

KEO5-06

A Tale of Two Lions

A Two-Round D&D® LIVING GREYHAWK™

Keoland Regional Adventure

Version 1.2

by Christian J. Alipounarian

Reviewer: Keoland Triad

Circle Reviewer: Steven Conforti

Playtesters: Travis Baldwin, Adam Beece, Ben Christensen, Camden Jenkins, Steve Lorenz, Mark Lory-Moran, Norm Lowrey, Alexander Mehler, Judson Powers, Ryan Richardson, Anne Romano, Colin Schultz, Megan Thompson, Chad Valdes, and Ian Vaughn

Upon her divine loom, Istus weaves the threads of fate into tapestries of destiny. Within the oldest kingdom on Oerth, a sinister cabal's plans for domination stand on the edge of fruition. Can those threads be undone to make right what was rendered so terribly wrong? A Keoland regional adventure for APLs 6-12, and the Conclusion of the *All Good Things* series (which included KEO4-IN1 *Hide and Seek* and KEO5-01 *For Want of a King*).

Note: PCs with the **Wrath of House Neheli** may not play this adventure.

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

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

RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2006.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on

running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in the *Appendices*.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. 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.
3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard two-round Regional adventure, set in Keoland. Characters native to Keoland pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

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

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

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Many of the prior events in the Kingdom of Keoland in the past two years (594-595 CY) are vital to the understanding of this adventure, and so they are discussed here in detail.

The King of Keoland, Kimbertos Skotti, received a prophecy from the black dragon Aulicus, the Prophet of the Hool. It warned the King of a gathering threat to the Lion Throne. The King sent agents far and wide across Keoland in an attempt to discover who or what the threat was. The threat alluded to one thing amongst a gathering of three that would bring ruin to the Lion Throne (KEO3-IN *Winter's Passing* at UNYCON 2003).

It was not long afterward that a herald brought the king news of an excavation by the Seekers into the tomb of Tibbett the Seven-Fingers. What made the tomb of this thief significant is that he was a member of the Iron Company, a group of adventurers that successfully recovered three weapons of power from the clutches of Keraptis, the wizard of White Plume Mountain (see the original AD&D 1st Edition adventure S2 *White Plume Mountain*). Worried about the coincidence of the Seekers suddenly looking for three artifacts, the King dispatched a group of neophyte heroes to the site of the dig. There, the party discovered the location of the resting places of the three weapons of White Plume, which had been scattered across the Kingdom.

The first weapon, a dwarven hammer called *Whelm*, was recovered from beneath the dwarven town of Curget (KEO4-IN6 *Rivals and Arrivals* at Weekend in Keoland 2004) and returned to the King. The second was a trident called *Wave*, and it was wrested from the sahaugin off the Gradsul coast by Duke Luschan and was being held "in trust" for the Lion Throne (KEO4-IN7 *Run Silent, Run Deep* at Diplomatic Immunity 2004).

The third weapon lay in the ruins of Steffenmoor, in the County of Linth. *Blackrazor* was in the hands of a cult of demon-worshipping blackscale lizardfolk and their lich-druid leader. The King sent a number of teams of adventurers into the ruins to make easier the impending assault by Keoish forces that would retake Steffenmoor once and for all. The weapon was recovered, but during the presentation of *Blackrazor* to the King, the presenter, Holphin Neheli, struck him down. The assassin was immediately spirited away by an agent of the Silent Ones (KEO4-IN10 *Bane of the Black Blade* at UNYCon 2004).

While the killer could not be interrogated, *divinations* on the subject have revealed to the Silent Ones that Holphin was not a willing participant and was somehow controlled. *Blackrazor* was a sword known to consume souls; several attempts to *resurrect* the King from

the dead have met with failure, and the ancient Lion Throne now sits vacant within the still halls of the King's palace.

Shortly after the assassination, all three of the weapons were stolen by a great efreeti known as Nix, who once served Keraptis. Even the vaults of the Lonely Tower of the Silent Ones were violated in the theft of *Blackrazor*.

The death of the King has left Keoland in turmoil. Keoland is not a true monarchy; the Court of the Land in the capital city of Niole Dra must decide on a successor.

The root of this evil in Keoland is the Iron Cabal. A shadowy group of powerful nobles and figures of the upper crust of Keoish society, they are led by the current Regent of Keoland, Lady Jessa. She and the other members of the Iron Cabal are devil-worshippers, following the being known as Dispater, lord of the second plane of Hell. They are ruthless, power-mad and utterly evil.

One of King Kimbertos' daughters, Jessa's lust for the Lion Throne has led her to engineer the murder of both of her parents. It was Jessa that hired the archmage Kelestan to imprison the Queen's soul in a gem (see KEO5-04 *Burning Brightly* for more information on Kelestan), and it was also she that contacted a group of renegade Seekers, led by the Olman priest Atzuzu, to find *Blackrazor* (KEO4-IN1 *Hide and Seek* and KEO5-01 *For Want of a King*).

Through the machinations of the Cabal, *Blackrazor* was presented to King Kimbertos by Holphin, who was in truth briefly *magic jarred* by Kelestan, just long enough to murder the King. With the King and Queen out of the way, Jessa has turned to political maneuvering. The other nobles belonging to the Cabal have aided her, and the fruits of her labor have seen her placed on the throne of Keoland as its Regent. Although ancient laws prohibit a woman from holding the Lion Throne, the political pull of the Cabal is threatening to succeed in their efforts to undo the old law and see Jessa as the first (reigning) Queen of Keoland.

However, there is one fault in the plans of the Cabal. Heroes recovered from the tomb of a drider-lich the ancient lore and information about *Blackrazor* (KEO5-01 *For Want of a King*). The information was turned over to Stoakdor Neheli, who has analyzed this information and found out an important piece of information heretofore unknown. *Blackrazor* consumes the souls of those it slays, but it does not destroy them – not immediately. It is able to hold within itself but a single soul at a time. Provided that no one else's life has been taken with the weapon, Stoakdor is confident that they can free the King's soul from *Blackrazor* and restore him to life.

The heroes have been charged, with the utmost secrecy, with a daunting task. The body of the slain King lies entombed in the Ruby Crypt, in the Vault of Kings, the resting place of the Keoish kings attended by the

devoted of Wee Jas. They must travel to the Crypt and bring Kimbertos' corpse to Redlee Manor, where the powerful magic needed to tear his soul away from *Blackrazor* and restore him to life will be cast.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In the Introduction, the PCs have come to Redlee Manor at the urgent request by Stoakdor Neheli. There the results of the study of the drider-lich Cjaian's notes regarding *Blackrazor* are revealed – the King of Keoland might yet be restored to life. As the Redlee Neheli prepares the great magic needed to restore the King to life, the PCs are tasked to go the Monastery of Wee Jas, where the King's body is entombed.

The PCs travel to the monastery to speak with High Priestess Illithria Neheli, only to find that the entire monastery is under a *time stop* effect. The PCs must make their way through the place, frozen in time around them, and make their way into the Vault of Kings. After defeating the guardians of the royal crypts, the PCs encounter an Aspect of Wee Jas standing guard over King Kimbertos' body.

The aspect charges the PCs with making the case why King Kimbertos should be raised from the dead. As the PCs know nothing about Kimbertos personally, Wee Jas sends the PCs into the past to meet and interact with Kimbertos at three stages of his life to judge his worthiness to be restored.

When the PCs have done so, the Aspect will charge them with deciding whether or not the King will be restored.

The PCs return to Redlee Manor. If the PCs brought back the body, they are witnesses to King Kimbertos' restoration (or, if the PCs have chosen not to recover Kimbertos, the release of his soul from *Blackrazor*). During the ritual, the PCs are challenged by the mysterious master of the White Plume weapons of legend, through one of his agents sent to disrupt the ritual.

Once the PCs have briefed Kimbertos (or Stoakdor, if the former remains dead) on what has happened and the existence of the Cabal, he will begin using magic to communicate with his closest allies in the Kingdom. The King (or Stoakdor) will still charge the PCs with the task of uncovering the plot against the Lion Throne. He orders them to the Axewood, to meet with Baron Anladon, who has more information for them.

In Encounter 3, if the PCs restored the King, they have journeyed to the Axewood and are present as the King and those he has summoned arrive – Lord Holphin Neheli, Duke Luschan Sellark and his wife, Duchess Maressa Sellark-Linth, Great Druidess Reynard Yargrove and Lashton, the Archmage of Keoland. Once gathered, the allies of the King notify him that they have confirmed that the person responsible for the death of

his wife and he is his daughter, Jessa. The King retires for the evening with a heavy heart, and tells the assembled host that he will give them his decision in the morning about what they will do next.

If the king remains dead, the debate takes place between these principals of the Kingdom.

The following day, the King (or the noble gathering) has made a decision. He has decided to return to Niole Dra, gather up any forces still loyal to him, and to retake the Lion Throne by force. It is clear that he/they intend to personally dispatch Regent Jessa Skotti for her repeated acts of treachery and gross evil. Each of the King's allies is tasked with aiding the effort. Duchess Maressa will utilize the agents of the Shadowdark to reconnoiter the defenses of the Royal Palace and to suggest the best place to penetrate the interior. Duke Luschan will command a military river-cutter to ferry Lord Holphin Neheli and a group of Darkwatch knights to the riverside palace grounds. There they will make a diversionary attack against the palace guards, attempting to draw as many of them out as possible. Lashton and Reynard Yargrove will seal the castle with physical and magical barriers to keep troops drawn out by Holphin's attack from returning. From there, the King (if present) and the PCs will enter the palace, fight their way to the throne room, and put the Regent down.

Wearing the Crown of Keoland once more, Kimbertos has no doubt that the palace guards that remain will recognize him and yield to his authority (or, alternatively, the collected nobles will bring the treason of Jessa to the attention of the Court of the Land once her threat has been removed and the palace restored to their control).

If the PCs chose not to restore the King to life, the adventure will play out in a similar vein, except that Anladon will be acting the part of protagonist in encouraging the rival notables present to put aside their differences and defeat Jessa once and for all.

When assaulting the castle, the PCs find themselves in a pitched series of battles to fight their way into the throne room. (A series of *dimensional lock* spells has shielded the throne room and the areas around it from being magically pierced; the party will have to fight their way there).

In the Conclusion, the King (if present) has to make a very difficult personal choice, one for which he asks the PCs aid – whether or not he will announce that he is restored to life, or seize the chance to slip away in anonymity.

If the King was not restored, the PCs are instead charged with giving their input as to who they would recommend as being the new monarch of Keoland.

The finale of this adventure, and the setting of the stage for Keoland in 596 CY, is left to the PCs to decide...

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Ascertain whether or not any of the players have participated (with the PCs they are playing for this adventure) in the adventures KEO4-IN1 *Hide and Seek* and/or KEO5-01 *For Want of a King*. You should also check to see whether or not any of the PCs have one or more of the AR effects entitled **All the King's Men**.

Check that no PC possesses the AR effect entitled **Wrath of House Neheli**. If so, that PC may not be played in the adventure. Lesser forms of negative influence with House Neheli (such as **Disfavor of House Neheli**) are acceptable.

It will be helpful if you get a few Spot checks for each PC, for when they hit Encounter 11. You should ask them to make two (APL 8), four (APL 10), or eight (APL 12) Spot checks. A DC 30 check will allow the PC to spot the presence of the topiary guardians; see Encounter 11 for details.

Lastly, check with the PCs to find out if any are worshippers of Wee Jas.

INTRODUCTION

Although this section references the events of previous adventures, it has been written in such a way as to not provide any spoiler information for those who have not played previous adventures in the series. If all of the players at the table have participated in them, feel free to elaborate on those events.

The summons from Stoakdor Neheli was one that was transmitted with the utmost urgency. It came in the middle of the night, its courier a gleaming silver raven who bore the fine vellum scroll in its talons. The missive contained only a short message introducing the sender and promised full compensation for travel expenses to Redlee Manor, in the far northern edge of the Kingdom of Keoland.

For any PCs not already familiar with Stoakdor, a DC 10 Knowledge (nobility or local – Sheldomar Valley metaregion) or Bardic Knowledge check reveals that Chancellor Neheli is Baron Jharmok's brother. He has joined his sibling in the governance of the barony. While Jharmok is the fighting type, Stoakdor is a scholarly, contemplative and accomplished diviner. Rumors spread by some of the nobles in Shelspring and Dorlin say that Stoakdor is plotting to usurp his brother's power through evil magic.

PCs may have met Stoakdor in a number of adventures, including COR4-01 *Shedding Scales*, COR 5-06 *Clipping Wings*, and/or KEO5-01 *For Want of a King*. PCs that played the latter adventure will also know that Stoakdor was one of their two potential patrons in a task of recovering vital lore regarding *Blackrazor*, the soul-

sucking necromantic sword used by Holphin Neheli to assassinate the king.

Verify that the PCs are willing to travel there before proceeding with the read-aloud text below.

The journey to Redlee Manor is uneventful. Redlee Manor is the name of the small town that has grown up around Redlee Keep. All but a few of the buildings are obviously of recent construction.

The older buildings are made of fieldstone, while the newer construction has made use of lumber imported from the edges of the Dreadwood. Foundations and frames for more buildings surround a completed interior village.

Sitting atop a hill to the east of the village is an impressive keep. From the size and construction, it looks as though it could easily hold the entire population of the town four times over and withstand a siege for weeks if necessary.

The keep is not ornate or ostentatious, and the interior shares the same sparse but utilitarian design and decoration. A Knight of the Malagari escorts you to see Stoakdor, and on their way to his meeting chambers you notice a variety of diverse activities: female adepts of Lydia preparing food and mending clothes, dour knights dressed in black talking in whispered conversations, and children singing songs and learning Keoish history.

The guards all wear heavy armor and shields emblazoned with a unique coat of arms: a pair of owl wings flanking an upright longsword. A DC 15 Knowledge (history, nobility, or local – Sheldomar Valley metaregion) or Bardic Knowledge check reveals this is the coat of arms of the Knights of the Malagari, known to the general populace as the Darkwatch. PCs that are Darkwatch or belong to the Dorlin military automatically make this check.

Within the keep, most of the people are either connected to the Darkwatch (dressed in dark colors) or they are female followers of Lydia (wearing brightly colored robes and clothing, even multicolored garb is some instances). Many of these females also wear a holy symbol: a fist grasping a rainbow-colored shaft of light. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that this is very similar to the holy symbol of Lydia, but it is altered slightly: the normal holy symbol of Lydia has a multi-colored shaft of light spraying forth from an open palm. Again, Darkwatch and Dorlin military PCs automatically make this check.

Stoakdor Neheli is a Suloise man of learned mien and deliberate speech. He wears his reddish-blond hair long and back in a ponytail. Although he tries to present the demeanor of being cool and collected, he is clearly excited about that which he is going to tell you. A number of other adventurers have also responded to Stoakdor's summons.

Allow the players to describe and introduce their respective PCs before continuing.

Stoakdor begins speaking rapidly. "Adventurers, welcome to Shelswake - my thanks for responding to my summons with such haste. You will find this is a situation that warrants immediate action." He steps forward and says almost breathlessly, "King Kimbertos... he may yet live."

Seeing your confused looks, he explains. "Earlier in the year, the journal and magical lore of the elf witch named Cjaian (SHAY-ahn) was returned to me. This witch, as some of you may know, was an expert in the lore surrounding Blackrazor, the soul-sucking sword which was used to assassinate our king and whose power has thwarted our efforts to resurrect him."

"In her notes, she revealed that the weapon does not immediately consume the soul which it absorbs. Rather, it holds that soul within it, consuming it only when it has the opportunity to swallow another. Since the discovery of this information, I have labored incessantly on my divinations. I can now announce to you that the King's soul remains intact, though imprisoned. Using Cjaian's notes, I have devised a ritual that should snatch it back from Blackrazor, and in so doing, allow him to be raised from the dead."

"Even now I've begun preparations for this feat of magic, but of course the King's remains are not here. Rather, they lie in state in the great monastery of Wee Jas, the Ruby Crypt. I have spoken to High Priestess Illithria Neheli and explained the situation. She has agreed to allow the King's remains to be brought back here for resurrection. She is not willing to raise the King herself, as the Stern Lady she worships has prohibitions against doing so."

"This must be done in the utmost secrecy, as this so-called 'Iron Cabal' which is behind the murder of the king still has not been discovered. Danger may well dog your steps, so be careful. And of course, this endeavor should be done secretly. Tell no one of your task. Only we, the High Priestess and the gods themselves know of our mission."

As Stoakdor finishes, the wizard rubs his hands together, fidgeting as he waits for your decision as to whether or not you will accept, or for any questions you might have.

The PCs may have questions. Some possible ones, and suggested answers, are shown below.

Holphin Neheli, one of your kinsmen, was the King's killer. Why should we trust you or help you? *"Holphin's hand wielded the blade, but his will was not his own. He was controlled by an outside force, and in so doing our family's reputation has been*

stained. Admittedly, we seek to restore him for many reasons, not a few of which are selfish. Regardless, I am Keoish, and I seek to right a wrong that was done to my country."

How do we know that you're not involved in this cabal you mentioned? *"I had hoped that my actions thus far would have shown my sincerity. If you have doubts, perhaps you should decline my request for your assistance."*

What's in it for us? *"I will reward you, and if you succeed, you will find many, many doors open for you. I imagine that the king would be especially grateful, wouldn't you say?"*

Can Priestess Illithria be trusted? *"Yes. She has given her word, and those that follow the Stern Lady are creatures of law. She will not betray me or my agents. I suspect that she also wishes to see the King restored, but she must abide by the strictures of her faith."*

Where is the Ruby Crypt? How do we get there? *"Time is of the essence, so I am going to magically transport you all there as soon as you are ready. I am not sure how much time it will take for you to retrieve the remains, so I will return here and continue working on the ritual while you do so."*

If the PCs accept Stoakdor's offer, he will explain what he needs the PCs to do.

Stoakdor looks pleased by your acceptance of his offer. "The king's body has not deteriorated since his assassination, as the clerics of Wee Jas have seen to the body with a magical unguent that, when smeared on the remains, preserves them. Once you have secured the remains from the crypt, the High Priestess will contact me by magic. I will arrive and magically retrieve you and the body."

"Now, gather yourselves and make any preparations you need to make. As soon as you're done, return here and I'll transport you to a site near the monastery."

The PCs can make any preparations they wish before leaving. They may also make any purchases they wish (the usual item access requirements apply, of course).

Once they are ready to proceed:

Stoakdor nods as you indicate that you are ready to go. He begins by casting a spell, and whispers, "We're coming, High Priestess. Please be ready for them."

A DC 20 Spellcraft check reveals that Stoakdor has cast a sending spell.

This done, the diviner begins casting a second spell. "Join hands," he orders. When you do, he says a single magical word and you find yourselves elsewhere.

This is a greater teleport spell, identified with a DC 22 Spellcraft check.

You stand in a small copse of fruit trees surrounded by fields of waving knee-height grass. To your right, you can make out an ancient-looking stone edifice, about two miles away. Stoakdor motions towards it and frowns. "Odd. We should have arrived much closer. I'm not sure what happened."

A Spellcraft check (DC 22) reveals to any PC that the greater teleport normally has no chance of error. Wee Jas has warded the monastery against all attempts to teleport into it, and so Stoakdor found himself "bounced" here.

"The Ruby Crypt, final resting place of ancient Keoish kings. Tread lightly and with respect," Stoakdor cautions. "Good luck."

Stoakdor will teleport himself back to Redlee Manor, leaving the PCs to make the short hike to the Ruby Crypt.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE RUBY CRYPT

Refer to DM Aid: Map #1. Give the players Player Handout #1.

Although the PCs do not know it (nor can they – the situation in the Ruby Crypt is being masked by the intervention of Wee Jas herself, foiling any PC-cast divination spells to scry into the place), the monastery has been frozen in time by the will of the Stern Lady. An Aspect of Wee Jas patiently waits for the PCs in the Vault of Kings.

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT THE MONASTERY

The monastery is surrounded by a black iron fence ranging from seven to nine feet in height (DC 18 Climb) and bearing skull motifs on it. The enclosed grounds are square, about a half-mile on each side. Most of that space represents a burgeoning graveyard, the final resting place of those servants of Wee Jas that spend a lifetime behind these gates.

The monastery itself is a hundred feet on a side, made of smooth grey-colored marble. Most of the structure is a single story, though the center temple area is raised three stories in height and is capped with a dome.

The path stretching from the fruit trees copse to the monastery's gates is paved with cobblestones. As the PCs approach the gates, you should ask for a DC 26 Spot check. Any PC succeeding in the check will notice a tiny bird (a sparrow) hanging motionless and in mid-air above the monastery dome. PCs that notice this, or have it pointed out to them, may make a DC 29 Spellcraft check.

If they succeed, they may surmise that something has caught the sparrow in an effect similar to a *time stop* spell, although one whose duration the PC heretofore would have thought was impossible.

The radius of the *time stop* area is the limits of the monastery as delineated by the iron gates that surround the place.

When the PCs approach, read the following:

Having followed the cobblestone path from the copse of trees to the monastery, you can make out a number of details as you approach. The monastery is surrounded by a black iron fence ranging from seven to nine feet in height and bearing skull motifs on it. The enclosed grounds are square, about a half-mile on each side. Most of that space represents a burgeoning graveyard, the final resting place of those servants of Wee Jas that spend a lifetime behind these walls.

The monastery itself is a hundred feet on a side, made of smooth grey-colored marble. Most of the structure is a single story, though the center temple area is raised three stories in height and is capped with a dome. Every wall sports multiple sets of stained glass windows – most a half-story, though the ones inset into the western side of the complex run the full three stories in height and doubtless allow light into the main worship area. A pair of great brass doors, emblazoned with the image of the Stern Lady in bas-relief and inset into the monastery's eastern wall, appears to be the only conventional way inside.

ENTERING THE MONASTERY

Once the PCs have stepped past the perimeter of the gates, they will find themselves inside the *time stop* effect. Because of the will of Wee Jas, they (and her aspect) are unaffected by it, as are attended object of theirs. For example, a PC carrying a coin will find it seems normal until she tries to flip it into the air, whereupon it will hang motionless the moment it leaves her hand. This effect makes ranged projectile combat impossible, for various reasons, and cannot be dispelled (not by the PCs, anyway).

Although a map and a brief description of each area of the monastery are provided it is suggested that, in the interests of time, you narrate the PCs exploration of the place. Drawing out a map of the entire site will take too long, unless you have a large block of time in which to play this adventure. Don't spend too much time on Encounter 1; there are no active threats to the PCs. The rooms of greatest relevance are Areas 5 and 6, the quarters of the High Priestess, where a way into the Vault of Kings may be found.

As the monastery is trapped in a fold of time by the will of Wee Jas, the PCs are the only things in motion.

You should remember this in your descriptions of the site. Monks can be seen "stuck" in mid-step. A fly hangs motionless and frozen in the air, as does a water droplet from someone's washed hands.

Because of the immense divine magic used by Wee Jas in this area, spells such as *detect magic* (and *detect law*, as her magic has a strong component of law to it) are useless, as EVERYTHING here will radiate such an aura.

Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are eight feet in height. The monastery is well-illuminated by *continual flame* spells, except in the barracks (Area 3) and in the quarters of the High Priestess (Area 5), where the needs of sleep might preclude the constant use of light. Doors are of the standard wooden variety.

◆ **Wooden Doors:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 18.

THE ANGER OF WEE JAS

Should any of the PCs commit acts against the temple that would anger the Stern Lady, they will find that they have earned the **Wrath of the Stern Lady** AR effect. These acts include the theft of temple property, assaulting one of the helpless priests, and EXCESSIVE damage to the monastery (a broken window or a few broken locks are one thing, but extreme damage to the place will earn her ire). Any PC that makes a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check will be aware of this prohibition – Wee Jas is a goddess of beauty, and her vanity lends her to take a dim view of those who would deface that which belongs or is dedicated to her.

AREA 1 – ENTRY FOYER

You stand in a grand antechamber. A pair of brass double doors stands to the west, an image of a skull before a ball of flame inset into the doors in bas-relief. Elaborate mosaic tile in the floor depict past High Priests of Wee Jas. A pair of halberdiers in full plate stands motionless, weapons crossed, before the double doors. A mirror and wash basin are on the northern wall very close to the entrance. Smaller, more mundane-looking doors lead north and south.

The halberdiers are frozen in time, and it is easy enough for the PCs to step beneath the crossed weapons if the wish to proceed west. The mirror and wash basin are for new arrivals, who are expected or asked by the guards to wash themselves (as one of the Stern Lady's portfolios is that of vanity). The mosaics are a visual representation of past High Priests; PCs that have played KEO4-05 *A Last Dance at Midnight* will recognize one of them as the late Countess Katarina Linth, whom they may have met. (Katarina was Illithria's immediate predecessor.)

AREA 2 – TEMPLE

This chamber is the main worship area of the monastery and is clearly meant to inspire awe in those who come to pay homage to Wee Jas. The dome thirty feet above your heads is held in place by a quartet of gleaming marble columns which form the temple's nave. The dome is an enormous representation of the holy symbol of the Stern Lady, an alabaster skull set over a ball of flame, both of which are inset against a black background. Four embroidered gray banners of the finest silk hang from each corner of the dome, descending fifteen feet. Simple and elegant marble benches form four rows stretching west towards the central altar area. On the altar are a number of valuable objects, including a platinum basin and reliquary. Three enormous stained glass windows, each with depictions of Wee Jas in all her radiant beauty, allow muted, colored light to filter into the chamber. About a dozen monks in gray, finely-embroidered robes are in the room, frozen, with several literally in mid-step.

Each of the platinum items is worth a thousand gold pieces, but taking them is a bad idea, as noted earlier.

AREA 3 – DORMITORY

This plain room houses a number of simple but comfortable-looking bunks. Two small foot lockers sit at the end of each bunk. Several monks are here. Some are laying in bed, while others are sitting up reading religious texts. All are utterly motionless.

The collected valuables in the lockers (which are neither locked nor trapped) are valued at 500 gp.

AREA 4 – KITCHEN / MESS

This seems to be the area where meals are both prepared and consumed. A few small stone tables and wooden chairs have seating for several monks, all of which are frozen in place. The northeast corner of the room has a hanging collection of metal pots and wooden utensils, as well as a small fire pit, cauldron and chopping block.

AREA 5 – HIGH PRIESTESS' BEDROOM

This room is the bedchamber of someone of prominence, and bears a feminine imprint to the décor. The room is exquisite in appearance, using only the finest materials, and manages to be elegant without being ostentatious. The furnishings include a four-poster bed, a dresser with an oval mirror, and several thick throw rugs. Sitting before the dresser is an older Suloise woman of striking beauty. She is dressed in light blue robes and wears several pieces of platinum jewelry – a ring, a six-inch platinum hair pin around which her hair has been braided

into a bun, and an amethyst-adorned necklace. She had just started to apply blush to her cheeks, but now frozen in place like everyone else you've seen in the Ruby Crypt thus far.

This is, of course, High Priestess Illithria Neheli. Even she has fallen prey to the effects of the *time stop* put in place by the aspect of Wee Jas in the Vault of Kings below. The jewelry she wears is worth 500 gp. One of the pieces, the pin in her hair, is actually the key to the Vault of Kings (see Area 6, below).

Note: Taking the platinum pin will NOT immediately incur the wrath of Wee Jas, since the PCs are using the item for a legitimate purpose. When the PCs leave the monastery, you should confirm (by asking them directly) whether or not they return the item before they leave. Only if you ask and they indicate they keep the item after they use it should you apply the **Wrath of the Stern Lady** AR effect to the PC(s).

AREA 6 – HIGH PRIESTESS' WORSHIP ROOM

This chamber's centerpiece is a lozenge-shaped stained glass window of exceptional beauty, depicting Wee Jas in a three-quarter profile. You would guess that this place is a private area of prayer and meditation for the woman whose bedchamber adjoins this room. There is a small altar of white marble, in a lozenge shape identical to the window in the northern wall. The altar is inscribed with gold and platinum inlaid symbols.

If PCs inspect the altar, they will see that it features a lion inlaid in platinum on its right side, and a crown inlaid in gold on its left. In the center of the altar's surface is a small hole a foot in depth. The altar radiates faint transmutation magic.

This altar serves both its obvious purpose as well as being a "plug" over a shaft that leads down into the Vault of Kings.

The normal way to open the passage is to take the platinum hair pin of the High Priestess and drop it into the hole (which is deeper than the pin's length, so it will disappear when dropped in). This will trigger four stone pins at the edges of the altar's base to rise, lifting the altar off the ground by a height of three feet (enough to allow Medium sized creatures to wriggle beneath it) and revealing a seven-foot diameter shaft with a metal ladder inset into the well's side. The shaft is well lit by *continual flame* spells and descends seventy feet into the Vault of Kings (see Encounter 2). The shaft cannot be detected as a secret door, nor may the altar's mobility be detected by skills such as *Disable Device*.

There is a magical as well as mechanical component to the altar's operation, so dropping even an object of identical weight and dimensions as the hair pin won't work – only the real thing.

Alternatively, the mechanism may be activated by a Disable Device check (DC 27 + APL). Smashing or otherwise wrecking the altar to get to the shaft will earn the **Wrath of the Stern Lady**.

To close the plug, a PC need only apply firm pressure to the altar. Counterweights will lower the altar down to the ground once more, and a small stone pin at the base of the hole will push the platinum hair pin partially out so it can be retrieved. Once the pin is removed, the altar resets itself.

AREA 7 – HIGH PRIESTESS’ STUDY

A comfortable high-backed chair, bookcases and a roll-top writing desk denote this chamber as the High Priestess’ study. The place is meticulously clean and the shelves impeccably organized.

The titles represented here are principally dealing with historical or theological concepts, and are of no relevance to the PCs.

AREA 8 – HIGH PRIESTESS’ MEDITATION CHAMBER

This chamber contains a thick prayer mat of soft blue color. A censer hangs from the ceiling of the room’s center on a delicate silver chain. The smoke from the incense burning within it smells of lavender and is frozen in mid-air. A feeling of calm serenity pervades this place.

The room has nothing of interest to the PCs.

AREA 9 – STUDY CELLS

These bare cells contain a comfortable chair and a simple desk.

AREA 10 – BATHS

A tiled in-ground bath is within each of these rooms, along with cloth towels and a small hearth in which to warm water and dry out the room after it has been used.

AREA 11 – LAVATORIES

These contain a chamber-pot and related necessities.

AREA 12 – HOSPICE

This sprawling room contains row after row of sick beds, each with a small table upon which sits a pitcher of water, bandages and other supplies. There are a half-dozen monks here, tending the infirmary’s thirty patients. Everyone here seems frozen in place. One monk is pouring water, and the fluid hangs like a bridge connecting the pitcher and the rag which she was moistening. A great collection of books runs the entire length of the southern wall. Light streams

into the room through the colorful windows of stained glass.

This is one of the largest infirmaries of the sick and dying outside of the facilities of the Hospitaliers. The dogma of Wee Jas accords a high importance on the allowance of a person to enjoy a “good death” and the monastery’s focus is providing this sacred service. The books contain extensive writings on anatomy, healing, herbalism, and theology related to death and the dying.

ENCOUNTER 2: THE VAULT OF KINGS

Refer to DM Aid: Map #2.

Once the PCs exit the shaft leading into the Entry Chamber, the sound of running water to the west (from the Hall of Reflection) will provide an auditory clue that this part of the monastery is free of the *time stop* effect.

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT THE VAULT OF KINGS

Unlike the levels above, unless otherwise noted, the areas are kept unlit. The ceilings here are seven feet in height. All areas are of finished stone construction.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE TOMB

The guardians are a trio of air elementals who have been magically bound to the tomb to protect it from all intruders. They normally would not be a problem for the PCs, but they are entering without being escorted by High Priestess Illithria Neheli. Without her to order the guardians from attacking, the PCs must contend with these threats. However, the guardians will **strike for non-lethal damage** against worshippers of Wee Jas, and are able to sense the religious devotion of any PC not warded from divination spells in some fashion.

ENTRY

Having descended the shaft from the monastery level above, you descend seventy feet into a thirty foot square chamber. A pair of portcullises bar your way. Beyond each of them, hallways lead off into the gloom.

The portcullises each contain no apparent lock mechanism, although there is a lever inset into the northern wall of the corridors ten feet past the gates. PCs notice this lever with a DC 10 Spot check. PCs can manipulate the lever by mundane (ten-foot pole) or magical (*mage hand*, *telekinesis*) means. Alternatively, each portcullis will slide noiselessly open at the touch of any devoted follower of Wee Jas. They radiate a faint transmutation aura.

❖ **Iron Portcullis:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 25.

HALL OF HISTORY

This chamber is a historic homage to the great and lengthy history of the oldest continuing human empire in the Flanaess. Gold inlays in the floor form a small checkerboard pattern across it. Each square contains a depiction of a single historic event, rendered by finely cut pieces of colored tile. The pictures are thus arranged in chronological order, and about three-quarters of the floor's total space has been used. The walls are of polished grey marble.

While artistically and academically interesting, there is nothing vital here for the PCs.

HALL OF REFLECTION

This room contains a wide pool with a low lip, filled with crystal clear water. A statue in the center of the pool depicts Wee Jas, and water flows from her palms into it. Curved stone benches make this place one of quiet reflection. The ceiling vaults to a height of twenty feet, and rendered in oil paints above are mosaics depicting the coronation ceremonies of the ten Keoish kings.

The ten are the first ten such Kings of Keoland. The water is quite cold and is potable, though it has a metallic tang to its taste.

VAULT OF KINGS

If the capital of Niole Dra is the heart of the Keoish Empire, than this place must be its introspective soul. This massive chamber stretches out before you, farther than you can see. The great ceiling vaults to a height of fifty feet above your heads; the chamber is nearly as wide as the roof is tall. The chamber looks to contain many crypts, small but elaborate, each containing the remains of one of the monarchs of Keoland. Each bears the name of the interred above the crypt's iron door – along with the sternest possible warning in several languages against disturbing the occupant's eternal rest.

From ten feet below the apex of the ceiling hangs a large globe of steady, crimson-colored light. It casts the place in a hue of red, the Keoish color of mourning. Although it is a dozen feet across, even it cannot shed enough light to completely illuminate this enormous chamber.

Not far below the sphere hang a number of amorphous, shifting clouds surrounded by fast-moving dust devils. Darker bits of twirling vapor form the suggestion of eyes and mouths.

The forms are those of the crypt's guardians, magically-bound air elementals.

APL 6 (EL 6)

🌀 **Air Elementals, Medium (3):** hp 30 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 96.

APL 8 (EL 8)

🌀 **Air Elementals, Large (3):** hp 66 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 96.

APL 10 (EL 10)

🌀 **Air Elementals, Huge (3):** hp 144 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 96.

APL 12 (EL 11)

🌀 **Air Elementals, Greater (2):** hp 189 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 96.

Setup: The elementals will begin at a height of forty feet in the center of the chamber.

Tactics: The guardians will rely on their superior speed and initiative modifiers to immediately attack the PCs when they enter, charging from above and remaining high enough to enjoy the +1 to hit bonus granted for melee attacks made from higher ground. (If they can do so using their superior reach at APLs 8 to 12, they will do so). The elementals will focus on a single PC unless another character makes themselves an especially easy (or priority) target. **Note:** They strike for non-lethal damage against worshippers of Wee Jas.

If PCs attempt to flee, two of the guardians will give chase (though at APLs 10 and 12, they are too large to fit easily inside the 10 ft.-wide passageways and must squeeze through, as per the rules for doing so in the *Player's Handbook*) while the third remains in the chamber. They will not pursue PCs who flee up the shaft back towards the monastery, so they will not be caught in the time stop effect should the PCs try and lead them topside. They fight until destroyed.

Development: Once the guardians have been dealt with, the PCs are free to explore the chamber. The years of their reign, the name of the king residing in each crypt, and the corresponding crypt number, follows. Note that in some cases, several monarchs have opted to be buried with their predecessors:

1. -342 to -314 CY: Nyhan I of House Neheli
2. -314 to -295 CY: Malv I of House Rhola
3. -295 to -279 CY: Lorgyr I of House Neheli
4. -279 to -272 CY: Nyhan II of House Neheli
5. -272 to -236 CY: Mandros I of Sedenna
6. -236 to -139 CY: Luschan I & II of House Rhola
7. -193 to -157 CY: Malv II of House Rhola
8. -157 to -121 CY: Sanduchar I of House Rhola
9. -121 to -107 CY: Senestall I of House Neheli

10. -107 to -98 CY: Lanchaster I of House Rhola
11. -98 to -72 CY: Lanchaster II of House Rhola
12. -72 to -63 CY: Senestall II of House Neheli
13. -63 to -19 CY: Lanchaster III of House Rhola
14. -19 to 7 CY: Luschan III of House Rhola
15. 7 to 49 CY: Malv III of House Rhola
16. 49 to 278 CY: The Neheli Dynasty (Cedrian I & II, Nyhan III & IV, Trevlyan I & II)
17. 278 to 286 CY: Gillum I of House Neheli
18. 287 to 346 CY: Tavish I of House Rhola
19. 346 to 395 CY: Tavish II of House Rhola
20. 395 to 414 CY: Luschan Sellark IV of House Rhola
21. 414 to 453 CY: Tavish III of House Rhola
22. 453 to 488 CY: Tavish IV of House Rhola
23. 488 to 510 CY: Nyhan IV of House Neheli
24. 510 to 539 CY: Senestall II of House Neheli
25. 539 to 564 CY: Trevlyan III of House Neheli
26. 564 to 594 CY: Kimbertos Skotti of House Lizhal (this crypt can be seen from the outside to be empty, unlike nos. 1-25.)

Notes on the Crypts: Crypt 16's interior is actually a landing for a small stair that descends into a separate, private mausoleum. Crypts 26 to 30 are unoccupied; the latter three bear no name (they await the interment of a king).

Trap: Each of the crypts EXCEPT #26 (Kimbertos') has been trapped. Woe to the adventurer that fails to heed the warning against disturbing the remains of the lords of Keoland!

All APLs (EL 10)

↗ **Wail of the Banshee Trap:** CR 10; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*wail of the banshee*, 17th-level wizard, DC 23 Fort negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

Treasure: Should the PCs break into any of these vaults, they will find one or more corpses in partially arrested states of decay (via *unguents of timelessness*, applied long ago) and 3d6 x 1,000 gp in valuables per corpse. Any PCs involved in this tomb-robbing gain the permanent **Wrath of the Stern Lady** AR effect.

CHAMBER OF STATE

The double doors leading into the Chamber of State read the following in Keoish:

The Chamber of State. May the Gods protect and defend the Empire.

The doors are huge portals of darkwood inlaid with platinum. They are nine feet in width and twenty feet in height and bear the seals of the Kingdom of Keoland upon them. They are closed but unlocked, and their fine manufacture renders them easily opened by even a modicum of effort.

Having opened the great doors to this chamber, you find yourselves looking into a room whose ceremonial purpose is clearly to allow the viewing of a corpse in state. The body of the assassinated king lies here. Kimbertos Skotti of House Lizhal was a man of broad shoulders and regal bearing. His face is weathered and slightly gaunt in the embrace of death, but it retains its regal mien. His brown hair was growing to silver near his temples at the time of his death. His eyes are shut, and he lies upon a great slab of carved alabaster marble, his head facing west in the custom of those interred by followers of Wee Jas.

Standing on the side of the slab opposite you is a breathtakingly beautiful woman with lush black hair, sculpted features and gleaming copper-colored eyes. She wears a suit of finely wrought plate, crafted of mithral. An eight-foot sword lies in easy reach in a sheath across her back, positioned between the great feathered wings that emerge from her back. You get an overwhelming sense of divine awe from this figure, who nods solemnly to you as you meet her gaze.

"I am an Aspect of Wee Jas," she says, "a shard of her power made flesh, yet divine. I would speak with you, mortals. Stay your blades and spells."

This figure is a divine shard of the power of Wee Jas – an Aspect, in the form of an avenging angel of law known as a Justicator.

☞ **Aspect of Wee Jas (Justicator):** hp 128; see Appendix 5.

Development: If the PCs attack the Justicator immediately, the Justicator will simply leave. Her departure will end the *time stop* effect on the monastery. The PCs will earn the permanent **Wrath of the Stern Lady** AR effect, although this leaves them free to take the King's body and leave. Proceed to Encounter 7 or (should the PCs immediately magically spirit themselves back to Stoakdor) Encounter 8. The same applies if the PCs ignore the Justicator and take the body; the Aspect will not interfere, but will mark them for their disrespect to the Stern Lady.

If the PCs allow the Justicator to speak:

"I am a goddess of law, and death," the divine figure begins, "and I know that the path you find yourselves upon could lead to chaos and ruin across

this valley. You come here seeking to restore to life this king, but how can you make such a decision without truly knowing the man?"

The angelic figure cocks its head in curiosity before continuing; the question is obviously a rhetorical one. "Decisions made in ignorance and haste will always lead to failure. Therefore, you will see this mortal king as a boy, and as a man, and as a monarch. Only then will I allow you to return and make your choice."

Even before the figure has finished speaking, you find yourselves elsewhere.

PCs receive the AR effect **A Stern Encounter**. Proceed to Encounter 3.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE BOY KIMBERTOS

The Aspect has dispatched the PCs back to the past, to observe the king during three critical points in his life. In doing so, Wee Jas hopes that the PCs will make a more informed decision, one that will decide the fate of the kingdom, the Sheldomar Valley, and thousands of her own worshippers.

The first stop for the PCs is the Dreadwood, when Kimbertos is a petulant ten-year old child.

With the divine being's words are still ringing in your ears, you find the area around you swirling out of focus. A sense of vertigo overwhelms you, and you drop to your knees. The hard floor softens around you, and the illumination becomes that of streaming sunlight. As you struggle to recover from whatever the being did to you, you find yourself in a foreboding wood, alongside a narrow road which cuts through the wilderness.

Coming up the road, perhaps a hundred yards away, are a pair of riders. The first rider is a human woman, the second that of a male child. As you watch, you see the smaller figure spur his horse, completely without warning, and tear off into the woods.

The child's voice is briefly heard, shouting, "I don't want to go!" before it is replaced with the frightened, frantic din of a woman. "Kim," she nearly shrieks, "Gods! Come back!" Noticing your group struggling to its feet, the woman screams, "Bring him back, please!"

Any Dreadwalker PCs will realize that they are in the Dreadwood (no check required). Any other PC can determine where they are with a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check.

☛ **Andira Rhola-Skotti of House Lizhal:** Human Female Ari5; hp 20; Bluff +4, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +4, Sense Motive +3.

Andira is the mother of Kimbertos, who at this age is a petulant and stubborn ten-year old who is nearly hopelessly spoiled. She and her son are traveling through the Dreadwood whose roads are normally safe – provided one does not leave them, as her child has done.

Andira is too frantic to really have any meaningful dialogue with the PCs. She can explain (briefly) that her son Kimbertos has been throwing an extended tantrum since they began this trip, and now he seems eager to stop their travel for the day. She has heard stories of the Dreadwood's dangers and is terrified by what fate might befall her reckless, disobedient son.

If the PCs refuse Andira's request, she will curse them even as they feel themselves once again being overcome by vertigo. Proceed to Encounter 4 in this instance.

If the PCs tear off into the woods after him:

As you plow your way into the woods, you hear the whinny and cry of a horse dozens of yards ahead. After pursuing as quickly as you can, you burst through a thicket of brambles to find the boy standing motionless, his back to you. Menacing him is a hideous creature with a bulbous body and a central, unblinking eye. A large maw with dagger-sharp teeth drools in evil anticipation, even as eye-stalks twitch at the sight of you as you come into view.

☛ **Kimbertos Skotti:** Male Human; AC 8; hp 5; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +3.

Kimbertos is being threatened by one or more beholders. The child is frozen in fear.

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ **Beholders, Gauths (2):** hp 50 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 26.

APL 8 (EL 10)

☛ **Beholders, Gauths (4):** hp 50 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 26.

APL 10 (EL 12)

☛ **Beholders, Gauths, 10-HD Advanced Ftr2 (3):** hp 102 each; see Appendix 3.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ **Beholders (2):** hp 99 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 26.

Setup: The beholders begin 60 feet away from the lead PC and 10 feet from Kimbertos. Any additional beholders are arranged in a rough semi-circle around Kimbertos. They should be about 10 or 15 feet apart from one another, no closer to Kimbertos than 10 feet.

This is considered difficult terrain and doubles the normal cost of ground movement (the levitating

beholders ignore this). In addition, the tree cover provides a +2 bonus to AC and +1 bonus Ref saves (Dungeon Master's Guide, page 87) for all combatants.

Tactics: The beholders disregard Kimbertos once the PCs come into view. If there is more than one, they will immediately attempt to space themselves out to minimize the effectiveness of any area effect spells thrown at them. They harass the PCs with eye beams from a distance, pounding on them until they come within melee range, at which point the beholders use their superior mobility to retreat further. These creatures fight until destroyed and will not allow themselves to be captured, even using their own eyebeams on themselves if need be (they fear the masters of the Dreadwood far more than any PCs).

Development: It doesn't matter if Kimbertos is accidentally killed in this encounter, since what the PCs are experiencing is an illusion of divine magnitude that is recreating the past – the players won't know this, however, and you shouldn't ruin the suspense for them.

PCs that are slain in this dream, however, will die – the illusion is utterly indistinguishable from reality, and the shock to the system of one who thinks he has been slain is more than the body can bear. Such PCs can be restored to life via the usual methods; the Aspect will not raise anyone from the dead (Wee Jas is very selective about who she allows to be resurrected).

In later dialogues, should any of the PCs mention that they rescued him from beholders in the Dreadwood as a child, Kimbertos will state that he could never seem to remember the face of his rescuers, but he will confirm that it happened. He will also mention that this encounter with the aberrations of the Dreadwood spurred him into ultimately becoming a Dreadwalker.

Proceed to Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 4: THE MAN KIMBERTOS

You are once again overcome with vertigo. As the world spins, you find yourself in yet another place. It is a wooded grove, although the character and appearance of this forest is greatly different from the one in which you last found yourselves.

By the light of Celene, two lovers stand in a passionate embrace. The first is a woman, clearly an elf, with auburn-colored tresses that dangle to her hips and whose braids include colorful flowers. Her garb is diaphanous robes barely enough to keep her skin dry of the mist clinging to the grass. The second is a broad-shouldered human male, with thick tousled hair the color of bark – this is Kimbertos Skotti, but one aged thirty less years than the one you saw in the Vault of Kings. Their embrace is long and intimate.

Unlike the last time, your forms are hazy and insubstantial; you are floating two inches off the ground. The man separates from his lover, and even though it is impossible he could not have noticed you, he does not react to your presence. You wonder if you are even really here at all.

"What about her?" she says, turning away. There is a look of pain and guilt on her face.

Kimbertos comes up behind her and cinches his arms around her waist. "It doesn't matter. Nothing matters except us."

The world around you abruptly metamorphoses, and now you stand in a sumptuously-appointed bedchamber within some unknown castle. Two women are speaking. The first bears a delicate silver crown and wears a dress of the finest material. The second looks weathered and rugged, though no less attractive.

"I know where he is," Queen Jaedrae says insistently. Her voice cracks. "He's with her." The other woman looks on impassively but says nothing. The first turns from her in disgust even as, somewhere in the distance, an infant begins to wail.

"How much more will I suffer as Queen, Reynard?" she cries, before rushing from the room in tears.

As she does, Reynard's face abruptly softens, and she murmurs, "More than you could possibly know."

Your world dissolves around you.

Proceed to Encounter 5.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE KING KIMBERTOS

Having seen Kimbertos as a reckless, spoiled child and an unfaithful husband, the PCs will see the king at his worst one more time – this time, through the eyes of those studying the legacy of his reign.

Two dozen aisles across two wide rows separate you from the elderly man standing at the lectern at the far side of the lecture hall. The benches are filled with students taking notes, and the speaker is an elderly human with a neatly-trimmed beard. The man's voice carries easily to you even though he makes little effort to project his voice.

"...Keoland was ill-prepared for the Greyhawk Wars, and Kimbertos, busy as he was in attempting to extract concessions out of those nations that urgently needed his help, acted too late. Geoff, Sterich, and the Yeomanry were assailed by giants, and all but the latter remain partially or wholly in their grasp to this day. The king was forced to sign the Treaty of Niole Dra for fear that the Pomarj and

Iuz would seize the chance to carve up more former vassal states of Keoland for themselves, as the giants had done."

The man adjusts the spectacles on his nose. "Gradsul was nearly invaded by the Lordship of the Isles in 584 CY, and repelling the attack saw a quarter of Keoland's navy destroyed. Four years later, Sterich was freed in a ham-handed campaign whose costs in the lives of Keoish soldiers were staggering, and included the king's own son – and Sterich eventually fell to the giants regardless. Two years later, Kimbertos personally led an attack to capture Westkeep – a foolhardy move with questionable tactical value and that cost thousands of more lives. And in 593 CY, when the nation of Geoff needed Keoish troops the most, Kimbertos dispatched five thousand there, only to recall them without explanation months later." (Excerpted, in part, from the Living Greyhawk Gazetteer).

The man removed his spectacles and looked up at his students. "In conclusion the reign of Kimbertos Skotti must be judged by any reasonable historian to be a failure."

ANALYZING THE LECTURER'S ARGUMENT

This lecturer is biased, and PCs who are knowledgeable in the history and politics of Keoland can poke holes in his arguments – which might be important in helping the PCs to reach their ultimate decision regarding the king in Encounter 6.

Listed on the DM Aid: Poking Holes in the Lecturer's Arguments is the relevant skill checks and DCs. PCs who possess the noted skill(s) should roll against the listed DC; if they make it, you can provide them with the information listed.

In all cases, a Bardic Knowledge check (using the listed DCs) may be rolled in addition to any relevant skill check listed. Give them the highest of the rolls that they are able to make; each increasing DC adds to the insight the PC has about what really happened.

Once you've provided the PCs with any additional information their insight might have given, proceed to Encounter 6.

ENCOUNTER 6: DECISIONS

Note: The time has come for the PCs to make their decision. The adventure does account for the PCs changing their minds regarding whether or not Kimbertos should be brought back from the dead and/or restored to the throne. However, it is the experience of the author that many players are used to adventures in which there is only one "correct" way to complete it. This is not the case. The core of the adventure is **CHOICE**, and

if you need to assuage any doubts that the players might have about this, you are encouraged to do so by telling them out-of-game if need be.

You stand once more in the Chamber of State. You cannot be certain how much time has passed – if any – and the Aspect seems not to have moved since you left.

She speaks. "A reckless child that lived for the moment; a quality he retained as a man. Unfaithful to his wife, she would suffer a horrendous fate; even now her disquieted soul remains trapped as a ghost, in eternal torment. You have heard a tale of thousands of lives squandered, by his actions and his inaction alike, and a conclusion that he has left his kingdom worse off than when he was crowned."

The Aspect looks down at the corpse and says but one more word to you all:

"Choose."

The Aspect will answer no more questions, but instead simply waits to see how the situation resolves itself. She also does not require any sort of explanation for the choice of the PCs, though she won't interrupt them should they wish to verbalize their reasons. In short, she will do nothing before but wait for the PCs to choose.

Note: This must be a **GROUP DECISION**. A PC seizing the body hasn't made the decision for the rest of the group – unless her fellow PCs don't object or attempt to stop her. Don't allow a single player to railroad the others at the table; this must be a choice agreed to by all.

If the PCs attack the Justicator, the Aspect will simply leave. The PCs will earn the permanent **Wrath of the Stern Lady** AR effect, though they are free to take the King's body and leave. Proceed to Encounter 7 (or if the PCs then immediately magically transport themselves away) or Encounter 8 if this occurs.

Once the PCs have clearly and unanimously indicated their decision, the Aspect will reply simply, "So be it," before vanishing, recalled by Wee Jas. The *time stop* effect on the monastery ends, and High Priestess Illithria, realizing that something has happened, immediately heads for the Vault of Kings after calling her guards, meeting the PCs in Encounter 7.

ENCOUNTER 7: MEETING ILLITHRIA

This encounter will take place in the Entry Chamber, as the PCs are attempting to leave the Vault of Kings. Upon the dismissal of the *time stop* effect following the PCs making their decision, Illithria senses that something has happened (particularly if her hairpin is missing). She pauses only long enough to don her mithral shirt before heading down into the Vault.

Assume that the time the High Priestess takes to do the above and get into the Vault has her meeting the PCs in one of the Halls (whichever one the PCs pass through on the way out). If the PCs are taking a truly inordinate amount of time on gathering up the King's remains, you may wish to have the meeting take place in the Vault itself, where Illithria is waiting for whomever the intruders are to emerge. Until the PCs leave the Chamber of State (with or without the King's body), assume that the Aspect has left the door magically barred, keeping the High Priestess out, but allowing the PCs to exit whenever they wish.

Having rendered your decision, you start the trek back through the Vault of Kings and to the monastery above. Before you are able to make your exit, you are met by the High Priestess, Illithria Neheli, who has rushed down into the crypts. She steps forward and says "By the Stern Lady," she demands in a commanding voice, "hold and explain yourselves to me!"

Illithria will of course demand to know what has happened. She will likewise answer any questions that the PCs might have of her to the best of her ability, provided that they are forthcoming and truthful.

❖ **High Priestess Illithria Neheli of the Ruby Crypt:** Female Suloise Clr9 of Wee Jas; see Appendix 5.

Should any of the PCs require healing or restorative magic, Illithria will offer to heal them to the best of her ability. This is done at no charge to the PCs.

Some possible comments by the PCs, and her likely responses to them, are provided below:

We met an Aspect of Wee Jas downstairs... *"Blessed are we to have received such a visitor. In truth, I am not surprised. The Stern Lady often takes an interest in events that can tip the scales between law and disorder. I hope you heeded her advice and rendered a decision based on cognition and reflection alike."*

Do you think we made the correct decision? *"That is not for me to say. You followed the instructions of Wee Jas; that is all that matters."*

Can you alert Stoakdor that we're ready to return? *"Of course. We will communicate with him once we've gone to the copse outside. Given what's happened here, I cannot completely trust my fellows."*

If the PCs earned the **Wrath of the Stern Lady**, Illithria will sense their indiscretions and will order them from the monastery in anger. They must find their way back to Stoakdor on their own.

ENCOUNTER 8: RETURN TO REDLEE MANOR

The PCs will arrive at this encounter with or without the body of King Kimbertos. The circumstances of their arrival may also vary – they may be led here by Illithria, have come here on their own, or needed to make their own way back to Redlee Manor.

PCS ARE LED TO THE COPSE BY ILLITHRIA

Illithria will lead the PCs to the copse of trees where they arrived. Illithria will cast a *sending* spell, contacting Stoakdor, who will appear a few moments later via a *greater teleport* spell, read from a scroll. He will nod cordially to Illithria in thanks, and will quickly look over the PCs. He will scowl if they don't have the body of the King with them, but assumes that there must be a compelling reason for it. He orders the PCs to join hands with him, and he reads a second scroll of *greater teleport*, whisking the PCs back to Redlee Manor. Proceed to Debriefing below.

PCS RETURN TO MANOR ON THEIR OWN

Assuming that the PCs magically transport themselves back to see Stoakdor, you can proceed to Debriefing below. If the PCs should not have, or choose not to use, such magical transportation, Stoakdor will locate the PCs via magical divination and will use a *greater teleport* to retrieve them as noted above (and probably grousing that the PCs were *walking home*).

DEBRIEFING

The below read-aloud text assumes that the PCs were retrieved by Stoakdor; you may need to make some ad hoc changes to it if the PCs made their own way back to Redlee Manor.

Having been retrieved by Stoakdor, you find yourselves back within a sitting room somewhere within Baron Jharmok's keep. A collection of antique chairs provides seating for you all. Stoakdor declines to sit down and his fatigue is evident. Dark rings lurk beneath his eyes, and his posture is somewhat slumped. "Something happened there," he says. "I need not be a diviner to see that. Tell me everything."

At this point, Stoakdor will allow the PCs to bring him up to speed regarding the events thus far. He will listen intently, showing little reaction (except for a raised eyebrow when the Aspect and her mighty magic are mentioned). He will answer any questions put to him to the best of his ability.

Should any of the PCs require healing or restorative magic, Stoakdor will arrange for any cleric spell up to 5th level to be cast on the PCs. (There are a large number of clerics of Lydia available on site.) This is done at no charge to the PCs.

After the PCs have concluded speaking, he will retort with a statement based on whether or not the PCs have returned with the body of the king. Read the sections entitled Kimbertos Recovered or For Want of a King, as applicable to the decisions made by your group.

KIMBERTOS RECOVERED

Stoakdor nods to you, and looks down with sympathy at the remains of the king, who has been respectfully laid upon the ground. "I'm pleased that your decision was to bring our fallen lord back. I admit that, in the presence of such a divine being, I might have doubted I was making the correct decision myself."

He rubs his hand through his hair, and it is evident that the wizard has not fallen to exhaustion on sheer willpower alone. "In your absence, I have finished the preparations for the ritual which will tear the soul of the king back from the grip of Blackrazor and restore him to life within his mortal shell. While I anticipate no problems, the weapons of White Plume Mountain are unpredictable, and I ask you to stand guard over the ritual. I will be in no condition to defend myself should something go awry. The place of restoration is a chamber next door. Please, gather him and follow me."

If asking, Stoakdor will clarify that Blackrazor is not physically present, though for the purposes of the ritual it need not be. Assuming that the PCs agree to his request, proceed to Encounter 9, Restoring the King.

If, for some reason, the PCs should refuse Stoakdor's request for aid during the ritual, several Knights of the Malagari will guard them in their stead. No untoward incidents will occur during the summoning, and you can proceed to Encounter 10, The King Restored in this case (after summarizing Stoakdor's restoration of the king as detailed in Encounter 9, Restoring the King).

FOR WANT OF A KING

Stoakdor initially reacts to your decision not to restore the king to life with a mixture of disbelief and anger. But his face softens, instead becoming a blend of resignation and acceptance. "In the presence of the Stern Lady herself, I admit even I would have questioned my decision and my resolve. I can only hope that you have made the correct choice. Kimbertos will remain in the Vault of Kings, then."

He rubs his hand through his hair, and it is evident that the wizard has not fallen to exhaustion

on sheer willpower alone. "In your absence, I have finished the preparations for the ritual which will tear the soul of the king back from the grip of Blackrazor and free his soul to pass to its final resting place. But the weapons of White Plume Mountain are unpredictable, and I ask you to stand guard over the ritual. I will be in no condition to defend myself should something go awry. The place of restoration is a chamber next door. Please, follow me."

If asking, Stoakdor will clarify that Blackrazor is not physically present, though for the purposes of the ritual it need not be. Assuming that the PCs agree to his request, proceed to Encounter 9, Freeing the King's Soul.

If, for some reason, the PCs should refuse Stoakdor's request for aid during the ritual, several Knights of the Malagari will guard them in their stead. No untoward incidents will occur during the summoning, and you can proceed to Encounter 10, The Nobles Assembled in this case (after summarizing Stoakdor's restoration of the king as detailed in Encounter 9, Freeing the King's Soul).

ENCOUNTER 9: THE RITUAL

RESTORING THE KING

An exhausted Stoakdor leads you into a circular room thirty feet (or fifty feet at APLs 10-12; see Setup below) in diameter, with a vaulted ceiling that soars fifty feet above your heads. He stands at a lectern where a worn and weathered book lies open.

PCs that played KEO5-01 For Want of a King will recognize this tome as the notes on Blackrazor recovered from Cjaian.

In the room's center, on a simple wooden stand, sits a large uncut diamond. Stoakdor motions for you to place the king's remains near the diamond and then spread yourselves out in the room before he begins.

You should draw the room out and have PCs describe their positions on the map. Stoakdor won't volunteer any information about the ritual unless asked directly. If this is the case, he explains:

"I will be summoning the soul of the king from Blackrazor, dragging it here by force. It will briefly go into that diamond before being released back into his body. The ritual should take about thirty minutes."

PCs that are suspicious of this can make DC 24 Spellcraft checks to verify that Stoakdor's description of what will occur is accurate and that the spells he is casting are benevolent ones.

With the preparations made, Stoakdor begins intoning words of power. His words carry through

the room with a reassuring resonance for nearly a minute before you notice the beads of sweat on the wizard's brow. At first, you think that the pressure of the ritual must be getting to him, until you realize that the room has become uncomfortably hot.

A column of flame bursts over the diamond, charring the stand to ash and sending the gem on a short drop to the ground. From the column emerges a pair of massive demonic-looking crimson humanoids, wreathed in flames, each wielding a wicked-looking scimitar.

"FOOLS!" bellow the creatures, "the weapons of Keraptis belong to Nix now!"

The creatures are efreet warriors, called Pix and Pox, sent by the current possessor of *Blackrazor* in an attempt to thwart Stoakdor's spell.

Because of the ample preparation time the PCs have had to prepare themselves with pre-cast spells and the like, as well as the efreet being summoned creatures (and this vulnerable to spells such as *magic circle against evil*), this encounter's EL has been reduced by 1.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ Genies, Efreet (2): hp 75 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 115.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ Genies, 14-HD Advanced Efreet (2): hp 105 each; see *Appendix 2*.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☛ Genies, 16-HD Advanced Efreet (2): hp 144 each; see *Appendix 3*.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ Genies, 20-HD Advanced Efreet (2): hp 180 each; see *Appendix 4*.

Setup: The efreet will appear in the center of the room, in the air above the diamond at an altitude of fifteen feet (out of reach of PCs without a reach of at least 10 feet).

At APLs 10-12, the advanced efreeti are Huge, making them a bit too large for the chamber they are in. (They can fly, but the likelihood of the efreet's 15 ft. space overlapping that of another of the room's occupants becomes likely, and this is headache for running the encounter.) At that APL only, modify the read-aloud text to refer to the room as being fifty feet in diameter, and draw the room accordingly.

Feel free to make the room a 30 ft. (or 50 ft. at APL 12; see above) square chamber if it's easier for you to draw.

Stoakdor will be unable to do anything but continue the ritual. The efreet will ignore the wizard unless all the PCs are down. Assume that Stoakdor has magical protections in place to shield himself and the king's remains from any incidental damage (being caught by fireballs and the like) – they are critical for the adventure to proceed.

Tactics: The efreet, who are vulnerable to cold spells, will single out any obvious wizards (except Stoakdor) and will attempt to put them down as quickly as possible. They will use a combination of melee attacks and quickened *scorching rays* to do this as rapidly as possible. Once this is done, they will switch to what it perceives as the most dangerous target. On any round that they are not casting a spell, they will swing the scimitar with two hands, to maximize the amount of damage they inflict.

The efreet cannot be captured; if slain or rendered unconscious, they will vanish (as summoned creatures normally do).

Development: Once the genies have been dealt with, Stoakdor is able to complete the ritual. Read the following:

Stoakdor's chant leaves you light-headed, and floating before your eyes is the image of a sword. It is made of black metal, and within it twinkle stars, as if a piece of the night sky has been rendered as metal. There is a howl, and you see from within it a bright glowing light pull itself away from the blade.

The roar of rage, which seems to come from the weapon itself, breaks you from your reverie. The same light now struggles to enter the diamond. After several seconds, it does so, illuminating the gem briefly from within. The howl of rage from Blackrazor subsides, and as it does, the diamond shatters into dust.

Beside it, the King of Keoland stirs. Stoakdor rushes over to his side, and kneels. Looking up at him, Kimbertos says with a weak gargle, "...N-Neheli?"

Stoakdor nods. A moment later, the king's hand is clenched around Stoakdor's throat, intent on choking the life out of him.

The PCs can easily separate the two men. Kimbertos is disoriented and, as one might imagine, angry at anyone of Neheli lineage.

After several minutes, Kimbertos can be calmed enough to spoken to rationally. In general, Kimbertos will demand to know what has transpired, the location of Holphin Neheli, and who the new ruler of Keoland is in his absence. He will look surprised but relieved to be informed that one of his daughters, Jessa, is the Regent of Keoland. Stoakdor will inform the king of the existence of an Iron Cabal, one that seems to have ordered his

assassination and seems to have influence throughout the Keoish nobility.

Note: It is important to note that, as of this point in the adventure, Stoakdor does **NOT** suspect the Regent of being complicit in any of the actions of the Iron Cabal. This revelation will come later.

Kimbertos is weakened and will take hours to recover, regardless of any offered healing magic – his psyche and soul have suffered tremendous trauma beyond the purview of curative spells. Still, he is king, and after gathering as much information about the current status of the Kingdom will decide on a course of action.

“Stoakdor,” the king begins, “forgive my reaction upon seeing you. But know that while your actions reflect well upon you and your kin, I cannot yet trust the Neheli – or anyone outside of this room – until the details of all this treason have been settled.” He turns to you and your group. “You have my thanks.”

“Your Majesty,” interjects Stoakdor, “I would urge that we keep your restoration a secret, or the threats against your life will begin anew.”

“I agree,” the king says. “I need a safe haven, where I can summon my herald and other allies in secrecy, and decide on a course of action.” He turns to Stoakdor. “The Axewood. Explain the situation to Baron Anladon – personally. Trust no one with the message, not you’re your brother’s herald. Tell him to summon anyone that remains an ally of mine... no, of Keoland’s,” he corrects himself. “They must not know the reason, and it must be done in utmost secrecy.”

Turning back to you, Kimbertos says “I need your help. As monarch of this land, I could order it from you, but I will not. I ask that you will remain by my side. If you need compensation, you will have it, but you are needed.”

The PCs are free to decline, in which case they are dismissed with the king’s thanks. If they choose to continue in service to the King, proceed to Encounter 10, The King Restored.

FREEING THE KING’S SOUL

An exhausted Stoakdor leads you into a circular room thirty feet (or fifty feet at APLs 10-12; see Setup below) in diameter, with a vaulted ceiling that soars fifty feet above your heads. He stands at a lectern where a worn and weathered book lies open.

PCs that played KE05-01 For Want of a King will recognize this tome as the notes on Blackrazor recovered from Cjaian.

In the room’s center, on a simple wooden stand, sits a large uncut diamond. Stoakdor motions for

you to spread yourselves out in the room before he begins.

You should draw the room out and have PCs describe their positions on the map. Stoakdor won’t volunteer any information about the ritual unless asked directly. If this is the case, he explains:

“I will be summoning the soul of the king from Blackrazor, dragging it here by force. It will briefly go into that diamond before being released to its final resting place. The ritual should take about thirty minutes.”

PCs that are suspicious of this can make DC 24 Spellcraft checks to verify that Stoakdor’s description of what will occur is accurate and that the spells he is casting are benevolent ones.

With the preparations made, Stoakdor begins intoning words of power. His words carry through the room with a reassuring resonance for nearly a minute before you notice the beads of sweat on the wizard’s brow. At first, you think that the pressure of the ritual must be getting to him, until you realize that the room has become uncomfortably hot.

A column of flame bursts over the diamond, charring the stand to ash and sending the gem on a short drop to the ground. From the column emerges a pair of massive demonic-looking crimson humanoids, wreathed in flames, each wielding a wicked-looking scimitar.

“FOOLS!” bellow the creatures, “the weapons of Keraptis belong to Nix now!”

The creatures are efreet warriors, called Pix and Pox, sent by the current possessor of Blackrazor in an attempt to thwart Stoakdor’s spell.

Because of the ample preparation time the PCs have had to prepare themselves with pre-cast spells and the like, as well as the efreet being summoned creatures (and this vulnerable to spells such as *magic circle against evil*), this encounter’s EL has been reduced by 1.

APL 6 (EL 9)

🔥 Genies, Efreet (2): hp 75 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 115.

APL 8 (EL 11)

🔥 Genies, 14-HD Advanced Efreet (2): hp 105 each; see Appendix 2.

APL 10 (EL 13)

🔥 Genies, 16-HD Advanced Efreet (2): hp 144 each; see Appendix 3.

APL 12 (EL 15)

✦ **Genies, 20-HD Advanced Efreet (2):** hp 180 each; see Appendix 4.

Setup: The efreet will appear in the center of the room, in the air above the diamond at an altitude of fifteen feet (out of reach of PCs without a reach of at least 10 feet).

At APLs 10-12, the advanced efreeti are Huge, making them a bit too large for the chamber they are in. (They can fly, but the likelihood of the efreet's 15 ft. space overlapping that of another of the room's occupants becomes likely, and this is headache for running the encounter.) At that APL only, modify the read-aloud text to refer to the room as being fifty feet in diameter, and draw the room accordingly.

Feel free to make the room a 30 ft. (or 50 ft. at APL 12; see above) square chamber if it's easier for you to draw.

Stoakdor will be unable to do anything but continue the ritual. The efreet will ignore the wizard unless all the PCs are down. Assume that Stoakdor has magical protections in place to shield himself from any incidental damage (being caught by fireballs and the like) – his survival is critical for the adventure to proceed.

Tactics: The efreet, who are vulnerable to cold spells, will single out any obvious wizards (except Stoakdor) and will attempt to put them down as quickly as possible. They will use a combination of melee attacks and quickened *scorching rays* to do this as rapidly as possible. Once this is done, they will switch to what it perceives as the most dangerous target. On any round that they are not casting a spell, they will swing the scimitar with two hands, to maximize the amount of damage they inflict.

The efreet cannot be captured; if slain or rendered unconscious, they will vanish (as summoned creatures normally do).

Development: Once the genie has been dealt with, Stoakdor is able to complete the ritual. Read the following:

Stoakdor's chant leaves you light-headed, and floating before your eyes is the image of a sword. It is made of black metal, and within it twinkle stars, as if a piece of the night sky has been rendered as metal. There is a howl, and you see from within it a bright glowing light pull itself away from the blade.

The roar of rage, which seems to come from the weapon itself, breaks you from your reverie. The same light now struggles to enter the diamond. After several seconds, it does so, illuminating the gem briefly from within. The howl of rage from Blackrazor subsides, and as it does, the diamond shatters into dust.

Stoakdor nods, dabbing perspiration from his face with a handkerchief. "It is done. Gods save the king," he says softly. "But," he adds quickly, a new sense of purpose seizing him, "this does not mean that we need sit idly by and take no action against the cabal that engineered his death. As long as they are not stopped, the next ruler of Keoland will be one of their own, or will meet the same fate as his predecessor."

The wizard speaks firmly and with authority. "There are a number of people with whom I will make contact this evening. And then, I will sleep. You are welcomed and honored guests in my home. On the morrow, I will travel to the Axewood to meet Baron Anladon, the wisest noble of us all and dearest friend to the king. There we will devise a strategy for destroying this cabal once and for all."

"I could use your help in this matter, and I hope I can count on you. But this situation remains dire and dangerous, and I will understand if you do not wish to continue."

Stoakdor will not elaborate on his pending actions, beyond stating that he will be speaking with those few people in power who are loyal to the Kingdom beyond a shadow of a doubt. He will escort the PCs to some very comfortable quarters where they are free to refresh themselves and get some rest. If any of the PCs indicate they wish to bow out at this point, he accepts their decision with regret and thanks them for the service to Keoland thus far.

If they choose to continue, proceed to Encounter 10, The Nobles Assembled.

BREAK: END OF ROUND 1

Check the time. If you are running on schedule (about four hours or so into the adventure) this is a good place to give the players a five or ten minute break. No experience or gold should be calculated or distributed to the PCs at this time, of course.

ENCOUNTER 10: INTERLUDE IN THE AXEWOOD

THE KING RESTORED

For the purposes of brevity, the second part of the adventure begins *in media res*, a day and a half later. The narrative text finds the PCs have rendezvoused with the King, Baron Anladon, and a few of their mutual allies – although one visitor, who has come at the behest of Anladon, is one who is more than a bit unexpected.

Note: There is a lot of exposition in this section – unavoidable, as this is the summary of three years' worth of plotline. Please ask the players to be attentive as you

read the section (alternatively, you could make enough copies of this section to distribute to all the players – otherwise it's faster simply to read it).

King Kimbertos glared at Holphin Neheli with a gaze that could have melted ice. "How dare you come here, Holphin!" His hand remained, white-knuckled, on his sword.

You stand in the throne room of Baron Anladon's castle within the Axewood. It seems like a lifetime, but only a night and a day has passed since your efforts restored the King of Keoland. Anladon, a life-long friend of the king's, summoned a number of people here in secrecy. Anladon was a half-elf so venerable that you wondered how he could stand upright.

Stoakdor was here, of course. He had been busily coordinating communications between his brother, Baron Jharmok Redlee Neheli, and the king. Then came Duke Luschan, by magic, and was followed within hours by the High Herald of the King of Keoland, Doria – a fire-haired, green-eyed elf whose face looked tired and whose shoulders slumped against some unseen weight. Lastly was Markos Skotti, watching and saying nothing, alone with his thoughts.

Your reverie ended as you snapped back to the situation that was unfolding in front of you. Anladon stepped between Holphin and the king. "My lord," began Anladon, "I have been in communication for several weeks with the Wyrd of the Lonely Tower. The Silent Ones have confirmed that Holphin was not complicit in your assassination."

Holphin's head had been bowed, but it rose to meet the king's stare. "Your Majesty, Anladon did not want me here. He didn't think it was wise, but I insisted. I ask only that I be allowed to serve, and make restitution for my actions – unwilling though they were."

"If not for Anladon's word... and the Wyrd's..." said Kimbertos through clenched teeth.

Anladon cleared his throat. "The testimony of the Wyrd has already exonerated him within Niole Dra. And he still holds influence with those Malagari who remain true despite the schism in their knighthood, but who are not yet ready to swear allegiance to Baron Jharmok."

The king nodded, reluctantly, and turned to his herald. "Doria, what have you found?"

She hesitated before speaking. "Your Majesty, since your death, I have been pursuing your killers. Recently, the hired assassin responsible for the deaths of you and the Queen was captured. He is an arch-mage named Kelestan."

The herald swallowed and continued. "He revealed that there exists in Keoland an 'Iron Cabal,' a group of mostly-unknown nobles who worship the arch-devil Dispater. Over the past few years, they have slowly engineered the eventuality of you being removed and one of their own placed upon the Lion Throne. It was they that hired the Seekers to begin searching for Blackrazor, to make your removal a permanent one. Their plans for a coup stand on the brink of fruition."

The king frowned. "Names, Doria."

"I have found that Kelestan knew only one of the Iron Cabal... apparently, its leader." Doria closed her eyes as she spoke, her words coming with the finality of a tomb door being closed, "The Regent. Your daughter, Jessa."

For several moments, everyone stood as if they had been struck dumb as she continued. "I have confirmed this wizard's testimony. On the day you were restored, the Court of the Land was influenced to revoke our ancient law regarding women assuming the throne. Now a final vote on your successor is pending, and she stands to become Queen Jessa the First."

The king's hand went to his stomach as if he had been kicked there. He turned his back on the assemblage and walked away for a time. Tears trickled down Doria's face, and even Anladon's.

When the king returned, it was without a piece of his soul. His voice was quiet, but like steel. "If this Cabal manipulates the Court of the Land, we must act independently of them. Holphin, go to Dorglast and gather up any Malagari you trust. Jharmok, do the same with those loyal to Stoakdor. Bring them all to Niole Dra."

"The royal palace will doubtless be warded against magical intrusion. Luschan, order the Keoish navy's river cutters to ferry those Malagari up the Sheldomar to the banks on which the palace sit. Have those knights, your marines, and your wife's... compatriots remove any guards and secure the palace's exterior."

Note: Duchess Maressa Linth-Sellark is the secret guildmistress of the Shadowdark, a guild of thieves.

Luschan nods. "Understood." He looked over to Holphin and smiled. "A temporary alliance, Neheli."

Holphin nodded and managed to return Luschan's smirk as the king turned to you. "I will enter the palace with some allies through the passages that run beneath it. I want you enter separately, through the palace grounds once the exterior has been secured. Fight your way inside, and make your way to the throne room. Whoever gets there first will seize it in the name of the true

king. Once I arrive, I am certain that the guards will recognize me and submit to my authority."

"Spare the lives of any of my palace guard as best you are able – they were duped, as were we. But if you find any members of the Cabal, including Jessa... kill them."

The PCs can avail themselves of this chance to ask questions. Likely queries have been listed below, along with suggested replies and the nobles most likely to answer them.

Isn't what we're doing illegal? Kimbertos: *"I am still king, as no successor has been appointed. In times of crisis I am empowered to make decisions independently of the Court of the Land. This is one of those times. And I am certainly empowered to execute a traitor to the throne, no matter what her current title."*

So what happened to make Holphin kill the king? Doria: *"An arch-mage named Kelestan briefly seized control of Holphin via a spell called magic jar. He forced his soul out of my body just long enough to murder the king."*

Holphin adds: *"From my perspective, I lost consciousness for moments, and when I awoke, and agent of the Silent Ones was spiriting me away by magic. Since then I've lived with the guilt of what happened and have wracked my brain thinking of a way to make amends."*

How was this arch-mage captured? Doria: *"He was seized by an enemy and taken to Limbo, where he was held prisoner. A group of adventurers recovered him and brought him back to Keoland, where I had the chance to interrogate him and verify his claims."*

Note: Doria is speaking of the events of KEO5-04 Burning Brightly.

What's this about passages under the castle? Anladon: *"In years past, the first kings of Keoland created a network of passages beneath the castle to allow them to come and go without being seen. Perhaps a handful of people know of their existence, and even fewer know how to navigate them. I doubt that Jessa has heard of them. It will afford us a way to surprise her and attack the castle from two different angles."*

Who are the "compatriots" of Duke Luschan's wife of which Kimbertos spoke? Luschan: *"My wife has a number of secret allies who serve her. I can't explain in any further detail. I suspect at least some of you know the truth, and I'd ask that you not reveal it."*

Note: Duchess Maressa Linth-Sellark is the secret guildmistress of the Shadowdark, a guild of thieves.

What purpose does it serve to send two groups into the castle? Kimbertos: *"She won't be expecting a two-*

pronged attack, and she will assume that we're striking first with our strongest forces and holding lesser ones in reserve. As competent as you are, I intend the forces I lead up from beneath the castle to be one that will break the back of whatever opposition she can muster against us."

What's in it for us? Kimbertos, sourly: *"You'll be rewarded. Generously."*

Development: Once the PCs have had any questions answered that they may have, Kimbertos will dismiss them, remaining with the other nobles to formalize battle plans. At this point you may proceed to Encounter 11.

THE NOBLES ASSEMBLED

For the purposes of brevity, the second part of the adventure begins *in media res*, a day and a half later. The narrative text finds the PCs have traveled to the Axewood and rendezvoused with Baron Anladon and the luminaries of Houses Rhola and Neheli - although one visitor, who has come at the behest of Anladon, is one who is more than a bit unexpected.

Note: There is a lot of exposition in this section – unavoidable, as this is the summary of three years of plotline. Please ask the players to be attentive as you read the section (alternatively, you could make enough copies of this section to distribute to all the players – otherwise it's faster simply to read it).

Duke Luschan glared at Holphin Neheli with a gaze that could have melted ice. "How dare you come here, Holphin!" His hand remained, white-knuckled, on his sword.

You stand in the throne room of Baron Anladon's castle within the Axewood. It seems like a lifetime, but only a night and a day has passed since your efforts freed the soul of the King of Keoland. Anladon, a life-long friend of the king's, summoned you, Stoakdor, and a number of people here in secrecy.

Anladon was a half-elf so venerable that you wondered how he could stand upright; he greeted you with a grim resolve evident in his worn features. Then came Duke Luschan, by magic, and was followed within hours by the High Herald of the King of Keoland, Doria – a fire-haired, green-eyed elf whose face looked tired and whose shoulders slumped against some unseen weight. Lastly was Markos Skotti, watching and saying nothing, alone with his thoughts.

Your reverie ended as you snapped back to the situation that was unfolding in front of you. Anladon stepped between Holphin and Luschan. "I have been in communication for several weeks with the Wyrd of the Lonely Tower. The Silent Ones have

confirmed that Holphin was not complicit in the king's assassination."

Holphin's head had been bowed, but it rose to meet the duke's stare. "Luschan... Anladon did not want me here. He didn't think it was wise, but I insisted. I ask only that I be allowed to serve, and make restitution for my actions – unwilling though they were."

"If not for Anladon's word... and the Wyrd's..." said Luschan through clenched teeth.

Anladon cleared his throat. "The testimony of the Wyrd has already exonerated him within Niole Dra. And he still holds influence with those Malagari who remain true despite the schism in their knighthood, but who are not yet ready to swear allegiance to Baron Jharmok."

Luschan nodded, reluctantly, and stepped back, with a final suspicious glare at Holphin. Anladon turned to his kinsman. "Doria, what have you found?"

She hesitated before speaking. "Since the king's death, I have been pursuing his killers. Recently, the hired assassin responsible for the deaths of our king and queen was captured. He is an arch-mage named Kelestan."

The herald swallowed and continued. "He revealed that there exists in Keoland an 'Iron Cabal,' a group of mostly-unknown nobles who worship the arch-devil Dispater. Over the past few years, they have slowly engineered the eventuality of the king being removed and one of their own placed upon the Lion Throne. It was they that hired the Seekers to begin searching for Blackrazor, to make his removal a permanent one. Their plans for a coup stand on the brink of fruition."

Anladon frowned. "Names, Doria."

"I have found that Kelestan knew only one of the Iron Cabal... apparently, its leader." Doria closed her eyes as she spoke, her words coming with the finality of a tomb door being closed, "The Regent. Jessa, the king's daughter."

For several moments, everyone stood as if they had been struck dumb as she continued. "I have confirmed this wizard's testimony. On the day you freed the king's soul, the Court of the Land was influenced to revoke our ancient law regarding women assuming the throne. Now a final vote on Kimbertos' successor is pending, and she stands to become Queen Jessa the First."

Anladon's hand went to his stomach as if he had been kicked there. His voice cracked as he spoke. "If this Cabal manipulates the Court of the Land, we must act independently of them."

Luschan blinked. "Are you suggesting..."

Holphin finished his sentence, his jaw slack. "... a coup d'etat (COO-day-TAH)?"

Anladon nodded. "We must excise this evil from the kingdom. We have all been played for fools. Our pride, as lords of Keoland, demands that we take action."

No objections came. "What do you have in mind, Anladon?" asked Luschan. "You're the eldest and wisest of us all."

The ancient half-elf nodded. "Holphin, go to Dorglast and gather up any Malagari you trust. Jharmok, do the same with those loyal to Stoakdor. Bring them all to Niole Dra."

"The royal palace will doubtless be warded against magical intrusion. Luschan, order the Keoish navy's river cutters to ferry those Malagari up the Sheldomar to the banks on which the palace sit. Have those knights, your marines, and your wife's... compatriots remove any guards and secure the palace's exterior."

Note: Duchess Maressa Linth-Sellark is the secret guildmistress of the Shadowdark, a guild of thieves.

Luschan nods. "Understood." He looked over to Holphin. "A temporary alliance, Neheli."

Holphin managed to return Luschan's thin smirk as Anladon turned to him. "I have assembled some powerful allies who could not be here, including the great druid. They will enter the palace through the forgotten passages that run beneath it. I want you enter separately, through the palace grounds, once the exterior of the castle has been secured. Fight your way inside, and make your way to the throne room. Whichever group gets there first will seize it in the name of the true king. Once we have neutralized the Iron Cabal's leader, those traitorous nobles within it will think twice about opposing us in open court for fear of revealing themselves."

"Spare the lives of any of the palace guard as best you are able – they were duped, as were we. But if you find any members of the Cabal, including Jessa... kill them."

The PCs can avail themselves of this chance to ask questions. Likely queries have been listed below, along with suggested replies and the nobles most likely to answer them.

Isn't what we're doing illegal? Anladon: "Technically, yes. But the words of the king's own High Herald will carry tremendous weight in the Court of the Land when we are tasked with explaining our actions. I wish there was another way, but we must act quickly and decisively."

So what happened to make Holphin kill the king? Doria: *"An arch-mage named Kelestan briefly seized control of Holphin via a spell called magic jar. He forced his soul out of my body just long enough to murder the king."*

Holphin adds: *"From my perspective, I lost consciousness for moments, and when I awoke, and agent of the Silent Ones was spiriting me away by magic. Since then I've lived with the guilt of what happened and have wracked my brain thinking of a way to make amends."*

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What's in it for us? Anladon, sourly: *"You'll be rewarded. Generously."*

Development: Once the PCs have had any questions answered that they may have, Anladon will dismiss them, remaining with the other nobles to formalize battle plans. At this point you may proceed to Encounter 11.

ENCOUNTER 11: ASSAULT ON THE PALACE

Refer to DM Aid: Map #3. Again, for the purposes of brevity, this encounter takes place in *media res*:

The assault on the royal palace of Keoland began at Highsun. By then, the cunning rogues of the Shadowdark had already neutralized the outer ring of defenders surrounding the palace. When noon came, the Keoish royal navy's swift river cutters made their move. They slipped with alacrity through the gleaming waters of the Sheldomar, loaded down with two groups that were normally rivals – the Knights of the Malagari and the navy's royal marines. Arbalests on the decks of the cutters sent burning pitch and smoke, visible across the city, drawing the defenders out to the shores of the river as (Kimbertos/Anladon) had planned.

But while some of the Royal Standards who stood on the shore returned fire with missiles, others were quickly revealed to be more than they appeared. Many shed their forms, taking on those with leathery flesh and bat-like wings, alighting across the water to do battle with the Malagari. Devils – in the heart of the Keoish Empire. Soon, the decks were awash with the blood of Darkwatch and baatezu alike.

Safely away from the carnage, Reynard Yargrove, the Great Druid of the Sheldomar, stood hand-in-hand with Lashton, Archmage of Keoland. Reynard nodded to the archmage and, smiling, looked back at you. "As we expected, we cannot teleport directly into the palace, so Lashton will whisk us to the tunnels beneath it. You will head for the palace through the royal gardens. Once you're inside, make for the throne room. Good luck."

A pair of honor guards you encountered at the gates was quickly knocked out, and now the great gardens of the royal palace lie before you.

The gardens are often arranged in such a manner that the hedges form a complex hedge maze. Since the death of the king, Royal Gardener Goldmist has not seen the need to create another one, and so the grounds simply form an irregular pathway. Making their way to the opposite gate is easy enough for the PCs, but a hidden danger remains. To bolster the palace defenses, Regent Jessa ordered that several of the hedges shaped in the form of the Keoish Lion be enchanted, with deadly results. It was a new defense of which the King and his loyal nobles was unaware, and one which the PCs must deal.

Read the following as the PCs make their through the gardens:

The gardens are breathtaking. Bubbling pools are made of the finest alabaster marble, and the

hedges are perfectly cultivated and shaped, many of them to form the stately Keoish Lion in repose. The place is solemn and peaceful, in odd contrast to the ugly plumes of smoke, and the sounds of clashing metal coming from the direction of the shore.

The topiary guardians are marked by numbers 1-8 on the map (up to the maximum present at the highest APL). The lions will be inert and detectable only by PCs who can make a DC 30 Spot check (as per the guardians' freeze ability).

Because of the likelihood that the PCs will be surprised, the EL of this encounter has been increased by 1. However, the topiary guardians strike for nonlethal damage (via their merciful special ability), which reduces the EL by 1. Thus the final EL is unaltered.

APL 6 (EL 7)

🦁 **Topiary Guardian Lion (1):** hp 90; see Appendix 5.

APL 8 (EL 9)

🦁 **Topiary Guardian Lions (2):** hp 90 each; see Appendix 5.

APL 10 (EL 11)

🦁 **Topiary Guardian Lions (4):** hp 90 each; see Appendix 5.

APL 12 (EL 13)

🦁 **Topiary Guardian Lions (8):** hp 90 each; see Appendix 5.

Setup: The lions will only attack if the PCs indicate that they have detected them, or if any PC attempts to open the gates leading into the palace. At that point, the creatures will attack.

Tactics: The guardians are essentially mindless. They attack the nearest PC, striking for nonlethal damage until the PC has been subdued, before moving on to the next opponent. They fight until destroyed.

Development: Once the PCs have dealt with the guardians, they are free to open the great gates leading into the palace. The gates are wrought iron and secured with a simple lock-and-chain (hardness 10; 10 hp; Break DC 24).

When the PCs enter, proceed to Encounter 12.

ENCOUNTER 12: REFLECTING POOL CHAMBER

Refer to DM Aid: Map #4.

Once the PCs have defeated the topiary guardians, they have penetrated the first line of defense that Regent Jessa has put into place. However, the devils that would have guarded her palace have been drawn away by the

diversionary attack, one other nasty surprise remains within the palace through which the PCs must pass.

Remember, once the PCs enter the palace, all teleportation-related effects (such as that spell, *dimension door*, and so on) are not functioning. The *tree stride* spell will work normally.

Background on the Chamber: The reflecting pool chamber is a place where PCs may have found themselves in adventures past. It is here that the PCs met then-Princess Calisse in the days before her wedding (the interactive adventure *The Case of the Mithral Dancers*, from Gyricon 2000), or perhaps where they delivered the urgent intelligence from a slain spy to the King himself (in KEO4-IS1 *Hide and Seek*). The chamber was originally nothing more than a place of quiet refuge for the king, with a simple low pool with stone benches. During the Princess' wedding, a mischievous guest to the palace threw a *Quaal's feather* token into the water, creating a tree in the middle of it (a second tree stands on the palace roof). Kimbertos ordered it tended by the master gardener, and has since enjoyed its use to allow him to leave the palace unseen via a *tree stride* spell.

The interior of the palace is far too massive to be mapped, and so instead the adventure assumes that the PCs have been making their way through the palace and have come into this chamber. Along the way, the PCs are assumed to have encountered and defeated some token resistance in the form of guards; this is detailed in the boxed text.

Having defeated the guardians in the exterior gardens and entered the palace, you have thus far been able to move through its massive environs with little resistance. The diversionary attack and the actions of the Shadowdark seem to have drawn off the majority of the defenders. Those few guards you have encountered you have quickly subdued and left behind you.

The interior of this grand palace is solemn. From this place, the lords of Keoland have ruled their empire, the longest continually-existing one in the known world. The din of battle from the river continues unabated, and you now begin to hear shouts of conflict coming from the streets as well.

A wide passage takes you in the direction of the great stairs that lead up to the second floor of the palace. It leads you through a room containing a round reflecting pool, surrounded by several stone benches. All are made of fine alabaster marble. A domed ceiling caps the room twenty feet above your heads. A great tree set into the middle of the pool is jarringly out of place.

But there is something very wrong with this chamber. A place seemingly meant for quiet reflection now radiates a palpable aura of unease. The branches of the tree begins to rustle, and two fissures open in the tree's bark, illuminating red

pin-pricks within the recesses and creating a ghastly set of eyes that regard you with sheer hatred. Moving out from behind the tree's bulk is a number of other-worldly horrors.

Setup: The tree here is not a true treant; it is a creation of the hellish magic at the disposal of the Iron Cabal's infernalists. They have wracked the tree with evil magic, mutating it into a creature of evil. The devils present are those who have been charged with defending the passageway to the stairs and, by extension, the throne room. All the creatures here will stop at nothing to destroy all intruders. PCs that flee will be pursued anywhere in the palace grounds, but no farther.

The devils' starting positions are marked on the map; #3 is reserved for the third devil that appears at APL 12 only.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ **Treant:** hp 69; see *Monster Manual*, page 244.
Note: This treant is Outsider (native) and AL NE.

☛ **Devils, Bearded (2):** hp 50 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 52.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ **Treant:** hp 69; see *Monster Manual*, page 244.
Note: This treant is Outsider (native) and AL NE.

☛ **Devils, Erinyes (2):** hp 88 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 54.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☛ **Treant, Fiendish 11-HD Advanced:** hp 116; see Appendix 3.

☛ **Devils, Bone (2):** hp 98 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 52.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ **Treant, Fiendish 11-HD Advanced:** hp 116; see Appendix 4.

☛ **Devils, Barbed (3):** hp 126 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 51.

Tactics: At all APLs, the treant will use its superior reach to attack foes anywhere in the room. The creature will move minimally, if at all, as it knows that deceiving its foes into believing it to be immobile could be valuable. If a single or weakened target gets separated, it may attempt a sudden trample upon it. In general, it is content to remain strategically placed in the center of the area, attacking any targets that come within reach.

None of the devils will attempt to *summon* other devils; all diabolical forces available have been committed in the melee taking place in the capital city.

At APL 6, the bearded devils immediately use their battle frenzy ability and engage the nearest opponent.

They are not especially bright, and will generally hammer an opponent until they drop, and move on to another as quickly as possible, to maximize their battle frenzy. Note that should the combat last longer than six rounds, they drop out of battle frenzy. Because they suffer no ill effects (unlike a barbarian's post-rage fatigue), they will immediately use their battle frenzy ability a second time.

At APL 8, the erinyes will take to the air, utilizing the high ceiling of the room to their advantage while making liberal use of their at-will *unholy blight* ability. Should the party seem especially resistant to these tactics (i.e. most of the party is not good-aligned), they will use their *charm monster* ability on a PC who looks likely to have a low Will save (a fighter, a rogue) before peppering targets from the air with arrows.

At APL 10, the bone devils will activate their fear auras immediately and will assess the situation. If there is a good opportunity to split the PCs with a well-placed *wall of ice*, they will do so. Otherwise, they will attempt to get into melee as quickly as possible, to make full use of their large number of attacks. These creatures are much brighter than their bearded devils counterparts, and will look for opportunities to flank opponents.

At APL 12, the barbed devils won't immediately seek to get into melee. They will lead off with their area-effect abilities, *unholy blight* and *order's wrath*. Any devil not engaged in melee by the next round will use *scorching ray*. Beyond that, the devil will attempt to grapple (via Improved Grab following a successful claw attack) and impale foes as quickly as possible on its body spikes. Remember that creatures striking a barbed devil with hand-held weapons lacking reach, or with natural weapons, suffer damage.

Treasure: If the devils are defeated, their possessions dissolve into nothingness (as Dispaten has willed that none of his minions' items get into the hands of the heroes).

Development: Should the PCs capture and interrogate any of these devils, they will only tell the PCs that the "Iron Duke" (Dispaten) will see to their ultimate ruin in the future. The devils will die rather than provide any useful information; they are simply too frightened of Dispaten's wrath to do so.

If the PCs opted earlier to restore Kimbertos to life, proceed to Encounter 13, Kimbertos' Wrath. If they did not, go to Encounter 13, Avenging the King.

ENCOUNTER 13: SLAYING THE LION

KIMBERTOS' WRATH

Refer to DM Aid: Map #5. Please read this encounter carefully. This can be a challenging combat, especially at the higher APLs. This is a battle to determine the fate of

the Kingdom of Keoland and the ultimate fate of Regent Jessa, who may go down in history as Keoland's greatest traitor.

Having defeated the twisted tree-creature and its devil keepers in the pool room, the way into the heart of the palace, the throne room, lies open before them. No other guardians will challenge the PCs.

At this point Kimbertos, Lashton, and Reynard are emerging from the caverns below in another area of the palace. Jessa had been forewarned of the existence of the caverns and fully expected a secret assault to come from that direction. A host of ice devils defended the caverns, and only the collective might of the ranger-king of Keoland, his Archmage, and the Great Druidess of the Sheldomar Valley has allowed them to win out.

But this story is about the PCs, after all. Read the following:

The grand staircase is flanked on either side by dozens of hanging tapestries, each depicting the great royal standard of Keoland. The wide steps at whose base you now stand could allow a dozen soldiers to walk abreast. Everything is made of polished white marble, and all is eerily quiet. You see no further resistance between you and the throne room, your final objective, which is hidden behind massive wooden doors nearly fifteen feet high.

When the PCs ascend the stairs:

The stairs come to a circular landing. Marble pillars soar into the air to support the gleaming golden dome of what is known as the Royal Rotunda. Over your heads, the Keoish lion stands, proudly embossed on the gold and platinum dome.

Throne Room Details

The throne room is protected from scrying by a Mordenkainen's private sanctum spell, cast by Kelestan and rendered permanent (via a permanency spell). The entire palace throne room is thus rendered inviolate to both direct observation and divination magic. PCs will see the room normally if and only if they move beyond the threshold of the main doors. Vision and senses are otherwise foiled, even by spells such as *true seeing*. Note that ward prevents sound from leaving the room and so PCs within the sanctum cannot communicate with those who have not yet crossed the threshold.

The ceiling of this area is thirty feet in height and is permanently illuminated by *continual flame* spells set every twenty feet on otherwise-mundane wall sconces.

Opening the doors, one of which looks to have been repaired recently, you see an odd sight. At the border of the threshold of the doors swirls a grey mist. You stare as hard as you are able into it, but you cannot see beyond it.

When a PC crosses the threshold and penetrates the sanctum:

The throne room of Keoland is as impressive as you would have imagined. The chamber is immense, with 30-foot high ceilings with gold-inlaid depictions of Keoish history in bas-relief. A viewing gallery extends over your heads. Windows of clear glass, each costing a small fortune, extends the full height of the ceilings.

The floor of the gallery is fifteen feet above the heads of the PCs when they first enter the room; likewise, the ceiling is fifteen feet above the heads of those standing in the gallery.

Regent Jessa of Keoland – usurper, traitor, and murderer – rises to her feet, her mouth briefly opening in shock before closing into a grimace of sheer rage. Her hands clench into fists. On her head rests the great Keoish crown. It would seem that she could not wait for the final vote of the Council before donning it.

Between you and she are a number of several creatures that are clearly devils. Four of them stand as her honor guard, great creatures the size of ogres.

A Knowledge (the planes) check by the PCs can determine the devils in the room by type (what's in here, of course, varies by APL) and a bit of useful information about them: bearded devil (DC 16); malebranche (DC 26); pit fiend (DC 28). For every five points by which the PC beats the DC, you may give them an additional piece of useful information (per the rules for the Knowledge skill on page 78 of the Player's Handbook).

"You think you're so clever," she snarls, the hatred in her marring her lovely features. "Hell's breath, you heroes... you have no idea what we're doing here." She shakes her head sadly. "Keoland stands on the precipice. Come the changing of the seasons, plots unfolding will threaten this kingdom – threats so dire that I cannot be certain that even the armies of Hell itself can stand against them. But I will try. The Iron Duke has loaned me the strength to protect my beloved nation, and I will kill anyone who prevents me from doing so..."

There is a crackle and a loud snap. All around you, the air seems to sparkle briefly in a magical glow before fading. From behind you, the mist that separated this chamber from the rotunda fades. The king, Lashton, and Reynard stand grim-faced and battered beyond it.

Lashton has just cast a Mordenkainen's disjunction, disrupting and destroying all active spells within a 40-ft. radius. This has collapsed both the sanctum and the teleportation ward. He has used his archmage class ability (mastery of shaping) to avoid affecting Reynard, Kimbertos, or any of the PCs who yet linger in the rotunda.

At the appearance of her father, any self-control that Jessa had evaporates. Whatever spell Lashton cast seems to have broken the ward against teleportation, because the Regent's honor guard vanishes before Jessa can even issue an order, appearing in the rotunda a moment later to do battle with the second wave of intruders.

If any of the PCs haven't entered the throne room at this point:

As the devils arrive, Lashton casts another spell, and a magical force throws you clear of the rotunda and into the throne room.

Continue with:

Another spell cast by Reynard, and a wall of thick thorns the size of swords erupts to separate the areas from each other.

A fierce battle will explode in the rotunda, as the three powerful NPCs challenge a quartet of pit fiends. This combat is not meant to be played out – the focus of this is on the PCs, not the NPCs.

Any PC that decides they wish to return into the rotunda will be assumed to be knocked unconscious in the resultant melee.

In the moments after the brief flurry of action, even Jessa seems surprised. "Alone at last," she says, wide-eyed and breathless, before she gives a final frantic order to her servants who yet remain within the throne room.

"KILL THEM! IN THE NAME OF THE IRON DUKE AND THE LION THRONE! LONG LIVE LORD DISPATER! MAY THE HELLS SAVE KEOLAND!"

Note: Because of the dragon's ability to surprise the PCs and enjoy cover, the EL of this encounter was raised by 1. However, this increase is offset by the PCs ability to cast preparatory spells, an opportunity which the NPCs do not enjoy. Thus the final ELs are unchanged.

The rust dragon is Corronithrar, an extraplanar dragon who is a loyal servant to the archdevil Dispater (who shares the dragon's power to corrode metal at a whim). The bearded devil is a messenger, while the malebranche are servants loaned to Jessa by Dispater.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☞ **Devil, Bearded:** hp 50; see *Monster Manual*, page 52.

☞ **Regent Jessa:** female human Ari1/Brd8; hp 56; see *Appendix 1*.

☞ **Rust Dragon, Young:** hp 135; see *Appendix 1*.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☞ **Devil, Malebranche:** hp 168; see *Appendix 5*.

☞ **Regent Jessa:** female human Ari1/Brd8; hp 56; see *Appendix 1*.

☞ **Rust Dragon, Juvenile:** hp 180; see *Appendix 2*.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☞ **Devils, Malebranche (2):** hp 168 each; see *Appendix 5*.

☞ **Regent Jessa:** female human Ari1/Brd9/Exemplar1; hp 66; see *Appendix 3*.

☞ **Rust Dragon, 17-HD Advanced Juvenile:** hp 217; see *Appendix 3*.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☞ **Devils, Malebranche (2):** hp 168 each; see *Appendix 5*.

☞ **Regent Jessa:** female human Ari1/Brd11/Exemplar1; hp 80; see *Appendix 4*.

☞ **Rust Dragon, Adult:** hp 284; see *Appendix 4*.

Tactics – rust dragon (all APLs): Corronithrar's tactics at all APLs is relatively uniform. As soon as it is able, the dragon will drop from the gallery to the ground and spray as many PCs as possible with its breath weapon, with a special focus of attention on PCs in heavy and medium armor. At APL 6-10, the dragon needs clear square(s) appropriate to its size in which to drop down and land. At APL 12, it will use its crush attack while landing on targets three or more size categories smaller than itself (i.e. Small or smaller) as described on page 68 of the *Monster Manual*. The rust dragon will only use its corrosive breath cone *once*; like most dragons, it's always on the lookout for treasure to add to its horde, and it would be loathe to risk destroying all the coins, armor, weapons, and other significant valuables carried by the PCs. It will, of course, use its acid breath weapon as often as is possible (and tactically sound). Note that at higher APLs, the dragon's Recover Breath feat allows it to re-use its breath weapon more quickly.

The devils are equipped with ironwood weapons, and so they have nothing to fear from the dragon's breath weapon.

Once Corronithrar has used its breath weapon, it will engage the PCs in melee as it waits for its breath weapon to recharge – it will hover in the air, taking advantage of its superior reach at APL 8+. If the dragon succeeded in destroying heavy armor worn by a PC, it will throw all of its attacks except its bite against her, as the dragon is assuming that most of the PCs AC came from her armor. Targets whose armor was destroyed are likely targets for the dragon to use Power Attack against. It will save the bite within its attack sequence for a PC whose metal armor is still intact, in the hopes of connecting and destroying it.

In all cases, when making armor-destroying attacks (breath weapon, bite) Corronithrar will opt for the most heavily-armored targets possible.

Should the melee last long enough for the creature to use its breath weapon again, it will essentially repeat the same tactics as above.

Tactics – bearded devil (APL 6): The bearded devil immediately uses its battle frenzy ability and engages the nearest opponent. It is not especially bright, and will generally hammer an opponent until they drop, and move on to another as quickly as possible, to maximize its battle frenzy. Note that should the combat last longer than six rounds, its battle frenzy ends. Because it suffers no ill effects (unlike a barbarian's post-rage fatigue), it will immediately use its battle frenzy ability a second time.

Tactics – malebranche (all APLs): The malebranche are the “heavy hitters” of devil armies. They have but one job – kill enemies with brute force – and they do it well, and their good spell resistance and exceptional regenerative abilities give them the staying power that other devils lack.

The malebranche will immediately activate their fear aura as a free action and will use their charge ability to quickly enter combat. If a creature has been denuded of its metal armor by Corronithrar's breath weapon (see above), they will focus their melee attacks on that PC in the hopes of a quick kill. These devils have no spell-like abilities of note; they are focused melee combatants who will attempt to maximize the shock and damage of their savage attacks.

Tactics – Regent Jessa (APLs 6 & 8): Jessa will make use of her Danger Sense feat to maximize her initiative. In round one, she will cast *inspirational boost* as a swift action, followed by *harmonize* as a standard action, and finally as a move action (thanks to her *harmonize* spell) will use her bardic music ability to inspire courage (granting all allies a +3 morale bonus to attacks, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against charm or fear effects). She will immediately end the song; her Linger Spell feat means the effects will last for a minute afterward.

On round two, she will look for an opportunity to catch several enemies in a medium-range area effect spell (*confusion* in a 15-ft. burst or, if a smaller burst is preferable, a 10-ft. *glitterdust*). A *dispel magic* against a pesky spell effect is possible, or against a PC who is obviously affected by several spell effects. Should no such opportunity readily present itself, she will look to her own defenses, casting *mirror image* or *invisibility*.

She will adopt a similar set of tactics in subsequent rounds. In general, her first priority is bolstering her allies; her secondary goal is to protect herself with magic, and her tertiary goal is to harry the PCs with spells. Of course, should she see an opportunity to hit half the PCs with a *glitterdust*, she will of course take it – you should

recognize that Jessa is intelligent and competent and play her as such.

Tactics – Regent Jessa (APL 10): At APL 10, Jessa becomes much more of a threat to the PCs. At this APL, Jessa's Use Magic Device score is sufficiently high enough for her to automatically use any magic scroll of any level without a chance of failure.

Jessa will make use of her Danger Sense feat to maximize her initiative. This done, she will retrieve her scroll of *time stop* and read it. This will give her several rounds in which to continue raising defenses. Remember, it's important that you have no idea how many rounds worth of “free time” she has to cast spells – it is suggested that you tell the players to roll the duration of the spell (1d4+1) without showing you, and for you to call off rounds and let them tell you when Jessa's spell ends.

In her first round of *time stop*, she will cast *inspirational boost* as a swift action, followed by *harmonize* as a standard action, and finally as a move action (thanks to her *harmonize* spell) will use her bardic music ability to inspire courage (granting all allies a +3 morale bonus to attacks, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against charm or fear effects). She will immediately end the song; her Linger Spell feat means the effects will last for a minute afterward.

In her second round of *time stop*, she will retrieve her scroll of *blade barrier* and cast it, placing it without striking any combatants (doing so would violate the restrictions of the *time stop* spell). She will position the *blade barrier* in front of her, to provide her with protection. She is not terribly concerned with her minions, as she is well aware that she is the most fragile combatant on the battlefield. You may wish to consider pulling her *blade barrier* placement closer to her, since the spell might interfere with the flying movement of the rust dragon.

If she has a third round in *time stop*, she will cast *mirror image* on herself and begin moving forward (seeking to get within 30' of an ally), drawing her longsword as she goes, avoiding the *blade barrier* area of course.

If she has a fourth round of *time stop*, and has gotten within 30 ft. of an ally, she will use her inspire greatness ability on that ally as a move action, immediately ending it after she begins it (and lasting for one minute as noted above). She will also cast *haste* on herself and her allies.

If she has a fifth round of *time stop*, she will use her inspire greatness ability on another ally if possible as a move action – if none is available, she will use her movement action to retrieve her *wand of magic missiles* in her off-hand. Jessa will cast *grease* on an area containing as many PCs as possible, which will be in effect when the *time stop* ends.

When the *time stop* spell runs out, her tactics will be similar to the above, but she will be more cautious as she knows that she cannot cross the battlefield with impunity. She will look for an opportunity to catch several enemies in a medium-range area effect spell (*confusion* in a 15-ft. burst or, if a smaller burst is preferable, a 10-ft. *glitterdust*). A *dispel magic* against a pesky spell effect is possible, or against a PC who is obviously affected by several spell effects. Should no such opportunity readily present itself, she will look to her own defenses, casting personal defensive spells.

In general, her first priority is bolstering her allies; her secondary goal is to protect herself with magic, and her tertiary goal is to harry the PCs with spells. Of course, should she see an opportunity to hit half the PCs with a *glitterdust*, she will of course take it – you should recognize that Jessa is intelligent and competent and play her as such.

Tactics – Regent Jessa (APL 12): At APL 12, Jessa becomes much more of a threat to the PCs. At this APL, Jessa's Use Magic Device score is sufficiently high enough for her to automatically use any magic scroll of any level without a chance of failure.

Jessa will make use of her Danger Sense feat to maximize her initiative. This done, she will retrieve her scroll of *time stop* and read it. This will give her several rounds in which to continue raising defenses. Remember, it's important that you have no idea how many rounds worth of "free time" she has to cast spells – it is suggested that you tell the players to roll the duration of the spell (1d4+1) without showing you, and for you to call off rounds and let them tell you when Jessa's spell ends.

In her first round of *time stop*, she will cast *inspirational boost* as a swift action, followed by *greater harmonize* as a standard action, and finally as a move action (thanks to her *greater harmonize* spell) will use her bardic music ability to inspire courage (granting all allies a +3 morale bonus to attacks, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against charm or fear effects). She will immediately end the song; her *Lingering Spell* feat means the effects will last for a minute afterward.

In her second round of *time stop*, she will retrieve her scroll of *repel metal or stone* and cast it, projecting the repelling waves towards the doors. She will subsequently use this spell to hold PCs at bay, and will also use the spell strategically to force PCs backwards if it is advantageous to do so. Note that the weapons carried by the devils are made of darkwood and thus not affected by the spell.

If she has a third round in *time stop*, she will retrieve her scroll of *blade barrier* and cast it, laying the barrier as far forward ahead of her as she can without striking any combatants (doing so would violate the restrictions of the *time stop* spell).

If she has a fourth round in *time stop*, she will cast *dimension door* and will get within 30 ft. of an ally (remaining clear of the *blade barrier* area), and will use her *inspire greatness* ability on that ally as a move action, immediately ending it after she begins it (and lasting for one minute as noted above).

If she has a fifth round of *time stop*, she will inspire greatness on another ally as a move action if one is close enough. If not, she will retrieve her *wand of fireball*. She will cast a *haste* spell on herself and any allies within the zone of effect.

When the *time stop* spell runs out, her tactics will be similar to the above, but she will be more cautious as she knows that she cannot cross the battlefield with impunity. She will look for an opportunity to catch several enemies in a medium-range area effect spell (*confusion* in a 15-ft. burst or, if a smaller burst is preferable, a 10-ft. *glitterdust*). A *dispel magic* against a pesky spell effect is possible, or against a PC who is obviously affected by several spell effects. Should no such opportunity readily present itself, she will look to her own defenses, casting personal defensive spells.

In general, her first priority is bolstering her allies; her secondary goal is to protect herself with magic, and her tertiary goal is to harry the PCs with spells. She can even provide some healing via her scroll of *mass cure light wounds*. Of course, should she see an opportunity to hit half the PCs with a *glitterdust*, she will of course take it – you should recognize that Jessa is intelligent and competent and play her as such.

Treasure: The possessions of Jessa and the devils are the only treasure here.

Development: There are only a few ways in which this conflict can end, as all the combatants fight until either they or the PCs are slain or rendered unconscious.

If the PCs win the day, and Jessa has been slain, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Slain (Kimbertos' Choice).

If the PCs win the day, and Jessa has been rendered unconscious, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Captured (Kimbertos' Choice).

If Jessa and her allies defeated the PCs, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Victorious (Kimbertos' Choice).

If Jessa escaped but her allies were defeated, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Escapes (Kimbertos' Choice).

AVENGING THE KING

Refer to DM Aid: Map #5. Please read this encounter carefully. This can be a challenging combat, especially at the higher APLs. This is a battle to determine the fate of the Kingdom of Keoland and the ultimate fate of Regent Jessa, who may go down in history as Keoland's greatest traitor.

Having defeated the twisted tree-creature and its devil keepers in the pool room, the way into the heart of the palace, the throne room, lies open before them. No other guardians will challenge the PCs.

At this point Holphin, Lashton, and Reynard are emerging from the caverns below in another area of the palace. Jessa had been forewarned of the existence of the caverns and fully expected a secret assault to come from that direction. A host of ice devils defended the caverns, and only the collective strength of Holphin, the Royal Archmage, and the Great Druidess of the Sheldomar Valley has allowed them to win out.

But this story is about the PCs, after all. Read the following:

The grand staircase is flanked on either side by dozens of hanging tapestries, each depicting the great royal standard of Keoland. The wide steps at whose base you now stand could allow a dozen soldiers to walk abreast. Everything is made of polished white marble, and all is eerily quiet. You see no further resistance between you and the throne room, your final objective, which is hidden behind massive wooden doors nearly fifteen feet high.

When the PCs ascend the stairs:

The stairs come to a circular landing. Marble pillars soar into the air to support the gleaming golden dome of what is known as the Royal Rotunda. Over your heads, the Keoish lion stands, proudly embossed on the gold and platinum dome.

Throne Room Details

The throne room is protected from scrying by a *Mordenkainen's private sanctum* spell, cast by Kelestan and rendered permanent (via a *permanency* spell). The entire palace throne room is thus rendered inviolate to both direct observation and divination magic. PCs will see the room normally if and only if they move beyond the threshold of the main doors. Vision and senses are otherwise foiled, even by spells such as *true seeing*. Note that ward prevents sound from leaving the room and so PCs within the *sanctum* cannot communicate with those who have not yet crossed the threshold.

The ceiling of this area is thirty feet in height and is permanently illuminated by *continual flame* spells set every twenty feet on otherwise-mundane wall sconces.

Opening the doors, one of which looks to have been repaired recently, you see an odd sight. At the border of the threshold of the doors swirls a grey mist. You stare as hard as you are able into it, but you cannot see beyond it.

When a PC crosses the threshold and penetrates the *sanctum*:

The throne room of Keoland is as impressive as you would have imagined. The chamber is immense, with 30-foot high ceilings with gold-inlaid depictions of Keoish history in bas-relief. A viewing gallery extends over your heads. Windows of clear glass, each costing a small fortune, extends the full height of the ceilings.

The floor of the gallery is fifteen feet above the heads of the PCs when they first enter the room; likewise, the ceiling is fifteen feet above the heads of those standing in the gallery.

Regent Jessa of Keoland – usurper, traitor, and murderer – rises to her feet, her mouth briefly opening in shock before closing into a grimace of sheer rage. Her hands clench into fists. On her head rests the great Keoish crown. It would seem that she could not wait for the final vote of the Council before donning it.

Between you and she are a number of several creatures that are clearly devils. Four of them stand as her honor guard, great creatures the size of ogres.

A Knowledge (the planes) check by the PCs can determine the devils in the room by type (what's in here, of course, varies by APL) and a bit of useful information about them: bearded devil (DC 16); malebranche (DC 26); pit fiend (DC 28). For every five points by which the PC beats the DC, you may give them an additional piece of useful information (per the rules for the Knowledge skill on page 78 of the *Player's Handbook*).

"You think you're so clever," she snarls, the hatred in her marring her lovely features. "Hell's breath, you heroes... you have no idea what we're doing here." She shakes her head sadly. "Keoland stands on the precipice. Come the changing of the seasons, plots unfolding will threaten this kingdom – threats so dire that I cannot be certain that even the armies of Hell itself can stand against them. But I will try. The Iron Duke has loaned me the strength to protect my beloved nation, and I will kill anyone who prevents me from doing so..."

There is a crackle and a loud snap. All around you, the air seems to sparkle briefly in a magical glow before fading. From behind you, the mist that separated this chamber from the rotunda fades. Holphin, Lashton, and Reynard stand grim-faced and battered beyond it.

Lashton has just cast a *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, disrupting and destroying all active spells within a 40-ft. radius. This has collapsed both the *sanctum* and the teleportation ward. He has used his archmage class ability (mastery of shaping) to avoid affecting Reynard, Holphin, or any of the PCs who yet linger in the rotunda.

At the appearance of these new threats, any self-control that Jessa had evaporates. Whatever spell Lashton cast seems to have broken the ward against

teleportation, because the Regent's honor guard vanishes before Jessa can even issue an order, appearing in the rotunda a moment later to do battle with the second wave of intruders.

If any of the PCs haven't entered the throne room at this point:

As the devils arrive, Lashton casts another spell, and a magical force throws you clear of the rotunda and into the throne room.

Continue with:

Another spell cast by Reynard, and a wall of thick thorns the size of swords erupts to separate the areas from each other.

A fierce battle will explode in the rotunda, as the three powerful NPCs challenge a quartet of pit fiends. This combat is not meant to be played out – the focus of this is on the PCs, not the NPCs.

Any PC that decides they wish to return into the rotunda will be assumed to be knocked unconscious in the resultant melee.

In the moments after the brief flurry of action, even Jessa seems surprised. "Alone at last," she says, wide-eyed and breathless, before she gives a final frantic order to her servants who yet remain within in the throne room.

"KILL THEM! IN THE NAME OF THE IRON DUKE AND THE LION THRONE! LONG LIVE LORD DISPATER! MAY THE HELLS SAVE KEOLAND!"

Note: Because of the dragon's ability to surprise the PCs and enjoy cover, the EL of this encounter was raised by 1. However, this increase is offset by the PCs ability to cast preparatory spells, an opportunity which the NPCs do not enjoy. Thus the final ELs are unchanged.

The rust dragon is Corronithrar, an extraplanar dragon who is a loyal servant to the archdevil Dispater (who shares the dragon's power to corrode metal at a whim). The bearded devil is a messenger, while the malebranche are servants loaned to Jessa by Dispater.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ **Devil, Bearded:** hp 50; see *Monster Manual*, page 52.

☛ **Regent Jessa:** female human AriI/Brd8; hp 56; see *Appendix 1*.

☛ **Rust Dragon, Young:** hp 135; see *Appendix 1*.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ **Devil, Malebranche:** hp 168; see *Appendix 5*.

☛ **Regent Jessa:** female human AriI/Brd8; hp 56; see *Appendix 1*.

☛ **Rust Dragon, Juvenile:** hp 180; see *Appendix 2*.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☛ **Devils, Malebranche (2):** hp 168 each; see *Appendix 5*.

☛ **Regent Jessa:** female human AriI/Brd9/ExemplarI; hp 66; see *Appendix 3*.

☛ **Rust Dragon, 17-HD Advanced Juvenile:** hp 217; see *Appendix 3*.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ **Devils, Malebranche (2):** hp 168 each; see *Appendix 5*.

☛ **Regent Jessa:** female human AriI/Brd11/ExemplarI; hp 80; see *Appendix 4*.

☛ **Rust Dragon, Adult:** hp 284; see *Appendix 4*.

Tactics – rust dragon (all APLs): Corronithrar's tactics at all APLs is relatively uniform. As soon as it is able, the dragon will drop from the gallery to the ground and spray as many PCs as possible with its breath weapon, with a special focus of attention on PCs in heavy and medium armor. At APL 6-10, the dragon needs clear square(s) appropriate to its size in which to drop down and land. At APL 12, it will use its crush attack while landing on targets three or more size categories smaller than itself (i.e. Small or smaller) as described on page 68 of the *Monster Manual*. The rust dragon will only use its corrosive breath cone *once*; like most dragons, it's always on the lookout for treasure to add to its horde, and it would be loathe to risk destroying all the coins, armor, weapons, and other significant valuables carried by the PCs. It will, of course, use its acid breath weapon as often as is possible (and tactically sound). Note that at higher APLs, the dragon's Recover Breath feat allows it to re-use its breath weapon more quickly.

The devils are equipped with ironwood weapons, and so they have nothing to fear from the dragon's breath weapon.

Once Corronithrar has used its breath weapon, it will engage the PCs in melee as it waits for its breath weapon to recharge – it will hover in the air, taking advantage of its superior reach at APL 8+. If the dragon succeeded in destroying heavy armor worn by a PC, it will throw all of its attacks except its bite against her, as the dragon is assuming that most of the PCs AC came from her armor. Targets whose armor was destroyed are likely targets for the dragon to use Power Attack against. It will save the bite within its attack sequence for a PC whose metal armor is still intact, in the hopes of connecting and destroying it.

In all cases, when making armor-destroying attacks (breath weapon, bite) Corronithrar will opt for the most heavily-armored targets possible.

Should the melee last long enough for the creature to use its breath weapon again, it will essentially repeat the same tactics as above.

Tactics – bearded devil (APL 6): The bearded devil immediately uses its battle frenzy ability and engages the nearest opponent. It is not especially bright, and will generally hammer an opponent until they drop, and move on to another as quickly as possible, to maximize its battle frenzy. Note that should the combat last longer than six rounds, its battle frenzy ends. Because it suffers no ill effects (unlike a barbarian's post-rage fatigue), it will immediately use its battle frenzy ability a second time.

Tactics – malebranche (all APLs): The malebranche are the “heavy hitters” of devil armies. They have but one job – kill enemies with brute force – and they do it well, and their good spell resistance and exceptional regenerative abilities give them the staying power that other devils lack.

The malebranche will immediately activate their fear aura as a free action and will use their charge ability to quickly enter combat. If a creature has been denuded of its metal armor by Corronithrar's breath weapon (see above), they will focus their melee attacks on that PC in the hopes of a quick kill. These devils have no spell-like abilities of note; they are focused melee combatants who will attempt to maximize the shock and damage of their savage attacks.

Tactics – Regent Jessa (APLs 6 & 8): Jessa will make use of her Danger Sense feat to maximize her initiative. In round one, she will cast *inspirational boost* as a swift action, followed by *harmonize* as a standard action, and finally as a move action (thanks to her *harmonize* spell) will use her bardic music ability to inspire courage (granting all allies a +3 morale bonus to attacks, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against charm or fear effects). She will immediately end the song; her Lingering Spell feat means the effects will last for a minute afterward.

On round two, she will look for an opportunity to catch several enemies in a medium-range area effect spell (*confusion* in a 15-ft. burst or, if a smaller burst is preferable, a 10-ft. *glitterdust*). A *dispel magic* against a pesky spell effect is possible, or against a PC who is obviously affected by several spell effects. Should no such opportunity readily present itself, she will look to her own defenses, casting *mirror image* or *invisibility*.

She will adopt a similar set of tactics in subsequent rounds. In general, her first priority is bolstering her allies; her secondary goal is to protect herself with magic, and her tertiary goal is to harry the PCs with spells. Of course, should she see an opportunity to hit half the PCs with a *glitterdust*, she will of course take it – you should recognize that Jessa is intelligent and competent and play her as such.

Tactics – Regent Jessa (APL 10): At APL 10, Jessa becomes much more of a threat to the PCs. At this APL, Jessa's Use Magic Device score is sufficiently high enough for her to automatically use any magic scroll of any level without a chance of failure.

Jessa will make use of her Danger Sense feat to maximize her initiative. This done, she will retrieve her scroll of *time stop* and read it. This will give her several rounds in which to continue raising defenses. Remember, it's important that you have no idea how many rounds worth of “free time” she has to cast spells – it is suggested that you tell the players to roll the duration of the spell (1d4+1) without showing you, and for you to call off rounds and let them tell you when Jessa's spell ends.

In her first round of *time stop*, she will cast *inspirational boost* as a swift action, followed by *harmonize* as a standard action, and finally as a move action (thanks to her *harmonize* spell) will use her bardic music ability to inspire courage (granting all allies a +3 morale bonus to attacks, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against charm or fear effects). She will immediately end the song; her Lingering Spell feat means the effects will last for a minute afterward.

In her second round of *time stop*, she will retrieve her scroll of *blade barrier* and cast it, placing it without striking any combatants (doing so would violate the restrictions of the *time stop* spell). She will position the *blade barrier* in front of her, to provide her with protection. She is not terribly concerned with her minions, as she is well aware that she is the most fragile combatant on the battlefield. You may wish to consider pulling her *blade barrier* placement closer to her, since the spell might interfere with the flying movement of the rust dragon.

If she has a third round in *time stop*, she will cast *mirror image* on herself and begin moving forward (seeking to get within 30' of an ally), drawing her longsword as she goes, avoiding the *blade barrier* area of course.

If she has a fourth round of *time stop*, and has gotten within 30 ft. of an ally, she will use her inspire greatness ability on that ally as a move action, immediately ending it after she begins it (and lasting for one minute as noted above). She will also cast *haste* on herself and her allies.

If she has a fifth round of *time stop*, she will use her inspire greatness ability on another ally if possible as a move action – if none is available, she will use her movement action to retrieve her *wand of magic missiles* in her off-hand. Jessa will cast *grease* on an area containing as many PCs as possible, which will be in effect when the *time stop* ends.

When the *time stop* spell runs out, her tactics will be similar to the above, but she will be more cautious as she knows that she cannot cross the battlefield with impunity. She will look for an opportunity to catch

several enemies in a medium-range area effect spell (*confusion* in a 15-ft. burst or, if a smaller burst is preferable, a 10-ft. *glitterdust*). A *dispel magic* against a pesky spell effect is possible, or against a PC who is obviously affected by several spell effects. Should no such opportunity readily present itself, she will look to her own defenses, casting personal defensive spells.

In general, her first priority is bolstering her allies; her secondary goal is to protect herself with magic, and her tertiary goal is to harry the PCs with spells. Of course, should she see an opportunity to hit half the PCs with a *glitterdust*, she will of course take it – you should recognize that Jessa is intelligent and competent and play her as such.

Tactics – Regent Jessa (APL 12): At APL 12, Jessa becomes much more of a threat to the PCs. At this APL, Jessa's Use Magic Device score is sufficiently high enough for her to automatically use any magic scroll of any level without a chance of failure.

Jessa will make use of her Danger Sense feat to maximize her initiative. This done, she will retrieve her scroll of *time stop* and read it. This will give her several rounds in which to continue raising defenses. Remember, it's important that you have no idea how many rounds worth of "free time" she has to cast spells – it is suggested that you tell the players to roll the duration of the spell (1d4+1) without showing you, and for you to call off rounds and let them tell you when Jessa's spell ends.

In her first round of *time stop*, she will cast *inspirational boost* as a swift action, followed by *greater harmonize* as a standard action, and finally as a move action (thanks to her *greater harmonize* spell) will use her bardic music ability to inspire courage (granting all allies a +3 morale bonus to attacks, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws against charm or fear effects). She will immediately end the song; her Lingering Spell feat means the effects will last for a minute afterward.

In her second round of *time stop*, she will retrieve her scroll of *repel metal or stone* and cast it, projecting the repelling waves towards the doors. She will subsequently use this spell to hold PCs at bay, and will also use the spell strategically to force PCs backwards if it is advantageous to do so. Note that the weapons carried by the devils are made of darkwood and thus not affected by the spell.

If she has a third round in *time stop*, she will retrieve her scroll of *blade barrier* and cast it, laying the barrier as far forward ahead of her as she can without striking any combatants (doing so would violate the restrictions of the *time stop* spell).

If she has a fourth round in *time stop*, she will cast *dimension door* and will get within 30 ft. of an ally (remaining clear of the *blade barrier* area), and will use her inspire greatness ability on that ally as a move action,

immediately ending it after she begins it (and lasting for one minute as noted above).

If she has a fifth round of *time stop*, she will inspire greatness on another ally as a move action if one is close enough. If not, she will retrieve her *wand of fireball*. She will cast a *haste* spell on herself and any allies within the zone of effect.

When the *time stop* spell runs out, her tactics will be similar to the above, but she will be more cautious as she knows that she cannot cross the battlefield with impunity. She will look for an opportunity to catch several enemies in a medium-range area effect spell (*confusion* in a 15-ft. burst or, if a smaller burst is preferable, a 10-ft. *glitterdust*). A *dispel magic* against a pesky spell effect is possible, or against a PC who is obviously affected by several spell effects. Should no such opportunity readily present itself, she will look to her own defenses, casting personal defensive spells.

In general, her first priority is bolstering her allies; her secondary goal is to protect herself with magic, and her tertiary goal is to harry the PCs with spells. She can even provide some healing via her scroll of *mass cure light wounds*. Of course, should she see an opportunity to hit half the PCs with a *glitterdust*, she will of course take it – you should recognize that Jessa is intelligent and competent and play her as such.

Treasure: The possessions of Jessa and the devils are the only treasure here.

Development: There are only a few ways in which this conflict can end, as all the combatants fight until either they or the PCs are slain or rendered unconscious.

If the PCs win the day, and Jessa has been slain, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Slain (For Want of a King).

If the PCs win the day, and Jessa has been rendered unconscious, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Captured (For Want of a King).

If Jessa and her allies defeated the PCs, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Victorious (For Want of a King).

If Jessa escaped but her allies were defeated, proceed to Conclusion, Jessa Escapes (For Want of a King).

CONCLUSION

JESSA SLAIN (KIMBERTOS' CHOICE)

With the enemies to the Lion Throne vanquished and the Regent slain, your attention is drawn to the wall nearest the grand entry portals. The masonry gives way and an ephemeral fist smashes one of the ogre-sized devils through the wall, burying it. The fist dissolves in the air, and three figures step over the debris – Kimbertos, Lashton, and Reynard.

Approaching you, the three take in the aftermath of the battle in the throne room.

Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of limited wish spells that he will cast to raise two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a resurrection-level spell for some reason, and only if they need that level of magic (either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple raise would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single wish spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs still have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four reincarnate spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

Alternatively, the player may opt to allow her PC's body to be taken to Gradsul by Lashton, who will arrange for the ranking cleric of Zilchus there to cast a true resurrection spell on the PC, with the cost of such casting being borne by Lashton. Note that any player's PC that opts for the true resurrection will be dead during the Conclusion section of the adventure, and will lose the ability to affect the events of the adventure (and to participate in any critical event results, if applicable). The time taken to arrange this service will cost the player 2 TU above and beyond the cost of the adventure itself. It is acceptable for the player to communicate his desires to you, even though her (dead) PC could not do the same to the survivors of the battle.

See the AR effect **Friends in High Places** for further details.

Kimbertos moves to stand over his fallen daughter. He bows his head, looking down at her corpse and the crown that lies beside it. Picking it up, he holds it in his hands and says, "I have seen my daughter slain. My grandchildren are orphans. The weight of this crown... is more than I can bear."

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. "Such is the way of things. We all have parts to play. Ever is the deer the prey of the wolf, Lizhal, with every turning of the Wheel."

"Must it always be?" murmurs the king. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Lashton comes forward, clearing his throat, and says gruffly, "You know... only those who are loyal to you know that you're alive..."

The king looks up at Lashton. Reynard blanches. "That must not be! He cannot simply walk away from the Lion Throne!"

"One has, before him," Lashton reminded her.

"And he had his own part to play," she countered. She sounded oddly desperate, turning to Kimbertos. "You must not..."

The king nodded and, with the crown still held at his side, turned to address all of you. "I would be interested, and grateful, if you would give me your opinion. I find myself weighing duty against happiness. Speak, heroes."

This is a pivotal moment. The king will hear the opinions of each of the PCs. You should ask each player to give their opinion on whether or not the King should return to the throne, or allow his nation to believe that he remains dead.

Once the PCs have ventured their opinions:

With your opinions having been heard, the king bows his head. "I thank you. I have much to think about. Please," he says, looking at all of you as well as Lashton and Reynard, "leave me. The Kingdom of Keoland will know of my decision shortly."

Saying nothing more, the beleaguered monarch moves to one of the great windows, looking out across the capital as he contemplates his decision.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** AR effect on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record are eligible for the **Lionheart** AR effect.

Proceed to Epilogue.

IESSA SLAIN (FOR WANT OF A KING)

With the enemies to the Lion Throne vanquished and the Regent slain, your attention is drawn to the wall nearest the grand entry portals. The masonry gives way and an ephemeral fist smashes one of the ogre-sized devils through the wall, burying it. The fist dissolves in the air, and three figures step over the debris – Lashton, Reynard, and Holphin Neheli.

Approaching you, the three take in the aftermath of the battle in the throne room. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of limited wish spells that he will cast to raise two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a resurrection-level spell for

some reason, and *only* if they need that level of magic (either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple *raise* would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single *wish* spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs *still* have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four *reincarnate* spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

Alternatively, the player may opt to allow her PC's body to be taken to Gradsul by Lashton, who will arrange for the ranking cleric of Zilchus there to cast a *true resurrection* spell on the PC, with the cost of such casting being borne by Lashton. Note that any player's PC that opts for the *true resurrection* will be dead during the Conclusion section of the adventure, and will lose the ability to affect the events of the adventure (and to participate in any critical event results, if applicable). The time taken to arrange this service will cost the player 2 TU above and beyond the cost of the adventure itself. It is acceptable for the player to communicate his desires to you, even though her (dead) PC could not do the same to the survivors of the battle.

See the AR effect **Friends in High Places** for further details.

Holphin moves to stand over the fallen Regent. He bows his head, looking down at her corpse and the crown that lies beside it. Picking it up, he holds it in his hands and says, "What have I done?"

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. She put her hand on his shoulder. "You bear no responsibility in this tragedy, Holphin Neheli."

"What a mess," Lashton said, his tone an equal blend of gruffness and sorrow. "The souls of the king and queen must be wracked to see what has come of their daughter's evil."

From the great tower between the palace and the Court of the Land's chambers came the sudden wild pealing of its great brass bell. The tones were rapid, carrying like shrill thunderclaps across all of Niole Dra.

Reynard cocked her head, looking curious. "What is that?"

The Archmage of Keoland bowed his head, and Holphin said sharply, "The Court of the Land has chosen a new monarch."

"But who?" asked Reynard, breathlessly.

Following the events of this adventure, who is the new monarch of Keoland will be revealed. But for now, the story has ended.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint

offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** AR effect on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record are eligible for the *Lionheart* AR effect.

Proceed to Epilogue.

IESSA CAPTURED (KIMBERTOS' CHOICE)

With the enemies to the Lion Throne vanquished and the Regent subdued, your attention is drawn to the wall nearest the grand entry portals. The masonry gives way and an ephemeral fist smashes one of the ogre-sized devils through the wall, burying it. The fist dissolves in the air, and three figures step over the debris – Kimbertos, Lashton, and Reynard.

Approaching you, the three take in the aftermath of the battle in the throne room.

Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of limited *wish* spells that he will cast to *raise* two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a *resurrection*-level spell for some reason, and *only* if they need that level of magic (either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple *raise* would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single *wish* spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs *still* have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four *reincarnate* spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

Alternatively, the player may opt to allow her PC's body to be taken to Gradsul by Lashton, who will arrange for the ranking cleric of Zilchus there to cast a *true resurrection* spell on the PC, with the cost of such casting being borne by Lashton. Note that any player's PC that opts for the *true resurrection* will be dead during the Conclusion section of the adventure, and will lose the ability to affect the events of the adventure (and to participate in any critical event results, if applicable). The time taken to arrange this service will cost the player 2 TU above and beyond the cost of the adventure itself. It is acceptable for the player to communicate his desires to you, even though her (dead) PC could not do the same to the survivors of the battle.

See the AR effect **Friends in High Places** for further details.

Kimbertos moves to stand over his fallen daughter. He bows his head, looking down at her, where her chest slowly rises and falls – she yet lives.

The king draws his sword, still wet with the ichors of devils, and executes Jessa with a single sword stroke.

The king's face is blank, without feeling. He spots the crown lying near her corpse. Picking it up, he holds it in his hands and says, "I have slain my own daughter. I have orphaned my grandchildren. The weight of this crown... is more than I can bear."

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. "Such is the way of things. We all have parts to play. Ever is the deer the prey of the wolf, Lizhal, with every turning of the Wheel."

"Must it always be?" murmurs the king. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Lashton comes forward, clearing his throat, and says gruffly, "You know... only those who are loyal to you know that you're alive..."

The king looks up at Lashton. Reynard blanches. "That must not be! He cannot simply walk away from the Lion Throne!"

"One has, before him," Lashton reminded her.

"And he had his own part to play," she countered. She sounded oddly desperate, turning to Kimbertos. "You must not..."

The king nodded and, with the crown still held at his side, turned to address all of you. "I would be interested, and grateful, if you would give me your opinion. I find myself weighing duty against happiness. Speak, heroes."

This is a pivotal moment. The king will hear the opinions of each of the PCs. You should ask each player to give their opinion on whether or not the King should return to the throne, or allow his nation to believe that he remains dead.

Once the PCs have ventured their opinions:

With your opinions having been heard, the king bows his head. "I thank you. I have much to think about. Please," he says, looking at all of you as well as Lashton and Reynard, "leave me. The Kingdom of Keoland will know of my decision shortly."

Saying nothing more, the beleaguered monarch moves to one of the great windows, looking out across the capital as he contemplates his decision.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** AR effect on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record are eligible for the **Lionheart** AR effect.

Proceed to Epilogue.

JESSA CAPTURED (FOR WANT OF A KING)

With the enemies to the Lion Throne vanquished and the Regent unconscious, your attention is drawn to the wall nearest the grand entry portals. The masonry gives way and an ephemeral fist smashes one of the ogre-sized devils through the wall, burying it. The fist dissolves in the air, and three figures step over the debris – Lashton, Reynard, and Holphin Neheli.

Approaching you, the three take in the aftermath of the battle in the throne room. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of limited wish spells that he will cast to raise two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a resurrection-level spell for some reason, and only if they need that level of magic (either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple raise would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single wish spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs still have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four reincarnate spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

Alternatively, the player may opt to allow her PC's body to be taken to Gradsul by Lashton, who will arrange for the ranking cleric of Zilchus there to cast a true resurrection spell on the PC, with the cost of such casting being borne by Lashton. Note that any player's PC that opts for the true resurrection will be dead during the Conclusion section of the adventure, and will lose the ability to affect the events of the adventure (and to participate in any critical event results, if applicable). The time taken to arrange this service will cost the player 2 TU above and beyond the cost of the adventure itself. It is acceptable for the player to communicate his desires to you, even though her (dead) PC could not do the same to the survivors of the battle.

See the AR effect **Friends in High Places** for further details.

Holphin moves to stand over the fallen Regent. He bows his head, looking down at her corpse and the crown that lies beside it. "You murdered my queen. You saw me ensorcelled, to see me slay a king who you rightly feared to raise a hand against."

A moment later, Holphin's sword rests, thrust into the throne room floor, leaving dead and impaled the greatest traitor in Keoish history.

Lashton gasps. "What have you done?"

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. She put her hand on Holphin's shoulder. "She deserved no fairer justice, Lashton. You bear no responsibility in this tragedy, Holphin Neheli. The Balance has been restored."

"The souls of the king and queen must be wracked to see what has come of their daughter's evil," Lashton said, his tone an equal blend of gruffness and sorrow.

From the great tower between the palace and the Court of the Land's chambers came the sudden wild pealing of its great brass bell. The tones were rapid, carrying like shrill thunderclaps across all of Niole Dra.

Reynard cocked her head, looking curious. "What is that?"

The Archmage of Keoland bowed his head, and Holphin said sharply, "The Court of the Land has chosen a new monarch."

"But who?" asked Reynard, breathlessly.

Following the events of this adventure, who is the new monarch of Keoland will be revealed. But for now, the story has ended.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** AR effect on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record are eligible for the **Lionheart** AR effect.

Proceed to Epilogue.

JESSA VICTORIOUS (KIMBERTOS' CHOICE)

Upon Jessa's defeat of the PCs, she will realize that she has nonetheless lost in her bid to become the first Queen. She tosses her crown down and makes her escape (via her *scroll of teleportation*) to a sanctum of the Iron Duke, hidden away with Keoland.

When Lashton, Reynard, and Kimbertos defeat the pit fiends, they enter the throne room and survey the scene. They quickly realize that the Regent has escaped. Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of *limited wish* spells that he will cast to *raise* two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a *resurrection*-level spell for some reason, and *only* if they need that level of magic

(either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple *raise* would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single *wish* spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs still have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four *reincarnate* spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

Alternatively, the player may opt to allow her PC's body to be taken to Gradsul by Lashton, who will arrange for the ranking cleric of Zilchus there to cast a *true resurrection* spell on the PC, with the cost of such casting being borne by Lashton. Note that any player's PC that opts for the *true resurrection* will be dead during the Conclusion section of the adventure, and will lose the ability to affect the events of the adventure (and to participate in any critical event results, if applicable). The time taken to arrange this service will cost the player 2 TU above and beyond the cost of the adventure itself. It is acceptable for the player to communicate his desires to you, even though her (dead) PC could not do the same to the survivors of the battle.

See the AR effect **Friends in High Places** for further details.

Kimbertos moves to stand by his throne. He bows his head, looking down at the discarded crown that lies beside it. Picking it up, he holds it in his hands and says, "My daughter is a traitor to the throne. I must see her slain. I must orphan my grandchildren. The weight of this crown... is more than I can bear."

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. "Such is the way of things. We all have parts to play. Ever is the deer the prey of the wolf, Lizhal, with every turning of the Wheel."

"Must it always be?" murmurs the king. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Lashton comes forward, clearing his throat, and says gruffly, "You know... only those who are loyal to you know that you're alive..."

The king looks up at Lashton and blinks. Reynard blanches. "That must not be! He cannot simply walk away from the Lion Throne!"

"One has, before him," Lashton reminded her.

"And he had his own part to play," she countered. She sounded oddly desperate, turning to Kimbertos. "You must not..."

The king nodded and, with the crown still held at his side, turned to address all of you. "I would be interested, and grateful, if you would give me your opinion. I find myself weighing duty against happiness. Speak, heroes."

This is a pivotal moment. The king will hear the opinions of each of the PCs. You should ask each player to give their opinion on whether or not the King should return to the throne, or allow his nation to believe that he remains dead.

Once the PCs have ventured their opinions:

With your opinions having been heard, the king bows his head. "I thank you. I have much to think about. Please," he says, looking at all of you as well as Lashton and Reynard, "leave me. The Kingdom of Keoland will know of my decision shortly."

Saying nothing more, the beleaguered monarch moves to one of the great windows to contemplate his decision.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** AR effect on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record are eligible for the **Lionheart** AR effect.

Proceed to Epilogue.

JESSA VICTORIOUS (FOR WANT OF A KING)

Upon Jessa's defeat of the PCs, she will realize that she has nonetheless lost in her bid to become the first Queen. She tosses her crown down and makes her escape (via her *scroll of teleportation*) to a sanctum of the Iron Duke, hidden away with Keoland.

When Lashton, Reynard, and Holphin defeat the pit fiends, they enter the throne room and survey the scene. They quickly realize that the Regent has escaped. Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

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Alternatively, the player may opt to allow her PC's body to be taken to Gradsul by Lashton, who will arrange for the ranking cleric of Zilchus there to cast a *true resurrection* spell on the PC, with the cost of such casting

being borne by Lashton. Note that any player's PC that opts for the *true resurrection* will be dead during the Conclusion section of the adventure, and will lose the ability to affect the events of the adventure (and to participate in any critical event results, if applicable). The time taken to arrange this service will cost the player 2 TU above and beyond the cost of the adventure itself. It is acceptable for the player to communicate his desires to you, even though her (dead) PC could not do the same to the survivors of the battle.

See the AR effect **Friends in High Places** for further details.

Holphin moves to stand beside the throne of Keoland, and the discarded crown that lies beside it. Picking it up, he holds it in his hands and says, "What have I done?"

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. She put her hand on his shoulder. "You bear no responsibility in this tragedy, Holphin Neheli."

"What a mess," Lashton said, his tone an equal blend of gruffness and sorrow. "The souls of the king and queen must be wracked to see what has come of their daughter's evil."

From the great tower between the palace and the Court of the Land's chambers came the sudden wild pealing of its great brass bell. The tones were rapid, carrying like shrill thunderclaps across all of Niole Dra.

Reynard cocked her head, looking curious. "What is that?"

The Archmage of Keoland bowed his head, and Holphin said sharply, "The Court of the Land has chosen a new monarch."

"But who?" asked Reynard, breathlessly.

Following the events of this adventure, who is the new monarch of Keoland will be revealed. But for now, the story has ended.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

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Proceed to Epilogue.

JESSA ESCAPES (KIMBERTOS' CHOICE)

With the enemies to the Lion Throne vanquished and the Regent escaped, your attention is drawn to the wall nearest the grand entry portals.

The masonry gives way and an ephemeral fist smashes one of the ogre-sized devils through the wall, burying it. The fist dissolves in the air, and three figures step over the debris – Kimbertos, Lashton, and Reynard.

Approaching you, the three take in the aftermath of the battle in the throne room.

Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of limited wish spells that he will cast to raise two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a resurrection-level spell for some reason, and only if they need that level of magic (either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple raise would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single wish spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs still have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four reincarnate spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

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Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. "Such is the way of things. We all have parts to play. Ever is the deer the prey of the wolf, Lizhal, with every turning of the Wheel."

"Must it always be?" murmurs the king. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Lashton comes forward, clearing his throat, and says gruffly, "You know... only those who are loyal to you know that you're alive..."

The king looks up at Lashton and blinks. Reynard blanches. "That must not be! He cannot simply walk away from the Lion Throne!"

"One has, before him," Lashton reminded her.

"And he had his own part to play," she countered. She sounded oddly desperate, turning to Kimbertos. "You must not..."

The king nodded and, with the crown still held at his side, turned to address all of you. "I would be interested, and grateful, if you would give me your opinion. I find myself weighing duty against happiness. Speak, heroes."

This is a pivotal moment. The king will hear the opinions of each of the PCs. You should ask each player to give their opinion on whether or not the King should return to the throne, or allow his nation to believe that he remains dead.

Once the PCs have ventured their opinions:

With your opinions having been heard, the king bows his head. "I thank you. I have much to think about. Please," he says, looking at all of you as well as Lashton and Reynard, "leave me. The Kingdom of Keoland will know of my decision shortly."

Saying nothing more, the beleaguered monarch moves to one of the great windows to contemplate his decision.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

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Proceed to Epilogue.

JESSA ESCAPES (FOR WANT OF A KING)

With the enemies to the Lion Throne vanquished and the Regent escaped, your attention is drawn to the wall nearest the grand entry portals. The masonry gives way and an ephemeral fist smashes one of the ogre-sized devils through the wall, burying it. The fist dissolves in the air, and three figures step over the debris – Lashton, Reynard, and Holphin Neheli.

Approaching you, the three take in the aftermath of the battle in the throne room. From outside of the palace, the sounds of battle have begun to die down, sounding ever more distant.

Reynard will quickly use healing spells to completely heal any unconscious PCs, and stabilizing any who are in danger of dying (assume any PC that had not died at the time the combat concluded is still alive).

If any of the PCs were slain, Lashton has a pair of *limited wish* spells that he will cast to *raise* two PCs from the dead. Should a PC need a *resurrection*-level spell for some reason, and *only* if they need that level of magic (either three PCs died, or one PC suffered death in such a way that a simple *raise* would not be sufficient to restore them), he has a single *wish* spell available to be cast to that end. If the PCs *still* have deceased party members (i.e. more than three), assume that Reynard can cast up to four *reincarnate* spells as needed (two memorized, and two on scrolls).

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Holphin moves to stand beside the throne of Keoland, and the discarded crown that lies beside it. Picking it up, he holds it in his hands and says, "What have I done?"

Reynard steps forward, her face impassive, but not cold. She put her hand on his shoulder. "You bear no responsibility in this tragedy, Holphin Neheli."

"What a mess," Lashton said, his tone an equal blend of gruffness and sorrow. "The souls of the king and queen must be wracked to see what has come of their daughter's evil."

From the great tower between the palace and the Court of the Land's chambers came the sudden wild pealing of its great brass bell. The tones were rapid, carrying like shrill thunderclaps across all of Niole Dra.

Reynard cocked her head, looking curious. "What is that?"

The Archmage of Keoland bowed his head, and Holphin said sharply, "The Court of the Land has chosen a new monarch."

"But who?" asked Reynard, breathlessly.

Following the events of this adventure, the identity of the new monarch of Keoland will be revealed. But for now, the story has ended.

Treasure: Several days later, each PC will receive a handsome reward in jewelry and platinum coins, a joint offering on the part of a grateful Duke Luschan, Lord Holphin, and Baron Anladon.

PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** AR effect on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record are eligible for the **Lionheart** AR effect.

Proceed to Epilogue.

EPILOGUE: ALL GOOD THINGS

"... and thus was ended the Iron Cabal's plot against Keoland," the old man finished, closing the book on his lap with a clunk. "The Court of the Land finally restored a monarch to the throne. The heroes who saved the nation went on to even greater heights of glory and danger. The nobles who had allied against our country faded into the shadows, waiting for another time where they could enact their own greedy plots, and carry out the will of the Iron Duke as well."

"Grand-papa, it's still early!" the young girl complained. He looked down at her sadly; she looked so much like her mother, his daughter, that it pained him. "Read us another story, please!"

"Yes, another!" her brother intoned.

The grandfather stood, remembering a time when his knees didn't crack and his bones didn't click. He walked to the bookshelf, replacing the volume there, and regarded the one beside it.

"COLLECTED HISTORY OF THE KEOISH DARK AGE, VOLUME ONE - 596 CY TO 599 CY."

He frowned, and turned back to face the children.

"Not that one. It's a long tale indeed... and not one to be told before bedtime."

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 2

Defeat the air elementals.

APL 6: 180 xp.
APL 8: 240 xp.
APL 10: 300 xp.
APL 12: 330 xp.

Encounter 3

Defeat the beholders.

APL 6: 240 xp.
APL 8: 300 xp.
APL 10: 360 xp.
APL 12: 450 xp.

Encounter 9

Defeat Pix and Pox.

APL 6: 270 xp.
APL 8: 330 xp.
APL 10: 390 xp.
APL 12: 450 xp.

Encounter 11

Defeat the topiary guardians.

APL 6: 210 xp.
APL 8: 270 xp.
APL 10: 330 xp.
APL 12: 390 xp.

Encounter 12

Defeat the treant and the devils.

APL 6: 270 xp.
APL 8: 330 xp.
APL 10: 390 xp.
APL 12: 450 xp.

Encounter 13

Defeat Jessa and her allies.

APL 6: 270 xp.
APL 8: 330 xp.
APL 10: 390 xp.
APL 12: 450 xp.

Discretionary Roleplaying Award

APL 6: 360 xp.
APL 8: 450 xp.
APL 10: 540 xp.

APL 12: 630 xp.

Total possible experience

APL 6: 1,800 xp.
APL 8: 2,250 xp.
APL 10: 2,700 xp.
APL 12: 3,150 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 adventure, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

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

Encounter 2:

Note: PCs who take this treasure receive the **Wrath of the Stern Lady** AR effect. This treasure is **NOT** included in the totals below, it is noted here merely for reference if the PCs are foolish enough to take the valuables of the temple.

All APLs: L: 0 gp, C: 90,500 gp, M: 0 gp.

Encounter 13:

APL 6: L: 26 gp, C: 0 gp, M: +1 *chain shirt* (104 gp), +1 *mithral buckler* (180 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2 (333 gp), *vest of resistance* +2 (333 gp), *divine scroll of cure moderate wounds* (CL 3rd) (12 gp), *arcane scroll of protection from good* (CL 1st) (2 gp), *arcane scroll of teleport* (CL 9th) (94 gp).

APL 8: L: 26 gp, C: 0 gp, M: +1 *chain shirt* (104 gp), +1 *mithral buckler* (180 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2 (333 gp), *vest of resistance* +2 (333 gp), *divine scroll of cure moderate wounds* (CL 3rd) (12 gp), *arcane scroll of protection from good* (CL 1st) (2 gp), *arcane scroll of teleport* (CL 9th) (94 gp).

APL 10: L: 26 gp, C: 0 gp, M: +1 *chain shirt* (104 gp), +1 *mithral buckler* (180 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2 (333 gp), *vest of resistance* +2 (333 gp), *wand of magic missile* (CL 5th) (312 gp), *divine scroll of blade barrier* (CL 11th) (137 gp), *arcane scroll of time stop* (CL 17th) (319 gp), *arcane scroll of teleport* (CL 9th) (94 gp).

APL 12: L: 26 gp, C: 0 gp, M: +1 *chain shirt* (104 gp), +1 *mithral buckler* (180 gp), *cloak of charisma* +2 (333 gp), *vest of resistance* +2 (333 gp), *wand of fireball* (CL 6th) (1,125 gp), *divine scroll of blade barrier* (CL 11th) (137 gp), *divine scroll of repel metal or stone* (CL 15th) (250 gp), *divine scroll of mass cure light wounds* (CL 9th) (94 gp), *arcane scroll of time stop* (CL 17th) (319 gp), *arcane scroll of teleport* (CL 9th) (94 gp).

Conclusion:

APL 6: L: 0 gp, C: 1,000 gp, M: 0 gp.

APL 8: L: 0 gp, C: 1,800 gp, M: 0 gp.

APL 10: L: 0 gp, C: 3,000 gp, M: 0 gp.

APL 12: L: 0 gp, C: 3,900 gp, M: 0 gp.

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed)

APL 6: L: 26 gp, C: 1,000 gp, M: 1,084 gp – Total: 2,110 gp (1,800 gp).

APL 8: L: 26 gp, C: 1,800 gp, M: 1,084 gp – Total: 2,910 gp (2,600 gp).

APL 10: L: 26 gp, C: 3,000 gp, M: 1,838 gp – Total: 4,864 gp (4,600 gp).

APL 12: L: 26 gp, C: 3,900 gp, M: 2,901 gp – Total: 6,827 gp (6,600 gp).

ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

Special

☛ **A Stern Encounter:** You have met an Aspect of Wee Jas, fulfilling the special requirement for the Contemplative prestige class for that deity.

☛ **Wrath of the Stern Lady:** You have made the mistake of defiling, damaging, stealing from, or otherwise disrespecting the Monastery of the Ruby Crypt while you were being observed by the goddess Wee Jas. Her wrath has fallen on you, and now death follows your every step. Whenever a foe strikes you and threatens a critical hit, the roll to confirm that critical hit is assumed to always be successful, with no actual roll made. When interacting with divine casters who worship Wee Jas, they will sense your offense, reducing their initial attitude by one step. If you are a divine caster who worships Wee Jas, you are stripped of your divine spell-casting ability. This effect is normally permanent. It may only be removed by a cleric of Wee Jas of 15th or higher caster level with the *atonement* spell, or by a donation in restitution to the Stern Lady. This donation is 500 gp x the current character level of the PC at the time this Wrath was “earned.”

However, if you gained this Wrath from disturbing the remains of the Kings of Keoland or from attacking the Aspect of Wee Jas, this effect may not be removed – Wee Jas has forever marked you in anger. Circle this paragraph if this is the case, and notify the Keoland Triad of your PC's actions.

☛ **Friends in High Places:** For your service to the Empire, Lashton and the artificers of the National Academy of Wizardry have pledged to repair (if damaged) or replace (if destroyed) any three items you carried with you in the course of this adventure that were damaged during the adventure. Choose three items that were destroyed or damaged and list them below. This repair or replacement is done at no cost to you.

Should this PC have met their demise in the final encounter of this adventure, Lashton and/or Reynard will see to your being restored to life. You may be the recipient of a *raise dead*, *resurrection*, *reincarnation*, or *true resurrection* (circle one) – the adventure details for the DM what options are available to your PC. This is done at no

cost, and Lashton does this regardless of whether or not your PC wished to be raised from the dead (though your soul can decline to return to your body, as normal, causing the spell to fail). Make a note of this restoration to life in the Play Notes section of the Adventure Record.

☛ *Lionheart*

This PC completed KEO5-06 *A Tale of Two Lions* and earned the honorific *Lionheart*. This honorific is only available to PCs who earned at least one **All the King's Men** effects on a previous Keoland regional, interactive, or special mission Adventure Record.

You have demonstrated an unswerving friendship to the Lion Throne of Keoland and/or have been an unrelenting foe of the Iron Cabal, which nearly succeeded in seizing control of Keoland for itself. In short, you have served, and perhaps even saved, the Empire.

Thus, the Court of the Land has designated you a Baronet (for female PCs, Baronette) of the County of Sayre and has bestowed upon you the honorific of *Lionheart*. (If you had a lesser noble title prior to this one, you lose the lower one in place of this one. You retain any associated benefits of that title, however.) In order to accept this title, your PC must have Keoland as her home region at the time this adventure was played. If she does not, you may not gain the benefits of this Adventure Record item until your PC has relocated to Keoland.

So long as you retain your noble title of Baronet(te), you enjoy the following benefits:

- You are gifted with a fifty-acre estate of currently-undeveloped land in the Barony of Sayre. If you desire to do so, you will be given permission to build a house of worship to any deity whose worship is not forbidden in Keoland. You must bear the costs of any construction or development of your land, but you may do so as you see fit within the parameters of Keoish law.
- You gain a +2 circumstance bonus to any Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made when dealing with residents of Keoland or any of her designated vassal states. You are considered to have free Luxury Lifestyle for any adventure that takes place wholly or in part inside the Kingdom of Keoland. You gain the Great Renown modifier (+2) to your Leadership Score, which does not stack with itself should you have earned it from another source. PCs that are Knights of the Watch are considered to have “defeated a foe of impressive power” for the purposes of their Promotion Point totals.

With the defeat of Regent Jessa Skotti and the adoption of her orphaned children by Baron Markos Skotti, the Barony of Sayre has no ruler. As a Baronet(te), you may petition the Lion Throne to grant you the title of

Baron(ess) of Sayre. Such a title would grant you the Keep of Sayre as your residence, and you would hold a voting rod in the Court of the Land. If you are successful in your efforts to become the new Baron(ess), your PC is retired and becomes an NPC wholly under control of the Keoland Triad, to do with as the Triad sees fit. You need not retire your PC until the Triad has chosen you as the new Baron(ess) of Sayre (immediately after 12/31/06, the retirement date of this adventure) – until then, Sayre is assumed to be collectively ruled in trust by a council of the Baronets of Sayre. If you are interested in petitioning for this title, or have questions about this Adventure Record item, contact the Keoland Triad for more information. Retiring a PC to take the title of Baron(ess) also excludes this PC from any High Level Living Greyhawk play options that might become available in the future.

Item Access

APL 6 (all of the following):

- +1 Mithral Buckler (Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Arcane Scroll of Teleport (CL 9th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Vest of Resistance +2 (Adventure; *Complete Arcane*)

APL 8 (all of APL 6 plus the following):

- Huge Masterwork Ironwood Trident (Adventure; *Player's Handbook/Dungeon Master's Guide*)

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

- Arcane Scroll of Time Stop (CL 17th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*; Limit One)
- Divine Scroll of Blade Barrier (CL 11th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Wand of Magic Missile (CL 5th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*)

APL 12 (all of APLs 6, 8, 10 plus the following):

- Divine Scroll of Mass Cure Light Wounds (CL 11th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Divine Scroll of Repel Metal or Stone (CL 15th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*; Limit One)
- Wand of Fireball (CL 6th; Adventure; *Dungeon Master's Guide*)

ENCOUNTER 13

Young Rust Dragon: CR 6; medium dragon (extraplanar); HD 12d12+36; hp 135; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (+12 natural); BAB/Grp +12/+15; Atk bite +16 melee (1d8+3); Full Atk bite +16 melee (1d8+3) and 2 claws +13 melee (1d6+1) and 2 wings +13 melee (1d4+1); SA breath weapon (6d4 acid 60 ft. line, or 30 ft. cone and see below; Reflex DC 18), frightful presence (90 ft. radius, Will DC 14), rusting bite, natural weapons are treated as magic for purposes of overcoming DR; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, metal resistance, SR 16; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +8; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 6. *Draconomicon*, page 186.

Skills & Feats: Jump +9, Listen +15, Spot +15, Search +12, Sense Motive +5, Tumble +5; Hover, Improved Toughness^{CW}, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite). ^{CW}Complete Warrior.

Breath Weapon (Su): A rust dragon has two breath weapons: a line of acid or a cone of reddish-brown liquid that instantly corrodes and destroys any metal it touches. Attended and magical metals receive Reflex saves to avoid this effect, but any metal is susceptible: iron, steel, silver, gold, even mithral and adamantite.

Metal Resistance (Ex): A rust dragon is resistant to attacks from metal weapons. Against weapons whose damage-dealing part is metal (a blade, metal point, arrowhead, or even mace head), a rust dragon has damage reduction equal to that of a rust dragon of two age categories older than itself (for this dragon, this would be DR 10/magic).

Rusting Bite (Ex): A rust dragon that makes a successful bite attack causes metal armor worn by the target creature to corrode, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. A dragon can also use its bite attack to target a weapon or other metal object, of course. The size of the object is immaterial – a full suit of armor rusts away as quickly as a sword. Magic metal items are allowed Reflex saves against a DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon save DC (for this dragon, DC 18).

Description: Rust dragons bear a strong resemblance to the metallic dragons of the Material Plane, but appeared covered in rust, tarnish, or verdigris. Their scales appear pitted and lined with corrosive color, and the membranes of their wings are very thin and iridescent.

Regent Jessa Skotti: Female Suloise Ari1/Brd8: CR 8; medium humanoid (human); HD 8d6+1d8+18; hp 56; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +2 Dex); BAB/Grp +6/+5; Atk masterwork longsword +6 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); Full Atk longsword +6/+1 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); SQ bardic

music 8/day, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, *suggestion*; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18 (20).

Skills & Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +14, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +11, Perform (vocal) +17, Speak Language +3, Spellcraft +14, Tumble +3, Use Magic Device +20. Danger Sense^{CV}, Improved Initiative, Lingering Song^{CV}, Lyric Spell^{CV}, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device). ^{CV}Complete Adventurer.

Languages: Common, Flan, Keoish, Ancient Suloise.

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/2 per day; DC 15 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*; 1st – *grease*, *inspirational boost*^{SC}, *joyful noise*^{SC}, *Tasha's hideous laughter*; 2nd – *glitterdust*, *harmonize*^{RoS}, *invisibility*, *mirror image*; 3rd – *confusion*, *dispel magic*, *haste*. ^{SC}SpellCompendium, ^{RoS}Races of Stone.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +1 mithral buckler, masterwork longsword, cloak of charisma +2, vest of resistance +2^{CA}, divine scroll of cure moderate wounds (CL 3rd), arcane scroll of protection from good (CL 1st), arcane scroll of teleport (CL 9th). ^{CA}Complete Arcane.

APPENDIX 2 – APL 8

ENCOUNTER 9

Efreeti, 14-HD Advanced: CR 10; large outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 14d8+28 (105 hp); Init +7; Spd 15 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (-1 size, +5 armor, +3 Dex, +6 natural); BAB/Grp +14/+25; Atk large masterwork scimitar +22 melee (1d8+7 and 1d6 fire; 15-20/x2) or slam +20 melee (1d8+7 and 1d6 fire; 20/x2); Full Atk large masterwork scimitar +22/+17/+12 melee (1d8+7 and 1d6 fire; 15-20/x2) or 2 slams +20 melee (1d8+7 and 1d6 fire; 20/x2); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA *change size*, heat, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, *plane shift*, telepathy 100 ft., vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +12, Will +11; Str 24, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +19, Craft (armorsmith) +18, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Intimidate +21, Listen +19, Move Silently +17, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +18, Spot +19. Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*).

Change Size (Sp): Twice per day, an efreeti can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the efreeti chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the efreeti. A DC 13 Fortitude save negates the effect. The save DC is Cha-based. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Heat (Ex): An efreeti's red-hot body deals 1d6 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or in each round it maintains a hold when grappling.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect magic*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *scorching ray* (1 ray only); 3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire* (DC 16); 1/day—grant up to three wishes (to non-genies only), *gaseous form*, *permanent image* (DC 18), *polymorph* (self only). CL 12th. The save DCs are Cha-based.

Possessions: Large masterwork breastplate, large masterwork scimitar.

ENCOUNTER 13

Juvenile Rust Dragon: CR 8; large dragon (extraplanar); HD 15d12+60; hp 180; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (-1 size, +15 natural); BAB/Grp +15/+23; Atk bite +19 melee (2d6+4); Full Atk bite +19 melee (2d6+4) and 2 claws +16 melee (1d8+2) and 2 wings +16 melee (1d6+2) and tail slap +16 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (8d4 acid 80 ft. line, or 40 ft. cone and see below; Reflex DC 20), frightful presence (120 ft. radius, Will DC 16), rusting bite, natural weapons are treated as magic for purposes of overcoming DR; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision

120 ft., immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, metal resistance, SR 18; AL LE; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8. *Draconomicon*, page 186.

Skills & Feats: Jump +12, Listen +18, Spot +18, Search +17, Sense Motive +18, Tumble +13; Hover, Improved Toughness^{CW}, Multiattack, Power Attack, Recover Breath^{DR}, Weapon Focus (bite). ^{CW}Complete Warrior, ^{DR}Draconomicon.

Breath Weapon (Su): A rust dragon has two breath weapons: a line of acid or a cone of reddish-brown liquid that instantly corrodes and destroys any metal it touches. Attended and magical metals receive Reflex saves to avoid this effect, but any metal is susceptible: iron, steel, silver, gold, even mithral and adamantite.

Metal Resistance (Ex): A rust dragon is resistant to attacks from metal weapons. Against weapons whose damage-dealing part is metal (a blade, metal point, arrowhead, or even mace head), a rust dragon has damage reduction equal to that of a rust dragon of two age categories older than itself (for this dragon, this would be DR 10/magic).

Rusting Bite (Ex): A rust dragon that makes a successful bite attack causes metal armor worn by the target creature to corrode, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. A dragon can also use its bite attack to target a weapon or other metal object, of course. The size of the object is immaterial – a full suit of armor rusts away as quickly as a sword. Magic metal items are allowed Reflex saves against a DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon save DC (for this dragon, DC 20).

Description: Rust dragons bear a strong resemblance to the metallic dragons of the Material Plane, but appeared covered in rust, tarnish, or verdigris. Their scales appear pitted and lined with corrosive color, and the membranes of their wings are very thin and iridescent.

Regent Jessa Skotti: Female Suloise Arii/Brd8: CR 8; medium humanoid (human); HD 8d6+1d8+18; hp 56; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +2 Dex); BAB/Grp +6/+5; Atk masterwork longsword +6 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); Full Atk longsword +6/+1 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); SQ bardic music 8/day, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, *suggestion*; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18 (20).

Skills & Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +14, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +11, Perform (vocal) +17, Speak Language +3, Spellcraft +14, Tumble +3, Use Magic Device +20. Danger Sense^{CV}, Improved Initiative,

Lingering Song^{CV}, Lyric Spell^{CV}, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device). ^{CV}Complete Adventurer.

Languages: Common, Flan, Keoish, Ancient Suloise.

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/2 per day; DC 15 + spell level): 0 – detect magic, light, mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st – grease, inspirational boost^{SC}, joyful noise^{SC}, Tasha's hideous laughter; 2nd – glitterdust, harmonize^{ROS}, invisibility, mirror image; 3rd – confusion, dispel magic, haste. ^{SC}SpellCompendium, ^{ROS}Races of Stone.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +1 mithral buckler, masterwork longsword, cloak of charisma +2, vest of resistance +2^{CA}, divine scroll of cure moderate wounds (CL 3rd), arcane scroll of protection from good (CL 1st), arcane scroll of teleport (CL 9th). ^{CA}Complete Arcane.

APPENDIX 3 – APL 10

ENCOUNTER 3

Gauth, 10-HD Advanced Ftr2: CR 9; Medium Aberration; HD 10d8+2d10+36; hp 102; Init +6; Spd 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good); AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 natural); BA/Grp +9/+8; Atk +12 ranged touch (eye rays) and +3 melee (1d8-1, bite); Full Atk +12 ranged touch (eye rays) and +3 melee (1d8-1, bite); SA eye rays, stunning gaze; SQ all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., flight; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Hide +15, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Listen +4, Search +19, Spot +21, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks); Alertness^B, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot^B, Weapon Focus (eye ray)^B.

All-Around Vision: Gauths are exceptionally alert and circumspect. Their many eyes give them a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks, and they can't be flanked.

Flight (Ex): A gauth's body is naturally buoyant. This buoyancy allows it to fly at a speed of 20 ft., and also grants it a permanent *feather fall* effect (as the spell) with personal range.

Stunning Gaze (Su): Stun for 1 round, 30 ft., Will DC 17 negates. The save DC is Cha-based. Any creature meeting the gaze of the gauth's central eye is subject to its stunning gaze attack. Since the gauth can use its eye rays as a free action, the creature can use a standard action to focus its stunning gaze on an opponent and attack with all eye rays that bear on its foes at the same time.

Eye Rays (Su): Each of a gauth's six small eyes can produce a magical ray once per round as a free action. During a single round, a creature can aim only two eye rays at targets in any one 90-degree arc (up, forward, left, right, back, down). The remaining eyes must aim at targets in other arcs, or not at all. A gauth can tilt and pan its body each round to change which rays it can bear in any given arc. Each of a gauth's six eye rays resembles a spell cast by an 8th-level caster. Each eye ray has a range of 100 ft. and a save DC 17. The saves are Cha-based. The six eye rays include:

Sleep: This works like the spell, except that it affects one creature with any number of Hit Dice (Will negates). Gauths like to use this ray against warriors and other physically powerful creatures.

Inflict Moderate Wounds: This works like the spell, causing 2d8+8 points of damage (Will half).

Dispel Magic: This works like the targeted dispel function of the spell. The gauth's dispel check is 1d20+8.

Scorching Ray: This works like the spell, dealing 4d6 points of fire damage (no save). A gauth creates only one fiery ray per use of this ability.

Paralysis: The target is paralyzed (Fort negates) for 2d10 minutes.

Exhaustion: This works like the spell ray of exhaustion (no save).

Languages: Beholder, Common.

ENCOUNTER 9

Efreeti, 16-HD Advanced: CR 12; huge outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 16d8+64 (144 hp); Init +6; Spd 15 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (-2 size, +5 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural); BAB/Grp +16/+35; Atk huge masterwork scimitar +27 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 15-20/x2) or slam +25 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 20/x2); Full Atk huge masterwork scimitar +27/+22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 15-20/x2) or 2 slams +25 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 20/x2); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA *change size*, heat, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, *plane shift*, telepathy 100 ft., vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 32, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +21, Craft (armorsmith) +20, Concentration +23, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Intimidate +23, Listen +21, Move Silently +18, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +20, Spot +21. Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*).

Change Size (Sp): Twice per day, an efreeti can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the efreeti chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the efreeti. A DC 13 Fortitude save negates the effect. The save DC is Cha-based. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Heat (Ex): An efreeti's red-hot body deals 1d6 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or in each round it maintains a hold when grappling.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect magic*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *scorching ray* (1 ray only); 3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire* (DC 16); 1/day—grant up to three wishes (to non-genies only), *gaseous form*, *permanent image* (DC 18), *polymorph* (self only). CL 12th. The save DCs are Cha-based.

Possessions: Huge masterwork breastplate, huge masterwork scimitar.

ENCOUNTER 12

Treant, Fiendish 11-HD Advanced: CR 11; huge plant (extraplanar); HD 11d8+66; hp 116; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +13 natural); BAB/Grp +7/+25; Atk slam +15 melee (2d6+10); Full Atk 2 slams +14 melee (2d6+10); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA animate trees, double damage against objects, trample 2d6+14; SQ DR 10/slashing and 5/magic, darkvision 60

ft., low-light vision, plant traits, resistance to cold and fire 10, SR 16, vulnerability to fire; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 30, Dex 8, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Diplomacy +3, Hide -9*, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (planes) +6, Listen +12, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12, Survival +8 (+10 aboveground). Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

Animate Trees (Sp): A treant can animate trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes 1 full round for a normal tree to uproot itself. Thereafter it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant in all respects. Animated trees lose their ability to move if the treant that animated them is incapacitated or moves out of range. The ability is otherwise similar to liveoak (caster level 12th). Animated trees have the same vulnerability to fire that a treant has.

Damage Reduction: The treant's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Double Damage against Objects (Ex): A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20) against a good foe.

Trample (Ex): Reflex DC 23 half. The save DC is Strength-based.

Skills: *Treants have a +16 racial bonus on Hide checks made in forested areas.

ENCOUNTER 13

Juvenile Rust Dragon, 17-HD Advanced: CR 9; large dragon (extraplanar); HD 17d12+85; hp 217; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), burrow 45 ft.; AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 22 (-1 size, +15 natural); BAB/Grp +17/+25; Atk bite +21 melee (2d6+4); Full Atk bite +21 melee (2d6+4) and 2 claws +18 melee (1d8+2) and 2 wings +18 melee (1d6+2) and tail slap +18 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (8d4 acid 80 ft. line, or 40 ft. cone and see below; Reflex DC 22), frightful presence (120 ft. radius, Will DC 16), rusting bite, natural weapons are treated as magic for purposes of overcoming DR; SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, metal resistance, SR 18; AL LE; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +10; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8. *Draconomicon*, page 186.

Skills & Feats: Jump +14, Listen +20, Spot +20, Search +19, Sense Motive +20, Tumble +13; Hover, Improved Toughness^{CW}, Multiattack, Power Attack, Recover Breath^{DR}, Weapon Focus (bite). ^{CW}*Complete Warrior*, ^{DR}*Draconomicon*.

Breath Weapon (Su): A rust dragon has two breath weapons: a line of acid or a cone of reddish-brown liquid that instantly corrodes and destroys any metal it touches. Attended and magical metals receive Reflex saves to avoid this effect, but any metal is susceptible: iron, steel, silver, gold, even mithral and adamantine.

Metal Resistance (Ex): A rust dragon is resistant to attacks from metal weapons. Against weapons whose damage-dealing part is metal (a blade, metal point, arrowhead, or even mace head), a rust dragon has damage reduction equal to that of a rust dragon of two age categories older than itself (for this dragon, this would be DR 10/magic).

Rusting Bite (Ex): A rust dragon that makes a successful bite attack causes metal armor worn by the target creature to corrode, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. A dragon can also use its bite attack to target a weapon or other metal object, of course. The size of the object is immaterial – a full suit of armor rusts away as quickly as a sword. Magic metal items are allowed Reflex saves against a DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon save DC (for this dragon, DC 22).

Description: Rust dragons bear a strong resemblance to the metallic dragons of the Material Plane, but appeared covered in rust, tarnish, or verdigris. Their scales appear pitted and lined with corrosive color, and the membranes of their wings are very thin and iridescent.

Regent Jessa Skotti: Female Suloise Arix/Brd9/Exemplar1: CR 10; medium humanoid (human); HD 10d6+1d8+20; hp 66; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +2 Dex); BAB/Grp +6/+5; Atk masterwork longsword +6 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); Full Atk longsword +6/+1 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); SQ bardic music 9/day, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, skill artistry (Use Magic Device), skill mastery (Concentration, Perform (vocal), Use Magic Device), suggestion; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +11; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18 (20). *Complete Adventurer*, page 44.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +13, Concentration +16, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +16, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +13, Perform (vocal) +19, Sense Motive +3, Speak Language +3, Spellcraft +18, Tumble +2, Use Magic Device +26. Danger Sense^{CV}, Improved Initiative, Lingering Song^{CV}, Lyric Spell^{CV}, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device). ^{CV}*Complete Adventurer*.

Skill Artistry (Ex): An exemplar is particularly talented in the use of one of her skills. Choose one skill in which the exemplar has at least 13 ranks. She gains a +4 competence bonus on all skill checks involving that skill. At 4th, 7th, and 10th levels, an exemplar gains this ability again. Each time she selects a different skill to receive the +4 competence bonus, provided she has at least 13 ranks in a skill that has not yet been chosen to benefit from this ability. If not, she gains no benefit from this ability until she has 13 ranks in another skill. She can then immediately apply the benefit of skill artistry to that skill.

Skill Mastery (Ex): An exemplar is so confident in the use of certain skills that she can use them reliably even under adverse conditions. She selects a number of

skills equal to 1 + her Int modifier. When making a check with one of these skills, she can take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent her from doing so. Each time an exemplar gains a class level, she can add another skill to the list of skills with which she has mastery.

Languages: Common, Flan, Keoish, Ancient Suloise.

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/3 per day; DC 15 + spell level): 0 – detect magic, light, mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st – grease, inspirational boost^{SC}, joyful noise^{SC}, Tasha's hideous laughter; 2nd – glitterdust, harmonize^{RoS}, invisibility, mirror image; 3rd – confusion, dispel magic, haste. ^{SC}SpellCompendium, ^{RoS}Races of Stone.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +1 mithral buckler, masterwork longsword, cloak of charisma +2, vest of resistance +2^{CA}, wand of magic missile (CL 5th), divine scroll of blade barrier (CL 11th), arcane scroll of time stop (CL 17th), arcane scroll of teleport (CL 9th). ^{CA}Complete Arcane.

APPENDIX 4 – APL 12

ENCOUNTER 9

Efreeti, 20-HD Advanced: CR 14; huge outsider (extraplanar, fire); HD 20d8+80 (180 hp); Init +7; Spd 15 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect); AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (-2 size, +5 armor, +3 Dex, +9 natural); BAB/Grp +20/+39; Atk huge masterwork scimitar +31 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 15-20/x2) or slam +32 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 20/x2); Full Atk huge masterwork scimitar +31/+26/+21/+16 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 15-20/x2) or 2 slams +29 melee (2d6+11 and 1d6 fire; 20/x2); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA *change size*, heat, spell-like abilities; SQ darkvision 60 ft., immunity to fire, *plane shift*, telepathy 100 ft., vulnerability to cold; AL LE; SV Fort +16, Ref +15, Will +14; Str 32, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +25, Craft (armorsmith) +24, Concentration +27, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Intimidate +27, Listen +25, Move Silently +23, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +24, Spot +25. Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*).

Change Size (Sp): Twice per day, an efreeti can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the efreeti chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the efreeti. A DC 13 Fortitude save negates the effect. The save DC is Cha-based. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

Heat (Ex): An efreeti's red-hot body deals 1d6 points of extra fire damage whenever it hits in melee, or in each round it maintains a hold when grappling.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect magic*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *scorching ray* (1 ray only); 3/day—*invisibility*, *wall of fire* (DC 16); 1/day—grant up to three wishes (to non-genies only), *gaseous form*, *permanent image* (DC 18), *polymorph* (self only). CL 12th. The save DCs are Cha-based.

Possessions: Huge masterwork breastplate, huge masterwork scimitar.

ENCOUNTER 12

Treant, Fiendish 11-HD Advanced: CR 11; huge plant (extraplanar); HD 11d8+66; hp 116; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 7, flat-footed 20 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +13 natural); BAB/Grp +7/+25; Atk slam +15 melee (2d6+10); Full Atk 2 slams +14 melee (2d6+10); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA animate trees, double damage against objects, trample 2d6+14; SQ DR 10/slashing and 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, plant traits, resistance to cold and fire 10, SR 16, vulnerability to fire; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 30, Dex 8, Con 22, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills & Feats: Diplomacy +3, Hide -9*, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (planes) +6, Listen +12, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12, Survival +8 (+10 aboveground). Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

Animate Trees (Sp): A treant can animate trees within 180 feet at will, controlling up to two trees at a time. It takes 1 full round for a normal tree to uproot itself. Thereafter it moves at a speed of 10 feet and fights as a treant in all respects. Animated trees lose their ability to move if the treant that animated them is incapacitated or moves out of range. The ability is otherwise similar to liveoak (caster level 12th). Animated trees have the same vulnerability to fire that a treant has.

Damage Reduction: The treant's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Double Damage against Objects (Ex): A treant or animated tree that makes a full attack against an object or structure deals double damage.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day the creature can make a normal melee attack to deal extra damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20) against a good foe.

Trample (Ex): Reflex DC 23 half. The save DC is Strength-based.

Skills: *Treants have a +16 racial bonus on Hide checks made in forested areas.

ENCOUNTER 13

Adult Rust Dragon: CR 13; huge dragon (extraplanar); HD 21d12+126; hp 284; Init +0; Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (average), burrow 45 ft.; AC 29, touch 8, flat-footed 29 (-2 size, +21 natural); BAB/Grp +21/+37; Atk bite +28 melee (2d8+8); Full Atk bite +28 melee (2d8+8) and 2 claws +25 melee (2d6+4) and 2 wings +25 melee (1d8+4) and tail slap +25 melee (2d6+12); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft. (15 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon (12d4 acid 100 ft. line, or 50 ft. cone and see below; Reflex DC 25), frightful presence (180 ft. radius, Will DC 20), rusting bite, natural weapons are treated as magic for purposes of overcoming DR, spell-like abilities, crush (Ex, 2d8+12, Reflex DC 25); SQ blindsense 60 ft., damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 120 ft., immunity to sleep and paralysis effects, metal resistance, SR 23; AL LE; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10. *Draconomicon*, page 186.

Skills & Feats: Jump +34, Listen +24, Spot +24, Search +24, Sense Motive +24, Tumble +26; Cleave, Hover, Improved Flight^{RoW}, Improved Toughness^{CW}, Multiattack, Power Attack, Recover Breath^{DR}, Weapon Focus (bite). ^{CW}Complete Warrior, ^{DR}Draconomicon, ^{RoW}Races of the Wild.

Breath Weapon (Su): A rust dragon has two breath weapons: a line of acid or a cone of reddish-brown liquid that instantly corrodes and destroys any metal it touches.

Attended and magical metals receive Reflex saves to avoid this effect, but any metal is susceptible: iron, steel, silver, gold, even mithral and adamantite.

Metal Resistance (Ex): A rust dragon is resistant to attacks from metal weapons. Against weapons whose damage-dealing part is metal (a blade, metal point, arrowhead, or even mace head), a rust dragon has damage reduction equal to that of a rust dragon of two age categories older than itself (for this dragon, this would be DR 15/magic).

Rusting Bite (Ex): A rust dragon that makes a successful bite attack causes metal armor worn by the target creature to corrode, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. A dragon can also use its bite attack to target a weapon or other metal object, of course. The size of the object is immaterial – a full suit of armor rusts away as quickly as a sword. Magic metal items are allowed Reflex saves against a DC equal to the dragon's breath weapon save DC (for this dragon, DC 25).

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day – wall of iron (CL 6th).

Description: Rust dragons bear a strong resemblance to the metallic dragons of the Material Plane, but appeared covered in rust, tarnish, or verdigris. Their scales appear pitted and lined with corrosive color, and the membranes of their wings are very thin and iridescent.

Regent Jessa Skotti: Female Suloise
Ari1/Brd11/Exemplar1: CR 12; medium humanoid (human); HD 12d6+1d8+26; hp 80; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +2 Dex); BAB/Grp +8/+7; Atk masterwork longsword +8 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); Full Atk longsword +8/+3 melee (1d8-1; 19-20/x2); SQ bardic music 15/day, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +2, skill artistry (Use Magic Device), skill mastery (Concentration, Perform (vocal), Use Magic Device), suggestion; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 19 (21). *Complete Adventurer*, page 44.

Skills & Feats: Bluff +16, Concentration +18, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +18, Gather Information +7, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Listen +15, Perform (vocal) +21, Sense Motive +9, Speak Language +3, Spellcraft +20, Tumble +2, Use Magic Device +26. Danger Sense^{CV}, Extra Music^{CV}, Improved Initiative, Lingering Song^{CV}, Lyric Spell^{CV}, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device). ^{CV}*Complete Adventurer*.

Skill Artistry (Ex): An exemplar is particularly talented in the use of one of her skills. Choose one skill in which the exemplar has at least 13 ranks. She gains a +4 competence bonus on all skill checks involving that skill. At 4th, 7th, and 10th levels, an exemplar gains this ability again. Each time she selects a different skill to receive the +4 competence bonus, provided she has at least 13 ranks in a skill that has not yet been chosen to benefit from this ability. If not, she gains no benefit from this ability until she has 13 ranks in another skill. She can

then immediately apply the benefit of skill artistry to that skill.

Skill Mastery (Ex): An exemplar is so confident in the use of certain skills that she can use them reliably even under adverse conditions. She selects a number of skills equal to 1 + her Int modifier. When making a check with one of these skills, she can take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent her from doing so. Each time an exemplar gains a class level, she can add another skill to the list of skills with which she has mastery.

Languages: Common, Flan, Keoish, Ancient Suloise.

Bard Spells Known (3/5/4/4/2 per day; DC 15 + spell level): 0 – detect magic, light, mending, message, prestidigitation, read magic; 1st – grease, inspirational boost^{SC}, joyful noise^{SC}, Tasha's hideous laughter; 2nd – cure moderate wounds, glitterdust, mirror image, tongues; 3rd – confusion, dispel magic, displacement, haste; 4th – dimension door, greater harmonize^{RoS}, greater invisibility. ^{SC}SpellCompendium, ^{RoS}Races of Stone.

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +1 mithral buckler, masterwork longsword, cloak of charisma +2, vest of resistance +2^{CA}, wand of fireball (CL 6th), divine scroll of blade barrier (CL 11th), divine scroll of repel metal or stone (CL 15th), divine scroll of mass cure light wounds (CL 9th), arcane scroll of time stop (CL 17th), arcane scroll of teleport (CL 9th). ^{CA}Complete Arcane.

APPENDIX 5 – ALL APLS

ENCOUNTER 2

Justicator: Large Outsider (Lawful); CR 13; HD 17d8+34; hp 128; Init +7; Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good) in full plate (base speed 40 ft., fly speed 90 ft. (good)); AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (-1 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural, +9 armor); Base Atk/Grp: +17/+26; Atk +23 melee (3d6+8/17-20, +1 large greatsword); Full Atk +23/+18/+13/+8 melee (3d6+8/17-20, +1 large greatsword); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA smite chaos, spell-like abilities, its natural and wielded weapons are treated as lawful-aligned for the purposes of overcoming DR; SQ darkvision 60 ft., DR 10/chaotic, immunity to paralysis, outsider traits, SR 24; AL LN; SV Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +16; Str 21, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 12. *Monster Manual III*, page 85.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +22, Diplomacy +3, Heal +24, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (the planes) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Listen +24, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +21, Spot +24, Survival +4 (+6 on other planes); Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Penetration, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

Smite Chaos (Su): Four times per day, a justicator can attempt to smite chaos with one normal melee attack. It gains a +1 on the attack and +17 on the damage roll. If a justicator accidentally smites a creature that is not chaotic, the smite has no effect, but the ability is still used up for that day.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bless*, *detect chaos*; 3/day—*cure serious wounds*, *dimensional anchor*, *invisibility purge*, *silence* (DC 13); 1/day—*dispel chaos* (DC 16), *greater command* (DC 16), *plane shift*. CL 10th.

Languages: Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal.

Possessions: +1 large greatsword, +1 mithral full plate.

Description: An imposing man dressed in gold-inlaid mithral full plate stands composed with a serious manner. Magnificent black-and-white feathered wings sprout from his back. His eyes glow gold under thick brows, and he wields a silvery greatsword. A justicator stands nine feet tall and weighs 500 pounds. Its eyes and weapons include all manner of metallic hues, ranging from electric metallic blue to antique copper.

ENCOUNTER 7

High Priestess Illithria Neheli of the Ruby Crypt: Female Sulioise Clr9 of Wee Jas; CR 9; medium Humanoid (human); HD 9d8; hp 54; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 15 (+5 armor), touch 10, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grp +6/+6; Full Atk +1 *light mace* +7/+2 melee (1d6+1; 20/x2); SA Spontaneous casting (*inflict* spells), turn undead 6/day; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 16 (18), Cha 16.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +12, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (religion) +14, Spellcraft +16. Divine Metamagic (Empower Spell), Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Focus (Necromancy), True Believer.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6 / 5+1 / 5+1 / 4+1 / 3+1 / 1+1 per day; DC 14 + spell level, +2 DC for necromancy spells): 0 – *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1st – *comprehend languages*, *deathwatch**, *detect undead*, *remove fear*, *sanctuary*; 2nd – *cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*, *gentle repose**, *hold person*, *remove paralysis*, *spiritual weapon* x2; 3rd – *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic**, *magic circle against evil*, *remove disease*; *searing light*; 4th – *cure critical wounds*, *death ward*, *discern lies**, *sending*; 5th – *greater command**, *raise dead*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Magic (use spell trigger or spell completion items as a 4th level wizard), Repose (use a 9d6 death touch 1/day as per the Death domain).

Possessions: +1 glamered mithral shirt, +1 light mace, cloak of resistance +1, periapt of wisdom +2, silver holy symbols (2), spell component pouches.

ENCOUNTER 11

Topiary Guardian (Lion): Large Plant; CR 7; HD 10d8+40; hp 90; Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size); Base Atk/Grp: +7/+18; Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d6+7, 2 claws) or +8 melee (1d8+3, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA improved grab, merciful, pounce, rake 1d6+3; SQ DR 10/slashing, freeze, low-light vision, plant traits, tremorsense 90 ft., vulnerability to fire; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 18, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 3. *Monster Manual III*, page 174.

Skills & Feats: Move Silently +10; none.

Freeze (Ex): A topiary guardian can hold itself so still that it appears to be a normal sculpted shrub. An observer must succeed on a DC 30 Spot check to notice that the topiary guardian is actually an enchanted creature.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a lion topiary guardian must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake on subsequent rounds.

Merciful (Ex): A topiary guardian can deal non-lethal damage with any of its attacks without taking the standard -4 penalty on attack rolls. The creature chooses whether to deal lethal or non-lethal damage depending on the orders it is given by its creator. Orders to capture or subdue enemies cause the topiary guardian to use non-lethal attacks; any other attack order causes the creature to deal lethal damage.

Pounce (Ex): If a lion topiary guardian charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d6+3.

Skills: A topiary guardian has a +8 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Description: A topiary guardian is a shrub or bush sculpted into the shape of an animal and then animated by arcane magic. As much decoration as they are defense, these creatures guard the courtyards of kings and nobles, blending in seamlessly among ordinary hedge sculptures. The guardians spring to life only when an intruder enters the garden.

Topiary guardians are as much construct as plant. They are not naturally mobile plant creatures; like golems, their animating force is a spirit from the Elemental Plane of Earth that has been bound to the body via magic. As a result, druids find them distasteful at best and an abomination at worst. The wealthy landowners who keep the creatures in their gardens rarely worry about such issues, however. They consider the extra security of having a topiary guardian patiently waiting to spring on thieves or assassins more important than the shrub's "feelings."

A topiary guardian is the same size as the creature it imitates, so a lion topiary guardian would have a lion's dimensions. However, a guardian is composed mostly of tiny branches and leaves, making it much lighter than a flesh-and-blood creature of the same size; it weighs only one-quarter as much as its flesh-and-blood counterpart. Topiary guardians do not speak, but do rustle slightly as they move. A lion topiary guardian is up to 8 feet long and weighs about 100 pounds.

ENCOUNTER 13

Devil, Malebranche: Huge Outsider (Baatezu, Evil, Lawful); CR 9; HD 16d8+96; hp 168; Init -1; Spd 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (average); AC 24, touch 7, flat-footed 24 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +17 natural); Base Atk/Grp: +16/+34; Atk +25 melee (2d8+15, huge masterwork ironwood trident) or +24 melee (2d4+10, claw) or +24 melee (2d6+5, gore) or +24 melee (2d6+5, bite); Full Atk +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (2d8+15, huge masterwork ironwood trident) and +22 melee (2d6+5, gore) or +25/+20/+15/+10 melee (2d8+15, huge masterwork ironwood trident) and +22 melee (2d6+5, bite) or +24 melee (2d4+10, 2 claws) and +22 melee (2d6+5, gore) or +24 melee (2d4+10, 2 claws) and +22 melee (2d6+5, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA charge, fear aura, improved grab; SQ DR 10/good, baatezu traits, outsider traits, regeneration 8, SR 20; AL LE; SV Fort +16, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 30, Dex 9, Con 23, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10. *Monster Manual II*, page 67.

Skills & Feats: Balance +1, Bluff +19, Climb +13, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +21, Jump +32, Listen +18, Move Silently +18, Search +19, Spot +18, Tumble +20; Cleave, Flyby Attack, Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Charge (Ex): A malebranche typically begins a battle with a flying charge at an opponent on the ground. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge,

this tactic allows a malebranche to make a single gore attack that deals 6d6+15 points of damage. The creature can also charge while moving on the ground if it wishes.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a malebranche hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with a claw attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The creature has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use its claw to hold the opponent (-20 penalty on the grapple check, but the malebranche is not considered grappled). In either case, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals claw damage.

Fear Aura (Su): As a free action, a malebranche can produce a fear effect. This ability functions like a fear spell (caster level 12th; save DC 18), except that it affects all creatures within a 15 ft. radius around the malebranche. Any creature that makes a successful saving throw against the effect cannot be affected again by that malebranche's fear aura for 24 hours. All baatezu are immune to the malebranche's fear aura.

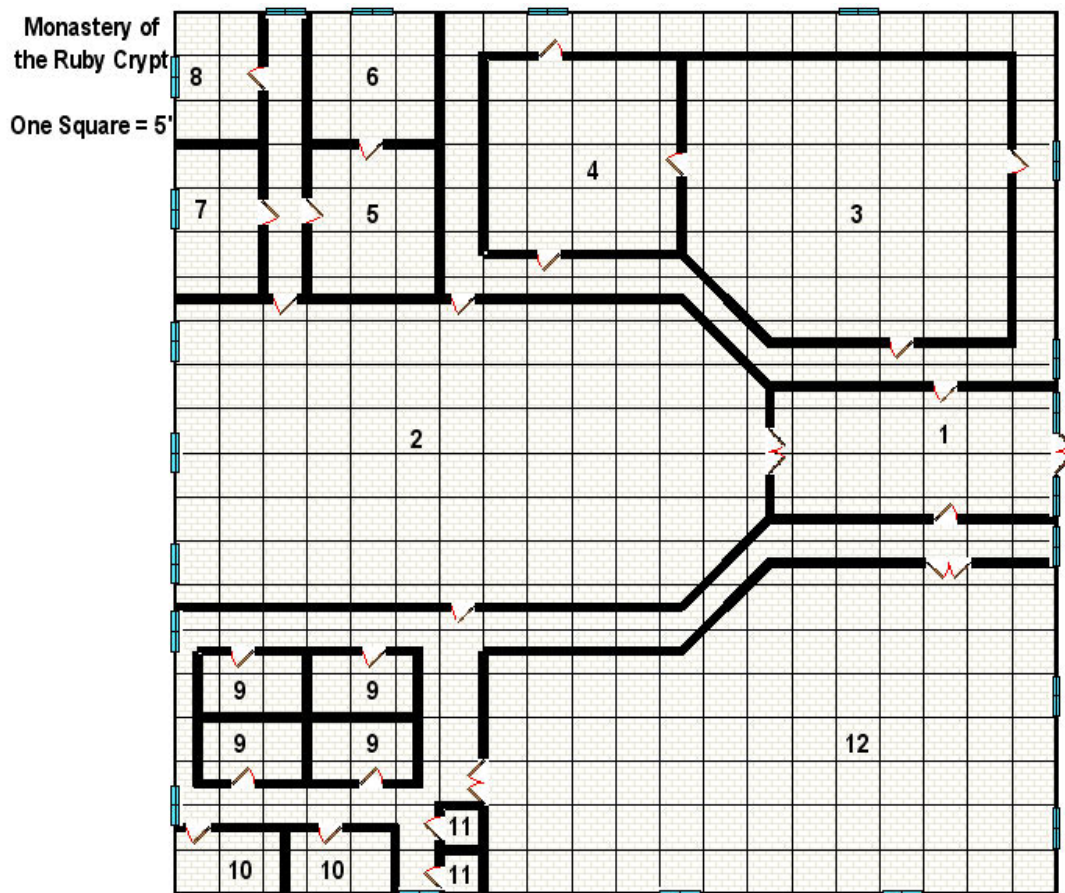
Regeneration (Ex): A malebranche takes normal damage from acid, from holy weapons, and from attacks that deal holy damage.

Languages: speak only Infernal, but they understand Common, particularly orders and curses in that language.

Possessions: huge masterwork ironwood trident.

Description: Malebranche are huge, hulking devils with wickedly curving horns. These creatures usually serve other, more intelligent members of the infernal hierarchy as warriors, enforcers, punishers, and occasionally as mounts. Within the Nine Hells of Baator, malebranches are usually armed with immense masterwork tridents wrought from cold iron (those in this adventure, however, bear tridents crafted of darkwood). These aggressive baatezu tend to bully creatures smaller than themselves and grovel before those that are more powerful. A malebranche is a massive, winged devil of humanoid shape with an underslung jaw and huge, slightly curved horns. Its feral eyes glow with flickering shades of red.

DM AID: MAP #1



1 – Entry Foyer

4 – Kitchen/Mess

7 – High Priestess' Study

10 – Baths

2 – Temple

5 – High Priestess' Bedroom

8 – High Priestess' Meditation Chamber

11 – Lavatories

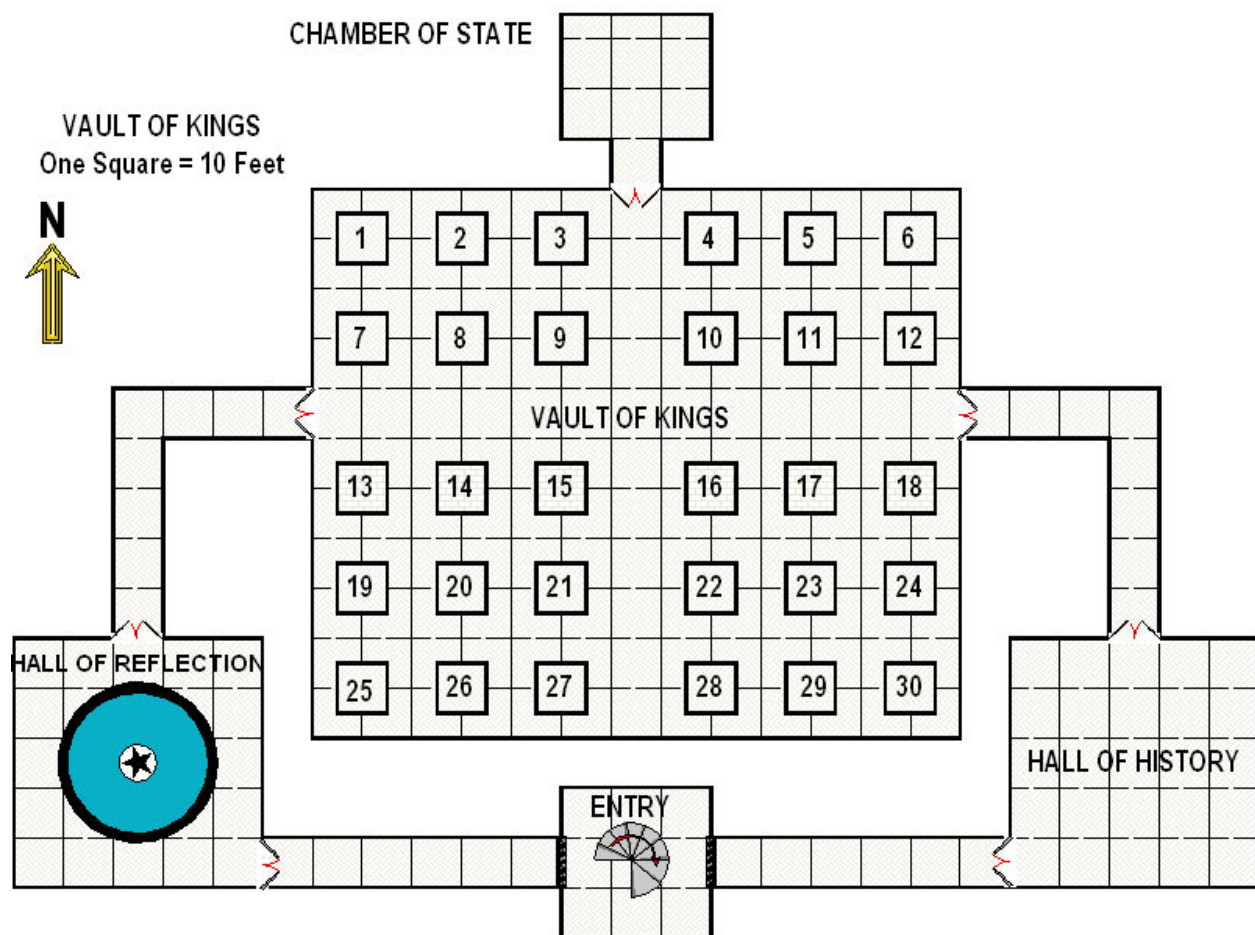
3 – Dormitory

6 – High Priestess' Worship Room

9 – Study Cells

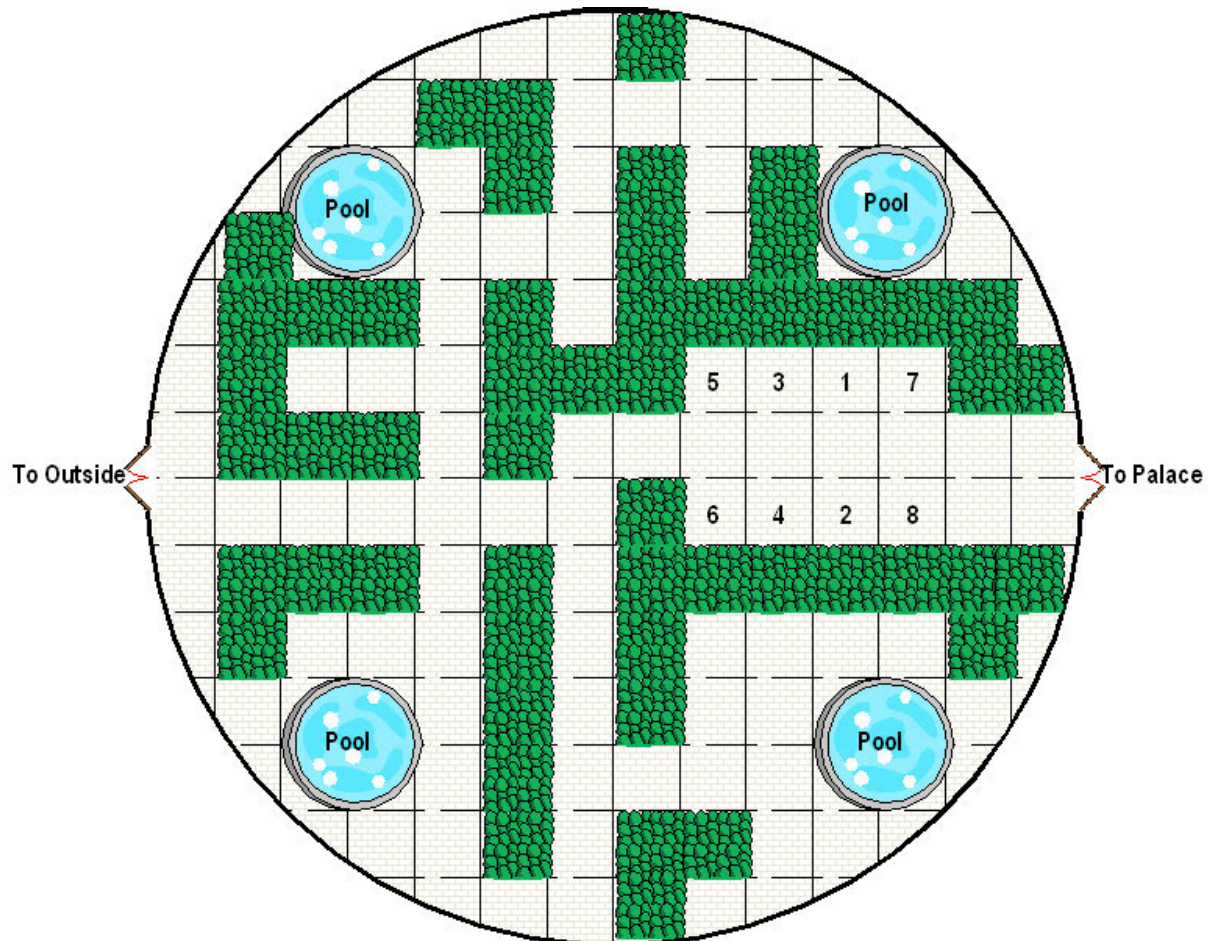
12 – Hospice

DM AID: MAP #2



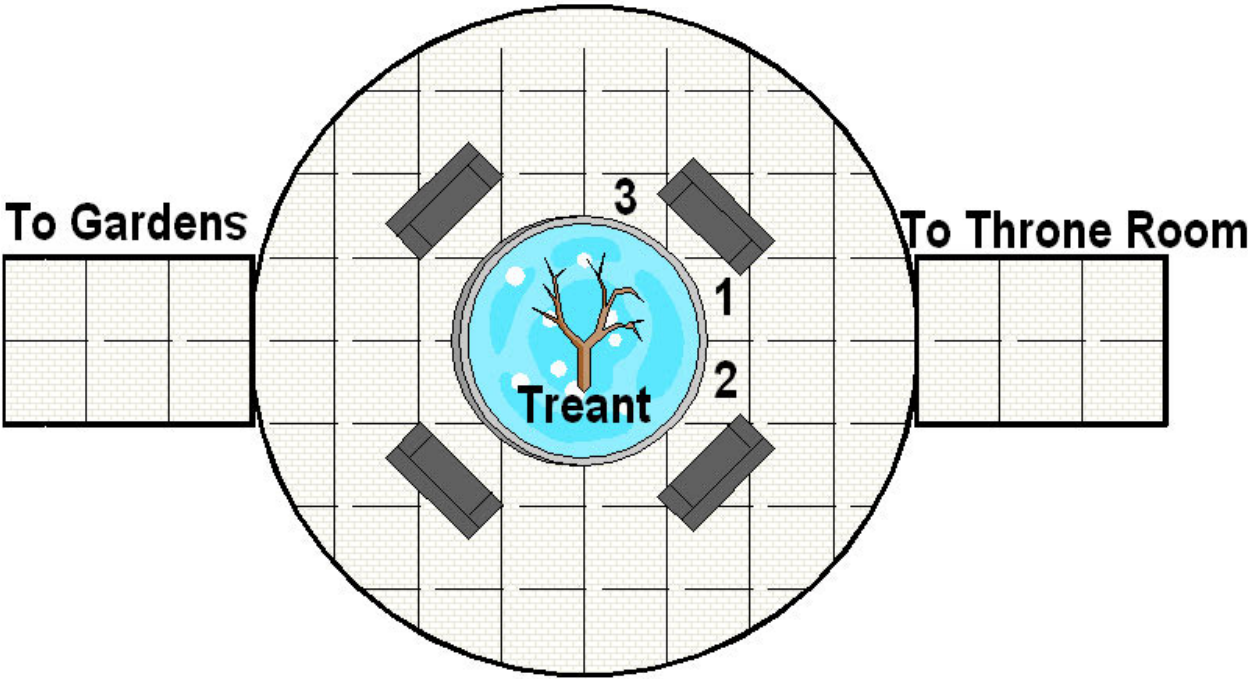
DM AID: MAP #3 – GARDENS OF THE ROYAL PALACE

Scale: 1 square = 5 ft.

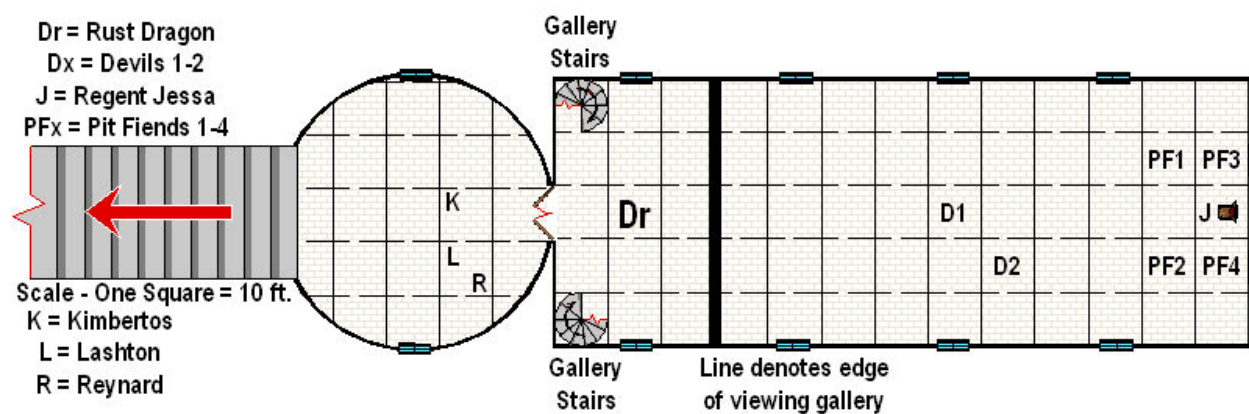


DM AID: MAP #4 – REFLECTING POOL ROOM (ENCOUNTER 12)

Scale: 1 square = 5 ft.



DM AID: MAP #5 – THRONE ROOM (ENCOUNTER 13)



DM AID: POKING HOLES IN THE LECTURER'S ARGUMENTS

Knowledge (local – Sheldomar Valley metaregion)

DC 10: Keoland is a large bureaucracy, with the king is chosen by the Court of the Land. The king was ill-prepared to aid the surrounding regions, less so when the Scarlet Brotherhood assaulted southern Keoland. King Kimbertos led a counterassault that freed southern Keoland and captured Westkeep, while using mercenary companies and the offer of rewards to free Sterich.

Knowledge (local – Sheldomar Valley metaregion) or Knowledge (history)

DC 15: Keoland is a large bureaucracy, and the king's formal title includes "Chief Bureaucrat." During King Kimbertos' reign, the nobles became complacent. When the Greyhawk Wars began, Keoland's nobility was caught off guard, and their ponderous bureaucracy couldn't be put into action quickly enough to help their neighbors. Keoland's delayed aid was disastrous for her needy allies, especially when the army that was created to help the neighbors was used to free the southern portion of Keoland (led by King Kimbertos). Mercenaries and adventuring companies were offered rewards to free Sterich.

DC 20: Keoland is a large bureaucracy, and the king's formal title includes "Chief Bureaucrat and Defender of the Realms." During King Kimbertos' reign, the nobles became complacent and selfish. When the Greyhawk Wars began, Keoland's nobility was caught off guard, and their ponderous bureaucracy couldn't be put into action quickly enough to help their neighbors. Keoland's delayed aid was caused by bickering noble houses who demanded concessions; this was disastrous for her needy allies, especially when the army that was created to help the neighbors was used to free the southern portion of Keoland (led by King Kimbertos). He appointed Lashton, his royal Archmage, with the task of freeing Sterich. He used mercenary and adventuring companies to do so.

DC 25: Keoland is a large bureaucracy, and the king's formal title includes "Chief Bureaucrat and Defender of the Realms." During King Kimbertos' reign, the nobles became complacent and selfish. When the Greyhawk Wars began, Keoland's nobility was caught off guard. The king lacked the proper resources to aid his neighbors and protect Keoland; moreover, his nation's ponderous bureaucracy couldn't be put into action quickly enough to help their neighbors. Keoland's delayed aid was caused by bickering noble houses who demanded concessions from regions that, in some cases, had already been overthrown. This was disastrous for her needy allies, especially when the army that was created to help the neighbors was used to free the southern portion of Keoland (led by King Kimbertos). The Scarlet Brotherhood assaulted Keoland by taking Salinmoor, and by pushing into the Dreadwood. The army raised to aid Keoland's neighbors was instead used to push the Brotherhood out. Kimbertos appointed Lashton, his royal Archmage, with the task of freeing Sterich. He used mercenary and adventuring companies to do so, and paid them out of Keoland's coffers.

DC 30: Keoland is a large bureaucracy, and the king's formal title includes "Chief Bureaucrat and Defender of the Realms." His real influence is limited by his budget and his ability to influence the Court of the Land. King Kimbertos was chosen because he possessed an ability to do neither. During King Kimbertos' reign, the nobles became complacent and selfish. When the Greyhawk Wars began, Keoland's nobility was caught off guard, initially because of the short-sightedness of Lashton, his court archmage. They were thus ill-prepared for the invasion of giants into Keoland's surrounding territories and Keoland's western borders. Moreover, the king lacked the proper resources to aid his neighbors and protect Keoland; his nation's ponderous bureaucracy couldn't be put into action quickly enough to help their neighbors. Keoland's delayed aid was caused by bickering noble houses who demanded concessions from regions that, in some cases, had already been overthrown. This was disastrous for her needy allies. Once an agreement had been arranged with those allies, (the Treaty of Niole Dra in 583 CY), the king marshaled his forces. He used them to recapture southern Keoland in only a few months, which had been attacked with surprise by the forces of the Sea Princes and the Scarlet Brotherhood. He led the army into Monmorg, and seized the city of Westkeep from the Sea Princes. Thus, the army raised to aid Keoland's neighbors was instead used to push the Scarlet Brotherhood and the Sea Princes out. Kimbertos appointed Lashton, his royal Archmage, with the task of freeing Sterich. The archmage used mercenary and adventuring companies to do so, and paid them out of Keoland's coffers. The king's only son, Kimbertos, was lost in the subsequent attack on Sterich. King Kimbertos' actions repulsed a dangerous enemy, and in doing so likely saved the Kingdom of Keoland.

DM AID: NEW RULES

NEW FEATS

Danger Sense (*Complete Adventurer*)

You are one twitchy individual.

Prerequisite: Improved Initiative.

Benefit: Once per day, you may re-roll an initiative check you have just made. You may use the better of your two rolls. You must decide to re-roll before the round starts.

Extra Music (*Complete Adventurer*)

You can use your bardic music abilities more often than you otherwise could.

Prerequisites: Bardic music.

Benefit: You can use your bardic music abilities four extra times per day.

Normal: Bards without the Extra Music feat can use bardic music once per day per bard level.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

Lingering Song (*Complete Adventurer*)

Your inspirational bardic music stays with listeners long after the last note has died away.

Prerequisite: Bardic music.

Benefit: If you use your bardic music to inspire courage, inspire greatness, or inspire heroics, the effects last for 1 minute after an inspired ally stops hearing you play.

Normal: Inspire courage, inspire greatness, and inspire heroics last as long as an ally hears the bard sing plus an additional 5 rounds thereafter.

Lyric Spell (*Complete Adventurer*)

You can channel the power of your bardic music into your magic, allowing you to expend uses of your bardic music ability to cast spells.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 9 ranks, ability to spontaneously cast 2nd-level arcane spells.

Benefit: You can expend daily uses of your bardic music to cast any arcane spell that you know and can cast spontaneously. You must still use an action to cast the spell (following the normal rules for casting time), but using the Lyric Spell feat counts as part of the spellcasting action. Casting a spell requires one use of your bardic music ability, plus one additional use per level of the spell. For example, casting a 3rd-level spell requires four daily uses of your bardic music ability.

Special: Any spell that you cast using the Lyric Spell feat gains your instrument as an additional arcane focus, if you use one. You cannot use Lyric Spell to cast a spell improved by the Silent Spell metamagic feat.

Improved Flight (*Races of the Wild*)

You have gained greater maneuverability when flying than you would normally have.

Prerequisite: Natural fly speed.

Benefit: Your maneuverability while flying improves by one category (see page 312 of the *Monster Manual*). For example, if your normal maneuverability is poor, it becomes average.

Improved Toughness (*Complete Warrior*)

You are significantly tougher than normal.

Prerequisite: Base Fortitude save bonus +2.

Benefit: You gain a number of hit points equal to your current Hit Dice. Each time you gain a HD (such as by gaining a level), you gain 1 additional hit point. If you lose a HD (such as by losing a level), you lose 1 hit point permanently.

Special: A fighter may select Improved Toughness as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Recover Breath (*Draconomicon*)

You wait less time before being able to use your breath weapon again.

Prerequisites: Con 17, breath weapon.

Benefit: You reduce the interval between uses of your breath weapon. You wait 1 round less than usual before breathing again, but always at least 1 round. The feat stacks with the effects of metabreath feats, reducing the total time you must wait to use your breath weapon again by 1 round.

Special: If you have multiple heads with breath weapons, all breath weapons use the reduced interval.

NEW ITEMS

Vest of Resistance (Complete Arcane)

These garments offer magic protection in the form of a +1 to +5 resistance bonus on all saving throws.

Faint abjuration; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *resistance*, caster's level must be at least three times the vest's bonus; Price 1,000 gp (+1), 4,000 gp (+2), 9,000 gp (+3), 16,000 gp (+4), 25,000 gp (+5); Weight 1 lb.

NEW SPELLS

Harmonize (Races of Stone)

Transmutation

Level: Brd 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

You blend magic and music seamlessly. While this spell is in effect, starting a bardic music effect requires only a move action. Concentrating on a bardic music effect that requires concentration still requires a standard action.

Harmonize, Greater (Races of Stone)

Transmutation

Level: Brd 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

You blend magic and music seamlessly. While this spell is in effect, starting a bardic music effect requires only a move action. In addition, concentrating on a bardic music effect that requires concentration only requires a move action. For example, this benefit means that you could maintain concentration on a bardic music effect and cast a spell, make an attack, or begin (or maintain) another bardic music effect.

Inspirational Boost (Spell Compendium)

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting, Sonic]

Level: Brd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 swift action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round or special; see text

You concentrate on assisting your friends as you begin the short chant and simple hand-chopping motion necessary to cast the spell. As you finish, the spell's chant allows you to segue easily into bolstering your allies.

While this spell is in effect, the morale bonus granted by your inspire courage bardic music increases by 1. The effect lasts until your inspire courage effect ends. If you don't begin to use your inspire courage ability before the beginning of your next turn, the spell's effect ends.

Joyful Noise (Spell Compendium)

Abjuration

Level: Brd 1

Components: S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 ft.

Target: 10 ft. radius emanation centered on you

Duration: Concentration; see text

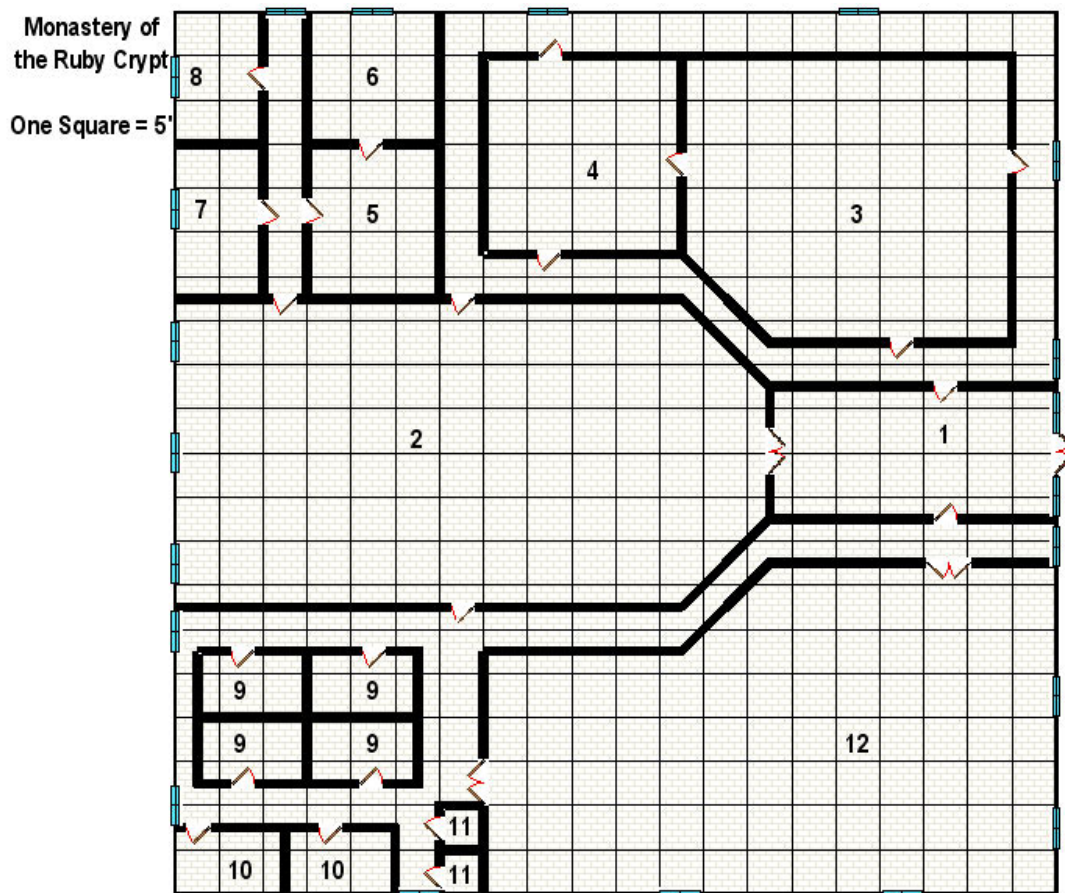
Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You stomp your foot on the ground, creating a ripple of noise that unleashes suppressed sounds behind it.

You create sonic vibrations that negate any magical silence effect in the area. This zone of negation moves with you and lasts as long as you continue to concentrate. The silence effect is not dispelled but simply held in abeyance; it remains in effect outside of the joyful noise effect.

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