

SHL5-06

Running Out of Time

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

Version 1.0

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Time is of the essence. A siege army of Iuz minions began a new offensive against the Shield Lands several months ago, bringing with them a devastating plague which has now spread to the farthest corners of the Shield Lands. The race for the cure continues... An adventure for parties of APLs 2-8.

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

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For questions specific to this document and your region, please e-mail your triad point of contact (POC) at jeff@shieldlands.net; for LIVING GREYHAWK campaign questions, email rpgahq@wizards.com.

character's animals separately. Animals with different CRs are determined separately using the chart; then, take the highest CR animal (or animals), and add 2 (drop fractions). This result is the effective character level for a mixed-CR group of animals. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard 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. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this scenario.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a Survival check (DC 20), the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

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

Adventure Background

For the last few years, the Shield Lands have fought hard to reclaim their homelands from the Occupation by Iuz. However, after some all too sweet gains, Iuz struck back! Torkeep, South Keep, Gensal and Bright Sentry were all attacked. Gensal actually fell in the initial assault. And then, with the Iuzian army poised to strike at the heart of the Shield Lands, the Iuzians appeared to withdraw to the Northeast.

Meanwhile, a virulent plague, known as the Black Breath of Iuz, is sweeping through the Shield Lands. Only Paladins and some Monks seem immune to its effects. Weakened soldiers find it hard to fight and raids on caravans are increasing. Weakened mages and clerics find it difficult to cast spells, so divine and arcane solutions seem unlikely...

Recently though, Lineene of Bright Sentry traveled to Critwall to peer into the skull of Waquonis to see if she could find some answers as to Iuz's plans. She was able to identify two items that would lead to the cure of the plague.

The first was the Book of Dark Alchemy, the second was a flail called Hextor's Wrath. Both were recovered recently by stout adventurers and returned to Critwall. The third item eluded Lineene and thus far, attempts to scry or divine the third item have gone unanswered.

The Black Breath of Iuz is the cornerstone of the siege Iuz is waging on the Shield Lands. It weakens the defenses day by day. The Old One's minions have learned of the plan by the Council to vanquish the plague and are seeking information at any cost on the whereabouts of the objects needed for a cure.

Iuz's siege army awaits orders to march on the next city, nobody's sure which it will be, but rumors tend to point at Ringland or Critwall. Scouts and Hunter-Killer parties are very abundant between Critwall and Ringland, more so than ever before. Unbeknownst to the Siege army, they are camped but a mere five miles or so from Ringland!

Adventure Summary

The adventure begins in Critwall at Dewey's Tavern. Inside, there is much discussion about the recent siege on the Shield Lands by Iuz. With Waqounis defeated, the Lesser Boneheart Vayne has complete control of the armies of Iuz in the Shield Lands, and he intends to use them. At Dewey's, the party will waste time and lounge the hot day away. Before too long the party is requested to head to the bardic college as their presence is requested.

The party meets with Lineene and is told of the situation. The council has been gathering objects, which Lineene has foretold to be keys to ending the plague. They are requested to go to Ringland in search of information of the third and final item needed to once and for all end the plague. They are then escorted outside of Critwall to a nearby grove of trees overlooking Critwall. It is there, out from under the watchful eye of Vayne that they intend to teleport to Ringland undetected. The party is given a small rock to crush when they wish to return to Critwall.

The party is teleported to an area just a few hundred yards outside of Ringland. Coming to the bridge that lies on the road into town, they are confronted by the city guard (see *SHL2-01 Message From Ringland*). The party is allowed to pass and enters the city with the guards. They are shown the way to Delquond's place.

The party eventually goes to Delquond's home. Once they get there the door is slightly ajar and unlocked. They can use tracking to determine that someone was just here and spot the layers of dust have been disturbed in several places as if they didn't know what they were looking for. But mostly, a number of books have been moved around haphazardly in the Library. The party sifts through the volumes of books, and eventually comes to some research tomes about artifacts Delquond has come across in his

journeys. Most noteworthy is the tome about the Lantern of Everlasting Night. The tome goes into great detail about the experiments conducted in the presence of this artifact. In conclusion, Delquond says that many of the powers of the Lantern are beyond him, but he did find out that divine spells that produce negative energy seemed to be greatly enhanced by the Light of the Lantern. The Lantern was lost on its way to Critwall. Upon reading this, there is a chance the party will discover a spy amongst them; however, before they can act the spy teleports away. If the party is able to locate and terminate the spy, then Ringland remains safe; if not, Ringland has been compromised, and the enemy now has information on the artifact!

The party, with the scouting information in hand and a solid lead on the last object needed for the cure to the plague, crush the stones and re-appear back at the tree-line overlooking Critwall

The party presents its findings to Lineene and they are immediately requested to seek out the object and return it immediately to the Council. The party heads to the Nyr Dyv where they, with the help of a water naga, find and locate the Lantern, destroying an aboleth's slave in route.

On the way home, the party is attacked by a hunter-killer group lying in wait for them. The party defeats the Iuzian minions and returns the Lantern to the council for study.

Preparation for Play

The Black Breath of Iuz: Various characters in the Shield Lands may have the Black Breath of Iuz. It is a nasty virus that seems to be magical in nature. Players should have campaign documentation that explains the details more completely. Non-player characters may have their reaction to infected characters spelled out in the adventure. If not, their reaction will vary from fear and loathing to pity and everything in between. At the end of the adventure, if there are any party members who have this disease, the other party members might catch it! Characters immune to disease are also immune to this disease. Characters must make a Fortitude save DC 12 to avoid catching the disease.

Introduction

It's an oven. Dewey's... Critwall... the Shield Lands in general. The beer is warm and the tempers are hotter.

Morale again sits at an all time low. Last fall the Armies of the Old One showed that they could attack almost with impunity. Bright Sentry, South Keep and Torkeep amazingly held. But the ravaging of Gensal drastically set back the gains the War of Reclamation fought so hard to recover. Worse, the assailing army just withdrew after its victory, discarding the lands which men died defending for apparently no reason. Even now the enemy army sits only two days march from Gensal daring another imprudent resettlement, continually raiding across the border, pillaging and burning crops. Missing patrols of experienced Pathfinder units attest to the return of the Old One's hunter-killer groups. Rumors run rampant that Boneheart Vayne, now in complete control of the forces besetting the Shield Lands, plans to crush resistance from the Shield Lands once and for all.

But he seems in no hurry. Why would he be? The longer he waits the more mettle gets worn out of the citizenry. They sicken and die. They mistrust, fear, and avoid each other lest they too fall ill. All Vayne needs to do is wait until a time of his choosing when the Lands are ripest for picking, and unleash his forces.

On top of it all, the hottest driest summer on record bakes the land. Crops wither and die in the fields, at least where farmers still attempt to tend crops. At least that hurts Vayne's troops almost as much as our own. Good...

The party is gathered in Dewey's Tavern. For players who are unfamiliar with this establishment, Dewey's is a simple two story tavern that has a few rooms upstairs. It is owned by Dewey, a sturdy man who looks a bit more like a dwarf than he does a human. Legend has it he is a retired adventurer who was one of the last to leave Critwall before the occupation. He was a great friend of Sergeant Duc and often buys spicy sausages from Arvid (see *SHL01-01 Lifeline*) to serve to his customers. Behind the bar is a greatclub that is inscribed "Equalizer". Finally, there is a sign on the wall that reads "Raise a toast to my friend, a loyal soldier to the end. You will be remembered Sergeant Duc".

The party has been off duty for a couple of days, waiting for some breakthrough by Lineene to piece together the fragments of her vision of the third relic necessary to create a cure for the Black Breath of Iuz.

Dewey's is very slow right now. In the establishment are just Dewey and the party. Allow them to introduce themselves if they don't already know each other. Select two players to pass the time playing dragon chess while the others play darts. Each dart player rolls a d20 + ranged

attack bonus three times. For suspense have them each roll one dice each to simulate the rounds. Highest total score wins. For the dragon chess first have each player roll a Wisdom check to get through the opening and the midgame, and then an Intelligence check for the endgame. The highest total wins. If a player wishes to cheat they can make an opposed Sleight of Hand check to be able to add their roll to their total score.

Describe the culmination of the games. Just as they finish a messenger enters Dewey's. He will read off the names of any of the characters that have played in any of the preceding year five adventures. He will tell them that their presence is requested at the Bardic College of Agridagh Cuach. If no one has played any of the adventures he will ask if they are Pathfinders and state that a squad of Pathfinders is needed at the college. If some, but not all of the characters have played in any of the events, he will ask if they are a Pathfinder, and suggest that they go along, as whatever the mission is, it looks like the rest will need the help.

Upon arriving at the college an attendant shows you to a quiet area of the library outside of the restricted section. An elven woman stands near the closed door that leads to the rarest and most valuable tomes the college owns. She watches you approach.

Any character that played in *SHL2-06 Dark Moon Rising* will recognize her as Arquen of the Rimwalkers. She is one of the wizards that teleported their party to Ringland. She will pleasantly greet any party members she recognizes.

"Please wait here," the attendant requests. He quietly slips into the restricted section and closes the door behind him. A moment later the door to the room reopens. After opening the door wide, the attendant discreetly leaves the area. Meric Ritage guides ancient Lineene through the doorway. Meric, a promising young bard from the college has been acting as the blind woman's eyes while they've been researching a way to end the Black Breath of Iuz.

The elderly woman shows an iron determination that defies her age. A white silk blindfold covers her eyes. She lost her vision peering into the Skull of Waquonis while attempting to find a way to lift the curse. Behind the silk, her eye sockets hold red orbs with laughing black skulls where the pupils and iris should be. She turns unseeingly in your direction and speaks.

"Thank you for your patience my friends. Waquonis's curse slows my pace, but Meric and I think we've found a reference that'll help us find the last piece to the puzzle. But in order to find it, I must

examine an unabridged version of 'Delquond's Artifacts of Wonder and Light.' The version we have does not go into sufficient detail. It alludes to a wondrous lantern, but does not detail what it is or, more importantly, its history. From what we can discern it matches my vision of the third relic necessary to end the Black Breath of Iuz."

"The only unabridged copy still known to exist would be the original manuscript of Shield Mage Delquond himself. As you well know, the Shield Mages died out. However, Delquond retired before the original invasion to the little town of Ringland. You must go there and recover the book if it still exists."

A well-dressed human with strange tattoos on his face and neck enters the main library and hurries over to join your group. He wipes the perspiration off his face with a monogrammed handkerchief.

Anyone that has played SHL2-06 Dark Moon Rising will recognize the man as Kiraldan of the Arcanists' Society. Kiraldan will extend his hand and introduce himself.

"I am Kiraldan of the Arcanists' Society. I am so sorry I am late, Madame Blackford," he apologizes to Lineene.

He nods and smiles at any that make it known they recognize him.

Lineene continues, "We told Lady Katarina with heavy hearts that our only chance was sending a team to a town, probably ruins far behind enemy lines in hopes of finding a forgotten manuscript. Imagine our surprise and relief to learn that Ringland still stands and is still free. The Lady asked that we summon you Pathfinders, Kiraldan, and Arquen for the mission.

"Kiraldan and Arquen," says Meric indicating the man and the elven woman who nod in acknowledgement. "They are very familiar in teleporting to Ringland. They'll transport you there and bring you back. In case of trouble, take this stone as well. Join hands and crush it. You'll be safely teleported back to Critwall."

Low level parties will almost certainly accept this transport. If they refuse, they can walk, risking encounters with hunter-killer groups and delaying the chance of a cure. Parties with individuals capable of casting their own teleports are welcome to do so if they wish to waste their own spells. Arquen will describe carefully where they are going. Kiraldan will also point out that success is dependent on familiarity with the area

if they are not using greater teleport. Meric will give the stone to the apparent leader of the party.

Many characters may have questions about where and what is Ringland. Before Arquen will answer any questions, she will insist that the party swear to speak of Ringland to no one. Not even other Pathfinders.

Arquen will explain that:

"Ringland was a town in the northwest Shield Lands before the invasion. Ages ago a magical protection was laid around it that prevented evil from entering it. The protective charms act very subtly causing any evil creature to merely avoid the area and forget about it. This protection kept the town safe through the invasion and for years into the occupation. Three years ago after we retook Gensal, a messenger reached the reclaimed lands letting us know that Ringland still existed. We have had discreet and secret communications with Ringland ever since. Having a secret base deep in enemy territory has been invaluable to our cause. Its exact location and its existence have been a closely guarded secret known only to a few Pathfinders, Kiraldan, myself and the Council of Lords." Arquen exchanges a meaningful glance with you as she mentions the council.

A DC 15 Sense Motive check will allow a character to discern that Arquen thinks others, such as enemies of the Shield Lands may be aware of Ringland as well. If asked, Arquen will casually mention the discovery of doppelgangers within the Council of Lords several months ago.

If the secret is out, the enemy has made no recent move against the town. Her last trip there, about a week ago to rotate the Pathfinder garrison, had been uneventful.

Unfortunately, a spy knows of the mission as well. Meric had been put in place to keep an eye on Lineene's progress in searching for a cure. As soon as he learned of Ringland and learned who would be going on the mission, he let his boss know as well. Kiraldan is late in more ways than one. Meric's boss, a doppelganger wizard, responded to Meric's news by paying an immediate visit to Kiraldan. Finding Kiraldan quickly gathering his things for the trip, Meric's boss killed him and assumed his identity. He spent a few minutes interrogating Kiraldan and knows the general info about Ringland and the teleport site.

Encounter One – Ringland Compromised

The imitation Kiraldan does not have perfect knowledge of the destination having only viewed the area once. However, he succeeds in delivering his charges to the correct destination.

The two wizards offer their hands explaining that they can each transport three people. Each of the three must be touching the wizard or each other. Kiraldan and Arquen produce scrolls and after a moment of incantation by each of the wizards there is a flash of magic.

You appear standing in damp heather surrounded by a moderate fog. The sound of a small stream gurgles from somewhere nearby. Though hazy, it is still warm. The temperature feels nice after the oven of Critwall. It is comfortably quiet. Some of the sounds of nature that abruptly stopped at your sudden arrival slowly resume.

Arquen points and says “There are guards hidden on the far side of the bridge, explain who you are and there shouldn’t be any trouble. Kiraldan and I will wait here. We dare not go into the town to reduce the risk that the location might be compromised. From the sounds of the mission I don’t expect you’ll be long. If you could, please have someone send a bit of lunch, I didn’t really get a chance to pack any provisions before we left. We’ll have lunch while we wait. If you are delayed, send a towns person with word and dinner. Otherwise we’ll be ready to go when you return.”

With that she opens a bag and begins to pull out a pair of chairs, a small table, and a dragon chess set. Kiraldan pulls one of the field camp chairs up to the table and begins to place the pieces.

Arquen plans to wait for the party to complete their mission and return to this location. As soon as they leave, Kiraldan will kill Arquen unobserved in the fog, and pursue the party by turning invisible and flying over the stream. This is a significant coup for the Old One. He has discovered the location of the missing town of Ringland, potentially cut the party off from easy transportation back to Critwall, and with any luck will get the book/information on the Lantern.

Encounter Two – The City That Shall Not Be Named

As you approach the rickety old bridge a pair of soldiers wearing deep green and brown field uniforms break cover and approach cautiously.

“Halt and identify yourselves and your business here” calls one as they walk up to you.

If the party is non-compliant with this request there are a dozen more guardsmen hidden around. A DC 17 Spot check will reveal the guardsmen archers, forming a perimeter around the far side of the bridge. These men won’t hesitate to attempt to kill the party as they understand that if security is breached the destruction of their town will follow.

All APLs

Ringland Guards (12): Male or female human, dwarf, half-elf or halfling War2.

Assuming the party halts and identifies themselves, they’ll be asked to wait on the bridge while word is sent to Lord Reynald. Since the party is not one of the regular group of Pathfinders rotated in for duty, nor is a replacement group expected for another week the guards are cautious about letting them enter. The Ringlanders have heard of the Black Breath and have avoided contamination up to this point.

If any of the adventurers bear obvious signs of the Black Breath, the guards will keep their distance, many of them making signs to their deities for protection. The below encounter should be portrayed more intensely if any characters have the Black Breath as Captain Vallin and Lord Reynald will be wary of allowing the disease to affect Ringlanders.

After maybe fifteen minutes a pair of heavily armored men on horseback rides up. The first man is a captain in the Standing Army of the Shield Lands and eyes you suspiciously. The other, a fair skinned knight with reddish brown hair, touches the holy symbol on his chest and appraises you with his green eyes.

The first man is Captain Vallin. The party may know him as the duty officer they met in *SHL2-06 Dark Moon Rising*. He has since been promoted, and commands the garrison in Ringland. The second man is Lord Reynald, a paladin of Heironeous and a Knight of the Holy Shielding. They had been inspecting militia training when the guard from the bridge brought them word of the visitors. Lord Reynald is a sitting member on the

Council of Lords, but swore an oath when he was a knight to defend Ringland, and maintains it as his charge. Players of *SHL2-01 A Message from Ringland* or *SHL2-06 Dark Moon Rising* will recognize him as will a successful DC 15 Knowledge (Nobility) check. He uses his detect evil ability to scan the party. Assuming no one detects as evil he will welcome them and introduce himself.

“Greetings, friends”, says the knight, “I am Lord Reynald. To what do we owe this unexpected visit?”

If the party explains that they have come seeking a cure to the Black Breath of Iuz and need to search Delquond’s house he’ll agree to let them enter Ringland, but requires they don’t stray from their mission and don’t interact with the townsfolk, especially if any of them bear the disease. He will personally show them to Delquond’s house before returning to his lordly duties.

If they aren’t forthright in their explanation Reynald will turn them away, requiring a DC 12 Diplomacy check or a DC 20 Intimidate check to reconsider. Attempting to Intimidate a Lord and failing will have negative consequences.

Encounter Three – Delquond’s Residence

Lord Reynald leads you down a dirt road and into the town of Ringland. After a brief exchange Captain Vallin makes his leave and returns to the militia training. People watch curiously as you follow the knight to a solitary house surrounded by empty lots... You walk past it before you notice Lord Reynald stopped his mount in front of it. “The home of Delquond,” indicates Reynald.

Other than the unkempt yard it looks very nondescript. Not really the impressive residence of a great Shield Mage.

“Good luck with your quest, friends. My duties call me elsewhere, but if I can be of any help I will be in Rendor Keep.” With that the knight rides off.

Delquond’s home has been abandoned for years. Like Ringland itself, the home has a form of apathy magic on it. It is not alignment based, and doesn’t have memory loss charms on it. It kept the house safe while Delquond was away. Because of this no one has moved in during the twelve years since he died. To approach the door each character must make a DC 16 Will save. Those that fail the save will be more interested in the house next door (where they saw a fox dart around the corner), a village

boy that has been watching them, or a flock of crows flying overhead, etc. This can be overcome by taking the apathetic character by the hand and leading them inside. If everyone fails the save, eventually Captain Vallin will ride by and remind them to “stick to their mission and not go spreading the plague all about.” This will give another save for each character. Worst case scenario Captain Vallin will lead the party into the house and then leave.

The uninteresting wooden door is locked, requiring an attempt to Open Locks at DC 25.

The map for Delquond’s home is DM’s Map #1 in Appendix Three.

1 - Antechamber

Beyond the door, the room opens into a well-decorated antechamber. A fine painting of a distinguished middle-aged woman hangs from the polished mahogany wall. A torch in a wall sconce flickers to life as the boots of the party stir up the dust on the floor.

The painting is a youthful picture of Delquond’s former wife, also a former Shield Mage named Eórsidh. Some party members may have met a much older Eórsidh in *SHL4-05 If the Towers Should Fall*.

The torches in the wall sconce and others like it in the house are *everburning torches*.

2 - Kitchen:

Thick dust covers the counters of this kitchen. Obviously it hasn’t been used in years.

3 - Pantry:

The shelves of this room are laden with foods of every type. Except for a layer of dust, fresh fruits from far off lands, loaves of bread and strange smelling spices seem as though they were delivered this morning.

The magic of this pantry prevents the foods from spoiling.

4 - Dining Room:

Several torches illuminate the dusty chandelier hanging over a beautifully finished dining room table with six chairs. Empty blackened place settings adorn the table.

The place settings are tarnished silver.

5 - Study:

Books, hundreds of them, line the shelves of this study. Two plush armchairs sit near a cozy fire.

The fire, like the torches, is *everburning* and emits no heat. The books are pretty mundane and searching them produces nothing of particular interest to the party. However, a DC 20 Search check will find a revolving bookcase that leads to a secret staircase. The stairs lead to the basement. When the party is ready to descend, Arquen will arrive. See the basement section.

6 - Master Bedroom:

Like the rest of the house, dust coats everything in the room. That aside, this room is beautifully decorated with fine curtains and tapestries and an enormous feather bed with a carved walnut frame.

A wardrobe contains a variety of mundane wizard's robes and other clothing.

7 - Basement:

The doppelganger in Arquen's form will show up at this point, possibly explaining that "Kiralden attacked her. We need to get the book and get out of here." If the party attempts a Sense Motive check, roll an opposed Bluff check. See Encounter Four for how the doppelganger will respond to an attack.

ALL APLs (EL 10)

Doppelganger (1): hp 66; see Appendix One.

The stairs descend more than a hundred feet below the house and end at a lead-lined locked iron door.

Delquond's house has a surprisingly large basement. The door (Open Lock DC 25) opens into a long hallway. Search checks for secret doors reveal nothing. A DC 20 Search check for traps will reveal a hidden portcullis just inside the hallway where the party enters. Additionally the bricked walls behind the curtains sound thin; a Stonecunning or Knowledge (architecture) check at DC 18 reveals this. The walls are composed of only one layer of bricks and the mortar seems very weak and crumbly, but the wall itself seems solid. The bricks are painted on both sides with a thick layer of lead-based paint.

Beyond the door is a long hallway some fifty feet long and ten feet wide. The ceiling is arched to fifteen feet tall and the corridor ends at a stout eight foot tall, lead-lined iron door.

The door is trapped with a cunning trap. Opening the door releases four effects.

A DC 25 Search check on the door will find the trap. It is very difficult to disable requiring a DC 28 Disable Device check. When sprung, several effects take place in the following order.

ALL APLs (EL4)

Collapsing Wall Trap: CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger, no reset; Atk +10 touch (4d6); multiple targets at APL 6+ (1d4 per target); Search DC 25, Disable Device DC 28.

- The portcullis by the entry way triggers sealing off the path of retreat.
- The brick walls are primarily supported not by the mortar and brick, but by greased steel dowels that run vertically through the holes in the bricks. The bricks are lined up so the holes in them are aligned. Two dowels for each brick. The greased dowels are attached to piston-like mechanisms so that when the door is opened they are pulled down. They are freshly greased from a reservoir at this time. While the dowels are pulled down, the walls maintain their integrity only through inertia and gravity.
- A programmed *soften earth and stone* spell is triggered at the base of the walls. This causes the walls to fall in upon the entire length of the hallway. Each person is targeted with a +10 melee touch attack (dmg 4d6). At APL 6+ each person is targeted with 1d4 attacks at the same attack bonus.
- Anyone flying or above the ten foot mark, where the walls begin to collapse escapes the damage from the falling blocks, but is targeted by 1d4+1 poisoned darts from a poison dart trap near the ceiling.

Poisoned Dart Trap: CR 4; mechanical; contingent trigger; no reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1d4+1 per target); poison (Medium monstrous spider venom, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, (1d4 Str/1d4 Str); Search DC 17, Disable Device DC 21.

Encounter Four – Spies like Us

Your search of the rest of the basement has been uneventful. You come across an abandoned laboratory with very little in it, a small, secure room that must have once been used to store the wizard's valuables, though none remain now, and finally a square room with a large fireplace, couch, and desk in it. The desk has several books stacked on it in a neat pile.

One of the books is "Delquond's Artifacts of Wonder and Light." There is little else in the basement, long ago having given up its treasure to others.

If the party examines the book, read or paraphrase the following.

The tome focuses on a powerful and ancient device known as the Magic Lantern of Everlasting Night. It had the power to "push back the light" and to "purify men's souls". An entry in the book reads as such: several years ago an adventuring party recovered the lantern from the lair of the Fiend of the Fellreev, a forest demon that they destroyed. While they were transporting it to the collector that hired them, their ship was caught in a storm on the Nyr Dyv and sunk. The collector led a mission himself to recover the Lantern from the bottom of the Nyr Dyv, but was never heard from again.

The Arquen doppelganger will attempt to get the book through guile if she can. She will recommend that she keep the book through the return to Critwall. The doppelganger will do everything in her power to convince the party she should hold the book for safe-keeping. If she can not receive it through guile, she will attempt to disarm it from someone who has it. Whether she succeeds or not, she will then take the next round to teleport away.

Note: The doppelganger's primary role is subterfuge and information gathering. It will not risk losing its information or life in a fight (even against an APL 2 opponent). If it is unable to get the book, then it will take the information it has gathered and seek to escape, first through the use of its teleport scroll and second through its other magical and spell-like abilities. This should not be a combat encounter as most groups would easily get wiped.

ALL APLs (EL 10)

Doppelganger (1): hp 66; see Appendix One.

Now there is trouble. The book may or may not be lost. An agent of the Old One knows of the location of the Lantern, an item critical to the cure for the Black Breath, not to mention the location of Ringland itself!

If the party stopped Arquen the doppelganger from leaving, that will save Ringland and reduce the pressure on them to get the lantern. They are then free to crush the stone they have been given to teleport back to Critwall.

Encounter Five –

A Message for the Council

When the party returns to Critwall, they will probably want to seek out the Council for more information. If they instead have the idea of seeking out the Lantern

themselves, they may do so, though without help from the naga, it will be a difficult undertaking.

If they head back to the council, Lineene will meet with them personally again. She will ask what information the party has found and listen to all they have to say before continuing.

"This is grave news. It seems the Lantern may have been lost to us years ago. If anyone is to know if it lies yet in the Nyr Dyv, it is the naga. Tell me, have you had any contact with them before?"

Anyone who has played *SHLI-05 Enter the Naga* may be able to summon the naga and ask them directly. Lineene will suggest the party summon the naga to ask them if the Lantern yet lies in the Nyr Dyv. If no one has played *SHLI-05 Enter the Naga*, read or paraphrase the following.

"The naga are an ancient and secretive race. We have had some contact with them and I believe they owe me a favor or two. You must go to the Nyr Dyv. Wade into the water and place this stone into the waves. The naga will hear your call and answer it. Explain your situation and I believe they will be of immense help to you."

Lineene will answer any other questions the party may have before sending them on their way. Lineene does not know anything about the Lantern besides what the party is able to provide her. At this point, she is not even sure how the three items would combine to disperse the plague. Some possible questions and her answers:

- How will the Lantern be used to stop the Black Breath? I do not know at this time, but perhaps more can be divined when I have possession of all three objects.
- Why must we contact the naga to find the Lantern? The territory of the naga stretches deep into the Nyr Dyv. They would be the best resource for determining its location.
- What if the naga are not helpful? The naga will want to pay off their debts by being helpful to our plight.
- What about the doppelganger spy? Speed is of the essence. You must recover the Lantern before the Old One's minions find it. As for Ringland, there may be no time left for them.

Encounter Six –

The Murky Depths of the Nyr Dyv

Once the party has summoned the naga, either through Lineene's means or their own, read or paraphrase the following.

It takes only minutes after you call before a shape appears drudging out of the icy waters of the Nyr Dyv. It looks like a golden colored snake with a human head. The creature wades in the water a few feet from the shore and looks at each of you in turn. It speaks in a high pitched, almost melodic tone, "Welcome land walkers. You have called and I have answered. Tell me, what business brings you hear on such a fine day?"

The naga will listen to the concerns of the party. She is very cordial and will help the party as much as possible. The naga's name is Umno and she acts as a scout and messenger for her kind. If asked about her relationship to a naga that the party may have met before, she will respond, "My uncle was named Umno and I have taken his name in respect to his bravery."

She knows of the location of the Lantern, though a great evil now lairs there. If the party wishes, she will bring them to its location. The naga has several potions of extended *water breathing* and *freedom of movement* and will gladly share them with the party so that they may, "experience the world the way it is supposed to be."

Once the party agrees to enter the water, read or paraphrase the following.

For hours you swim through the black waters, occasionally being able to see some of your beautiful surroundings with the help of the glowing rocks.

This deep it seems as if darker colors dominate the underwater terrain; Greens, purples or perhaps dark blues. At one point there is a burst of panic from Umno as you get a streaking image of a shark-like creature, although Umno quickly regains composure and leads you away from danger.

Eventually Umno stops you and lights the area with a simple light spell. It is the first time since entering the deep that the terrain can be seen clearly.

A strange sight is ahead. A large hand, made from some sort of iron, yet rust free, is reaching up towards

the surface. The hand itself is buried into the lake bed and is the size of a horse.

Umno lets you swim around and touch it, the smooth surface of the hand is actually warm. There are glyphs and runes etched onto the fingers where rings would be, all are unrecognizable.

You get images of confusion from Umno as if not even the water naga are aware of this object's meaning.

Her light spell fades and you continue on, leaving the iron giant behind. Somehow, this thought saddens you.

Another hour passes and Umno sends you images of stopping. She turns to your group and casts a spell. Then she does something she has not done since she brought you down here. She swims away.

The spell is *bless* (caster level 5). Allow characters to react. Umno will be gone for about five minutes. You should allow the characters to float in the darkness with their thoughts and react appropriately. Then she returns.

You receive images from Umno, somehow they are distorted, you get the immediate impression that Umno is enraged and is having a hard time concentrating on sending you images.

After a few moments you understand what Umno is asking and showing you.

There is a creature that has been plaguing these waters for a long time (it is unclear how long). Umno sends you an image of it.

Measuring some 25 feet from snout to tail, with four 10-foot long tentacles sprouting from behind its massive head, the creature has rubbery skin of blue-green color with regular gray splotches running along its sides. The pink belly of the creature is interrupted by a lamprey-like mouth and four pulsating organs that secrete a gray slime that surrounds the entire body.

Umno has found a small lair where the creature has been storing items for some sort of ritual. These creatures know a great amount of dark knowledge and Umno wants to interrupt whatever it is doing. Thankfully the creature is not there but it has slaves guarding the lair.

Umno is asking for your help to attack the lair. She can offer no proof of the evil deeds of these creatures other than her word.

Allow characters to react, most likely they will join the attack. Those that do not wait in the dark waters for a dozen minutes or so while the others swim off and do

battle. Rules for underwater combat may be found in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 93.

Umno lights the area with a spell and you see a blackened pit 40 feet in diameter that drops into the lake floor to an unseen bottom. There are several crossbreeds of human and fish of various sizes, none smaller than a grown man. The creatures are spread around the pit opening; half perched on the edge while the others swim in a circling pattern 40 feet above the pit.

For a map of this encounter, see DMs Map #2 in Appendix Three.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Skum (2): hp 11 each; see Monster Manual page 228.

APL 4 (EL 6)

Skum (5): hp 11 each; see Monster Manual page 228.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Advanced Skum (2): hp 40 each; see Appendix One.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Advanced Skum (6): hp 48 each; see Appendix One.

The skum are slaves of the aboleth that stalks the area; they were created for the sole purpose of guarding this pit. They do not retreat or surrender.

Treasure: Near the pit edge, the skum have a nest. Searching through the nest will uncover their hoarded baubles.

APL2: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp).

APL4: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp).

APL6: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp), *finned gauntlets* (833 gp), *scroll of siren's call* (58 gp).

APL8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp), *finned gauntlets* (833 gp), *scroll of siren's call* (58 gp), *everfull sails* (1,000 gp), *cloak of the manta ray* (600 gp).

After the battle is over Umno will perform a purifying ritual on the area; satisfied that the creature can not return here to do evil. If the party wishes to return in

the future and deal with the aboleth they may, though it will not return for several hours, at which time the parties *water breathing* effects will have run out. The aboleth is an optional encounter and provided in Appendix One.

Umno will not allow anyone to enter the pit, sending images of extreme danger to any character that tries to enter.

All APLs

Aboleth (1): hp 149; see Appendix One.

Encounter Seven –

The Trap Has Been Sprung

Finally after hours of swimming, your legs and arms tired from the unusual exercise, you come across the remains of a sunken ship. Umno sends you images of safety and security as well as a warm feeling of peace. She sends an image of swimming away from the setting sun and bows to you all in the dim light before she swims away. As she vanishes into the murky depths, you get one final image; it is of her trading goods with you on the shore on some distant day in the future.

Once the party enters the hold, read or paraphrase the following.

The ship looks as if it has been down here for a hundred years. Barnacles line its sides and a massive hole sits in its flank. You search around the ship's hold and find only one box still intact. Inside is a blackish colored lantern with arcane runes etched around the outside. The lantern gives off an icy feeling of dread.

Despite the feeling of dread, touching the Lantern has no ill effects. However, the Lantern can be activated through several ways. It may be activated blindly through the use of the Use Magic Device skill or the command words may be gleaned through other magic. The Lantern has the following effects.

When lit it acts as a *desecrate* spell in a 60 foot radius. Each of its other functions may be used once per day. These are based on three command words.

Inferius: A *doom* spell is cast on all good-aligned creatures in a 60 foot radius with no save. Simultaneously, an *aid* spell is cast on all evil-aligned creatures.

Poliuj'kin: A *magic circle against good* is cast on all creatures in a 60 foot radius.

Bof'in'tarkin: All evil creatures in a 60 foot radius immediately gain the benefit of a *false life* spell and may use the effects of a *true strike* spell once in the next hour.

These spells are cast as a 16th level caster.

Once the party returns to land, read or paraphrase the following.

You manage to swim much of the distance away from the sun, though your water breathing is soon to expire. As you wade into the shore, thankful to finally be back on land, the spell effect ends, having lasted just long enough for you to complete your mission. However, your joy at finally being on nearly solid land is quickly wiped away when you see a group of humanoids crest a nearby hill. From their posture it looks as if they had been waiting here for a while now... waiting for you.

The orcs and/or ogres are at the crest of a hill 40 feet away that surrounds the beach area. Split the attacking group to come from different directions as shown on DM's Map #3 in Appendix Three.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Orc (8): hp 5 each; see Monster Manual page 203.

APL4 (EL 7)

Ogre Barbarian (1): hp 61; see Appendix One.

Orc (4): hp 5 each; see Monster Manual page 203.

APL6 (EL 9)

Ogre Barbarian (2): hp 61 each; see Appendix One.

Orc (6): hp 5 each; see Monster Manual page 203.

APL8 (EL 11)

Ogre Fighter (1): hp 120; see Appendix One.

Orc (8): hp 5 each; see Monster Manual page 203.

Treasure: The only treasure is that carried by the orcs and ogres.

APL2: L: 59 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

APL4: L: 140 gp; C: 0 gp; M: +1 *cloak of resistance* (83 gp).

APL6: L: 283 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2x +1 *cloak of resistance* (166 gp), 2x *brooch of shielding* (250 gp).

APL8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: +2 large full plate (596 gp), +1 large greatsword (200 gp).

Conclusion – The Last Hurrah

You finally manage to make it back to Critwall. It has been a harrowing couple of days, but well worth it. The council and Lineene all gave approving nods and smiles when you announced your mission a success. With so much going wrong these days, it is a welcome relief for something to go right. The council is quick to reward you for a job well done. The sound of fresh coin in your pocket is a testament to that and it should be a long while before you miss another meal.

You sleep that night with the peaceful rest that is known only to a person at the end of a long, but successful journey. Perhaps things are about to change in the Shield Lands. Perhaps Iuz will realize the futility of standing against a united, resilient people. Perhaps the darkness that lies within the heart of the artifacts that you have helped to recover is the key to removing the darkness from the lands. Or, perhaps you just had good dreams that night.

The End

Experience Point Summary

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

Encounter Three

Disarm/Bypass Traps

APL2 120 xp

APL4 120 xp

APL6 120 xp

APL8 120 xp

Encounter Four

Discovering the Spy

APL2 5 xp

APL4 10 xp

APL6 20 xp

APL8 30 xp

Encounter Six

Defeating the Skum

APL2 120 xp

APL4 180 xp

APL6 240 xp

APL8 300 xp

Encounter Seven

Defeating the Hunter-Killer Group

APL2 120 xp

APL4 210 xp

APL6 270 xp

APL8 330 xp

Story Award

Objective: Recover and return the Lantern of Everlasting Night to the Council of Lords

APL2 20 xp

APL4 40 xp

APL6 70 xp

APL8 120 xp

Discretionary role-playing award

APL2 65 xp

APL4 115 xp

APL6 180 xp

APL8 225 xp

Total possible experience:

APL2 450 xp

APL4 675 xp

APL6 900 xp

APL8 1,125 xp

Treasure Summary

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

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

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

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

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

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

Encounter Six:

APL2: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp).

APL4: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp).

APL6: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp), *finned gauntlets* (833 gp), *scroll of siren's call* (58 gp).

APL8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *bag of teeth* (167 gp), *scroll of swim* (12 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *anchor* (4 gp), *Quaal's feather token*, *swan boat* (33 gp), *finned gauntlets* (833 gp), *scroll of siren's call* (58 gp), *everfull sails* (1,000 gp), *cloak of the manta ray* (600 gp).

Encounter Seven:

APL2: L: 75 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

APL4: L: 140 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+1 cloak of resistance* (83 gp).

APL6: L: 283 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *2x +1 cloak of resistance* (166 gp), *2x brooch of shielding* (250 gp).

APL8: L: 140 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *+2 large full plate* (596 gp), *+1 large greatsword* (200 gp).

Conclusion:

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 125 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 350 gp; M: 0 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: L: 75 gp; C: 125 gp; M: 216 gp – Total: 416 gp (max 400 gp on AR)

APL 4: L: 140 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 299 gp – Total: 689 gp (max 600 gp on AR)

APL 6: L: 283 gp; C: 300 gp; M: 1,523 gp – Total: 2,106 gp (max 800 gp on AR)

APL 8: L: 140 gp; C: 350 gp; M: 3,503 gp – Total: 3,993 gp (max 1,250 gp on AR)

Special

Umno's Aid: For helping to destroy the aboleth's slaves, Umno is not only willing to trade with you in the near future, but will grant one of the following options: She will help construct any armor or weapon from pearlsteel (see *Stormwrack* page 128). Or, she will offer to imbue any armor with the buoyant property (see *Stormwrack* page 128). The upgrades must be paid for by the PC. Cross off once used.

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 2 and 4:

- Bag of Teeth (Adventure; CL 13th; 2,000 gp; Stormwrack)
- Scroll of Swim (Adventure; CL 3rd; 150 gp; Stormwrack)
- Quaal's feather token, anchor (Adventure; CL 12th; 50 gp; DMG)
- Quaal's feather token, swan boat (Adventure; CL 12th; 400 gp; DMG)

APL 6 (all of APLs 2-4 plus the following):

- Gloves of swimming and climbing (Adventure; CL 5th; 6,250 gp; DMG)
- Scroll of Siren's Call (Adventure; CL 7th; 700 gp; Stormwrack)

APL 8 (all of APLs 2-6 plus the following):

- Everfull Sails (Adventure; CL 3rd; 12,000 gp; Stormwrack)
- Cloak of the Manta Ray (Adventure; CL 9th; 7,200 gp; DMG)

Appendix One

Encounter Three/Four

ALL APL's

Doppelganger Wizard: Male Doppelganger Enchanter7; CR 10; Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 4d8+7d4+33; hp 66 (down from 77); Init +7; Spd 30'; AC 19 (flatfooted 16, touch 14)[+3 Dex, +1 deflection, +5 natural]; BA/G +7/+7; Atk +8 melee (1d6, club) or +11 ranged (1d6, thrown club); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6, club); Space/Reach 5'/5'; SA Detect thoughts, spells; SQ Change shape, immunity to sleep and charm effects; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13*, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +17*, Forgery +5, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Listen +3, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +12, Spot +4; Deceitful, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Run, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell.

Possessions: Masterwork Club, Shoes, Amulet of Natural Armor +1, Ring of Protection +1, 2 Scrolls of Teleport, Spellbook.

Detect Thoughts (Su): A doppelganger can continuously use detect thoughts as the spell (caster level 18th; Will DC 14 negates). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Change Shape (Su): A doppelganger can assume the shape of any Small or Medium humanoid. In humanoid form, the doppelganger loses its natural attacks. A doppelganger can remain in its humanoid form until it chooses to assume a new one. A change in form can not be dispelled, but a doppelganger reverts to its natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell or ability reveals its natural form.

Skills: *When using its shape change ability, a doppelganger gets an additional +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If it can read an opponent's mind, it gets a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.

Spells Prepared (4/6/5/4/2; base DC=13 + Spell Level): 0-Daze, Ghost sound, Mage Hand, Resistance; 1-Cause Fear, Charm Person, Chill Touch, Expeditious Retreat, Mage Armor; 2-Fox's Cunning, Ghoul Touch, Glitterdust, Tasha's Hideous Laughter; 3-Displacement, Hold Person, Major Image; 4-

Dimension Door. (The doppelganger has cast a few spells, and their durations have expired.)

Spellbook: 1-Cause Fear, Charm Person, Chill Touch, Color Spray, Expeditious Retreat, Mage Armor, Ventriloquism; 2-Blur, False Life, Ghoul Touch, Glitterdust, Hideous Laughter, Misdirection; 3-Displacement, Hold Person, Major Image, Suggestion; 4-Crushing Despair, Dimension Door, Greater Invisibility.

Encounter Six

APL 6

Advanced Skum: Male Skum; CR 2; Large Aberration; HD 5d8+15; hp 40; Init +1; Spd 20', Swim 40'; AC 14 (flatfooted 13, touch 10)[+1 Dex, -1 size, +4 natural]; BA/G +3/+15; Atk/Full Atk +10 melee (3d6+8, bite); Space/Reach 10'/10'; SA Rake; SQ Amphibious, darkvision 60'; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +0, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Spot +5, Swim +16; Alertness, Snatch.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +5 melee, damage 1d8+4. A skum also gains two rake attacks when it attacks while swimming.

Skills: *Skum have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks underwater. A skum has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Possessions: None.

APL 8

Advanced Skum: Male Skum; CR 2; Large Aberration; HD 6d8+18; hp 48; Init +1; Spd 20', Swim 40'; AC 13 (flatfooted 13, touch 9)[-1 size, +4 natural]; BA/G +4/+15; Atk +12 melee (3d6+9, bite); Full Atk +12 Melee (3d6+9, bite) and +10 melee (1d6+4, claw); Space/Reach 10'/10'; SA Rake; SQ Amphibious, darkvision 60'; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 28, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide -1, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Swim +17; Alertness, Multiattack.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +10 melee, damage 1d8+4. A skum also gains two rake attacks when it attacks while swimming.

Skills: *Skum have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Spot checks underwater. A skum has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Possessions: None.

All APL's

Aboleth Illusionist: Male Aboleth Illusionist5; CR 12; Huge Aberration; HD 8d8+5d4+91; hp 149; Init +3; Spd 10', Swim 60'; AC 18 (flatfooted 15, touch 11)[+3 Dex, -2 size, +7 natural]; BA/G +8/+25; Atk +15 melee (1d6+9 plus slime, tentacle; Full Atk +15 melee (1d6+9 plus slime, 4 tentacles); Space/Reach 15'/10'; SA Enslave, mucus cloud, psionics, slime; SQ Darkvision 60'; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +13; Str 28, Dex 16, Con 24, Int 19, Wis 16, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +7, Concentration +18, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +4, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (History) +9, Knowledge (The Planes) +9, Listen +14, Search +6, Spellcraft +17, Spot +11, Swim +17; Eschew Materials, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (Enchantment), Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (Enchantment).

Enslave (Su): Three times per day, an aboleth can attempt to enslave any one living creature within 30 feet. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be affected as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 16th). An enslaved creature obeys the aboleth's telepathic commands until freed by *remove curse*, and can attempt a new Will save every 24 hours to break free. The control is also broken if the aboleth dies or travels more than 1 mile from its slave.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 14), *illusory wall* (DC 16), *mirage arcana* (DC 17), *persistent image* (DC 17), *programmed image* (DC 18), *project image* (DC 19), *veil* (DC 18). Effective caster level 16th.

Slime (Ex): A blow from an aboleth's tentacle can cause a terrible affliction. A creature hit by a tentacle must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save or begin to

transform over the next 1d4+1 minutes, the skin gradually becoming a clear, slimy membrane. An afflicted creature must remain moistened with cool, fresh water or take 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. The slime reduces the creature's natural armor bonus by 1 (but never to less than 0).

A *remove disease* spell cast before the transformation is complete will restore an afflicted creature to normal. Afterward, however, only a *heal* or *mass heal* spell can reverse the affliction.

Mucus Cloud (Ex): An aboleth underwater surrounds itself with a viscous cloud of mucus roughly 1 foot thick. Any creature coming into contact with and inhaling this substance must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save or lose the ability to breathe air for the next 3 hours. An affected creature suffocates in 2d6 minutes if removed from the water. Renewed contact with the mucus cloud and failing another Fortitude save continues the effect for another 3 hours.

Skills: An aboleth has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Possessions: None.

Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3; base DC=14 + Spell Level(*base DC=16 + spell level for enchantment)): 0-Daze*, Ghost sound, Mage Hand, Resistance; 1-Charm Person*, Expeditious Retreat, Mage Armor, Protection from Good, Silent Image; 2-Blur, Fox's Cunning, Tasha's Hideous Laughter*, Invisibility; 3-Displacement, Haste, Heroism*.

Spellbook: 0-Acid Splash, Arcane Mark, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Ghost Sound, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Read Magic, Resistance; 1-Alarm, Charm Person, Expeditious Retreat, Hypnotism, Mage Armor, Protection from Good, Silent Image; 2-Blur, Fox's Cunning, Glitterdust, Tasha's Hideous Laughter, Invisibility, Touch of Idiocy; 3-Displacement, Haste, Heroism, Slow, Suggestion.

Encounter Seven

APL 4

Ogre Barbarian: Male Ogre Barbarian2; CR 5; Large Giant; HD 4d8+2d12+24; hp 61; Init +1; Spd 50'; AC 19 (flatfooted 19, touch 10)[+1 Dex, -1 size, +4 armor, +5

natural]; BA/G +5/+15; Atk +6 ranged (1d8, throwing axe) or +12 melee (2d8+9, greatclub); Space/Reach 10'/10'; SA Bonuses when enraged (STR +4, CON +4, Willpower +2, AC -2, HP +4), rage 1 times/day (9 rounds); SQ Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Jump +15, Listen +4, Spot +3; Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Greatclub).

Possessions: Masterwork Throwing Axe (Large), Masterwork Chain Shirt (Large), Masterwork Greatclub (Large), +1 *cloak of resistance*.

APL 6

Ogre Barbarian: Male Ogre Barbarian2; CR 5; Large Giant; HD 4d8+2d12+24; hp 61; Init +1; Spd 50'; AC 19 (flatfooted 19, touch 10)[+1 Dex, -1 size, +4 armor, +5 natural]; BA/G +5/+15; Atk +6 ranged (1d8, throwing axe) or +12 melee (2d8+9, greatclub); Space/Reach 10'/10'; SA Bonuses when enraged (STR +4, CON +4, Willpower +2, AC -2, HP +4), rage 1 times/day (9 rounds); SQ Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +9, Jump +15, Listen +4, Spot +3; Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Greatclub).

Possessions: Masterwork Throwing Axe (Large), Masterwork Chain Shirt (Large), Masterwork Greatclub (Large), +1 *cloak of resistance*, *brooch of shielding*.

APL 8

Ogre Fighter: Male Ogre Fighter7; CR 10; Large Giant; HD 4d8+7d10+55; hp 120; Init +1; Spd 30'; AC 26 (flatfooted 26, touch 10)[+1 Dex, -1 size, +10 armor, +6 natural]; BA/G +10/+20; Atk +11 ranged (2d6+5 x3, longbow) or +17 melee (3d6+12 19-20/x2, greatsword); Full Atk +11/+6 ranged (2d6+5 x3, longbow) or +17/+12 melee (3d6+12 19-20/x2, greatsword); Space/Reach 10'/10'; SQ Darkvision 60', low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Jump +3, Listen +4, Ride +3, Spot +4; Blind Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Natural Armor, Iron Will, Power Attack, Run, Weapon Focus

(Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword).

Possessions: 20 Arrows (Large), Masterwork Strength (+5) Longbow (Large), +2 Full Plate (Large), +1 Greatsword (Large).

Appendix Two

Player Handout #1

A short review of the current state of the Shield Land.

The Shield Lands is currently at war with the forces of Iuz, also known as the Old One. Run by the so-called “Council of Lords”, the Shield Lands have been rebuilding its nation after nearly being completely destroyed approximately 15 years ago. However, over the last year, all that was built was nearly destroyed.

The leader of the Shield Lands, Lady Katarina Walworth, was attacked and her very soul was stolen from her. During her absence, the Council of Lords fell upon each other: loyalists (those supporting Lord Franz Torkeep) felt that it was crucial to empower the citizenry and make sure the Shield Lands were well armed. Traditionalists (those supporting Lord Natan Enerick) believe that it is crucial to establish the noble’s power base first, allowing strength of arms to be more easily governed. Both refused to budge.

Then, as civil war was about to ignite, the Lady’s soul was returned. Stronger than ever, she unified the council just in time. Iuz had chosen that moment to attack! South Keep, Gensal, and Torkeep each were besieged and at the battle of Torkeep, the vile warlock Waquonis was vanquished. Such a victory was saddened by the loss of Gensal. The Iuzian army that attacked Gensal continued to march on the capital, Critwall, when suddenly and mysteriously it stopped its advance and retreated. Gensal was quickly retaken and fortified, but it truly is more of a no man’s land than an outpost.

Meanwhile, the Admiral of Bright Sentry (on Scraghome Island) decided to invade Admundfort, the former capital of the Shield Lands (and still under enemy control). The invasion might have worked had he more soldiers. As it was, he left Bright Sentry wide open for invasion by Iuzian pirates. A note on Bright Sentry: Simen Sharn is destined to be on the Council of Lords. However, his Uncle, Natan Enerick, is currently filling in for him until he is old enough to take his place.

Against all of this are rumors of a demoness in the region, a black-hearted beast who lives only to trick, torment and deceive the good men and women of the Shield Lands. Finally, there is the plague. The Black Breath of Iuz came in with the invasions and it has left a hideous scar. Only certain members of the churches and the strange organization known as the Open Spirit are immune...

Ringland

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Without House Rendor to govern them, the people turned to the Shield Knights. Both knights took their vow to protect the town seriously, but knew that the situation called for caution. Being new to the town, the knights sought the advice of those who had spent their lives in Ringland, hoping to learn from them how best to govern the people. Eventually, the knights and the town elders joined together to form a different sort of rulership for the town; one based on both the feudal responsibilities of the past and a necessity for the people's needs and fears to be heard and considered. Today, the council consists of Sir Reyneld (the default leader), Arvet (Earl Rendor's seneschal), Anehel of Atroa and Master Dorgin the innkeep. Sir Deleven sat on the council before his departure, as did Jessot the miller before his passing last winter.

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

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

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

Rendor Keep, the seat of House Rendor's power still sits above the town as it has for generations. Currently it is occupied by Sir Reyneld, Arvet and all of the regular Ringland soldiers (about twenty-five well trained warriors and scouts). The keep is well armed and provisioned and will act as the last defense if Iuz ever penetrates the field. All able townsfolk are required to train regularly under Sir Reyneld and his officers, as well as perform guard duties for the town in addition to their normal daily responsibilities.

In the last month, a dragon has been sighted in the skies over Ringland. From what witnesses can tell, it is always the same dragon; a very large red. The beast flies northeast towards White Plume Mountain (or perhaps a bit farther north) and returns several hours later. Once or twice the dragon has paid mild attention to Ringland, but flew off without landing, stopping only long enough to circle around a few times and flying off. Sir Reyneld and the council believe the dragon is looking for something, or perhaps scouting out new territory for itself. It was the dragon's interest in Ringland that prompted them to send out five scouts to attempt to reach help.

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

Despite their isolation and constant fear, the people of Ringland are content, almost happy. Their lives have not changed for the worse so much that they would abandon their town or each other. They are certainly better off than the rest of the Shield Lands (though until the PCs arrive they have no idea of this). Even if given the chance to leave,

most would choose to stay in Ringland no matter what happens. Having had no newcomers in seven years that did not mean them harm, the people tend to be overly cautious at first, but soon warm to trustworthy visitors.

Ringland NPC Descriptions

Sir Janszen Reyneld: Male human Pal8 (Heironeous)/KoHS5. (If Knight of Holy Shielding prestige class is not available, assume he is a 13th level paladin).

Sir Reyneld is the youngest of the town council, but many still look at him as the leader. He has red-brown hair, green eyes and very light skin. Though only in his late thirties, the man has seen more than his share of war, having spent the majority of his a life in one conflict or another, but always in the service of the Shield Lands. A devoted follower of Heironeous, he sometimes sees things far too black and white for some other townfolk likes, but he is wise enough to know not to force his view points on everyone. Over the years he has learned to curb his impulsive nature, to the point of frustrating the young soldiers under his command with his “more patient then stone” attitude. In truth, this is a guise he keeps up to teach others what he feels he lacks; patience. Early on in Ringland’s isolation, he allowed his restlessness to get the better of him and it cost five lives. He has since vowed to never allow that to happen again.

Arvet: Male human, Nob6. Seneschal for Lord Rendor before the occupation.

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

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

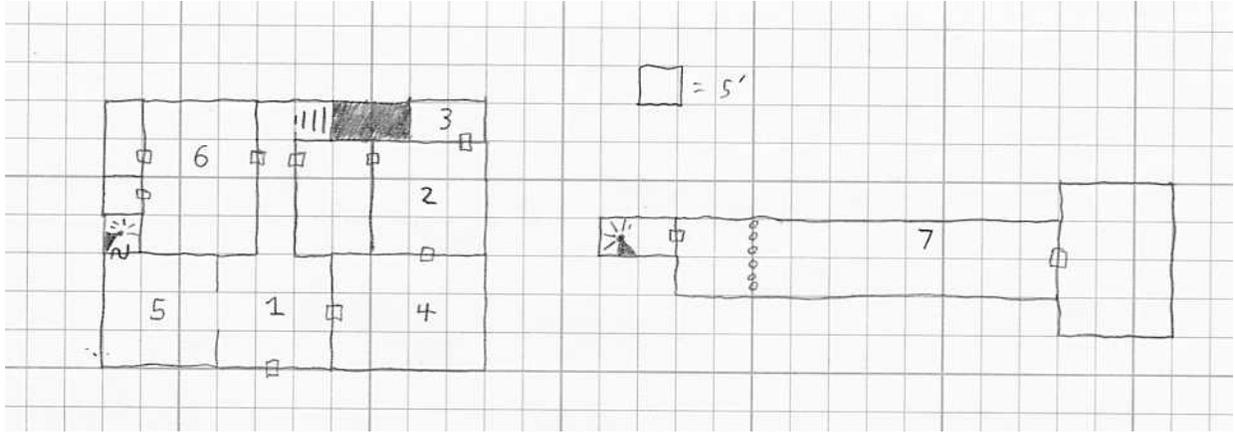
As a half-elf, Anedhel is longer lived than most humans. As such, she is quite a bit older than even Dorgin. Still, she looks much younger. Even now, she is very attractive suggesting a stunning beauty as a young woman. She has auburn hair and green eyes that compliment the earthy colors of her simple,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

Dorgin: Male human, Com5. A local innkeeper and owner of the Silver Ring.

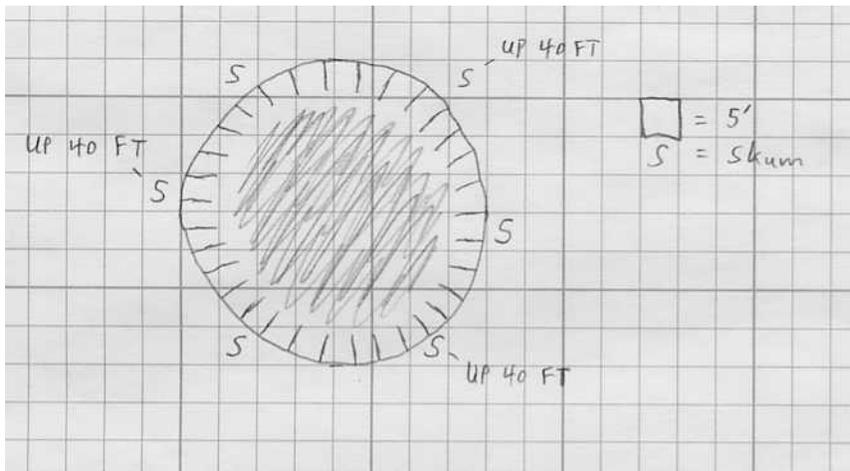
Dorgin is the typical jolly old innkeep. He’s well past his sixties and carries a large belly and even larger smile. His hair has long since gone white, but his eyes still shine a deep blue. He has a kind word for everyone who enters his establishment (the Silver Ring Inn, named for it’s distinctive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

Appendix Three

DM's Map #1



DM's Map #2



DM's Map #3

