

SHL04-06

# The Banners of Torkeep

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

Version 1.0

### Round 1

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The Council of Lords called for the Banners (Ancient Writs of Title) of the Lords to be presented. This adventure of redemption and hope for tables of adventurers of APL 2 through 12 involves the aftermath of the presentment ceremony. This adventure is a follow up to SHL03-06 "A Chink in the Armor", SHL03-7 "Noble Intentions", SHL04-02 "In the Service of the Lady" and SHL04-03 "End of the Path".

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

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## 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

	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

character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this

type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

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

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

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

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

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

### **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

This adventure may be confusing to some players. Care on behalf of the Dungeon Masters should be taken to read the background carefully to be able to answer player questions as thoroughly as possible.

Despite being a year 4 module taking place in the adventure that appears to ACTUALLY begin one year in the future in CY 595. This module deals with a dream, a portent if you will, of a time line in which the Shield Lands has fallen to luz.

Gildor Arcanix is an ancient gold dragon who believes he owes the Shield Lands a favor. However, he does not want to be TOO directly involved in influencing the outcome of events. Therefore, he selects a party of brave adventurers and sends them into a magical dream-like state. He is able to do this, in part, by harnessing both his own powers as well as the hidden powers lying deep within the Sidhee forest (To be further detailed in CY 595).

In this dream state, the Council of Lords of the Shield Lands vote to call for a “showing of the Banners”. The Banners were the names of the ancient writs of title and land ownership parceled out centuries before. These were essentially bearer bonds in nature: i.e. In order to be a titled noble, you would have to be granted your title by the Council. In order to own lands, you would first need to be titled, and then given possession of a Banner for the land in question (author’s note – this is a precursor to the ‘deed’ system of land ownership we are currently familiar with). Over the centuries, this has led to some petty, but deadly, versions of capture the flag as various lords would go to steal the banners of other lords by hook, crook, and show of violence.

Such deeds, however are a thing of the past and the ceremony has not been held in over 100 years – for one thing, it’s a mere formality as EVERYONE knows who holds what particular Banner. Many have been passed from generation to generation to generation... For another thing, it requires a 2/3rds vote of all council members (the council is usually lucky to get a simple majority on any vote). Finally, no lord is typically bold enough to challenge the land ownership of any other lord.

However, after Lady Katarina fell, Lord Lardon called for a vote on the Banners. In part supported by the desire of the nobles to show proof of their power after the invasion, and in part supported by a desire to make a positive statement after the unexpected loss of Lady Katarina, Lord Lardon managed to get a 2/3rds vote! Upon presentment, Lord Torkeep was unable to come up with his

banner. The council was about to vote for a replacement banner to be issued in his name (after all, it is not at all unlikely for a banner to be missing after the occupation) but amazingly, Count Lardon then presented Torkeep’s banner in addition to his own!

The Council was in an uproar! Count Lardon refused to back down and turn the Banner over to Torkeep. This tore the council apart. Torkeep left for his keep and took his army (and many pathfinders) with him.

Just less than half of the lords vowed to ‘get even’ with Lardon, while just over half supported his claim (the law is the law). Lardon was given command of the Standing Army of the Shield Lands to march to Torkeep to take possession by force.

That was when luz attacked from the east. Storming out of wilds, armies overran South Keep. Unsupported by the bulk of the army, Gensal was quickly surrounded. The army was forced to be pulled back to Critwall. In the mean time, Torkeep managed to entrench and hold at bay the hordes.

The ultimate destruction was inevitable. luz’s forces managed to crush Gensal. Then he turned his sights on Critwall. It fell within a month. Diplomacy with his nation fell on deaf ears as he stated he never relinquished his claim after occupying the Shield Lands. The remaining 10 months have been spent by him taking over Bright Sentry and positioning himself for one final smash against the walls of Torkeep.

Again, this is all a dream state of a future that may or may not come to pass. However, Gildor is not explaining this to the party, not yet... and so this is where the party finds itself – a year in the (dream) future facing a demon-bolstered horde on the walls of Torkeep...

## Adventure Summary

### Introduction

The party stands in front of the gates of Torkeep. Torkeep himself has taken Torkeep’s Twenty (a group of Knights of Holy Shielding) out on a sortie to drive back the hordes long enough for a group of soldiers who fought their way through the luzian hordes to make it into the keep. As Torkeep brings his Knights back to Torkeep, they are pursued by demons. The party must fight off the demons or Torkeep will be lost. After fighting the first wave, is clear this is a completely hopeless position: within a day, no more, Torkeep the man and the keep will be no more.

As a new wave of demons charge the party, a portal opens behind them. In it stands an

unassuming man in simple leathers carrying a quarterstaff. He says his name is Gildor Arcanix and if the party wishes to see evil thwarted and good prevail, they need to step through the portal with him. Gildor is actually an ancient gold dragon who was captured by luzians two years ago (See SHLINT03-02 *Amidst the Smoke and Flames*).

Stepping through the portal, the party will find themselves near the town of Lardon. Gildor will say that a great wrong was committed here. His power is limited, but he can give the party one single shot to avoid this disaster. He tells the party he can use a wish spell to send the party back in time for 48 hours – back nearly 20 years to when Count Lardon stole Torkeep's Banner for use during a future time. The party will need to 1) Locate the stolen Banner. 2) Substitute a new document for Lardon's stolen Banner. 3) Return to their present time with the real Banner without anyone in the past knowing of the switcheroo.

Gildor does not know what exactly this will do, but he believes it will at least give the Shield Lands a chance at surviving. If the party agrees, they proceed to ...

#### Encounter One

In this encounter, the party believes they have traveled back in time. There they learn they can only travel in a 10 mile radius of their drop off point. They need to get to Lardon and find out where the Banner is stored.

That is when they meet the succubus Black-hearted Zhayne. Zhayne has actually plagued the Shield Lands for decades. She is appearing to the party, and tells them this is all a dream. Gildor has tricked them, and that none of this is real. She does this in a form similar to that of a *projected image*. She got wind of Gildor's 'dream' and used all the magic at her disposal to appear to the party. She cannot directly interact with them in any manner. Nor can they directly interact with her. Further, the party is the only group that can see or hear her.

Zhayne follows the party throughout the rest of the module attempting to dissuade the party from success by words alone.

The party gets a chance to scout out the perimeter of Lardon. After they get the lay of the land, they go into the village.

#### Encounter Two

This encounter subsists of a detailed village with a number of places for the party to explore.

Ultimately, the party needs to learn the following:

1) Count Lardon hates Franz Torkeep and wants to embarrass him.

2) Count Lardon recently attended a knighting ceremony at Torkeep. Lardon returned early.

3) Lardon tends to spend a lot of time in the tavern. He has full run of the place.

4) In the basement of the tavern is a secret panel. Inside the secret panel is a box. This is where the party needs to swap papers. The papers will be recovered by the party in SHL03-07 *Noble Intentions*.

After going through the town, the party can return to the meeting point where they will be transported into the future and their own time.

#### Encounter Three

Upon returning to the site, they will find that it is being tampered with by Zhayne's minions. Zhayne will advise them she has managed to tamper with the dream to allow a few 'friends' of hers she discovered to ruin the party's dream-journey. The party must fight the minions to get to the time/dream portal.

#### Encounter Four

Returning to a point in time just before the presentment ceremony, the party discovers the world has not yet changed. They are now awake, somewhere near Critwall. If they managed to acquire the banner, they have it in their possession. They are in time to try to get back to Critwall for the presentment ceremony (holding the real Banner). On the way, they are attacked one last time (for real this time) by minions of Zhayne. The party manages to overcome the minions and make it to Critwall in time to get the Banner to Torkeep.

#### Conclusion

Lardon opens his chest at the presentment ceremony, fully expecting it to contain Torkeep's Banner. Instead, it contains Gildor's laundry list, as well as a used scroll of bad jokes.

## Introduction – Riders in the Storm

The adventure begins in front of the Last Siege of Torkeep, CY 595... Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***luz won. The Shield Lands are no more. The sky is dark, filled with boiling, rolling clouds, and lightning crashes down on the horizon. A***

*storm is brewing...*

*You now stand just inside the gates of Torkeep with about a half-dozen other brave souls, watching at Lord Franz Torkeep thunders past you out of the gates of Torkeep to the demon-filled horde of bandits, demi-humans, giants and worse.*

*With Torkeep rides Torkeep's Twenty, a mighty band of Knights. They are making a desperate charge to rescue a small group of soldiers who got trapped outside of the keep. You watch as Torkeep's Twenty smashes through a shield wall of goblins and charges past a group of orc spear to reach the embattled soldiers.*

*Torkeep's plan is desperate but not foolhardy. He hopes the surprise of charging out will keep the horde off balance long enough to rescue the soldiers and ride back to the safety of the keep.*

*Amazingly, Torkeep seems to succeed. The charge of the mighty knights drives back the forces of evil long enough for the soldiers to regroup and make their way back towards the keep. The knights begin to fight a holding action, slowly retreating as the soldiers work their way towards the keep.*

*But then you see that the plan will not succeed. The archers and arcane casters have lining the walls of Torkeep have managed to keep a small area of land in front of the keep free from the enemy. However, as you watch, a number of horrible demonic shapes are moving to a position just behind and to the right of Torkeep's Twenty. It is clear the troops on the walls will not be able to effectively engage the demons before these fiends engage Torkeep's knights from behind. Once engaged, it is certain the brave lord and his knights will be overwhelmed.*

*It becomes crystal clear to you in a split second: If Torkeep is to survive, only you and those standing with you, are in a position to quickly take out the demons. What do you do?*

The party will undoubtedly have MANY questions. What happened? How did we get here? Why did this come to pass? Hand the party Player's Handout 1 – "A short history of the final fall of the Shield Lands". Give them a moment to read it, then proceed with the encounter.

## **Demonic Pinning Force**

### **APL 2 (EL 4)**

**Dretch (2):** hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 42.

### **APL 4 (EL 6)**

**Dretch (2):** hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 42.

**Quasit (2):** hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 42.

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

**Chaos Beast (1):** hp 44 each; see *Monster Manual* page 33.

**Dretch (2):** hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 42.

**Quasit (1):** hp 13; see *Monster Manual* page 42.

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

**Chaos Beast (1):** hp 44 each; see *Monster Manual* page 33.

**Vrock (1):** hp 115; see *Monster Manual* page 148.

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

**Hezrou (1):** hp 138 each; see *Monster Manual* page 44.

**Vrock (1):** hp 115; see *Monster Manual* page 148.

### **APL 12 (EL 14)**

**Hezrou (1):** hp 138 each; see *Monster Manual* page 44.

**Glabrezu (1):** hp 174 each; see *Monster Manual* page 43.

**Tactics:** The demons (if they have the ability) will not summon in further demons. If attacked by the party, they will savagely throw themselves at the adventurers. However, these are not "summoned" outsiders for purposes of spells and effects.

**Treasure:** None.

**Development:** Killing the demons will allow Torkeep to make it back into the keep.

Presuming the party went to assist Lord Torkeep, read of paraphrase the following.

***Defeating the demons, you have a brief moment to resurvey your surroundings. Lord Torkeep and his knights have managed to disengage from the horde and are now retreating past you into the keep. As they ride by, each of the knights raises their helm and***

*dips their lances, a sign of great thanks.*

*As you now look to the safety of the walls of Torkeep, there are popping sounds coming from around the battlefield. You can see more and more demons magically coming into the fray. This must have been some pre-arranged signal, for the horde, previously held at bay, now shouts as one "SOULS FOR IUZ" and begins to charge forward.*

*As you weigh your chances, there is a bright light appearing between you and the keep: it is a circle of light and inside stands a scrawny human, maybe 6' tall, with corn-silk hair and piercing blue eyes. He has an incredibly likeable grin on his face and seems nimble as a mountain lion. He is dressed in traveling boots, sturdy dark-grey cotton pants and a loose white cotton shirt. Over one shoulder he carries a quarterstaff which he alternatively twirls with one hand or just rests on his shoulder.*

*"I am Gildor Arkanix," he says "and if you want to set right that which went horribly wrong, please come with me." He looks around and grins "...unless you'd rather play some more with your friends!"*

If the party did not go out to assist, read or paraphrase the real aloud text below.

*As you watch, the demons charge in and pin Torkeep and his knights from behind. Left with no room to maneuver, they are trapped and the horde overwhelms them. Mercifully, their fate is shielded by the evil bodies swarming over them...*

*But then, as Torkeep falls, a bright light appears behind you: it is a circle of light and inside stands a scrawny human, maybe 6' tall, with corn-silk hair and piercing blue eyes. He has an incredibly likeable grin on his face and seems nimble as a mountain lion. He is dressed in traveling boots, sturdy dark-grey cotton pants and a loose white cotton shirt. Over one shoulder he carries a quarterstaff which he alternatively twirls with one hand or just rests on his shoulder.*

*"I am Gildor Arkanix," he says "and if you want to set right that which went horribly wrong, please come with me." He looks around and somberly adds "Feel no remorse for Lord Torkeep, you could not have saved him but would only have thrown away your lives. This is your chance to save him!"*

### **What happens if the party questions Gildor?**

Gildor will answer questions for four rounds. As they party questions him, he will get more and more agitated as the horde gets closer and closer.

1) Who are you? Gildor Arkanix was introduced in SHLINT03-02 Amidst the Smoke and Flames. He will NOT reveal he is actually an ancient gold dragon. However, he will not deny it, either. Knowledge (Local) or Knowledge (History) or a Bardic Lord check (DC 15) will remind party members who do not know this npc of the following:

- ❖ About 2 years ago, the luzian army tried to burn down the Sidhee Forest.
- ❖ The luzian Army was bolstered by a strange man of great power – Gildor Arkanix.
- ❖ Gildor challenged the entire Shield Lands army to single combat.
- ❖ Three pathfinders came forward to challenge the man (Mangram, Colin, and a dwarf who was not seen since). Colin managed to break a domination spell that was on Gildor.
- ❖ As the spell broke, it was revealed that Gildor was an ancient gold dragon that had been dominated by the forces of evil.
- ❖ Gildor basically shredded the evil army in his fury and believes he owes the Shield Lands a debt.

2) Why are you here? Gildor is very grateful to the Shield Lands for rescuing him a couple of years ago and has been waiting the proper time to repay that assistance. This appears to be the best opportunity for him to satisfy that debt.

3) Where are you taking us? Gildor will smile and say "Ah... that is best not answered on this battlefield where evil ears can hear." He will add he is taking them to a place of relative safety where they can talk.

4) Any other questions? Consult the Adventure Background above. Gildor would know most of the details of the history of the Shield Lands over the last year.

5) What is this shining portal? Gildor has used one of his three *wish* spells per day to open a *gate* between his location and the party. It will close very, very soon...

### **What happens if the party doesn't go with Gildor?**

Gildor will not give the party hours to question him at this time. If the party does not move through the portal in 30 seconds, he will look sad and tell the party he will seek out other adventurers. With that the portal will close. Let the party fight wave

after wave of demons, orcs, etc. until they teleport away or are killed. These fights are not established in this module, nor are they detailed in any way. This is because it is not expected that the party will actually decide to not go with Gildor. If they really do not want to, just grab the Monster Manual and have fun! Unlike the later part of the dream (see below) during this battle, any party deaths will NOT be permanent. Other than that, refer to the notes on the dream state in Encounter One, below. See the Conclusion below for more information.

**What happens if the party goes with Gildor?**

Please proceed to Encounter One.

## Encounter One – Lardon/Lardon

Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***Stepping through the portal you arrive at a patch of land void of all life. Its cracked surface reveals it was blasted, as if by a great heat, which burned away anything that would have been here. A chilling wind blows across the field. In all directions, until your vision is blocked by hills, the view is the same. “Welcome to Lardon”, says Gildor, bowing low before you.***

As mentioned above, Gildor is actually an ancient gold dragon who was captured by luzians two years ago (See SHLINT03-02 Amidst the Smoke and Flames). After being freed from his servitude by Pathfinders, he now wishes to repay his debt.

Gildor will now take the time to freely answer the party's questions as best he can, having access to everything detailed in the Adventure Background, above, as well as Player's Handout 1. If the party will not ask questions about the last year of events, Gildor will explain the gist of the information contained in the Adventure Background, making sure they understand about Lardon, Torkeep and the Banner.

Three other questions may arise:

1) What happened here? This is the town of Lardon. About 8 months ago, Count Lardon sent some of the army here along with a number of the Arcanist's Society in an attempt to free it from luz's grasp. It was a foolish idea and the land was utterly devastated by the Lesser Boneheart Vayne as a result.

2) Why us? Gildor will advise the party

that he was drawn to either a) the heroism of the party if they rushed out to help Torkeep or b) the wisdom of the party if they chose to stay inside the keep.

3) You said we could help? How? Read or paraphrase the following:

***“Ah, how can you help?” Gildor ponders. He turns around slowly looking at the vast devastation that has occurred here. “That is a difficult question to answer. You must understand there is nothing you can do to help here and now. However, I am capable of a few parlor tricks. Old Wicked will rue the day his followers made me an enemy.***

***“What would you say if I could tell you that I could send you back in time.... Back to when Count Lardon stole Torkeep's Banner for his own?” Without waiting for an answer, Gildor takes a step, grabs his quarterstaff in both hands, and takes a swing at a dirt clod, powdering it. He looks up at you and continues:***

***“I can do it, you know. Send you back in time, I mean. It's funny how magic works. I have immense power but I cannot use it to directly defend against the evil one's successes for fear of the repercussions it might bring. Yet, it will let me send you back in time to where your freedom of will may affect countless lives.”***

Let the party ask questions of Gildor. Here are some of the questions that may come up.

- 1) To what exact time are we returning? Gildor will send them back 22 years. His research shows this is when Lardon stole the Banner.
- 2) Where will we find the Banner? This is unknown.
- 3) What do we do when we find it? Try NOT to raise suspicions that it has been taken. Gildor will give the party a couple of sheets of parchment in a scroll tube that he assures the party is a reasonable facsimile of the scroll tube with the Banner in it. If the party looks, it contains it contains Gildor's laundry list, as well as a used scroll of bad jokes.
- 4) If we are going back in time, why here, why this event? Why not to any other time, like to try to convince the Shield Lands to ally with Furyondy and avoid the first invasion? Because Gildor has consulted great magics and is convinced that the smallest interruption in time is

necessary. Trying to cause a larger interruption in time might not work and could have disastrous consequences.

- 5) Why don't you do more to help? Gildor has his reasons. If pressed he will state that he does not directly interfere with Luz for a couple of reasons. First, he is afraid of drawing more attention to the Shield Lands than necessary. Second, he thinks that all of the spells placed on him while under the domination of the Luzians may not be gone and he is afraid of them gaining control of him again (and using him against the Shield Lands). Finally, he has been working on gaining certain alliances with higher powers and his direct intervention may damage those alliances.
- 6) SPECIAL NOTE: Gildor is, of course, not sending the party back through time. Instead, the party is journeying through a dream state he has created. He has created this dream state by using his vast stores of magic as well as tapping into the power of the Sidhee forest (which will be explored more fully in CY 595). Anyone can Sense Motive (DC 1D20+27 opposed Bluff check). If they manage to Sense Motive, they will know that Gildor is not being entirely truthful. If pressed on this, he will only say "You can either trust me on this, or you can go home..." If a person chooses to go home, the adventure is over and they wake up in a featherbed in Gensal.

#### A SPECIAL NOTE ON THE SCROLL TUBE:

The original scroll tube was actually recovered by a party in SHL03-07 Noble Intentions. Some party members may have looked at it. In that module, it is described merely as 'a variety of legal papers'. Any player that did actually open the tube in that module should have the 'Ire of Lord Lardon' on their AR from that adventure. Such players will remember that one of the documents did look like a deed to land of some sort.

In this dream-state, it is possible for players to tinker with the papers inside the scroll tube. Gildor put in a laundry list and a couple of pages from '101 Dragon Jokes', a book he happens to like. Players can add or subtract what they like but then the Dungeon Master will have to adjust the language in the conclusion. If the party successfully completes the mission, the dream state will merge with the real world and allow the switch of tubes to take place.

After the party has asked its questions, read or paraphrase the following:

***"I can wish you back in time, but I will not know when to wish you to return. In fact, if you get in any trouble, you may not return at all!" Gildor reaches inside his shirt and withdraws a flat, shiny gold disk. "What I have done is to imbed into this dragon scale a single, special wish. When you arrive in the past, bury it in the ground. This will establish a zone of disrupted time about five miles across. You can move freely in that zone. You will not be able to move beyond the borders of the zone. If you do not bury the scale in the earth, it will not be able to be properly in contact with Oerth to establish the zone.***

***"When you are done with your quest, come back and unbury the scale. A few moments after it is unburied, the latent wish contained within and anyone touching it will be sent forward in time to just before the Banner Presentment ceremony. You will then have to hurry as fast as you can to Critwall, to give Torkeep his stolen Banner."***

Gildor will give the party the dragon scale and allow them to prepare for their journey. He will also give them a thick iron ring. It will stretch or shrink to snugly fit on any player's finger. Etched into the ring are a series of stars and moons. He tells the party it is a ring of spell storing, minor. Currently it contains a *Nystul's Magic Aura* cast at 9th level. He tells them they may find the ring useful on their trip even if the spell is not. When they are ready, he will use a *wish* to send the party back in time. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***As you fade away, journeying to the past, you hear Gildor say "Zhayne! What are YOU doing here?"***

***The sky is blue, the grass is green and the smell in the air is rich with healthy growing things. You have arrived in the past.***

***You stand on the top of a hill. Lardon is not far away, and you can see parts of the town between the trees gentle hills that mark your approach.***

***It does not take a historian to remind you this part of the Shield Lands is the heartland of the nation. Along with Gensal, it is the breadbasket of the land. Harvests from this region will fill the bellies of Shield Landers everywhere and plenty left over for trade beyond the borders.***

***Obvious farms are scattered throughout***

**the area. A few farmers can be seen in the distance, working on getting the fields ready for planting.**

Let the party get their bearings and work on burying the scale. If the party chooses not to bury the scale it will start to hum and glow brightly. The party will need to bury the scale (even an inch below the surface) within just a couple of minutes or the dream state they are in will be unraveled. See the Conclusion, below.

As the party finishes burying the scale, read or paraphrase the following:

***“What’cha doin’?” asks an overly pleasant girl’s voice. You did not see or hear anyone approach! Looking around you see materializing in your midst a young girl of perhaps thirteen years, dressed in peasant clothes. She seems... transparent some how.***

This is Black-hearted Zhayne. She is an evil succubus who has plagued the Shield Lands for years. Refer to the Appendix for details about her history.

Zhayne is appearing to the party via a powerful illusion. She is correct, the party is not actually in the past, nor is she showing up from the future. She has instead, through her magics, joined the dream in order to appear to the party. Consequently, only the party can see and hear her (or so she will say – actually she can appear to whomever she wants, but right now she only wants to appear to the party).

Zhayne will come and go as she pleases, tormenting the party. She will definitely show up where indicated in the module. PLEASE NOTE: It is important to play her as an irritant rather than as an obstruction to having fun in the module.

Let the party interact with her. She will answer just about anything they ask. She does not believe the party will succeed at their task and is torn as to whether she hopes they do or not! After all, with luz winning the war, all of those people she enjoys tormenting will have worse things to worry about if they are subjugated. Zhayne is a pathological liar. She will have a result of 32 for any Bluff checks she is required to make.

Here are some of the questions she can answer:

- 1) Who are you? She is Zhayne, the Black-hearted. She is a succubus from the Abyss.

- 2) What are you doing here? She is here to enjoy the show and to taunt the mortals.
- 3) Is that how you really look? She will GLADLY do a number of quick shape changes to find a form pleasing to the members of the party: A young school girl, a bookish wizard, an exotic dancer, a demure peasant girl, etc. When she does this, she will be very catty towards any women in the party, using her sharp tongue and sense of wit to insult them about their appearance, intellect, tactics, etc. Again, be careful not to lay this aspect of her personality on too thickly.
- 4) What happened to Gildor? She will giggle. She tells the party she thinks Gildor is just the cutest thing for a gold dragon. In fact, when he was captured, she got to use him as a servant for a while and thought he was just too much fun to be with! She did nothing to Gildor. She just showed up to say ‘hi’ to him.
- 5) Really? She did NOTHING to Gildor? Well, she did convince him to tell her his plan. She can be VERY convincing – even to a gold dragon...He would never have revealed his plan except he thought there was nothing she could do to stop it.
- 6) What can you do to stop it? She’s not sure she wants to! At this point in time, Zhayne is not quite sure what exactly Gildor intends to accomplish, so she is more than content to follow along and cause chaos.

***After your party has had a moment or two to get acquainted with her, she suddenly gives you a look of amazement and says “Wait a minute... You think all this is real? Oh, this is too funny! You realize Gildor is lying to you, don’t you? None of this is real! All of this is a dream!” Zhayne starts pacing back and forth, her hands behind her back. Turning her head towards you she continues “You don’t really believe that he has the power to alter time itself, do you? That’s too fantastical to believe. No, no my friends, you are in nothing more than a dream. If you want to wake up, just do it! But I’d recommend against it. I’m curious to see just how well Gildor got the details...” With that she sweeps one hand out in front of her towards the town... “Should we...?” she asks, implying the party should lead the way.***

## Encounter Two – We Built this City

The party can make their way down into Lardon. It is about 10:00 in the morning.

When the party is ready to move down the hill into town, read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***Zhayne, appearing as a druid with green hair and eyes, wearing a dress of leaves and flowers, looks down into the town and grins. “You know, I don’t think you’re going to make it.”***

***When it is obvious to her that you do not know what exactly she’s talking about, she claps her hands together in joy. “Oh! I forgot to tell you! I tampered with Gildor’s dream magic. You don’t have an unlimited amount of time here. You only have until midnight to return. At that point, the magic in the scale will unravel with or without you.” She tilts her head down and looks up at you through thick green lashes and with a pout to her lips inquires “Was that wrong of me?”***

### NOTES ON THE DREAM STATE

- 1) Zahne, is not lying about the dream state. The party is truly in a dream world created by Gildor to represent the past.
- 2) Regarding her tampering with the scale, on that part she IS lying. She did not tamper with the ‘spell’ Gildor put on the scale. She will later lie again to the party to tell them the scale will actually release its magic even earlier. The party can learn of this other deception later in the Golden Stag Inn, below. Actually, the scale is a trigger Gildor put into the dream to allow the party an opportunity to escape the dream state he has created.
- 3) In the dream, any charges or expendable items the party uses are not actually used in reality. However any spells used or damage taken is treated as real. Also, using abilities that can be called on a limited amount of times, such as a die reroll from the luck domain, is used up if called upon. The list specifically is as follows:
  - a) Charges from items – not used up.
  - b) Items destroyed – not destroyed.

- c) Favors off of ARs – used up and crossed off.
  - d) Spells cast, powers and abilities used – used up and crossed off.
  - e) Damage taken – considered real.
  - f) Death of a character/follower/familiar, etc. – considered real. However, if anything would cause an unrecoverable body or similar, at the end of the dream the deceased will be discovered in a feather bed in Gensal.
  - g) This should be used as a guide. Essentially, permanent items are not used up, while things effecting the person are.
- 4) This dream state cannot be dispelled, per se, from within the dream. However, if a party member no longer wants to be in the dream, they can attempt to ‘wake up’ by disbelieving the events. The player makes a Will save versus a mind effecting illusion of DC 28. If the player succeeds, that player wakes up and for them the adventure is over.
  - 5) The party cannot go beyond 10 miles in any direction from the center of town. The dream area created is only so big...

Lardon is a medium size town of about 500 people. Lardon Keep sits on a hill above the town and unlike the town has a stout stone wall strengthened by several towers and gate houses.

Most of the town is constructed of wood with brick foundations. A few are of piled stone or entirely of brick. The party is less than a mile from Lardon. They will pass by a number of farm fields on their way to town. As they get closer, they will have many opportunities to talk to any of the locals they chose.

As the party enters the town, read or paraphrase the following:

***The town of Lardon is busy with activity. Citizens can be seen hard at work: Some are working on buildings, some are moving carts of food, and others are busy coming to and from some of the shops. Compared to the state of devastation and rebuilding you are used to, the wood and brick buildings seem amazingly alive.***

***As you enter the town, Zhayne appears in front of you, dressed as an especially innocent looking cleric of Pholtus. She says***

***“Oh! Lardon! I remember this town. Why I had no idea you were coming here. That Gildor – he should have said something. Oh well. You know, I spent some time here. I know, lets see if he got his research right. Why don’t I give you a tour of some of my handiwork!” With that she gives you a heartwarming grin.***

At this time, Zhayne will not specifically say what she means by ‘her handiwork’ and will only say “you’ll see” with a giggle and a wink.

Here are a few things to keep in mind while the party is in Lardon and interacting with Zhayne.

- 1) A *dispel magic* will keep Zhayne from interacting with the party for 30 minutes.
- 2) Any spells or effects that block the ability to *detect thoughts* will prevent Zhayne from interacting with that particular party member.
- 3) Any spells or effects that block *scrying* will stop Zhayne from interacting with that particular party member.
- 4) Gildor did a good job constructing the dream. Still, the party’s clothes will look slightly different because of the apparent time-line difference. The cut of the fabric will be off, the color choices and patterns perhaps different. This may cause a few of the locals to inquire as to where the party is from.
- 5) Similarly, coins in the party’s possession will probably be of too new of a vintage. The Shield Lands created new coinage when they reestablished control from luz. As an estimate 7 to 8 out of every 10 coins will be of an unfamiliar mint. This will cause the coinage of the party in general to be worth approximately 25% of what it normally would be. It also may raise questions as to where the party is from.
- 6) No one in this part of the module will believe the party is from the future or a dream or that luz will attack the Shield Lands or any other predictions from the future. If the party insists on continually pestering people with such stories, the townsfolk will completely ignore them or call for the guards.

General knowledge anybody in town will know:

- 1) Who lives in the mansion? The Lardon family.
- 2) Where is Count Lardon? This will be responded with “in his mansion”?

However, the locals will definitely be confused as Count JANEK Lardon (the one the party would be familiar with) is now only 34 years old and his father Lord JAREK Lardon is still alive. His father is known as Count Lardon and the son is known as Young Master Lardon. To confuse matters, Count Lardon also has the title of ‘Lord’ which is also used. Jarek Lardon, the father, actually dies during luz’s invasion

- 3) Ok, where can we find Young Master Lardon? He tends to frequent one of four locations:
  - A) Lardon Mansion (but not too often)
  - B) The Iron Hammer (a smithy)
  - C) The Stables
  - D) The Golden Stag Inn
- 4) Do you like the Lardons? The current Count Lardon has a 70% approval rating. He is very well liked by the local. His son however would have only a 30% approval rating by the locals. Most feel the son is too arrogant and proud to be a good leader. They are concerned because the son will not listen to any of the father’s admonitions.

The rest of this encounter is broken down into 5 events and 6 locations. Each of the events can only happen once, although the order of these events is not critical. It is recommended that one event occurs after the party finishes investigating any particular location.

It is also possible the party will manage to stumble onto Young Master Lardon’s hiding place for the Banner right away! This is ok and does not ‘ruin’ the module in any way. Let the party succeed at good investigations and role playing. However, if the party does ‘succeed’ quickly, make sure to have them face at least the first 3 of the events.

#### **Events:**

- 1) The Family. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***A strikingly beautiful woman of slight build and long brown hair walks through town with a backpack full of supplies. Following right behind her is a small (maybe three or four years old) girl carrying a stuffed cat doll. Zhayne appears before you as a Halfling warrior and points to the pair. “Oh! These***

**folks were interesting. Watch them for a minute...” and with that becomes quiet.**

If the party watches, read or paraphrase the following:

**As you watch, you see the woman and her daughter walk towards a strong looking man also carrying a backpack. He is leading a donkey that has a number of saddlebags and supplies strapped to it. As they approach, the girl’s face will brighten and she will run up to the man screaming “Daddy!” Her stuffed cat will lay forgotten in the dust.**

**Her mother gets a big grin and picks up the stuffed cat. “Anana Dara! You dropped your snuggling kitty.” She hands the cat to the girl. “Sorry mommy,” she says with a grin. “That’s ok, dear: just be sure you hang on to it. You don’t want to lose it. We have a long walk if we are going to make it Critwall and I don’t think Snuggling Kitty will make it without you.” At that point Zhayne interrupts your observations. “This is fun. You know I remember these folks. I found them on the road probably two days from now. I killed the mother when she went off the road and then took her place for a day. I then used her form to trick the father into following me into the marshes.” She grins. “The troll took a long time picking him apart.” She looks confused for a moment. “I don’t know what ever happened to the girl...”**

The party can certainly try to interfere with the family’s travel plans. The father is Winet Dara. His wife is Gini Dara, and their daughter is Anana Dara. The family will be understandable nervous about strangers trying to interfere with their lives. They are off to Critwall to take on new jobs as tenders of one of the gardens owned by the Church of Holy Shielding inside the city (Gini has good skills with plants and has been hired as a caretaker, with Winet assisting her). It would take a Bluff or Diplomacy check (or similar skills) of DC 20 or better to make them change their plans. However, if the party gets them to make any significant change in plans (take a different route, travel with merchants, etc.), Zhayne will appear before them depressed and say something like “Phooey. I really enjoyed ruining their lives... Hmmm... of course, this is all just a dream. I’m sure your efforts were wasted...”

2) The woman and the well. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

**As you move through town, Zhayne appears before you. She is dressed in a stunning black silk evening gown and has her flowing black hair held neatly in place by a tiara. “Oh, did you notice the peasant?” she says, gesturing towards a woman carrying two earthen buckets. “She’s a member of the local militia. She gets too nosy a few weeks from now... Er, I mean if this was real. Heh. You know, I can’t believe she actually catches me in my actual form landing behind a building one night. I had to kill her before she could raise the alarm. I ended up throwing her body down the town well so it looked like an accident.” With that, Zhayne will sigh, as if full of deep regret.**

Let the party interact with the woman. Her name is Ilya Fon. She is off to the town well to get water for the next two days. She is a member of the town militia. She is INCREDIBLY perceptive and will not easily be persuaded to take unusual courses of action. A character would need to make a Bluff or Diplomacy check (or employ similar skills) of DC 20 or better to make her change her plans. If the party can approach her with any reasonable tale they will learn that as a favor she is planning on taking the night watch over for a buddy of hers, Gaerth. There are other militia members Gaerth could ask, but he just talked to her first. If the party manages to change her fortune, Zhayne will appear before them and laugh, saying “Ah, much better to help her live. That way she will be slowly tortured to death by orcs when they invade this land. My death for her was much too quick. Wait a minute, what am I saying. She’s dead. I killed her. This is just a dream.”

3) The Dwarf. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

**The party sees a dwarf pushing a wheelbarrow full of bricks. His ruddy complexion is in stark contrast to his thick mane of grey hair. He is dressed in heavy work clothes and wears a thick leather apron, similar to those worn by blacksmiths or masons. As he pushes the cart, he continually wheezes and gasps for air.**

**Zhayne appears in front of you as doughty female dwarf with golden tresses and heavy looking plain brown leather clothes. She grimaces. “Now there’s a fun memory! You’d**

**never know it, but he really wanted an apprentice and lucky for me I was willing to be one. The blasted dwarf just would not be seduced! I finally had to drop an anvil on him, literally!"**

The dwarf is Thundar Quickcinder, a blacksmith. He used to be a mercenary warrior and spent decades selling his axe skills out to the highest bidder. He could care less about any warnings the party might have. However, he is here because despite his age he wanted to feel useful and many of the locals need a good blacksmith. The problem is that he is not a good craftsman and his work just is not up to par (He, sadly, knows it). The party could possibly convince him (Diplomacy or similar skills check DC 22) to move to a different community because this one has a blacksmith. Alternatively, they could more easily convince him he should really focus on teaching his militia skills to others (the DC would be lowered to 18). Thundar is a devotee of the dwarven gods so any holy person (Cleric, Paladin or similar) of the dwarven gods will have a +4 circumstance bonus on any Charisma based skills used on him).

If the party changes his life path, Zhayne will appear and say "Must you meddle with everyone? How do you know that saving him helped the Shield Lands? A dwarf of his stubbornness might be a liability to those around him, regardless of his skill! In any event, none of this is real, I guess... I just don't know WHY you bother!"

4) The man and the cart. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

**As you move through the town, you manage to overhear someone yelling "Shelton! Get your lazy self over to the cart. I need you to help unload this load!" Looking towards the commotion, you see a frustrated looking man struggling with sacks of grain. He is trying to unload an entire cart full of similar sacks into a shed. Dancing – no darting – around the shed is a young man, perhaps 14 years of age, swinging an imaginary sword into equally imaginary foes.**

**The teenager looks admonished for only a moment, then with a brush of his hand moves a heavy mop of brown hair out of his eyes and flashes the man a huge grin. "But dad, I haven't killed all the orcs yet!"**

**"Shelton, I told you, now's not the time to play at adventuring," counters the man. "Besides, that's dangerous stuff. I don't want**

**you playing with such nonsense. Now's the time to help get work done. With yer ma dead, I can't do it all myself! 'Rules are Rules' Shelton, always remember that."**

**"Ok, ok, keep your blade sheathed. I'm coming..." and with that the son puts his back to it, helping to unload the cart.**

Any party member who has played SHL03-06, or 07, or SHL04-02 or 03 will recognize the youth after a moment's hesitation. This youngster will one day become Shelton Halfhand, secretary to the Council of Lords. His father is Davon Tillson, a devotee of Heironeous and very much in favor of following rules.

**Zhayne appear behind the youth, as herself, a succubus, her long reddish hair barely covering her otherwise naked form. Her hands appear bound with rune encrusted chains submissively in front of her and a summoning circle surrounds her feet. She speaks very demurely, refusing to look up. "Ah, the young master. How smart he is, how wise. He knows what is best for the Shield Lands. He has taught us the wisdom of his ways."**

**But then, just as quickly as the blink of an eye, the demon changes form and appears as Lady Katarina, the Knight Commander of the Shield Lands. She gives you an all too evil smile "Sadly, the young man exceeded his station years ago (well years from now, actually). He thought by bravely questing he could catch the eye of the beautiful and powerful lady only to learn she was already in love with another... a most patient lord in dire need known as the Shield Lands. He was never the same after that." She looks at you... "Of course it didn't help that I appeared to him as your precious Lady Kate and professed a secret love to him. Oh! The wonderfully delicious rage that fostered when the real Lady Kate later spurned him!" She laughs maliciously and fades from view...**

The party can interact with both Shelton and his dad. Both will instantly sense the party is composed of adventurers and consequently both will interact with them differently.

Shelton will be obsessed with the party, asking them about their adventures and skills with a great passion. He will believe ANYTHING they tell him... His father, on the other hand, will not believe a word the party says and believes them to be trouble of the worse form.

The party can help unload the cart which will loosen the father's unhappiness a notch. A successful Diplomacy Check (DC 25) or use of a similar skill will reveal that Davon hates adventurers because his wife was one and she died on an adventure (she was going after some fabled lost treasure), leaving him to raise Shelton alone. Some party members may want to kill or injure Shelton. He is, in this dream world and at this stage of his life, an innocent youth. Killing him is definitely an evil act.

5) The crazy prophet of doom! The party will encounter a crazed old man who is Gildor's attempt at warning the party of Zhayne's interference. Based on the temperament of the party, Panis can be as toned down or as nutty as desired. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***Staggering through the streets towards you is a man, ancient by all appearances, and completely destitute. His dirty strands of white hair are few and far between, and his clothes are tattered, filthy, and torn. Through cataract encrusted eyes he stares at you, then with a rasping voice shouts "You should not be here! You walk with EEEVVVHLLLL! Gather to me people of Lardon. The future is here and it brings with it an evil from the past – one that haunts us today and will plague us in the future!" Despite his ramblings, no one else in the area seems to be paying any attention to him.***

***Zhayne, appearing as a human scribe, looks at him through bespectacled eyes and says "Uh, I think I must be the evil he's talking about, and you must be the future, but how is this 'one-dretch-short-of-a-horde' even seeing me?"***

The man is Panis, a devotee of Istus. He took a vow of poverty ages ago to show his love for his goddess. As a result, he sometimes can prophesy. In this case, his devotion has allowed him to see (and hear) Zhayne clearly and can tell that the party is from the future, an awful future...

At this point in the adventure, Gildor has learned that Zhayne is tampering with his dream. Panis is Gildor's (failed) attempt at influencing the dream to try and force Zhayne out.

Sadly for Gildor, and for Panis, nobody in this area listens to him. In the (dream)minds of the locals, he has rambled on about events that never

seem to occur on endless occasions and so he is genuinely ignored.

If the party questions Panis, he will keep pointing at Zhayne, calling her the "Demon-tongued Evil that shall slay us all!" or "that Vile Mistress of Lies and Evil" or "the Slayer of Truth and Love" or "Holy Shielding's Bane" and similar sorts of recriminations. However, the party, if persistent, can extract the following from him:

- 1) "The Lady Sleeps. You can wake the Lady if you dare to face the Fires of Order."
- 2) "The master is the servant and the servant is the master."
- 3) "The breath of luz shall plague you all."
- 4) "Seek the Sleeper."

These cryptic ramblings will possibly be explained in SHL04-07, 08, and 09.

The problem for the party is that he will continue to follow the party around, loudly proclaiming their status as being from the future and in the consort of demons until the party can get rid of him, or 10 minutes have passed (at which time he will find someone else to bother). Zhayne will personally be a little bit concerned why he can see and hear her, but this aspect will be outweighed by her amusement at the embarrassment and delay this is causing the party. She will feed into Panis' confusion by making menacing faces at him, telling him she is here for his soul, and other minor torments.

#### **Locations:**

##### ***Distel's Grainery***

Distel's Grainery is actually two buildings. The first is a squat one room affair about 30' on a side. The building is completely made of brick and the doors have impressive looking locks on them (Open Locks DC 30 to pick). During the day, inside and out is a mass of activity as farmers deal with the various issues of selling and buying grain. At this time of year, the farmers are looking at buying seed for their farms.

The other building is a 30' by 50' brick and wood structure. There are massive doors set into each of the thirty foot ends, and a wide ramp leads up both of the fifty foot sides. These ramps are used for hauling grain in to the warehouse. At the top is a wooden roof with removable doors. There are buckets and ropes around to haul out grain as well.

The current proprietor is Hona Distel, a crusty middle aged woman who seems as if she can count the number of grains of wheat in a mule pulled cart from 200 paces. Anything that interrupts her business cannot be good.

At any given time during the day there are 1D10+5 farmers here, most with carts to get grain. It is a laborious process and most do not want to really spend time “chatting” with adventurers.

That said, successful Diplomacy, Gather Information or similar skill checks (DC 24) will reveal the following information from Distel or the farmers:

- 1) Janek Lardon, the son, never stops by to inquire as to the state of the grain. His father, Lord Jarek Lardon, always does.
- 2) Lord Jarek Lardon, while Heironean, also is rumored to be a devotee of Zilchus.
- 3) The most interested anyone ever overheard the Young Master get over grain production was whether last year’s crop would affect the local brew!

The party can get a +4 circumstance bonus to the checks if they are able to come up with a method to control the mouse and rat problem the warehouse always seems to suffer.

#### *Lardon Mansion*

This building is also referred to as ‘House Lardon’. It stands out as out of place as a bright red rose among dandelions. It is located on a hill about a half-hour to an hour’s walk to the west (depending on whether there are a number of petitioner’s coming and going to the ‘House’).

The building is set on a large (225’ tall) hill overlooking the city. It has 15’ tall stone walls carefully set around the perimeter, leaving a court yard about 45’ feet from the main building in all directions. The building itself is actually three buildings attached to each other: A main hall two stories tall (and made with a layered stone lower level and a wooden upper level and a flagstone roof), a servant’s quarters (actually the OLD manor) built of ancient timbers, and a stables (relatively new and built mostly of sturdy planks of oak).

Today the Count, Lord Jarek Lardon, is hearing claims in what is called the “Petty Court”, essentially acting as the local magistrate. He will do this from approximately 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. and then cease for the day. Anyone who acts respectfully is allowed admission to his hall.

If the party seeks entry during this time period, it will be allowed. If they seek entry during any other time, it will be denied. Messages will be respectfully taken by the gate guard and delivered in the morning. If the party makes a success Diplomacy or Bluff skill check (DC 25) or use a similar skill, they will have their message immediately taken to the Count.

If the party gains admission to the halls, read or paraphrase the following:

***The walls of House Lardon are made of stone and stand 15’ tall. They are about 5’ thick and apparently have a walkway across their top as you can see a few guards walking patrolling back and forth.***

***Inside the walls, the courtyard is an immaculately kept green, perhaps a total of 150 across. There is a 45’ perimeter of the neatly cut grass between the walls and the main buildings of the manor.***

***The manor itself is actually three buildings attached to each other: A main hall two stories tall (and made with a layered stone lower level and a wooden upper level and a flagstone roof), a servant’s quarters (actually the OLD manor) built of ancient timbers, and a stables (relatively new and built mostly of sturdy planks of oak).***

***You are pointed in the direction of the two-story manor. At the front of the building is a pair of heavy oak double doors. On either side stands a guard wearing a chain shirt and armed with a spear and a long sword. They seem uninterested in you and you are able to enter the building unquestioned.***

***Inside, you see the main floor is a 30’ long hallway, 25’ across. There are four stone pillars on each side of the hallway and between them are stretched massive woven tapestries (alternatively of the symbol of the Shield Lands and the Holy Symbol of Heironeous). You suspect there is at least a five foot walk space behind the tapestries.***

***The room is lit with globes of magical light cast on stone long swords affixed to the pillars. At the far end is an oak chair, almost throne-like in appearance. Sitting on it is a man, perhaps 50 years of age, perhaps more. He is a bit on the thin side and wears excellently tailored clothes. His dark eyes are piercing and his smile is warm and friendly. He has dark hair, combed neatly back, streaked heavily with grey.***

This is Jarek Lardon. As long as the party is respectful, he will talk to them for up to ten minutes before he announces ‘other duties’ to attend to and asks them to leave. If they party is here when there are other petitioners seeking claims to be heard, there will be 2d6 petitioners and half as many guards. The party will have to wait their turn to speak (about 5 minutes per petitioner). The claims will typically include

contract disputes between the locals, adjudicating a divorce, minor criminal offenses (stealing an apple for example) and other minor matters. Jarek decides quickly and as fairly as he can.

He will not believe any fanciful tales of time travel or dreams or disastrous wars with luz or the like. If the topic turns to his son, he will sigh momentarily and explain that his son is not here. He has returned since his visit to Torkeep, but has not 'checked in' at the manor. He has no idea where his son could be, but is probably staying in town.

During the entire encounter, Zhayne will appear completely bored (if present). She will be dressed in one of the guard outfits, even if the chain shirt seems to be impossibly form fitting... At any given time, the wall will have 1D6+4 guards in chain shirts, with spears and long swords. The grounds do not typically have any guards patrolling it, but there will be 1d4 servants wandering about performing chores (carrying laundry, going to/from the stables, working on the yard, carrying food to the guards, etc.)

#### *The Axe of Justice (A temple to Heironeous)*

As the party approaches, read or paraphrase the following:

**You see a building constructed of thick oak planks. It has been painted blue with white trim. The building is about 30' feet on a side and stands 20' tall. On the front of the building, painted carefully onto the twin doors, is the holy symbol of Heironeous. You can see an old man sweeping dust off the stone slabs that make up the entry way. He is dressed in a cleric's garb: a white robe trimmed with blue.**

The cleric is named Rownri. He is actually only about 30 years old, but, due to some unfortunate encounters with ghosts, he has become aged beyond his years (he will explain that when he faced the ghosts, their very image seemed to age him...).

He is genuinely a friendly soul and absolutely devoted to Heironeous. He is currently collecting funds as it is his goal to afford an all stone church. He will not notice Zhayne at all. She will appear dressed all in black, as if in mourning, and be very agitated if the party enters the church. In fact, she will fade out if the party goes in and only reappear after they leave. When they do, she will be extremely cross with them, giving them lots of "humph" and "Ugh, I can't believe you kept me waiting" type comments.

As to Rownri, he can relay the following to any polite person:

- 1) He has not seen Janek in weeks. He knows the Young Master went to see Torkeep in keep Torkeep (he thinks this is a funny phrase). He believes he has come back but does not know where he is.
- 2) Rownri suspects Janek is no longer a true devotee of Heironeous but instead may be worshipping Zilchus.
- 3) He thinks there are only three other worshippers of Zilchus in town: Cooper Iron Hammer (the town smithy), Quelda the stable owner, and Caln Arwa, proprietor of the Golden Stag Inn.
- 4) He has heard that Janek will sometimes stay with these folks (detailed in 3, above) rather than live in the mansion. This may be because his father keeps trying to groom him for leadership and Janek seems to not take his father's tutelage very well.

#### *The Iron Hammer (a smithy)*

Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

**The Iron Hammer is name you see carefully printed on the wood sign hammered into the ground. The building behind the sign is made of brick and contains a square building, about 20' on a side, with an open air attached work area of equal size. The forge is fully ablaze and a Halfling, standing on a set of stone steps, is busy hammering away on something.**

**The Halfling appears well muscled for one of the small folk, and is using hammer and tongs with a passion on some unseen item. With a grin, he uses the tongs to pull a glowing red short sword from the heat of the forge and turns towards you. "It's a beauty!" he says proudly. You aren't quite sure if he's talking to you or himself.**

The Halfling is Cooper Iron Hammer. He is 49 years old (and proudly states that fact, as if it's a badge of honor) and has worked here in Lardon for about 20 of those years. Cooper is actual name, while Iron Hammer is the title given to him by his former master Tongs Iron Hammer (Cooper will sadly tell them that Tongs has been dead now 6 years, having died peacefully in his sleep).

Cooper is a follower of Zilchus. There is a holy symbol of the god (hands clutching a bag of money) made from hammered metal (copper) over the doorway between the work area and the main building.

Cooper knows Janek quite well and counts

him as a close friend. If the party is respectful and does not seem to pose any threat to Janek, Cooper will relate the following (and do so proudly!):

- 1) Janek helps Cooper market his goods beyond the borders of Lardon for what Janek calls "a wee bit of spending coin".
- 2) Janek sometimes stays here when he is not staying at the mansion. In fact, he came here last night after closing down the local tavern. He went out riding west of town early this morning.
- 3) Janek recently came back from Torkeep. Cooper did not go with, but hears the time there was very boring.
- 4) Janek was there for a meeting with Lord Torkeep over some sort of a land matter. From what Cooper has overheard, Janek wanted Lord Torkeep to give him a section of land on which to build his own manor. Lord Torkeep was unwilling to do so. Janek claimed he was entitled to it as there was some old document that said Janek's family, not Torkeep's should own the land.
- 5) Janek mentioned he made his god proud and Torkeep would end up with 'kobolds in the pantry' when all was revealed. (Note: "Kobolds in the Pantry" is a local colloquialism similar to "egg on his face". The reference to making 'his god proud' has to do with Zilchus being a god of trickery. Cooper will not volunteer this information because he thinks it's common enough knowledge about both Zilchus and the phrase.)
- 6) He knows Thundar Quickcinder but doesn't think he'll get much work as Janek sends most of the local work to 'his good friend Cooper'.

The party may or may not notice, but Cooper never calls him "the Young Master" but always refers to his friend merely as Janek.

Zhayne will appear as a female goblin warrior, complete with a nasty jagged battle axe and a set of heavy leather armor. She will stomp around here (unseen by Cooper) and seem unhappy about something. If pressed on the subject she will tell the party that Cooper never would fall for her charms, and as far as she knows, actually made it out of here alive when the luzians attacked. She hates Cooper because he managed to thwart a number of her little plots for the region. She further curses Gildor under her breath as she cannot figure out how he can make this dream so

real! If the party somehow manages to get into Cooper's house, they can easily find the guest room. This is where Janek stayed last night. On the night table is a wooden drink coaster from the Golden Stag (See below).

#### *The Stables*

***Ahead of you is a barn with a good sized fenced in area attached to it. The barn has a stone foundation and a wooden upper structure. There are barn doors on the front of the building and, presumably, on the back side (leading into the fenced in area) as well.***

***There are a couple of men in the fenced in area, walking a horse around. The barn doors are ajar, but just barely.***

***Across the road is a small wooden building about 20' by 30'. Coming out of the door is a half-elven woman with bright red hair. Her freckled face frames a large smile and her green eyes sparkle. She is dressed in a sturdy riding outfit. As she approaches she looks at you and says "Say, you're new to town."***

This is Quelda. She is the owner of the stables. Inside are 10 riding horses. There are two empty stables. One belongs to the horse out back (who the men are currently inspecting for possible sale) and one that belongs to Janek's personal horse "Divine Favor". That horse is currently missing.

Quelda is hardly suspicious of anyone. In fact she is way too trusting. She will happily blather on about how fun it is to be a stable owner: buying selling and trading horses. Janek is a customer of hers as well as a friend. She will reveal the following:

- 1) Janek loves to ride horses. He stopped by early this morning to ride around the surrounding lands. He loves to go riding by himself.
- 2) Janek really doesn't care for his father too much. He thinks his father is trying to control his life and does not approve of his lifestyle (remember, Janek's 34 years old and has not yet taken a wife or settled down. This is somewhat scandalous as he should be working on creating the next generation of Lardons rather than just frittering away the days).
- 3) Janek just came back a few days ago from visiting Lord Torkeep. There was some sort of a party at Torkeep.
- 4) Janek hates Lord Torkeep. Apparently the Magistrates in Critwall ruled against him

on a land claim. Janek believes the Lardon's are the true owners of a large section of land near Torkeep, and Torkeep won't recognize his claim.

- 5) Janek spent yesterday in the Golden Stag and last night at his friend, Cooper's (the Smithy).

#### *The Golden Stag Inn*

Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***The hand painted sign swinging from the building in front of you shows a mighty stag, standing on its rear hooves. In one of its front hooves, it holds a single gold coin. The building itself is a three story affair. The lower level is made of stone with the upper two levels being made of oak. The outer surface of the wood has been stained to a golden brown.***

***Windows appear every ten feet on all levels of the building (which is 40' across and 60' long). On the east front the building is a wide set of stairs leading up to the door. A sign on the door states "No Tavern Service before 2<sup>nd</sup> Prayers". A smaller sign just under it says "All deliveries to the rear of the building please". On the North side of the building is a small pen where some pack animals (a mule and two pack horses) are tied up. The rear (west) end of the building has a large (20' square) fenced in area and a wider 10' door set into the building. It's clear that gate on the fenced area can be pulled out to allow for carts to come in and out of here, probably with deliveries.***

Outside of the inn there will be 2d4 commoners milling about. If asked, they can advise that this is the Golden Stag Inn.

The sign discussing "no service" relates to the church of Heironeous' second prayer service of the day, typically held around 2:00 p.m. It is a local custom not to serve (for sale) food and liquor after 9:00 am or before 3:00 p.m. This is not really Heironean dogma, but has been part of local custom as long as anyone can remember.

#### Common Room:

***The common room of this inn is quite large and is ornate. The stone and woodworking show a high level of craftsmanship and talent. Numerous expensive tapestries hang from the walls (all showing pictures of heroic battles – hidden in each picture, somewhere, is a stag with a gold coin in one hoof). There are a***

***dozen tables neatly organized in four rows of three. At the west end is a bar with a large book on it.***

***You see two doors that exit the room, one that must lead up to the inn's upper floors and the other (behind the bar) that must lead to the kitchen.***

If the party enters before approximately 3:00 p.m. read the first text below to the party, other wise read the second.

(If between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.)

***No one seems to be here. The grand fireplace is not lit and all the tables are barren. Then you see a woman backing into the room through a door behind the bar.***

(If after 3:00 p.m.)

***The tavern has about a dozen men and women sitting at tables and a few more milling about. They are engaged in some pleasant conversation and enjoying food and drink. The grand fireplace is not lit. You see a woman standing behind the bar.***

The woman is Caln Arwa. She is 38 years old and has short cropped brown hair. She is pleasant enough, but is so thin she looks as if she's missed a few too many meals.

Upon the party seeing her, Zhayne will reappear as a buxom barmaid, wearing a short green apron over a nearly as short white dress and blouse. Her blonde hair is tied in pig-tails.

Zhayne will tell the party not to trust this woman. She tells the party that Caln is nothing but trouble and a well known devotee of Zilchus (who is, Zhayne will remind the party, a god of trickery and deceit!). Actually Caln is fairly trustworthy.

Caln is happy to see visitors and will offer them a room. The book on her desk is a guest book and flipping through it will show Janek Lardon's name MULTIPLE times. Caln has not seen "the Young Master" today and does not expect him back.

She tells the party that Janek keeps a regular room upstairs on the third floor. She will not normally let the party in to see the room. However, if anyone in the party uses a successful Diplomacy, Bluff or similar skill (DC 30) on her, she will take them up to see the room. Otherwise, the party will have to figure out how to sneak up to his room. She is more than willing to rent them a room (2 silver for the night) which could give them access upstairs.

She is not above calling for the city militia (who appear in 1d4+2 minutes) by going out the

back door of the kitchen and using a heavy gong set by the door for just such purposes.

Behind the bar is a small stack of wooden drink coasters. Each has been cleverly carved with the words "Golden Stag".

Speaking to any of the patrons will reveal that Caln runs a respectable business here. Everything shuts down just before midnight and Caln scoots everyone outside at that point. They also reveal the front door is not locked as sometimes guests have to get up during the night to inspect their animals or the like. Theft is not considered as Caln (or one of her staff) takes all of the valuables off the site each night.

If the party is looking for work, Caln does have some battered pans, metal beer steins, etc., they can take over to Cooper Iron Hammers to be fixed. She'd give them a hot meal if they do so.

Caln and the cooks will not allow folks to running around tearing up the place on some odd quest... However, if the party is clever, perhaps show a good deed or the like, they may be able to convince her they need to see the basement area. Caln is unaware of young Lardon going downstairs at any specific moment, but if asked she will say he has the run of the place and it would not be unusual if he did go to the basement to get some supply or another.

#### Kitchen:

When the party enters for the first time, read or paraphrase the following:

***The kitchen is in much the same condition as the common room and appears to contain a stove and cooking utensils of the highest quality. There are two barrels of something set over what appears to be a trap door set into the floor. There is also a heavy gong set next to the door leading out back.***

The room contains lots of excellent food supplies. There is a full larder of grains, breads, fruit and the like, and Caln gets whatever food hunters or farmers bring in. Today they are working on two deer. There are two men and a Halfling woman in here working on getting food prepared (Kulver, Macad, and Quivereen, respectively).

One barrel contains apples and the other is filled with brine and pickles. It would take a strength of 12 to move the apple barrel or a strength of 14 to move the pickles. Otherwise a strength check (DC 12 or 14 respectively) is required to move the barrels. Underneath them is a trapdoor. Lifting it up reveals a set of stairs into the basement.

#### Basement:

When the party enters for the first time, read or paraphrase the following (presuming the party has some light source available):

***The basement seems to be mostly unused. There are a few small cobwebs in the corners of the ceiling. The basement stairs end in 10' by 10' room. Each wall of the room has centered in it a 5' wide corridor running 10' to a door.***

There is no map for this room. It is basically a 'plus' sign. The center is a 10' x 10' room and each door at the end of the plus is unlocked. Behind each door is a storage room about 10' across. All of them contain seldom used supplies (extra bedding, cooking utensils, cleaning supplies, and the like). However, along the wall directly across from the stairs, there is a secret door (more of a panel, really as it is 3' by 3').

**Secret Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; hp 60; AC 5; Break DC 28, Search DC 18 + APL.

The door is not trapped, *per se*, but does have a *Leomund's Trap* cast on it by a 10<sup>th</sup> level mage. Behind the stone panel is a room: 3' by 3' by 3'. Inside the room is the silver bound oak chest. If detected for, it does glow with strong magic. It is *Nystul's Magic Aura* cast by a 10<sup>th</sup> level mage. Janek owns a magic ring that lets him cast this spell once per 10 days. Note that Gildor's ring contains a spell of *Nystul's Magic Aura*.

Aside from the chest, there is nothing of value in this room.

Inside the chest is a heavy ivory scroll tube. It is just big enough to contain the various papers given the party by Gildor (and happens to look IDENTICAL to the one currently held by the party). When the party finds the map, read or paraphrase the following to the party (the party can interrupt this text with actions or comments, but this is the gist of what Zhayne says to them):

***Zhayne looks frustrated. She shakes her head slowly back and forth and then says "I can't believe he's that big of an idiot. You know, I took him for being smarter! I should have just seduced him straight off and been done with it. It would have been a LOT easier. What a fool. Well, it won't really matter. I lied when I told you I messed with Gildor's magic. Actually the spell should be wearing off any time now" She looks at you and continues "you know, just in case, maybe I should... yes.***

*I've got to run now! I've got to see a man about a shovel. Have fun!" And with that, she is gone...*

#### The Rest of the Inn:

The rest of the inn is in much the same condition as the common room, all of it is excellently made.

The Second floor contains seven guest rooms, the Third floor contains four. The room right across from the stairs on the Third floor is rented by Janek. The door is locked.

**Wooden Doors:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 18, Open Locks DC 25.

If the party makes it into Janek's room, read or paraphrase the following:

***As you open the door, you see that it is possibly one of the more egotistically designed rooms on Oerth. There is a massive mirror on one wall and three of the walls contain paintings of what must be Janek Lardon. One is of Janek as mighty knight, slaying hordes of dark creatures. Another is of Janek as a holy man, breaking through the darkness with light emanating from his very being as various noble women look on fawningly. The final portrait is of Janek the might hunter, riding a white horse as Janek drives a spear into the throat of an especially nasty looking dire boar. There are a half-dozen trinkets lying around: all minor statues of Janek cast from iron or carved from stone. The bed itself has expensive looking silk sheets on it with a hand stitched comforter. Standing against one wall is a wardrobe chest, partially open.***

If the party wishes to steal from Janek, they are more than welcome to. However, Gildor's spell will not let them bring anything back through the dream-state other than Torkeep's Banner (the party does not need to know this at this time). In the wardrobe chest, it is a simple matter (no search check necessary) to discover a note lying on the floor (it looks as if it may have fallen out of a pocket). The note says on it "Golden Stag Basement. Go forward 15 paces. Third stone from top, fourth from left." Following these instructions will take the party directly to the Secret Door in the basement and give them a +4 circumstance bonus to searching for it.

## Encounter Three – Just Dig It

As the party returns to the site of the buried scale, they will notice that despite it being day or night, there are not any peasants or farmers in the area. Depending on how the party approaches, they may see the minions of Zhayne already at the site where they buried the scale from up to 200 feet. There are too many bushes in the way to see them earlier than this (although flying party members or others using unusual movement may see them sooner).

The important thing for the party is that Zhayne lied. She never tampered with Gildor's spell. The only way it can go off is if it is removed from the earth.

Read or paraphrase the following to the party when they get close enough to notice the creatures at the dig site (Note this is an open battlefield with the party moving uphill):

***As you approach where you buried the scale, the unanswered question that hangs in the air is "What every happened to Black-Hearted Zhayne?" After she left you at the Inn there has been no further sign of her. That's when you notice the burial site is not abandoned. There is something up there, something that appears to have just lifted a scale sized object from the ground.***

The minion listed below has just recovered the scale. The magic on it will expire in exactly 2 minutes (20 rounds). The party must be within 15' of it when the spell unravels or the documents they took from the basement of the Inn will not merge with the real world. They will still reappear, but none of their hard-fought for changes will have taken place.

Note also that if this encounter takes place prior to 9:00 p.m. the reason there are no farmers in the area is they have fled back to their homes in fear of these creatures. In such a case, about the same time the party discovers these minions, the townsfolk will have raised an alarm. The party can hear some sort of horns being blown back in the town. Militia will arrive in 1D10+10 minutes.

### **Minions of Zhayne**

#### **APL 2 (EL 4)**

**Ogre (1):** hp 29; see *Monster Manual* page 199.

**Goblins (3):** hp 5 each; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

#### **APL 4 (EL 6)**

**Fensir (1):** hp 26; see *Appendix B*.

**Gnolls (2):** hp 11 each; see *Monster Manual* page 130.

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

**Hill Giant (1):** hp 102; see *Monster Manual* page 123.

**Fensir (1):** hp 26 each; see *Appendix B*.

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

**Stone Giant Elder (1):** hp 119; see *Monster Manual* page 124.

**Fensir (2):** hp 22, 30; see *Appendix B*.

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

**Stone Giant Elder (1):** hp 119 see *Monster Manual* page 124.

**Hill Giant (4):** hp 102 each; see *Monster Manual* page 123.

#### **APL 12 (EL 14)**

**Sarkrith Spelleater (1):** hp 202; see *Appendix B*.

**Sarkrith Thane (1):** hp 148; see *Appendix B*.

**Tactics:** The monsters are all Chaotic Evil (see Development, below). All of them will use fairly straight forward attack tactics, using ranged attacks and spells as best they can to target no more than two party members at a time, if possible. Note that some monsters can turn the ground to mud, delaying parties while thrown rocks batter characters from afar. At APL 12, the Thane's ability to create an anti-magic field cannot be underestimated. The Thane and Spelleater will look to set up flanking situations.

The Fensirs will, if it is daylight, be in a really tough situation due to their sunlight vulnerability. In such a case, they are ONLY out because of the sheer willpower Zhayne is able to exert. During the daylight they will be wrapped in heavy cloth, almost mummy-like, that protects them from the sunlight (but not spell effects – see the description of Fensirs in Appendix B, below) but gives them an additional arcane 5% spell failure. Further, players who know anything about these creatures may be able to use other creative methods (grappling to pull the cloth away from them, *gust of wind*, etc.). The Fensir ability to “Sense Twin” plays no part in this adventure.

**Treasure:** The treasure is not listed as it will not travel to the future. See Encounter Four, below.

**Development:** All of these creatures are Chaotic Evil in alignment (overriding the alignment given in their descriptions where appropriate). They are all loyal to luz. When Zhayne discovered she could not directly dispel the dream magic, she again tampered with the magic of the dream, inserting these monstrous villains as if she found them scouting the Shield Lands and brought them here to grab the scale.

If the party cannot defeat the monsters in 20 rounds, the scale's embedded magic will go off. Any of the party within its 15' radius will be sent to Encounter 4 along with the documents from the basement of the inn. All others will be sent to Encounter 4, but without any documents from the basement of the Inn. In other words, if the documents do not get within 15' of the scale when the dream unravels, they will not be able to affect the real world.

If the monsters are defeated, the party can grab the scale. As it gets closer to the two minute mark, it will glow a brighter and brighter gold. As the spell unravels, read or paraphrase the following to the party:

*Zhayne appears before you in her 'natural' state. She looks quite cross. "I know your game. I'll see you later...." With that you fade from sight, only to reappear in the dead of night on a hilltop.*

## **Encounter Four – Like a Demon**

The party has appeared on a hill about a half days march north from Critwall. From their location, they can't see the lights of the city twinkling on the horizon. A Knowledge (Geography) (Local – luz Metaregion) or Survival check DC 25 will tell the party exactly where they are. Otherwise they will have to figure it out. The party has 10 hours to make it to Critwall before the presentment ceremony.

If they check their possessions, any items they took from the dream, with the exception of the Scroll Tube and the Banner of Torkeep, has faded away because it was never real. This is regardless of whether it was stored in an extraplanar area (Such as a bag of holding). Their own possessions are fine. A Knowledge Arcana check (DC 24) will reveal the reason for this is most likely because of the nature of the dream. Specifically note that the

ring of minor spell storing that Gildor gave them is now gone as well.

Read or paraphrase the following to the party.

***As you get your bearings, the ghostly image of Gildor appears before you. "Well done, my friends, well done. I understand Zhayne told you that your adventures were merely in a dream world, and not truly in the past. I apologize for not being entirely truthful with you, but I was worried the magics would otherwise not work. Know that the magic of the dream has returned you to less than 12 hours before Torkeep's deadline for presenting the Banner. You were supposed to wake up in Critwall, but that pest, Zhayne tampered it. I'm more afraid that she will have trouble waiting for you! Beware..." with that, his image fades away...***

Give the party a couple of minutes to get their bearings. Just as they are ready to leave (be teleporting or walking or whatever), there will be lots of popping noises around them. 30' away, they will see a/some demonic form(s) materializing. Read or paraphrase the following:

***Zhayne's image appears again. "I cannot believe you got this far. Do you know HOW MANY FAVORS I've had to trade in to track you down? You have cost me FAR TOO MUCH! Here are some friends for you to play with. May I see your souls in the Abyss very soon..."***

It is important to remember that the party is back in the "Real World", so to speak, as they have escaped the dream realm.

### **Zhayne's Demonic Friends**

#### **APL 2 (EL 4)**

**Quasit (2):** hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 46.

#### **APL 4 (EL 6)**

**Babau (1):** hp 66 each; see *Monster Manual* page 40.

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

**Babau (2):** hp 66 each; see *Monster Manual* page 40.

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

**Beblith (1):** hp 150; see *Monster Manual* page 142.

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

**Beblith (2):** hp 150 each; see *Monster Manual* page 142.

#### **APL 12 (EL 14)**

**Nalfanshee (1):** hp 175; see *Monster Manual* page 45.

**Tactics:** These beasts will advance and try to use their abilities to neutralize the party. For example, the Nalfanshee has many spells at its disposal and does not mind using them. All of these demons, unlike those in the dream state, are summoned in.

**Treasure:** None

**Development:** With the fiends dead, the party is free to travel to Critwall. No matter how hard the party searches at this time, they will not find Black Hearted Zhayne.

## **Conclusion – Critwall: Gem of the Nyr Dyv**

**First Conclusion – if the party chose to stay at Torkeep and fight to the death:**

After the last party member falls, read or paraphrase the following:

***As the last of your party falls, the darkness and pain become overwhelming. There is a sense of nothingness, timelessness, and perhaps a sense of eternity. But then, consciousness reclaims you. You are sitting at a table in the Jousting Mug, a tavern in Gensal. You cannot remember how you got here, or why you are sitting at this table with the other, equally confused looking persons.***

***The look of the bartender tells you that you have, however, overstayed your welcome... Leaving the Jousting Mug you step outside to the bustling village of Gensal. You can see to the north the mighty walls of Gensal Keep, and the flags of the Shield Lands flying defiantly in the afternoon sun. You get the distinct impression that you missed a grand adventure, but then you notice, lying in the ground at your feet, a small leather pouch.***

***Inside is a note: "Friends ~ your loyalty to others, even when all hope is lost, is commendable! Others have helped me while you sacrificed your all. Best wishes... G"***

The adventure is over for the party.

**Second Conclusion - If the party went with Gildor and had a grand adventure:**

The trip to Critwall is seven hours by foot, less if the party uses magic. The party can make it back without any further difficulties.

Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***Gildor must have been good to his word. Critwall is unassailed by luz or his minions. The walls still stand, the populace blissfully unaware of the horrors to befall them within the next few months.***

***You can easily navigate the streets to Critwall Keep. As you near the center of government, you can see four members of the Standing Army of the Shield Lands guarding the doorway.***

***In the courtyard is also a sad reminder of the failures of this year. Lady Katarina's body lays in state in a glass coffin resting on an altar of stone.***

Any commoners in the street can tell the party it is 594 CY and wonder why anyone would ask. It is common knowledge about Critwall that Torkeep must present his Banner today or the Council will have to decide what exactly to do.

These guards are under specific orders not to let anyone enter. It really depends on what time the party gets here as to their reaction. If it is still early morning, the guards will tell the party to return in a few hours if they wish to seek an audience with the council. Do not forget the party has probably not slept in over 24 hours.

If the party arrives during later in the morning (8:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m.), the guards will not let them in but will take a message to whomever the party desires if the party does not appear with some far fetched tale but seem to have some official reason for showing up. If the party mentions they have Torkeep's Banner (or the like) they will be immediately ushered in to the Council Chambers.

If the party arrives early and wants to see Lord Torkeep or Lord Lardon advise them of the following:

1) Lord Torkeep is staying at his Critwall home. He will, upon being given the message as

to why the party wants to see him, meet with them, take the Banner, and invite them to Council.

2) Lord Lardon is not in town. He is in Bright Sentry and will be teleported to the Council Chambers just before the meeting along with Lord Natan Enerick.

The party will ultimately be admitted to the Council of Lords. The Council chamber is very opulent in stark contrast to the remodeling and lack of materials in the rest of the Shield Lands.

The council chamber will be full except for Lady Katarina's missing spot. Shelton Halfhand, secretary to the council, will glare at the party but will keep his tongue.

Taking careful note of how the party gets here (with Torkeep, coming in at the last minute, etc.) read or paraphrase the following to the party:

***The Council members look at you, their stares telling you your business here had best be proper with no tomfoolery. It is a serious matter for them to even consider removing a Lord from power. Lord Torkeep stays silent and gestures for you to hold your tongue for a moment as well. You see in front of Lord Lardon a familiar chest, one you left 21 years in the past.***

Let the party either act or wait for Lord Torkeep's cue.

***Torkeep looks at Janek Lardon "Well Janek, this is it. All your petty desires come to a single dagger's point. I'm advised these adventurers have information on my missing Banner."***

***"Preposterous, Torkeep. There is no "Banner of Torkeep". Your family stole it from mine nearly 200 years ago! Your carelessness during the war lost you something you never should have had." With that he opens the chest in front of him and pulls out a scroll tube. The room is deathly silent as he unscrews the cap on one end and takes out a stack of papers. He tosses them to the dwarf, Lord Bladehome. "Good and Noble friend, please advise the council what these documents say."***

***The dwarf looks at them confused for a moment... "You sure 'bout this?"***

***"Positive! Read on and learn the matters I have presented to the Council."***

***"Ok..." Bladehome pulls out some spectacles and stretches the first paper in front of him. "Remember to pick up tunic from***

**laundry. Make sure they got out soup stain on sleeve. Go to tailors and get socks darned..."**

**Lardon explodes! "WHAT! LET ME SEE THAT!" and snatches the paper from Bladehome's hands. The other council members begin to snicker.**

**"Oh wait, Janek, this must be what you were looking for," Bladehome exclaims and reads the next sheet. Lardon looks up expectantly. "Why did the red dragon wear green shoes? It wanted to hide in the trees. Why did the red dragon wear (snicker) a green hat? It wanted to hide in the grass. What do you know if you see (heh heee hee) a bunch of red dragons walking towards you wearing green hats and shoes? They are all on the same team! (Chortle – snicker) What did the paladin say when he saw the red dragons walking towards him wearing green hats and shoes? Look! Here come the dragons!" With this the council bursts out laughing. Lord Lardon's face become as red as the dragon's in the joke.**

**Torkeep raises one eyebrow and turns to you. "Do you kindly adventurers actually have my Banner?"**

If the party has the Banner, they cannot actually use it as they are not recognized by the Council as able to become Lords. Thus holding it will do them little good. If they refuse to turn it over, destroy it, etc., they will be accused of theft and sentenced to visit the Deep Rock (Critwall's Jail) for 1D4 TU. They gain a point of Infamy for each TU spent visiting the Deep Rock. Mark this on the player's AR.

If they give it to anyone OTHER than Torkeep, that lord will turn it over to Torkeep.

**"Thank you. I do not know why Janek Lardon has hated me these years for any reason other than greed. I also suspect there is quite the tale in how you came by this document. That tale will have to wait. Nonetheless, I am in your debt. You will be rewarded for your efforts. Now: to the Council, may I present the Banner of Torkeep? Is all in order?" Without really looking for an answer, Torkeep gets up and leaves the chamber, done with this foolishness and getting back to business of defending his home.**

The day after the council meeting, as long as the party returned the Banner to Lord Torkeep, Lord Torkeep will provide the party some magic items as thanks:

#### **Treasure**

APL 2 magic: wand of burning hands, necklace of fireballs type I (600 gp)

APL 4 as above plus magic: mithril shirt (183 gp)

APL 6 as above plus magic: elixir of fire breath (183 gp)

APL 8 – as above plus magic: slaying arrow: demons (380 gp)

APL 10 – as above plus magic: ring of counterspells, arcane scroll of passwall (854 gp)

APL 12 – as above plus magic: wind fan (916 gp)

After the adventure, read or paraphrase the following:

**A week has gone by since your adventure. Anyone you might have told of your travels alternatively thinks you are daft or dangerously fey-touched. Then, as you walk the lands outside of Critwall, Gildor is suddenly in your midst, swinging his quarterstaff and showing a very sly smile on his face. "Thank you all for your efforts. I know it must be frustrating to you to go to such lengths only to have none believed you. Well, nobody said adventuring was all about the fame, eh? But listen, know that I know what you went through and I appreciate it. You have my favor and I promise that will be no small thing."**

The party can ask Gildor any number of questions, like why did he lie to them about the dream, etc., but Gildor, while apologetic, will only say he was doing what he believed was right (and what was necessary for the dream to work).

**He looks at you for a moment, pauses, and then continues, "Chances were very good your memories of this adventure would have faded by now, you understand. Dreams have a way of fading with the light of dawn. That you remember is an amazing gift more than I can ever give. I do not know what all you learned in the dream, but it seems to be important to your future. Use this treasure well... and for now, goodbye my friends!" and with that, he is gone...**

#### **The End**

### **Experience Point Summary**

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then

assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Experience objective

### Introduction

APL2 120 xp; APL4 180 xp; APL6 240 xp;  
APL8 300 xp; APL10 360 xp; APL12 420 xp.

### Encounter Three

APL2 120 xp; APL4 180 xp; APL6 240 xp;  
APL8 300 xp; APL10 360 xp; APL12 420 xp.

### Encounter Four

APL2 120 xp; APL4 180 xp; APL6 240 xp;  
APL8 300 xp; APL10 360 xp; APL12 420 xp.

### Story Award

Objective(s) met:

For each of the first three Events in Encounter Two where the party successfully changed the person's life:

APL2 30 xp each, 90 total; APL4 45 xp each, 135 total; APL6 60 xp, 180 total; APL8 75 xp each, 225 total; APL10 105 xp each, 315 total; APL12 120 each, 360 total.

### Total possible experience:

APL2 450 xp; APL4 675 xp; APL6 900 xp; APL8 1125 xp; APL10 1350 xp; APL12 1575 xp.

A special note: If the party fought at Torkeep until dying, they gain 30 xp for each EL of monsters defeated, to the maximum of the following:

APL2 360 xp; APL4 540 xp; APL6 720 xp; APL 8 900 xp; APL10 1080; APL12 1260 xp.

## Treasure Summary

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

### Conclusion:

APL 2 M: 600 gp  
APL 4 M: 783 gp  
APL 6 M: 800 gp  
APL 8 M: 1250 gp  
APL 10 M: 2100 gp  
APL 12 M: 3000 gp

### Total Possible Treasure

APL 2 M: 600 gp  
APL 4 M: 783 gp  
APL 6 M: 800 gp  
APL 8 M: 1250 gp  
APL 10 M: 2100 gp  
APL 12 M: 3000 gp

## Special

There is no treasure for characters that did not accompany Gildor.

For assisting Lord Torkeep, he will speak on your behalf. You may have one point of Influence with the Shield Lands metaorganization of your choice.

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Hatred of Janek Lardon. You have earned the hatred of Janek Lardon. This may affect you in the future.

Dreamlore: Travelling in the realm of dreams has revealed unexpected information to you. As a result, you may choose to have access to one of the following feats or spells (Circle one and cross off the others): Foe Specialist (MH), Second Wind (MH), Curse of Impending Blades (MH), Quick March (MH).

Favor of the Dragons. For assisting Gildor Arcanix, you now have access to a pseudodragon familiar. You must be able to take the feat Improved Familiar to gain access to the pseudodragon (pseudodragons are not normally available in the Shield Lands).

Minor Ring of Spell Storing. You are considered to have access to a minor ring of spell storing for magic item creation purposes. If you have the cursed ring from SHL03-06 A Chink in the Armor, Gildor will cast a Remove Curse on it. In addition to allowing you to remove it, after you have had the ring in your possession for 1 year after playing A Chink in the Armor, you discover the ring has a latent power. You may pay to have its magic abilities altered to that of a *Minor Ring of Spell Storing*. The cost to do so is ½ of its normal cost.

## Items for the Adventure

### Record

#### Item Access

APL 2

*wand of burning hands* (adventure, CL1, DMG)

*necklace of fireballs type I* (adventure, DMG)

APL 4 as above plus *mithril shirt* (adventure, DMG)

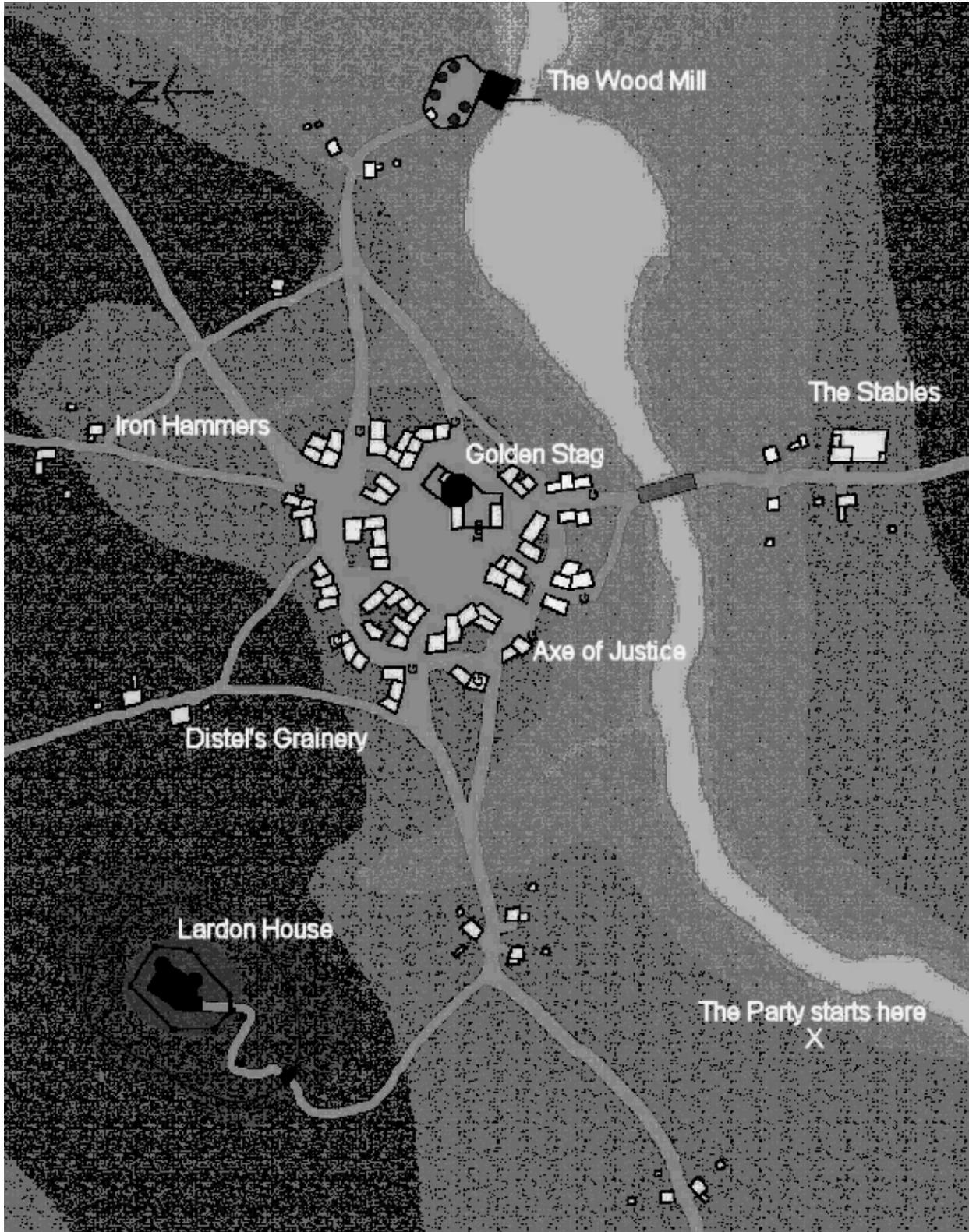
APL 6 as above plus: *elixir of fire breath* (adventure, DMG)

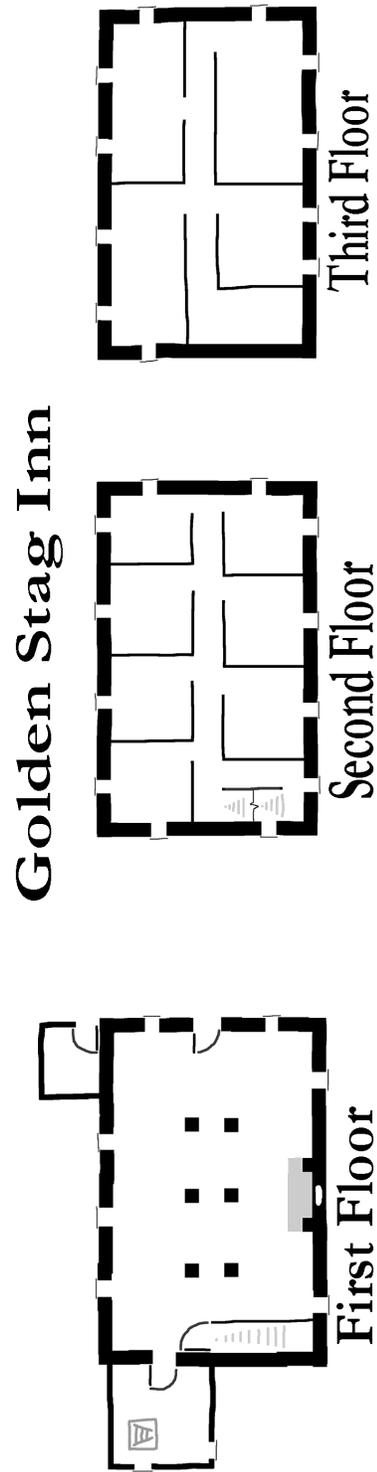
APL 8 – as above plus: *slaying arrow: demons* (adventure, DMG)

APL 10 – as above plus: *ring of counterspells, arcane scroll of passwall* (adventure, DMG)

APL 12 – as above plus: *wind fan* (adventure, DMG)

Appendix A – Map1: Lardon





## Appendix B

### Fensir (From the Fiend Folio)

#### Large Giant (Extraplanar)

**Hit Dice:** 4d8+4 (26 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +6 natural, +2 leather), touch 10, flat-footed 17

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+12

**Attack:** Huge greataxe +7 melee, or rock +4 ranged

**Full Attack:** Huge greataxe +7 melee, or rock +4 ranged

**Damage:** Huge greataxe 2d8+7, rock 1d6+5

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Rock-throwing, spell-like abilities, spells

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, rock catching, sense twin, sunlight vulnerability

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 7

**Skills:** Climb +9, Hide +1, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +6

**Feats:** Brew Potion, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land (Ysgard)

**Organization:** Solitary, pair, family (4-6), or village (11-20 plus 35% noncombatants)

**Challenge Rating:** 5

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always Chaotic Neutral

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +5

Fensirs range in size from nearly human stature to that of a hill giant. They are unattractive beings with huge heads and enormous noses. Most fensirs have warty skin and deep black eyes that are often misaligned. Fensirs typically wear fine leather armor, vests, and big-black rabbit-fur hats of varying styles.

Fensirs speak Giant and Common.

**Rock Throwing (Ex):** An adult fensir has a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls when throwing rocks. A normal fensir can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each (Small objects) up to five range increments. The rocks have a range increment of 120 feet.

**Rock Catching (Ex):** A normal fensir can catch Small, Medium-size, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a fensir that would normally be hit by a rock can make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC to catch a rock is based on the rock's size (See the table below). If the projectile has a bonus on attack rolls, the DC increases by that amount. The fensir must be aware of and ready for the attack.

Rock Size	DC
Small	15
Medium-size	20
Large	25

**Sunlight Vulnerability:** If a fensir is caught out in sunlight, it turns into stone as if by a *flesh to stone* spell without a saving throw. If in the area of a *sunbeam* or *sunburst* spell, a fensir must make a Fortitude save or be turned to stone, in addition to the normal effects of the spell. Fensirs can sense automatically when the sun is about to set or rise up to 1 hour ahead of the event.

**Transmute Rock to Mud/Transmute Mud to Rock (Su):** All fensirs have the ability to *transmute mud to rock*, which they use to keep a steady supply of rocks on hand to hurl at opponents. They also use *transmute rock to mud* to bog down the enemy. This ability can be used at will at caster level 5.

**Spells:** A fensir can cast arcane spells as a 5<sup>th</sup>-level wizard (4/4/2/1; save DC 11 +spell level). A fensir has the normal arcane spell failure chance for the armor it wears (10% in the case of leather armor). A typical spell list: 0-*detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*; 1<sup>st</sup>-*color spray*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from law*; 2<sup>nd</sup>-*bull's strength*, *darkness*; 3<sup>rd</sup>-*lightning bolt*.

**Sense Twin (Ex):** A fensir knows the location and health of his or her twin as if by the status spell with no range limit. If the death of the twin happened through malicious intent by another being or beings, the surviving fensir can track those individuals as if by *locate person* with no range limitation.

## **Sarkrith - Spelleater** (From the Fiend Folio)

### **Large Monstrous Humanoid**

**Hit Dice:** 15d8+135 (202 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 40 ft.

**AC:** 23 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +2 large steel shield, +4 masterwork chain shirt, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 19

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +15/+27

**Attack:** Masterwork longsword +23 melee, or masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +19 ranged

**Full Attack:** Masterwork longsword +23/+18/+13 and bite +17 melee, or masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +19/+14/+9 ranged (+17/+17/+12/+7 with Rapid Shot feat)

**Damage:** Masterwork longsword 1d8+8, bite 1d6+4, masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) 1d8+8

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** -

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., dispelling ray, mask scent, scent, spell absorption, SR 25

**Saves:** Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +8

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 18, Con 29, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 7

**Skills:** Climb +17, Hide +5, Jump +24, Search +20, Spot +19, Survival +19 (+21 following tracks)

**Feats:** Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run (B)

**Climate/Terrain:** Warm forest and underground

**Organization:** Solitary or with a squad of thanes

**Challenge Rating:** 13

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement:** By character class

The heart of the sarkrith race, spelleaters drive the sarkrith's hatred of magic and its effects. Spelleaters rarely travel without a squad of thanes for protection. Like thanes, spelleaters are physically powerful, scaled humanoids with reptilian features, and they stand over 9 feet tall. Spelleaters have light blue skin that dulls almost to gray as they age.

Other creatures find it almost impossible to negotiate with spelleaters. Spelleaters expect obedience from other creatures and they have a difficult time even grasping the concept of an exchange of equals. One is simply stronger or weaker than another, and thus the chain of command is established. Since spelleaters are so obsessed with individual might, powerful creatures such as dragons sometimes attempt to establish dominion over groups of them, but spelleaters are never loyal to other races – in their eyes, all nonsarkriths are tainted by magic's foul touch.

Sarkriths speak Common, Draconic, and Infernal.

Combat

Spelleaters are as cold and calm about battle as they are about everything else. Never seeming hurried and never making decisions based on emotion, spell eaters always direct thanes and their own attacks against spellcasters or other individuals obviously using magic.

When fighting in groups, spelleaters coordinate their attacks: Half their number strip their foes of magic with their dispelling rays, while the others attack with their bows.

**Dispelling Ray (Su):** Spelleaters can generate a ray that cancels magical effects on anything it touches at will. The spelleater must make a ranged touch attack against the target. If the ray hits, it affects the target as a targeted *greater dispel magic* spell cast by a 20<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. The range is 300 ft. (100 ft. + 10 ft. per level).

**Spell Absorbition (Ex):** Anytime a spell fails to beat a spelleater's spell resistance, the spelleater gains hit points equal to the level of the spell. These hit points first heal damage that the spelleater has taken. Extra hit points are treated as temporary hit points, and expire after 1 minute.

**Sarkrith - Thane** (From the Fiend Folio)

**Large Monstrous Humanoid**

**Hit Dice:** 11d8+99 (148 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 30 ft. (masterwork full plate); base 40 ft.

**AC:** 24 (-1 size, +8 masterwork full plate, +2 masterwork large steel shield, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 24

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +11/+23

**Attack:** Masterwork greatsword +19 melee, or large masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +11 ranged

**Full Attack:** Masterwork greatsword +19/+14/+9 and bite +13 melee, or large masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +11/+6/+1 ranged

**Damage:** Masterwork greatsword 2d6+8, bite 1d6+4, masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) 1d8+4

**Face/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** -

**Special Qualities:** Adaptive resistance, adrenaline boost, antimagic field, darkvision 60 ft., mask scent, resist blows, scent, SR 23

**Saves:** Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +3

**Abilities:** Str 26, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 9

**Skills:** Climb +14, Jump +14, Survival +12

**Feats:** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

**Climate/Terrain:** Warm forest and underground

**Organization:** Solitary or squad (10)

**Challenge Rating:** 11

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always lawful evil

**Advancement:** By character class

Thanes are tasked with guarding the sarkrith protectorates from physical attack. Like all sarkriths, thanes hate magic. Fierce, loyal, and cruel, thanes understand nothing but orders. When confronting those they deem less powerful, they speak only in the imperative, and when dealing with spelleaters and other they have been bred to obey, thanes respond with instant obedience.

Scaled humanoids with heavy, reptilian heads, sarkrith thanes stand 9 feet tall and weigh close to 800 pounds.

Sarkriiths speak Common and Infernal.

#### Combat

Brutal and efficient in combat, sarkriith thanes use size and numbers to crush smaller foes. Unless an adept orders otherwise, thanes pick one foe (usually the closest) and concentrate their attacks until that foe is down; then they move to the next foe. This simple tactic makes them predictable, if dangerous, adversaries.

**Adaptive Resistance (Ex):** Any time a thane takes damage from a spell or effect that deals energy damage, the thane gains resistance 10 against subsequent attacks involving the same energy type. This resistance lasts for one day.

**Adrenaline Boost (Ex):** A thane can take an extra move or attack action once during a round. A thane can use this ability action once during a round. A thane can use this ability a number of times a day equal to its Constitution bonus (9 for an average thane).

**Antimagic Field (Su):** Once per day as a free action, a thane can create an *antimagic field* around itself. The field is always centered on the thane and has a 5-foot radius. The field lasts for a number of rounds equal to the thane's Constitution bonus (9 for an average thane).

**Resist Blows (Ex):** Sarkriith thanes treat all damage dealt by bludgeoning weapons as subdual damage.

## Appendix C

### A short history of Black-hearted Zhayne

Any of this information can be discovered with a Bardic Lore check of DC 30 or a Knowledge History check of DC 35. Or a person could just ask her... she isn't shy!

Many, many centuries ago, there was a young woman named Zhayne. She was madly in love with a knight named Khev. The knight did not know she even existed. Instead, he only had eyes for Kelana, a beautiful blonde-haired woman who Zhayne despised. Kelana learned of Zhayne's infatuation with Khev. In order to push Zhayne away so Kelana could have a life without Zhayne always being around, Katarina arranged to have Zhayne publicly humiliated. Kelana truly believed this would make Zhayne leave the region and her embarrassment behind her.

Instead, being publicly humiliated only stoked the fires of hatred inside of Zhayne. She bargained with dark powers and promised her soul if they would deliver Khev to her. To seal the bargain, she captured Kelana and planned on sacrificing her. However, Khev learned of the plot and rushed to save his love. He managed to show up at the ritual and slew Zhayne. Zhayne's spirit was given over to the dark forces.

Who knows how long she suffered? She was reborn as a lowly dretch and as such served abominable masters. However, her hatred for Kelana, now for Khev, for the people of her village that witnessed her humiliation, for her new masters, all of this acted as a forge and hammer her soul. She kept getting stronger. After untold periods of time, she eventually advanced enough to become a succubus.

As a succubus, she was finally allowed sufficient freedom from her masters to seek the prime material plane. She eventually escaped to Oerth and sought out her old home region, now called the Shield Lands. Here she has lived for at least 100 years, sowing dissent and causing grief wherever she could.

However, it was not until luz came to power that opportunities for great misdeeds came to light. Offering her services to the evil one, she now used her powers to foster not just minor evil, but great tragedies. She is a consummate liar. She will admit to just about any crimes leveled against her, true or false.

It is known that she definitely turned Burryne Arbas against his family and made him the traitor that he ultimately became (See SHL01-03 In the Name of the Father, SHL03-06 Chink in the Armor, and SHLInt03-03 Top Secret). She also, using the name Jeenverreia, seduced her way into the Church of Holy Shielding (See SHL02-04 Secrets Within). 21 years from now, she convinces Lardon to use the missing Banner not to merely embarrass Torkeep, but to depose him. It is suspected that she does not just work to ruin the lives of good folk, either. It is believed she also has worked at fostering animosity between Waquonis and Vayne, feeding them half truths and outright lies just for the sheer fun of it.

Zhayne hates all living things, but hates women most of all. She enjoys seducing men and making them humiliate themselves and betraying their true loyalties.

## **Player Handout #1**

In CY 594, the Council of Lords of the Shield Lands voted to call for a “showing of the Banners”. The Banners were the names of the ancient writs of title and land ownership parceled out centuries before. These were essentially bearer bonds in nature: I.e. In order to be a titled noble, you would have to be granted your title by the Council. In order to own lands, you would first need to be titled, and then given possession of a Banner for the land in question (author’s note – this is a precursor to the ‘deed’ system of land ownership we are currently familiar with). Over the centuries, this has led to some petty, but deadly, versions of capture the flag as various lords would go to steal the banners of other lords by hook, crook, and show of violence.

Such deeds, however are a thing of the past and the ceremony has not been held in over 100 years – for one thing, it’s a mere formality as EVERYONE knows who holds what particular Banner. Many have been passed from generation to generation to generation... For another thing, it requires a 2/3rds vote of all council members (the council is usually lucky to get a simple majority on any vote). Finally, no lord is typically bold enough to challenge the land ownership of any other lord.

However, after Lady Katarina fell, Lord Lardon called for a vote on the Banners. In part supported by the desire of the nobles to show proof of their power after the invasion, and in part supported by a desire to make a positive statement after the unexpected loss of Lady Katarina, Lord Lardon managed to get a 2/3rds vote! Upon presentment, Lord Torkeep was unable to come up with his banner. The council was about to vote for a replacement banner to be issued in his name (after all, it is not at all unlikely for a banner to be missing after the occupation) but amazingly, Count Lardon then presented Torkeep’s banner in addition to his own!

The Council was in an uproar! Count Lardon refused to back down and turn the Banner over to Torkeep. This tore the council apart. Torkeep left for his keep and took his army (and many pathfinders) with him.

Just less than half of the lords vowed to ‘get even’ with Lardon, while just over half supported his claim (the law is the law). Lardon was given command of the Standing Army of the Shield Lands to march to Torkeep to take possession by force.

That was when luz attacked from the east. Storming out of wilds, armies overran South Keep. Unsupported by the bulk of the army, Gensal was quickly surrounded. The army was forced to be pulled back to Critwall. In the mean time, Torkeep managed to entrench and hold at bay the hordes.

The ultimate destruction was inevitable. luz’s forces managed to crush Gensal. Then he turned his sights on Critwall. It fell within a month. Diplomacy with his nation fell on deaf ears as he stated he never relinquished his claim after occupying the Shield Lands. The remaining 10 months have been spent by him taking over Bright Sentry and positioning himself for one final smash against the walls of Torkeep.