

LKOK24



A Bit of Truth

A 1-Round D&D Living Kingdoms of Kalamar[®] Adventure

by Andrew Garbade

A beloved adventurer has passed on, and all of Bet Rogala mourns her loss. Many of her former companions visit the city to pay their respects, but one hides a festering hatred that threatens Pekal and its fragile alliances. When the adventurers find themselves in this bed of intrigue, can they discover the identity of this pariah before it's too late? This event continues the story from *The Rub* and *A Simple Detail*. A Living Kingdoms of Kalamar adventure for ATLS 1, 3, 5, and 7.

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This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

Calculating Average Table Level (ATL)

Living Kingdoms of Kalamar uses ATL rather than Average Party Level (APL) in an effort to offer challenging adventures without massacring smaller or imbalanced tables. What this means is that, to calculate the ATL for a table, the levels of all the player-characters are added together. That number is divided by six regardless of how many player-characters there actually are. This number constitutes the party's ATL (rounded to the closest integer). If that number is not offered in the adventure, the players may choose if they play up (a higher ATL) or down (a lower ATL). It is against the spirit of the campaign to deny a player an open spot at a table in an effort to maximize the treasure for the other players at the table. Twelve players should play in 2 tables of 6 not 3 tables of 4.

Once you calculate the ATL write it down here as you will need it later for setting the DC of certain skill checks.

ATL _____

ADVENTURE NOTES

This module is an official supplement to the Living Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign. It is designed for 4 to 6 characters ranging from 1st to 7th level. It is advised that PCs go through this adventure with a full party, as the challenges presented may overwhelm a small party of adventurers.

You, the Judge (the authority figure of the table and the administrator of the adventure), need a copy of the Dungeons & Dragons® 3rd Edition revised Player's Handbook and Dungeon Master's Guide (v.3.5) for this event. The adventure takes place in the Kingdoms of Kalamar setting in the Principality of Pekal. Therefore, the Judge should also have the Kingdoms of Kalamar® Core Sourcebook and the Kingdoms of Kalamar Player's Guide.

Specific statistics for key Non-Player Characters (NPCs) and other materials are included in the appendix at the back of this adventure as well as throughout the adventure text itself. Certificates that may be photocopied are also included. The Judge should read this adventure entirely no less than once before playing in order to ensure a precise flow of events, as there are many aspects relating to the flavor and culture that are important to the Living™ Kingdoms of Kalamar campaign and to this adventure.

CALENDAR AND CLIMATE

Summer has arrived in Pekal, and the temperature is much warmer than in recent years. The days frequently see the low to mid 90s (F) while the nights drop to the 60s. The cities around Lake Eb'Sobet seem to be cooler than most of the rest of the country because of the breezes coming off the water. Unfortunately, Baneta is not so lucky, and the humidity in the city has caused a number of deaths in the lower income populace.

Luckily, the harvest seems to be going well, and the summer heat just cannot last forever.

MODULE NOTES

Terrina Valsini was recently told by a Priestess of The Raiser that she was dying. Aching for one last adventure, she approached Ambassador Welstern Vrindolvus, the Emissary of Cosdol living in Bet Rogala for help. The Ambassador helped her find something worthy of her great name, and ended up sharing in her final few days on Tellene. She died of natural causes soon after returning from the adventure.

Yurgon, however, is not convinced that Terrina died of natural causes. Through his contacts within the Network of the Blue Salamander, he has learned that Cosdol is preparing to march a large number of soldiers into Pekal. He has convinced himself that this is part of a grand scheme by which King Welren of Cosdol can overthrow the legitimate government of Pekal. He has decided to embarrass the King by bringing word of this plot to the surface of the political world.

Ambassador Vrindolvus is keeping secrets from everyone, including his own staff. Ironically, some of these secrets revolve around the fact that the political forces in Cosdol *really are* considering an annexation of Pekal if the war against Kalamar goes badly. In addition to

gaining important resources in the Young Kingdoms, acquiring Pecal would be the first step toward reuniting the ancient Brandobian Empire. The Ambassador is not convinced this is the wisest course of action, but as there is not yet a final decision, he is keeping his options open.

Yurgon has been invited to a celebration in Bet Rogala for Terrina's funeral. He has taken the opportunity to hire some Blue Salamander thugs to try and steal Terrina's body in the hopes of resurrecting her. While that is going on, he has decided to kill Lord Dronte, the Secretary to Ambassador, for his actions not only in sending Terrina on her final adventure, but also because he is the main contact between the court of Cosdol and the Embassy in Pecal. There is also a servant named Felida who was once a member of the Network, but disappeared a few years ago. Yurgon has been asked to eliminate her by his superiors in the organization. He figures that killing the woman can take last priority, after eliminating Lord Dronte and any other meddlers that get in the way.

BACKGROUND

Terrina Valsini was a beautiful barbarian from the mountains west of Cosdol. She gained notoriety early in her adventuring career when she saved a group of Royal Couriers from a large wyvern. When word reached King Welren's court of her deeds, she was summoned to his side.

After many adventures, Terrina had quite a following in the court. Her lover at the time was a promising apprentice to Welren named Yurgon. This man was very intelligent, and often seemed on the verge of becoming a brilliant diviner. His insight and understanding of the craft was paramount, but his true devotion was reserved for Terrina.

In time, some forces of the Cosdol military found themselves in a desperate situation. The King was unsure what to do until a suicidal plan presented itself. Unwilling to force anyone to undertake a mission that would likely lead to certain death, the King asked for volunteers. Terrina was the first and only one who spoke.

Yurgon was out of the city at the time, and was unaware of Terrina's actions. When he found out, he flew into a rage, demanding that the King

call her back. Yurgon was eventually restrained by nervous Royal Guards after he threatened the King. Eventually he calmed down and apologized. The King, recognizing his love for Terrina, forgave him and bade him never mention his slight again.

But Yurgon did not forget. Time passed with no word of Terrina. The wizard began devoting more and more time into his divination studies, spending every waking moment trying to find some trace of his lost love – each time convinced that he could succeed where everyone else had failed.

After a few years, rumors reached the King's court of a beautiful barbarian slave in Eldor who was literally destroying her opposition in the fighting pits. Though there was more evidence that the slave was in fact Terrina, King Welren forbade any to attempt a rescue, as he believed, rightly so, that the Eldor government was waiting for just such an attempt to discredit Cosdol. Though it pained the monarch to see such a loyal servant subjected to slavery, Welren made what he considered to be the best decision for his kingdom.

Yurgon of course disagreed. But time had sharpened his wisdom, and he praised the King's decision in front of the entire court. However, Terrina was once again known to him and every night Yurgon would retire to his chambers and watch her through his powerful scrying spells. Though he yearned to speak with her, he feared her reaction at realizing that her lover knew where she was but was doing nothing to save her. Yurgon eventually began traveling to Eldor to "inspect" the other slaves, often sabotaging the efforts of some of the stronger ones to ensure Terrina's victory. He was careful to never let Terrina catch sight of him, lest his secret be revealed. Over the year his behavior became more and more obsessive until he reached the point where he would watch her all day long, stopping only to sleep and re-memorize spells. The whole time, while he pondered his love as one from a bad romance novel, he also nurtured his disgust for King Welren.

Years passed, and Terrina won her freedom from the slave pits. Unfortunately, she had met another man, and after over ten years away from Yurgon, had fallen in love again. Yurgon by this time had assumed a role of the "silent

protector” by his own estimation, and believed that though he still loved Terrina, she would be happier in her new life. So he continued watching her as she adventured in dozens of new lands, discovering ancient treasures and defeating powerful beasts. He eventually managed to “run into” her one day, of course feigning surprise to find her healthy and safe.

This pattern of stalking and obsessive observation between Yurgon and Terrina went on for years until Terrina ended up dying in her adopted home of Bet Rogala.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Introduction:

The characters are asked to stand guard over the tomb of Terrina Valsini, a famous adventurer who recently died. Characters who played either *The Rub* or *A Simple Detail* are asked to attend by Ambassador Vrindolvus as a personal favor.

Encounter 1:

The Ambassador asks the PCs to watch over the gravesite of Terrina Valsini. This is considered a great honor in his culture, and he would very much like the PCs to accept.

Encounter 2:

The PCs arrive at the graveyard followed by the “guards” who have come to relieve them.

Encounter 3:

The characters arrive at the manor house and meet with the Ambassador. They also make the discovery that Dronte has died.

Encounter 4:

The Ambassador asks the characters to investigate Dronte’s death before the entire night is ruined.

Encounter 5:

A servant is found dead in the basement area, far away from the aide in the upstairs bedroom.

Encounter 6:

The PCs enter the cellar and discover the crumpled form of a dead servant. Their investigations may reveal more than they bargained for as secrets may be revealed that will change the fate of Pekal.

Encounter 7:

The characters find injured servants in the hallway. They need to save as many as possible, and may find out information to help them in the next encounter.

Encounter 8:

The PCs encounter Vrindolvus and Yurgon arguing amongst themselves. Both try to sway the PCs to their way of thinking, and the decisions may affect the future of Pekal.

Awards

Experience Points

Appendix I: NPCs and Monsters

Appendix II: Additional Rules

Appendix III: Player Handouts

INTRODUCTION

Summary: The characters are asked to stand guard over the tomb of Terrina Valsini, a famous adventurer who recently died. Characters who played either *The Rub* or *A Simple Detail* are asked to attend by Ambassador Vrindolvus as a personal favor.

Plot Hooks:

PCs who have played *The Rub* or *A Simple Detail*:

Bet Rogala is vibrant today, with a brisk breeze that seems to carry away much of the early afternoon heat. Pausing to watch a street performer accidentally trap himself in an imaginary box, a young boy in the livery of Cosdol approaches you. “Pardon, your grace, I have a message for you.” Reaching under his bright red tabard, he pulls forth a small scroll wrapped around a silver rod. Holding it in front of him, he unfurls it and reads, “Ambassador Welstern Vrindolvus requests your presence at a ceremony to honor Terrina Valsini, a famous adventurer and resident of Bet Rogala. He requests you meet at his manor at six bells past noon if you are interested.” Rolling the scroll back up, he looks at you, “May I tell the Ambassador you will attend?”

This is the same servant who approached the PCs in *A Simple Detail*. Any PCs who played that event recognize the boy as the personal valet of Ambassador Vrindolvus.

Each PC who has not played *The Rub* or *A Simple Detail* receives a message from the Adventurers Guild:

Bet Rogala is vibrant today, with a brisk breeze that seems to carry away much of the early afternoon heat. As you pause to enjoy the items in the market, a lithe man jogs up and stops beside you. Panting slightly, his flushed face and perspiration obviously indicate he has been working hard for the past few minutes.

“I was asked to hand you this. It is from the Adventurers Guild.”

He draws forth a small paper and hands it to you. Seeing you grasp it, he bows slightly, and begins to move away.

If the PCs try to question him, he provides the following information:

- Who are you?
I am Lark, a runner for the Adventurers Guild.
- What is the Adventurers Guild?
They make sure all the adventurers in Pecal obey the laws of the Prince and don't give everyone a bad reputation.
- Who told you to give this to us/me?
The Guildmaster.
- What were your orders?
To find <insert PC's name> and give them the message. After that, return immediately to report I have accomplished my duty.
- What does it say?
I don't know.

Continue this for a few moments, but the runner must get back to the Guild very quickly. He eventually tires of answering questions and – even if a bit rude – interrupts the PCs and takes his leave of them.

When the PCs open the letter:
“Greetings. One of our most famous members has died, and we need an honor guard for her tomb throughout the next day or so. Ambassador Welstern Vrindolvus of Cosdol is handling the arrangements. Please meet him at his manor six bells past noon.”

It is not signed, though it has the wax seal of the Adventurers Guild where the signature should be located.

Before going to meet the Ambassador:
The PCs may undertake a variety of tasks at this point. In addition to mundane equipment, a large crowd has gathered around a merchant carrying wares from across Tellene.

In addition to what is allowed per the Living Kingdoms of Kalamar Campaign Sourcebook, PCs may purchase any equipment from the following tables:

Once the PCs have finished their activities, read the following:

Arriving at the Ambassador's house, it is clear that the servants have been busy preparing for a celebration. Colorful bunting hang from the windows, and the grounds of the manor are immaculate. Guards stand at attention in their dress uniforms, much more fashionable than functional. You see a short line of people in front of you as they introduce themselves to the servant at the front door.

There is a servant at the door asking each of the characters for an introduction. At this time, the judge should play the role of the servant, and ask each of the players in turn for their character's name, physical description, and any other information they wish to divulge. This character introduction allows the judge and the other players to get an idea who they will be adventuring with during the event.

After the introductions are over, continue to the next Encounter.

ENCOUNTER 1 **A Graveyard at Night?**

Summary: The Ambassador asks the PCs to watch over the gravesite of Terrina Valsini. This is considered a great honor in his culture, and he would very much like the PCs to accept.

Entering the manor, the bustling activity of servants creates a chaotic scene. In the midst of all this commotion, a tall man wearing a regal mantle speaks to an older man clad in a silk doublet. Noticing you, the older man nods his head in your direction.

Turning, the taller man breaks into a large smile as he strides toward you.

“Welcome! I am Ambassador Vrindolvus Welstern, Emissary of Cosdol, and Servant of King Welren.”

He greets PCs who played *The Rub* or *A Simple Detail* by name, then inquire about other names.

“Well, thank you all for coming on such short notice. I am preparing my home for a small dinner tonight, so I’ll be brief. Terrina Valsini, a native of Cosdol who retired to Bet Rogala, recently passed away. It was a sad day, for Terrina was well-loved by many across the lands.

At any rate, she was born to a barbarian tribe high in the mountains that border Cosdol. In their traditions, when a brave warrior passes away, his family and friends stand guard for one day over his burial site. The origins of this tradition are quite hazy as the barbarians do not believe in keeping very accurate historical records, so your guess is as good as mine.

One of my retainers is a barbarian from the same tribe, and he insisted that I make every effort to honor Terrina. In return, he volunteered to stand guard the entire duration, if I could but find individuals who would be worthy to watch over the grave by his side.

As Terrina did not have any family in town, and she had no more than a handful of friends, I had to come up with an alternative – the Adventurers Guild. Terrina was one of the founding members of the Bet Rogala chapter, and many considered it her second home. Since you are all adventurers, in my mind, I think that qualifies you for an invitation.

All you must do is stand watch over her burial site for a period of no more than four hours. You will be relieving another group who has been guarding before you, and you will in turn be replaced after your shift is completed. And before any of you ask, the only pay involved in this venture is my gratitude. As this is something of a sacred ritual, some might think it defiled if money changes hands to find volunteers. However,

as some of you may have heard, I am very good friends with quite a few merchants in town, and quite a number of them owe me a favor or two.

Anyway, that is the offer. Are there any questions?

Do you expect danger around the tomb?

“Absolutely not. Your job is to take the place of an honor guard. To be completely honest, we have set up a table and chairs near the gravesite so the guards can entertain themselves and not fall asleep from the boredom. It is the presence of worthy individuals who spend their time around the grave that is important to the ritual – not the dangerous nature of the location.”

What began this tradition?

“I’m really not too sure. Perhaps the people in those days raided other tribe’s villages, maybe they were cannibals. Whatever the reason, it is very sacred to the tribes of the region, and I would be remiss if I did not do everything in my power to make sure the tradition was revered.”

How long do we have to stand guard?

“About six hours, give or take. Your shift will begin in about two hours, near nine bells. You will be relieved when the Lamplighters make their second rounds (at 3am).”

How will we know when our shift is over?

“Another group of guards will come relieve you. One of them will carry a staff like this.” The Ambassador points to a large white rod in the corner. “These are carved from a special tree that grows near the ocean shore in Cosdol. I doubt many other people in Bet Rogala have even heard of them, much less seen one.”

What do we do after we are finished guarding the gravesite?

“Come back here and report that you have been relieved. If I am not available, inform Dronte, my Secretary, that you have completed the assignment. Return in the morning, and I will have letters of introduction for each of you if the guard duty is completed without incident.”

What can you tell us about the barbarian who will be at the gravesite?

“Turrol is an older man, mainly of Fhokki descent. He has been in my service for only a few months, but he is quite the bodyguard. Very loyal, and he is one of the most respected tribesmen in the entire region of my home country. Don’t be surprised if he doesn’t talk very much; he generally keeps to himself.”

What is going on at the manor tonight?

“I’m having a few important people over for a nice dinner. Many of them are people who knew Terrina, and are in town so they could attend her funeral (which happened that morning). I would be a poor host to not take care of visitors from my home country.”

What can you tell us of Terrina?

Distribute **Appendix III: Player Handout #1** if it has not already been handed out. Vrindolvus cannot add any more to that information.

When the questions are finished, Ambassador Vrindolvus hands the PCs one of the white rods and bids them good evening.

ENCOUNTER 2 **Watching Her Rest**

Summary: The PCs arrive at the graveyard followed by the “guards” who have come to relieve them.

The graveyard is quiet, though not as eerie as you may have thought. Perhaps the frequent followers of the Eternal Lantern making their rounds on the Dark Watch, or the stoic city guards manning posts outside the graveyard wall set your mind at ease. Large lamps on either side of the graveyard gate hold back the darkness with bright oily flames. The smell of soot and oil hangs in the air, but no more than usual moving in the streets of a city like Bet Rogala.

Entering the large open field of the graveyard it is easy to spot the area you are supposed to guard. Several large torches light the sky around a lavishly decorated gravestone. A few men, all dressed in matching chainmail and white surcoats with longswords clad at their belts rise from a nearby table as you approach. Almost lost in the shadows is a large Fhokki man leaning against a nearby

obelisk, his arms crossed, and his face set in a dour expression.

One of the armored warriors raises a hand to speak, “Welcome, friends. I am Conten Rengarr, Captain of the White Light of Justice. What brings you here this fine evening?”

Knowledge (local – Pekal/Bet Rogala) DC 15:

The White Light of Justice is an Adventuring Company with reputation for only accepting “honorable” jobs. Their most well-known trademark is that all the members wear gleaming white surcoats over high quality chainmail.

Assuming the PCs indicate why they have come, the other group gladly turns over the camp. They are friendly, if a bit distant. Only Captain Conten speaks the with PCs. There are four other males, all clad in identical garb.

Once the PCs have assumed guard duty, allow them to set up as they wish. Turrol nods in greeting to any who approach him, but he does not speak.

The evening passes uneventfully. Soon after your time as a guard begins, a few people continue to move around the graveyard, but as the hours pass, the entire area becomes very still. Almost... too still. A slight fog covers the ground, and strange noises reach your ears. Sounds that cannot be “normal.”

But the time you have spent as an adventurer convinces you that the only problems tonight are going to be in your head. After all, what could possibly happen at a graveyard... In the middle of the night... Hanging around a freshly buried corpse... Nothing, right?

Right?!

Absolutely nothing is exactly right. The Ambassador was correct; this assignment may indeed be a high honor, but it IS boring.

A growing light interrupts the monotony as a group of men moves near the entrance to the graveyard. The large pot torches they carry betray their identities as members of the Lamp Lighters guild. These men travel throughout the city ensuring that

streetlamps pierce the shadows wherever possible. Not a very powerful guild, to be sure, but they do have quite a number of friends in the city like the Church of the Eternal Lantern and the City Watch.

As they check the lamps outside the graveyard, you realize they must be making their second rounds. Almost a minute later, the echoes of booted feet reach your ears as a small troop of individuals comes into view. As they move into the graveyard, three individuals become clear, one of whom carries a large white rod.

Walking steadily into the graveyard, the man with the white rod stops a dozen feet away from you. He is a Brandobian male with close-cropped black hair and dark eyes. All of his companions are of similar heritage. The men all wear leather armor and dark cloaks the color of which are lost in the flickering torchlight. A variety of weapons are visible on the group, the most curious being a huge-bladed axe carried by one of the men over his shoulder.

In a deep voice the leader says, "We're the Mountain Scorpions and the Ambassador hired us to take the next watch," while holding out the white rod.

Give the PCs a **Spot check**. A barbarian, druid, ranger, and shaman gains +3 to this check.

DC 11+ATL: The rod in the Scorpions' possession appears a bit different from the one in the PCs' possession

DC 15+ATL: The rod in the Scorpions' possession resembles a familiar wood pattern – perhaps oak?

DC 19+ATL: The rod in the Scorpions' possession is not actually white – it has been painted

Sense Motive DC 9+ATL: The man's eyes seem to look down as he speaks, a movement common in people who are lying.

Knowledge (local Pekal / Bet Rogala) DC 17 + ATL: The Mountain Scorpions were an Adventuring Company who originally came from

northern Pekal, and all the members were Fhokki.

PC members of the Adventurers Guild gain a +4 circumstance bonus to this check.

PC members of an Adventuring Company gain a +1 circumstance bonus to this check.

If the PCs begin asking questions, the man responds in a fairly hostile manner for "questioning his integrity." He answers one or two questions before throwing down the rod and drawing his sword initiating combat. There is no surprise round, just roll initiative and proceed as normal.

The details for these creatures are found in **Appendix I: NPCs and Monsters**.

ATL 1:

Mountain Scorpions:
Brandobian Ftr1 (3)

ATL 3

Mountain Scorpions:
Brandobian Ftr4 (1)
Brandobian Ftr2 (2)

ATL 5

Mountain Scorpions:
Brandobian Ftr6 (1)
Brandobian Ftr4 (2)

ATL 7

Mountain Scorpions:
Brandobian Ftr8 (1)
Brandobian Ftr6 (2)

When combat begins, Turrol moves to stand beside Terrina's gravesite, readying an action to attack enemies who move near him.

All ATLS:

Turrol, Fhokki Bbn5

After Combat:

When the combat is over, Turrol moves among them using his Heal skill to stabilize any who may be close to dying. (Heal +13)

Otherwise, **Search checks** reveal the following:

DC 12: The men all have tattoos of small blue lizards on the inside of their bicep near their shoulder

DC 18: The leader has a secret pocket inside his vest. Inside is a small velvet pouch containing a ring with a blue stone.

This is a *Minor Ring of the Salamander*, and any PC who has one instantly recognizes it. Other PCs may have heard of the Network of the Blue Salamander with a successful **Knowledge (local – Pekal/Bet Rogala) check DC 24**. If successful, they know the Network of the Blue Salamander is reported to be a shadowy merchant organization that is trying to move into mercantile locations all over Tellene. They are spoken of with curses by both the Golden Alliance (because of competition) and members of the College of Magic (because of rumored psionic activity).

Speak with dead only turns up the fact that the men were mercenaries from Eldor – a rival country of Cosdol – and they were hired to kill the guards at the graveyard. None of them met their employer as they communicated through magical means.

City guards appear after a minute or so and begin taking statements from everyone. This is just for consistency, and is not intended to be a drawn out role-play session.

About ten minutes after the fight, another group of men appears bearing a white rod. All are dressed with green tabards with an open eagle claw stitched to the front in brown fabric. They are very surprised to see the remains of the fight.

Who are you?

We are the Claws of Kalokopeli.

Where have you been?

We would have been here on time except Lord Dronte asked us to help move some shelves in the storage cellar.

These are the only two important items they can reveal. Their white rod and their story is genuine, should the PCs seek to sense their motives or inspect the staff.

ENCOUNTER 3 **All Night Party**

Summary: The characters arrive at the manor house and meet with the Ambassador. They also make the discovery that Dronte has died.

The house has obviously been the scene of a large gathering. Many people lounge about the front of the house preparing to leave. One of the guards notices your group approaching and motions you toward a side door. “This way, milords, I know the Ambassador is expecting you.”

The inside of the manor is recovering from the after effects of a grand party. Glasses, plates, and utensils remain where guests left them, while servants move quickly from place to place trying to clean as much of the house as possible at this late hour. Passing through the sitting room to the dining room, you see Ambassador Vrindolvus sitting at the head of the table beside an older man wearing red robes.

“Ah, the guards have returned. I sent Dronte to get your letters a few moments ago, so please, have a seat. He should return any moment.”

Motioning to the older man at his side, “This is Yurgon, one of my oldest friends. We both trained under my uncle for some time, though he took to the arcane arts much more so than I; he’s now quite the master of divination magic, though he detests the baser destructive arts. While my future was in serving my uncle’s court, Yurgon’s foresight and magical abilities have helped Cosdol maintain its independence from our enemies for decades.”

Yurgon is an older Brandobian man, with thinning red hair and sharp features. His eyes are a curious color, a mixture of green and brown that almost seems yellow in the evening light. In accented Low Kalamaran, “Greetings to you all. I thank you for paying honor to Terrina’s memory by standing guard at her grave.” With a wry smile, “Did you find it as ‘challenging’ as the others guards have?”

At some point, the PCs should reveal the facts that they were: 1) attacked, and 2) that Dronte delayed the real guards.

Both men are instantly concerned over this turn of events, though they calm down if the PCs reveal that the gravesite was not disturbed. **Sense Motive checks DC 26** reveal that both men seem to relax when they find out that nothing disturbed the grave, but they also both seem to become distracted for a moment.

The Ambassador questions the PCs about the imposters, as well as Turrol's behavior. He approves of Turrol's actions if asked, stating the barbarians' primary concern during the ritual is to protect the integrity of the grave – though he never thought of protection in a literal sense.

Eventually, finding Dronte should be mentioned. When it is, the Ambassador does not act concerned, as Dronte is a trusted advisor. All the same, he excuses himself from Yurgon and leads the PCs upstairs to his private study.

If it is mentioned, Yurgon asks if he can see the ring taken off the imposters to see if his divination magic can turn up anything significant. He indicates that he will stay in the dining room to cast his spells.

ENCOUNTER 4 **Gruesome Discovery**

Summary: One of the Ambassador's aides is found dead upstairs in a bedroom. He asks the characters to investigate the incident before the entire night is ruined.

Arriving at his study, the Ambassador pauses momentarily, then opens the door. What lies beyond is a room in utter chaos. The desk on the far side of the room is disarray with scrolls and parchment scattered across the floor. It is not nearly thick enough to cover the crumpled form you recognize as Dronte lying near the center of the room.

The Ambassador audibly catches his breath. "Would you all look around; I believe your talents may be better suited for this task than mine. I will go summon the guard at the bottom of the stairs and shall return straight away. I would prefer it if you made haste – I do not believe I can keep this incident quiet very long."

Ambassador Vrindolus literally moves to the edge of the stairs and screams "GUARDS!" He then moves back to wait outside the room for questions. PCs may accompany him if they choose.

Questions for Ambassador Vrindolus:

What was Dronte's position?

He was my Secretary and Castellan. His duties included setting my calendar, minor correspondence, and managing this estate. He was also a bodyguard, though very few people knew that. In addition to his martial training, he became my poison taster after an episode last year. Obviously, I counted on him as an advisor, but also as a friend.

Secretary?

Yes, he was responsible for reading all of my documentation, and ensuring I responded when appropriate in a timely manner. Everything I did that was not a private communication from the King was known to Dronte.

Castellan?

His duties as the Castellan were to ensure the manor was maintained by servants and guards. He delegated some of the duties to the butlers, maids, and Guard Captain, but he was responsible for everything here.

After the poison incident last year, he went back through the entire manor to re-evaluate everyone on staff. There were a few changes, but I used my contacts to ensure nobody was thrown out in the street and they all were paid a bit of gold to live for a while.

Poison Taster?

Yes, it's a long story, but I was poisoned about a year ago. After that, Dronte and I decided to purchase a couple of protective items that would make our bodies immune to poison for a short time. We approached the clergy of the Peacemaker, and they were happy to help us out for a sizable donation. In addition, the priests commissioned a special pair of spectacles that allowed Dronte to look at food and drink to determine if it was poisonous. Everyone in the manor knows he has the spectacles, but only he and I know of the periapts that he and I wear.

How well did you know him?

He served in the Cosdol military for eight years, then spent nine years serving in my uncle's court as an advisor to the Crown. He has been with me for seven. I feel I know him as well as any man could know another, and he was always treated as close to family as anyone not of the Royal blood was able.

Would anyone want him dead?

I can't understand why. He has no family of note, his sons are in the Cosdol military, and his wife passed way some time ago. All of his work over the past few years has been as my assistant, and I haven't been involved in anything that would create enemies for him.

You are a politician. Surely you have some enemies?

Of course, I would not be doing my job if I was not making some enemies. But I have been in Bet Rogala for over a year now, and none of my negotiations with the various factions in Pekal have caused more than a few whispers in Prince Kafen's court. Besides, killing Dronte would not affect my instructions or decisions.

How long ago did he come up here?

The Ambassador thinks for a moment. It must have been 30 minutes or so. I confess I did not notice the exact time.

Did you know all the guests at the party?

Yes, I have a guest list if you wish to peruse it. Most of the people who attended are nobles from Pekal, or visitors from Cosdol who were in town for the funeral of Terrina.

Isn't a party a bit inappropriate for Terrina's death?

Actually, Turrol asked that we do it. Much like guarding her gravesite, celebrating the passing of the spirit is another of the important ceremonies in their tribe. We would have liked to hold it on another night because of the ritual gravesite watching, but the timing did not work out for another day. As most of the visitors are leaving tomorrow, Turrol, Dronte and I decided to go ahead and hold the party.

Answer other questions as necessary, but these questions cover the pertinent information.

If questioned, the guard summoned to the door confirms he saw Dronte go upstairs between 30 and 45 minutes ago. He did not notice anything peculiar, save that Dronte had a glass of wine in his hand.

Search check:

DC 10: A wine glass on the ground seems to have rolled away from Dronte's hand.

DC 15: Dronte appears to have been standing facing the desk, with his back to the door.

DC 20: A glass of wine is on the carpet next to the desk under some papers. It looks like it was set on the desk, and fell off to the side.

DC 25: There are small shards of what appear to have once been a small gem between Dronte's body and the door. (These are the remains of the *Elemental Gem*, but they do not radiate magic)

Heal check:

DC 10: Dronte does not have any wounds on his body

DC 15: It appears that his tongue swelled to a size where he suffocated, and his extremities are an odd color.

DC 20: His body appears to have fallen quickly, as if he did not even try to catch himself as he hit the ground (he died very fast).

DC 25: The pupils in his eyes are wide and have a yellow tint. This is very odd, and only usually happens when a person has been subjected to multiple different poisons at the same time.

Craft (alchemy) or Craft (poison):

DC 20: The glass nearest Dronte's hand contains Oil of taggit poison (which causes unconsciousness).

DC 25: It also contains nitharit poison (3d6 Con damage).

Both of these poisons act minutes after the subject has contracted them, so Dronte would not have had any warning that he had actually consumed the poisons (i.e. no primary damage from the poisons).

Brew Potion:

Anyone with the Brew Potion feat can make a **Knowledge (arcana)** check DC 18 to identify the remaining drops of liquid as something similar to a *Dispel Magic* potion.

Detect Magic:

If a character casts *detect magic* in the room, they detect two auras.

One aura comes from the wine glass nearest Dronte's hand (which they discover with *detect magic* even if they missed it in the Search). It is moderate abjuration magic (from the *potion of dispel magic*).

The other aura is one of conjuration, and seems to encompass most areas of the room (where the elemental flew around messing up papers). It is strongest between Dronte's body and the desk. (which gives a +5 bonus to Search checks if the PCs have not discovered the broken shards of the *Elemental Gem*)

The Periapt of Poison around Dronte's neck radiates magic per the item description.

Detect Poison:

A character who casts *detect poison* notices that the liquid drops on the wine glass that fell from Dronte's hand are poisoned.

If Detect Magic is used:

Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft:

DC 15: Conjurations usually take a long time to cast, and are easily interrupted

DC 20: Summoned creatures generally are called to attack opponents, not tear up desks and papers. That seems a bit strange to use a spell for that purpose.

DC 25: There are only a few creatures commonly summoned that could inflict the kind of damage found on the papers; most would tear through the room, not toss items around in a chaotic mess.

Papers on the desk and floor

A **Search check DC 22** notices the remains of a paper in the fireplace. Though most of it was burned in a fire, there are a few legible scraps. However, the Ambassador seems to be hovering near the fireplace. A Sleight of Hand check against the Ambassador's spot check is necessary to get the papers under his notice. If

the check fails, he asks the papers be returned as they may contain private information.

Alternatively, if the PCs can distract the Ambassador, apply a penalty to his Spot check as appropriate; a general guideline of -2 or -4 depending on the specific situation can be used.

If the PCs get the paper from the fireplace, give them **Appendix III: Player Handout #2**.

ENCOUNTER 5
Another One

Summary: A servant is found dead in the basement area, far away from the aide in the upstairs bedroom. The guests are getting nervous, and more than a few believe the spirit of Terrina has returned.

As your search continues, a young servant nearly crashes into the door frame as he skids to a stop in front of the study. Panting, he addresses the Ambassador, "Sir, I went downstairs to replace some unused wine bottles, but there was a body lying on the floor!!"

The Ambassador deftly moves to hide the body of Dronte behind his flowing mantle and looks at you, "It seems this night continues with its grim surprises. Would you mind accompanying me?"

Turning to the guard, "After we leave, let no person enter this room save by my order." The guard salutes and resumes his stance beside the study entry.

If asked questions, the servant begs them to follow him and ask on the way. He really does not know very much, but here are some suggestions:

What is your name?

My name is Erren. I am the Chief Butler for Ambassador Vrindolvus.

What are your duties?

My duties include making sure all meals are prepared and served properly, as well as managing my Lord's kitchen and server staff.

How long have you been in service here?

Only about a year. I was working for a merchant out of Cosdol when I heard about this position.

Did Dronte hire you?

Well, yes. He interviewed me along with a couple of priests from local churches. Apparently there had been an attempt on the Ambassador's life, and he was happy to learn I was a patriot loyal to King Welren. The priests cast spells upon me to make sure I was worthy and answering questions truthfully. But I was offered the job and I accepted.

Who is the person who was found?

Felida, a kitchen chef who has been with us for some time. (Before the "purge" Dronte conducted a year ago)

What race was she?

Felida was a human of Kalamaran descent.

Who found her?

I found her. I was going into the basement to put away a couple of bottles of wine.

Was anyone else with you?

No, the other servants are cleaning the rest of the manor. I told one of the guards to stand at the top of the cellar and not let anyone else down there until I returned.

Did you know Terrina?

No, I never met her.

Where did you find the body?

I went down the stairs into the main basement area. You have to walk through the main part of the cellar to reach the racks where the wine is stored. I reached the bottom of the steps and when I opened the torch, I saw the body sprawled out on the ground in the middle of the basement.

How do you know she was dead?

Well, it looks like someone hit her in the head very hard. Her neck was twisted weird, and there was blood everywhere.

Did you go to her and check her out?

No. –sigh- I must confess that I sort of flew into a panic when I saw her.

That is really about all that Erren knows at this point. He is very flustered, much more so than

should be normal. **Sense Motive** DC 20 reveals that he is very nervous.

ENCOUNTER 6

More Wine Please

Summary: The PCs enter the cellar and discover the crumpled form of a dead servant. Their investigations may reveal more than they bargained for as secrets may be revealed that will change the fate of Pekal.

Arriving at the cellar, a dozen servants all stand huddled together on the side of the kitchen opposite a large guard at attention in front of a doorway. Seeing the Ambassador enter the kitchen, the guard's demeanor changes noticeably and he relaxes. Stepping away from the doorway, the man nods at Erren, the servant who came to alert you to the body in the cellar.

"Shall we?" asks Vrindolvus, motioning to the cellar.

Allow the PCs to ask questions of servants and the guard before descending. The only thing they know is that Felida went into the cellar some time ago to put away some flour that was not used in during the party. That was about 20 minutes ago.

Once the PCs move into the cellar, read the following:

Ambassador Vrindolvus watches as you enter the cellar. "I will wait for you in the kitchen. I need to speak with my servants and guards to ensure they take steps to protect themselves. The door will remain open and this guard" motioning to the man beside the door, "will remain here to prevent others from coming down to interrupt you."

The Cellar

The moldy smell of the basement coupled with the thick odor of blood is heavy as you descend the stairs. As you move down, the soft sounds of your boots stepping on moisture reach your ears. Through the dim light, you notice that blood covers nearly every surface in a wide spray at the bottom of the cellar. At the center of the carnage is the sprawled body of a dark-haired woman, her head twisted at an odd angle.

She still wears the plain clothes of a servant, but the back of her skull has been crushed in, as if some massive blunt instrument was forced into the back of her head.

Ask players to make a **Fortitude** save DC 17. Those who fail are sickened until the end of this encounter. In this instance, another player who makes a **Heal** check DC 19 on a sickened PC cures the afflicted character immediately.

PCs with the Endurance feat gain a +4 on this saving throw.

Search check:

The judge is encouraged to ask the PCs what they are searching for if they ask to make a check. In this way, the judge can be sure to give them the proper information since searching around Felida is a different task than searching the cellar (which would result in them finding the secret door).

DC 10: Felida was walking into the cellar from the direction of the stairs, and once she hit the ground she did not move again (there are no movement marks in the pools of blood).

DC 15: There is a small blue lizard tattoo on the inside of her bicep near her left armpit (exactly the same size, shape, and design as the ones on the Mountain Scorpions).

DC 20: There are some strange patterns in the blood around her body, as if her body were at the center of some kind of wind vortex.

Heal check:

DC 10: Felida has a single wound in the back of her head from a large blunt object. (There are no such objects around here; larger than a wine bottle, smaller than an anvil)

DC 15: The wound killed her instantly.

DC 20: The amount of blood on the ground is strange; it is almost as if something caused the blood to evacuate the body much faster than normal and spray around the room in wild patterns (the whirlwind surrounding her body created a vacuum that pulled the blood out of her body).

Craft (alchemy):

Nothing.

Detect Magic:

If a character casts *detect magic* in the room, he detects two auras.

One aura of *conjunction* magic comes from the area of the room from the top of the staircase all the way to Felida's body. It is strongest near the top of the stairs. This aura is from the conjunction spell used to call the air elemental.

Another aura comes from behind one of the large shelves. It is a moderate illusion effect.

Detect Poison:

Nothing.

The Secret Room

The PCs can detect this room one of two ways. The first is to investigate if the illusion effect is detected. The second is to succeed on a **Search check DC 25** when the characters specifically state they are searching the cellar (as opposed to searching around Felida's body).

If the PCs mention they are looking for any large crates or shelves that have been moved recently (as mentioned by the replacement guards in **Encounter 1**), they gain a +5 bonus to their check.

If they find the secret door, there is a specially modified version of *Major Image* cast upon the opening to make it seem like part of the brick wall of the cellar. This spell requires a Will save DC 17 for any PC that interacts with it. Characters who make the save realize there is an illusion spell covering an archway into a small chamber.

Anyone who has the Appreciation of Welstern Vrindolvus cert from *A Simple Detail* gains a +2 to the saving throw to disbelieve the illusion.

Once PCs move into the room, continue below:

The stench and dampness of the cellar recede once you move into the small room beyond the archway. Everything is strangely still in this room, and you experience strange tingling sensations up and down your arms.

The only items of interest in this room are a large wooden desk and a padded chair. A number of scrolls and books lie open on the desk.

This room is protected from divination magic, so *detect magic* does not reveal anything inside the room.

The desk is trapped. The trap is activated by taking something off the desk without disabling the trap (a verbal trigger to disable known only to Welstern Vrindolvus).

In addition, at ATLS 5 and 7 the scroll (**Player Handout #3**) has *Illusory Script* cast upon it. The spell has two days remaining on the spell, was cast by a 9th-level wizard, and requires a Will save DC 17. The suggestion implanted within the text is “Burn this scroll, then forget it existed.”

Trapped Desk

ATL 1 (EL 2)

Magic Missile Trap: magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm* covering the desk); no reset; spell effect (*magic missile*, 3rd-level wizard, 2d4+2 force, no save); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

ATL 3 (EL 4)

Magic Missile Trap: magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm* covering the desk); no reset; spell effect (*magic missile*, 7th-level wizard, 4d4+4 force, no save); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

ATL 5 (EL 6)

Lightning Bolt Trap: magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm* covering desk); no reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 10th-level wizard, 10d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

ATL 7 (EL 7)

Chain Lightning Trap: magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm* covering desk); no reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target nearest desk plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 20 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

The *Chain Lightning* trap only targets individuals inside the room – the spell effect does not pass into the main cellar.

If the PCs continue to search after avoiding, setting off, or disabling the trap, they find **Player Handout #3**.

Elemental Attack

Allow the characters to continue their searching, but when they declare they are ready to leave, read the following:

From the top of the stairs, a brightly-glowing gem appears as it arcs down toward the cellar floor. It hits with a resounding crack, and where the gem shattered, a whirling cyclone of wind appears. Two dark ovals within the vortex stay centered on you as the whirlwind advances!

Knowledge (planes) DC 15, **Knowledge (arcana)** DC 15, (and other relevant skills) reveals this is an air elemental.

Please note that these air elementals do not use the “whirlwind” special ability. They attempt to attack the nearest PC until dead, then move to the next PC.

ATL 1 (EL 1)

Small Air Elemental

ATL 3 (EL 3)

Medium Air Elemental

ATL 5 (EL 7)

Huge Air Elemental

ATL 7 (EL 9)

Greater Air Elemental

While the PCs are in combat, the door to the cellar is closed and barred from the other side. To get out they must break down the door.

If any PCs are in the kitchen (or try to stay with Vrindolvus):

If a PC(s) insists on remaining outside the cellar, he or she becomes the target of a *Maze* spell from Yurgon.

While they are trapped, Yurgon kills the servants and the guards in the kitchen with a *quicken* *fireball*, throws the gem into the cellar, then closes and bars the door. All of this takes two rounds after he casts *Maze*.

When the PCs escape, the Ambassador is gone, and they see the devastation around the main hall as described in Encounter 7.

ENCOUNTER 7 **Wizard's Gambit**

Summary: The characters find injured servants in the hallway. They need to save as many as possible, and may find out information to help them in the next encounter.

More cries can be heard in the main entry hall. The room is littered with the remains of servants and guards. One servant moves around trying desperately to save those who are still clinging to life.

PCs who wish to help save people may do so. Allow two rounds of healing, skill checks, wand use, etc. There are seven people who may be saved.

First have the PCs make a **Search** or **Heal** check DC 15 to find a person who might be saved. This is a free check, and is done immediately before their action. If the PC finds someone, they may attempt to administer aid, or wait for another PC to help.

If the characters decide to ask questions, any of the servants or guards can answer, though most are badly injured.

What happened?

We were in the kitchen when a loud explosion sounded in the hall. We came to look, and saw injured people on the ground. As we moved to help them, fire erupted all around us, and most of us would be dead if not for you.

Did you see anyone?

Yurgon and the Ambassador ran upstairs as we came into the room. It seemed like Yurgon was chasing the Ambassador.

Did either of them move their hands in weird ways like casting spells?

Well, yes. The Ambassador paused at the top of the stairs as we came in, and waved his hand. Yurgon just kept running. The fire came after that.

Were Yurgon and the Ambassador arguing or anything during the party?

No, they seemed to be getting along just fine during the party.

Don't spend too much time on this, but try to instill some doubt that the Ambassador *may* have cast the fireball spell. When the PCs are finished helping out, continue to the next Encounter:

ENCOUNTER 8 **The Truth Revealed**

Summary: The PCs encounter Vrindolvus and Yurgon arguing amongst themselves. Both try to sway the PCs to their way of thinking, and the decisions may affect the future of Pekal.

A loud explosion shakes the building, and a dust cloud appears at the top of the steps from the second story.

Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft DC 18 identifies it as a fireball spell.

If the characters hesitate, one of the servants tells them the Ambassador Vrindolvus was in his room, and he may be in trouble.

Once they reach the room, continue below:

A scene of destruction greets you as you approach the study of the Ambassador Vrindolvus. The wall around the door has been destroyed, and rubble rests in the hallway. Peering cautiously inside, you note the ceiling is open to the night sky, as whatever caused the wall to crumble also apparently literally blew the roof off this section of the house.

A high-pitched shriek comes from inside the bedroom. "No, I cannot!"

Another voice, much more measured counters, "You would conquer this land that Terrina so loved? You disgust me!"

Allow the PCs a moment to compose themselves. Once they decide to enter the room, continue:

Before you, his form covered in cascading light, Yurgon stands before Ambassador Vrindolvus. Turning slightly to face you, Yurgon's face takes on a pained expression.

"Ah, more servants of the Cosdol dogs. How much did gold were you promised to betray Prince Kafen and the Principality?"

Allow the PCs a chance to respond. They may have questions, and both Yurgon and Vrindolvus will answer, though the Ambassador attempts to spin his responses to his best advantage.

Questions for Yurgon:

These questions cover some of the likely questions the PCs may have for Yurgon. He is forthright, though all of his comments are made from his own warped sense of justice.

What is your connection with the Blue Salamander?

A tenuous one at best. I help protect some of their merchandise from time to time. Other than that, I mainly draw on them for mundane help.

Did you kill Dronte?

Yes, he was instrumental in trying to stage an overthrow of the Pekal government. He then dared call himself "Terrina's friend" in front of me. I gave him a quick death, which is more than Terrina would have done.

Did you kill Felida?

Yes, she was a follower of Elnamna (The Flaymaster) and had killed a dozen other members of the organization over the past few years. I was told she had finally come unhinged, and was dangerous to everyone around her.

Why did you try to kill the guards and servants?

I did not cast those spells, the servants are meaningless to my plans. Besides, I am not the only person present who trained in the arcane arts.

Did you try to kill us?

Yes, you follow the Ambassador's orders like green soldiers, and you killed my men at the graveyards.

Yes, after the guards attacked us!

I had not heard this – they were given explicit instructions NOT to attack anyone. I would apologize, if I thought it would matter to you.

What were they doing at the graveyard?

They were trying to recover Terrina's body. The Ambassador had her killed, and I meant to take her away to prove the truth.

How do you know he killed her?

Because she was in perfect health not three weeks ago, and after taking a "special" job for the Ambassador, suddenly she dies of natural causes? You don't find that suspicious?

What do you mean by "betraying Pekal?"

Surely you discovered the Ambassador's secret room in the cellar?

If "No" then:

There are documents in there that prove the King of Cosdol has allied himself with an exiled noble of this country to try and wrest control of Pekal from Prince Kafen.

If "Yes" then:

Then you have the proof of the King's plans; using an exiled noble to wrest control of Pekal from Prince Kafen.

Why are you doing this?

I have many reasons, but my primary concern is causing injury to the King. He stole Terrina from me when I was younger – ordering her into a situation everyone knew was a suicide mission. When he received word she had been captured, all of his people were ordered not to rescue her. But that was just the beginning – I watched him use and discard people for decades before deciding to act. Now, by forcing his plans into the light, I can strike back at him by embarrassing his rule, and his family.

What do you hope to gain?

Only the satisfaction of knowing that his plan will not succeed. If you agree to turn over all the documents you have found to the Pekal military, I swear to you I will submit to face trial for my crimes in the courts of Pekal. Only if you agree to give them to the Pekalese Military will I surrender myself.

How did you learn about these plans to conquer Pekal?

A little blue lizard told me.

Questions for Ambassador Vrindolvus Welstern:

These questions cover some of the likely questions the PCs may have for Vrindolvus. All of his answers are true to a point, though he tries to make sure the PCs sympathize with him.

Did you kill Terrina?

No, she came to me to reveal that she was dying. She wanted my help to fund one last adventure – I consented. If you don't believe me, the High Priestess of Liela (The Raiser) can verify my story.

Does your uncle plan to conquer Pekal?

Of course not! The documents you found do talk about troop movements, but they are all well-known to the Prince. This is not public, but Cosdol has agreed to provide military assistance to Pekal during the upcoming conflict with Kalamar. The King believes that stopping Kabori now means less loss of life later. Besides, do you realize how far away Pekal is from Cosdol? Who could control another country that far away with so much turmoil in between?

Was Dronte trying to set up rebellion among the populace?

No! Dronte was an old man who was ready to retire. Why in the world would he want to make trouble for himself and Cosdol by participating in this fantasy of Yurgon's imagination?

Was Felida a mass murderer?

She confessed to me some time ago about horrible crimes she committed under the influence of an evil cult. I had given her another chance. I agreed to give her life new meaning if she would make an effort to change her ways. I truly do not know if she actually killed anybody.

Why did you cast the fireball spells against your servants?

I did not cast any spells against my own servants. Yurgon must have done it. He already killed others tonight – what would make him hesitate to kill more?

What about Terrina being sent into the war zone?

I am not sure what Yurgon believes, but I know that my Uncle never abandoned anyone to slavery. He asked for volunteers to go, and she volunteered – that is the kind of woman she was.

What if we were to turn these documents over to the authorities?

Unfortunately, as with all documents of the King of Cosdol, my career would be over, and my servants would be sold into slavery.

My uncle would very likely exile me from Cosdol, and remove my name from the family. Such is the price for failing to protect the private documents of the Royal Family.

To prove that I and my King are innocent of these spurious charges, you may have the documents and do with them what you wish. By my order, nobody in this house will stop you.

Any characters who make a **Sense Motive** here must succeed in a **DC 26** check. If so, they get the impression that the Ambassador is not revealing the entire truth about the matter. If pressed, he repeats his story, without further details.

What of Yurgon?

He has admitted to breaking at least three laws of Pekal, and should therefore be arrested. He is a powerful wizard, though, and there is not likely anyone nearby who could force him into anything without his permission.

Who is the exiled Duke that is mentioned?

<<Big Spoiler Warning>> If characters have not played *Barriers of Mentality*, answer in this way: **“An exiled noble who still holds the Prince's favor has agreed to work for the King of Cosdol.”** and inform the players that more detailed information would contain spoilers.

If all character have played *Barriers of Mentality*, then reply, **“Duke Matikis. He was, incidentally, mentioned to me by Prince Kafen. Though the Duke lost the political battle, the Prince still thought highly of him, and did not want to see him suffer more than that which was required by propriety.”**

Eventually, the PCs must make the decision whether or not to take the scrolls from the manor house. Making copies is an option, as are having people guard the documents until others come to read them.

If the PCs take the original documents out of the manor, read **Conclusion A**.

If they return the original documents to Ambassador Welstern, read **Conclusion B**.

CONCLUSION A

The End

Ambassador Vrindolvus shakes his head slowly from side to side as he listens to your decision. "I understand, but you have condemned my entire household. Please leave my estate immediately."

Yurgon sighs heavily. He looks at you all, then places his hands behind his back as he walks from the bedroom. Following him out the front door, you realize he is headed for the College of Magic, perhaps the only place in the city where they could hope to contain such a powerful individual.

After a few days, you receive word from the military:

"Thank you for the recent information regarding a threat to the country. Our intelligence has confirmed what we feared – there was a plot to bring in soldiers under pretenses of a false alliance, then use them to take control of the country. You have done a great service for the country, and the Prince is pleased. Please accept these tokens as a reward for your noble actions."

CONCLUSION B

Yurgon snarls as you hand the documents to Vrindolvus. "Fools, you have just sacrificed your country and all you love." Speaking an arcane word, Yurgon vanishes without a trace.

Ambassador Vrindolvus smiles as he places the documents inside his robes. "Let me get the letters of introduction I promised you. In addition, I will ensure that you have an audience with the Prince's Royal Steward to speak about the contents of these documents."

A few days later, you are invited to speak with the Royal Steward. He supports the Ambassador's statements – there are negotiations between Pekal and Cosdol for mutual military assistance, and the contents of the documents you all discovered were nothing more than contingency plans in case Kalamar succeeded in taking over Pekal. After the meeting, your hearts feel more at ease, and the moral questions you had been asking yourselves over your chosen course of action seem to have been answered.

Awards

TREASURE

This is where treasure is listed. Items that have been stripped off bodies will be listed at prices for which they may be sold. Treasure is broken down by Encounter to aid the judge in determining if characters are awarded specific items. The amount may be more or less than what is listed in the PHB as the economy may fluctuate.

Encounter 1: Studded leather (3) - 38 gp sale value
 Longswords (2) - 15 gp sale value
 Bardiche (1) – 7 gp sale value
Conclusion A: 50 gp each
 Notice of the Pekal Military
Conclusion B: 50 gp each
 Appreciation of Welstern Vrindolvus
 Letter of Introduction

Judges who run this adventure without first playing it (i.e. “eating” the adventure) gain **200 gp**

OTHER AWARDS

Notice of the Pekal Military

This recommendation is but one step that must be gained to secure membership in certain secretive and selective groups dedicated to protecting Pekal from its enemies.

Appreciation of Welstern Vrindolvus

This platinum coin is twice the size of a standard minted coin. On one side it bears the royal coat-of-arms of Cosdol. On the other, it bears the crest of the Archmage Welren, king of Cosdol.

(Important Note: Every character at the table gets the “Appreciation of Welstern Vrindolvus” cert, even if they already have one. The text on this cert updates certain information that is necessary for future campaign events. Characters who have the cert from A Simple Detail should destroy that version, and keep this one)

Letter of Introduction

Ambassador Vrindolvus has agreed to speak to certain merchants on your behalf. The character named above may use this cert to purchase two potions from Table 7-17 in the DMG with a market price of 750 gp or less. Write the potions purchased on the lines below, and cross them off when used.

Experience Points

EXPERIENCE	ATL 1-3	ATL 5-7
Encounter 2: Defeating the Mountain Scorpions	50 xp	100 xp
Encounter 3: Discovering the wine was poisoned	25 xp	50 xp
Discovering the wine was poisoned with two poisons	25 xp	50 xp
Discovering the aura of conjuration magic	15 xp	30 xp
Successfully retrieving the letter remains	15 xp	30 xp
Encounter 6: Discovering the aura of conjuration magic	15 xp	30 xp
Entering the secret room	20 xp	40 xp
Disabling the trap	30 xp	60 xp
Defeating the Air Elemental	50 xp	100 xp
Encounter 7: Providing aid to injured servants	20 xp	80 xp
Getting information from servants	15 xp	30 xp
Discretionary Experience for Role Playing	120 xp	240 xp
Total	400 xp	800 xp

Judges who run this adventure without first playing it (i.e. "eating" the adventure) gain **200 xp**

Appendix I: NPCs and Monsters

Encounter 2

ATL 1 (EL 1)

Mountain Scorpions

Brandobian Human Ftr1

Hit Dice: 1d10+1 (10 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+3; **Attack:** Longsword +3 melee (1d8+2) or Bardiche +3 melee (1d10+3); **Full Attack:** Longsword +4 melee (1d8+2) or Bardiche +4 melee (1d10+3); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword or bardiche); **Alignment:** Neutral

ATL 3 (EL 6)

Mountain Scorpion Leader

Brandobian Human Ftr4

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (35 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+6; **Attack:** Longsword +8 melee (1d8+4); **Full Attack:** Longsword +7 melee (1d8+4); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (longsword), Dodge, Mobility; **Alignment:** Neutral

Mountain Scorpion Fighters

Brandobian Human Ftr2

Hit Dice: 2d10+2 (17 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+4; **Attack:** Longsword +4 melee (1d8+2) or Bardiche +4 melee (1d10+3); **Full Attack:** Longsword +5 melee (1d8+2) or Bardiche +5 melee (1d10+3); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword or bardiche), Dodge; **Alignment:** Neutral

ATL 5 (EL 8)

Mountain Scorpion Leader

Brandobian Human Ftr6

Hit Dice: 6d10+6 (50 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+8; **Attack:** Longsword +9 melee (1d8+2); **Full Attack:** Longsword +9/+3 melee (1d8+4); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes; **Alignment:** Neutral

Mountain Scorpion Fighters

Brandobian Human Ftr4

Hit Dice: 4d10+4 (35 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +4/+6; **Attack:** Longsword +7 melee (1d8+4) or Bardiche +7 melee (1d10+5); **Full Attack:** Longsword +7 melee (1d8+4) or Bardiche +7 melee (1d10+5); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword or bardiche), Weapon Specialization (longsword or bardiche), Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes; **Alignment:** Neutral

ATL 7 (EL 10)

Mountain Scorpion Leader Brandobian Human Ftr8

Hit Dice: 8d10+8 (66 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +8/+11; **Attack:** Longsword +12 melee (1d8+4); **Full Attack:** Longsword +12/+7 melee (1d8+4); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 16, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword); **Alignment:** Neutral

Mountain Scorpion Fighters

Brandobian Human Ftr6

Hit Dice: 6d10+6 (50 hp); **Initiative:** +3; **Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares); **Armor Class:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+8; **Attack:** Longsword +9 melee (1d8+2) or Bardiche +9 melee (1d10+3); **Full Attack:** Longsword +9/+3 melee (1d8+4) or Bardiche +9/+3 melee (1d10+5); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** N/A; **Special Qualities:** N/A; **Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; **Abilities:** Str 15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus (longsword or bardiche), Weapon Specialization (longsword or bardiche), Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes; **Alignment:** Neutral

Encounter 6

ATL 1 (EL 1)

Air Elemental, Small

Small Elemental (Air, Extraplanar); **Hit Dice:** 2d8 (9 hp); **Initiative:** +7; **Speed:** Fly 100 ft. (perfect) (20 squares); **Armor Class:** 17 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/-3; **Attack:** Slam +5 melee (1d4); **Full Attack:** Slam +5 melee (1d4); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** Air mastery, whirlwind; **Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; **Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +6, Will +0; **Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11; **Skills:** Listen +2, Spot +3; **Feats:** Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative^B, Weapon Finesse^B; **Alignment:** Neutral

ATL 3 (EL 3)

Air Elemental, Medium

Medium Elemental (Air, Extraplanar); **Hit Dice:** 4d8+8 (26 hp); **Initiative:** +9; **Speed:** Fly 100 ft. (perfect) (20 squares); **Armor Class:** 18 (+5 Dex, +3 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 13; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +3/+4; **Attack:** Slam +8 melee (1d6+1); **Full Attack:** Slam +8 melee (1d6+1); **Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.; **Special Attacks:** Air mastery, whirlwind; **Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; **Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +1; **Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 21, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11; **Skills:** Listen +3, Spot +4; **Feats:** Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative^B, Weapon Finesse^B; **Alignment:** Neutral

ATL 5 (EL 7)

Air Elemental, Huge

Huge Elemental (Air, Extraplanar)

Hit Dice: 16d8+64 (136 hp); **Initiative:** +13; **Speed:** Fly 100 ft. (perfect) (20 squares); **Armor Class:** 21 (-2 size, +9 Dex, +4 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 12; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +12/+24; **Attack:** Slam +19 melee (2d8+4); **Full Attack:** 2 slams +19 melee (2d8+4); **Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.; **Special Attacks:** Air mastery, whirlwind; **Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5/-, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; **Saves:** Fort +9, Ref +19, Will +5; **Abilities:** Str 18, Dex 29, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11; **Skills:** Listen +11, Spot +12; **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative^B, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse^B; **Alignment:** Neutral

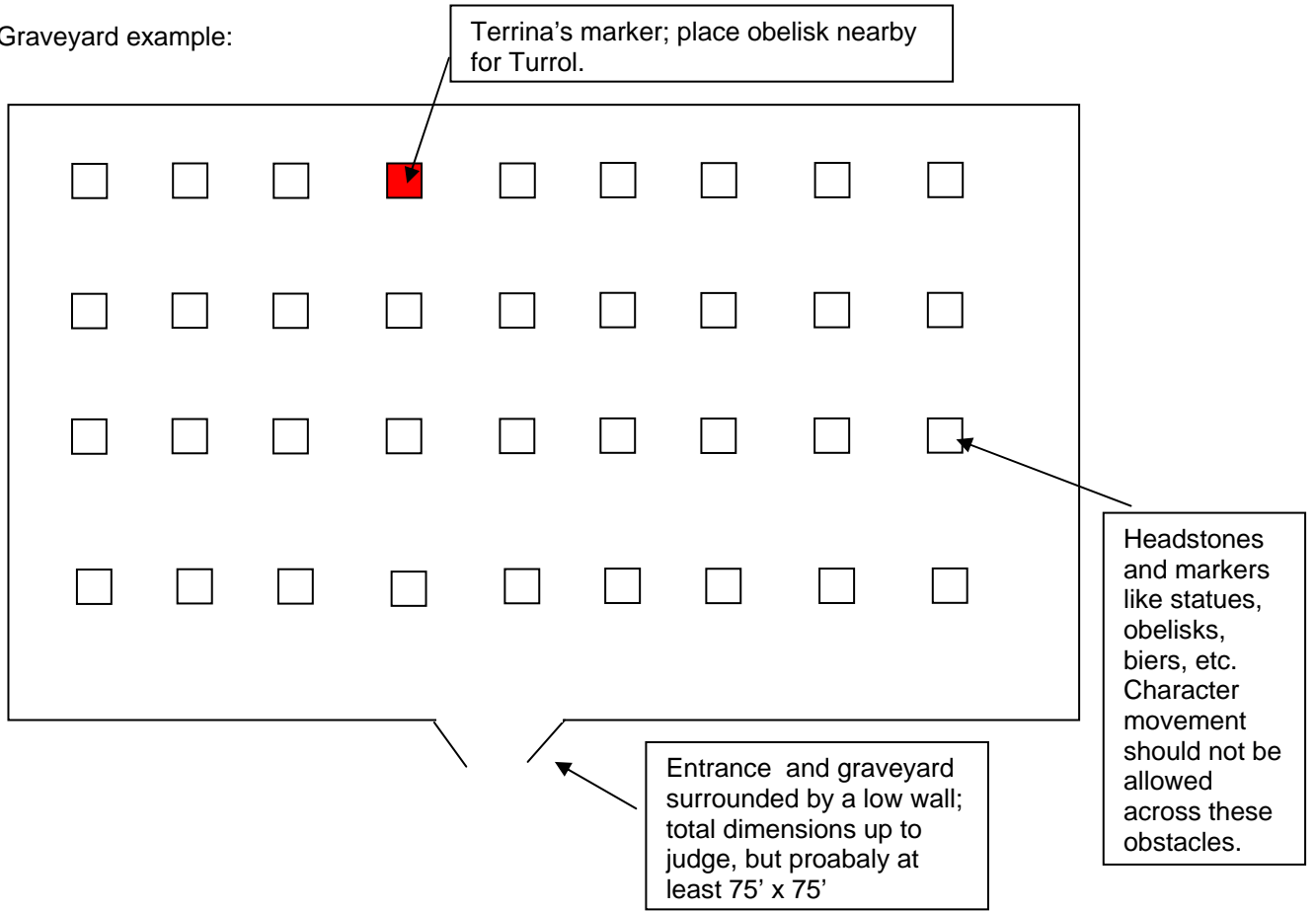
ATL 7 (EL 9)

Air Elemental, Greater

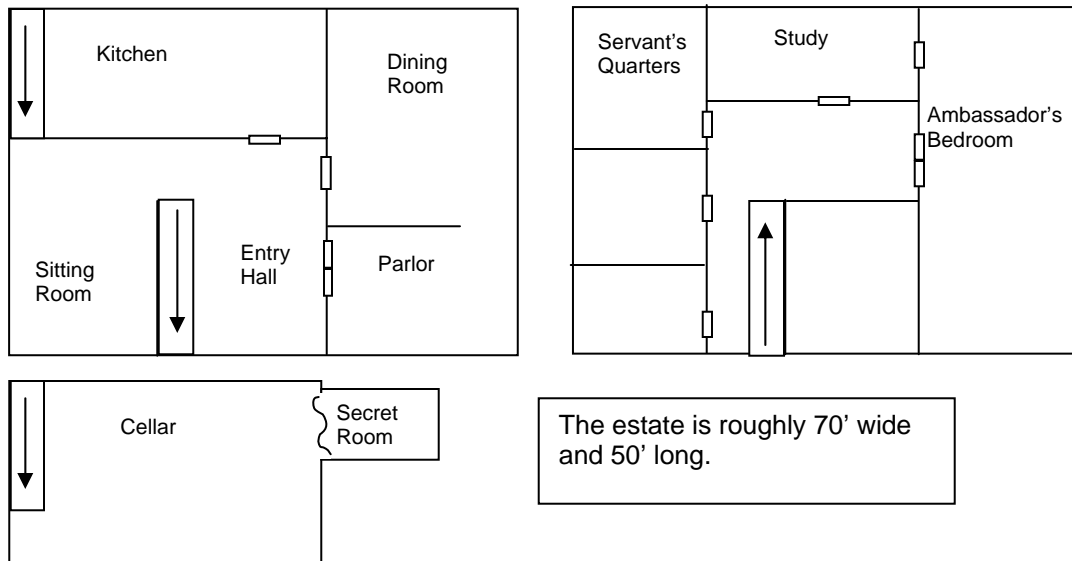
Huge Elemental (Air, Extraplanar); **Hit Dice:** 21d8+84 (178 hp); **Initiative:** +14; **Speed:** Fly 100 ft. (perfect) (20 squares); **Armor Class:** 26 (-2 size, +10 Dex, +8 natural), touch 18, flat-footed 16; **Base Attack/Grapple:** +15/+28; **Attack:** Slam +23 melee (2d8+5); **Full Attack:** 2 slams +23 melee (2d8+5); **Space/Reach:** 15 ft./15 ft.; **Special Attacks:** Air mastery, whirlwind; **Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 10/-, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits; **Saves:** Fort +11, Ref +22, Will +9; **Abilities:** Str 20, Dex 31, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11; **Skills:** Listen +14, Spot +14; **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative^B, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse^B; **Alignment:** Neutral

Appendix II: Additional Rules

Graveyard example:



Ambassador Vrindolvus' Estate



APPENDIX III: Player Handout #1

The life of Terrina Valsini:

This information can be distributed via Gather Information checks, in game via role-play, or other methods as the judge sees fit

Terrina Valsini was a beautiful barbarian from the mountains west of Cosdol. She gained notoriety early in her adventuring career when she saved a group of Royal Couriers from a large wyvern. When word reached King Welren's court of her deeds, she was summoned to his side.

After many adventures, Terrina had quite a following in the court. Her lover at the time was a promising apprentice to Welren named Yurgon. This man was very intelligent, and often seemed on the verge of becoming a brilliant diviner. His insight and understanding of the craft was paramount, but his true devotion was reserved for Terrina.

In time, some forces of the Cosdol military found themselves in a desperate situation. The King was unsure what to do until a suicidal plan presented itself. Unwilling to force anyone to undertake a mission that would likely lead to certain death, the King asked for volunteers. Terrina was the first and only one who spoke. Yurgon was out of the city at the time, and was unaware of Terrina's actions. When he found out, he became distraught and tried to go after her. Unfortunately, everyone's worst fears had come true – Terrina had been lost on the fields of battle.

Of course, as fate would have it, she was not killed, but captured and forced into slavery by a Hobgoblin tribe. She was treated harshly as her upbringing would not permit her to be cowed by her captors. Eventually, the hobgoblins sold her to a traveling slave master.

This slaver took her to the country of Eldor, one of Cosdol's main political rivals – though they were nominally allies. One of the Eldor nobility was at the slave market and recognized the barbarian from one of his trips to the court of King Welren. Sensing an opportunity to gain favor with the government of Eldor, this noble purchased Terrina and forced her into the arena games where he promised if she could win every match for one year, he would release her. He then allowed word of her presence to leak back to Cosdol, hoping to provoke an incident between the two countries.

Years passed, and Terrina eventually won her freedom from the slave pits. During her time as a slave, she had forced herself to forget Yurgon, sure that he had found another after so many years. Deciding to travel back to Cosdol, she met the man that she would eventually marry, and they both journeyed together on many adventures.

Toward the end of her career, Terrina found herself in the city of Baneta, working as a mercenary for some of the Merchant Houses of Kalamar. Falling in love with the people of the region, and curious about the elven traditions that so infused Pekalese culture, she made her way to Bet Rogala. While there, she met with another group of adventurers, and they all gathered their friends to recount tales of their bravery and daring. While in the city, this large group of rough and tumble individuals caught the attention of the Guards. Not wanting to start any trouble, the guards informed the groups that roving bands of adventurers were not welcome in Bet Rogala, so unless they had business in the city, they would need to move on.

Many took umbrage at this insult, and were ready to draw blades to demonstrate their displeasure. Terrina, realizing her new friends' futures were quickly coming to an end, jumped on a table and proposed a solution – the adventurers would stay in town two more days, then, if unemployed, would leave peacefully. Until then, however, the guards would have to leave them alone. Though grumbling could be heard by both groups, neither was eager for combat, so everyone agreed to Terrina's plans.

The next morning, Terrina approached the Prince's palace with a small bag of gold. Asking to see the Prince's Seneschal, she quickly recounted what had happened, and proposed an alternative to such confrontations in the future, and the Adventurers Guild of Pekal was established on that day, and all individuals who pay their dues are allowed to remain in the city as long as they please.

APPENDIX III: Player Handout #1

Written in Brandobian

... dangerous game you're playing. You know the history there, and none of them should be trusted. I'll allow you to continue for a time, but Eldor's threats against us grow more desperate. I have no doubt I'll survive these insipid plots against me, but you have already been targeted once, and I have no desire to lose a nephew.

Be careful,
Uncle

Appendix III: Player Handout #3

Emissary,

The plans go apace, and the time for the decision grows near. The forces are ready, and await your order to march. Once war begins, it will take the army seven weeks to arrive, five is possible, though that would leave them open to detection. As I'm sure you're aware, the men will have strict orders not to reveal their presence to any organized military forces. If either realized the true scope of the soldiers, even they would join forces against us to prevent a reforging of the True Empire.

And lest I forget, your recommendation has borne fruit; the exiled Duke has agreed to join our cause and has kissed the Ring of Cosdol.

Regards,
The King