

GRMI-07

Lesser of Two Goods

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®

Gran March Regional Adventure

Version 1

by Russell S. Timm

Blurb: The Church of St. Cuthbert in Shibolet is looking for a few noble souls with your talents to help them out in the Dim Forest. But what's this? Someone else seeks your help for the same purpose? It looks like somebody's going to be disappointed. An adventure for characters level 3-10.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, GREYHAWK and RPGA are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. LIVING GREYHAWK is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Scenario detail copyright 2001 by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the

players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

LIVING GREYHAWK Tier Structure

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>	<u>Lvl Cap</u>
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6 th
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8 th
T4:	33-42	36-46	39-50	42-54	10 th

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Is it a Full Moon?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute: You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

Poor: You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

Common: You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

High: You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

Luxury: You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

Adventure Summary and Background

Shiboleth

Shiboleth is a town of just under 6,000 people in the southeastern part of Gran March. Shiboleth is the seat of the Barony of Shiboleth, and its ruler is Baron Germike Doulanfon. Although small as compared to other walled cities in the Flanaess, Shiboleth is second only to Hookhill in size in the Gran March. Shiboleth serves as an important station for trade goods headed north out of the Sheldomar Valley and south into Keoland. Shiboleth is also the northern terminus of the Sheldomar Pike, which runs through the Ulek states. As such, Shiboleth has a plethora of

inns and shops that cater to travelers for a city of its size.

The Soft Pillow Inn and Tavern

Just as the name suggests it is a delightful inn. This Inn can be found just inside the second city walls, near the main entrance. Here people receive the red carpet treatment. Many fine foods and wines, ales and beers can be found here. Each room is beautifully decorated with paintings and other fine pieces of furniture. The inn is own by the Calvius family, one of the noble families of the city. A pleasant gentleman named Vesvare Habbinsford runs the Inn. The inn is very safe, guarded by half a dozen to a dozen guards (Lvl 3-6 War), not to mention the backing of Calvius's own guards. Room here is 10 gp a night, which includes dinner, breakfast, and a bath. This does not include drinks. It has 2 stories of bedrooms and a pleasant gathering room for eating and socializing, which also features a live band. While not having its own stables, there is a stable house called Fernanin's Keep only a block away, where the horses are groomed and fed for 3 gp the first night and 1 gp each day there after.

The Dim Forest

The bulk of this forest lies within the Lost Lands, with Bissel's boundary just clipping the northeastern portion, and the Gran March laying claim to an eastern fringe. The forest itself has huge old trees so broad and leafy that virtually no sunlight passes to the soil below. This makes the forest ideal for orcs, goblins, and other nocturnal and light-hating creatures, but an unknown number of wood elves live within the forest's confines. They are said to be slowly overcome by humanoids marauding from the Lost Lands, and the Dim forest has more than its fair share of legends of terrible monsters, including tenebrous worms, slow shadows, and worse.

The Church of St. Cuthbert

As elsewhere in the Flanaess, the church of St. Cuthbert in Gran March is divided into the three branches. Most common are the Billets, charged to serve as ministers and protectors. Most of the adventuring clergy are of this order. The Stars, the least numerous of the orders, keep doctrinal purity among the faithful, while the Chapeaux seek out new converts. The faithful of St. Cuthbert are the third most numerous religious group in Gran March, behind only Heironeous and the Harvest Church.

The faith of St. Cuthbert is marked by a strong devotion to friends and family, and to traditional values like honesty and forthrightness. While the faiths of Heironeous and Pholtus appeal more to the philosophical side, St. Cuthbert appeals to an instinctive sense of right and wrong. This makes the faith extremely popular among the common people, especially soldiers and former soldiers,

who also appreciate his unbending loyalty and martial aspect. This faith is very common among the rare communities whose members are still primarily Flan, as the faith of Berei has fallen out of favor.

Activities of the Priesthood

While the missions of the three branches of the priesthood are different, their day-to-day activities include many common elements. Most priests of St. Cuthbert wander from village to village, and tend to the needs of the common folk. Renowned for their wisdom, honesty, and common sense, they are often called upon to settle disputes between neighbors, and their decisions are usually respected. They tend to the sick and injured, and conduct services for the faithful.

The Billets are typically assigned to a shrine or chapel, and tend to the village where it is located, and other villages perhaps as much as a day's walk away. In addition to their other duties, they seek out and eliminate threats to their flocks, either personally, by recruiting adventurers or alerting the Knights or army. Except for those who have become infirm with age, they participate in local militias, though they eschew leadership roles in those organizations.

Relationship with the Church of Pholtus

As one might expect, the followers of St. Cuthbert do not get along well with those of Pholtus. This is particularly acute among the older members of the clergy who still remember the Penbroke Massacre of Flocktime 11th, 570 CY when a band of young, hot-headed followers of Pholtus put a chapel of St. Cuthbert to the torch – during worship services, after barricading the doors from the outside. Thirty-four worshippers and a priest were murdered that day, and the wound has still not healed. To their credit, the leaders of the church were able to prevent any retaliation, but relationships between the two priesthoods remain icy.

The Church of Pholtus

The church of Pholtus in Gran March is a small one, generally confined to urban areas. The followers of Pholtus are extremely dedicated, and worship services are very well attended, as devotees seek the One True Path. They are absolutely certain that they are right, and will brook no argument in this regard.

Their certainty caused tremendous grief in the village of Penbroke twenty-one years ago when, following a fiery sermon denouncing the worship of Cuthbert, a group of young followers of Pholtus rode forth from Shiboeth and burned a chapel of St. Cuthbert to the ground, with the congregation inside. Though the murderers were captured, tried, and put to death, and denounced all the while by the hierarchy of the church, the

reputation of the followers of the Blinding Light gained a black mark that has not faded.

The worship of Pholtus appeals to those who seek a rigid, unbending code to live by, or by those who are searching for an unmoving, stable and reliable facet in their lives. The church has benefited in recent years from an influx of refugees, many of who turn to Pholtus for certainty in uncertain times.

Centers of Worship

The Blinding Spire in Shibolet is the seat of the Shining Master, leader of the faith in the Gran March. Temples of Pholtus are typically constructed of white marble (or the best available equivalent). They are adorned with silver and white fixtures and cloths. The temples have a very clean, elegant look to them, and are quite striking to behold. Services include prayer, the singing of hymns, and sermons. Services are conducted by the light of pure white tapers, no matter the time of day. Services to Pholtus are longer and more frequent than is typical of the other Powers worshipped in Gran March.

Activities of the Priesthood

The priests of Pholtus spend much of their time seeking converts to their faith, and preaching to the unfaithful. These activities tend to make them somewhat unpopular, since the Pholtians tend to do their recruiting by explaining how horrible and immoral everyone else is, and telling them that they must come worship Pholtus to find the One True Path.

In addition to proselytizing the church of Pholtus engages in a number of more useful works. They expend a great deal of energy and resources tending to the needs of the destitute, both native and refugee, in Hookhill and Hochoch. They provide food, alms, and of course spiritual guidance. In addition, the members of this faith militantly seek out and destroy evil and chaotic monsters that threaten the realm, and lead expeditions into the wild areas and Lost Lands. The adventuring clergy is thus well respected, both for their accomplishments and because their experiences tend to temper their self-righteousness. It is the temple-bound clergy that is less appreciated, except among the desperately poor.

Church Leadership

Shining Master Orden Maxwell runs the church of Pholtus in authoritarian fashion. Orden came to his office in the aftermath of the Penbroke Massacre, when the preceding Shining Master resigned in disgrace. He was selected for his charisma and calm demeanor. Under his leadership and on his direct orders, the church of Pholtus has drastically reduced its rhetoric denouncing the other faiths of Gran March. While they still present themselves as the

keepers of the One True Path, they do so without direct reference to other faiths or churches. The priests of Pholtus are especially diffident with regards to the church of St. Cuthbert. They don't like the Cuthbertians, but go out of their way not to invoke any further violence. This deference is the direct result of an order from the Commandant of the Gran March. After the massacre, it was made abundantly and pointedly clear that the followers of Pholtus were going to get along with their neighbors, or they would be disbanded, and their leaders imprisoned or worse.

Relationship with the Church of St. Cuthbert

The most important relationship is with the church of St. Cuthbert. The old wounds have yet to heal, and there are some Cuthbertians still waiting for the church of Pholtus to err again. The church of Pholtus also has strained relationships with the church of Phyton. They consider the followers of the chaotic Suel god to be a dangerous influence, and have been known to say so. Orden has reduced this tension markedly by putting a stop to public declarations against Phyton, but again, many of the older priests on either side still regard each other with distaste.

Adventure Synopsis

This adventure begins with the PCs in Shibolet for whatever reason the players can provide. A poster in the town square should hopefully pique their interest for a meeting with Themlin (pronounced TEM-lin), a Billet of St. Cuthbert. After a dinner at Themlin's expense, he will try to coerce the PCs to his aid. This requires a week-long journey across the Rushmoors to the edge of the Dim Forest, where a historian and archaeologist named Vechris Aruweg is digging up the land around an old abandoned chapel of St. Cuthbert (with the church's permission and backing, of course). It seems Vechris has been having problems with some humanoids (bugbears specifically), and is worried that when the retinue of guards from Fort Endurance leave (about 8 days from now), the bugbears will return. Themlin will try to convince PCs of the plight and encourage them to help him and the church in this time of need.

Once dinner is over and as the PCs are leaving, a priest of Pholtus named Barichema will approach them and ask them to follow him to the Blinding Spire, the temple of Pholtus in Shibolet and hierarchal seat of the faith in the Gran March. They will be escorted in to see none other than Orden Maxwell, the head of the church of Pholtus in the March. He will explain that he wishes to hire them to perform the same duty. He will introduce them to a fellow member of the clergy, Pholemius Brightmantle. Pholemius is an enigmatic fellow, also known as the Sin Eater (See **Appendix**). Pholemius will try

his best to convince the PCs that the church of Pholtus has a greater need and therefore their interests take greater precedence in this matter.

Once the players have made their decision, this scenario essentially becomes two different adventures. If they decide to honor the agreement with Themlin, they will travel across the Rushmoors and make it there with a day to spare. Since the retinue will still be there, the PCs will be encouraged to go out on a seek-and-destroy mission against the bugbears. After finding the bugbears and eliminating them, the PCs will probably explore the rest of an old temple complex devoted to Erythnul the Many. If the PCs survive the traps and search carefully, they may just find their way down to the Chamber of Slaughter, where they will find an ancient relic of Pholtus and a unique elemental guarding it. Tampering with the artifact will only bring grief to the PCs and eventually they will probably give up and report back to Vechris. This leads to the conclusion described in **Aftermath (St. Cuthbert)**.

Should the players decide to instead work for Orden, they will accompany Pholemius to the site, delaying long enough to ensure the retinue has left. When they get to the site, they will find a scene of carnage, as Vechris and his workers have been slain. Following the trail of the assailants, the PCs encounter the remnants of the bugbears in a temple complex devoted to Erythnul. Pholemius will be invaluable to them here as they explore the temple. Finally the PCs will descend into the Chamber of Slaughter to defeat the elemental guarding the Prism Scepter. This then leads to the conclusion presented in **Aftermath (Pholtus)**.

Introduction

This brisk Coldeven afternoon finds you in Shibolet, a sizeable city in the southeastern part of the March. You have seen small caravans of trade goods heading north and south, some staying and others leaving. Like in other sizeable places of the March, the presence of the military is to be found everywhere, and in addition to the familiar standard of the land, other various battle standards can be seen on soldiers of various Prides. Across the street, a young boy catches your attention as he nails a piece of parchment to a posting board. He is dressed like a junior clergy member of St. Cuthbert. After nailing the parchment, he quickly heads back the way he came, off to the northeast and you surmise probably back to the Temple of the Oaken Cudgel.

As might be inferred, the Temple of the Oaken Cudgel is the temple of St. Cuthbert in Shibolet. The temple itself plays no role in this adventure. Should the PCs decide to read what the acolyte has posted, read them the following:

The Church of St. Cuthbert seeks brave and noble souls to aid it in its time of need. Men and women with strong arms and strong character are required. If interested, come to the Soft Pillow Inn and Tavern one hour after sundown. Be prompt and presentable. Ask for Billet Themlin of St. Cuthbert.

The PCs have several hours to do what they wish before meeting with Themlin. If they are hesitant, remind them that they might at least get a free meal just for hearing what the man has to say. The Soft Pillow Inn and Tavern is easily the best and highest quality establishment of its kind in Shibolet.

Encounter 1: Dinner Time

Having convinced yourself that meeting with a Cuthbertian priest outside of his church can't be that bad, you have ended up at the prestigious tavern. The atmosphere is relaxed and reserved, and there are several capable looking guards about the place. You have been escorted to a large table in a private dining room by a man name Vesvare. Seated at the far head of the table is a cheery looking man in a simple white and tan outfit. He is balding and has gray beginning to show through his beard, moustache, and what remains of his hair. He is somewhere between five and a half feet to six feet in height and is of medium build, perhaps slightly overweight. His tanned and weathered skin acts to contrast his bright blue eyes. As you enter, he steps forward and clasps your hand with both of his, giving a firm handshake. "Good Coldeven to you. So glad you could come. I am Billet Themlin. Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable. Dinner will be served shortly." There are several other people seated at the table. While you wait for dinner, Themlin asks each of the people at the table their name and to tell a little about themselves, including yourself.

The players should now describe their PCs to the DM and to the other players. Themlin will for the most part nod appreciatively, though he will ask any questions that the DM feels are appropriate. He is suspicious of half-orcs, especially ones with minimal intelligence. However, he is not so prejudiced as to ask them to leave. After the descriptions are over, continue with the following.

Themlin looks up as the doors open. "Ahh dinner is served." A man and a woman enter with several platters and the smells of roast boar and turkey assail your noses. Accompanying the main course is an assortment of vegetables and fruits. "Before we eat, let us give thanks to St. Cuthbert for the blessings of this day." He bows his head and says a small prayer before returning his gaze to the lot of you. "Let us eat." There is enough food on the

table to fill even the largest among you to his or her content. "Now, as to the reason you have come." He pauses, making sure he has everyone's attention.

"There is a scholarly and learned man by the name of Vechris Aruweg that makes his abode in Shibolet. This man is currently working in the Dim Forest, with our church's permission, digging up an abandoned church there. I believe he's looking for old artifacts from the days of the Oerid migrations eons ago that he believes exist there. We are sponsoring his efforts and wish to see him succeed."

He pauses and then continues. "We have recently received a letter from him about the progress of his work. It seems he is being harassed by humanoids in the area. He has been told that these are large goblins known as bugbears. There is a small contingent from Fort Endurance protecting him currently, but they will have to return in about a week's time. He is worried that the attacks will resume when the contingent leaves, and without a force to protect him and his band of excavators, he fears the worst."

"Since this site is many leagues from here, our church would like you to aid us in this time of need. You would have to leave here tomorrow morning at the latest to arrive on time. Although we can't offer much of a material reward at this time, our church would be most grateful to you and be certain to return the favor in your time of personal need if possible. Will you aid us?" he pleads.

If the PCs agree, Themlin says:

"Excellent. I knew St. Cuthbert had sent us the right people when I laid my eyes upon you. I shall meet you at Fermanin's Keep just down the road tomorrow morning. You shall be provided with horses to aid you in getting there as quickly as possible. Until then I bid you good evening."

After that, Themlin leaves. The PCs are free to do what they want after this. PCs probably can't afford to stay here so they will most likely be lodging elsewhere. Those who do leave should proceed to **Encounter 2**.

Encounter 2: A Light Dessert

As you're leaving the tavern, an unfamiliar cloaked figure approaches you. The light of the two moons behind him hides his features. "This night finds you well. Follow me if you would prosper. There is no time for questions now. We must hurry." With that the figure turns and heads off to the east.

PCs may try and ask questions or just stand around confused. If a cleric, paladin, or known worshipper of St. Cuthbert is present, he or she

will not be invited, and the figure will say that in so many words. If the PCs follow him, read the following.

You continue after the mysterious figure through the streets to the northeastern part of the city. The figure draws you closer and closer to a building that dominates this part of the city. It seems to draw all those who gaze upon it like a magnet as it looms larger the closer you get. You enter a paved courtyard across from a massive tower, five stories in height. The walls are made of white marble and granite. Even in the darkness, the tower is well lit, and it is capped with a bright flame atop it that can be seen for miles around. The court itself is also well lit, and the light reflects off of the many large windows of the tower. The figure proceeds across the courtyard and beckons you to enter. You weigh your options as you look to the top of the magnificent cathedral known to all in the land as *The Blinding Spire*, the seat of the faith of Pholtus in the Gran March.

This is the PC's last chance to avoid involvement with the Pholtians in this matter. If PCs choose to walk away, that's fine. If for whatever reason they cross the court, read the following.

For reasons only known to yourself, you decide to follow the figure, certainly a follower or priest of Pholtus. You are divested of any obvious weapons or implements of harm before you are allowed to proceed. You follow after him through the halls of the *Blinding Spire*, adorned with suitable riches and decorations. You proceed up stairs, certainly far enough to be near the top. Ahead of you is a set of closed double doors, made of fine polished sablewood. A silver sunburst is set into each. The figure turns to address you. "The Shining Master wishes to speak with you. You will address him with respect and behave yourselves or you will not see the light of day again. Am I understood?" Having made himself clear, he proceeds to open the doors.

Inside the large room is a man seated in a plush chair. He is older with white hair and a chiseled face. His eyes are closed and he has his hands clasped as if in meditation. He wears extremely fine garments of gold and white, with jewelry to match. Certainly this must be the Shining Master of Pholtus, Orden Maxwell. To his right, his left hand resting upon the chair, stands another man. This man is about six feet in height and has an olive complexion with kinked copper hair. His brown eyes study you intently and his clothes make him appear but a commoner as he stands next to the Shining Master. He smiles at you as you gaze about the room.

The sitting room itself is lavish, fit for King Skotti himself. Various portraits of clergy gone before adorn the walls in between murals that extol the achievements of those who have served the *Blinding Light* in years gone by. Oddly, there

are no other seats in the room, and so you remain standing. There are two guardsmen in the far corners of the room dressed in heavy armor and decked out in ceremonial raiment. Each has an exquisite halberd that extends halfway to the ceiling some twenty or thirty feet above you.

The Shining Master looks up at you, but oddly doesn't open his eyes. He begins to speak slowly and deliberately, in a rich and accented voice. "I know that you have spoken with a member of the Church of St. Cuthbert earlier this evening on matters that concern the Blinding Spire. You will tell me everything that he spoke of." The Shining Master waits expectantly.

It would be unwise for PCs to lie to Orden Maxwell. Remind players if necessary that if the Shining Master knows of the meeting, he probably already knows what was said there, and might be testing the PCs to see if they're honest. (This isn't exactly the case, though he does have a good idea. There are also two candles of truth burning in the room, as he expects heretics such as the PCs to lie.) After the PCs are done with their explaining, Orden continues.

"Nothing that is said here leaves this room. If asked, you were never here and this meeting never took place. The man to my right is Pholemius Brightmantle. He has come here all the way from Wintershiven in the Pale. He is firmly convinced that Vechris Aruweg is about to unearth something of great importance to our faith. Although I don't understand how he is so certain, the reputation of the Sin Eater is known throughout the Flanaess among our faith. I am sure you are aware of the tenuous relationship between our faith and that of St. Cuthbert. The thought of allowing something so precious to fall into their hands is...unbearable. Aruweg must fail. I wish it of you to renounce your deal with this Themlin, and instead accompany Pholemius to this area. The eyes of the Blinding Light look upon you in this dark hour. Shall you aid us?" The Shining Master again looks at you expectantly.

If the PCs accept, Orden smiles slightly, saying:

"Though I had doubts, Pholemius had faith in you to make the correct decision. You shall not regret this, and the Blinding Spire remembers those who stand with it in its hour of glory and hour of need. From what you have told me, if you delay for several days, the humanoid rabble should be able to dissuade Aruweg from his excavation. You will then guard Pholemius' person while he searches the area for this...this...object. It saddens me that innocent men may die because of this, but such is the price that oft must be paid of those heretics who meddle in the affairs of the Blinding Light. Leave us now. Pholemius shall talk to you in the morning after you have resolved your un-commitment to that Billet Themlin. You will also swear that you will not

harm Pholemius and to do all in your power to see that no harm comes to him. You risk drawing the attention of Pholtus himself should that happen." The PCs are then escorted out of the Blinding Spire by the guards in the room.

If the PCs decline, Orden frowns and speaks with venom in his voice:

"I was correct. I have allowed a band of heretic rabble to mar this holy sanctum. I am most displeased. Know that the Blinding Light casts no shadow that you can hide in. I know your names. Should you ever give me cause, I shall bear down upon you like a devil spawned of the Hells coming to collect your soul when your miserable time in this life has come to an end. Be gone from my sight! Your evil and wretched souls appear before me like a vacuous abyss in the Light. Guards!"

With that the PCs are hurriedly rushed out of the room and the Blinding Spire. From here on out, the adventure will differ depending upon whether the PCs have stuck with their commitment to Themlin or chosen to go accompany Pholemius. If they have chosen the former, use all subsequent encounters that have **St. Cuthbert** in parentheses. If they chose the latter, use all subsequent encounters that have **Pholtus** in parentheses.

Encounter 3 (St. Cuthbert): You Can't Have Your Cake and Eat It Too

Having chosen to honor your commitment to Themlin, you make it to the stables at Fernanin's Keep in the morning, where Themlin awaits you. "Good Coldeven to you. Are you ready to go?"

PCs who speak of the meeting last night with the Shining Master are in REALLY hot water. Of course, Themlin will be certain to report this to his superior, Truthseeker Aberion Colshimere as soon as the PCs leave for town. This will have important ramifications (See **Aftermath**). Themlin gives the PCs their mounts along with a month's rations in their saddle pack. He gives them directions, telling them to head north to Buxton's Crossing and then west toward Fort Endurance. When they come in view of the Dim Forest, they are to head south, keeping the Rushmoors on their left. The site is approximately two days ride south of the road between Buxton's Crossing and Fort Endurance. He then wishes them luck.

The journey to the site is nearly a week in length, but uneventful. The roads are well established and patrolled, and there is little danger of an attack by any of the native flora or

fauna. Eventually, on the late morning of the sixth day, they can see the site in the distance.

To the southwest, you can make out several flags. They appear to be military standards. Certainly this is what you must be looking for. There is little else in this area. As you get closer, you see several dozen footmen camped around an excavation site near an old decrepit and abandoned building. You are hailed by some of the guards as you approach.

As word gets around the camp, a middle-aged man approaches. He is dirty but seems pleased to see you. "Hello. I'm Vechris Aruweg. I'm so glad to see you. I guess my letter made it in time. Have you eaten?"

Vechris is happy to eat a brunch-type meal with the PCs along with some of his workers. He is happy to share any details about his work, though he seems disappointed that he hasn't found anything real exciting so far. He is happy to show them around the site. He also introduces them to Captain Blandis Weshlar, who is in charge of the contingent. He tells them the following:

"It seems Vechris is in luck that you showed up. We've had several skirmishes with bugbears over the past two weeks and we're heading out of here tomorrow. I just don't have the manpower to go hunting them down in the forest. They're crafty and deadly if they ambush you. But you seem to be capable fellows. Maybe you'd like to go and see if you can't track them down while we secure the camp. I'd try to the northwest. They can't be that far off, wherever they're holed up. I'd definitely get some rest, but do it before night falls. Then you couldn't pay me enough to go out into those woods with them about."

Should they take the Captain's suggestion, proceed to **Encounter 4, The Chamber of Hate**.

Note: St. Cuthbert

Always keep in mind the light source(s) and visual range of the PCs and modify descriptions accordingly.

In each of the Chambers, there are certain features of the encounters that the DM should keep in mind. Unless otherwise stated, ceilings in rooms are 15 feet high. The passageways are 10 feet high and 5 feet wide. The doors are made of polished stone and exceptionally strong for that material due to the enchantments placed upon them long ago. As such, they will radiate a dim magic aura if detected for. Some enterprising PCs may decide to take the direct route, and bludgeon their way through each door with a sledge. Each door is 5 ft. wide by 10 ft. tall with a large (~1 ft. in diameter) red blood drop engraved into both sides (The holy symbol of Erythnul the Many). The doors are 1 ft. thick, have a Hardness 10 and 180 hp. Due to the enchantments on the doors,

the doors also have Damage Reduction of (5/+1) and a Break DC of 30. Bashing through these doors will be no simple task. There are no other adornments of the Chambers, as those who worshipped here took anything of value long ago, and everything has crumbled into dust.

Each Chamber has a statue, which been enchanted as appropriate to its name. As such, the statues will radiate both magic and evil if detected for. Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to identify the creature the statue is intended to resemble. Observant PCs may notice with a Spot check (DC 20) or a Search check (DC 15) that the eyes of each statue are in fact small green gems. They cannot be pried out without destroying the statue, which is no small task (Hardness 10 hp 100, Damage Reduction 10/+1) due to the enchantments on the statue.

Any PC may make a Religion check (DC 15) to recognize the various symbols in the room as belonging to Erythnul the Many. A PC who has made a successful Religion check may also be prompted by the DM to make a Sense Motive check (DC 15), if he or she requests it, to interpret the mural as representing scenes of the aspect of that particular Chamber. Otherwise, the DC to interpret this or any other mural is 25.

As PCs investigate a room, they may come under the effects of that particular enchantment. Any PC who remains in a particular Chamber for more than one round must roll a Will save (DC 15). Those who fail fall victim to the effects as described in each entry. The DM should explain this condition to relevant players privately and encourage appropriate roleplaying of the situation. This affliction remains only while in the Chamber and ceases to affect the PC one round after he or she has left the room. PCs may gain an additional saving throw while in the room should the DM determine that conditions warrant it (e.g. two paladins of Heironeous affected by the Chamber of Hate go to attack each other). *Protection from chaos, protection from evil*, and similar spells will ward characters against the effects of the statues.

Each of the statues acts as one of the five levers that release the stone elevator from the ceiling above the Chamber of Slaughter (Room 9). A Search check (DC 16) of the statue will reveal that the arms can move, and pulling both arms in a downward motion until they are parallel with the waist of the statue will result in a very audible locking sound. After all five levers have been activated, proceed to **Encounter Nine (St. Cuthbert)**.

A small lever to the right of the door will cause the door to ascend into the ceiling. The door will descend again one minute later unless wedged open.

Anyone approaching within 10 feet of a door from the far side of a particular Chamber activates a *continual flame* spell that has been cast on a series of torches inset into the wall.

There are a total of six torches around each door, arranged three to a side in vertical manner. Each torch appears to be made of some ferrous metal that has stood the test of time well (better than the spell enchanting each). Each torch is set into a circular sconce of the same metal. Each sconce is set into the forehead of a small reddish clay fixture that resembles a leering face with mad eyes and tongue hanging out of its mouth. As the players will figure out sooner or later, opening the door from this side requires them to pull the correct sconce. As they may also find out, on each door at least one of the sconces is trapped. Each sconce may be pushed or pulled down (it depresses about an inch), and any PCs who listen will hear an audible "click". The sconce will remain in this position for 2 rounds before returning to its original position. The door will not close, however, until the correct sconce is pulled again (at least from this side). Like the others found throughout this small temple complex, the runes engraved on each sconce give some clue as to which one is the correct one to pull, provided the PCs manage to identify the aspect of Erythnul represented in each Chamber. A Search check (DC 10) or a Spot check (DC 15) will allow PCs to identify which sconce has which particular rune. A Decipher Script check (DC 23) made against each rune will allow that particular PC to identify the rune's meaning. There is no particular order to the placement if the players try and establish one (clergy of Erythnul could learn a lot from the clergy of Rao in that regard). The players should be given the appropriate **Player Handout** if they examine the runes on the sconces.

Finally, the DM should feel free to adjust the DCs of certain checks, or eliminate them completely, if it is apparent that the players are aware of a common feature of any facet of the temple complex (e.g. how to open the doors).

Encounter 4 (St. Cuthbert): The Chamber of Hate

Taking the Captain's suggestion, you head into the Dim Forest with a good six hours or more of daylight. Perhaps a quarter of a mile into the woods, the trail leads up and over a small rise. Approaching the top of the rise, you are slightly stunned to see a scene of carnage before you. Here lay many large hairy goblinoids, approaching seven feet in height. The humanoid have yellow-brown skin and thick, coarse hair brown in color. They are garbed in a variety of leather armors and they lie sprawled among each other, with weapons buried in their dead carcasses. It appears that they fought each other, perhaps for the spoils of their slaughter, or perhaps just from uncontrolled bloodlust. There is no indication that they were members of opposing tribes.

What has happened here are that the bugbears have fallen victim to the enchantments placed upon the Chamber of Hate. It didn't take long after exploring this room for the magically inspired anger to boil over into a lethal brawl. If PCs investigate this more and ask questions surrounding this scene, the DM should give answers consistent with what took place here without revealing the real cause. Weapons include morningstars, javelins, hand axes, battle axes, and small wooden shields. Most are broken or in bad shape. If the PCs make a thorough search of the area (this will take approximately 10 minutes), they will find the items listed in the **Treasure** section of this scenario.

Walking down the shallow slope of the hill, you see a cavern entrance, perhaps ten feet by ten feet, which has been dug out of the hill.

If PCs get closer to the cavern entrance (within 5 feet) read them the following. Remember those PCs with darkvision or lowlight vision will be able to see what lies in the Chamber of Envy at a greater distance than those who are either using a light source or simply peering in with normal vision. PCs may also make a Listen check (DC 10+1/every 5 feet from the cave mouth) to hear a weak moaning from the wounded bugbears within.

Peering inside, you are immediately drawn to several figures that get up slowly off of the floor and draw their heavy morningstars defensively. They look wounded and appear in pain. Even so they grimace and snarl, as foam forms on their lips and they growl with a look of madness in their eyes.

Any PC spending more than one round in the Chamber must roll a Will save (DC 15). Those who fail succumb and immediately attack the nearest creature, with a +1 profane bonus to hit and to damage PER TIER. Although bugbears are quite dangerous, especially for low-level PCs, the fact that they are wounded and not using their best tactics (bugbears prefer to use their incredible stealth to ambush victims) should make them easier to dispatch than would be normally possible. On the other hand, these bugbears are under the influence of the Chamber of Hate. As such they receive a +1 profane bonus to hit and to damage PER TIER of the PARTY. Any PC who spends more than one round in this Chamber and fails his Will save will also fall under the influence of the Chamber of Hate. The afflicted PC becomes irrationally irate and angry and will take it out on the bugbears. Such a PC also gains a +1 profane bonus to hit and to damage PER TIER of the CHARACTER. After the fight is over the affected PC may make another Will save with a +2 bonus, as they feel drained and exhausted from expending themselves. This Chamber particularly affects rangers if one of

cause a trap door to swing open into a 30-foot pit. Fortunately for the PCs, time has gotten the better of this trap as well, and the left side of the trap door (away from the hinge) will only drop two inches. This won't endanger the PCs but should give them a hint of things to come should they mess around with this door.

Encounter 5 (St. Cuthbert): The Chamber of Malice

Off to your left, there is another door inset into the wall. Six sconces are set along the door in the same pattern as the room you've just come from, but none light up at your approach. The passageway continues straight ahead, while directly across from the door a short passageway opens up into a larger square-shaped room. In front of the door lie two more of the dead humanoids, but these don't seem to have done in each other. Rather they appear to be quite charred.

The players should be given **Player Handout # 2** if they examine the sconces. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

__ (Ugliness) __ (Malice)

__ (Panic) __ (Slaughter)

__ (Hate) __ (Envy)

If the PCs happen to pull the middle right sconce, read the following.

As you pull the sconce downward, you hear an audible click. You feel the onrushing heat of fire descending from the ceiling above you!

The PCs have activated a flame jet trap that shoots a cone of flame down from the ceiling in all 5 ft. x 5 ft. squares that abut the Chamber of Malice (see map). Any PC in the square in front of the door or on either end is allowed a normal Reflex save to avoid the flames, but PCs in the middle two squares receive a -2 circumstance penalty to reflect the additional difficulty they will have in reaching a safe place.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Flame jet: 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. long cone of flame (5d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 15); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Flame jet: 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. long cone of flame (7d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 17); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Tier 4 (EL 9)

Flame jet: 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. long cone of flame (9d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 19); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Should PCs pull the top sconce on the right, read them the following.

Pulling the sconce, you hear a clicking sound. Seconds later, the stone door in front of you ascends into the ceiling with the sound of stone on stone. The way into this room thus cleared, you peer in. The room is fairly unremarkable, being square and tapering to a small alcove on the far side of the room. Directly across from the door is another statue. This one appears to be a human male, garbed in a fluted heavy armor of some kind. The statue is completely red in color, and it clutches its fists together under its evil grinning sneer. About the room, you see another mural. This one has all sorts of men and women, grinning evilly and reveling in their fiendish plots against fellow men that have come to fruition.

As PCs investigate this room, they may come under the effects of the Chamber of Malice. Any PC who fails a Will save (DC 15) begins to have malicious intentions toward their fellow party members. As mentioned in **A DM's Note**, the DM should explain this to relevant players and encourage appropriate roleplaying. A particularly devious PC might even somehow engage the trap outside the door and unleash it on his fellows.

Encounter 6 (St. Cuthbert): The Chamber of Panic

If the PCs approach within 10 feet of the door, read the following.

As you reach the bottom of the dark stairwell, six of the familiar torches greet your approach, and surprisingly they all come to life, albeit weakly. It seems some of the enchantments laid about this temple have fared better than others have. Again two humanoids lie at the foot of the door, face down with a couple of arrows sticking in their backs.

The players should be given **Player Handout #3** if they examine the sconces. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| __ (Slaughter) | __ (Malice) |
| __ (Panic) | __ (Envy) |
| __ (Ugliness) | __ (Hate) |

In this case, pulling the middle sconce on the left opens the Chamber of Panic. If it is pulled read the following:

Pulling the sconce, you hear the grinding of stone on stone as the door moves upward into the ceiling.

If the PCs pull the lower sconce on the right, read the following to the players.

Pulling the sconce, you hear the sound of several arrows being released behind you!

Roll randomly among those in the two squares in front of the door to choose targets for the arrows.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Arrow trap: 6 arrows; +10 ranged (1d6 [crit x3]); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Arrow trap: 12 arrows; +10 ranged (1d6 [crit x3]); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 4 (EL 10)

Arrow trap: 24 arrows; +10 ranged (1d6 [crit x3]); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

When the PCs finally make it into the room read them the following description.

This room is larger than any you have been in so far, and flares out from the entrance to eventually over 30 feet in width. Some 30 feet away directly across from the door is a red statue of a large humanoid figure, its arms extended out before it, as if to choke any whom would dare approach. Along both walls are murals of humans and elves with expressions of fear on their faces, running for their lives across some great plain from hordes of the same monsters that this statue represents. A giant figure of a similar monster in blood red armor with green eyes dominates the mural. The great monster swings a flail and appears to be bleeding from wounds on his body. The blood that flows from his body falls to the plains below him, the droplets form more monsters, adding to the onrushing horde. There is nothing else but dust, the stale air of the long-sealed chamber, and the quiet here to greet you.

If the PCs step into the room, read the following:

As you step into the room, the emerald eyes of the statue light up by means of some enchantment that still has yet to fade. As you fall under the statue's eerie green gaze, you begin to empathize with the humans and elves on the mural. You can almost hear the mural now, as the cries of the fleeing echo in your ears, and the joyous howling of the bloody beasts as they pursue their prey. Above it all, you hear a strange droning sound emanating from that hideous flail, and yet emanating from all directions as well. Your heart starts to beat faster, as the droning seems to call your name. You've got to get away from here...NOW!

To successfully approach the statue and resist the enchantments in the Chamber of Panic requires a Will save (DC 15) vs. Magical Fear. Those who fail their saves will run away as fast as possible for 1d4 rounds as if affected by *cause fear*. Characters may make another attempt to enter the room, but the DC is raised by one for each successive attempt. Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to recognize the statue as an ogre.

Encounter 7: (St. Cuthbert) The Chamber of Envy

Proceeding across the room, the passageway on the right side goes only 15 feet before turning to the left down a long stairwell.

When the PCs reach the bottom, read the following:

Around the corner to the right, the uppermost four of the torches spring to life vibrantly. Maybe they should have had whomever enchanted these torches do them all. A lone humanoid lies in front of the door; face down and with a sizeable hole going clear through him.

The players will have probably figured out by now what they need to do here, and so the guessing game begins anew. The players should be given **Player Handout # 4** if they examine the sconces. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| __ (Hate) | __ (Ugliness) |
| __ (Slaughter) | __ (Malice) |
| __ (Envy) | __ (Panic) |

This time around, every sconce but the lower left one act as a trigger for a Poison Spear Trap, which is set into the wall opposite the door. Read the following to the unlucky PCs who set off the trap.

Pulling the sconce, you have no time to react as you hear a spring mechanism of some kind release behind you!

Roll randomly among those in the two squares in front of the door to choose targets for the spears.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Poison spear trap: 2 spears; +12 melee (1d8 [crit x3] + poison (Fort save to resist (DC 14); 1d2 Str/1d3 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Poison spear trap: 4 spears; +12 melee (1d8 [crit x3] + poison (Fort save to resist (DC 14); 1d2 Str/1d4 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 4 (EL 10)

Poison spear trap: 6 spears; +12 melee (1d8 [crit x3] + poison (Fort save to resist (DC 14); 1d4 Str/1d6 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

This trap is loaded into a spring mechanism that will reset itself one round later. A very unlucky PC can therefore set it off multiple times, though at least one round must pass before setting it off again.

If the PCs successfully open the door, read the following.

The click of the iron sconce precedes the movement of the stone door into the ceiling. Beyond the door waits a small mostly square room. Across from the doorway is a statue of some humanoid, larger than most men are. It has a dog-like head and hairy mane, and its open hands extend toward you palms up, as if in supplication. Murals are painted on the walls, depicting humans and some humanoid races in scenes with gold and silver, precious gems, castles, and beautiful women.

As PCs investigate the room, they may come under the effects of the Chamber of Envy. If they fail a Will save (DC 15), they feel envious of what one or more party members possess, be it monetary, magical, or mundane in nature. If the opportunity arises while in the Chamber of Envy, that PC may try to steal from one or more fellow party members, or a fight may even break out between two affected PCs. Any PC may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to determine that the statue is that of a gnoll.

Encounter 8 (St. Cuthbert): The Chamber of Ugliness

Proceeding across the room, the far passageway goes only 20 feet before turning to the left and continuing out of view.

If PCs proceed further, read the following:

It seems the hallway only goes another 30 feet before ending at a door similar to the ones you have already seen. This door doesn't have a dead attendant acting as a doormat. Perhaps the humanoids all killed each other before they got this far.

If the PCs approach within 10 ft. of the door read the following:

The lower torch on the left and the middle torch on the right flicker with a dim light at your approach.

Like the other sconces, these have a familiar set of runes that are arranged in the following order.

— (Ugliness)	— (Panic)
— (Hate)	— (Malice)
— (Envy)	— (Slaughter)

The players should be given **Player Handout #5** if they examine the sconces. In this case, pulling the upper sconce on the left opens the Chamber of Ugliness. If it is pulled read the following.

Pulling the sconce, you hear a familiar clicking sound and the grinding of stone on stone as the door moves upward into the ceiling.

If the lower sconce on the left is pulled, read the following to the players.

Pulling the sconce, you hear a familiar click. The door does not move, but you begin to notice the air fill with a gray mist that is descending from the ceiling. You quickly begin coughing and choking from the strange gas.

The trap releases *insanity mist*, an inhaled toxin, which fills the area from the door out to 10 feet.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Poison gas trap: Fort save to avoid (DC 13), 1d3 Wis/1d6 Wis; Search (DC 23); Disable Device (DC 23).

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Poison gas trap: Fort save to avoid (DC 16), 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

Tier 4 (EL 9)

Poison gas trap: Fort save to avoid (DC 19), 1d6 Wis/2d6 Wis; Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27).

Privately inform players who fail their saving throw of the following.

The gray mist clouds your mind and the world seems to move in slow motion. You can't think clearly.

Privately inform those players who fail a second saving throw of the following:

The air itself seems oppressive. You can't breath. You must get out of this prison of stone. Why are those people looking at you? They're laughing at you! You clutch your ears to stop from hearing their laughter but to no avail.

As the PCs enter this room, read the players the following:

This room has a bizarre design, as if the two halves were under the charge of different architects. The left half of the wall is angled to form an irregular half-diamond, whereas the right half is rectangular. Directly across from the door is another statue of a tall but lanky humanoid with horrible claws, a long pointed nose, and a terrible maw with dagger-like teeth. Its sinewy limbs reach out toward you. Around the room are murals of hideous beings, so twisted and deformed you are unsure of what race they might even be. Above them all stands a large figure similar to the statue, which points his horrendous limbs at the figures in the mural. The beautiful become deformed, the young become old. You glance down at the polished mirror surface of the floor and gasp in horror as you see your face slowly wither and twist into some horrid visage!

Again PCs in this room must make a Will save (DC 15) or stand motionless, horrified at what they have become, victims of the enchantments in the Chamber of Ugliness. PCs who fail this save may make another save every ten minutes to try to shake off the effects of the spell. Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to recognize the statue as a troll.

Encounter 9 (St. Cuthbert): The Chamber of Slaughter

If the PCs have discovered the levers, they may find the true treasure of this temple. Once the PCs have pulled all the levers, read the following:

As you pull the statue's arms into the down position, you hear a great rumbling from outside the room, as a loud grating sound of stone on stone is accompanied by the sound of moving chains.

If PCs search for the sound of all this racket, read the following:

Entering the square chamber at the center of the complex, you see the middle part of the stone floor has fallen away like some giant trap door, as if on a hinge that swings downward. From the ceiling, a large stone platform, roughly the size of the trap, descends slowly, held by two massive iron chains. Peering into the depths below, the darkness seems to beckon like the gateway to an endless abyss.

Eventually the platform will come to rest. If at least 100 lbs. is put on it on it, it will begin to descend again, its mechanism activated by the weight. It descends very slowly and PCs can easily jump on it without any problems. The platform can hold up to 3000 lbs. before the chain breaks.

As the stone conveyance slowly sinks into the floor, an uncomfortable silence blankets the area, broken only by the sounds of the chains lowering the platform like some great anchor into the depths of the earth. Soon the chamber above becomes lost from view as the descent continues. After several minutes, the platform comes to rest with a great noise of stone on stone. Somehow it still manages to seem hollow in the unnatural quietness. The platform has come to rest on a set of steps that extend outward ahead and on both sides of you. You peer into a large rectangular room, whose ceiling extends beyond visible range. The whole room has a strange reddish cast to it, and many large circular pillars can be seen on either side of the room, evenly spaced throughout the entire length of the room. The pillars seemed to be...adorned...with human skeletons, their arms held above their heads by rusting manacles attached to chains. The chains in turn are attached to hooks that extend from the columns, allowing the skeletons to swing freely, in some sort of grotesque dance of the dead. Mercifully, they lay still now, undisturbed for countless years it appears. Who they were one can only speculate. Perhaps even the temple's clergy have found their final resting place here on these pillars.

The far end of the chamber appears to have a bier of some kind surrounded by five pillars similar to those lining the room, only larger. There is something resting on the bier that seems to be the source of a muted, but brilliant, light. The light from the bier adds a contrast to the general hue of the room and it plays upon the surface of a pool of water that appears from this distance to surround the bier.

If the players investigate the skeletons more closely, a Search (DC 10) will reveal the following.

The skeletons have a strange red hue to them, and in the middle of their exposed ribcages some of them appear to have the remnants of a continual flame that seems to be the source of the strange illumination. The untold centuries have taken their toll even upon these enchantments, as now only a dim flicker remains, a ghost of the spell's former radiance.

If the players approach within 30' of the bier, read the following:

The bier is indeed surrounded by a pool of liquid approximately 25 feet in diameter. Although the light in the chamber tends to lend a red cast to everything, the liquid in the pool seems to have more than its share of the color, and you have an uncomfortable hunch that this pool is full of...blood. Intermittent drops break the surface of the pool, and looking to their source, you see that the columns surrounding the pool are adorned with a carving of a large head of some creature. The drops fall from the open mouth of each carving into the pool below.

The source of the conflicting illumination is now apparent. Standing upright and set into the bier is a small staff, made of a silvery metal and studded with gems. Adorning the top of the staff are two crescent moons that overlap and face inward. A pair of hands grasps the staff. There is a ring on one of the hands.

This area radiates strong magic due to the *prism scepter*, but also radiates strongly of good AND evil if detected for. The pool is only two feet deep, but it has an unusual and extremely dangerous resident who is more than eager for an infusion of fresh blood to add to its domain. With its limited intelligence and eagerness to kill, it immediately attacks the first person to step into the pool. It also attacks the first person that passes over the pool within range of its tentacles (1.5x height in feet, height varies by tier). The bier itself is on a raised dais that lies 5 feet above the surface of the pool.

If any PC is within range of an attack, read the following:

Stepping closer to examine the pool of blood, you are surprised and horrified to see a vaguely humanoid shape appear out of the murk and lash out at you with a tendril of blood!

The humanoid shape is an elemental creature formed of blood. It is unique and has taken the name Bloodshed.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Bloodshed: CR 5; Medium Blood Elemental (8 ft tall); HD 5d8+15; hp 37; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 (Sw 90); AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d8+3, buffet); SA Blood mastery, drench, blood drain (DC 15), smother (DC 15); SQ Elemental; SR 0; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +6 Spot +6 Feats: Power Attack

SA: **Blood Mastery (Ex):** The elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and the opponent are in the pool of blood. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. The blood elemental may move anywhere within the room, but (for obvious reasons) would prefer to stay in the pool.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Blood Drain (Su): The most common means of attack is a blow from one of its tentacles. Further, the victim of such an attack must make a Fort save (see above) or have a portion of his own blood drawn forth from his body and added to that of the elemental. The amount of blood lost in this way is equal to the damage done by the initial blow. Hit points lost to the blood drain are added directly to the elemental's own hit point total (to a maximum of 8 hit points per Hit Die). When striking at a target that has no blood of its own, the blood elemental cannot employ its blood drain attack and suffers a -2 penalty per die on all damage rolls (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Smother (Ex): In any round that the elemental chooses not to attack, it may attempt to smother an opponent. To do so, the elemental makes a normal attack roll to hurl itself onto the target of the attack. If it succeeds, the victim of the attack must make a Fort save or find that the elemental has filled his nose, mouth, and lungs with blood. The victim of this attack has a very good chance of drowning (as described in the DMG pg.85). On the next round, the elemental is free to move away from this victim and attack another character, leaving the first target for dead. Attacks on the elemental while it is smothering do full damage to the elemental and half damage to the victim (who is unable to lash out at the elemental while being smothered).

SQ: Elemental: As an elemental creature, the blood elemental is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Elementals have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. The blood elemental has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Bloodshed: CR 7; Medium Blood Elemental (8 ft tall); HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 (Sw 90); AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural); Atks +10/+5 melee (1d12+4, buffet); SA Blood mastery, drench, blood drain (DC 17), smother (DC 17); SQ Elemental; SR 0; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1.

Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +8 Spot +8 **Feats:** Power Attack

SA: Blood Mastery (Ex): The elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and the opponent are in the pool of blood. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. The blood elemental may move anywhere within the room, but (for obvious reasons) would prefer to stay in the pool.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Blood Drain (Su): The most common means of attack is a blow from one of its tentacles. Further, the victim of such an attack must make a Fort save (see above) or have a portion of his own blood drawn forth from his body and added to that of the elemental. The amount of blood lost in this way is equal to the damage done by the initial blow. Hit points lost to the blood drain are added directly to the elemental's own hit point total (to a maximum of 8 hit points per Hit Die). When striking at a target that has no blood of its own, the blood elemental cannot employ its blood drain attack and suffers a -2 penalty per die on all damage rolls (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Smother (Ex): In any round that the elemental chooses not to attack, it may attempt to smother an opponent. To do so, the elemental makes a normal attack roll to hurl itself onto the target of the attack. If it succeeds, the victim of the attack must make a Fort save or find that the elemental has filled his nose, mouth, and lungs with blood. The victim of this attack has a very good chance of drowning (as described in the DMG pg.85). On the next round, the elemental is free to move away from this victim and attack another character, leaving the first target for dead. Attacks on the elemental while it is smothering do full damage to the elemental and half damage to the victim (who is unable to lash out at the elemental while being smothered).

SQ: Elemental: As an elemental creature, the blood elemental is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Elementals have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. The blood elemental has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Tier 4 (EL 9)

Bloodshed: CR 9; Large Blood Elemental (16 ft tall); HD 9d8+36; hp 76; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 (Sw 90); AC 20 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural); Atks +13/+8 melee (2d8+5, buffet); SA Blood mastery, drench, blood drain (DC 19), smother (DC 19), deathwatch; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1; SR 15; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2.

Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +10 Spot +10 **Feats:** Cleave, Power Attack

SA: Blood Mastery (Ex): The elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and the opponent are in the pool of blood. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. The blood elemental may move anywhere within the room, but (for obvious reasons) would prefer to stay in the pool.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Blood Drain (Su): The most common means of attack is a blow from one of its tentacles. Further, the victim of such an attack must make a Fort save (see above) or have a portion of his own blood drawn forth from his body and added to that of the elemental. The amount of blood lost in this way is equal to the damage done by the initial blow. Hit points lost to the blood drain are added directly to the elemental's own hit point total (to a maximum of 8 hit points per Hit Die). When striking at a target that has no blood of its own, the blood elemental cannot employ its blood drain attack and suffers a -2 penalty per die on all damage rolls (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Smother (Ex): In any round that the elemental chooses not to attack, it may attempt to smother an opponent. To do so, the elemental makes a normal attack roll to hurl itself onto the target of the attack. If it succeeds, the victim of the attack must make a Fort save or find that the elemental has filled his nose, mouth, and lungs with blood. The victim of this attack has a very good chance of drowning (as described in the DMG pg.85). On the next round, the elemental is free to move away from this victim and attack another character, leaving the first target for dead. Attacks on the elemental while it is smothering do full damage to the elemental and half damage to the victim (who is unable to lash out at the elemental while being smothered).

Deathwatch (Su): As per the spell of the same name (pg. 191, Player's Handbook), the blood elemental can determine the condition of any creature within 50' as a free action. This ability also has the added advantage that the elemental does not need to see to determine the exact location of a creature.

SQ: *Elemental*: As an elemental creature, the blood elemental is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Elementals have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. The blood elemental has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

In addition, each statue continues to pour blood into the pool, healing the creature 10 points every round. Also, each statue will use a spell-like power each round. Roll on the following table to determine which, if any, effects are used. Each spell that allows for a saving throw has a save (DC 20), and for purposes of ranged touch attacks the statues get +10 to hit. Treat the statues as 10th-level casters for other effects. Targets are randomly determined. Should the party be successful, Aberion Colshimere will remove any curses the PC(s) may suffer as a result of the statues:

1. No power used
2. *Cause fear* (Player's Handbook, pg. 182)
3. *Hold monster* (Player's Handbook, pg. 214)
4. *Inflict serious wounds* (Player's Handbook, pg. 217)
5. *Bestow curse* (Player's Handbook, pg. 178)
6. *Unholy blight* (Player's Handbook, pg. 268)

Should the PCs manage to defeat the elemental, they will most likely want to examine the scepter more closely. If one or more PCs step onto the bier, read the following:

As you step closer toward the strange gem-encrusted staff, it begins to glow; getting ever brighter the closer you approach. The hands on the staff appear to be real, though mummified with age. The ring appears to be made out of silver metal and has a clear gemstone set into it. Within the gemstone is an emblem that looks like a sunburst made of another silver metal.

The symbol in the gemstone is that of Pholtus. A PC may make a Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 12) to recognize it as such. The ring is enchanted to cast *cure serious wounds* as a 5th-level cleric one time upon its bearer after which it becomes a non-magical ring. If anyone but a cleric of Pholtus touches the *prism scepter* BY ANY MEANS, read the following.

As you touch the staff, you recoil as it flashes with a brilliant light. You open your eyes but you see nothing. You're blind!

This blindness lasts for 2d4 minutes and affects all in the room (no save). Wise PCs should relent at this point and go tell VeChris of their find. Any single PC unwise enough to touch the scepter a second time suffers from blindness for 2d4 days. Touching it a third time invokes the wrath of Pholtus and unleashes a *power word blind* that affects all in the room (the effect is permanent regardless of how many combined hit points the

PCs have). If players still haven't gotten the hint and touch it a fourth time, a *power word kill* is unleashed on all of the PCs.

Crafty PCs may try to knock it out of the stone from a distance, but this will not work no matter how hard they try. Even craftier PCs might destroy the bier and then perhaps pick it up using *telekinesis* or a similar means. The *prism scepter* is utterly resistant to attempts to manipulate it magically. A rogue attempting a Use Magic Device skill (to emulate alignment and class) will also be unsuccessful.

What if the PCs don't merely touch it, but pick it up and hold it? This PC will find that he or she cannot let go of the scepter and cannot move either. The scepter can be knocked free of the PC's hands, however. (If this is done by a PC that has already touched it, guess what? It looks they're all going to be blind for longer now.)

DM Note: This of course begs the question of how this scepter got here in the first place. After the scepter was stolen long ago by a large band of humanoids and humans led by clergy of Erythnul, they came here to this temple complex, and magically compelled one of the few surviving priests of Pholtus (whose skeleton still adorns one of the pillars in this room) to lay it in the bier. When he wouldn't release it, they cut off his hands at the wrists and then killed him. The minions of The Many then fled the temple and sealed it (as they were being pursued by another force of Oeridians bent on retaliation). The temple eventually sunk into the ground slowly over the years (as a result of the marshy soil) and the Dim Forest grew over it. It had remained this way until several months ago, when the bugbears from **Encounter Four** uncovered it.

Conclusion (St. Cuthbert)

If the PCs go to VeChris with this information, he is very excited, as he has yet to have found anything of real value and is becoming discouraged. He examines it as closely as he dares and makes some sketches of it, murmuring about various historical references that the PCs probably won't understand. He does believe that this relic is very old but he doesn't know why it is here in a temple of Erythnul. He thanks the PCs and asks them to stay around to guard the site while he sends word to Themlin in Shibolet. The PCs have two more weeks of boring duty before Themlin arrives with some other clergy members of St. Cuthbert. A sizeable military force also arrives from Fort Endurance in the Dim Forest. The reason for this is readily apparent, as the next day a large retinue of Pholtians led by none other than Orden Maxwell arrives on the site (Pholemius is not among them). The PCs learn from the various rumors that Themlin divined

the general nature of the *prism scepter* and, in something that will be talked about in Shibolet for many months, Aberion Colshimere went to the Blinding Spire to speak with Orden about it. (Certainly an interesting conversation, given the history of the respective churches in the Gran March.) The PCs are among the few to accompany the retinue to the depths of the temple. Themlin privately confides in the PCs on how pleased he is with their performance, and this will do them well to increase their reputation around Shibolet and in the Church of St. Cuthbert. He will also reward the PCs with a *potion of wisdom* and a *potion of bull's strength*, to provide them with the benefits of St. Cuthbert's grace wherever they might go.

As all of you gather around in the large room, the man known as Maxwell Orden steps forward toward the pool of blood, alone and silent. As the grotesque heads look on, he casts a spell, and the blood becomes a pool of clear and shining water. He then walks across the water to the bier and approaches the staff. Grasping the small staff firmly in both hands, it flashes again. He turns around, facing all in the room. Holding it before him, he begins to speak in a deep voice that resonates in the cavernous room.

"It is by the blessings of Great Pholtus, The Blinding Light, Resolute Keeper of The Way and The One True Path, that this Holy Prism Scepter, given so long ago to the Oerid faithful, has been found. It shall serve the faithful of Pholtus today as it did then. With this great relic, the Blinding Spire shall be a bastion of greatness, calling to the hearts of all that would know The Way of Enlightenment. Let us now go forth from this crypt of evil and wickedness and into The Light."

With that, he holds the prism scepter high above his head and it begins to radiate again. The pool glimmers with its reflection and rays of various colors pour forth from the hole where the two half moons cross. As Orden walks toward the exit, the skeletons on both sides explode and crumble into nothingness, at last free to join the departed souls they once held. As Orden passes, he glares at you. It is obvious that not everyone is pleased with your efforts. Only time shall tell what else comes of this day as you leave the abandoned temple behind you.

The End (St. Cuthbert)

Note: The **Experience** and **Treasure** sections appear after the Pholtus encounters.

Encounter Three (Pholtus) You Can't Have Your Cake and Eat It Too

If the PCs decide to meet Themlin to tell him that they won't be undertaking his mission after all, present the following (if they don't meet him at the appointed place and time, he'll track them down – adjust the first part below).

You awake the next morning to meet Themlin at the stables of Fernanin's Keep. He is happy to see you, but his look becomes one of concern as he reads your faces.

The PCs will have to make up some explanation. Themlin is unhappy at the least or angry at the PCs if they don't have a good excuse. He shakes his head.

"Well, I certainly hope you never find yourselves in need of aid from another. I'll have to try and find someone else, and pray that St. Cuthbert watches over Vechris and his men. I'm feeling ill. Excuse me if you will. I have important work to do."

Later that morning, the PCs are approached by Pholemius.

"I am gladdened that you have made the right decision. Trust in Pholtus and He shall not lead you astray. We shall leave in two days time and we shall have more time to talk then. I trust in Pholtus that we shall all become good friends and, with his guidance, persevere in our quest. I suggest you rest up until then. Pholtus does not give gifts to the undeserved and I know we have many trials ahead of us. Come to the Blinding Spire this time two days from now and we shall embark with the Blinding Light to guide us."

The PCs can do as they wish for the span of two days. The group leaves without incident or fanfare. Oddly enough, Pholemius doesn't know the way there, but claims that Pholtus shall guide him. *"One is never lost when one walks the One True Path of the Enlightened."* Somehow Pholemius will eventually lead them to the dig site. The journey to the site is nearly a week in length, but uneventful. The roads are well established and patrolled, and there is little danger of an attack by any of the native flora or fauna. Eventually, on the late morning of the sixth day, they can see the site in the distance.

Perhaps half a mile off, you see dark smoke rising in the air. Pholemius excitedly says "We are close now. Let us hurry." As you get within close range, it seems the fears of Themlin were correct. Before you lies a scene of carnage. A few slain horses and workers lie about the smoldering

ruins of the camp. Smashed goods are scattered everywhere. A bloodstained trail made by many feet exits the camp to the northwest. By the signs of it, the attack probably took place last night.

There is nothing of value left here if the PCs search. Pholemius looks around but eventually he says, ***“We must head in that direction.” He is pointing the same way as the bloodstained trail.*** If the PCs agree, proceed to **Encounter Four, The Chamber of Envy.**

A DMs' Note (Pholtus)

Pholemius will remain aloof from the concerns of exploring the dungeon as much as possible, preferring to let the PCs do their job with minimal guidance. He will take part in melee only when personally attacked or when the PCs are obviously outclassed (but if he does fight, add his levels to those of the PCs to determine the encounter Tier, adding hit points and additional opponents if necessary). He will offer advice only when it is requested of him and his advice is typically, ***“Trust in The Blinding Light to lead us upon the path of Righteousness.”*** Exceptions to this policy are noted in the encounters – he will not suffer a companion to bear the influence of Erythnul and so will act if the PCs fall victim to the powers of the statues described in the encounters.

Always keep in mind the light source(s) and visual range of the PCs and modify descriptions accordingly.

In each of the Chambers, there are certain features of the encounters that the DM should keep in mind. Unless otherwise stated, ceilings in rooms are 15 feet high. The passageways are 10 feet high and 5 feet wide. The doors are made of polished stone and exceptionally strong for that material due to the enchantments placed upon them long ago. As such, they will radiate a dim magic aura if detected for. Some enterprising PCs may decide to take the direct route, and bludgeon their way through each door with a sledge. Each door is 5 ft. wide by 10 ft. tall with a large (~1 ft. in diameter) red blood drop engraved into both sides (The holy symbol of Erythnul the Many). The doors are 1 ft. thick, have a Hardness 10 and 180 hp. Due to the enchantments on the doors, the doors also all have Damage Reduction of (5/+1) and a Break DC of 30. Bashing through these doors will be no simple task. There are no other adornments of the Chambers, as those who worshipped here took anything of value long ago, and everything has crumbled into dust.

Each Chamber has a statue, which been enchanted as appropriate to its name. As such, the statues will radiate both magic and evil if detected for. Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to identify the creature the statue is intended to resemble. Each statue is completely red from head to toe with two exceptions. Observant PCs may notice with a Spot check (DC 20) or a Search check (DC 15) that

the eyes of each statue are in fact small green gems. They cannot be pried out without destroying the statue, which is no small task (Hardness 10 hp 100, Dmg Reduction 10/+1) due to the enchantments on the statue.

Pholemius won't tolerate such desecration, as he has recognized this chamber as sacred to Erythnul the Many, the Oeridian Power of Hate, Malice, Envy, Panic, Ugliness, and Slaughter. If PCs ask, he explains this and any other details the DM considers appropriate. Otherwise, he keeps this knowledge to himself as he doesn't wish to alarm the PCs more than they already are. Any PC may make a Religion check (DC 15) to recognize the various symbols in the room as belonging to Erythnul the Many. A PC who has made a successful Religion check may also be prompted by the DM to make a Sense Motive check (DC 15), if he or she requests it, to interpret the mural as representing scenes of the aspect presented in that particular Chamber. Otherwise, the DC to interpret this or any other mural is 25.

As the PCs investigate the room, they may come under the effects of that particular enchantment. Any PC who remains in a particular Chamber for more than one round must roll a Will save (DC 15). Those who fail fall victim to the effects as described in each entry. The DM should explain this condition to relevant players privately and encourage appropriate roleplaying of the situation. This affliction remains only while in the Chamber and ceases to affect the PC one round after he or she has left the room. PCs may gain an additional saving throw while in the room should the DM determine that conditions warrant it (e.g. two paladins of Heironeous affected by the Chamber of Hate go to attack each other). *Protection from chaos, protection from evil*, and similar spells will ward characters against the effects of the statues.

Pholemius is unaffected by any of the Chambers' enchantments. In case a whole party is affected, Pholemius may be their only hope. Any PC who tries to attack Pholemius with a melee weapon stops short and instead stands confused. Pholemius then approaches the PC and touches him or her on the forehead as described in each Encounter. With that, the affected PC snaps out of his affliction and may act as normal.

There is of course, the unforeseen possibility that Pholemius might die for one reason or another. If this happens, the DM should modify the description of encounters appropriately.

Each of the statues acts as one of the five levers that release the stone elevator from the ceiling above the Chamber of Slaughter (Room 9). A Search check (DC 16) of the statue will reveal that the arms can move, and pulling both arms in a downward motion until they are parallel with the waist of the statue will result in an very audible moving of gears followed by a locking sound. After all five levers have been activated, proceed to **Encounter Nine (Pholtus).**

A small lever to the right of the door will cause the door to ascend into the ceiling. The door will descend again one minute later unless wedged open.

Anyone approaching within 10 feet of a door from the far side of a particular Chamber activates a *continual flame* spell that has been cast on a series of torches inset into the wall. There are a total of six torches around each door, arranged three to a side in vertical manner. Each torch appears to be made of some ferrous metal that has stood the test of time well (better than the spell enchanting each). Each torch is set into a circular sconce of the same metal. Each sconce is set into the forehead of a small reddish clay fixture that resembles a leering face with mad eyes and tongue hanging out of its mouth. As the players will figure out sooner or later, opening the door from this side requires them to pull the correct sconce. As they may also find out, on each door at least one of the sconces is trapped. Each sconce may be pushed or pulled down (it depresses about an inch), and any PCs who listen will hear an audible “click”. The sconce will remain in this position for 2 rounds before returning to its original position. The door will not close, however, until the correct sconce is pulled again (at least from this side). Like the others found throughout this small temple complex, the runes engraved on each sconce give some clue as to which one is the correct one to pull, provided the PCs manage to identify the aspect of Erythnul represented in each Chamber. A Search check (DC 10) or a Spot check (DC 15) will allow PCs to identify which sconce has which particular rune. A Decipher Script check (DC 23) made against each rune will allow that particular PC to identify the rune’s meaning (There is no particular order to the placement if the players try and establish one. Clergy of Erythnul could learn a lot from the clergy of Rao in that regard). The players should be given the appropriate **Player Handout** if they examine the runes on the sconces.

Finally, the DM should feel free to adjust the DCs of certain checks, or eliminate them completely, if it is apparent that the players are aware of a common feature of any facet of the temple complex (e.g. how to open the doors).

Encounter 4 (Pholtus): The Chamber of Envy

You easily follow the trail of trampled brush, bloodstains, and bits and pieces of gear that must have fallen from the victims. Perhaps a quarter of a mile into the woods, the trail leads up and over a small rise. Approaching the top of the rise, you are slightly stunned to see another scene of carnage before you. Here lay many large hairy goblinoids, approaching seven feet in height. The humanoid have yellow-brown skin and thick,

coarse hair brown in color. They are garbed in a variety of leather armors and they lie sprawled among each other, with weapons buried in their dead carcasses. It appears that they fought each other, perhaps for the spoils of their slaughter, or perhaps just from uncontrolled bloodlust. There is no indication that they were members of opposing tribes.

Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to identify these creatures as bugbears. It appears that VeChris Aruweg’s concerns were justified. What has happened here are that the bugbears have fallen victim to the enchantments placed upon the Chamber of Envy. Given their general nature, they easily succumbed and soon minor squabbling over loot became a deadly fray. If PCs investigate this more and ask questions surrounding this scene, the DM should give answers consistent with what took place here without revealing the real cause. Weapons include morningstars, javelins, hand axes, battle-axes, and small wooden shields. Most are broken or in bad shape. If the PCs make a thorough search of the area (this will take approximately 10 minutes), they will find the items listed in the **Treasure** section of this scenario.

Walking down the shallow slope of the hill, you see a cavern entrance, perhaps ten feet by ten feet, which has been dug out of the hill.

If PCs get closer to the cavern entrance (within 5 feet) read them the following. Remember those PCs with darkvision or lowlight vision will be able to see what lies in the Chamber of Envy at a greater distance than those who are either using a light source or simply peering in with normal vision. PCs may also make a Listen check (DC 10+5/every 5 feet from the cave mouth) to hear a weak moaning from the wounded bugbears within.

Peering inside, you are immediately drawn to several figures that get up slowly off of the floor and draw their heavy morningstars defensively. They look wounded and appear in pain.

Although bugbears are quite dangerous, especially for low-level PCs, the fact that they are wounded and not using their best tactics (bugbears prefer to use their incredible stealth to ambush victims) should make them easier to dispatch than would be normally possible.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Bugbears (4): hp 13, 12, 10, 8; hp 16 each; See *Monster Manual*, page 27.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Bugbears (6): hp 16 each; hp 16 each; See *Monster Manual*, page 27.

Tier 4 (EL7 than 8)

Bugbears (6): hp 13, 12, 10, 8, 7, 6; hp 16 each; See *Monster Manual*, page 27.

Two rounds after melee begins, a rival band of bugbears who have just arrived in the area join in.

Bugbears (6): hp 16 each; See *Monster Manual*, page 27.

Bugbear Sergeants, male bugbear Ftr2 (2): CR 4; Medium Humanoid (Goblinoid) (7 ft tall); HD 3d8+3 + 2d10+2; hp 29; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +3 studded leather, +1 small shield); Atks +7 melee (1d8+2, morningstar), or +5 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1.

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +4, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Spot +3. *Feats*: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Bugbear Leader, male bugbear Ftr4: CR 7; Medium Humanoid (Goblinoid) (7 ft tall); HD 3d8+3 + 4d10+4; hp 42; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +3 natural, +3 studded leather, +2 large wooden shield); Atks +10/+5 melee (1d8+5, morningstar), or +7/+2 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2.

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Climb +2, Hide +5, Listen +3, Move Silently +8, Spot +3. *Feats*: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (morningstar), Weapon Specialization (morningstar).

Once the bugbears have been dispatched (or perhaps even negotiated with however unlikely that may be) the PCs can get a better view of the room.

The room is octagonal in shape, and perhaps only twenty or so feet across. A large red statue, seemingly of the same race as these foul creatures, abuts the middle of the right wall. Its face snarls at some unseen onlooker and its arms are outstretched before it as if to grab someone or something. Directly across from the statue on the left wall is a door. Only a red tear-shaped engraving mars its surface. There appears to be some kind of lever on the right side of it, approximately six feet off the ground. Murals are painted on the walls, depicting humans and some humanoid races in scenes with gold and silver, precious gems, castles, and beautiful women. Littering the floor, more bodies lie sprawled about the room, including the remains of some of the humans. You look on as Pholemius approaches a dismembered head, which is all that remains of the man who was VeChris Aruweg. He frowns and shakes his head. "Such a waste" he

sighs. He then whispers a prayer for the dead man.

As PCs investigate the room, they may come under the effects of the Chamber of Envy. PCs who fail their Will save (DC 15) feel envious of what one or more party members possess, be it monetary, magical, or mundane in nature. If the opportunity arises while in the Chamber of Envy, that PC may try to steal from one or more fellow party members, or a fight may even break out between two affected PCs. If Pholemius becomes aware of a problem, he approaches the affected PC and touches him or her on the forehead, saying, *"No heart full of avarice can steal that which cannot be stolen. Be envious not of my material goods, but of my spiritual wealth. For I have the Blinding Light within me. Follow me and walk the One True Path to Enlightenment."* With that, the affected PC snaps out of his or her affliction and acts normally. Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to recognize the statue as a bugbear.

After several minutes of milling about the room, Pholemius speaks. "This is very dangerous. We must use caution here. What we seek lies beyond that door," he says, pointing to the left hand wall. "However, there is something else we must do first. What it is I do not know."

PCs should easily find the lever that opens the door, so they may be deceived when they fail to find the statue's true purpose, which is what Pholemius is referring to (see **A DM's Note**). Read the following to them as they proceed:

Stepping through the doorway, you are caught slightly unaware as a torch inset into the wall on the far side of the door sputters weakly to life. It is but one of six, each arranged three to a side in vertical manner. It seems time has taken its toll on its companions, as the enchantments laid upon these other iron torches have faded long ago. Each torch is set into a sconce and each sconce is in the form of a nightmarish humanoid visage formed from red clay. The torch itself protrudes from the forehead of the creature. The dim light provided doesn't help as you peer down a hallway that extends past your view.

PCs might investigate the door and spot some of its hidden details (see **A DM's Note**). If they spot the runes, read the following and give them **Player's Handout #1**. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

You notice that the sconces appear to be inscribed with a rune you're not familiar with. Each appears to have a different rune.

If the PCs succeed in a Decipher Script check (DC 23), translate the runes as follows (the same symbols are used on each door, so once the

translation is known, no further checks are required).

__ (Malice) __ (Envy)

__ (Panic) __ (Hate)

__ (Slaughter) __ (Ugliness)

Pholemius will murmur appreciatively, but deciphering these runes isn't one of his supernatural powers. It'll be up to the PCs to figure this important clue out. In this case, the upper right sconce is the correct one. The middle right sconce is trapped to cause a trap door to swing open into a 30-foot pit. Fortunately for the PCs, time has gotten the better of this trap as well, and the left side of the trap door (away from the hinge) will only drop two inches. This won't endanger the PCs but should give them a hint of things to come should they mess around with this door.

Encounter Five (Pholtus) The Chamber of Malice

Off to your left, there is another door inset into the wall. Six sconces are set along the door in the same pattern as the room you've just come from, but none light up at your approach. The passageway continues straight ahead, while directly across from the door a short passageway opens up into a larger square-shaped room.

If they spot the runes, give them Player's Handout #2. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

__ (Ugliness) __ (Malice)

__ (Panic) __ (Slaughter)

__ (Hate) __ (Envy)

If the PCs happen to pull the middle right sconce, read the following.

As you pull the sconce downward, you hear an audible click. You feel the onrushing heat of fire descending from the ceiling above you!

The PCs have activated a flame jet trap that shoots a cone of flame down from the ceiling in all 5 ft. x 5 ft. squares that abut the Chamber of Malice (see **Map**). Any PC in the square in front of the door or on either end is allowed a normal

Reflex save to avoid the flames, but PCs in the middle two squares receive a -2 circumstance penalty to reflect the additional difficulty they will have in reaching a safe place.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Flame jet: 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. long cone of flame (5d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 15); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Flame jet: 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. long cone of flame (7d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 17); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Tier 4 (EL 9)

Flame jet: 5 ft. wide, 10 ft. long cone of flame (9d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 19); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 26).

Should PCs pull the top sconce on the right, read the following to the players.

Pulling the sconce, you hear a clicking sound. Seconds later, the stone door in front of you ascends into the ceiling with the sound of stone on stone. The way into this room thus cleared, you peer in. The room is fairly unremarkable, being square and tapering to a small alcove on the far side of the room. Directly across from the door is another statue. This one appears to be a human male, garbed in a fluted heavy armor of some kind. The statue is completely red in color, and it clutches its fists together under its evil grinning sneer. About the room, you see another mural. This one has all sorts of men and women, grinning evilly and reveling in their fiendish plots against fellow men that have come to fruition. Pholemius has a look of concern on his face as he enters the room.

As PCs investigate this room, they may come under the effects of the Chamber of Malice. PCs who fail their save (DC 15) begin to have malicious intentions toward their fellow party members. If Pholemius becomes aware that one or more of the PCs have been afflicted by this, he approaches the PC, touching him or her on the forehead, saying, ***"Come not before the Blinding Light with a heart full of malice. One who walks the True Path is enlightened and may do no wickedness to his fellow man"***. With that, the affected PC snaps out of his or her affliction and acts normally.

Encounter 6 (Pholtus): The Chamber of Panic

If the PCs approach within 10 feet of the door, read the following.

As you reach the bottom of the dark stairwell, six of the familiar torches greet your approach, and surprisingly they all come to life, albeit weakly. It seems some of the enchantments laid about this temple have fared better than others have.

If they spot the runes, read the following and give them **Player's Handout #3**. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

__ (Slaughter) __ (Malice)
__ (Panic) __ (Envy)
__ (Ugliness) __ (Hate)

In this case, pulling the middle sconce on the left opens the Chamber of Panic. If it is pulled read the following.

Pulling the sconce, you hear the grinding of stone on stone as the door moves upward into the ceiling.

If the lower sconce on the right is pulled, read the following to the players.

Pulling the sconce, you hear the sound of several arrows being released behind you!

Roll randomly among those in the two squares in front of the door to choose targets for the arrows.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Arrow trap: 6 arrows; +10 ranged (1d6 [crit x3]); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Arrow trap: 12 arrows; +10 ranged (1d6 [crit x3]); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 4 (EL 10)

Arrow trap: 24 arrows; +10 ranged (1d6 [crit x3]); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

When the PCs finally make it into the room, read them the following description.

This room is larger than any you have been in so far, and flares out from the entrance to eventually over 30 feet in width. Some 30 feet away directly across from the door is a red statue of a large humanoid figure, its arms extended out before it, as if to choke any whom would dare

approach. Along both walls are murals of humans and elves with expressions of fear on their faces, running for their lives across some great plain from hordes of the same monsters that this statue represents. A giant figure of a similar monster in blood red armor with green eyes dominates the mural. The great monster swings a flail and appears to be bleeding from wounds on his body. The blood that flows from his body falls to the plains below him, the droplets form more monsters, adding to the onrushing horde. There is nothing else but dust, the stale air of the long-sealed chamber, and the quiet here to greet you.

If the PCs step into the room, read the following.

As you step into the room, the emerald eyes of the statue light up by means of some enchantment that still has yet to fade. As you fall under the statue's eerie green gaze, you begin to empathize with the humans and elves on the mural. You can almost hear the mural now, as the cries of the fleeing echo in your ears, and the joyous howling of the bloody beasts as they pursue their prey. Above it all, you hear a strange droning sound emanating from that hideous flail, and yet emanating from all directions as well. Your heart starts to beat faster, as the droning seems to call your name. You've got to get away from here...NOW!

To successfully approach the statue and resist the enchantments in the Chamber of Panic requires a Will save (DC 15) vs. Magical Fear. Those who fail their saves will run away as fast as possible for 1d4 rounds as if affected by *cause fear*. Characters may make another attempt to enter the room, but the DC is raised by one for each successive attempt. As elsewhere, Pholemius is unaffected by the enchantments in this room and attempts to grab any PC who attempts to flee. He will calm the PC by saying, "*There is nothing to be afraid of. The Blinding Light is with us and shall not lead us astray. One does need to run in fear when he walks the One True Path.*" Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to recognize the statue as an ogre.

Encounter 7 (Pholtus): The Chamber of Hate

Proceeding across the room, the passageway on the right side goes only 15 feet before turning to the left down a long stairwell.

When the PCs reach the bottom, read the following.

Around the corner to the right, the uppermost four of the torches spring to life vibrantly. Maybe they should have had whomever enchanted these torches do them all.

The players will have probably figured out by now what they need to do here, and so the guessing game begins anew. If they spot the runes, give them **Player's Handout #4**. The runes are listed in the order they are presented.

__ (Hate) __ (Ugliness)
__ (Slaughter) __ (Malice)
__ (Envy) __ (Panic)

This time around, every sconce but the upper left one act as a trigger for a Poison Spear Trap. (This trap is set into the wall opposite the door). Read these unlucky PCs the following:

Pulling the sconce, you have no time to react as you hear a spring mechanism of some kind release behind you!

Roll randomly among those in the two squares in front of the door to choose targets for the spears.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Poison spear trap: 2 spears; +12 melee (1d8 [crit x3] + poison (Fort save to resist (DC 14); 1d2 Str/1d3 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Poison spear trap: 4 spears; +12 melee (1d8 [crit x3] + poison (Fort save to resist (DC 14); 1d2 Str/1d4 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Tier 4 (EL 10)

Poison spear trap: 6 spears; +12 melee (1d8 [crit x3] + poison (Fort save to resist (DC 14); 1d4 Str/1d6 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

This trap is loaded into a spring mechanism that will reset itself one round later. A very unlucky PC can therefore set it off multiple times, though at least one round must pass before setting it off again.

If the PCs successfully open the door, read the following.

The click of the iron sconce precedes the movement of the stone door into the ceiling. Beyond the door waits a small mostly square room. Across from the doorway is a statue of some humanoid, larger than most men are. It has a dog-like head and hairy mane, and its fists flank its bestial, snarling maw, as if clenched in anger. Murals on the walls depict scenes of humanoids and giants, elves and dwarves, armed to the teeth and ready to spill blood. Behind it all, a large

figure similar to the statue bleeds upon the impending battlefield, his horrible green flail high above his head.

PCs who haven't gotten wise to the nature of these statues may fall under the effect of the Chamber of Hate. Any PC failing a Will save succumbs and immediately attacks the nearest PC, with a +1 profane bonus to hit and to damage PER TIER. Pholemius does his best to end the violence, grabbing the arm of an affected PC, saying, "***There is no room for hatred in a soul filled with the Blinding Light. Violence begets only violence, and such is not the way of the Enlightened.***" Any PC may make a Monster Lore check (d20+PC level, DC 13) to determine that the statue is that of a gnoll.

Encounter 8 (Pholtus): The Chamber of Ugliness

Proceeding across the room, the far passageway goes only 20 feet before turning to the left and continuing out of view.

If PCs proceed further, read the following.

It seems the hallway only goes another 30 feet before ending at a door similar to the ones you have already seen.

If the PCs approach within 10' of the door read the following.

The lower torch on the left and the middle torch on the right flicker with a dim light at your approach.

Like the other sconces, these have a familiar set of runes that are arranged in the following order.

__ (Ugliness) __ (Panic)
__ (Hate) __ (Malice)
__ (Envy) __ (Slaughter)

If they spot the runes, give them **Player's Handout #5**. In this case, pulling the upper sconce on the left opens the Chamber of Ugliness. If it is pulled, read the following.

Pulling the sconce, you hear a familiar clicking sound and the grinding of stone on stone as the door moves upward into the ceiling.

If the lower sconce on the left is pulled, read the following to the players.

Pulling the sconce, you hear a familiar click. The door does not move, and you begin to notice the air fill with a gray mist that is descending from

the ceiling. You quickly begin coughing and choking from the strange gas.

The trap releases *insanity mist*, an inhaled toxin, which fills the area from the door out to 10 feet.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Poison gas trap: Fort save to avoid (DC 13), 1d3 Wis/1d6 Wis; Search (DC 23); Disable Device (DC 23).

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Poison gas trap: Fort save to avoid (DC 16), 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis; Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25).

Tier 4 (EL 9)

Poison gas trap: Fort save to avoid (DC 19), 1d6 Wis/2d6 Wis; Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27).

Privately inform players who fail their saving throw of the following.

The gray mist clouds your mind and the world seems to move in slow motion. You can't think clearly.

Privately inform those players who fail their second saving throw of the following.

The air itself seems oppressive. You can't breathe. You must get out of this prison of stone. Why are those people looking at you? They're laughing at you! You clutch your ears to stop from hearing their laughter but to no avail.

Unfortunately, Pholemius has no power to cure the poison or what it inflicts. Pholemius will be unaffected by this poison himself, however.

As the PCs enter this room, read the players the following.

This room has a bizarre design, as if the two halves were under the charge of different architects. The left half of the wall is angled to form an irregular half-diamond, whereas the right half is rectangular. Directly across from the door is another statue of a tall but lanky humanoid with horrible claws, a long pointed nose, and a terrible maw with dagger-like teeth. Its sinewy limbs reach out toward you. Around the room are murals of hideous beings, so twisted and deformed you are unsure of what race they might even be. Above them all stands a large figure similar to the statue, which points his horrendous limbs at the figures in the mural. The beautiful become deformed, the young become old. You glance down at the polished mirror surface of the floor and gasp in horror as you see

your face slowly wither and twist into some horrid visage!

Again PCs in this room must make a Will save or stand motionless, horrified at what they have become, victims of the enchantments in the Chamber of Ugliness. PCs who fail this save may make another save every ten minutes to try to shake off the effects of the spell. Pholemius is unaffected by the Chamber of Ugliness, and helps any affected PCs. Cupping their face with both hands, Pholemius says, *"Let the inner beauty of one who walks the One True Path shine through the façade of flesh and bone. Let the Light that can not be seen shine upon these eyes so that they may know The Way."* As in the other Chambers, the PC snaps out of the effects as if waking from a daydream. Any character may make a Monster Lore check (d20+ PC level, DC 13) to recognize the statue as a troll.

Encounter 9 (Pholtus):

The Chamber of Slaughter

Once the PCs have pulled all the levers, read the following.

As you pull the statue's arms into the down position, you hear a great rumbling from outside the room, as a loud grating sound of stone on stone is accompanied by the sound of moving chains.

If PCs search for the sound of all this racket, read the following.

Entering the square chamber at the center of the complex, you see the middle part of the stone floor has fallen away like some giant trap door, as if on a hinge that swings downward. From the ceiling, a large stone platform, roughly the size of the trap, descends slowly, held by two massive iron chains. Peering into the depths below, the darkness seems to beckon like the gateway to an endless abyss.

Eventually the platform will come to rest. If at least 100 lbs. is put on it on it, it will begin to descend again, its mechanism activated by the weight. It descends very slowly, and PCs can easily jump on it without any problems. The platform can hold up to 3000 lbs. before the chain breaks.

As the stone conveyance slowly sinks into the floor, an uncomfortable silence blankets the area, broken only by the sounds of the chains lowering the platform like some great anchor into the depths of the earth. Soon the chamber above becomes lost from view as the descent continues. After several minutes, the platform comes to rest with a great noise of stone on stone. Somehow it

still manages to seem hollow in the unnatural quietness.

The platform has come to rest on a set of steps that extend outward ahead and on both sides of you. You peer into a large rectangular room, whose ceiling extends beyond visible range. The whole room has a strange reddish cast to it, and many large circular pillars can be seen on either side of the room, evenly spaced throughout the entire length of the room. The pillars seemed to be...adorned...with human skeletons, their arms held above their heads by rusting manacles attached to chains. The chains in turn are attached to hooks that extend from the columns, allowing the skeletons to swing freely, in some sort of grotesque dance of the dead. Mercifully, they lay still now, undisturbed for countless years it appears. Who they were one can only speculate. Perhaps even Erythnul's clergy have found their final resting place here on these pillars, for not even the minions of The Many would be safe from their own violent and wicked nature.

The far end of the chamber appears to have a bier of some kind surrounded by five pillars similar to those lining the room, only larger. There is something resting on the bier that seems to be the source of a muted, but brilliant, light. The light from the bier adds a contrast to the general hue of the room and it plays upon the surface of a pool of water that appears from this distance to surround the bier.

If the players investigate the skeletons more closely, a Search (DC 10) will reveal the following.

The skeletons have a strange red hue to them, and in the middle of their exposed ribcages some of them appear to have the remnants of a continual flame that seems to be the source of the strange illumination. The untold centuries have taken their toll even upon these enchantments, as now only a dim flicker remains, a ghost of the spell's former radiance.

If the players approach within 30' of the bier, read the following.

The bier is indeed surrounded by a pool of liquid approximately 25 feet in diameter. Although the light in the chamber tends to lend a red cast to everything, the liquid in the pool seems to have more than its share of the color, and you have an uncomfortable hunch that this pool is full of...blood. Intermittent drops break the surface of the pool, and looking to their source, you see that the columns surrounding the pool are adorned with a carving of a large head of some creature. The drops fall from the open mouth of each carving into the pool below.

The source of the conflicting illumination is now apparent. Standing upright and set into the bier

is a small staff, made of a silvery metal and studded with gems. Adorning the top of the staff are two crescent moons that overlap and face inward. A pair of hands grasps the staff, and a ring adorns one of the hands. Pholemius gasps and exclaims "A Prism Scepter of the Blinding Light!" and starts toward the bier.

This area radiates strong magic due to the prism scepter, but also radiates strongly of good AND evil if detected for. Pholemius is about to make a rash decision, and hopefully one or more PCs will grab him before he proceeds into the pool. The pool is only two feet deep, but it has an unusual and extremely dangerous resident who is more than eager for an infusion of fresh blood to add to its domain. With its limited intelligence and eagerness to kill, it immediately attacks the first person to step into the pool. It also attacks the first person that passes over the pool within range of its tentacles (1.5x height in feet, height varies by tier). The bier itself is on a raised dais that lies 5 feet above the surface of the pool.

If Pholemius or another player is within range of an attack, read the following.

Stepping forth into the pool of blood, you are [Pholemius is] surprised and horrified to see a vaguely humanoid shape appear out of the murk and lash out at you [him] with a tendril of blood!

The humanoid shape is an elemental creature formed of blood. It is unique and has taken the name Bloodshed.

Tier 2 (EL 5)

Bloodshed: CR 5; Medium Blood Elemental (8 ft tall); HD 5d8+15; hp 37; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 (Sw 90); AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural); Atks +7 melee (1d8+3, buffet); SA Blood mastery, drench, blood drain (DC 15), smother (DC 15); SQ Elemental; SR 0; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 16, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +6 Spot +6 Feats: Power Attack

SA: Blood Mastery (Ex): The elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and the opponent are in the pool of blood. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. The blood elemental may move anywhere within the room, but (for obvious reasons) would prefer to stay in the pool.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Blood Drain (Su): The most common means of attack is a blow from one of its tentacles. Further, the victim of such an attack must make a Fort save (see above) or have a portion of his own

blood drawn forth from his body and added to that of the elemental. The amount of blood lost in this way is equal to the damage done by the initial blow. Hit points lost to the blood drain are added directly to the elemental's own hit point total (to a maximum of 8 hit points per Hit Die). When striking at a target that has no blood of its own, the blood elemental cannot employ its blood drain attack and suffers a -2 penalty per die on all damage rolls (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Smother (Ex): In any round that the elemental chooses not to attack, it may attempt to smother an opponent. To do so, the elemental makes a normal attack roll to hurl itself onto the target of the attack. If it succeeds, the victim of the attack must make a Fort save or find that the elemental has filled his nose, mouth, and lungs with blood. The victim of this attack has a very good chance of drowning (as described in the DMG pg.85). On the next round, the elemental is free to move away from this victim and attack another character, leaving the first target for dead. Attacks on the elemental while it is smothering do full damage to the elemental and half damage to the victim (who is unable to lash out at the elemental while being smothered).

SQ: Elemental: As an elemental creature, the blood elemental is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Elementals have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. The blood elemental has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Tier 3 (EL 7)

Bloodshed: CR 7; Medium Blood Elemental (8 ft tall); HD 7d8+28; hp 59; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 (Sw 90); AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural); Atks +10/+5 melee (1d12+4, buffet); SA Blood mastery, drench, blood drain (DC 17), smother (DC 17); SQ Elemental; SR 0; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1.

Str 18, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +8 Spot +8 **Feats:** Power Attack

SA: Blood Mastery (Ex): The elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and the opponent are in the pool of blood. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. The blood elemental may move anywhere within the room, but (for obvious reasons) would prefer to stay in the pool.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Blood Drain (Su): The most common means of attack is a blow from one of its tentacles. Further, the victim of such an attack must make a Fort save (see above) or have a portion of his own blood drawn forth from his body and added to that of the elemental. The amount of blood lost in

this way is equal to the damage done by the initial blow. Hit points lost to the blood drain are added directly to the elemental's own hit point total (to a maximum of 8 hit points per Hit Die). When striking at a target that has no blood of its own, the blood elemental cannot employ its blood drain attack and suffers a -2 penalty per die on all damage rolls (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Smother (Ex): In any round that the elemental chooses not to attack, it may attempt to smother an opponent. To do so, the elemental makes a normal attack roll to hurl itself onto the target of the attack. If it succeeds, the victim of the attack must make a Fort save or find that the elemental has filled his nose, mouth, and lungs with blood. The victim of this attack has a very good chance of drowning (as described in the DMG pg.85). On the next round, the elemental is free to move away from this victim and attack another character, leaving the first target for dead. Attacks on the elemental while it is smothering do full damage to the elemental and half damage to the victim (who is unable to lash out at the elemental while being smothered).

SQ: Elemental: As an elemental creature, the blood elemental is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Elementals have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. The blood elemental has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Tier 4 (EL 9)

Bloodshed: CR 9; Large Blood Elemental (16 ft tall); HD 9d8+36; hp 76; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 20 (Sw 90); AC 20 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +9 natural); Atks +13/+8 melee (2d8+5, buffet); SA Blood mastery, drench, blood drain (DC 19), smother (DC 19), deathwatch; SQ Elemental, damage reduction 10/+1; SR 15; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +2.

Str 20, Dex 14, Con 19, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Listen +10 Spot +10 **Feats:** Cleave, Power Attack

SA: Blood Mastery (Ex): The elemental gains a +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and the opponent are in the pool of blood. If the opponent or elemental is landbound, the elemental suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. The blood elemental may move anywhere within the room, but (for obvious reasons) would prefer to stay in the pool.

Drench (Ex): The elemental's touch puts out torches, campfires, exposed lanterns, and other open flames of nonmagical origin if these are of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* cast by a sorcerer whose level equals the elemental's HD total.

Blood Drain (Su): The most common means of attack is a blow from one of its tentacles. Further, the victim of such an attack must make a Fort save (see above) or have a portion of his own blood drawn forth from his body and added to that of the elemental. The amount of blood lost in

this way is equal to the damage done by the initial blow. Hit points lost to the blood drain are added directly to the elemental's own hit point total (to a maximum of 8 hit points per Hit Die). When striking at a target that has no blood of its own, the blood elemental cannot employ its blood drain attack and suffers a -2 penalty per die on all damage rolls (to a minimum of 1 point per die).

Smother (Ex): In any round that the elemental chooses not to attack, it may attempt to smother an opponent. To do so, the elemental makes a normal attack roll to hurl itself onto the target of the attack. If it succeeds, the victim of the attack must make a Fort save or find that the elemental has filled his nose, mouth, and lungs with blood. The victim of this attack has a very good chance of drowning (as described in the DMG pg.85). On the next round, the elemental is free to move away from this victim and attack another character, leaving the first target for dead. Attacks on the elemental while it is smothering do full damage to the elemental and half damage to the victim (who is unable to lash out at the elemental while being smothered).

Deathwatch (Su): As per the spell of the same name (pg. 191, Player's Handbook), the blood elemental can determine the condition of any creature within 50' as a free action. This ability also has the added advantage that the elemental does not need to see to determine the exact location of a creature.

SQ: Elemental: As an elemental creature, the blood elemental is immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Elementals have no clear front or back and are therefore not subject to critical hits or flanking. The blood elemental has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

In addition, each statue continues to pour blood into the pool, healing the creature 10 points every round. Also, each statue will use a spell-like power each round. Roll on the following table to determine which, if any, effects are used. Each spell that allows for a saving throw has a save (DC 20), and for purposes of ranged touch attacks the statues get +10 to hit. Treat the statues as 10th-level casters for other effects. Targets are randomly determined. Should the party be successful and Pholemius still lives, he will remove any curses the PC(s) may suffer as a result of the statues:

1. No power used
2. *Cause fear* (Player's Handbook, pg. 182)
3. *Hold monster* (Player's Handbook, pg. 214)
4. *Inflict serious wounds* (Player's Handbook, pg. 217)
5. *Bestow curse* (Player's Handbook, pg. 178)
6. *Unholy blight* (Player's Handbook, pg. 268)

Should the PCs manage to defeat Bloodshed, and Pholemius is still alive, read the following.

With the bizarre monstrosity defeated, Pholemius walks up the dais and to the bier. He grasps the scepter with both hands, and it comes out of its stone prison easily, with a ringing sound of metal on stone. He turns toward you and smiles "Truly we are blessed by Pholtus, to have found such a relic in this old and forgotten place of evil and wickedness. Though we all were lured to our demise through our own weaknesses, the Blinding Light prevailed. Now we are all that much closer to walking the True Path to Enlightenment. I hold in my hands a Prism Scepter of the Blinding Light, a relic of great power and of equally great age."

"Ages ago, before The Pale knew of the Blinding Light, before the first Overking sat on the corrupt Malachite Throne in the kingdom of Aerdy, the Oeridian peoples lived far to the west, beyond the lands of the Baklunish. When the Oerid migrations began, the faithful of the Blinding Light were among them, to guide them and protect them from the wicked and evil, corrupt souls like those that built this place. Given unto the greatest of the faithful, to aid them in their tasks were vessels of great power such as this Scepter. Many were lost, along with the knowledge to use them. Look upon it now, pristine and holy. Not even the ravages of time have marred it. Nor has this vile prison managed to corrupt it. Let us return now, into the Light where this belongs, to shine as a beacon to all people who would know Pholtus and walk the One True Path to Enlightenment. You have done well this day and shall know Pholtus' blessing, even as men shall know your names across the breadth of the Flanaess. Come now. We have been here too long already."

With that, the prism scepter begins to radiate again, and from the center gap where the two half moons cross, a brilliant white light shines forth and rays of various colors stream across the room. The blood of the pool becomes water, and glistens in the light. The skeletons in the room all crumble into dust as the various rays hit them, the bones free at last to join the tortured souls they once held do long ago.

Conclusion (Pholtus)

When Pholemius and the PCs return to Shibolet, Pholemius requests that the PCs accompany him to the Blinding Spire. Orden Maxwell is very pleased at the discovery of the prism scepter, though he will be a bit reserved about letting the populace know who actually found it (can't let the faithful know that a bunch of heretic mercenaries helped the clergy on this one). However, Orden is grateful to the PCs and tells them that he will be keeping an eye on them. He does invite them to the ceremony in which the prism scepter is unveiled to the congregation of Shibolet, which happens on Godsdays of next week (to allow all the major figures of the faith in

the Gran March to make it to Shibolet to attend). This is a truly major event, and even if Orden would like it to be otherwise, Pholemius will ensure that all the major clergy members in attendance know of the PCs' role in this. Pholemius will also give one PC of his choosing a *potion of truth* to aid him or her in their quest of the One True Path. He will select the recipient based on who in the group best followed the ways of Pholtus, showing unbending respect for law and opposition to chaos.

Billet Themlin will be highly upset at the PCs. The reasons should be quite apparent. They shouldn't expect any favors from the Church of St. Cuthbert any time in the foreseeable future.

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 4

Defeating the bugbears 150 xp

Encounters 5-8

No characters killed as a result of traps 100 xp

Encounter 9

Finding the Chamber of Slaughter 100 xp
Defeating Bloodshed 300 xp

Total experience for objectives 650 xp

Roleplaying award for portraying effects of any of statues' enchantments 0-50 xp

Roleplaying award for consistent character portrayal that adds to the fun of the game 0-50 xp

Total possible experience 750 xp

Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than [insert campaign value] that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief, such as Infamy. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter Four

- 47 gp, 15 ep, 29 sp, 34 cp
- Darkwood shield (large, 257 gp, 5 lbs., wood): This large nonmagical wooden shield is made out of darkwood. It has no enhancement bonus, but its construction material makes it lighter than a normal wooden shield. It weighs 5 pounds and has no armor check penalty. It is decorated with the coat-of-arms of Geoff, a half white and half black griffon facing sinister on an opposite background of black and white.
- *Quaal's tree feather token* (tiny, 100 gp, *, feather): This pheasant feather has been enchanted to instantaneously cause a great oak to spring into being, being 6-foot in diameter around the trunk, 60 feet in height, and 40 feet in diameter around the top. It is useable but once.
- Silver dagger (small, 10 gp, 1 lb., silver): This ornate, yet functional, dagger is made of silver. It is of Ketite make and has "Voice of

Shadows" written in Baklunish along its left side.

- Magnifying glass (small, 100 gp, *, steel/glass)

Encounter Nine

- *Ring of Shembal Tessrek* (tiny, 200 gp, *, silver): This ring appears to be made out of silver and has a clear gemstone set into it. Within the gemstone is an emblem that looks like a sunburst made of another silver metal. The name of Shembal Tessrek can barely be made out on the inside of the band. The ring is still enchanted to cure serious wounds (3d8+5 hp) upon its bearer once, after which it becomes a non-magical ring worth 50 gp.

Conclusion (St. Cuthbert)

- *Potion of wisdom* (tiny, 300 gp, *, glass)
- *Potion of bull's strength* (tiny, 300 gp, *, glass)
- Influence Point (Church of St. Cuthbert) (uncerted)
- Infamy (Church of Pholtus): Check the appropriate box on the cert.

Conclusion (Pholtus)

- *Potion of truth* (tiny, 600 gp, *, glass): This potion functions as per the standard version in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* except that saves are made at DC 16.
- Influence Point (Church of Pholtus) (uncerted)
- Infamy (Church of St. Cuthbert): Check the appropriate box on the cert.

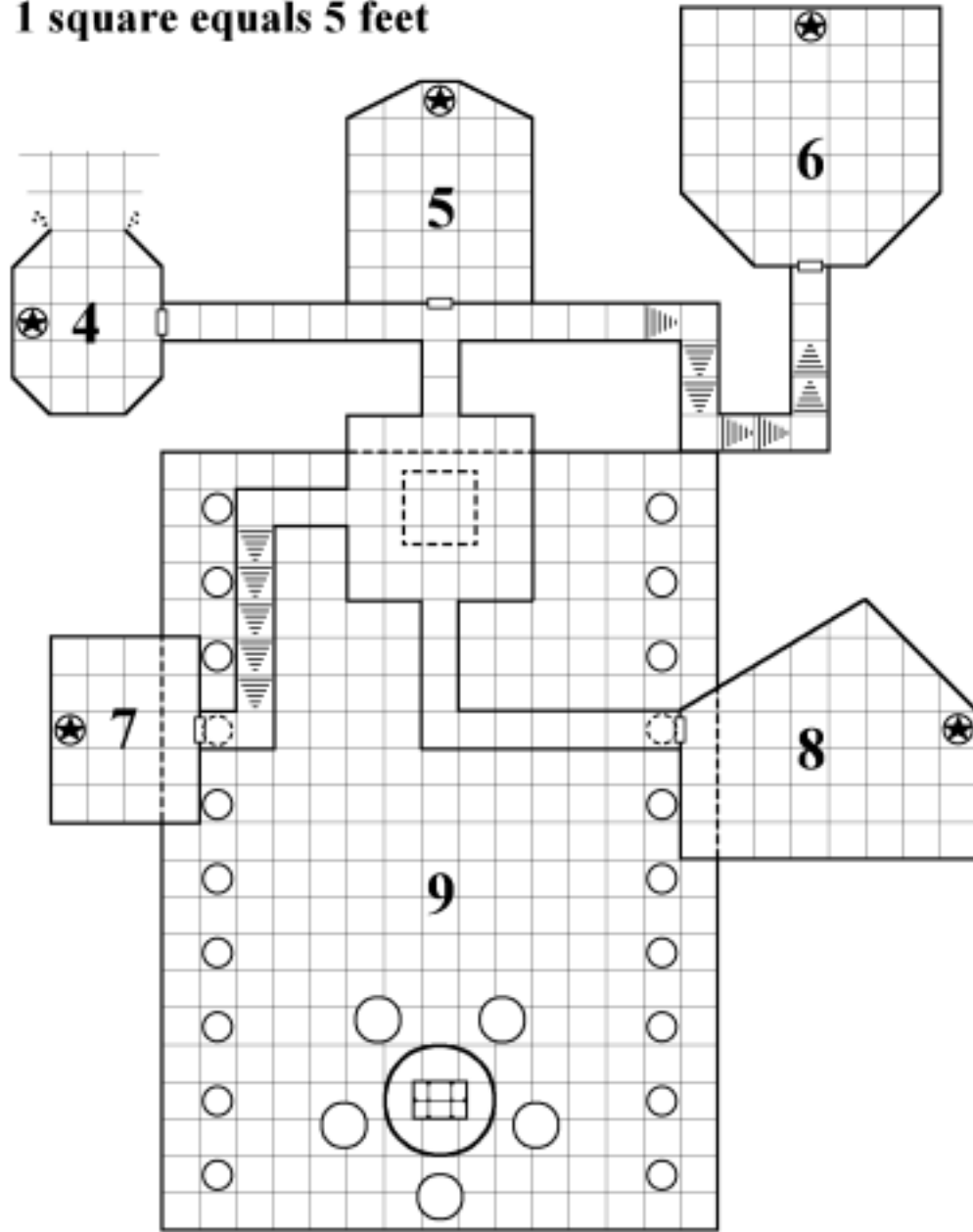
Infamy

[] St. Cuthbert [] Pholtus

Due to your decision, you have become known to the above faith in a manner that you'd probably rather not. You must show this certificate in any event or encounter in which you deal with a member of the above clergy. To determine if the clergy member recognizes you, he or she makes an Intelligence check (DC 15) with a +2 circumstance bonus if inside the Gran March and with a +2 synergy bonus if the clergy member in question possess 5 or more ranks of Knowledge (religion). If the clergy member recognizes you, you suffer a -2 circumstance bonus to all Charisma-based checks with that clergy member (and any other clergy members the he or she might inform). The following NPCs AUTOMATICALLY make this check: Orden Maxwell, Billet Themlin, Pholemius Brightmantle, and Truthseeker Aberion Colshimere. In no case will an NPC of the above faith who recognizes you aid you.

DM Appendix 1: Map of the Temple of Erythnul

1 square equals 5 feet



DM Appendix 2: Pholemius Brightmantle, The Sin Eater

Pholemius Brightmantle male human Clr12: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 12d8+12; hp 78; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+7 from *bracers*, +2 Dex); Atks +9/+4 melee (1d6+4 [crit 20], +3 *quarterstaff*); SA see below; SQ see below; AL LN; SV Fort +11, Ref +8, Will +13.

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 15.

Skills: Diplomacy +19, Heal +18, Knowledge (Religion) +15. *Feats*: Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Diplomacy).

Equipment: *Bracers of Armor* +7, +3 *quarterstaff*, *Ring of Freedom of Movement*, white robes, holy symbol of Pholtus, healer's kit, pouch containing 11 gp and 23 sp.

Physically, Pholemius Brightmantle is a typical Flan male of medium build in the middle years of his life. He has weathered bronze skin that the Tenhas typify, with curly copper hair tinged with white in spots. He has brilliant brown eyes and carries himself with an air of utmost confidence. He is the type of person you'd like to choke, but you can't, because he always seems to be right and he knows it. Combine that with the righteous attitude of a Pholtian, plus a lucky streak Rudd would envy, and you have the Sin Eater.

When speaking of the Sin Eater, you truly talk about a man who is something special. Because of his close relationship with Pholtus, Pholemius can effectively Sense Motive with a +20 to his check, and if he concentrates on an individual, that person finds it very hard to lie to him, as if he or she was within a *zone of truth* (DC 20). Also Pholemius gets the granted power of the Luck Domain.

Pholemius is something of an enigma, though he is not the first or only Sin Eater to walk the Flanaess. Pholemius first appeared in the adventure "The Sin Eater", pp. 91-96, in the *From The Ashes* boxed set Campaign Book. The DM should read that adventure if possible before running this event to get a better idea about this NPC. The following is paraphrased from that source.

Although Pholemius is a cleric of Pholtus, he does not employ spells, saving his spiritual energy for his work instead. Only if he is in dire need will he pray for a spell (appropriate to the situation). Such is the relationship between Pholemius and his deity that Pholtus will grant him one per day, immediately upon request, for such a dire need.

Pholemius' primary mission as a Sin Eater is to give succor and aid to those who have served Pholtus well and are near death. By visiting them and taking bread, meat, and mead in their presence, the Sin Eater is deemed to bring their souls as close to the acceptance of Pholtus' supremely critical faculties as possible. His act is thus a blessing and preparation for the afterlife.

Given the context of the scenario, one might be wondering why Pholemius has come all the way from the Pale. Although not directly stated in the scenario, many of the skeletons hanging in the Chamber of Slaughter are the mortal remains of servants and clergy of Pholtus. Through the actions of the PCs (either directly, in the case that they accompanied Pholemius, or indirectly, if they summoned Orden Maxwell), Pholemius has given these departed souls the final absolution denied them for so long.

DM Appendix 3: Critical Event Summary

Please fill out the information below based on the events that occurred during scenario play and return this form to the Gran March Regional Point of Contact:

Pete Winz
1006 Queensbury Circle
Durham, NC 27713

The input from these forms will help to determine future campaign events. Thanks for your assistance.

- 1) Which church did the PCs assist - St. Cuthbert or Pholtus?
- 2) Did the PCs discover the Chamber of Slaughter?
- 3) Did the PCs recover the prism scepter?
- 4) Did any PC touch the prism scepter more than once? If yes, how many times and what was the PC's name?
- 5) If the PCs assisted the church of Pholtus, did Pholemius survive?
- 6) Were there any other events of note not covered in the sections above?

Player Handout #1

Player Handout #2

Player Handout #3



Player Handout #4



Player Handout #5

