

PAL4-03

All Which Is Forgotten

**A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®] Theocracy of the
Pale Regional Adventure**

Version 1

by David W. Baker

An army gathers and a battle looms on the eastern border of the Pale. Yet, rather than join in the battle, you are asked to recover treasure stolen from the Library of Antigua. It is commonly known that no thief has successfully absconded with a relic from that vault, where it is said the Theocracy stores dangerous and perhaps even evil artifacts for study and safeguarding. The treasure is now in the hands of a wizard named Konrad Huber. Chapter Six and the conclusion of Germinations. Unlike most chapters, it's recommended you play the previous chapters before playing this one.

An adventure for Average Party Levels 2 through 12.

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

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Introduction

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are

carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the Dungeon Master's Guide when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the Monster Manual when confronted with a monster.

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

Scoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the

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

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three

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

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

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

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

Checking for Enhancements

Enhancements might be available for this scenario, which can be downloaded from the Web.

These enhancements might include additional maps, drawings, or diagrams that could not be included within the published scenario, but they are not necessary to run this scenario.

If you want to check to see if enhancements are available, please go to:

<http://www.theocracyofthepale.com/cons/scenarios.html>

The enhancement document will be an Adobe Acrobat file with the password "izdun". If there is no enhancement in the scenario description, none has been created.

Pale Holy Day

Some player characters may wish to give or attend services in game on Pholtan holy days. For adventures set in the Theocracy of the Pale, a Member of the Church of the One True Path may ask the judge at the beginning of an Adventure to determine how many days it is until the next Pholtan Holy day.

This is accomplished by rolling a d8, rerolling if the result is 8. If a 7 is rolled, the first day of the adventure is a Pholtan Holy day. Otherwise the die result indicates the number of days until the next Pholtan Holy day. Due to the special nature of the Theocracy of the Pale, on Holy Days, Judges are encouraged (but not required) to work in a brief scene involving Pholtan worship, possibly including a brief 1-2 minute sermon by a PC Character if his or her rank in the Church of the One True Path is at least Prior and the judge believes that there is time available.

Critical Event Summary

After running this scenario, please send the answers to the following questions to dwb@netspace.org to aid further development of the Germinations series:

- Did the party choose the optional encounter and fight the rex aartuk army? If so, what was the outcome?
- Did the PCs destroy the third spelljamming vehicle before it could escape?
- Did the PCs do anything to prevent the Theocracy from apprehending the 333 Gems of Tharizdun?
- Did the party leave Viligant unharmed within the tower?

Adventure Background

He of Eternal Darkness

Eons ago, a deity of unimaginable evil was imprisoned through the combined efforts of several major good and neutral deities. Trapped away, the vile Tharizdun was prevented from wreaking havoc on the cosmos. Even the evil deities, demons, and devils don't dare seek the release of Tharizdun, for they know that the end of his binding would bring an end to all of existence. He does, however, have his followers.

Though Tharizdun is bound within a prison of divine formation, he is far too powerful to completely sequester. Faint echoes of his vileness escape. The ambitious and truly insane promote his name in secret. Over the course of several millennia, enough of his essence has escaped to form avatars. Fortunately, in those instances, Tharizdun's essence has been defeated.

Sages with the courage to study these matters have hypothesized that the strength of Tharizdun's prison fluctuates, much as the tides on the shore, following a cyclical pattern throughout the ages. Some wonder if the great disasters of Oerth have coincided with when his bindings were the weakest, such as during the time of the Twin Cataclysms. Studying the timeline of history, these sages speculate that Tharizdun's prison is the weakest roughly every 1,000 years. If true, Oerth is currently in the midst of a very dangerous time.

The Arrival of the Rex Aartuk

Three years ago, the people of the Pale witnessed an astonishing sight. Three stars fell from the western heavens and streaked eastward across the sky. Most felt it was a foul omen, but none could guess what it might portend.

Since that night, many events in the Pale have revolved around a resurgent force of what many call "demonspawn." A millennium ago, these "demons" almost defeated the forces of good in this area, but were driven back after many costly battles. They have now returned.

The three stars that fell two years ago were in fact vessels, and they were not carrying demons, but rather a species of plant creature known as the rex aartuk (pronounced like "are TOOK", rhymes with "our book"). This species is a more powerful, advanced offshoot of a creature known as the aartuk, from *MC7 Spelljammer Monstrous Compendium*. (The arrival of the rex aartuk was depicted in *PAL1-04 Prelude to the Past*.) They are working slowly, and have collaborated with a

network of spies and thieves entrenched within the Pale known as the Freelancers.

The rex aartuk have a martial culture, and consider battle with other species a holy practice. They follow the dark Tharizdun, believing that his release will trigger a cleansing fire that destroys this existence and creates fertile ground for a new one, much as a forest fire spawns new growth. In this new existence, plant life will be dominant, no longer subservient to dominion of animals.

The rex aartuk have returned to this place because part of Tharizdun's essence lies hidden within the Raker Mountains. An aspect of his vileness leaked from his imperfect prison, and formed a "Black Cyst." The Cyst resembles a large, black deposit surrounded by a purple nimbus of intense cold. Attuned to the ebbing strength of Tharizdun's presence, the rex aartuk have returned to the Cyst. They have unearthed it and are sculpting it into an inverted step pyramid, a form they believe will focus their dark god's power. (Another Black Cyst was described within the module *WG4 The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*. A piece of the Black Cyst was found by PCs in *PAL1-04 Prelude to the Past*, known only as a "strange black rock.")

To heal the wounds suffered by their slumbering god, the rex aartuk sacrifice people to the Black Cyst. When bound to the vile artifact, the Cyst feeds off of the life energy of those sacrificed. Only strong souls tempt its hunger. In game-terms, the Cyst creates a level draining effect that only drains PC class levels. NPC-only classes, such as commoner, are of no use to Tharizdun. Part of the rex aartuk relationship with the Freelancers has been to capture members of the Pale Patrol to sacrifice to the Cyst. (This plot was revealed within *PAL2-02 Pale Harvest*.)

A Traitor to His Own Kind

The evil wizard Konrad Huber was the first person to encounter the rex aartuk three years ago. He has since ingratiated himself with the rex aartuk force, despite his initial hostile interaction. Huber has used his contacts within the Freelancers to support the rex aartuk, doing so even knowing the rex aartuk's ultimately disastrous goals.

In exchange, Huber uses the rex aartuk to gain knowledge. The wizard has always been fascinated with hybrid magical beasts – chimeras, hippogriffs, griffins, and other such forms. Using their otherworldly knowledge, Huber has returned to his experiments and begun an ambitious new effort – to create a hybrid between plant and animal. The rex aartuk have also been providing

Huber information about pseudonatural creatures, a topic that has fascinated the wizard and which he hopes will bring his ultimate salvation. Huber is no idiot, and realizes that the release of Tharizdun will certainly spell the end of Oerth. He plans to use his knowledge of the pseudonatural to escape Oerth for planes of power and wonder.

Huber, however, is desperately ill. In his experiments, he was mistakenly infected by a yellow musk creeper. He has managed to slow the progress of the seed growing within him, but the efficacy of his treatment is diminishing. The rex aartuk have shown little sympathy for his plight, but he hopes to change that.

Huber used his Freelancer contacts to gather relics known as the "333 Gems of Tharizdun." The Gems were once a single collection, held by one of his terrible cults long ago. The powers of the Gems are unknown, but they are said to bring horrific curses to any who possess them. Evil clerics and greedy thieves dispersed the Gems throughout the Flanaess. Some of the Gems were locked within the Library of Antigua in Wintershiven, within a vault used to secure dangerous magic items. Agents of the Freelancers perpetrated the first known theft from the Library recently. The Gems also included the Shards of the Uvalnoniz, which the Freelancers were able to steal after they were used within the scenario *PAL3-04 Full Circle*. From these and other sources, Huber has managed to collect the complete set, and intends to present them to the rex aartuk shortly. With their favor, he hopes for a cure to the yellow musk creeper infection.

A Final Assault

This is the last in the *Germinations* series. The Theocracy's awareness of the rex aartuk has been increasing. The Church Militant has also linked the theft from the Library of Antigua to Huber and the rex aartuk. An army has set forth into the Rakers, its purpose to eliminate the rex aartuk settlement located in a secluded valley.

While the Church is unaware of the true significance of the Gems, anything important enough to be stolen from the Library's vault is important enough to recover. While the final assault is being executed on the rex aartuk, the Church wishes for the PCs to enter Konrad Huber's tower, adjacent to the rex aartuk valley. They want the PCs to find the gems and return with them.

Adventure Summary

It is important to stress that the overall feel of this scenario should be eerie and unsettling. For instance, the conversation with the likeable Theo suddenly turns into a disturbing tragedy as his sentience is rapidly pulled from him. A protagonist of the series, Amaris Viligant, is found to be altered and barely human. Huber's tower is a disturbing, hellish setting. Be sure to stress these elements of the scenario.

Player Introduction

The PCs are summoned to a Prelatal Army outpost a few days from Ogburg, where various able bodied citizens have been summoned to fight an important battle. March Major Rhess gives a very concise overview of the threat to the Pale. The party is needed to recover the gems from Konrad Huber.

To help their trek, the PCs are introduced to Theo the Raven, a familiar of a wizard that was captured by the rex aartuk. Theo escaped and can guide the PCs to Huber's tower.

The PCs must infiltrate miles of difficult terrain controlled by the rex aartuk. The Prelatal Army will attack from a completely different direction, so while the rex aartuk may be distracted, they most assuredly will have powerful patrols to deal with.

A member of the Arcanist Guild arrives, jubilant that he has found a means for the PCs to infiltrate the territory controlled by the rex aartuk. He has crafted a potion that will allow them to don viticula necklaces, evil tools of the rex aartuk that allow them to control human subjects. (These necklaces were introduced in *PAL2-02 Pale Harvest*.) The potion will allow the PCs to don the necklaces without falling under the control of the creatures. If they can obtain necklaces, rex aartuk patrols should let them enter their lands freely. There could be unpredictable side effects of the necklaces, however, and wary PCs might choose to find some other means to infiltrate the rex aartuk controlled lands.

Encounter One: Freelancer Patrol

During his flight, Theo came across some humans in the forest. Observing them, he determined they were working for the rex aartuk and heard about the necklaces in their possession. If the PCs decide to obtain the viticula necklaces before infiltrating rex aartuk lands, Theo can guide the PCs to the general area where these humans were patrolling.

The Freelancers possess ten viticula necklaces, with instructions to keep them safe. They have set up camp for the night, most of them intent on eating their evening stew. The party can approach this encounter from various different angles. A stealthy PC can manage to steal the necklaces without notice. The PCs could attempt some ruse, and manage to convince the Freelancers to hand over the necklaces. Finally, the party can attack the Freelancers.

Encounter Two: Donning the Necklaces

Once the party has recovered the viticula necklaces, they can drink their potions and don them. The necklaces, detailed in Appendix II, bond themselves to the PCs. The process is quite painful, and despite the potions, not without consequence. Each PC feels the urge to perform selfish, hurtful acts, but with effort can resist such temptations. In essence, each PC feels the pull of evil very strongly. In addition, each PC has a personalized quirk to roleplay throughout the rest of the scenario.

Encounter Three: Infiltrating Hostile Territory

If the PCs have obtained and are wearing the viticula necklaces, this encounter proceeds very smoothly for them. They are approached by a rex aartuk patrol, briefly scrutinized, and allowed to pass. The creatures aren't terribly intelligent, and as long as they're wearing necklaces, the party can proceed unmolested.

Alternatively, the PCs must find some other means to pass through these lands. It boils down to the party finding the means to circumvent or confront a rex aartuk patrol. However, it may be difficult to complete this adventure within a four-hour slot if they choose to directly confront the rex aartuk.

Encounter Four: Theo's Departure

Theo chats with the party all along the trip. In addition to asserting his unique personality, he explains what happened to his master and how there are multiple entrances into Huber's tower.

Without warning, something dreadful happens. Theo feels a horrible sinking feeling, and his mind starts slipping away. He knows something terrible is happening to his master, Melvane. The rex aartuk are sacrificing Melvane, and as his character level decreases, Theo's capability as a

familiar diminishes. Within a few tragic moments, Theo is nothing but a normal raven.

Encounter Five: Huber's Tower

Huber's tower is a strange vine-entwined spire. Remember to emphasize the eerie, otherworldly nature of Huber's demesne.

Area A – Main Entrance

The most obvious means into Huber's lair, the main entrance is strangely deserted. The attack on the rex aartuk has begun, and they've all joined the defense. The door is trapped, and an *alarm* may make Area B more difficult.

Area B – Main Hallway

Passing through this hallway, the party will be attacked by foul animals. These horrid creatures have plant features grafted onto their forms, the result of Huber's bizarre experiments. If alerted to the PC's entrance, these creatures will attack with surprise.

Area C – Hidden Entrance

The hidden entrance is a cave from which flows a foul stream – essentially, a sewer. Into this stream flow refuse and the disposed remains of Huber's experiments. A couple of locked grates, one of them trapped, block this entrance.

Area D – Yellow Musk Creeper Cavern

The cave leads into a cavern where a yellow musk creeper has taken root. Huber once experimented with yellow musk creepers, and carelessly disposed of them after accidentally infecting himself. Musk creeper zombies attack the party. A shaft in this chamber leads up into Huber's lair, while the tunnel continues further beneath the mountain from where the musk creeper's victims came.

Area E – Washroom

Climbing the shaft from below, this is where the two main means of entering Huber's tower join.

Area F – Specimen Room

This room contains preserved specimens of Huber's recent experiments. Horrible plant/animal combinations permanently rest with tormented expressions inside glass containers filled with preservation fluid.

Area G – Study/Bedroom

Huber's living quarters contain various mundane items. A spellbook rests on the desk, along with a note summarizing the collection of the 333 Gems.

Area H – Storage Room

This is a small room for storage.

Area I – Prisoner Room

This room contains several prisoners destined for sacrifice upon the Black Cyst. Bound, strange vines cover their mouths; in fact, their breathing circulates the warm, moist air within Huber's tower.

Once released from her bindings, the least subdued of the prisoners is a surprisingly spry gnome named Felia. Though exhausted and depleted of her spells, this Wayfarer from *PAL2-05 The Heretic* will lead the prisoners out of the tower and to safety. As one prisoner leaves, she gives the PCs a ring on a necklace as a gift. This is *Laelithra's ring of piety*.

Area J – Viligant's Room

Perhaps the most disturbing of all of Huber's experiments is what he has done to Amaris Viligant, of the Church Militant and from previous scenarios in the Germinations series. Huber's first attempt at plant/human hybrid, this tragic figure is only vaguely aware of her surroundings. Only a *wish* or a *miracle* can restore her. She provides the party information about what Huber and the rex aartuk are doing.

Area K – Laboratory

At the uppermost level of Huber's tower, the laboratory is where the evil wizard has conducted his foul experiments and practiced with the pseudonatural. Huber's last summoning has gone dreadfully wrong, and several vicious beasts claw at the door of the storage room in which Huber has locked himself. The creatures attack the PCs.

Area L – Storage Room

Huber has locked himself within this room. His yellow musk creeper infection has nearly taken over, and he lies prostrate on the floor, struggling to breathe. He needs an elixir lying on a table in Area K, or he will succumb to the infection. The PCs encounter a pathetic Huber who bargains for his life. Within this room are the 333 Gems of Tharzdun.

Area M – Upper Exit

This door leads out the far side of the mountain. An astonishing view of the valley below shows the Black Cyst, victims being sacrificed upon it, and the furious battle between the rex aartuk and Palish forces.

Coming up a trail from the valley floor is Dorjan Oldrich and several wounded soldiers. Oldrich is elated to see the PCs. He asks that they escort the wounded out to Pale controlled territory so he can defend this exit out of the valley. He hints that he is quite weary, and alternatively he could escort the wounded and the PCs could enter the fray below – a completely optional encounter. Oldrich warns PCs that joining the battle may be a suicide mission, and the DM should let the players know that the encounter is completely optional.

Encounter Six (Optional): Joining the Battle

In the optional encounter, the party descends into the valley to defend the path out of the valley. They face a squad of rex aartuk in what should be a tough battle.

Encounter Seven: Vessels Take Flight

The party witnesses the rex aartuk leaders attempting to escape. One of the rex aartuk spelljamming vessels is destroyed. A second attempts to take off, but is quickly destroyed by catapults before it can depart. A third gets aloft and flies over the party. If they are capable of inflicting severe damage in a single round, this vessel crashes and is destroyed.

Conclusion

The heroes of the battle are honored at a grand celebration. The PCs' efforts are lauded. The Black Cyst has been destroyed, and bards sing of the "Battle of Blackrock Valley." The 333 Gems are taken by the Church.

Keys to This Scenario

There are a few points to emphasize to make this scenario a distinct experience:

1. Focus on roleplaying Theo the Raven. It should be a unique experience to interact with a raven, and the more vibrant the experience, the more tragic what happens to him in Encounter Four.
2. Allow creative solutions for PCs to get to Huber's tower, particularly at high APLs. The party gets full XP for reaching the tower. Don't

feel the need to thwart their efforts in order to ensure they experience all encounters.

3. Emphasize the creepy nature of Huber's tower.
4. Make the roleplaying experience with the pathetic Huber memorable. This is a chance for the PCs to watch a villain squirm and gain information that may be of interest to them.

Player Introduction

The PCs are each summoned to a Prelatal Army outpost, where they will be asked to volunteer for a special mission. If you have time, provide a custom hook to each PC. Suggestions include:

- PCs who earned the "Favor of Bahira" from *PAL2-04 Full Circle* are contacted personally by her. She implores the PCs to volunteer to help the Army on a mission involving an evil wizard named Konrad Huber.
- PCs who earned the "Favor of Amaris Viligant" from *PAL2-02 Pale Harvest* hear that she has gone missing, and that the rex aartuk are suspected in her disappearance. While attempting to find out what has happened to her, they are picked up by an Army patrol.
- Faithful Pholtans learn of the gathering force, and ask the Army how they might be able to assist.
- Elves of the Phost are asked by their tribe to aid the Pale as a sign of good will.
- Druids are asked by more senior druids to involve themselves in this matter. The rex aartuk are not of this world and threaten to upset nature's balance.
- PCs who affiliate themselves with factions that work against the Theocracy are asked to learn what has been stolen from the Library of Antigua. If possible, the PCs should subtly arrange for the stolen goods to fall into their hands, as it might be useful in their struggle. Direct conflict with anyone on the matter, however, should be avoided at all costs.
- PCs who hail from foreign lands and serve their nations interests are contacted by their governments. The upcoming battle in the Pale has come to their attention. The PCs are asked to help the Pale while also learn as much as possible about the evil forces that threaten the Flanaess.

A layer of thick smoke hovers just above your head, as you wait in the large tent for the Prelatal Army March Major to arrive. Her cigar still smolders on her desk. You're a couple of

days north of Ogburg, amidst the foothills of the Rakers, where the Army is gathering. "Volunteers for a special mission" is all that you know about your purpose.

Give the PCs a chance to introduce themselves before proceeding.

March Major Rhess bursts into the tent and immediately begins speaking while she retrieves her cigar.

"Let's keep this brief. Our lands are threatened by a race of evil creatures. The rex aartuk, plant creatures filled with hatred. The Church tells me they have come to our lands from the spaces between the stars. Their forces have been building for some time, and only recently have come to the attention of the Prelatal Army. We're going to take them out."

At this point, the March Major is going to describe the PCs' mission. At APLs 2-6, he presents the mission as an irrelevant distraction. At APLs 8-12, the March Major is convinced the Gems are a serious matter.

APLs 2-6:

"I've been ordered to deal with a special matter. We're about to go to into battle! I'm not going to divert my soldiers to follow up on the bird-brained ravings of a wizard in the Arcanist Guild. So, I need a 'diverse' group of volunteers to deal with this minor matter, while the rest of us attend to the battle. The matter is not overly dangerous. My soldiers are going into far greater danger. Will you help us?"

APLs 8-12:

"A very serious matter has come to my attention. I need some volunteers to deal with a special issue. My men are trained to fight on the battlefield, not infiltrate a wizard's tower. I need the help of people with such impressive skills as you. I ask of you – will you help us?"

For all APLs, continue:

"A few weeks ago, a cache of gems was stolen from the Library of Antigua. Nothing has been stolen before from its secure vault. The gems are now in the hands of a wizard. A traitor to his own kind, Konrad Huber.

"Huber is helping the plant creatures somehow. The gems are part of his plan. We want you to infiltrate his tower and recover the

gems. To get to his tower, you'll need at least a day's travel through land controlled by these evil beings. We have a guide for you."

The March Major notices her cigar has extinguished itself. With a tindertwig, she relights it while strumming her fingers on her desk, waiting.

After a few moments, a man in his thirties with short, unkempt hair enters. A raven is perched on his shoulder. He places the raven on the desk. A deep sigh escapes from the March Major's mouth.

"So, you're the ones who will take Theo back," says the raven suddenly, the March Major's eyes rolling skyward. "Theo must get back to Master. Master captured and taken to tower. Others with Master in tower. Each day, some of others taken away and never come back. Theo escaped. Traveled through dangerous lands for help. Theo can lead you back, if you promise to help Theo's master."

March Major Rhess, Female Human Ftr9/Clr1:

Rhess is short, stocky, well padded, and heavily armored. A streak of white runs through her brown hair. She moves smoothly, always in balance, clearly a trained warrior. She is devoted to her faith, and feels she can serve best as career military. PCs may recognize her from *PAL1-10 Siege at Castle Arndulant*. The white in her hair is from dying and being raised twice during the siege.

Theo the Raven: see Appendix I.

Adept Bevan, Male Human Wiz5: AL N; Adept Bevan is a very excitable and eccentric individual who obsesses over his studies. Bevan's excited language is punctuated with exaggerated gesticulations. The PCs may have met the Adept in *PAL3-04 Full Circle*.

At this point, the three NPCs explain to the PCs the details of their mission.

- March Major Rhess says the gems are smoky colored crystals, 208 in number. They were contained within a sablewood box. All must be returned. A great curse is said to be on the gems.
- March Major Rhess unrolls a map, the handout entitled "Rhess's Map." He shows the lands the PCs must infiltrate and where the Prelatal Army will be approaching.
- The PCs need to reach his tower at noon the day after tomorrow, which is when the Army will be attacking the plant creature settlement.

During the attack, whatever guards are around Huber's tower will most likely be distracted. It is noon right now. It's about 16 hours of travel through dense forest and rough, snowy terrain to reach Huber's tower.

- Adept Bevan explains that the trip to Huber's tower will be dangerous. The plant creatures patrol the area and are very powerful. If the PCs don't have a better means to traverse the land unnoticed, he offers an option.
- Bevan presents vials of an elixir he created. The plant creatures employ strange necklaces that exert some form of mind control over the victim. He was privileged to study one such victim and created the elixir to block most of the nefarious effects of these "viticula necklace." If the PCs were able to obtain such necklaces, they could travel through the rex aartuk lands and be identified as allies of the plant creatures. Bevan mentions that there could be unpredictable side effects of the necklaces; wary and powerful PCs might choose to find some other means to infiltrate the rex aartuk controlled lands.
- Theo can guide the PCs to the general location of a human patrol he passed within rex aartuk lands. Theo and Bevan believe these humans possess several of the rex aartuk necklaces, and that these humans are brigands associated with a group known as the Freelancers.
- The March Major urges the PCs to use whatever means they have to reach Huber's tower as quickly as possible. If they can fly, teleport, or employ other powerful means to get there rapidly, they should do so. However, if they arrive early at Huber's tower, they should remain hidden until noon on the day after tomorrow. Soon after the battle begins, the March Major expects the tower's defenses will be diminished. The March Major sees no advantage to assaulting Huber's tower early, and, in fact, an early assault might place the rex aartuk on alert, making the battle more difficult for the Army.
- Theo can lead the PCs to Huber's tower. As they approach the tower, he can also describe the general layout of the sections he witnessed.
- If asked, Bevan will say he is confident he can remove a viticula necklace once the PCs return. In truth, he's not certain how exactly he will do this.
- Konrad Huber casts *mind blank* on himself every day, making him immune to scrying.

Encounter One: Freelancer Patrol

Assuming the PCs choose to find the viticula necklaces, Theo guides them towards the Freelancer patrol. Throughout their trip, Theo proves to be a very outgoing familiar. He hops from shoulder to shoulder, talking to each PC in turn. To some, Theo might be quite annoying. Adding to this is Theo's fondness of "knock-knock" jokes, some of which are listed in the handout "Theo's Knock-Knock Jokes." Theo speaks of a beautiful raven familiar named Willow who lives with her master in Ogburg.

After traveling for the remainder of the first day, the PCs will eventually need to make camp. The weather is quite cold and darkness falls quickly. As the PCs are setting up shelter, but before they can make a fire, a random PC notices something. A low breeze blows in his face and he smells smoke. After looking into the wind, he can see a faint glow filtering through the trees.

Five hundred feet ahead, the Freelancer patrol has already made camp. They are seated around the fire, with two guards keeping watch at all times. The Freelancers are patrolling the edge of the rex aartuk domain and are instructed to protect against intruders. They are also expecting Freelancers from other parts of the Pale to arrive from time to time, to meet their rex aartuk allies. They have ten necklaces, intended for the arriving Freelancers to arrive.

The leader is the weaselly Fenmit. Fenmit has always been the subservient one, but with the rex aartuk alliance, he has gained some power. He stutters and is noticeably unsure of himself, but he relishes bossing his men around. Fenmit is very suspicious of others.

The party can approach this encounter from various angles.

Stealth

It is quite feasible for the party to sneak in and steal the necklaces. The two guards take 10 on all Spot and Listen checks. The other two Freelancers roll randomly on their Spot and Listen checks, but suffer a -2 penalty due to inattention.

The necklaces are in a leather bag amidst a pile of backpacks and other equipment away from the fire. If a PC observes the camp unnoticed for at least 10 rounds, she sees a Freelancer approach the equipment, open the leather bag, admire a necklace, return the necklace to the bag, and go back to what he was doing.

To aid the stealthy approach, the PCs might setup some sort of distraction. Unless the distraction is particularly clumsy, it will aid the stealthy PC's objectives.

Deception

Skilled PCs can successfully deceive the Freelancers, engage in conversation, and convince the Freelancers to turn over the necklaces. After all, the Freelancers are expecting others of their ilk to arrive, and the necklaces are for these newcomers.

However, all of the Freelancers are wearing viticula necklaces. When first encountering a PC posing as an ally, they will use the Reveal Necklaces ability (see Appendix II). Assuming nothing appears around the PC's neck, he has some explaining to do.

The party may create some ingenious ruses, particularly if illusions or skilled bluffers are involved. It is not necessary to thwart these efforts, and in fact, the encounter may be a fun opportunity to play through such a situation.

When bluffing, apply appropriate Sense Motive modifiers. A very poor bluff in this case would warrant a +10 or +20 modifier. A very creative bluff that ties in with the rex aartuk would have a +0 modifier or even a -5 modifier.

Combat

The Freelancers can be attacked outright. The PCs already have the advantage. If they choose combat, allow them 10 minutes to plan a surprise attack; note the section above on Stealth regarding Spot and Listen checks when the party approaches. Should the players waste more than 10 minutes, one of the Freelancers gets spooked and the group of them gathers, heading in the PCs direction. Much of the advantage or surprise is lost.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Freelancer Patrolmen (4): 12 hp each; see Appendix I.

[These patrolmen are Ftr1, which is CR 1. 4 CR 1 creatures are an EL 4 encounter.]

APL 4 (EL 5)

Freelancer Patrolmen (4): 22 hp each; see Appendix I.

[These patrolmen are Ftr2, which is CR 2. 4 CR 2 creatures are an EL 5 encounter.]

APL 6 (EL 6)

Freelancer Patrolmen (3): 34 hp each; see Appendix I.

[These patrolmen are Ftr3, which is CR 3. 3 CR 3 creatures are an EL 6 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 8)

Freelancer Patrolmen (4): 44 hp each; see Appendix I.

[These patrolmen are Ftr4, which is CR 4. 4 CR 4 creatures are an EL 8 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 9)

Freelancer Patrolmen (3): 64 hp each; see Appendix I.

[These patrolmen are Ftr6, which is CR 6. 3 CR 6 creatures are an EL 9 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 10)

Freelancer Patrolmen (4): 64 hp each; see Appendix I.

[These patrolmen are Ftr6, which is CR 6. 4 CR 6 creatures are an EL 10 encounter.]

Encounter Two: Donning the Necklaces

Once obtained from Encounter One, the PCs have ten viticula necklaces in a leather bag. The necklaces are detailed in Appendix II.

If the PCs consume the elixirs provided by Adept Bevan, they can then safely don the necklaces. The process, however, is quite painful:

As you place the necklace over your head, the loop of vines comes alive. You feel dozens of tiny roots emerge, at first tickling the flesh on your neck and then suddenly causing intense pain as they plunge into you. Your body is wracked with pain, perhaps the most intense you've ever felt. Your heart beats faster and you are very aware of the blood rushing through your veins. It feels as though a war is being waged within your body and mind.

Finally, the pain subsides. You open your eyes and notice the necklace has disappeared, though you still feel it around your neck. Though you suffer no obvious ill effects, your mind is unsettled and somehow you feel unbalanced.

The potion provided by Adept Bevan blocks the Pervert Alignment ability of the viticula necklaces, and the bonding process is without any of the risks

described. All other abilities are the same, however, the necklaces fall off and die within one week, unable to establish a symbiotic relationship with the subject.

Each PC suffers from a single trait, randomly chosen from the handout "Viticula Necklace Traits." It's up to each player to roleplay out this trait to his satisfaction; they have no game-mechanic effect. No PC is compelled to act out the traits indicated. These traits will go away once the necklaces die.

Encounter Three: Infiltrating Hostile Territory

There are a few different ways the party can travel to Konrad Huber's tower.

Using the Necklaces

The most obvious way to traverse the hostile territory is to obtain the viticula necklaces in Encounter One. Should the PCs do this, rex aartuk patrols will recognize the party as allies and allow them to travel unmolested. The party will arrive at Huber's tower on the morning of the battle.

You travel through the frigid forest, ascending higher and higher. It may be a trick of the light, but the trees appear like souls tortured within the depths of Hades, their limbs grasping desperately for mercy.

With little warning, you see some movement and suddenly a strange, multi-limbed creature appears before you. Star-shaped, its deep green skin suggests it is some form of plant life. You sense others are right behind it.

The creature stands there, still and quiet. The necklaces around your necks appear, the gems at the base of them glowing slightly. The creature nods its strange head and disappears back into the forest.

This scene repeats itself twice more before the party reaches the tower.

The Direct Approach

The party can choose to just plod right into the forest. Assuming that they don't take sufficient measures to remain undetected for the two days of travel, they have to fight two hostile rex aartuk patrols. Set up the encounter based on how carefully the party is traversing the land. Both

combat encounters occur on the day before the battle.

Note that two combat encounters can significantly extend the length of this scenario. If you're not in an open-ended time slot, consider dissuading the party from choosing this course by having Theo the Raven speak up. He becomes quite adamant that just walking through the hostile lands is suicide, and that if the party can't come up with a better way to remain undetected, he's not going with them unless they get the necklaces.

APL 2 (EL 3)

Yellow Rex Aartuk: hp 39; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. 1 CR 3 creature is an EL 3 encounter.]

APL 4 (EL 6)

Yellow Rex Aartuk (3): hp 39 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. 3 CR 3 creatures are an EL 6 encounter.]

APL 6 (EL 8)

Yellow Rex Aartuk (6): hp 39 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk is CR 3. 6 CR 3 creatures are an EL 8 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 10)

Orange Rex Aartuk (6): hp 65 each; see Appendix II.

[Orange Rex Aartuk are CR 5. 6 CR 5 creatures are an EL 10 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 12)

Green Rex Aartuk (6): hp 102 each; see Appendix II.

[Green Rex Aartuk are CR 7. 6 CR 7 creatures are an EL 12 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 14)

Blue Rex Aartuk (6): hp 133 each; see Appendix II.

[Blue Rex Aartuk are CR 9. 6 CR 9 creatures are an EL 14 encounter.]

Both combat encounters follow the above statistics. The second encounter occurs three hours after the first.

Flying

At higher APLs, the party may have access to the means of flying all the way to Huber's tower. While

this avoids the rex aartuk patrols, the foothills are very dangerous. At higher APLs, unless the party undertakes sufficient means to remain concealed, they are attacked. These creatures made their home within the Rakers, but have been displaced by the rex aartuk and are very hungry. They appear out of the clouds 200 feet away from the party.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Griffons (4): hp 59 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Griffons are CR 4. 4 CR 4 creatures are an EL 8 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 10)

Wyverns (4): hp 59 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Wyverns are CR 6. 4 CR 6 creatures are an EL 10 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 12)

Yrthak (3): hp 102 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Yrthak are CR 9. 3 CR 9 creatures are an EL 12 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 14)

Yrthak (6): hp 102 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Yrthak are CR 9. 6 CR 9 creatures are an EL 14 encounter.]

Avoiding All Conflict

There are many means that the party may avoid all encounters, such as *teleport* or other magics. If such options are within their reach, do not discourage the party from employing them. This approach will not diminish the XP or gp award for the scenario.

Encounter Four: Theo's Departure

While traveling to Huber's tower, Theo fills the party in on his story:

- A week ago, he and Melvane were traveling alone on the Foothills Road. His master was captured by human brigands and taken to Huber's tower.
- Theo hid within Melvane's cloak, and they were taken to Huber's tower. He remembers being taken through the main entrance (Area A) where there were several plant creatures. His master was taken to Area I. After waiting with him a few hours, Theo escaped, leaving Areas D and C.

- There are several other prisoners within Area I. Theo has no idea what Huber or the plant creatures want with the prisoners, but he is very concerned for his master's life.
- Theo tells the party he is aware of two entrances to Huber's tower. Area A might be guarded or trapped, and opens into a long hallway that leads into the tower. Area C, a tunnel that starts about 200 yards south of the tower in a gully, has several grates that might be locked, and it leads to Area D where he heard some creatures moving around. From Area D, the party would need to travel up the shaft into the tower.

Sometime just before the PCs enter into Huber's tower, something horrible happens to Theo. His master is sacrificed to the Black Cyst.

"Did you feel that?!" Theo says, twitching his wings. It's not exactly clear what he's referring to.

Give the PCs a chance to react.

"There it is again! Theo felt something like a compulsion, a mind-affecting spell."

Again, give the PCs a chance to react.

"Something awful wrong. Like feeblemind. When you go back to city, please find raven familiar named Willow. Tell her Theo miss her and love her. You promise do this! Please promise."

Wait for PCs to respond.

"Worms? Worms to eat?" Theo falls silent, and looks like he wants to fly away.

Any PC who casts arcane spells can deduce Theo now behaves like a normal, non-familiar raven. A PC who makes a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 10) realizes if a familiar's master dies, the familiar should retain all of its abilities. However, if a familiar were level-drained, the familiar's abilities would be lost. If the master lost all of his levels, the master would die and the familiar would revert to a normal animal.

Encounter Five: Huber's Tower

Using Theo as a guide, the PCs can easily reach Huber's tower on foot before noon on the day of

the attack. The area surrounding the tower shows tracks of many rex aartuk, but they are all strangely absent.

If the party arrives at the tower very early, many rex aartuk can be found within the area. The PCs will have no trouble finding a place to hide until the appointed time, but if they choose to attack, send four sets of rex aartuk as described in Encounter Three. About an hour before noon, all of the rex aartuk leave hastily, heading southwards. They have received word that the Prelatal Army is moving against them and are joining the battle.

A mountain ridge rises before you, and halfway up the slope is a strange tower. It appears as though a normal stone tower has been wrapped with large vines, twisting around its circumference. Their sickly yellow-green color is a stark contrast to the bleak, snowy terrain around you. A thin aura of mist surrounds the tower, as though heat from the tower is reacting to the surrounding cold.

The tower was constructed decades ago by a recluse wizard and had been abandoned until Huber began working with the rex aartuk. When describing Huber's tower, imagine a small stone tower that has been absorbed by vines from an alien plant.

The interior is dimly lit by a yellowish-green light. The air is warm and very moist, stiflingly so. PCs wearing cold weather gear will need to disrobe. Every so often, vents are located on the walls, from which the moist, warm air emanates. Surrounding each vent is a small colony of flowers that seem to flourish in the humid air. In Area I, the PCs learn that the circulation of this air is provided by the prisoners. Doors are generally wooden, also covered in vines.

Keep the pace moving as the PCs explore the tower. When the party comes to a new room, quickly summarize what they find, rather than force them to describe how they are searching the room. Make it clear when the PCs have found everything of interest within a room.

Area A – Main Entrance

The main entrance is a set of large iron doors. Normally, a patrol of rex aartuk guards the entrance. Instead, the door is merely locked and trapped. Just beyond the door is an *alarm* spell. If triggered, the PCs hear a noise that sounds like a handbell for a few seconds. This noise alerts the

monsters in Area B, as they would be if the door were smashed in.

[The below traps are all directly from the DMG with CRs equal to the EIs shown, with the only modification that they are all “touch trigger.”]

APL 2 (EL 1)

Locked Door: hardness 5; 20 hp; Open Lock (DC 20); Break (DC 25).

Spear Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +12 ranged (1d8/x3); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

APL 4, 6, and 8 (EL 3)

Locked Door: hardness 5; 20 hp; Open Lock (DC 25); Break (DC 25).

Melf's Acid Arrow Trap: CR 3; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +2 ranged touch; spell effect (*Melf's acid arrow*, 3rd-level wizard, 2d4 acid/round for 2 rounds); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

APL 10 (EL 4)

Locked Door: hardness 5; 20 hp; Open Lock (DC 30); Break (DC 25).

Bestow Curse Trap: CR 4; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*bestow curse*, -6 Con, 5th-level cleric, DC 14 Will negates); Search DC 28; Disable Device 28.

APL 12 (EL 5)

Locked Door: hardness 5; 20 hp; Open Lock (DC 35); Break (DC 25).

Phantasmal Killer Trap: CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*phantasmal killer*, 7th-level wizard, DC 16 Will save for disbelief and DC 16 Fort save for partial effect); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

Area B – Main Hallway

This wide hallway is 40 feet wide and extends a long way into the main section of the tower, sloping gradually. Just inside Area A, the air is extremely foggy, obscuring all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. Creatures 5 feet away have concealment (20% miss chance). This area of fog extends 30 feet from the door. A strange, low frequency hum can be heard near the entrance, which is louder at higher APLs.

A cruel result of Huber's experiments patrol this hallway. These creatures appear like normal animals that have various plant features grafted on to them – vines that snake out and weave like tentacles on a displacer beast, patches of skin that

look like plant matter, eyes that are pure green in color. Have fun describing their eerie nature. These animals are trained to attack intruders. Except for their appearance, these are normal animals in every other aspect.

If the PCs set off the *alarm* or smashed the door in Area A, the animals are aware of the PCs. They use their scent ability to identify where the party is and attack with surprise. The deep hum makes it difficult to hear the approaching animals. A PC must succeed at a Listen check (DC 10+APL) to act in the surprise round. If the animals have not been alerted, the party and the animals both notice each other simultaneously once the party emerges from the fog.

APL 2 (EL 3)

Wolves (3): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Wolves are CR 1. 3 CR 1 creatures are an EL 3 encounter.]

APL 4 (EL 5)

Wolverines (3): hp 28 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Wolverines are CR 2. 3 CR 2 creatures are an EL 5 encounter.]

APL 6 (EL 7)

Dire Wolverines (3): hp 45 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Dire Wolverines are CR 4. 3 CR 4 creatures are an EL 7 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 9)

Dire Bears (3): hp 105 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Dire Bears are CR 7. 2 CR 7 creatures are an EL 9 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 11)

Dire Tigers (3): hp 120 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Dire Tigers are CR 8. 3 CR 8 creatures are an EL 11 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 13)

Dire Tigers (6): hp 120 each; see *Monster Manual*.

[Dire Tigers are CR 8. 6 CR 8 creatures are an EL 13 encounter.]

Area C – Hidden Entrance

An alternative way of getting into Huber's tower is to crawl through a tunnel that heads underneath the tower. The tunnel starts in a gully that is about

200 yards south of Area A. Bushes and trees obscure the tunnel entrance, but someone who knows approximately where to look will have no trouble finding it.

The tunnel varies in height and width from 4 feet to 6 feet. It extends 200 yards before reaching Area D. A small stream flows outward, sullied by the refuse that comes from Area E. The tunnel is dark and despite the cold, smells quite wretched. Every so often, the party comes across human waste and small pieces of vivisected animals.

The original owner of the tower was aware of this tunnel, and erected a few grates to prevent anyone from crawling through it. Theo had little trouble slipping between the bars. After traveling 50 and 100 yards, the party comes to rusty, locked grates.

Locked grate: hardness 5; 30 hp; Open Lock (DC 25); Break (DC 25).

Continuing further, at the 150-yard mark, there is another locked grate. This one is also trapped.

[The below traps are all directly from the DMG with CRs equal to the ELs shown, with the only modification that they are all "touch trigger."]

APL 2 (EL 1)

Scything Blade Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +8 melee (1d8/x3); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.

APL 4, 6, and 8 (EL 3)

Stone Blocks from Ceiling: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +10 melee (4d6, stone blocks); Search DC 25; Disable Device 20.

APL 10 (EL 4)

Wall Scythe Trap: CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/x4, scythe); Search DC 21; Disable Device 18.

APL 12 (EL 5)

Falling Block Trap: CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (6d6); multiple targets (can strike all characters in two squares in front of grate); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25.

Finally, at the 200-yard mark, within sight of Area D, there is a final rusty, locked grate the same as described above.

Area D – Yellow Musk Creeper Cavern

The tunnel that leads from Area C eventually enters into this large cavern. Another tunnel leaves from the far side of this cavern, leading into a large network of tunnels underneath the Rakers. (The party finds nothing of interest if they choose to explore this tunnel.) A pool fills part of this cavern, fed from beneath by a spring, and is four feet at its deepest. Water from the pool flows down the tunnel that leads to Area C. A small island is on the far side of the pool. A roughly carved shaft penetrates the ceiling above, rising up from the ceiling to Area E. It is about three feet wide.

Konrad Huber once experimented with yellow musk creepers. He accidentally infected himself and disposed of the plants down the shaft from Area E. A plant has taken root on the island within the pool.

About two months ago, a band of monsters exploring the area came into this cavern. The yellow musk creeper infected them. These zombies are no longer limited to remaining within 100 feet of the creeper and have been intermittently attempting to get through the grate so they can go outside to sprout. They attack anyone who enters the cavern to protect the plant.

APL 2 (EL 3)

Yellow Musk Zombie Troglodytes (3): 13 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Yellow Musk Zombie Troglodytes are CR 1 (1 base, +0 for template). 3 CR 1 creature is an EL 3 encounter.]

APL 4 (EL 5)

Yellow Musk Zombie Troglodytes (6): 13 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Yellow Musk Zombie Troglodytes are CR 1 (1 base, +0 for template). 6 CR 1 creature is an EL 5 encounter.]

APL 6 (EL 7)

Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giant: 102; see Appendix I.

[Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants are CR 7 (7 base, +0 for template). 1 CR 7 creature is an EL 7 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 9)

Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants (2): 102 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants are CR 7 (7 base, +0 for template). 2 CR 7 creatures are an EL 9 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 11)

Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants (4): 102 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants are CR 7 (7 base, +0 for template). 4 CR 7 creatures are an EL 11 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 13)

Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants (8): 102 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giants are CR 7 (7 base, +0 for template). 8 CR 7 creatures are an EL 13 encounter.]

The yellow musk creeper is isolated on the island on the far side of the pool, unable to cross the water. The range of its musk is only 30 feet, and only covers part of the pool. Killing the creeper should be trivial with ranged attacks, and only a foolish PC would get caught in its musk.

All APLs (EL 4)

Yellow Musk Creeper: 57 hp; see Appendix II.

Area E – Washroom

This small room serves as a bathroom for Konrad Huber. The shaft down leads to Area D, and was used by Theo in his escape. While unpleasant, climbing up this shaft from Area D should pose no problems for the party.

Area F – Specimen Room

Opening the door to this room, you see inside a truly sickening scene. Various large glass jars rest on a countertop that goes around the entire room. A cloudy yellowish liquid fills each jar. Inside the jars are some of the most tortured forms you've ever seen.

A puppy floats in one jar. Leaves push out from its ears and small roots can be seen exiting the fur over its entire body. Its eyes are cloudy gray, the color of bone. They stare at you lifeless, unfeeling, and blind.

A small kitten rests in another jar, with wretched vines growing from its eye sockets. The pitiful creature's mouth is open widely, as though forever screeching in infinite pain.

A marmot hangs in yet another. Around its head, a net-like mesh of green vines wraps. A transparent green membrane covers its mouth and nose.

These and other tortured creatures float lifelessly within the glass tombs surrounding you.

Huber has preserved a few of his attempts to create plant/animal hybrids.

Area G – Bedroom/Study

Konrad Huber spends much of his time within this room, reading, studying, sleeping, and eating. A variety of mundane items can be found here – bed, desk, dresser, clothes, personal effects, etc.

The desk is very neat and has only two items of interest on it. The first is one of Huber's spellbooks. The second is a note totaling the gems that Huber has recovered from various sources to make sure he'd recovered all 333 Gems of Tharizdun. This note is shown on the handout "Note on Desk."

Area H – Storage Room

This room contains various foodstuffs, equipment, and other items needed by Huber. There is a small area for him to prepare food here. There is nothing of interest to the party here.

Area I – Prisoner Room

You open the door and see a sight that makes your heart drop and your stomach twitch. Seated around the room are about a dozen men and women. Their hands and ankles are crudely bound with rope. Their faces are garishly gaunt in the green light. The prisoners open their eyes, looking at you with terrified stares. Weakly, they struggle against their bonds.

What shocks you most is that a network of vines covers each of their mouths and noses. The vines almost look like tubes, and what partially covers their face is almost some kind of mask. In slow, deliberate unison, these people breath in. Pause. And then breathe out.

Behind you, you hear air circulating from the strange vents you have seen throughout the complex. Listening to the pattern of that sound and seeing these people before you, you now realize what circulates the air here and why it is so moist and humid.

One of Huber's tasks for the rex aartuk is to collect and store human prisoners until they're needed for sacrifice to the Black Cyst. Every day, they take a few prisoners away, and about every week, Huber gets enough prisoners to fill up this room.

The prisoners can be set free quite easily. The vines around their mouths can be ripped off, causing a disgusting slurping sound. They are all

exhausted and have been reduced to between 1-10 hit points. The few spellcasters in the group have no spell slots available until they can rest. With one exception (see below), none have any equipment.

There are nine prisoners in total: Gwenda (female human Ftr1), Bryn (male human Rog2), Hellard (male human Ftr 3), Gorbard (male human Rgr2), Alwyn (female human Clr1), Rhun (male human Ftr3), Weliva (female human Sor2), Talvan (male human Drd1), and Felia (female gnome Wiz10/Wayfarer Guide 3).

Most of the prisoners are very timid and shaken upon release. Felia, however, is vocally grateful and works to organize the prisoners. Though she is very weak, her spirit is strong and Felia is confident that she can lead the prisoners out of the tower and to safety. Before she departs, Felia says to the party, "If you ever need my help, come see me in Holdworthy." For freeing her, the PCs have earned the Favor of the Wayfarers. (PCs who played *PAL2-05 The Heretic* will recognize Felia.)

Just as the prisoners leave, Alywyn approaches the PCs and extends her clutched hand. Within it is a silver ring. "I managed to hide this from my captors. Please take this, so that your journey may be blessed by the memory of Laelithra." This is a *ring of Laelithra*.

Area J – Viligant's Room

At the beginning of this scenario, note if anyone has played previous scenarios in the Germinations series. If they have not, change the below description, as they do not recognize Amaris Viligant.

Within this room, you see a horrifying site. Hanging from the ceiling is a torso of a human woman, her form wrapped in large, dark green leaves. You see neither arms nor legs. Four, rope-like vines attach to her shoulders and extend up to the ceiling, where other plant matter grows. Like a skullcap, a thick green leaf wraps over the top of her head, extending back around her neck. Her eyes are closed and her brow furrowed, as though she was deep in concentration. You can see this bizarre form is breathing. Realizing that somehow this distorted image of a person is alive, you recognize the face. This is Bishop-General Amaris Viligant, of the Church Militant.

If the PCs speak to Viligant, she opens her eyes and will respond to questions. She speaks in a

steady monotone. What has been done to her has greatly dulled her mind, to the point where she questions and comprehends very little of her surroundings. Things she might be able to explain include:

- “The Huber” is the one who made her like this. She is a symbol of the Huber’s genius.
- She remembers nothing of her past life, but when questioned by someone she’s met before, she says, “Something inside me tells me I should know who you are.”
- The Huber comes to check on her regularly, occasionally “enhancing” her form. Sometimes, he brings friends – star-shaped friends with five legs.
- The Huber wishes to keep his friends happy. They teach him things. In return, she has seen the Huber with many beautiful gems for his friends.
- The Huber’s friends teach him things, strange things she doesn’t understand that the Huber calls “the pseudonatural.”
- The Huber is sick. Something with the Huber’s work with plants went wrong, and now the Huber struggles to live.
- She is happy to be here, and would not leave if she could. She enjoys feeling connected to the plantlife around her.

Don’t let this roleplaying encounter last long. She volunteers much of the above information, even if the PCs don’t ask for it. Once she’s revealed the above information, she says, “You are most curious. I don’t believe I have anything further to say to you,” and then is silent.

Viligant cannot be cured or removed from this room by any means short of a *wish* or a *miracle*. If the PCs cut her down, red blood pumps out from the vines and she quickly dies.

Area K – Laboratory

Konrad Huber’s latest experiment has gone awry. Working to open a channel to pseudonatural realms, he has transported several hostile creatures into his lab. To gather his wits and prepare to mount a magical assault on the creatures, Huber locked himself within Area L.

Unfortunately for him, the elixir Huber uses to suppress the yellow musk creeper infection has just worn off. And the next batch of elixir is on a table in his lab. The creatures are banging on the door to Area L while Huber writhes inside in intense pain.

When the PCs enter Area K, the hostile creatures will turn and attack.

Be sure to describe the pseudonatural creatures with all of their horrific glory. The krenshar have a mane of tentacles around their necks, the trolls have small mouths on their torsos that open and scream, and the umber hulks have eyes on retractable stalks. At least once in the combat a monster will change into its alternate form. The krenshar pulls back the skin from its head, but it keeps going until the entire creature is inverted into a tentacled mass. The troll and umber hulks rend their own chests open, tentacled masses pouring out of their bodies.

APL 2 (EL 4)

Pseudonatural Krenshars (3): 11 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Pseudonatural Krenshars are CR 1 (1 base, +0 for template). 3 CR 1 creatures are an EL 4 encounter.]

APL 4 (EL 6)

Pseudonatural Krenshars (6): 11 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Pseudonatural Krenshars are CR 1 (1 base, +0 for template). 6 CR 1 creatures are an EL 6 encounter.]

APL 6 (EL 8)

Pseudonatural Trolls (2): 63 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Pseudonatural Trolls are CR 6 (5 base, +1 for template). 2 CR 6 creatures are an EL 8 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 10)

Pseudonatural Trolls (4): 63 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Pseudonatural Trolls are CR 6 (5 base, +1 for template). 4 CR 6 creatures are an EL 10 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 12)

Pseudonatural UMBER Hulks (3): 71 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Pseudonatural UMBER Hulks are CR 9 (7 base, +2 for template). 3 CR 9 creatures are an EL 12 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 14)

Pseudonatural UMBER Hulks (5): 71 hp each; see Appendix I.

[Pseudonatural UMBER Hulks are CR 9 (7 base, +2 for template). 5 CR 9 creatures are an EL 14 encounter.]

In the center of the floor, there are various strange symbols written in chalk – the remnants of Huber’s attempt to open a pseudonatural gateway. Bits of two destroyed spellbooks lie in tatters. There is also a solid stone table. Upon it are numerous beakers, flasks, glass tubes, and cruel-looking surgical instruments. There are several sheets with indecipherable notes. In one flask there is a slightly warm green liquid – the elixir that Huber desperately desires. There are also vials of concoctions of interest to the PCs (see Treasure Summary).

Area L – Storage Room

When the party arrives in Area K, the creatures in that room are banging on the locked door to this room.

Locked Door: hardness 5; 20 hp; Open Lock (DC 20); Break (DC 25).

Inside this room, you see a middle aged man lying on the floor, clutching his head. He wears wizardly robes and has short-cut platinum hair. He groans in pain and you notice a small leaf poking its way out of one ear. A small yellow bug emerges from the other.

He looks up at you and pleads, “Please help me! The elixir in the other room, please get it for me.”

Konrad Huber (human Wiz15) mistakenly infected himself with a yellow musk creeper seed several weeks ago. Using a specially crafted elixir, he can stop the seed’s growth. However, the elixir works for a limited duration before Huber must imbibe more. Failure to do so causes debilitating pain and permanent Intelligence damage.

Huber is desperate for help. The PCs can let him squirm, but at this point, he’ll tell them anything they want – all the while in great pain. He can reveal almost any detail from this scenario. Items of interest he can talk about include:

- His yellow musk creeper infection and the elixir.
- The rex aartuk and Tharizdun, and how they’ve come here to unearth and carve the Black Cyst.
- The 333 Gems of Tharizdun that he’s collected.
- The prisoners and how they were captured for sacrifice to the Black Cyst.

- His horrid experiments in blending plant and animal life.
- His investigation of the pseudonatural.

Soon after drinking the elixir, Huber falls unconscious from his ordeal. If they don’t help him, Huber dies within a few minutes.

Next to Huber is a small sablewood chest with platinum trim. Inside are the 333 Gems of Tharizdun. Anyone who casts *detect evil* or *detect magic* discovers an overwhelming aura. How to invoke whatever powers exist within the Gems is unknown.

At APL 6+, there is a second chest where Huber places valuable items from the prisoners (see Treasure Summary).

Area M – Upper Exit

These double doors open to a small balcony that looks over the mountain ridge to the east and into the valley where the rex aartuk base is. A stone bridge slopes gently downward from the balcony and connects to a path near the top of the ridge.

From the front of the tower, this bridge is concealed and can only be seen by a party who uses flight to scout around the tower. However, a resourceful party could very easily find this bridge and enter the tower from above. Don’t dissuade the party from such inventiveness. The encounters may occur out-of-order, but it should still work. When they first arrive, the battle below has yet to begin. Allow the party to explore the tower and then once done, explain that they hear the sounds of distant battle – leading them back through Area M and to the events of this encounter.

Opening these double doors, you see a small balcony looking over the mountain ridge to the east and into the valley beyond. A stone bridge connects the balcony to the ridge. In the valley beyond, you can see the battle raging between the strange plant creatures and the Prelatal Army.

The plant creatures are arranged around a huge black stone formation at the northern end of the valley. Black as night, you see the stone has been carved into the shape of an inverted step pyramid. To the side, a team of creatures continues the task of carving the stone, small chunks of strange black rock falling off their chisels and into the stream that flows nearby.

On the far side of the black inverted pyramid are three strange vessels. They almost look like sailing ships that have run aground, but their form also bears a striking

resemblance to a hammerhead shark. The Prelatal Army has advanced towards these vessels and, using ranged weaponry, partially damaged them.

Allow the party to react at this point. They might wish to start heading towards the battle. The events they're seeing are far away, perhaps a mile distant.

After observing the battle for a few moments, you see the Prelatal Army clearly has the upper hand. Then you see the plant creatures escort a handful of human figures to the base of the black rock formation. The humans are placed against the rock and a purple aura appears around them. After a few moments, the aura disappears and the humans fall to the ground. Then you notice the entire force of plant creatures fighting with renewed vigor. It appears the sacrifices of the humans to the black pyramid have empowered the rex aartuk.

Coming up the path leading toward the bridge is a group of about a dozen soldiers, all wounded and carrying even more seriously wounded away from the battle. Leading this group of injured is a dwarf of great renown in the Pale – Dorjan Oldrich, holding his famous battleaxe Berrvenin.

Seeing you, Dorjan motions for the wounded soldiers behind him to stop. He holds out his battleaxe and calls out to you. "Foe or friend?"

Allow for a very abbreviated conversation between Dorjan Oldrich (male dwarf Ftr6/Rog10) and the party. He is gruff, taciturn, and very undiplomatic. His task is to escort the wounded soldiers away from the battle. He himself is quite injured as well, though he tries to hide it.

If you are running short on time, or if the party is severely depleted and clearly can't succeed at Encounter Six, Dorjan orders the party to escort the wounded soldiers to safety so he can prevent any rex aartuk from using this path to escape. Go to Encounter Seven and then the Conclusion.

If there is time, allow the party to choose Encounter Six. Dorjan wants the party to take over the task of bringing the wounded to the army outpost safely. He confesses he is weary, but this path must be guarded. If the party offers, he'll let them switch places – he'll continue to escort the wounded and they can go down to the valley below to fight. However, he provides a stern warning:

"You don't look like organized soldiers to me. It's war in the valley, the likes of which you've never seen. Heed my warning carefully:

"You may find death swiftly below. The creatures below are a horrible terror. Expect no personal reward – gold and booty will not be coming your way. And don't think this will be valuable experience. You will only earn nightmares, not experience, from the horrors below.

"So, I ask you again to escort these poor souls. You have worked hard this day, and you have earned your full measure of glory. There is no dishonor in turning your back and letting me fight."

Dorjan's warning is intended to suggest just how difficult the battle will be, and that the PCs will earn no gp or XP award from the optional encounter.

Encounter Six (Optional): Joining the Battle

The party chooses to descend down the path into the valley where the battle is taking place. Just before they reach the valley, a squad of rex aartuk comes around a corner in the path and attacks the PCs.

When they are first visible, the rex aartuk are 80 feet away. At higher APLs, the Rex Aartuk Sorcerer has made certain preparations, none of which are reflected in the statistics of the creatures:

- APL 6+: The Sorcerer has *mage armor* precast on itself.
- APL 8+: The Sorcerer always uses Energy Substitution (sonic) on its *scorching ray* and *fireball* spells whenever it doesn't need to take more than a 5-foot step.
- APL 10+: The Sorcerer has precast *mage armor* on the two rex aartuk with it, and has also cast *protection from good* on the three of them, still active for 12 rounds at the start of the battle.
- APL 12: The Sorcerer uses *Evard's black tentacles* if it can hamper multiple members of the party, particularly if it wins initiative. If it detects an arcane caster, it targets that caster with *feblemind*.

APL 2 (EL 5)

Yellow Rex Aartuk (2): hp 39 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. 2 CR 3 creatures are an EL 5 encounter.]

APL 4 (EL 7)

Yellow Rex Aartuk (4): hp 39 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. 4 CR 3 creatures are an EL 7 encounter.]

APL 6 (EL 9)

Rex Aartuk 4th-Level Sorcerer: hp 57; see Appendix I.

Orange Rex Aartuk (2): hp 65 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. Adding 4 levels makes it CR 7. Orange Rex Aartuk are CR 5. 2 CR 5 creatures are equivalent to CR 7. 2 CR 7 creatures are an EL 9 encounter.]

APL 8 (EL 11)

Rex Aartuk 6th-Level Sorcerer: hp 66; see Appendix I.

Green Rex Aartuk (2): hp 102 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. Adding 6 levels makes it CR 9. Green Rex Aartuk are CR 7. 2 CR 7 creatures are equivalent to CR 9. 2 CR 9 creatures are an EL 11 encounter.]

APL 10 (EL 13)

Rex Aartuk 8th-Level Sorcerer: hp 75; see Appendix I.

Blue Rex Aartuk (2): hp 133 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. Adding 8 levels makes it CR 11. Blue Rex Aartuk are CR 9. 2 CR 9 creatures are equivalent to CR 11. 2 CR 11 creatures are an EL 13 encounter.]

APL 12 (EL 15)

Rex Aartuk 10th-Level Sorcerer: hp 84; see Appendix I.

Purple Rex Aartuk (2): hp 178 each; see Appendix II.

[Yellow Rex Aartuk are CR 3. Adding 10 levels makes it CR 13. Blue Rex Aartuk are CR 11. 2 CR 11 creatures are equivalent to CR 13. 2 CR 13 creatures are an EL 15 encounter.]

Encounter Seven: Vessels Take Flight

The Prelatal Army has routed the plant creatures! One of the strange shark-like ships

is in flames. The second levitates from the ground, but is quickly destroyed by several catapult strikes. The third, however, rises from the ground and flies from the valley, sailing the skies as a normal ship would the ocean. It heads in your direction.

The PCs have a brief chance to affect the outcome. In round one, the ship is 1,500 feet distant from the party, traveling towards them. In round two, it's at its closest, 500 feet above them. In round three, it's 1,500 feet from the party and each round thereafter, moves 1,000 feet away. At its closest, the ship is 500 feet away, and each round thereafter it moves 1,000 feet away.

The vessel is already damaged. 30 more points of damage to its hull (hardness 5) will bring the ship down. This should be a very brief, cinematic encounter. Don't roll initiative; just ask what each PC is doing. Parties with access to long range damaging effects can break the hull, and cause the craft to crash into a flaming pile of rubble. Describe the crash in dramatic terms.

It is possible for high-level PCs to pursue the ship even at great distance (e.g. *teleport*). If they have these means, and demonstrate a desire to use them, summarize their successful efforts. A PC on the vessel finds the rex aartuk uninterested in her – they are fighting fires on deck – and she can easily damage the hull through various means. As the ship begins to crash, she must have a means to escape the impact, or will suffer 10d6 damage, save for half.

Conclusion

Parties that bypassed Encounter Six and escorted the wounded away from the battle find the trip to be very cold, but otherwise uneventful.

If the PCs attempt to prevent the return of all 333 Gems of Tharizdun, the Church Militant investigates quite thoroughly. Whatever the PCs do, they run into Church Militant agents at several points over the next few days. As an abstraction, any PC involved in the deception must succeed a Bluff check (DC 25) or be jailed for 20 TUs. Modify the below description should the party succeed in the deception.

After a week, the necklaces upon any PCs wither and die.

Back in Ogburg, a grand celebration is at hand. The army has been victorious! The foul menace of the rex aartuk will no longer threaten the Pale. Bards sing of the heroic conflict, now known as the "Battle of Blackrock"

Valley.” Clerics have been dispatched to study the strange Black Cyst. Dorjan Oldrich is nowhere to be found, and some say he is wandering the Rakers, searching for any plant creatures that might have fled the scene.

You are all hailed as heroes! The Church takes the gems you have recovered, to guard them until it can be determined what to do with them. A menace has been eradicated, and you have played a critical role in this victory.

At the end of the celebrations, PCs who succeeded at Encounter Six receive a private audience with the new Prelate of Ogburg.

As the celebrations die down, you are summoned to a large tent surrounded by several guards. Led inside, you are introduced to Sental Tekis, Prelate of Ogburg. As you come in, she shakes each of your hands firmly while looking you keenly in the eye. She stands nearly six feet tall, with light brown hair, tied up. She wears immaculately polished full plate that has the symbol of Pholtus emblazoned upon it. A throwing axe hangs from her hip.

“Please, sit down,” she says, motioning to a semi-circle of burnished wooden chairs. “Help yourself to some wine.”

“I have heard the tale of your heroism. Not only did you secure these Gems of Tharizdun, but you pressed on to stand against very powerful forces. I thank you for your courage.”

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

Reaching Huber’s tower (EL 4/5/6/8/9/10)

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	300 XP

[OK, here’s how I evaluated this. The PCs must get to Huber’s tower. There are some difficult ways – e.g. just fighting your way through two

rex aartuk patrols – and there are some easier was – getting the necklaces in Encounter One. The easiest way in the scenario is Encounter One, so the PCs get XP equivalent to defeating that encounter. They shouldn’t get more XP for finding more difficult ways to reach Huber’s tower.]

Encounter Five, Area A

Getting beyond the door (EL 1/3/3/3/4/5)

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

Encounter Five, Area B

Defeating the animals (EL 3/5/7/9/11/13)

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP
APL 12	390 XP

Encounter Five, Area C

Getting beyond the grates (EL 1/3/3/3/4/5)

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

Encounter Five, Area D

Defeating the zombies (EL 3/5/7/9/11/13)

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP
APL 12	390 XP

[Note, I give no XP for killing the yellow musk creeper. Stuck on an island with no ranged attacks, it’s a helpless opponent, really.]

Encounter Five, Area K

Defeating the monsters (EL 4/5/8/10/12/14)

APL 2	120 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	240 XP
APL 8	300 XP
APL 10	360 XP
APL 12	420 XP

[Very purposefully, the optional Encounter Six does not provide any XP.]

Conclusion

Returning Gems to Church (RP Award)

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	135 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	225 XP
APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	315 XP

Maximum Possible Experience

Total ELs for this adventure

APL 2	12
APL 4	18
APL 6	24
APL 8	30
APL 10	36
APL 12	42

[Note that Area A+B is mutually exclusive with Area C+D.]

Maximum Possible Experience Awards

APL 2	450 XP
APL 4	675 XP
APL 6	900 XP
APL 8	1,125 XP
APL 10	1,350 XP
APL 12	1,575 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.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy (calculated at 50% of book price); Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables (at 100% of value found); Magic = Magic Items (calculated at 50% of book price). Amounts are rounded to the nearest whole gold piece.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter One

Obtaining the patrol's gear

APL 2: L—28 gp [4 suits of scale mail (16 gp), 4 light wooden shields (1 gp), 8 longswords (10 gp), 4 daggers (0 gp), 16 javelins (1 gp)].

APL 4: L—46 gp [4 suits of scale mail (16 gp), 4 heavy wooden shields (2 gp), 8 longswords (10 gp), 4 daggers (0 gp), 16 javelins (1 gp)].

APL 6: L—84 gp [4 suits of breastplate (66 gp), 4 heavy wooden shields (2 gp), 12 longswords (15 gp), 4 daggers (0 gp), 16 javelins (1 gp)].

APL 8: L—84 gp [4 suits of breastplate (66 gp), 4 heavy wooden shields (2 gp), 12 longswords (15 gp), 4 daggers (0 gp), 16 javelins (1 gp)].

APL 10: L—84 gp [4 suits of breastplate (66 gp), 4 heavy wooden shields (2 gp), 12

longswords (15 gp), 4 daggers (0 gp), 16 javelins (1 gp).

APL 12: L—84 gp [4 suits of breastplate (66 gp), 4 heavy wooden shields (2 gp), 12 longswords (15 gp), 4 daggers (0 gp), 16 javelins (1 gp)].

Encounter Five, Area D

Defeating the zombies

APL 2: L—1 gp [3 clubs (0 gp), 12 javelins (1 gp)].

APL 4: L—2 gp [6 clubs (0 gp), 24 javelins (2 gp)].

APL 6: L—2 gp [large hide armor (2 gp), large greatclub (0 gp), 4 rocks (0 gp)].

APL 8: L—5 gp [2 suits of large hide armor (5 gp), 2 large greatclubs (0 gp), 8 rocks (0 gp)].

APL 10: L—10 gp [4 suits of large hide armor (10 gp), 4 large greatclubs (0 gp), 16 rocks (0 gp)].

APL 12: L—20 gp [8 suits of large hide armor (20 gp), 8 large greatclubs (0 gp), 32 rocks (0 gp)].

Encounter Five, Area G

Obtaining Huber's spellbook

All APLs: L—80 gp [Konrad Huber's spellbook (80 gp)].

Encounter Five, Area I

Freeing the prisoners

All APLs: M—500 gp [*Laelithra's ring of piety* (500 gp)], Favor of the Wayfarers.

Encounter Five, Area K

Facing the pseudonatural creatures

All APLs: Alienist Prestige Class Access.

Getting vials from laboratory

APL 2 and 4: M—20 gp [*silversheen* (20 gp)].

APL 6, 8, 10, and 12: M—129 gp [*elixir of hiding* (20 gp), *elixir of love* (12 gp), *elixir of sneaking* (20 gp), *elixir of swimming* (20 gp), *elixir of vision* (20 gp), *silversheen* (20 gp), *unguent of timelessness* (12 gp), *universal solvent* (5 gp)].

Encounter Five, Area L

Obtaining treasure chest

APL 6: C—5 gp.

APL 8: L—100 gp [10 adamantine arrows (50 gp), 10 adamantine bolts (50 gp)]; M—334 gp [+2 *hide armor* (334 gp)].

APL 10: L—100 gp [10 adamantine arrows (50 gp), 10 adamantine bolts (50 gp)]; C—104

gp; M—1,093 gp [+2 *heavy darkwood shield* (342 gp), +3 *hide armor* (751 gp)].

APL 12: L—100 gp [10 adamantine arrows (50 gp), 10 adamantine bolts (50 gp)]; C—18 gp; M—2,092 gp [+3 *heavy darkwood shield* (758 gp), +4 *hide armor* (1,334 gp)].

Encounter Six (Optional)

Defeating the rex aartuk

All APLs: Hero of the Pale.

Treasure so far:

APL 2: 629 (+229)

APL 4: 648 (+48)

APL 6: 800 (0)

APL 8: 1,250 (0)

APL 10: 2,100 (0)

APL 12: 3,005 (+5)

Maximum Possible Treasure

The total wealth available is:

APL 2: 629 gp

APL 4: 648 gp

APL 6: 800 gp

APL 8: 1250 gp

APL 10: 2,100 gp

APL 12: 3,005 gp

The Theocrat takes any above the cap as a tithe or donation to the church, so the maximum gp that the PCs can come away from the scenario with is:

APL 2: 400 gp

APL 4: 600 gp

APL 6: 800 gp

APL 8: 1,250 gp

APL 10: 2,100 gp

APL 12: 3,000 gp

New Items

Please put these two items on the Adventure Record, with the notice "Cross out the items this character does not acquire."

Konrad Huber's spellbook: This spellbook is useful to a wizard who wishes to copy these spells into her own spellbook. Before a wizard can prepare these spells, she must first copy them into her own spellbook, as per the rules on page 155 in the *Player's Handbook*.

This spellbook contains the following spells: 6th—*circle of death*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic—greater*, *legend lore*, *move earth*, *true seeing*; 7th—*insanity*, *spell turning*, *summon monster VII*, *waves of exhaustion*; 8th—*clone*, *maze*, *mind blank*, *screen*.

Market Price: 960 gp. (Frequency: Adventure.)

Favor of the Wayfarers: Felia bestows her favor for rescuing her and will transport you, once. In game terms, this PC can play any one scenario at a 1 TU reduced cost.

Laelithra's Ring of Piety: This silver ring is formed with the design of an iris. When worn by a cleric of good alignment, the ring increases the cleric's Wisdom score in the form of an enhancement bonus of +2. If worn with either *Laelithra's phylactery* or *coif*, the bonus is +4. If worn with both the phylactery and coif, the bonus is +6.

In lieu of wearing a second item, this bonus can be increased from +2 to +4 by affixing a 12,000 gp ruby to the ring. In lieu of a third item, the bonus can be increased from +4 to +6 by affixing a 20,000 gp diamond to the ring. Wearing a second item and a ring a ruby still has only a +4 bonus. Wearing no other items and the ring with a diamond, but not a ruby, has only a +2 bonus. Gems added this way can never be removed, but do increase the value of the ring.

In addition, when all three are worn together, a portion of Laelithra's spirit becomes present. The ring becomes an intelligent item. Use of gems does not trigger this. Please contact the Pale Triad to receive details.

Market Price: 6,000 gp. (Frequency: Adventure.) [Valuation: As is standard for an advancing item in LG, the item is worth its base powers. A +2 Wisdom-enhancing item in the necklace slot is worth 4,000 gp. Since this is in a non-standard slot, it's worth 50% more – 6,000gp.] [Laelithra's coif was available in PAL3-01. Laelithra's phylactery was available in PAL1-04. I think there are very few PCs with both items.]

Alienist Prestige Class Access: This PC meets the Special requirement for and obtains access to the alienist prestige class.

Hero of the Pale: For taking Dorjan Oldrich's place in the battle, Sental Tekis, Prelate of Ogburg, arranges a one-time upgrade by +2 for one of the following items, which costs the difference in market price: *amulet of health*, *belt of giant strength*, *cloak of charisma*, *gloves of dexterity*, *headband of intellect*, *periapt of wisdom*.

Items Found

List the following in the "Items Found During the Adventure" section. Items PCs always have access to have been left off the list.

APL 2 and 4

- Konrad Huber's Spellbook (Adventure, see above)
- *Laelithra's ring of piety* (Adventure; see above)
- *silversheen* (Adventure; DMG)

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

- *elixir of hiding* (Adventure; DMG)
- *elixir of love* (Adventure; DMG)
- *elixir of sneaking* (Adventure; DMG)
- *elixir of swimming* (Adventure; DMG)
- *elixir of vision* (Adventure; DMG)
- *unguent of timelessness* (Adventure; DMG)
- *universal solvent* (Adventure; DMG)

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

- adamantine arrows (Adventure, limit 40 per PC; DMG)
- adamantine bolts (Adventure, limit 40 per PC; DMG)
- +2 *hide armor* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 10 (all of APLs 2-8 plus the following)

- +2 *heavy darkwood shield* (Adventure, DMG)
- +3 *hide armor* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 12 (all of APLs 2-10 plus the following)

- +3 *heavy darkwood shield* (Adventure, DMG)
- +4 *hide armor* (Adventure, DMG)

Appendix I: NPCS

Player Introduction

Theo the Raven: CR —; Tiny magical beast; HD 9; hp 15; Init +1; Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp -9; Atk +8 melee (1d2-5, claws); Full Atk +8 melee (1d2-5, claws); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SQ deliver touch spells, improved evasion, scent, speak with master, speak with other birds; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +8; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Decipher Script +12, Hide +16, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spellcraft +14, Spot +5; Weapon Finesse (claws).

Improved Evasion (Ex): When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, this creature takes no damage if it makes a successful saving throw and half damage if the saving throw fails.

Personality: Theo is an extremely officious individual. He's very friendly, cloyingly so, and curious about those willing to help his master. Among his personality quirks are that he refers to himself in the third person and he enjoys telling very bad knock-knock jokes.

Theo's master is Melvane of Oldred, a 9th-level wizard from Nyron. Melvane and Theo were traveling along the Foothills Road towards Rakervale when they were ambushed and captured. Theo hid within his master's clothing as Melvane was taken by a Freelancer patrol into Huber's tower. After arriving in the prisoner room, Theo escaped through a tunnel beneath the tower. Theo is desperate to help his master, but despite his concern is still very up beat.

Theo loves an albino raven familiar named Willow, who lives with her master in Ogburg. Willow and Theo have known each other for a year and have spent much time together as their respective masters study at the Ogburg Arcanist Guild.

Encounter Three

APL 2

Freelancer Patrolman: Human Ftr1; CR 1; Medium humanoid; HD 1d10+2; hp 12; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 17 (+4 scale mail, +1 light wooden shield, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +1; Grp +3; Atk +4 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); Full Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword) or +3 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will

+0; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2, Spot +4; Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: scale mail, light wooden shield, 2 longswords, dagger, 4 javelins, viticula necklace.

APL 4

Freelancer Patrolman: Human Ftr2; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10+6; hp 22; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (+4 scale mail, +2 heavy wooden shield, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +2.5, Spot +5; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: scale mail, heavy wooden shield, 2 longswords, dagger, 4 javelins, viticula necklace.

APL 6

Freelancer Patrolman: Human Ftr3; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d10+12; hp 34; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+5 breastplate, +2 heavy wooden shield, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d8+4/19-20, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, longsword) or +6 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +6; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: breastplate, heavy wooden shield, 3 longswords, dagger, 4 javelins, viticula necklace.

APL 8

Freelancer Patrolman: Human Ftr4; CR 4; Medium humanoid; HD 4d10+16; hp 44; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+5 breastplate, +2 heavy wooden shield, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+6/19-20, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+6, longsword) or +7 ranged (1d6+4, javelin); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will

+3; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3.5, Spot +7; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: breastplate, heavy wooden shield, 3 longswords, dagger, 4 javelins, viticula necklace.

APL 10 and 12

Freelancer Patrolman: Human Ftr6; CR 6; Medium humanoid; HD 6d10+24; hp 64; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (+5 breastplate, +2 heavy wooden shield, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d8+7/19-20, longsword) or +9 ranged (1d6+5, javelin); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+7, longsword) or +9/+4 ranged (1d6+5, javelin); AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 20, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Listen +6.5, Spot +11; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: breastplate, heavy wooden shield, 3 longswords, dagger, 4 javelins, viticula necklace.

Encounter Five, Area D

APL 2 and 4

Yellow Musk Zombie Troglodyte: CR 1; Medium plant; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+8 natural armor, -1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +1; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d6, club) or +1 melee (1d4, claw) or +0 ranged (1d6, javelin); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, club) and -4 melee (1d4, claw) and -6 melee (1d4, bite); or +1 melee (1d4, 2 claws) and -6 melee (1d4, bite); or +0 ranged (1d6, javelin); SQ creeper loyalty, darkvision 90 ft., deadened mind, plant traits, seeded; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Yellow musk zombies have no skills or feats.

Creeper Loyalty (Ex): Yellow musk zombies always act to protect and nurture the yellow musk creeper that created them. They can range no farther than 100 feet from their progenitor for the first two months of their existence. Thereafter, they wander freely for 1d4 days before dropping dead. Unless cured (see below), a yellow musk zombie automatically dies two days after the death of its patron creeper.

Deadened Mind (Ex): A yellow musk zombie recalls nothing of its previous life, and it exists only to serve its parent plant. It cannot make use of class abilities, skills, or feats it previously knew. It also cannot use magic devices, although it can still wield weapons and use armor.

Plant Traits (Ex): A yellow musk zombie is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-affecting effects. The creature also has low-light vision.

Seeded (Ex): If a yellow musk zombie dies, the growing seed inside its head takes root and grows into a yellow musk creeper within 1 hour.

Possessions: club, 4 javelins.

APL 6, 8, 10, and 12

Yellow Musk Zombie Hill Giant: CR 7; Large plant; HD 12d8+48; hp 102; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (+11 natural armor, +3 hide armor, -1 size, -1 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +9; Grp +20; Atk +16 melee (2d8+10, greatclub) or +15 melee (1d4+7, slam) or +8 ranged (2d6+7, rock); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (2d8+10, greatclub) or +15 melee (1d4+7, 2 slams) or +8 ranged (2d6+7, rock); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA rock throwing; SQ creeper loyalty, deadened mind, low-light vision, plant traits, rock catching, seeded; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Yellow musk zombies have no skills or feats.

Creeper Loyalty (Ex): Yellow musk zombies always act to protect and nurture the yellow musk creeper that created them. They can range no farther than 100 feet from their progenitor for the first two months of their existence. Thereafter, they wander freely for 1d4 days before dropping dead. Unless cured (see below), a yellow musk zombie automatically dies two days after the death of its patron creeper.

Deadened Mind (Ex): A yellow musk zombie recalls nothing of its previous life, and it exists only to serve its parent plant. It cannot make use of class abilities, skills, or feats it previously knew. It also cannot use magic devices, although it can still wield weapons and use armor.

Plant Traits (Ex): A yellow musk zombie is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-affecting effects. The creature also has low-light vision.

Rock Catching (Ex): A giant of at least Large size can catch Small, Medium, or Large rocks (or projectiles of similar shape). Once per round, a giant that would normally be hit by a rock can

make a Reflex save to catch it as a free action. The DC is 15 for a Small rock, 20 for a Medium one, and 25 for a large one. (If the projectile provides a magical bonus on attack rolls, the DC increases by that amount.) The giant must be ready for and aware of the attack in order to make a rock catching attempt.

Rock Throwing (Ex): Adult giants are accomplished rock throwers and receive a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls when throwing rocks. A giant of at least Large size can hurl rocks weighing 40 to 50 pounds each (Small objects) up to five range increments. The range increment is 120 feet for a hill giant's thrown rocks.

Seeded (Ex): If a yellow musk zombie dies, the growing seed inside its head takes root and grows into a yellow musk creeper within 1 hour.

Possessions: large hide armor, large greatclub, 4 rocks.

Encounter Five, Area K

APL 2 and 4

Pseudonatural Krenshar: CR 1; Medium outsider; HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 15 (+3 natural armor, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6, bite); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6, bite) and +0 melee (1d4, 2 claws); SA scare, true strike; SQ acid resistance 5, alternative form, darkvision 60 ft., electricity resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 4, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Hide +4, Jump +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +6; Multiattack, Track.

Alternate Form (Su): At will, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form determined by the DM), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. Changing shape is a standard action. Other creatures receive a -1 morale penalty to their attack rolls against pseudonatural creatures in this alternate form.

Scare (Ex or Su): As a standard action, a krenshar can pull the skin back from its head, revealing the musculature and bony structures of its skull. This alone is usually sufficient to scare away foes (treat as a Bluff check with a +3 bonus).

Combining this scare ability with a loud screech produces an unsettling effect that works like a scare spell from a 3rd-level caster (Will DC 13 partial). A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same krenshar's scare ability for 24 hours. The shriek does not affect other krenshars. This is a supernatural,

sonic mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can make a normal attack with a +20 insight modifier on a single attack roll. The creature is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

APL 6 and 8

Pseudonatural Troll: CR 6; Large outsider; HD 6d8+36; hp 63; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+5 natural armor, -1 size, +2 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +14; Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+6, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d6+3, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA rend 2d6+9, true strike; SQ acid resistance 5, alternative form, darkvision 90 ft., DR 5/magic, electricity resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 12, regeneration 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb Listen +5, Spot +6; Alertness, Iron Will, Track.

Alternate Form (Su): At will, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form determined by the DM), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. Changing shape is a standard action. Other creatures receive a -1 morale penalty to their attack rolls against pseudonatural creatures in this alternate form.

Rend (Ex): If a troll hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll. If a troll loses a limb or a body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can make a normal attack with a +20 insight modifier on a single attack roll. The creature is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

APL 10 and 12

Pseudonatural Umber Hulk: CR 9; Large outsider; HD 8d8+35; hp 71; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; AC 18 (+8 natural armor, -1 size, +1 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +16; Atk +11 melee (2d4+6, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (2d4+6, 2 claws) and +9 melee (2d8+3, bite); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA confusing gaze,

true strike; SQ acid resistance 5, alternative form, darkvision 60 ft., DR 5/magic, electricity resistance 5, SR 16, tremorsense 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Jump +5, Listen +11; Great Fortitude, Multiattack, Toughness.

Alternate Form (Su): At will, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form determined by the DM), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. Changing shape is a standard action. Other creatures receive a -1 morale penalty to their attack rolls against pseudonatural creatures in this alternate form.

Confusing Gaze (Su): Confusion as the spell, 30 feet, caster level 8th, Will DC 15 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can make a normal attack with a +20 insight modifier on a single attack roll. The creature is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

Encounter Six

APL 6

Rex Aartuk 4th-Level Sorcerer: Yellow Rex Aartuk Sor4; CR 7; Large plant; HD 6d8 + 4d4 + 20; hp 57; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+3 natural armor, -1 size, +4 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +5; Grp +14; Atk +10 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +9 ranged (1d8, pellet); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +9 ranged (1d8, pellet); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA tongue grapple; SQ blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 21, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +9 (+13), Knowledge (arcana) +3, Spellcraft +4; Combat Casting, Silent Spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/4; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*scorching ray*.

Possessions: spell component pouch.

APL 8

Rex Aartuk 6th-Level Sorcerer: Yellow Rex Aartuk Sor6; CR 9; Large plant; HD 6d8 + 6d4 + 24; hp 66; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+3 natural armor, -1 size, +4 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +6; Grp +15; Atk +11 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +10 ranged (1d8, pellet); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +10 ranged (1d8,

pellet); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA tongue grapple; SQ blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +6; Str 21, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +11 (+15), Knowledge (arcana) +5, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Energy Substitution (sonic), Silent Spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/6/3; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*obscure object, scorching ray*; 3rd—*fireball*.

Possessions: spell component pouch.

APL 10

Rex Aartuk 8th-Level Sorcerer: Yellow Rex Aartuk Sor8; CR 11; Large plant; HD 6d8 + 8d4 + 28; hp 75; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+3 natural armor, -1 size, +4 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +16; Atk +12 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +11 ranged (1d8, pellet); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +11 ranged (1d8, pellet); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA tongue grapple; SQ blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 21, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12 (+17), Knowledge (arcana) +5, Spellcraft +8; Combat Casting, Energy Substitution (sonic), Silent Spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/6/3; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, protection from good, ray of enfeeblement, shield*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, obscure object, scorching ray*; 3rd—*fireball, fly*; 4th—*dimension door*.

Possessions: spell component pouch.

APL 12

Rex Aartuk 10th-Level Sorcerer: Yellow Rex Aartuk Sor10; CR 13; Large plant; HD 6d8 + 10d4 + 32; hp 84; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+3 natural armor, -1 size, +4 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +8; Grp +17; Atk +13 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +12 ranged (1d8, pellet); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d6+5, slam) or +12 ranged (1d8, pellet); Space/Reach 10ft./10 ft.; SA tongue grapple; SQ blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 21, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14 (+19), Knowledge (arcana) +5, Spellcraft +10; Combat Casting, Energy Substitution (sonic), Improved Initiative, Silent Spell.

Sorcerer Spells Known (6/7/7/7/7/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile, protection from good, ray of enfeeblement, shield, true strike*; 2nd—*detect thoughts, ghoul touch, glitterdust, obscure object, scorching ray*; 3rd—*deep slumber, fireball, fly, suggestion*; 4th—*dimension door, Evard's black tentacles, ice storm*; 5th—*feeblemind*.

Possessions: spell component pouch.

Appendix II: New Rules – Vitacula Necklace

Diminutive Plant

Hit Dice: 2d8+2 (11 hp)

Initiative: -5

Speed: 0 ft.

AC: 8 (-5 Dex, +3 natural), touch 5, flat-footed 8

Base Attack/Grapple: +1/-4

Attack: –

Full Attack: –

Space/Reach: 1 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: –

Special Qualities: Bond to host, natural invisibility, protection by host, pervert alignment, project alignment, confound thought detection, reveal necklaces, plant traits

Saves: Fort +4, Ref –, Will -4

Abilities: Str –, Dex –, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 2, Cha 1

Environment: Unknown

Organization: Unknown

Challenge Level: 1/3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: Unknown



The vitacula necklace appears to be a strange piece of jewelry. It is a loop of green and red vine, from which hangs an amber gem. Within the gem, a dim light swirls.

In actuality, the necklace is a living being. When placed around the neck of a humanoid, rootlets spring forth and invade the body of the host. After bonding to a humanoid, the necklace becomes invisible and provides the host certain benefits.

The elusive organization known as the Freelancers has been provided with an unknown quantity of vitacula necklaces. The Freelancers are aware of most of their powers, and has begun to utilize them for the project alignment and confound thought detection abilities. Other powers might lie dormant within the necklaces that the Freelancers have yet to become aware of.

COMBAT

Vitacula necklaces have no means of attack and few defenses. However, when bonded to a host, it has several apparent powers:

Bond to Host (Ex): When placed around the neck of a humanoid, rootlets grow from the necklace and invade the host. The process takes one minute and renders the humanoid helpless during that time. If the humanoid resists, a successful Fortitude save (DC 17) will prevent this process and the necklace will wither and die. If the humanoid resists and fails, a Will save (DC 20)

must be made or the victim is driven *insane*. Once successfully attached, the necklace can only be removed by a *wish*, *limited wish*, or *restoration* followed by a *remove curse*. If the host dies, the necklace quickly decays and after 10 minutes nothing of the vitacula necklace remains.

Natural Invisibility (Su): When bonded to a host, the necklace becomes invisible.

Protection by Host (Ex): The necklace is defended as though it were an item attended by the host. For instance, the necklace survives magical attacks as described on page 150 of the Player's Handbook under Items Surviving after a Saving Throw.

Pervert Alignment (Su): The necklace causes the host's alignment to shift one step towards evil just after bonding. A second alignment shift happens a day later.

Project Alignment (Su): The necklace foils magical means to determine the alignment of the host. When such means are employed, the host detects as though he were of some other alignment. The default alignment detected is the host's original alignment, but the host can change this as a free action.

Confound Thought Detection (Su): The necklace constantly confounds any attempts to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and other such effects that attempt to reveal the host's true thoughts. Such attempts generally register benign thoughts and truths. However, the host can choose to have

different thoughts or lies detected. The host is unaffected by a *zone of truth*.

Reveal Necklaces (Su): As a standard action, a host wearing a necklace can cause all necklaces within 30 feet to become visible for 1 minute.

Plant: As a plant, a viticula necklace is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects).

Rex Aartuk

	<p>Yellow Rex Aartuk Large Plant</p> <p>Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp) Initiative: +4 (Dex) Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares) AC: 16 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12</p> <p>Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+13 Attack: Slam +9 melee (1d6+5) or pellet +8 ranged (1d8) Full Attack: Slam +9 melee (1d6+5) or pellet +8 ranged (1d8)</p> <p>Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. Special Attacks: Tongue grapple Special Qualities: Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits</p> <p>Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will -1 Abilities: Str 21, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6</p>	<p>Orange Rex Aartuk Large Plant</p> <p>Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65 hp) Initiative: +4 (Dex) Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares) AC: 18 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +5 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14</p> <p>Base Attack/Grapple: +7/+17 Attack: Slam +13 melee (1d8+7) or pellet +11 ranged (1d8) Full Attack: 2 Slams +13 melee (1d8+7) or pellet +11 ranged (1d8)</p> <p>Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. Special Attacks: Tongue grapple Special Qualities: Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits</p> <p>Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +1 Abilities: Str 23, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6</p>	
	<p>Green Rex Aartuk Large Plant</p> <p>Hit Dice: 12d8+48 (102 hp) Initiative: +4 (Dex) Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares) AC: 20 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +7 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16</p> <p>Base Attack/Grapple: +9/+20 Attack: Slam +16 melee (2d6+10) or pellet +13 ranged (1d8) Full Attack: 2 Slams +16 melee (2d6+10) or pellet +13 ranged (1d8)</p> <p>Face/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. Special Attacks: Tongue grapple Special Qualities: Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits</p> <p>Saves: Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +2 Abilities: Str 25, Dex 18, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6</p>	<p>Blue Rex Aartuk Large Plant</p> <p>Hit Dice: 14d8+70 (133 hp) Initiative: +4 (Dex) Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares) AC: 21 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +8 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 17</p> <p>Base Attack/Grapple: +10/+23 Attack: Slam +19 melee (3d6+13) or pellet +14 ranged (1d8) Full Attack: 2 Slams +19 melee (3d6+13) or pellet +14 ranged (1d8)</p> <p>Face/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. Special Attacks: Tongue grapple Special Qualities: Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits</p> <p>Saves: Fort +14, Ref +8, Will +2 Abilities: Str 29, Dex 18, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6</p>	<p>Purple Rex Aartuk Large Plant</p> <p>Hit Dice: 17d8+102 (178 hp) Initiative: +4 (Dex) Speed: 40 ft. (8 squares) AC: 23 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +10 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 19</p> <p>Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+28 Attack: Slam +24 melee (4d6+18) or pellet +16 ranged (1d8) Full Attack: 2 Slams +24 melee (4d6+18) or pellet +16 ranged (1d8)</p> <p>Face/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft. Special Attacks: Tongue grapple Special Qualities: Blindsight, darkvision 120 ft., plant traits</p> <p>Saves: Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +6 Abilities: Str 35, Dex 18, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 6</p>
<p>Environment: Any Organization: Solitary, squad (2-8), or tribe (50-300) Challenge Rating: Yellow 3; orange 5; green 7; blue 9; purple 11 Treasure: Standard; double gems, art, magic Alignment: Always lawful evil Advancement: Yellow 7-9 HD (Large); orange 11 HD (Large); green 13 HD (Large); blue 15-16 HD (Large); purple 18-19 HD (Large); also by character class.</p>			

The rex aartuk (pronounced like “are TOOK”, rhymes with “our book”) are nomadic plants that organize themselves into well-structured tribes. They are a larger, more powerful offshoot of the aartuk (from *MC7 Spelljammer Monstrous Compendium*). Rex aartuk are organized socially and physiologically into a number of different castes based on age. The focus of their

culture is war. They are religious fanatics, serving the dark god Tharizdun and believing war as the ultimate form of art.

The rex aartuk’s body is roughly star-shaped. Five tentacle-like branches extend from its body. The creature’s head stands at the end of a retractable snake-like stalk. Its entire body is covered with thick,

deep green skin. Brightly colored veins run over the skin. The veins change color as the creature ages and becomes more powerful. The youngest and weakest of the rex aartuk have yellow-colored veins and stand 8 feet tall, while the most powerful have purple veins along their 10-foot-tall bodies.

A rex aartuk propels itself by walking along its branches. The branches end in suction cups, allowing it to walk along vertical or inverted surfaces. Inside each suction cup are three small pseudopods that can be retracted, enabling it to manipulate small objects.

Its head is roughly spherical with a single orifice topped by three black bumps. These sensory organs allow the rex aartuk to detect movement via vibration, smell, and infrared vision. The creature is blind to the light range visible to humans, but can see via darkvision.

Rex aartuk are capable of speech and can understand Common. Their own language is a combination of rustles, snaps, clicks, pops, and whistles.



Combat

A rex aartuk uses its limbs to bash opponents within reach. Its extraordinary strength and 10-foot reach makes this a devastating attack.

Alternatively, a rex aartuk can spit forth a secretion from the orifice in its head. The secretion solidifies upon contact with air to form a rock-hard pellet. The range increment of this pellet is 60 feet.

Blindsight (Ex): With its strange sensory organs, a rex aartuk can ascertain all foes within 60 feet. Beyond that range, it relies upon darkvision. It usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight.

Tongue grapple (Ex): As a standard action, a rex aartuk can quickly extend its sticky tongue outward up to 30 feet to grab an opponent. This is resolved like a normal grapple attack, provoking an attack of opportunity. The target gets this attack of opportunity even if the rex aartuk is out of range – the attack is

really occurring against the tongue. Like in a normal grapple, if the attack of opportunity succeeds, the grapple automatically fails; furthermore, the rex aartuk's tongue is damaged so much by the attack of opportunity that it cannot make another tongue grapple attempt for one day. If the grapple succeeds, the opponent is pulled into the rex aartuk's space. A rex aartuk is much more likely to use its slam attack than the tongue grapple.

Rex Aartuk Society

Rex aartuk travel through the spaces between the celestial bodies with magical vessels. These ships use magic in a way unknown to all but a few on Oerth. An entire tribe lives on a single vessel, and tribes of rex aartuk rarely interact. The coming of an elder (see below) is a notable exception.

Rex aartuk live and die for war, which is linked to their religion and reproductive system. They have many customs and traditions regarding combat, and a system of honor most humanoids would find unfathomable. They often keep humanoids as slaves, and often use slaves to pilot the magical vessels that allow them to travel the stars.

The rex aartuk homeland was destroyed long ago. In their rage they bound themselves to Tharizdun. They believe his release will trigger a cleansing fire that destroys this existence and creates fertile ground for a new one, much as a forest fire spawns new growth. In this new existence, plant life will be dominant, no longer subservient to the dominion of animals.

Most rex aartuk serve as warriors to protect the tribe. A few that are exceptionally wise attend to the religious teachings of the tribe and become clerics. Each tribe has a small circle of individuals who work together to see to the religious needs of the tribe. A similar circle of exceptionally intelligent wizards preserves the magical knowledge of the tribe.

Rex aartuk are able to ingest any form of nourishment, absorbing food through an orifice underneath their bodies. They normally cook their food and can prepare sophisticated dishes.

A rex aartuk reproduces by infecting an unconscious victim with a virus that progressively turns the victim's flesh to jelly in a few days. The victim takes 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage per day until death occurs or until a *remove disease* spell destroys the virus. A fully-grown aartuk—with the memories of the one who infected the victim—emerges from the jelly in one month.

Rex aartuk infect victims by leaving their tongues on an open wound for 3 rounds. Rex aartuk view the "gift of birth" as a sign of respect and honor towards a victim. The infection of a victim is a religious ritual that

must be overseen by a cleric of the tribe. There is no gender among the rex aartuk.

A rex aartuk who finds a slave useful generally infects the victim with a variant of the reproductive virus, a process known as the “gift of service.” The victim takes no damage while infected. However, within a range of 1 mile, the rex aartuk who infected the victim can send a telepathic signal that causes the virus to instantly transform the victim’s body into an ooze. The victim can resist this with a Fortitude save (DC 18). The most common oozes that result from this horrible process are gray oozes, ochre jellies, and black puddings. The rex aartuk use this virus as a means of control over their slaves.

Elder Rex Aartuk

As a rex aartuk grows, it becomes more and more powerful. It grows taller, stronger, and the color of the veins along its skin changes. After about seventy to eighty years, usually when it has achieved purple coloring, small-multicolored flowers form along its skin. A blossoming rex aartuk is treated with the respect and reverence that humans would give to an aristocrat. After a year of blossoming, the flowers fall off and the creature dies.

However, in a few, very rare instances, a rex aartuk survives the flowering period. To the rex aartuk, this is a messianic event. Such a creature is designated an elder rex aartuk. After recovering from an initial vulnerable period, white blossoms sprout on its body and the elder becomes immensely powerful. It serves as a spiritual nexus for a tribe of rex aartuk. The appearance of one spurs rex aartuk tribes to join together and venture on a holy war of conquest. Elders are also unique in that they have the power to pilot the rex aartuk flying vessels; normally, humanoid slaves are needed to pilot the ships. The elder lives for only three years. The tribes seek to finalize victory long before the elder passes, for without the elder’s presence, their ability to effectively lead a military campaign is severely hampered.

The stats for an elder rex aartuk are detailed in *PAL1-04 Prelude to the Past*

Yellow Musk Creeper

Source: *Fiend Folio*, pages 190-193.

Huge Plant

Hit Dice: 6d8+30 (57 hp)

Initiative: +3

Speed: 5 ft.

AC: 17 (-2 size, +3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+12

Attack: Vine whip +5 melee, or musk puff +5 ranged touch

Full Attack: 6 vine whips +5 melee, or musk puff +5 ranged touch

Damage: Vine whip 1d6

Face/Reach: 15 ft./15 ft.

Special Attacks: Consume Intelligence, musk puff

Special Qualities: Blindsight 30 ft., plant traits, regeneration 5

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +2

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 21, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 9

Skills: —

Feats: Weapon Finesse (B)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or infestation (1 yellow musk creeper plus 2-8 yellow musk zombies)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 7-12 HD (Huge); 12-18 HD (Gargantuan)

A yellow musk creeper is an immense climbing plant with long, grasping green tendrils and large, vibrant leaves. Beautiful yellow and purple orchidlike flowers positioned throughout the creature's body emit a heady, entrancing odor. The plant's musk draws victims to the heart of the creeper, where hungry, naturally sharp vines probe at its head, extracting brain matter in gluttonous gulps. Drained victims become yellow musk zombies, mindless servants who care for the insidious plant.

Despite their bulk, yellow musk creepers react swiftly to potential prey and maneuver their flowers within spraying distance. The plants grow from a single bulbous root that is submerged beneath the creature alongside the buried trappings of previous victims.

Yellow musk creepers usually grow in underground regions that have some amount of loos soil, and they shrink from direct sunlight. Occasionally the plants thrive under the canopy of deep woods or forests. They make excellent guards, and some have been deliberately planted in a given location to protect nearby treasure. Particularly paranoid hoarders sometimes bury their treasure several feet below the base of the plant.

Combat

A yellow musk creeper has a symbiotic relationship with the yellow musk zombies it creates. The zombies attempt to protect the yellow musk creeper to the best of their ability. The creeper attempts to ensnare any living creatures that approaches within range of its musk, and it defends itself with its vines only if it comes under attack.

A yellow musk creeper can be summoned using a *summon nature's ally IV* spell.

Consume Intelligence (Ex): As a free action, a yellow musk creeper can extend dozens of probing, sharp-edged tendrils into the head of any helpless or unresisting creature that also occupies its space. These tendrils begin to devour the victim's brain, dealing 1d4 points of Intelligence damage each round. If the damage reduces a victim's Intelligence to 0, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 18). Those who fail die, and their bodies grant sustenance to the hungry plant. Those who succeed are implanted with a seed and become yellow musk zombies (see the next entry).

The only way to stop a yellow musk creeper from consuming a victim's Intelligence is to kill either the victim or the creeper.

Musk Puff (Ex): Yellow musk creepers attack by puffing a spray of potent-smelling dust upon a nearby target. The musk has a range of 30 feet and can target one creature per round.

Creatures struck by a yellow musk creeper's musk puff must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or fall under a mind-affecting compulsion to get closer to the entrancing source of the musk. The duration of the effect is 2d8 rounds, although creatures within the plant remain under the compulsion until removed from the creeper.

Creatures under the yellow musk creeper's compulsion can take no actions other than moving to enter the plant's space. (The creeper does oppose these attempts, of course.) Affected creatures do anything they can to comply with the compulsion and even attack companions who seek to restrain them. Once within the plant, the affected creature drops anything in hand and stands motionless. The creature is dazed and does not resist the creeper's attacks as long as it remains within the plant.

Blindsight (Ex): A yellow musk creeper maneuvers and fights not only by sight, but also by using hearing and smell to ascertain its surroundings. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within 30 feet. The yellow musk creeper usually does not need to make Spot or Listen checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight.

Plant Traits (Ex): A yellow musk creeper is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-affecting effects.

Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to a yellow musk creeper. Attack forms that don't deal hit point damage ignore regeneration, and a yellow musk creeper does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation.

The Yellow Musk Zombie Template

"Yellow musk zombie" is an acquired template that can be applied to any living creature that would ordinarily have an Intelligence score, and whose physiology includes a brain (referred to hereafter as the base creature). The creature's type becomes plant. It uses all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Change to d8.

AC: Natural armor increases by +2.

Attacks: A yellow musk zombie retains all the attacks of the base creature. Most yellow musk zombies use the weapons they used before their transformation.

Special Qualities: A yellow musk zombie gains the following special qualities.

Creeper Loyalty (Ex): Yellow musk zombies always act to protect and nurture the yellow musk creeper that created them. They can range no farther than 100 feet from their progenitor for the first two months of their existence. Thereafter, they wander freely for 1d4 days before dropping dead. Unless cured (see below), a yellow musk zombie automatically dies two days after the death of its patron creeper.

Deadened Mind (Ex): A yellow musk zombie recalls nothing of its previous life, and it exists only to serve its parent plant. It cannot make use of class abilities, skills, or feats it previously knew. It also cannot use magic devices, although it can still wield weapons and use armor.

Plant Traits (Ex): A yellow musk zombie is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and polymorphing. It is not subject to critical hits or mind-affecting effects. The creature also has low-light vision.

Seeded (Ex): If a yellow musk zombie dies, the growing seed inside its head takes root and grows into a yellow musk creeper within 1 hour.

Abilities: Same as the base creature, except that the yellow musk zombie has an Intelligence of 2, and Dexterity and Wisdom change to 10, unless they were already lower.

Skills: A yellow musk zombie has no skills.

Feats: A yellow musk zombie has no feats.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground.

Organization: Solitary or gang (2-8).

Treasure: Same as the base creature (although the zombie retains only whatever it was wearing or carrying when transformed).

Alignment: Always neutral.

Curing a Yellow Musk Zombie

A yellow musk zombie's patron plant must be killed before the zombie can be cured of its affliction. Thereafter, a cleric of at least 12th level must cast regenerate or heal upon the character before the implanted seed germinates.

Pseudonatural Creatures

Source: *Tome and Blood: A Guidebook to Wizards and Sorcerers*, page 47 and updated with the *D&D v.3.5 Accessory Update Booklet*.

Pseudonatural creatures dwell past the eons that lie between the stars, beyond the planes as we know them, nestled in far realms of insanity. When summoned to the Material Plane they often take the form of, and emulate the abilities of familiar creatures, though they are more gruesome in appearance than their earthly counterparts. Alternatively, they may appear in a manner more consistent with their origins: A mass of writhing tentacles is a favorite, although other terrible forms are always possible.

Creating a Pseudonatural Creature

“Pseudonatural” is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the “base creature”). The creature’s type changes to “outsider.” It uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Special Attacks: A pseudonatural creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, the creature can make a normal attack with a +20 insight modifier on a single attack roll. The creature is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

Special Qualities: A pseudonatural creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

- Electricity and acid resistance (see the table below).
- Damage reduction (see the table below)
- SR equal to double the creature’s HD (maximum 25).

Hit Dice	Electricity, Acid Resistance	Damage Reduction
1-3	5	—
4-7	5	5/magic
8-11	5	5/magic
12+	10	10/magic

If the base creature already has one or more of these special qualities, use the better value.

Alternate Form (Su): At will, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form determined by the DM), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. Changing shape is a standard action. Other creatures receive a -1 morale penalty to their attack rolls against pseudonatural creatures in this alternate form.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Same as the base creature, but Intelligence is at least 3.

Skills: Same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Same as the base creature

Challenge Rating: Up to 3 HD, as base creature; 4 HD to 7 HD, as base creature +1; 8+ HD, as base creature +2

Treasure: Same as base creature

Alignment: Same as base creature

Advancement: Same as the base creature

Guidebook Feats

Energy Substitution [Metamagic]

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

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

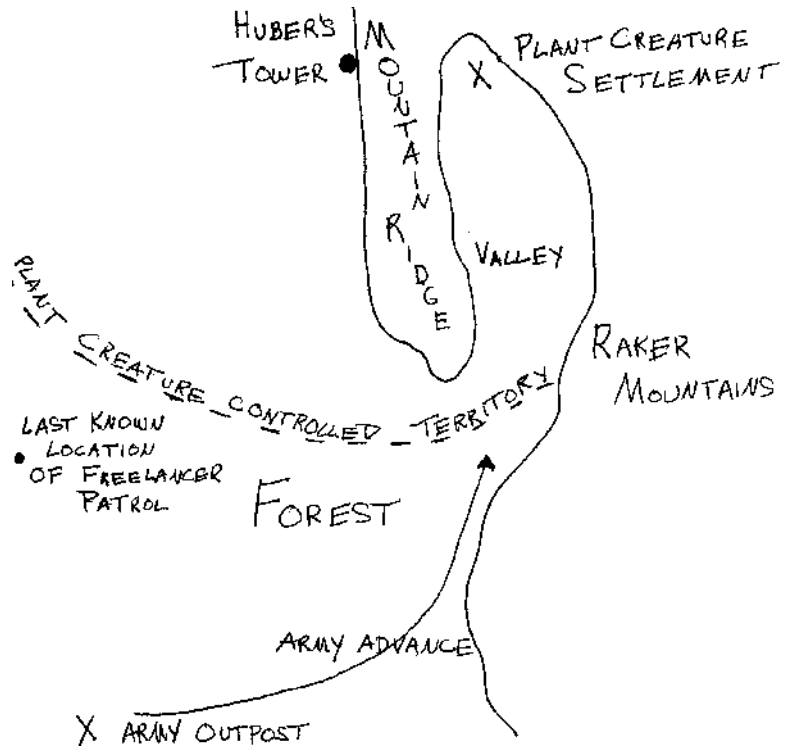
Benefit: Choose one type of energy: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. You can modify a spell with an energy designator to use the chose type of energy instead. A substituted spell works normally in all respects except the type of damage dealt (see sidebar).

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

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

Source: Tome and Blood: A Guidebook to Wizards and Sorcerers, page 40.

Appendix III: Misc. – March Major's Map



Theo's Knock-Knock Jokes

These are some of the knock-knock jokes that Theo enjoys. Few others find them humorous. For brevity, Theo's initial statement and the questions of the person he's interactive with are omitted in all but the first joke.

Theo: Knock! Knock!

PC: Who's there?

Theo: Spell.

PC: Spell who?

Theo: W. H. O. Sheesh, you need to ask a bird to help you spell?!

Theo: Gnome.

Theo: Gnome. Are you kidding? Do you think I'd do something as easy as come up with a knock-knock joke using the word "gnome"?

Theo: Ancient dragon.

Theo: Ain't ya draggin' too much equipment? You should travel lighter.

Theo: Ooze.

Theo: Who's gonna get me some dinner, I'm starving!

Theo: Ghosts go.

Theo: No they don't! Ghosts go 'boo.'

Theo: Goliath.

Theo: Go lieth down, you look tired.

Theo: Snow.

Theo: 's nobody but me.

Theo: Wisdom.

Theo: We is dumb to have attacked those troll barbarians.

Theo: Hydra.

Theo: hydrangeas are pretty flowers, but I prefer tulips.

Theo: Goblin.

Theo: Gobblin' lots of food will get you fat.

Theo: Minotaur.

Theo: Wait a minute or two, and you'll find these jokes really funny.

Vitacula Necklace Traits

After describing what happens when the PCs don the vitacula necklaces, hand a random trait to each player. These traits will last as long as the necklace is worn.

After the pain subsides, you realize that something is different. It's almost like a voice is whispering into your mind, but it's more subtle than that. You feel on edge, and some of your darker emotions and thoughts keep coming to the fore. Your mind keeps returning to how important you are to this party. Your abilities are great, and your deeds are quite noteworthy. Great confidence in your skills wells up from within you. You are certain that with your help, this mission will be a great success.

After the pain subsides, you realize that something is different. It's almost like a voice is whispering into your mind, but it's more subtle than that. You feel on edge, and some of your darker emotions and thoughts keep coming to the fore. Your mind keeps returning to those around you. Your fellow party members all benefit from privilege and special treatment. They all have better equipment than you, and it's hard not to resent that. It might be difficult to keep your mouth shut about your discontent, but you know that you're strong enough to do so if you put your mind to it.

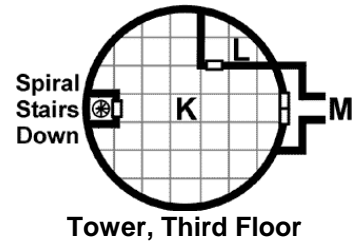
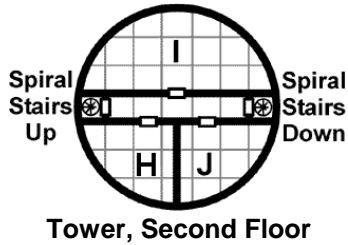
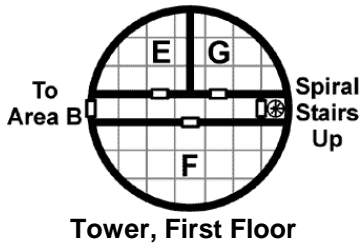
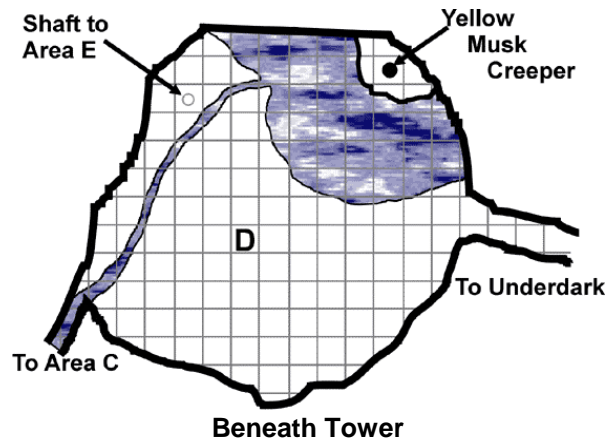
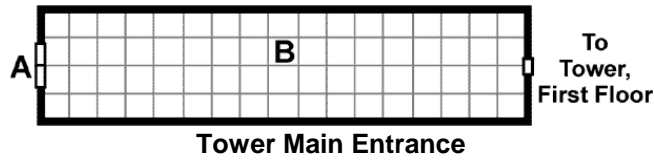
After the pain subsides, you realize that something is different. It's almost like a voice is whispering into your mind, but it's more subtle than that. You feel on edge, and some of your darker emotions and thoughts keep coming to the fore. Your mind keeps returning to how long it's been since your last meal. You're actually quite hungry, and the feeling isn't going away. You also feel like drinking some wine, but you know that if you consume too much, your mission will be at risk. But just a little bit shouldn't hurt.

After the pain subsides, you realize that something is different. It's almost like a voice is whispering into your mind, but it's more subtle than that. You feel on edge, and some of your darker emotions and thoughts keep coming to the fore. Your mind keeps returning to a sense of rage that you feel about everything around you. It's hard to pin-point, but part of you is just downright mad. If you put your mind to it, you can control your anger and bottle it up. But it's tempting to just let your feelings be known.

After the pain subsides, you realize that something is different. It's almost like a voice is whispering into your mind, but it's more subtle than that. You feel on edge, and some of your darker emotions and thoughts keep coming to the fore. Your mind keeps returning to your mission at hand, and in particular, the rewards you'll receive. Returning something stolen from the Library of Antigua must come with a very significant reward. In fact, any opportunity to bring a few more Gold Glories into your pocket is worth your attention. Money makes the world go round.

After the pain subsides, you realize that something is different. It's almost like a voice is whispering into your mind, but it's more subtle than that. You feel on edge, and some of your darker emotions and thoughts keep coming to the fore. Your mind keeps returning to just how much effort it will take to succeed on this mission. You're actually quite tired of having to work so hard all the time, and if there's a way that you can avoid some of this effort, you'll take it. Even little things, like maybe someone can carry some of your equipment for you?

Map of Huber's Tower



Note on Desk

75 - temple in the Sunless Sea
of the Zunderdark
4 - Shards of the Zvalnoniz
46 - Scarlet Brotherhood
208 - Library of Antigua
333 gems collected

Refresher—PAL1-04 Prelude to the Past

The following is a summary of what happened during *Prelude to the Past*, the first chapter in the Germinations series. Since this scenario is retired, you can pass this out to all players.

Chapter One—Prelude to the Past: To help a wizard named Konrad Huber, you capture a magical beast. On the way to his lair, a cleric casts a *divination*, causing a woman to appear. In her 20s, dark skin and missing an eye, she says that 1,000 years into your past, an evil “Elder” came. Too late they learned its weakness—it lives for 3 years. You will face an Elder. Before disappearing, she gives a gem that will age all nearby 5 years. In Huber’s lair, there is evidence he is a spy, helping a group called the Freelancers. His experiments upon animals are perverse. A strange plant creature nearly kills Huber. You smash the gem. The creature dies. You return Huber to the Church Militant, who are grateful, but warn about accepting foolish contracts in the first place.

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Refresher—PAL2-01 *Drawing from Life*

The following is a summary of what happened during *Drawing from Life*, the second chapter in the Germinations series. Since this scenario is retired, you can pass this out to all players.

Chapter Two—Drawing from Life: You travel with a dwarf named Koreth into a lost temple. His ancestor sacrificed himself long ago, killing a demon lord. After 1,003 years, his ancestor's life could be restored. You find the temple is trapped and guarded by minions of a group called the Freelancers, who have found it for some “new friends” that have given them means to avoid the detection magic of the Church Militant. You find a book supposedly about magic that affects plants, *The Floracon*, which you later turn over to the Phostwood elves. You free Koreth's ancestor to learn that Koreth was misguided. By freeing his ancestor, the demonspawn would also be released. Another must make the sacrifice to prevent this. Proudly, Koreth steps forth.

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Refresher—PAL2-02 Pale Harvest

The following is a summary of what happened during *Pale Harvest*, the third chapter in the Germinations series. Since this scenario is retired, you can pass this out to all players.

Chapter Three—Pale Harvest: Squads of the Ogburg Pale Patrol have disappeared. An insider is suspected. To uncover the plot, you are asked to pose as novice volunteers for the Pale Patrol. On your assignment, you resolve a few disturbances. Ambushed by thugs, you learn they were paid to capture you alive and take you to an abandoned barn. At the barn, you find a man and a strange plant creature. The plant creature needs live humans for some sort of ritual. It is working with the man, part of a group called the Freelancers, to procure victims. Defeating them, you find that the man was an officer in the Pale Patrol; on his corpse, a strange vine necklace decays to dust. Inside the barn are the unconscious bodies of six Pale Patrol members.

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Refresher—PAL3-01 *In the Shadow of Death's Door*

The following is a brief reminder of what happened during *In the Shadow of Death's Door*. Pass out this summary only to people who have played that scenario, the fourth chapter in the Germinations series.

Chapter Four—In the Shadow of Death's Door: The Theocrat is dying. The dragon Xianshee's ghost terrorizes Rakervale. Prelates Thace and Baslett must kill the ghost dragon. He who lands the final blow will become Theocrat. Guarding them, you head into the Rakers. You defeat Xianshee's servant, a wicked half-orc. An amulet created by the wizard Bahira protects Baslett from the dragon's aging breath, but eventually the amulet fails; he is incapacitated. Thace proclaims that if he dies, Baslett should be Theocrat. Thace kills Xianshee, but is slain in the process. His youth restored, Baslett becomes Theocrat. In a bold speech, Baslett admits your guidance has helped him complete a personal transformation. He pledges to reform the Pale to follow a progressive path.

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Refresher—PAL3-04 Full Circle

The following is a brief reminder of what happened during *Full Circle*. Pass out this summary only to people who have played that scenario, the fifth chapter in the Germinations series.

Chapter Five—Full Circle: The wizard Bahira asks you to obtain gems needed to complete a powerful spell. Agreeing to help, you follow several leads to find the gems in the possession of the former members of an adventuring party known as the Four of Eltison. They have fallen on hard times, and it turns out that the one presumed dead is terrorizing the rest. You recover the gems, but are confronted by strange plant creatures, demanding the gems in exchange for your escape. You refuse and defeat them. Returning the gems, Bahira casts her spell – sending her to the past to deliver an item needed to dispatch a great threat 3 years ago. The story of what she must accomplish sounds very familiar. She returns a younger woman with far fewer powers.

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