should they be killed, the rider will plummet as well. Therefore, though not able to dish out as much damage as some of the lower-level attackers, their energy ray is constantly directed at the party's low-HP mounts, making them a dire threat.

During the fight, Anedhel will play a reactive roll, concentrating on keeping the party flying in the right direction and keeping the hippogriffs in good order. In the first round of combat, she will draw out her *wand of feather fall* and ready an action to activate the wand if anyone in the party, or their mounts, should begin falling. Once that is cast, she will ready another action to cast again, and assume or hope another PC can swoop down to either catch the character or heal the hippogriff, thus halting their fall. If a PC does not do so

within 2 rounds, Anedhel curses and guides her mount into a dive to affect the rescue.

Creatures and characters that are not saved by the *feather fall* begin falling at a rate of 150 ft./rd. If its fall is not slowed or stopped, the creature in question continues to fall 150 ft. every round. The combat begins at 2,000 ft. above ground, a fairly lethal fall, though it may the elevation may change due to the maneuvering of the PCs.

APL 6 (EL 5)

👉 **Hippogriffs (3):** hp 21, 24, 26; see *Monster Manual*

APL 8 (EL 7)

👉 **Griffons (3):** hp 52, 57, 64; see *Monster Manual*

APL 10 (EL 9)

👉 **Wyverns (3):** hp 54, 57, 62; see *Monster Manual*

APL 12 (EL 11)

👉 **Elder Arrowhawks (3):** hp 99, 107, 115; see *Monster Manual*

Development: Remember that each hippogriff can only fly when burdened with 300 lbs. or less. PCs may have to double up if mounts didn't survive the attacks, or even leave equipment behind. In any case, descending beneath the clouds, the party will discover that the encounter occurred quite near White Plume Mountain, and if they must travel on foot, they need only do so for 6 miles, putting them only an hour or two behind schedule.

Encounter Four

Signaling with a downward sweep of her arm, Anedhel guides your squad downward through the now quite-sulfurous clouds and you behold an awe-inspiring site.

Looming before you, and not much below you, is White Plume Mountain. It is an almost perfectly conical volcanic hill, about 1000 yards in diameter at the base, and rises about 800 feet above the surrounding land. The white plume which gives the mountain its name and fame is a continuous geyser that spouts from the very summit of the mountain another 300 feet into the air, trailing off to the east under the prevailing winds like a great white feather. The spray collects in depressions down slope and merges into a sizeable stream. There are steam vents in various spots on the slopes of the mountain; As you watch, trickles of steam burst out of them . . . some, before they can escape

into the surrounding air, are grabbed at the tip by an unseen force and curled back in, as if the mountain were a man breathing on a cold winter day. The hippogriffs seem to shy away from the steam vents, disliking either the reek they exude or the strange thermal patterns they create in the air. Anedhel signals that you are going to descend near the bottom of the cone on the north side, the area with the fewest vents.

If the PCs managed to avoid encountering the aerial attack in Encounter Three (as opposed to successfully evading the attackers after they swooped in, which should be considered a success), stage that attack as soon as they have landed and turned back from their feathers forms, *windwalk* forms, etc.

After dismounting, you take a few moments to regain your land legs. The view from the ground presents a sharp contrast to the foreboding majesty and might spread out below you just moments ago. Up close, the flora has a dingy, almost sick look that brings to mind the unwashed refugees of Critwall. Your mounts pace uneasily as they acclimate to the strange sights and smells. To your back, the valley spreads out into the rolling hills you are accustomed to, the sun setting over gray and wind-blasted fields. But in front of you the rock face vaults straight up, sheer and virtually unclimbable. It ends in a sky hung with artificial and burnt clouds.

Allow players to search the area for a few minutes. Without much effort, PCs can gather the following information.

The area they have landed in, though not well traveled, is certainly not devoid of life. A tribe of gnolls lives nearby (Track DC 10) and a trail runs up toward the mountain and descends at a slight grade into the Twisted Thicket, an expanse of abnormal thorny plumeberry bushes. Knowledge (nature) DC 15 or Knowledge (geography or local) DC 20 checks will let party members know that the bushes are poisonous and should be avoided: DC 12 every hour of travel; injury; primary and secondary damage 1d4 Strength. Characters with an armor bonus of +5 or higher are immune, as are the local gnolls.

There are few signs of normal woodland life beyond rodents and insects. The terrain is inhospitable and it would not be out of the question to insinuate a curse and/or blight.

Stone tell will reveal information that can otherwise only be provided by the gnoll tribal elder: unfamiliar creatures have passed through the earth and

have gone deep, into the chamber of the mother. The stones in the mountain are worried for the safety of their protector.

As soon as the PCs have gotten a general idea of their surroundings, introduce Blixnard.

Stepping from the Plumberry thicket to the northeast, a dog faced figure approaches you, palms up and arms spread wide. Wearing an assortment of unique but mismatched hides, he carries a spyglass and a club but is otherwise lightly encumbered. Mangy and with mottled gray patches of fur leaking through his otherwise jet black coat, the stooped man-dog stops, briefly sizes up each of you, and continues his approach bearing a gait that leads you to believe he may be more comfortable on four legs than he is on two.

Close to home, Blixnard is not carrying much with him in the way of gear. Many PCs will have encountered gnolls before and should be wary of him. He is a gruff old man who speaks as though he constantly has phlegm in the back of his throat. He often mutters to himself and his speech will occasionally trail off indecipherably. Perhaps most eerie and unnerving to the PCs, he laughs like a hyena at unusual or inopportune times. PCs who think to ask about a holy symbol will note that he actually wears two. A DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check allows PCs to recognize the symbol of Obad-Hai, and a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check is sufficient to recognize the symbol of the demon lord Yeenoghu, commonly worshipped by gnolls. Blixnard does not detect as evil.

Blixnard has no interest in going toe-to-toe with a party of professional adventurers. Though he could easily handle an APL6 party, things get less certain above that. That isn't to say he is unprepared. He has the following spells pre-cast: *antilife shell*, *freedom of movement*, *resist energy (fire)*, and *resist energy (electricity)*. At the first sign of trouble, he will wildshape into a badger and burrow into the thicket, only fighting if he is backed into a corner. See Appendix 1 for Blixnard's stats and tactics. Ultimately, his goal is to acquire allies rather than enemies.

All APLs (EL12)

❖ **Blixnard**, Male Gnoll Drd11: see *Appendix 1*.

Blixnard addresses the PCs as follows:

"You are trespassing on tribal grounds. What does Blixnard find here? Powerful adversaries or food for my children on this cold winter day?" <Menacingly>

Or perhaps fertilizer for the Twisted Thicket? State your purpose."

Any answer the PCs give indicating they are fighting the forces of Iuz or that they are intercepting the Free Reavers will be sufficient to produce a positive reaction from Blixnard, which will be acknowledged by his heinous hyena laugh. Indication that the "earth spirit" may be at risk will produce a momentary look of worry (Sense Motive DC 15) followed by the same unnerving laugh. Any of those three responses triggers the boxed text below.

If they do not mention anything meaningful to Blixnard, he will warn them to "Get on with your business quickly. The children of the Thicket are hungry." If the PCs are not honest with him, he will be very difficult to Bluff (+15 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive regarding why the PCs have come to White Plume) as he is aware Free Reavers are inside the mountain and he is aware of the approaching caravan.

Blixnard pats the spyglass at his hip, "Yes, I saw you coming through the skies and I knew there would be trouble. My children are accustomed to interlopers and they are now trying to decide whether you should be eaten or enslaved. They will come soon. But I have seen the Iuz caravans approaching from the South and I have spoken to the stones. Something unnatural will take place within this mountain. Her silence . . . it must be disturbed, to save her." Blixnard once again seems to be taking your measure, then with a glance toward the mountain he states, "She is beneath the mountain, and they are with her. Dark ones, in armor. How they got there, I do not know. We know the way down there, but it is blocked. They are preparing a ritual. At dawn, it will finish . . . the stones tell me this . . . and my love, she will be destroyed." As his words trail off into a mutter, you hear a rising cackle of hideous laughter from all around you. Red eyes begin to approach through the thicket, and the night's gloom reveals hunched, canine shapes darting around the edges of the clearing.

Two forms emerge from the darkness to come stand by Blixnard, and a familial resemblance is immediately apparent in their fur markings. Both are large, well-muscled gnolls. One wears pieced-together plate armor, scavenged from sundry sources, and bears a long spear; the other carries a greataxe on his back, and is dressed in hides. They hang at the edge of the clearing, and the rest of the gnolls cluster behind them in two groups. They

seem as antagonistic toward each other as they are protective of Blixnard.

A DC 15 Sense Motive check will tell PCs that Blixnard knows more than he is letting on. If asked about “her silence” or his “love,” Blixnard will cryptically allude to the earth guardian (who is an earth weird; see MM2), but will not go into further detail until the PCs have gained his trust. “His children” refers to the unruly and often chaotic tribe of gnolls he rules, who will be arriving shortly.

Blixnard’s eventual goal is to work out a deal with the PCs: he and his warriors will harry and, if possible, destroy the approaching caravans, while the rest of the tribe begins clearing the cave that leads to the earth weird. In return, the PCs will take on the Reavers and prevent her from being destroyed. He will propose this allegiance to the PCs as soon as it seems reasonable to do so. Let the PCs ask Blixnard questions and roleplay the encounter, as appropriate, before settling on the allegiance. Use the following information to respond to the PCs’ questions.

● *Where can we find the caravans?*

Blixnard answers with his hyena laugh and simply mutters, *“the caravans, the caravans, my scouts report there are several . . . and we know the ways much better than you. They are wily, the Iuz, they are wily . . . the danger is beneath us, not up here...”*

● *Why are you in charge of the tribe?*

“I have been the head of my tribe for several years now. I have many sons and many concubines. They are some of the most beautiful gnoll women you have ever seen! But they all fight too much, especially these oldest two sons, of mine Sapnik and Haelph. <he gestures at the large gnolls at the edge of the clearing> I calm them all, however. I give them the blessings of the earth goddess, below. The one you must save.

● *Which one is Haelph and which one is Sapnik?*

Sapnik is the elder, the one with the axe, and he is even-handed like his father <toothy grin> but sometimes afraid to make the difficult choices. Haelph is younger and smarter than his brother and he would make a strong leader of gnolls . . . but he is so angry. I must admit that as they grow older, it is becoming more difficult to control each of them, and undoing their damage is aging me beyond my considerable years. I’ve tried to teach them that showing favoritism among the male warriors will do them no good. I have tried also to teach Haelph to defer to his older brother out of

respect and I have tried to teach Sapnik to respect the strength of his younger brother out of wisdom, but it does no good.”

● *What makes Haelph so angry?*

“Haelph has always had a taste for blood. Though more calculating than his older brother, he is far more barbaric by nature.

● *Which god do you follow?*

“I am a follower of Obad-Hai, though I pay homage to the Prince Yeenoghu who many of my children follow.” Blixnard uses “children” to refer both to the Gnolls of his tribe and his progeny.

● *Why are you so interested in helping us?*

“An old gnollish proverb suggests that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. I believe we have similar goals.”

● *What kind of goals?*

“Iuz is our enemy and the land is our friend.”

● *Do all the gnolls of your tribe feel the same way you do about Iuz and about the land?*

“Each and every one of them hates Iuz and his armies. My people use the land but I have spent much effort teaching them all to respect it. Many of them must fear it to respect it.”

● *What exactly is in White Plume?*

“A wizard named Keraptis once ruled here. He is gone many decades now, but his curse lingers. His compound was built into the mountain on the south side . . . it is still there, sometimes fought over by his old servants or other humanoids, not to mention treasure seekers. The source of power that the Iuzians seek, that is in a cave on the north side. It is held by my mistress, the earth mother.”

● *Why don’t you go down and fight the Reavers, and save your “earth mother?”*

She has forbidden me, or any of my people, from approaching her. <his voice drops to a whisper> Some years ago she began to act abnormal. It was the wards that the evil wizard placed upon her. She was going insane, and in order to prevent herself from harming my people or the land, she placed herself into a sleep. She gave me a boon that would wake her when the need was dire, but made me promise that I would not approach her, for she might do me or my children harm. I believe that she can control herself for a time, and so she can be

saved without undo danger to yourselves . . . but my promise to her was sacred. I would not break it.

Blixnard offers the PCs the boon to wake the earth weird. If they agree to try to save her, he puts Haelph in charge of clearing the rubble and sends Sapnik to deal with the caravans. He tells the PCs they may rest, and that he will come to them at dawn and guide them to the cave.

Encounter Five

Assuming the PCs accept assistance, they will be able to rest during the evening while the cave entrance is cleared for them. Blixnard gives them a small, humanoid statuette and tells them that if they bring it near the weird, it will crumble, awakening her. That should interrupt whatever ritual they are planning to destroy her.

The gnolls spend the evening clearing rubble from the cave entrance. Many of them clearly are not happy about doing the all-night grunt work, but with every belch of steam from the tunnel, every odd quake or rumble, every unexpected shift of rubble, their pace quickens. Just before dawn, Blixnard approaches you. "The way is clear, at least to a series of caves that will take you directly to the earth guardian." He says menacingly, "You must go now to save my love! Do not fail me!"

If the PCs make a DC 15 Sense Motive check, they will discover that Blixnard is troubled about something. If they succeed at a DC 20 Diplomacy check, he will reveal that Haelph has gone missing. He is torn between worry and fear that Haelph may have betrayed them. The truth is the latter: he has long been secretly worshipping the slaughter god, Erythnul, and when the Reavers' cleric of Erythnul approached him during a reconnaissance of this area, Haelph agreed to join their cause. He has gone into the caves to warn them of the PCs' approach.

The cave that the gnolls uncovered is about eight feet in diameter, roughly circular, and extends forty feet into the mountain. At that point there is a hole in the floor, what was once a stairway, but that has long been collapsed and destroyed. The gnolls have cleared just enough of a tunnel for the PCs to fit down it. As they proceed, single file and in cramped conditions, and always descending, the PCs see signs that this was once a dungeon complex; early in their descent the lead PC will notice an old, ratted tabard lying under some debris. Digging further around it will reveal that it contains only dust that might have once been bone,

though not enough with which to perform divinations, *speak with dead*, or any sort of return-to-life spell. PCs who make a DC 15 Knowledge (local – core) or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check will recognize the coat of arms as that of the infamous Lord Bluto, propagator of the River of Blood massacres over 20 years ago. Whether this belonged to the man himself or one of his lackeys cannot be discerned. However, this is simply a side note. Their true goal lies ahead:

The passage has become an almost surreal mixture of worked stone dungeon and natural earthen caves. Though no longer spewing lava, White Plume is certainly still an active geologic structure whose movements enhance time's natural degradation. After moving several hundred feet through these mixed corridors, something tells you it is time to slow down. Blixnar's boon begins to pulse ever so slightly, seemingly imploring you to move cautiously.

The crumbling of rock and the echoing of these strangely joined caves means that the Free Reavers know the party is coming. The bang of armor on rock as the PCs squirm through narrow openings echoes loudly, and even if the party is operating stealthily and under a *silence* spell, the spilling of loose rocks extends beyond the silence radius. However, thanks to the boon, the party knows when they are about to encounter the Free Reavers.

The floor of the tunnel drops steeply in front of you, almost like a slide, into the room ahead. You see evidence of the first light sources in this complex that are not your own.

Enter initiative as soon as the first PC reaches the bottom of the slide (point A on map 1). While it is possible to approach unseen, it is very difficult. PCs moving down the slide must make a DC 20 + APL Balance check to avoid sending scree down ahead of them; additionally, Move Silently checks suffer a –5 penalty on the slide and in the room. Finally, the room is magically lit with permanent *light* spells left over from Keraptis' days, augmented by a *daylight* spell cast by Haelph; this, combined with large amounts of chalky dust in the air that reveal movement and wind currents quite easily, make hiding difficult (no shadows, cover, or concealment to hide in, meaning only invisible creatures may attempt to hide, and even they receive –10 to Hide checks from the dust in the air).

The attackers are a group of Free Reavers led by Haelph, who is positioned there to make sure intruders

don't interrupt the ritual in the room next door. A half-orc priest of Erythnul named Bloodspitter is overseeing the ritual in the next room, hidden behind a secret door. He has given his team a leg up in this throwdown: Falen and Syd have been coated in a thin layer of pure earth that has been ritually prepared as a combat boon. It supplies the following unusual properties:

Falen and Syd receive the benefit of a *barkskin* spell (though visually, their skin is more like clay than bark) at a caster level equal to their hit dice. Additionally, the pure earth wards them against possession and domination, as if a *protection from evil* had been cast on them. While the *barkskin* effect can be removed with a successful dispel magic, the protection from mental control can only be removed by wiping off the pure earth.

APL6 (EL 9)

- **Haelph**, male gnoll Clr7: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Falen**, male human Ftr3: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Jubal**, male human Ftr3: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Syd**, male human Ftr3: *see Appendix 1.*

APL8 (EL 11)

- **Haelph**, male gnoll Clr9: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Falen**, male human Ftr5: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Jubal**, male human Ftr5: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Syd**, male human Ftr3/Rog2: *see Appendix 1.*

APL10 (EL 13)

- **Haelph**, male gnoll Clr11: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Falen**, male human Ftr7: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Jubal**, male human Ftr7: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Syd**, male human Ftr3/Rog2/Thief-Acrobat2: *see Appendix 1.*

APL12 (EL 15)

- **Haelph**, male gnoll Clr13: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Falen**, male human Ftr9: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Jubal**, male human Ftr9: *see Appendix 1.*
- **Syd**, male human Ftr3/Rog2/Thief-Acrobat4: *see Appendix 1.*

Tactics – At APL 6 and APL 8, Haelph will lead with *confusion* and *flame strike*, and then either *divine power* or *righteous might*, then step into combat. At APL 10 and APL 12 he will have pre-cast *antilife shell*. At APL10 he will lead with *recitation* and follow that with *blade barrier* to cut off party members still in the tunnel. If he feels fairly confident at that point, he'll cast *Righteous Might* and step into melee. If not, he will go invisible, summon a monster to help, and then

act as normal. At APL 12, he will lead with *blasphemy* followed by *recitation* and then his damage dealing spells, only stepping into combat if he is forced to or if he runs out of spells that can do damage from afar. If at any point he is led to believe that an invisible PC is a serious threat, he will interrupt his normal tactics to cast *invisibility purge*.

The Free Reavers are smart, tactically adept fighters who will take advantage of each other's strengths. They will provide flanking when possible, take advantage of prone bonuses when possible, and focus on eliminating the biggest threats first. Syd's first act will be to drink the *potion of enlarge person*, which will give him 15 ft. reach with his spiked chain; he is the default guard of the secret door to the earth weird chamber, tripping anyone who comes within his reach. Jubal will try to disable arcanists first and clerics next with his ranged attacks. Falen faces off against melee combatants.

Dwarven PCs that are native to the Shield Lands, as well as any PCs with Knowledge (local – Iuz) or Knowledge (nobility and royalty) may make a Spot check when they first see Falen. Those that succeed at a DC 10 (with appropriate penalties for distance) will recognize that, not only he is a human wielding a dwarven waraxe, but that the dwarven waraxe bears the ancestral family seal of the Bladehone family, renowned dwarven nobility and expert weapon smiths. If the PCs return the axe to Lord Bladehone, they may be rewarded (see adventure record).

Encounter Six

Once the party has defeated the Free Reaver guards, they will find a magical rod on Haelph's body that, when tapped, emits a humming sound. That sound causes the boon that Blixnard gave the PCs to hum in response; if they hold it forward, it causes the secret door to vibrate and open, leading into the adjoining room. The room that they enter, however, exists for only a few feet in each direction before disappearing in a bulbous cavern. Read the following:

As you step into the room, you find that it can barely be called that. A few feet past the door, the floors, wall, and ceiling give way to a 100- ft. wide spherical chamber. Its walls are smooth, as if worn by centuries of water and wind, yet the cross sections of veins of metal and the striations of different layers of rock are bright and fresh, as if this room was carved out yesterday. The bottom third of the chamber is a pool of red, glowing lava, swirling with vortexes and eddies.

As you enter the room, you see several figures. Floating in mid-air at about your level, forming a square around the center of the chamber, are four robed figures. Three of them appear deep in trance and concentration, glowing nimbuses surrounding their hovering forms, foul chanting emerging from their lips. The fourth is an orc, his heavy armor adorned with the leering face of the slaughter god, Erythnul. Seeing the boon and hearing its ominous hum, his face transitions from surprise to rage, and you hear the last syllable of a word of recall just before he winks out of existence.

One more figure is in the room, kneeling in the lava, her body folded over her knees in a fetal position and her head resting face-down in her hands. She appears to be made of earth, stone, and mud . . . but for all that is floating motionless on the surface of the pool. The lava has begun to seep over her, however, and you can see that she will soon be destroyed.

The PC with Blixnar's boon will notice that it has begun to glow with an eldritch light. It hums and crackles with energy. Go around the table, asking each PC what he does. Any physical or magical attacks against the chanting wizards are deflected by magical wards; only the PC with the boon may save the day. If he throws the boon into the lava, read the following:

The statuette flares into oblivion as soon it touches the lava pool, and you wait with baited breath for some huge explosion of arcane power. However, after several tense heartbeats, nothing has happened. The figures still chant, unseeing and unhearing, and the form in the middle of the pool is still folded in on herself. . . oh. But now she's looking at you.

She blinks once, and suddenly you feel as if your mind has been ripped from its skull, jerked forward, and then brought to an instant halt. Somehow, she is now standing in the pool, and somehow, that pool has become a churning circle of mud, the lava within cool and already forming hardened, rocky chunks grinding against one another. Also in that lost instant of time, all of your spells seem to have been dispelled. As have the Iuzians', their eyes now open and their minds recovering quickly from the shock of being snapped from their trance. They begin to float gently down to the now cool, but still deadly, churning pool of rock and mud.

The woman, for that she definitely is, is clothed only in the earth that is her flesh. She strides forward on the surface of the pool, coming

toward you. One of the gently falling wizards mutters an arcane word <it is an attempted teleport spell>, and has a moment to look surprised at its ineffectiveness before his legs touch the pool and are immediately mired in crushing earth. Another re-casts his fly spell and races to escape via the doorway in which you stand, only to slam with a sickening crunch into an invisible wall, then falling as well into the pool below. The third caster, seeing that escape is futile, begins casting what seems to be an offensive spell, possibly thinking that he will at least take this creature with him. She turns toward him when he is halfway through his incantation, and stares . . . and in an instant the man's body has caved in upon itself with a gurgling scream, and he has simply ceased to exist.

Satisfied for the moment, the earth woman turns and looks at you with certainty in her eyes. She knows, you think, everything you are about to say or do, knows exactly what path your life will lead, and even knows when and how you will die a final death.

Then she speaks in a voice as dark as the deepest cavern, yet as rich as the loamiest earth, and says, "I foresaw their doom long ago, the poor creatures. Yet if not for your intervention, I would have remained in hibernation while their ritual destroyed me, instead. Your actions allowed the proper fate to come about, and in repayment I offer knowledge."

Give the players, who just sat through a *lot* of boxed text, time to react. They may talk amongst themselves, but if they ask her questions, she responds as follows.

● *Why were they trying to kill you and/or where is the pure earth you are guarding?*

"Know that in attempting to destroy me, these beings wished to garner much of the substance they call pure earth, for it is in the death of a creature tied to or of the elemental plane of earth that such pure earth is created. A simple summoned elemental will not do, as the creature must be both of the earth and of the Oerth, and must have become native to your world before its body, and its death, will render pure earth."

● *Why did you enter stasis?*

"I am whelmed by this place and the bindings placed upon me by the ancient wizard, Keraptis. I become not myself, and feel a lust to enact fate, not merely to foretell it. It is madness, and of a dangerous sort."

☛ Upon asking their 2nd question:

The woman of earth looks about to speak, when a particularly shrill and piercing shriek emits from the last, still-living wizard, now buried up to his torso in mud and being ground slowly to death, the pain too great for him to even think of a spell, much less cast it. With what could almost be considered a sigh of exasperation, she turns and stares at the dying wizard. A moment later, his body implodes, and he is gone.

☛ *What does pure earth do?*

"It has many uses, and is as varied as the creatures beneath the sun and in the earth. It may turn others to stone. To those with powers arcane or divine, it may cause their spells of earth to be more powerful, or other spells to become of the earth. To some it simply protects. And there are other, more powerful uses . . .

She stops for a moment, cocking her head to the side as if listening to distant voices, and suddenly a fire lights in her eyes. "And now I see your doom, too!" she cackles. "It may come soon, or soon only as dragons and the earth judge time, but know this, my own fate is to be trapped deep beneath this cone of earth and fire, and even now the world trembles to bring such a fate about."

As if to lend credence to her statement, the cave begins to shudder and shake around you. The tremors fade for a moment, and as quickly as the woman's cackling began, it fades, leaving the calm and certain voice of the earth. "You see," she says sadly, "there is little time. The wards that Keraptis placed upon me have eroded at my mind and my will. I'm slipping away . . . to the trance . . . I may speak of things that you must know, but I also may kill, though I wish it not . . ." with that, her eyes roll back in her face, and she wraps her arms about her body, kneels, and begins to speak in a raving monotone. The cavern begins to shake violently . . . your exit tunnel will not last long in this quake.

Ask the players how long they stay. Some may leave while others remain. Each round they stay, they are imbued with prophetic energy from the earth weird. The PCs do not know what information they are receiving, only that it is of great import, and that the longer they stay, the more information they will receive. They instinctively know that the information may save hundreds, if not thousands, of lives, including their own. On the first round any PCs stay, however, pure elemental energy lashes out at them and the cave begins to crumble, causing an amount of damage that varies by APL (1d6 at APL 6, 2d6 at APL 8,

3d6 at APL 10, and 4d6 at APL 12). Remember that when the earth weird woke up, all spells were deactivated, so any buff spells are gone. Nor can spells be cast anywhere near the earth weird . . . the pure elemental energy flooding forth from her prevents it. In other words, no quick-escape teleports, no healing or avoiding the damage from the elemental energy or dodging the falling rocks. The damage cannot be saved against, avoided with spells, or prevented in any way. Each round the PCs remain, add an additional d6 to the damage total.

Meanwhile, the weird's own burial that she predicted will soon come to pass, as frequent tremors and near-earthquakes rock the chamber. There is a cumulative 5% chance that the tunnel between the weird and the PCs collapses. If this occurs, anyone left in the tunnel suffers that round's damage and must flee, or is buried alive and killed. Fleeing characters will barely manage to get themselves out alive, much less fellow party members. If the tunnel collapses, any unconscious or dead PCs that have not already been carried out are utterly lost, and are unrecoverable. Punctuate each round with a growing sense of urgency, describing fissures appearing in the wall, the ground on which they stand trembling so much that they fall prone, etc. Even when the tunnel collapses, it should be used as more of a "you must leave NOW" plot device than as a way to actually harm or trap PCs. When the last PC leaves, if the tunnel has not yet collapsed, it will do so. Mark down the number of rounds each PC remained in the tunnel; it will be noted on their ARs. The weird is buried during the collapse, but her final words to the PCs will be

"Tell my children, trapped by madness and earth though I am, that I am with them!"

Conclusion

As you emerge from the shuddering cave into the cold winter sunlight, the last of the rocks tumble down behind you, once more sealing the earth guardian in her prison. Anehel and the hippogriffs stand at one side of the clearing before the cave, while Blixnard and his gnolls stand at the other. Upon your emergence, both sides, which looked tense and ready for the other to do anything, relax somewhat.

Let the PCs decide what to tell Blixnard; that his son Haelph had joined the Reavers, or that he is dead, or the earth weird's parting words. Then read the following.

As you relate the events to Blixnard, an intense sadness enters his eyes. He sags visibly, leaning on Sapnik for support, and seems to age a decade in the span of a few moments. He nods wearily as you conclude your tale, saying only "The land . . . she trapped herself for the land . . . we must stay now in her honor . . ." Above his head, the son shakes his head and hands the old gnoll to a pair of warriors to escort away. He speaks to you, saying, "My father's time has passed. I rule here now, and I would have us leave this land. We wish now to find better land on the west side of the river, in the land you call the Shield. We fight the Old One for you along these roads and near this mountain, and in return you will give us some part of your good hunting land, once the Old One has grown so old that he is dead. And if he dies not soon enough, by our axe and tooth he will die. Is it agreed?"

The PCs have no true power to broker a deal with the gnolls, but as an elder of Ringland, the nearest Shield Land community, Anedhel does. Even she cannot grant land, that is a power reserved for the Council of Lords, but on behalf of her community she could give the gnolls hunting rights to areas to the east of Ringland. She will listen to whatever the PCs have to say; if they suggest that she agree, she will do so. The PCs will then receive the favor and obligation of the gnolls of White Plume, but also receive the distrust of the Council of Lords.

If the PCs suggest that she deny them the deal, the PCs receive the enmity of the gnolls of White Plume.

Finally, the PCs may suggest to Anedhel to give the gnolls hunting rights in the area to the east of Ringland . . . but only if they can maintain those hunting rights during the war (i.e., they must keep those lands free to hunt in, effectively using the rights to hunt any threatening Iuzians as well as any potential game animals, thereby protecting Ringland from attack from the east). If they come up with this idea, they earn the favor and obligation of the gnolls but do not receive the distrust of the Council of Lords, as the gnolls will be very valuable allies in defending that area, and are much less likely to be able to collect on the agreement if they are killed during the war.

Whatever they decide, the son ends the encounter, and the module, thus:

Sapnik turns his back on you, saying simply, "Very well then. You will leave now." As you mount up to return home, the last thing you hear from the gnolls is Blixnard's desperate muttering . . . "The land . . . the land . . ."

The End

Experience Point Summary

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

Encounter One

Destroy the Free Reaver caravan and learn of their destination.

APL6 270 xp

APL8 330 xp

APL10 390 xp

APL12 450 xp

Avoid the poison on Grignar's journal

All APLs: 60 xp

Encounter Three

Successfully drive off, evade, or kill aerial predators.

APL6 150 xp

APL8 210 xp

APL10 270 xp

APL12 330 xp

Encounter Five

Overcome the Free Reavers guarding the earth weird

APL6 270 xp

APL8 330 xp

APL10 390 xp

APL12 450 xp

Story Award

Awaken the earth weird from her dormancy and save her from the destruction ritual

APL6 90 xp

APL8 115 xp

APL10 135 xp

APL12 160 xp

Discretionary Roleplaying Award

APL6 90 xp

APL8 110 xp

APL10 135 xp

APL12 155 xp

Total Possible Experience:

APL6 900 xp

APL8 1125 xp

APL10 1350 xp

APL12 1575 xp

Treasure Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter One:

APL 6: L: 148 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 148 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 148 gp; C: 61 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 148 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

Encounter Five:

APL 6: L: 222 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 422 gp

APL 8: L: 222 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 872 gp

APL 10: L: 89 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1794 gp

APL 12: L: 75 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2777 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 6: L: 370 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 422 gp

Total: 800 gp

APL 8: L: 370 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 872 gp

Total: 1250 gp

APL 10: L: 237 gp; C: 69 gp; M: 1794 gp

Total: 2100 gp

APL 12: L: 223 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2777 gp

Total: 3000 gp

Special

☛ **Ysaira laid to rest:** This special effect may only be granted to the PC that Ysaira’s silver raven chose to approach. That PC may spend 1 additional TU at the end of this adventure to return her ancestral *silver raven* to her family in Celene. In thanks, Ysaira’s family will allow the PC, at the end of this adventure only, to purchase one (and only one) of the following items at half its normal cost: *boots of elvenkind*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *quiver of Ehlonna*, or *silver raven*. Alternatively, the character may gain access to the following item: *oathbow* (frequency: Region) but at normal cost.

☛ **Favor and Obligation of the Gnolls of White Plume:** For speaking on behalf of them, the gnolls of White Plume Mountain will remember you as an ally. However, this is a double-edged sword: speaking up for them now is easy, but you are also expected to uphold your position in the face of disagreement. You therefore retain an obligation to the gnolls that may affect future events.

☛ **Enmity of the Gnolls of White Plume:** For advising against giving the Gnolls hunting rights, you have earned their enmity. Gnolls from this tribe begin any encounter with the PC as Unfriendly. All Charisma-based checks against them made by the PC suffer a –8 penalty; Charisma-based checks made by allies of the PC suffer a –4 penalty.

☛ **Distrust of the Council of Lords:** For making a deal with the gnolls of White Plume Mountain that was beyond your jurisdiction, and for dealing with known enemies of the state, the Council of Lords views you with distrust. This may affect future events. You may remove this effect by spending 2 influence points with the Council of Lords.

☛ **Scion of Law's Forge:** As thanks for returning his family's ancestral weapon, Count Gerridan Bladehone may give this boon. It is only granted to dwarves who return the axe and either A) made the killing strike against Falen, or B) expend 1 influence point with the Bladehone family and 1 influence point with any other lord or lords. The dwarf is named an honorary scion of Law's Forge, which may have future effects.

☛ **Prophetic Vessel:** This PC received the earth guardian's prophetic energy. This may come into play in future Shield Lands events. The PC stayed in the cavern for _____ rounds.

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 6:

Composite Longbow [+5] (Adventure, PHB)
Wand of Feather Fall (Region, DMG)

APL 8 (all of APL 6 plus the following)

Composite Longbow [+6] (Adventure, PHB)
Vest of Resistance +1 (Adventure, Tome and Blood)

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

Composite Longbow [+6] (Adventure, PHB)
+1 Full Plate Armor of Light Fortification
(Adventure, DMG)
Vest of Resistance +2 (Adventure, Tome and Blood)

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

Arrow of Slaying (half-orcs) (Adventure, DMG)
Arrow of Slaying (humans) (Adventure, DMG)
Arrow of Slaying (gnomes) (Adventure, DMG)
+1 Full Plate Armor of Medium Fortification
(Adventure, DMG)
Mithral Breastplate (Adventure, DMG)

Appendix 1: NPC & Monster Stats

Encounter 1:

APL 6

➤ **Grignar:** Male human Bar3/Forsaker2, mounted on mountain mule; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d12+20; hp 58; Init +1; Spd 40 ft; AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 14) [Dex +1, chain shirt +4]; Base Atk +5; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (2d6+7, mwork greatsword) or +6 ranged (1d6+5, javelin); SQ Rage 1/day, SR 12, fast healing 1 (10), DR 3/magic, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +7, Listen +6, Ride +9, Survival +6; Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

Rage (Ex): hp 68; Atk +12 melee (2d6+9, mwork greatsword) or +6 ranged (1d8+5, composite longbow [+5]); Will +8.

Fast Healing 1(10) (Ex): If he is wounded, Grignar automatically heals 1 hp per round as a free action. He may heal up to 10 points of damage in this manner per day.

Possessions: Masterwork greatsword, composite longbow [+5], 20 arrows, 3 javelins, dagger, chain shirt, 8 gp.

Physical Description: This cocky, burly man swaggers in his every movement. His wind-burned features, blond hair, and thick beard betray his heritage as a barbarian from the north. His armor and weapon appear to be in good repair, but everything else about him is slovenly and unkempt. When he sees evidence of a magic item in use, however, his confident mannerism fades and a glimmer of part fear, part hatred, begins to show in his eyes.

➤ **Mounted Free Reavers (Archers):** Male human Ftr2 on light warhorses; CR 3 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15) [Dex +2, chainmail +5]; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (bowyer/fletcher) +5, Handle Animal +4, Ride +7; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Weapon Focus (longbow).

Possessions: Longsword, dagger, composite longbow [+2], chainmail.

Physical Description: These sturdy, well-trained soldiers move with the assurance of one who has seen

many combats. Their equipment is in good repair; better, at least, than their dental hygiene.

➤ **Mounted Free Reavers (Melee):** Male human Ftr2 on light warhorses; CR 3 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 17) [Dex +2, chainmail +5, shield +2]; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +5 melee (1d8+3, lance) or +6 melee (1d8+3, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d4+3, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (armorer or weaponsmith) +1, Handle Animal +4, Heal +2, Ride +7; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Heavy lance, longsword, dagger, large steel shield, chainmail.

Physical Description: These sturdy, well-trained soldiers move with the assurance of one who has seen many combats. Their equipment is in good repair; better, at least, than their dental hygiene.

APL 8

➤ **Grignar:** Male human Bar3/Forsaker4, mounted on mountain mule; CR 7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d12+28; hp 82; Init +1; Spd 40 ft; AC 19 (touch 11, flat-footed 18) [Dex +1, +4 natural, chain shirt +4]; Base Atk +7; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (2d6+7, mwork greatsword) or +10 ranged (1d6+5, javelin); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+7, mwork greatsword) or +6/+1 ranged (1d8+5, composite longbow [+6]); SQ Rage 1/day, SR 14, fast healing 1 (20), DR 5/magic, tough defense, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +7, Listen +8, Ride +11, Survival +6; Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

Rage (Ex): hp 96; Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+10, mwork greatsword) or +8/+3 ranged (1d8+6, composite longbow [+6]); Will +9.

Fast Healing 1(20) (Ex): If he is wounded, Grignar automatically heals 1 hp per round as a free action. He may heal up to 20 points of damage in this manner per day.

Possessions: As APL 6, except composite longbow is [+6].

Physical Description: As APL 6.

➤ **Mounted Free Reavers (Archers):** Male human Ftr4 on light warhorses; CR 5 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+8; hp 36; Init +6; Spd 20 ft; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15) [Dex +2, chainmail

+5]; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow); Full Atk +6/+6 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (bowyer/fletcher) +5, Handle Animal +6, Heal +1, Ride +9; Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow).

Possessions: As APL 6.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

➤ **Mounted Free Reavers (Melee):** Male human Ftr4 on light warhorses; CR 5 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 4d10+8; hp 36; Init +6; Spd 20 ft; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 17) [Dex +2, chainmail +5, shield +2]; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+3, lance) or +8 melee (1d8+3, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d4+3, dagger); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (armorer or weaponsmith) +2, Handle Animal +5, Heal +3, Ride +9; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: As APL 6.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

➤ **Gargoyle, advanced:** CR 6; Large Monstrous Humanoid (Earth); HD 7d10+45; hp 83; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 15) [+1 Dex, -1 size, +6 natural]; Base Atk +7; Grp +17; Atk +12 melee (1d6+6, claw); Full Atk +12 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws), +10 melee (1d8+5, bite), and +10 melee (1d8+5, gore); Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4 (+12 in a background of worked stone), Listen +5, Spot +5; Hover, Multiattack, Toughness.

Freeze (Ex): When the gargoyle is standing still, an observer must make a successful Spot check (DC 20) to notice it is really alive.

Hover (Feat): Can halt forward motion and hover as a move action. Can then fly in any direction at half speed, regardless of maneuverability.

If it begins its turn hovering, the creature can hover in place for the turn and take a full-round action, using all of its limbs and appendages to attack.

If hovering within 20 ft. of ground with loose debris, the draft from the wings creates a hemispherical cloud with a radius of 60 ft. Clear vision is limited to 10 ft. Creatures have concealment at 15 and 20 ft. (20% miss chance). At 25 ft. or more,

creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance, cannot be located with sight).

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 13) to cast a spell.

APL 10

➤ **Grignar:** Male human Bar3/Forsaker7, mounted on mountain mule; CR 10; Medium humanoid (human); HD 10d12+50; hp 125; Init +2; Spd 40 ft; AC 21 (touch 12, flat-footed 19) [Dex +2, +5 natural, *adamantine chain shirt* +4]; Base Atk +10; Grp +16; Atk +16 melee (2d6+9, mwork greatsword) or +12 ranged (1d6+6, javelin); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d6+9, mwork greatsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+6, composite longbow [+8]); SQ Rage 1/day, SR 17, slippery mind, fast healing 2 (40), DR 7/magic, tough defense, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +8, Listen +8, Ride +12, Survival +6; Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Power Lunge.

Rage (Ex): hp 145; Atk +18 melee (2d6+12, mwork greatsword) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8+8, composite longbow [+8]); Will +10.

Fast Healing 2(40) (Ex): If he is wounded, Grignar automatically heals 2 hp per round as a free action. He may heal up to 40 points of damage in this manner per day.

Slippery Mind: If he fails his saving throw against an enchantment effect, Grignar can attempt his saving throw again 1 round later. He only gets one extra chance to succeed at his saving throw.

Possessions: As APL 8, except 61 gp, composite longbow is [+8], and armor is *adamantine chain shirt*.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

Mounted Free Reavers (Archers): Male human Ftr6 on heavy warhorses; CR 7 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d10+12; hp 60; Init +7; Spd 20 ft; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [Dex +3, breastplate +5]; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +10 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow) or +8/+8/+3 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (bowyer/fletcher) +5, Handle Animal +6, Heal +2, Ride +10; Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow).

Possessions: As APL 6.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

➤ **Mounted Free Reavers (Melee):** Male human Ftr6 on heavy warhorses; CR 7 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 6d10+12; hp 52; Init +6; Spd 20 ft; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 17) [Dex +2, chainmail +5, shield +2]; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, lance) or +9 melee (1d8+5, longsword) or +8 ranged (1d4+3, dagger); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8+3, lance) or +10/+5 melee (1d8+5, longsword); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (armorer or weaponsmith) +3, Handle Animal +6, Heal +3, Ride +10; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: As APL 6.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

➤ **Gargoyle, advanced:** CR 7; Large Monstrous Humanoid (Earth); HD 10d10+63; hp 123; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 16) [+1 Dex, -1 size, +7 natural]; Base Atk +10; Grp +21; Atk +16 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +16 melee (1d6+7, 2 claws), +14 melee (1d8+6, bite), and +14 melee (1d8+6, gore); Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 24, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5 (+13 in a background of worked stone), Listen +6, Spot +6; Hover, Improved Natural Armor, Multiattack, Toughness.

Freeze (Ex): When the gargoyle is standing still, an observer must make a successful Spot check (DC 20) to notice it is really alive.

Hover (Feat): Can halt forward motion and hover as a move action. Can then fly in any direction at half speed, regardless of maneuverability.

If it begins its turn hovering, the creature can hover in place for the turn and take a full-round action, using all of its limbs and appendages to attack.

If hovering within 20 ft. of ground with loose debris, the draft from the wings creates a hemispherical cloud with a radius of 60 ft. Clear vision is limited to 10 ft. Creatures have concealment at 15 and 20 ft. (20% miss chance). At 25 ft. or more, creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance, cannot be located with sight).

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15) to cast a spell.

APL 12

➤ **Grignar:** Male human Bar3/Forsaker9, mounted on mountain mule; CR 12; Medium humanoid (human); HD 12d12+60; hp 149; Init +3; Spd 40 ft; AC 22 (touch

13, flat-footed 19) [Dex +3, +5 natural, *adamantine chain shirt* +4]; Base Atk +12; Grp +18; Atk +18 melee (2d6+9, mwork greatsword) or +15 ranged (1d6+6, javelin); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (2d6+9, mwork greatsword) or +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d8+6, composite longbow [+8]); SQ Rage 1/day, SR 17, slippery mind, fast healing 2 (40), DR 7/magic (or DR 1/—), tough defense, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +6; Str 22, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Intimidate +8, Listen +8, Ride +12, Survival +6; Cleave, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Power Lunge.

Rage (Ex): hp 173; Full Atk +20/+15/+10 melee (2d6+12, mwork greatsword) or +15/+10/+5 ranged (1d8+8, composite longbow [+8]); Will +10.

Fast Healing 3(50) (Ex): If he is wounded, Grignar automatically heals 3 hp per round as a free action. He may heal up to 40 points of damage in this manner per day.

Slippery Mind: If he fails his saving throw against an enchantment effect, Grignar can attempt his saving throw again 1 round later. He only gets one extra chance to succeed at his saving throw.

Possessions: As APL 10.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

Mounted Free Reavers (Archers): Male human Ftr8 on heavy warhorses; CR 9 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +8; Spd 20 ft; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [Dex +3, breastplate +5]; Base Atk +8; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +13 ranged (1d8+2[+4 within 30 ft.], composite longbow); Full Atk +13/+8 ranged (1d8+2 [+4 within 30 ft.], composite longbow) or +11/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+2 [+4 within 30 ft.], composite longbow); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (bowyer/fletcher) +5, Handle Animal +6, Heal +2, Ride +14; Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow).

Possessions: As APL 6.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

Mounted Free Reavers (Melee): Male human Ftr8 on heavy warhorses; CR 9 w. horse; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +6; Spd 20 ft; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 17) [Dex +2, chainmail +5, shield +2]; Base Atk +8; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d8+4, lance) or +13 melee (1d8+6, longsword) or +10 ranged (1d4+3, dagger); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+4, lance) or

+13/+8 melee (1d8+6, longsword); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Craft (armorer or weaponsmith) +4, Handle Animal +6, Heal +4, Ride +12; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: As APL 6.

Physical Description: As APL 6.

Gargoyle, advanced: CR 8; Large Monstrous Humanoid (Earth); HD 12d10+75; hp 141; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average); AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 16) [+1 Dex, -1 size, +7 natural]; Base Atk +13; Grp +24; Atk +19 melee (1d6+7/19-20, claw); Full Atk +19 melee (1d6+7/19-20, 2 claws), +17 melee (1d8+6, bite), and +17 melee (1d8+6, gore); Face/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Damage reduction 10/magic, freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +8; Str 24, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Hide +5 (+13 in a background of worked stone), Listen +6, Spot +6; Hover, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Natural Armor, Multiattack, Toughness.

Freeze (Ex): When the gargoyle is standing still, an observer must make a successful Spot check (DC 20) to notice it is really alive.

Hover (Feat): Can halt forward motion and hover as a move action. Can then fly in any direction at half speed, regardless of maneuverability.

If it begins its turn hovering, the creature can hover in place for the turn and take a full-round action, using all of its limbs and appendages to attack.

If hovering within 20 ft. of ground with loose debris, the draft from the wings creates a hemispherical cloud with a radius of 60 ft. Clear vision is limited to 10 ft. Creatures have concealment at 15 and 20 ft. (20% miss chance). At 25 ft. or more, creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance, cannot be located with sight).

Those caught in the cloud must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 15) to cast a spell.

Encounter 4:

All APLs

☛ **Blixnard:** Male Gnoll Drd11; CR12; Medium Humanoid (Gnoll); HD 13d8+39; hp 107; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (touch 10, flat-footed 14) [+1 natural, +3 hide armor]; Base Atk/Grapple +9/+13; Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, club); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+1 club); SA

spells; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +11, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge Nature +10, Listen +9, Spot +19, Survival +15; Augmented Summoning, Improved Initiative, Natural Spell, Spell Focus (conjuraton).

Possessions: Club, hide armor, holy symbol of Obad-Hai, holy symbol of Yeenoghu, spyglass, *wand of antilife shell*.

Spells Prepared (6/6/5/5/4/2/1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *create water* (2), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *purify Food and Drink*, *Resistance*, 1st – *Calm Animals*, *Cure Light Wounds* (2), *Entangle*, *Faerie Fire*, *Speak with Animals*; 2nd – *Barkskin* (2), *Briar Web*, *Resist Energy* (2); 3rd – *Call Lightning*, *Cure Moderate Wounds* (2), *Greater Magic Fang*, *Windwalk*; 4th – *Dispel Magic*, *Flame Strike* (2), *Freedom of Movement*; 5th – *Animal Growth*, *Call Lightning Storm*; 6th – *Stone tell*.

It should be extremely difficult for PCs to press Blixnard into combat. He is convinced that if he should die, his tribe will fall into chaotic infighting and the Free Reavers will destroy the very precious Earth Weird. However, if backed into a corner, Blixnard will Wildshape into Polar Bear form and will use his Flame Strike and Call Lightning Storm spells to facilitate a defensive retreat targeting archers and spell casters while relying on his Antilife Shell to protect him from melee fighters. If further pressed he will Animal Growth himself and dismiss his Antilife Shell before wading into combat.

Encounter 5:

APL 6:

☛ **Haelph:** Male gnoll Clr7; CR8; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 9d8+18; hp 66; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 19) [+1 dex, +1 natural, +8 full plate armor]; Base Atk +6; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+4, *longspear* +1) or Atk +10 melee (1d8+2, morningstar); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+4, *longspear* +1) or +10/+6 melee (1d8+2 mwork morningstar); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Diplomacy +2, Listen +8, Spot +8; Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: full plate armor, holy symbol of Erythnul (2), *longspear* +1, masterwork morningstar.

Spells Prepared (6/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*, *resistance*, 1st – *bane*, *cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *magic weapon*;

remove fear, shield of faith, 2nd – invisibility, remove paralysis, resist energy, shield other, silence, 3rd – dispel magic, magic circle against good, magic vestment*, summon monster III, 4th – confusion*, divine power.*

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills); War (Free Weapon Focus Morningstar).

☛ **Falen:** Male human Ftr3; CR3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+9; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 10, flat-footed 17) [+5 chainmail armor, +2 large steel shield]; Base Atk +3; Grp +6; Atk +8 melee (1d10+4, *dwarven waraxe +1*) or Atk +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d10+4, *dwarven waraxe +1*) or +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Handle Animal +5, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Ride +6; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*dwarven waraxe*), Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*dwarven waraxe*).

Possessions: chainmail, dagger, +1 cold iron *dwarven waraxe*, large steel shield, light crossbow, bolts (20).

☛ **Jubal:** Male human Ftr3; CR3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+6; hp 28; Init +3 (+3 dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+3 dex, +1 buckler, +4 chain shirt armor]; Base Atk/Grapple +3/+5; Atk +7 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow [+2]) or Atk +5 melee (1d8+2, longsword); Full Atk +5/+5 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow) or +5 melee (1d8+2, longsword); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +6; Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus Longbow.

Possessions: arrows (40), buckler, chain shirt, composite longbow [+2], dagger, longsword, *cloak of resistance +1*.

☛ **Syd:** Male human Ftr3; CR3; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+3 dex, +5 chainmail]; Base Atk +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (2d4+3, spiked chain); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+3, spiked chain); SA sneak attack; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +3, Climb +5, Jump +5, Tumble +3; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Trip, Iron Will.

Possessions: chainmail, dagger, spiked chain; *potion of enlarge person*.

APL 8:

☛ **Haelfh:** Male gnoll Clr9; CR10; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 11d8+22; hp 80; Init +5 (+1 dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 11, flat-footed 20) [+1 dex, +1 natural, +9 full plate armor +1]; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d8+4, *longspear +1*) or Atk +11 melee (1d8+3, mwork morningstar); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+4, *longspear +1*) or +11/+6 melee (1d8+3 morningstar); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +15(+19), Diplomacy +4, Listen +8, Spot +8; Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: full plate armor, holy symbol of Erythnul (2), *longspear +1*, masterwork morningstar.

Spells Prepared (6/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *create water, detect magic, guidance, light, purify food and drink, read magic, resistance, 1st – bane, cure light wounds, divine favor, magic weapon*, remove fear, shield of faith, 2nd – invisibility*, remove paralysis, resist energy, shatter, shield other, silence, 3rd – cure serious wounds, dispel magic, magic circle against good, magic vestment*, summon monster III, 4th – confusion*, divine power, freedom of movement, spell immunity, 5th – flame strike*, righteous might.*

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills); War (Free Weapon Focus Morningstar).

☛ **Falen:** Male human Ftr5; CR5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+10; hp 44; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 10, flat-footed 19) [+7 half plate armor, +2 large steel shield]; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +10 melee (1d8+6, +1 *dwarven waraxe*) or Atk +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +10 melee (1d10+6, +1 *dwarven waraxe*) or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +7, Jump +4, Ride +8; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*dwarven waraxe*), Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (*dwarven waraxe*), Weapon Specialization (*dwarven waraxe*).

Possessions: +1 cold iron *dwarven waraxe*, dagger, half plate armor, large steel shield, light crossbow, bolt (20), *vest of resistance +1*.

☛ **Jubal:** Male human Ftr5; CR5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 5d10+10; hp 44; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+3 dex, +1 buckler, +4 chain

shirt armor]; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +11 ranged (1d8+3, +1 composite longbow) or Atk +7 melee (1d8+2, longsword); Full Atk +10/+10 ranged (1d8+3, +1 composite longbow) or +7 melee (1d8+2, longsword); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +7, Jump +8; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus Longbow.

Possessions: arrows (40), buckler, chain shirt, +1 composite longbow [+2], dagger, longsword, *cloak of resistance* +1.

☛ **Syd:** Male human Ftr3/Rog2; CR 5; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3 plus 2d10+2; hp 36; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (touch 13, flat-footed 14) [+3 Dex, +4 chain shirt]; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+3, mwork spiked chain); Full Atk +7 melee (2d4+3, mwork spiked chain); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +10, Jump +10, Tumble +9; Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Trip, Iron Will.

Possessions: masterwork chain shirt, dagger, masterwork spiked chain; *potion of enlarge person*.

APL 10

☛ **Haeph:** Male gnoll Clr11; CR12; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 13d8+26; hp 94; Init +5 (+1 dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 11, flat-footed 20) [+1 dex, +1 natural, +9 full plate armor of light fortification +1]; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d8+4, *unholy longsword* +1) or Atk +13 melee (1d8+3, mwork morningstar); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+3, *unholy longsword* +1) or +13/+8 melee (1d8+3 mwork morningstar); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +17(+21), Diplomacy +6, Listen +8, Spot +8; Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: full plate armor of light fortification +1, holy symbol of Erythnul (2), masterwork morningstar, *scroll of invisibility purge*.

Spells Prepared (6/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/ 1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *create water, detect magic, guidance, light, purify food and drink, read magic, resistance*, 1st – *bane, cure light wounds, divine favor, magic weapon**, *remove fear, shield of faith*; 2nd – *invisibility**, *remove paralysis, resist energy, shatter, shield other, silence*; 3rd – *cure serious wounds, dispel*

*magic (2), magic circle against good, magic vestment**, *summon monster III*; 4th – *confusion**, *divine power, freedom of movement, recitation, spell immunity*; 5th – *flame strike**, *righteous might, summon monster V*; 6th – *antilife shell, blade barrier**.

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills); War (Free Weapon Focus Morningstar).

☛ **Falen:** Male human Ftr7; CR7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+21; hp 67; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 10, flat-footed 20) [+9 full plate armor +1, +2 large steel shield]; Base Atk +7; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d10+6, +1 *dwarven waraxe*) or Atk +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d10+6, +1 *dwarven waraxe*) or +11/+5 melee (1d10+6, +1 *dwarven waraxe*) and +8 melee (1d6+1, heavy spiked shield); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +9, Jump +7, Ride +10; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*dwarven waraxe*), Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (*dwarven waraxe*), Weapon Specialization (*dwarven waraxe*).

Possessions: +1 cold iron *dwarven waraxe*, dagger, full plate armor +1, heavy spiked steel shield, light crossbow, bolts (20); *vest of resistance* +2.

☛ **Jubal:** Male human Ftr7; CR7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 60; Init +7 (+3 dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+3 dex, +1 buckler, +4 chain shirt armor]; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +13 ranged (1d8+3, +1 composite longbow) or Atk +9 melee (1d8+2, longsword); Full Atk +11/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+3, +1 composite longbow) or +9/+4 melee (1d8+2, longsword); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Intimidate +9, Jump +10; Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus Longbow, Weapon Specialization Longbow.

Possessions: arrows (60), buckler, chain shirt, +1 composite longbow [+2], dagger, longsword.

☛ **Syd:** Male human Ftr3/Rog2/ThiefAcrobat2; CR7; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3 plus 4d6+8; hp 48; Init +5 (+1 dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 13, flat-footed 17) [+3 dex, +7 mithral breastplate armor +2]; Base Atk +5; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (2d4+3, spiked chain); Full Atk +8 melee (2d4+3, spiked chain); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion, trapfinding, kip up, fast balance; AL CE; SV Fort +5,

Ref +10, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Climb +10, Jump +10, Listen +7; Spot +7; Tumble +9; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (spiked chain).

Possessions: mithral breastplate, dagger, masterwork spiked chain; *potion of enlarge person.*

Kip Up (Ex): A thief-acrobat can stand up from a prone position as a free action.

APL 12

☛ **Haelph:** Male gnoll Clr13; CR14; Medium humanoid (gnoll); HD 15d8+30; hp 108; Init +5 (+1 dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (touch 11, flat-footed 20) [+1 dex, +1 natural, +9 +9 *full plate armor of medium fortification +1*]; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +13 melee (1d8+4, *unholy longspear +1*) or Atk +14 melee (1d8+3, mwork morningstar); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+4, *unholy longspear +1*) or +14/+9 melee (1d8+3, mwork morningstar); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 19, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +19(+23), Diplomacy +9, Listen +10, Spot +10; Cleave, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: As APL 10, except armor is *full plate of medium fortification +1.*

Spells Prepared (6/6+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level; evocation base DC = 15 + spell level): 0 – *create water, detect magic, guidance, light, purify food and drink, read magic, resistance*, 1st – *bane, cure light wounds, divine favor, magic weapon**, *remove fear, shield of faith*, 2nd – *invisibility**, *remove paralysis, resist energy(2), shatter, shield other, silence*, 3rd – *cure serious wounds, dispel magic (2), invisibility purge, magic circle against good, magic vestment**, 4th – *confusion**, *divine power, freedom of movement, greater magic weapon, recitation, spell immunity*, 5th – *flame strike**, *righteous might, spell resistance, summon monster V*, 6th – *antilife shell, blade barrier**, *heal*, 7th – *blasphemy, power word blind**.

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills); War (Free Weapon Focus Morningstar).

☛ **Falen:** Male human Ftr9; CR9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 9d10+18; hp 85; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 10, flat-footed 20) [+9 *full plate armor +1*, +2 large steel shield]; Base Atk +9; Grp +13; Atk +16 melee (1d10+6, dwarven waraxe) or Atk +9 ranged (1d8, light

crossbow); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d10+6, dwarven waraxe) or +14/+9 melee (1d10+6, dwarven waraxe) and +13 melee (1d6+2, spiked heavy shield); AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +11, Jump +9, Ride +12; Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Greater Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Improved Initiative, Improved Shield Bash, Iron Will, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: dagger, +1 *cold iron dwarven waraxe, full plate armor +1*, spiked heavy steel shield, light crossbow, bolts (20), *vest of resistance +2.*

☛ **Jubal:** Male human Ftr9; CR9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d10+14; hp 76; Init +8 (+4 dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 15) [+4 dex, +1 buckler, +4 chain shirt armor]; Base Atk/Grapple +9/+11; Atk +16 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow [+2]) or Atk +11 melee (1d8+2, longsword); Full Atk +14/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow) or +11/+6 melee (1d8+2, longsword); AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Intimidate +11, Jump +12; Greater Weapon Focus Longbow, Improved Critical Longbow, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus Longbow, Weapon Specialization Longbow.

Possessions: arrows (60), buckler, chain shirt, +1 *composite longbow [+2]*, dagger, longsword, *arrow of slaying (half-orcs)*, *arrow of slaying (humans)*, *arrow of slaying (gnomes).*

☛ **Syd:** Male human Ftr3/Rog2/ThiefAcrobat4; CR9; Medium humanoid (human); HD 3d10+3 plus 7d6+7; hp 60; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 14, flat-footed 15) [+4 dex, +5 *mithral breastplate*]; Base Atk +7; Grp +9; Atk +11 melee (2d4+3, spiked chain); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (2d4+3, spiked chain); SA sneak attack +2d6; SQ improved evasion, kip-up, defensive bonus, slow fall; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +14, Climb +16, Disable Device +9, Jump +18, Listen +4, Search +9, Spot +4, Tumble +14; Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Knockdown, Weapon Focus (spiked chain).

Possessions: mithral breastplate, dagger, masterwork spiked chain; *potion of enlarge person*, *potion of blur*.

Kip Up (Ex): A thief-acrobat can stand up from a prone position as a free action.

Appendix 2: Windriders of Ringland

The church of Atroa in the reclaimed lands, revitalized by the renewed contact with one of their shrines in Ringland, sees this eastern beacon of hope as a good omen. It has gathered volunteers from throughout its clergy and even other lands to begin training hippogriff riders. None are yet paladins of Atroa with a sacred bonded mount nor windriders, as some say the griffon riders of Greyhawk must be, but a few hopefuls are nearly ordained. The hidden town is a perfect place for training this aerial strike force, as it is common knowledge that Iuz's spies see much that occurs in Critwall and its environs, and warriors on flying mounts would certainly draw attention. Here, however, they may train with impunity, and when the time comes to strike from the air against the Old One, it is hoped that he will unprepared.

Player Handout #1

(Hastily scrawled on a narrow strip of paper):

West sentries-
I pray that the east wind
remains still so my raven
may reach you in time. I
am a day's journey east of
Naireen, at the mouth of
the Yarpick River. It is just
after moonrise. I have
spotted a wagon train
heading east from
Naireen, cross-country. It
does not appear to be a
military expedition,
though there are armed
guards, Free Reavers I
think. Why such a caravan
should head due east
cross-country, I can but
imagine one reason. Send
what rangers and scouts
you can, immediately; I
will wait until midway to
dawn for reinforcements.
If none arrive . . . what can
I do but try to stop them?
I will at-tempt to infiltrate
their camp this night, and
either determine that their
destination is not what I
fear, or if it is, will kill
those that I can in their
sleep. Goddess willing, I
will see you soon and it
will not come to that.

--Ysaira

Player Handout #2

Entry 1: Know that I, Grignar the nigh-indestructable, soon-to-be savior of the north and vanquisher of the false god Vatun, pen these words. By the time you read this, I will be a legend, I have foreseen, my tales of valor and destruction spread across this realm, even unto the edge of the world, where the great lake called "The Near Dive" laps at the land. And with my rule shall come the end of all magics, for they are evil and deceptive. For now I will serve this false god Vatun, though he did lead my people into unwarranted wars and much death. He pays me richly in coin, and these Reavers that I have joined are good men, soldiers all. I will slaughter the slaughterpriest, ha ho, and the swordwoman . . . fi, that sword doth glare at me, I feel its evil . . . and command this mercenary band.

Entry 17: These Vatunites go by many names, do they not? I will memorize these names, the better to smash them all, and their magic as well. Iuz, Old One, Vatun. Hmm. Those are only three. That is not so many. Never mind.

Entry 22: The swordwoman and the slaughterpriest are fools. They are impressed by my strength, and make me a lieutenant of these troops in the place called Naireen. It is only natural. They do not know their folly. Already I bend the troops to my will. The goal of these troops is to find some kind of earth. Pure earth, they call it. So pure it is beyond magic, perhaps?

Entry 23: The pure earth is magic, I am sure of it. Fie! They have shown me many things, and how to find it, and I must touch the stuff. I rage, rage, rage! Oops. I spilled my inkwell. More tomorrow.

Entry 24: Foul, dirty earth! Here is what I have seen. They perform some evil ritual on the dirt, someplace I know not, but then . . . then it is more than simply dirt. It does things. When placed on a man, caked like armor, it becomes a part of his flesh, and wards blows! I will not use it, for it is only for the weak, and already my flesh is hardened like steel to all but mighty blows and the most vile of weapons. But more does it do! I have seen them layer a man with the dirt, and then he melts, as the snow in the coming of spring, until there is nothing left! And they seem joyous of this, the destruction of one of their own. The ghosts of the men they melt are angry, this I know, for later that night I saw the spirit of the man that had melted walking, about the camp! He wore strange garb, as if from another land, and this is how I know he had returned from the afterlife. Others did not notice him, or thought him just a normal man, but I warded him with the secret signs and he could not come near me. The spirit walked about in broad daylight the next day, and so it may be that this earth makes powerful undead out of those that it kills, as everyone knows that only the most powerful living dead may walk in daylight. Also, they gave me a magic token that would sense the pure earth. But it was evil, so I smashed it. I enjoyed that.

Entry 25: I am to take my caravan overland from Naireen, to the smoking cone in the east. I am to avoid the main roads because the peasants of the Lightning God watch. The orcish slaughterpriest is already on his way there; by the 10th day of Sunsebb he will arrive, to destroy an earth guardian and prepare the pure earth that is with her. When we arrive, we will take the dirt. Other Reaver caravans head that way too. The place we go to, they call "White Plume Mountain."

Map 1: Free Reaver Guards & Earth Weird Chamber

