

# Promises in the Dark

## A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup> Living Greyhawk<sup>™</sup> Theocracy of the Pale Regional Adventure

Version 1.0

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Whispered rumors are circulating in Landrigard Prelacy that the lost dwarven city of Garsegzul has been discovered deep beneath the Rakers. Can the zealous footfalls of experienced spelunkers, historians and relic-hunters go unnoticed while long-forgotten treasures are unearthed, or will the intrusion of surface-dwellers disturb a centuries-old, uneasy stillness? What fetid secrets lurk below, only the harshest light is fit to reveal. This scenario is the third and final chapter of *Biting the Hand that Feeds*, begun in PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* and continued in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*. A one-round Pale Regional Adventure for decisive PCs of levels 4-14 (APLs 6-12) who know that revenge is a dish best served cold. "*The last act is bloody, howsoever fine all the rest of the play*"—Pascal.

Resources for this adventure include *Book of Vile Darkness* [Monte Cook]; *Complete Adventurer* [Jesse Decker]; *Complete Divine* [David Noonan]; *Complete Warrior* [Andy Collins, David Noonan, Ed Stark]; COR4-07 *Crystal Caverns of the Cairn Hills* [Nicholas K. Tulach]; *Fiend Folio* [Eric Cagle, Jesse Decker, James Jacobs, Erik Mona, Matt Sernett, Chris Thomasson, James Wyatt]; "In Cold Hell, in Thicket" [Charles Olson], *Monster Manual II* [Ed Bonny, Jeff Grubb, Rich Redman, Skip Williams, Steve Winter]; PAL5-03 *Strata* [Derek Schubert]; PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* [Brian Moseley and Jason Clark]; PAL5I-02 *Force of Habit* [Jason Clark]; PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* [Jason Clark]; *Spell Compendium* [Matthew Sernett, Jeff Grubb, Mike McArtor].

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> 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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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2007.

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### Players Read No Further

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 will know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you are 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 rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1. For your convenience, that appendix is split by APL.

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

## LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

	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 up to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

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

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

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

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

## TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round regional adventure, set in the Theocracy of the Pale. Characters from the Pale pay one (1) Time Unit per round, while all other characters pay two (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*.

## PALE HOLY DAY

Some player characters may wish to give or attend services in-game on Pholtan holy days. For adventures set in the Theocracy of the Pale, a member of the Church of the One True Path may ask the judge at the beginning of an Adventure to determine how many days it is until the next Pholtan Holy day. This is accomplished by rolling a d8, rerolling if the result is 8. If a 7 is rolled, the first day

of the adventure is a Pholtan Holy Day. Otherwise, the die result indicates the number of days until the next Pholtan Holy Day. Due to the special nature of the Theocracy of the Pale, on Holy Days, Judges are encouraged (but not required) to work-in a brief scene involving Pholtan worship, possibly including a brief 1-2 minute sermon by a PC if his or her level is at least fifth level and the judge believes that there is time available.

## SPECIAL RULES FOR THE PALE

See DM Aid 1: Special Rules for the Pale.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

This scenario is the third and final chapter in a series focusing on the Cult of Demogorgon and its search for a lost artifact at the behest of a mysterious benefactor. Initially assigned to search the Rakers, the half-troll priest and cult lieutenant Aodhan ultimately developed a heightened sense of identity and a strong resentment toward authority. After the death of his protégé and necropolitan creation Bran Mac Colm, and his subsequent reprimand by his demonic superiors (both detailed in PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*), Aodhan rebelled and conspired with his nemesis and fellow lieutenant cultist, H'nakaalah, to murder their master Malerix Moorcol and assume leadership of the Cult's Troll Fens outposts. His burgeoning sense of individuality and predilection toward necromantic activity and company led Aodhan to abandon his search for the artifact and also to cease Malerix's troll breeding experiments, of which he himself was one.

Following the events in PAL5-06, Aodhan had a hunch where the artifact was hidden but not how to recover it from its mysterious, otherworldly guardian. Keeping this information to himself, he eventually returned to the Rakers (one of many such forays, which PCs may have learned about during PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*) with his half-troll bodyguards to study the problem, planning to recover and keep the artifact for himself.

The Underdark passage leading to the grotto known as Beltar's Maw (where the lost artifact is indeed hidden) has a secondary fork that leads to a vast, underground lake whose southern outlet eventually leads to the fabled River Svartjet. The lake is a favorite hunting area of an elder black dragon, who has survived in anonymity for ages by keeping a low profile. While his name and age are not relevant to the scope of this scenario, he is the sponsor of a local troglodyte tribe and especially of a female named Xilaisha, who has become his disciple. The tribe lairs in the lost city of Garsegzuul, which lies in the opposite direction along the subterranean highway from Beltar's Maw—about 50 miles from the Maw itself but a quick jaunt as the dragon flies.

One day recently, the dragon returned from hunting near the lake and detected the unmistakable, offensive odor of trolls. (Aodhan's troll heritage, lack of personal

hygiene, and commission of sacrifices while living in the middle of a swamp combined into a homing beacon for the dragon's keen senses.) Sensing that they were likely far from their home and up to something, he crept toward the Maw for a closer look.

What he saw aroused his curiosity: two mutated half-trolls stood by as the third (Aodhan) performed some kind of ritual over a dark pool. Aodhan also carried a *flesheater rod*, a magnificent brown scepter that the dragon instantly coveted. However, the dragon had also been around long enough to recall that some kind of entity occupied the pool and guarded something. A closer look at the trolls showed the dragon the unholy symbol of Demogorgon, so he stealthily retreated to dwell on this discovery.

Certainly he could kill and devour the trolls, but he wasn't particularly hungry, and the mystery of what the trolls were looking for would elude him. More importantly, here was an opportunity to test the mettle of his troglodyte tribe. The dragon devised a plan and returned to the large magma lake (seen in PAL5-06), where he quickly bribed a gang of feisty steam and fire mephits to prevent the trolls from departing until the dragon returned.

The dragon then took flight back toward Garsegzuul, flying low and unseen along the magma-chasm (also from PAL5-06). At the ancient dwarven city, he summoned his disciple Xilaisha and told her of his plan: to lure the trolls to Garsegzuul under the pretense of assisting them in their search. Once the trolls lowered their guard and revealed what they were looking for, the troglodytes would attack and slay the trolls, (and claim the brown scepter for the dragon).

Xilaisha relayed the dragon's plan to her chief, a devious priest of Laogzed named Skkal, and then went with the dragon to Beltar's Maw. Back at the magma lake, the mephits dutifully reported that the trolls had not left the Maw; the dragon then paid and dismissed them. He counseled his young disciple Xilaisha that the success of the plan was now fully in her hands.

Posing as a troglodyte concubine, she approached the three trolls. She threw herself at their mercy, claiming to be a mere servant, setting traps for surface-dwellers that had recently come in search of Garsegzuul and disturbed her master's meditation. As the dragon expected, Aodhan demanded to know more. Xilaisha described her master as a powerful savant with great knowledge of the Underdark. She added that her chief would reward the trolls for her return.

Frustrated at not acquiring the artifact, but knowing that every moment away from the Fens camp would draw suspicion from his demonic superiors, Aodhan agreed to accompany her to Garsegzuul. The next day, the dragon made his move, killing one of Aodhan's bodyguards with his acid breath and then flying away with a screaming Xilaisha. Aodhan pressed on to Garsegzuul in curiosity and desperation. In the distance, the dragon returned Xilaisha to her tribe and ordered Skkal not to disturb him until the trolls were slain.

Aodhan and his bodyguard reached Garsegzuul without incident; after making certain that no adventurers were near, he used divination magic (biting the hand that fed him, by using the Cult's gifts to betray them) to locate the troglodyte tribe, in an ancient temple of Moradin. Skkal's ranger-lieutenant Irakiss shadowed the two half-trolls through the deserted city. Aodhan cautiously approached the troglodyte lair, prepared to make a deal, but Skkal was ready for him.

Playing to Aodhan's suspected expectations of a dull-witted, reptilian shaman, Skkal listened to his tale of the Cult of Demogorgon, its search for the artifact, the dark pool in Beltar's Maw, and the infuriating intrusion of adventurers. Skkal then bluffed (as the dragon had instructed) and said he knew how to recover Aodhan's artifact: the dark pool in Beltar's Maw was but one access point to a vast underground lake. Skkal knew of another access point, he said, but it was guarded by powerful salamanders. Skkal slyly suggested that if Aodhan returned with half-trolls specially tailored to withstand fire, he should easily be able to defeat the salamanders and gain entry to the lake.

In return for this information, Skkal demanded live bodies for food and sacrifice, along with the augmented trolls to help fight off the recent influx of surface-dwellers. (Skkal really intended to accept the half-trolls and prisoners, and then lead Aodhan into an ambush by the dragon and Xilaisha). Blinded by greed and visions of further rebellion against the Cult of Demogorgon once the artifact was his, Aodhan agreed.

But unbeknownst to any of them, the Cult's mysterious benefactor had discovered Aodhan's insubordinate behavior and was furious at his delay in recovering the artifact. The benefactor sent his envoy, a being with some relation to the noble House Rax of the Great Kingdom, to secretly follow Aodhan on this most recent journey to the Rakers. Once Aodhan accepted Skkal's terms and returned to the Fens, the envoy approached the troglodytes and made them a generous counteroffer. He described Aodhan as a disobedient minion, untrustworthy and greedy but still a formidable challenge, so he bribed them with magic items in exchange for revealing the artifact's location, and gave them a magic weapon (varying by APL) to deter Aodhan from striking back upon learning he had been betrayed.

Skkal tentatively agreed to the envoy's terms and promised to betray Aodhan by driving him and his bodyguards out of their lair into the unexplored passages of the Underdark. With no artifact or justification for his willful behavior, and with no way of returning to the Fens without exposing his guilt, Aodhan had all but guaranteed his destruction by his wrathful demonic superiors.

Once the envoy departed, Skkal told the dragon what he had done and was relieved when the dragon rewarded his resourcefulness. The plan would still work: once the trolls were driven away, the dragon could easily ambush and destroy them. The troglodytes could keep the envoy's gifts and the dragon would get his brown scepter. More importantly, the dragon had acquired

valuable knowledge: after Skkal described the envoy and the seal of House Rax, the dragon recognized the true power behind Aodhan's cult and what the lost artifact was. (*Editor's note: The identity of the artifact is intended to remain a secret from you, the judge.*) Though the dragon planned to avoid direct involvement for now, he counted the envoy's ignorance of his existence as a keen advantage.

Aodhan returned to the Fens and, in creating what would be the Cult's last two half-trolls, suffered a coup as Malerix's remaining experiments rebelled against him. Aodhan managed to quash the rebellion, gathered his remaining humanoid minions and the two fire-resistant half-trolls, and led them back to the Rakers with the promise of recovering the artifact. In truth, he was leading them to attack the presumptuous troglodytes, torturing as many as necessary to get it. Soon after they left, adventurers raided his Fens encampment (in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*) and intimidated the remaining cultists into divulging what they knew about their master's recent odd behavior.

Meanwhile, in the hamlet of Tobinsford, profits from a recent gold rush had attracted all manner of adventurers, entrepreneurs, and freeloaders. Additionally, discoveries of a subterranean highway and lost dwarven city had attracted several explorers and historians. This news, perhaps along with inquiries made into their sabotaged expedition during PAL6-04, has led the PCs to Tobinsford, where they will cross paths with several suspicious characters and a group of dwarves planning an expedition to Garsegzuul who are keen to enlist the PCs' expertise on their trek.

The PCs will eventually encounter Aodhan after his betrayal by the troglodytes, and a demonic strike team sent by Aodhan's quasit superior to kill him. By destroying Aodhan and the demons, the PCs have a chance to permanently remove the Mark of Demogorgon and to decisively thwart all organized Cult activity in the Pale. Unfortunately, the lost artifact ultimately eludes them, as the Cult's mysterious benefactor has already negotiated to acquire it.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

This adventure occurs soon after the events in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*. The accidental discovery of the ancient dwarven city of Garsegzuul by adventurers in PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* has attracted all manner of so-called explorers hoping to plumb its long-forgotten depths. They have converged on the burgeoning hamlet of Tobinsford, but the promise of low risk and easy profits from a gold claim (or leeching off someone else's) has kept most of them within the safe confines of the town. While the Church of the One True Path would ordinarily take note of such a chaotic influx, the exceptionally efficient recordkeeping of parish priest Eamon has convinced his Pholtan superiors in Landrigard that Tobinsford is already in capable hands. Thus, Tobinsford has degenerated (with the help of a disreputable new tavern) into a nearly lawless and dangerous frontier town.

Into this milieu come the PCs, who may be in town for any number of reasons: to explore Garsegzuul; to check on their own mining claim or visit with Eamon, if they played PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*; to follow up on the rumors of easy wealth derived from gold mining (DC 10 Knowledge [local-Nyrond and Her Environs] check); to find out who betrayed their expedition to the Troll Fens (if they played PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*), be it Sir Andros or someone else; or perhaps this is their first visit to Tobinsford, where first impressions—unlike fortunes—can be lasting.

**Introduction/Investigation** (15 minutes): The PCs arrive at sundown. From the interior of a new inn named the *Heathen's Retreat* all manner of raucous revelry can be heard. A lone dwarf stands outside, calmly smoking a pipe. PCs may approach the dwarf and enter the inn, or proceed across the town square to Tobinsford's more reputable inn, the *Bounding Stag*.

**Encounter 1** (30 minutes): The PCs enter one of Tobinsford's two inns. If they choose the *Heathen's Retreat*, they can meet (among many other suspicious characters) the dwarf's companions and learn of their planned expedition to Garsegzuul. The PCs can instead avoid the new tavern in favor of the old one, the *Bounding Stag*. Both offer a wealth of fact and rumor, but the clientele inside each are quite different.

During this roleplay encounter, the PCs have a chance to revisit some NPCs and meet new ones while learning about the effects "gold fever" has had on Tobinsford. They may gather information on the gold rush, expeditions to Garsegzuul, or even Sir Andros and any suspicious activity. They may also hire the ranger Dack Splintheel as a guide.

**Encounter 2** (15 minutes): The PCs trek through the wilderness of the Rakers; along the way they pass the remains of some adventurers who never made it to the Underdark. The PCs otherwise reach the Underdark highway without incident.

From here, the journey to Garsegzuul lasts two days. During their long, dark passage, the PCs discover the remains of other adventurers slain by Underdark predators. The PCs may also discover the carcasses of trolls, half-trolls, and Demogorgon cultists. This should alert the PCs that Aodhan might be nearby. As the PCs reach the end of the highway, they hear cries for help.

**Encounter 3** (30 minutes): The PCs reach Garsegzuul just as several adventurers are being attacked by a host of demons, sent to assassinate Aodhan for violating Cult directives. The quasit that leads them can see the Mark of Demogorgon on any PC that bears it; he redirects a contingent of demons to attack the PCs. PCs that speak Abyssal and correctly intuit his directive have a unique opportunity to negotiate.

**Encounter 4** (15 minutes): After defeating the demons, the PCs are guardedly welcomed to the “base camp” plateau by two groups of adventurers that beat the PCs to Garsegzuul. (A third group, made up of gnomes, also beat them but all of them disappeared.) The two groups bicker over who has official claim to the city. One group is composed of rugged adventuring types, here to loot Garsegzuul. The other group is composed of scholars and lorekeepers, keen to study the city before allowing any treasures to be removed. After listening to both, the PCs must choose to side with one group or neither. This choice determines where the PCs go next within the city: each group has a map of the areas they have explored, but there are also unexplored areas.

**Encounter 5** (20 minutes): The PCs spend an uneventful night at “base camp” and enter Garsegzuul the following morning. If the PCs sided with one of the other groups, they are directed to one of two partially explored areas (the chosen group explores the other area); if the PCs did not choose a side, they may select one of two completely unexplored areas that are farther from the camp. The areas include an armory, a reliquary, apartments, a laboratory, a forge, and a library. Exploring any of these areas takes the whole day, after which everyone returns to camp.

**Encounter 6** (20 minutes): The PCs rest for the night and share (or withhold) their discoveries. If the PCs did not travel to Garsegzuul with the dwarves from Tobinsford, they now find the dwarves here; if the PCs did not hire the ranger Dack Splinheel, he also shows up in the employ of an unscrupulous relic-hunter. Finally, a member of the scholars’ group returns with startling news of an odd cave, strange voices, and two indistinct humanoid shapes (actually Skkal and the mysterious envoy). The PCs will likely be curious to investigate these things in the morning.

**Encounter 7** (20 minutes): The PCs investigate the cave mentioned in Encounter 6; though currently unoccupied, it has natural acoustic features, suggesting that the scholar who found the cave heard voices that were not actually inside but somewhere nearby. Now, the PCs overhear Aodhan and Skkal speaking in Draconic: the half-troll learns that he has been betrayed and that Skkal’s promises of recovering the artifact were lies. The PCs must mesh their Listen, Survival, and Knowledge (dungeoneering) skills to make a unique Track check and pinpoint the source of the voices. Greater success on this check leads to a more advantageous entrance to the troglodyte lair, within the ruins of a former temple to Moradin.

**Encounter 8** (30 minutes): The PCs follow the voices to the troglodyte lair, where they are attacked. The troglodytes wield magic items against the PCs (gifts from the envoy) that will be conspicuous among a tribe of savages and should provide PCs with a clue that there is

yet another player behind the scenes. Once the PCs defeat the troglodytes, they must move to confront Aodhan before he escapes. Taking too long to catch him threatens the safety of everyone at the plateau.

**Encounter 9** (30 minutes): The PCs confront Aodhan at the “base camp”. Depending on the PCs’ speed, he may have already killed some of the NPCs. Aodhan has nothing left to lose and fights to the death, hoping if nothing else to slay and *animate* the PCs. If at least one PC possesses the sacrificial nails from PAL6-04 and if the party manages to kill Aodhan, they can permanently remove the Mark of Demogorgon.

**Conclusion** (15 minutes): The PCs return to Tobinsford in time to hear the surprise announcement of Eamon and Lorna’s wedding the next day. PCs that played PAL6-04 may follow up on any leads involving their betrayal and may name their suspect(s) to a visiting Church dignitary here to promote Eamon. The PCs receive VIP invitations to the wedding, which is held outdoors at sundown in the partially completed shrine of Pholtus. Following the ceremony, the Cult of Demogorgon’s Tobinsford spy is exposed as the unctuous Clive Orbison, either by astute PCs or by an anonymous source.

## PREPARATION FOR PLAY

### Past Scenarios

The first two scenarios in this series may affect this one in several ways. First, one or more PCs may bear the Mark of Demogorgon curse from PAL5-06 *My Brother’s Keeper* or its mutated strain from PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*. Second, Clive Orbison is working as the Cult’s spy in Tobinsford; he was responsible for betraying the party at the outset of PAL6-04, but the PCs should not be sure of this just yet. PCs who played PAL6-04 may wish to investigate who betrayed them. Rules for such investigations are found in the Introduction below, and the results obtained are intended to lead PCs toward correctly—or incorrectly—accusing an NPC during the Conclusion.

PCs that successfully completed PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* acquired the nails used in Bran Mac Colm’s Ritual of Crucimigration (detailed in the Background section of PAL5-06). The nails radiate moderate necromancy and faint transmutation. Ask each player whether they intend to play the same character they played in PAL6-04; those who do must show its Adventure Record before play begins, as personal possession of the nails is necessary to permanently remove the Mark of Demogorgon.

Note which PCs played PAL5-06 *My Brother’s Keeper* and spent extra TUs assisting Brother Eamon with his gold claim paperwork; he will remember such PCs and welcome them back to Tobinsford with great enthusiasm.

Also, note which PCs staked a gold claim from that scenario, as the current level of decadence in Tobinsford that has developed as a result of the gold rush activity may reflect negatively on them.

## High-Level Pholtan PCs

Pay special attention to PCs who are either clerics of paladins of the Church of the One True Path, as the aforementioned decadence will surely concern them and arouse their suspicion; tailoring the behavior of some NPCs will enliven the roleplay. Nevertheless, do not let high-level Pholtan PCs try to take over the town in the Church's name. They should merely report the problem back to their superiors in Landrigard. No PCs can actually speak for the Church, anyway, since the Clergy meta-org is outside the official Church hierarchy.

## Malerix and His Reminder-Dream

Next, note whether any PC has the "Grimy Black Bag" from PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*, as it holds the essence of the dead priest Malerix Moorcol. Only one PC in the party can have the bag, so if two or more PCs got it, Malerix abandons all but one of them, choosing the one with an alignment closest to CN; break any ties by level (highest wins) and then Will save (lowest wins).

Malerix's essence will not rest until Aodhan is destroyed. To remind the PCs (and players) of their mission, Malerix sends the chosen PC a dreamlike vision one night during the week before this adventure begins. (Elf PCs receive this vision during their trance state.) If no PCs have the bag or the Mark of Demogorgon, Malerix simply chooses the PC with the lowest Will save. Take the player aside and read the following:

*You experience a vivid dream in which several undead humanoids shuffle around an unconscious human male nailed to a large cross. Another humanoid with fiery, pale blue eyes carves glowing scars into the unconscious man. In the background, a massive and repulsive humanoid chants a foul incantation that is soon disrupted by the appearance of a tiny, bat-winged creature that immediately chastises the much larger creature. These two figures then vanish.*

*The dreamscape changes and now shows a black-clad human male standing on a muddy isthmus in the middle of a vast swamp, performing bizarre experiments on trolls and other large creatures. Soon, this man is viciously attacked from behind and slain by two figures: one of the killers is a stealthy Flan male, while the other is the massive, repulsive humanoid from the first part of the dream, who is now clearly identifiable as a half-troll.*

*These images then swirl together like a whirlpool, whose edges are defined by a series of jagged teeth. In the pitch-black center of this swirling mass, an image soon appears of a huge, serpentine form covered in dark, blue-green scales and capped with two baboon-like heads atop long, snaky necks. This creature's forked tail is soon absorbed in the motion of the whirlpool, and just as you begin to discern where the tail ends and the*

*motion begins, one of the heads turns swiftly to look upon you, and you awaken in a cold sweat...*

This two-headed creature is, of course, Demogorgon: recognizable by a DC 15 Knowledge (the planes) or Knowledge (religion) check.

## Skills and Feats

Have each PC roll two Listen and two Spot checks; also, take note of each PC's Sense Motive modifier and secretly roll three checks for each of them. Note each PC's physical description and attire, and also whether any can Track. A PC may predict the weather via a Survival check (PHB page 83); it will be cold and overcast but with no inclement weather. Cold weather gear is advised but not required. The Troll Winter has chilled the whole spring and summer, and the coldest times might yet lie ahead.

## Timing

Finally, note that this scenario is tightly structured with regard to time; while the PCs are free to roleplay and explore during the first encounter, make every effort to get them on the road to Garsegzuul within 45-60 minutes after starting play, or else they will be in danger of not completing the adventure.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**Father (Abbot) Eamon of Pholtus:** Tobinsford's original parish priest and gold-rush accountant has prospered. With two new assistants and a recent promotion, he now oversees construction on the new shrine to Pholtus but humbly admits that he owes his current accomplishments to selfless adventurers who helped him when he needed it the most (in PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*). He and Lorna are in love with each other, though they have not yet admitted it even to themselves. As a Pholtan abbot, he is properly addressed as "Father", strange though it may seem for a man of 22 years.

**Greddis:** Proprietor of Tobinsford's original tavern, the *Bounding Stag*, Greddis is disgusted by the decadence and disreputable characters at Fynch's tavern, but secretly jealous of Fynch's obvious skill as a businessman. He is unaware of the romance between his daughter and Eamon.

**Lorna:** Daughter of Greddis and secret admirer of Father Eamon, Lorna has become dejected in the presence of Tobinsford's many new females. Once the girl everyone loved to admire, she has found her humble beauty eclipsed by the garish make-up and questionable attire of the prostitutes at Fynch's tavern. She has become unjustly self-conscious about her looks, and PCs may have difficulty in lifting her spirits.

**A. Fynch:** This suave but unscrupulous entrepreneur owns Tobinsford's newest tavern, the *Heathen's Retreat*,

whose reputation and clientele have many local citizens in an uproar. In addition to his anti-Pholtan sentiments, Fynch is guilty of violating several Pale ordinances, which the PCs may investigate and expose.

**Peralyn:** This woman from is Fynch's partner in crime. She seduces miners (and possibly PCs) possessing gold claims with the intent of poisoning them and then forging their claim documents.

**Orran Twinbridges:** This amateur miner has unearthed the most successful gold mine in Tobinsford. Wealth has warped his once-humble attitude and he now spends money extravagantly. His decadence may challenge the PCs' ethical outlook, as he insists that gold can solve any problem and fill any void in a person's life.

**Rayner Von Krall:** This similarly unscrupulous and condescending looter can first be found at Fynch's; he seeks a guide to lead him to Garsegzuul but refuses to travel with the PCs due to their "obvious" lack of experience. If the PCs do not hire Dack Splintheel (see below), Rayner arrives midway through the adventure with him. Rayner should embody everything the PCs find distasteful in adventurers, most notably a lack of respect for other people and past cultures.

**The Dwarves:** This group of four adventurers from the County of Urnst has heard the rumors about Garsegzuul and has a genuine, selfless desire to explore it. They are both happy and eager to travel with the PCs, especially if any PCs have played PAL5-06 and/or have tracking skills.

**Garrold and Teague:** These two twenty-something Flan males frequent Fynch's tavern. They work for Clive Orbison and are overseeing his daily operations while he is away on business. The PCs should find them a little too well-dressed and observant for mere hired hands.

**Marlin Spurlock:** The never-present Pale Patrol representative has not been seen in some time, suggesting either that Tobinsford has fallen off the Pale's priorities, or that its recent level of decadence has made it worthy of permanent Pale troops to replace Marlin. What no one has yet considered is the correct third option: murder.

**Garsegzuul Adventurers:** Three groups of adventurers and explorers have beaten the PCs to the lost city. One intends to loot it, and one prefers to study it before allowing any treasures to be removed. The third group (five gnomes) has disappeared, victims of Skkal's troglodyte tribe.

**Dack Splintheel:** Tobinsford's least charismatic fixture has gained even more notoriety for confrontations with miners and his defeat of an owlbear and a winter wolf that had been drawn to town by careless humans and their refuse. If the PCs do not hire him as a guide, he

arrives in Garsegzuul with the relic-hunter, Rayner Von Krall. Dack's reluctance to play the hero may be tested in the confrontation with Aodhan (Encounter 9).

**Malerix Moorcol:** The former high priest and troll-breeder of the Cult of Demogorgon's Troll Fens outpost now survives as a sentient grimy black bag. A PC who took possession of him during PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* may be protected in the fight against Aodhan during Encounter 9.

**Gumboots:** The abused crocodile from PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* may have been adopted by a PC. If so, he willingly follows his new master to places crocodiles would not ordinarily go. Once Gumboots encounters either Aodhan (who tortured him and killed his old master) or Skkal (to whom Aodhan gave a necklace of Gummy's teeth), his animal instincts take over and make him hard to control.

**Aodhan:** The sins of this half-troll Cult priest come back to haunt him, as he is misled and betrayed by a tribe of troglodytes at the behest of Cult's mysterious benefactor. In a daring act of faith, he recently abandoned Demogorgon in favor of full devotion to Vaprak, the troll deity. Demons have also been sent to dispatch him, but the PCs have a chance to negotiate with his quasit superior for that privilege. Aodhan's defeat removes the Mark of Demogorgon curse and is intended to underscore the dual follies of power and vanity.

**The Black Dragon (offscreen):** This reclusive wyrm is the sponsor of the troglodyte tribe that betrays Aodhan. While his motives are purely covetous, the dragon soon deduces the true power behind the Cult of Demogorgon's current activities and chooses to maintain his low profile, working through his female troglodyte disciple.

**Skkal:** This insidious troglodyte tribal leader and priest of Laogzed helps to deceive and betray Aodhan. Though he is a devoted foe of surface-dwellers, Skkal has something the PCs may want: information on the Cult's benefactor (or at least the envoy), but he would sooner die than give them any satisfaction. Skkal has made a truce with the black dragon whereby Skkal retains tribal authority while the dragon schools his protégée in arcane matters. Adhering to an ancient tribal tradition, Skkal forbids anyone other than Xilaisha to use magical healing; Skkal is unaware that his lieutenant has disobeyed and pilfered healing potions from the black dragon's hoard.

**Xilaisha:** This young trog is seen as a kind of seer by the tribe. She has no real authority, but the trogs do not question her orders, which generally come from the dragon anyway. She regards both the dragon and Skkal as her masters and seeks to benefit from their combined experience. At APL10-12, the black dragon has forced her to advance as a dragon disciple rather than as a sorceress;



PCs bearing the Mark of Demogorgon may believe that the curse is controlling them in a similar way, but it has only the power that the PC lets it.

**The Benefactor (offscreen):** This being first charged the Cult of Demogorgon with finding the artifact. (*Editor's Note:* The benefactor's identity remains a secret to the players of Living Greyhawk.)

**The Envoy (offscreen):** This spokesman for the benefactor negotiated with Skkal to betray Aodhan in a different way. He appears as an indistinct humanoid form wearing a cloak with the insignia of House Rax, of the former Great Kingdom.

**The Quasit:** Aodhan's immediate superior and the Cult's liaison to the Material Plane has been sent to assassinate the disobedient half-troll. Though he prefers to destroy the PCs as well (especially those bearing the Mark), they may persuade him to observe a temporary truce.

**Sir Andros (offscreen):** The elusive noble and former knight of Pholtus, who in fact did not betray the PCs in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* but did know that a betrayal would occur, is on an important errand and does not appear in this scenario.

**Clive Orbison – the Spy from Tobinsford (offscreen until the optional encounter):** This unctuous entrepreneur betrayed the PCs' expedition in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*. He has prospered greatly off the dupes drawn here by the gold rush. Clive has used dummy organizations to buy up more than half of the gold claims around Tobinsford. Clive is out of town for most of this adventure, but returns to Tobinsford in time for Eamon and Lorna's wedding, where his identity is finally exposed.

## INTRODUCTION

### BETRAYAL AND INVESTIGATION

PCs who played PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* (and ONLY those PCs) may wish to preface this adventure by investigating the betrayal at the outset of their Fens expedition during that scenario. Ask all qualifying players whether they would investigate. If a PC wants to investigate, give that player (or pass around) a copy of *Player Handout 1*. The player must choose one of the four methods without consulting the other players: do not let them coordinate their efforts to cover all the methods. After each player secretly tells you his chosen method of investigation, give the appropriate part of *Player Handout 2* privately to each player. What each PC chooses to divulge about the results of their investigation, if anything, is up to them.

### BACK TO TOBINSFORD

The adventure begins just after sundown on the outskirts of Tobinsford; the PCs may have varied reasons for traveling together, depending on whether they have played the previous adventures in this series. Allow the players to introduce their characters to one another if they have not already met. Once the PCs approach the bridge over the Velk River west of the town square (see Map 1), read or paraphrase the following:

*Twilight settles over the once-sleepy hamlet of Tobinsford like dust on a neglected antique. From its dark streets, light flickers through open windows as if from the eyes of old friends welcoming home one of their own. Crossing the stone bridge over the Velk River into the town square, one would scarcely believe that this village could ever be troubled by the larger cares and evils of the world.*

*The town square is devoid of pedestrians, save for a lone dwarf calmly smoking a pipe outside a new two-story building, from whose lighted interior can be heard all manner of raucous revelry. A sign above the entrance proclaims it as an inn called the Heathen's Retreat. Tobinsford's original inn, the Bounding Stag, sits just across the square: quiet, unassuming, and familiar. Several wagons are loaded with cords of new lumber; horses attached to the wagons quietly munch grass by the side of the road.*

The smoking dwarf is Nuron Stonecrawler. As the PCs approach, he tips his pipe and bids them good evening. If the PCs wish to converse, he explains that he is part of an adventuring group from Trigol (in the County of Urnst) on its way to the Rakers in search of Garsegzul. He and his companions are only here for the night and will be leaving at dawn. Nuron is dressed somewhat fashionably (for a dwarf) in studded leather and wears two short swords in decorative leather scabbards on his waist; he describes himself as a "reconnaissance expert" and chuckles if the PCs seem to suspect his likely vocation (rogue), but notes that if they want to know more about his expedition, then they should visit his companions inside, as he is just "along for the ride."

☛ **Nuron Stonecrawler:** male dwarf rogue 7; see Encounter 1 for detailed description.

**Development:** If the PCs have not heard of Garsegzul, allow them a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check, DC 20 bardic knowledge check, or DC 25 Knowledge (local – Nyrond and Her Environs) check to identify Garsegzul as the site of a war fought centuries ago between a dwarven clan and a tribe of derro. Dwarves get a +4 bonus on this check. All Nuron can tell the PCs is that "Garsegzul" is definitely not a dwarven word (it is Undercommon and has no coherent literal translation, due to the madness common to all derro). PCs who have played PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* may recall the name.

If they accept Nuron's invitation and wish to speak to his companions, proceed to Encounter 1 ("Heathen's Retreat") below.

If they are not interested in speaking with his companions or investigating the new tavern, proceed to Encounter 1 ("Bounding Stag"), below.

Going to the estate of Sir Andros is not in the scope of this adventure, aside from what is provided in the "Determined" option of investigation.

## ENCOUNTER 1: STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND

The PCs have two choices on where to spend the remainder of the evening. Both the *Bounding Stag* and the *Heathen's Retreat* are still open and have rooms to rent for the night. Each also has specific clientele and associated rumors, should the PCs wish to gather information. The taverns are the only places suitable for this purpose now, as most residents have turned in for the evening.

### THE HEATHEN'S RETREAT

If the PCs accept Nuron's invitation to meet his companions, read or paraphrase the following:

*The dimly-lit, first-floor interior of this H-shaped establishment looks like a displaced corner of the Greyhawk City River Quarter. The center of the room is dominated by a fully stocked bar; a fireplace adorns the far wall, where the room stretches around both corners to more private tables. Twin staircases flank the bar and lead upstairs, from whose shadowy recesses several young, scandalously dressed women peer at the scene below. Behind the bar is a muscular but well-groomed man, eyeing you as he polishes a glass; a small monkey scampers across kegs, bottles, and the heads of passed-out patrons around the bar.*

*In the near left corner, a ruggedly attired man studies a collection of maps and journals as two Flan men approach his table. In the near right corner, an attractive human female quietly sips a glass of wine. Seated back near the fireplace, two more Flan males in fashionable clothes are speaking with one another while casting occasional glances around the tavern. The rest of the tables and seats at the bar are occupied by men who work in mines, if one can judge by the dust on their boots and faces. Other commoners and laborers mill about in the crowded tavern. No other dwarves can be seen; as no back door is visible either, the companions of the dwarf outside must be around one of the corners near the fireplace, or perhaps even upstairs.*

*The tavern is illuminated by everburning torches fashioned from the skulls of small animals, one at each table. Sawdust covers the floor, along with several silver spittoons. The cacophony of the clientele draws attention to the tavern's one notable*

*absence: no minstrel can be seen or heard, nor is there a stage of any kind. Occasionally, however, an uproar can be heard from around the corner to the right of the fireplace, as if good times and great mirth were being enjoyed by many.*

Draw out Map 2 (without revealing the secret room E) and allow them to proceed where they will. The tavern's current occupants and their individual locations are detailed below. Note that if any PCs try to go upstairs without permission, the proprietor Fynch stops and informs them that the upstairs rooms are private and must be rented for the evening to proceed. The scene inside the *Heathen's Retreat* may seem discouraging, as the PCs can easily note how profits from the recent gold rush have changed the populace. PCs keen to find out who betrayed them in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* find several likely suspects herein.

Gather Information results for the *Heathen's Retreat* can be found in DM Aid 2.

### NPCs Present

The numbered tables not occupied by key NPCs are occupied by gold miners and common laborers in town to work on the new shrine to Pholtus. It is from these folk that most of the Gather Information results are obtained.

☛ **A. Fynch, Proprietor:** CN male human expert 5 / sorcerer 3 / swashbuckler 4 (from *Complete Warrior*); Bluff +15, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8.

**Location:** At the bar.

*Description and Personality:* the man behind the bar is Fynch, who never reveals what the initial "A" stands for; he is the owner and bartender of the *Heathen's Retreat*. He is in his mid-thirties and of mixed Oeridian descent. He is well-groomed, with short brown hair and piercing dark eyes. He wears a scruff of whiskers and is well-muscled for a businessman. He dresses in leather breeches with a loose-fitting silk shirt and black vest. His left ear is pierced by two gold, skull-shaped studs. He displays no holy symbols and initiates no discussion on any religious matters. He describes himself as an "entrepreneur," and thereby invites parallels to Tobinsford's other notable lowlife, Clive Orbison. Fynch, however, is everything Clive aspires to be: clever, charming and most of all, subtle. He hails from Ratikhill and should be played as an aloof, intelligent crook. Fynch is easily suspicious enough to make PCs believe that he betrayed them in PAL6-04.

Fynch came to Tobinsford upon hearing rumors of the gold rush (from PAL5-06). His intent was to establish a means to take advantage of naive miners who would squander any earnings based on proximity rather than necessity, and in that regard the *Heathen's Retreat* has succeeded wildly. In contrast to Greddis and the *Bounding Stag*, which is a typical village inn and supports the community with basic amenities, Fynch's place preys on the weaknesses of miners and offers things they don't

really need, such as alcohol, gambling, female companionship, and an environment in which the shared quilt of low moral fiber is warm, cozy, and self-perpetuating.

As to his wholly inappropriate tavern sign, Fynch explains that the apostrophe in *Heathen's* is a "signmaker's error," intended to read "*Heathens, Retreat!*" These are all lies, and the sign could not be more accurate.

🔮 **Peralyn:** CN female human rogue 8; Bluff +15.  
**Location:** Table #1.

*Description and Personality:* Standing 5'5" tall with a trim figure, flowing red hair, and green eyes, this mixed-blood human is nearly thirty and quite attractive. She wears her wavy hair loose with small black ribbons, and dresses in a dark green frock with modest jewelry, suggesting adequate means. Peralyn is a professional thief and former prostitute from Leukish in the Duchy of Urnst; she is also Fynch's partner in a scheme to rob boastful and foolhardy miners. She first gains their confidence with her good looks, plies them with drink while asking about their claims or any mining activity, and then "invites them upstairs".

The black ribbons in her hair are a signal to Fynch: an odd number means she has found a "mark," so Fynch drugs the miner's next drink with potent oil of taggit. When the miners fall unconscious upstairs, Peralyn quickly copies any maps related to their claim and forges their official Claim Certificate from the Church of the One True Path (including the signature of Brother Eamon). She gives the information to Fynch, who sends his crew of hired mercenaries to plunder the claim site. When the miners regain consciousness in the morning, Peralyn is gone and they are none the wiser, as none of their possessions are missing.

This scheme has worked over a dozen times in the last four months, netting Fynch great profit while inflaming the miners' tempers as they accuse one another of claim jumping. The escalation of hostilities is a double blessing for Fynch, as they all come to his tavern to drown their sorrows, and Abbot Eamon—never a fan of the gold rush—believes that they have only themselves to blame for lost profits, and remains oblivious that his signature is being forged.

Peralyn is not affiliated with the prostitutes upstairs; when the PCs first see her, she is sitting alone with an even number of black ribbons tied in her hair. Due to her impressive information-gathering skills, she recognizes any PC with an active gold claim from PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* and tries to seduce this person. (If multiple PCs have gold claims, she selects the PC with the highest Charisma who is not an obvious member of the Church of the One True Path.) At Fynch's request, she does not meddle with Orran (see below), as the legend of his gold streak continues to attract miners and patrons to the area. Peralyn's charismatic attitude and savvy demeanor should be warning signs to the PCs:

someone so glib and seductive could function as a spy for the Cult of Demogorgon.

🔮 **Orran Twinbridges:** N male human commoner 4.  
**Location:** Table #7.

*Description and Personality:* This carpenter's apprentice from Ogburg came to Tobinsford three months ago to try his luck at gold mining and unwittingly unearthed a vein that has yet to exhaust itself. He has so prospered from it that he has abandoned his home city and profession to take up residence at Fynch's. His success has netted him friends and enemies alike: other miners are jealous of his luck, while Fynch's prostitutes and other tavern scavengers cling to him like parasites, thanks to his newfound and overwhelming capacity for decadence.

He is 6'0" tall and weighs 240 pounds, with short black hair, a full beard, and a blackened right eye; wealth has swelled his waistline, as he has not strayed from Fynch's in weeks. Orran does not even mine the claim anymore, instead hiring laborers to work it for him. Despite his wealth, he still dresses like a commoner; he is clean and well-groomed (thanks to the hot baths upstairs), but chews tobacco. Orran's "lucky strike" occurred at roughly the same time as the events of PAL6-04. This coincidence, coupled with his wealth and constant presence in town since then, should make some PCs suspect him as the spy.

It is Orran's entourage that the PCs hear celebrating when they first enter the tavern. His crude affluence is intended as a challenge to the PCs' ethical outlook, as he believes that money can solve any problem or fill any void. He is sitting with two prostitutes (though neither he nor they admit to their occupation), three local miners, and a writer from Eltison hired to take notes for his new book on how to be a better gold miner. Orran offers to hire the strongest-looking PC to be a foreman in his mine (500 gp/week), and the most attractive (highest-Charisma) female PC to be his permanent "companion" (1000 gp/week). (Tailor the phrasing of this offer to the sensibilities of your players.) He tosses a gold piece to one of the remaining PCs and asks them to "be a sport and fetch us another round of ale."

Orran has forgotten his humble origins and now lets his money do the talking. When Old Spooner (see below) comes in to empty a nearby spittoon, Orran spits and accidentally misses the spittoon, creating a disgusting mess on the floor; his entourage laughs as if he had done it on purpose, but rather than apologizing, Orran tosses a small gold nugget at Spooner. A DC 20 Spot check reveals Spooner's contemptuous expression; a second Spot check (versus his Sleight of Hand, at +14) notes him toss the nugget in the spittoon and spit after it.

If questioned about his black eye, Orran mutters something inaudibly profane along with "Splintheel...stupid ranger." PCs who succeed on a DC 15 Diplomacy check eventually coax the truth out of him: local ranger, trapper and malcontent Dack Splintheel has established claim rights for a large piece of land seven

miles outside town; Dack has apparently set up this land as a “nature preserve,” though Orran has no idea what that means. What he does know (via reconnaissance from his lackeys) is that the land contains several exploitable gold veins along with a small stream, and that it directly abuts Orran’s own claim. Orran made Dack a generous offer for the claim; when the ranger refused, Orran tripled his offer, figuring to recoup the money through mining. Dack punched him and ordered his dire badger to chase Orran out of the hills.

☛ **Rayner Von Krall:** CN male human expert 3 / rogue 5 / temple raider of Olidammara 5 (from *Complete Divine*).

**Location:** Table #2.

*Description and Personality:* Rayner is of mixed Oeridian descent, with narrow dark eyes, thick bushy lashes, and a soft gravelly voice. He dresses in typical adventuring garb highlighted by a magic *haversack*, a fine spelunker’s rope coiled at his hip, and a dirty brimmed hat which he never removes and which sports two magical black feathers (he does not explain what they do). He hails from the Sheldomar Valley, far to the west, and is a professional tomb raider, relic-hunter and artifact merchant; he heard the rumors of Garsegzul’s rediscovery and promptly headed to the Pale. Tobinsford is his last civilized stop on a three-week journey across the Flanaess.

A DC 21 bardic knowledge check confirms that Rayner has an infamous reputation as an infiltrator, thief, and looter, working either for himself or for an employer. He is rumored to be independently wealthy and his private collection worthy of a dragon’s envy. Rayner’s table is covered by a large ledger and two small journals, along with a detailed map of the immediate area (which he made). His reputation, condescension, and evasiveness should make him worthy of suspicion as the Cult’s Tobinsford spy.

When the PCs enter the tavern, Rayner is speaking with two Flan miners from Stradsett. One is a victim of Peralyn’s seduction scheme (see above) though, so their claim was plundered by Fynch’s mercenaries. They blame some of the other miners, have run out of money trying to discover the culprit, and are now selling some heirlooms (a homemade symbol of Beory and a leather utility-belt) to finance another claim. If the PCs approach Rayner’s table, they overhear the end of this transaction. Rayner offers a generous price for each, but a DC 15 Sense Motive check reminds the PCs that a nobler man would instead lend the men whatever coin they require, or at least try to dissuade them from the folly of gold mining. By dealing with Rayner, they are guaranteed never to see their heirlooms again.

Once the men leave, the PCs may speak with Rayner. He admits only that he is interested in venturing to Garsegzul in order to “study” it. He has been in Tobinsford for one week looking for a suitable guide. He asked the dwarves (see below) who arrived yesterday afternoon, but they turned him down. Under no

circumstances does he ask to accompany the PCs to Garsegzul; he says he is “waiting until a more experienced-looking group comes to Tobinsford.” He does, however, offer to buy any odd trinkets from the PCs, such as “mysterious maps” or similar items from previous Adventure Records. (He buys anything worth 10 gp or less, at 50 gp for each such item).

#### **The Dwarves:**

☛ **Steg Badhammer:** NG male dwarf fighter 8.

☛ **Azric Badhammer:** N male dwarf barbarian 2 / fighter 4.

☛ **Nuron Stonecrawler:** N male dwarf rogue 7.

☛ **Hargal Silenthill:** LG male dwarf cleric 7 (Moradin).

**Location:** Table #5.

*Description and Personality:* Steg is in his early fifties with long, braided brown hair and a bushy beard. He wears a fine chain shirt and has a dwarven waraxe propped against the wall, along with a bundled item of similar size. He and his fellows hail from the County of Urnst. Steg is the leader of their expedition to Garsegzul. When rumors of its rediscovery reached him in Trigol, he quickly assembled this adventuring party and set out for the Pale. It is the first trip to the Theocracy for all of them, and they do not see anything unusual about Fynch’s tavern. One of Steg’s ancestors had passed down an exquisitely crafted battle axe reputedly acquired through trade with Garsegzul centuries ago (a DC 10 Appraise check identifies the axe as a masterwork weapon); the weapon’s craftsmanship and his adventurer’s curiosity drive him to investigate the ancient dwarven city. He knows nothing else about Garsegzul. When the PCs approach the table, he and Hargal (see below) are looking at a terrain map of the Rakers.

Steg is practical, friendly and keenly interested in all things dwarven. If any PCs have played PAL5-03 *Strata* and relate to him how Koreth Orcsplitter the First is on a sort of lecture tour of the Pale’s eastern cities, Steg visibly crumbles as he tries to decide which is more important: continuing to Garsegzul or hearing Koreth speak, but Hargal (see below) advises him to keep his mind on track. At the mention of the word “track,” Steg regains his composure and invites the PCs to travel with him. If any of the PCs are rangers, scouts, or druids, or if they have played PAL5-06 *My Brother’s Keeper* and know their way through the wilderness to the Underdark, the dwarves are especially keen to have them as companions (ordering another round of drinks as a show of good faith), as they are all “city dwarves” and lack wilderness skills. If no PCs are capable trackers, a DC 10 Gather Information check (at either tavern) confirms that the ranger Dack Splintheel has been seen around town and works as a guide but charges steep fees.

Azric is Steg’s older brother and has spent most of his life drifting from one adventure to another. His carefree attitude and lack of concern for fame, riches or

accolades have held him back somewhat in terms of worldly experience. This does not bother him, as he considers adventuring and traveling with good friends to be the most rewarding of experiences. Azric wears studded leather armor and typically wields a cursed guisarme. (The weapon is up in his room; if the PCs accompany the dwarves to Garsegzuul, Azric explains that the curse compels him to make trip attacks against gnomes approaching within 15 feet; he doesn't expect the PCs to know how it feels to be cursed, but wanted to warn them.) Azric is eating when the PCs approach the table; he nudges his brother while emitting a loud belch and excusing himself. If any PCs are female, he courteously stands and upends the table with his prodigious beer gut. Steg and Hargal work to keep ale mugs from spilling onto the map while Azric smiles good-naturedly and invites the PCs to sit. His fingers are greasy with stew and his beard is bejeweled with bread crumbs. His favorite food is chicken; when there is none to be had (as is the case now), he prides himself on carrying two dozen eggs in a magically chilled, custom-made container that looks like a small ale keg. He cracks 1-2 eggs into each mug of ale he drinks.

Nuron is the youngest of the group, barely into his forties, with impeccably groomed dark hair and a short beard. His manners are equally impeccable: he opens doors and pulls out chairs for female PCs, or shares his exquisitely slow-burning pipe tobacco with anyone who asks. Nuron's interest in seeing Garsegzuul is personal; his hobby is architecture, and he carries a sketchbook packed with intricate, exotic drawings of bridges, buildings, and the like. He happily discusses the subject with any PC possessing two ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering). His key roguish abilities are Climb, Listen, and Move Silently. If asked, he knows about the reputation of Rayner Von Krall and advises the PCs against associating with him.

Hargal is a devout priest of Moradin and a close friend of the Badhammers. When Steg told him about Garsegzuul, Hargal shed his typical stoicism and took a leave of absence from the church. He is keen to learn what deity the dwarves of Garsegzuul worshipped, and discover any temples in the city. He dresses in masterwork half-plate and carries a shield decorated with the holy symbol of Moradin. He is older than his three companions and has a long, grayish-white beard. When the PCs approach the table he is studying a map and strategizing with Steg about how to overcome the "wilderness obstacle." Nuron soon returns to the table with a round of drinks for everyone, bringing a varied assortment of beverages to accommodate as many PCs as possible. If the PCs succeeded on their Knowledge checks regarding Garsegzuul's history, and if they inform the dwarves of its likely fate, each adopts a grim expression and mutters unpardonable dwarven oaths about the despicable nature of all derro.

**Garrold and Teague:** NE male human rogue 9 and rogue 7 / assassin 2 (respectively; Bluff +14 for both).

**Location:** Table #3.

*Description and Personality:* These two twenty-something Flan males are frequent fixtures at Fynch's tavern. As everyone in town knows, they work for Clive Orbison and are overseeing his daily operations while he is away on business. They recognize and politely greet any PCs who earned Clive's favor from PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*. If asked where Clive is, they reply that he is in Landrigard (true). They say they are visually inspecting his claims, tallying funds, and otherwise keeping their eyes and ears open for prospective business partners and any noteworthy news (also true). They claim to hail from Landrigard (false) and have been in town for three months (true). They expect Clive back within the week. They profess not to know what he is doing in Landrigard, being "mere hired hands", but a Sense Motive check (opposed by their Bluffs) tells the PCs they are lying. Both men radiate evil and, while not a crime in and of itself within the Pale, this should put the PCs on alert, given the reputation of their employer. The PCs should find them a bit too well dressed and highly observant for mere hired hands; a DC 15 Knowledge (local – Nyron and Her Environs) check reminds PCs that their attire bespeaks a rather opulent style of dress lately seen in Stradsett.

If questioned about their evil nature, they lie (via Bluff; also not a crime) but do not otherwise say or do anything to disrupt the tavern's atmosphere or make them liable for arrest.

If a PC cleric or paladin of any prominent, good-aligned deity (including Pholtus) requests that they leave the tavern, both men comply without a fuss. They go back to Orbison's business office (see Map 1) and do not reemerge.

**Old Spooner:** male human (retired rogue).

**Location:** Working around the tavern.

*Description and Personality:* Tobinsford's most infamous drunk has truly fallen on hard times. PCs who remember him from his ill-fated gold mining experiment in PAL5-06 easily recognize the grizzled old coot, but his usually glassy gaze contains something extra: contempt. Fynch was quick to recognize Spooner's alcohol addiction and devise a foolproof means to exploit it: by offering Spooner a job at the tavern and paying him with limitless free drink (off-shift), he trapped the old man in a vicious cycle. Spooner's alcoholism is so bad now that he suffers physical pain if he doesn't drink at regular intervals. His work day begins around noon, lasts 8-12 hours (depending on the number of patrons), and is capped with a 3-4 hour spate of binge drinking out back beside the Velk River (PCs who skulk around outside tonight can find him there; see "Tobinsford After Dark," below, for details), followed by a pristine state of unconsciousness lasting until around noon the next day, when it starts again.

His list of unpleasant tasks includes (but is not limited to) emptying spittoons; washing the guest room linens; and cleaning up after Fynch's monkey familiar, Crossbones (informally known as "The Filthiest Primate in Ratik"). Unbeknownst to Fynch, his manipulation of Spooner's addiction has come with a dangerous side effect: when he isn't drinking, Spooner's mental clarity is sharper than it has been in decades. Because of this, Spooner knows he is being used but is still powerless to stop it. His trusty rogue skills are no match for Fynch's brawn and Peralyn's abilities. (Spooner does know her true profession.)

Spooner both needs and wants help, and he has something to offer the PCs for their assistance. If any PCs that remember him from PAL5-06 recognize his predicament and wish to aid in some way, have Spooner surreptitiously communicate with and arrange to meet them outside behind the tavern after it closes at midnight—slipping a note under a PC's chair or something similar (be creative); to heighten tension, roll phony Spot checks for Fynch or his monkey, but tell the PCs that Spooner succeeds because "he's an 'old school' rogue and is just too crafty." Once Spooner is alone with the PC, he makes his plea: he knows things about Fynch and this tavern and is willing to reveal them, but wants something in return. What he knows is that Fynch is an anti-Pale extremist and an arcane spellcaster, that the liquor is being diluted, that the business license is forged, that the girls upstairs are prostitutes operating illegally, and finally that there is a secret gambling room. The last three revelations alone are enough to shut down Fynch's tavern, but Spooner's price for this information is not cheap: the PCs have to promise to cure his alcoholism, permanently. The AR entry "Spooner's Benefactor" details this situation.

### **Patronizing the *Heathen's Retreat***

Assuming they don't cause trouble, the PCs can rent rooms here for the night. Room rates are covered by the Adventurer's Standard lifestyle costs. Peralyn takes note of PCs paying Rich or Luxury lifestyle. (Play this by ear; she doesn't pickpocket the PC, but if such a PC is also a non-Pholtan and a claim owner, she definitely tries to milk such cash cows for all they are worth.)

Fynch's tavern does not serve meals (he considers it cost-prohibitive to hire a chef), adding to the growing animosity between the town's two taverns: miners (and drunkards) eat at the *Bounding Stag* and then quickly retire to Fynch's place to drink his liquor, rent his rooms, etc.

Drinks at the tavern are 150% of standard PHB costs and are not covered by lifestyle costs.

The prostitutes charge 20 gp for the night (definitely not covered by lifestyle costs). The upstairs rooms all have private baths heated by water from a concealed room on the first floor (another of Spooner's many chores).

### **Optional Scene: The Sisters**

If time permits or especially if the players seem hesitant to have their characters interact with the disreputable NPCs, introduce the following vignette (ideally when the PCs are at the dwarves' table).

Three young women and a black dog enter the tavern, bringing most noise and conversation to a low murmur. Two of the females are humans, dressed in light armor with longswords at their waist and a strange triangular crest emblazoned on their light steel shields and tunics. The third is a beautiful dark-haired half-elf wearing a fine chain shirt and a magnificent, dark purple traveling cloak emblazoned with the same strange crest; a sheathed bastard sword is strapped to her back. A DC 20 Knowledge (local – Nyron and Her Environs) check identifies the crest as that of the Abbey of Montaire (from PAL5I-02 *Force of Habit*). Indeed, the half-elf is Sister Aradi ("AIR-ah-die"), a former paladin of Pholtus but still a brave and kind soul. Aradi instantly recognizes and warmly greets PCs that played PAL5I-02.

The three women are in Tobinsford on an errand from the Abbey to deliver an exquisite ledger to Father Eamon and a book with a secret compartment to Clive Orbison. Not knowing where to find either man, they have come here to ask.

A staged scene ensues. Fynch tells her to keep the dog outside. She eyes him coolly, but sends the dog and one of her companions out. Sister Aradi and her companion approach the bar but stop as Aradi sees the prostitutes upstairs; she looks again at Fynch with narrowed lids, then proceeds to the stairs. Fynch warns her against it, but she reaches to her belt and throws a pouch full of platinum pieces spilling onto the bar. Fynch's monkey quickly scampers about to retrieve them as the tavern's patrons murmur; even Aradi's companion looks uneasy. Conversation soon returns to normal and Fynch is clearly displeased, as Aradi talks with one of the four girls upstairs for about fifteen minutes. When Aradi and the girl return downstairs, Aradi tells Fynch that the girl is leaving with her, and that the platinum should cover his losses. Fynch again says nothing but if looks could kill...or so the expression goes.

Aradi is a staunch foe of prostitution and seeks convince its practitioners that there are other options in life for intelligent, strong-willed girls; she has just converted this girl. The girl and Aradi's remaining companion exit the tavern, leaving Aradi alone among the heathens.

She moves from table to table, speaking briefly with each patron before moving on to the next—including rebuffing a lewd advance from Orran. When Garrold and Teague say that they work for Clive Orbison, Aradi smiles and pulls from her backpack a garishly decorated yet well-bound tome and asks them to sign for Mr. Orbison's property. (He has already paid for it, as the abbess requires advance payment of any commissioned work.) They do so, and she leaves the tome with them, showing a faint smile and advising them to "stay out of trouble,

boys". Teague then opens the tome and reveals it to be a multi-pocketed, portable map case.

When she reaches the PCs' table (probably talking with dwarves), she repeats her request about Eamon; any PC that has played PAL5-06 should remember that he favors the stew at the *Bounding Stag* and suggest that she try there. If they are curious, she shows the PCs what she has for him: a new gold-claim ledger, authorized by Prelate Anonsis of Landrigard and handmade by the abbess of Montaire herself. If such a thing existed, the ledger would be a masterwork book: pages of the purest vellum, each individually decorated by a different abbey nun and the whole thing bound in white goatskin and embellished with gold filigree from a local Tobinsford mine. Any PC making a DC 15 Appraise check can correctly approximate its value at 3,000 gp. Success should tell them three things: that the abbess is a master bookbinder, that Tobinsford is overflowing with wealth from the gold rush, and that Aradi and her companions must be tough if they travel through the Pale wilderness at night carrying something so valuable. Once the PCs suggest Eamon's likely whereabouts, Aradi thanks them and leaves.

☛ **Sister Aradi:** NG female half-elf ex-paladin 2 / rogue 3 / fighter 2.

### Optional Endeavor: Fynch's Crimes

If you have time to play it out, players might pursue their suspicions about the tavern. Fynch has broken several laws in order to get it up and running. The PCs have a chance to uncover these violations, but allow them a DC 10 Wisdom check to recognize that confronting Fynch directly is unwise, as he has obviously broken the law intentionally and a confrontation could result in a public brawl, which is itself also illegal (DC 15 Knowledge [local – Nyrond and Her Environs] check). Instead, persuade them that concrete proof is what they really need to convict him, and that the most direct means of doing so is through the offices of the Prelate of Landrigard. Fynch is a registered arcane spellcaster but does not admit his sorcerer skills unless prompted; the monkey cavorting around the bar is his familiar, Crossbones. Fynch's violations (and suggestions on how to expose them) are noted below:

- **Forged Business License:** Peralyn forged it, using the signature of a high-ranking Church official in Landrigard. Eamon has been here and seen the license, but he lacks any skill in spotting forgeries and believes it to be authentic. Officially, the Church is unaware that this tavern even exists. The license is kept under the bar and can be found with a DC 20 Search check (but taking 20 to search the whole premises after hours will certainly get them caught, so they must say they are searching the bar specifically). A Pholtan cleric PC (only) may demand to see the license based on their regional authority; Fynch happily complies, confident in Peralyn's

forgery, but does not let the PCs take the license from the bar. He suggests fetching Eamon to corroborate the document. Spotting the forgery requires a DC 15 Forgery check.

- **Gambling:** A secret panel hides a room (Area E) where four miners play an illegal dice game. A DC 15 Knowledge (local—Nyrond and Her Environs) check confirms the illegality of gambling of any kind within the Pale. The secret panel can be detected normally by elves, or found after hours with a DC 20 Search check. An exceptional Listen check from a nearby table (DC 30 from Table #5, DC 25 from Table #3, or DC 20 from Table #7) allows a PC to hear voices behind the panel.
- **Falsifying Church Documents and Misappropriation of Church Funds:** Noting Eamon's supervision on the new shrine, Fynch and Peralyn forged his signature to requisition official Church supplies from Landrigard—lumber, oil, tools, benches, and tables—to build a bunker below the *Heathen's Retreat* to hide Fynch's more conspicuous illegal activities. These items are hidden in area D. In order to uncover the truth, the PCs first need to successfully gather information here concerning the nature of the building materials seen outside; next, they must visit the *Bounding Stag* this evening and question Eamon. He knows nothing about the extra supplies and quickly adjourns to his cottage to review his requisition invoices. This makes him suspicious enough of Fynch's motives to notify Landrigard and ask for guidance, which qualifies as "success" for the PCs.
- **Prostitution:** The four scandalously clad women (aged 19-26) peering down from the second floor—plus the two seated with Orran—are prostitutes hired by Fynch from the Pale's southern cities and from northern Nyrond to attract the miners. The violation here is one of registration: like arcane spellcasting, prostitution is legal in the Pale (DC 18 Knowledge [local—Nyrond and Her Environs] check) so long as individuals are registered with the local temple of Pholtus. Fynch has taken advantage of a convenient loophole in that Tobinsford has no temple. (It has no Arcanist Guild house, either.) In order to verify the violation, a PC must rent an upstairs room and select one of the girls to be a companion for the evening. The PC must coax the truth from the prostitute with a DC 20 Diplomacy check (shifting her attitude from "Friendly" to "Helpful"; no retries) or a DC 20 Perform check. Success yields the following: Fynch receives a 20% kickback from each client. The girls admit to being treated well enough, and working here keeps their identities from the "official" Pale registry. They know that Fynch is some kind of spellcaster and that he and Peralyn are often up late in his room, talking.
- The fifth violation concerns the elaborate claim-stealing scheme devised by Fynch and Peralyn, as explained above.

Despite its suspicious environs, the PCs are not obligated to uncover the existing violations; rather, Fynch's lawless activities are intended to spur debate between indifferent and more duty-bound PCs over what the true nature of right and wrong is within the Pale. If a PC wishes to skulk about after hours to uncover a suspected violation, allow them to do so but keep things simple: one Hide or Move Silently check opposed by a Spot or Listen check; failure means the PC is caught in the act by Fynch or his monkey familiar, Crossbones (Spot +5), and asked to return to bed; success means the PC uncovers the desired information. Do not allow this to take up more than a few minutes of game time. If the PCs successfully uncover at least three of the five listed violations and report them to the offices of the Prelate in Landrigard, Fynch's tavern will be shut down.

## THE BOUNDING STAG

If the PCs do not accept Nuron's invitation from the Introduction (to join him in the *Heathen's Retreat*) or if they simply favor the *Bounding Stag*, read or paraphrase the following:

*The interior of this two-storied tavern is warm and cozy. Hooded lanterns and tall candles provide an intimate yet subdued illumination. Five of the tavern's seven tables are occupied by local residents, while several men dressed like laborers contentedly nurse their ales at the L-shaped bar. A brawny man of perhaps forty winters clears dishes from the two empty tables. In one corner of the dining area, a lone teenage girl with long, dark bangs and a dejected expression sips a steaming beverage from a mug cupped between her small hands. In the opposite corner, sitting in what one of three newly-constructed booths, a raven-haired woman not much past twenty gazes affectionately into the face of her dining companion, whose back faces the door.*

No map is provided for this tavern.

PCs who visit the *Bounding Stag* quickly learn that the new tavern's owner, its questionable reputation and especially its clientele have many residents in an uproar. PCs who staked a gold claim in PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* may either be welcomed as local heroes or blamed for the town's condition. (PCs with gold claims who pay Rich or Luxury lifestyle, must succeed on a DC 15 Diplomacy check following any Gather Information attempt, or else they fail to learn anything and are treated to a lecture on the dangers of excess.) Although many strangers have recently come to Tobinsford, most have shied away from the dangers of the wilderness and someone or something called "Garsheschool" and chosen to stake gold claims instead. As a result, the town is nearly overwhelmed with seedy individuals who are too scared, lazy or arrogant to seek treasures beneath the Rakers and who instead spend their free time and meager

earnings in revelry at Fynch's. A few adventuring groups have set off for Garsegzuul, but none has yet returned.

Rooms and meals here are covered by Adventurer's Standard lifestyle costs. Animals larger than size Small must stay outside. Drinks and exotic liquor from the impressive wine cellar cost extra. There is also one suite, which he added on to the existing rooms after an adventuring paladin of Pholtus mentioned the need for a quiet place to meditate; Greddis named it the Taran Suite in honor of Sir Andros's late squire, Taran Mac Colm, who perished during PAL5-06. Gather Information results for the *Bounding Stag* are found in DM Aid 2.

## NPCs Present

☛ **Greddis:** N male human (Oeridian) expert 5; Diplomacy +8, Profession (cook) +11.

*Description and Personality:* This 45-year-old veteran of the Greyhawk Wars relocated to the Pale from central Nyrond ten years ago to raise his daughter after the death of his wife. He is a stout, barrel-chested man with a deep, hearty laugh who prides himself on feeding guests until they are full. That pride has suffered a blow recently with the opening of Fynch's tavern, which has siphoned away many of his regular customers. Greddis is honest and would be willing to suffer the loss in business to a similarly honest and more skilled tavern owner in the name of friendly competition, but he knows Fynch to be a charlatan. Greddis is also a simple man and lacks the sophistication necessary to compete at Fynch's level; Greddis built three new booths in the dining area, hoping that his more loyal patrons would prefer the intimacy they offered, but aside from home-cooked meals he has little else to offer and refuses to stoop to Fynch's level of debauchery. Being a veteran, Greddis knows a prostitute when he sees one and isn't fooled by the girls at Fynch's (though he does not know they are unregistered), but he worries about the effect their presence in town will have on his daughter Lorna (that effect is already worse than he imagines; see below). Greddis is disgusted by the decadence and disreputable characters at Fynch's, yet secretly jealous of Fynch's skill as a businessman. He has no opinion on the lifestyle of PCs with gold claims, though he recognizes anyone who played PAL5-06. He can rent rooms to the PCs and fetch them a table and supper (dire elk stew is tonight's special).

☛ **Lorna:** female human (Oeridian) commoner 2; Diplomacy +7.

*Description and Personality:* The daughter of Greddis is 23 years old with curly black locks and an angular but expressive face dominated by large brown eyes. She inherited her father's laugh and his patience, but not his strength of spirit: Lorna has become dejected over the last several weeks due to the prostitutes at Fynch's tavern. She knows the girls for what they truly are but has kept



this awareness from both her father (who she knows always tries to protect her innocence and who she also knows is secretly bitter over his inability to compete with Fynch) and from Eamon (who is so happy over his recent promotion, his success at managing the gold claims, and the future shrine to Pholtus). Lorna has become unjustly self-conscious about her looks: she is the second-eldest among Tobinsford's single females (thanks to a bizarre generation gap, the oldest is a 49-year-old widow), and while she was once the girl that men loved to admire, her humble beauty has been eclipsed by the garish make-up, scandalous attire, and sophisticated behavior of Fynch's prostitutes. Those girls are a kind of pink elephant: most people know what they are but refuse to discuss it.

Lorna has another reason for not mentioning her current depression to Eamon: impressed by his goodness, hard work, and loyalty to the town, she has secretly developed a crush on him. Although she is convinced—via feminine intuition—that he feels the same, she has no idea if he is aware of her feelings, nor does she know how to address the issue without compromising his position within the Church and giving her father something else to worry about. Thus, when he dines here each evening she is briefly elated, but when he goes back home her inability to express her feelings leaves her miserable for the next twenty hours. Under no circumstances does she admit her feelings for Eamon to any PC, but when they approach her table and see that it is Eamon at whom she was affectionately gazing, she quickly stands, blushes, and goes back to helping her father clear tables; allow the PCs a Sense Motive check (DC 20 due to the subdued lighting and conversation within the tavern) to realize that Eamon has a secret admirer in Lorna. If a PC succeeds on the check and wishes to speak privately with Lorna about it, she admits nothing but listens politely to the PC's advice.

♣ **Father (Abbot) Eamon (“AY-mohn”)**: LG male human (Oeridian) cleric 5 (Pholtus); Profession (bookkeeper) +7.

*Description and Personality*: Less than one week from his 22nd birthday, Tobinsford's original parish priest has evolved from an overworked and underappreciated gold-claim accountant to the charismatic and well-regarded designer of the new shrine to Pholtus. With the exception of Sir Andros, whose presence is felt rather than seen in Tobinsford, Eamon is the most popular and recognizable figure in town. After being promoted to abbot through a loophole in Church policies, Eamon has acquired two new assistants (male and female human LG cleric 1 (Pholtus)) who have allowed him to spend less time managing gold claims and more time designing and overseeing construction on a new shrine to Pholtus. His once unkempt light brown hair is now neatly combed, and the dark circles beneath his eyes have been replaced with a cheerful and healthy disposition. Despite his new prosperity, Eamon is quick to point out his debt to selfless adventurers who helped him with his

bookkeeping when he needed it the most (in PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*).

Eamon recognizes and enthusiastically welcomes PCs that spent extra TUs helping him with his gold claim paperwork; he invites them to join him for supper.

Before him on the booth's new oak table are a ledger and maps of the local hills, where ninety percent of the gold claims are located. As Lorna unobtrusively returns to take everyone's order, Eamon explains that he is cross-checking his older maps of the gold rush (from CY 595) against the latest map and ledger. He is baffled by an incongruity between the list of claims and the number of colored wooden site markers still out in the hills. When miners open a claim, Eamon assigns colored markers to the site; when the claim is closed, the markers are supposed to be returned so he can update the ledger; registered claims now outnumber the checked-out site markers almost two to one, as if miners had abandoned their claims and left town without telling him. Eamon has visited several of these mines and verified that they are not being worked and that the markers are gone. More curiously, Eamon has heard rumors that some businesses own claims, though he cannot recall meeting any such business representatives. The discrepancy is caused by Clive Orbison's claim-buyout scheme (see below). Eamon has no proof, but he suspects that one of those businesses is buying out other miners' claims.

There are three businesses listed in his ledger: Infinity Holdings in Eltison, the 588 Tannery in Landrigard, and the Symba Salt Company in Stradsett. (These names refer to Demogorgon or the Abyss in various cryptic ways.)

(Clive Orbison has set up three dummy organizations to buy out gold claims. His “ridiculous rancher's hat” from PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* is actually a *hat of disguise*. Clive has approached miners in different disguises, claiming to represent a company and offering to buy the claim to get around the Pale's burdensome taxes. He advises the miners to leave town awhile and never to mention this to a representative of the Church of the One True Path, as selling a claim like this would be a form of tax evasion. Many miners have fallen for the ruse and the big payoff; some refused but cannot identify Clive. By the time the duped miners return to Tobinsford, the “agent” they met with is gone, the mines have been worked bare by Cult agents, and the site markers have been destroyed. The original miners have not dared to report it, for fear of prosecution. The scheme is nearly foolproof, but some disgruntled miners have muttered the names of the fake companies while drunk at Fynch's; word of mouth has reached Eamon, which is how the names appear in his ledger.)


Eamon soon apologizes for boring the PCs with his work and begins speaking in animated tones about his new project, the shrine to Pholtus. He rifles through his maps and produces a plan of his own design; neither a masterpiece nor the scrawling of an amateur, it shows the honest dedication of someone passionate about a cause. Eamon was about to request permission from Prelate Anonsis of Landrigard to erect a temple to Pholtus, until

Lorna convinced him that an outdoor shrine or pavilion would be more in keeping with the rustic, open spirit of Tobinsford. The Prelate not only agreed but based on Eamon's exemplary recordkeeping (aided by adventurers), allowed him to design it as well.

Lorna's constant support over the last year—delivering meals he would otherwise have forgotten and showing interest in his sketches—has enabled them to become close friends. Eamon's ineffable emotions for her are in conflict with his role in the Church; all he thinks about lately are his shrine design and what he could say to Lorna about his feelings for her. As a result, Eamon is distracted from Fynch, Clive Orbison, and the more lasting effects of gold-obsession on Tobinsford.

Still, he clings to his recent optimism, encouraging the PCs to visit the construction site. He notes that the area is kept lit at night by *everburning torches* to keep intoxicated miners from getting hurt.

Eamon is unaware of the violations at Fynch's tavern, including that Fynch forged his name. As noted above (The *Heathen's Retreat*, Optional Endeavor: Fynch's Crimes), if the PCs confront Eamon with proof of three of the five listed violations, he contacts his supervisor in Landrigard for guidance. Simply mentioning the forgery of his name for building supplies is enough to get him to head back to his cottage to investigate his invoices; he thanks the PCs for their diligence, asks them to have Lorna deliver his dinner, and says that he will contact them once he and his two assistants unravel the paperwork.

 **Faira:** female human (Oeridian) commoner 1.

*Description and Personality:* PCs may recognize the unhappy girl in the corner (DC 20 Spot check, due to the darkness and her deteriorated looks) as one of the three teenage girls from PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* who fell into a catfight over their affection for Taran Mac Colm. Faira is disconsolate: in addition to still being distraught over Taran's death, she has also lost her two girlfriends to other fates. Faira is seventeen and wears a long, drab grey peasant's dress fastened with a black leather belt. She is thin to the point of unhealth, with hazel eyes and long, dark, unkempt hair. She is sipping tea as the PCs approach.

Faira blames Pholtus for Taran's death (by extension through Sir Andros and the Church). Her parents—both local farmers—bless their food in Pholtus's name, so Faira refuses their food and tries to feed herself with nuts, roots, and berries (in theory, not tainted by Pholtus). She knows that her parents love her, but feels hurt nonetheless.

One of Faira's friends (also Oeridian) works as a prostitute at Fynch's place; she and Faira have not spoken in over a year. Her other friend (a Flan girl) was lured away from home by the bewitching villain Caelarah, whom the PCs may have encountered in PAL5-03 *Strata*. This woman pretended to represent a school in Stradsett, offering a scholarship to her and other girls of modest

means. Now many months later, the girl's parents and Faira still have not heard from her.

PCs can begin to talk her out of her depression, but they must offer some distraction or hope. Successfully reaching her takes a DC 25 Diplomacy check; Pholtan PCs suffer a -10 penalty but female PCs get a +10 bonus. Allow the players to be creative here but remember that she is unwilling to do anything that helps the Church of the One True Path, helps Fynch's tavern, or hurts her parents.

If time permits, introduce Aradi (see "Optional Scene: The Sisters" in the *Heathen's Retreat*) but note that she easily spots Eamon, delivers his tome, and asks if anyone knows where Clive Orbison can be found; Aradi is not exposed to any rude theatrics in the *Bounding Stag*.

## TOBINSFORD AFTER DARK

Two side encounters are available to PCs who wander around town on the night of their arrival.

### Old Spooner

The first involves Spooner (see his entry in the *Heathen's Retreat*): he can be found drinking heavily beside the Velk River, in back of Fynch's tavern. If the PCs wish to intercede, this is where the encounter occurs. The PCs are not discovered or disturbed while talking with Spooner.

### Dack and the Shrine

The second side-encounter occurs at the construction site of the new shrine. PCs that take Eamon's advice or simply get curious enough to visit the site are treated to a late night show. Consult Map 1; as the PCs approach the site, which is clearly defined by eight *everburning torches* in a compass rose formation, allow them a DC 15 Spot check to note a sizable hole in the ground ahead beside a small shrub. Success also reveals a pair of eyes within the hole; failing the check puts the PCs squarely beside the hole when a dire badger darts out of it and threatens them. PCs may attempt a DC 15 Wild Empathy check to determine that the badger is trying to prevent them from going forward into the construction site; if the party lacks the Wild Empathy ability, allow them two more Spot checks. The first (DC 15) notes the squatting figure of a man in leather armor with shortswords at his waist roughly forty feet ahead beside a large block of stone; the second (DC 20) reveals a very large wolf roughly thirty feet beyond the man, where the edge of the construction site gives way to dense trees.

The man is Tobinsford's most infamous malcontent, ranger and trapper, Dack Splintheel (whom the PCs may remember from PAL5-06); the dire badger is his animal companion, Weasley; the large wolf is a female dire wolf (and former mate of Old Rendfang from that same scenario), displaced from her usual hunting grounds by miners and drawn to town by the refuse of careless residents. The PCs have just interrupted Dack's attempt to use wild empathy on her. When the PCs approach the

hole, Weasley darts out and emits a low growl that trails off into sputtering fear: Weasley is justifiably scared to death of the wolf and growls only to warn his master that the PCs are approaching. Dack maintains eye contact with the wolf but holds up a hand to stop the PCs; Weasley moves to watch from the safety of his hole. Dack then casts *speak with animals* and talks with the wolf. So long as the PCs do not move closer or otherwise interrupt Dack, they may employ magic to find out what he and the wolf are discussing. Dack is telling the wolf that her foraging here is dangerous, and that the humans in town will likely kill her. She should leave immediately and wait for him in the woods, and he will take her to a place where he promises that she and her cubs will be able to hunt in peace (see below). As he communicates, three “small” (Medium-size) wolf cubs stumble out from behind a nearby tree stump and congregate around their mother’s legs. Provided the PCs do not interrupt, Dack succeeds at his check (roll anyway to heighten tension) and the wolf retreats with her cubs into the trees. If the PCs interrupt the check, it automatically fails, the wolf flees, and Dack becomes angry at the intrusive PCs (see below).

🦄 **Dack Splintheel:** male human (Flan) ranger 9; hp 72; Craft (alchemy) +11, Handle Animal +10, Heal +11, Survival +14 (+16 aboveground or underground, or to avoid getting lost).

🦄 **Weasley:** advanced dire badger animal companion (5 HD); hp 53.

*Description and Personality:* Dack is likely between 25-30 years old, and sports unkempt shoulder-length brown hair. His brown eyes are perpetually narrowed in scorn, and his belt is lined with pouches and vials containing a variety of ominously colored, viscous liquids.

Dack hates everyone, especially Pholtans and miners, but despite his animosity for most things on two legs, Dack has secretly earned some respect from Tobinsford’s residents for his inexplicable defense of the town. Within the last three months he and Weasley defeated both an owlbear and a winter wolf that had been drawn to the town’s burgeoning refuse problem: drunken miners consistently leave half-eaten meals in the street and rarely clean up after themselves. Dack has no sympathy for them and strips their coin pouches to scatter the contents in the river. A magical beast he cannot reason with, either, but an animal with low intelligence that doesn’t know any better deserves his sympathy.

Dack is trying to direct the wolf to his established preserve in the hills. PCs may remember him as having a deep hatred for gold mining, but after witnessing how the Church essentially turns a blind eye once claims are registered, he decided to take advantage of Eamon’s efficiency and staked a claim where the gold could virtually be plucked up off of the ground. Instead of mining it, however, he set snares around the entire perimeter and routinely patrols it to catch and repel any

intruding miners. (If the PCs think to ask, the stakes marking Dack’s preserve are colored with badger dung.)

In addition to gold, Dack’s large preserve is home to many animals and a diverse, exotic variety of plant life; it is the latter which drew him to town this evening: the hole in which Weasley is hiding is actually a tunnel down to the roots of the nearby thistleberry shrub, whose leaves make bare skin itchy. As a ranger, Dack’s primary (and thus far secret) favored enemy is plants; he is skilled in creating poisons and antitoxins from them, but more often than not, if a plant serves no useful purpose, he kills it. Weasley was digging a hole to more easily uproot the shrub; Dack intends to replant it within the outhouse behind Fynch’s tavern. While he is technically vandalizing consecrated ground, make sure the PCs recognize the just and magnificent subversion of his cause.

If the PCs did not interrupt Dack’s negotiations with the dire wolf and want to hire him as a guide to Garsegzuul, they must succeed on a Diplomacy check in an effort to shift his attitude to Friendly from Indifferent, or from Unfriendly if there is an obvious Pholtan PC in the party, or from Hostile if they interrupted his negotiations with the dire wolf. PCs who tell him that they intend to visit the Underdark may add +2 to the check, as Dack has recently acquired aberrations as his second favored enemy and is itching to confront one.

Dack’s fee is 50 gp per day and is non-negotiable; if there are Pholtans in the party, this fee doubles. (As the PCs might remember from PAL5-06, it takes roughly three days to get up to the Underdark entrance, and then another two days underground to Garsegzuul: ten days of travel for the round trip, plus time spent at the city.) Dack makes it very clear to the PCs: accept his terms or don’t, right now. He doesn’t need their money, but he knows these hills better than anyone except Old Man Colm, and a trip to the Underdark will cost him lost income from trapping and keep him away from his preserve.

**Development:** Once the PCs decide where to spend the night, they may turn in for the evening. (The night passes uneventfully.) If the PCs decided to join the four dwarves on their journey to Garsegzuul, proceed to Encounter 2.

## ENCOUNTER 2: PARALLEL LINES

No boxed text is provided for this encounter, which is intended to illustrate for the PCs the dangers of traveling in the wilderness unprepared.

If the party uses magic to reach the Underdark entrance leading to Garsegzuul (*teleport*, etc), modify the following section accordingly. Otherwise, the long journey there is relatively uneventful and occurs in three stages.

No fixed trail exists between Tobinsford and the Underdark, so the PCs must use either mundane or esoteric means to find their way. The mundane way is to

make several dozen DC 20 Track checks (one per mile) to follow the trail of those adventurers who preceded them. (Six groups have attempted the trek to the Underdark, all within the last month.) Taking 10 is the best way to do this, so the PCs must include a tracker with Survival at +10 or better to succeed. If they do not, they can hire Dack Splintheel.

Alternatively, PCs that make a series of DC 20 Spellcraft or Knowledge (nature) checks sense the ley line (the Path of Grievous Ascension, which PCs may have discovered during PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*) and may then substitute the above two variant skills in place of Track/Survival.

### Stage 1 (Tobinsford to Split Rock Valley)

The PCs might be inclined to visit the cantankerous frontiersman Colm (last seen in PAL5-06). It takes roughly five hours to reach Colm's place from Tobinsford on foot.

If they visit Colm's homestead, several of his young wives note that Colm and his two eldest sons left a few days ago to go hunting up near Wolf Lake; they aren't expected back for another week. The young women do not recognize the PCs, so if the PCs wish to spend the night before continuing and succeed on a DC 15 Diplomacy check (to shift their attitude from Indifferent to Friendly), then the women welcome them to spend the night. If the Diplomacy check fails, then the PCs are not allowed to spend the night, as the women fear Colm would be upset if he found out about it. Dack, if present, agrees and chooses to live off the wild not far outside the homestead. The dwarves are grateful for any hospitality and actually set to work making minor repairs on the outhouse, forge and chicken coop.

(The AR for PAL5-06 does not include a favor of Colm, so you cannot assume that a PC left Colm's homestead on good terms. The new Diplomacy check puts everyone on equal footing.)

In either case, the women say (if asked) that several groups of "adventurers" have passed by in the last two weeks on their way to Split Rock Valley, along with several dozen groups of miners headed to the gold rush area. The miners come and go, but no adventurers have returned as yet.

The night here passes without danger but full of the wild sounds of the hills, including the howling of wolves.

### Stage 2 (Split Rock Valley up through the Rakers to the cave-ridden gorge leading to the Underdark)

The PCs have a chance to make an ominous discovery along this stage. This occurs in the boggy, upper portion of Split Rock Valley; with a DC 20 Spot check the PCs notice some odd, icy mounds off in the distance amid the snow-dusted and partially frozen bog. The mounds hold four frozen corpses: two dwarves, a gnome, and a human. A DC 20 Search notes the absence of any cold weather gear and finds a scroll tube containing a crudely drawn map of Split Rock Valley that has several confusing trail

marks and vague "Xs" on it. A DC 15 Intelligence check allows a PC to conclude that this party probably got lost, most likely due to poor map quality or the absence of a skilled wilderness expert. However, their lack of cold weather gear is surely what killed them. There is no identifying paperwork or gold claim information on any of them, but two have scroll tubes and large journals.

The PCs eventually reach the gorge of caves without further incident and easily locate the appropriate cave entrance to the Underdark, even if none of them has played PAL5-06, as the entrance has been clearly marked by other adventuring parties.

### Stage 3 (through the Underdark to Garsegzul)

This is the longest stage. The PCs use a series of Undercommon "highway" signs (seen in PAL5-06) to follow the narrow ledge leading southwest.

At key points during their long, dark passage the PCs discover the grisly remains of several other adventurers: some have been literally torn to pieces, some have been reduced to unrecognizable piles of flesh and bone by acid (black dragon breath), and some seem simply to have been killed by slashing and piercing wounds, the work of various Underdark predators.

Additionally, a DC 20 Search check reveals (within nooks further along the highway) the carcasses of three trolls, two half-trolls, and six Demogorgon cultists from the Fens camp in PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*. The other "halves" of the two half-trolls are red dragon and hill giant, determined by DC 23 Knowledge (arcana) and DC 22 Knowledge (nature) checks, respectively. The cultists are recognizable by their garb and broken unholy symbols. This should alert PCs that Aodhan and his minions may be nearby. PCs may cast *speak with dead* on one of the bodies (assume an average Will save of +3), but they knew nothing of Aodhan's grand plans when they were alive, nor that he had negotiated with troglodytes.

**Development:** Forty miles (two days, on average) along the Underdark highway, the sporadic Undercommon wall engravings give way to defaced signs that once welcomed travelers to the dwarven city, whose true name (Taarindaulk) has been obliterated. At this point, flickering light and echoing cries for help signal that someone is in trouble. Proceed to Encounter 3.

## ENCOUNTER 3: TALION

During this encounter the PCs interrupt a battle between two groups of explorers and a demonic strike team (led by the enigmatic quasit from PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper*) sent to assassinate Aodhan. The quasit visited Aodhan's Fens camp but found it deserted and all Cult treasure missing. He "persuaded" one of Aodhan's injured harpy mercenaries to reveal everything she knew about his bizarre recent activities. Coincidentally, the quasit's extraplanar superiors had also just been tipped off by the mysterious benefactor. This tip-off placed Aodhan at Garsegzul. Instructed to cut the Cult's losses and

assassinate the renegade priest, the quasit gathered a group of demons and *plane shifted* to Garsegzүүл. However, as he had only a vague idea of where to go, he went off-target and landed in the camp of some human explorers. Certain that one of them had to have seen Aodhan, the quasit is ordering his minions to slay all but two of the humans, who would then be tortured for any information.

Assuming the PCs rush to investigate the screams, read or paraphrase the following:

*On a small rocky plateau dotted with two large bonfires and overlooking a vast expanse of desolate architecture punctuated here and there by bright swatches of orange lava, a ferocious battle is underway. Several humans—some in armor and wielding weapons, others in robes and scholarly attire—desperately try to fend off a horde of nightmarish creatures. Two of the humans already lie motionless on the ground while a tiny bat-winged creature directs the actions of the much larger monsters. Upon seeing members of your party emerge from the tunnel, it points in your direction and issues several commands as a small contingent of its minions—their fiendish, glowing eyes promising no quarter—moves toward you.*

**Creatures:** The quasit expected severe resistance: in addition to the demons that will be engaging the PCs (see below), he has brought four extra vrocks, ten jovocs and six babaus, along with two dozen dretches trained to control a retriever that has been keyed to Aodhan's *flesheater rod* (which the quasit will recover off-screen later); all of these creatures are on or flying near the plateau regardless of APL. As the PCs emerge onto the plateau, the quasit orders the dretches to release the retriever, which randomly kills four of these creatures before gaining its bearings and lumbering off into the city with the remaining dretches trailing behind it. The quasit then orders the majority of his minions to scatter into the city. These orders are in Abyssal; the quasit's initial order to his troops was "find him." The remaining demons attack the PCs:

**APL 6 (EL 7)**

☛ **Jovocs (2):** hp 42, 42; Appendix 1.

**APL 8 (EL 9)**

☛ **Babaus (3):** hp 77, 77, 77; *Monster Manual* 40.

**APL 10 (EL 11)**

☛ **Advanced Babaus (3):** hp 117, 117, 117; Appendix 1.

**APL 12 (EL 13)**

☛ **Vrocks (3):** hp 130, 130, 130; *Monster Manual* 48.

**Tactics:** The quasit can see the Mark of Demogorgon on any PC that bears it and, at all APLs, orders his minions to

slay such PCs first. Note that the PCs are 100 feet away from the edge of Map 3 when they hear the screams.

**Negotiation:** If any PC understood the quasit's "find him" command in Abyssal, allow them a DC 15 Sense Motive check to recognize that the demons have a more specific motive than merely slaying human explorers, and that they might be deterred from attacking. If a PC succeeds at a DC 25 Diplomacy check (other than PCs bearing the Mark—they automatically fail), the quasit orders his remaining demons to halt their attack. The quasit then explains his mission and gives the PCs 48 hours to slay Aodhan themselves. If they agree, the quasit departs with his remaining minions (via *plane shift*); proceed to Encounter 4.

**Fight:** If the Diplomacy check fails or if the PCs refuse to negotiate with the quasit, he departs (on his initiative via *teleport* to another part of the city to check on the retriever).

At APL 6, the jovocs move to within 30 feet of the closest PC to take advantage of their Aura of Retribution ability. They attack one another in the first round of combat; in the second, one of them tries to summon another jovoc.

At APL 8 and 10, the babaus work together to keep the PCs off-balance: two move to flank a target while the third tries to summon another babau before joining the others in melee. They *teleport* away if the PCs gain the upper hand. At APL 10, the elite babau use their reach and sneak attack to maximum effect. These demons are extraplanar cultists and make a greater effort to slay PCs bearing their master's Mark.

At APL 12, the quasit unleashes the enforcers: three vrocks, who immediately fly above the plateau and begin their Dance of Ruin. If the PCs manage to interrupt the Dance before its completion, the vrocks wade into melee. Each wears a collar bearing the unholy symbol of Demogorgon: two entwined, clawed tentacles, last seen in PAL6-04 and identified with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. Each vrock has a focus in one of the three following Knowledge skills: religion, the planes, and local (to understand humanoid traits). These skills may prove useful to them in combat against the PCs. In melee, one vrock leads off with its Stunning Screech while a second tries to summon another vrock; the third uses *telekinesis* to attack the PC who disrupted the Dance. The vrocks then move to full attack the PCs and make use of their spores and their Power Attack feat. They *teleport* away if reduced to 10 hp or lower.

**Development:** If the dwarves are with the PCs, they are attacked by a pair of babaus; one of the dwarves dies every third round beyond the fifth round of the PCs' fight. If Dack is here as well, he aids the dwarves but outlasts them all. If Dack is here but the dwarves are not, he moves to aid the two motionless human explorers. Once the demons are defeated, driven off or placated, the PCs may move to aid and/or interrogate the human explorers. The demons carry no treasure but the howls of their counterparts can be heard in the distance. Some PCs may

wish to pursue the remaining demons into the city, but you should discourage them from doing so; attending to the other wounded explorers is a suggested method. Proceed to Encounter 4.

## ENCOUNTER 4: RELICS

Two groups of adventurers have beaten the PCs to Garsegzuul and lived to tell about it. They are very different from one another and guardedly welcome the PCs to what they call “base camp” (especially if the dwarves from Tobinsford are present, as both groups fear that the dwarves will themselves claim ownership). They also thank the party for their aid against the demons. Soon, though, they resume a heated argument over which has official claim to the city. While technically neither group does each is extremely territorial and claims that it arrived first and possesses a more comprehensive map of the city.

One group is composed of rugged adventurers (“the Plunderers”) who make no secret that they are here to loot Garsegzuul for as much as they can carry and then sell it. The other group is composed of historians and lorekeepers (“the Scholars”) who want to study the entire city with painstaking detail before allowing any treasures to be removed. The PCs may not wish to get involved in this debate, but it should be clear that without imposing some kind of organization here, both mulish factions will hinder efficient mapping and exploration of the city.

Both groups present convincing arguments, but there is something they are hesitant to reveal: someone or something is stalking them, most likely a band of marauding humanoids (in actuality the troglodytes from Encounter 8 trying to drive away the remaining surface-dwellers). Both groups have been camping here for a week, and nearly every foray into the city-proper has been terrorized, but no one has yet gotten an accurate description of the attackers, who are exceptionally stealthy and have been conducting highly organized raids. Several adventurers—including one Plunderer, two Scholars, and all five members of a gnomish adventuring party that were camped here until three days ago—have disappeared, with their agonized screams eerily echoing through the darkness; it is unknown whether any of them is alive or dead.

The demon attack, however, is a new threat that they cannot explain; it is up to the PCs to reveal or conceal what they know about it.

Neither group has seen any humanoid or creature fitting Aodhan’s or a cultist’s description.

After speaking with both groups and learning of their progress thus far, the PCs are intended to side with one group and aid in its exploration, or to shun both of them and explore on their own. Both groups appeal to the PCs for assistance, citing safety in numbers while promoting their own exploratory philosophy. The PCs’ decision determines where they go next within the city, as each group has a partially detailed map of the areas they’ve explored (keyed to their own interests); however, if the PCs side with neither group, they may discover an

unexplored area of the city for themselves. The city is large and only about ten percent of it has been explored thus far. The PCs’ choice determines their reward in Encounter 5.

### The Plunderers

(Four remaining.) The Plunderers are a group of human fighter-based adventurers from Stradsett who heard the rumors about Garsegzuul’s rediscovery. They paid a local historian for information about it and decided to loot the ancient city. Their motives are purely financial. They are led by **Corris Bathanel** (fighter 8), an Oeridian who dresses in a breastplate and wields a bastard sword with two hands. This group contains no clerics and heals themselves with magic potions and a *wand of cure moderate wounds* with few charges left (one member is a ranger). Corris is now very upset, as his girlfriend **Maris** was the one wounded in the demon attack; another of his friends was “taken” by the marauders while exploring the city five days ago.

Corris openly disdains what he terms “weak” PCs (those not wearing armor or carrying obvious melee weapons) as he explains his group’s philosophy: once word of the city’s rediscovery has a chance to spread, it will be overrun with adventurers and plunderers like himself. Thus, it is better to find and claim what one can before everyone comes along and takes “the good stuff.” The early bird gets the worm, as they say, and a quick payoff and a reputation for swift initiative will serve adventurers better in the long run. He urges the PCs to join his group, citing strength and safety in numbers, but he is curious why the PCs seemed to merit special attention from (or were able to negotiate with) the demons. Moreover, his group wants help mapping the city, as they are not “geniuses” and have almost gotten lost twice.

If the PCs team up with Corris, he reveals his group’s map and indicates two areas they discovered yesterday which they physically marked but have not yet explored. In one of these areas (southwest of camp) Corris found a battered dwarven helmet; in the second area (west-by-southwest of camp) they found a shockingly sharp and well-preserved chisel. Corris suggests that the PCs explore one of these two areas in the morning while his group explores the other.

If the PCs select the “helmet” option, proceed to Encounter 5A (“The Armory”), below; if they favor the area where the chisel was found, proceed to Encounter 5B (“The Reliquary”), below.

### The Scholars

(Originally nine, now five remaining.) The Scholars are a group of human adepts, bards, loremasters and historians (experts) from the Rakervale area who also heard rumors of Garsegzuul’s rediscovery and rushed here to study the city before it fell victim to disorganized, insensitive and disrespectful looters. Three of their number perished on the way to Garsegzuul; a fourth was taken two days ago while exploring the city. Their motives are purely

academic: study Garsegzul's history, evolution, and downfall before looters destroy the integrity of its ruins looking for "treasure." The Scholars are co-led by **Erikal** (male human (Suel) wizard 7 / loremaster 2) and **Polliae Reidlin** ("POLL-ee-AY REED-lin"; human favored soul 7 of Boccob); their wounded ally is a bard specializing in cartography. They heal themselves by Polliae's magic and a seemingly inexhaustible supply of scrolls (much to the chagrin of Corris's group). They used their combined knowledge of Spellcraft to traverse the wilderness via the ley line instead of hiring a tracker. They all express disdain at anyone whose first impulse is to solve a problem with a weapon rather than with the mind or through study. Erikal explains the group's philosophy as one of nobility: it is far better to serve as a preserver of knowledge rather than as one of its pawnbrokers. The rewards in reputation may be longer in coming by joining his group, but Erikal says that Corris's fame and wealth from looting Garsegzul will last only as long as his next "shopping spree." Erikal is curious to know why the demons were so eager to attack (or negotiate with) the PCs, but he and Polliae are still keen to have the PCs join their group. He, too, cites safety in numbers and hopes the PCs can be perimeter guards: the biggest hindrance to their efforts thus far has been having to look over their shoulders for the next random attack instead of concentrating on their work.

If the PCs team up with the Scholars, Erikal shows them the group's map and indicates two areas they discovered two days ago but have yet to explore (while Corris's group goes out to explore each day, the Scholars spend one day exploring and the next day mapping; thus, their map is actually the more comprehensive, even though the Plunderers have explored a much larger area). In one of these areas (northwest of camp) Polliae found a suit of dwarven chainmail and some odd tools (a PC with five or more ranks in Craft [carpentry] can identify the tools as those of a carpenter); in the second unexplored area (due north of camp), Erikal and the now-unconscious bard noticed an odd smell; it was not from a dead animal or anything of that kind, they know. (It was a blend of alchemical substances from an old laboratory, as explained below.) Erikal suggests that the PCs explore one of these areas in the morning while his group explores the other.

If the PCs favor the "armor and tools" area, proceed to Encounter 5C ("The Apartments"), below; if they instead wish to investigate the odd smell, proceed to Encounter 5D ("The Laboratory"), below.

### Neutrality

If the PCs do not wish to further the antagonism between Corris's and Erikal's groups, or if they think they can do better on their own, the PCs can go their own way. If they make this intention clear, allow them to overhear each group grumbling about other areas that they did not mention to the PCs. These two areas lie generally west-by-northwest from camp and are farther away from it than any of the others. (Due to their rivalry, both groups

began exploring in the opposite direction from one another, but their movements have gradually drawn them closer together; the west-by-northwest area lies between their areas.) Whichever area the PCs choose to investigate, the dwarves (if present) are happy to investigate the other; Nuron especially is keen to do anything other than listen to people waste their breath arguing. One area was marked by several coin-shaped pieces of a strange metal; the other was marked by a large collection of colorfully decorated but broken crockery.

If the PCs favor the "coin" area, proceed to Encounter 5E ("The Forge"); if they prefer to investigate the crockery, proceed to Encounter 5F ("The Library").

**Development:** The PCs' arrival in Garsegzul should come at the end of a second full day of travel. Given the length of the journey and the rigors of the demon attack, it should reasonably be expected that the PCs would want to rest. The other two groups (and the dwarves, if present) are not averse to this idea; Corris notes that the city is vast and that the PCs will need their rest. Before they retire for the night, Erikal notes that this area is not known for demonic activity, offering the PCs another chance to explain anything they wish.

The night passes uneventfully, though both Corris and Erikal (and the dwarves, if present) set watches, encouraging the PCs to do the same; Dack (if present) offers to take the middle watch. In the morning, proceed to the appropriate segment of Encounter 5.

## ENCOUNTER 5: DARK CITY

This encounter is split into six subsections. When the PCs awaken, they will likely want to start exploring. Based on which group they sided with during Encounter 4 (if any), the PCs will eventually venture into the 1,200-year-old city and be led to one of the six corresponding areas, as noted below. No boxed text is provided for these encounters, but a few parameters are in effect:

First, no matter where they end up exploring, the PCs' efforts at the location of their choice takes all day: walking, searching, excavating, scanning for the "humanoid marauders," mapping, identifying, and carrying the various rewards back to "base camp". Keep the PCs focused and do not allow them to get sidetracked worrying about everyone else's safety. The city is too vast and the six sites too far apart for audible communication, but bonfires at "base camp" are visible throughout the city and act as homing beacons for the explorers. One member of each group tends them throughout the day.

Second, despite their efforts, the PCs will be unable to locate any trace of Aodhan, his entourage, or the mysterious humanoid marauders (trogs). These foes are all nearby but the city is too large and the scenario timeline too tight to justify Track checks; allow PCs to make such checks but do not reward them with any concrete information just yet.

Finally, inform the PCs that 1-2 hours will have elapsed before they reach their intended destination; after this, several hours should be spent investigating the

site, followed by the return trip to camp. Each of the other groups labels any PC notion of spending the night in the city-proper as “suicidal.” Paraphrase the appropriate individual description of the area the PCs explore and inform them of their reward. In most cases the treasure is cumbersome and requires most of the party (or high magic) to unearth it. PCs that fear some kind of attack and wish to remain at “base camp” may do so; Dack (if present) accompanies the PCs into the city, if they require his services.

### **Encounter 5A: The Armory**

The “battered helmet” clue eventually leads to a small armory tucked away between three larger structures. The armory itself is a fully enclosed, roofed and pivoting chamber roughly 60x60 feet.

There is only one entrance, keyed to a rotating apparatus (operated from within the armory) that swings around and lines up with one of three secret doors on each of the adjacent buildings; thus, entrance to the armory is through one of these buildings. It was designed by the dwarves for defense, so that if one of the buildings was under siege, then the dwarves who manned the armory could rotate it, go around through one of the other buildings and pin their foes in from behind. Three people are required to properly operate it: one to man the pivot-apparatus, one inside the building with which it is intended to align, to operate the secret door, and one more inside the armory to operate its own internal secret door. The crafty design also thwarted the invading derro’s attempts to find it, but an all-day search allows any group of PCs to do so.

Once the PCs access the armory, they find that it is still well-stocked. The PCs gain access to several items, as noted on the AR.

### **Encounter 5B: The Reliquary**

The chisel was found near a secret, stone trap door over a steep staircase leading down into a burial crypt that is deceptively vast and contains several interconnecting passages. The derro invaders did not find this chamber. The entire crypt is under a permanent *hallow* effect, contains no other exits, is roughly 600 feet by 250 feet in size, and is home to approximately 2,000 long-deceased dwarves. Of the dead, 30% are in sealed stone sarcophagi and 10% of those are nobles from the city’s ruling house, Clan Embermaul (this much is explained in dwarven runes carved into the sarcophagi); those occupants not in sarcophagi have long since crumbled to dust. This is likely the PCs’ first exposure to the clan name, and while it is a valid piece of history that could aid them in researching the city’s past, it does not shed any light on the true name of the city. More importantly, examining the runes for at least an hour allows a PC to learn that the city’s last king, Dugnaumanthur, is secretly interred elsewhere.

The Dwarven inscriptions proclaim a variety of curses against thieves and defilers. The PCs would be wise to take the hint.

Of the dead not in sarcophagi, many were interred with their most valuable or sacred items to take into the afterlife. These may be removed from the reliquary without any problem, but if a PC keeps any of these items, they gain a permanent Infamy point with ALL non-evil dwarves for selfishly plundering the graves of Garsegzuul’s dead instead of turning the items over to dwarves or a museum for study and/or posterity. This Infamy point equates to a -4 penalty on all Charisma based checks, as noted under the Graverobber entry on the AR.

Besides the moderate evocation of the *hallow*, the reliquary also radiates strong abjuration, representing a curse with an effect similar to *Mordenkainen’s disjunction*. If any PC is foolish enough to pry open any of the sarcophagi, the curse immediately disjoins every unattended magical item within the reliquary. This curse also affects the PCs’ items, but a maximum of one item per PC. Go through the magic items of each PC, most valuable to least, with a DC 24 Will save to negate the disjunction for that item.

The items found here are noted on the AR.

### **Encounter 5C: The Apartments**

The tools and dwarven chainmail were found near a large housing area where much of Garsegzuul’s population once lived. There are no secret doors or curses in this area, but the PCs do find some well-preserved items that were a part of everyday life in the city, as well as a book describing an organization called the Darkrunners. This access is noted on the AR.

### **Encounter 5D: The Laboratory**

If the PCs wish to investigate the curious odor mentioned by Erikan, they are directed to an area of the city with taller buildings. After searching around (animals are especially drawn to this odor), the PCs discover an ancient alchemical laboratory high in one of the buildings, roughly eighty feet above street level. The hundreds of glass containers here have long since shattered, but many earthenware decanters are still intact and colorfully decorated. The PCs find that several of these have been knocked off of a table, and only a creature could have disturbed them. (In truth it was the troglodyte Xilaisha collecting samples for study; the noise from Polliae’s nearby group scared her and she fled, knocking over some decanters.) The commingled contents of these decanters are responsible for the odor, which is highly musky with a trace of acidity; indeed, spending more than a few minutes in here leaves the PCs with slightly itchy skin.

The PCs will likely be on their guard from this point forward, as this lab proves they are not alone in the city; allow them to speculate as to who or what was in this room (or why), but they will not be disturbed while searching. The items found here are noted on the AR.



### Encounter 5E: The Forge

Investigating the strange, unmarked coins yields the mother lode—literally. The coins were dropped five hundred years ago as the derro began their attack on the city. Dust, debris, and corpses eventually covered the rest of the coin trail, but recent troglodyte activity has uncovered part of it. The troglodytes do not covet monetary wealth, as it is essentially useless in their culture, so they left the coins on the ground. The NPCs from “base camp” that noticed the loose coins were interrupted by a noise nearby (the troglodyte ranger and his gang from Encounter 8 stalking them) and retreated to the safer eastern confines of the city. Thus, much of the trail remains intact.

The PCs can easily follow the trail of coins; this eventually leads to one of the most important sites in all of Garsegzuul’s ancient culture: the forge. The troglodytes found this vast area but do not know how to make it work and left it alone. The forge is fully functional, but refiring it will require a serious commitment from some NPCs.

Merely finding the forge leads to its refiring by dwarven NPCs and earns the PC the enmity of all derro, as the genocide of Clan Embermaul is a point of pride among derrokind. The PC also gains permanent renown among dwarvenkind (+4 to all Charisma-based interactions with dwarves in the Pale). Both of these effects are listed on the AR.

### Encounter 5F: The Library

If the PCs’ curiosity is piqued by the broken crockery, they are eventually led to a confluence of narrow, high-walled alleys that wind into the face of a cliff. Herein lies the sole surviving repository of Garsegzuulian lore, the hidden Library of Halaad-Storr, named after one of the city’s elder sages. (The broken crockery is explained by the fact that the dwarves maintained a brewery within the library.) While most of Garsegzuul is composed of compact city blocks that stand out proudly from the stone from which they were carved, the library is built into the rock and is hard to find unless one knows where to look. The sole entrance is at the bottom of a ramp below street level; there are no windows within.

Inside, however, the library is virtually untouched and remains as it was when the city fell (notwithstanding 500 years of dust and spiderwebs since the derro attack). There are two things for the PCs to find here. The first is a city almanac, which at last reveals the true dwarven name of the city as Taarindaulk. Second, a clerical section of the library details many spells, rites, priestly lineages, and Clan Embermaul nobility. Most importantly, it details the ultimate resting-place of Taarindaulk’s last king, Dugnaumanthur, within the magically warded ceiling over the magma lake seen in PAL5-06 *My Brother’s Keeper*.

Uncovering the library is the greatest thing the PCs can do to aid in the study of the city; the PCs gain a special kind of renown, as noted on the AR.

Additionally, if the PCs wish to spend time helping to sort, catalog, and decode the library’s exhaustive stone tablets (2 TUs for Pale PCs and 4 TUs for all other PCs), they earn the title of Honorary Historian (noted on the AR) and gain a permanent +2 insight bonus on Knowledge (history) checks, as listed on the AR.

**Development:** Once the PCs have made their discoveries, inform them that most of the day has gone by and that they should be getting back to the plateau. Proceed to Encounter 6.

## ENCOUNTER 6: ECHOES

During this brief encounter, the PCs return to camp after a full day exploring the ruins of Garsegzuul. It is up to the PCs to divulge (or conceal) the outcome of their explorations.

For their part, the other groups make no effort to conceal their discoveries; if the PCs sided with either group, then the group with which they sided finds the other possible reward from their exploration track. The group with which the PCs did not side also finds something (your choice). If the PCs sided with neither group, then both groups return in a festive mood, having found something of importance to their own adventuring philosophy (again, your choice here).

If the dwarves traveled from Tobinsford with the PCs, they found the reward from Encounter 5F (or 5E if the PCs investigated 5F themselves).

If the PCs hired Dack Splintheel in Tobinsford but did not ask him to help explore the city, he spends the day at camp searching for tracks and surveying the area with Weasley.

### Late Arrivals

If the dwarves did NOT travel to Garsegzuul with the PCs, then they arrive late this afternoon and are waiting at the plateau.

Finally, there may be two other arrivals late in the evening:

If the PCs did not hire Dack, someone else did: the relic-hunter Rayner Von Krall, who paid him an exorbitant fee to get here. Dack is none too pleased about it, but Von Krall’s coin will aid Dack’s ultimate goal of buying up most of the unclaimed wilderness around Tobinsford to add to his preserve. Still, the ranger’s mood is foul and he avoids Rayner while in camp. These two arrive as the PCs and the other groups are making dinner and perhaps sharing their discoveries.

Rayner looks greedily at any Garsegzuul loot; such treasure likely amounts to large, numerous and/or cumbersome items that cannot easily be carried around or effectively hidden. A DC 15 Sense Motive check alerts PCs that their treasures may no longer be secure.

### Polliæ and the Overheard Meeting

As the PCs and NPCs interact, Erikal expresses concern that Polliæ is still out in the city. Polliæ made a mapping

error and wanted to correct it before the error creates a spiral of further errors.

Soon, though, Polliae races into camp out of breath and with a fantastic tale: an overheard meeting of Skkal with the envoy.

He explains that while correcting his map error by torchlight, he heard a shuffling noise close by. He dropped the torch and fled, ran for perhaps ten minutes, then paused to get his bearings and to cast *light* upon his quill. Looking at his map, he realized that he was in an unexplored section of the city riddled with caves, which he feared led to the more dangerous depths of the Underdark.

He soon spotted the “base camp” bonfires when he again heard the faint sound of speech from one of the caves. Hoping to find the PCs or his colleagues, he entered the cave but was dismayed to find that the voices were actually echoes, and that several of the caves he had seen outside were interconnected. Just as his *light* spell expired (and after nearly getting lost), he found his way out, although he was several hundred yards away from where he had entered the original cave.

Then, in the orange half-light from a nearby lava pool, Polliae saw a medium-sized humanoid silhouette (actually the troglodyte priest Skkal) accompanied by a second, hazy humanoid figure (the envoy), but the two seemed not to notice him. Before they moved off to the northwest, he heard the insubstantial figure speaking Common, albeit using obscure and archaic speech patterns. This figure was dressed in a long, flowing cape that bore a glowing, unfamiliar crest, which he describes or sketches for the PCs. A DC 25 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) check correctly identifies it as that of House Rax, of the former Great Kingdom.

After the two figures departed, Polliae ran back to camp. He has half-convinced himself that what he saw a panicked delusion, but he offers to show the cave complex to the PCs in the morning, once he has had a chance to rest and effectively map it.

**Development:** Once the PCs are ready to bed down for the night, ask if they wish to set watches again and note who will be awake at midnight. The other groups set their usual watches, but the dwarves (if present) choose not to set one, as they are too excited by their discoveries and plan to sleep contentedly. Dack takes the midnight watch on his own, sneaking out of bed to prowl around. The night passes without incident.

## ENCOUNTER 7: BETRAYAL

In the morning, Polliae offers to lead the PCs to the mysterious cave complex. The dwarves, if present, opt to explore another part of the city.

Dack, if present, prefers to remain on the plateau “just in case,” despite Rayner’s insistence that Dack is his employee and that they will be exploring a different area. At this, Weasley erupts into a frothy rage while Dack snaps at his employer, “You paid me to lead you here. Find your own swag. Signal me when you get hurt.”

It takes roughly 45 minutes to reach the cave complex on foot, 1.5 miles away; the cave from which Polliae heard the voices is vast but now deserted. Inside, the PCs find pictographic evidence of recent derro occupation, but while searching they hear faintly echoing voices. Investigation reveals that the speakers are not within this cave but that the entire complex contains natural acoustic features (tubes, tunnels, honeycombs and shaped stalactites) that amplify sound, suggesting that the conversation Polliae heard yesterday took place elsewhere. As the PCs listen more intently, two voices are soon raised in unmistakable tones of confrontation, but they are speaking a language in which the PCs may not be versed. If any PCs understand Draconic or have the ability to use magic as a surrogate, they may listen in on an argument between Skkal and Aodhan wherein the half-troll learns he has been betrayed. To more directly involve the players, select two to read the scripted argument found in Player Handout 3. (Skkal is the “raspy voice,” while Aodhan is the “guttural voice”).

In order to follow the sound of the voices to their source, the PCs must mesh their Listen, Survival and Knowledge (dungeoneering) skills to make a unique track check—ceasing conversation, pressing their ears against the walls, etc. Success is relative and determines not only where the PCs enter the troglodyte lair in Encounter 8 (see below), but also how much of a head start Aodhan has. The troglodytes live in the ruins of a former temple to Moradin; the lair has three entrances, and greater success on this check leads to a more advantageous entrance. Utter failure forces the PCs to spend extra time searching and carries two penalties: first, the PCs discover the main (and most heavily guarded) entrance by default; second, Aodhan reaches the base camp early enough to threaten the NPCs remaining there.

**Development:** Once the PCs are ready to trace the voices to their source, ask for their marching order and determine who the primary “tracker” will be based on the parameters listed below. The troglodyte lair has three entrances: a main entrance (heavily guarded now, given Aodhan’s recent expulsion), an apse entrance (partially collapsed and concealed), and a secret entrance whose existence is as yet unknown to the troglodytes. Consult the following bullets to determine which entrance the PCs find.

- The secret entrance: requires a DC 40 Track check. At least one other PC must be trained in Knowledge (dungeoneering) and succeed at a DC 10 check, which counts as an aid to the Track check. All other PCs may assist using Listen or Knowledge (dungeoneering).
- Apsel entrance (by Track failure): any Track check less than DC 40. The players should not feel as if they have failed, as the secret entrance was well-hidden by the dwarves, and the troglodytes will still not be expecting anyone to enter the lair from the apse.

- Apse entrance (by Knowledge success): requires a DC 30 Knowledge (dungeoneering) check, assisted by the Listen checks or Knowledge (dungeoneering) checks of all other PCs.
- Main entrance (by Knowledge failure): any Knowledge (dungeoneering) check less than DC 30, including assists.
- Main entrance (by Listen success): requires a DC 20 Listen check. Other PCs, animal companions, or familiars may assist. The PCs may retry a failed check. While they will eventually succeed and locate the main entrance, each failure allows Aodhan to get farther away and begin killing NPCs at the plateau (see Encounter 9). Count how many times the PCs fail. Players should not feel that their characters are useless here, as any PC can make a Listen check, and sometimes one extra assist is all a party needs.

Regardless of which entrance they find, this special track check takes thirty minutes.

## ENCOUNTER 8: TRESPASS

The PCs find one of three entrances to the troglodyte lair, which is nestled within the city's main temple to Moradin. The tribe is led by the devious cleric Skkal, who has negotiated with the envoy to betray Aodhan. The tribe is in high spirits, having just killed Aodhan's remaining half-troll bodyguard, captured his Fens cultists, and driven the traitorous half-troll out of their lair and into the unforgiving Underdark depths. Still, they remain alert in case Aodhan retaliates.

As part of a ruse suggested by the benefactor's envoy, Skkal used magic to appear as a human particularly antagonistic to Aodhan (H'nakaalah, from PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail*). This disguise is still in effect when the PCs enter, as Skkal is amusing his tribe by play-acting as a human to show them the mortal folly of all surface-dwellers, so it will look as though a human were leading a band of troglodytes.

Depending on which entrance the PCs located, paraphrase the appropriate text below:

### Main Entrance

The main entrance to the temple is still intact, essentially looking as it did five hundred years ago thanks to the integrity of dwarven construction. Like the library (see Encounter 5F), the temple is built into the side of a cliff; its facade stands out from the cliff face and is at the end of a winding canyon (see Map 4, area M2). The temple originally had two reinforced stone doors, but these were sundered by derro invaders; there is no other visible entrance, nor is there another way out of the canyon, whose walls are forty feet high.

As they have just repelled Aodhan, the trogs' attention is focused on the main entrance, and they are better prepared to respond to an attack here than from one of the other entrances.

PCs approaching the main entrance are apt to be betrayed by any light sources they are carrying as soon as

they round the canyon corner (Map 4, area M1); if the PCs are spotted in this manner, the trogs within the temple quickly hide and try to ambush the party. If the PCs are travelling without a light source, the troglodyte ranger, Irakiss, may Spot them (as only he has line of sight); Irakiss and all other troglodytes may hear the PCs anyway. Set the encounter distance accordingly.

### Apse Entrance

The derro assault on the temple destroyed a small antechamber and its connecting passage, as noted on Map #4. Seismic activity over the centuries has created auxiliary points of entry to this antechamber. From the antechamber (which is not guarded), the PCs must shimmy, climb and crawl their way along the connecting passage, which is filled with old bones, cobwebs, phosphorescent bluish-yellow fungi and small stones. This breach is known to the troglodytes but it is only lightly guarded, given that it opens into the temple on the second tier. Once the PCs reach area A1 on Map 4, they must make Move Silently checks in order to reach area A2 without being detected. If the PCs are detected, the nearby troglodyte immediately shouts for aid and combat begins. Note that moving from A2 into the temple-proper is a move action that must be done single-file due to the narrow aperture.

### Secret Entrance

The third entrance to the temple is a masterfully crafted secret door that the dwarves intended as an escape route. Unfortunately, the derro blew up the temple doors, causing a cave-in within the temple. As a result, the mechanism jammed, trapping several dwarves within its exit tunnel while consigning the rest of the dwarves to grisly deaths as derro marauders poured in. The troglodytes are totally unaware of this entrance.

The PCs discover it by following the sound of voices along a subterranean stream (the source of the troglodyte's fresh water via a well within the temple) and up through a narrow staircase to the rear door (area S1) of the secret chamber. Locating the mechanism on this rear door requires a DC 20 Search check; once it is opened, the PCs see seven dwarven skeletons in tattered, priestly robes and mithral holy symbols of Moradin, resting where they fell 500 years ago in this airless chamber (area S2). As air rushes into the chamber, the skeletons crumble violently to dust. Once the PCs spend five minutes excavating a path through the partially caved-in chamber, they must succeed at both a DC 20 Search check and either a DC 25 Disable Device check or DC 30 Strength check to un-jam the locking mechanism on the inner secret door. Non-combatant troglodyte women and younglings are just inside the secret door; if the PCs choose the Strength check and fail, the troglodytes hear them and call for the lair's defenders to buff and reposition themselves. Otherwise, the PCs can enter the temple without immediately being detected. Though the PCs cannot surprise the troglodytes in this manner, it gives them a better tactical position and prevents the

troglobytes from setting up an ambush against them; see Map 4, area S3.

#### 🦋 **Trap:**

One feature of the temple is a large **tar pit** that the dwarven clergy used for some long-forgotten purpose. The troglobytes now use this pit as a cesspool and, occasionally, for other decorative and mundane purposes. The pit is present at all APLs but is covered, as the ranger Irakiss sought to use it as a trap for Aodhan or his bodyguards; this pit is now a terrain feature incorporated into the listed ELs of this encounter. A DC 20 Survival check is required to notice it. PCs who step on the pit and fail a DC 20 Reflex save fall in. The pit is very deep and the pull from below is extreme; PCs are sucked beneath the surface in two rounds and irretrievably lost after five rounds.

Trapped PCs can escape only via magic (spells or effects without somatic components) or with help from other PCs. A trapped PC can be pulled from the tar within one round of falling in by a DC 20 Strength check; on the second round this DC increases to 25; on the third round the trapped PC goes under and begins to suffocate (Suffocation, DMG page 304). After this, other PCs must Search the tar to find the lost PC (and then with a reach object or weapon), but trapped PCs are not the only thing in the tar pit: to find anything in the sticky tar requires a DC 20 Search check, but searching PCs must then roll d6 to determine what they find (1=random weapon, 2=random shield, 3=dead gnome adventurer from “base camp”, 4=large Underdark monster bone, 5=unidentifiable black mass, 6=the missing PC).

PCs who escape the pit are still coated with tar, which can be removed only via dedicated *prestidigitation* cleaning (one minute for a Small character, two for a Medium, four for a Large). PCs coated in tar move at half speed (all modes).

**Creatures:** The PCs are technically invading a troglobyte lair, home to roughly thirty troglobytes. Two-thirds of these are non-combatant females and younglings; among the remaining adults, only an elite few engage the PCs (as noted by APL below), while the rest protect the non-combatants. There are also several monitor lizards prowling the upper ledges of the temple.

The tribe is led by Skkal; his second-in-command is the ranger Irakiss. The other two notable troglobytes are females: one is Xilaisha, a female dragon disciple (black) of the tribe’s reclusive sponsor; the second is Triis, a flamboyant bard; one of these classed troglobytes (depending on APL) wields a magic item gifted to them by the envoy of the Cult of Demogorgon’s mysterious benefactor, which should seem incongruous among a primitive tribe.

#### **APL 6 (EL 8)**

🦋 **Skkal:** male troglobyte cleric 5; hp 47; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Irakiss:** male troglobyte ranger 1; hp 27; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Monitor Lizard:** hp 27; *Monster Manual* 275.

🦋 **Xilaisha:** female troglobyte sorcerer 2; hp 30; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Troglobytes (2):** hp 16, 16; *Monster Manual* 246.

#### **APL 8 (EL 10)**

🦋 **Skkal:** male troglobyte cleric 7; hp 63; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Irakiss:** male troglobyte ranger 4; hp 54; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Nichei (monitor lizard animal companion):** hp 27; *Monster Manual* 275.

🦋 **Xilaisha:** female troglobyte sorcerer 4; hp 42; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Troglobytes (4):** hp 16, 16, 16, 16; *Monster Manual* 246.

#### **APL 10 (EL 12)**

🦋 **Skkal:** male troglobyte cleric 9; hp 77; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Irakiss:** male troglobyte ranger 6; hp 80; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Nichei (advanced monitor lizard animal companion):** hp 45; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Triis:** female troglobyte bard 5; hp 48; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Xilaisha:** female troglobyte sorcerer 6 / dragon disciple 1 (black); hp 66; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Troglobytes (4):** hp 16, 16, 16, 16; *Monster Manual* 246.

#### **APL 12 (EL 14)**

🦋 **Skkal:** male troglobyte cleric 11; hp 91; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Irakiss:** male troglobyte ranger 7 / shadowdancer 1; hp 100; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Nichei (advanced monitor lizard animal companion):** hp 45; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Triis:** female troglobyte bard 7; hp 55; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Xilaisha:** female troglobyte sorcerer 6 / dragon disciple 3 (black); hp 90; Appendix 1.

🦋 **Troglobytes (4):** hp 16, 16, 16, 16; *Monster Manual* 246.

**Setup:** The temple interior was originally a three-tiered design with a vaulted central area used by workers on the surrounding walkways to experiment on the design for King Dugnaumanthur’s ceiling-crypt (see Encounter 5F). Centuries of seismic activity, intentional desecration, tribal skirmishes between Underdark denizens, and natural decay have resulted in the deterioration evidenced on Map 4: the upper walkways are broken (but will not collapse from PC or NPC weight), the altar has been sundered and turned into a barricade, and several

holes have been dug into the floor for sewage disposal and water retrieval (disturbingly, both from the same underground stream below the temple). The troglodytes' tactics and movements vary slightly depending upon both APL and on which entrance the PCs use to infiltrate the lair. Note the trogs' positions on Map 4, then read or paraphrase the following:

*The [canyon/passage/chamber] opens into a large, vaulted stricture that looks to have been a temple in ages past. At the southern end is a massive, sundered and bloodstained altar. Several alcoves line the walls at ground level; in one of these alcoves huddle a dozen or so black-clad humans, half-elves and half-orcs guarded by javelin-wielding, reptilian humanoids. Two of the other alcoves are occupied by more of the reptilians, many of whom appear to be children. Several broken walkways on the second and third tiers of this former temple indicate that its vaulted central area may have been used for some type of special project; roughly a dozen more reptilians look down with hostile intent upon your unwelcome intrusion. Near the center of the room is a large, barely recognizable pile of burned flesh, likely a troll or half-troll. The ground level is dotted with tall stone columns, most of which are badly burned and chipped. An overpowering foul odor fills the entire area.*

The pervasive odor is, of course, of the troglodytes themselves.

The black-clad humanoids are the surviving Demogorgon cultists brought here by Aodhan; the troglodytes have already sacrificed and/or eaten six of them.

At all APLs (as previously noted), Skkal is transformed via a *scroll of veil* (recovered from the dragon's lair and cast by Xilaisha) and is cavorting on the second tier directly above the main entrance (Irakiss's monitor lizard companion sits beside Skkal at higher APLs). When the PCs approach (by stealth or otherwise), Skkal hides on the ledge (opposed by the PCs' Spot checks once they are inside the temple); a DC 15 Spot check allows PCs to pierce the *veil* and see Skkal's true form before Xilaisha dismisses the spell.

Irakiss lurks on the far side of the tar pit, having intended to lure Aodhan (and now the PCs) into charging toward him; if no PCs take the bait, he moves around the pit to engage them directly. When the PCs first see him, Irakiss is munching on the fingers of a humanoid hand (from one of the slain Demogorgon cultists). Irakiss dislikes the elaborate machinations of Skkal and the dragon. If reduced to 5 hp or fewer, he abandons the tribe and flees by dropping down through the tribe's well and following the underground stream deeper into the Underdark.

Xilaisha hides on the third tier, adopting the reclusive habits of her draconic master; when the PCs engage the tribe in melee, she moves closer and dismisses the *veil* before using her own spells.

(Once the *veil* is dispelled, the crocodile Gumboots (if present) may hinder combat, as Skkal wears magic boots fashioned from his hide—a gift from Aodhan to open negotiations. It takes a DC 20 Handle Animal check to keep Gumboots from cowering in fear of Skkal.)

#### **Tactics:**

All non-classed troglodytes on the upper tiers take advantage of the many missile weapons at their disposal, which were staged to repel Aodhan; these weapons include extra javelins, flasks of “diluted lava” (alchemist's fire), and vials of “concentrated black dragon saliva” (acid) procured by Xilaisha. (Assume 5 of each alchemical weapon per trog, attack bonus +0 ranged touch.) The troglodytes use their Stench ability to sicken as many foes as possible.

The troglodytes are familiar with their lair and use its terrain features (lava pool, tar pit, wells) to their advantage (bull rushes, pinning foes, etc).

At APL 6, Skkal waits until Irakiss moves to engage the PCs (ideally once all PCs are within the temple); he then casts *prayer* before jumping from the ledge to join the melee. Irakiss prefers to full-attack his foes (especially centaur PCs, who are monstrous humanoids). The ground-level troglodyte hurls a javelin then closes for melee; the second-tier troglodyte hurls missile weapons at spellcasters. Xilaisha descends to ground level and tries to *color spray* as many PCs as possible before unleashing her *acid orbs* and using the envoy's gift, which at this APL is a *wand of scorching ray*.

At APL 8 and above, there are two additional non-classed troglodytes that behave as their APL 6 counterparts, ideally setting up flanks for Irakiss. Skkal follows *prayer* with *divine power* and then wades into melee. Xilaisha crawls to the edge of her platform and tries to target a PC with *phantasmal assailants*; failing this, she uses the envoy's *necklace of fireballs* (Type IV) (warning Irakiss in Draconic) before descending to ground level and using her APL 6 tactics. Irakiss commands his animal companion Nichei to jump and attack the last PC to enter the temple.

At APL 10, the bard Triis joins the fight. Taunting the PCs (in Common) “What is that horrible smell?”, she casts *inspirational boost* and follows it with her inspire courage ability, and casts *miser's envy* the next round on an obvious fighter-type (selecting an item on one of the other PCs—ideally a weapon or holy symbol—as the desired object of her target-PC). Skkal casts *prayer* followed by *flame strike* (if 3 or more PCs are bunched up) or *freedom of movement* (if they are not); he then casts *divine power* and jumps down to melee. Xilaisha uses *shadow binding* to immobilize PCs before blasting them with her *wand of magic missile*; she is now a full-fledged dragon disciple and joins melee where prudent. If Irakiss cannot lure a PC into charging at him across the hidden tar pit, he moves to cast *magic fang* on Nichei and then full-attacks the nearest PC. At this APL it is he who wields the envoy's gift: a +1 *corrosive short sword*.

At APL 12 Triis inspires her allies and uses *confusion* to disrupt party organization. Skkal leads off with *freedom*

of movement, prayer, flame strike, and mass bull's strength before jumping into melee. Irakiss uses the envoy's gift (a +1 corrosive giant bane shortsword) while hiding in plain sight to victimize the PCs. Finally, Xilaisha behaves as at APL 10, but here she tries to catch PCs with her new breath weapon.

**Special:** One unexpected ally for the PCs comes from other troglodytes: if any PCs possess a bag of **troglodyte dung** from COR4-07 *Crystal Caverns of the Cairn Hills*, the troglodytes here immediately smell it (it retains its potency for years) and must each succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be shaken for 1d3 rounds from a fear that the PCs are actually troglodyte-hunting mercenaries.

#### Treasure:

**APL 6:** Loot – 112 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *potion of cure moderate wounds* (25 gp each), 2 *potions of cure light wounds* (4 gp each), *wand of scorching ray* (375 gp each), *boots of the winterlands* (208 gp each), *cloak of resistance +1* (83 gp each).

**APL 8:** Loot – 98 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – +1 *studded leather armor* (97 gp each), *potion of cure light wounds* (4 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (25 gp each), *potion of bull's strength* (25 gp each), *boots of the winterlands* (208 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp each), *cloak of resistance +1* (2) (83 gp each), *javelin of lightning* (125 gp each), *necklace of fireballs* (Type IV) (450 gp each).

**APL 10:** Loot – 89 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic -- +1 *studded leather armor* (97 gp each), +1 *leather armor* (2) (96 gp each), +1 *corrosive short sword* (692 gp each), 2 *potions of bull's strength* (25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (x2; 25 gp each), *potion of shield of faith* (+4) (50 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance* (12 gp each), *scroll of mirror image* (12 gp each), *scroll of bless weapon* (8 gp each), *scroll of faerie fire* (2 gp each), *scroll of see invisibility* (12 gp each), *scroll of heat metal* (12 gp each), *scroll of sound burst* (12 gp each), *scroll of fireball* (31 gp each), *scroll of bull's strength* (12 gp each), *scroll of haste* (31 gp each), *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th) (437 gp each), *boots of striding and springing* (458 gp each), *cloak of resistance +1* (4) (83 gp each), *periapt of Wisdom +2* (333 gp each).

**APL 12:** Loot – 50 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – +1 *studded leather armor* (97 gp each), +1 *leather armor* (2) (96 gp each), +1 *club* (191 gp each), +1 *corrosive giant bane short sword* (1,525 gp each), +1 *kukri* (192 gp each), *potion of bull's strength* (25 gp each), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (25 gp each), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp each), *scroll of faerie fire* (2 gp each), *scroll of bless weapon* (8 gp each), *scroll of ice storm* (58 gp each), *scroll of bear's endurance* (12 gp each), *scroll of see invisibility* (12 gp each), *scroll of mirror image* (12 gp each), *scroll of spiritual weapon* (12 gp each), *potion of shield of faith* (+3) (25 gp each), *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th) (437 gp each), *scroll of ray of enfeeblement* (2 gp each), *scroll of shield* (2 gp each), *scroll of haste* (31 gp each), *scroll of fireball* (31 gp each), *bead of force* (250 gp each), *boots of striding and springing* (458 gp each), *brooch of shielding* (125 gp each), *cloak of Charisma +2* (333 gp each),

*cloak of resistance +2* (3) (333 gp each), *javelin of lightning* (125 gp each), *periapt of Wisdom +2* (333 gp each).

**Detect Magic Results:** +1 *leather armor* (faint transmutation), +1 *studded leather armor* (faint transmutation), +1 *corrosive short sword* (moderate conjuration), +1 *corrosive giant bane short sword* (moderate conjuration), +1 *kukri* (faint transmutation), *potion of bull's strength* (faint transmutation), *potion of cure light wounds* (faint conjuration), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (faint conjuration), *potion of cure serious wounds* (faint conjuration), *potion of shield of faith* (+3 and +4; faint abjuration), *scroll of bear's endurance* (faint transmutation), *scroll of mirror image* (faint illusion), *scroll of bless weapon* (faint transmutation), *scroll of faerie fire* (faint evocation), *scroll of see invisibility* (faint divination), *scroll of heat metal* (faint transmutation), *scroll of sound burst* (faint evocation), *scroll of fireball* (faint evocation), *scroll of bull's strength* (faint transmutation), *scroll of haste* (faint transmutation), *scroll of ice storm* (moderate evocation), *scroll of spiritual weapon* (faint evocation), *scroll of ray of enfeeblement* (faint necromancy), *scroll of shield* (faint abjuration), *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th; moderate evocation), *wand of scorching ray* (faint evocation), *bead of force* (moderate evocation), *boots of striding and springing* (faint transmutation), *boots of the winterlands* (faint abjuration and transmutation), *brooch of shielding* (faint abjuration), *cloak of Charisma +2* (moderate transmutation), *cloak of resistance +1* and +2 (faint abjuration), *javelin of lightning* (faint evocation), *necklace of fireballs* (Type IV) (moderate evocation), *periapt of Wisdom +2* (moderate transmutation).

**Development:** Based upon the argument overheard during Encounter 7, the PCs may justifiably expect to discover Aodhan in or near the troglodyte lair. When they find that he is not there, the PCs will likely wish to search for him, concluding that he cannot have gotten far. Such a conclusion may prove to be erroneous depending on how successful the PCs were in initially locating the lair. While many players will instinctively rely on Track checks to locate the half-troll, especially astute players should remember the remains of his entourage, found during Encounter 2, and reason that since Aodhan walked in, he will likely walk out. Foregoing Track checks and rushing directly to “base camp” is the best action. The PCs thus have a choice about how they wish to find Aodhan, but let the players decide what they wish to do: do not hint at or suggest the “interceptor” option to them.

Additionally, the PCs will need to decide what to do with the captured Demogorgon cultists.

Whatever they decide, they soon face a mighty battle; proceed to Encounter 9.

## ENCOUNTER 9: ERASURE

During this encounter the PCs at last confront the renegade half-troll, Aodhan. The severity of this confrontation depends on both how quickly the PCs

located the troglodyte lair, and whether or not they chose to track him from the lair. When Aodhan and his entourage arrived at the “base camp” plateau it was deserted, as the (then) three groups of adventurers were all out in the city exploring; they had not yet devised a plan to post guards on the plateau during the day, so Aodhan’s group was able to slip into the city unnoticed. As he tries to flee, however, guards from the two remaining groups, one of the dwarves, and Dack Splintheel try to stop him. Aodhan is desperate and fights with reckless abandon; thus, the lives of these NPCs are dependent on the PCs’ actions.

If the PCs found the troglodyte lair on their initial attempt during Encounter 7, and if they rush to the plateau (via magic or swiftness of foot) without wasting any time searching the troglodytes or their lair for treasure, they arrive at the plateau just after Aodhan does (proceed to “Fast and Furious” below) without any NPCs dying.

If the PCs do not immediately rush to the plateau, allow them to witness a *dancing lights* rising from the plateau over the city to its maximum range. A DC 15 Intelligence check recognizes that this spell effect is being employed as a signal flare. This should get the party racing back to the plateau.

Otherwise, an NPC dies as a result of each of these indirect PC actions:

- A failed attempt (DC 19 or less) in Encounter 7 to locate the troglodyte lair
- Choosing to track Aodhan (DC 20 Track) after the fight with the troglodytes in Encounter 8. If the PCs lack the ability to Track, allow them a Search check, though it automatically fails. Use another *dancing lights* signal to spur them toward the plateau)
- Failing on the check to track Aodhan
- Spending any time looting the troglodyte lair.

As Encounter 9 begins, there are 4-5 NPCs on the plateau (Corris, Erikal, and Azric Badhammer, who are today’s plateau guards; Dack Splintheel; and possibly Rayner Von Krall). These NPCs die in the following order, as needed: Azric, Erikal, and then Corris. If it comes down to Dack and Rayner, the relic-hunter activates his *ring of invisibility* and hides. Dack holds the exit in hopes that the PCs will return to help; each time an NPC dies (and when Rayner flees), Dack loses 20% of his full hit points. If all of the NPCs die before the PCs arrive, then Aodhan escapes and PCs bearing the Mark of Demogorgon will never be able to rid themselves of the curse.

If, after tallying the deaths, there are any NPCs left alive on the plateau besides Rayner and Dack, proceed to “Better Late than Never” below; if Dack is holding off Aodhan on his own, proceed to “Last Man Standing” below. If all the NPCs are slain and Aodhan has escaped, improvise for the PCs the futility of their late arrival.

Once the PCs decide how to pursue Aodhan, read or paraphrase the appropriate read-aloud text, as noted below:

### **Fast and Furious**

*Your arrival at the “base camp” plateau may seem like an instance of déjà vu, as members of Corris’s and Erikal’s adventuring parties are taking up arms with Dack Splintheel but instead of a demon horde, this time they face a single opponent: a massive and repulsive, muscular humanoid with bronze skin covered by unsightly patches of mottled green, knobby growths. Stringy black hair hangs to his neck, around which is a bizarre amulet depicting two entwined, clawed tentacles being crushed by a taloned claw. With a savage glare and a swift glance toward the exit, the figure conveys an unspoken promise of brutal, merciless finality.*

### **Better Late than Never**

*Your arrival could have been timelier, as the surviving guards and Dack Splintheel trade blows with a massive, repulsive humanoid whose bronze skin is covered by unsightly patches of mottled green, knobby growths. At least one adventurer lays motionless at the feet of the muscular figure, whose stringy black hair hangs to his neck and frames a bizarre amulet. He wields a gore-stained greatclub, and his bloody claws convey an unspoken promise of brutal, merciless finality.*

### **Last Man Standing**

*Your arrival is too late, and the situation is dire: the two adventurers whom you met just yesterday—Erikal and Corris—lie motionless at the feet of a massive and repulsive humanoid, whose bronze skin is covered by unsightly patches of mottled green, knobby growths. This figure wields a gore-stained greatclub; stringy black hair hangs to his neck and frames a bizarre amulet depicting two clawed tentacles being clutched by a taloned claw. Dack Splintheel’s ferocious badger charges the humanoid and is effortlessly batted away, emitting a piteous squeal as it flops motionless to the ground. Bleeding badly and limping on one leg, Dack is all that stands between the repulsive humanoid and the Underdark highway leading to the surface.*

### **Oerth-quake**

After reading the appropriate text above, allow the PCs a DC 16 Knowledge (nature) check to identify Aodhan as a half-troll. PCs who have played PAL5-06 *My Brother’s Keeper* may recall him chanting in the background while they fought his protégé, Bran Mac Colm, in Beltar’s Maw. A DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies his modified unholy symbol as one devoted to Vaprak, but formerly Demogorgon. Have the PCs roll initiative (and also roll initiative for the NPCs on the plateau; roll Dack’s initiative separately and use one generic roll for any other NPC still standing), then read or paraphrase the following:

*The ground suddenly begins to violently shake and rumble. Dack and the other adventurers struggle to maintain their balance as large stalactites and jagged chunks of stone are dislodged from the ceiling and fall crashing onto the plateau. The repulsive humanoid lowers his eyelids and appears to enter a momentary trancelike state; his lips move briefly and then stretch into a menacing snarl. His eyelids then snap open and he glares at Dack, who blocks the only exit...*

Aodhan's brief trancelike state is caused by Vaprak, as the troll deity rewards him for forsaking Demogorgon and blesses him with combat bonuses (see below for details). For PCs with the Mark of Demogorgon (Phase I or II), also read or paraphrase the following:

*The invisible but incurable scars on your face begin to pulse with an overwhelming, white-hot pain. Small rivulets of blood soon trickle down from your face to your chest, as the massive humanoid eyes you knowingly...*

For PCs that acquired the sacrificial nails from PAL6-04, which were used in Bran Mac Colm's Ritual of Crucimigration, paraphrase the following:

*The magic, sacrificial nails you found within the Cult of Demogorgon's Troll Fens campsite begin to emit intense heat. They soon exhibit a strange, magnetic pull centered on the repulsive humanoid, as if drawing you and you alone into a confrontation with this foe...*

For PCs who drank from Fuilmere and witnessed the vision of the Oerth Mother during PAL5-06, also read or paraphrase the following:

*As the earth shakes beneath your feet, you become aware of a more powerful sensation: a sudden rush of blood to the head accompanied by extreme dizziness. Something coppery and intangible rises like bile in the back of your throat, and you experience a strange weightlessness. For you, the violent rumbling ceases and you enter a heretofore unknown state of profound equilibrium, as if floating in a sentient liquid...*

Finally, if a PC has become the host of Malerix Moorcol, read or paraphrase the following:

*The grimy black bag you found within the Troll Fens begins to stretch as if it will burst at the seams. Telepathically, you receive a message: "Now is the time: unbind me, so that we two may become one and defeat the betrayer!"*

This earthquake is not natural: it is a physical manifestation of regret suffered by the avatar of Beory

that dwells within Fuilmere, the dark pool in Beltar's Maw that PCs encountered during PAL5-06 My Brother's Keeper. The artifact that was hidden within the pool has just been retrieved by the envoy of the Cult of Demogorgon's mysterious benefactor; for failing to protect the artifact, the Earth Spirit is lashing out in frustration. The resulting earthquake is affecting the entire Underdark between Garsegzuul and Beltar's Maw. This has the effect of a trap:

**Trap:**

➤ **Earthquake Quasi-Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Atk +13 ranged (3d6, stalactites); d20 bypass (lowest roll fails to avoid); Search n/a; Disable Device n/a.

The falling stalactites and chunks of stone are a variable element of this combat: once per round, all active PCs, animal companions and NPCs must roll a d20. The individual with the lowest roll is the target of the falling debris. Dack (AC 17) has specific hit points, but assume one hit from falling stone knocks any other NPC unconscious. Through Vaprak's blessing, Aodhan uncannily evades all of the falling debris.

The earthquake has two secondary effects: anyone standing on the ground must succeed on a DC 10 Balance check each round or fall prone. Additionally, the casting of any spell while touching the shaking ground requires a Concentration check of DC 15+spell level. Aodhan is also immune to these two secondary effects. Any PCs who drank the Oerthblood from Fuilmere (see above) during PAL5-06 are also immune to both of these secondary effects.

**Creatures:** Face to face at last with the renegade half-troll, the PCs have the chance to end his machinations and permanently remove the Mark of Demogorgon from any afflicted characters.

**APL 6 (EL 9+)**

➤ **Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 7 (Vaprak); hp 70; Appendix 1.

**APL 8 (EL 11+)**

➤ **Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 9 (Vaprak); hp 99; Appendix 1.

**APL 10 (EL 13+)**

➤ **Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 11 (Vaprak); hp 121; Appendix 1.

**APL 12 (EL 15+)**

➤ **Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 13 (Vaprak); hp 143; Appendix 1.

**Special:** If a PC has the Mark of Demogorgon, Aodhan can be killed only by that PC and only if the PC is not at full hit points. If a PC without the curse deals damage that would normally drop him below 0 hp, Aodhan stays



at 1 hp and continues fast healing. The PCs may attempt visual Heal checks (DC 15) during combat to notice this negated damage.

PCs that bear the Mark of Demogorgon take 1 point of damage per round while they are within 20 feet of Aodhan. This effect stacks with that of Aodhan's *negative energy aura* spell if he has time to cast it, and may actually benefit the PCs, as only a wounded curse-bearer can slay Aodhan, but it also makes such PCs more vulnerable (this effect continues even if the PC falls unconscious).

For PCs who have played both PAL5-06 and PAL6-04, and who possess both the Mark of Demogorgon and the sacrificial nails, the curse-removal dynamic functions for that PC only: a cursed PC (from PAL5-06) who did not play PAL6-04 may not "borrow" the nails for the purposes of this combat dynamic; such PCs retain the Mark of Demogorgon until they play PAL6-04 (out of order), or possibly forever.

If no PC has the Mark of Demogorgon, Aodhan may be killed normally.

**Tactics:** Aodhan traveled to the Underdark with spells intended for use against the troglodytes; since he was repulsed from their lair before combat occurred, he has his entire spell arsenal for use against the PCs. The weapon gifted to the tribe by the envoy made Aodhan think twice about attacking them, especially after they used it to kill his remaining half-troll bodyguard. (His first bodyguard was killed by the quasit's strike force shortly before Aodhan went to meet with Skkal; in the ensuing melee, the quasit recovered the *flesheater rod* and returned to the Abyss to fetch more demons.) Now that the PCs likely have the weapon, Aodhan has no choice but to face it.

If Corris, Erikal and Azric are killed (see below) before the PCs reach the plateau, Rayner Von Krall (if present) succeeds in hiding and escaping with valuable artifacts looted from the other slain NPCs, which limits what the PCs gain access to on the Adventure Record.

The crocodile Gumboots from PAL6-04 (if present) recognizes Aodhan as his former torturer and requires another mighty Handle Animal check (DC 25) to keep him from charging the half-troll on sight. Aodhan's *peript of wisdom* is actually adorned with the poor crocodile's teeth (easily noted by any PC).

If a PC possesses Malerix Moorcol and agrees to his telepathic command (see above), retrieving and untying the bag is a full-round action; this may seem like a steep price to pay in the middle of combat, but the reward is worth the risk. The former high priest unleashes his vengeance against his traitorous lieutenant; read or paraphrase the following to the host-PC:

***As you utter the Abyssal command words and untie the grimy black bag, deep, maniacal laughter and a rush of hot air burst forth. The bag then spills its malevolent contents: a liquid blackness washes out and over you like a second skin; the jagged, dirty***

***teeth that once lined the interior now adorn you like enameled armor spikes, glistening with keen fury. Inside your head, Malerix urges you forward with one plea: "Destroy."***

The host PC is now protected by Malerix's essence, gaining two forms of protection. First, the teeth protect the PC from falling stalactites, absorbing the first 50 hit points of damage from them. The black, skin-like membrane provides the host with SR 12+APL against Aodhan. The host-PC is not actually compelled to attack. As the host-PC takes falling damage or absorbs spell effects, the "second skin" begins to visibly crack, allowing the true color and texture of the host-PC's gear to shine through.

At APL 6, Aodhan leads off with *negative energy aura*, followed by *masochism*, *chaos hammer* and *divine power* before attempting to rend the PCs in melee.

At APL 8, he follows *negative energy aura* with *freedom of movement*, *righteous might* and then *slay living* on any PC within reach. At this APL and above, he has also prepared various *summon undead* spells; any undead creatures summoned by him benefit from both his Necromantic Might and Necromantic Presence feats; at this APL, he summons a troll skeleton (*Monster Manual* 227, +2 to attacks and saves, +4 turn resistance).

At APL 10, he casts *negative energy aura*, *spell resistance*, and *stoneskin* (in that order), followed by *righteous might* (if he is not already mobbed by PCs) before wading into melee; if pressed into casting *summon undead* IV, he calls forth a ghastr (*Monster Manual* 119 [Ghoul], +2 to attacks and saves, +4 turn resistance) to immobilize his foes and distract any PC clerics.

At APL 12, his tactics remain essentially the same; his *summon undead* V brings forth a wight (*Monster Manual* 255, +2 to attacks and saves, +4 turn resistance). Many clerics of his level would use *word of recall* to escape a dangerous fight, but Aodhan has no haven after being betrayed by the troglodytes. Thus, if his situation is dire, he uses *repulsion* followed by *summon monster* VI (chaos beast) to cover his escape.

Although he can see the Mark of Demogorgon on a PC, he is beyond such rivalries and is as much an enemy of the Cult as are the PCs.

#### **Treasure:**

**APL 6:** Loot – 175 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp each), *cloak of resistance* +1 (83 gp each), *peript of Wisdom* +2 (333 gp each).

**APL 8:** Loot – 14 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – *potion of haste* (62 gp each), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp each), *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp each), *cloak of resistance* +1 (83 gp each), *pearl of power* (1st) (83 gp each), *peript of Wisdom* +2 (333 gp each).

**APL 10:** Loot – 66 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic -- +1 studded leather armor (97 gp each), +1 *greatclub* (192 gp each), *potion of displacement* (62 gp each), *potion of haste* (62 gp each), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp each), *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp each), *cloak of resistance* +2 (333 gp

each), *pearl of power* (2nd) (333 gp each), *periapt of Wisdom* +2 (333 gp each).

**APL 12:** Loot – 66 gp, Coin – 0 gp, Magic – +1 *studded leather armor of light fortification* (347 gp), +1 *vicious greatclub* (692 gp each), *potion of displacement* (62 gp each), *potion of haste* (62 gp each), *potion of cure serious wounds* (62 gp each), *ring of protection* +1 (166 gp each), *cloak of resistance* +3 (750 gp each), *pearl of power* (2nd; 333 gp each), *periapt of wisdom* +2 (333 gp each).

**Detect Magic Results:** +1 *studded leather armor* (faint transmutation), +1 *studded leather armor of light fortification* (faint transmutation and strong abjuration), +1 *greatclub* (faint transmutation), +1 *vicious greatclub* (faint transmutation and moderate necromancy), *potion of cure serious wounds* (faint conjuration), *potion of displacement* (faint illusion), *potion of haste* (faint transmutation), *ring of protection* +1 (faint abjuration), *cloak of resistance* +1, +2 and +3 (faint abjuration), *periapt of Wisdom* +2 (moderate transmutation), *pearl of power* (1st and 2nd; strong transmutation).

**Development:** If Aodhan is slain, PCs who bear the Mark of Demogorgon may rejoice as the invisible scars reappear, seal over, and then disappear as the curse is permanently lifted (as noted on the Adventure Record).

If a PC carried Malerix Moorcol and helped defeat Aodhan, Malerix's grimy vessel ruptures and disintegrates in a wave of ominous yet harmless black energy; the host-PC gains access to the Sound and Fury favor, as noted on the AR.

If Dack Splinheel survived, he grudgingly acknowledges the PCs' heroism. If a PC possessing a gold claim from PAL5-06 voluntarily forfeits it to Dack, he thanks the PC and promises to make it worth their while.

If Rayner Von Krall was the second-to-last man standing against Aodhan, he steals some of the loot recovered from Garsegzuul; this eliminates PC access to one item (randomly determined by secret die roll).

The PCs may attend to any slain or injured NPCs; if Aodhan escaped, he does not return to trouble them.

The PCs may collect their treasures from Encounter 5 and return to Tobinsford.

## CONCLUSION

The return trip to Tobinsford is uneventful, but the PCs arrive in time to hear the surprise and spontaneous (and scandalous) announcement that Eamon and Lorna are to be wed the following evening in the partially completed outdoor shrine to Pholtus. The PCs are the first adventurers to return from Garsegzuul; if they PCs brought slain adventurers, Cult prisoners, or ancient dwarven treasure, they are hailed as heroes by the jubilant populace and receive VIP invitations to the wedding.

The elderly **Bishop Reydrend** from Landrigard (with an escort of several Church Militant guards) has just arrived to promote Eamon, and is also surprised about the impromptu wedding.

Any PCs that played PAL6-04 *Tooth and Nail* are allowed to follow up on any leads involving their betrayal, and to name their suspect(s) to the bishop.

If the PCs do not wish to accuse anyone of being the Tobinsford spy, skip ahead to the next paragraph. Otherwise, allow them to speak with the bishop. He politely curtails the PCs' desire to name an NPC as the spy or to report violations in an effort to shut down Fynch's tavern: now is not the most appropriate time, he suggests, as a public arrest would likely dampen the spirit of Eamon's wedding. The bishop offers to have his guards ensure that no one leaves town until the wedding is complete; at that time, the PCs may name their suspect(s), with full cooperation from the dignitary.

The wedding occurs without interruption or complication, and is a serene rustic affair in which Lorna (wearing a simple dress that belonged to her mother) and Eamon exchange personal vows before the assembled guests, including the PCs, most residents, and all prominent NPCs from this scenario. Clive Orbison has returned from Landrigard and is also in attendance (outlandishly attired, as always, in his rancher's hat and a questionably fashionable suit), but the two notable absences from the assembled guests are Garrold and Teague (not invited, though Clive asks any PC that played PAL5-06 if they have seen his two assistants), along with Sir Andros (who definitely was invited). No one at the wedding knows where the three missing men are.

After the wedding, there is a small reception, also held outdoors and catered by a proud if befuddled Greddis. (If Dack survived, he uses this opportunity to surreptitiously steal and poison Lorna's bouquet, regardless of who caught it.). Eamon and Lorna then open their gifts (the PCs may also give gifts if they wish). One anonymous gift, opened by Lorna, contains a small, black onyx statuette of a dragon. When she touches it, a *magic mouth* is triggered: in a feminine voice, it publicly reveals Clive as a spy for the Cult of Demogorgon. He tries to flee but can easily be apprehended by the PCs or the bishop's guards.

The Cult of Demogorgon has now been shut down and will trouble the PCs no more. But that does not mean the PCs are without enemies...

## The End

### Critical Events Summary

Answers to the following questions would provide invaluable assistance to the author. Please send all relevant answers and any positive or negative feedback to [eteignoir@yahoo.com](mailto:eteignoir@yahoo.com) or [poc@theocracyofthepale.com](mailto:poc@theocracyofthepale.com).

1. Did the PCs help to shut down Fynch's tavern?
2. Did any PCs visit the *Bounding Stag* and improve Faira's gloomy mood? If so, how?
3. Did Merilyn seduce a PC and forge their gold claim certificate?
4. Did any PCs help Spooner?

5. Did the PCs negotiate with the quasit cleric?
6. Which group (if any) did the PCs side with upon reaching Garsegzul?
7. Which of the dwarven ruins did the PCs find?
8. Did any of the trogs escape? Who?
9. Was Aodhan killed or did he escape?
10. Did a PC bond with Malerix Moorcol in the fight against Aodhan? If so, which PC?
11. Did Rayner Von Krall escape the final encounter with treasure stolen from a PC or NPC?

## EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

### Encounter 3

Defeat (or negotiate with) the demons	
APL 6	210 XP
APL 8	270 XP
APL 10	330 XP
APL 12	390 XP

### Encounter 8

Defeat the troglodytes	
APL 6	240 XP
APL 8	300 XP
APL 10	360 XP
APL 12	420 XP

### Encounter 8

Defeat and destroy Aodhan	
APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP
APL 12	450 XP

### Story Award

<b>Discretionary roleplaying award</b>	
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	225 XP
APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	315 XP

### Total possible experience:

APL 6	900 XP
APL 8	1,125 XP
APL 10	1,350 XP
APL 12	1,575 XP

## TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information

about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

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

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

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

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

### Encounter 8: Trespass

APL 6:	Loot: 112 gp; Magic: 699 gp.
APL 8:	Loot: 98 gp; Magic: 1,225 gp.
APL 10:	Loot: 89 gp; Magic: 2,835 gp.
APL 12:	Loot: 50 gp; Magic: 5,564 gp.

### Encounter 9: Erasure

APL 6:	Loot: 175 gp; Magic: 582 gp.
APL 8:	Loot: 14 gp; Magic: 789 gp.
APL 10:	Loot: 66 gp; Magic: 1,640 gp.
APL 12:	Loot: 66 gp; Magic: 2,807 gp.

### Total Possible Treasure

APL 6:	Loot: 287 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,281 gp;
Total:	1,568 gp (capped at 900 gp)
APL 8:	Loot: 112 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 2,014 gp; Total: 2,126 gp (capped at 1,300 gp)
APL 10:	Loot: 155 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 4,475 gp; Total: 4,630 gp (capped at 2,300 gp)
APL 12:	Loot: 116 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 8,371 gp; Total: 8,487 gp (capped at 3,300 gp)

## Special

**Mark of Demogorgon (Phase III):** Your invisible, cursed facial scars have at last been cured. You enjoy the same success or failure on die rolls as does every other PC, and minions of Demogorgon see nothing different about you. Note that the Mark is removed only if you fulfilled certain conditions stated in the adventure. If you did not meet these conditions, cross off this item; the Mark remains until your final death.

**Taarindaulk (Garsegzuul) Unearthed:** You have aided in the recovery and restoration of a site in the ancient dwarven city. All item access is Regional. Check the appropriate entry:

[ ] **Armory:** Dwarven warpike, throwing hammer, interlocking plate, extreme steel shield (RS); maul (A&EG), plus masterwork versions of these items.

[ ] **Reliquary (Graverobber):** *Amulet of health +4, belt of dwarvenkind, ring of protection +4, unguent of timelessness*; but if you buy any of these you suffer a -4 penalty on all Charisma-based checks with non-evil dwarves in the Pale.

[ ] **Apartment:** Lockpick ring, steadfast stone, darkvision powder, and thieving helmet (A&EG); access to Darkrunner prestige class (LoM).

[ ] **Laboratory:** Blasting pellets, blister oil, spiderlily essence (RS); clearbreath, fleetfoot, stonebreaker acid (A&EG).

[ ] **Forge (Fires of Fame/Infamy):** You earn the enmity of all derro you encounter in the Pale, but a permanent +4 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-checks involving dwarves in the Pale. You gain access to one suit of mithral armor (PHB armors only) of Small or Medium size; cross out this sentence when you buy the armor.

[ ] **Library of Halaad-Storr:** You gain free Rich Lifestyle in Pale Regional adventures for one year from the date on this AR, as grateful dwarves treat you as a hero and pay your expenses. Additionally, you may spend 2 TUs cataloging ancient tablets to become an **Honorary Historian** and gain a permanent +2 insight bonus to Knowledge (history) checks in the Pale. (You must still be trained to make a check.)

**Sound and Fury:** For avenging former Demogorgon high priest Malerix Moorcol's death, you are melded with his euphoric, shrieking essence. This conveys a permanent +1 profane bonus to Will saves but a -2 penalty to Concentration and Listen checks. You may banish him to the Abyss, permanently forgoing these effects; cross off this favor if you so choose.

**Spooner's Benefactor:** You agreed to help Old Spooner defeat his alcohol addiction. You must donate a minimum of either 2 TUs or 500 gp to the endeavor. Record the TUs/gp spent here: \_\_\_TU, \_\_\_gp. This counts as a good act.

**Favor of Dack Splintheel:** For donating your gold claim from PAL5-06 *My Brother's Keeper* to Dack's wilderness

preserve, Dack (and Weasley) offer you free services in tracking (Survival +16) and alchemy (Craft [alchemy] +11) anytime you visit the Rakers or Landrigard Prelacy, but it costs 1 extra TU to summon them.

## ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

### Item Access

APL 6:

- *Boots of the winterlands* (made from crocodile hide) (Adventure; DMG; 2,500 gp)
- *Wand of scorching ray* (Adventure; DMG; 4,500 gp)

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

- *Brooch of shielding* (Adventure; DMG; 1,500 gp)
- *Javelin of lightning* (Adventure; DMG; 1,500 gp)
- *Necklace of fireballs* (Type IV) (Adventure; DMG; 5,400 gp)
- *Pearl of power* (1st) (Adventure; DMG; 1,000 gp; you may buy only 1)

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

- *Boots of striding and springing* (made from crocodile hide) (Adventure; DMG; 5,550 gp)
- *Cloak of resistance +2* (Adventure; DMG; 4,000 gp)
- *Pearl of power* (2nd) (Adventure; DMG; 4,000 gp; you may buy only 1)
- *Wand of magic missile* (CL 7th) (Adventure; DMG; 5,250 gp)
- *+1 corrosive short sword* (Adventure; A&EG; 8,310 gp)

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

- *Bead of force* (Adventure; DMG; 3,000 gp)
- *Cloak of resistance +3* (Adventure; DMG; 9,000 gp)
- *Scroll of ice storm* (Adventure; DMG; 700 gp)
- *+1 studded leather armor of light fortification* (Adventure; DMG; 4,175 gp)
- *+1 vicious greatclub* (Adventure; DMG; 8,305 gp)
- *+1 corrosive giant bane short sword* (Adventure; A&EG; 18,315 gp)

## APPENDIX 1: APL 6

### ENCOUNTER 3: TALION

**Jovoc:** CR 5; Small outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri); HD 4d8+18; hp 42; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +4; Grp +1; Atk +6 melee (1d3+1, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d3+1, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4, bite); SA Aura of Retribution; SQ DR 5/silver, fast healing 5, SR 13, *summon tanar'ri* 1/day, tanar'ri traits; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 7.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +13, Listen +7, Move Silently +9, Search +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +7; Toughness (x2).

**Aura of Retribution (Su):** This effect is always active in a 30-foot spread centered on the jovoc. Whenever the creature takes damage from any source, all non-tanar'ri within the area of effect immediately take an equal amount of damage. A successful Fortitude save (DC 15) halves the damage. Regardless of the source of damage to the jovoc, the damage dealt to non-tanar'ri by this effect is not subject to negation or reduction because of resistance, immunity, damage reduction, spell resistance, or the like.

**Summon Tanar'ri (Sp):** Once per day, a jovoc can attempt to summon another jovoc with a 25% chance of success.

**Tanar'ri Traits:** A jovoc can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language. It is immune to electricity and poison, and has acid resistance 20, cold resistance 20, and fire resistance 20.

**Physical Description:** A jovoc is a 4-foot tall, bloated, hairless creature resembling the bruised, battered corpse of a gnome left to decompose in the heat of high summer, with a stench to match. It has dark, blue-black skin and vacant black eyes. Its three-fingered hands end in long, blood-red fingernails.

**Source:** *Monster Manual II* (with skills updated by editor).

### ENCOUNTER 8: TRESPASS

**Skkal:** male troglodyte cleric 5 (Laogzed); CR 6; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 plus 5d8+5; hp 47; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +4; Grp +5; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +3 ranged (1d6+1, javelin) or +5 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) and +5 melee (1d4+1, claw) and +3 melee (1d4, bite) or +5 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d4+1, bite); SA Rebuke undead, stench; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +5 (+9 defensively), Heal +5, Hide +11, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (religion) +3, Knowledge (the planes) +2,

Listen +8, Spellcraft +3; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

**Languages:** Draconic, Goblin, Undercommon, Common.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 4/day; 1d20+1; turning damage 2d6+8.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 12.

**Cleric Spells Prepared (5/4+1/3+1/2+1):** 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance (2), resistance; 1st—cause fear\** (DC 14), *cure light wounds, doom (DC 14), entropic shield, sanctuary; 2nd—cure moderate wounds, death knell\** (DC 15), *sound burst (DC 15), spiritual weapon; 3rd—contagion\** (DC 16), *cure serious wounds, prayer.*

**\*Domain spell.** Deity: Laogzed. Domains: Death (Death Touch once/day); Destruction (gain the smite ability once/day).

**Possessions:** Masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork club, 2 javelins, 2 vials of acid, wooden holy symbol (Laogzed), *boots of the winterlands, cloak of resistance +1, potion of cure moderate wounds.*

**Physical Description:** Skkal stands taller than all of the troglodytes, and fights alongside his warriors to prove he is worthy of leadership.

**Irakiss:** male troglodyte ranger 1; CR 2; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6 plus 1d8+3; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +2; Grp +2; Atk +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +3 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +3 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork short sword) and +2 melee (1d4/18-20, masterwork kukri) and +1 melee (1d4, bite) or +3 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., favored enemy monstrous humanoids +2, wild empathy; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Hide +14, Listen +7, Move Silently +2, Perform (dance) +0, Search +1, Survival +4; Dodge, Mobility, Multiattack, Track.

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 14.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, masterwork short sword, masterwork kukri, 4 javelins, tanglefoot bag, 2 flasks of alchemist's fire, 2 vials of acid, vial of antitoxin, 2 *potions of cure light wounds.*

**Physical Description:** Irakiss moves in a permanent crouch, as if preparing to leap upon a foe.

**Xilaisha:** female troglodyte sorcerer 2; CR 3; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6 plus 2d4+6; hp 30; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +2; Grp +1; Atk +1 melee (1d4-1, claw) or +3 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +1/+1 melee (1d4-1, 2 claws)

and -1 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA Stench; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +4, Hide +14, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Listen +5; Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Illusion).

*Languages:* Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 14.

*Sorcerer Spells Known* (6/5 per day): 0—acid splash (+3 ranged touch), detect magic, ghost sound (DC 14), resistance, touch of fatigue (+1 melee touch, DC 13); 1st—color spray (DC 15), lesser orb of acid (+3 ranged touch) (see Appendix 2).

*Possessions:* 4 javelins, 5 vials of acid, wand of scorching ray.

*Physical Description:* Xilaisha is one of the smallest troglodytes in the tribe at just over four feet in height. Though petite and somewhat timid, she is slowly learning confidence under her draconic tutor. She approaches melee slowly, gauging foes before committing to an attack. Her hide has recently acquired a blackish tint that matches her lustrous eyes.

## ENCOUNTER 9: ERASURE

**Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 7 (Vaparak); CR 9; Medium giant; HD 7d8+28; hp 70; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +8; Atk +8 melee (1d4+3, claw); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA Rend, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +10; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 16 (18), Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +10, Heal +6, Knowledge (the planes) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Spellcraft +4; Corpsecrafter (see Appendix 2), Necromantic Presence (see Appendix 2), Necromantic Might (see Appendix 2), Spell Focus (necromancy).

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Giant, Abyssal.

**Rend (Ex):** If a half-troll hits with two or more claw attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d4+4 points of damage.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 4/day; 1d20+3; turning damage 2d6+8.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/ 5+1/4+1/3+1/ 2+1): 0—create water, cure minor wounds (2), detect magic (2), guidance; 1st—cure light wounds, deathwatch, divine favor, entropic shield, protection from law\*, sanctuary (DC 15); 2nd—~~bull's strength\*~~, cure moderate wounds, death knell (DC 17), resist energy, spiritual weapon; 3rd—animate dead, dispel magic, magic vestment\*, remove blindness/deafness; 4th—chaos hammer\* (DC 18), divine power, negative energy aura (see Appendix 2).

\*Domain spell. Deity: Vaparak. Domains: Chaos (cast Chaos spells at +1 caster level); Strength (feat of

Strength once per day; +7 to Strength for one round as a free action).

*Possessions:* Masterwork studded leather armor, ring of protection +1, periapt of wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +1.

**Power-Up Suite (Status – bull's strength spell):** Base Atk +5; Grp +10; Atk +10 melee (1d4+5, claw); Full Atk +10 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +5 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA Rend 2d4+7; Str 20.

*Physical Description:* This wicked soul is a product of foul breeding pits deep within the Troll Fens. Truly a fearsome specimen, Aodhan's bronze skin and black hair betray his swamp-folk heritage, but the skin is covered in large patches of rough and knobby green growths, and his greasy hair clumps into long fuzzy locks. He towers over most humans, and his elongated and extremely muscled limbs tipped with long, filthy claws give him the appearance of a feral beast. He is armored in thick leather and swathed in furs, and wears heavy boots. His exposed limbs show recent evidence of severe acid damage.

## APPENDIX 1: APL 8

### ENCOUNTER 8: TRESPASS

**Skkal:** male troglodyte cleric 7 (Laogzed); CR 8; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 plus 7d8+7; hp 63; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +7; Atk +8 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +5 ranged (1d6+1, javelin) or +7 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) and +7 melee (1d4+1, claw) and +5 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench, rebuke undead; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +6 (+10 defensively), Heal +5, Hide +11, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (religion) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +3, Listen +8, Spellcraft +4; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

**Languages:** Draconic, Goblin, Undercommon, Common.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 12.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 5/day; 1d20+2; turning damage 2d6+9.

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (6/ 5+1/4+1/3+1/ 1+1): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *resistance*; 1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 14), *entropic shield*, *inflict light wounds*\* (DC 14), *sanctuary*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*\* (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 15), *sound burst* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*contagion*\* (DC 16), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *prayer*; 4th—*death ward*\*, *divine power*.

**\*Domain spell.** Deity: Laogzed. Domains: Death (Death Touch once/day); Destruction (gain the smite ability once/day).

**Possessions:** +1 studded leather armor, masterwork club, 2 javelins, 2 vials of acid, tanglefoot bag, wooden holy symbol (Laogzed), boots of the winterlands, cloak of resistance +1, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of bull's strength*, brooch of shielding.

**Physical Description:** Skkal stands taller than all of the troglodytes, and fights alongside his warriors to prove he is worthy of leadership.

**Irakiss:** male troglodyte ranger 4; CR 5; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6 plus 4d8+12; hp 54; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork short sword) or +6 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +7 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+1/19-20, masterwork short sword) and +5 melee (1d4/18-20, masterwork kukri) and +4 melee (1d4, bite) or +6 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench; SQ Animal companion, darkvision 90 ft., favored enemy monstrous humanoids +2, link with companion, share spells, wild empathy; AL CE; SV Fort

+11, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Handle Animal +1, Hide +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Perform (dance) +3, Search +1, Survival +6; Dodge, Endurance, Mobility, Multiattack, Natural Bond (see Appendix 2), Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 14.

**Ranger Spells Prepared:** 1st—*magic fang*.

**Possessions:** Leather armor, masterwork short sword, masterwork kukri, 2 javelins, tanglefoot bag, flask of alchemist's fire, vial of antitoxin, *potion of cure light wounds*, *cloak of resistance* +1, *javelin of lightning*.

**Physical Description:** Irakiss moves in a permanent crouch, as if preparing to leap upon a foe.

**Xilaisha:** female troglodyte sorcerer 4; CR 5; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6 plus 4d4+12; hp 42; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +2; Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, claw) or +4 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA Stench; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +5, Concentration +4, Hide +14, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Listen +5; Ability Focus (Stench), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Illusion).

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 16.

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/7/4 per day): 0—*acid splash* (+4 ranged touch), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *message*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 13, +2 melee touch); 1st—*color spray* (DC 15), *lesser orb of acid* (+4 ranged touch) (see Appendix 2), *true strike*; 2nd—*phantasmal assailants* (DC 16) (see Appendix 2).

**Possessions:** 4 javelins, 5 vials of acid, necklace of fireballs (Type IV).

**Physical Description:** Xilaisha is one of the smallest troglodytes in the tribe at just over four feet in height. Though petite and somewhat timid, she is slowly learning confidence under her draconic tutor. She approaches melee slowly, gauging foes before committing to an attack. Her hide has recently acquired a blackish tint that matches her lustrous eyes.

### ENCOUNTER 9: ERASURE

**Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 9 (Vaprak); CR 11; Medium giant; HD 9d8+45; hp 99; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 18; Base Atk +6; Grp +9; Atk +9 melee (1d4+3, claw); Full Atk +9 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +10/+5 melee (1d10+5, +1 greatclub) and +4 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA

Rend, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +4, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16 (18), Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +12, Heal +7, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +6; Corpsecrafter (see Appendix 2), Necromantic Presence (see Appendix 2), Necromantic Might (see Appendix 2), Power Attack, Spell Focus (necromancy).

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Giant, Abyssal.

**Rend (Ex):** If a half-troll hits with two or more claw attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d4+4 points of damage.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 4/day; 1d20+3; turning damage 2d6+10.

*Cleric Spells Prepared* (6/ 5+1/5+1/4+1/ 3+1/1+1): 0—create water, cure minor wounds (2), detect magic (2), guidance; 1st—cure light wounds, deathwatch, divine favor, entropic shield, protection from law\*, sanctuary (DC 15); 2nd—~~bull's strength\*~~, cure moderate wounds (2), death knell (DC 17), resist energy, spiritual weapon; 3rd—animate dead, dispel magic, magic vestment\*, remove blindness/deafness, summon undead III (see Appendix 2); 4th—chaos hammer\* (DC 18), divine power, freedom of movement, negative energy aura (see Appendix 2); 5th—righteous might\*, slay living (DC 20).

\*Domain spell. Deity: Vaprak. Domains: Chaos (cast Chaos spells at +1 caster level); Strength (feat of Strength once per day; +7 to Strength for one round as a free action).

*Possessions:* Masterwork studded leather armor, +1 greatclub, ring of protection +1, periapt of Wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +1, potion of haste, potion of cure serious wounds, pearl of power (1st).

**Power-Up Suite (Status – bull's strength spell):** Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d4+5, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +12/+7 melee (1d10+8, +1 greatclub) and +6 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA Rend 2d4+7; Str 20.

*Physical Description:* This wicked soul is a product of foul breeding pits deep within the Troll Fens. Truly a fearsome specimen, Aodhan's bronze skin and black hair betray his swamp-folk heritage, but the skin is covered in large patches of rough and knobby green growths, and his greasy hair clumps into long fuzzy locks. He towers over most humans, and his elongated and extremely muscled limbs tipped with long, filthy claws give him the appearance of a feral beast. He is armored in thick leather and swathed in furs, and wears heavy boots. His exposed limbs show recent evidence of severe acid damage.



## APPENDIX 1: APL 10

### ENCOUNTER 3: TALION

**Advanced Babau:** CR 8; Large outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri); HD 9d8+63; hp 117; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +22; Atk +17 melee (1d8+9/19-20, claw); Full Atk +17 melee (1d8+9/19-20, 2 claws) and +15 melee (1d8+4, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Sneak attack +2d6, spell-like abilities, *summon tanar'ri*; SQ Damage reduction 10/cold iron or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to electricity and poison, protective slime, resistance to acid 10, cold 10, and fire 10, spell resistance 14, telepathy 100 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +8; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 24, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +21, Disable Device +14, Disguise +15, Escape Artist +12, Hide +16, Listen +22, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +12, Search +22, Sleight of Hand +12, Survival +2 (+4 following tracks), Use Rope +0 (+2 with bindings); Cleave, Improved Critical (claw), Multiattack, Power Attack.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** A babau can make a sneak attack like a rogue, dealing an extra 2d6 points of damage whenever a foe is denied his or her Dexterity bonus to AC, or when the babau is flanking.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will: *darkness*, *dispel magic*, *see invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only). Caster level 9th.

**Protective Slime (Su):** A slimy red jelly coats the babau's skin. Any weapon that touches it takes 2d6 points of acid damage from the corrosive goo, and the weapon's hardness does not reduce this damage. A magic weapon may attempt a DC 21 Reflex save to avoid taking this damage. A creature who strikes the babau with an unarmed attack, unarmed strike, touch spell, or natural weapon takes this damage as well but can negate the damage with a DC 21 Reflex save. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

**Summon Tanar'ri (Sp):** Once per day a babau can attempt to summon 1 babau with a 40% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd level spell.

**Possessions:** Unholy symbol (Demogorgon).

### ENCOUNTER 8: TRESPASS

**Skkal:** male troglodyte cleric 9 (Laogzed); CR 10; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 plus 9d8+9; hp 77; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) or +6 ranged (1d6+1, javelin) or +8 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork club) and +8 melee (1d4+1, claw) and +6 melee (1d4, bite) or +8 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench, rebuke undead; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16 (18), Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +7 (+11 defensively), Heal +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (history) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (religion) +5, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +9, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

**Languages:** Draconic, Goblin, Undercommon, Common.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 12.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 5/day; 1d20+2; turning damage 2d6+11.

**Cleric Spells Prepared (6/ 5+1/5+1/4+1/ 3+1/1+1):** 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *resistance*; 1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 15), *entropic shield*, *inflict light wounds\** (DC 15), *sanctuary*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell\** (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*contagion\** (DC 17), *cure serious wounds* (x2), *dispel magic*, *prayer*; 4th—*cure critical wounds*, *death ward\**, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*; 5th—*flame strike* (DC 19), *slay living\** (DC 19).

**\*Domain spell.** Deity: Laogzed. Domains: Death (Death Touch once/day); Destruction (gain the smite ability once/day).

**Possessions:** +1 studded leather armor, masterwork club, 2 javelins, 2 vials of acid, wooden holy symbol (Laogzed), *periapt of Wisdom* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *boots of striding and springing*, *potion of bull's strength*.

**Physical Description:** Skkal stands taller than all of the troglodytes, and fights alongside his warriors to prove he is worthy of leadership.

**Irakiss:** male troglodyte ranger 6; CR 7; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+8 plus 6d8+24; hp 80; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+2/19-20 plus 1d6 acid, +1 *corrosive short sword*) or +8 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +9 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6+2/19-20 plus 1d6 acid, +1 *corrosive short sword*) and +5/+0 melee (1d4/18-20, masterwork kukri) and +6 melee (1d4, bite) or +8 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench; SQ Animal companion, darkvision 90 ft., favored enemy monstrous humanoids +4, favored enemy elves +2, link with companion, share spells, wild empathy; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Handle Animal +3, Hide +20, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2, Knowledge (nature) +4, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Perform (dance) +4, Search +1, Spot +3, Survival +7; Dodge, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Multiattack, Natural Bond (see Appendix 2), Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 15.

*Ranger Spells Prepared:* 1st—*magic fang*.

*Possessions:* +1 leather armor, +1 corrosive short sword, masterwork kukri, 2 javelins, tanglefoot bag, flask of alchemist's fire, vial of antitoxin, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *cloak of resistance +1*.

*Physical Description:* Irakiss moves in a permanent crouch, as if preparing to leap upon a foe.

**Nichei (advanced monitor lizard animal companion):** CR —; Medium animal; HD 5d8+15; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+6, bite); SA —; SQ Evasion, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +8, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +5, Swim +12; Alertness, Great Fortitude.

**Triis:** female troglodyte bard 5; CR 6; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+4 plus 5d6+10; hp 48; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, claw) or +6 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., countersong 5/day, fascinate 5/day, inspire competence 5/day, inspire courage 3/day; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +2, Balance +5, Concentration +4, Craft (instrument) +4, Decipher Script +2, Escape Artist +3, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (history) +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Perform (percussion) +9, Sense Motive +3, Tumble +6, Use Magic Device +7; Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Weapon Focus (javelin).

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnome, Undercommon.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 13.

*Bard Spells Known* (3/4/2 per day): 0—*detect magic*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*; 1st—*feather fall*, *grease* (DC 13), *inspirational boost* (see Appendix 2), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 14); 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 14), *miser's envy* (DC 15) (see Appendix 2), *silence*.

*Possessions:* +1 leather armor, 4 javelins, 3 vials of acid, 3 flasks of alchemist's fire, thunderstone, masterwork instrument (gnome-skull xylophone, two-handed), *cloak of resistance +1*, *potion of shield of faith* (+4), *scroll of bear's endurance*, *scroll of mirror image*, *scroll of bless weapon*, *scroll of faerie fire*, *scroll of see invisibility*, *scroll of heat metal*, *scroll of sound burst*, *scroll of fireball*.

*Physical Description:* Xilaisha's charismatic appeal stems from her relationship to the dragon, but Triis's popularity is born of pure flamboyance. Her scales are

exotically colored and her personality more extroverted; she takes pride in being the center of attention. Triis is no fighter and is most effective as a nuisance in combat, using spells to disrupt enemies while inspiring the savage morale of her allies.

**Xilaisha:** female troglodyte sorcerer 6 / dragon disciple 1 (black); CR 8; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6 plus 6d4+18 plus 1d12+3; hp 66; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +4; Grp +3; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, claw) or +5 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, 2 claws) and +1 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA Stench; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +8; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Bluff +5, Concentration +7, Hide +14, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +5, Spellcraft +3, Spot +1; Ability Focus (Stench), Greater Spell Focus (Illusion), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Illusion).

*Languages:* Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 16.

*Sorcerer Spells Known* (6/7/6/5 per day): 0—*acid splash* (+5 ranged touch), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *message*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (+3 melee touch); 1st—*color spray* (DC 16), *feather fall*, *lesser orb of acid* (+5 ranged touch) (see Appendix 2), *true strike*; 2nd—*Melf's acid arrow* (+5 ranged touch), *phantasmal assailants* (DC 17) (see Appendix 2); 3rd—*shadow binding* (DC 18) (see Appendix 2).

*Possessions:* 2 javelins, 5 vials of acid, vial of antitoxin, *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th), *cloak of resistance +1*, *scroll of bull's strength*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of haste*.

*Physical Description:* Xilaisha is one of the smallest troglodytes in the tribe at just over four feet in height. Though petite and somewhat timid, she is slowly learning confidence under her draconic tutor. She approaches melee slowly, gauging foes before committing to an attack. Her hide has recently acquired a blackish tint that matches her lustrous eyes.

## ENCOUNTER 9: ERASURE

**Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 11 (Vaprak); CR 13; Medium giant; HD 11d8+55; hp 121; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +11; Atk +11 melee (1d4+3, claw); Full Atk +11 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws) and +6 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +12/+7 melee (1d10+5, +1 greatclub) and +6 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA Rend, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16 (18), Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +13, Heal +9, Knowledge (the planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +9, Spellcraft +8; Corpsecrier (see Appendix 2), Necromantic Presence (see Appendix 2), Necromantic

Might (see Appendix 2), Power Attack, Spell Focus (necromancy).

*Languages:* Common, Draconic, Giant, Abyssal.

**Rend (Ex):** If a half-troll hits with two or more claw attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d4+4 points of damage.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 4/day; 1d20+3; turning damage 2d6+12.

*Cleric Spells Prepared (6/ 6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1):* 0—create water, cure minor wounds (2), detect magic (2), guidance; 1st—cure light wounds (2), deathwatch, divine favor, entropic shield, protection from law\*, sanctuary; 2nd—~~bull's strength\*~~, cure moderate wounds (2), death knell (DC 17), resist energy, spiritual weapon; 3rd—animate dead, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, invisibility purge, magic vestment\*, remove blindness/deafness; 4th—chaos hammer\* (DC 18), cure critical wounds, freedom of movement, negative energy aura (see Appendix 2), summon undead IV (see Appendix 2); 5th—righteous might\*, slay living (DC 20), spell resistance; 6th—harm (DC 20), stonesskin\*.

\*Domain spell. Deity: Vaprak. Domains: Chaos (cast Chaos spells at +1 caster level); Strength (feat of Strength once per day; +7 to Strength for one round as a free action).

*Possessions:* +1 studded leather armor, +1 greatclub, ring of protection +1, periapt of Wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +2, ~~potion of barkskin (+4)~~, potion of displacement, potion of haste, potion of cure serious wounds, pearl of power (2nd), 2 tanglefoot bags, 4 black opals worth 50 gp each, 2 uses of material component for stonesskin.

**Power-Up Suite (Status – *bull's strength* spell, *barkskin* potion):** AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +8; Grp +13; Atk +13 melee (1d4+5, claw); Full Atk +13 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +14/+9 melee (1d10+8, +1 greatclub) and +8 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA Rend 2d4+7; Str 20.

*Physical Description:* This wicked soul is a product of foul breeding pits deep within the Troll Fens. Truly a fearsome specimen, Aodhan's bronze skin and black hair betray his swamp-folk heritage, but the skin is covered in large patches of rough and knobby green growths, and his greasy hair clumps into long fuzzy locks. He towers over most humans, and his elongated and extremely muscled limbs tipped with long, filthy claws give him the appearance of a feral beast. He is armored in thick leather and swathed in furs, and wears heavy boots. His exposed limbs show recent evidence of severe acid damage.

## APPENDIX 1: APL 12

### ENCOUNTER EIGHT: TRESPASS

**Skkal:** male troglodyte cleric 11 (Laogzed); CR 12; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+2 plus 1d8+11; hp 91; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +10; Atk +11 melee (1d6+2, +1 club) or +9 ranged (1d6+1, javelin) or +8 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d6+2, +1 club) and +10 melee (1d4+1, claw) and +8 melee (1d4, bite) or +10 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +8 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench, rebuke undead; SQ darkvision 90 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +6, Will +14; Str 12, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 16 (18), Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +8 (+12 defensively), Heal +7, Hide +11, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (local) +2, Knowledge (religion) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +9, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

**Languages:** Draconic, Goblin, Undercommon, Common.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 12.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 5/day; 1d20+4; turning damage 2d6+13.

**Cleric Spells Prepared (6/ 6+1/5+1/5+1/3+1/2+1/1+1):** 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *guidance* (2), *resistance*; 1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 15), *entropic shield*, *inflict light wounds*\* (DC 15), *lesser vigor*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell*\* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*contagion*\* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds* (x2), *dispel magic* (x2), *prayer*; 4th—*cure critical wounds* (x2), *death ward*\*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*; 5th—*flame strike* (DC 19), *slay living*\* (DC 19), *spell resistance*; 6th—*harm*\* (DC 20), *mass bull's strength*.

**\*Domain spell.** Deity: Laogzed. Domains: Death (Death Touch once/day); Destruction (gain the smite ability once/day).

**Possessions:** +1 studded leather armor, +1 club, 2 javelins, 2 vials of acid, wooden holy symbol (Laogzed), *peripart of Wisdom* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *boots of striding and springing*, *javelin of lightning*, *bead of force*.

**Physical description:** Skkal stands taller than all of the troglodytes, and fights alongside his warriors to prove he is worthy of leadership.

**Irakiss:** male troglodyte ranger 7 / shadowdancer 1; CR 9; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+8 plus 7d8+28 plus 1d8+4; hp 100; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +9; Atk +10 melee (1d6+2/19-20 plus 1d6 acid, +1 *corrosive giant bane short sword*) or +9 melee (1d4+1, claw) or +10 ranged (1d6+1, javelin); Full Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+2/19-20 plus 1d6 acid, +1 *giant bane short sword*) and +6/+1 melee (1d4+1/18-20, +1 *kukri*) and +7 melee (1d4, bite)

or +9 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws) and +7 melee (1d4, bite); SA Stench; SQ Animal companion, darkvision 90 ft., favored enemy monstrous humanoids +4, favored enemy elves +2, hide in plain sight, link with companion, share spells, wild empathy, woodland stride; AL CE; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +3, Escape Artist +3, Handle Animal +3, Hide +20, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +3, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Perform +4, Search +2, Spot +4, Survival +8, Tumble +3; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Mobility, Multiattack, Natural Bond (see Appendix 2), Track, Two-Weapon Fighting.

**Languages:** Draconic.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 15.

**Ranger Spells Prepared:** 1st—*magic fang*.

**Possessions:** +1 leather armor, +1 *corrosive giant bane short sword*, +1 *kukri*, 2 javelins, tanglefoot bag, flask of alchemist's fire, vial of antitoxin, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *cloak of resistance* +2.

**Physical Description:** Irakiss moves in a permanent crouch, as if preparing to leap upon a foe.

**Nichei (advanced monitor lizard animal companion):** CR —; Medium animal; HD 5d8+15; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +3; Grp +7; Atk/Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+6, bite); SA —; SQ Evasion, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +8, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +5, Swim +12; Alertness, Great Fortitude.

**Triis:** female troglodyte bard 7; CR 8; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+4 plus 7d6+12; hp 55; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +6; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (1d4-1, claw) or +8 ranged (1d6-1, javelin); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4-1, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA Stench; SQ Darkvision 90 ft., countersong 7/day, *fascinate* 7/day, inspire competence 7/day, inspire courage 7/day, *suggestion*; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14 (16).

**Skills and Feats:** Appraise +4, Balance +6, Concentration +7, Craft (instrument) +5, Decipher Script +2, Escape Artist +4, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +4, Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +3, Listen +6, Move Silently +2, Perform (percussion) +12, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +9, Tumble +6, Use Magic Device +11 (+13 to use scrolls); Improved Initiative, Magical Aptitude, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Weapon Focus (javelin).

Languages: Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnome, Undercommon.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 13.

**Bard Spells Known** (3/4/3/1 per day): 0—*detect magic, flare, ghost sound, message, prestidigitation, resistance*; 1st—*feather fall, grease* (DC 14), *inspirational boost* (see Appendix 2), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 15); 2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 15), *cat's grace, miser's envy* (DC 16) (see Appendix 2), *silence*; 3rd—*confusion* (DC 17), *dispel magic*.

**Possessions:** +1 *leather armor*, 5 javelins, 5 vials of acid, 4 flasks of alchemist's fire, vial of antitoxin, thunderstone, masterwork instrument (gnome-skull xylophone, two-handed), *cloak of Charisma +2, scroll of faerie fire, scroll of bless weapon, scroll of ice storm, scroll of bear's endurance, scroll of see invisibility, scroll of mirror image, scroll of spiritual weapon, potion of shield of faith (+3)*.

**Physical Description:** Xilaisha's charismatic appeal stems from her relationship to the dragon, but Triis's popularity is born of pure flamboyance. Her scales are exotically colored and her personality more extroverted; she takes pride in being the center of attention. Triis is no fighter and is most effective as a nuisance in combat, using spells to disrupt enemies while inspiring the savage morale of her allies.

**Xilaisha:** female troglodyte sorcerer 6 / dragon disciple 3 (black); CR 10; Medium humanoid (reptilian); HD 2d8+6 plus 6d4+18 plus 3d12+9; hp 90; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +6 melee (1d4, claw) or +7 ranged (1d6, javelin); Full Atk +6 melee (1d4, 2 claws) and +4 melee (1d4, bite); SA *Breath weapon, stench*; SQ *darkvision 90 ft.*; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +5, Concentration +7, Hide +14, **Knowledge (arcana) +9**, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +3; Ability Focus (Stench), **Greater Spell Focus (Illusion)**, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Spell Focus (Illusion).

Languages: Common, Draconic.

**Breath Weapon (Su):** 60-ft. line, damage 2d8 acid, Reflex DC 16 half.

**Stench (Ex):** As the ability in the *Monster Manual*, page 246, but at DC 16.

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/7/6/6 per day): 0—*acid splash* (+7 ranged touch), *detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 15), *mage hand, message, resistance, touch of fatigue* (+5 melee touch); 1st—*color spray* (DC 16), *feather fall, lesser orb of acid* (+7 ranged touch) (see Appendix 2), *true strike*; 2nd—*Melf's acid arrow* (+7 ranged touch), *phantasmal assailants* (DC 17) (see Appendix 2); 3rd—*shadow binding* (DC 18) (see Appendix 2).

**Possessions:** 2 javelins, 4 vials of acid, 5 flasks of alchemist's fire, *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th), *cloak of resistance +2, brooch of shielding, potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of ray of enfeeblement, scroll of shield, scroll of haste, scroll of fireball*.

**Physical Description:** Xilaisha is one of the smallest troglodytes in the tribe at just over four feet in height. Though petite and somewhat timid, she is slowly learning confidence under her draconic tutor. She approaches melee slowly, gauging foes before committing to an attack. Her hide has recently acquired a blackish tint that matches her lustrous eyes.

## ENCOUNTER 9: ERASURE

**Aodhan:** male half-troll human cleric 13 (Vaprak); CR 15; Medium giant; HD 13d8+65; hp 143; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +9; Grp +12; Atk +12 melee (1d4+3, claw) or +13 melee (1d10+5, +1 *vicious greatclub*); Full Atk +12/+12 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws) and +7 melee (1d6+1, bite) or +13/+6 melee (1d10+5, +1 *vicious greatclub*) and +7 melee (1d6+1, bite); SA *Rend, rebuke undead 4/day*; SQ *Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 5, scent*; AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 16, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 16 (18), Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +15, Heal +9, Knowledge (the planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +9; *Corpsecrafter* (see Appendix 2), *Greater Spell Focus (necromancy)*, *Necromantic Presence* (see Appendix 2), *Necromantic Might* (see Appendix 2), *Power Attack, Spell Focus (necromancy)*.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Giant, Abyssal.

**Rend (Ex):** If a half-troll hits with two or more claw attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d4+4 points of damage.

**Rebuke Undead (Su):** 4/day; 1d20+3; turning damage 2d6+14.

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (6/ 6+1/6+1/5+1/ 5+1/3+1/2+1/ 1+1): 0—*create water, cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic* (2), *guidance*; 1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *deathwatch, divine favor, entropic shield, protection from law\**, *sanctuary*; 2nd—~~*bull's strength\**~~, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *death knell* (DC 18), *resist energy, sound burst* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*animate dead, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, invisibility purge, magic vestment\**, *remove blindness/deafness*; 4th—*chaos hammer\** (DC 18), *cure critical wounds* (x2), *freedom of movement, negative energy aura* (see Appendix 2), *poison* (DC 20); 5th—*righteous might\**, *slay living* (DC 21), *spell resistance, summon undead V* (see Appendix 2); 6th—*harm* (DC 22), *stoneskin\**, *summon monster VI*; 7th—*repulsion, Vaprak's (Bigby's) grasping hand\**.

\*Domain spell. Deity: Vaprak. Domains: Chaos (cast Chaos spells at +1 caster level); Strength (feat of Strength once per day; +7 to Strength for one round as a free action).

**Possessions:** +1 *studded leather armor of light fortification*, +1 *vicious greatclub*, *ring of protection +1, periapt of Wisdom +2, cloak of resistance +3, ~~potion of barkskin~~ (+4), potion of displacement, potion of haste, potion of cure serious wounds, pearl of power* (2nd), 2 *tanglefoot*

bags, 4 black opals worth 50 gp each, 2 uses of material component for *stoneskin*.

**Power-Up Suite (Status – *bull's strength* spell, *barkskin* potion):** AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +14 melee (1d4+5, claw); Full Atk +14 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws) and +9 melee (1d6+2, bite) or +15/+10 melee (1d10+8, +1 *greatclub*) and +9 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA rend 2d4+7; Str 20.

*Physical Description:* This wicked soul is a product of foul breeding pits deep within the Troll Fens. Truly a fearsome specimen, Aodhan's bronze skin and black hair betray his swamp-folk heritage, but the skin is covered in large patches of rough and knobby green growths, and his greasy hair clumps into long fuzzy locks. He towers over most humans, and his elongated and extremely muscled limbs tipped with long, filthy claws give him the appearance of a feral beast. He is armored in thick leather and swathed in furs, and wears heavy boots. His exposed limbs show recent evidence of severe acid damage.

## APPENDIX 2: NON-CORE RULES ITEMS

### NEW BASE CLASS

**Favored Soul** (*Complete Divine*): not reprinted here. Used only for non-combatant NPC.

**Swashbuckler** (*Complete Warrior*): not reprinted here. Used only for non-combatant NPC.

### NEW PRESTIGE CLASSES

**Temple Raider of Olidammara** (*Complete Divine*): not reprinted here. Used only for non-combatant NPC.

### NEW FEATS

#### **Corpsecrafter [General] (*Libris Mortis*)**

Undead you raise or create are tougher than normal.

**Benefit:** Each undead you raise or create with any necromancy spell gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and +2 hit points per Hit Die.

#### **Natural Bond [General] (*Complete Adventurer*)**

Your bond with your animal is exceptionally strong.

**Prerequisite:** Animal companion.

**Benefit:** Add three to your effective druid level for the purposes of determining the bonus Hit Dice, extra tricks, special abilities, and other bonuses that our animal companion receives (see page 36 of the *Player's Handbook*). This bonus can never make your effective druid level exceed your character level.

#### **Necromantic Might [General] (*Libris Mortis*)**

Undead you control gain benefits when they are near you.

**Prerequisite:** Necromantic Presence.

**Benefit:** Whenever undead you control are within 60 feet of you, they are physically inspired by your necromantic aura and gain a +2 enhancement bonus on their attack rolls and saving throws.

#### **Necromantic Presence [General] (*Libris Mortis*)**

Undead you control are harder to turn when they are near you.

**Benefit:** Whenever undead you control are within 60 feet of you, they gain a +4 bonus to their turn resistance.

### NEW ACTION TYPE

**Swift Action (*Spell Compendium*):** A swift action consumes a very small amount of time, but represents a larger expenditure of effort and energy than a free action. You can perform one swift action per turn without affecting your ability to perform other actions. However, you can perform only a single swift action per turn, regardless of what other actions you take. You can take a swift action any time you would normally be allowed to take a free action. Swift actions usually involve spellcasting or the activation of magic items; many characters (especially those who don't cast spells) never have an opportunity to take a swift action.

Casting a quickened spell is a swift action (instead of a free action, as stated in the *Player's Handbook*). In addition, casting any spell with a casting time of 1 swift action is a swift action.

Casting a spell with a casting time of 1 swift action does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

### NEW SPELLS

#### **Inspirational Boost (*Spell Compendium*)**

Compulsion [Mind-Affecting, Sonic]

Level: Bard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 swift action (see above)

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 round or special; see text.

You concentrate on assisting your friends as you begin the short chant and simple-hand chopping motion. As you finish, the spell's chant allows you to segue easily into bolstering your allies.

While this spell is in effect, the morale bonus granted by your inspire courage bardic music increases by 1. The effect lasts until your inspire courage effect ends. If you don't begin to use your inspire courage ability before the beginning of your next turn, the spell's effect ends.

### **Lesser Orb of Acid (*Spell Compendium*)**

Conjuration [Creation] [Acid]

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Effect: One orb of acid

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

*Your quick, precise movements culminate in your open palm facing your target. An orb of dark green acid flies from your hand.*

An orb of acid about 2 inches across shoots from your palm at its target, dealing 1d8 points of acid damage. You must succeed on a ranged touch attack to hit your target.

For every two caster levels beyond 1st, your orb deals an additional 1d8 points of damage: 2d8 at 3rd level, 3d8 at 5th level, 4d8 at 7th level, and the maximum of 5d8 at 9th level or higher.

### **Miser's Envy (*Spell Compendium*)**

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Bard 2, Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Target: One living creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

*Upon invoking the power of this spell, both the dwarf and the small idol across the room glow with a violet shade. The dwarf starts moving toward it, his eyes tinged violet with greed.*

When you cast this spell, you designate a target creature and specify an object, both of which must be within the spell's range. If the target creature fails its saving throw, it becomes consumed by a powerful desire for the object. For the duration of the spell, the creature seeks to obtain the object (going so far as to attack anyone holding or wearing it).

Once the creature gains possession of the object, it protects the item greedily, attacking anyone who approaches within 30 feet or who otherwise appears to be trying to take the object away. If no one approaches within 30 feet or seems interested in trying to take the object, the subject can act normally.

Dragons, due to their greedy nature, take a -4 penalty on their saving throw against this spell.

*Material Component:* A copper piece.

### **Negative Energy Aura (Necromancy) (*Spell Compendium*)**

Level: Cleric 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

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

Duration: 1 round/level

*You speak the ancient words of this spell and an aura of black, crackling energy surrounds you.*

Each round on your turn, every living creature within 10 feet of you loses 1 hit point per three caster levels (maximum 5). Undead creatures instead gain 2 hit points per round (though they cannot exceed their full normal hit point total from this effect). Characters with immunity to negative energy effects are not affected by this aura. The aura does not affect you.

### **Phantasmal Assailants (Illusion [Phantasm]) [Fear, Mind-Affecting] (*Spell Compendium*)**

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 2

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Target: One living creature

**Duration:** Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with), then Fortitude half; see text



Spell Resistance: Yes

You point at your intended target. Instantly, shadowy shapes form at your flank and rush toward the creature you indicate, surrounding it. Others nearby do not notice the images that plague your target.

You create phantasmal images of nightmare creatures in the target's mind, visible only as shadowy shapes to you and unseen by all others. If the target succeeds on an initial Will save, it recognizes that the images are not real, and the spell fails. If not, the phantasms strike the target, dealing 8 points of Wisdom damage and 8 points of Dexterity damage (4 points each on a successful Fortitude save). If the subject of a *phantasmal assailant* succeeds in disbelieving and is wearing a *helm of telepathy*, the spell can be turned back upon you with the same effect.

### **Shadow Binding (Illusion [Shadow]) (*Spell Compendium*)**

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

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

Area: 10-ft.-radius burst

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

As the links of chain in your hand dissipate to feed the arcane energies of your spell, a multitude of ribbonlike shadows instantaneously explodes outward from an indicated point nearby.

Creatures in the area that fail a Will save are entangled and unable to move. Breaking free of a *shadow binding* requires a DC 20 Strength or Escape Artist check, taken as a full-round action.

*Material component:* A few links of iron chain.

### **Summon Undead III (Conjuration) (Summoning [Evil]) (*Spell Compendium*)**

Level: Blackguard 3, Cleric 3, Sorcerer/wizard 1

Components: V, S, F/DF

Casting Time: 1 round

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

Effect: One summoned creature

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

### **Summon Undead IV (Conjuration) (Summoning [Evil]) (*Spell Compendium*)**

Level: Blackguard 4, Cleric 4, Sorcerer/wizard 4

### **Summon Undead V (Conjuration) (Summoning [Evil]) (*Spell Compendium*)**

Level: Blackguard 5, Cleric 5, Sorcerer/wizard 5

NOTE: The full lists of undead available are not reprinted here. The specific creature to be summoned is prescribed in the caster's Tactics section.

## **NEW MONSTER**

**Jovoc** (*Monster Manual II*): relevant stats reprinted in Appendix 1, APL 6.

## **NEW TEMPLATE**

### **Half-Troll (*Fiend Folio*)**

Trolls, as a rule, breed only with those of their own kind. But from time to time, a troll in rut finds itself without a mate. At such times, many trolls wander into the territories of other creatures in a nearly blind state of lust. Such trolls are often less particular about their choice of mates, willing to make an attempt with whatever creature they encounter.

At other times, trolls might breed with polymorphed or otherwise magically altered spellcasters or other creatures in disguise, hoping to cause just the sort of crossbreed such a union inevitably produces. Some less scrupulous practitioners of the arcane mysteries have, at times, taken captive trolls and bred them forcibly with other creatures, hoping to produce a new breed of powerful, resilient, yet easily controlled minion.

A half-troll is typically much tougher than a member of its nontroll parent race. It gains much of the troll's natural ability to shrug off damage; its superior strength, quickness, and hardiness; and some of the natural weaponry that makes trolls so fearsome. Half-trolls also inevitably find that they adopt some of their troll parents' less desirable

qualities as well. Greenish skin, an elongated snout, knobby dermal growths, and an insatiable hunger for raw flesh are only a few of these. Half-trolls typically have longer limbs than their nontroll parents—a trait especially obvious in humanoid, giant, and monstrous humanoid half-trolls.

### Creating a Half-Troll

“Half-troll” is an inherited template that can be added to any animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or outsider (referred to hereafter as the base creature). The creature’s type becomes giant, and a half-troll with an outsider as the base creature also gains the extraplanar subtype. The half-troll uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**AC:** Natural armor improves by +4.

**Damage:** Half-trolls have bite and claw attacks. If the base creature does not have these attack forms, use the appropriate damage values based on the half-troll’s size (see the table below). Otherwise, use the values from the table or the base creature’s damage, whichever is greater.

Size	Bite Damage	Claw Damage
Fine	1	—
Diminutive	1d2	1
Tiny	1d3	1d2
Small	1d4	1d3
Medium	1d6	1d4
Large	1d8	1d6
Huge	2d6	1d8
Gargantuan	2d8	2d6
Colossal	4d6	2d8

**Special Attacks:** A half-troll retains all the special attacks of the base creature. Half-trolls also gain two claw attacks (or the base creature’s number of claw attacks, whichever is higher) and the special ability to rend.

**Rend (Ex):** If a half-troll hits with two or more claw attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent’s body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional amount of damage based on the half-troll’s size (see the table below). A half-troll adds 1-1/2 times its Strength modifier to this base rend damage.

Size	Rend Damage
Fine	—
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	2d2
Small	2d3
Medium	2d4
Large	2d6
Huge	2d8
Gargantuan	4d6
Colossal	4d8

**Special Qualities:** A half-troll has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus darkvision with a range of 60 feet, fast healing 5, and scent.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** A half-troll heals 5 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow a half-troll to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

**Scent (Ex):** A half-troll can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

**Abilities:** Adjust from the base creature as follows: Str +6, Dex +2, Con +6, Int -2, Cha -2.

**Skills:** A half-troll has skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1) x (its Hit Dice + 3). Treat skills possessed by the base creature as class skills and other skills as cross-class. If the base creature has a class, it gains skill points for class levels normally.

**Feats:** Half-trolls gain feats normally. They tend to favor feats that take advantage of their strength, such as Power Attack and Cleave, or feats that offset their natural weaknesses, such as Iron Will.

**Climate/Terrain:** Same as base creature or any land, aquatic, and underground.

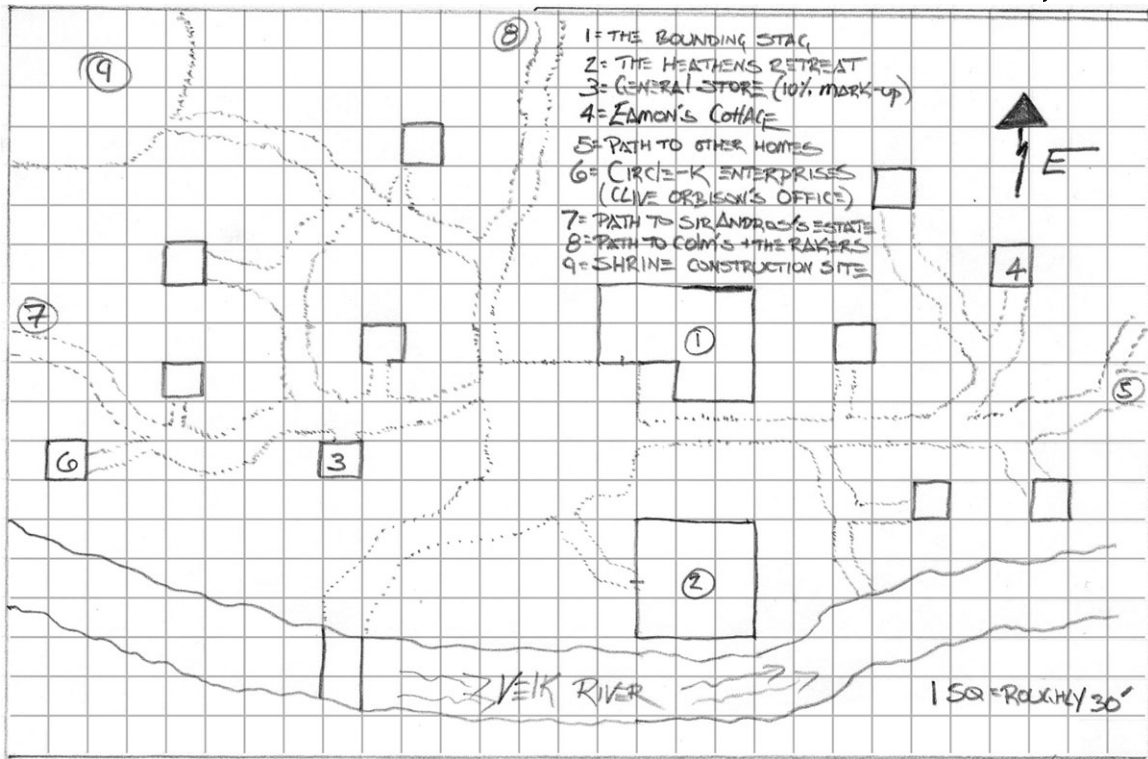
**Organization:** Same as the base creature or solitary.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +2.

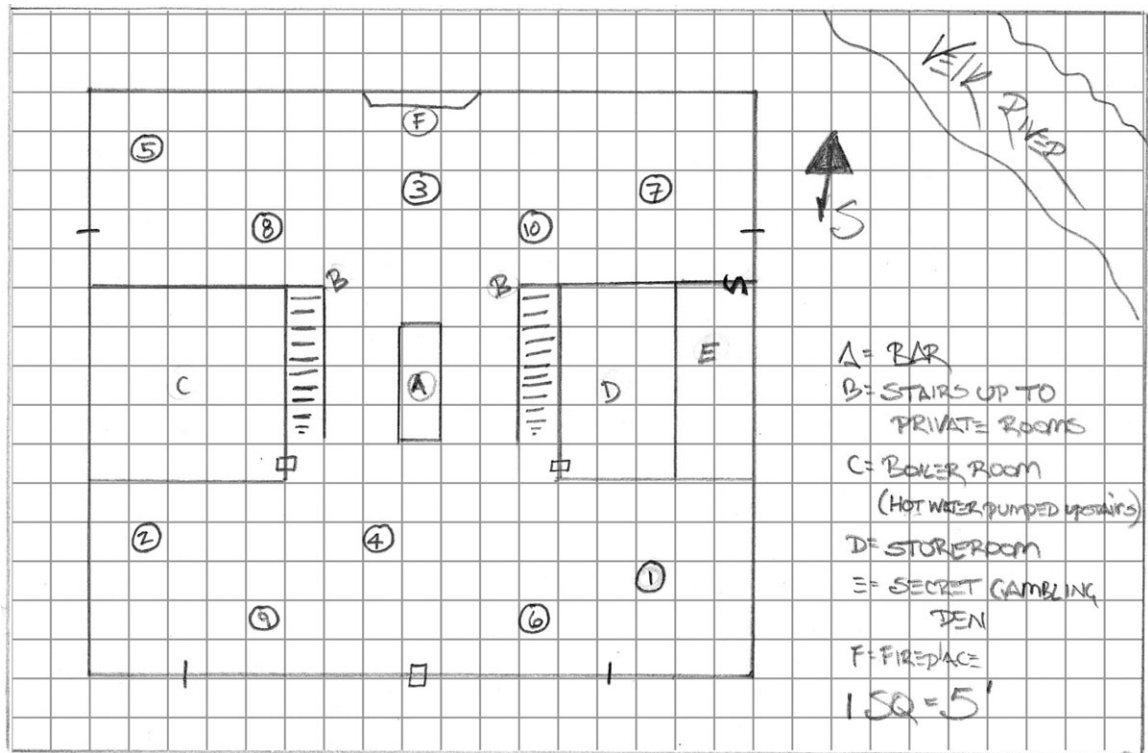
**Alignment:** Usually chaotic neutral or chaotic evil.

**Level adjustment:** +4.

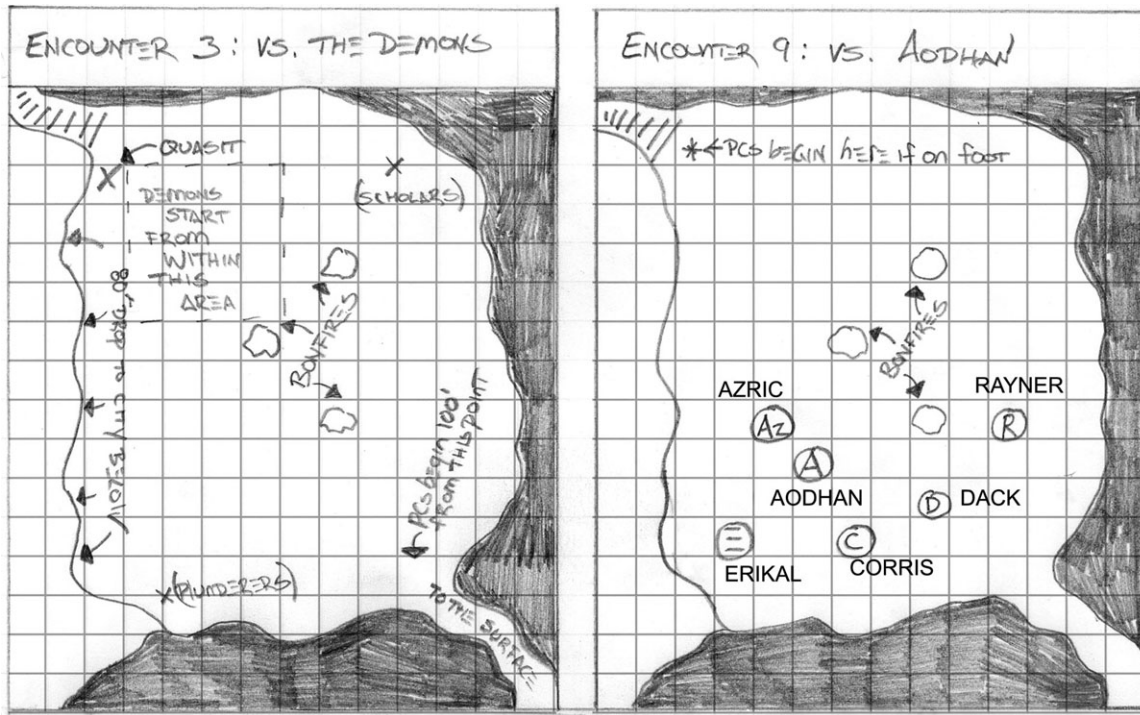
## MAP 1: TOBINSFORD, CY 596



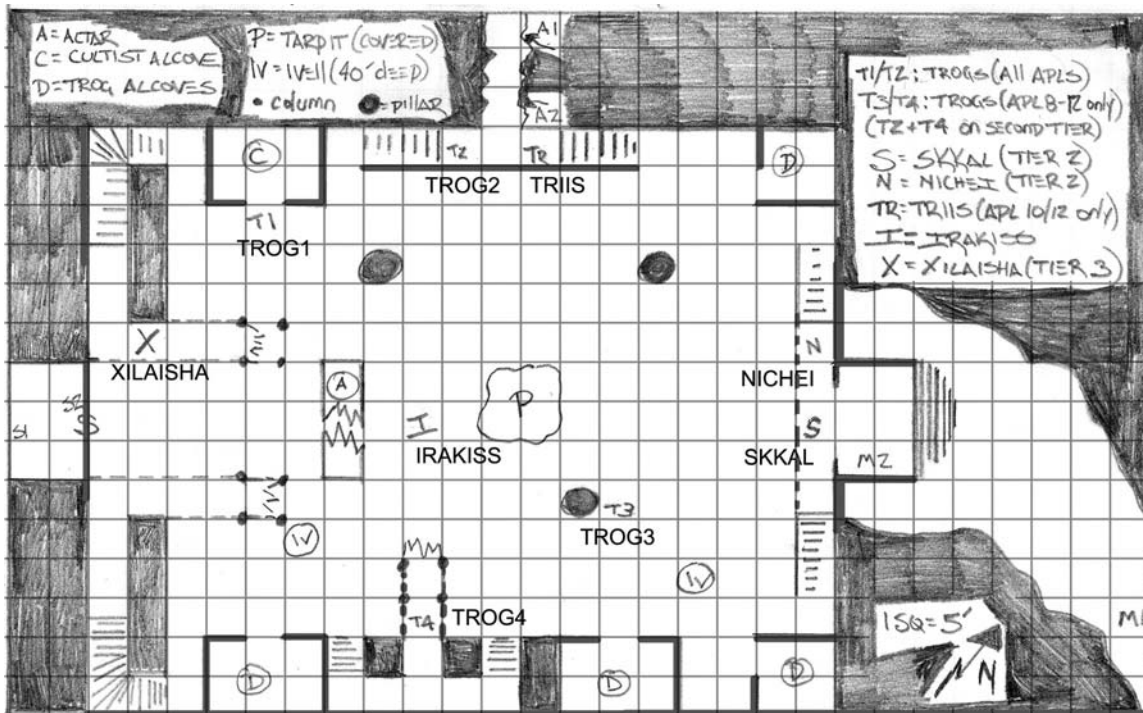
## MAP 2: THE HEATHEN'S RETREAT



## MAP 3: BASE CAMP



## MAP 4: TROGLODYTE LAIR



# DM AID 1: SPECIAL RULES FOR THE PALE

## Non-Pholtan Holy Symbols

It is illegal for adventurers to display a human holy symbol other than that of Pholtus in the Pale.

The intent of this rule is to properly depict the flavor of the Pale as a single religion theocracy ruled over by the Church of the One True Path and not to create player-vs.-player conflict. It is meant to enhance the role-playing of living under a religious government that does not allow freedom of religion.

PCs displaying the holy symbol of any human deity other than that of Pholtus should be fined and their holy symbol should be confiscated for destruction by the Palish authorities. The amount of the fine varies by APL: APL 2—90gp, APL 4—130gp, APL 6—180gp, APL 8—260gp, APL 10—460gp, APL 12—660gp. The confiscation and fine should take place as soon as any Palish authorities notice the holy symbol. This may leave a non-Pholtan cleric without his holy symbol for the adventure, as non-Pholtan holy symbols may not be purchased in the Pale without taking special actions. Non-human PCs are exempt from this law when displaying their racial deities' holy symbol(s). Non-humans are heathens who cannot even recognize the glory of Pholtus due to their beliefs in their own racial deities. If they can be brought to the light of Pholtus, this is good and perhaps they can be redeemed, but if they do not, it is of no consequence. Non-humans wearing the holy symbols of a human deity are treated the same as a human wearing a non-Pholtan holy symbol as they have shown that their souls have chosen to acknowledge human beliefs and culture, and they should, therefore, be brought to the truth of Pholtus.

Some deities require special adjudication for this rule due to their positions within non-human cultures as well as within human cultures.

- Bleredd – Considered a human deity due to his origins as an Oeridian deity and continued worship by Oeridians.
- Ehlonna – Considered an elven deity when worn as a holy symbol by elves only. This is due to special dispensation and negotiations with the Phostaldaron to allow for continued use of the Treaty Road through the Phostwood and into Tenh for the liberation and relief efforts in that region. All non-elves will be penalized as if violating the law even if they are not human as Ehlonna is considered to be a human deity.
- Fortubo – Considered a dwarven deity as he has withdrawn his support from the Suel, where his origins lie, in favor of fighting against the derro and their evil deity.
- Jascar – Considered a human deity, his origins are Suel and his primary worshippers still include many Suel.
- Nazarn – Considered a half-orc deity, since even though his origin is Suel, he was a half-orc himself and is venerated primarily by half-orcs
- Ulaa – Considered a human deity due to her position as the wife of the Oeridian god, Bleredd, and her worship by humans

Deities with Special Consideration due to their status:

- St. Cuthbert – Clergy loyal to St. Cuthbert were found to be working with clergy loyal to an infernal deity in the past. Displaying the holy symbol of St. Cuthbert is as offensive as displaying the holy symbol of a force of Chaos. See the next entry for worshippers of Chaotic deities.
- Chaotic Deities – Worshippers of Chaotic deities are fined double the usual fine, for being Agents of Chaos.
- Evil Deities – If a PC is found to be carrying the unholy symbol of an evil deity, all normal actions will be taken, and a *geas/quest* is cast on the PC to keep him from touching the unholy symbols of evil deities in the future. (The above assumes that the PC is not actually a cleric of the evil deity, since that is prohibited in the Living Greyhawk Campaign.)

No PC may enforce this rule through combat or offensive physical actions. Player-vs.-player conflict will be adjudicated as a violation of the RPGA General Rules, as always. If one PC chooses to report another PC to the authorities for a violation of this law, he will also be questioned and detained as to why he was associating with such a heathen, but will not be penalized.

For fair adjudication of this rule in the Theocracy of the Pale, some in-game rules are required for skills like Bluff and the hiding of non-Pholtan holy symbols:

1. To locate a non-Pholtan holy symbol in the Pale requires a DC 25 Gather Information check and the holy symbol will cost twice the standard price listed in the *Player's Handbook* price.
2. To craft a new wooden holy symbol requires a DC 15 Craft (jewelrymaking) or (woodcarving) check.
3. Seeing a holy symbol in its normal location around the neck as a necklace unless engaged in conversation or within a normal conversational distance from someone is a DC 10 (the average Pale legal authority has an average Spot

skill of +2). Holy symbols worn as other pieces of jewelry are not readily recognized as holy symbols at this time and require a DC 20 Spot check to notice followed by a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check to identify the holy symbol since it is a non-standard holy symbol; it is the same Spot check even if engaged in conversation as most people look to the neck to notice holy symbols.

4. It is a Bluff check or Sleight of Hand check (player's choice) opposed by Spot checks may be used to cast a spell using a holy symbol without the other person being able to see the holy symbol being used to cast the spell. The person attempting this has a -5 circumstance penalty due to the requirement of forceful presentation of holy symbols to cast spells where they are required as the divine focus.
5. It is a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check to identify the holy symbol of most deities. Some more obscure deities require a DC 15 and some extremely obscure deities may require a higher check to identify their holy symbols. Judges should use their best judgement on this, but a simple guide is if the deity is listed in the *Player's Handbook* or is a greater deity according to the LG deities' document, it is probably only a DC 10 check. If you haven't heard of the deity before, the deity is probably obscure.

### **Arcane Registration by Arcane Spellcasters**

Arcane magic is distrusted in the Theocracy of the Pale. Thus, the law requires all arcane spellcasters to register with the government. (Registry with the government is not the same as membership in the Arcanist Guild, which is a meta-game organization.) The Church is very diligent about informing foreigners of this law, so most traveling spellcasters are promptly registered as well.

Any PC who is found not to be registered as an arcane spellcaster within the Pale will be arrested and confined to service within a New Dawn Camp for a period of 4 TU (one month in game terms). The arcanist will immediately be registered as such in the Pale as a part of his arrest.

In Pale Regional scenarios, city guards or other officials may ask any known arcane casters to show proof of registration. As the player of an arcane caster, you may download and print the Arcane Registration Certificate from the Pale regional website ([http://www.theocracyofthepale.com/downloads/arcane\\_registration.pdf](http://www.theocracyofthepale.com/downloads/arcane_registration.pdf)). If you are judging a scenario, you might want to print some certificates, in case any players with arcanist PCs have not done so for themselves. Just because a player has failed to print this certificate for his character is not a reason to punish his PC; if the player just did not have the opportunity or means to print a certificate, you may assume he is registered if he says he is though you may wish to document this on his AR. Once an arcanist has been arrested, he is registered in the Pale and this should be documented on his AR. It does not matter if he destroys his certificate or not as the Pale keeps diligent records of the registered arcanists and this information is transcribed to the registration books throughout the Pale once a month.

Arcane spellcaster characters may attempt to utilize forged documents if they so choose. It requires a Bluff check opposed by the Sense Motive check of the authorities attempting to verify the PCs registration paperwork to succeed at this ruse. Failure results in arrest for not being registered and an additional 500 gp fine for forging official Pale documents. (If the PC has the ability to forge documents, this check may be used in lieu of his Bluff check).

## DM AID 2: GATHER INFORMATION RESULTS

### **At the *Heathen's Retreat*:**

- DC 5: Garseg-huh? What's that? Sorry, but I only understand Common.
- DC 7: Sure, adventurers like yourselves have passed through town in the last month or so; there were a few of groups, as I recall, some humans, some small folk. Haven't seen 'em since.
- DC 10: Look at all of these construction workers that are in town, "making an honest wage," whatever that is. Poor laboring slobs! It's much easier to make money as a miner.
- DC 15: The supplies in the square? That priest Eamon ordered it all for some new temple or something to Pholtus that he's building. There's gonna be way too many seats, if you know what I'm saying. Better to use the wood instead on new rooms for this tavern or as shoring for the gold mines. Gold is more popular than Pholtus in Tobinsford, anyway. What? What did I say?
- DC 20: Dack Splintheel?!? That tree-hugging jerk! He snuck onto my claim site and coated all of my claim markers with some kind of stinky alchemical goo and lit them on fire! Me and my partners couldn't extinguish the flames! By the time morning came our site was overrun with these weird, giant moths with crazy patterns on their wings! Dang things chased us out and we can't even go back up there to get our gear! I hate that guy!!! Someone should teach him a lesson!
- DC 25: (Overheard) Remember that gnome who came through town a month ago and kept asking about Sir Andros and some crazy curse? I heard he was murdered on the way to Woodsedge and the Flinty Hills. Mr. Spurlock passed through town a few days after that to report it to Brother Eamon and I heard him talking about it in the *Stag*. He said the murder was horribly violent: organs removed and stuff. Really creepy. He said it was kind of weird too, that he found swamp grass near the body. All the more reason to stay here in town and order more ale.
- DC 30: Could you buy me a drink? I'm low on coin these days. See, I sold my gold claim to this guy from Stradsett; he said he represented a company that was looking to expand its portfoe—portofile—something like that. Anyway, he paid me gold glories aplenty and said the company would do the mining and I'd get a percentage. Well, I used all the coin he paid me and never saw him again, or got my percentage. I went to Stradsett to find him, and the Church of Pholtus said there was never any such company! I think I got suckered. Dang businessmen!

### **At the *Bounding Stag*:**

- DC 5: Garseg-huh? What's that? No doubt it's some vulgarity concocted at that atrocious new tavern.
- DC 10: The lumber and building supplies in the town square are for the new shrine to Pholtus. Brother Eamon—I mean, Father Eamon [chuckles]—is overseeing construction on this shrine. It should be finished within the week.
- DC 15: It's disgraceful! All those laborers in town to help with construction on a new shrine to Pholtus, and most of them spend their nights drinking and carousing in that horrible new tavern!
- DC 20: Dack Splintheel?!? That guy is my hero! Did you hear about the owlbear? Crazy feathery monster with a beak! It probably escaped from some weird wizard's zoo! Thing probably would've killed and eaten everyone in town if not for Ol' Dack. I hear he's whittling the beak into some kind of boomerang. Oh, and how about that big white wolf? It spit ice at two local girls before Dack and his big opossum chased it away. Yessir, Dack's sure got a temper, but I'm glad he's around. Spends most of his time up in the hills, I know, but someone should throw that guy a party!
- DC 25: Being around that Clive Orbison is bad enough, but those two men he recently hired make me even more uncomfortable. They sure don't act like the "hired hands" they claim to be...more like partners. There was even a third man in town a few weeks ago. He was Flan like the other two, but he limped as if he were injured. I saw them talking just after dark down by the river but it was hard to see the third man's features. I don't know what happened to him.
- DC 30: Sir Andros? Are you friends of his? What a terrible shame about his young squire, Taran. I hear that the boy's hillbilly father was so upset that he made death threats against Sir Andros. It's a very awkward situation, really. Well, I haven't seen Sir Andros around town in some time. I'm sure he's very busy, what with being a knight. There's always some activity out at his estate. Pity he doesn't come to town more often; someone in his position should do something about that unpardonable new tavern, since that layabout of a Pale Patrolman Marlin Spurlock comes around about as often as a balmy day.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 1: METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

1. **Unconcerned:** You prefer to face challenges as they present themselves, daring the members of the Cult of Demogorgon to show themselves.
2. **Curious:** You consider the slain, treacherous Flan guide Sterlys to be a viable lead, so you ask about him at Griffwatch Castle and several nearby Fens outposts. This leads to interviews with other local trackers and minor Church officials.
3. **Determined:** You cannot ignore the fact that Sir Andros of Tobinsford both organized and financed the Fens expedition, so you go back to Tobinsford to confront the retired knight directly.
4. **Secretive:** Not wishing to draw attention (especially from the Church) to yourself, you undertake a private investigation into the matter, without Church knowledge or sanction.

## PLAYER HANDOUT 2: INVESTIGATION RESULTS

1. **Unconcerned:** Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

2. **Curious:** You interview minor Church officials and trackers based near the Troll Fens, and learn that all official requests for trackers originate within the Church. Therefore, there must be spies within the Church, and at higher levels than anyone you were able to interview. Moreover, such spies must be based in Tobinsford (where the expedition was originally organized) and very well-connected (with contacts stretching across the Pale) to have orchestrated such an elaborate trap. Your contacts thank you for bringing this to their attention and advise you not to trust anyone—especially any suspicious “outdoor types” such as rangers and scouts (not trusting druids goes without saying), or even members of the Church until the plot is solved. One tracker recalls overhearing some lizardfolk deep in the Fens; strangely, they spoke in broken Common and referred to someone named Aodhan (“OW-then”).

3. **Determined:** You look for Sir Andros at his estate outside Tobinsford, yet the retired knight is mysteriously elusive. His servants are evasive and report that he is “away on business”; they do not know when to expect him back. Asking about Andros around Tobinsford yields conspicuous answers: where he goes or what he does is unknown, but most people assume that it must be both important and for the good of the Prelacy. Andros is the closest thing Tobinsford has to a genuine noble, and eccentricity is often a staple of that social class. Still, some people don’t take kindly to unknown adventurers prying into the affairs of their beloved village elder, and your overt curiosity results in a temporary -4 penalty to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks while in Tobinsford, at least until Sir Andros returns and agrees to vouch for your character.

Returning to the estate after several days of inquiry in town, your persistence eventually leads Andros’s servants to admit that he left without warning one night almost a week ago, and that they have no idea where he is. They are concerned and note that several people have recently arrived in Tobinsford, and that perhaps this has something to do with their lord’s disappearance. The servants implore you to keep this information to yourself, as public knowledge that Sir Andros is missing could cause an unnecessary panic. If Andros did not sabotage the Fens expeditions, perhaps whoever did has already gotten to him as well. Prudence suggests that you speak about this only with someone you trust, perhaps another adventurer or even someone who was there in the Fens with you.

4. **Secretive:** Your private investigation into the sabotaged Fens expedition yields a startling discovery: there are Cult spies within the Church of the One True Path. The more damning evidence is that Sir Andros appears to have been aware of this but organized the Fens expedition with full knowledge that he was sending you into a trap. What isn’t clear yet is why. Andros seems an unlikely culprit given his noble reputation, but perhaps that is the key: someone completely above suspicion would be ideally suited to operate as a Cult spy. Who else in Tobinsford fits that description?



## PLAYER HANDOUT 3: ECHOES OF BETRAYAL

The following argument is overheard during Encounter 7. Solicit two players to read the following two parts aloud while the others follow along (actions in parentheses should not be read aloud, however):

Guttural voice: "You mock me! Deceiver!"

Raspy voice (*amid much laughter and hissing*): "Do not preach morality to us. You do not know the meaning of the word."

Guttural voice: "I should have recognized a liar when I set eyes on one, you subhuman scum!"

Raspy voice: "And yet here you are, desperate to deal. If I am so loathsome, where were your moral convictions during our first meeting, or did the prospect of recovering your precious trinket further dull your half-breed wits?"

Guttural voice: "You do not even know where it is, do you?"

Raspy voice: "No, we do not...but our benefactor does."

Guttural voice: "What benefactor?"

Raspy voice: "Oh, I think you have already met him," [*much hissing and laughter ensues*] "judging by those burns on your chest and arms—"

Guttural voice: "Then this was a deception from the beginning! You promised to help me recover the artifact! You set me up! You used me! Everything you told me was a lie!"

Raspy voice: "No one lied to you! You heard what you wanted to hear, then failed to ask questions. You assume too much. You are as greedy as he said you would be."

Guttural voice: "As *who* said? If you do not have the artifact, why betray me like this?"

Raspy voice (*amid much frenzied laughter*): "Someone made us a better offer. He said you would be upset."

Guttural voice (*shakily, after a pause*): "Where did you get THAT?"

Raspy voice: "Consider it an insurance policy.."

Guttural voice: "You vile, manipu—"

Raspy voice: "You call me manipulative? Would you have us believe that you brought along ALL these scrawny humans—armed, and with spell components, no less—as part of our deal? Are you SURE you were not planning to kill all of us once you had your trinket? Please do not flatter me with tales of your innocence and good faith. We know all about you. We're burning the corpses in case you had any other crazy ideas."

Guttural voice: "I'll kill you!!!!"

Raspy voice (*amid much shouting and hissing*): "You are welcome to try, but you saw how easily we dispatched your last bodyguard. If I were you, I would kill myself. You are an abomination. Your god must be weak to have allowed such a vassal as you as a petitioner."

Guttural voice: (*after a pause*): "What do you want?"

Raspy voice: "Want? Do you mean, what do we want in exchange for your trinket? It is no longer ours to bargain with. We have everything we need." [*human shrieks in Common erupt in the background*] "It is what we do not want that concerns us now: YOU."

Guttural voice: "What are you saying?"

Raspy voice: "GO. Go back to the surface world, back to your muddy swamp, back to your masters' assassins."

Guttural voice: "My bodyguard and I already dispatched them—"

Raspy voice: "For now. I will wager that more are coming. Call it an informed hunch. Perhaps H'nakaalah can help you!" [*wild laughter ensues*] "I banish you. Oh, my scouts inform me that several groups of surface-dwelling adventurers are infesting the city as we speak. One of them is surely looking for you. Now GO, or fall upon our claws, half-breed." [*frenzied laughter fades away*]