

VTF7-05

Underhandedness

A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™ VTF Meta-Regional Adventure

by Kevin Elmore

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As the forces of the Pomarj pour out of Blackthorn, laying waste to all they find in the Gnarley Forest, several adventurers claim to have visions from Istus of impending doom. Orcish activities have fallen in line with the prophecy, even down to the destruction of the village of Tricaster. Some of the Gentry members are taking this vision seriously; they fear the predictions that the Free and Independent City of Dyvers will fall to the orcs within a year. Desperate times do call for drastic measures. A one-round VTF Meta-Regional adventure set in the outskirts of the Free Lands of Dyvers, for characters level 6-15 (APLs 8-14). A continuation of the Gnarley Threat. Note: Those who earned the Disfavor of Felbon from *Dyv5-07 End of the Line* are able to participate in this adventure.

Resources for this adventure [and the authors of those works] include *Stormwrack* [Richard Baker, Joseph D. Carriker, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes], and *The Adventure Begins* [Roger E. Moore].

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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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 rule 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. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Refer to Appendix 1 for full information on NPCs and monsters. For your convenience, Appendix 1 is split by APL.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session 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). You need one copy of this for each participating player.

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.

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

3. Sum the results of 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.

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

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

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round VTF meta-regional adventure, set in Dyvers. All regional characters pay 1 Time Units per round; Out-of-region characters pay 2 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 that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a DC

20 Survival check, 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

As a whole, the criminal guilds of Dyvers work as a well-oiled machine: Crime is prosperous and relatively risk-free, competition is eliminated, and alliances with various guilds along the Volverdyva trade route have bolstered trade. Despite its relative steadiness, there are people within the Alliance that seek personal gain over the stability of the group. One such person is the current head of the Dyvers Smugglers' Guild, the halfling Alcorn Calabreezie.

For 20 years, he has coveted the position of Master Thief. He has been passed over several times. When the Master Thief's position and the Smuggler Guildmaster position suddenly became vacant in CY 595, he felt betrayed that he was promoted only to the Guildmaster position. Timmorn Darkeyes became the new Master Thief. He has never forgiven her this, and he believes that her removal would herald his promotion. He is working with the recovering House Siggoran and a wizard named Barnaby to remove her without the messy political implications of an assassination. Barnaby and Siggoran have a method that may be conducive to the smuggler's ambitions.

Meanwhile, forces of the Pomarj, using Blackthorn as a staging ground, ravage the Gnarley Forest outside of Dyvers and Verbobonc. The Magister of Dyvers, Larissa Hunter, is aware of a powerful vision that Istus has granted to several adventurers. Each vision reveals that the vast city of Dyvers will fall to Turrosh Mak's forces in CY 598. The invasion would be successful because the orcs' allies, a contingent of drow from the UnderOerth, would infiltrate Dyvers and render the defenses useless. The vision further reveals that the drow would bring about the fall of Dyvers because of a sacrifice the orcs have promised them.

Larissa Hunter is a virtuous person, a fact which makes some of the Gentry (including Houses Herall and Siggoran) doubt that she is willing to put the safety of Dyvers ahead of her own sense of morals. While these Gentry Houses do not wish to concede anything to the drow, they feel that it is imperative that the drow

are no longer allied with the orcs. Magister Hunter plans to send a diplomatic contingent to the UnderOerth to persuade the drow to sever their alliance with the orcs. Lord Herall feels that a gift would aid the talks and may even convince the drow to ally with Dyvers and betray the orcs. The cathedral of Istus has performed some divinations for Kael Lord Herall and is aware of a delivery being made by a pirate ship called the *Just Desert*.

An Istus priest named Pinnel leads a representative of House Herall to the Maraven docks where a group of adventurers disembark from a newly arrived ship. This group is told of the situation and is asked to recover this gift from the captain of the *Just Desert*, the Jaundiced Barb. They are to return this item to Lord Pete Siggoran, the head of House Siggoran.

Unfortunately for the PCs, the Jaundiced Barb no longer has the package. He has only been hired to transport a mercenary named Mullen farther down the Nyr Dyv. Mullen believes that he is meeting with representatives of Turrosh Mak to sell the package. Mullen and the Jaundiced Barb are unaware that they were sent on this mission through intermediaries of Alcorn Calabreezie for the express purpose of the package being “rescued” by the PCs. Mullen waits for a nonexistent Pomarj envoy to purchase the gift.

The gift is simply a wooden token and an arcane scroll. They were crafted by Barnaby, who has done his own research on the Alliance and the UnderOerth. Barnaby learned that Timmorn Darkeyes was formerly T'lesha the Scourge, a drow noble who was of some importance in the UnderOerth 200 years ago. She betrayed her people and disappeared without a trace. Her queen vowed revenge on T'lesha and would love a chance to exact revenge on her. Barnaby discovered that T'lesha took the name of Timmorn and now leads the Alliance. The token and the scroll would bring Timmorn—who is in another disguise as a baker named Esmeralda Ingram—into captivity to be delivered to the drow for whatever they wish.

The original intent of the scroll is to be read concurrently with the breaking of the token. The token is linked to a cursed item on Timmorn's body, which teleports the owner to the location of the token holder. The scroll is a *dimensional lock*. As Timmorn is very powerful, she has paid someone to craft a contingency spell on her so she can teleport to a safe location. This scroll would prevent that contingency from happening. If House Siggoran and Alcorn are able to get these items, then they can blindside Timmorn and keep her locked up for transport. While Alcorn is one of the originators of the scroll and token, he is playing the role of the dutiful citizen and has distanced himself from the Jaundiced Barb, even

though he was the one that put the items in the hands of the pirate himself. If Alcorn is successful, the diplomatic envoy that is scheduled to travel to the UnderOerth can deliver T'lesha the Scourge to the drow that she betrayed.

Naturally, if the adventurers are curious enough to see what the token summons, then Timmorn has an offer of her own to make.

RELATIONSHIP WITH GREYHAWK

Relationships between Dyvers and Greyhawk has always been tense, but idle threats and annoyances have escalated lately. In CY 595, Magister Larissa Hunter laid claim to the “unaffiliated” portions of the Gnarley Forest in response to the threat from the orcs in Blackthorn. Many of these unaffiliated lands are very near or even overlapping Greyhawk-claimed territory, including the village of Tricaster.

Greyhawk responded by establishing a blockade on the Selintan River, prohibiting Dyvers merchants from sailing their wares through that area. Magister Hunter finally did cede Tricaster and the surrounding lands. By then, the orc horde overwhelmed the village. As a result, the mayor of Greyhawk has conveniently forgotten to lift the blockade.

Neither side wants a war, but they have no problem making life harder for the other. This information is known to PCs who make a DC 12 Knowledge (VTF) or Knowledge (Core) check.

WINTER IN THE GNARLEY FOREST

Dyvers is in an unusually temperate area. Some speculate that the Nyr Dyv tempers the weather. Whatever causes it, the people in Dyvers and the Gnarley Forest are accustomed to pleasant weather year-round.

This has changed in CY 596. A man calling himself Winter has brought about the end of pleasant weather in the Gnarley Forest with his sacrifice. These hardships are compounded by the presence of the orcs who slaughter anything they can find within the forest. The new weather condition (but not the cause of it) is known to PCs who make a DC 12 Knowledge (VTF) or Knowledge (Geography) check.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Introduction: The PCs arrive in Maraven where they are immediately met by Sergeant Oddfellow of the constabulary and Pinnel Farsight from the Istus cathedral. The PCs learn that they are part of a prophecy sent by Istus.

Encounter 1: The Proposition: The PCs are asked by Sergeant Oddfellow to acquire a package from the pirate ship, the *Just Desert*, on behalf of Lord Herall and Lord Siggoran. Lord Herall wishes to offer the package to the drow in exchange for betraying the orcs that now threaten the region. In any case, Lord Herall does not want the orcs to get their hands on this package.

Encounter 2: Forearmed: The PCs have 4 hours to gather information, if they wish.

Encounter 3: All Aboard: The PCs board the *Laughing Eel*, a merchant vessel that has agreed to pursue the *Just Desert*. The PCs meet Captain Hammon, a sailor who is fiercely loyal to House Siggoran and the city of Dyvers.

Encounter 4: High Piracy: The *Laughing Eel* crosses paths with a Greyhawk merchant vessel. Captain Hammon orders the *Laughing Eel* to attack the ship and rob it of cargo. The PCs have an opportunity to prevent the piracy.

Encounter 5: The Map: Pinnel received divinations in regards to the location of the *Just Desert*. He performs more divinations, inviting the PCs to contribute. Through the clues granted by Istus, the PCs can find the location of the *Just Desert*.

Encounter 6: Getting Your Just Deserts: The PCs find the *Just Desert* and must contend with the pirate captain, the Jaundiced Barb, a devout follower of Kurell. Watching the PCs with fear and paranoia, the Jaundiced Barb has rigged the ship to sink upon his defeat. The PCs learn that the package is no longer on the *Just Desert*. It was taken by a man called Mullen, who already left to meet with orcs.

Encounter 7: Getting the Goods: The PCs encounter Mullen, a half-orc mercenary under orders to sell the package to a contingent of orcs. The PCs may acquire the package through force, guile, or negotiation.

Encounter 8: A Little Traveling Madness: The PCs meet Tinlow Beaterbrain, a cleric of Ralishaz. Among his random babblings, the PCs might figure out that the package is bigger than suspected.

Encounter 9: Trapping Esmeralda: If the PCs activate the gift, they summon Esmeralda Ingram, the current alias of the Master Thief. Provided the PCs do not attempt to capture her, Esmeralda makes a counteroffer to the PCs.

Encounter 10: Cruel Winter: If the PCs attempt to teleport with Esmeralda's cursed robe, they wind up in the Gnarley Forest, where they are beset by the "children of Winter," undead minions serving the man responsible for the wintry conditions in the forest.

Encounter 11: An Offer You Can't Refuse: If the PCs subdue Esmeralda and don't hide her presence upon arriving in Maraven, the PCs are met by a group of Alliance thugs. They threaten the PCs to hand over Esmeralda. If the PCs refuse to comply, they have made very powerful enemies.

Conclusion: The PCs have decided what to do with the package (or let Esmeralda slip through their fingers). They are rewarded for stopping the *Just Desert* and possibly for serving either House Herall or Esmeralda.

THE MOUSETRAP

A lot of effort and research went into kidnapping this simple baker named Esmeralda Ingram from Verbobonc. That is because Esmeralda is not a simple baker. Esmeralda Ingram is actually a disguised Timmorn Darkeyes, the Master Thief of the Alliance. Throughout the adventure, she is referred to strictly as Esmeralda for consistency's sake. It is unlikely that the PCs will learn her real identity, but through magic or difficult knowledge checks, the PCs may justify their suspicions.

The face behind Esmeralda is a drow herself who fled the UnderOerth after betraying some powerful and influential drow. She eventually found her way to Dyvers many years ago and eventually established herself as the guildmaster of the Infiltrators' Guild. In CY 595, the Master Thief abdicated his position, and Timmorn took the reins of leadership of the Alliance. While she has had the support of most of the guilds, there are some who covet the position for himself, including Alcorn Calabreezie, Guildmaster of the Smugglers' Guild. He hopes to remove her soundlessly and take her position without being challenged (which would be very messy if he staged an assassination or coup).

Alcorn learned through his wizard ally, Barnaby that Timmorn originally went under the name of T'Lasha the Scourge and is a fugitive from the UnderOerth. Alcorn and Barnaby set the trap that would remove Timmorn from Dyvers and pave the way to realizing his ambitions. While Alcorn would be content with just removing her, he decided that offering Timmorn to the drow would be an extra boon.

If Dyvers had amity with the drow, then Alcorn could expand his smuggling operations to the tunnels under the Flanaess.

The keystone of the trap is a *robe of blending* modified by Barnaby. It is cursed, so when Timmorn wears the robe, it cannot be removed through normal means. It is not unusual for the Master Thief to wear the robe for days at a time, so she would not even realize that her normal *robe of blending* has been replaced until the trap is sprung. The robe has two features: It interferes with *teleport*, causing an automatic mishap (see Encounter 10: Cruel Winter if PCs attempt to *teleport* her), and it suppresses her spell resistance just long enough to provide a flawless one-way *teleport* to the owner of a linked token. When the token is destroyed, the robe and its wearer are instantly teleported to the token. See Encounter 9: Trapping Esmeralda if the PCs decide to break the token.

The package held by Mullen consists of the token and a scroll. The scroll contains a *dimensional lock* spell. The instruction on the package states that one person breaks the token while someone else immediately casts the spell off the scroll. The effect is that Esmeralda Ingram appears before the token holder. Upon arrival she instinctively says, "Gingerbread dwarven pie," which is the key phrase that triggers a contingent spell that would teleport her to a safe house in Dyvers. If the *dimensional lock* is in place, then the contingency spell is triggered, but she is prevented from teleporting out. Without the *dimensional lock* in place, she utters the phrase and vanishes; her *teleport* is a mishap, but from the vantage of the PCs Esmeralda is out of their lives forever.

Obedient PCs would take the package to Maraven and hand it over to their employers. The employers take the package into a secret location in order to abduct Esmeralda without the prying eyes of those who would be loyal to her. Nosy PCs may have the opportunity (or curse) to meet Esmeralda themselves.

The persona of Esmeralda is that of a Rhennee woman trying to make her own as a baker. As a little girl, she yearned to be as free as the boys on the barge. One day, she left the barge while it was in Verbobonc City and took up a job as a baker's assistant. She cannot imagine why someone would go through all the trouble of kidnapping her. She suspects that it may be Jaffar, a boy who had a crush on her while she lived on the barge. He may have conned a powerful wizard into obtaining her.

Her story changes if Esmeralda learns that the drow have an interest in her. She wonders if Jaffar made a dark pact with these creatures. She even goes so far as to shyly admit that she is a virtuous woman who has never committed sins of the flesh; she has heard

that the forces of darkness seek women of her demeanor for their sinister sacrifices. She even mentions that her 33rd birthday is coming up; perhaps the number 33 is important for some dark ritual. A DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check confirms that there is nothing significant about the number 33 in the drow religion.

Through all things, she always insists on being called Esmeralda. Only magical compulsion can cause her to reveal who she really is, and that would require subduing her and stripping her of all her magic. Even if someone recognizes her as Timmorn, she maintains the façade, remaining professional all the way.

Esmeralda is curious as to who would orchestrate such a maneuver and asks various questions about the adventurers. She starts off with inquiries about their exploits, but she ultimately tries to find out who hired them, asking for any identifying features that may lead her to recognize her nemesis.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

DM Note: It is important to note if anyone in the party is of a Dyvers or VTF regional meta-org. In particular you need to know about members in:

- The Alliance (Dyvers)
- The Pack (Veluna)
- The Family (Verbobonc)
- The Tears of Marid (Tusmit)
- The Brotherhood of Bashaarat (Tusmit)
- The Dusk Lash (Zeif)
- The Xanavade (Ket)
- The Cour des Miracles (Ekbir)
- The church of Istus (any region)

Those PCs who are part of a VTF thieves' guild (all of the above groups except for the church of Istus) receive **Player's Handout 4** or **Player's Handout 5** at the beginning of the adventure. This lets them know how they can identify members of the Alliance.

GEM OF XULLITHAN

During this time, the stars are in the right position to create some power fluctuations within the worshippers of Nerull. This does not have an impact on the adventure itself, but those PCs who possess the Gem of Xullithan from VTF5-02 *Reaping the Darkness* are under an unusual effect. For the adventure, the PC is considered to be under the effect of *death ward*. The PC also radiates an aura of unhealthiness. Anyone (friend, foe, or familiar) within 5 feet of the affected PC is automatically sickened. This aura is considered a

supernatural death effect and can be overcome with spells that protect against death effects. For the purposes of *detect magic* and *detect evil*, the aura detects as strong necromancy and strong evil (though the PC himself does not detect as evil as a result of the gem).

The PC can choose to lose the gem. Mark the gem off of the AR if the PC takes this option. Aside from NPCs feeling uncomfortable around this PC, there is no complication caused by the possession of this gem.

INTRODUCTION

The adventure begins as the PCs arrive in the port city of Maraven, near the border of the Greyhawk domain. The ship carrying them is the *Blue Diamond*. For whatever reason that befits them, the PCs have booked travel to Maraven, whether it's for delivery, shopping, or general nosiness. Since the PCs shared space for several days, allow them the chance to become acquainted with one another, if necessary. If a PC owns a ship and insists on taking it, modify the introduction, allowing the other ship to arrive coincidentally at the same time as the *Blue Diamond*. After the players have become situated, read or paraphrase the following.

It is a pleasant morning as you sail out of the Vilverdyva River into the Nyr Dyv, and the ship you're on, the Blue Diamond, pulls into port at the town of Maraven. The tales from the sailors manning your ship are jovial and hopeful. With the crackdown on smuggling in the past 2 years, honest sailors can enjoy a night of drinking and carousing in Maraven with only minimal risk of waking up in a press gang. Several ships make port in Maraven, as the city of Greyhawk has not followed through in lifting the blockade on the Selintan River that threatens all ships flying the flag of Dyvers.

When you step onto the docks of Maraven, you are assaulted by the screech of hungry seagulls, the curses of dockworkers, and the cajoling of merchants. One would expect these sensations in any port town, but the uniformed man following a plain robed man is more unusual. The man in robes walks up to you, a look of recognition on his face. "Yes, yes," he says. "These are the ones that my Mistress prophesied." From a pile of disheveled papers, he pulls a piece of parchment with several sketches on it. The sketches bear an uncanny likeness to you, even down to the clothes you're wearing.

The uniformed man following him raises an eyebrow and glances at you skeptically. He clears his throat and addresses you, "Good sirs (and

madams), welcome to Maraven. You must be tired after your journey. Could I interest you in a drink and an offer of employment?"

The uniformed man is Sergeant Oddfellow of the Maraven constabulary. He has been tasked by Kael Lord Herall to work with a priest of Istus to find capable people to help him. The priest of Istus, Pinnel Farsight, consulted his goddess and determined that the soldiers can find the most likely people at the docks at this time. Istus has even provided him with a rough sketch of the PCs and their gear. While Sergeant Oddfellow is not against this idea, he is a little uncomfortable at the nature of tracking down the PCs.

There is no further adventure for the PCs if they are not curious enough to meet with Sergeant Oddfellow and Pinnel. When the PCs agree to meet, Sergeant Oddfellow leads them to a clean (by dock standards, anyway) tavern called the Rotted Peg. Proceed to Encounter 1: The Proposition.

1: THE PROPOSITION

Sergeant Oddfellow and Pinnel find a table large enough for them and the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following:

The uniformed man, who claims to be Sergeant Oddfellow of the Maraven constabulary, leads you into a sturdy tavern called the Rotted Peg. Upon seeing the constable and able-bodied adventurers entering, several sailors suddenly find a convenient reason to stand up and leave, much to the chagrin of the bartender. Sergeant Oddfellow and the robed man, a follower of Istus named Pinnel Farsight, take up seats and gesture that you do the same.

Sergeant Oddfellow speaks to Pinnel, "Well, we finished the second part of your prophecy. What happens now?"

The robed man says, "We must find the pirate! He is out there, and we must find him so the dark elves may be placated."

The sergeant grimaces uncomfortably and says to you, "My apologies. Allow me to explain what has happened before our, ahem, web strands crossed."

He explains the following:

- Many orcs from Blackthorn are threatening Dyvers and the surrounding lands. Already, the orcs have completely decimated the village of Tricaster—and again when it was rebuilt.

- Dyvers intelligence has shown that Blackthorn is replenishing its forces with orcs from the Pomarj. A defector informed the Dyvers military that the orcs travel through the UnderOerth to arrive at Blackthorn. One reason that the orcs have been so brutally efficient is because of the cooperation of the drow and duergar.
 - Many people have reported a simultaneous vision sent by Istus herself (or hallucination) where Dyvers is invaded within a year. The success of the invasion is due to the drow infiltrating the sewers of Dyvers and crippling the defense of the city.
 - The drow do not engage in such dangerous tasks freely. This vision also shows that the orcs are to promise the drow some sort of gift.
 - Maraven's liege, Kael Lord Herall, has learned through Pinnel Farsight that the Jaundiced Barb, a pirate who has eluded capture so far, has in his possession an item that would interest the drow. Pinnel does not know if this is the same gift that the orcs plan to give to the drow. In any case, Lord Herall would like to ensure that this gift never falls into the hands of the orcs.
 - Simply stopping the Jaundiced Barb and his ship, the *Just Desert*, is a 3,000 gp bounty. While the first priority is to get the gift away from the Jaundiced Barb, Lord Herall would like to have the gift in his own hands. If the PCs can deliver the gift to one of his fellow Gentry members, Lord Pete Siggoran, then the PCs would be further rewarded.
 - Since the Dyvers navy is busy, Lord Herall cannot afford to devote a military ship to the operation. Sergeant Oddfellow has requested the use of a fast merchant ship, the *Laughing Eel*. Captain Hammon has agreed to intercept the *Just Desert*, provided the men that Oddfellow provides are sturdy in arms. Sergeant Oddfellow feels confident that the PCs fit the bill. The *Laughing Eel* is on its way to Admunfort, but Captain Hammon is willing to delay his journey long enough to engage the *Just Desert* and drop the PCs onto land when they have completed their task.
 - There is no life-threatening urgency, but Lord Herall would like the gift delivered quickly to the head of House Siggoran, Lord Pete Siggoran, who is staying in Maraven. The government of Dyvers plans to send a diplomatic envoy to meet with the drow in order to convince them to cease giving aid to the orcs. This gift might convince the drow to ally with Dyvers and ambush the orcs within their tunnels.
 - The orcs threaten not just Dyvers. Neighboring Verbobonc surely is on the mind of their commander, Gnasher Barrock. Ships using the Volverdyva River to traverse the Nyr Dyv would be subject to orcish naval vessels, which are more interested in piracy and slavery. Persuading the drow to sever their alliance with Blackthorn and the Pomarj would help the entire Volverdyva trade route.
 - Captain Hammon won't be ready to set sail for 4 hours, so the PCs have some time to equip themselves and make preparations.
- The Jaundiced Barb has a 3,000 gp bounty, but Sergeant Oddfellow can be talked into increasing this to 4,500 gp with a DC 20 Diplomacy check. He has Lord Herall's authority to increase the bounty. PCs with ranks in Knowledge (VTF) already know that ships have reported that the *Just Desert* vanishes after an attack and that the Jaundiced Barb displays great cruelty. The pirate is responsible for various attacks, but they are infrequent and seemingly random, so he has eluded capture so far.
- If the PCs agree to sail out to intercept the gift (and possibly bring it to Maraven), they learn more from the priest of Istus, Pinnel Farsight. He has the following to say:
- Pinnel has prayed and communed with the Lady of Our Fates daily for the past week. She has given him visions that the PCs are instrumental in acquiring this gift.
 - Istus has also guided him in drawing a map with enigmatic lines and symbols. He believes that the map represents the Volverdyva River as it opens up into the Nyr Dyv. The town on the map must be Maraven.
 - The *Just Desert* is located in one of the sections on the map, but the exact location is not known yet. The Lady of Our Fates has revealed clues to the ship's location each day.
 - Pinnel has marked a couple of the clues on the map, and he intends to sail with the *Laughing Eel* so he may perform a daily divination. Other clerics are welcome to invoke their gods for inspiration. If a higher-level cleric of Istus is at the table, Pinnel defers to her superior ability in divination.
 - Pinnel is peaceful and does not intend to fight. He offers what he can in terms of healing, should things bode poorly for the PCs.
 - After the PCs are done with the *Just Desert*, Pinnel will travel on the *Laughing Eel* to Admunfort. The

Lady of Our Fates has decreed that he is to go to that city next.

When the PCs learn all they can from Sergeant Oddfellow and Pinnel Farsight, continue with the next encounter.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SHADOWS

Members of the Alliance the Pack, the Family, the Tears of Marid, the Brotherhood of Bashaarat, the Dusk Lash, the Xanavade, or the Cour des Miracles receive a message from a street urchin. The urchin does not expect a tip. Give these players a copy of **Player's Handout 1**. Ideally, this happens in Encounter 2: Forearmed, but it can happen anywhere during the 4 hours of waiting. The urchin tries to get the PC alone before delivering the message.

Development: The PCs may choose to gather information in Encounter 2: Forearmed. If they forego this option, move on to Encounter 3: All Aboard.

2: FOREARMED

The PCs have 4 hours to gather any information they like. This may require splitting up the party in order to inquire about everything they want to know. It takes the standard time to make a Gather Information check with one exception: Treat any 5 as a 4. If the PCs attempt another check and exceed 4 hours, then they do not succeed in that check. What they seek determines what they learn.

THE LAUGHING EEL OR CAPTAIN HAMMON

- 0: It is a merchant vessel that sails mostly around Dyvers and the various ports on the Nyr Dyv.
- 9: The *Laughing Eel* has been modified to take to the sea more quickly than others.
- 17: Captain Hammon is a loyal follower of House Siggoran, a Gentry house that is struggling to get back on its feet since the Kesser Massacre of CY 595 wiped out almost all of its members.
- 21: The name of the ship reflects Captain Hammon's patron deity, the Laughing Rogue.
- 25: Captain Hammon despises Greyhawk and vows to inflict suffering on any ship he finds flying the Greyhawk flag.

THE JUST DESERT

- 0: Nothing useful can be found about the *Just Desert*

- 15: The *Just Desert* engages in piracy on a regular basis. It disappears without a trace after it strikes.
- 23: The ship is a harbinger of madness. Those who survive the attacks by the *Just Desert* have reported that crew members slit each other's throats.
- 28: One survivor claims to have heard the sound of 2000 men shouting conflicting orders at his crew. The voices were so distracting that he curled up into a fetal position and shivered as he watched his own brother stab his captain in the back. He doesn't remember what exactly happened when the men of the *Just Desert* boarded. A DC 14 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check reveals this to be the result of a gibbering moulder.
- 32: Another survivor vaguely remembers the captain wearing green spiked plate mail and a holy symbol of a broken coin a DC 15 (Knowledge [religion] check to recognize it as Kurell). The captain was not interested in killing the crew, though he is responsible for many deaths. He focused more on humiliating them in terrible ways.
- 36: While it is not official on any books in the docks, the *Just Desert* actually has ties to House Siggoran, a Gentry house that is struggling to get back on its feet since the Kesser Massacre of CY 595 wiped out almost all of its members. It has been used by House Siggoran to smuggle illegal goods.

THE JAUNDICED BARB

- 0: Nothing useful can be found about the Jaundiced Barb
- 18: The Jaundiced Barb commands the *Just Desert*, which is known to strike ships and then vanish into thin air.
- 23: The Jaundiced Barb has been seen with a holy symbol of the Vengeful Knave (Kurell). He consorts with creatures of chaos that confuse the crews of the ships he assaults.
- 27: The Jaundiced Barb does not revel in murder. Instead, he would rather punish people, often making the punishment fit the crime.
- 31: The Jaundiced Barb's favorite trick is to disguise himself as a mere sailor while one of his men pretends to be the captain. The Jaundiced Barb then ingratiates himself with the captured crew and uses that knowledge to further punish them. He also uses illusions to confound enemies.
- 35: One of the Jaundiced Barb's men has been seen at the apothecary several weeks back. He bought several vials of pepper water labeled with a man

with gills a DC 35 Spellcraft check lets the PC know that an *elixir of reckoning* has a very fiery taste.

PINNEL FARSIGHT

Members of the church of Istus receive +5 to their check.

- 0: No one has heard of him.
- 18: He is a mid-ranking member of the Cathedral of Istus. While power within the cathedral is reserved for females, it is believed that Pinnel is actually a nephew of the high priestess.
- 21: In addition to being hired by House Herall lately, Pinnel has performed divinations for Lord Siggoran. It was through his connection to Lord Siggoran that the *Laughing Eel* was recruited.

SERGEANT ODDFELLOW

- 0: He is a member of the constabulary and is perhaps one of the more honest ones.

HOUSE HERALL

- 0: House Herall is one of the "Big Five" Gentry houses (along with Houses Grandhearth, Maltrus, Navoy, and Grift). House Herall oversees the activities of Maraven and its surrounding lands.
- 8: House Herall only recently became a major house. Every member of House Herall was killed by Greyhawk assassins in CY 595. It was discovered that Derreg Lord Pengallen hired the assassins shortly before leading an army against the city of Dyvers. House Pengallen was stripped of all its patents, which were given to the newly resurrected Kael Lord Herall as restitution.
- 13: Kael Lord Herall has made a poor showing in ruling Maraven. While crime has declined slightly, smuggling is still a lucrative trade. Lord Herall has been unable to garner the same respect as the other major houses.
- 20: Kael Lord Herall is trying to prove himself by performing an exemplary service for Her Excellency, Magister Larissa Hunter. He has even considered establishing the Red Arrows, a branch of law enforcement in the western lands known for its unorthodox but effective cruelty inflicted on criminals. The negative image of impaling living bandits on pikes far outweighs the law and order they would bring, though.
- 29: Some of Lord Herall's servants have let slip that Lord Herall has a solution for dealing with the orcs. He has been keeping this from the other major Gentry houses in the hopes that he can

claim credit for it if it works and disavow it if it doesn't.

- 33: Lord Herall is not comfortable with the plan, as he suspects that whatever appeals to the drow would result in the ruin of innocent people. Still, he would place a wager against the thousands that would be killed if the orcs invade Dyvers.

THE ALLIANCE

This requires spending an influence point with the Alliance. Members of the Alliance, the Pack, the Family, the Tears of Marid, the Brotherhood of Bashaarat, the Dusk Lash, the Xanavade, and the Cour des Miracles are able to inquire about this without spending the influence point.

- 0: Nobody's talking
- 15: House Siggoran is looking to increase its smuggling traffic. It uses the *Laughing Eel* as its legitimate flagship, but it is looking to expand its hold on the sea.
- 21: The guildmaster of the Smugglers' Guild, Alcorn Calabreezie, has been working heavily with House Siggoran and House Herall. No doubt all three are in cahoots with some bigger plan, though it is unlikely that Kael Lord Herall is aware of the smugglers' involvement.
- 27: Alcorn has been working with a wizard named Barnaby. Even though Barnaby seems to be a powerful wizard, no one in the Alliance or the Dweomercrafter's Guild knows who he is. Barnaby has given Alcorn a magical robe, a scroll, and a small wooden token.
- 31: The *Just Desert* is a ship in House Siggoran's employ. It does not show up on any of the books, but it often carries out tasks for the Smugglers' Guild and House Siggoran.
- 36: Someone I know swears that he found the Master Thief's *robe of blending* stashed in an alley in the dock district of Dyvers. He's not sure if it is, but he's not going to miss out on the opportunity to hide from the constables. Besides, if the Master Thief just tosses a robe in an alley, he can't be that concerned about it, right?

Development: If the PCs can gather information in only 2 hours, they can make another attempt, as long as it does not take more than 4 hours. When this has been exhausted, move on to Encounter 3: All Aboard.

3: ALL ABOARD

When the PCs are ready to meet at the *Laughing Eel*, read or paraphrase the following:

The Laughing Eel doesn't look too unlike the other ships docked at Maraven except that it is sleeker with fewer protrusions to slow it down. In some ways, it does look like an eel, complete with a painting on the bow of a toothy smile. The captain, a tall Suel man, wearing a dashing blue silk shirt, strides down the dock to you. "Ah, I recognize you from the drawing made by that priest," he says jovially. "We're almost underway, so if you'll board, I'll show you around."

Despite being owned by a smuggler, the *Laughing Eel* is an honest ship with no more hiding spaces than the average ship. Several crates of arrows and javelins are stored below, soon to be launched by the resistance fighters in Admunfort. The bunks are a bit crowded, as the ship is narrower than most. All in all, it is a comfortable ship, and Captain Hammon tries to be as accommodating as possible.

Captain Hammon has no time to talk with the PCs while the crew loads the last of the cargo. The crew consists of Captain Hammon and eight sailors. When they are underway, he is available for conversation. Throughout the conversation, Captain Hammon relays the following:

- The *Laughing Eel* is expected in Admunfort, but they do have a little leeway. Captain Hammon has enough time to devote to finding the *Just Desert*. He won't have time to head back to Maraven, but he is happy to row the PCs to land so they can make it back by foot.
- He's heard lots of tales about the *Just Desert*. The most popular story is that it is a ghost ship that appears out of nowhere and then vanishes. Unlike most pirate attacks, the victims are left alive, but they are worse for wear. Some claim to have been flogged on the mast, forced to lick boots, dunked in the water, and pitted against another sailor in a pit fight at sea.
- He does confirm that he reports to House Siggoran. While he keeps it to himself, he can be persuaded into discussing how Lord Siggoran has been wronged by the Greyhawk navy. He would like to show the Greyhawk sailors what for.
- The *Laughing Eel* is named such because it is sleek and because of his devotion to the Laughing God. While he usually makes an honest living, he feels an attraction to the roguish side of life.

As Captain Hammon worships Olidammara, and he serves House Siggoran, who has secretly employed

smugglers, the PCs might be suspicious of the *Laughing Eel*. It is all as it seems, which may or may not make the PCs more paranoid.

Each morning, Pinnel casts *divination* to uncover the next clue on the map. Give them the clue and let the PCs determine which space(s) on the map they want to search. Consult Encounter 5: The Map to calculate how many spaces the PCs can check for the *Just Desert*.

Development: Shortly after leaving Maraven, the PCs have a chance to engage in piracy in Encounter 4: High Piracy. If you are short on time, you can move directly to Encounter 5: The Map. It is possible to combine both encounters.

4: HIGH PIRACY

This encounter takes the *Laughing Eel* past a Greyhawk merchant vessel. Captain Hammon considers boarding the ship and taking its cargo in retribution for how the Greyhawk navy has treated Dyvers merchants, including Lord Siggoran. Unless the PCs have enhanced vision and make an effort to bypass this encounter, read or paraphrase the following:

You have sailed on the Nyr Dyv with no sign of your quarry when a cry calls out from the crow's nest. Captain Hammon looks to the north with a spyglass and lets out a sardonic chuckle. "Boys," he bellows, "it looks like we have ourselves a defenseless little ship flying the flag of Greypuke." Laughter erupts from the sailors.

The captain lowers the spyglass and says through clenched teeth, "This is our chance to get back at those sons of dogs for stripping all those Dyvers ships. Hard to port! Let's strip them of their cargo and send them back home in a dingy and their skivvies!"

Captain Hammon is carrying out a personal grudge. He has been on a ship that was stopped by the Greyhawk navy and impounded for illegally sailing in Greyhawk waters. He has heard many tales of woe (almost all exaggerated) about Dyvers ships being sunk by Greyhawk ballista. He views this lone Greyhawk ship as an opportune moment to get revenge against Greyhawk.

If no one intervenes, then Captain Hammon orders the attack, and the *Laughing Eel* easily overtakes the Greyhawk ship. The private marines surrender in the face of superior numbers, especially if the PCs aid in the attack. If you have time, you can roll

out the battle, but the lone merchant vessel cannot withstand the typical APL 8+ party. Captain Hammon does insist that no one is murdered or hurt (too grievously anyway). While the piracy is not evil in itself, it is certainly evil to murder the crew.

The PCs can talk Captain Hammon out of the attack. He blusters at first about how Greyhawk "has it coming", how it won't impact their schedule, and how boring it can be on the high seas. He does relent if the PCs are insistent and acknowledges that the current task is more important. That does not stop him and the crew from making lewd gestures at the Greyhawk vessel as they pass.

If a PC participating in the attack (rather than sitting back and watching) is a member of the Dyvers meta-org, Protégé of House Siggoran, at the beginning of the adventure, he receives one additional Affiliation point, thanks to the glowing report of Captain Hammon. PCs who participate get a share of the booty.

Treasure: The PCs can gain the following treasure here:

All APL: Loot 50 gp; Total 50 gp.

Development: When this is resolved, move on to Encounter 5: The Map.

5: THE MAP

Despite the Jaundiced Barb's best efforts, his location is betrayed by the divinations of Istus. Alcorn, using House Siggoran, has given orders to the Jaundiced Barb to drop off Mullen and the gift onto land and wait in the mouth of the Nyr Dyv. He uses the Jaundiced Barb in order to provide a challenge to the PCs; he wants them to believe that the gift is highly contested. While the area on the map represents several square miles of open water, the Jaundiced Barb—who is an adept cleric of Kurell—is skilled at hiding the *Just Desert*. Each clue on the map gives the PCs another chance to find the *Just Desert*.

Pinnel is convinced that just sailing through a section is not enough. Despite the wide-open blueness of the sea, Pinnel believes they are seeking something hidden. As a result, the *Laughing Eel* must spend significant time in a section in order to find their quarry. The number of sections that can be explored per day depends on the table below:

Highest Spot skill in party	Number of sections per day searched
Less than +10	1
+10 to +15	2
+16 to +20	3
More than +20	4
Group has the Luck domain	+1 (only once)
Group has the Water domain	+2 (only once)

Captain Hammon has the highest Spot on the crew with +8. Note that modifiers to Spot can only be added if they apply to daytime long-distance spotting. *Eyes of the eagle* would apply, but the owl's nighttime bonus does not. Keep track of how many days it takes for the PCs to home in on the section with the *Just Desert*. This may have an impact on the inland adventure.

Each morning, Pinnel casts *divination*. This reveals the next line in the puzzle. He is only 7th level, so he has a 77% chance of receiving an answer. Other clerics may cast *divination* to ask their gods. Each god can be contacted only once per day (even if it's a failure). Another cleric of the same god receives the exact same answer as the first cleric. Pinnel knows that he is a simple cleric and defers to another cleric of Istus if she wishes to cast her own *divination*.

The clues for the puzzle are as follow:

- The healthy octopus has its prey. Where it is wounded, it will not stay. (already known)
- If it is colored as a ruby of worth, each octopus keeps one arm about its girth. (already known and transcribed)
- The item that harms shall see two more arms. (already known and transcribed)
- If its color is of an evil dragon and is oft on farms, you can find an octopus with three more arms.
- Where one can ride into the color of the sun the octopus missing an arm finds another one.
- If the wind can whisk it out of your grasp, the octopus has two more tentacles to clasp.
- Its color is primary and it is keen, which gives another arm on which to lean.
- A jealous bird produces one, so the octopus has four arms for fun.
- If it's there for eating, the octopus has one arm for beating.
- Paint its wheels the color of blood so the three arms can stay ahead of the flood.
- It is mightier than the sword, so two more arms it has scored.

By the time the last clue is given, the PCs may figure out that the Jaundiced Barb is hidden in the section marked with the green quill. If they are unable to solve the puzzle, the PCs can still stumble across the green quill section through searching. While he may be cranky, the Jaundiced Barb is still there even if the PCs take weeks to find him.

MAP TROUBLESHOOTING

In most cases, the players should only need **Player Handout #2**. If there is a poor-quality print or a visually handicapped person, this section may be of help to the players.

- There are five bands separated by color (from north to south): Red, blue, green, black, and yellow.
- There are ten columns, each represented by a picture (from west to east): axe, sword, wagon, bow, hay, vegetable, spear, quill, galley, mace.
- Each section has an octopus with no arms. Pinnel has already learned the first three clues, which hint that the correct section is the one with eight arms in it.
- Currently, Pinnel has figured out that the following sections have one arm each:
 - red wagon
 - red hay
 - red vegetable
 - red quill
 - red galley.
- Pinnel has figured out that the following sections have two arms each:
 - all axes (except red)
 - all swords (except red)
 - all bows (except red)
 - all spears (except red)
 - all maces (except red).
- Pinnel has figured out that the following sections have three arms each:
 - red axe
 - red sword
 - red bow
 - red spear
 - red mace.

Some of the clues might be vague enough to be open to interpretation. If the PCs over think the puzzle or are simply missing something, then they have to rely on picking the correct section through sheer luck. According to Istus, the final results of the grid are as follow:

	red	blue	green	yellow	black
<i>axe</i>	4	3	2	3	2
<i>sword</i>	4	3	2	3	2
<i>wagon</i>	7	3	3	1	3
<i>bow</i>	3	2	2	2	2
<i>hay</i>	7	6	6	3	6
<i>vegetable</i>	5	4	4	1	4
<i>spear</i>	4	3	2	3	2
<i>quill</i>	6	5	8	5	4
<i>galley</i>	1	0	0	1	0
<i>mace</i>	4	3	2	3	2

If the PCs are able to solve the puzzle (or happen upon the correct space) and can intercept Mullen within 6 days, then they receive an advantage in combat (as noted in that Encounter). Once 6 days have passed, the advantage is gone. Feel free to wrap up this encounter if the players aren't having fun with it.

When the PCs choose to explore the section with the green quill (through puzzle-solving or happenstance), go to Encounter 6: Getting Your Just Deserts.

Development: When the correct section is chosen (or the players give up after 6 days), move on to Encounter 6: Getting Your Just Deserts. If the PCs take 6 days or longer, then they do not benefit from rain in Encounter 7: Getting the Goods. If the PCs take less than 6 days, then they have a chance to benefit from the rain.

INTERLUDE

If the PCs begin their search of the correct section with a *true seeing* spell or other means to penetrate illusions, then the Jaundiced Barb is unable to make most of these preparations. For everyone else, the Jaundiced Barb watches their progress and comes to the most logical conclusion: Confrontation (per Encounter 6: Getting Your Just Deserts).

The *Just Desert* cannot be easily found due to the Jaundiced Barb casting *screen* on a daily basis. While hidden in the *screen* spell, the crew of the *Just Desert* watches the *Laughing Eel* as it cuts across the water several times. The Kurellite experiences a sense of paranoia and concludes that the *Laughing Eel* is searching for him. While the Jaundiced Barb does not intend to lose his ship, he figures that anyone actively seeking him out has the manpower to defeat him, and he recognizes the futility in trying to outrun the *Laughing Eel*. During the time the *Laughing Eel* is

sailing around the hiding spot of the *Just Desert*, the Jaundiced Barb prepares for the upcoming fight.

Ten minutes before the crew of the *Laughing Eel* investigates the illusion, the Jaundiced Barb prepares himself with several long-duration spells. The stat block assumes that he is able to cast these spells ahead of time. If the PCs are able to get the jump by seeing past the illusion and making a beeline to the *Just Desert*, then he can only cast those spells while hidden below deck.

In addition to casting spells on himself, he tells each crew member to drink a *potion of water breathing*. The Jaundiced Barb would rather lose his crew than have them spilling secrets about him, so the potions are fakes. Some of them are simply pepper water, and the others are *elixirs of reckoning* (which taste a bit like pepper water). The Jaundiced Barb hopes that when he is gone, the crew will panic and leap overboard, thinking they are safe to breathe the water. This causes them to drown more quickly than usual, since they aren't fighting it. The resulting explosions should cripple and eventually sink the *Just Desert*. The Jaundiced Barb orders the crew members to not start any fights. He doesn't want to give the PCs a reason to kill a crew member and prematurely set off a chain of explosions on the ship.

The Jaundiced Barb also casts *invisibility* on the skull-and-crossbones flag. This is his way of testing the PCs. If anyone makes mention of the blatant pirate flag flapping in the wind, then he knows that someone has *see invisibility* or other magics in use. At APLs 12 and 14, the Jaundiced Barb's slaad ally makes himself invisible and flies up to the top of the center mast. He waits for a fight to break out before making his move.

Once the *Laughing Eel* moves toward the *Just Desert* in Encounter 6: Getting Your Just Deserts, the Jaundiced Barb casts his preparatory spells. He casts *mislead* and hides below deck. His illusion stands bravely on the aft deck and taunts the PCs as they board the *Just Desert*. During the conversation, the Jaundiced Barb repeats his insults to the PCs for 3 rounds (he ceases concentrating on *mislead* so he can cast more spells to hurt the PCs).

If the PCs are going to put this priest of Kurell out of business, then he intends to get some revenge on them.

6: GETTING YOUR JUST DESERTS

Due to the NPCs and the interaction between them, this encounter is broken up into subsections. It is likely that one subsection crosses into another

subsection easily. For ease of use, the subsections consist of:

6A: The Jaundiced Barb – Description of the pirate captain and his personality.

6B: Palaver – Description of the captain's gibbering mouther ally (APLs 10 and up).

6C: On the Use of Fodder – Description of the sailors and their propensity for exploding.

6D: The Slaad – Description of the captain's *planar ally* (APLs 12 and up).

6E: The Fight – Tactics of the captain and his allies.

6F: Aftermath – Results of searching the *Just Desert* while preventing or slowing its destruction.

6G: Fallout – Results of searching the *Just Desert* after the Jaundiced Barb and/or his crew explodes.

In this encounter, the PCs find the *Just Desert* and board it. They have to contend with a pirate crew and a cleric of Kurell who does not intend to make the task easy on the PCs. Unless the PCs have a means of seeing through illusions, read or paraphrase the following:

While traffic is fairly busy, there has been no sign of the pirate vessel, the Just Desert. Captain Hammon does not see the benefit of scouring a section of open water, but he nevertheless complies with Pinnel's insistence that the Laughing Eel zigzags across the sea. The crew of the Laughing Eel is kept busy with the maneuvering, but for those on lookout, it is tedious work.

Three hours later, something does catch your eye. While there are no landmarks to speak of, you do notice an area of rough water rife with eddies that could slow a ship down, which is not so unusual to see in the Nyr Dyv, but it is strange that it would remain so turbulent on your second and third passes through the area. Captain Hammon considers this and calls out, "Well, boys, I can't figure out what is so queer about that patch of water, but I guess we'll just have to find out. Hard to starboard!"

The Laughing Eel noses toward the strange patch of water and glides into the eddy. Suddenly, the eddies vanish, leaving calm waters. Seemingly out of nowhere looms a ship with no flag. The sudden appearance and impending collision startles Captain Hammon who cries out, "Hard to port! Full stop!" The crew works frantically, and the Laughing Eel slows significantly. As it pulls alongside the Just Desert, a slight nudge rocks both ships.

The captain of the Just Desert glowers at your approach. He is a short, dumpy man looking almost comical in a massive set of green spiked armor and

oversized shield. He sneers at you, “What are you harassing me for? Do I fly a flag that offends you?”

The surprise appearance of the *Just Desert* is the result of the *Laughing Eel* penetrating the *screen* spell that has been in place for several days. The Jaundiced Barb has orders to wait in the Volverdyva for 2 weeks (but he stays longer just so he can tell Mullen all about how he was put upon). He is unaware that he has been betrayed by Alcorn. The image of the *screen* spell is that of a rough patch of water. While the turbulent condition is safe to sail through, the merchant vessels choose the calmer routes that are conducive to expedient travel. This is why no ship collides with the *Just Desert* as it sits there. Only someone passing the same area several times would notice that the patch of water never changes.

The PCs have five rounds to prepare before the ships touch. At that point, they can simply climb over onto the other ship. By the time the *Just Desert* becomes visible, the Jaundiced Barb's ruse is in place. Even PCs who cast *true sight* at the realization of the strange patch of water do not see anything overly unusual, as the Jaundiced Barb prepared his crew and stowed away below deck 10 minutes before the *Laughing Eel* arrives. The crew of the *Just Desert* is in preparation to sail away, but the illusion of the Jaundiced Barb has not given the order to make sail.

The job of the Jaundiced Barb illusion is simple: Keep the PCs talking. If possible, split the party on the ship by having a group go below deck to retrieve whatever they want and/or open the door to Palaver's room. The Jaundiced Barb tests the PCs' ability to see invisibility by pointing out the absence of a flag (which is really invisible). Nobody on the ship knows anything about Mullen's package.

The Jaundiced Barb hopes to soften the PCs before he makes his appearance. Using the gaps in the hatch, he can target summoning spells or *chaos hammer*. At some APLs, the Jaundiced Barb may attempt a *silent slay living* if he is confident the PCs cannot see invisible objects.

6A: THE JAUNDICED BARB

A devout worshipper of the jealousy and revenge aspects of Kurell, the Jaundiced Barb plunders the seas. While he is not above murder, he finds more satisfaction in humiliating and hurting the crews. He enjoys freedom and has no intention of being arrested for his crimes. In his eyes, anyone who pursues him is a bounty hunter, and he treats anyone he meets as a possible agent for the law.

The Jaundiced Barb has no intention of speaking with the PCs for long. The fact that someone can bypass his disguise infuriates and panics him, and he wants to make them pay. He keeps them talking long enough to prepare a counter-strike. When he is ready, he attacks the PCs (if they are not already provoked by his barbed tongue or the hidden slaad).

See the Tactics section for information on how the Jaundiced Barb fights. If the Jaundiced Barb is defeated and interrogated, he reveals the following (in as sneeringly of a voice as possible):

- One of my contacts hooked me up with a half-orc named Mullen. Mullen paid me to sail him from the city of Dyvers to a spot east of Maraven (from location **h** to location **c** on **DM Aid #1**). I don't know the contact's name, and it would have changed by now anyway.
- Nobody tells me anything—as if I were untrustworthy or something—so I poked around. I don't know what Mullen's purpose is, but Mullen and his mercenaries traveled inland from the drop-off point. Mullen didn't mention his final destination, but I know it because I rifled through his belongings.
- Mullen has made use of my personal iron chest to store the package and instructions (conveniently neglecting to mention the trap on his door). I gave my personal word that Mullen's secrets would be safe in the chest. What an idiot.
- I did look at the package, but it wasn't anything interesting. It included a sealed scroll case and a wooden token. There were instructions to break the token and cast the spell on the scroll, but I don't know what is supposed to happen.
- Mullen carries around some bow he got off of some elves, which is as funny as a goblin eating a salad. He travels with some humans who seem pretty good with a bow.

6B: PALAVER

The Jaundiced Barb has only one real friend in the world, a gibbering mouther called Palaver. He spends many hours confiding in the mass of blithering nonsense and bolsters his own ego by picking the words he likes. As a result, Palaver actually enables the Jaundiced Barb to continue on his path of revenge and jealousy. Palaver stays in the wardroom (the room to the aft and starboard of the ship).

Palaver has a tactical use on the high seas. When attacking another ship, the Jaundiced Barb uses Palaver's maddening gibbering to demoralize the crew as the *Just Desert* closes in on its quarry. At APLs 10,

12, and 14, Palaver is a contender in the fight. At APL 8, Palaver has recently passed away of old age.

The Jaundiced Barb has learned a while back that Palaver's use was detrimental to his own crew. As a result, the crew now has breakfast tied to their chairs in the same room as Palaver every morning. The crew spends about 10 seconds struggling and screaming, but they eventually grow accustomed to Palaver's gibbering. For the rest of the day, the crew is not affected by Palaver's effect.

The door to Palaver's cabin is closed but not locked. If possible, one of the sailors goes over to open it (sailor #6 on **DM's Aid #2**, who should not be assigned as an imbiber of the *elixir of reckoning*). Inquisitive PCs can hear the sounds of several men and women arguing and laughing behind the door. Once they open the door, Palaver attacks anyone who is not the Jaundiced Barb, his slaad ally, or his crew.

See the Tactics section for information on how Palaver fights. Palaver is barely intelligent and unable to convey coherent information to the PCs.

6C: ON THE USE OF FODDER

The Jaundiced Barb does not hire (or conscript) people of any real talent. This is mostly because he knows that no mutiny can succeed when he recruits from the bottom of the barrel. It also makes him feel superior, as he is prone to bouts of jealousy and insecurity. Where the crew lacks in ability, the Jaundiced Barb makes up for by using Palaver to weaken the crews of enemy ships and a personal involvement with every attack. The crew is loyal to him only out of fear. As soon as the Jaundiced Barb flees or is killed, the crew immediately jumps ship (which can trigger the *elixirs of reckoning* as outlined below).

The crew is under orders not to attack the PCs. With the exception of magical compulsion, the crewmembers absolutely do not draw weapons on the PCs. First, the Jaundiced Barb has threatened horrible retribution if they do. Second, the crew doesn't think it stands a chance against anyone who can defeat the Jaundiced Barb. Keep track of their hit points, as it becomes important if one of them dies.

The Jaundiced Barb has a contingency in place. If he is victorious, then he and his crew sail away and come back for Mullen another time. If he is defeated, then he leaves behind flotsam and jetsam with booby-trapped corpses. He accomplishes this with multiple uses of *elixirs of reckoning* (see Appendix 2). He and some of the crew have ingested one of these potions. Upon death, the imbiber explodes, doing 5d6 damage in a 20-foot radius. This could possibly kill another crew member also under the effect of an *elixir of*

reckoning, which sets off a chain reaction. This should not happen above deck unless the PCs are careless in applying lethal damage. The Jaundiced Barb only wants the crew members to explode when he is defeated. The affected crewmembers detect as magical faint abjuration.

The crew attempts to flee when either the Jaundiced Barb is defeated (killed or unconscious), the Jaundiced Barb dives overboard, or the Jaundiced Barb calls for the crew to abandon ship. Since the crew members have been given what they believe are *potions of water breathing*, they dive overboard to hide under the water. They inhale the water, which kills them in three rounds (per the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). No matter where the explosions are (unless the crew is somehow flung away from the *Just Desert*), the structural integrity of the ship is destroyed. It sinks in 2 minutes. Treat the water as 10 feet below the deck, whose cover provides a bonus to Reflex saves. For dramatic tension, you can describe the *Laughing Eel* as taking damage, as well, but Captain Hammon's crew is able to tend to the damage.

See the Tactics section for information on how the pirates react during the fight. If any sailor is defeated and interrogated, he reveals the following (as ingratiatingly and pleadingly as possible):

- I never wanted to be a pirate! If I did, I would have signed on with a better captain. The captain kidnapped me one night and forced me to sail the *Just Desert*.
- The captain is a right bastard who is crazy as the Nine Hells. I just know he'll come back (even from the watery grave) and punish me.
- We dropped off a passenger X days ago (on the same day that the PCs arrive in Maraven in Encounter 1: The Proposition). He was a half-orc named Mullen with some human guards. We took him from Dyvers to a spot east of Maraven (from location **h** to location **c** on **DM Aid #1**).
- Mullen used the captain's personal footlocker to store some stuff. I never saw it, because that door is haunted! Anybody who opens that door that isn't the captain has his eyes pop out!

6D: THE SLAAD

At APLs 12 and 14, the Jaundiced Barb has made a deal with an agent of chaos. He has summoned a slaad as a planar ally. They enjoy a lucrative relationship: The Jaundiced Barb's operation is even more effective on the seas, while the slaad sows chaos among the Jaundiced Barb's victims.

While the slaad is an ally, it is somewhat resentful of the Jaundiced Barb's condescending tone. The slaad

puts up with it, but it considers the Jaundiced Barb a big jerk. First and foremost, the slaad's responsibility is to protect the Jaundiced Barb's pirate operation. This means protecting the crew, the ship, and the Jaundiced Barb. If the ship is damaged to the point of sinking, the slaad protects only the Jaundiced Barb and has no regard for anything else.

See the Tactics section for information on how the slaad fights. If it is defeated and interrogated, it reveals the following:

- I traversed the vast reaches of chaos to bring the gift of entropy. The one called the Jaundiced Barb served chaos well. He paid me to guard his pirate operation. What he paid me is of no concern of yours. But since the pirate operation is no more, I have no further obligation to him.
- The Jaundiced Barb dropped off a passenger X days ago (on the same day that the PCs arrive in Maraven in Encounter 1: The Proposition). He was a half-orc named Mullen with some human guards. The Jaundiced Barb took him from Dyvers to a spot east of Maraven (from location **h** to location **c** on **DM Aid #1**).
- Mullen used the captain's personal footlocker to store some stuff. I have no interest in poking into his affairs. He is a good leader, as the sailors are all afraid to enter his cabin.

6E: THE FIGHT

APL 8 (EL 11)

The Jaundiced Barb: male human cleric 13; hp 81; Appendix 1.

Pirates (4): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

Exploding Pirates (2): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 13)

The Jaundiced Barb: male human cleric 13; hp 93; Appendix 1.

Palaver: gibbering mouter; hp 48; *Monster Manual* 126.

Pirates (3): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

Exploding Pirates (3): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

APL 12 (EL 14)

The Jaundiced Barb: male human cleric 13; hp 93; Appendix 1.

Palaver: advanced gibbering mouter; hp 168; Appendix 1.

Gray Slaad: hp 110; *Monster Manual* 231.

Pirates (2): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

Exploding Pirates (4): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

APL 14 (EL 15)

The Jaundiced Barb: male human cleric 13; hp 93; Appendix 1.

Palaver: advanced gibbering mouter; hp 168; Appendix 1.

Death Slaad: hp 165; *Monster Manual* 231.

Pirates: male human commoner 1; hp 5; Appendix 1.

Exploding Pirates (5): male human commoner 1; hp 5 each; Appendix 1.

Tactics: Caring for no one but himself, the Jaundiced Barb does not feel the need to die for any cause—or ship. If he is reduced to below 50% of his normal hit points, he abandons everything and saves his own neck. His first choice is to jump ship, crying out for the crew to do the same. With his *water breathing* active (he casts it every night so it's on him continuously) and heavy gear, he safely lands on a shelf 400 feet below the surface of the sea. If he is able to bull rush someone into the water or grapple him and fall overboard, that's even better. If the Jaundiced Barb absolutely cannot escape, then he sullenly surrenders.

When things get violent, the crew tries to do the following:

- The Jaundiced Barb casts spells on the PCs (silently, if possible) from below deck. If he believes the PCs cannot see invisibility, he sneaks onto the deck. This spell may be what triggers combat.
- Sailor #6 tries to open the door to the Wardroom (Palaver's home). This allows Palaver's gibbering to affect the invaders. As a morning ritual, the Jaundiced Barb and the sailors subject themselves to Palaver's gibbering, so they are immune during this fight (but not the slaad). This sailor did *not* drink the *elixir of reckoning*, so his death does not cause any problems.
- At APLs 12 and 14, the invisible slaad hovering around the mast attacks. It uses any effective tactic that harms the PCs while protecting the ship and her crew, such as *chaos hammer*, *power word*, or *implosion*.

At APLs 12 and 14, the Jaundiced Barb makes use of a slaad through the *planar ally* spell (or a scroll of *greater planar ally* spell). The slaad agrees to safeguard the Jaundiced Barb's pirate operation. This means it

works to protect the *Just Desert*, its captain, and its crew. Should the Jaundiced Barb jump overboard, the slaad realizes that the ship is lost and works to protect the Jaundiced Barb. The slaad refuses to eat breakfast with Palaver, so he is *not* immune to Palaver's gibbering.

The Jaundiced Barb (and the slaad, if available) is cognizant of the sailors who drank the *elixirs of reckoning*. Therefore, he does not put his crew in harm's way. He is careful with area-of-effect spells, such as *castigate* and *confusion*. He is free with *chaos hammer* as everyone on his side is immune to the spell.

If the ship is severely damaged (such as the Jaundiced Barb exploding, a pirate exploding, or careless use of spells or alchemist fire), it sinks 2 minutes later. Substantial damage or damage in multiple areas may cause the ship to sink faster, depending on the devastation. A good rule of thumb is that each additional explosion reduces the time by 3 rounds. The combatants react as follow:

- The Jaundiced Barb curses the PCs for their meddling and jumps overboard to save himself.
- The surviving pirates panic and leap overboard, believing the PCs are responsible for the explosions. They drown themselves, which can cause even more explosions.
- Palaver (if applicable) is a capable swimmer and doesn't notice. It continues to try to engulf and feed on PCs.
- The slaad (if applicable) recognizes that the ship is lost and devotes its efforts to letting the Jaundiced Barb get away. It no longer tries to protect any surviving crew members. If the Jaundiced Barb is killed, the slaad relishes in the ensuing chaos and continues fighting.

APL 8 (EL 5)

Exploding Pirate Trap (2): CR 5; magical; conditional trigger; no reset; conditional bypass (don't be near a pirate upon death); blast (DC 14 Reflex save for half, 5d6 damage per dead pirate); Search N/A; Disable Device N/A.

APL 10 (EL 7)

Exploding Pirate Trap (3): CR 7; magical; conditional trigger; no reset; conditional bypass (don't be near a pirate upon death); blast (DC 14 Reflex save for half, 5d6 damage per dead pirate); Search N/A; Disable Device N/A.

APL 12 (EL 10)

Exploding Pirate Trap (4): CR 10; magical; conditional trigger; no reset; conditional bypass (don't

be near a pirate upon death); blast (DC 14 Reflex save for half, 5d6 damage per dead pirate); Search N/A; Disable Device N/A.

APL 14 (EL 13)

Exploding Pirate Trap (5): CR 13; magical; conditional trigger; no reset; conditional bypass (don't be near a pirate upon death); blast (DC 14 Reflex save for half, 5d6 damage per dead pirate); Search N/A; Disable Device N/A.

Treasure: The PCs can gain the following treasure here:

APL 8: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+I spiked full plate* (225 gp), *+I heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+I cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+I ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 1361 gp.

APL 10: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+I retaliation spiked full plate* (891 gp), *+I heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+I cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+I ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 2028 gp.

APL 12: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+I retaliation spiked full plate* (891 gp), *+I heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+I cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+I ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *metamagic rod of silence* (916 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 2944 gp.

APL 14: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+I retaliation spiked full plate* (891 gp), *+I heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+I cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+I ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *metamagic rod of silence* (916 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 2944 gp.

Note: Per the Living Greyhawk rules, it takes 2 minutes to loot a body. If the *Just Desert* is in the process of sinking, the PCs might not finish looting the Jaundiced Barb. If the PCs retard the ship's descent or set out on a salvage expedition, they can recover all of the Jaundiced Barb's equipment.

6F: AFTERMATH

If the PCs search the ship (within 2 minutes if it's sinking), they find the following:

- In the hold are 3,000 gp worth of commodities plundered from merchant vessels. These items are generic enough that the rightful owner could not be located, so they are included as part of the loot. These goods weigh 800 pounds, but Captain Hammon is willing to hold them for the PCs if they don't want to carry it all.

- Also in the hold is a crate with several empty potion vials. Some of them contain the residue of an *elixir of reckoning* (which can be identified as normal with a DC 25 Spellcraft roll). The remaining potion vials contain traces of pepper water. The crate also has one full vial of an *elixir of reckoning* and seven full vials of pepper water. Each vial is labeled with a picture of a man with gills.
- The captain's cabin has a waterproof iron chest (marked as ☐ on **DM Aid #2**. It is locked but not trapped. Inside the chest is Player's Handout 3.
- The captain's cabin also has a journal. It contains colorful language about the heredity of various people that he dislikes, but it also documents where Mullen made land on the same morning that the PCs arrived in Maraven. The Jaundiced Barb refers to Mullen as an insufferable jackass.

The door to the captain's cabin is trapped.

All APLs (EL 4)

Glyph of Warding Trap: CR 4; magic; touch trigger; no reset; conditional bypass (follower of Kurell can open safely); cold 5-foot radius (DC 14 Reflex save for half, 5d8 cold); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Iron Chest: 1/2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 15; AC 5; Break DC 26.

6G: FALLOUT

If the *Just Desert* sinks before the PCs can explore it, then they must salvage the chest. Pinnel is able to cast *water breathing* on the PCs, but he must memorize the spell the following morning. The PCs can recover the iron chest listed above, but the potion vials have all been swept into the Nyr Dyv, and the journal is ruined. The PCs can only loot 600 gp worth of commodities (100 pounds) from the wreckage.

If the PCs do not have the journal, then they can pick up Mullen's trail by making land south of the Jaundiced Barb's location. The PCs find the trail after 40 hours of searching. The PCs may make one Survival check with assists. Subtract this value from 40 to determine the true number of hours (minimum of 1). If the lead tracker doesn't have the Track feat, the Survival skill caps out at 10.

Development: The PCs have the location of the rendezvous point, which is outlined in Encounter 7: Getting the Goods.

7: GETTING THE GOODS

In this encounter, the PCs attempt to acquire the items that would interest the drow. They are in the possession of a mercenary named Mullen. He and his men believe they are to meet with a representative of the Pomarj. On the same morning that the PCs meet with Sergeant Oddfellow in Maraven, Mullen has landed on the bank and is traveling south (Day 1). This is indicated on **DM's Aid 1** by the first red diamond. Mullen pushes about 16 miles and makes camp at the second diamond. At the end of Day 2, Mullen makes camp at the third red diamond. At the end of Day 3, Mullen reaches the fourth red diamond. He reaches the rendezvous point by noon on Day 4.

Mullen is a gruff mercenary. He has been hired through an intermediary in Dyvers to meet with the Jaundiced Barb and to deliver the package. He has one master: The mighty gold coin. He is bigoted against elves and relishes in the looks of disgust he earns for flaunting his bow of obvious elven make.

In general, there are three conditions in which the PCs encounter Mullen: They arrive at the rendezvous point after Mullen has set up, they overtake Mullen on his way to the rendezvous point, or they beat Mullen to the rendezvous point and wait for him there. If the PCs arrive after noon on Day 4, then they can only meet Mullen at the rendezvous point after he has set up.

THE RENDEZVOUS POINT

Mullen has orders to deliver the token and the scroll to the orcs at an abandoned farm between the Gnarley Forest and the Selintan River. The ruined farmhouse sits on a rise and commands a view of the surrounding lands for 2 miles. The area has copses of trees, wild brush, and tall grasses, so someone could sneak up to the farmhouse. Due to the farmhouse's altitude, a spotter receives a +2 circumstance bonus to Spot checks.

The farmhouse is little more than crumbled stone haphazardly holding up a ramshackle roof. There are gaps large enough for a Medium creature to fit comfortably. The house is overgrown with ivy and tall grasses. It hardly looks like a building from far away.

Refer to **DM's Aid 3** for the layout of the house. The solid walls provide total cover while the windows provide cover. The gaps between the walls are large enough that they do not provide cover.

If the PCs arrive before Day 6, it is raining. Apply the appropriate penalties for ranged weapons and Spot checks during these times (as seen below). After Day 6, the rain has stopped.

RAIN (DAYS 1-6)

Rain reduces visibility ranges by half, resulting in a -4 penalty on Spot and Search checks. It has the same effect on flames, range weapon attacks and Listen check as severe wind.

Severe wind automatically extinguishes any unprotected flames, causes protected flames to dance wildly and has a 50% chance of extinguishing such flames. Ranged weapon attacks and Listen checks are at a -4 penalty.

MULLEN GETS HERE FIRST (DAY 4 AND AFTER)

In this situation, Mullen and his men arrived at the farmhouse first and are waiting for the Pomarj representative. Mullen is eager to get paid, so he does not exhibit the best judgment. Nevertheless, he is not stupid (especially for a half-orc), and he attacks anyone who raises his suspicions. Mullen and his men can see the PCs arriving unless steps are taken to camouflage their arrival. Unless the PCs do not boldly walk up to the farmhouse in the open, read or paraphrase the following:

You've gone several miles without seeing a single soul on the plains. You've passed some sites of battle as outriders engaged the orcs foolish enough to step out of the Gnarley Forest. For the most part, your journey is peaceful. A half-mile (100 feet if raining) ahead of you is a building perched on a small rise. It is difficult to pick it out due to the brush obscuring it.

Allow the PCs to prepare as they wish. If they have not been hiding as they travel, then Mullen sees them before they see the farmhouse. He watches them with interest as the PCs approach. If the PCs take visible steps to prepare for a fight (such as casting spells before approaching), this impacts their interaction with him. As the PCs get within 200 feet (or 50 feet if raining), read the following:

A loud, gruff voice calls out to you, "Ain't no shelter for the likes of you, traveler. Keep on moving, or suffer an arrow between your eyes!" You can see a half-orc standing in what might be called a doorway. He holds a bow of obvious elven make and points a nocked arrow in your direction.

At this stage, the PCs have a few choices:

- **Assault the farmhouse.** While some archers may be hidden, Mullen's obvious presence pretty much

nullifies any surprise round. See the tactics section for running the combat.

- **Approach the farmhouse.** Mullen reads this as a threat and orders a counterattack. As above, Mullen's presence nullifies any surprise round. See the tactics section for running the combat.
- **Pretend to represent the orcs from the Pomarj.** Mullen is smarter than the average half-orc, but he still falls for the occasional swindle. A successful Bluff check allows the PCs to buy the items from Mullen on behalf of the orcs. The price starts at 20,000 gp, but that can be haggled down as detailed below, with Mullen starting off as Friendly, which is not worsened through bad Diplomacy. Mullen's Sense Motive is modified as follows:
 - If the group has races that are not human or orcs in it: +5
 - If the group comes from the north instead of the south: +4
 - If he sees the group preparing for a fight ahead of time: +2
 - If someone is noticeably disgusted by his bow: +4
 - If someone visibly wears a "good" crest, such as a knighthood or holy symbol of a major god (Pelor and Al Akbar would count, but Mayaheine and Kord would not): +4
 - If someone is a Hero of Dyvers or Legendary Hero of Dyvers (AR award): +2
 - If none of the above apply: -5 (he really wants to believe the PCs and get his money)
- **Tell the truth.** The PCs can tell Mullen that they are here to acquire the items and have money. Mullen begins as Indifferent if the PCs didn't approach in a threatening manner. If he has seen them casting spells beforehand or taking any other aggressive action, he starts off as Unfriendly. The PCs can continue a Diplomacy check as long as the attitude improves. If the attitude remains the same or worsens, then no further Diplomacy checks can be made. He accepts the cargo from the *Just Desert* at 75% of its value but only pays half of the *Player's Handbook* price for the Jaundiced Barb's gear; he has no way of telling if anything is magical. The results of the Diplomacy are as follow:
 - **Hostile:** Mullen is tired of talking and attacks the PCs.

- **Unfriendly:** Mullen is tired of talking and gives the PCs until the count of 10 to be on their way. If they stay, he immediately becomes Hostile.
- **Indifferent:** He sells to the PCs for 40,000 gp. He wants the extra money to put as much distance between him and the orcs he just double-crossed.
- **Friendly:** He sells to the PCs for 20,000 gp, the original selling price.
- **Helpful:** He sells to the PCs for only 10,000 gp. He likes their style.

THE PCS GET HERE FIRST (DAYS 1-3)

In this situation, Mullen arrives at the farmhouse after the PCs. The PCs may choose to set up an ambush or simply negotiate with Mullen. The options are the same as above, including modifiers to Bluff, except that Mullen obviously can't know the direction the PCs arrived.

When the PCs arrive at the farmhouse, read or paraphrase the following:

You've gone several miles without seeing a single soul on the plains. You've passed some sites of battle as outriders engaged the orcs foolish enough to step out of the Gnarley Forest. For the most part, your journey is peaceful. Through the rain, you can make out a building perched on a small rise 100 feet ahead. It is difficult to pick it out due to the brush obscuring it.

Note: At APL 8, Mullen travels with one companion. They are unable to set up suitable watches, so they each receive less sleep. Treat them as Fatigued when they arrive unless the PCs actually allow them time to rest. This reduces the Diplomacy DC by 2, as Mullen is not thinking straight.

THE PCS OVERTAKE MULLEN (DAYS 1-3)

In this situation, the PCs head to the rendezvous point quickly enough that they can meet Mullen along the way. During days 1 through 6 it is raining. The lands are fairly flat so it is easy to spot someone coming from far away. There are plenty of brush and tall grass, so the PCs can actively hide if they spot Mullen before he spots them. Consult **DM Aid #1** to see when and where Mullen is located. Due to the archers' heavier armor, they travel 16 miles a day.

If the PCs wish to ambush Mullen while they make camp, it is easier for them. With the exception of

Mullen, the archers remove their armor when they sleep. A third of the men take each watch, with Mullen taking the darkest watch. At APL 8, Mullen travels with one companion. They are unable to set up suitable watches, so they each receive less sleep. Treat them as Fatigued when encountered.

Mullen is suspicious of meeting anyone on his travel. He attacks anyone moving toward him within 200 feet. If the PCs indicate a desire to parley, he lets them get to 50 feet so their voices can be heard in the rain. The PCs have the same options as above, except they cannot Bluff Mullen into thinking they were sent by the Pomarj. The deal was to meet at the farmhouse, and anyone claiming to be with the Pomarj is met with a throaty laugh and an arrow.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Mullen: male half-orc barbarian 5/fighter 3; hp 86; Sense Motive +0; Appendix 1.

Archer: male human fighter 8; hp 76; Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Mullen: male half-orc barbarian 5/fighter 5; hp 105; Sense Motive +0; Appendix 1.

Archers (2): male human fighter 8; hp 76 each; Appendix 1.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Mullen: male half-orc barbarian 7/fighter 5; hp 127; Sense Motive +0; Appendix 1.

Archers (5): male human fighter 8; hp 76 each; Appendix 1.

APL 14 (EL 16)

Mullen: male half-orc barbarian 6/fighter 8; hp 146; Sense Motive +0; Appendix 1.

Archers (8): male human fighter 8; hp 76 each; Appendix 1.

Treasure: The PCs can gain the following treasure here:

APL 8: L: 21, C: 21, M: +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) (141 gp), +1 great swordbow (+4 Str) (595 gp), +1 chain shirt (187 gp); Total 967.

APL 10: L: 41, C: 21, M: 2 +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) (141 gp each), +1 great swordbow (+4 Str) (595 gp), +1 chain shirt (187 gp); Total 1128 gp.

APL 12: L: 99, C: 21, M: 5 +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) (141 gp each), +1 flaming great swordbow (+5 Str) (1604 gp), +1 chain shirt (187 gp), gauntlets of ogre power (333 gp); Total magic: 2953.

APL 14: L: 157, C: 21, M: 8 +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) (141 gp each), +1 flaming bane (elf) great

swordbow (+5 Str) (3270 gp), +1 chain shirt (187 gp), gauntlets of ogre power (333 gp); Total magic: 5103.

Tactics

It rains in the area up until the end of Day 6. If it is raining when the PCs encounter Mullen, then the archers suffer penalties for firing in the rain. There is no penalty for melee, and the ground is not so muddy that it precludes charging. Initially, the archers try to maximize their volleys by taking full-attack actions to fire as many arrows as possible before the PCs can engage in melee (with 5-foot steps behind cover, if allowed). If the PCs are effective at range, the archers rely on guerilla tactics, running from cover to cover and taking potshots.

THE PACKAGE

One way or another, the PCs should have the package. It consists of a wooden token, an arcane scroll, and brief instructions. These are all placed in a waterproof ivory scroll case (worth 100 gp). The instructions read:

For the sacrifice, first read aloud the scroll. Before the end of the words can be recited, quickly break the token. The spell shall be complete, and you must focus on the location of the fractured token. Your gift arrives.

Development: If curious PCs wish to break the token, move to Encounter 9: Trapping Esmeralda. This can happen before or after Encounter 8: A Little Traveling Madness. If the PCs choose to deliver the token intact to Maraven, then move to Encounter 8: A Little Traveling Madness and then the Conclusion.

8: A LITTLE TRAVELING MADNESS

This encounter occurs after the PCs have acquired the gift from Mullen. It happens as they travel back to Maraven (or Dyvers). It could happen on a road or in the fields surrounding the Gnarley. It happens regardless of whether or not they summoned Esmeralda. After a few hours of travel, read or paraphrase the following:

Your journey has been uneventful with few travelers hurrying past you. One thing does stand out: A brightly dressed gnome stands before a tree, seeming to talk with it. Hanging 3 feet off the ground is an orc, suspended from a bough by his hands and feet. The orc struggles and utters curses at the gnome, who tells him to shush.

The PCs may choose to sneak past the tree. The gnome, Tinlow Beaterbrain, has a Spot check of +5 and chases down the PCs if he sees them skulking. Tinlow is a cleric of Ralishaz, whose holy symbol can be identified on a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check. Worshipers of Ralishaz or his allies know this symbol instantly. Anyone listening to the conversation can tell that the gnome is doing all the talking, though he gives responses as if the tree spoke to him. In actuality, Tinlow is simply batty but has some moments of lucidity and portentousness, if one can sift out the nonsense. Tinlow has been in *DYV2-06 A Crime of Faith* and *VTF5-02 Reaping the Darkness*.

When the PCs gain Tinlow's attention (whether intentional or not), his jaw drops, and he speaks to them awe-struck. Read or paraphrase his reaction:

The gnome stops his conversation and gapes at you. "Oh my, yes," he says. "You carry the head of the hydra. How lucky you are to have the head of the hydra." He nods emphatically and then solemnly says, "You know that the funny thing about hydra heads is that you can chop one off, and a new one grows in its place. Are you ready to face the new head?"

When questioned, the gnome gives the following information:

- "The early fish gets the worm, but the late fish floats belly up. Ha, ha, ha."
- "The queen bee has the sweetest honey. If you are nice to the queen bee, she gives you some of her honey, but if you are mean to the queen bee, she stings you!"
- "I have captured the great Gnasher Barrock! He hangs from the tree, but he talks too much. My friend, the treant, captured him."
- "When danger threatens outside his shell, the turtle hides, but what happens when the danger threatens inside his shell? Where will he hide?"
- "With friends like these, who needs a sharp stick jammed in his brain?"

Tinlow is unable to clarify on any of his rambling. To his knowledge, he is truthful, though it should be obvious that the orc hanging in the tree is not the commander of the Blackthorn orcs, Gnasher Barrock. Tinlow tries to prove that he is a great wizard with a treant familiar by demonstrating the following:

- The gnome casts *ghost sound* to make the tree talk. It simply says, "The gnome's right, and that's all I have to say on the matter." Tinlow cannot cast *ghost sound* again, so that is all the tree has to say on the matter.
- He climbs up the tree, casts *aid*, and jumps to the ground, thus proving that Ralishaz grants him the ability to fly.
- He casts *stone shape* on the ground and creates a statue of a donkey with four heads, thus demonstrating his *summon planar ally*.
- He proves his power of *telepathy* by casting *sending* on a party member. He tells the character to think back to him but concludes that the character's mind cannot handle the immense power of Ralishaz.
- He demonstrates his ability to cast *explosive runes* by tracing some letters in the dirt with a stick and then shouting, "BOOM!"

The PCs don't really have a reason to attack Tinlow. He does not detect as evil and poses no threat to the group. If the PCs attack anyway, they easily overwhelm him. Killing the innocent gnome could be an evil action.

If Esmeralda is with the PCs, a Sense Motive check against her Bluff reveals that she is taken aback by Tinlow's comments. If she is traveling with an Alliance member PC, she tells him through a secret message (using Bluff) to silence the gnome before he reveals too much. She does not participate herself, still maintaining the ruse of the baker. She lets underlings do the job.

THE ORC

The orc is a Blackthorn raider named Kazzul. He saw the gnome traveling alone and decided to attack him. The gnome said a few magic words, and he stopped moving (DC 22 Spellcraft to note a *hold person* spell). The gnome then tied him up and used the branch as a pulley to haul him up. He is just an orc grunt who has no real knowledge of the troops within the Gnarley Forest. It was a mistake for him to venture this far out of the forest. The PCs could kill him just for being an evil orc (indeed, the orc might prefer that to his current humiliation).

Development: If curious PCs wish to break the token, move to Encounter 9: Trapping Esmeralda. If the PCs choose to deliver the token intact to Maraven, then read Conclusion A. If the PCs choose not to deliver the token, then read Conclusion C.

9: TRAPPING ESMERALDA (OPTIONAL)

Anyone who breaks the token activates the trap that captures Esmeralda Ingram (who is actually Timmorn Darkeyes; see **The Mousetrap** in the **Adventure Background** for more information). The trap obviously does not work if the PCs cast *dimensional lock* before breaking the token. Read or paraphrase the following:

With a sharp snap, the token crumbles into dust. Suddenly, a Rhennee woman wearing the accoutrements of a baker and flour on her face stands before you with a startled expression on her face. She looks around her and breathlessly says, "Gingerbread dwarven pie!"

The phrase triggers the crafted contingency spell she's had placed on her, which would teleport her to a safe house in the city of Dyvers.

There are two problems with her plan. If she is in an area under a *dimensional lock*, then her contingency spell is expended with her remaining in the same place. Even if she is able to teleport out, the cursed robe interferes with her *teleport*, and she is shunted to a different location. She is actually taken to Encounter 10: Cruel Winter, but the PCs aren't expected to know that, just that Esmeralda is no longer the PCs' concerns.

Note that Esmeralda is aware of how pawns are used. As a result, she does not hold a grudge against a group of PCs that she has only seen for 3 seconds. If Esmeralda escapes through this method, the PCs do not earn the AR award, **Disfavor of Timmorn Darkeyes**.

If the PCs follow the instructions, then Esmeralda is within their custody. Give the PCs a surprise round to perform their actions. Roll initiative, if necessary. If there is not a *dimensional lock* in place on Esmeralda's turn, she teleports away. See the **Tactics** section for more information. When Esmeralda realizes that she is not returning to her safe house, she looks surprised and dismayed, as befits an innocent baker suddenly finding herself in a strange land.

Despite being in such dire straits, Esmeralda is a cool, collected, and intelligent person. She excels at deception and attempts to ingratiate herself into the PCs' company until she can find out what is happening, playing on pity, if possible. It is suggested that you roll her deceptive skills ahead of time (Bluff +22, Sleight of Hand +32, and Disguise +32) or take 10 without rolling the dice. This may prevent unintentional metagaming. Esmeralda sticks to her

cover story, even if the PCs discover the truth. In conversation, the PCs learn the following from Esmeralda:

- Esmeralda is a simple Rhennee woman who has the good fortune of working in a bakery in Verbobonc City (false).
- She hasn't seen her family in years and is working for a living all on her own (true).
- Esmeralda doesn't know why she has been teleported here (true).
- Esmeralda has no idea why she would be offered as a sacrifice to the drow, but she suspects Jaffar, a former childhood friend, might be angry at her leaving the Rhennee barge and is seeking revenge (false).
- Esmeralda has friends in Dyvers and wants desperately to meet up with them so she can go back home (true).
- If the PCs would be kind enough to take her to Dyvers instead of Maraven, she'd be very grateful and may be able to put in a good word with what meager contacts she has (true, but a successful Sense Motive can determine that her reward is significant).

A DC 20 Knowledge (VTF) check does reveal that there is indeed a bakery in Verbobonc City that matches Esmeralda's description. If the check is 30 or more, the PC realizes that he's never seen her there.

If the PCs determine that Esmeralda is not who she says she is and press the issue, then Esmeralda's demeanor changes as she focuses less on the ruse. She still insists on her current identity, but her conversation does not center as much on her baker persona. Remaining as vague as possible, she imparts the following (all true):

- Esmeralda will be missed if she does not return to the city of Dyvers.
- Esmeralda has many friends throughout the Volverdyva Trade Route, and she can make it worth the PCs' while if they escort her to Dyvers.
- She won't hold it against the PCs for not escorting her to Dyvers, but she refuses to go with them to Maraven. It would end poorly, and her friends would be very unhappy with them if they force her to go to Maraven.

If the PCs figure out that Esmeralda is really Timmorn Darkeyes, conclude that she must be a very powerful figure in the Alliance, or discover that she is really a drow, then most of the pretense is dropped. Esmeralda

never claims to be part of the Alliance and never lets on that she's actually the Master Thief (not even to other members of the Alliance), making nebulous references to rival bakers. She tells the PCs the following (also all true):

- No doubt another baker wants her out of the way and is making a power play. This could result in trade being disrupted along the trade route, as the bakers are unable to deliver their goods to the right people.
- She knows how to placate some of the more violent elements of the area and offers to smooth things over with these people if the PCs escort her to Dyvers. She even demonstrates her understanding of the situation by listing the enmities by name (limited to the following list: **Enmity of Vincent Fleet** in *Dyv6-02 Into the Dragon's Maw*, **Enmity of Felbon** in *Dyv5-08 Casualties of War*, **Disfavor of Rumontas** in *VEL6-02 Scum and Villainy*, and **Tears of the Marid I-O-U** or **Enmity of the Tears of the Marid** in *TUS6-03 Spy Games*).
- As the person responsible for her predicament is undoubtedly relying on the PCs to not know the true nature of this task, Esmeralda is certain that this patron sees no need to offer the PCs a reward as generous as hers.

In addition, Esmeralda is willing to talk with any members of the Alliance, as well as members of the thieves' guilds mentioned in Preparation for Play, in private. The conversation is coded and contains several red herrings and innuendos. Any Alliance member who speaks publicly about being a member of the Alliance (and Esmeralda is not captured at the end of the module) is removed from the campaign per the meta-org certificate. The conversation between Alliance members covers the following:

- Esmeralda intends to find out who is attempting to sell her to the drow. That person will pay dearly for his betrayal.
- Esmeralda's usual escape route has been thwarted by this plan. She feels confident that she can make it to Dyvers on her own, but one never knows with the orcs rampaging throughout the area. She also doesn't know what other tricks this usurper has up his sleeve.
- She's heard of the name Barnaby, but she cannot place it. She plans to find out who has ties to this wizard.

- In addition to the reward offered to the rest of the PCs, Esmeralda swears to vouch for the Alliance PC when he pursues promotion (she counts as two recommendations instead of one).

DECEPTION

Esmeralda is in disguise, and PCs may try to see through it. As Esmeralda Ingram, her Disguise skill is only +30, since she is masquerading as a different race. If suspicious PCs ask her to rub her face, she uses her Sleight of Hand skill to rub harmless flour off onto the cloth. Anyone with ranks in Craft (alchemy) or Perform (acting) automatically recognizes grease paint mixed with the flour. Those who beat her Sleight of Hand check can see that she only made a cursory rub with the cloth.

Esmeralda does not allow herself to be touched and responds unfavorably toward those that try to touch her without permission. If the PCs get physical, then she attempts to flee, as outlined below.

At some point in the conversation, Esmeralda does tell the PCs that her brother used to be a good man; he would keep her warm on the barge (“or boat for landed folk”) with an axebeak blanket. This is her way of announcing her affiliation to those who would recognize her (or use a more appropriate phrase as befits the situation). Members of the Alliance may respond according to **Player's Handout 5** to announce their affiliation. Esmeralda knows she can relax around them (or at least as much as one can relax in an organization devoted to thievery, bribery, and assassinations).

Esmeralda is under the effects of a *nondetection* spell due to a potion. Unfortunately, the potions she keeps are back in Dyvers. The current one wears off in 2 hours. Any attempts to detect her alignment or the presence of magic in those 2 hours must make a caster check of 22 or are thwarted. After that, she radiates the following auras:

- chopping knife (*blade of deception*; moderate illusion)
- rolled-up sleeves (*bracers of armor*; moderate conjuration; +3 *buckler*)
- apron strings (*belt of giant strength*; moderate transmutation)
- chef's hat (*hat of protection*; faint abjuration)
- caked flour around knuckles (*gloves of dexterity*; moderate transmutation; *ring of freedom of movement*; moderate abjuration; *ring of mental fortitude*; strong abjuration)
- simple shoes (*boots of speed*; moderate transmutation)
- cloak (*cloak of resistance*; faint abjuration)

- shirt and pants (*robe of blending*; moderate illusion)
- eyes (*eyes of the eagle*; faint divination)
- waterskin (*potion of reduce person*; faint transmutation)
- apron (*Daazzikx's vest*; moderate abjuration)
- rolling pin (*rod of avoidance*; strong abjuration)
- tarnished silver brooch (*scarab of invulnerability*; strong transmutation)

ATTACKING ESMERALDA

Esmeralda does not know who is responsible for her predicament, but she knows that she is no position to face him at the current time. She plans to return to Dyvers and shake down her contacts for information. She doesn't care if the PCs escort her to Dyvers or not, but she is adamant about not being taken to Maraven. If the PCs intend to take her to Maraven, then she attempts to flee. Without her shadow companion or other allies, Esmeralda does not hope to defeat a group of powerful adventurers, but with her shadowdancer abilities (which are not hampered by the cursed robe) and considerable magic items, the odds are against the PCs that they can subdue her.

Esmeralda has no qualms about killing the PCs, but she is smart enough to know when to fight and when to run. She only fights if she is cornered and absolutely cannot flee. If Esmeralda escapes, then the PCs do not see her again for this adventure. If the PCs have no idea who she is, she does not hold it against them for trying. The PCs do not earn the **Disfavor of Timmorn** on this AR.

If the PCs do subdue Esmeralda, then they must transport her to Maraven discreetly. Failure to hide Esmeralda's identity (real or disguised) triggers Encounter 11: An Offer You Can't Refuse.

All APLs

Esmeralda Ingram: female drow rogue 7/shadowdancer 10; hp 107; Appendix 1.

Treasure: The PCs can gain the following treasure here:

All APLs: L: 8, C: 400, M: *blade of deception* (1651 gp), *bracers of armor +8* (5333 gp), *+3 buckler* (763 gp), *belt of giant strength +4* (1333 gp), *hat of protection +5* (8333 gp), *ring of freedom of movement* (3333 gp), *boots of speed* (1000 gp), *Daazzix's vest* (2083 gp), *gloves of dexterity +6* (2666 gp), *cloak of resistance +5* (2083 gp), *rod of avoidance* (833 gp), *ring of mental fortitude* (9166 gp), *scarab of invulnerability* (3333 gp), *robe of blending* (2500 gp), *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *potion of reduce person* (20 gp); Total 45052 gp.

Tactics when first summoned

If the PCs are simply interested in reading the scroll and breaking the token, then don't worry about initiative. If the PCs plan to attack or have conditions based on what happens, then the rounds would happen as such (unless circumstances present themselves where Esmeralda would be better served with a different tactic):

Surprise round: Esmeralda is surprised. One PC readies an action to break the token just before another PC finishes reading the scroll.

First round: Esmeralda says, "Gingerbread dwarven pie," which triggers her contingency spell. If she is barred from teleporting out, then she draws her *rod of avoidance* (which looks like a rolling pin) and activates it with a standard action to add +15 to her AC (since the hat and the rod do not stack). If she has been attacked before her action, she activates her *scarab of invulnerability* as a free action. She waits the entire round to see if the PCs mean her harm. If they do not attack her, then she plays the innocent victim, begging that they don't hurt her and wondering where she is. If any PC attacks her, then combat continues.

Second round: Being attacked, Esmeralda activates her *boots of speed* and runs full speed away from her captors. She ends her movement within 5 feet of a shadow of a tree or some high grass. If she has not activated the *scarab of invulnerability* already, she activates it now.

Third round: She hides in plain sight, using the nearby shadows. She spends a move action to move farther away, taking -5 to her Hide and Move Silently checks to move at full.

Fourth round: Fully hidden, she activates her final use of the *rod of avoidance* and takes another move action to move farther away.

Fifth round: If the PCs are unable to keep up, she takes the -20 to Hide and Move Silently to run as fast as she can. If the PCs are able to follow her (fast tracking, tremorsense, etc.), she attempts to shadow jump along a tangent. By now, she should succeed at the task as she has left the *dimensional lock*.

Tactics when attacked

If the PCs try to get physical with Esmeralda, she simply tries to flee. She does not stick around to fight; one does not become Master Thief by charging headlong into every danger that rears its head. Use most of the tactics above, but keep in mind that she has probably expended one use of her *scarab of invulnerability* and *rod of avoidance* when she first arrived. Instead of the second use of the rod, Esmeralda

may decide to improve her chances of hiding by quaffing her *potion of reduce person*.

ESCORTING ESMERALDA

If the PCs agree to escort Esmeralda, continue with the adventure. There is no danger on the way (unless they trigger Encounter 10: Cruel Winter), so they can talk with each other. She maintains her disguise, even if the PCs know that she's a drow.

It is likely the trip will take more than one day. When the group beds down for the night, Esmeralda sneaks off and performs her revelry in a hidden spot. She returns 4 hours later and pretends to sleep for the rest of the night.

TELEPORTING ESMERALDA

It is not immediately obvious, but Esmeralda is wearing a cursed *robe of blending* that is designed to interfere with extra-dimensional mobility. It may not become apparent unless the PCs try to remove the robe. The robe can be removed with a *remove curse* or *break enchantment*. Once the robe is free of the curse, Esmeralda can be safely teleported (though she cannot use her contingency, as she already wasted that in the *dimensional lock*).

Anyone who teleports (including *greater teleport*) with the cursed robe in the group is automatically subjected to a mishap. This mishap places the caster and his group in the middle of the Gnarley Forest, where they are set upon by the minions of Winter. Proceed to Encounter 10: Cruel Winter if this happens. This might leave a group behind to report back to Maraven.

Development: If the PCs agree to escort Esmeralda to Dyvers, read Conclusion B. If the PCs subdue Esmeralda and deliver her discreetly to Lord Siggoran, read Conclusion D. If the PCs subdue Esmeralda and are not discreet in delivering her to Maraven, move to Encounter 11: An Offer You Can't Refuse. If the PCs attempt to *teleport* with the cursed *robe of blending*, move to Encounter 10: Cruel Winter.

10: CRUEL WINTER (OPTIONAL)

This encounter only happens if the PCs attempt to teleport with Esmeralda's cursed robe still intact. Due to the magic of the robe, the *teleport* suffers an immediate mishap, which lands the caster and his passengers in the middle of the Gnarley Forest. This is where Esmeralda would be shunted to if she were

allowed to activate the contingency spell that was cast on her. Faced with undead foes that could seek her out when she hides, Esmeralda would perish in an icy grave if left alone here. Since *greater teleport* prevents mishaps, the spell simply returns the PCs to the current location.

The PCs may not be aware that they are in the Gnarley Forest due to the frigid conditions. The PCs may make a Knowledge (geography) check of DC 20, a Knowledge (VTF) check of DC 15, or a Knowledge (history) check or Bardic Knowledge check of DC 12 to remember that a large section of the normally temperate Gnarley Forest has fallen into an unnatural winter, which may clue them into location. Otherwise, the PCs could simply be in any arctic location.

When the PCs arrive, read the following:

After you complete your incantation, you leave your current location and find yourself somewhere else. A biting wind howls in your face, as you stand knee-deep in snow. Gnarled, bare trees surround you as far as the eye can see, which is not saying much due to the blinding snow. The wind carries a voice to you that pleads, "Kill me." You make out the faces of elves and orcs through the snow, hunger looming in their empty eyes.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Spectres (2): hp 45 each; *Monster Manual* 232.

APL 10 (EL 11)

Dread Wraith: hp 104; *Monster Manual* 257.

APL 12 (EL 13)

Dread Wraiths (2): hp 104 each; *Monster Manual* 257.

APL 14 (EL 15)

Dread Wraiths (4): hp 104 each; *Monster Manual* 257.

The wind carries the cry of Winter, the man responsible for the unnatural weather in the Gnarley Forest. The voice is impossible to follow, as it shifts with the wind. The undead are servants of Winter.

The PCs may choose to teleport out of the Gnarley or walk out of the Gnarley. If they choose to teleport, they cannot bring Esmeralda with them, as the robe interferes with the spell again, depositing them back at this location. The PCs may leave her to her fate, which does kill her. Due to the cloud cover and lack of recognizable landmarks, navigating out of the forest is a difficult affair. The lead PC must succeed at a DC 40 Survival check to make it to Dyvers (or Maraven) in a

timely fashion with no TU penalty. A DC 30 Survival check only expends an extra TU as they make their way out of the Gnarley. Anything less than 30 results in spending 2 TUs in escaping the Gnarley Forest. You may assign appropriate circumstance bonuses for creative solutions, such as casting *fly* so the lead character can position himself above the clouds and ascertain the correct direction. These TUs are not adventuring TUs and thus must be marked down accordingly on the AR.

The rules for surviving freezing weather (with severe cold at night) apply here (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 302).

Unless the entire group can teleport with Esmeralda (or a caster with multiple instances of teleport gathers the group), the other group has to return to Maraven to report on the task.

Development: If the PCs agree to escort Esmeralda to Dyvers, read Conclusion B. If the PCs subdue Esmeralda and deliver her discreetly to Lord Siggoran, read Conclusion D. If the PCs subdue Esmeralda and are not discreet in delivering her to Maraven, move to Encounter 11: An Offer You Can't Refuse.

11: AN OFFER YOU CAN'T REFUSE (OPTIONAL)

This encounter happens only if the PCs escort Esmeralda into Maraven without hiding her identity (either real or fake). If the PCs take the effort of hiding Esmeralda, if the PCs don't take Esmeralda to Maraven, or if the PCs don't even have Esmeralda, then ignore this encounter. As the PCs enter Maraven with Esmeralda in plain view, read or paraphrase the following:

Few people pay you much attention as you enter Maraven, but the ones that do approach from the alleys. Three men wearing dark leathers and sporting daggers on their belts take one look at Esmeralda and motion to you. One of the men, a disfigured half-elf with a rope scar around his neck says, "That's, uh, a very interesting package you bring to this town. I admire your chutzpah, but I think it's time you put some serious thought into living. Hand her over to us, and you might be lucky. This whole thing could just be chalked up to a misunderstanding." The three men look at you expectantly.

The half-elf's name is Karn, and he is a member of the Footpad's Guild within the Alliance. He is one of the

few people who recognize Esmeralda, including her disguise. He's not sure how the PCs were lucky enough to capture the Master Thief, but he's looking to cash in on the opportunity. If he is instrumental in the rescue of the Master Thief, then he can be assured of some nice rewards.

Karn's first option is to simply intimidate the PCs. As no one would be so foolish as to parade the Master Thief in public, Karn figures the PCs are simply ignorant of her importance. He stresses this in the following pieces of information:

- That woman has more friends than the PCs realize. She's been like a mother to Karn and his friends.
- Karn won't pay the PCs anything or owe them any favors. In his eyes, the PCs might get off scot-free if they don't end up chopped and sown to the sea.
- Karn isn't going to fight the PCs. He's no fool. The PCs should be aware that the woman WILL be free, and the PCs will have to watch their backs.
- Who she is isn't important. What is important is that the PCs are in a position to make some very powerful enemies. Karn is offering a chance to wiggle out of that position, but he can't make any guarantees.

While Karn speaks in a threatening tone, he does not draw a weapon, not even to defend himself. He knows that he's done nothing illegal. If the PCs attack Karn and his men, then they are arrested for assault and/or drawing a weapon. Consult the laws of Dyvers at the end of this adventure. Karn simply tells the PCs that he'll see them later. The PCs can report Karn's threat to the Maravan constabulary, but they receive no sympathy. The constables grew up in a city where those who serve the Alliance literally get away with murder, and they've learned the most lucrative way of coping with the Alliance. They treat the PCs as the criminals for starting a fight.

If the PCs hand Esmeralda over to Karn, then they do not receive the **Disfavor of Timmorn Darkeyes**. She chalks it up to the PCs being ignorant. Since the PCs have demonstrated a show of respect, she lets the incident slide, but she does not offer the PCs the **Forgiveness of Timmorn Darkeyes** or the **Gratitude of Timmorn Darkeyes** either.

If the PCs do not hand Esmeralda over to Karn, he melts back into the shadows. He contacts a few people, and Esmeralda is freed that same day. As the PCs purposely ignored Karn's offer of amnesty, they have now gained the enmity of the Master Thief. She places a contract on the PCs' heads throughout all the thieves'

guilds within the Volverdyva Trade Route. The PCs have earned the **Disfavor of Timmorn Darkeyes**.

Development: If the PCs agree to hand Esmeralda to Karn, read Conclusion C. If the PCs continue to deliver her to Lord Siggoran, read Conclusion D.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION A

This conclusion happens if the PCs bring the gift to Siggoran.

For a land being ravaged by orcs, goblinoids, and giants, your trip to the port city of Maraven has been without incident. Lord Siggoran takes your package and pays you as per Lord Herall's promise. He stares blankly at the wooden token and the scroll and says, "Huh, seems kind of insignificant for appeasing the drow, but I suppose big treasure can be in small packages. Whatever it is, I'm just glad that it'll help us in our war with the orcs. You guys are all right! I'll buy you a drink."

The PCs earn the **Gratitude of House Herall**.

CONCLUSION B

This conclusion happens if Esmeralda Ingram has been summoned, and the PCs agree to escort her to Dyvers.

You arrive at the bustling city of Dyvers with minimal trouble. As you near the city walls, Esmeralda's demeanor shifts. No longer walking like a simple baker girl, Esmeralda leads you along the walls away from the gate. She stops at a sizable outcropping. For the first time in days, Esmeralda grins, but there is no sweetness in the smile.

She looks at you and says boldly, "You've served me well. I won't forget this. Fare well." Her eyes flash purple briefly, and she steps behind the outcropping. Her form melds into the shadow, and Esmeralda vanishes.

The PCs earn **Gratitude of Timmorn Darkeyes** and **Forgiveness of Timmorn Darkeyes**.

Continue on to Conclusion C.

CONCLUSION C

This conclusion happens if Esmeralda Ingram has been summoned and she flees. It also happens if the PCs decide not to turn over the package (which can happen concomitantly with Conclusion B).

For a land being ravaged by orcs, goblinoids, and giants, your trip to the port city of Maraven has been without incident. Lord Siggoran meets with you to pay you as per Lord Herall's promise. Upon learning that he cannot receive the package, he shrugs noncommittally. He says, "Well, I'm sure it could have helped us against the orcs, but we have a mighty fine military. Why, in the past 2 years it has fought more than it ever has in the previous decade! Ha, ha, I'm joking, of course. Well, almost. I'm sure we'll still pull through. What's the worst that can happen? The orcs will sack Dyvers and make me into a eunuch slave? I'd like to see them try!" He laughs jovially at his joke, but you couldn't help but notice a look of worry cross his face.

The PCs receive the bounty for the *Just Desert* but do not receive **Gratitude of House Herall**.

CONCLUSION D

This conclusion happens if Esmeralda Ingram has been summoned, and the PCs forcibly took her (or her corpse) to Maraven.

For a land being ravaged by orcs, goblinoids, and giants, your trip to the port city of Maraven has been without incident. Lord Siggoran meets with you to pay you as per Lord Herall's promise. Upon seeing Esmeralda Ingram, Lord Siggoran's face turns ashen. "May the gods strike me dead," he swears. He remembers that you are there and gives a weak, forced chuckle, "Ha, ha, I'm kidding, of course. Here's that money as promised."

Lord Siggoran quickly takes a sack and wraps it around Esmeralda's head. He looks worriedly at you and says, "You know, you folks might want to go take a vacation for a while. I suggest Rookroost or Admunfort. You know, someplace safe." Without saying another word, he quickly wraps Esmeralda up in some rags and hides the baker.

If the PCs were able to smuggle Esmeralda into Maraven without being spotted by the Alliance thugs, then they do not earn the **Disfavor of Timmorn Darkeys**. If Encounter 11: An Offer You Can't Refuse did run, then the PCs gain the **Disfavor of Timmorn Darkeys**.

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.

6: Getting Your Just Deserts

Defeating the Jaundiced Barb, Palaver, and the slaad ally (if applicable)

APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP
APL 12	420 XP
APL 14	450 XP

6: Getting Your Just Deserts

Avoiding or surviving the exploding pirates

APL 8	150 XP
APL 10	210 XP
APL 12	300 XP
APL 14	390 XP

6: Getting Your Just Deserts

Surviving the trap on the Jaundiced Barb's door

APL 8	120 XP
APL 10	120 XP
APL 12	120 XP
APL 14	120 XP

7: Getting the Goods

Acquiring the gift from Mullen

APL 8	300 XP
APL 10	360 XP
APL 12	420 XP
APL 14	480 XP

Story Award

Deciding the fate of the gift to the drow

APL 8	225 XP
APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	315 XP
APL 14	360 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 8	1,125 XP
APL 10	1,350 XP
APL 12	1,575 XP
APL 14	1,800 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.

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

1: The Proposition

APL 8: Coin: 750 gp.

APL 10: Coin: 750 gp.

APL 12: Coin: 750 gp.

APL 14: Coin: 750 gp.

4: High Piracy

All APL: Loot 50 gp; Total 50 gp.

6: Getting Your Just Deserts

APL 8: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+1 spiked full plate* (225 gp), *+1 heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+1 cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+1 ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 1361 gp.

APL 10: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+1 retaliation spiked full plate* (891 gp), *+1 heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+1 cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+1 ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 2028 gp.

APL 12: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+1 retaliation spiked full plate* (891 gp), *+1 heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+1 cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+1 ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *metamagic rod of silence* (916 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 2944 gp.

APL 14: L: 387, C: 0, M: *+1 retaliation spiked full plate* (891 gp), *+1 heavy steel shield* (97 gp), *+1 cloak of resistance* (83 gp), *+1 ring of protection* (166 gp), *peripart of wisdom +2* (333 gp), *metamagic rod of silence* (916 gp), *elixir of reckoning* (68 gp); Total 2944 gp.

7: Getting the Goods

APL 8: L: 21, C: 21, M: *+1 composite longbow (+3 Str)* (141 gp), *+1 great swordbow (+4 Str)* (595 gp), *+1 chain shirt* (187 gp); Total 967.

APL 10: L: 41, C: 21, M: 2 *+1 composite longbow (+3 Str)* (141 gp each), *+1 great swordbow (+4 Str)* (595 gp), *+1 chain shirt* (187 gp); Total 1128 gp.

APL 12: L: 99, C: 21, M: 5 *+1 composite longbow (+3 Str)* (141 gp each), *+1 flaming great swordbow (+5 Str)* (1604 gp), *+1 chain shirt* (187 gp), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp); Total magic: 2953.

APL 14: L: 157, C: 21, M: 8 *+1 composite longbow (+3 Str)* (141 gp each), *+1 flaming bane (elf) great swordbow (+5 Str)* (3270 gp), *+1 chain shirt* (187 gp), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp); Total magic: 5103.

9: Trapping Esmeralda

All APLs: L: 8, C: 400, M: *blade of deception* (1651 gp), *bracers of armor +8* (5333 gp), *+3 buckler* (763 gp), *belt of giant strength +4* (1333 gp), *hat of protection +5* (8333 gp), *ring of freedom of movement* (3333 gp), *boots of speed* (1000 gp), *Daazzix's vest* (2083 gp), *gloves of dexterity +6* (2666 gp), *cloak of resistance +5* (2083 gp), *rod of avoidance* (833 gp), *ring of mental fortitude* (9166 gp), *scarab of invulnerability* (3333 gp), *robe of blending* (2500 gp), *eyes of the eagle* (208 gp), *potion of reduce person* (20 gp); Total 45052 gp.

Treasure Cap

APL 8	1,300 gp
APL 10	2,300 gp
APL 12	3,300 gp
APL 14	6,600 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 8	1,300 gp
APL 10	2,300 gp
APL 12	3,300 gp
APL 14	6,600 gp

APPENDIX 1: ALL APLS

6: GETTING YOUR JUST DESERTS

PIRATE CR 1

Male human Commoner 1
CN Medium Humanoid (human)
Init +2; **Senses** Listen -1, Spot -1
Languages Common

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp 7 (1 HD)

Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** -1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), base movement 30ft.;

Melee club +1 (1d6+1)

Ranged weapon +2 (1d6+1)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1

Combat Gear belaying pin (club)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 10

SQ Imbided an *elixir of reckoning* (2, 3, 4, or 5 pirates).

Feats Skill Focus (Profession [sailor]), Skill Focus (Climb).

Skills Climb +8, Profession (sailor) +6.

Possessions combat gear plus bottle of rum.

9: TRAPPING ESMERALDA

ESMERALDA INGRAM CR 17

Female drow rogue 7/shadowdancer 10

NE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +10; **Senses** Listen +15, Spot +21, Darkvision 120 feet

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Kuo-Toan, Undercommon

AC 37, touch 25, flat-footed 37

hp 107 (7d6 + 10d8 HD)

Immune enchantment, sleep

Resist ; **SR** 33

Fort +10, **Ref** +27, **Will** +10 (+12 against spells and spell-like effects)

Weakness

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), base movement 30 ft.;

Melee Blade of Deception +25/+20/+15 (1d8+5)

Ranged black stiletto +22/+17/+12 (1d4+2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +14

Special Actions sneak attack +4d6

Combat Gear *blade of deception*, 2 black stilettos, *bracers of armor* +8, +3 *buckler*, *belt of giant strength* +4, *hat of protection* +5*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *boots of speed*, *Daazzix's vest**, *gloves of dexterity* +6, *cloak of resistance* +5, *rod of avoidance**, *ring of mental fortitude**, *scarab of invulnerability**

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th):

2nd—*darkness*

1st—*faerie fire*

0th—*dancing lights*

‡ Already cast

Abilities Str 15, Dex 30, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 11, Cha 15

SQ Light Blindness, Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2, Improved Evasion, Trapfinding, Defensive Roll, Slippery Mind, Hide in Plain Sight, Summon Shadow, Shadow Jump

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Elusive Target*, Mobility, Leadership, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +22, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +10, Disable Device +9, Disguise +32, Escape Artist +30 (+32 vs. rope), Hide +42, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (VTF) +14, Listen +15, Move Silently +32, Open Lock +15, Perform (dance) +7, Search +12, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +32, Spot +21, Tumble +27, Use Rope +15.

Possessions combat gear plus *robe of blending*, *eyes of the eagle*, *potion of reduce person*, masterwork thieves' tools, 2,400 gp.

6: GETTING YOUR JUST DESERTS

THE JAUNDICED BARB

CR 11

Male human cleric 13

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4

Aura Strong evil, chaos

Languages Common

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23

hp 81 (13 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +15

Speed 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base movement 30 ft.;

Melee masterwork short sword +13/+8 (1d6+3) or armor spikes +12/+7 (1d6+3)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +10 (1d8)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Martial Proficiency (short sword), Spontaneous Casting (inflict)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th):

7th—*screen*^d.

6th—*harm*.

5th—*false vision*^d.

4th—*confusion*^d, *castigate** (DC 18).

3rd—*invisibility purge*, *prayer*.

2nd—*invisibility*^d, *deific vengeance** (DC 16), *silence*, *silent summon monster I*, *silent cure light wounds*.

1st—*bless*, *divine favor*, *summon monster I*, *doom* (x2) (DC 15), *cure light wounds*.

0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *resistance* (x4).

D: Domain spell. Deity: Kurell. Domains: Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills), Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level)

‡ Already cast *disguise self*, *freedom of movement*, *water breathing*, *mislead*, *iron silence**, *magic circle against law*, *bull's strength*, consumed *elixir of reckoning*.

Abilities Str 12 (16), Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 12

Feats Combat Casting, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Persuasive, Craft Wondrous Item

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +17, Disguise +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Move Silently +0, Profession (sailor) +15, Spellcraft +6.

Possessions spyglass, Masterwork short sword, masterwork crossbow, +1 *spiked full plate*, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 *cloak of resistance*, +1 *ring of protection*, +2 *periapt of wisdom*

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Special note on spells: At APL 8, the Jaundiced Barb has been caught off guard. While he is still a formidable foe, he has expended many of his spells scrying on his enemies, sending threatening messages to his enemies, and communing with Kurell on the best way to humiliate his enemies. His obsession with revenge could be his downfall.

The Jaundiced Barb is especially in a foul mood, as he recently discovered that his gibbering moulder ally, Palaver, *can* pass away through old age.

7: GETTING THE GOODS

MULLEN

CR 8

Male half-orc Barbarian 5/Fighter 3

CN Medium humanoid (half-orc)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +0

Languages Common, Orc

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16

hp 74 (5d12 + 3d10 + 16 HD)

Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft. in light (8 squares), base movement 40 ft.;

Melee +1 *great swordbow** (+4 Str) +13/+8 (2d6+7) or greataxe +12/+7 (1d12+6) or short sword +12/+7 (1d6+4)

Ranged +1 *great swordbow* (+4 Str) +10/+5 (1d8+5)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +12

Special Actions Rage

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge

Feats Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Power Attack, Track

Skills Climb +14, Intimidate +11, Listen+8, Survival +8,

Possessions the package, +1 *great swordbow** (+4 Str), greataxe, +1 *chain shirt*, greataxe, short sword

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ARCHER

CR 8

Male human fighter 8

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +5

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 68 (8d10 + 16HD)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. in medium (4 squares), base movement 20 ft.;

Melee greataxe +11/+6 (1d12+4) or heavy flail +11/+6 (1d10+4) or dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +14/+9 (1d8+6) or +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +12/+12/+7 (1d8+6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Shot on the Run, Rapid Shot

Abilities Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (comp longbow), Weapon Specialization (comp longbow), Greater Weapon Specialization (comp longbow)

Skills Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +5

Possessions camping gear, breastplate, +1
composite longbow (+3 Str), heavy flail, dagger

6: GETTING YOUR JUST DESERTS**THE JAUNDICED BARB** CR 13

Male human cleric 13
 CE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Aura Strong evil, chaos

Languages Common

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23

hp 93 (13 +13 HD)

SR 25

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +15

Speed 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base movement 30 ft.;

Melee *greater magic weapon* short sword +15/+10 (1d6+6) or armor spikes +12/+7 (1d6+3)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +10 (1d8)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Martial Proficiency (short sword), Spontaneous Casting (inflict)

Combat Gear.

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th):

7th—*screen*^d, *silent harm* (DC 20).

6th—*silent slay living* (DC 19), *greater dispel magic*.

5th—*false vision*^d, *greater command* (DC 19), *righteous might*.

4th—*chaos hammer*^d (DC 18), *castigate** (DC 18), *divine power*, *spell immunity*.

3rd—*silent deific vengeance** (DC 16), *invisibility purge*, *prayer*, *searing light*.

2nd—*invisibility*^d, *deific vengeance** (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16), *silent summon monster I*, *silent cure light wounds*.

1st—*bless*, *divine favor*, *summon monster I*, *doom* (x2) (DC 15), *cure light wounds*.

0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *resistance* (x4).

D: Domain spell. Deity: Kurell. Domains: Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills), Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level)

‡ Already cast *disguise self*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *water breathing*, *mislead*, *nondetection*, *iron silence**, *bull's strength*, *spell resistance*, consumed *elixir of reckoning*.

Abilities Str 12 (16), Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 12

Feats Combat Casting, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Persuasive, Craft Wondrous Item

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +17, Disguise +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Move Silently +0, Profession (sailor) +15, Spellcraft +6.

Possessions spyglass, Masterwork short sword, masterwork crossbow, +1 *retaliation** *spiked full plate*, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 *cloak of resistance*, +1 *ring of protection*, +2 *periapt of wisdom*

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

7: GETTING THE GOODS**MULLEN** CR 10

Male half-orc Barbarian 5/Fighter 5
 CN Medium humanoid (half-orc)
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +0

Languages Common, Orc

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16

hp 90 (5d12 + 5d10 + 20 HD)

Fort +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Speed 40 ft. in light (8 squares), base movement 40 ft.;

Melee +1 *great swordbow* (+4 Str) +16/+11 (2d6+9) or greataxe +14/+9 (1d12+6) or short sword +14/+9 (1d6+4)

Ranged +1 *great swordbow* (+4 Str) +12/+7 (1d8+5)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +14

Special Actions Rage

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge

Feats Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword)

Skills Climb +16, Intimidate +13, Listen+8, Survival +8,

Possessions the package, +1 *great swordbow** (+4 Str), greataxe, +1 *chain shirt*, greataxe, short sword
 * see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ARCHER CR 8

Male human fighter 8
 CN Medium humanoid (human)
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +5

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 68 (8d10 + 16HD)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Weakness

Speed 20 ft. in medium (4 squares), base movement 20 ft.;

Melee greataxe +11/+6 (1d12+4) or heavy flail +11/+6 (1d10+4) or dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +14/+9 (1d8+6) or +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +12/+12/+7 (1d8+6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Shot on the Run, Rapid Shot

Combat Gear

Abilities Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (comp longbow), Weapon Specialization (comp longbow), Greater Weapon Specialization (comp longbow)

Skills Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +5

Possessions camping gear, breastplate, +1
composite longbow (+3 Str), heavy flail, dagger

6: GETTING YOUR JUST DESERTS

THE JAUNDICED BARB

CR 13

Male human cleric 13

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4

Aura Strong evil, chaos

Languages Common

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23

hp 93 (13 +13 HD)

SR 25

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +15

Speed 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base movement 30 ft.;

Melee *greater magic weapon* short sword +15/+10 (1d6+6) or armor spikes +12/+7 (1d6+3)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +10 (1d8)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; Grp +12

Atk Options Martial Proficiency (short sword), Spontaneous Casting (inflict)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th):

7th—*screen*^d, *word of chaos* (DC 21).6th—silent *slay living* (DC 19), *greater dispel magic*.5th—*false vision*^d, *greater command* (DC 19), *righteous might*.4th—*chaos hammer*^d (DC 18), *castigate** (DC 18), *divine power*, *spell immunity*.3rd—silent *deific vengeance** (DC 16), *invisibility purge*, *prayer*, *searing light*.2nd—*invisibility*^d, *deific vengeance** (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16), silent *summon monster I*, silent *cure light wounds*.1st—*bliss*, *divine favor*, *summon monster I*, *doom* (x2) (DC 15), *cure light wounds*.0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *resistance* (x4).

D: Domain spell. Deity: Kurell. Domains: Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills), Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level)

‡ Already cast *disguise self*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *water breathing*, *mislead*, *nondetection*, *iron silence**, *bull's strength*, *spell resistance*, consumed *elixir of reckoning*.

Abilities Str 12 (16), Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 12

Feats Combat Casting, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Persuasive, Craft Wondrous Item

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +17, Disguise +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Move Silently +0, Profession (sailor) +15, Spellcraft +6.

Possessions spyglass, Masterwork short sword, masterwork crossbow, +1 *retaliation** *spiked full plate*, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 *cloak of resistance*, +1 *ring of protection*, +2 *periapt of wisdom*, *metamagic rod of silence*.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

PALAVER

CR 7

Advanced gibbering moulder

CN Large aberration

Init +0; Senses Listen +9, Spot +10

Languages Common

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19

hp 168 (12d8 + 96 HD); DR 5/bludgeoning

Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +9

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), base movement 10 ft., swim 20 ft.;

Melee six bites +13 (1d2) and spittle +8 ranged touch (1d6 acid plus blindness)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; Grp +21

Atk Options spittle, improved grab, blood drain, engulf

Special Actions gibbering, ground manipulation

Abilities Str 18, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 15

SQ amorphous

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Ability Focus (gibber), Ability Focus (engulf), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Swim +14.

Gibbering (Su) As soon as Palaver spots something edible (not a crew member), it begins a constant gibbering as a free action. All creatures (other than moulthers) within a 60-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be affected as though by a *confusion* spell for 1d2 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting compulsion effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by Palaver's gibbering for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, Palaver must hit with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.**Blood Drain (Ex)** On a successful grapple check after grabbing, that mouth attaches to the opponent. It automatically deals bite damage and drains blood, dealing 1 point of Constitution damage each round. A mouth can be ripped off (dealing 1 point of damage) with a DC 12 Strength check or severed by a successful sunder attempt (the mouth has 2 hit points). A severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds after such an attack. A creature whose Constitution is reduced to 0 is killed.**Engulf (Ex)** Palaver can try to engulf a Large or smaller opponent grabbed by three or more mouths. The opponent must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or fall and be engulfed. In the next round, Palaver makes twelve bite attacks instead of six (each with a +13 attack bonus). An engulfed creature cannot attack Palaver from within. The

previously attached mouths are now free to attack others. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Amorphous (Ex) Palaver is not subject to critical hits. It cannot be flanked.

Skills: Thanks to its multiple eyes, Palaver has a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. Palaver has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

7: GETTING THE GOODS

MULLEN

CR 12

Male half-orc Barbarian 7/Fighter 5
CN Medium humanoid (half-orc)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +10, Spot +0

Languages Common, Orc

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16

hp 108 (7d12 + 5d10 + 24 HD) **DR** 1/-

Fort +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Speed 40 ft. in light (8 squares), base movement 40 ft.;

Melee +1 *flaming great swordbow** (+5 Str) +19/+14/+9 (2d6+10 + 1d6 fire) or greataxe +17/+12/+7 (1d12+7) or short sword +17/+12/+7 (1d6+5)

Ranged +1 *flaming great swordbow* (+5 Str) +14/+9/+4 (1d8+6 + 1d6 fire)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +17

Special Actions Rage

Abilities Str 21, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge

Feats Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword)

Skills Climb +19, Intimidate +15, Listen+8, Survival +10

Possessions the package, +1 *flaming great swordbow** (+5 Str), greataxe, +1 *chain shirt*, greataxe, short sword, *gauntlets of ogre power*

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ARCHER

CR 8

Male human fighter 8
CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +5

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 68 (8d10 + 16HD)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Weakness

Speed 20 ft. in medium (4 squares), base movement 20 ft.;

Melee greataxe +11/+6 (1d12+4) or heavy flail +11/+6 (1d10+4) or dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +14/+9 (1d8+6) or +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +12/+12/+7 (1d8+6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Shot on the Run, Rapid Shot

Combat Gear

Abilities Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (comp longbow), Weapon Specialization (comp longbow), Greater Weapon Specialization (comp longbow)

Skills Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +5

Possessions camping gear, breastplate, +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str), heavy flail, dagger

6: GETTING YOUR JUST DESERTS

THE JAUNDICED BARB

CR 13

Male human cleric 13
 CE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Aura Strong evil, chaos

Languages Common

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23

hp 93 (13 +13 HD)

SR 25

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +15

Speed 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base movement 30 ft.;

Melee *greater magic weapon* short sword +15/+10 (1d6+6) or armor spikes +12/+7 (1d6+3)

Ranged masterwork light crossbow +10 (1d8)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12

Atk Options Martial Proficiency (short sword), Spontaneous Casting (inflict)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th):

7th—*screen*^d, *word of chaos* (DC 21).

6th—silent *slay living* (DC 19), *greater dispel magic*.

5th—*false vision*^d, *greater command* (DC 19), *righteous might*.

4th—*chaos hammer*^d (DC 18), *castigate** (DC 18), *divine power*, *spell immunity*.

3rd—silent *deific vengeance** (DC 16), *invisibility purge*, *prayer*, *searing light*.

2nd—*invisibility*^d, *deific vengeance** (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16), *silent summon monster I*, *silent cure light wounds*.

1st—*bliss*, *divine favor*, *summon monster I*, *doom* (x2) (DC 15), *cure light wounds*.

0—*create water*, *detect magic*, *resistance* (x4).

D: Domain spell. Deity: Kurell. Domains: Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills), Chaos (cast chaos spells at +1 caster level)

† Already cast *disguise self*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon*, *water breathing*, *mislead*, *nondetection*, *iron silence**, *bull's strength*, *spell resistance*, *consumed elixir of reckoning*.

Abilities Str 12 (16), Dex 10, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 12

Feats Combat Casting, Iron Will, Silent Spell, Persuasive, Craft Wondrous Item

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +17, Disguise +11, Hide +10, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Move Silently +0, Profession (sailor) +15, Spellcraft +6.

Possessions spyglass, Masterwork short sword, masterwork crossbow, +1 *retaliation** *spiked full plate*, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 *cloak of resistance*, +1 *ring of protection*, +2 *periapt of wisdom*, *metamagic rod of silence*.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

PALAVER

CR 7

Advanced gibbering moulder
 CN Large aberration
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +10

Languages Common

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19

hp 168 (12d8 + 96 HD); **DR** 5/bludgeoning

Fort +12, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), base movement 10 ft., swim 20 ft.;

Melee six bites +13 (1d2) and spittle +8 ranged touch (1d6 acid plus blindness)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +21

Atk Options spittle, improved grab, blood drain, engulf

Special Actions gibbering, ground manipulation

Abilities Str 18, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 13, Cha 15

SQ amorphous

Feats Lightning Reflexes, Ability Focus (gibber), Ability Focus (engulf), Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Swim +14.

Gibbering (Su) As soon as Palaver spots something edible (not a crew member), it begins a constant gibbering as a free action. All creatures (other than moulthers) within a 60-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be affected as though by a *confusion* spell for 1d2 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting compulsion effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected by Palaver's gibbering for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Palaver must hit with a bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Blood Drain (Ex) On a successful grapple check after grabbing, that mouth attaches to the opponent. It automatically deals bite damage and drains blood, dealing 1 point of Constitution damage each round. A mouth can be ripped off (dealing 1 point of damage) with a DC 12 Strength check or severed by a successful sunder attempt (the mouth has 2 hit points). A severed mouth continues to bite and drain blood for 1d4 rounds after such an attack. A creature whose Constitution is reduced to 0 is killed.

Engulf (Ex) Palaver can try to engulf a Large or smaller opponent grabbed by three or more mouths. The opponent must succeed on a DC 20 Reflex save or fall and be engulfed. In the next round, Palaver makes twelve bite attacks instead of six (each with a +13 attack bonus). An engulfed creature cannot attack Palaver from within. The previously attached mouths are now free to attack

others. The save DC is Strength-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Amorphous (Ex) Palaver is not subject to critical hits. It cannot be flanked.

Skills: Thanks to its multiple eyes, Palaver has a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks. Palaver has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

7: GETTING THE GOODS

MULLEN

CR 14

Male half-orc Barbarian 6/Fighter 8

CN Medium humanoid (half-orc)

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +0

Languages Common, Orc

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 16

hp 123 (6d12 + 8d10 + 28 HD)

Fort +13, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

Speed 40 ft. in light (8 squares), base movement 40 ft.;

Melee +1 *flaming bane (elf) great swordbow** (+5 Str) +21/+16/+11 (2d6+10 + 1d6 fire + 2d6 vs. elves) or greataxe +19/+14/+9 (1d12+7) or short sword +19/+14/+9 (1d6+5)

Ranged +1 *flaming bane (elf) great swordbow* (+5 Str) +17/+12/+7 (1d8+8 + 1d6 fire + 2d6 vs elves)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +19

Special Actions Rage

Abilities Str 21, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ Uncanny Dodge, Improved Uncanny Dodge

Feats Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (Greatsword), Weapon Specialization (Greatsword), Weapon Focus (Comp Longbow), Weapon Specialization (Comp Longbow)

Skills Climb +21, Intimidate +17, Listen+9, Survival +9,

Possessions the package, +1 *flaming bane (elf) great swordbow** (+5 Str), greataxe, +1 *chain shirt*, greataxe, short sword, *gauntlets of ogre power*

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ARCHER

CR 8

Male human fighter 8

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +5

Languages Common

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 68 (8d10 + 16HD)

Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. in medium (4 squares), base movement 20 ft.;

Melee greataxe +11/+6 (1d12+4) or heavy flail +11/+6 (1d10+4) or dagger +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +14/+9 (1d8+6) or +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str) +12/+12/+7 (1d8+6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11

Atk Options Shot on the Run, Rapid Shot

Abilities Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus (comp longbow), Weapon Specialization (comp longbow), Greater Weapon Specialization (comp longbow)

Skills Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +5

Possessions camping gear, breastplate, +1 *composite longbow* (+3 Str), heavy flail, dagger

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

FEATS

Elusive Target

Trying to land a blow against you can be a maddening experience.

Prerequisites: Dodge, Mobility, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: The Elusive Target feat enables the use of three tactical maneuvers.

Negate Power Attack: To use this maneuver, you must designate a specific foe to be affected by your Dodge feat. If that foe uses the Power Attack feat against you, the foe gains no bonus on the damage roll but still takes the corresponding penalty on the attack roll.

Diverting Defense: To use this maneuver, you must be flanked and you must designate one of the flanking attackers to be affected by your Dodge feat. The first attack of the round from the designated attacker automatically misses you and may strike the other flanking foe instead; the attacking creature makes an attack roll normally, and its ally is considered flat-footed. If the designated attacker is making a full attack against you, its second and subsequent attacks function normally.

Cause Overreach: To use this maneuver, you must provoke an attack of opportunity from a foe by move out of a threatened square. If the foe misses you, you can make a free trip attempt against this foe, and the foe does not get a chance to trip you if your attempt fails.

Source: *Complete Warrior*

MAGIC ITEMS

Blade of deception

The flat steel blade of this +3 rapier is hard to follow in combat. Any time a character uses the Bluff skill to feint in combat while wielding a *blade of deception*, the blade provides a +2 enhancement bonus on the Bluff check. A *blade of deception* provides no bonus on other Bluff checks. In addition, any opponent against whom the wielder successfully feints cannot make attacks of opportunity against the wielder until the beginning of the opponent's next turn. Anyone who was not the target of the feint can make attacks of opportunity against the wielder normally.

Source: *Complete Adventurer* 129

Daazzix's vest

Daazzix's vest increases the wearer's existing spell resistance by 5.

Aura: Moderate; abjuration.

Activation: —

Source: *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 267

Elixir of reckoning

After consuming an *elixir of reckoning*, the imbiber's body is filled with unstable magical energy. If she dies (that is, if her hit points fall to –10 or lower) within 1 hour of imbibing the elixir, her body explodes in a blast of eldritch energy that deals 5d6 points of damage to every creature and object within a 20-foot radius. Targets in this area can attempt a DC 14 Reflex save to halve the damage. Remnants of the imbiber's body survive the blast but are distributed around the periphery of the blast radius.

If the imbiber is not slain within 1 hour of consuming the elixir, it has no effect.

Aura: Faint; abjuration.

Activation: Standard to drink; —

Source: *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 268

Hat of protection

This hat offers continual magical protection in the form of a deflection bonus of +1 to +5 to AC.

Prerequisites: Forge Ring, *shield of faith*.

Source: *Dungeon Master's Guide*

Retaliation

A suit of armor that has this property strikes back at foes who hit hard in melee. While wearing retaliation armor, each time you take 10 or more points of damage from a single melee attack, the armor deals 1d6 points of damage to the attacker. If a single melee attack drops your hit points below 0, the armor strikes the attacker for 3d6 points of damage.

Damage from retaliation armor is treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Aura: Moderate; (DC 19) necromancy.

Activation: —

Source: *Magic Item Compendium* 14

Ring of mental fortitude

This ring protects the wearer against all mind-affecting spells and abilities as long as it is worn. She need not make any saving throws against these effects; they simply fail to affect her.

Aura: Strong; abjuration.

Activation: —

Source: *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 264

Rod of avoidance

Upon activating the rod, the wielder gains a +20 deflection bonus to Armor Class that lasts until the beginning of his next action. The rod is usable three times per day.

Aura: Strong; abjuration.

Activation: Standard

Source: *Dungeon Master's Guide II* 264

Scarab of Invulnerability

A *scarab of invulnerability* provides you with brief but complete protection from all forms of damage. For 1 round after activating the scarab, you are immune to all forms of damage (including ability damage), whether from weapons, spells, psionic powers, poison, environmental effects, or any other cause. The scarab doesn't protect you from harmful effects that don't deal damage.

A *scarab of invulnerability* functions once per day. You must wear a *scarab of invulnerability* for 24 hours before you can access its abilities. If it is taken off, it becomes inactive until worn for an additional 24 hours.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *iron body*.

Aura: Strong; (DC 22) transmutation.

Activation: Swift (command)

Source: *Magic Item Compendium* 132

Swordbow

The magical *swordbow* takes the concept of the elvencraft bow and does it one better. As the name implies, the weapon can transform from a sword to a bow (or vice versa) upon a mere thought by the wielder (a free action). A wielder can even interchange bow and sword attacks as part of the same full attack action.

In sword form, the weapon features a bowlike grip and a pommel that resembles the curving tip of a bow. The blade is often decorated with an arrow. In bow form, the weapon is made of metal, and each half of the bow's arc resembles a sword blade.

In either form, a *swordbow* has the same enhancement bonus. A *swordbow's* enhancement bonus can be improved as if improving two separate weapons. A *swordbow* may have special abilities added to it (such as flaming); such abilities cost twice the normal amount and apply to both weapons if possible.

Great Swordbow: This weapon can change between greatsword and composite longbow form. It is favored by elf fighters.

Source: *Races of the Wild* 171

SPELLS

Castigate

Evocation [Sonic]

Level: Cleric 4, Paladin 4, Purification 4

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range 10 ft.

Area: 10-ft.-radius burst centered on you

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell has no effect on creatures who cannot hear. All creatures whose alignment differs from yours on both the law-chaos and the good-evil axes take 1d4 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d4). All creatures whose alignment differs from yours on one component take half damage, and this spell does not deal damage to those who share your alignment.

A Fortitude saving throw reduces damage by half.

Source: *Spell Compendium* 44

Deific Vengeance

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: Cleric 2, Purification 2

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One creature

Duration: Instantaneous

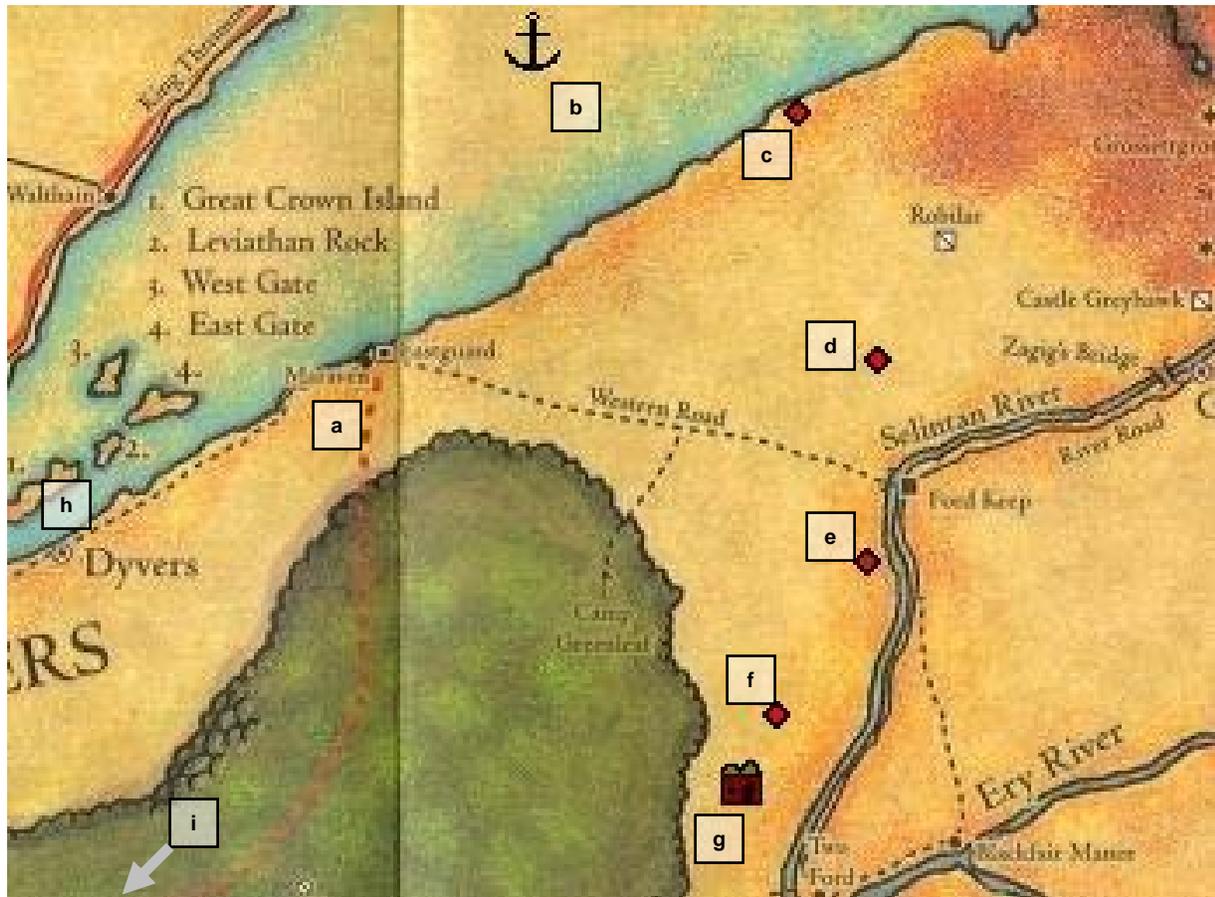
Saving Throw: Will half

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell deals 1d6 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d6), or 1d6 points per caster level (maximum 10d6) if the target is undead.

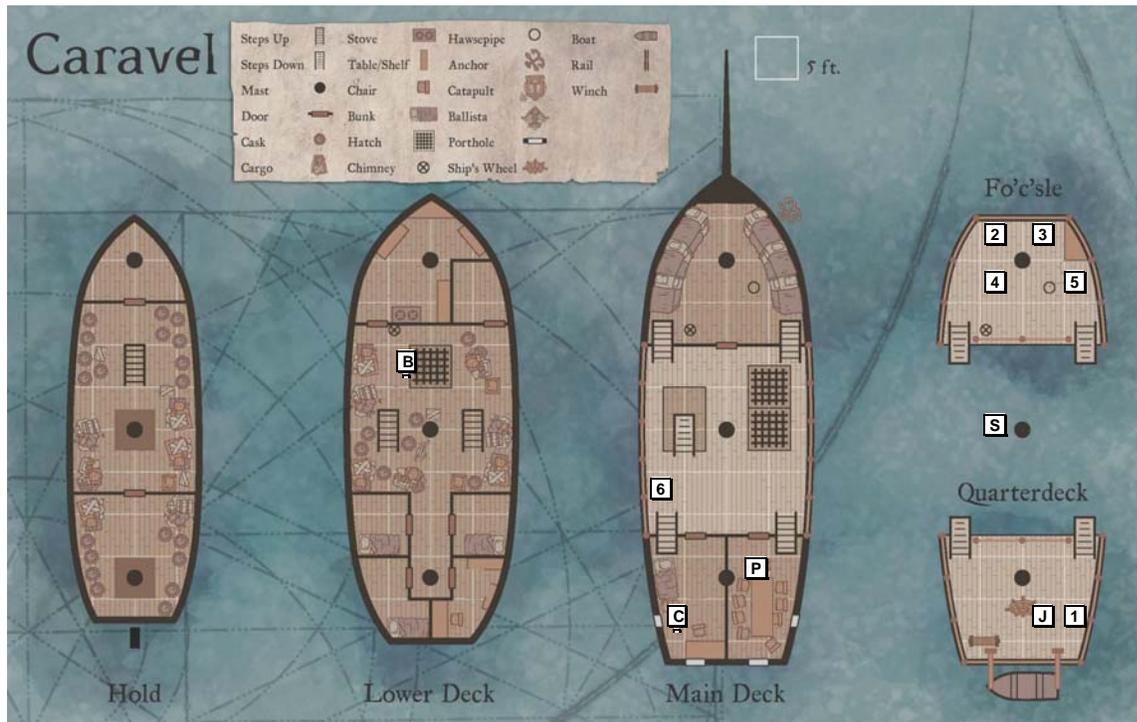
Source: *Spell Compendium* 62

DM'S AID #1: MAP OF EASTERN DYVERS/WESTERN GREYHAWK



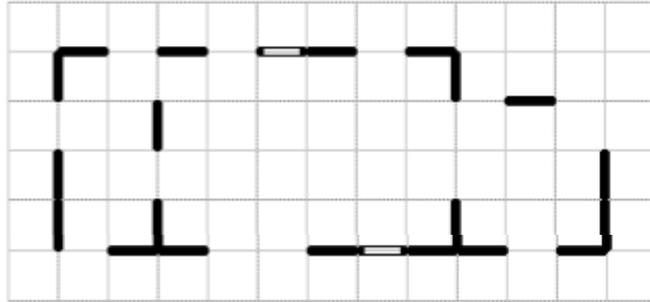
a	PCs arrive in Maraven and meet with Pinell and Oddfellow.
b	Location of the <i>Just Desert</i> (within <i>screen</i> spell).
c	Location where Mullen landed morning of Day 1
d	Mullen's camp end of Day 1.
e	Mullen's camp end of Day 2.
f	Mullen's camp end of Day 3.
g	Rendezvous point between Mullen and nobody.
h	Esmeralda's desired destination.
i	Esmeralda's teleportation mishap destination (about 45 miles)

DM'S AID #2: MAP OF THE *JUST DESERT*



- # Sailor (the lowest numbers have drunk the *elixir of reckoning*)
- B The Jaundiced Barb (invisible)
- J The Jaundiced Barb (illusion)
- P Palaver
- S Slaad (APLs 12 and 14, invisible, flying, resting on mast)
- C Iron chest

DM'S AID #3: RENDEZVOUS POINT



Window (provides cover)



Wall (provides total cover)

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

This letter is delivered to a member of the Alliance, the Pack, the Family, the Tears of Marid, the Brotherhood of Bashaarat, the Dusk Lash, the Xanavade, or the Cour des Miracles after Encounter 1: The Proposition.

Friend,

I have seen the drawing, and your face is familiar to me as one who shares my philosophy of rightful ownership. We both are of the same side of the wheatsheaf. If you carry out the task requested by Lord Herall, you aid me in strengthening this wheatsheaf.

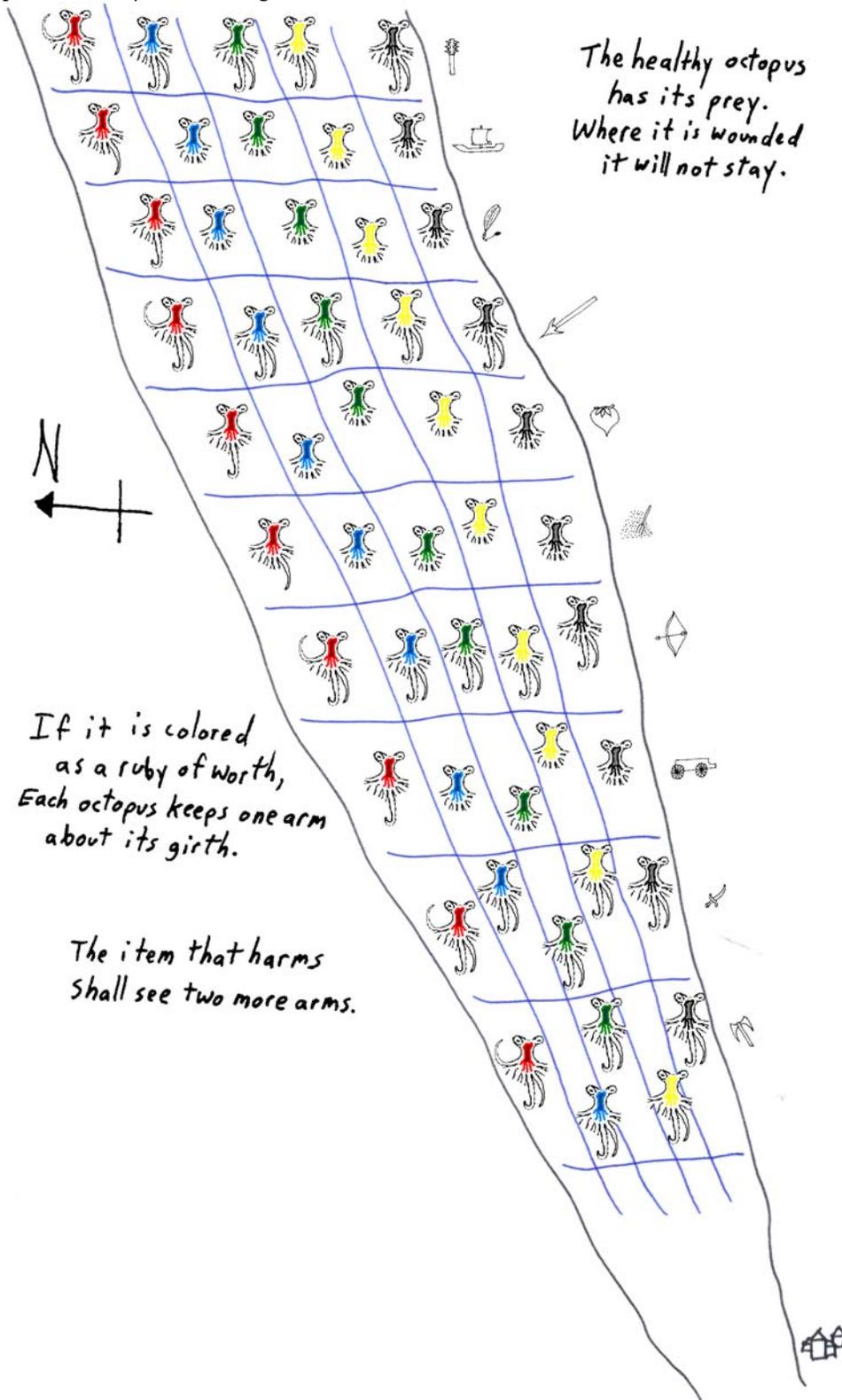
By now, I am sure we are both familiar with how one's aid is oft reciprocated.

Sincerely,

A

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

This map was drawn by Pinnel Farsight as a result of his communion with Istus.



PLAYER HANDOUT 3

This letter is found among the personal effects in an iron chest.

Mullen,

Representatives of the Pomarj will meet you at a ruined farmhouse about 50 miles south of where the Jaundiced Barb will drop you off. Travel to a small hill between the Selintan River and the Gnarley Forest. There is still an old signpost that points to the river. The farmhouse is about 4 miles south of that signpost. The contingent will bring 2000 pieces of platinum in exchange for the package. I will contact you after you return to Dyvers to collect my share.

Barnaby

PLAYER HANDOUT 4

This is common knowledge for PCs who are members of the Pack, the Family, the Tears of Marid, the Brotherhood of Bashaarat, the Dusk Lash, the Xanavade, or the Cour des Miracles.

Those who walk on the illegal side of life in the Volverdyva trade route are aware of the Alliance, a confluence of criminal guilds within the city of Dyvers. In fact, some would say that the Alliance is the true power behind Dyvers politics.

It behooves your organization to know who are members of the Alliance. The Alliance is a brutal and jealous organization that maintains its reputation through fear and violence. Therefore, you are aware of some key phrases that Alliance members may use in conversations in order to announce their affiliations. This identification helps your colleagues know what are the best deals to offer.

While the phrases change from month to month, you are aware that an Alliance member may choose to identify himself by incorporating into a conversation the following: Brother, boat, and blanket.

For example, one conversation may be:

“You thought the snows were bad in the forest? My brother spent time on a boat in the frozen wastes—well, a ship, really. It was so cold that he needed a blanket for his blanket.”

Or...

“Say brother, could you spare a silver piece? I have just come off the boat from the Pale, and I wish to blanket the infidels here with tales of the glory of my god.”

It is more important to include the terms sometime during the conversation so the other person picks up on it. It is unnecessary to cram all three words into a single sentence.

Note: The Alliance functions on secrecy. It is never acceptable to “out” an Alliance member. Those who have revealed the membership of Alliance members turn up dead in alleys with their tongues cut out—if they’re lucky.

PLAYER HANDOUT 5

This is common knowledge for PCs who are members of the Alliance.

The Alliance operates in secrecy within Dyvers. Members of the Alliance may go a long time without seeing another member. When they meet, they rarely speak freely, as there could be unwanted visitors. Two Alliance members can announce their membership through the use of keywords in conversation.

While the phrases change from month to month, you are aware that an Alliance member may choose to identify himself by incorporating into a conversation the following: Brother, boat, and blanket. Another member of the Alliance may choose to identify himself by responding in a way that includes the following: Statue, stout, and snout.

For example, one conversation may be:

“You thought the snows were bad in the forest? My brother spent time on a boat in the frozen wastes—well, a ship, really. It was so cold that he needed a blanket for his blanket.”

“Imagine waking up as a short, stout statue. I couldn’t handle a fishing boat. Who wants fish snouts for snacks?”

Or...

“Say brother, could you spare a silver piece? I have just come off the boat from the Pale, and I wish to blanket the infidels here with tales of the glory of my god.”

“I won’t fall for your tricks! You’ll just shove your snout in some ale or a stout, you drunken bum. Why, I bet you don’t even worship a god. Tell me, what direction do you face when kneeling before his statue? Prove your faith, or you won’t see a single copper piece.”

For business purposes, members of friendly thieves’ guilds along the Volverdyva trade route (the Pack, the Family, the Tears of Marid, the Brotherhood of Bashaarat, the Dusk Lash, the Xanavade, and the Cour des Miracles) are aware of the first phrase used to identify members of the Alliance. This lets members of those groups know that they are dealing with the true power of Dyvers. Since ambitious unaffiliated thugs try to do business with these groups outside of Dyvers, the lack of a phrase tells the thieves’ guild that they are approached by a rogue element that must be eliminated.

CRITICAL EVENTS SUMMARY

- Did Captain Hammon raid the Greyhawk merchant vessel? YES NO
- Did the Jaundiced Barb escape? YES NO
- Was Esmeralda (or the token) handed over to House Siggoran? YES NO

Please visit <http://living-dyvers.net/tabid/188/Default.aspx> to enter these critical events.