

VEL6-06

The Dark Path

A One-Round D&D® LIVING GREYHAWK™ Veluna Regional Adventure

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The life of an adventurer is one of constant conflict...of the soul within as well as with adversaries without. The characters will contend with both, and face the consequences of each, in an effort to ensure that vanquished threat to Veluna remains so. A one-round Regional adventure set in Veluna for characters level 4-14 (APLs 6-12) wherein PCs may forward the cause of good or commit themselves entirely to evil.

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

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

RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

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

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

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

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2007.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

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

PREPARING FOR PLAY

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

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

running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1.

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

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

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

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

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

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Over the course of the last few years, Veluna has been engaged in a life or death struggle with a powerful former ruler of the nation who was reborn as a lich and sought to reclaim Veluna as his own. The lich, known as Herion, mustered a powerful force of orcs, devils, and undead that swarmed over Northern Veluna and looked poised to overrun the entire nation until they were halted at Mitrik. In Mitrik, a stalemate was achieved at high cost in blood, but this deadlock allowed the theocracy the time it needed to rally its forces for a counterattack.

Eventually, Veluna began to push back the forces of Herion, but it was realized that there would be no permanent victory until Herion himself was destroyed. It was planned that Herion would be met in battle and slain. While the battle was raging, a party of adventurers was to infiltrate Herion's crypt, located in an isolated

valley in the Yatil Mountains, and destroy his phylactery. Only once this was done could it be certain that Herion would not re-form to plague Veluna at some point in the future.

Herion was destroyed in battle as planned. In the meantime, his crypt was penetrated by adventurers...who destroyed what they believed to be his phylactery. Unfortunately, they were mistaken. What was destroyed was not, in fact, the true phylactery but a replica meant to trick any whose goal was Herion's defeat. Since the supposed destruction, however, it is widely believed that Herion has been eliminated as a threat. Veluna has concentrated on rebuilding its shattered lands and healing the gaps left by the death or betrayal of its highest officials. There are few who are worried about Herion's return as there has been no indication that he survived.

Until now...

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

While on patrol in the wasted lands formerly held by Herion, the PCs encounter a strange oeridian man who asks for the aid of the PCs. Osh'mann shares his vision with the PCs of a dark and evil land where Herion's minions work to complete evil projects assigned to them by their undead lord. These assignments have as their goal the creation of powerful magic items of evil, which will greatly decrease the amount of time it will take Herion to repair his shattered forces and be able to, once again, strike Veluna. Osh'mann insists that haste is necessary as the land where Herion's artifacts are being constructed can only be reached a single night each year. Osh'mann gives them an old holy symbol that he says will guide their way and can be used to escape the evil lands in an emergency (as well as summon Osh'mann).

Osh'mann leads them to Herion's Valley, where they find soldiers and clerics of Veluna working to investigate the ruins and purify the tainted land. Though the military commander of the Velunan forces asks a few questions of the PCs, the PCs are thoroughly grilled by a Raoan inquisitor named Llairmin Brignir, also known as "Lightbringer" for his skill in banishing fiends. The arrogant and direct inquisitor attempts to throw his weight around to show the party who is *really* in charge at the camp.

In truth, "Lightbringer" is actually a Yugoloth mercenary named "Lezulrix'ith'nalax" (or "Lezul") working in the employ of Herion. Lightbringer has disguised himself as an inquisitor and has secretly worked his way up the hierarchy of the Raoan church. Recently, Lezul was able to get himself assigned as the ranking church representative on the mission sent to the Vale of Herion to purify the tainted area and explore the

structures left behind after Herion's defeat. The Yugoloth is interested in anything that is found, he has also been instructed by Herion to try to do whatever possible to help corrupt heroes of Veluna and help turn them towards the lich's service. The camp of Velunan troops in the Vale is divided between those who hate Inquisitor Brignir and those who seem almost fanatically loyal to him. While in the camp, a single PC will receive a letter from a noblewoman of the town of Snelland, who asks for the PC's aid in returning the body of her brother, Allerik, to Veluna.

After spending a few hours in the Valley of Herion, Osh'mann will lead the PCs to the basement of a tower located in the valley. As midnight draws near, a shadowy gateway forms out of this air and Osh'mann instructs the PCs to step-through.

After the players pass through the gate they find themselves in a shadowy land where evil hangs heavy in the air and they can feel the darkness pulling at their souls. Players may discover immediately that some divination magic fails to function; other effects will not likely be noticed right away.

The PCs will be attacked by powerful undead guardians of Herion patrolling near the entrance to the demi-plane but, once past them, they will reach a wide earthen path that leads off into the distance. The PCs can choose either to follow the road or to try to navigate the high grass.

As the party travels along the wide dirt path, a colossal dome latticework of human bones emerges out of the thick fog. The bones are enchanted with a *silence* effect that blocks sound from breaching the dome. Within the dome is a large town composed of a mixture of identical small stone buildings. The PCs discover that the people of the town are, in fact, citizens of Veluna who were presumed killed by Herion's advancing armies. Though they confirm that Herion's armies killed many, many others were brought to the town by Herion's armies. The townspeople tell PCs a wide variety of information about the situation in the area.

The strangest thing about the townspeople, however, is the fact that they believe that many years have passed since they were captured and their physical bodies seem to reflect this reality. After doing some investigation, the PCs may discover that time has passed many times faster for the townspeople than it has for those in Veluna. Besides that, it is also discovered that all the children of the town were recently taken by Herion's agents. No one in the town knows what happened to them. A man named Caine can be persuaded to guide the party to Herion's fortress, but will not agree to fight should combat break out. Caine claims that he has purposely deafened himself so as to not be affected by the nightmarish sounds outside the town at night and,

therefore, is the only inhabitant of the town able to travel outside town at night.

A few hours travel past the town the party sights an enormous black tree in the distance. Its branches are gnarled and twisted by evil. Mangled bodies can just barely be recognized on the ground nearby the tree, the rotting corpses providing the plant with a vile fertilizer of sorts. If the party wishes to try to avoid the threat they can get by without further incident (unless their evasion attempt is completely without merit). If the party decides to attack the tree they will fight an untiered combat against a powerful enemy.

Following Caine's lead, the PCs continue to follow the earthen path when they run across a dog who leads them to a clear area bordering a strange river. There, the PCs spot the town's children marching along the river's edge in a zombie-like state. The PCs spot several creatures guarding the children and must fight them if they wish to save the children.

The children themselves are currently under the domination of one of the creatures and the PCs will have to either try to subdue the children without harming them, or find some other way to deal with the situation to avoid harming the children. Caine volunteers to escort the children back to the town so the PCs can continue their mission without worrying about the children getting caught in any fights or other danger the PCs may run across.

When the PCs reach Herion's keep they find it surprisingly easy to infiltrate, using a hidden *teleportation circle* they discover with the help of Osh'mann's holy symbol. The party is instantly teleported into a chamber filled with evil artifacts. Most are uncompleted, but a few appear ready for use. The majority of the items can be destroyed without difficulty, but a few cannot be damaged through normal means. Some PCs may be tempted at this point to secret away some of the items from the rest of the party for later use if they spoke to Lezul the Yugoloth earlier.

Just as the PCs destroy the last of the magic items, the door to the vault opens revealing Herion himself (actually a simulacrum of Herion who has been placed here to oversee the item creation and rule this demi-plane). The arch-lich is flanked by a death knight bearing the heraldry of the Knights of Whitehale; Herion is also guarded by Caine Brandwood, the guide who directed the PCs to Herion's fortress. Caine reveals himself to be an undead creature of evil at this point.

Herion (the simulacrum) tells the PCs that their situation is hopeless and suggests that the characters serve him and they will rule as his agents when Veluna is taken. If the PCs refuse this offer, Herion directs his underlings to kill them; the lich himself simply observes the battle. The death knight is Sir Allerik de Snelland, the

Knight of Whitehale whose body one PC was asked to bring back to Veluna in encounter 3. The characters can either fight Allerik or, through diligent efforts, attempt to redeem the soul of the fallen paladin. Caine is beyond hope of redemption and will fight the PCs to the death.

Should the PCs defeat Herion's minions, Herion himself prepares to fight the PCs. It is here that the PCs should activate Osh'mann's holy symbol to summon his aid. A portal of glowing light appears and Osh'mann steps through. Osh'mann orders the PCs to enter the circle of light and flee to Veluna. After this he moves to engage Herion.

If the PCs step into the circle of light they will be returned to Veluna. If they refuse, they will likely be killed.

After stepping through the planar gate, the PCs find themselves back in the Vale of Herion, the morning after the date of their departure. A contingent of church inquisitors are present, along with representatives of the College of the Arcane, who *teleported* the inquisitors to the valley. The PCs are interrogated by the inquisition about what they have learned. The PCs are told that the mission sent to purify the Valley of Herion and investigate the structures within has disappeared, along with almost half of the troops. The other half of the troops assigned to the mission being found slain throughout the area. All of the items recovered by the mission are also missing.

The PCs are treated to rough questioning by the inquisition, as they are at first suspected of having a role in the disappearance of Sir T'llok and his troops. Sometime during the interrogations, PCs who choose to do so will be able to perform the acts requested of them by Lezul. If they perform these acts, they may become evil NPCs, depending on how each PC deals with the results of their act.

Eventually, the church becomes convinced that the PCs were not involved with the mystery of what happened in the Vale of Herion. At that point, the PCs will be asked their opinion of what they discovered and the church will take possession of the items recovered by the PCs. After this, the PCs will receive a terse warning that they are not to speak of what they have learned and are told that they are free to go.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

Before the Game:

Read through the adventure and attached Appendices

Read the adventure at least once, twice if needed, before you run it. Even if you believe it possible to run

the combats "cold," this adventure has many non-combat elements that cannot be adequately run without preparation.

Get a sense of the identity of each NPC

In DM Aid 2, at the end of this adventure, you will also find some information on role-playing notable NPCs. This is designed to aid you as a DM in making the NPCs stand out as distinct personalities and not simply a collection of abilities and skills. The role-playing information may also help you when the PCs ask questions of or about the NPC which go what is beyond what is included in the adventure itself.

Do any preparation for the combats you believe necessary

At the higher APLs especially, many of the NPCs have special abilities and attacks. As emphasized above, reviewing the adventure in advance will ensure that you are prepared to run the combats in this adventure. A significant part of the challenge rating of the NPCs that the characters will face in combat is due to their special abilities so it is important that the DM understand you to employ these effectively.

When preparing to run this adventure, take note of the feats and special abilities an NPC might have. You should also consider what you use to represent the enemy NPCs in combat. Many DMs choose to make use of the pre-painted plastic miniatures sold by Wizards of the Coast. You can also use other items however, ranging from figures you have painted yourself to coins or pieces of candy. You may also wish to consider other time saving ideas in combat such as making use of initiative cards and pre-rolling initiative for enemy NPCs.

Also note that no maps are provided for this adventure. The terrain for the likely combats in this adventure is relatively simple and does not require detailed maps. Instead, a section labeled "set-up" is provided right before the tactics section to detail how to prepare the map and where to place the PCs and NPCs when combat starts. Make sure to review this section in advance.

During the Game:

Try to keep the appropriate mood (as appropriate for your players)

This adventure relies heavily on a sense of tension and mystery to tell a story. As a DM you should attempt to preserve this sense of tension and mystery when running the adventure. The adventure is not intended to

be humorous and the DM should attempt to maintain a dramatic, rather than comedic, mood when running the adventure. Both the DM and the players need to keep this in mind during this adventure. Failure to do so will make the NPCs seem generic and two dimensional, and detract from the impact of this adventure.

In addition, there are certain parts of this adventure which verge on light horror. When possible, the adventure attempts to point out sections that may require modification by the DM for younger players and suggests that the DM alter or paraphrase these sections as necessary for these players. When running this adventure, feel free to adjust other sections as you feel necessary for younger participants.

Be diligent in moving the adventure forward/keep on schedule

This is of greatest concern if you are running at a convention. This adventure can easily run longer than the standard 4 hour convention slot. To prevent this from happening, you as a DM need to be disciplined regarding time management. Ask that players pay attention to read aloud text and avoid side conversations that distract from the adventure.

More importantly, as a DM you should avoid such conversations yourself and resist the temptation to interrupt the adventure to share how your own character handled a given situation in the adventure when you played. There will be time to do so after the adventure should you wish to do so. If the players themselves fail to complete the adventure due to their own side conversations and inattention to the adventure, they have no one but themselves to blame. Players would be rightfully annoyed, however, if they fail to complete the adventure due to a DM causing game delay.

A second time concern relates to combat encounters. It is the DMs duty to make sure that combat rounds flow smoothly and are not subject to unnecessary delays. The DM should always remain aware of where they are in the initiative count and make sure that players take their turn in a reasonable amount of time. If a player is unable to decide on an action they may go on delay status until they can decide what to do. If a player is not present at the table when it is their turn they should also go on delay status until they return so the game can continue. When you are taking an NPC turn, try to resolve the NPC turn quickly and efficiently. If forced to choose between taking ten minutes to figure out the most effective action for an NPC in combat and taking 1 minute to choose an adequate action, always choose the latter. Players again may be rightfully annoyed if they are unable to complete a adventure due to DM-caused delays in resolving combats.

Be cautious in "filling-in" information missing in the mod.

Certain elements of this adventure may serve as a basis for future adventures. To this end, certain information regarding some NPCs, locations, or other plot elements remains unrevealed to even the DM running this adventure. The DM should avoid, if possible, improvising information to "fill in the gaps" left by information that has been purposely omitted. At some point in a future adventure information that has been omitted in this adventure may be revealed to the players. It would preferable for the gamemaster to "break character" and tell players that a given piece of information is not provided in this adventure rather than to provide the players with conjecture, presented as fact, that might cause the PCs confusion in future adventures.

INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following:

In the year since the defeat of Herion and his armies the government of Veluna has had a great deal to keep it busy. The efforts to return the rogue diocese of Grayington to the fold are ongoing, endless endeavors to root out hidden enclaves of evil continue, and the rebuilding of Northern Veluna is a task with no current end in sight...even if the land itself seems supernaturally fertile this year.

One "loose end" that remains is to ferret out the last isolated elements of Herion's defeated army, which persist in making occasional trouble within the theocracy. Many of them have focused their activities in and around the valley containing Herion's crypt. The church has, therefore, recently dispatched a mission to purify the valley and unlock any remaining secrets it might hold. Meanwhile, the government has commissioned small groups of experienced adventurers, such as your own, to patrol around the valley and eliminate any of Herion's forces that you come across. The mission is relatively straightforward, easy and of relatively short duration. In fact, you are due to be relieved in a few days...

While trying up the remaining loose ends of Herion's army hasn't been the most interesting duty in the world. You are thankful that, at the very least, the threat from Herion is ended at last.

Tell the PCs that each of them is being paid 10gp per APL for this mission and allow them to make brief character introductions at this point (as they have been working together for some time).

Treasure:

APL 6: Coin: 60 gp.

APL 8: Coin: 80 gp.

APL 10: Coin: 100 gp.

APL 12: Coin: 120 gp.

Continue to encounter 1...

ENCOUNTER 1: A STRANGER IN THE MIST

At the start of this adventure the PCs have just finished a long day's patrol outside the Valley of Herion, somewhere in the Lortmil Mountains. They are preparing to camp as night descends.

Read or paraphrase the following:

As night comes on it seems a good time to make camp for the night. The day's patrol has been largely uneventful. A few scattered wandering undead that needed to be put to rest and a small band of orcs to be driven off, but certainly no major threats. Though it is certainly reasonable to be wary, so far the fear that Herion or his minions would attempt to recover hidden sources of power within the Valley of Herion seems to be unfounded.

This is not to say that everything has been peaceful and serene though. You can't put your finger on exactly what, but something seems strange...even ominous, about this night. The sky seems somehow darker, the wind colder than normal for a Veluna Autumn. Perhaps it is all just your mind playing tricks on you...

Regardless, you and your companions have so far faced no significant challenges since you were commissioned by the Church to patrol outside the valley. Your duty will be concluded in a few more days and another group of adventurers, or perhaps members of the ever-strengthening Mitrik Temple Guard, will replace you on patrol.

It is past dusk at this point and the PCs should be asked if they wish to camp for the evening. The PCs are in a hilly, forested area outside the Valley of Herion. If there are looking for specific terrain features to set a camp, allow them to do so as long as it is within reason (ask for a Survival check if necessary). PCs should then set watches and explain what other precautions or other preparations they wish to put in to place at the camp.

If the PCs refuse to set-up camp and wish to continue patrols during the night, the following

encounter still occurs, modify as necessary to conform to the actions that the PCs are taking.

Read or paraphrase the following to whoever is on watch at midnight:

Over the course of the last several hours, a thick mist has slowly begun to blanket your campsite. Though the silvery light of the full moon illuminates the area to some degree, the fog makes everything beyond the camp seem shadowy and indistinct. Occasionally, you hear the snap of a twig or the crunching of leaves that may mark the passage of local wildlife. Suddenly...you can just barely make-out the outline of a gray-robed humanoid figure moving through the mist at a distance...just as suddenly, the figure steps into the fog and disappears...

A few seconds later you see a similar figure, perhaps the same one, moving through the fog on the other side of the camp. Again, he steps into the fog and disappears, though he seems to stop a moment and gaze at you before you can, once again, see him no more. Through the darkness and fog it is impossible to see his features hidden within the thick hood...or even if there are any features there to be seen...

At this point the PC or PCs can decide what, if anything, they wish to do. A strange man known as Osh'mann is currently scouting-out the PCs to determine if they are of use to him (they are). Due to his nature, however, it is very difficult for the PCs to discover much about him that he does not wish to be discovered. If the PCs search the area surrounding their camp they will find no trace of anything unusual.

If the PC or PCs on watch are agitated about not being able to act during box text, allow them to retroactively start casting spells or otherwise "powering-up." The PC will not be able to "catch" Osh'mann, however, before he decides to make himself known.

Once the PCs begin to settle back into their normal camp watch routine (if they disrupted it to check on what caused the noises), Osh'mann makes a sudden appearance within the camp itself.

Read or Paraphrase the following to any awake PC: (modify as needed)

After spending some effort fruitlessly trying to discover the source of the disturbance around the camp, you complete the remainder of your watch without further event. Eventually, however, you begin to grow weary and decide it would be a good time to wake the next watch. Turning to do so, you are surprised to find your way blocked by a figure in a

thick gray robe. The man holds his open palms before him, as if to show that he is not armed.

As an experienced adventurer, your eyes quickly search for less obvious danger signs, such as a spell book or component pouches, but you see none. Despite the softness of the ground, you note no footprints leading up to the place the figure before you now stands. After a moment's pause, the man's hands move to lower his hood and you are reassured that the individual before you is human, or at least wants to be seen as such.

The man appears to be Oeridian in origin, with short brown hair and a scholarly look about him. Eyes the color of steel appraise you sharply, but with a tired weariness apparent. The fog seems slightly thicker near where the man stands, as if the mists are drawn to him as moths to flame. With a slight smile that betrays inner warmth, the old man bows slightly and addresses you, "Greetings [PC Name], time is short and the quest before you is long, wake your friends quickly and the length shall be lessened..." At that, the man steps back, out of your way, and looks to you expectantly.

"Osh'mann": male human (Oeridian) cleric 10/contemplative 6/ risen martyr 1; See Appendix 1 for stats.

It is possible that Osh'mann may look familiar to one or more of the PCs. Any PC who played any of the following Veluna regional adventures will think he looks vaguely familiar: **VEL2-04, VEL2-05, VEL2-06, VEL3-01, VEL3-04, VEL3-06, VEL3-09, VEL4-05, or intro mod VEL3-02.** Additionally any PC who was a member of the following meta-orgs in years 1 thru 3 may find his face familiar: Church of Rao, Heironeous, St Cuthbert, Knights of Salvation, Mitrik Temple Guard, Brotherhood of the Vale.

At this point the PC or (if the other PCs are awoken) PCs will likely have some questions for the strange man that has emerged in their midst. Osh'mann's nature is to let the PCs ask questions of him rather than for him to deliver a briefing to the party (refer here to the DM aid on role-playing Osh'mann in this mod). Try to run the question and answer session in a fairly freeform manner, but make sure that the PCs get the information necessary for them to succeed in the adventure (even if Oshman must give some information to the PCs without being asked). Try not to make things feel highly scripted though if possible. Some information provided below is mostly for flavor and not necessary to complete the adventure (in other words, it is not necessary for Osh'mann to speak about it if he is not asked).

If the PCs attack Osh'mann in this encounter for any reason (he will do nothing to provoke the PCs) he will

seek the aid of more reasoned adventures. The mod is over for the PCs.

Likely questions and their answers follow (questions marked with an asterisk "*" contain answers that the DM should be sure to share with the PCs regardless of what questions they ask):

How did you know my name?

I know what it is necessary for me to know, how it is so I cannot say...so I'm afraid I can't give you the answer you likely wish. I require the aid of heroes to prevent the return of a great evil. You are such a hero, and your name was therefore known to me.

Who are you?

*Hmm...a seemingly simple question, yet it I could not truly answer without spending more time than what is available...and even then I don't fully know the answer myself. You may refer to me as 'Osh'mann and I will answer to that name and none other while I am with you. (PC's who speak Flan recognize that "Osh'mann" translates roughly to "sinner". PC's who make a DC 25 Knowledge (History) or Knowledge (Local: VTF) know that the term Osh'mann has roots in Ancient Flan history. Long before the nation of Veluna existed, the Osh'mann were a group of Rao-worshiping ascetics who lived in the vale. PCs who make a DC 30 Knowledge (History) or Knowledge (Local: VTF) check get **Player Handout 1**, "The Osh'mann." PCs who speak Flan get a +5 circumstance bonus on these knowledge checks.)*

Aren't you [NAME OF NPC]?

You may call me Osh'mann.

Why are you being so secretive?

The quest you will undertake shall be very dangerous and the risk that you may fall to the enemy is significant. I can only give you the information that is necessary for you, lest evil grow stronger.

*** What quest are you talking about; we're just on patrol aren't we?**

For the past few years the Lich Known as Herion has wrought destruction on this land with the aid of his armies. Nearly a year ago Herion was defeated, but not destroyed. I ask that you journey with me on a path through darkness, at hazard to not only your body, but

your mind and soul as well ... if we are successful, Herion will remain defeated, though his destruction remains beyond your power.

I'm not afraid of Herion, we'll not only defeat him, and we'll destroy him too! (Or something similar)

I admire your confidence, but Veluna needs live heroes to protect her in the dangerous future that is not yet known. Your skills and power are significant, but you will meet threats that are beyond even you. Recognizing what you must fight and what you must bypass will be something you should consider carefully.

*** *Where is Herion now?***

Even while prosecuting his war against Veluna, Herion knew there was always a risk he might be defeated. As a hedge against this possibility, the arch-lich spent a great deal of time and effort to create a demi-plane, tied to Veluna, where his power would be greatest. If Herion were defeated he could safely retreat to this demi-plane to plan a second attempt to regain control of the vale.

*** *How do we get there?***

To minimize the risk that Veluna would be able to discover the demi-plane and attack him there, the gateway between Veluna and the demi-plane of Herion only opens once a year at a single location. The gate is hidden beneath a tower within Herion's Vale. It will open tomorrow at midnight.

*** *How can we defeat him? Or Surely Herion can't be a major threat now, with his armies destroyed?***

Herion's forces were decimated by the armies of Veluna and, under ordinary circumstances, it would take Herion many years to rebuild his army of orcs, undead, and infernal troops. Circumstances are not ordinary, however.

What do you mean? / How are the circumstances not ordinary?

In the end, Herion's demi-plane served as more than merely a place of possible retreat. The most promising and powerful magic-users in Herion's service remained there, while lesser casters were sent to fight on the front lines. These powerful clerics and wizards were given the task of crafting powerful items imbued with dark power. These items were to be used against the armies of Veluna.

Fortunately, Herion believed that his armies were sufficient to overrun the vale without these objects, so he did not await their completion before moving against Veluna. Had he done so the outcome of the war might have been different. With the aid of these new magic items, it may be possible for Herion to rebuild his armies more rapidly and, once those armies are rebuilt, they will be even more powerful than they were previously.

How can the items rebuild Herion's armies more rapidly?

Some of the items aid in the rapid creation of undead, living allies can not be created in the same manner, but the promise of using some of the other evil items will draw new allies to Herion's cause. Herion is especially seeking Lieutenants of skill as he believes that his sub-commanders were a chief cause of his failure against Veluna as they were unable to stand against the heroes mustered against him.

*** *Where are these items?***

They are kept in a chamber deep within Herion's fortress, located near the center of the demi-plane.

*** *How will we get inside Herion's fortress?***

A way will be shown to you when you are near. You will be provided with a way when it is needed...as long as you remain on the path I will set you on.

*** *Describe the items to us.***

You will know them by their evil. Once you are in the chamber they will surround you. Destroy all that you can. Anything you cannot destroy you should return to Veluna and seek the aid of the theocracy in their destruction.

*** *How will we return to Veluna?***

You will not be able to return the way you arrive. You will have to seek your own means of exit after you are in possession of the items. However, take this holy symbol... Osh'mann gives the PCs a strange looking Raoan holy symbol (Knowledge (Religion) DC20 to recognize that it is of ancient Flan design). By activating the power of that symbol and calling my name, a portal will be opened and I will be summoned. You could use that portal to return to this plane, and I could provide aid

should it be required. However, Herion will instantly sense the opening of the portal so this should only be done in the direst of circumstances. Once you have used the symbol, it will be spent and your quest will be done, so do not expend it foolishly.

*** Are there any other special characteristics of Herion's demi-plane that we should be aware of?**

Yes. In addition to the time difference, like the curse Herion created here in Veluna, the demi-plane restricts divination magic. If anything, the effect on the demi-plane is even more powerful. The land also restricts magic of teleportation.

*** Is there anything else we need to know?**

Yes. Near the center of the plane is an ancient tree of evil brought by Herion from the depths of the Abyss itself. Known as "Kaz'allerax," It feeds on the malevolence and negative energy of the plane, using this power to grow stronger. This tree anchors Herion's demi-plane in place near Veluna, and preventing it from drifting through the astral plane. If the plant were destroyed, the threat to Veluna may be lessened, but it has grown far too powerful to oppose without more information on its weaknesses. If you come across Kaz'allerax, try to slip by without drawing its attention. Attacking it will likely result in your deaths to no purpose.

How do you know all these things about Herion's Demi-Plane?

I cannot provide the answer to that question; it would aid Herion greatly if he were to discover the answer.

Why should we trust you?

The level of trust you grant me is for you to decide. It is for you to resolve your own path. I have offered you a choice to make. It will be the first of many if you accept the task which is asked of you.

We have been hired by the church to guard this area...we can't just leave!

You must decide between what I have asked of you and the duties you are honor-bound to perform. I do not envy you this choice, nonetheless it for you decide how the greater good is best served. (The PCs are under contract to patrol the region for several more days before a relief party is set to arrive. If the PCs ask, the likely

consequence if they left their duty would be that there would be some wandering undead, orcs, and lesser devils that would be able to attack surrounding communities without heroes prevent to stop them. The consequence of not aiding Osh'mann the PCs can guess at based on what he has told them).

Can you pay us?

I cannot. I have no possessions except what I now wear. However...I can promise you that you will face opposition in your quest. You will likely find treasure on those who oppose you. Beyond that, all I can offer you is a chance to test yourselves against adversity, to confront new foes, and to stave off, if only for a time, a great evil...all things that heroes value even above gold. (Oshman smiles as he says the last part).

*** Are you coming with us then?**

Only part way. I cannot enter Herion's plane, for he would surely sense my presence immediately. For now I will remain with you, but once you pass thru the planar portal, I cannot accompany you.

If the PCs have any other questions not covered above, the DM will need to improvise an answer. Many questions will get little in the way of answers, with Osh'mann restating variations of his concerns about giving the PCs too much information.

Holy Symbol of Rao game effects: See DM Aid 1.

At this point the PCs must decide if they will leave immediately (it will take about one day's travel over rough terrain to get to the Vale of Herion) or if they believe it necessary to remain at their post and continue to patrol outside the vale. If the PCs think of it, and have access to magic that gives them the ability to contact the church, one of several things can happen:

- 1) If the PC has no great influence within the church (less than five influence points and not in a church-related meta-org) then they are directed (one way or another) to a lowly acolyte who promises to get the message to his superiors (but doesn't do so until after the adventure is already over).
- 2) If the PCs are known to the church, but not of high rank (five or more influence points or lower tier member of a church related meta-org) then they are directed to a mid-level cleric who has some knowledge and authority. He informs

the PCs that a Knight of Salvation is currently leading a mission to explore and purify the Vale of Herion. The PCs should report to him and he may approve the mission. If the PCs ask to speak to anyone important they are told that the individual is not to be disturbed as they will be participating in an important ritual the next morning.

- 3) If the PCs are of high rank in a church (Knight of Salvation or top tier in a church-related meta-org) they get to talk to someone important (a bishop, etc. ...depending on who the PCs want to talk to). The church member the PCs speak to is suspicious of Osh'mann and suggests that the PCs take him into the valley, but that they turn him over to the inquisition there and await further orders.

If the PCs have access to magic that allows them to reach the Vale of Herion more quickly (i.e. *overland flight*, *teleport*, etc.) allow them to use these spells, the PCs will simply have more time to interact with the NPCs in the vale.

No matter what spells or skills the PCs use, the church will not be willing to accept the validity of Osh'mann's claims without verification using a powerful church inquisitor and none are currently available to be sent towards the vale. Persistent PCs may be told that there should be an inquisitor assigned to the purification of the vale...perhaps he could verify Osh'mann's claims?

If the PCs decide they should remain on patrol, the adventure is over for them. This is a lawful decision and the PCs will get an xp award for keeping their word to the church. But the reward is nominal as the greater good is definitely not being served by such a decision.

If the PCs decide that the threat to Veluna justifies a breach of their contract, the PCs advance to encounter 2...

ENCOUNTER 2: THE SHADOW OF THE VALLEY OF DEATH

After agreeing to aid Osh'mann in the previous encounter, the PCs must journey nearly a full day over rough terrain before they reach the Valley of Herion. If the PCs have mounts they can lead them along, but the ground is too rough to ride. If the PCs have access to magic that allows them to reach the Valley sooner, allow for it as long as the use of such magic is reasonable and adjust the following box text as necessary.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Entering into the Valley of Herion, you see nearly a hundred men at work. Most of them wear insignia that marks them as members of the Mitrik Temple Guard or other soldiers in the service of Veluna, but a significant minority are Raoan clerics or priests of other faiths favored in Veluna. Several buildings lie within the valley, still foreboding, but less so since the defeat of Herion. Teams of men trickle in and out of the dark structures, occasionally bringing wrapped bundles out and stacking them on the ground. The clerics mostly work outside, casting spells that seem to purify the desecrated ground.

On one end of the valley, a crew of Dwarvish stonemasons is hard at work carving grave markers. Each of the headstones bears a likeness of the face of the reasoned one, with a single tear descending from the right eye. Below the face on each stone you see many different names and dates of birth. The date of death is the same on each, testifying to the price paid in blood by many soldiers to allow a team of adventurers the opportunity to destroy the phylactery of the lich-lord Herion. An effort that apparently failed.

A Knight of Salvation, resplendent in gleaming plate mail, moves among the men in the valley, supervising their work. Close by his side is a thin, red-haired cleric of Rao, unarmored, but in robes that mark him as a member of the inquisition. The priest offers occasional advice to the knight, who pauses just a moment before nodding in agreement and changing some aspect of the work in the valley.

The work here has obviously been underway for some time, as a large camp fills a significant part of the valley. Many tents are deployed, but there are fortifications or trenches set around the camp. The absence of guards around the camp is also odd. While no organized enemy forces currently remain in the vale, such a lapse in discipline does seem unusual.

The pass the PCs use to enter the vale is a good distance from the camp (about a half mile or so). If the PCs are not trying to conceal their approach, the red-haired cleric of Rao soon notices the party and points them out to the Knight of Salvation. The PCs then see the knight summon a pair of soldiers, and the soldiers then proceed to mount nearby horses and ride out to intercept the PCs.

The troops that ride out to intercept the PCs are members of the Mitrik Temple Guard. Assuming that the PCs do not appear to be an obvious threat, (i.e. do not appear as undead, devils, full-blooded orcs, or displaying

holy symbols of any evil gods) the two soldiers have friendly attitudes when they intercept the PCs. They will ask the PCs the usual questions that guards always ask: (1) Who are you, (2) Why are you here, and (3) do you have any papers to prove what you say (i.e. authorization of a bishop, etc.). As long as the PCs answer these questions in a reasonably honest fashion (or reasonable sounding lies) the soldiers agree to take the PCs into the camp to meet with Sir T'llok, the Knight of Salvation who commands in the vale. The two guardsmen ask the PCs to peace-bond their weapons and spell component bags until their story is verified by Sir T'llok, but are willing to back-off on this request if the PCs press the issue (allow a Diplomacy roll if you wish). Note that Osh'mann will let the PCs do all the talking. If asked, he will explain to them that he has given them the quest, but it is theirs to complete.

The guards seem to be in reasonably good spirits but, if the PCs inquire at length, they admit that base discipline is somewhat lacking and that the mission has been run in a less focused and efficient manner than they would have expected with a Knight of Salvation in command. The trip to the camp is fairly short and the guards don't answer any more questions as they don't want to speak any further ill of their leader and expect Sir T'llok to answer any other questions the PCs may have.

The two soldiers are 2nd Class Mitrik Temple Guardsmen. They are fairly new, but promising, recruits. They each have Knowledge (Local: VTF) +2 (for recognizing high-level PCs by reputation), Sense Motive +2, and Spot +2. Hopefully, combat should not break out, if it does for some reason, use 2nd level fighter stats from page 117 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

If the PCs try to sneak into camp without being seen, have them make some rolls, but allow them to get in camp unseen as long as they have a reasonable plan and make reasonable skill rolls. Otherwise, have them caught by some Mitrik Temple Guards and taken to meet with Sir T'llok. The security of the camp is almost non-existent and Sir T'llok is especially susceptible to being duped right now, so the PCs should not have permanent problems even if they screw-up. If the PCs try to search-around to scout out the camp they don't find much that has not been described. The wrapped bundles are items removed from Herion's crypt. Many have magic or evil auras but none of them are immediately useful to the PCs without further research.

One way or another, the PCs should end-up meeting with the camp commander, Sir Quedin T'llok, and his clerical advisor, Inquisitor Llairman Brignir... (Allow PC's a DC 10 intelligence check to recognize "T'llok" as an Olman name, those who speak Olman know this automatically).

What is REALLY going on in the camp . . . (DM only Info)

Unknown to anyone in the camp, Inquisitor Llairman Brignir, also known as "Lightbringer" for his skill at banishing devils, is actually a Yugoloth (Arcanaloth) whose true name is Lezulrix'ith'nalax (hereafter referred to as "Lezul"). For reasons of his own (see the DM aid on playing Lezul) the Yugoloth was actually of great aid to the nation of Veluna during the recent war, banishing Herion's Devil allies with great skill and earning himself a high rank as a member of the Raoan inquisition. Lezul is now working for Herion.

Before the arrival of the PCs, the Yugoloth's plans were coming close to fruition. By using mind-affecting spells with his silent spell and still spell feats, Lezul has undermined Sir T'llok's ability to command and the false inquisitor now routinely bends the Knight of Salvation to his will. The knight is currently under the effect of a *bestow curse* spell, which has lowered his Wisdom score by six points. Additionally, the Yugoloth casts *charm monster* and miscellaneous *suggestion* spells on Sir T'llok every day (in case he successfully saves) and casts *geas/quest* on him each night while he sleeps with the command to "Obey the inquisition unquestioningly." The command is worded in such a way as it would not seem an unusual attitude for a Knight of Salvation to have and it does not point directly back to Lezul if it is discovered (as it lists "the inquisition" and not just Lezul as the party to be obeyed).

The aim of all this effort on Lezul's part was twofold. First, there were certain items left behind in his crypt that Herion wanted recovered. By attaching himself as the ranking cleric in the Veluna exploration force, Lezul plans to allow the theocracy to do the difficult work to recover that which Herion desires and, by the time this recovery of Herion's items is complete, Lezul plans to have undermined enough of the Veluna force to use it to return Herion's items to him. Any soldiers who are able to resist the Lezul's enchantments will be slain.

Herion's second major goal is to subvert heroes of Veluna to his own cause. In the last war, Herion repeatedly saw his champions fall to the heroes of Veluna. Ever the pragmatist, Herion is only all-too-willing to accept the service of his former enemies to aid him in a future attempt to claim the vale...providing that he is able to seduce them to evil. Lezul has had less success in this endeavor, so far only finding Sir T'llok as a possible worthy addition to Herion's cause, and having no firm idea yet as to how the Paladin's faith might be undermined.

When the PCs arrive, however, Lezul sees a possible solution. The PCs fit the bill of the sort of powerful heroes that Herion wants to add to his cause. Lezul

reasons that the most effective means to undermine the characters is try to play on the resentment any of them might have to the way the church, and especially the inquisition, is being run since the death of Cannon Hazen. If the PCs resentment can be bent and focused, they might be tempted into committing an act of evil so great that they would be bound to the service of Herion. As for the PCs claims (if shared with Lezul) that they are seeking to destroy powerful evil items of Heron's...Lezul is essentially a mercenary, hired by Herion to complete two tasks. Being concerned with the fate of Herion's toys is outside his contract and he will not try to dissuade them from it. If the PCs try to "turn over" Osh'mann to Lezul, he will display little interest in taking custody of or questioning Osh'mann (which the PCs might see as a strange attitude for an inquisitor) and the Yugoloth will suggest the PCs handle Osh'mann "as they see fit."

What the PCs see...

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you are led to meet with Sir Quedin T'llok you see a camp that is clearly not on high alert. Everything seems neat and in order, but none of the wartime security efforts; posting patrols around the camp, fortifying the perimeter, or holding a part of the army on alert; seem to be in place. The power of Herion has been banished and his forces scattered to be sure...but there is still a lingering evil in this place that tells you that all is not well...that the relaxed mood of this camp is somehow inappropriate.

Soon you are led to a larger tent that clearly serves as the commander's personal tent, as well as the camp headquarters. Inside is a fairly Spartan interior, with a few chests arrayed against the walls, likely containing clothing and the commander's personal effects. On a wooden rack on the far side of the room rests a suit of fine full plate and a mace of tremendous size...far larger than the light mace carried by most clerics of the Reasoned One.

Your attention is dominated, however, by the large wooden table that fills most of the tent. The knight you observed outside sits at the head of the table, with the red-haired cleric sitting immediately to his right. The knight has shed his armor and is now dressed in more comfortable clothing. He is of obvious Olman descent, with dark skin and hair. His aide, by contrast, looks more typically Oeridian. The cleric bears a fine silver holy symbol of The Reasoned One and a superior air typical of members of the Raoan inquisition.

The knight is engaged in conversation with the cleric by his side when you enter and does not notice

you at first. The cleric, on the other hand, obviously notes your appearance, but ignores you completely. A few seconds later, the knight turns to gesture at something and seems almost surprised to see you. Composing himself quickly, he rises to greet you and offers a deep bow, "Greetings, fellow defenders of Veluna. I am Sir Quedin T'llok, commander of this camp in the service of The Reasoned One. Please make yourselves comfortable at my table and I will have refreshments brought. I apologize that the fare may be simple, but many in our wounded land are subsisting on much less in these times."

Sir Quedin T'llok: male human (olman) paladin 7; (Sense Motive -2).

"Inquisitor Llairmin Brignir": male yugoloth (arcanaloth) sorcerer 3; See Appendix 1.

Before the PCs start into their own questions, Sir T'llok and Inquisitor Brignir have a few of their own for the PCs (after all, the PCs arrival is unusual and unexpected). Basically, Sir T'llok and the Inquisitor ask the same questions the PCs were asked by the guards: (1) who the PCs are, (2) what are they doing at the camp, and (3) what proof do they have. Sir T'llok and the inquisitor, however, will likely inquire more deeply than the Mitrik Temple Guardsmen that the PCs first met with.

In speaking with the PCs, Sir T'llok will generally be courteous, yet firm. Inquisitor Brignir is much more haughty and demanding during the discussions. Ask players if their character has a positive or negative view of the Raoan inquisitors and if they are trying to conceal this attitude. *Any PC trying to hide their distaste for the inquisition must make a Bluff check against the Inquisitor's Sense Motive skill.*

Once Sir T'llok and Inquisitor Brignir are satisfied with the party's answers they will answer questions put to them by the PCs (assuming the PCs tell the truth or put forward a reasonably believable story...Lezul won't call them on any lies and Sir T'llok won't catch any of them). If the PCs ask about Sir T'llok or inquisitor Brignir, you can either have the NPCs answer questions about themselves using the DM aids concerning each NPC, or allow Knowledge checks (DC 15) to give the PCs selected bits of information. Knowledge (Local: VTF) or Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) can be used to find out more about Sir T'llok, Knowledge (Local: VTF) or Knowledge (Religion) can be used to find out more about Inquisitor Brignir.

If the PCs ask questions about what is going on at the camp, the NPCs can share the following:

- The expedition the party sees was sent by the church to purify the Vale of any taint left by Herion and remove any remaining items of power from the buildings within the vale.
- The expedition is led by Sir T'llok. Inquisitor Brignir serves as chief advisor and second in command of the mission.
- The work has taken longer than expected as the mark of Herion on the land is deeper than was expected and his enchantments have been difficult to dispel.
- The troops under T'llok's command have removed many items, both magical and mundane, from the buildings in the vale. They will be hauled back to Veluna once they are catalogued.

If the PCs share with Sir T'llok and Inquisitor Brignir the purpose of their mission and what they intend to do both men seemed stunned by the revelation. Sir T'llok expresses the opinion that his work in the vale is too important to send forces with the PCs, but that they should do what they believe is best for Veluna. Inquisitor Brignir, on the other hand, demands that the PCs do nothing until he has time to speak to his superiors in Mitrik. If asked how long this will take, Brignir states that he can speak to them magically as early as tomorrow. T'llok wavers back and forth between agreement with the inquisitor and telling the PCs that they will have to judge for themselves what the best course of action is.

If Osh'mann is present, or if the PCs mention him, the inquisitor, at first, seems interested in questioning the man. As soon as Inquisitor Brignir sees Osh'mann, however, he suddenly loses all interest in doing so for reasons he refuses to explain.

After the PCs have a chance to speak to Sir T'llok and Inquisitor Brignir a while read or paraphrase the following:

A uniformed guardsman suddenly rushes into the room and addresses your host. "Sir T'llok, I think we may have discovered a secret passageway in the crypt Sir! Sergeant Draeman had everyone stop work until you could direct us how to proceed." The soldier smiles broadly at Sir T'llok, obviously proud of himself. His expression changes to a slight scowl; however, when he notices Inquisitor Brignir in the room...the inquisitor, luckily, appears not to notice the low opinion that the guardsman seems to have of him.

Shaking his head a moment, Sir T'llok goes to clap the guardsman on the back. "Excellent work, Guardsman Bilhus, I...uh, I'll come myself to make sure we're able to deal with any 'surprises' we might

find," pausing as if to think for a moment, the knight quickly adds, "Inquisitor Brignir will come too of course."

Turning to all of you, Sir T'llok smiles regretfully, "my apologies that I must cut our conversation short, I'm afraid that the inquisitor and I have duties to attend to. I will have Guardsman Bilhus here prepare a tent for your party where you can stay for the night. Feel free to move about the camp or explore the valley as you wish, just be careful. If you are still here tomorrow we can speak more at that time. If not, I will assume that you have gone forward with your mission. Good luck to you." At this, the knight turns quickly and departs, followed closely by Inquisitor Brignir.

If the PCs try to ask to go along Sir T'llok refuses, saying that supervision of the work is his responsibility. Inquisitor Brignir supports him on this, saying that the PCs don't have proper "clearance". If the PCs try to be sneaky and follow anyway, it will be hard to do so without getting caught. In the end though, the "secret passage" is a red herring, a rough door outline where expansion of the crypt was planned but never occurred, eventually, this will be realized by the guardsmen and Sir T'llok. No matter what, eventually the PCs will be led to their own tent while Sir T'llok and Inquisitor Brignir attend to other business.

Proceed to encounter 3...

ENCOUNTER 3: I HAVE AN OFFER FOR YOU...

Not long after the PCs start heading to their tent, a soldier will approach the PC who has role-played as being the most noble, good-hearted, and honorable in the party (not necessarily who *should* role-play their character that way).

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you move about the camp, a young soldier suddenly approaches you, "Excuse me sir, are you [NAME OF PC]?"

[If the PC lies, the soldier apologizes for the mistake and goes on his way. If the admit their identity, continue]

"Ah, I have a message for you then sir. I'm in charge of mail for the camp and I thought I was going to have to send this one back. Here you are sir!" With

that, you are handed a plain letter held closed with a drop of wax, but without the mark of any seal.

[Give the PC **Player Handout 2**]. The letter has not been tampered with in any way (if the PC wants to make a forgery check). Allow the PC to read this handout while other PCs are meeting with Inquisitor Brignir or gathering information.

PCs who choose to gather information around the camp can make a DC 10+APL Gather Information check to discover that the camp is divided between those who dislike Inquisitor Brignir and his harsh mannerisms and those who seem almost fanatically devoted to him. A DC 25 Sense Motive check reveals that some of those who favor Inquisitor Brignir seem to be under the effect of magical enchantments. If the enchantments are broken, these guards would also be suspicious of the inquisitor and tend to dislike him.

Allow the PCs some time, if they specifically ask for it, to investigate matters...but the PCs should not have time to get to the bottom of things. Just as they seem to start uncovering disturbing information, night falls and they have to follow Osh'mann to the planar gateway.

Eventually, up to three PCs will be individually summoned (not all at the same time, but only after each meeting is complete) to meet with Inquisitor Brignir. The yugoloth in disguise will try to meet individually with up to three PCs who he feels have the greatest distrust and/or dislike for the inquisition (he was sizing up the PCs for this attitude in the last encounter).

If no PC has a negative view of the inquisitors then he summons the PCs he believes would be most easily tempted towards evil. PCs will individually receive a summons (**Player Handout 3**) from a Mitrik Temple Guardsmen that they are asked to meet privately with Inquisitor Brignir in his tent. If a PC accepts this offer the entire encounter below should occur out of earshot of other players (i.e. away from the table).

If any PC decides not to meet with the inquisitor, so be it. The inquisitor will not pursue the matter further. Any PC who accepts the invitation, however, should have the following text read or paraphrased for them:

After deciding to accept the invitation to meet with Inquisitor Brignir you are escorted to his ornate tent by the messenger who delivered his summons. The Inquisitor's tent is incredibly opulent, crafted mostly of silvery silk of fine quality. An enormous face of the god Rao, stitched in gold thread, fills a large area on the front of the square structure, divided in its center by an entrance flap.

Inside, you find Inquisitor Llairman Brignir, lounging on an overstuffed chair enjoying spiced pastries of Baklunish origin. Rich artwork, consisting

mostly of paintings of Raoan clerics smiting down various enemies of the church, rests on wooden racks about the room. A brush and colors lie near an unfinished piece.

"Ah, [NAME OF PC], I am glad you decided to accept my summons. We have much to discuss. I gather that you are not a fan of the Inquisitors of the church of the reasoned one. You would be wise to hide your feelings better on this subject. The Inquisition has been given great power by the church...those who cross it do so at their own risk. Do you truly hate the inquisition so much that you would endanger your own well-being in the vale?"

Allow the PC to respond. If they suddenly have a change of heart and decide that they are in favor of the inquisition then the inquisitor tells them they have made a wise choice and lets them leave. If the character *lies* and says they have no problem with the inquisition then let them make an opposed Bluff check vs. the inquisitor's Sense Motive (+20). If the inquisitor detects the lie then continue to the next box text as if the PC admitted to hatred of the inquisition. If the PC admits that they dislike the inquisition, hate it, etc. then the "inquisitor" suddenly changes his tone to take on a much friendlier manner.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, Inquisitor Brignir takes a much more relaxed and friendly tone, shedding his former arrogance. Pushing the array of food away, he stands and begins pacing the room, as if deep in thought. He stops suddenly and seems to appraise you with his eyes before continuing. "You are right to distrust the inquisition, they try to grab power for themselves and trample everyone in their way. They accuse all who disagree with their opinions as being evil or disloyal."

Pause a moment to let the PC absorb this before Brignir continues...

"As you may have guessed, I am not truly an inquisitor. I am a representative of a group who believe that the inquisition has grown too powerful and dangerous and it should be opposed. I have infiltrated the ranks of the inquisition in order that I might more easily discover how their growing power can be contained and, perhaps, even reduced. Those I represent are very powerful, but we dare not move openly against the inquisition at this time. With your aid it may be possible to limit their oppressive influence. The mission you are currently engaged upon may provide the means to do so if you are

willing to help us. Is your conviction of the wrongness of the inquisition so great that you will act, or your beliefs only strong enough for words and not deeds?"

The yugoloth in disguise is very charming and makes his position seem very reasonable. Allow PCs to make Sense Motive checks against the yugoloth's Bluff (+27). If the PC wins, they think that what the yugoloth is saying might be literally true (enough to pass a *zone of truth* even) but he is phrasing things in such a way that there are very deliberate omissions of important facts.

Lezul the yugoloth waits to hear the response of the PC. If they agree Lezul is very pleased and instructs the PC on what he needs to do. Read or paraphrase the following:

As I have already confessed to you, I represent a group of individuals of some power who are opposed to the actions of the inquisition. I can not tell you how I come by the information that I have, but I know that there are certain items where you are going that may assist in weakening the stranglehold that the inquisition has over the Vale. If you are willing retrieve and make use of such an item, I will instruct you in its use...

If the PC is still interested, refer to DM Aid 3 and use the offer most appropriate option to the PC's class, try not to use the same task twice. PCs should understand that the items Lezul mentions will be found amongst the rest of the evil items in Herion's vault. If they fail to realize this, allow them a DC 10 Wisdom check to do so.

Lezul will mask the true depth of the evil act the PCs will perform if they accept the offer, but even what is told to the PC should make it obvious that the PCs will be doing a VERY BAD thing. The PC should definitely be aware of this, and that they would be willingly performing an evil act if they agree to do what Lezul asks.

If the PC agrees to the task, read or paraphrase the following:

The Inquisitor seems satisfied with your answer; Very well, I hope that you are successful. Should you succeed and find yourself in great difficulty, drink this potion I now give you...it will take you before any can react...

The potion that Lezul gives the PC is gray in color. It detects as magical, but no particular aura.

Lezul refuses to answer most questions put to him by the PCs, saying only that he has made his case already and the PC must decide how to respond. He

generally tries to appeal more to what the PC *wants* to do, more than what is right and wrong. Again, it should be clear to the PC that what Lezul offers is not a good act, but more an act of giving the inquisition "what they deserve," basically an act of anger and perhaps revenge by any PC who has a problem with the inquisition. If the PCs try to find out specifically which group he represents (i.e. The Pack) he will admit to nothing. If need be, he would "kill" himself rather than be found out. As Lezul is a Yugoloth on the material plane, he will reform on his own plane...hopefully not as a lower form of Yugoloth...

In no circumstances will Lezul engage in combat with the PCs. If he is attacked, he will cry out for the guards to come and take the PCs away. He won't charge them with assault, but will not allow any PC who attacked him to get near him again. Lezul tries hard to maintain his cover if he can do so safely. If he is attacked in such a way that he fears being killed if he does not flee immediately, he will teleport away. If any PC who becomes aware of Lezul's true identity is able to report it (whether to others in the camp or, via magic, to higher ranking church officers) they are not immediately believed. An investigation may be launched (depending on how persuasive the PCs are) but the inquisitor is presumed innocent for the time being.

If the PCs are highly suspicious of Inquisitor Brignir and decide to investigate him a bit, adjudicate things as necessary. In general, the Inquisitor tries to maintain his current cover if possible, relying on his rank and quick tongue to keep him above suspicion. If in danger of being killed, however, Lezul will *teleport* or *plane shift* away and try to fix things later. No matter what, however, it should be emphasized to the PCs by Osh'mann that they **MUST** be at the portal to Herion's domain at midnight and all other problems must wait. This will give the PCs less time to get distracted and limit the amount of time they can dedicate to any investigation.

Eventually midnight draws close and Osh'mann insists that the PCs move to the portal. Continue to encounter 4...

ENCOUNTER 4: INTO SHADOW

As the hour draws near midnight Osh'mann and the PCs must go to the wizard's tower in the valley. PCs who played **VEL4-07 Behind Enemy Lines** may recall this tower as being under construction in that adventure.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs decide to follow Osh'mann to the planar portal:

As the hour nears midnight you follow Osh'mann to a tall unfinished black tower in the valley. Inside, the ceiling above appears to be one solid piece of stone obviously created by magic. It's apparent that once the floors above are completed stairs are intended to lead up and the stone will be cut or shaped to allow for access to the story above. In fact a set of stairs sits along one wall of the tower not far from the door. The stairs are only partially completed. You see signs of exploration; marks on the wall to show where surfaces have been checked for traps or secret doors, rows of various items stacked on the floors, and continual light torches hung to provide lighting for Sir T'llok's troops.

Osh'mann moves to the center of the floor seems to fumble about a moment, moving his hand along the surface of the floor, when suddenly there is a 'click' and a section of the floor opens. Without hesitation, Osh'mann descends into the hole.

Assuming the PCs follow:

The trap door in the floor reveals a set of stair leading down into the darkness. The steps are worn by untold ages and are certainly far older than the newer construction of the tower.

The stairs lead down to a crumbling stone passage some 30 feet below ground level. At the end of the passageway is a drop off that leads down into darkness.

The shaft is 20 feet square and 200 feet deep. There is a rope ladder leading down to the bottom. About halfway down is an open and empty compartment in the wall (nothing of interest). Osh'mann is climbing down the rope ladder.

Assuming the PCs follow Osh'mann down the ladder:

At the bottom of the shaft is a collapsed passageway leading off. It looks like it has been recently cleared a short ways, but the collapse appears complete and totally impassable. Osh'mann leans against a wall staring at the floor, apparently waiting for something.

If the PCs have time and want to ask anything of Osh'mann at this point, pause now to let them do so. He won't likely give them much in the way of answers, but will merely instruct them that they need to wait and be patient. Continue with the next section of box text...

Suddenly the shadows around you seem to gain substance and begin to move of their own accord. Slowly, wisps of the shadow's essence flow together and seem to form a flat, disk-shaped hole in space

against one wall...inside of which you see nothing but thick fog. Gray smoke hisses as it rises from the gateway, as if the portal's energy is being boiled away from its contact with the material plane.

Osh'mann stands before the strange phenomenon, his hand resting on his chin...as if considering something. He turns to you and says, "You must go now. I dare not follow." He steps aside and motions towards the fog...

The party must now decide how to respond. If they do not enter the fog the adventure is over. The gate is stable, however, and the PCs can cast a few prep spells before entering if they would like.

After the party enters the planar rift they must pass through a misty area that forms the border of the demi-plane. In game terms, treat the mist as a large area of *fog cloud* under the effects of *permanency*. A one hundred foot wide area of *solid fog* must then be passed though (in box text), followed by another section of *fog cloud*. If the party uses a spell, ability, etc. that dissipates fog they may be able to clear an area of fog. For the most part this will only allow them to see each other and relatively featureless stone. The area of *solid fog* cannot be dissipated by normal means. Once the party enters the planar rift they cannot return through it.

Read or paraphrase the following:

After entering the gateway, a thin mist, gradually thickening to a dense fog, sweeps over you. You are left wandering for a time, with no frame of reference to gauge your progress. A chill breeze with a heavy scent of moist earth brushes across your face as loose stone occasionally crushes beneath your boots.

The clouds around you seem to almost physically attempt to impede your progress for a time, slowing your movements to a crawl no matter how hard you attempt to push forward. Then, suddenly, it as if you have passed through a veil of some sort and the resistance fades. You now seem to be standing on weed-choked earth, with the fog gradually thinning as you move forward.

You are nearly out of the fog when an unseen something seems to detect you. A dark rumbling, like the sound of building settling in the night, issues from the haze as a wall of darkness advances towards you.

Planar effects: At this point, any PC or NPC that attempts to cast *scry*, *divination*, *commune*, or use any spell or ability to detect alignment or magical auras in the demi-plane will find their attempt blocked. They will feel great pressure on their minds and take 2d6 non-lethal

damage. Also, any spells with the “teleportation” subtype fail (they are cast with no effect). Note that the above-listed divination effects resume functioning within a mile of Herion’s fortress.

The party has been detected and about to be attacked by undead Vasuthant sentinels of the demi-plane. If the party has some means to avoid detection then give them xp credit for the combat and let them go on to the next encounter.

Special Rules:

Light Fog: Light fog is similar to fog, but with a decreased effect on vision. The first 10 feet of light fog provides concealment. Anything beyond 10 feet has total concealment.

APL 6 (EL 6)*

Advanced Vasuthant, Large: hp 105; See Appendix I.

APL 8 (EL 8)*

Advanced Vasuthant, Large: hp 147; See Appendix I.

APL 10 (EL 10)*

Advanced Vasuthant, Large (2): hp 147, 147; See Appendix I.

APL 12 (EL 12)*

Advanced Vasuthant, Huge (2): hp 189, 189; See Appendix I.

*Note that the EL of this combat has been increased due to environmental conditions (light fog and the unavailability of teleportation magic).

Set-up: The party must fight this combat in light fog (see “special rules” above). The fog covers the entire map in this fight. The terrain is otherwise open and featureless. Place the party on the map about 30 feet from the edge. Set-up the Vasuthant(s) 60 feet in front of the party. This is the range that their blindsight should detect the party. Remember that the Vasuthants emit darkness in a 60 foot radius from their bodies. Creatures with low-light vision and darkvision ignore this darkness.

Tactics: The Vasuthants are moderately intelligent undead who Herion has tasked with preventing the living from entering his demi-plane (unless the living are prisoners being brought in by Herion or his minions). Remember that, though the Vasuthants have blindsight, they do not “see” as normal creatures do, thus they will start the combat by attacking the closest target (or a random target if all are equally close). They will not be

able to tell what clothing or equipment a character is wearing by sight and will not be able to target certain classes or races. Once combat begins, the vasuthants will try to attack the PC who is hurting them the most. The Vasuthants use their reality distortion abilities to attempt to win opposed grapple checks and to avoid being hit.

Once combat has concluded, the PCs can finally emerge from the fog and see for themselves the nature of Herion’s demi-plane.

Remember that, once the PCs exit the fog and enter the demi-plane they cannot return back through the fog to Oerth. No matter what they attempt, the fog will dump them back into Herion’s demi-plane.

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you at last step from the fog, you find yourself standing on a wide path of hard-packed earth. There is a vast gray-green plain stretched-out before you. The shoulder-high grass looks at first as if it is covered with fine black dust, upon closer inspection you can tell that the plants themselves are discolored, as if afflicted with a wasting disease of some sort. Occasionally you think you can see things moving in the grass, but it is difficult to tell from where you are now. The sky is also grayish, with angry-looking black clouds, seemingly ready to assault the land with a deluge of storms at any moment. Despite the lack of any apparent source of light, the land is illuminated to the level of an autumn twilight.

On the path before you a human skeleton lays impaled by a blood-stained scythe, the blade passing through the breastbone and into the ground below. As you gaze at it, the skeleton writhes as if in agony. Its hands grab at the blade, as if trying to remove it...but to no effect. Its head turns to gaze at you as the once-human skeleton opens its jaw wide in a silent scream of agony. A rush of wind rustles through the deep grass...

The PCs may recall at this point that Osh’mann spoke to them about the path that will lead them deeper into Herion’s realm.

The skeleton is a normal human skeleton. If the scythe is removed, the skeleton crumbles immediately to dust. If attacked, it does not defend itself and may be destroyed normally. Attempts to communicate with the skeleton, whether magical or mundane, will not meet with any success.

Skill checks that can be attempted:

Search (Searching the skeleton and Scythe): A DC 10+APL search check reveals a smashed silver symbol of

Rao (it is a normal holy symbol, rather than an ancient Flan type carried by Osh'mann) that has been trampled under the hard dirt of the road. Velunans and Rao worshipers recognize the symbol automatically. It is a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check for others.

The Scythe seems to be a normal Scythe, except for the dripping blood.

Search (Searching the high grass): A DC 15+APL search reveals a partly decayed human hand hidden in the grass just off the road. It appears to have been gnawed off at the wrist. The hand is calloused (as if used to work) and bears no rings or other ornamentation.

Survival (Track Check): A DC 1+APL check reveals that the road was heavily traveled by shod humanoids but that this heavy foot traffic occurred long ago. A DC 10+APL check reveals that smaller numbers of creatures have been traveling on the road more recently. The more recent traffic is a mix of humanoids and quadruped creatures of various sizes and types. A significant minority of the tracks are skeletal in nature. Those who spot these more recent tracks can recognize some of them as undead without needing to make a roll. A DC 20 Knowledge (The Planes) check reveals some tracks as those of devils. A DC 30 Knowledge (The Planes) check reveals a small number to be not devils, but Yugoloth tracks.

The movements in the grass are various low-CR undead who prowl the demi-plane with orders to kill anyone living who comes across their path. The undead in the grass will not set foot on the road but will attack if the party enters the grass. This is not intended to be a combat encounter (in the sense that it should be unnecessary to roll initiative, draw out a map, etc.). If the party goes into the grass for any extended length of time tell them that they encounter some of these low CR undead (i.e. basic humanoid skeletons and zombies, maybe some ghouls at higher APLs) and they easily defeat them without expending any resources.

Let the PCs know that the farther they get off the road the more numerous and powerful the undead. Hopefully, they will figure out that the road is the easiest path. Should the party decide to hike through the high grass for no reason, they will eventually run into more patrolling vasuthants (run the earlier encounter again, but at the next higher APL difficulty, double the numbers if the PCs are playing at APL 12) no xp is given for this fight. The vasuthants will not pursue if the PCs flee back to the road. Should the PCs defeat this group of vasuthants, they will eventually run across a path in the grass that leads to the town in the next encounter. Alter the box text in the next encounter as necessary.

Once the party has decided to proceed down the road (or decided to navigate the high grass) they will eventually find their way to the next encounter, the town of Elav (encounter 5).

ENCOUNTER 5: VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED

Whether traveling by road or through the high grass, the party will eventually find the town of Elav. Note that this is a demi-planar effect and not merely a plot device. Even if the party gets hopelessly lost in the high grass the town will eventually appear before them. The town was built to serve as a "holding pen" of sorts for live humanoids, thus the plane itself attempts to channel living humanoid beings to the town. There is no magical force that keeps individuals from leaving, only the fear of what lurks beyond the town. A living humanoid can always find their way back to the town, somehow, if they wish it, by traveling for a day (if they survive that long) along any road in the demi-plane or even by traveling through the grass.

As the party travels they mostly see nothing but the hard-packed earth road and the high grasses that grow up to the road's edge. A rolling mist is omnipresent, but it usually comes no higher than knee-height on a normal human. Occasionally the PCs may run across a humanoid skeleton (70% of the time) or decaying body (30% of the time). Skeletons show signs of being killed by weapons; decaying bodies appear to have been attacked by wandering undead or other monsters. The party can also find evidence of the same footprints as in encounter 3, though the footprints seem somewhat more frequent.

Eventually, the party reaches the town of Elav...

Read or paraphrase the following:

After nearly a day's travel, you are suddenly confronted by a strange sight that emerges from the gloom. An enormous gray-white latticework dome, hundreds of feet high, looms ahead. The dome slopes gradually to the ground, perhaps reaching almost a mile in diameter. Inside the dome are a variety of ramshackle buildings, built mostly of stone and mud construction and resembling a town. Living human beings move about amongst the buildings performing a variety of chores, all of them going about their usual daily routines.

The path you travel upon leads directly through a wide gap in the dome and into the town. The framework of the dome over the town seems to be

constructed of human bones, with arm and leg bones forming the latticework itself and other bones, such as skulls and ribs, filling the role of joints and strengthening bars. The whole structure seems to slowly rise and fall, as if alive, while you watch.

Closer at hand, the sky seems to be darkening from the gloom you have been traveling in all day to something more resembling true night. The sounds of movement in the high grass increase and shadows mass at the edges of your vision as the mist at your feet all day slowly begins rising. Strangely, the town inside the dome seems to be unaffected. The dome itself begins to emit a weak light of its own that illuminates the town and the grassless ground under the dome shows no signs of rising mist.

As you contemplate the relative safety of the town as compared to the surrounding countryside, a bellowing groan reaches your ears as a vast area of shadows rises up at a distance to form several of the large dark globes you fought earlier. The town under the dome suddenly seems much safer by comparison to the surrounding land.

Hopefully the PCs will figure out on their own that even the strange town is safer than the obvious dangers in the open. As long as the party doesn't delay they can reach the town before they are attacked. If they try to fight, try to make it clear that they will not be able to defeat everything they are facing and let them retreat to the town unless they are acting very foolish. If the PCs insist on fighting, they will fight the same creatures as in the encounter 4, but double the number of enemies.

The gaps in the dome over the town are large enough to allow medium size creatures to pass through easily. Large creatures can squeeze through. The dome itself has a permanent *silence* effect on its surface so no sound from outside the dome makes it inside and vice versa. As mentioned previously, the dome also emits a low level of light. In addition to providing dim illumination within the town, the dome provides light for 30 feet outside of its surface (and 30 more feet of shadowy illumination). This light also serves to rebuke undead within 30 feet of the dome as if performed by a 20th level cleric. The bone structure of the dome has hardness of 5 and 10 hit points per foot if the party needs to destroy sections of it for any reason. The bone regenerates rapidly, however, and any damage done does not remain long.

Once the PCs enter the town, read or paraphrase the following:

Entering the strange town, you see a wide array of stone houses. The town seems centered on a circular

common area, where a large well and three small windowless buildings dominate an otherwise flat expanse. The ground inside the town is hard-packed earth and gravel, with none of the strange gray grass from the outside area. You notice nothing that looks like a shop or business of any sort in the town, nor any church or shrine. There is one larger building that appears to be a meeting house of some sort, nearby it is a pile of rubble which may be the remains of another large building.

People from around the town gather around you and gaze at you with eyes that have seen many sorrows. Though they seem reasonably well-fed, their clothing is worn and ragged. After a few moments of awkward silence, a thin woman with graying hair steps forward toward you, "You...you've come to rescue us, haven't you? To take us away from this place?"

At this, all of the other townspeople start asking similar questions such as: is Veluna winning the war? How did Veluna know to rescue them? How are they going to escape? The townspeople also ask the names of the PCs, if the PCs are of reasonably high level the NPCs may have heard of them. The townspeople may then make a few odd remarks about how little the PCs seem to have aged over the years (unless a PC is a member of an extremely long-lived race, such as an elf). The townspeople are various races, in proportions roughly equal to that generally found in Veluna. Half-Orcs, however, are completely absent.

As time may be running short at this point, have the PCs make a Gather Information check when they are in town to see how much information they get from the NPCs. If they PCs flub this roll badly, they may be able to get some information by role-playing out an interaction with an individual NPC. Generally, however, the Gather Information check assumes that the PCs have performed a reasonable investigation of the town and spoken to the townspeople for several hours. Spending too much time in the town will likely result in the adventure running longer than the allotted time. The varying DCs for the gather information check have less to do with finding an npc who knows the desired information and more to do with finding someone who is not too scared to speak of what they know.

GATHER INFORMATION RESULTS by DC:

DC 5

- The three buildings in the common area are the primary means of

supplying the town with the basics of life. The buildings must be closed at dusk every night and are opened after dawn. One building is full of fresh food every morning; another is full of stone that can be used to make shelter. The final building, if filled with waste from the town, will be empty the next morning. Water comes from the well nearby. (DM note: the trash-destroying building does so via a *disintegration* effect cast at midnight. The food and stone creation building uses *create food and water* and a variation of a *major creation* spell. None of the buildings function if they are left open and/or a living being is present inside the building. The buildings detect as magical with auras appropriate to the spells that provide their effect).

- No one ever leaves the town after dusk. Only one person who has ever done so has returned alive.
- The citizens of the town were all captured (they claim) anywhere from 10 to 19 years ago, when Herion's forces swept through the cities and towns they lived in. Many of their neighbors were slain, but survivors were brought here through a strange planar gate by minions of Herion. (Any PC with Knowledge (Local: VTF) or any Veluna character knows that the war with Herion began only two and a half years ago). As each town was captured, captives were deposited in the town.

DC 10

- A pair of undead warriors sometimes comes to the town to take people away. Any who resist them are killed. The townspeople fear the warriors greatly and hide from them whenever they come. Both of the warriors wear armor and have glowing eyes (one has orange glowing eyes, the other green). The townspeople don't know much else (they were too busy hiding to look at details). Half-Orcs who come to the town have always been taken not long after they arrive (and so none remain in the town).

DC 15

- The townspeople don't know why the bone dome over the town expands and contracts, why it illuminates the town at night, or how it regenerates. It frightened them at first, but eventually the townspeople stopped worrying about it as it never seemed to harm them.
- Caine Brandwood is the only person to ever leave the town after dusk and survive. He is a skilled ranger and the only person in the town who has dared to try to explore the surrounding lands. Caine usually searches for a means of escape from Herion's demiplane, but he may be able to help the PCs find Herion's fortress (if the PCs share this goal with the townspeople).

- All of the children in the town (there were 14) were taken away a few days ago by the undead warriors. The parents of the children are very upset about this. The names of the 14 children are: Angelina, Burtrem, Fenrik, Henrake, Jakob, Jenica, Liirum, Mathias, Melodia, Nathaniel, Patricia, Raul, Santel, and William.
- The townspeople are surprised to discover that Veluna has not been totally overrun by Herion. They believed that the fact that they have been held for so long in Herion's realm indicated that Veluna had fallen.
- The ruins near the town meeting hall was a small church building dedicated to Rao. It was destroyed long ago by the two undead warriors, along with any obvious holy symbols or other icons of the reasoned one. The townspeople have not rebuilt the church since that date.

DC 20

- Jakob had a dog, a bloodhound, named "Flash." Mathias had a Collie named "Baxter." Both dogs disappeared last night; they may be looking for their masters.

DC 25

- Undead creatures and evil outsiders frequently roam outside the town and it is not uncommon to see one from within the town. For reasons that the townspeople cannot explain, however, neither the undead nor the evil outsiders ever come into the town. Anyone found outside the town, however, is fair game.

DC 30

- One of the villagers once mustered the courage to observe the two undead warriors when they arrived in the town. One of them was encased in full plate and wore a heavy mace on his hip. The other was dressed in a chain shirt and had a quarterstaff strapped to his back. (Note: because of the distance and the fact that Caine disguises his weapon when he enters the town in his true form, the villager mistook his two-bladed sword for a quarterstaff).

After the PCs receive the above-listed information, the townspeople will offer to lead the party to Caine Brandwood, a ranger who lives in town who the townspeople believe may be able to guide the players to Herion's Fortress or, if the PCs have not shared this goal, the townsfolk believe that Caine may be able to help the PCs to find a means for all of them to escape. The townspeople of Elav are correct that Caine knows the way to Herion's fortress. The reason for this, however, is different from what the townsfolk believe.

In reality, Caine Brandwood is actually one of the undead warriors who often journey into the town to abduct its citizens for Herion's use. Caine is a type of undead known as a "Tainted Minion," an undead creature gifted with the ability to disguise itself to appear alive, or to appear as a member of another race. Caine was once a virtuous ranger whose knowledge of nature was a great boon to his neighbors in Veluna. Caine always possessed a hatred of orcs as many of his friends, as well as his wife of many years, were slain by successive outbreaks of orc raids in Northern Veluna. The orc tide brought on by Herion's invasion, however, pushed Caine over the edge when his only son was killed by an orcish scouting party.

During the war, Caine fought independently of organized forces of Veluna. Conducting hit and run guerilla warfare against the orc forces, Caine conducted a one-man campaign of terror, using ruthless methods to augment his skills. Caine did not shirk from killing even

those who had surrendered, nor any children or other dependants traveling with the orcish army.

When Caine was eventually captured he expected a slow and painful death. Herion, however, detected the strong potential towards evil that existed within Caine and saw that he might be of future use. Through use of dark rituals, Caine was transformed into a horrible undead creature of evil and kept on hand to monitor the "resources" in Elav. When Herion was defeated, Caine was set loose for a time to punish the orc leaders whom Herion believed had failed him. To the townspeople, these absences were explained away as efforts that Caine made to try to find an escape from the demi-plane.

Even as a new lieutenant of Herion's, however, Caine was punished for his previous opposition to Herion. Before being transformed into a tainted minion, Caine was rendered permanently deaf by Herion via a long and painful night of tortures. Herion justified this symbolically by claiming that it would prevent Caine from ever again plotting with enemies of Herion. Even in Caine's new form, he retains his deafness, which cannot be cured by normal or magical means. In fact, in Caine's present undead form, the healing energies used to cure normal deafness would not only fail to heal him, but also cause him great physical pain.

When the townspeople lead the PCs to Caine Brandwood, read or paraphrase the following (omit some of the physical description of Caine if Children are present at the table):

Following the citizens of Elav, you are led to a small stone shack on the edge of town. A man wearing a shirt and trousers made of a strange greenish leather works on his hands and knees outside. He is toiling over a hide made of the same greenish material as he wears currently. The hide has two holes in it that the man is currently sewing shut. Nearby, leaning against the front of the house, rest a pair of scaly crimson wings with a bat-like shape. The wings are greenish near their roots.

As you and the townspeople draw near, the man seems to sense your arrival. He stands and scowls for a moment, and then his face suddenly becomes friendly. Where the man's ears should be there is only melted flesh. Besides this, the man seems in good health. His eyes are bright and full of cunning as he observes you and the thick cords of his arms testify to a life accustomed to struggle.

Smiling, he states in sudden exasperation and a little too loudly, "Orcs are bad enough without wings and things, these devil-bred kind I'm always glad to get rid of...aren't many I see nowadays though."

Any PC who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (Nature) check realizes that clothing Caine wears and the hide he is currently working on appear similar to orc-flesh. Note that none of the other townspeople wear clothing of orc flesh; they find this practice of Caine's vaguely disturbing. The townspeople all wear the clothes they arrived in, except to the extent that they can scrounge for materials to make new clothing. This is why they are so raggedly dressed. It is likely that the PCs will have a few questions for Caine at this point. Note that, as Caine has been deaf for a long time, he has had a long time to grow skilled in reading lips; the DC for any Spot check to read lips is reduced by 10 for Caine. If any PC makes a DC 10+APL Sense Motive check they realize that Caine is deaf and reading their lips to understand what they say. Caine will admit readily to this is asked.

Below are some possible questions and the answers Caine will give to them:

Why are you making clothes out of Orc skin? (Or something similar).

Orcs killed my wife, my only son, and some of my best friends...I have a right to do whatever I want to any orc that crosses my path.

How did that happen?

My wife was killed a long time ago in an orc raid; I'd almost healed from that when the damned creatures hit us again when Herion attacked in the north. I lost my son when an advance scout group found my home while I was hunting for food. I found them there with what was left of my boy when I returned...none of those orcs ever reported back to their army.

How did you get to this town?

After what the orcs did to me I had to pay them back. I knew the land near my home well and was able to kill a hundred orcs for every friend and family member of mine the orcs got by hitting them when they least expected it. Eventually though, I got caught. Why they didn't kill me I'll never know, but they brought me here and left me about ten or so years back. Whenever I see those dead boys coming I figure they might be coming for me, so I make it my business to get out of town.

Aren't you afraid to leave the town? / Why don't others try to leave when the undead warriors come?

The rest of the folks here are...just that, regular folks who just want to get by, to live another day. I can't say I

blame them. They aren't adventuring types and probably wouldn't stand a chance outside the town. For them, to stay in town...yeah, there's a chance they might get grabbed and hauled away, but leaving the town is certain death. For me, I'm used to surviving where and when most others can't. I'd rather take my chances outside town.

Why don't you take the others with you and protect them?

That would lower my chances a lot, and it wouldn't improve theirs very much.

What do you know about the land outside town? / Have you left town to look around even when the undead warriors weren't in town? / Do you know of a way to escape this demi-plane?

Well, after leaving town so many times when I had to, I eventually started looking around more. I haven't found any way out of this place, but I've seen a bit more than I've wanted to. There are a lot of devils and undead in this land, not too many orcs though, most of them that are still around are devil-blooded. I don't know why, but most things stay clear of the town and the road. There is a big stone fort about a day's travel from here. My guess is that it may be Herion's whenever he is visiting this place...

How did you survive the night outside town? / Do you know what happened to the others who left town at night?

Well, I figured for a while that the others who tried to run away were killed by some of the stuff running around outside town, I figured that I could probably handle whatever got them. Stupid of me to think that. When I first tried to find a way back to Veluna I went so far away from town that I couldn't get back before night. As soon as night came on I heard the worst sound I ever did hear...some sort of song that made me feel hopeless and lose my will to live. I started heading towards the song, I couldn't stop myself. In knew, somehow, that if I kept going I wouldn't come back. Anyway, before I completely lost my mind, I took a knife and made it so I couldn't hear the song anymore...at least that's what I figured...I can't explain it...but even though I couldn't hear anything else anymore, I could still hear the song. Luckily, I had a torch lit and ready...and I was able to stop hearing that song...it was the last thing I ever heard...I still wake up with nightmares thinking about it

Since then the song hasn't got me and I can go outside the own at night. I've told the others how they can make it so the song can't hurt them, but they'd rather just stay in town and wait for someone o come rescue them...I guess they'll finally get their wish.

Can you find us a way into Herion's fortress?

Hmm...I can get you to the place, but I've never tried to get in...and I don't want to. If you want to face Herion then that's your own problem. I can guide you there though, that's sure. I got one condition though, you get yourself in trouble on the way and, unless it's orcs, it's your own business. You heroes come and go, if whatever you're planning with the lich don't work out then I'm all these people have left. Getting myself killed fighting for you won't help them a bit. (Caine is basically telling the PCs he won't participate in any combat encounters).

If the PCs decide to accept Caine's offer to serve as their guide, the townspeople and Caine tell the PCs that they should stay the night in town and set-out the next day, in which case the PCs can rest and recover spells normally. If the PCs insist on leaving immediately, they will be forced to fight the same encounter as in encounter 4, but double the number of enemies.

Proceed to encounter 6...

ENCOUNTER 6: KAZ'ALLERAX – THE TREE OF DEATH

After leaving the town of Elav the PCs can continue to follow the hard-packed earth road that winds through the demi-plane. Occasionally, the path branches off in different directions, but Caine guides them unerringly on the correct path towards Herion's fortress on the plane. Sooner or later, however, the party passes near The "Kaz'allera", the tree of death they may have been warned about. The tree serves as a focal point of the demi-plane's power.

Read or paraphrase the following:

With Caine as your guide, you set-off once more on the wide earth road that meanders through this strange land. The road sometimes branches off in several different directions, but Caine seems fairly confident when he points out to you which path you must follow to reach Herion's Fortress. A light gray mist remains with you throughout the journey, but nowhere near as thick as the fog you encountered when you first stepped into this demi-plane.

In the distance, you can make out the huge looming form of a massive tree. A deep sense of dread fills you as you observe the enormous plant through the gloom. Decaying bodies appear to litter the ground around the tree. Caine turns to you and looks concerned. "We would be wise to move by quickly, before we are noticed."

The PCs have a decision to make at this point. They have been advised that the Kaz'allerax is beyond their capabilities and that they should avoid it. On the other hand, the presence of the tree is, somehow, an amplifier to Herion's power on the demi-plane and its destruction may somehow weaken him. If the PCs decide to avoid the tree they can move past without being noticed unless they do something particular to draw attention to themselves.

If the PCs decide to engage the tree in combat, they will attract its attention and will have a tough untiered combat on their hands. If the PCs DO manage to win the combat, tell them that they notice that the sense of gloom and dread that they feel just from being on Herion's demi-plane seems to lighten a bit, but there is no further obvious effect at the time (but do note the results of the combat on the critical events summary).

All APLs (EL 23) – (untiered)

Kaz'allerax, the Tree of Death (Half-Fiendish Ancient Night Twist): hp 462; See Appendix 1.

Set-up: The PCs start in one corner of a blank map sheet; place the night twist on the opposite diagonal corner of the map sheet. There is no other terrain for this battle.

Tactics: The PCs get a surprise round on Kaz'allerax. After the surprise round it summons a bebelith using *summon monster IX* to strike at the PCs. After that, it will launch assaults with its own spells while the summoned fiend attacks on its own. Allow the PCs to withdraw if they decide to retreat and can come-up with a reasonable means to do so. The tree will not pursue, figuring that the other denizens of the demi-plane will be able to finish off the PCs.

Regardless of whether the PCs face the Tree of Death or decide to bypass it, they will need to continue their journey onward towards Herion's Fortress (encounter 7).

ENCOUNTER 7: INNOCENCE LOST

After fighting or bypassing the Tree of Death, the PCs continue to be led by Caine towards Herion's Fortress. As they journey, they are interrupted by a strange meeting.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Putting distance between yourself and your encounter with the Tree of Death, Caine leads you onward over a desolate landscape of tall gray grasses, cut only by the narrow packed-earth roads which cross it. With luck, you will soon arrive near Herion's Fortress. With even more luck, you'll be able to find a path inside without having to face Herion and his minions.

Your thoughts are suddenly interrupted by a sudden movement in the grass which is advancing quickly towards you...

Allow PCs to act if they wish. The movement through the grass is "Flash," one of the riding dogs (bloodhound) that the PCs were told about in the town who has gone missing. Flash and the other dog "Baxter" (Collie) left the town of Elav several days ago, seeking their child-owners. Using a mixture of Flash's nose and Baxter's instincts, the two were able to track down the town's children. Sadly, Flash's owner was not among them. Flash was running back towards the town to find help for the children when he runs across the PCs.

If the PCs act to hastily and somehow kill Flash (i.e. casting a *fireball* at what is moving in the grass) then they will have to make a DC APL+15 Track skill check to find the path leading back to the children. If the players hold back a moment, read the following box text:

You hear a long, mournful howl and, a moment later, a large bloodhound bursts from the tall grass onto the road. It stops and tilts its head to the side for a moment, as if considering you. It is panting heavily, as if it had just run some distance. The dog's brown fur is littered with bits of gray grass and its nose is dry and cracked. It suddenly gives out another mournful howl and starts circling nervously in one place. Without warning, it charges off towards the grass it came from, runs back toward you, and then races once more towards the grass...it repeats this several times.

At this point, the PCs may make a DC 10 Animal Empathy check to realize that the dog wants them to follow it...and quickly. If the PCs can't figure

this out on their own, Caine will figure it out and mention it to the PCs. If the PCs do not follow, they do not rescue the children and simply advance to encounter 8. If the party does try to follow the running dog, have each PC make a Constitution check with a DC of 15 (allow a +4 bonus for those with the run or endurance feat, +8 for PCs with both). Those who fail are fatigued from trying to keep-up with the dog.

Eventually, the dog slows and starts trying to move more quietly (note if the PCs follow suit or not). It then crawls forward slowly about 100 feet. If the PCs join the dog, they find themselves in the high grass at the edge of a clearing. In front of them is a wide area of gravel and hard earth which is devoid of vegetation this clear area extends for about 50 feet on either side of a river of black liquid which winds through the landscape. This area is currently occupied by thirteen children, a strange-looking dragon, an oddly-dressed man...and a dog. Read or paraphrase the following:

After a lengthy chase, the dog you are following eventually slows and carefully crawls forward for about a hundred feet. (Ask here which PCs are trying to move silently and which are not). Reaching the spot the dog stops at, you find yourself concealed in high grass, looking out over a large area of hard earth and gravel. A river filled with inky black liquid winds through the center of the area which is devoid of plant life.

Standing in the clear area, about 50 feet from you, are thirteen children, who are arranged in a column of two lines that are marching slowly away from you. A strange reptilian creature, and what looks to be a human man, stands about 20 feet from the column of children, directing its advance.

The reptilian creature looks like a large dragon with butterfly-like wings and a long, prehensile tail that constantly flicks and twitches. The creature has a sharp-toothed grin and the gray and black scales of its body seem arranged in an odd, checkerboard-like pattern. The only thing colorful about this creature is the strange top hat it wears, with alternating white and red horizontal stripes. The man is a gaunt figure clad in gray-hued jester's clothing with a dirty gray beard and an overlarge, reddish nose. The man's face is largely covered with white and gray coloring and he grips a scepter with a doll's head atop it in one hand.

The children move with the slow, jerky rhythm of puppets or zombies. Though they appear to be living, there is no spirit in their steps. At the back of line of children, a bedraggled canine tugs at the sleeve of the one of the children with its mouth. The

dog, a rust-colored collie, pulls with all of its might and the child tumbles to the ground. A moment later, however, the boy is back on his feet and has regained his place in the column of other children.

At the sound of a disturbance, the reptilian creature and man at the front of the column turn to search for its source. As the glowing red eyes of the butterfly-winged dragon sweep across it, the dog seems torn between fear and loyalty to the child. Laughing cruelly, the gray-clothed man asks, "Well, what have we here?"

The dog rushes quickly to the side of the boy, tugging madly at his clothing as he tries to pull the child away. The boy does not respond, however. Suddenly, it is over, the dog collapses to the ground, a dagger in its side and a stunned look in its still-open eyes. The gray-clad man lowers his right arm to his side, with an evil grin on his face.

If there are children at the table, do not read the last two sentences of the above box text, allow the PCs to intervene in the situation before the dog is killed. Otherwise, the party may act as soon as the above text is read. The party will likely wish to initiate combat immediately, as it is apparent that the dragon and the gray jester are particularly evil. Even if the PCs try to initiate diplomacy, the faerie dragon and gray jester refuse to talk and attack immediately.

If the PCs attempted to Move Silently compare their lowest checks to a Listen check from the gray jester and the faerie dragon. Give the bad guys a penalty of -10 for being 50 feet distant and the being distracted. If the PCs win the opposed roll, they get a surprise round on the enemy npcs. If the NPCs win the opposed check, roll initiative as normal.

APL 6 (EL 9)

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped faerie dragon; hp 96; See Appendix 1.

"Uncle Burris": grey jester; hp 81; See Appendix 1.

Bleak Ones (13): human commoner child; hp 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4; See Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 11)

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped faerie dragon; hp 153; See Appendix 1.

"Uncle Burris": grey jester bard 2/rogue 2; hp 108; See Appendix 1.

Bleak Ones (13): human commoner child; hp 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4; See Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped faerie dragon; hp 199; See Appendix 1.

"Uncle Burris": grey jester bard 4/rogue 4; hp 135; See Appendix 1.

Bleak Ones (13): human commoner child; hp 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4; See Appendix 1.

APL 12 (EL 15)

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped faerie dragon; hp 256; See Appendix 1.

"Uncle Burris": grey jester bard 6/rogue 6; hp 162; See Appendix 1.

Bleak Ones (13): human commoner child; hp 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4; See Appendix 1.

Set-up: Place the 13 children on the center of the map in two columns, packed closely together. Place the faerie dragon and gray jester 20 feet in front of the children. The PCs set-up 50 feet to the left of the children. Draw an area of high grass on the side of the map the PCs are on. The grass provides concealment, but has no other effect on combat. The PCs should start the combat on the very edge of the grass.

On the side of the map opposite the PCs, draw a 10 foot wide river of black liquid. Anyone who enters the river must make a DC 15+APL Will save or be *feeble-minded*, as the spell. The river is about 20 feet deep.

Tactics: If possible, the gray jester and the faerie dragon prefer to enslave the PCs rather than simply kill them, as they get perverse pleasure out of using others as their puppets. To this end, the npcs try to focus at first on attacks that make the PCs easier to control. The faerie dragon will use its breath weapon, followed by *mind fog* and *charm person* to make it easier for the gray jester to turn PCs into bleak ones. The gray jester will focus on *Tasha's hideous laughter* followed by empathic feeding to turn fighter-types into bleak ones. The children, and any PCs that are turned into bleak ones, will be ordered to subdue remaining PCs (striking for non lethal damage).

If trying to turn PCs to bleak ones does not seem to be working, the gray jester and faerie dragon turn to more lethal tactics. The Faerie dragon starts making normal attacks and summons a monster to attack as well. The gray jester will start making normal attacks, attempting to do sneak attack damage at higher apIs and the children will also be ordered to attempt lethal damage attacks. The human children are not a major

threat in this encounter beyond getting in the way of PCs and providing flanks. PCs will have xp penalties if they kill any of the children, however. Caine will not participate in this fight, feigning fear of the faerie dragon and gray jester. He will, however, try to maintain his cover as the PCs ally by trying to stabilize PCs who fall in combat.

Treasure:

APL 6: Magic: 1,205 gp – *bracers of armor+1* (83 gp each), *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), 2 *rings of protection+1* (167 gp each), *+1 scepter* (192 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (500 gp each).

APL 8: Magic: 2,164 gp – *bracers of armor+1* (83 gp each), *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *shawl of bewitching* (292 gp), *+1 sudden stunning scepter* (359 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (500 gp each), *ring of protection+2* (667 gp).

APL 10: Magic: 2,914 gp – *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), 1 *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *shawl of bewitching* (292 gp each), *bracers of armor+2* (333 gp each), *+1 sudden stunning merciful scepter* (859 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (500 gp each), *ring of protection+2* (667 gp).

APL 12: Magic: 6,920 gp – *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *shawl of bewitching* (292 gp each), *bracers of armor+2* (333 gp each), *+1 sudden stunning merciful scepter* (859 gp each), *soul anchor rod* (833 gp), *cape of the mountebank* (840 gp each), *ring of protection +3* (1,500 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (2,000 gp each).

If the gray jester is killed the children suddenly “snap out” of their zombie-like state and regain their normal charisma. PCs, however, are ability drained as normal and will need spells, such as *restoration*, to regain their lost Charisma. As long as the gray jester lives the children will remain in a zombie-like state and take no actions, unless ordered to do so by the gray jester.

If the faerie dragon and/or gray jester live the PCs can try to interrogate them. They will resist, but will share some information with a successful Intimidate or Diplomacy check. Both are natives of the demi-plane who allied themselves with Herion fairly recently. Both can share that the demi-plane was not actually created by Herion, rather, it is fragment of a much larger demi-plane that broke away from several hundred years ago (as time flows on the demi-plane). Herion arrived just over twenty years ago and took control of the land, killing any who

opposed him. The demi-plane was originally populated by a wide variety of evil creatures, but undead and evil outsiders now predominate. If asked about orcs, the npcs explain that no orcs live in the demiplane. The dragon and jester were recently assigned to conduct experiments in turning human children into mindless slave-soldiers for Herion. If things worked as planned, the “stock” in the town of Elav would be used to produce human automatons in large numbers.

The gray jester and faerie dragon won’t offer more than this unless severely pressed. If the PCs score an extremely high diplomacy or intimidate check on the npcs, they will begin to offer more information, but will both suddenly cry out in pain as their bodies melt into black goo (the result of a contingent spell cast by Herion on them without their knowledge).

After the combat, the PCs have to decide what to do with the children. Caine will then volunteer to lead the children back to the town. If the PCs decide to lead or take the children back to the town themselves, allow them to do so without incident, though they will have to spend another night in town. If the PCs consider taking the children with them, Caine will recommend against this, as Herion’s fortress is very dangerous and the children may be harmed if they went there. If the PCs return the children to the town themselves, the parents there are extremely grateful and will thank the PCs profusely.

Regardless of how the issue of the children is dealt with, Caine will go no further with the PCs. He points out that they need to take a right at the next fork in the road they come to and that will take them straight to Herion’s fortress. Caine states he has no wish to get any closer to it, no matter what counter-arguments the PCs raise. Proceed to encounter 8...

ENCOUNTER 8: THE END OF THE ROAD

Read or paraphrase the following:

After leaving Caine behind, you take the rightmost fork of the next road you come to. After only an hour’s more travel, you see a skull-like citadel of bone and iron looming in the distance. Though you recall Osh’mann’s statement that you would eventually find a way in if you stayed on the path, from a distance no obvious means of entry is apparent.

Allow the PCs a moment to consider whether they will stay on the path or leave it. If the PCs leave the path they will find no alternative means to enter Herion's fortress. When they resume their journey along the path, read or paraphrase the following:

Having no other obvious means of entry, you continue onward on the path. As you reach a point barely a mile distant, Herion's fortress seems even more immense and you seriously start to weigh the possibility that you will soon be spotted by any sentries posted at the fortress.

The following assumes the PCs have Osh'mann's holy symbol and have not used its power yet (if they have the adventure should be over by now).

...Before this occurs, however, a new path suddenly appears, branching off the one you now follow and leading off through the high grass.

Osh'mann's voice seems to speak from the holy symbol he gave you earlier... "Greetings Heroes. Knowing the hidden dangers of this land I prepared this message. You are about to journey to the focus of Herion's power in this nightmare land. Know this and have a care for the well-being of your body and soul as you go forth. The task you are near to completing is one of vital importance and, on behalf of all the peoples of the Vale; I thank you for your selfless courage. I hope this is enough to satisfy you, as the importance of what you accomplish may never be known beyond those present here."

"Go forward on this new path and you will be able to reach Herion's vaults without having to face his guards."

"What is shattered may be mended...know this and the path may shortened." With this, the translucent representation of Osh'mann fades and leaves you staring the new path. It is similar to the one you now stand upon...but somehow less touched by the darkness of this land.

Note that, within a mile of Herion's fortress, divinations again function. The PCs are now within a mile of Herion's fortress.

The PCs must now choose whether to follow the new path, or try to find their own way in to Herion's fortress. If the PCs ignore the new path and continue forward, at a distance of a half mile from the fortress, the PCs can see that several huge figures patrol the outside of Herion's fortress. A successful requisite Knowledge (religion) check identifies these as nightwalkers. The nightwalkers slowly circle the fortress with a significant

distance between them. The PCs can tell just by looking that they will have to face at least two nightwalkers (with the possibility of reinforcements a few rounds later). If the PCs insist in trying their luck they will have to face two nightwalkers, with a new nightwalker arriving as reinforcements every 1d6 rounds. The nightwalkers will not pursue if the PCs retreat from the combat.

When the PCs decide to follow the new path, read or paraphrase the following:

Following the new path, you wind through the high grass for several miles. Eventually, you reach a small clearing hidden away in a shallow depression in the terrain. In the center of the clearing is a black marble altar, covered in cobwebs and dust. Several silver fragments rest on the altar.

A DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check (automatic success for Veluna characters and Rao worshipers) reveals that the silver fragments are the shattered remains of a holy symbol of Rao. If the DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check was made, they recognize it as of ancient Flan design.

The clearing contains a teleportation circle that leads to the vault inside Herion's fortress where the magic items the PCs are trying to destroy are kept. In order to activate the teleportation circle, the PCs must repair the holy symbol. This can be done via *mending* or similar magic, use of an applicable craft or profession skill (i.e. one involving metalworking), or any other reasonable plan the PCs can imagine to repair the symbol. Another, more symbolic, means of activating the teleportation circle is if any PC whose faith in his or her deity has been shaken openly rededicates themselves to the service of their god (DM's discretion on the authenticity of this rededication). Finally, if the PCs touch Osh'mann's holy symbol to the altar in any way, it will also activate the teleportation ring.

Should the PCs activate the teleportation ring, read or paraphrase the following:

A strong wind gusts through the clearing, sweeping away the cobwebs and dust from the altar. The black stone first splits, and then shatters. The ground beneath the shattered altar is set alight with dancing blue flames of magic that emit no heat. A circle of azure illumination, wide enough for a human to stand within, shines brightly on the barren ground.

The PCs may realize from the box text that they should step into the light. PCs may make a DC 24 Spellcraft check to recognize the circle of light is a *teleportation circle*. Eventually, the PCs should figure out that they need to step into the teleportation circle.

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs step into the teleportation circle:

After entering the teleportation ring, you find yourself standing inside a large rectangular room. The room is windowless, and a single large iron door marks the only visible entrance to the room. Stone tables line the walls. On the tables are a variety of strange objects and stranger jars of magical components. Many of the objects are in various stages off assembly, but a few seem to be completely assembled. The otherwise featureless room is illuminated by torches of continual flame, placed around the room. No one else is present in the room at the moment.

Inside Herion's fortress, divination spells and effects can be used. Teleportation magic, with the exception of teleportation rings mentioned, still fail to function.

The PCs can do several things at this point. The most obvious, of course, is to move quickly to destroy the magic items which are undergoing construction in the room. Of course, while some PCs are doing this, others can be doing other things. If any PCs listen at the vault door they hear nothing. The door is locked from the outside and requires a DC 45 Open Locks check to open from within. The door can be breached eventually through damage, but this will take some time and cause a lot of noise to be made. Hopefully, the PCs will realize that nothing is gained by breaking out of the vault. If they decide to do so, however, they see only an empty hallway.

PCs may also search for secret doors and traps. There are no traps, but a DC 20+APL Search check finds an extremely well-hidden secret door. The door is actually a section of wall that can slide open. The PCs will be unable to find a way to open the door from the vault, though they may spend a large amount of time searching for one. The section of wall is lined with lead and adamantine, defeating efforts to use divination spells through it and slowing efforts to hack through it.

While the PCs are searching the room, PCs who spoke privately with the yugoloth Lezul in encounter 3 may attempt to secret-away the items he told him about for later use. Any PC who wishes to do so can make a Sleight of Hand check against the Spot check of the other PCs. Give the characters performing Spot checks a -5 penalty for being distracted unless other PCs have specifically stated that they are suspicious of that PC and are actively watching him or her. Also apply distance modifiers as normal. It is up to any PCs who are discovered to explain their actions to other PCs.

Eventually, the PCs will be able to destroy all of the magic items under construction and most of those already completed which have not been secreted away by other PCs. Three items, however, cannot be damaged by any normal means. The first is a gray fist sized object which looks like a seed of some type. The second is a key made of a silvery metal that the PCs at first appear to be able to smash, but the key always flows back into its original shape. Finally, the third item is a shard of a frozen black liquid that cannot be thawed. None of the three items detect as magical or as evil. A DC 10+APL Spellcraft check, however, allows a PC to realize that the true nature of the items may be masked by a spell effect woven into the creation of the items.

After the PCs destroy the last of the evil artifacts that they are capable of destroying, read or paraphrase the following (the DM will have to adjust this if the PCs have opened the vault door):

Just as you destroy the last of the magic items, the door to the vault opens to reveal an unwelcome surprise. Through the ten-foot wide doorway you see three figures. The farthest to the right, is a plate-mail clad warrior, his shield and breastplate bearing badly disfigured heraldry of the Knights of Whitehale. Though little of the man's body is not covered by armor, his open helmet reveals a face consisting only of rotting flesh clinging to a leering death's head. The knight's empty eye sockets glow an eerie orange. The leftmost figure is a human man, a grizzled woodsman of indeterminate age. You can, however, instantly recognize him as your guide in the recent past, Caine Brandwood. Before your eyes Caine's flesh seems to melt away until he appears as little more than a zombie-like corpse with green-lit eyes, clutching a two-bladed sword.

The final figure, however, makes your heart skip a beat. In the center, and slightly to the rear of the other two figures, stands a creature that is unmistakable. The skull and sickle holy symbol gives him away as a worshiper of the Reaper. The body is obviously unliving, held together only through powerful necromancy. The overpowering aura of death and evil flooding into the room reveals to you the horrible truth; the being before you is none other than the re-born lich Herion! The lich levels his undead gaze at your group and addresses you.

"Foolish adventurers, did you truly believe that you could come here, to the epicenter of my power, and escape alive? Even if you were to escape my fortress, you will never be able to return to Veluna..." The words hammer into your mind like nails being pounded into a coffin. Suddenly, the lich's inflection

changes, you could almost see him smiling if he were capable of doing so, "...I do, however, have need of new lieutenants; many of my previous agents have not fared well as of late. Serve me and you will rule in my name when the Vale is mine. Untold power can be yours; you have only to commit yourself to my cause. Refuse and I can offer you only oblivion..." Three pairs of glowing eye sockets bore into you, awaiting your answer.

This is not actually Canon Herion; rather it is a *simulacrum* (see *Player's Handbook* spell) of Herion. The *simulacrum* Herion acts like the real Herion in all regards and tries to bluff the PCs into thinking it is the real Herion.

At this point, allow the PCs to make dramatic refusals of Herion's offer. If any of the PCs is foolish enough to accept Herion's offer, he pulls out a dark colored potion and offers it to the PC. Drinking the contents of the vial turns a character into a lich (if a spellcaster) or a vampire (if a non-spellcaster). Describe the transformation to the players if you wish. After the transformation is complete, the transformed PC is immediately teleported away (ask for the PCs character sheet as they are now an evil NPC). Otherwise, when the PCs refuse Herion's offer read or paraphrase the following:

"Very well, you have made your decision. You will not have long to live with it." The lich waves dismissively in your direction, "Caine, Allerik...dispose of them." With that, Herion steps back against the wall of the hallway to watch.

Allow the players to roll initiative at this point. The death knight, Sir Allerik of Snelland, and Caine Brandwood attack the PCs, aiming to kill them.

APL 6 (EL 9)

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight ex-paladin 5/ranger 1; hp 54; See Appendix 1.

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion barbarian 1/fighter 2/ranger 2; hp 45; See Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 11)

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight blackguard 1/ex-paladin 6/ranger 1; hp 72; See Appendix 1.

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion barbarian 1/fighter 4/ranger 2; hp 63; See Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight blackguard 3/ex-paladin 6/ranger 1; hp 90; See Appendix 1.

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion barbarian 1/exotic weapon master 2/fighter 4/ranger 2; hp 81; See Appendix 1.

APL 12 (EL 15)

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight blackguard 10/ex-paladin 1/ranger 1; hp 108; See Appendix 1.

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion barbarian 2/exotic weapon master 2/fighter 4/ranger 3; hp 99; See Appendix 1.

Set-up: Draw a simple rectangular room, 60 feet long and thirty wide. Draw a 10 foot wide opening on one of the thirty foot long walls. This opening is where Sir Allerik and Caine enter the room. Outside the room is a ten foot wide hallway that extends 20 feet in either direction before ending in a doorway. Herion stands in this hallway, just outside the door (note in the tactics below he does not attack unless he is attacked). NOTE THAT HERION HAS AN *antilife shell* IN EFFECT. The position of Herion should thus prevent PCs from leaving entering the hallway as long as they are living.

Set-up the PCs according to what they were doing in the room before the combat began.

Tactics: Caine and Allerik fight using very different tactics. Note that Caine and Allerik have each had *freedom of movement* pre-cast on them by the simulacrum of Herion. Caine assaults the PCs remorselessly, charging an individual PC immediately and trying to slice them to pieces using his two-bladed sword to make full attack actions. If a particular PC got along badly with Caine in previous encounters (or if there is a half-orc in the party), Caine attacks them first if not tactically disadvantageous. Otherwise, Caine chooses to attack whichever PC to attack as he believes is most tactically advantageous. Caine does not power attack at first, trying to gauge how easy the PC is to hit. After his first attack he will power attack conservatively, preferring to hit with more attacks in a full attack rather than doing more damage but hitting with fewer attacks. Caine will not respond to any PC attempts at conversation. He has committed himself fully to Herion's service and does not feel the need to explain himself.

Allerik spends the first round summoning his mount (stats for his mount are included in Appendix 1) and addressing the PCs as he advances (a standard action to summon the mount and a move action to move forward). Read or paraphrase the following on Allerik's first turn:

The death knight advances slowly toward you, addressing you as he advances, "It was foolish of you to reject his offer, you will not leave this place alive.

Still, I offer you the chance to die an honorable death. I shall duel each of you in turn. If you are defeated, you will die well, if you defeat me then you can at least take satisfaction that you have bested Sir Allerik de Snelland before your soul is consumed." At that, the death knight salutes you with his mace. A mount appears beneath him, and he moves toward you at a trot.

As long as only a single PC engages Allerik in combat, he will only fight that PC and target no other. Should multiple PCs attack Allerik, he will be enraged at this affront to his sense of honor and make use of his Abyssal Blast attack that turn. Likewise, Allerik will not make use of his smite good attacks until multiple PCs attack him. Other than these limitations, Allerik will fight as he believes is most tactically advantageous, including use of the improved sunder feat.

Under no circumstances should Allerik and Caine try to attack the PCs from within Herion's anti-life shell. Allerik would not view this as honorable and Caine wants to prove his worth to his master.

Herion's simulacrum will not participate in the combat unless severely provoked. It seeks only to be entertained by watching his minions kill the PCs. Allow any PC who considers attacking Herion a DC 10 Sense Motive check to realize that Herion seems content to merely watch the combat at the time being, but this would likely change if he were attacked. Should the PCs win the combat, Herion believes he will be able to kill them easily enough. Should Herion's underlings be slain in the process, he believes that this was a sign that they were unworthy to serve him. Herion will not attack unless he takes significant damage from a PC. He is currently protected by an *antilife shell* as well as *spell resistance* (SR 23). The *antilife shell* should protect him from most melee attacks, *spell resistance* should counter most spells that target Herion and the DR/15 magic and bludgeoning should protect against ranged attacks. If Herion is attacked, but not significantly damaged, he will only laugh at the attacking PC but do nothing more.

If a PC does manage to deal significant damage to Herion (DM's discretion), Herion will target that PC with a "warning spell" (a mid-level spell that will harm the PC, but not likely kill him). After doing this, Herion will warn the PC against making future attacks against him (i.e. 'I wouldn't do that again if I were you!'). Herion will then resume observer-only status unless again attacked.

Treasure:

APL 6: Loot: 14 gp; Magic: 1,577 gp – +1 *chain shirt* (104 gp each), *ring of protection*+1 (167 gp each), +1 *full plate*

(221 gp each), +1/+1 *two-bladed sword* (392 gp each), +1 *heavy mace of frost* (693 gp each).

APL 8: Magic: 3,091 gp – +1 *heavy steel shield* (98 gp each), +1 *chain shirt* (104 gp each), *ring of protection*+1 (167 gp each), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp each), +1/+1 *two-bladed sword* (392 gp each), +2 *full plate* (471 gp each), +2 *heavy mace of frost* (1,526 gp each).

APL 10: Magic: 4,841 gp – +1 *heavy steel shield* (98 gp each), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp each), +2 *chain shirt* (354 gp each), +2 *full plate* (471 gp each), *ring of protection*+2 (667 gp each), +1 *keen*/+1 *keen two-bladed sword* (1,392 gp each), +2 *heavy mace of frost* (1,526 gp each).

APL 12: Magic: 9,528 gp – *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp each), +1 *heavy steel shield* (348 gp each), +3 *full plate* (888 gp each), +1 *keen*/+1 *keen two-bladed sword* (1,392 gp each), *ring of protection*+3 (1,500 gp each), +2 *chain shirt of fire resistance* (1,854 gp each), *mace of terror* (3,213 gp each).

Special: While one resolution of this encounter is for the PCs to simply kill Allerik and Caine, another possible solution exists. While difficult, it is possible for a PC to "redeem" Sir Allerik through persistent efforts. The PC who received the letter from Lady Zella should recognize Allerik's name from the letter (if not, allow a PC to make a DC 5 Intelligence check to make the connection). This should at least put the thought of attempting to redeem the death knight into the minds of the players. If not, allow a DC 15 Sense Motive check to alert the PCs of the possibility. While Allerik has performed many acts of great evil since entering Herion's service, he has recently begun to doubt the path he has chosen and efforts by the PCs could successfully save his soul...if not his life.

In game terms, in order to redeem Sir Allerik, a single PC (without assistance) must make a DC 45 Diplomacy check. Obviously, this roll will be extremely difficult for any PC to make initially. There are many possible modifiers, however. Starting the second round of combat, a PC will get a +5 to their Diplomacy roll if no more than a single PC is attacking Sir Allerik ("fighting honorably" by Allerik's definition). In addition, for every round in a row that the PCs talk to Allerik and do not damage him (even if they try) they get a cumulative +5 bonus to their Diplomacy rolls. Finally, allow fairly generous (up, to +10, circumstance bonuses for good role-playing by players, especially if they think to mention things that might tend to move Allerik to reconsider the path he has chosen. Good examples of these include: Allerik's oaths as a Knight of Whitehall, Lady Zella's memories of Allerik as a good man who fought hard for

Veluna and anything else the players can think of that seems appropriate).

It is relatively easy for the PCs to simply destroy Allerik. Trying to redeem him is a much harder task and entails greater risk to the PCs. If, however, the PCs are able to successfully make the roll necessary to redeem Sir Allerik, he will immediately turn on Caine and try to destroy him. If Caine is already destroyed, Sir Allerik will join Osh'mann in attacking Herion when that occurs.

Immediately as soon as Caine is destroyed, and Allerik is either destroyed or redeemed, read or paraphrase the following:

As soon as your opponent crumbles to dust, Herion stands and starts moving toward you. "Impressive...it is to be regretted that I must now destroy you."

The simulacrum Herion will not allow the PCs any time to cast spells or recuperate/prepare in any way. Ask the PCs what they intend to do as Herion prepares to attack them. If they activate Osh'mann's holy symbol:

The lich begins speaking words of magic and arcane energy gathers about him, "You need not worry; however, I'm sure I will be able to make use of your bodies to...AHHHH!" Herion's monologue is interrupted with a shout of surprise as a globe of golden light comes to life in front of you. The glow seems to burn the lich's dead flesh, causing him great pain. At the center of the light stands Osh'mann, his face a picture of serenity as he steps forward from a circle of azure light hanging in the air.

Osh'mann addresses you, his voice even but with a hint of urgency, as he strides toward Herion, "Take the remaining items and the knowledge of what you have learned and step into the blue light...you must share what you have learned here if the Vale is to remain free!"

Herion spins to face Osh'mann, "You! How...? Ah, the church must have spent quite a sum to bring you back...no matter; I'll send you back from where you came soon enough." Herion completes a spell and a column of fire descends from above and burns Osh'mann's flesh.

Osh'mann winces, as his flesh is ravaged by unholy fire, but he continues toward Herion. In places his flesh seems to be torn badly, and he seems to bleed light, rather than blood. "Go, go now or you will be trapped here forever!" the strange man commands you through a tightly clenched jaw.

Allow the PCs a chance to act now. If the PCs redeemed Allerik, the orange light in his eyes has been

replaced with azure flames that match the color of the circle of the light Osh'mann stepped from. He turns to the party and says simply, "do as he says...leave us." He will then charge into battle against Herion himself. The PCs should run and enter the circle of light at this point, while Herion is distracted. Some PCs may be tempted to try to defeat Herion. If they are leaning towards this allow each PC to make a DC 10 Wisdom or Intelligence check. If successful, remind the PC that (1) Herion reformed once after his phylactery was not destroyed, destroying him again would do little good unless it was destroyed...and the PCs have no idea where it could be, (2) Herion's fortress is the center of his power and more of his minions may soon arrive, (3) even with the help of Osh'mann and (if applicable) Allerik, Herion is likely too strong for the PCs to defeat. Also, Osh'mann has not actually done much damage to Herion as of yet. If the PCs decide to fight it out anyway, run the combat normally. Three rounds later a pit fiend will arrive to aid Herion, however...the PCs still may exit through the circle of light at any time, however (the circle of light is extinguished after 10 rounds).

Assuming that the PCs decide to follow the advice of Osh'mann and enter the circle of light, read or paraphrase the following:

As you rush to the circle of light, Herion taunts Osh'mann, "No spells of your own to respond with? I note that you seem devoid of your former wealth...are you devoid of your former power as well?"

Taking a step forward, Osh'mann replies flatly, "I am."

Osh'mann smiles now, his face full of knowing, like the image of the reasoned one himself. He bows his head for a moment and draws forth from his robe a tarnished and rusty iron mace, a weapon of poor quality which looks as if it were found in a pile of rubbish.

"Surely, you don't mean to fight me...with that? Even if you did have a weapon capable of harming me...I have taken precautions." Herion seems full of confidence as he steps towards Osh'mann, "No living thing can enter the antilife shell that surrounds me."

Osh'mann raises his head, eyes squarely meeting Herion's crimson orbs of evil, "No, it could not...nothing living could." With that, Osh'mann charges into Herion. His second-hand mace gleams with holy radiance as he swings it low as he moves forward. The metal head now moves up, smashing into Herion's exposed ribcage.

The lich screams in pain and grabs Osh'mann's left shoulder. Wounds appear suddenly

on Osh'mann's flesh and his cries mingle with those of Herion.

Suddenly, you enter the circle of blue light and everything goes blank for a time. Your body is thrown through space and you hurtle through nothingness. Finally you feel cold, hard stone at your back.

You are once again beneath the tower that stands in the Valley of Herion. Osh'mann's holy symbol is reduced to [number of PCs] shards. As you leave the tower an array of weapons are suddenly pointing at you and you notice that you are not alone. A small contingent of temple guardsmen eye you suspiciously, just behind them are a number of robed men wearing holy symbols of Rao. One of them steps forwards and speaks, "I am Inquisitor Silus Taak of the holy inquisition. My assistants and I have questions we wish to ask of you."

Continue to encounter 9...

ENCOUNTER 9: THE WAGES OF SIN...

Ask the PCs if they intend to follow Inquisitor Taak and submit themselves for questioning or if they try to resist. If the PCs resist they taken into temporary custody and questioned regardless. For those who do not resist, read or paraphrase the following:

After deciding to cooperate with Inquisitor Taak, you are taken back to the Raoan camp you visited several days ago. As you move towards the camp you notice a large number of bodies littering the ground. Most of the bodies are covered, but you glimpse an occasional exposed Mitrik Temple Guard insignia on several corpses. Blood stains the grass at regular intervals and broken weaponry sits near a few of the bodies.

You are led into a small stone building in the center of the camp (DC 19 Spellcraft check to identify as a leomund's secure shelter). Guards are posted outside the small building as you enter. Inquisitor Taak and two of his assistants join you inside. Within the structure furnishings are sparse. Ten simple wooden chairs surround an equally utilitarian wooden table. Inquisitor Taak directs you to take a seat and make yourself comfortable. He and his assistants remain standing. Taak strides about the room as he addresses you. His assistants stand, still as statues, near the door.

"Whether or not you are aware of this already is yet to be determined but, last night something very

grave happened to the mission sent here to purify this valley. The bodies you saw on the way are the remains of somewhere between a third to a half of the troops sent here. We aren't certain yet as some of the bodies are too mangled to make a positive identification. Sir T'llok, the Knight of Salvation assigned to lead the mission, is not among the dead. Also missing is Inquisitor Brignir, the highest ranking church representative. We haven't been able to account for the remaining troops, but there are indications that a large force marched away from here last night."

The church is aware that you traveled through this area last night. Because some of you performed great services to Veluna in the past, I am giving you a considerable benefit of the doubt by not arresting you immediately...especially considering your strange and unexpected return to the valley. I would advise you that it is in your best interests to confess anything you know about what occurred here last night."

Inquisitor Silus Taak: male human (oeridian) cleric 5/church inquisitor 7. (Bluff +20, Sense Motive+23).

Allow the PCs to explain anything they wish about what they saw at the camp when they went through. If they try to change the subject the inquisitor orders them to answer ONLY the questions he asked. Inquisitor Taak refuses to answer any questions himself. All information regarding the incident is "need to know," and the PCs don't fall into that category. If the PCs are taking too long in their explanations and time is running short you can basically ask the PCs if they basically tell the inquisitor what they know, or if they lie at all.

As long as the PCs are honest, the inquisitor realizes that the PCs have nothing to do with whatever happened to the Raoan troops. If the PCs lie and are caught lying by Inquisitor Taak (opposed Sense Motive vs. Bluff checks), then he is suspicious of them, but takes no action against them at the present time (having no hard evidence).

After the PCs explain what they saw in the valley, Silus Taak demands to know where the PCs were at and what they discovered. Again, if time permits feel free to role-play this out extensively. However, if you are running the adventure at a convention or game day and time is running short, simply ask of PCs whether or not they truthfully disclose everything they know, or if they lie or hold back information. As above, if the PCs lie or hold back the Inquisitor makes an opposed Sense Motive vs. the PCs Bluff check. If the inquisitor wins the opposed check he becomes suspicious of that PC.

No matter what the PCs say themselves, Inquisitor Taak asks specifically about the following:

- Do the PCs have any idea of the true identity of this “Osh’mann” and Do the PCs believe that he is a threat to the church?
- Do the PCs believe that Herion was destroyed by Osh’mann?
- What do the PCs believe that Herion’s immediate plans are?
- Did the PCs see any indications that Herion is rebuilding a force to assault Veluna again?
- For what purpose is Herion sustaining a town of living citizens of Veluna?

Note that, when questioning the PCs, Inquisitor Taak is extremely abrasive and confrontational. He will accuse the PCs of holding-back information, being spies for Herion, being agents of the pack or he might claim that a witness has named the PC as being involved with “subversive activities.” Whatever Taak accuses the PCs of, he is very vague in his accusations and refuses to go into details. Inquisitor Taak is *actually* a very calm and reasonable man. When conducting interrogations in sensitive matters, however, Taak takes on a much more aggressive manner and makes vague accusations and threats when speaking to those he is trying to get information from. Inquisitor Taak’s reasoning being that, while it is impossible for him to know everything, a person who believes that their crimes are already known may confess in hopes of getting mercy.

Unfortunately, in the present situation, some of the PCs who may be considering the proposals put them by the Yugoloth Lezul earlier may be encouraged to go through with the tasks suggested to them by the false inquisitor. This is a choice for each player to make. They have been made aware that Lezul has disappeared under somewhat mysterious circumstances. They should also understand that, even though the consequences of what they asked to do are worse than what they know, even what they think will result is unquestionably an evil act.

Should a PC nonetheless choose to follow-through with what the Yugoloth asked of them, read the box text included in the DM aid regarding that task. When the PC sees the result, they again have a second choice. When the PC sees the horrible results of their actions they can choose to face justice in Veluna for their actions. If they choose to do this, it should be noted on the characters AR that the PC performed an evil act and, if the PC has a history of repeated evil acts noted on their AR, the DM may consider whether the PC should be retired from play (Veluna triad guidelines are 3 or more evil acts noted on an AR constitute a change of alignment to evil). The PC must then face a TU penalty for the act they performed.

The PC can also, however, choose to drink the potion that Lezul provided them with. If they do this, the other PCs witness the character begin the transformation into the form of a lich (if a spellcaster) or a vampire (if a non-caster). The PC then disappears completely and cannot be detected via any divination magic.

After the interrogation and/or PCs attacking inquisition members, read or paraphrase the following:

Inquisitor Taak stares at you silently for a few moments. “You will remain here,” he states in a manner that suggests he expects to be obeyed. He and his aides then quickly exit the room without further comment.

Proceed to the conclusion...

CONCLUSION

Read or paraphrase the following:

After you are made to wait for several more hours a single Mitrik Temple Guardsman steps into the room. He has a serious expression on his face and gives you all a hard stare. “You are free to go. You will speak to no one about what you have learned until you are cleared to do so by the church. May the reasoned one guide you.” With that the guard departs, leaving the door open behind him.

The End

SPECIAL NOTE: If any PC became an evil NPC through their actions (either by accepting Herion’s offer in encounter 8, or drinking the potion in encounter 9), collect their character sheet and take down their email address. Contact the triad with the name of the character and player, as well as the email address.

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

Encounter 1

Fulfilling promise to Veluna government to patrol the area*

APL 6	60 XP
APL 8	80 XP
APL 10	100 XP
APL 12	120 XP

*note that PCs will only get this award if they refuse to go on the mission. Thus, they will receive no other xp awards.

Encounter 4

Defeat the Vasuthants

APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP
APL 12	360 XP

Encounter 6

Defeat Kaz'allerax, the tree of death**

APL 6	345 XP
APL 8	345 XP
APL 10	345 XP
APL 12	345 XP

**most parties will not achieve this objective. This award CANNOT take the total over the max cap listed below!

Encounter 7

Defeat the faerie dragon and gray jester

APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP
APL 12	450 XP

(For each child killed during the combat, reduce the xp award by 10%)

Encounter 4

Defeat Caine and defeat and/or redeem

Sir Allerik

APL 6	270 XP
APL 8	330 XP
APL 10	390 XP
APL 12	450 XP

Discretionary role-playing award

APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP
APL 12	360 XP

Total possible experience:

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

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

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

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

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value

increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

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

Encounter 1: A Stranger in the Mist

APL 6: Coin: 60 gp.

APL 8: Coin: 80 gp.

APL 10: Coin: 100 gp.

APL 12: Coin: 120 gp.

Encounter 7: Innocence Lost

APL 6: Magic: 1,205 gp – *bracers of armor+1* (83 gp each), *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), 2 *rings of protection+1* (167 gp each), *+1 scepter* (192 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (500 gp each).

APL 8: Magic: 2,164 gp – *bracers of armor+1* (83 gp each), *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *shawl of bewitching* (292 gp), *+1 sudden stunning scepter* (359 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (500 gp each), *ring of protection+2* (667 gp).

APL 10: Magic: 2,914 gp – *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), 1 *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *shawl of bewitching* (292 gp each), *bracers of armor+2* (333 gp each), *+1 sudden stunning merciful scepter* (859 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (500 gp each), *ring of protection+2* (667 gp).

APL 12: Magic: 6,920 gp – *+1 padded armor* (96 gp each), *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *shawl of bewitching* (292 gp each), *bracers of armor+2* (333 gp each), *+1 sudden stunning merciful scepter* (859 gp each), *soul anchor rod* (833 gp), *cape of the mountebank* (840 gp each), *ring of protection +3* (1,500 gp each), *amulet of mighty fists+1* (2,000 gp each).

Encounter 8: The End of the Road **

APL 6: Loot: 14 gp; Magic: 1,577 gp – *+1 chain shirt* (104 gp each), *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *+1 full plate* (221 gp each), *+1/+1 two-bladed sword* (392 gp each), *+1 heavy mace of frost* (693 gp each).

APL 8: Magic: 3,091 gp – *+1 heavy steel shield* (98 gp each), *+1 chain shirt* (104 gp each), *ring of protection+1* (167 gp each), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp each), *+1/+1 two-bladed sword* (392 gp each), *+2 full plate* (471 gp each), *+2 heavy mace of frost* (1,526 gp each).

APL 10: Magic: 4,841 gp – *+1 heavy steel shield* (98 gp each), *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp each), *+2 chain shirt* (354 gp each), *+2 full plate* (471 gp each), *ring of protection+2* (667 gp each), *+1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword* (1,392 gp each), *+2 heavy mace of frost* (1,526 gp each).

APL 12: Magic: 9,528 gp – *gauntlets of ogre power* (333 gp each), *+1 heavy steel shield* (348 gp each), *+3 full*

plate (888 gp each), *+1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword* (1,392 gp each), *ring of protection+3* (1,500 gp each), *+2 chain shirt of fire resistance* (1,854 gp each), *mace of terror* (3,213 gp each).

** Note that the PCs only get the treasure for this encounter if they think to grab the loot before stepping through the teleportation circle. If Sir Allerik is redeemed, his treasure is lost as he remains behind to battle Herion's simulacrum.

Total Possible Treasure (gold cap in parentheses)

APL 6: Loot: 12 gp; Coin: 60 gp; Magic: 2,782 gp; Total: 2,854 gp. (900 gp).

APL 8: Coin: 80 gp; Magic: 5,255 gp; Total: 5,335 gp. (1,300 gp)

APL 10: Coin: 100 gp; Magic: 7,755 gp; Total: 7,855 gp. (2,300 gp)

APL 12: Coin: 120 gp; Magic: 16,448 gp; Total: 16,568 gp. (3,300 gp)

Special AR Rewards and information for DM

Gratitude of Lady Zella de Snelland: Lady Zella is grateful to you for the redemption of her brother. Having no husband and no children of her own, she believes your character worthy to be the future ruler of Snelland. If your character receives this AR reward, email the triad and inform them of this fact. The first recipient of this AR reward who retires their character from active play by reaching level 16 will become the ruler of the town of Snelland.

Until such time, however, Lady de Snelland agrees to serve as a sponsor of a new adventuring company with you as its head. In addition to the standard benefits for membership of an adventuring company, all members of your adventuring company may purchase horses and/or ponies from Lady Zella at half normal price. The horses/ponies raised by Lady Zella are exceptionally hardy and can be trained in advance for particular uses. Said horses or ponies gain 2 bonus hit points per hit die and may be purchased pre-trained with their maximum number of tricks. They can be sold by the player at standard price for an animal of their type.

The adventuring company must receive triad approval as with any normal adventuring company. Also, it is expected by Lady Zella that the company will maintain the high ethical standards that the PC has already displayed. The charter of the adventuring company may be revoked by the triad at any time should the company fail to live up to Lady Zella's expectations. Once Lady Zella is succeeded by a retired PC, it will be up to that PC to decide whether or not to continue

sponsorship of your adventuring company. [This reward is granted to a PC who successfully redeems Sir Allerik de Snelland in Encounter 8.]

Lost: You were trapped on Herion's demi-plane and unable to return to the prime material plane. This PC is out of play until such time as they can be rescued. A future Veluna AR item may indicate that lost PCs have been rescued. If you ever play with another PC who has the rescued AR item, this PC may immediately come back into play (the DM verifies the conditions of the rescue and crosses off this item on the AR). [This is given to any PC who did not exit the demi-plane via the circle of light.]

Holy Symbol Shard: You have a piece of Osh'mann's holy symbol. The fragment still retains a small amount of power. You can activate the fragment to cast *dimension door*, as the spell, as if cast by a 15th level caster. The holy symbol shard is consumed after the spell is cast. 1500 gp. This item is unique and cannot be crafted. [This AR reward is given to any PC who completed the mission.]

Scepter: A scepter (to which access is granted on the AR below) is a one-handed (light) simple melee weapon that deals 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage that deals double damage on a critical hit and has a critical range of 20. [This should remain uncrossed on all ARs as it is informational only.]

Suspicion of the Inquisition: Your words or actions have caused you to be distrusted by the Inquisition of the Reasoned One. You lose half of any unspent influence points with the Church of Rao (rounded-up). Influence points before this effect: _____. Influence Points after this effect: _____. [This is given to any PC who lied to Inquisitor Taak in encounter 9 and was caught by him.]

APPENDIX 1: NPCS AND MONSTERS

ALL APLS

ENCOUNTER 1: A STRANGER IN THE MIST

"Osh'mann": male deathless* (augmented humanoid) cleric 10/Contemplative*6/Risen martyr1*; CR 17; Medium deathless; HD 16d12 hp 144; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 26, touch 15, flat-footed 26; Base Atk +10; Grp +12; Atk +16 melee (1d6+6, light mace); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d6+6, light mace); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA exalted strike, holy radiance, Spells*, turn undead; SQ AC bonus, aura of anonymity, deathless traits, deflection bonus, divine health, DR 5/evil, endure elements, freedom of movement, greater sustenance, mind shielding, natural armor increase, slippery mind, divine wholeness, divine body, regeneration, resistance, resistance 5 to acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic; AL LG; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +24; Str 14, Dex 10, Con -, Int 17, Wis 24, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +20, Diplomacy +20, Heal+10, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Knowledge (History) +10, Knowledge (local: VTF) +8, Knowledge (Religion) +21, Sense Motive +24, Spellcraft +16; Holy Radiance, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Nimbus of Light, Sacred Vow, Vow of Poverty

Languages: Common, Flan

AC Bonus (Su): Osh'mann receives a +9 exalted bonus to his armor class. This bonus does not apply to touch attacks and does not hinder incorporeal touch attacks. Brilliant energy weapons, however, do not ignore this bonus. This does not stack with an armor bonus.

Aura of Anonymity (Su): Osh'mann has a supernatural effect placed upon him that prevents any who knew him in his previous life from recognizing his appearance or voice. Osh'mann is unable to suppress this effect and it is active at all times. In addition, for the purposes of any and all divination spells or effects, Osh'mann does not exist.

Any creature immune to mind-affecting spells is also immune to this effect.

Damage Reduction (Su): Osh'mann has a damage reduction 5/evil.

Deflection Bonus (Su): Osh'mann gains a deflection bonus to armor class equal to his charisma bonus.

Energy Resistance (Ex): Osh'mann has resistance 5 to acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic.

Endure Elements (Ex): Osh'mann is immune to the effects of being in a hot or cold environment. He can exist comfortably in conditions between -50 and

140 degrees Fahrenheit without having to make fortitude saves.

Exalted Strike (Su): Osh'mann has a +4 enhancement bonus to all his attack and damage rolls and is considered good aligned. In effect, any weapon Osh'mann wields becomes a +4 magic weapon, and can overcome damage reduction as if it were a good aligned magic weapon.

Freedom of Movement (Ex): Osh'mann can act as if continually under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell.

Holy Purpose (Ex): A 1st level risen martyr receives a +1 sacred bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, ability checks, and skill checks that are directly related to the fulfillment of his purpose. This is not factored in to his above-listed stats.

Holy Radiance (Feat): At will, as a free action, Osh'mann can empower the radiance surrounding him into a blazing glow that shed bright light in a 10 foot radius (and shadowy illumination out to 20 feet). Undead within 10 feet of Osh'mann take 1d4 points of damage per round they remain within this halo.

Mind Shielding (Ex): Osh'mann is immune to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and any attempt to discern his alignment.

Natural Armor (Ex): Osh'mann has a +2 natural armor bonus to his armor class.

Regeneration (Ex): Osh'mann heals 17 points of damage every hour.

Resistance (Ex): Osh'mann receives a +3 resistance bonus on all saving throws.

Spiritual Body (Ex): When a martyr rises as a 0-level risen martyr, he takes on a corporeal spirit form. His creature type changes to deathless and he gains the features and traits of the deathless type. Deathless creatures have no Constitution score, and the risen martyr rerolls his hit points using d12s instead of his previous racial and class-based Hit Dice.

A risen martyr's body is formed of solid, spiritual flesh and is neither ghostly nor incorporeal. His ability scores remain unchanged (except for his Constitution score) and all other characteristics remain the same except that he is no longer a living creature.

Sustenance, Greater (Ex): Osh'mann does not need to breathe, eat, or drink.

***Spells:** Osh'mann currently has no spells memorized and is currently unable to pray to receive more.

unhallow (DC 22), *unholy blight* (DC 21), *weird* (DC 26).

Death Curse (Su): Killing a night twist invites a curse similar to that bestowed by the *nightmare* spell. The creature dealing the death blow must make a DC 29 Will save to avoid being cursed with hideous and unsettling nightmares that prevent restful sleep and deal 1d10 points of damage. The recipient becomes fatigued and unable to prepare or ready arcane spells for the next 24 hours. The nightmares and resulting damage affect the subject every night until the curse is removed or the victim dies. If the curse is removed, the victim remains fatigued for 24 hours thereafter.

A *limited wish* or more powerful magic cast while the subject is in the throes of a nightmare is the only way to remove a night twist's death curse. The save DC is Charisma-based.

If the victim of a night twist dies and is interred, a new night twist springs from where the corpse was laid one month earlier. While the creature is developing, a night twist "sapling" appears at the grave site; the creature seems to be a normal (nonintelligent) plant until it reaches maturity.

Despair Song (Su): Every evening, a night twist emits a sorrowful sound that inspires melancholy and despair in all creatures with an intelligence score of 6 or higher within a radius of 5 miles per hit die of the night twist. Those who fail a DC 29 Will save are affected as if by a *crushing despair* spell and must seek out the source of their sorrow (the night twist) to the neglect of all other tasks or needs, including eating or sleeping. If physically restrained and not allowed to seek out the night twist, a victim of this despair song loses 1d10 hit points every evening until it dies or the enchantment is removed. Relocating a victim outside the area affected by the night twist's song does not end the enchantment.

The despair song ceases to affect the subject in the round after the night twist makes a slam attack against it. To remove the effects of a night twist's despair song before it attacks, a *limited wish* or more powerful magic must be employed. *Dispel magic* and *dispel evil* spells cannot remove the enchantment. However, a bard of 12th level or higher using the *song of freedom* class feature can provide the subject a second Will save. The death of the night twist always ends the enchantment. A night twist's caster level is equal to its Hit Dice for the purpose of its despair song ability. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, Kaz'allerax can make a normal melee attack to deal 20 extra damage to a foe.

Unholy Grace (Su): A night twist adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on all of its saving throws, and as a deflection modifier to its Armor Class.

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A Vasuthant gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its hit dice.

Wind Blast (Su): A night twist's wind blast ability is similar to the *gust of wind* spell. The creature can use its wind blast as a free action, but does so only when it feels threatened. A powerful, gale force wind (50 mph) emanates from the tree in all directions out to 120 feet. All other effects of the wind blast are the same as those of the *gust of wind* spell. Any creature in the effected area can avoid the effect with a DC 24 Fortitude save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Skills: Night twists gain a +16 racial bonus on Hide checks in swamps or marshes where other trees or foliage thrive.

Physical Description: A huge, black, leafless tree characterized by unnatural and unsettling shapes. It radiates gloomy twilight, nightmares, and sorrow.

ENCOUNTER 8: THE END OF THE ROAD

Canon Herion Simulacrum CR 13; Male Lich cleric 9/divine oracle* 2 (effective caster level 11); Medium Humanoid (Undead Augmented Humanoid) HD 11d12; hp 96; Init +4; Spd 20ft AC 34 [touch 13, flatfooted 33] (+1 dex, +2 deflection, +5 natural, +3 (+5) shield, +9 (+11) armor); Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk +9 (2D4+2, +1 Unholy, Keen Scythe) or touch +8 melee (1D8+5 negative energy plus paralysis); Full Atk +9/+2 (2D4+2, +1 Unholy Keen Scythe) or touch +8 melee (1D8+5 negative energy plus paralysis); SA damaging touch, fear aura, paralyzing touch, spells, spell-like ability; SQ Oracle domain, scry bonus, prescient sense, trap sense +1, +8 turn resistance(+12 with cloak), SR 23 (spell resistance spell), DR 15/bludgeoning and magic, darkvision 60 ft, positive energy resistance 10 (protection from positive energy spell), immunity to fire (132 pts protection from energy spell), cold, electricity, polymorph, and mind-affecting effects, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +9 (+12 conviction), Ref +8 (+11 conviction), Will +21 (+24 conviction), Str 12, Dex 14, Con -, Int 20, Wis 28, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +18, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (arcane) +14, Hide +10, Listen +17, Move Silently +10, Search +13, Sense Motive +18, Spot +15, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (history) +15, Spellcraft +18; Combat Casting, Fell Drain*, Empower Spell, Improved Turn Resistance*, Skill Focus [Knowledge [religion]].

Spells Prepared 6/7+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1; Base DC = 19 + Spell Level; 0th – *read magic, guidance, inflict minor wounds x2, detect magic x2*; 1st – *command X2, conviction (MH), deathwatch, divine favor*, ** *cause fear, entropic shield, resurgencex2**; 2nd – *death knell*, ** *desecrate, deific vengeance**, *hold person, silence, sound burst*; 3rd – *bestow curse, inflict light wounds (Fell), animate dead***, ~~*magic vestment x2, protection from energy, protection from positive energy*~~*; 4th – ~~*air walk*~~, *confusion***, *divine power, energy vortex <cold or electricity>**, ~~*freedom of movement*~~, *fell sound burst*; 5th – ~~*spell resistance*~~, *death throes**, *flame strike, slay living***, ~~*true seeing*~~; 6th – ~~*antilife shell*~~, *harm, mislead***.

Note: ~~Strikethrough~~ spells are pre-cast spells currently in effect.

**Domains: Trickery-Add Bluff, Disguise, and Hide to your list of cleric class skills; Death-You may use death touch once per day. Your death touch is a supernatural ability that produces a death effect. You must succeed on a melee touch attack against a living creature (using the rules for touch spells). When you touch, roll 1D6 per cleric level you possess. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies (no save); Oracle: You cast divination spells at +2 caster level.

Equipment: *belt of magnificence** +2, 3 *holy symbols of the one*, +1 *unholy keen scythe*, +1 *unholy sickle*, +1 (+3 *magic vestment*) *full plate*, +1 (+3 *magic vestment*) *animated heavy steel shield*, *cloak of turn resistance*, *ring of protection* +2, 2 *pearl of power* (4th level), *ring of greater counterspelling*, *wand of unholy blight*, *hewards handy haversack*, *vest of resistance* +3

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 4: INTO SHADOW

Herion's Sentinel: advanced vasuthant; CR 5; Large undead; HD 10d12+20 hp 105; Init +5; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +5; Grp +19; Atk +10 melee (1d8+6, slam); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+6, slam) and up to 4 enervating crushes (1d8+6 and 1d4 str); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA enervating crush, improved grab, reality distortion; SQ +2 turn resistance, blindsight, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid and cold, immunity to light, resistance to fire 5 and electricity 5, trap light, undead traits, unholy toughness; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 22, Dex 12, Con -, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide+3*, Listen+8, Spot +9; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Grapple^B, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Enervating Crush (Su): A successful grapple attempt by a vasuthant against a living creature of the same size or smaller pulls the victim into the center of the vasuthant. In that round and every round thereafter, a grappled victim takes 1d8+6 points of damage plus 1d4 points of strength damage. A creature reduced to 0 strength by a vasuthant dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Every point of Strength damage dealt by a vasuthant heals the creature of 1 point of damage, or gives it 1 temporary hit point if the creature is at full normal hit points. These temporary hit points last for 10 minutes.

This vasuthant can grapple with one large creature or can simultaneously grapple one or two medium creatures or up to four small or smaller creatures. Creatures that become pinned are suspended inside the vasuthant while their life energy is crushed out of their bodies.

The use of its enervating crush ability does not prevent a vasuthant from making slam attacks or using its spell-like abilities.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a vasuthant must first hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, a vasuthant immediately employs its enervating crush attack.

Reality Distortion (Ex): A vasuthant has limited influences over the forces of time and reality. Three times per day (but only once per round), a vasuthant can take a free action to re-roll any unfavorable die roll or force its opponent to re-roll a favorable die roll. The vasuthant must accept the result of the re-roll.

Immunity to Light (Ex): Unlike many other undead creatures, a vasuthant is immune to any harmful effects of light, either natural or magical. All cleric spells of the Sun domain, as well as other spells with the light descriptor (such as daylight), produce no adverse effects on a vasuthant.

Trap Light (Ex): A vasuthant effectively absorbs nearby magical and non-magical light, creating a 60 foot emanation of shadow. All creatures within this area, including the vasuthant, gain concealment. Creatures with low-light vision or darkvision can see normally within the area of the emanation. Light sources within the area are suppressed, not dispelled. If a vasuthant moves out of range before the light source's duration expires, the light source illuminates again (though its illumination still cannot extend within the area of the vasuthant's trap light effect).

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A Vasuthant gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its hit dice.

Skills: Vasuthants have a +2 racial bonus to Listen checks and Spot checks. *A vasuthant gains a +4 racial bonus on hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In areas of bright illumination, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Physical Description: A large spherical cloud of impenetrable darkness floats towards you. As it draws near, black tendrils reach out from the cloud's opaque core.

ENCOUNTER 7: INNOCENCE LOST

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped* faerie dragon*; CR 8 Small aberration (augmented dragon); HD 8d12+32 hp 96; Init +9; Spd fly 30 ft., fly 100 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +8; Grp +9; Atk +15 melee (1d6+6, bite); Full Atk +15 melee (1d6+6, bite) and +10 melee (1d4+3, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immune to paralysis and *sleep*, low light vision, SR 19, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +11, Will +10; Str 21, Dex 20, Con 18, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+12, Concentration+8, Diplomacy+12, Disguise+5 (+7 Acting), Hide+20, Intimidate+11, Knowledge (Nature)+10, Listen+15, Move Silently+15, Sense Motive+15, Slight of Hand+18, Spot+15, Survival+9 (+11 in aboveground natural environments), Swim+5; Ability Focus (Breath Weapon), Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan, can converse with any animal

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

3/day – *charm monster* (DC 19), *entangle* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 18), *obscuring mist*,

1/day – *animate objects*, *mind fog* (DC 20), *project image* (DC 22), *summon monster IV*,

1/month – *commune with nature*

Breath Weapon: 20-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, DC 18 Will save or become dazed for 1d6 rounds.

Spell Absorption: Whenever a spell fails to penetrate Rathae'do'kundra's spell resistance, Rathae'do'kundra gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time that the spell effect is resolved.

Might: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to strength for 1 minute.

Agility: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to constitution for 1 minute.

Life: Rathae'do'kundra gains temporary hit points equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Speed: Rathae'do'kundra's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Resistance: Rathae'do'kundra gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or sonic) for 1 minute.

Possessions: *amulet of mighty fists +1*, *bracers of armor +1*, *ring of protection +1*

Physical Description: A small dragon with butterfly-like wings and a long, prehensile tail that constantly flicks and twitches. The creature has a sharp-toothed grin and the gray and black scales of its body seem arranged in an odd, checkerboard-like pattern. The only thing colorful about this creature is the strange top hat it wears, with alternating white and red stripes.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

"Uncle Burris": grey jester*; CR 6; Medium fey; HD 12d6+36 hp 81; Init +12; Spd 50 ft.; AC 23, touch 21, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +6; Grp +6; Atk +15 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *scepter*) or +15 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *scepter*); Full Atk +15 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *scepter*) or +15 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *scepter*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA empathic feeding, *Tasha's hideous laughter*; SQ damage reduction 10/cold iron, low light vision, SR 22; AL NE;

SV Fort +7, Ref +16, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 27, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+14, Concentration+11, Diplomacy+12, Hide+14, Listen +7, Move Silently+18, Perform (Comedy) +16, Sense Motive+12, Spot+7, Tumble+13, Use Magic Device+10; Ability Focus (*Tasha's Hideous Laughter*), Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan

Empathic Feeding (Su): A Gray Jester can drain joyous emotions from humanoid beings. The jester must be within 30 feet of a living humanoid who is experiencing laughter, joy, or similar emotions (this includes emotions evoked by magic, such as *Tasha's hideous laughter*).

In a single round, a gray jester can feed on a number of people equal to its Charisma bonus. Any target that fails a DC 22 will save takes 1d4 points of charisma drain. Those drained to 0 Charisma may become bleak ones (see below). Gray jesters feed on emotions but are at their weakest just after feeding. For a number of rounds equal to the total points of Charisma drained, a gray jester's damage reduction falls to 5/cold iron and its spell resistance drops by 6.

Tasha's Hideous Laughter (Sp): At will, DC 20, caster level 5th. The gray jester must touch his subject, either by hand or with its scepter, to use this ability.

Bleak Ones: The results of a gray jester's feeding vary depending on the target. Anyone with more hit dice than the gray jester loses the ability to laugh or feel joy if reduced to 0 charisma. Those of fewer or equal hit dice, however, become what the gray jesters call "bleak ones." They lose all self-will as well as the ability to feel positive emotions. Although not mindless, they undertake no actions unless the gray jester that drained them gives them orders. Bleak ones become followers and soldiers for the jester. They lose all abilities that rely on alignment, or those that require Charisma, but otherwise retain all their capabilities. A single gray jester can control up to 4 times its HD of bleak ones.

Possessions: +1 *padded armor*, *ring of protection +1*, +1 *scepter*.

Physical Description: A gaunt figure clad in gray-hued jester's clothing with a dirty gray beard and an overlarge, reddish nose. The man's face is largely covered with white and gray coloring and he grips a scepter with a doll's head atop it in one hand.

Bleak One Children: male/female human commoner (child); CR ½; Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4 hp 4; Init +21; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -2; Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Full Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger);

Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 6, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 0.

Skills and Feats: Climb+2, Handle Animal+0, Jump+2, Listen +0, Spot+0, Swim+1; Acrobatic, Athletic

Languages: Common

Possessions: dagger

Physical Description: These raggedly-dressed children move as if in an emotionless, dazed state. Though alive, they seem trapped in a zombie-like state.

ENCOUNTER 9: THE END OF THE ROAD

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight ex-paladin 5/ranger 1; CR 9; Medium undead; HD 6d12 hp 54; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 27; Base Atk +6; Grp +11; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d6 cold, +1 frost heavy mace); Full Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+6 plus 1d6 cold, +1 frost heavy mace) or +11 melee touch (1d8+3 plus 1 point con, touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA abyssal blast, fear aura; SQ DR 15/magic, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, immune to cold and electricity, immune to paralysis, SR 20, turn immunity, undead traits, wild empathy+4; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 12, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide-1, Knowledge (Local: VTF) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen +6, Move Silently -1, Ride +10, Search +4, Spot +6, Survival +6; Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Track^b

Languages: Common

Touch Attack: Sir Allerik's touch attack uses negative energy to deal 1d8+3 negative energy damage to living creatures. Each successful touch also deals 1 point of constitution damage. A DC 16 Will save reduces the damage by half and negates the constitution damage.

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, Sir Allerik can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 640 feet. The blast deals 6d6 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire damage, but the rest results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by *protection from elements (fire)* and similar magic. A DC 16 Reflex save reduces the damage by half.

Aura of Evil (Ex): Sir Allerik has a moderate aura of evil.

Fear Aura (Su): Death knights are shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within a 15-foot radius of Sir Allerik must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a sorcerer of the death knight's level.

Freedom of Movement: Sir Allerik is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Summon Mount (Su): A death knight has the ability to summon a mount. The mount may have no more hit dice than half the death knight's levels. If the mount is lost or killed, the death knight may summon another after one year and a day. At this APL Sir Allerik can summon a skeletal light warhorse whose stats are listed below. *Note that, unlike the mount-summoning of a paladin, death knights summon a mount as a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.*

Turn Immunity (Ex): A death knight cannot be turned. It can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if it were an evil outsider.

Possessions: +1 full plate, masterwork heavy steel shield, +1 frost heavy mace, ring of protection+1

Physical Description: A decaying body covered in ornate plate mail stands before you. The undead warrior's face is a blackened skull covered with patches of rotting flesh, with two pinpoints of orange light in the eye sockets. The undead warrior's voice is chilling, seeming to echo from deep within.

Skeletal Light Warhorse: CR 1 Large undead; HD 3d12 hp 27; Init +6; Spd 60 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +1; Grp +8; Atk +4 melee (1d4+3, hoof); Full Atk +3/+3 melee (1d6+3, 2 hooves) and -2 melee (1d3+1, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ DR 5/bludgeoning, immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 15, Con -, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion* barbarian 1/fighter 2/ranger 2; CR 6 Medium undead; HD 5d12 hp 45; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +5; Grp +10; Atk +12 melee (1d8+8/19-20, +1/+1 two-bladed sword); Full Atk +10 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1/+1 two-bladed sword) and +10 melee (1d8+3/19-20, +1/+1 two-bladed sword) or +10/+10 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA fear aura; SQ change shape, darkvision 60 ft., deaf, DR 10/magic, fast healing 3, fast movement, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, undead traits, wild empathy+3; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 20, Dex 18, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide+6, Intimidate+7, Jump+7, Knowledge (Nature)+6, Move Silently+7, Search+4, Spot+12, Survival+9, swim +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword), Power Attack, Skill

Focus (Spot), Track^B, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword)

Languages: Common

Fear Aura (Su): Tainted minions are shrouded in a constant aura of terror and evil. Creatures within a 30-foot radius of Ishmi tainted minion must succeed on a DC 13 Will save or become shaken. Shaken creatures take a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws.

Freedom of Movement: Caine is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Change Shape (Su): A tainted minion can assume the form of any humanoid creature. See page 306 of the *Monster Manual* for details.

Power-Up Suite (Prepared – *raging*): AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Grp +12; Atk +14 melee (1d8+11/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+8/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*) and +12 melee (1d8+4/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*) or +12 melee (1d4+7, 2 claws); SV Will +3; Str 24

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*

Physical Description: The undead warrior before you spins a two-bladed sword through the air in intricate patterns. In the shadows beneath his helm, specks of green light glow where his eyes should be.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

APL 8

ENCOUNTER 4: INTO SHADOW

Herion's Sentinel: advanced vasuthant; CR 6 Large undead; HD 14d12+28 hp 147; Init +5; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +21; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+6, slam) and up to 4 enervating crushes (1d8+6 and 1d4 str); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA enervating crush, improved grab, reality distortion; SQ +2 turn resistance, blindsight, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid and cold, immunity to light, resistance to fire 5 and electricity 5, trap light, undead traits, unholy toughness; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 22, Dex 12, Con -, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide+3*, Listen +10, Spot +11; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Grapple^B, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Enervating Crush (Su): A successful grapple attempt by a vasuthant against a living creature of the same size or smaller pulls the victim into the center of the vasuthant. In that round and every round thereafter, a grappled victim takes 1d8+6 points of damage plus 1d4 points of strength damage. A creature reduced to 0 strength by a vasuthant dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Every point of Strength damage dealt by a vasuthant heals the creature of 1 point of damage, or gives it 1 temporary hit point if the creature is at full normal hit points. These temporary hit points last for 10 minutes.

This vasuthant can grapple with one large creature or can simultaneously grapple one or two medium creatures or up to four small or smaller creatures. Creatures that become pinned are suspended inside the vasuthant while their life energy is crushed out of their bodies.

The use of its enervating crush ability does not prevent a vasuthant from making slam attacks or using its spell-like abilities.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a vasuthant must first hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, a vasuthant immediately employs its enervating crush attack.

Reality Distortion (Ex): A vasuthant has limited influences over the forces of time and reality. Three times per day (but only once per round), a vasuthant can take a free action to re-roll any unfavorable die roll or force its opponent to re-roll a favorable die roll. The vasuthant must accept the result of the re-roll.

Immunity to Light (Ex): Unlike many other undead creatures, a vasuthant is immune to any harmful effects of light, either natural or magical. All cleric spells of the Sun domain, as well as other spells with the light descriptor (such as daylight), produce no adverse effects on a vasuthant.

Trap Light (Ex): A vasuthant effectively absorbs nearby magical and non-magical light, creating a 60 foot emanation of shadow. All creatures within this area, including the vasuthant, gain concealment. Creatures with low-light vision or darkvision can see normally within the area of the emanation. Light sources within the area are suppressed, not dispelled. If a vasuthant moves out of range before the light source's duration expires, the light source illuminates again (though its illumination still cannot extend within the area of the vasuthant's trap light effect).

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A Vasuthant gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its hit dice.

Skills: Vasuthants have a +2 racial bonus to Listen checks and Spot checks. *A vasuthant gains a +4 racial bonus on hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In areas of bright illumination, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Physical Description: A large spherical cloud of impenetrable darkness floats towards you. As it draws near, black tendrils reach out from the cloud's opaque core.

ENCOUNTER 7: INNOCENCE LOST

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped* faerie dragon*; CR 10; Medium aberration (augmented dragon); HD 12d12+60 hp 153; Init +8; Spd fly 30 ft., fly 100 ft. (good), swim 30 ft.; AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 19; Base Atk +12; Grp +20; Atk +20 melee (1d8+9, bite); Full Atk +20 melee (1d8+9, bite) and +18 melee (1d6+5, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immune to paralysis and *sleep*, low light vision, SR 23, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +12; Str 26, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+14, Concentration+11, Diplomacy+16, Disguise+9 (+11 Acting), Hide+19, Intimidate+15, Knowledge (Nature)+12, Listen+15, Move Silently+18, Sense Motive+19, Slight of Hand+19, Spot+15, Survival+11 (+13 in aboveground natural environments), Swim+7; Ability Focus (Breath Weapon), Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (Invisibility)

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan, can converse with any animal

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

3/day – *charm monster* (DC 19), *entangle* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 18), *obscuring mist*,

1/day – *animate objects*, *mind fog* (DC 20), *project image* (DC 22), *summon monster IV*,

1/month – *commune with nature*

Breath Weapon: 20-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, DC 23 Will save or become dazed for 1d6 rounds.

Spell Absorption: Whenever a spell fails to penetrate Rathae'do'kundra's spell resistance, Rathae'do'kundra gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time that the spell effect is resolved.

Might: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to strength for 1 minute.

Agility: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to constitution for 1 minute.

Life: Rathae'do'kundra gains temporary hit points equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Speed: Rathae'do'kundra's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Resistance: Rathae'do'kundra gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or sonic) for 1 minute.

Possessions: *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *bracers of armor* +1, *ring of protection* +2.

Physical Description: A medium-sized dragon with butterfly-like wings and a long, prehensile tail that constantly flicks and twitches. The creature has a sharp-toothed grin and the gray and black scales of its body seem arranged in an odd, checkerboard-like pattern. The only thing colorful about this creature is the strange top hat it wears, with alternating white and red stripes.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

"Uncle Burris": grey jester*; CR 8; Medium fey bard 2/rogue 2; HD 16d6+48 hp 108; Init +11; Spd 50 ft.; AC 24, touch 22, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +8; Grp +7; Atk +18 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning scepter*) or +18 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning scepter*); Full Atk +18 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning scepter*) or +18 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning scepter*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA empathic feeding, sneak

attack+1d6, *Tasha's hideous laughter*, SQ bardic knowledge+4, bardic music 2/day (inspire courage+1, *fascinate* 1 creature, countersong), damage reduction 10/cold iron, low light vision, SR 26; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +23, Will +12; Str 8, Dex 28, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+17 (+22 when concealing the truth), Concentration+13, Diplomacy+13, Escape Artist +18, Hide+19, Listen +12, Move Silently+13, Perform (Comedy) +20, Sense Motive+14, Spot+12, Tumble+15, Use Magic Device+12; Ability Focus (*Tasha's hideous laughter*), Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan

Spells Known (3/4/3; base DC = 16 + spell level): 0— *dancing lights*, *daze*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *summon instrument*; 1st— *charm person*, *silent image*.

Empathic Feeding (Su): A Gray Jester can drain joyous emotions from humanoid beings. The jester must be within 30 feet of a living humanoid who is experiencing laughter, joy, or similar emotions (this includes emotions evoked by magic, such as *Tasha's hideous laughter*).

In a single round, a gray jester can feed on a number of people equal to its Charisma bonus. Any target that fails a DC 24 will save takes 1d4 points of charisma drain. Those drained to 0 Charisma may become bleak ones (see the new rules appendix). Gray jesters feed on emotions but are at their weakest just after feeding. For a number of rounds equal to the total points of Charisma drained, a gray jester's damage reduction falls to 5/cold iron and its spell resistance drops by 6.

Tasha's Hideous Laughter (Sp): At will, DC 20, caster level 5th. The gray jester must touch his subject, either by hand or with its scepter, to use this ability.

Bleak Ones: The results of a gray jester's feeding vary depending on the target. Anyone with more hit dice than the gray jester loses the ability to laugh or feel joy if reduced to 0 charisma. Those of fewer or equal hit dice, however, become what the gray jesters call "bleak ones." They lose all self-will as well as the ability to feel positive emotions. Although not mindless, they undertake no actions unless the gray jester that drained them gives them orders. Bleak ones become followers and soldiers for the jester. They lose all abilities that rely on alignment, or those that require Charisma, but otherwise retain all their capabilities. A single gray jester can control up to 4 times its HD of bleak ones.

Possessions: +1 *padded armor*, *ring of protection* +1, +1 *sudden stunning** *scepter*, *shawl of bewitching*.

Physical Description: A gaunt figure clad in gray-hued jester's clothing with a dirty gray beard and an overlarge, reddish nose. The man's face is largely covered with white and gray coloring and he grips a scepter with a doll's head atop it in one hand.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Bleak One Children: male/female human commoner (child); CR 1/2 Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4 hp 4; Init +21; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -2; Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Full Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 6, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 0.

Skills and Feats: Climb+2, Handle Animal+0, Jump+2, Listen +0, Spot+0, Swim+1; Acrobatic, Athletic
Languages: Common

Possessions: dagger

Physical Description: These raggedly-dressed children move as if in an emotionless, dazed state. Though alive, they seem trapped in a zombie-like state.

ENCOUNTER 9: THE END OF THE ROAD

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight* blackguard 1/ex-paladin 6/ranger 1; CR 11; Medium undead; HD 8d12 hp 72; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 28; Base Atk +8; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 cold, +2 *frost heavy mace*); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 cold, +2 *frost heavy mace*) or +13 melee touch (1d8+3 plus 1 point con, touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA abyssal blast, fear aura, smite good, sneak attack+1d6; SQ aura of evil, detect good, DR 15/magic, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, immune to cold and electricity, immune to paralysis, lay on hands, poison use, SR 20, turn immunity, undead traits, wild empathy+4; AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 12, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide+2, Knowledge (Local: VTF) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen+6, Move Silently-1, Ride+10, Search+4, Spot+6, Survival+6; Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Track⁵

Languages: Common

Spells Prepared: (base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*corrupt weapon*.

Touch Attack: Sir Allerik's touch attack uses negative energy to deal 1d8+3 negative energy damage to living creatures. Each successful touch also deals 1 point of constitution damage. A DC 17 Will save reduces the damage by half and negates the constitution damage.

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, Sir Allerik can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 720 feet. The blast deals 8d6 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire damage, but the rest results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by *protection from elements (fire)* and similar magic. A DC 17 Reflex save reduces the damage by half.

Aura of Evil (Ex): Sir Allerik has a moderate aura of evil.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, Sir Allerik can use *detect good* as a spell-like ability, duplicating the effect of the *detect good* spell.

Fear Aura (Su): Death knights are shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within a 15-foot radius of Sir Allerik must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a sorcerer of the death knight's level.

Freedom of Movement: Sir Allerik is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Lay on Hands (Sp): As a standard action Sir Allerik can heal himself. He can heal 3 points of damage per day.

Poison Use: Blackguards are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Smite Good (Su): Twice a day, Sir Allerik may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma modifier (+3) to his attack roll and deals 1 extra point of damage (1 point per blackguard level he possesses).

Summon Mount (Su): A death knight has the ability to summon a mount. The mount may have no more hit dice than half the death knight's levels. If the mount is lost or killed, the death knight may summon another after one year and a day. At this APL Sir Allerik can summon a skeletal heavy warhorse whose stats are listed below. *Note that, unlike the mount-summoning of a paladin, death knights summon a mount as a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.*

Turn Immunity (Ex): A death knight cannot be turned. It can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if it were an evil outsider.

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +2 frost heavy mace, ring of protection+1

Physical Description: A decaying body covered in ornate plate mail stands before you. The undead warrior's face is a blackened skull covered with patches of rotting flesh, with two pinpoints of orange light in the eye sockets. The undead warrior's voice is chilling, seeming to echo from deep within.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Skeletal Heavy Warhorse: CR 2 Large undead; HD 3d12 hp 36; Init +6; Spd 50 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Full Atk +5/+5 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves) and +0 melee (1d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ DR 5/bludgeoning, immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 15, Con -, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

Caine Blackwood: tainted minion* barbarian 1/fighter 4/ranger 2; CR 8 Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 7d12 hp 63; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +7; Grp +13; Atk +15 melee (1d8+9/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+6/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*) and +13 melee (1d8+3/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*) or +13/+13 melee (1d4+6, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA fear aura; SQ change shape, darkvision 60 ft., deaf, DR 10/magic, fast healing 3, fast movement, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, undead traits, wild empathy+3; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 18, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Craft(Weaponsmithing)+3, Hide+6, Intimidate+10, Jump+7, Knowledge (Nature)+6, Move Silently+7, Search+4, Spot+12, Survival+9, swim +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (two-bladed sword), Power Attack, Reckless Rage, Skill Focus (Spot), Track^B, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (two-bladed sword)

Languages: Common

Fear Aura (Su): Tainted minions are shrouded in a constant aura of terror and evil. Creatures within a 30-foot radius of Ishmi tainted minion must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or become shaken. Shaken creatures take a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws.

Freedom of Movement: Caine is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Change Shape (Su): A tainted minion can assume the form of any humanoid creature. See page 306 of the *Monster Manual* for details.

Power-Up Suite (Prepared – *raging*): AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Grp +16; Atk +18 melee (1d8+14/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d8+10/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*) and +16 melee (1d8+5/19-20, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*) or +15 melee (1d4+9, 2 claws); SV Will +4; Str 28

Possessions: +1 chain shirt, gauntlets of ogre power, +1/+1 *two-bladed sword*

Physical Description: The undead warrior before you spins a two-bladed sword through the air in intricate patterns. In the shadows beneath his helm, specks of green light glow where his eyes should be.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 4: INTO SHADOW

Herion's Sentinel: advanced vasuthant; CR 6; Large undead; HD 14d12+28 hp 147; Init +5; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +7; Grp +21; Atk +12 melee (1d8+6, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (1d8+6, slam) and up to 4 enervating crushes (1d8+6 and 1d4 str); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA enervating crush, improved grab, reality distortion; SQ +2 turn resistance, blindsight, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid and cold, immunity to light, resistance to fire 5 and electricity 5, trap light, undead traits, unholy toughness; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +10; Str 22, Dex 12, Con -, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide+3*, Listen +10, Spot +11; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Grapple^B, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Enervating Crush (Su): A successful grapple attempt by a vasuthant against a living creature of the same size or smaller pulls the victim into the center of the vasuthant. In that round and every round thereafter, a grappled victim takes 1d8+6 points of damage plus 1d4 points of strength damage. A creature reduced to 0 strength by a vasuthant dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Every point of Strength damage dealt by a vasuthant heals the creature of 1 point of damage, or gives it 1 temporary hit point if the creature is at full normal hit points. These temporary hit points last for 10 minutes.

This vasuthant can grapple with one large creature or can simultaneously grapple one or two medium creatures or up to four small or smaller creatures. Creatures that become pinned are suspended inside the vasuthant while their life energy is crushed out of their bodies.

The use of its enervating crush ability does not prevent a vasuthant from making slam attacks or using its spell-like abilities.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a vasuthant must first hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, a vasuthant immediately employs its enervating crush attack.

Reality Distortion (Ex): A vasuthant has limited influences over the forces of time and reality. Three times per day (but only once per round), a vasuthant can take a free action to re-roll any unfavorable die roll or force its opponent to re-roll a favorable die roll. The vasuthant must accept the result of the re-roll.

Immunity to Light (Ex): Unlike many other undead creatures, a vasuthant is immune to any harmful effects of light, either natural or magical. All cleric spells of the Sun domain, as well as other spells with the light descriptor (such as daylight), produce no adverse effects on a vasuthant.

Trap Light (Ex): A vasuthant effectively absorbs nearby magical and non-magical light, creating a 60 foot emanation of shadow. All creatures within this area, including the vasuthant, gain concealment. Creatures with low-light vision or darkvision can see normally within the area of the emanation. Light sources within the area are suppressed, not dispelled. If a vasuthant moves out of range before the light source's duration expires, the light source illuminates again (though its illumination still cannot extend within the area of the vasuthant's trap light effect).

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A Vasuthant gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its hit dice.

Skills: Vasuthants have a +2 racial bonus to Listen checks and Spot checks. *A vasuthant gains a +4 racial bonus on hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In areas of bright illumination, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Physical Description: A large spherical cloud of impenetrable darkness floats towards you. As it draws near, black tendrils reach out from the cloud's opaque core.

ENCOUNTER 7: INNOCENCE LOST

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped* faerie dragon*; CR 12 Large aberration (augmented dragon); HD 14d12+98 hp 199; Init +7; Spd fly 30 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 30 ft.; AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +14; Grp +30; Atk +25 melee (2d6+13, bite); Full Atk +25 melee (2d6+13, bite) and +23 melee (1d8+7, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immune to paralysis and *sleep*, low light vision, SR 25, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 34, Dex 16, Con 24, Int 17, Wis 19, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+16, Concentration+14, Diplomacy+16, Disguise+11 (+13 Acting), Hide+16, Intimidate+17, Knowledge (Nature)+12, Listen+15, Move Silently+19, Sense Motive+21, Slight of Hand+18, Spot+15, Survival+13 (+15 in aboveground natural environments), Swim+11; Ability Focus (Breath Weapon), Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (Invisibility)

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan, can converse with any animal

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

3/day – *charm monster* (DC 19), *entangle* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 18), *obscuring mist*,

1/day – *animate objects*, *mind fog* (DC 20), *project image* (DC 22), *summon monster IV*,

1/month – *commune with nature*

Breath Weapon: 20-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, DC 26 Will save or become dazed for 1d6 rounds.

Spell Absorption: Whenever a spell fails to penetrate Rathae'do'kundra's spell resistance, Rathae'do'kundra gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time that the spell effect is resolved.

Might: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to strength for 1 minute.

Agility: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to constitution for 1 minute.

Life: Rathae'do'kundra gains temporary hit points equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Speed: Rathae'do'kundra's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Resistance: Rathae'do'kundra gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or sonic) for 1 minute.

Possessions: *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *bracers of armor* +2, *ring of protection* +2.

Physical Description: A large dragon with butterfly-like wings and a long, prehensile tail that constantly flicks and twitches. The creature has a sharp-toothed grin and the gray and black scales of its body seem arranged in an odd, checkerboard-like pattern. The only thing colorful about this creature is the strange top hat it wears, with alternating white and red stripes.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

"Uncle Burris": grey jester*; CR 10; Medium fey bard 4/rogue 4); HD 20d6+60; hp 135; Init +11; Spd 50 ft.; AC 24, touch 22, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +12; Grp +11; Atk +22 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*) or +22 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*); Full Atk +22 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*) or +22 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*); Space/Reach 5

ft./5 ft.; SA empathic feeding, sneak attack+2d6, *Tasha's hideous laughter*; SQ bardic knowledge+6, bardic music 2/day (inspire competence, inspire courage+1, fascinate 2 creatures, countersong), damage reduction 10/cold iron, low light vision, SR 30; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +25, Will +15; Str 8, Dex 28, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 22.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+20 (+25 when concealing the truth), Concentration+15, Diplomacy+16, Escape Artist +19, Hide+19, Listen +18, Move Silently+13, Perform (Comedy) +24, Sense Motive+18, Spot+18, Tumble+18, Use Magic Device+18; Ability Focus (*Tasha's hideous laughter*), Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Weapon Finesse

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan

Spells Known (3/4/3; base DC = 16 + spell level): 0— *dancing lights*, *daze*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *summon instrument*; 1st— *charm person*, *lesser confusion*, *silent image*; 2nd – *blindness/deafness*, *mirror image*.

Empathic Feeding (Su): A Gray Jester can drain joyous emotions from humanoid beings. The jester must be within 30 feet of a living humanoid who is experiencing laughter, joy, or similar emotions (this includes emotions evoked by magic, such as *Tasha's hideous laughter*).

In a single round, a gray jester can feed on a number of people equal to its Charisma bonus. Any target that fails a DC 26 will save takes 1d4 points of charisma drain. Those drained to 0 Charisma may become bleak ones (see the new rules appendix). Gray jesters feed on emotions but are at their weakest just after feeding. For a number of rounds equal to the total points of Charisma drained, a gray jester's damage reduction falls to 5/cold iron and its spell resistance drops by 6.

Tasha's hideous laughter (Sp): At will, DC 20, caster level 5th. The gray jester must touch his subject, either by hand or with its scepter, to use this ability.

Bleak Ones: The results of a gray jester's feeding vary depending on the target. Anyone with more hit dice than the gray jester loses the ability to laugh or feel joy if reduced to 0 charisma. Those of fewer or equal hit dice, however, become what the gray jesters call "bleak ones." They lose all self-will as well as the ability to feel positive emotions. Although not mindless, they undertake no actions unless the gray jester that drained them gives them orders. Bleak ones become followers and soldiers for the jester. They lose all abilities that rely on alignment, or those that require Charisma, but otherwise retain all their capabilities. A single gray jester can control up to 4 times its HD of bleak ones.

Possessions: +1 padded armor +1, ring of protection +1, +1 sudden stunning* merciful scepter, shawl of bewitching.

Physical Description: A gaunt figure clad in gray-hued jester's clothing with a dirty gray beard and an overlarge, reddish nose. The man's face is largely covered with white and gray coloring and he grips a scepter with a doll's head atop it in one hand.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Bleak One Children: male/female human commoner (child); CR 1/2 Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4 hp 4; Init +21; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -2; Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Full Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 6, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 0.

Skills and Feats: Climb+2, Handle Animal+0, Jump+2, Listen +0, Spot+0, Swim+1; Acrobatic, Athletic

Languages: Common

Possessions: dagger

Physical Description: These raggedly-dressed children move as if in an emotionless, dazed state. Though alive, they seem trapped in a zombie-like state.

ENCOUNTER 9: THE END OF THE ROAD

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight* blackguard 3/ex-paladin 6/ranger 1; CR 13; Medium undead; HD 10d12; hp 90; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 31, touch 13, flat-footed 30; Base Atk +10; Grp +15; Atk +18 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 cold, *heavy mace+2 of frost*); Full Atk +18/+13 melee (1d8+7 plus 1d6 cold, *heavy mace+2 of frost*) or +15 melee touch (1d8+3 + 1 point con, touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA abyssal blast, aura of despair, fear aura, smite good, sneak attack+1d6; SQ aura of evil, command undead, dark blessing, detect good, DR 15/magic, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, immune to cold and electricity, immune to paralysis, lay on hands, poison use, SR 20, turn immunity, undead traits, wild empathy+4; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +8; Str 21, Dex 12, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide+6, Intimidate+6, Knowledge (Local: VTF) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen+6, Move Silently-1, Ride+10, Search+4, Spot+6, Survival+6; Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Track^B, Weapon Focus (Heavy Mace)

Languages: Common

Spells prepared: (base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st— corrupt weapon, inflict light wounds, 2nd— inflict moderate wounds

Touch Attack: Sir Allerik's touch attack uses negative energy to deal 1d8+3 negative energy damage to living creatures. Each successful touch also deals 1 point of constitution damage. A DC 18 Will save reduces the damage by half and negates the constitution damage.

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, Sir Allerik can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 720 feet. The blast deals 10d6 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire damage, but the rest results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by *protection from elements (fire)* and similar magic. A DC 18 Reflex save reduces the damage by half.

Aura of Despair (Su): Sir Allerik radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to take a -2 penalty on all saving throws.

Aura of Evil (Ex): Sir Allerik has a strong aura of evil.

Command Undead (Su): Sir Allerik can rebuke undead 5 times a day as a 1st level cleric.

Dark Blessing (Su): Sir Allerik applies his Charisma modifier as a bonus on all saving throws.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, Sir Allerik can use *detect good* as a spell-like ability, duplicating the effect of the *detect good* spell.

Fear Aura (Su): Death knights are shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within a 15-foot radius of Sir Allerik must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a sorcerer of the death knight's level.

Freedom of Movement: Sir Allerik is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Lay on Hands (Sp): As a standard action Sir Allerik can heal himself. He can heal 9 points of damage per day.

Poison Use: Blackguards are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Smite Good (Su): Three times a day, Sir Allerik may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma modifier (+3) to his attack roll and deals 3 extra points of damage (1 point per blackguard level he possesses).

Summon Mount (Su): A death knight has the ability to summon a mount. The mount may have no more hit dice than half the death knight's levels. If the mount is lost or killed, the death knight may summon another after one year and a day. At this APL Sir Allerik can summon a skeletal heavy warhorse whose stats are listed below. *Note that, unlike the mount-summoning of a paladin, death knights summon a mount as a*

standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Turn Immunity (Ex): A death knight cannot be turned. It can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if it were an evil outsider.

Possessions: full plate+2, heavy steel shield+1, heavy mace+2 of frost, ring of protection+2

Physical Description: A decaying body covered in ornate plate mail stands before you. The undead warrior's face is a blackened skull covered with patches of rotting flesh, with two pinpoints of orange light in the eye sockets. The undead warrior's voice is chilling, seeming to echo from deep within.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Skeletal Heavy Warhorse: CR 2; Large undead; HD 3d12; hp 36; Init +6; Spd 50 ft.; AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base Atk +2; Grp +10; Atk +5 melee (1d6+4, hoof); Full Atk +5/+5 melee (1d6+4, 2 hooves) and +0 melee (1d4+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA none; SQ DR 5/bludgeoning, immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 15, Con -, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Improved Initiative

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion* barbarian 1/exotic weapon master 2/fighter 4/ranger 2; CR 10; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 9d12; hp 81; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +9; Grp +14; Atk +17 melee (1d8+13/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword); Full Atk +13/+13/+8 melee (1d8+8/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword) and +13/+8 melee (1d8+5/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword) or +14/+14 melee (1d4+5, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA fear aura, flurry of strikes; SQ change shape, darkvision 60 ft., deaf, double weapon defense, DR 10/good, fast healing 3, fast movement, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, undead traits, wild empathy+4; AL NE; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 18, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Craft(Weaponsmithing)+3, Hide+6, Intimidate+11, Jump+7, Knowledge(Nature)+6, Move Silently+7, Search+4, Spot+13, Survival+9, swim +5; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Two-Bladed Sword), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Reckless Rage, Skill Focus (Spot), Track^B, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (Two-Bladed Sword), Weapon Specialization (Two-Bladed Sword)

Languages: Common

Fear Aura (Su): Tainted minions are shrouded in a constant aura of terror and evil. Creatures within a 30-foot radius of Ishmi tainted minion must succeed

on a DC 15 Will save or become shaken. Shaken creatures take a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws.

Change Shape (Su): A tainted minion can assume the form of any humanoid creature. See page 306 of the *Monster Manual* for details.

Freedom of Movement: Caine is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Power-Up Suite (Prepared – raging): AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Grp +17; Atk +20 melee (1d8+16/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword); Full Atk +16/+16/+11 melee (1d8+12/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword) and +16/+11 melee (1d8+7/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword) or +17 melee (1d4+8, 2 claws); SV Will +4; Str 28

Possessions: +2 chain shirt, gauntlets of ogre power, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword

Physical Description: The undead warrior before you spins a two-bladed sword through the air in intricate patterns. In the shadows beneath his helm, specks of green light glow where his eyes should be.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

ENCOUNTER 4: INTO SHADOW

Herion's Sentinel: advanced vasuthant; CR 8; Huge undead; HD 18d12+36; hp 136; Init +4; Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect); AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +31; Atk +17 melee (2d6+10, slam); Full Atk +17 melee (2d6+10, slam) and up to 4 enervating crushes (1d8+10 and 1d4 str); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA enervating crush, improved grab, reality distortion; SQ +2 turn resistance, blindsight, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to acid and cold, immunity to light, resistance to fire 5 and electricity 5, trap light, undead traits, unholy toughness; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +12; Str 30, Dex 10, Con -, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Hide-1*, Listen +12, Spot +12; Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Grapple^B, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Enervating Crush (Su): A successful grapple attempt by a vasuthant against a living creature of the same size or smaller pulls the victim into the center of the vasuthant. In that round and every round thereafter, a grappled victim takes 2d6+10 points of damage plus 1d4 points of strength damage. A creature reduced to 0 strength by a vasuthant dies. This is a negative energy effect.

Every point of Strength damage dealt by a vasuthant heals the creature of 1 point of damage, or gives it 1 temporary hit point if the creature is at full normal hit points. These temporary hit points last for 10 minutes.

This vasuthant can grapple with one large creature or can simultaneously grapple one or two medium creatures or up to four small or smaller creatures. Creatures that become pinned are suspended inside the vasuthant while their life energy is crushed out of their bodies.

The use of its enervating crush ability does not prevent a vasuthant from making slam attacks or using its spell-like abilities.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a vasuthant must first hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, a vasuthant immediately employs its enervating crush attack.

Reality Distortion (Ex): A vasuthant has limited influences over the forces of time and reality. Three times per day (but only once per round), a vasuthant can take a free action to re-roll any unfavorable die roll or force its opponent to re-roll a favorable die roll. The vasuthant must accept the result of the re-roll.

Immunity to Light (Ex): Unlike many other undead creatures, a vasuthant is immune to any harmful effects of light, either natural or magical. All cleric spells of the Sun domain, as well as other spells with the light descriptor (such as daylight), produce no adverse effects on a vasuthant.

Trap Light (Ex): A vasuthant effectively absorbs nearby magical and non-magical light, creating a 60 foot emanation of shadow. All creatures within this area, including the vasuthant, gain concealment. Creatures with low-light vision or darkvision can see normally within the area of the emanation. Light sources within the area are suppressed, not dispelled. If a vasuthant moves out of range before the light source's duration expires, the light source illuminates again (though its illumination still cannot extend within the area of the vasuthant's trap light effect).

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A Vasuthant gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier x its hit dice.

Skills: Vasuthants have a +2 racial bonus to Listen checks and Spot checks. *A vasuthant gains a +4 racial bonus on hide checks in areas of shadowy illumination. In areas of bright illumination, it takes a -4 penalty on Hide checks.

Physical Description: A huge spherical cloud of impenetrable darkness floats towards you. As it draws near, black tendrils reach out from the cloud's opaque core.

ENCOUNTER 7: INNOCENCE LOST

Rathae'do'kundra: advanced spellwarped* faerie dragon*; CR 14; Large aberration (augmented dragon); HD 18d12+126; hp 256; Init +7; Spd fly 30 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 30 ft.; AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 22; Base Atk +18; Grp +34; Atk +30 melee (2d6+14, bite); Full Atk +30 melee (2d6+14, bite) and +28 melee (1d8+8, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA breath weapon; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., immune to paralysis and *sleep*, low light vision, SR 29, water breathing; AL CE; SV Fort +18, Ref +14, Will +15; Str 34, Dex 16, Con 24, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+20, Concentration+15, Diplomacy+18, Disguise+15 (+17 Acting), Hide+20, Intimidate+21, Knowledge (Nature)+12, Listen+23, Move Silently+19, Sense Motive+21, Slight of Hand+18, Spot+23, Survival+16 (+18 in aboveground natural environments), Swim+11; Ability Focus (Breath Weapon), Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (Invisibility)

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Sylvan, can converse with any animal

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 15)

3/day – *charm monster* (DC 19), *entangle* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 17), *invisibility* (DC 17), *major image* (DC 18), *obscuring mist*,

1/day – *animate objects*, *mind fog* (DC 20), *project image* (DC 22), *summon monster IV*,

1/month – *commune with nature*

Breath Weapon: 20-ft. cone, once every 1d4 rounds, DC 26 Will save or become dazed for 1d6 rounds.

Spell Absorption: Whenever a spell fails to penetrate Rathae'do'kundra's spell resistance, Rathae'do'kundra gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time that the spell effect is resolved.

Might: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to strength for 1 minute.

Agility: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: Rathae'do'kundra gains a +4 enhancement bonus to constitution for 1 minute.

Life: Rathae'do'kundra gains temporary hit points equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Speed: Rathae'do'kundra's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Resistance: Rathae'do'kundra gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or sonic) for 1 minute.

Possessions: *amulet of mighty fists* +2, *bracers of armor* +2, *ring of protection* +3.

Physical Description: A large dragon with butterfly-like wings and a long, prehensile tail that constantly flicks and twitches. The creature has a sharp-toothed grin and the gray and black scales of its body seem arranged in an odd, checkerboard-like pattern. The only thing colorful about this creature is the strange top hat it wears, with alternating white and red stripes.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

"Uncle Burris": grey jester*; CR 12; Medium fey bard 6/rogue 6; HD 24d6+72; hp 162; Init +11; Spd 50 ft.; AC 24, touch 22, flat-footed 15; Base Atk +14; Grp +13; Atk +24 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*) or +24 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*); Full Atk +24 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*) or +24 melee touch (*Tasha's hideous laughter*, +1 *sudden stunning merciful scepter*); Space/Reach 5

ft./5 ft.; SA empathic feeding, sneak attack+3d6, *Tasha's hideous laughter*; SQ bardic knowledge+8, bardic music 4/day (inspire competence, inspire courage+1, fascinate 2 creatures, countersong, *suggestion* [DC 19]), damage reduction 10/cold iron, low light vision, SR 34; AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +27, Will +17; Str 8, Dex 28, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 23.

Skills and Feats: Bluff+26 (+31 when concealing the truth), Concentration+17, Diplomacy+16, Escape Artist +23, Hide+19, Listen +24, Move Silently+13, Perform (Comedy) +22, Sense Motive+22, Spot+24, Tumble+26, Use Magic Device+18; Ability Focus (*Tasha's hideous laughter*), Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Greater Spell Focus (Enchantment), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Weapon Finesse

Languages: Common, Elven, Sylvan

Spells Known (3/4/3; base DC = 16 + spell level):
0— *dancing lights*, *daze*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *prestidigitation*, *summon instrument*; 1st— *charm person*, *lesser confusion*, *silent image*, *unseen servant*; 2nd— *blindness/deafness*, *glitterdust*, *mirror image*.

Empathic Feeding (Su): A Gray Jester can drain joyous emotions from humanoid beings. The jester must be within 30 feet of a living humanoid who is experiencing laughter, joy, or similar emotions (this includes emotions evoked by magic, such as *Tasha's hideous laughter*).

In a single round, a gray jester can feed on a number of people equal to its Charisma bonus. Any target that fails a DC 28 will save takes 1d4 points of charisma drain. Those drained to 0 Charisma may become bleak ones (see the new rules appendix). Gray jesters feed on emotions but are at their weakest just after feeding. For a number of rounds equal to the total points of Charisma drained, a gray jester's damage reduction falls to 5/cold iron and its spell resistance drops by 6.

Tasha's hideous laughter (Sp): At will, DC 20, caster level 5th. The gray jester must touch his subject, either by hand or with its scepter, to use this ability.

Bleak Ones: The results of a gray jester's feeding vary depending on the target. Anyone with more hit dice than the gray jester loses the ability to laugh or feel joy if reduced to 0 charisma. Those of fewer or equal hit dice, however, become what the gray jesters call "bleak ones." They lose all self-will as well as the ability to feel positive emotions. Although not mindless, they undertake no actions unless the gray jester that drained them gives them orders. Bleak ones become followers and soldiers for the jester. They lose all abilities that rely on alignment, or those that require Charisma, but otherwise retain all their capabilities. A

single gray jester can control up to 4 times its HD of bleak ones.

Possessions: cape of the mountebank, +1 padded armor, ring of protection +1, +1 sudden stunning* merciful scepter, shawl of bewitching*, soul anchor rod*.

Physical Description: A gaunt figure clad in gray-hued jester's clothing with a dirty gray beard and an overlarge, reddish nose. The man's face is largely covered with white and gray coloring and he grips a scepter with a doll's head atop it in one hand.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Bleak One Children: male/female human commoner (child); CR 1/21 Medium humanoid (human); HD 1d4 hp 4; Init +21; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base Atk +0; Grp -2; Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Full Atk -2 melee (1d4-2/19-20, dagger); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will -1; Str 6, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 0.

Skills and Feats: Climb+2, Handle Animal+0, Jump+2, Listen +0, Spot+0, Swim+1; Acrobatic, Athletic

Languages: Common

Possessions: dagger

Physical Description: These raggedly-dressed children move as if in an emotionless, dazed state. Though alive, they seem trapped in a zombie-like state.

ENCOUNTER 9: THE END OF THE ROAD

Sir Allerik of Snelland: death knight blackguard 10/ex-paladin 1/ranger 1; CR 15; Medium undead; HD 12d12; hp 108; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 33, touch 13, flat-footed 32; Base Atk +12; Grp +18; Atk +21 melee (1d8+8, *mace of terror*); Full Atk +21/+16 melee (1d8+8, *mace of terror*) or +18 melee touch (1d8+3 + 1 point con, touch); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA abyssal blast, aura of despair, fear aura, smite good, sneak attack+3d6; SQ aura of evil, command undead, dark blessing, detect good, DR 15/magic, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, immune to cold and electricity, immune to paralysis, poison use, SR 22, turn immunity, undead traits, wild empathy+4; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +7; Str 22, Dex 12, Con -, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Hide+6, Intimidate+6, Knowledge (Local: VTF) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +2, Listen+6, Move Silently-1, Ride+10, Search+4, Spot+6, Survival+6; Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Track^B, Trample, Weapon Focus (Heavy Mace)

Languages: Common

Spells Prepared (base DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*cause fear, corrupt weapon, inflict light wounds*; 2nd—*death knell, inflict moderate wounds, shatter*; 3rd—*contagion, inflict serious wounds*; 4th—*freedom of movement*.

Touch Attack: Sir Allerik's touch attack uses negative energy to deal 1d8+3 negative energy damage to living creatures. Each successful touch also deals 1 point of constitution damage. A DC 19 Will save reduces the damage by half and negates the constitution damage.

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, Sir Allerik can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 880 feet. The blast deals 12d6 points of damage. Half of the damage is fire damage, but the rest results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by *protection from elements (fire)* and similar magic. A DC 19 Reflex save reduces the damage by half.

Aura of Despair (Su): Sir Allerik radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet of him to take a -2 penalty on all saving throws.

Aura of Evil (Ex): Sir Allerik has a strong aura of evil.

Command Undead (Su): Sir Allerik can rebuke undead 5 times a day as a 8th level cleric.

Dark Blessing (Su): Sir Allerik applies his Charisma modifier as a bonus on all saving throws.

Detect Good (Sp): At will, Sir Allerik can use *detect good* as a spell-like ability, duplicating the effect of the *detect good* spell.

Fear Aura (Su): Death knights are shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within a 15-foot radius of Sir Allerik must succeed on a DC 19 Will save or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a sorcerer of the death knight's level.

Freedom of Movement: Sir Allerik is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Fiendish Servant: Upon reaching 5th level, a blackguard can call a fiendish bat, cat, dire rat, horse, pony or horse to serve him. Sir Allerik has chosen to not yet summon a fiendish servant.

Poison Use: Blackguards are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves when applying poison to a blade.

Smite Good (Su): Four times a day, Sir Allerik may attempt to smite good with one normal melee attack. He adds his Charisma modifier (+3) to his attack roll and deals 10 extra points of damage (1 point per blackguard level he possesses).

Summon Mount (Su): A death knight has the ability to summon a mount. The mount may have no more hit dice than half the death knight's levels. If the

mount is lost or killed, the death knight may summon another after one year and a day. At this APL Sir Allerik can summon a Nightmare. Stats for this creature are found in the Monster Manual. *Note that, unlike the mount-summoning of a paladin, death knights summon a mount as a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.*

Turn Immunity (Ex): A death knight cannot be turned. It can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if it were an evil outsider.

Possessions: full plate+3, heavy steel shield+2, mace of terror, ring of protection+2

Physical Description: A decaying body covered in ornate plate mail stands before you. The undead warrior's face is a blackened skull covered with patches of rotting flesh, with two pinpoints of orange light in the eye sockets. The undead warrior's voice is chilling, seeming to echo from deep within.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

Caine Brandwood: tainted minion* barbarian 2/exotic weapon master 2/fighter 4/ranger 3; CR 12; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 11d12; hp 99; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Base Atk +11; Grp +16; Atk +18 melee (1d8+11, two-bladed sword); Full Atk +14/+14/+9 melee (1d8+8, two-bladed sword) and +13/+8 melee (1d8+5 two-bladed sword) or +17/+17 melee (1d4+6, 2 claws); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA fear aura, flurry of strikes; SQ change shape, darkvision 60 ft., deaf, double weapon defense, DR 10/good, fast healing 3, fast movement, favored enemy: humanoid (orc) +2, *freedom of movement*, undead traits, wild empathy+4; AL NE; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 22, Dex 18, Con -, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Craft(Weaponsmithing)+3, Hide+7, Intimidate+11, Jump+7, Knowledge (Nature)+6, Move Silently+7, Search+4, Spot+18, Survival+14, swim +5; Endurance^B, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Two-Bladed Sword), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Reckless Rage, Skill Focus (Spot), Track^B, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting^B, Weapon Focus (Two-Bladed Sword), Weapon Specialization (Two-Bladed Sword)

Languages: Common

Fear Aura (Su): Tainted minions are shrouded in a constant aura of terror and evil. Creatures within a 30-foot radius of Ishmi tainted minion must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become shaken. Shaken creatures take a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws.

Change Shape (Su): A tainted minion can assume the form of any humanoid creature. See page 306 of the *Monster Manual* for details.

Freedom of Movement: Caine is currently under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell cast by Herion's simulacrum.

Power-Up Suite (Prepared – raging): AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Grp +19; Atk +22 melee (1d8+16/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword); Full Atk +18/+18/+13 melee (1d8+12/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword) and +18/+13 melee (1d8+6/17-20, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword) or +20/+20 melee (1d4+9, 2 claws); SV Will +7; Str 28

Possessions: +2 chain shirt of fire resistance, gauntlets of ogre power, +1 keen/+1 keen two-bladed sword

Physical Description: The undead warrior before you spins a two-bladed sword through the air in intricate patterns. In the shadows beneath his helm, specks of green light glow where his eyes should be.

* see Appendix 2: New Rules Items

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

Belt of Magnificence ***Miniatures Handbook***

This sparkling metal belt projects power and authority. The belt adds a +2, +4 or +6 enhancement bonus to the wearer's Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Strong Transmutation; *Caster level*: 18th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, bear's endurance, *bull's strength*, *cat's grace*, *eagle's splendor*, *fox's cunning*, *owl's wisdom*; *Market Price*: 25,000 gp (+2), 100,000 gp (+4), 200,000 (+6)

Shawl of Bewitching ***Complete Adventurer***

A character wearing this simple-looking shawl gains a +5 competence bonus on Bluff checks made to conceal the truth (but not on any other use of the Bluff skill, including feinting in combat, creating a diversion to hide, or delivering a secret message). It also adds 1 to the wearer's caster level when he casts any enchantment (charm) spell.

A shawl occupies the same space on the body as a cloak, cape, or mantle.

Feint enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *charm person*; Price 3,500 gp.

Soul Anchor ***Dungeon Master's Guide II***

This strange and powerful rod magically roots creatures in place so that the wielder and his allies can finish them off while remaining safe from danger.

Description: Thin iron bands entwine around jagged fragments of jet-black obsidian to form the haft of this cruel-looking rod.

Activation: A *soul anchor* requires a standard action to activate.

Effect: When the rod is activated, each creature adjacent to the wielder must succeed on a DC 18 Will saving throw or be unable to move from its current location. Creatures that are flying or sinking when the spell takes effect are magically held in place, neither falling nor sinking further until the rod's effect ends. Affected creatures are neither paralyzed nor entangled, but they are magically prevented from moving out of their respective 5-foot-by-5-foot spaces. They otherwise fight and cast spells normally. Each affected creature can spend a standard action every round to attempt a new saving throw at the same DC. Success renders the creature mobile again.

The immobility imposed by this spell prevents all voluntary movement that would allow a creature to leave its square (including teleportation magic as well as spells and items that allow movement), but it does not preclude involuntary movement, such as that resulting from a bull rush. If an affected creature is involuntarily moved out of its current space for any reason, the effect ends immediately. The rod is usable three times per day.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate enchantment; CL 9th.

Construction: Craft Rod, *hold monster*.

Weight: 3 lb.

Price: 10,000 gp.

Sudden Stunning weapon special ability ***Dungeon Master's Guide II***

Weapons with the sudden stunning ability can, to put is simply, knock their targets into next week.

Description: A sudden stunning weapon is usually broad and heavy compared to other weapons of its kind. It displays a rough but solid craftsmanship that speaks of its straightforward functionality.

Activation: Activating a weapon with this ability is a swift action that must occur immediately after the wielder makes a successful melee attack.

Effect: On a successful melee attack, the wielder causes the weapon to emit a surge of magical energy. Unless the target succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 10 + half wielder's level + wielder's Cha modifier), it is stunned for 1d4+1 rounds. This ability is usable a number of times per day equal to the wielder's Charisma bonus.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate enchantment; CL 9th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *hold monster*.

Price: +2,000 gp.

Extraordinary Concentration ***Complete Adventurer***

Your mind is so focused that you can cast spells even while concentrating on another spell.

Prerequisites: Concentration 15 ranks.

Benefit: When concentrating to maintain a spell, you can make a Concentration check (DC 25 + spell level) to maintain concentration with just a move action. If you beat the DC by 10 or more, you can maintain concentration on the spell as a swift action. Using this ability is a free action, but if you fail the Concentration check, you lose concentration on the

maintained spell and its effect ends. This feat does not give you the ability to maintain concentration on more than one spell at a time.

Normal: Concentrating on a spell is a standard action.

Fell Drain [Metamagic]

Libris Mortis

Living foes damaged by your spell also gain a negative level

Benefit: You can alter a spell that deals damage to foes so that any living creature that is dealt damage also gains a negative level. If the subject has at least as many negative levels as Hit Dice, it dies. Assuming the subject survives, the negative level disappears (without requiring Fortitude save) after a number of hours equal to your caster level (maximum 15). A fell draining spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

Holy Radiance

Book of Exalted Deeds

You can increase the intensity of the light surrounding you to damage undead creatures.

Prerequisites: Cha 15, Nimbus of Light.

Benefit: At will, as a free action, you can empower the radiance surrounding you into a blazing glow that sheds bright light in a 10-foot radius (and shadowy illumination out to 20 feet). Undead within 10 feet of you take 1d4 points of damage per round they remain within your halo.

Improved Turn Resistance

Libris Mortis

You have a better than normal chance to resist turning.

Prerequisite: Undead type.

Benefit: You are less easily affected by clerics or paladins than you normally would be (see Turn or Rebuke Undead, page 159 of the *Player's Handbook*). When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +4 to your character level (monster Hit Dice plus class levels) to determine your Hit Dice for turn, rebuke, command, and bolster attempts. For example, a 4 HD wight with this feat is treated as an 8 HD undead for the purpose of turn, rebuke, command, and bolster attempts, even though it is a 4 HD creature for any other purpose. A vampire that already has a +4 turn resistance adds an additional +4 with this feat, for a total of +8.

Nimbus of Light

Book of Exalted Deeds

You are cloaked in a radiant light that marks you as a servant of the purest ideals. All who look upon you

know without a doubt that you are a champion of good and are favored by the powers of the Upper Planes. The nimbus may take the form of a cloud surrounding your entire body, or it may appear as beams of light around your head.

Benefit: Good creatures automatically recognize the radiance surrounding you as a sign of your purity and devotion to the powers of good. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy and Sense Motive checks made when interacting with good creatures.

Your radiance sheds light as a common lamp: bright light out to a radius of 5 feet and shadow illumination to 10 feet. You can extinguish this radiance at will and reactivate it again as a free action.

Reckless Rage

Races of Stone

You are considered extreme even among other barbaric warriors, and you enter a deeper state of rage than others.

Prerequisites: Con 13, rage ability.

Benefit: Whenever you activate your rage ability, you take an additional -2 penalty to your Armor Class, but you gain an additional +2 bonus to Strength and Constitution. These bonuses and penalties stack with the effects of rage, greater rage, and mighty rage.

Sacred Vow

Book of Exalted Deeds

You have willingly given yourself to the service of a good deity or cause, denying yourself an ordinary life to better serve your highest ideals.

Benefit: You gain a +2 perfection bonus on diplomacy checks.

Special: This feat serves as the prerequisite for several other feats, including the Vow of Abstinence, Vow of Chastity, Vow of Nonviolence, Vow of Obedience, Vow of Peace, Vow of Poverty, and Vow of Purity.

Sudden Silent [Metamagic]

Complete Arcane

You can cast a spell silently without special preparation

Benefit: Once per day, you can apply the effect of the Silent Spell feat to any spell you cast without increasing the level of the spell or specifically preparing it ahead of time. You can still use Silent Spell normally if you have it.

True Believer

Complete Divine

Your deity rewards your unquestioning faith and dedication

Prerequisite: Must choose a single deity to worship. Must be within one step of that's god's alignment.

Benefit: Once per day when you are about to make a saving throw you may declare that you are using this feat to gain a +2 insight bonus on that saving throw.

This feat also allows you to use a relic of the deity you worship.

Vow of Poverty

Book of Exalted Deeds

You have taken a sacred vow to forswear material possessions.

Benefit: You gain bonuses to your Armor Class, ability scores, and saving throws, as well as bonus exalted feats, all depending on your character level. See "voluntary poverty" rules included below.

Special: To fulfill your vow, you must not own or use any material possessions, with the following exceptions: you may carry and use ordinary (neither magic nor masterwork) simple weapons, usually just a quarterstaff that serves as a walking stick. You may wear simple clothes (usually just a homespun robe, possibly also including a hat and sandals) with no magical properties. You may carry enough food to sustain you for one day in a simple (nonmagic) sack or bag. You may carry and use a spell component pouch. You may not use any magic item of any sort, though you can benefit from magic items used on your behalf – you can drink a potion of *cure serious wounds* a friend gives you, receive a spell cast from a wand, scroll, or staff, or ride on your companion's *ebony fly*. You may not, however, "borrow" a *cloak of resistance* or any other magic item from a companion for even a single round, nor may you yourself cast a spell from a scroll, wand, or staff.

If you break your vow, you immediately and irrevocably lose the benefit of this feat. You may not take another feat to replace it.

Voluntary Poverty

Book of Exalted Deeds

In many cultures and belief systems, the height of purity is embodied in ascetic lifestyle that involves forswearing all material possessions. Such a life is hard for most D&D characters even to imagine, since their possessions-particularly their magic items-are such an important part of their capabilities. A character who swears a vow of poverty and takes the appropriate feats, Sacred Vow and Vow of Poverty, cannot own magic items, but he gains certain spiritual benefits that can

help outweigh the lack of those items. These benefits depend on his character level. The level at which the character swears the vow (and takes the appropriate feats) is irrelevant; if he gives up his possessions at 10th level he gains all the benefits of a 10th-level ascetic character, with the exception of bonus exalted feats.

Voluntary Poverty

Level	Benefit
1 st	AC bonus +4
2 nd	Bonus exalted feat
3 rd	AC bonus +5, endure elements
4 th	Exalted strike+1 (magic), bonus exalted feat
5 th	Sustenance
6 th	AC bonus +6, deflection+1, bonus exalted feat
7 th	Resistance+1, ability score enhancement+2
8 th	Natural armor+1, mind shielding, bonus exalted feat
9 th	AC bonus +7
10 th	Exalted strike+2 (good), damage reduction 5/magic, bonus exalted feat
11 th	Ability score enhancement +4/+2
12 th	AC bonus +8, deflection+2, greater sustenance, bonus exalted feat
13 th	Resistance+2, energy resistance 5
14 th	Exalted strike+3, freedom of movement, bonus exalted feat
15 th	AC bonus +9, ability score enhancement +6/+4/+2, damage reduction 5/evil
16 th	Natural armor+2, bonus exalted feat
17 th	Exalted feat+4, resistance+3, regeneration
18 th	AC bonus +10, deflection+3, true seeing, bonus exalted feat
19 th	Ability score enhancement +8/+6/+4/+2, damage reduction 10/evil
20 th	Exalted strike+5, energy resistance 15, bonus exalted feat

AC Bonus (Su): A 1st-level ascetic receives a +4 exalted bonus to his armor class. This bonus increases to +5 at 3rd level, and thereafter increases by +1 for each character levels. This bonus does not apply to touch attacks and does not hinder incorporeal touch attacks. Brilliant energy weapons, however, do not ignore this bonus. This does not stack with an armor bonus.

Bonus Exalted Feats: At 1st level, an ascetic gets a bonus exalted feat, and another bonus feat at 2nd level and every 2 levels thereafter. Unlike the other benefits of a vow of poverty, a character does not gain these

bonus feats retroactively when he takes the Vow of Poverty feat; he only gains those bonus feats that apply for the levels he gains after swearing his vow. Thus, the bonus feat gained at 1st level is available only to humans who take both Sacred Vow and Vow of Poverty at 1st level.

Endure Elements (Ex): A 3rd-level ascetic is immune to the effects of being in a hot or cold environment. He can exist comfortably in conditions between -50 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit without having to make Fortitude saves.

Exalted Strike (Su): At 4th level, an ascetic gains a +1 enhancement bonus to all his attack and damage rolls. In effect, any weapon the character wields becomes a +1 magic weapon, and can overcome damage reduction as if it were a magic weapon. This enhancement bonus rises to +2 at 10th level, to +3 at 14th level, to +4 at 17th level, and to +5 at 20th level. At 10th level, any weapon damage the character deals is also considered to be good-aligned, so that it can bypass the damage reduction of some evil outsiders.

Sustenance (Ex): A 5th-level ascetic does not need to eat or drink.

Deflection (Su): A 6th level ascetic receives a +1 deflection bonus to his Armor Class. This bonus increases to +2 at 12th level, and to +3 at 18th level.

Resistance (Ex): At 7th level, an ascetic gains a +1 resistance bonus on all saving throws. This bonus increases to +2 at 13th level, and to +3 at 17th level.

Ability Score Enhancement (Ex): At 7th level, an ascetic gains a +2 enhancement bonus to one ability score. At 11th level, he gains an extra +2 bonus to that score, and a +2 bonus to another ability score. At 15th level, he gains an extra +2 bonus to those two scores, and a +2 bonus to a third ability score. At 19th level, he gains an extra +2 bonus to those three scores, and a +2 bonus to a fourth ability score.

Natural Armor (Ex): At 8th level, an ascetic gains a +1 natural armor bonus, or his existing natural armor bonus increases by +1. It increases an extra +1 at 16th level.

Mind Shielding (Ex): Also at 8th level, an ascetic character becomes immune to *detect thoughts*, *discern lies*, and any attempt to discern his alignment.

Damage Reduction (Su): An ascetic gains damage reduction 5/magic at 10th level. At 15th level, this improves to 5/evil, and at 19th level to 10/evil.

Greater Sustenance (Ex): Once he attains 12th-level, an ascetic character doesn't need to breathe.

Energy Resistance (Ex): At 13th level, an ascetic gains resistance 5 to acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic energy. At 20th level, this increases to resistance 15.

Freedom of Movement (Ex): At 14th level, an ascetic can act as if continually under the effect of a *freedom of movement* spell.

Regeneration (Ex): At 17th level, an ascetic heals 1 point of damage per level every hour rather than every day. (This ability cannot be aided by the Heal skill.) Nonlethal damage heals at a rate of 1 point of damage per level every 5 minutes.

True Seeing (Su): At 18th level, an ascetic gains a continuous true seeing ability, as the spell.

Conviction *Miniature's Handbook*

Abjuration
Level: Clr 1
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature Touched
Duration: 1 min/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The Spell bolsters the mental, physical and spiritual strength of the creature touched. The spell grants the subject a +2 morale bonus on all saving throws, with an additional +1 to the bonus for every six caster levels you have (maximum +5 morale bonus at 18th level).

Material Component: A small parchment with a bit of holy text written upon it.

Death Throes
Planar Handbook
Necromancy [Force]
Level: Clr 5, Sor/Wiz 5
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Target: You

Duration: 1 hour/level or until you are killed
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Some extraplanar creatures, such as a balor or energon, expend the last of their life energy in a burst of power. You likewise attune your body's life force so that if you are killed, your body is instantaneously destroyed in an explosion of energy that deals 1d8 points of force damage per caster level to everyone in a 30-ft radius burst.

This explosion entirely destroys your body, preventing any form of raising or resurrection that requires part of the corpse. A *wish*, *miracle*, or *true resurrection* spell can restore life.

Deific Vengeance *Complete Divine*

Abjuration
Level: Clr 2, Purification 2
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25ft + 5ft/2levels)
Target: One creature
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will half
Spell Resistance: Yes

When you cast this spell, you call out to a deity, listing the crimes of your target and urging the deity to punish the miscreant. (The target's alignment is irrelevant to the success of the spell.) The divine power of the angry deity imposes this punishment in the form of a sharp, spiritual blow to the target. This attack hits automatically and deals 1d6 points of damage per two caster levels (maximum 5d6), or 1d6 points per caster level (maximum 10d6) if the target is undead. A successful Will saving throw reduces the damage by half.

Energy Vortex *Complete Divine*

Evocation [Acid, Cold, Fire, Electricity, or Sonic]
Level: Clr 4, Druid 4
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 20 ft
Area: All creatures within a 20ft radius burst centered on you
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: Yes

When you cast *energy vortex*, you choose one of the five energy types: acid, cold, fire, electricity, or sonic. A blast of that energy type bursts in all directions from you, dealing 1d8 points of damage +1 point per caster level (maximum +20) to nearby creatures other than you. If you are willing to take the damage yourself, you deal twice as much damage. You don't get a Reflex save, but spell resistance applies, as do any resistances and immunities you have to the energy type.

Protection from Positive Energy *Libris Mortis*

Abjuration
Level: Clr 3
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Undead creature touched
Duration: 10 min/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The warded creature gains partial protection against positive energy effects. Subtract 10 from the hit point damage dealt by any positive energy effect (such as cure spells) that affects the warded creature.

Positive energy effects that wouldn't deal hit point damage to the target (such as turning attempts) affect the target normally.

Resurgence *Complete Divine*

Abjuration
Level: Blackguard 1, Clr 1, pal 1
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

By laying hands on a creature and saying a brief prayer, you can convince a higher power to grant a second chance to one of your allies. The target of *resurgence* can make a second attempt to save against an ongoing spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability, such as *dominate person*, a chaos beast's corporeal instability, or the sickening effect (but not the damage) from

unholy blight. If the target of *resurgence* is subject to more than one ongoing magic effect, the target chooses one of them to retry the save against. If the subject succeeds at the saving throw on the second attempt, the effect ends immediately. *Resurgence* never restores hit points or ability score damage, but it does eliminate any conditions such as shaken, fatigued, or nauseated that were caused by the spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability.

If a spell, spell-like ability, or supernatural ability doesn't allow a save (such as *power word stun*), then *resurgence* won't help the subject recover.

Contemplative *Complete Divine*

Hit Dice: d6

Requirements: To qualify to become a contemplative, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 13 ranks.

Spells: Able to cast 1st-level divine spells.

Special: Must have had direct contact with one's patron deity, or with an enlightened being embodying the highest principles on an alignment (a solar, for example).

Class Skills:

The contemplative's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int). Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features:

All of the following are class features of the exotic weapon master prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Contemplatives gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Lvl	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per Day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Bonus domain, divine health	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Slipper mind	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
3 rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Divine wholeness	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
4 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	-	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
5 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Divine body	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
6 th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Bonus domain	+1 level of existing divine

						spellcasting class
7 th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Divine Soul	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
8 th	+4	+2	+2	+6	-	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
9 th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Eternal body	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class
10 th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Mystic union	+1 level of existing divine spellcasting class

Spells per Day/Spells Known: A contemplative who was previously a spellcaster continues to gain access to more powerful divine magic while following the contemplative path. Thus, when a new contemplative level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in the spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, more frequent remove disease, and so on). This essentially means that she adds the level of contemplative to the level of whatever other spellcasting class the character has, and then determines spells per day accordingly.

If a character had more than one divine spellcasting class before she became a contemplative, the player must decide which class to assign each level of contemplative for the purpose of determining divine spells per day and spells known.

If the contemplative did not previously belong to a divine spellcasting class, she gains the ability to cast divine spells exactly as a cleric of her patron deity. Her spell progression is the same as that of a cleric.

Bonus Domain: Upon adopting the contemplative class, and again at 6th level, a character gains access to a bonus domain of her choice. The character can choose any domain made available by her deity or her alignment. The character gains the granted power associated with the domain she chooses, and can select the spells in that domain as her daily domain spells.

Divine Health (Ex): A contemplative has immunity to all diseases, including magical diseases such as mummy rot and lycanthropy.

Slippery Mind (Ex): At 2nd level, a contemplative gains the ability to shrug off magical effects that would otherwise control or compel her. If a contemplative with slippery mind is affected by an enchantment and fails her saving throw, one round later she can attempt

her saving throw again. She only gets this one extra chance to succeed on her saving throw.

Divine Wholeness (Su): At 3rd level and higher, a contemplative can heal her own wounds, in addition to any other healing ability she may have. She can heal up to four times her contemplative level in hit points each day, and she can spread this healing out among several uses.

Divine Body (Su): At 5th level, a contemplative becomes immune to poisons of all kinds.

Divine Soul (Su): At 7th level, a contemplative gains spell resistance. Her spell resistance equals her class level + 15. In order to affect the contemplative with a spell, a spellcaster must roll the contemplative's spell resistance or higher on 1d20 + the spellcaster's level.

Eternal Body (Ex): After achieving 9th level, a contemplative no longer suffers ability penalties for aging and cannot be magically aged. (Penalties she has already suffered remain in place). Bonuses still accrue, and the contemplative still dies of old age when her time is up.

Mystic Union (Su): At 10th level, a contemplative becomes a magical creature. She is forevermore treated as an outsider (native) rather than a humanoid for the purpose of spells and magical effects. Additionally, the contemplative gains damage reduction 10/magic.

Divine Oracle *Complete Divine*

Hit Die: d6

Requirements: To qualify to become a divine oracle, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 8 ranks.

Feat: Skill focus (Knowledge [religion])

Spells: Able to cast at least 2 divination spells.

Class Skills

The divine oracle's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft, (Int), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Profession (Wis), and Spellcraft (Int). Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

The Divine Oracle

Level	BAB	For	Ref	Will	Special	Spells per day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Oracle domain, scry bonus	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Prescient sense, trap sense +1	+1 level of existing class

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the divine oracle prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mindbenders gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: A divine oracle who was previously a spellcaster continues to gain access to more powerful divine magic while following the divine oracle path. Thus, when a new divine oracle level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in the spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, more frequent remove disease, and so on). This essentially means that she adds the level of divine oracle to the level of whatever other spellcasting class the character has, and then determines spells per day accordingly. For example, if Theresa, an 11th level cleric, gains a level as a divine oracle, she gains new spells as if she had risen to 12th level as a cleric, but uses the other divine oracle aspects of level progression such as base attack bonus and save bonus. If she next gains a level as a cleric, making her a 12th level cleric/1st level divine oracle, she gains spells as if she had risen to 13th level as a cleric.

Exotic Weapon Master *Complete Warrior*

Hit Dice: d10

Requirements: To become an exotic weapon master, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +6

Skills: Craft (Weaponsmithing) 3 ranks.

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (any exotic weapon), Weapon Focus (any exotic weapon).

Special: Races that have familiarity with an exotic weapon (such as the dwarf's familiarity with the dwarven urgrosh) are considered to have the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat for the purpose of meeting the requirements for this class.

Class Skills:

The exotic weapon master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), and Profession (Wis). Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features:

All of the following are class features of the exotic weapon master prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Exotic weapon masters gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Lvl	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
1 st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Exotic weapon stunt
2 nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Exotic weapon stunt
3 rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Exotic weapon stunt

Exotic Weapon Stunt (Ex): At each level, an exotic weapon master learns a special trick that he can use with any exotic weapon for which he has the Weapon Focus feat. He must select the trick learned when he gains the level, and once selected, the choice cannot be later changed. He can't select the same stunt more than once.

Close-Quarters Ranged Combat: A character who knows this stunt doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity when using an exotic ranged weapon.

Double Weapon Defense: When wielding an exotic double weapon with both hands, the character gains a +1 shield bonus to AC.

Exotic Reach: When wielding an exotic weapon with reach, the character may make an attack of opportunity against a foe that provokes such an attack even if the foe has cover (but not total cover).

Exotic Sunder: When wielding a one-handed or two-handed exotic weapon, the character deals an extra 1d6 points of damage on any successful sunder attempt.

Flurry of Strikes: When wielding an exotic double weapon or a spiked chain with both hands, the character can elect to use a full attack action to make a flurry of strikes. When doing so, he may make one extra attack in the round at his full base attack bonus, but this attack takes a -2 penalty, as does each other each other attack made in that round and until the exotic weapon master's next turn. The extra attack may be either end of the double weapon.

Ranged Disarm: The character can make a disarm attempt even on a ranged attack. Such an attack provokes no attack of opportunity (except as normal for using a ranged weapon). For the purpose of this disarm attempt, treat the character's ranged weapon as a light weapon. If the character fails this disarm attempt, the defender can't attempt to disarm him.

Show Off: As a standard action, the character can display his mastery with an exotic weapon and confound his opponent. The character may make an Intimidate check against a single opponent within 30 feet that can see him, adding his base attack bonus to the result. If the result exceeds the opponent's modified level check (see the skill description on page 76 of the *Players Handbook*), the opponent becomes shaken (-2 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws) for one round per class level of the exotic weapon master.

Stunning Blow: If the character has the Stunning Fist feat, he can utilize the feat while wielding an exotic melee weapon.

Throw Exotic Weapon: The character can throw an exotic weapon with no penalty on the attack roll, even if it isn't designed to be thrown (such as an orc double axe or a spiked chain). When he throws a double weapon, only one end of the weapon (character's choice) can strike the target. Exotic weapons thrown in this way have a range increment of 10 feet.

Twin Exotic Weapon Fighting: When wielding the same light exotic weapon in each hand, the character is treated as having the Two-Weapon Fighting feat. If he already has the feat, the penalties on attack rolls are lessened to -1 for both the primary hand and the off hand when fighting in this manner.

Trip Attack: The character can use a one-handed or two-handed exotic weapon to make a trip attack. If he is tripped during his own trip attempt, he can drop the weapon to avoid being tripped. If the exotic weapon already allows its wielder to make trip attacks, the character instead adds a +2 bonus on any trip attempt.

Uncanny Blow: When wielding a one-handed exotic melee weapon in two hands, the character can focus the power of his attack so that he deals extra damage equal to his Strength bonus x2 instead of his Strength bonus x1.5. If he has the Power Attack feat, he treats the weapon as two-handed for purposes of determining his bonus on damage rolls.

Risen Martyr

Book of Exalted Deeds

Hit Dice: d12

Requirements: To qualify to become a risen martyr, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any good.

Base Save Bonuses: Fort +2, Will +2, Ref +2

Skills: Any one skill 9 ranks, Speak Language (Celestial).

Feats: Nimbus of Light, any one other exalted feat.

Special: The character must have suffered martyrdom and must not have been returned to life. As a special feature of this prestige class, the character rises with the abilities of a 0-level risen martyr added to the character's previous abilities. When the character earns enough experience points to advance another level, he must become a 1st-level risen martyr.

Class Skills:

The risen martyr's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis). Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features:

All of the following are class features of the risen martyr prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Risen martyrs gain no proficiency with any weapon or armor.

Lvl	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Special
0	+0	+0	+0	+2	Spiritual body
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Charisma score increase, deflection, holy purpose+1
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>Bless</i> , magic circle against evil
3 rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	<i>Daylight</i> , holy purpose+2
4 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Acid immunity, <i>detect evil</i>
5 th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Charisma score increase, protective aura
6 th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Holy purpose+3, <i>shield other</i>
7 th	+3	+2	+2	+5	<i>Celestial brilliance</i> , cold immunity
8 th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Holy aura
9 th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Electricity immunity, holy purpose+4
10 th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Perfection, final ascension

Spiritual Body (Ex): When a martyr rises as a 0-level risen martyr, he takes on a corporeal spirit form. His creature type changes to deathless, and he gains the features and traits of the deathless type. Deathless creatures have no Constitution score, and the risen martyr rerolls his hit points using d12s instead of his previous racial and class based hit dice.

A risen martyr's spiritual body is formed of solid, spiritual flesh and is neither ghostly nor incorporeal. His ability scores remain unchanged (except for his Constitution score), and all other characteristics remain the same except that he is no longer a living creature.

Charisma Score Increase: At 1st level, a risen martyr's Charisma score increases by +2. At 5th level, it increases by an additional +2.

Deflection Bonus (Su): A 1st-level risen martyr gains a deflection bonus to Armor Class equal to his charisma bonus.

Holy Purpose (Ex): A 1st-level risen martyr receives a +1 sacred bonus on all attack rolls, damage rolls, ability checks, and skill checks that are directly related to the fulfillment of his purpose. This bonus increases to +2 at 3rd level, and increases by an extra +1 every 3 levels thereafter.

Bless (Sp): Three times per day, a risen martyr of at least 2nd level can use *bless*, as the spell.

Magic Circle Against Evil (Su): At 2nd level, a risen martyr is continually surrounded by a protective aura that functions as a *magic circle against evil* spell.

Daylight (Su): At will, as a free action, a 3rd level risen martyr can use *daylight*, as the spell.

Acid Immunity (Ex): At 4th level, a risen martyr gains immunity to acid.

Detect Evil (Sp): At will, a risen martyr of at least 4th level can *detect evil* as the spell.

Protective Aura (Su): At 5th level, the risen martyr's *magic circle against evil* is replaced by an effect that duplicates the *protective aura* spell.

Shield Other (Sp): A 6th level risen martyr can use *shield other*, as the spell, three times per day.

Celestial Brilliance (Sp): A 7th level risen martyr can use *celestial brilliance*, as the spell, once per day.

Cold Immunity (Ex): At 7th level, a risen martyr gains immunity to cold.

Holy Aura (Su): At 8th level, the risen martyr's protective aura is supplemented by an effect that duplicates the *holy aura* spell. The holy aura protects only the risen martyr, while his protective aura continues to protect allies within 10 feet of him.

Electricity Immunity (Ex): At 9th level, a risen martyr gains immunity to electricity.

Perfection (Su): A 10th-level risen martyr is as close to celestial perfection as a mortal creature can be. He is considered a celestial for the purpose of any spell or effect that has special effects on celestials. If he is lawful, he is also considered an archon. If he is chaotic, he is also considered an eladrin. If he is neutral, he is also considered a guardinal. If he is a spellcaster, he can cast spells that have the Celestial, Archon, Gaurdinal, or Eladrin components, as appropriate.

Final Ascension: When a 10th-level risen martyr has earned enough experience points to gain his next level,

his perfected, spiritual body is taken whole into the upper planes.

Code of Conduct: A risen martyr who willfully performs an evil act is immediately destroyed and goes to face his judgment on the Upper Planes.

Death Knight Template

Monster Manual II

Gods of death create death knights. They are martial champions of evil. These horrible undead are most commonly raised from the ranks of blackguards, fighters, rangers, and barbarians; but a paladin who falls from grace near the moment of death may also become a death knight. Paladins who become death knights are subject to the same modifications as are presented for the blackguard in chapter 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

A death knight's physical form is that of a decayed body. The face is a blackened skull covered with patches of rotting flesh, with two pinpoints of orange light in the eye sockets. The voice of a death knight is chilling, seeming to echo from deep within. Death knights were powerful people in life, and so they often wear expensive or magic clothing and armor. They are quite fond of wearing flowing capes to mark them as figures of importance.

Death knights speak the languages they knew in life.

Creating a Death Knight:

"Death knight" is a template that can be added to any evil humanoid creature of 6th level or higher (hereafter referred to as the character). It uses all the character's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The character's type changes to undead.

Hit Dice: All the characters hit dice (current and future) become d12s.

Speed: Same as the character.

Armor Class: The death knight has +5 natural armor, or the character's natural armor, whichever is better.

Attacks: Death knights usually fight with martial weapons, but if disarmed they will use a touch attack.

Touch Attack: The death knight's touch attack uses negative energy to deal damage equal to 1d8 + the death knight's Charisma bonus to living creatures. Each successful touch attack also deals 1 point of Constitution damage. A Will save (DC 10 + ½ death knight's HD + death knight's Charisma modifier) reduces the damage by half and negates the

Constitution damage. Characters with natural attacks can use their natural weaponry, or use the touch attack, as they prefer.

Special Attacks: A death knight retains all the character's special attacks and gains those described below.

Abyssal Blast (Su): Once per day, a death knight can unleash a blast of eldritch fire. The blast fills a 20-foot-radius spread anywhere within a range of 400 feet + 40 feet per HD of the death knight. The blast deals 1d6 points of damage per HD of the death knight (maximum 20d6). Half of the damage is fire damage, but the rest results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by *protection from elements (fire)* and similar magic. A Reflex save (DC 10 + ½ death knight's HD + death knight's Charisma modifier) reduces the damage by half.

Fear Aura (Su): Death knights are shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD within a 15-foot radius of Sir Allerik must succeed on a DC Will save (DC 10 + ½ death knight's HD + death knight's Charisma modifier) or be affected as though by a *fear* spell cast by a sorcerer of the death knight's level.

Undead Followers: A death knight attracts lesser undead that happen to exist within a 200-mile radius. It may have up to twice its levels in Hit Dice of followers. The followers arrive monthly in the following increments: 1d6 ghouls, 1d4 ghosts, 1d12 medium skeletons, 1d4 wights, or 1d8 medium zombies once per week. The creatures remain in the service of the death knight until destroyed. The creatures are in addition to any undead creatures the death knight might be able to command or rebuke as a class ability.

Spells: A death knight can cast any spells it could while alive, unless alignment restrictions prohibit the casting of a particular spell.

Special Qualities: A death knight retains all the character's special qualities and gains those described below.

Damage Reduction (Su): A death knight's undead body is tough, giving the creature damage reduction of 15/magic.

Immunities (Ex): Death knights are immune to cold, electricity, and polymorph in addition to those immunities possessed by undead (see undead traits, below).

Spell Resistance (Su): A death knight gains spell resistance 20 + 1 per character's level beyond 10th.

Summon Mount (Su): A death knight has the ability to summon a mount, typically a nightmare, though it may be of any other species normally used as a mount. The mount may have no more hit dice than half the death knight's levels. If the mount is lost or

killed, the death knight may summon another after one year and a day.

Turn Immunity (Ex): A death knight cannot be turned. It can be banished with *holy word*, however, just as if it were an evil outsider.

Undead Traits: A death knight is immune to mind-affecting spells and effects, poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or death from massive damage. A death knight cannot be raised, and resurrection only works if it is willing. The creature has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Saves: Same as character.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Wis +2, Cha +2. Being undead, it has no Constitution score.

Challenge Rating: Same as character +3.

Alignment: Same as character (always evil).

Level Adjustment: +5

Faerie Dragons

Draconomicon

The faerie dragon is a mischievous creature that often allies with fey creatures such as pixies.

A faerie dragon's scales are iridescent, reflecting all the colors of the rainbow. Its butterfly like wings are a beautiful platinum. It bears a sharp-toothed grin at all times except when attacked in anger. It has a long, prehensile tail that constantly flicks and twitches, particularly when the creature is happy or excited.

Faerie dragons generally keep their distance from intruders into their forest homes, preferring to lead such creatures away rather than confront them directly. It is not uncommon to encounter them near the tree of a dryad, the lake of a nymph, or the lair of a tribe of sprites, since such creatures get along well with one another.

Faerie dragons speak Draconic and Sylvan. They can converse with any animal. Some also learn Common, Elven, or Gnome.

Small Dragon

Hit Dice: 8d12+6 (59 hp)

Initiative: +8

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 100 feet (perfect), swim 30 feet.

Armor Class: 19 (+1 size, +4 dex, +4 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 15

Base Attack/Grapple: +8/+5

Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d6+1)

Full Attack: Bite +13 melee (1d6+1) and 2 claws +8 melee (1d4)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Breath weapon, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., immunity to magic sleep and paralysis, low-light vision, scent, spell resistance 18, water breathing.

Saves: Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +9

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 16

Skills: Bluff+14, Diplomacy+7, Disguise+3 (+5 if acting), Hide+19, Intimidate+5, Knowledge (nature)+13, Listen +14, Move Silently+15, Sense Motive+14, Slight of Hand+17, Spot+14, Survival+3 (+5 in aboveground natural environments), Swim+1

Feats: Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Temperate forests

Organization: Solitary or pair

Challenge Rating: 6

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always chaotic good

Advancement: 9 HD (Small), 10-13 HD (Medium), 14-19 HD (Large), 20-24 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +2

Breath Weapon: A faerie dragon has one type of breath weapon, a 20-foot cone of euphoria gas. Any creature within the area of the gas must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or become dazed for 1d6 rounds.

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th): At will – *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13); 3/day – *charm monster* (DC 17), *entangle* (DC 14), *glitterdust* (DC 15), *invisibility* (DC 15), *major image* (DC 16), *obscuring mist*; 1/day – *animate objects*, *mind fog* (DC 18), *project image* (DC 20), *summon monster IV*,

Skills: A faerie dragon has a +8 racial bonus on any swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Gray Jester

Heroes of Horror

The gray jester is an otherworldly fey drawn to the presence of humanoids. It feeds on laughter and joy, strengthening itself while permanently draining these emotions from its prey.

Gray jesters look like jesters, clowns, or mimes clad in gray, white, or black. They tend to be thin, even emaciated. Their eyes are cold and empty, their smiles wide and filled with broken but perfectly white teeth. All gray jesters carry scepters of some sort, much like those wielded by real court jesters.

Gray jesters average 6 feet in height and weigh roughly 110 pounds. They speak Common, Elven, and Sylvan.

Medium Fey

Hit Dice: 8d6+16 (44 hp)

Initiative: +10

Speed: 50 ft. (10 squares)

Armor Class: 18 (+6 dex, +2 deflection), touch 18, flat-footed 12

Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+4

Attack: Scepter +10 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's Hideous Laughter*) or scepter +10 melee touch (*Tasha's Hideous Laughter*)

Full Attack: Scepter +10 melee (1d4 plus *Tasha's Hideous Laughter*) or scepter +10 melee touch (*Tasha's Hideous Laughter*)

Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Empathic feeding, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/cold iron (but see text), low light vision, spell resistance 18 (but see text)

Saves: Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +6

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 23, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 17

Skills: Bluff+7, Diplomacy+10, Hide+12, Listen +3, Move Silently+12, Perform (Comedy) +9, Sense Motive+7, Spot+3, Tumble+11, Use Magic Device+12

Feats: Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Environment: Any urban

Organization: Solitary or crew (1 gray jester and 2d4 bleak ones)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: 9-12 HD (medium)

Level Adjustment: +2

Empathic Feeding (Su): A Gray Jester can drain joyous emotions from humanoid beings. The jester must be within 30 feet of a living humanoid who is experiencing laughter, joy, or similar emotions (this includes emotions evoked by magic, such as *Tasha's hideous laughter*).

In a single round, a gray jester can feed on a number of people equal to its Charisma bonus. Any target that fails a DC 15 will save takes 1d4 points of charisma drain. Those drained to 0 Charisma may become bleak ones (see below). Gray jesters feed on emotions but are at their weakest just after feeding. For a number of rounds equal to the total points of Charisma drained, a gray jester's damage reduction falls to 5/cold iron and its spell resistance drops by 6.

Tasha's Hideous Laughter (Sp): At will, DC 15, caster level 5th. The gray jester must touch his subject, either by hand or with its scepter, to use this ability.

Bleak Ones: The results of a gray jester's feeding vary depending on the target. Anyone with more hit dice than the gray jester loses the ability to laugh or feel joy if reduced to 0 charisma. Those of fewer or equal hit dice, however, become what the gray jesters call "bleak ones." They lose all self-will as well as the ability to feel positive emotions. Although not mindless, they undertake no actions unless the gray jester that drained them gives them orders. Bleak ones become followers and soldiers for the jester. They lose all abilities that rely on alignment, or those that require Charisma, but otherwise retain all their capabilities. A single gray jester can control up to 4 times its HD of bleak ones.

Spellwarped Creature Template *Monster Manual III*

Spellwarped creatures have been tainted by powerful magic. Long ago, powerful spellcasters infused magic into the bodies of many creatures, seeking to make them stronger, tougher, and more tractable. The magic used in this process changed the nature of the affected creatures. These changes were irreversible, and the changes bred true as the creatures matured and produced offspring of their own. The process was a partial success, and the creatures did indeed grow stronger and faster than normal creatures of their kind. The creatures invariably proved unruly, however, and they seemed more clever and quick-thinking than others of their type. In addition, the creatures gained a strange and alien mindset, reacting to many situations in unusual but cunning ways.

Creating a Spellwarped Creature:

"Spellwarped" is an inherited template that can be added to any corporeal aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, plant, or vermin (hereafter referred to as the base creature).

A spellwarped creature uses all the base creature's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to aberration. Do not recalculate the creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves, or skill points if its type changes. The creature gains the augmented subtype if necessary. Size is unchanged.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus improves by 2 (this stacks with any natural armor bonus the base creature has).

Special Qualities: A spellwarped creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A spellwarped creature gains spell resistance equal to 11 + its Hit Dice. If the creature already has spell resistance, use the greater of the two values.

Spell Absorption (Su): Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped creature's spell resistance, the creature gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time that the spell effect is resolved.

Might: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped creature gains temporary hit points equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Speed: The spellwarped creature's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 x the level of the failed spell for 1 minute.

Resistance: The spellwarped creature gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or sonic) for 1 minute.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +4.

Challenge Rating: HD 3 or less, as base creature; HD 4 to 10, as base creature +1; HD 11 or more, as base creature +2.

Alignment: Usually evil (any). Spellwarped creatures are typically selfish and cruel.

Level Adjustment: +3.

Tainted Minion Template *Heroes of Horror*

A tainted minion is a mortal who has been transformed into a horrific undead servant of evil.

Creating a Spellwarped Creature:

"Tainted minion" is an acquired template that can be added to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature with at least mild levels of both corruption and depravity (hereafter referred to as the base creature). It is most often applied to a creature that dies because its corruption score exceeds the maximum for severe corruption for a creature with its constitution score.

A tainted minion uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented humanoid or monstrous humanoid). Do not recalculate the creature's base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is unchanged.

Hit Dice: Increase all current and future Hit Dice to d12s.

Armor Class: A tainted minion's natural armor bonus improves by +4, as chitinous plates form on and within the creature's flesh.

Attack: A tainted minion retains all the attacks of the base creature and also grows inch-long claws that it can use as a natural weapon. If the base creature can use weapons, the tainted minion retains this ability. A creature with natural weapons retains those natural weapons. A tainted minion fighting without weapons uses either its claw attack or its primary natural weapon (if it has one). A tainted minion armed with a weapon uses its claw or weapon, as it desires.

Full Attack: A tainted minion fighting without weapons can make two claw attacks as a full attack action, or it can use its other natural weapon (if it has any). If armed with a weapon, it usually uses the weapon as its primary attack, along with a claw or other natural weapon as a natural secondary attack.

Damage: Tainted minions have claw attacks. If the base creature does not have this attack form, use the appropriate damage value from the table below according to the tainted minion's size. Creatures that have other kinds of natural weapons retain their old damage values or use the appropriate value from the table below, whichever is higher. A tainted minion's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8

Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	2d8

Special Attacks: A tainted minion retains all the special attacks of the base creature and gains an aura of fear.

Fear Aura (Su): Tainted minions are shrouded in a constant aura of terror and evil. Creatures within a 30-foot radius of a tainted minion must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + ½ the tainted minion's level + the tainted minion's Cha modifier) or become shaken. Shaken creatures take a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and saving throws.

Special Qualities: A tainted minion retains all the special qualities of the base creature and gains those described below.

Change Shape (Su): A tainted minion can assume the form of any humanoid creature. See page 306 of the *Monster Manual* for details.

Damage Reduction (Ex): A tainted minion gains damage reduction according to its character level:

Character Level	Damage Reduction
1 st -3 rd	5/magic or silver
4 th -7 th	10/magic
8 th -11 th	10/good
12 th +	15/magic and silver

Fast Healing (Ex): A tainted minion heals 3 points per round so long as it has at least 1 hit point.

Undead Traits: A tainted minion is immune to mind-affecting spells and effects, poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromantic effects, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save unless it also works on objects. It is not subject to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, or death from massive damage. A death knight cannot be raised, and resurrection only works if it is willing. The creature has darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Cha +4. As an undead creature, a tainted minion has no constitution score.

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1.

Alignment: Always evil (any).

DM AID 1: OSH'MANNS HOLY SYMBOL

This holy symbol looks like a holy symbol of Rao, but on a Knowledge (Religion) check DC20 a PC can identify it of ancient Flan design. Osh'mann gives this holy symbol to the PCs when he meets them and tells them that it can summon him to the demi-plane and provide a means of escape.

If the PCs activate the holy symbol given to them by Osh'mann on Herion's demi-plane a glowing portal will open and Osh'mann will step through. Osh'mann will be able to help the PCs at that point, but the portal will close in 10 rounds. Osh'mann will urge them to flee through the portal before it closes as it may be their only avenue of escape. 6 rounds after the portal opens, another portal opens and Herion's simulacrum and his cronies from encounter 8 step through (if not already present) as they sensed the opening of the portal and came to investigate. If Caine is still with the party when this happens, he will not come through the portal with Herion but will instead show his true nature.

If the PCs spend the power of the holy symbol prior to arriving in Herion's fortress, they will have no way to get into the fortress as the alternate path will NOT be shown to them. If they do not flee through the portal back to the prime material plane before the portal closes, they will be trapped on Herion's plane and will get the "Lost" item on the AR (the PC is out of play until rescued). The DM should make sure the player knows the repercussions of this before deciding not to flee through the portal.

If the PCs use the symbol before the expected moment in Encounter 8, the DM will have to adjudicate the situation. Basically they will have to face Herion's cronies while Osh'mann squares off with the simulacrum. When the PCs flee through the portal, Herion's cronies WILL follow them and they will have to finish fighting them in the basement of the tower where the portal appears. Osh'mann and Herion's simulacrum will NOT follow through the portal. Anybody who stays behind to help Osh'mann will become "Lost".

The DM should strongly urge the PCs to use the portal once they have activated it.

DM AID 2: ROLE-PLAYING TIPS

MAJOR NPCs

Lezulrix'ith'nalax (aka "Lightbringer", aka Llairmin Bringnir)

Male Yugoloth (Arcanaloth) Sorcerer 3

Background

Lezulrix'ith'nalax (known as "Lezul" for short) is a Yugoloth mercenary who specializes in subterfuge. A free-roaming agent of evil, he usually sells his services to the highest bidder for his services...though he sometimes offers "discounts" when he sees an opportunity to cause trouble for a hated foe or work particularly cunning evil. Most of Lezul's recent jobs have been related to the eternal blood war between devils and demons, far from the material plane.

Lezul was brought to the material plane, specifically Oerth, due to a commission he received from a low-ranking demon prince. Lezul's employer, at some time in the past, suffered a major defeat at the hands of Gozrag, a powerful pit fiend sorcerer who later served as a servant of the Archlich Herion. The demon prince, whose standing suffered greatly from his defeat, hired Lezul to follow Gozrag to Oerth and do whatever possible to aid in foiling the schemes of the powerful devil.

To accomplish this, Lezul took on the persona of "Lairman Brignir" a fanatical servant of Rao "from a distant land" who offered his services to the church after the death of Cannon Hazen. Desperate for aid against Herion's forces, the theocracy took in the strange follower of the reason with relatively few questions about the man's past. Over time, Lairman became known as "Lightbringer" for his incredible skill at banishing fiends, ferreting-out agents of Herion within Veluna, and his extreme dedication to the cause. Lairman Brignir was known to have many notable eccentricities, such as his refusal to memorize defensive and healing spells, preferring offensive magic to "press the fight against the enemies of Veluna." Of course, in reality, Lezul could only cast a limited number of spells that could be explained away as clerical...only Lezul's smooth tongue and the desperation of Veluna for any aid it could get allowed him to remain hidden.

As the war raged on, Lairman Brignir rose steadily in the ranks, eventually becoming a noted inquisitor. Though Lezul played no role in Gozrag's destruction, the Yugoloth's power sent many of the devils's serving the Pit Fiend back to Gehenna. With Herion and Gozrag vanquished, Lezul collected his payment and decided to remain in Veluna for a time, secretly deriving great enjoyment from the fact that such a creature of evil as himself had become noted as a force of good. Lezul knew that his cover could not last much longer, but he needed a new employer and needed to think of a particularly treacherous manner to leave the Theocracy.

Both were provided when Lezul was approached by agents of Herion. Apparently, the lich, though defeated in battle, had been rebuilding on a demi-plane of his own construction. Using means available to a servant of the god of trickery, Herion had discovered Lezul's role in the war against him. Being a pragmatist, Herion offered Lezul new employment...rather than seek the destruction of the Yugoloth spy. Herion wished to accomplish two goals. First, certain items were left behind in Oerth when Herion fled to his demi-plane. Herion wanted these items back. Secondly, Herion noted the ease with which adventurer-heroes of Veluna were able to defeat his most capable agents. If these individuals could be made to serve him, Herion could instantly gain powerful new lieutenants while robbing Veluna of its most powerful defenders. Herion believed that that, by using temptations of power and resentment against some of the new cannon's policies, that he could turn some adventurers away from the church. If that same adventurer could then be convinced to commit an act of terrible evil then the split would be complete and it would be a simple act for Herion to recruit them to his cause.

Lezul was easily able to get himself appointed to a mission to explore what was left behind at the Vale of Herion. Using his skills and magical abilities, Lezul has undermined Sir T'llok, the Olman Paladin leading the mission, as well as many

of the troops. Lezul sees it as a simple matter now to wait until the gate to Herion's demi-plane opens. When it does, he will lead the men he has charmed into the demi-plane with as many items as possible.

Herion's second goal has proven harder to accomplish. Sir T'llok has been the only powerful hero that Lezul has nearby while on the exploration mission, and he has proven impossible to turn against the church...even in his vulnerable mental state. Lezul has come to accept that he will only be able to accomplish the first goal of Herion's and leave the second for another time. That is, until the PCs arrive...

Personality

Lezul is arrogant in the extreme and is visibly pleased when he can demonstrate how much more clever he is than anyone else. He tries to make others look foolish whenever possible, particularly by betraying those whose trust he has gained. Lezul thinks of himself as a blue-blooded spymaster whose abilities are unequaled. He becomes frustrated and angry if this self-image is damaged in any way. Lezul has come to hate church inquisitors as they are some of the few individuals able to see through the Yugoloth's bluffs and disguises.

When in disguise, Lezul adopts whatever persona would most assist him in completing his goals. Regardless of Lezul's adopted identity, however, some of his arrogance and sense of his own cleverness will always shine through.

Tactics

Lezul is a spy, not a soldier. His primary defense is his ability to cover his true nature and concoct elaborate lies. Lezul will try to maintain his cover if at all possible, even if PCs press him or attack him. If, however, Lezul is attacked in such a manner that he believes that his life is at risk (i.e. an attack that deals damage equal to 25% or greater of his hit points) or that he will be unable to maintain his cover, he immediately flees, using *plane shift* or *teleport*. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL LEZUL ENGAGE THE PCS IN COMBAT.

Osh'mann

Background

Osh'mann's background is largely unknown in this adventure. He was once a person of considerable power who used the power he was given to serve evil for some time. Osh'mann knows he has done evil in the past and his desire to repent is so strong that even death has not barred the man's will to right the wrongs he has done.

Personality and Tactics

Osh'mann is an individual who has known great power and been given great respect, but he has voluntarily cast aside all power, wealth, and title of his past as part of his effort to make-up for past wrongs. Osh'mann lives as an ascetic, forsaking all wealth, power (in the form of magic-using ability), and any aid he might gain by trading on his past rank. Osh'mann will *never* make use of any magic items or spells nor will he ever admit to any identity beyond the name of "Osh'mann." To do so would be to forsake the only path to redemption that he believes possible. Osh'mann has many immunities and special abilities that should make it difficult for the players to pry the information from Osh'mann. Players should be allowed sense motive checks to realize that the information Osh'mann holds back is due less to duplicity on his part than to a spiritual path he is on, forcing the information from Osh'mann would definitely not be a good act.

Osh'mann may display sadness if asked about his past, but he will tell little. Regarding the present, he is intended as a wise and knowing NPC who serves as a pathway to adventure for the player characters. He offers them a strange task and sets the tone for the mod by being mysterious and secretive himself. Despite Osh'mann's level, he is relatively weak in combat as he lacks spells. This is intentional as Osh'mann should not play a role in defeating any challenges intended for the PCs to solve (Osh'mann fighting Herion's simulacrum is not a challenge that is intended for the PCs, and they are told this at the outset). If Osh'mann is present during any combat, he will mostly just observe,

only participating to stabilize PCs who've fallen using the Heal skill. Osh'mann believes that the champions of Veluna must be strong to deal with future dangers to the nation; they will not gain in strength and wisdom unless they are permitted to bear their own burdens.

Osh'mann should start the adventure as a big question mark. By the end of the adventure some players may be able to decipher a few things about him, but Osh'mann will never confirm nor deny anything. At all times, however, Osh'mann should act as if the very personification of the dogma of Rao; always peaceful, never unreasonable...and serene in all things.

MINOR NPCS

Sir Allerik of Snelland – A fallen Oeridian paladin of Rao, now a death knight in the service of Herion. Though Allerik refers to himself as a knight, he only achieved the rank of squire within the Knights of Whitehale before falling into Herion's service.

Sir Allerik is the son of a minor noble who governed the town of Snelland with a firm but fair hand. Allerik's mother died while giving birth to his younger sister, Zella, leaving Allerik and Zella to be raised mostly by their caring, but often preoccupied, father. Allerik sought from a young age to membership of the prestigious Knights of Salvation. He was rejected by them, however, and had to settle for a "lesser" squireship in the Knights of Whitehale. While fairly devout and of good character, Allerik also hoped that his eventual knighthood would raise the prestige of his family line, which would then be granted more authority in the North.

The invasion of Herion and his forces wrecked Allerik's hopes. His father was killed fighting off orcs in the battles leading-up to the assault on Castle Sepher. Allerik himself was wounded several times in the battles, his body recovered fully each time, but his soul sustained lasting scars. Allerik was devastated by how quickly his homeland was overrun, and how little the church was doing to improve things. Rather than laying the blame on Herion, Allerik nursed anger at Rao for doing nothing to stop the invaders and coming to hate the church for its weakness.

Despite this, Allerik continued to fight bravely...for his home if not his faith. Eventually, Allerik was captured by the forces of Herion during the fighting in the Valley of Herion and brought before the Lich himself on his demi-plane. Rather than being tortured and killed, Allerik was treated well by the reformed Herion. Through twisted logic, Allerik slowly came to be convinced that the Church of Rao, not Herion, was to blame for the destruction of Northern Veluna. The weakness of the church invited invaders...if Herion had not attacked, someone else would have eventually. Allerik came to "see" that Herion had come not to conquer the Vale, but to liberate it. Only a ruler with the power to defend Veluna could truly protect it...and Herion had that power. One night, Herion shared that power with Allerik, so he could also have the power to protect Veluna one day. When Allerik accepted that power he became the undead creature that the PCs meet in encounter 8.

Caine Brandwood – Formerly a Flan ranger, now an undead minion of Herion. Caine was once a virtuous ranger whose knowledge of nature was a great boon to his neighbors in Veluna. Caine always possessed a hatred of orcs as many of his friends, as well as his wife of many years, were slain by successive outbreaks of orc raids in Northern Veluna. The orc tide brought on by Herion's invasion, however, pushed Caine over the edge when his only son was killed by an orcish scouting party.

During the war, Caine fought independently of organized forces of Veluna. Conducting hit and run guerilla warfare against the orc forces, Caine conducted a one-man campaign of terror, using ruthless methods to augment his skills. Caine did not shirk from killing even those who had surrendered, nor any children or other dependants traveling with the orcish army.

When Caine was eventually captured he expected a slow and painful death. Herion, however, detected the strong potential towards evil that existed within Caine and saw that he might be of future use. Through use of dark rituals, Caine was transformed into a horrible undead creature of evil and kept on hand to monitor the "resources" in Elav. When Herion was defeated, Caine was set loose for a time to punish the orc leaders whom Herion believed had failed him. To the townspeople, these absences were explained away as efforts that Caine made to try to find an escape from the demi-plane.

Even as a new lieutenant of Herion's, however, Caine was punished for his previous opposition to Herion. Before being transformed into a tainted minion, Caine was rendered permanently deaf by Herion via a long and painful night of tortures. Herion justified this symbolically by claiming that it would prevent Caine from ever again plotting with enemies of Herion. Even in Caine's new form, he retains his deafness, which cannot be cured by normal or magical means. In fact, in Caine's present undead form, the healing energies used to cure normal deafness would not only fail to heal him, but also cause him great physical pain.

Caine should come across as a grizzled backwoodsman type who fears little. He has a definite dark streak, which should be readily apparent but, while disguised as a living being, he attempts to hide his evil nature. Caine is very skilled at reading lips and may be able to hide the fact that he is deaf at first, but the DM should keep his deafness in mind for situations it may be relevant.

Caine is beyond all hope of being redeemed from evil. He has lost everyone he really cared about and now cares only about inflicting pain on orcs and anyone else who gets in his way. He is loyal to Herion, but not mindlessly

so...Caine values his own skin first and foremost. Caine is especially dismissive of characters with religious leanings, viewing them as arrogant and “holier-than-thou.”

Sir Quedin T'llok – An Olman Knight of Salvation. Sir T'llok was rescued from a life as a Scarlet Brotherhood slave by a group of Velunan adventurers several years ago. Quedin returned with the adventurers and decided to make Veluna his adopted homeland. He fought hard to defend Veluna in the recent war and, through his courage, faith, and constant efforts in defense of the theocracy; Quedin was recently raised to the position of Knight of Salvation.

Sir T'llok has been assigned to supervise the purification and exploration of Herion's Vale as his first major assignment as a knight and he hopes that his efforts will justify the faith the order has placed in him. Unfortunately, the knight was assigned “Llairman Brignir” as a church advisor. The disguised Yugoloth has bent Sir T'llok's will over time with powerful enchantments and the project has been badly mismanaged as a result.

Sir T'llok is the very image of knightly virtue and honor. He will act respectfully to the PCs at all time and do whatever he can to uphold the honor of the church and the knighthood. His mental faculties are reduced at the moment, but he maintains his high code of ethics.

Rathae'do'kundra – Rathae'do'kundra's parents were normal faerie dragons who imprisoned Uncle Burris (see below) when the evil fey attempted to harm children whom the faerie dragon's were protecting. At the time that Herion freed Uncle Burris from the faerie dragons, the young Rathae'do'kundra was abducted by Uncle Burris and brought back to the demi-plane of Herion. There, Uncle Burris demanded that Herion make the young faerie dragon serve him as payment for his services.

Making use of powerful dark magic, amplified by the evil of the demi-plane, Rathae'do'kundra was twisted in both mind and body. The once-good faerie dragon has been irrevocably twisted to evil by Herion and now serves Uncle Burris as something between a pet and a sidekick.

Rathae'do'kundra is slavishly devoted to Uncle Burris, and will willingly do whatever the gray jester asks, even giving his life to do so. The faerie dragon's persona is greatly influenced by that of his master. Like Uncle Burris, Rathae'do'kundra is drawn to dark humor and taunting others when possible. Rathae'do'kundra has no long term goals other than to serve Uncle Burris utterly.

“Uncle Burris” – An evil fey known as a gray jester who was recruited by Herion to turn living citizens of Veluna into mindless followers. The true name of “Uncle Burris” is unknown, but he was found by Herion being held prisoner by a mated pair of faerie dragons in a nearby demi-plane. Uncle Burris derives fiendish glee from controlling others, especially when he can turn them against their former allies. Many evil individuals do not think of themselves as evil...but Uncle Burris not only admits his evil, he relishes it, constantly seeking new forms of depravity.

When interacting with the PCs, Uncle Burris should come across as a wicked individual with an affection for extremely dark humor. He has no scruples whatsoever and lets nothing block his own pursuit of lifestyle of twisted hedonism. If Uncle Burris manages to do something harmful to a PC in combat, he will always try to rub salt in the wound by making a cruel joke immediately afterward or doing something else to humiliate the injured PC.

DM Aid 3: Lezul's Tasks

In encounter 3, a Yugoloth named Lezulrix'ith'nalax attempts to convince certain PCs to act against the Raoan Inquisition. If a PC seems receptive to Lezul's requests, he will give the PC *one* of the three tasks listed below (attempting to assign a different task to each PC that agrees, if possible). Each task is listed on a separate page, with a section that should be read when Lezul gives the task to the PC, and another section to be read when the deed is actually performed. Each of the items that are used in the task have an aura of strong evil if *detect evil* is used on them. If *detect magic* is used on the items, each also has a strong aura of necromancy.

The sections are explained below:

Lezul's Proposition: This section should be read to a PC in encounter 3, when Lezul assigns the PC to this certain task involving a certain evil magical item.

If this Item is Used On a PC: The items that Lezul describes to the PCs who accept his offer are intended to be used against NPC Raoan inquisitors. They have no effect at all on PCs who are not Rao worshipers with levels of the Church Inquisitor prestige class. If there are PC Rao-worshipping inquisitors, Lezul tells any PC who accepts his offer that the PC inquisitors are "not worth the effort" and that a more significant inquisitor should be the target. IF, however, a PC inquisitor is targeted nonetheless, the PC (unlike an NPC target) gets a save. In addition, the attacking PC *automatically* becomes an evil NPC matter what. The DM should feel free to hint to any player considering using the items on another player that this would result in a loss of their own character.

Read Aloud Text When the Act is Performed: This text should be read in encounter 9, when a PC performs the act required to activate the harmful effect of the item against an inquisitor NPC (or PC). Unless another PC has specifically stated that they are preparing to counter any attack on an inquisitor (in which case their will be an opposed initiative check), the attacking PC will get attack the inquisitor target as a surprise action.

Result in Game Terms: This section gives the actual result in game terms of what happens when a PC does what they were told to do by Lezul.

No matter what the PCs decide in encounter 9, they do not retain the items beyond this adventure. If the PCs make use of the items, the items fade from existence immediately after use. If the PCs do not use the items when they are given a chance to, the items also fade away, though the PC may not immediately realize this.

Hideous Dust (best for rogues and sneaky types)

Lezul's Proposition:

"Look for a bag of flesh-colored dust. Secret this dust away until you locate a powerful and arrogant inquisitor of Rao. When you locate such an individual, coat your hands with the dust and it will bind itself to you, becoming invisible to the naked eye. You need only touch the inquisitor's exposed skin with your hands and his skin will eventually become rough and boil-covered. The inquisitor will eventually become hideously ugly, this will allow us to show that the Reasoned One has withdrawn his favor from the inquisition and the people will withdraw support from them."

"Fear not the consequences of the dust on your own person, for it can only harm members of the inquisition."

If this Item is Used On a PC: Unless the PC is a worshiper of Rao with levels of the Church Inquisitor prestige class, nothing happens. If the PC is a Rao-worshiping church inquisitor they can avoid the effect of this item with a DC 5+APL Fortitude save (10+APL if the attacker is good-aligned).

Read Aloud Text When the Act is Performed:

"As soon as the inquisitor is touched, his skin begins to shrivel and break-out in boils. Entire body starts to blacken quickly, taking on the color of burned toast. Cracks form in the burned skin, and smoke streams out from the body. The man screams in shock...and his body suddenly collapses in on itself...all that remains is a pile of ash. After a few seconds, even this remnant fades from existence..."

Result in Game Terms: The target inquisitor is *disintegrated*, as if he failed his saving throw against the spell of the same name. The only difference being that there are no lasting remains left behind by the effect, only a *true resurrection* can therefore restore the inquisitor to life.

Scroll of Mind Sundering (for magic-users only)

Lezul's Proposition:

"Seek a scroll of gray papyrus, upon which the language of magic is written in sickly green ink. When this scroll is read, all inquisitors who hear it will have their minds subtlety bent, so that they forever after find their minds muddled and their thoughts confused. If this deed is performed, the inquisitors so-affected will cast a negative light on the entire inquisition through their acts and, thus, the corruption of the entire institution will be shown.

"Rest assured that only inquisitors of Rao are affected by this scroll"

If this Item is Used On a PC: Unless the PC is a worshiper of Rao with levels of the Church Inquisitor prestige class, nothing happens. If the PC is a Rao-worshiping church inquisitor they can avoid the effect of this item with a DC 5+APL Will save (10+APL if the attacker is good-aligned).

Read Aloud Text When the Act is Performed:

"As the scroll is read, the inquisitors clutch their heads as if in severe pain. Arcane energy fills the air, and a mad howling fills the air as the spell completes. The wailing ceases suddenly, and in the silence you become aware of one of the inquisitors burbling incoherently. Another screams and flees, weeping madly as he does so. The final inquisitor has drawn a light mace and is slamming its steel head into his left hand, crushing bone as he does so."

Result in Game Terms: The inquisitors are affected as if by the *insanity* spell, with a few major differences. Firstly, the 1-20 percentile range on the *confusion* chart is replaced with "subject attacks self, attempting to cause as much damage as possible." Secondly, the effect can only be removed via a *Wish* or *Miracle* spell.

Mace of Spirit Banishing (best for those with *extreme* hatred for the inquisition)

Lezul's Proposition:

"Hidden among other weapons, there lays a light mace with a haft of bone and a head made of a grayish spongy material which resembles the shape of the mind. Around the weapon swirls wisps of spirit...thus you will know that which you must find. Secret this weapon away on your person. Should you strike an inquisitor with this seemingly harmless weapon, his spirit shall be split from his person and sent to the far corner of Oerth. Eventually, it can be rejoined with the body, but no magic can be of assistance to the spirit until it finds its way back to the body. If this deed is completed, those I represent can claim that Rao himself has shown his disfavor of the inquisition and that they are no longer worthy of the respect of the people."

"Be aware that, though powerful, this weapon has no effect when used against one who is not an inquisitor of Rao."

If this Item is Used On a PC: Unless the PC is a worshiper of Rao with levels of the Church Inquisitor prestige class, nothing happens. If the PC is a Rao-worshipping church inquisitor they can avoid the effect of this item with a DC 5+APL Will save (10+APL if the attacker is good-aligned).

Read Aloud Text When the Act is Performed: (act requires a successful touch attack vs. AC 10)

"When the inquisitor is touched by the strange weapon he suddenly collapses to the ground. He clutches himself tightly, as if trying to hold himself together. His arms are suddenly thrust open, as if by an unseen force, and wisps of strange energy leak upwards from the body. The tendrils of spirit coalesce into a roughly man-shaped spectral form. The spirit-form slowly darkens, and glowing red eyes appear. The "head" of the strange creature turns to gaze at you and snarls, showing smoky black fangs as it does so."

"Without warning, an invisible force grabs the incorporeal beast and yanks it away, through the wall, at incredible speed. A second later, you see no sign of the creature. The inquisitor's unmoving body lies motionless on the floor."

Result in Game Terms: The inquisitor's soul has been torn from his body and, as Lezul promised, it has been cast to the far corner of Oerth. In addition, however, the power of the mace has twisted the inquisitor's soul and turned it to an evil incorporeal undead which the PC has loosened upon Oerth. The body of the inquisitor shows no signs of life.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1: THE OSH'MANN

The Osh'mann were a group of Rao-worshiping ascetics whose existence dates back to the time before the twin cataclysms, when the Oeridian Vollar tribe first entered the Vale of Luna and were warmly welcomed by the Flan tribes already living there. Gradually, the Vollar came to worship the Flan god Rao, who represented the power of reason and serenity.

Some of the first Oeridian converts were those who saw the peace and goodness of the Flan way of life and were greatly shamed by the violence and greed which had filled their own lives. Many of these renounced their past evils and converted to the worship of The Reasoned One. One of these was a former cultist of Tharizdun named "Dohan." Dohan feared that the evils he had committed in his past were so great that mere conversion would be insufficient to purify his soul. Dohan therefore shed his name and referred to himself only as "Osh'mann" a term that means "Sinner" in the Flan tongue. Dohan, now called Osh'mann, drew many followers. Dohan's followers followed his example and likewise referred to themselves only as 'Osh'mann.'

Any who would call themselves Osh'mann had to swear to renounce their past evils and follow the path of the Reasoned One. An Osh'mann carried no items of value, to symbolize their dedication to a spiritual path. Further, rather than advertise their dedication to the Reasoned One, any who referred to themselves as Osh'mann never spoke of their faith, preferring to show Rao's serenity through their examples, rather than words.

Eventually, the Osh'mann sect faded from existence soon after the then-Archclericy of Voll entered vassalage to the Viceroyalty of Ferrond. The church leaders took the view that the grace of Rao did not require the extreme penance for evil deeds that a member of the Osh'mann underwent. In addition, it was rumored that the overkings viewed the mysterious sect as a possible threat, though no firm evidence of this exists. Over time, the Osh'mann disappeared. Some scholars believe that the group eventually evolved into the present Monastery of the Unseen. Most, however, think that the Osh'mann sect simply faded away when it was no longer needed.

PLAYER HANDOUT 2: THE LETTER

Most Honorable Hero of Veluna,

I ask your forgiveness that I can not present myself in person to make the request of you that I make in this letter. My family has fallen upon difficult times as of late and I am unable to meet you in person.

I am Lady Zella de Snelland. Since the death of my father and disappearance of my brother in the recent war, I have inherited the position of titular ruler of the small, ravaged town of Snelland. My fief, unfortunately, has been left a wasteland by the forces of Herion. A recent strange flood has seemingly begun to rejuvenate the land, but the population and infrastructure of the town has been slow to rebuild.

I have tried to work hard to reconstruct Snelland and do right by my people, but I have been unable to sleep soundly since the disappearance of my brother nearly a year ago in the battle of Herion's Vale. Nightmares await me each night that I dare to close my eyes. I will not disturb you with the details, but my dreams have led me to believe that my brother, Aslerik, does not rest easily. Though I realize that, by now, he is likely dead; I have had visions of his corpse being trapped in a nightmare land of evil, where his soul is blocked from reaching The Reasoned One. I have spoken to several local clergy about this matter and, thus far, all believe that my mind is merely troubled by the grief of losing my family to the lich lord Herion. May the Calm God forgive me, but I have no faith in the words of these priests.

My brother was a squire in the service of the Knights of Whitehale. He was a good man who gave his all to the service of Veluna and was a good brother to me, teaching me much of what I have now come to use as present noble ruler of Snelland. He, more than most, deserves to rest in peace and receive Rgo's reward. He has not been seen since he joined a contingent of troops who fought in Herion's Vale to help clear the way for a party of adventurers. I have sent inquiries, but have been told by the church that Aslerik's body was not among those found in the vale. My weak spirit has, unfortunately, begun to show the signs of my want of rest and the citizens suffer from the lack of focus of their liege. Several nights ago, however, The Reason One heard my prayers and granted me a vision. I saw, in my dream, myself writing this very letter you are now reading. I was to send it to you, a true and faithful hero of the Vale... and I have now done so, though whether it will be received by you I cannot know but by my faith in the Reasoned One.

For reasons I do not understand, you will soon enter the nightmare land where my brother's body is now held imprisoned. I can only ask that, while you are in this land of horrors, that you would rescue the shell in which my brother's soul is imprisoned and see to it that he is granted Rgo's mercy. Should you do this, you have the unending gratitude of my line so long as it shall last. Though I realize the worth of this may be small at present, I beg of you anything you can do to aid my brother... and through this you shall do a great service to myself and the people of Snelland.

Sadly, I must ask of you one last favor. My visions have led me to believe that great temptation shall come to those who travel with you. I ask only that you share not this message save for with those whose righteousness is beyond reproach.

May The Calm God shield you,

Lady Zella de Snelland

PLAYER HANDOUT 3: THE SUMMONS

You are hereby summoned to submit to questioning immediately. You will follow the deliverer of this message to my tent without delay. You will dispel any magical effects on your person before entering my presence.

*In Rao's Service,
High Inquisitor Llairmin Brignir*