

SHL2-03



BEYOND THE PALE

A One-Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[®]
Shield Lands Regional Adventure

Version 1

by Jon Cazares

RPGA HQ reviewers: Christopher Lindsay and Stephen Radney-MacFarland

The stars shine a victorious evening for Beltar of Malice. The tealeaves read a hideous poem of Erythnul the Many. The songs of Hextor the Champion of Evil invade the air. The deceitful eye of Iuz watches the deceptive eye of Vecna who observes sleeping Critwal from afar and sees only the Black Rider approach. The chains that bind He of Eternal Darkness weaken. The Foe of all good is near. We sense the most unholy of alliances coming. My young acolyte, it is only us that are fully prepared. Welcome to the Temple of Spirit. You are now beyond the pale. An adventure for characters level 1-6.

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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This is an RPGA Network scenario for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Most sanctioned events delegate a four-hour time block for each round of this scenario, with actual playing time will around three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and reward distribution and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

PREPARATION

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

Read this entire adventure at least once before running the event Familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

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

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

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

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

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

Text that appears in ***bold italics*** is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase as appropriate. Text in appendixes contains important DM notes, for you, offering insight to issues particular to the adventure. Monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form. Full monster statistics for standard monsters are provided in the *Monster Manual*, while statistics for unusual monster and unique individuals are profiled in the Appendix at the end

of the adventure. You should review all of these statistics before the game starts to refresh you memory of the creatures' abilities.

SCORING

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

1-No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.

2-Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the DMs are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.

3-Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" among the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

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

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

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

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

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

1) Determine the character level for each character participating in the adventure.

2) If characters bring animals that have been trained for combat (usually war horses and riding dogs), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars, a paladin's mounts, and so forth) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single character may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 and 1/6 0	0	0	1	
1/3 and 1/2 0	0	1	1	
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7

3) Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure-round up.

4) If you are running a table of six characters, add one to that average.

By following these four steps, you have determined the modified APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge that the characters 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 you may gain at the end of an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL that this adventure is played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that

either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1st-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

1) Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.

2) Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. Characters who want their dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is usually a free action (see DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide Chapter 2: Characters) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist an iconic." The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Mialec, Lidda and Jozan are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to joint them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure set in the Shield Lands. All characters playing in region pay one Time Unit to participate in the adventure. Adventures' Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp, and Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp. Characters playing out of region pay double these amounts.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Markuth, the Raven of Desire, claims to have been in the service of the undead dragon, Dragotha for the last five decades. For a complete history on Markuth and his motivations, see Appendix II.

He created the Open Spirit in an attempt to infiltrate the Shield Lands from within. Over the years, he grew proud of the Open Spirit and wanted less and less to use them for the twisted plans of the Cult of Torment, the evil cult behind the Open Spirit. He began lying to the Cult of Torment, delaying their plans for the Open Spirit and subtly making sure no harm came to the benevolent organization. Now his plans for the Open Spirit are ended, they became exactly what he wanted them to be, a force for good, to help those who need it. He leaves the sect in good hands and goes to kill the remaining cultists of Torment, his old allies. For the entire story, refer again to Appendix II.

Fearing retribution after killing off the remaining members of The Cult of Torment, Markuth, wounded and distraught knows his life is not worth much if he cannot get Katarina's protection. He is not worried about the Open Spirit members, he knows they are well trained and have many allies.

Markuth is also aware of the woman who his former cultists smuggled into the city, and he wants her stopped. He cannot allow her to fulfill the demented ritual she plans. For more details on Serene and her plans, see Appendix IV.

On their way to meet their friend Lineene the characters see the bloody mess of Markuth as he stumbles out of a recently rebuilt merchant's home after killing the last three members of the Cult of Torment. In his injured and confused state, he begs the characters for their help in warning Lady Katarina of a great danger facing Critwall. He asks for their aid in transporting him to the keep, but turns down offers to heal him, claiming he is not worthy of help. Along the way to the keep the characters, with a still-dazed Markuth in tow, are attacked by shadows sent to kill the wounded elf.

When they arrive at the keep they are escorted in but not before Markuth begs them to protect Jelial, but collapses from the poison in his system before he can explain who she is or why she is in danger. Characters must turn him over to the guards, report and leave.

Hoping for clues as to Jelial's identity, the characters go to the newly erected Temple of Spirit to find out about who she is and where she can be found. They discover that she was a little girl who died a few months back from some sort of pox that slew her overnight. The family brought the girl to the Open Spirit for help, but they could do nothing but watch her die. She is buried in a small, private grave inside the city. Characters go there and stop some robbers from digging up her body.

Everything has taken place in a few hours and by the time characters get back from the grave, they can meet Lineene for lunch. She is in Critwall searching for someone and would like to meet with her friends.

They meet and discuss recent events. At lunch they get involved in a bar fight with some visiting Knights of the Hart from Furyondy. Lineene asks them to look into her friend who has gone missing, they ask around and find out some disturbing information about him.

Then they are summoned to the keep for an update. The characters are ordered to escort Markuth out of the city, and across the Critwall Bridge and out of the Shield Lands; Markuth is to be exiled. The characters are ordered not to discuss anything about Markuth or his crimes with anyone, and that the mission remains a secret so as not to create chaos and confusion.

Markuth pleads with characters to let him go while they escort him to the bridge. He tells them about Serene and what little he knows about her plans.

When characters get to the Critwall Bridge they are escorting Markuth across when Serene and her pet(s) attack them. During the battle Serene casts a powerful *earthquake* spell sending Markuth over the edge of the bridge into the water, severely damaging Critwall Bridge

in the process. Serene flees as dozens of soldiers are rushing across the bridge toward her.

After searching the waters for a sign of the missing elf, the characters return to Critwall and report that Markuth has escaped.

General Shield Lands information

Due to the desperate conditions in the Shield Lands, all that enter the lands must contribute to the welfare of the Shield Lands in some way.

Those with the rather specialized abilities of the player characters are placed in what is basically a reserve unit of the Shield Lands army called the Pathfinders. The Pathfinders are used when the regular army is not equipped to deal with the problem or whenever the army needs help. Even foreigners are drafted into the Pathfinders.

Half-orcs are disliked immensely in the Shield Lands. Many businesses won't serve them and many people won't talk to them.

Important Note for the Scenario

Something of significance for the module is the Gather Information skill. Remember that a check for this skill involves time (hours) and money (spent on bribes, alcohol and general payments). Remember to charge characters an appropriate amount, and just because a lawful good Paladin would, "never pay for information that should be given freely to help the Shield Lands" does not mean they don't have to pay for the skill check. A DM may lower the amount they pay but raise the DC significantly (an example could be: Instead of talking too and paying street scum, the Paladin could speak to members of his church and donate a 20 gp tithe to receive the information. However, this information may not be as significant as the Rogue finding out the low down in taverns. The bottom line is, the Gather Information skill is costly and time consuming. Make sure it is used in that manner.

INTRODUCTION

This introduction assumes the characters have met Lineene in previous adventures. If they have not then slightly alter the text to make it sound as if there is a high powered bard in town seeking help from the pathfinders and the characters have agreed to seek her out either for curiosity sake or to offer assistance.

Life in Critwall is strange. There is a common cause, a common enemy for all to hate and yet, the petty politicking of the churches and state begin to wear thin to even the most patriotic or pious. Rumors continue to circulate of shouting matches and bickering between members of the Council of Lords. Religion, elven nations, building projects, food shortages, and everything else under the sun seem to be a topic of the arguments. Nothing seems to be getting solved. Most folk, especially those in Tent Town are tired of the drama and just want results. Many see the old "Shield Lands arrogance" resurfacing in the nobles and are

beginning to loose hope. Others have been turning to alternate religions like the Open Spirit or occasionally something darker..

On this particular day, you are with a group of Pathfinders, heading to a lunch rendezvous to meet your friend Lineene “the Bear”, the charming elderly bard from Bright Sentry. She is visiting Critwall for a few days and has asked to meet with you. A few days ago she sent a very eloquent and formal letter requesting the “honor of your presence” for an afternoon meal with pleasurable conversation and to discuss “a gathering of darkness”.

Though you are not supposed to meet her for a few hours you are all together, discussing what “gathering of darkness” she could be referring too. There are so many.

You walk through the streets of Critwall idly eyeing merchant’s stalls and the people passing you on the street. Even with all the rumors and dangers taking up so much of everyone’s attention, the people of the Shield Lands still find time to stop for the simple pleasures of life. A couple obviously enamored of each other and oblivious of everyone else walks down the street holding hands and laughing. In a small square a beautiful woman plays with a group of children who laugh and run around a small well as she teasingly chases them. Farther on, you see two merchants arguing over a fallen cart. They are so engrossed in their dispute they fail to see a group of stray dogs dragging away choice parts of the cart’s contents to the amusement of many onlookers.

Turning the corner, you see a thin woman stumbling down the street. The crowd of people is moving out of her way, as she is quite a sight. Covered in splattered blood, her sword is dangling limply from her right hand, dragging it across the ground making a sharp scrapping noise on the cobblestones.

Her clothing is torn and sliced; her fine chain shirt is hacked and chipped. Though her hair was once blond, it’s now matted with slick blood. A few people are rushing to her side to aid her but she screams out at them, “I am not worthy of assistance....”

It’s then, when you hear the voice that you realize it is not a thin woman but an elven male. He seems to be muttering to himself as he shrugs off assistance.

He looks familiar but... you can’t place him.

This is Markuth. He recently battled the last three remaining members of the Cult of Torment and although he won, he is under the effects of several spells including *confusion*, *word of chaos*, and he is poisoned from *prismatic spray* (the damage does not continue but the poison is still in his system). All of these effects fade within a few rounds of the characters finding Markuth, but he remains effectively dazed as long as the characters are with him. Healing spells affect him normally, but nothing seems to have any effect on his dazed state of mind.

Because of the blood and gore on him he is nearly unrecognizable, though a Spot check (DC 18) reveals him for whom he is. He tries to ward off anyone who attempts to heal him, though he is not aggressive in any way, telling them, “Do not waste it on the likes of me.” Because of all the spells on him, he is not totally coherent when talking to characters. He tells the story in a hazy way, as he remembers it right now.

Allow the characters to react to him and as they go to him to help read the following:

As you approach the elf weakly gestures behind him ... “I killed them all... they were Torment. Powerful spells, can’t really remember why I was here.

I’m sick... think I’m dying. No matter... I deserve I... I really do. Must warn... take me to Katarina...”

The crowd easily points to where he came from, which is only a few buildings down. If characters investigate the building they find a simple merchant’s home. Characters can easily find where the battle took place. The room is wrecked and places are still smoldering from blasting magic damage.

There are three corpses in here. All are dressed as commoners and seem to have been hacked apart as if, once they were dead, their killer continued to cut them to pieces.

That’s exactly what Markuth did. Under the effects of the *confusion* spell he kept butchering the bodies until he eventually figured out he had won, so he wandered out front to go warn someone about Serene. There are no witnesses of the actual battle, but several people in the crowd heard a ruckus inside the house. Any witness characters question simply states that they heard massive combat so they ran to get help. No one knew anyone who lived in the house where the bodies are found. Everyone says, “They seemed quiet.”

The characters are not able to find any “damning evidence” that would lead them to believe the three dead men were evil cultists. For all practical purposes, it looks like the elf attacked them when they were at home and they didn’t have any weapons.

All of that is true as well. Markuth attacked them when they were at their weakest, assuming that was his best chance to defeat them. They still had all sorts of spells they used against him. One had a holy symbol of Pyremius but it was destroyed in the battle. A successful Religion check (DC 20) allows a character to figure out what it is, despite the damage, as it is smoldering and cracked in half from a blow from Markuth’s sword. The room is total chaos and destruction, nothing much can be figured out from it. If someone casts *speak with dead* on the bodies, the corpse may get a save if they are opposite alignment, but the bodies tell the grim truth, they were all cultists in the Cult of Torment and Markuth killed them in cold blood.

Development: Once characters get Markuth away from the building move to the next encounter. He keeps reminding characters to make sure they grabbed his flower (his sword ... he’s a bit confused) but Markuth becomes hysterical if his sword is taken from him. He thinks it’s his only defense against his master (Dragotha). He tells the characters if he loses the “flower”, “she” (the undead dragon Dragotha, but Markuth isn’t coherent enough to explain who “she” is) will come and claim his soul. His sword is taken from him (or any character who may be carrying it) when the party reaches the temple (or wherever they end up taking Markuth).

It is possible that the characters split up, some of them escorting Markuth and some of them staying to

guard, or investigate, the wrecked room. The city watch is on their way, summoned by citizens. Characters can report to them as they arrive, but the guard allows the characters, who are Pathfinders after all, to escort Markuth to either a nearby temple or the local city watch garrison.

Whoever takes Markuth is attacked by the shadows in *Encounter 1*. If the party is split, the judge may opt to have each party attacked by shadows. This is feasible but may be deadly, so take caution before you go this route.

It doesn't matter if the characters take him to the keep or to a temple to be healed Markuth goes along without resistance.

ENCOUNTER 1: OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Unless characters noticed who the elf was, at this point he still has not identified himself, nor is he really in any shape to tell the characters his life story. So he just lets them lead him where they are taking him to, "Confess" and warn Lady Katarina of some great danger.

As they are leading him through Critwall read this. The text assumes there is more than one shadow, but at APL 2 there is only one, so adjust the text accordingly.

As you head toward the [insert destination], the crowd seems to get out of your way. The elf seems a messy sight and is drawing attention. He keeps insanely babbling about his "flower".

Almost suddenly he stops and stumbles but does not fall. He starts talking a bit more coherently. "They ... they will be hunting me. I feel them draw closer ... even now."

And he's right. Something grows near, the air is suddenly cold and the people on the street feel it as well.

Everything goes quiet all of a sudden. A child starts crying and then the dark shapes begin to move.

Someone in the crowd cries out in terror and then leaps away from a dark corner that was hiding a creature ... no it was the creature.

The shadows rise forth at impossible angles and slide across the ground toward you.

The priest of Pyremius animated the shadows long ago to do his killing in a physical manner, which the priest always found distasteful. Before being killed he was able to call forth a summons for the shadows with two commands, "To seek out the enemy of the priest and to gather the body of the priest should he fall in combat."

The shadows are hunting the killer of the priest, Markuth. After they kill Markuth, and the characters, they are going to attempt to retrieve the body of the fallen priest. Though incorporeal, the shadows have been empowered through a strangely worded ritual, so as soon as they near the body of the fallen priest, it turns incorporeal as well, allowing them access to carry it off.

It should be noted that if no character gets involved, the shadows kill Markuth and leave to gather the priest's remains. Things won't be altered too much, but if the

characters return to the house where the battle took place, after this happens, there are only two bodies, not three. If Markuth dies, he is identified, resurrected and brought before the Council of Lords for questioning, so the rest of the event proceeds essentially the same way. Modify as needed.

Creatures:

APL 2 (EL 3)

☛ **Shadow:** hp 20; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 4 (EL 5)

☛ **Shadows (2):** hp 30, 30, 30; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Shadows (4):** hp 36, 36, 36, 36; see *Monster Manual*.

Tactics: The Shadows are smart enough to go after clerics and paladins first before killing the others.

For this encounter, Markuth is too dazed to be effective in combat and essentially does not help the characters out.

Even if the characters are getting wiped out, he does not help them. Instead, he'll let them die and then let the shadow(s) kill him as well. The shadow(s) do not try to kill Markuth until all the characters are down or it is obvious they don't intend to protect him any longer.

Treasure: None.

Development: After the battle with the shadows, which happens regardless of where the characters take the elf, the characters can take Markuth wherever they want without any more problems. Markuth wants to go see Lady Katarina, but that's not really feasible since the characters have no way to arrange that on short notice, and definitely not with a blood soaked, half-deranged, self-admitted servant of Dragotha in tow.

The most obvious places characters might take Markuth is a nearby temple or city watch garrison. Either is fine. Assume a small temple of the Church of Holy Shielding is within a few minutes travel. At either location, the characters are not allowed to follow the wounded elf inside, but they are asked to describe their involvement and provide any information they have. As long as the characters seem honest, they are allowed to leave within a few minutes.

It's important to note that characters do not have another chance to speak with Markuth until they bring him across the bridge. If they return to where they drop him off later in the day they are not allowed to speak with him and learn he has been taken into custody by the Knights of Holy Shielding. He is eventually brought before the Council of Lords, but the characters won't know this until after they are ordered to take him to the bridge.

Before Markuth is led away, to be healed, or whatever is appropriate based on where the characters take him, Markuth calls out to them, still disoriented and confused, but momentarily rational enough to plead:

“Please... you must...find Jelial...quickly...she is in danger...make sure they do not defile her...she will try to use her to hurt me... to stop me...”

With that he collapses and no attempt to gain more information succeeds.

Before the characters leave, they are asked to turn over all evidence, including any of Markuth’s possessions.

If the characters try to find Jelial for him they can look at the Temple of the Spirit but they must do so right away. If they delay longer than an hour, they arrive to Jelial’s grave too late and she has already been dug up and is gone.

ENCOUNTER 2: THE TEMPLE OF SPIRIT

If characters go to the newly constructed Temple of Spirit, read the following:

The Temple of Spirit, the newly constructed worship area for the Open Spirit, is plain in design and simple in construction. It’s solid but not very pretty to look at.

Though you know it was built with folk helping from all over Tent Town, it looks almost dwarven in style.

Near the center of Tent Town the temple is one of the only permanent buildings in the town of ... well, tents.

The thing that has caused so much controversy in the last month has been the simple statement, painted in red near the entryway, “A Temple of Spirit; The one true temple of the Shield Lands.”

As usual there is someone greeting all who enter or bidding farewell to all who exit. He seems to be dressed in common clothing, obviously a volunteer and not a temple priest.

He utters the blessing of the Open Spirit as you enter, “Welcome, you are now Beyond the Pale.”

Inside the temple it is as austere as it is outside and equally unimaginative. There are neither pews to sit on during services nor any chambers in which to pray; only a few chairs and tables scattered around the main room.

There is an entryway, painted a pleasant sand color, a small service station where a few robed priests are speaking to folk from Tent Town about a food drive.

The center of the temple is just an open, circular area. There are a few back chambers and other small rooms. A robed man walks out from one of them, notices you and walks over.

“You are searching for something? Perhaps I can offer my assistance.”

The robed man introduces himself as Hannel, listens to the characters, and brings them to the head of the order if they mention Jelial or Markuth. Read this:

The kindly man leads you across the open circular area and into the chambers beyond. He knocks twice on a door and opens it. He leads you in where he briefly summarizes what (if anything) you told him to the older man sitting behind the simple desk.

The man waits patiently, and then turns his full attention to you.

This is Rohere, the head of the Open Spirit. If characters have anything else to add they can. Assuming they tell him about Markuth and Jelial, he offers what help he can. He knows the following information if these (or anything similar) questions are asked:

Q Who is Jelial?

A A few weeks ago Jelial’s parents brought her to the temple to be healed, she had some sort of disease. None of us had the craft to heal her, we told them to head to the churches inside the city. They said they did not trust the rigid ways of the Critwall clerics (they followed Atroua) and refused to go to them. We summoned Markuth and he tried some poultices and potions to no avail. The girl died. Markuth was quite upset. The parents bore us no ill will, instead thanking us for our effort. They left Critwall for Furyondy the following morning. They did not have coin for a proper burial so Markuth paid for a small funeral and plot.

Q Any question about Markuth being the leader of the Open Spirit.

A Ah, Markuth brought to us the belief of the Way but he is not the leader of our order. During his one appearance he was mistakenly interpreted as the leader of the order. I am the leader of the Order of the Open Spirit. So, yes, Markuth showed us the path but we are the one’s who journey toward the end of the road.

Q What does Beyond the Pale mean? Why are you proclaiming to be the one true temple of the Shield Lands? What God do you serve?

A There has been a simple miscommunication error that will be corrected soon. We will have a public meeting in perhaps a few days. More will be explained then.

Not much else happens if the characters talk to him longer. Although note if the characters sit around and talk to the priest for a long time, by the time they get to the grave it’s been dug up.

Rohere is friendly, but observant characters note that he has a hardness to him (Sense Motive, DC 18) that he conceals very well. They may also note (Spot, DC 15) that his hands are very rough, as if trained for heavy combat. He does not really comment on these if brought up, just kind of shrugs curiously.

He does, if asked, tell the characters exactly where Jelial is buried. A small unnamed private plot outside Critwall. It’s a new graveyard built about two and a half years back; only about two dozen people are buried there, mainly old Shield Landers who returned to their homeland to die.

Creatures:

☞ **Rohere of the Open Spirit:** Male human Mnk13; AL LG.

Rohere is the current head of the Order of the Open Spirit. He trained under Markuth and other members of the Cult of Torment since the beginning, but never

suspected their evil intentions, mostly due to carefully cast spells like *misdirection* and extremely high Bluff skills.

His powerful presence and unnatural calmness in battle make him the obvious choice to head the order when Markuth turned it over. He is both a leader of warriors and a leader of the humanitarian effort.

ENCOUNTER 3: GRAVE ROBBERS

This encounter only happens if characters head to the graveyard as fast as possible. If they lingered at the Temple of Spirit too long (more than an hour) or if they simply did not come here almost immediately after they uncovered the information about Jelial, then they arrive to find a few soldiers guarding the place. Apparently there were some grave robbers earlier and one grave was dug up and the body stolen; it was Jelial's.

Otherwise, if characters arrive on time proceed with the following:

You head through Critwall at a brisk pace. When you arrive at the graveyard, you immediately see the disturbance. There are four men ... no, that's not right.

There are two men and two animated corpses digging up a grave. It looks as if they are almost finished. They must have used some sort of magic to uncover the grave as fast as they have done so. Here in broad daylight, someone would have noticed them had they been here long.

There really isn't any place to hide and upon entering the private gate, which creaks like an old iron winch, two of the diggers ... the live ones, call out a warning.

The zombies shamble up out of the pit, with digging axes and move to attack.

The characters shouldn't have any way to sneak up on Yargon. The grave is small and surrounded by a private wall. Yargon is watching one side while Tennemen watches the other. The zombies are doing all the digging.

Should they be captured, Yargon says nothing but Tennemen spills his guts with almost no prodding. He claims that most of the grave was uncovered when they arrived. They had only been here a few minutes before the characters entered the scene. Tennemen has no idea why Yargon was digging up the body or where he got control of these two zombies, nor does he really care.

The graveyard is small with maybe, twenty markers here. There is really no place for cover or to hide.

The cleric of Pyremius sent a dream to this buffoon (Yargon) last night (along with the zombies) and convinced Yargon that he was having dreams about a great dragon. Yargon suspected that Markuth would betray them and was setting plans into motion. Though Yargon does not know this, since the cleric is now dead, he will not be receiving his just rewards as promised. Yargon actually believes a dragon is sending him dreams.

Creatures:

APL 2 (EL 3)

➤ **Yargon:** Male human Ftr1; hp 13; see Appendix I.

➤ **Tenneman:** Male human Ftr1; hp 13; see Appendix I.

➤ **Medium-size Zombies (2):** hp 16, 16; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ **Yargon:** Male human Ftr2; hp 22; see Appendix I.

➤ **Tenneman:** Male human Ftr2; hp 22; see Appendix I.

➤ **Large Zombies (2):** hp 29, 29; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Yargon:** Male human Ftr5; hp 49; see Appendix I.

➤ **Tenneman:** Male human Ftr4; hp 44; see Appendix I.

➤ **Large Zombies (2):** hp 40, 40; see *Monster Manual*.

Yargon has been friends with Tennemen for several years. He is brash and overbearing and needs to be in charge. He believes he has been receiving powerful dream visions from a dragon of late. Yargon is in awe of this "being" and does just about anything it asks, including digging up a child's body. Yargon asked his dream guide for a few more followers and received the zombies in response. Yargon, who is not too magic savvy, is convinced that he is developing magic powers. He dreams it and it happens, or so he thinks. So he is following the dragon voice as in the dream, he'll dig up the child's body and bring it to the designated location outside of Critwall, to West, on the bank of the Ritensa River. If the characters insist on going there, they find nothing but a recent campsite.

At APL 6, Yargon has no idea that his shield is magical. He pulled it off a dead bandit about a year ago when he and Tenneman hired themselves out with a merchant group (as guards) that went to Dyvers to buy and sell wares.

Tenneman has no idea that Yargon is having visions, nor would he care. He likes hanging out with Yargon because Yargon is tough. Though he doesn't really think digging up a body in the middle of the day is a great plan, he goes along anyway. Also, he has no idea where Yargon got these zombies but it gets him out of working so Tenneman likes them, aside from the smell. Regardless, self-preservation is a driving focus for Tenneman. Despite the few years he and Yargon have been together, he would abandon his friend in a second if it saved his hide.

Tenneman received his shield at the same time Yargon did. At APL 6, he has no idea that Yargon's shield is magical.

Tactics: This is an all out attack. Yargon does not surrender and neither does Tenneman if Yargon is still up. If Yargon falls and the zombies look like they cannot finish the job, Tenneman surrenders immediately.

Treasure: Their weapons and armor are in good condition, especially the shields. See treasure breakdown for summary. The digging picks and shovels are ordinary tools. Together they have a total of 80 gold on them.

Development: Several minutes after characters finish the battle, several soldiers arrive to secure the area and remain on guard at the graveyard in case of further attempted grave robbing.

ENCOUNTER 4: OLD FRIENDS AND NEW ALLIES

After the business at the graveyard the characters may want to return to wherever they left Markuth to see if there is any word on him, or to try to talk to him. When they arrive, they are told that Markuth was taken away by the Knights of Holy Shielding and is not available.

After trying to see Markuth, if the characters even try, or after anything else the characters may do, they can head off to meet up with Lineene for their lunch meeting, as it should be getting close to that time now.

The following text assumes that some of the characters have met her before, while others have not. If this is not the case for your table, adjust as appropriate.

You meet for lunch at a good size, respectable establishment called, "The Twisting Tune."

It's generally a place for visiting Knights, bards, and merchants—kind of pricey for the life of an average soldier or pathfinder.

Lineene looks charming in twice wrapped blue shawls and sits near the fire, though this time of the year is relatively warm.

There is a sword rack as you enter for weapons, as it is not proper to bring them to the table. Patrons from all over fill the place.

As you remove your weapons (unless they don't, no one really tells them they have to) you spot a large table of well-dressed men wearing the colors of Furyondy. They are drinking and talking loudly, much to the disgust of the crowd around them.

In mocking tones they are laughing about the Knights of Holy Shielding. Lineene waves you past them toward her table. She sits with Sergeant Duc, though there are plenty of seats around her. She has a small glass of scalding water that she is pouring dark broken tea leaves into. Several slices of cheese and bread are on the table in front of her.

"It is fine to see you in good health. Please... sit... lunch is on me."

Sergeant Duc nods to you.

"I asked the Sergeant along for lunch as well since I was asking for help of some of his Pathfinders, I figured it only proper to invite their sergeant as well."

Lineene insists on paying for the meal, she is quite wealthy after all. Her exact motivations and reasons for coming into town are detailed in Appendix 5. She tells the characters she is in Critwall for several reasons. She wanted to find out more about these Sidhee elves who she knows nothing about. She also heard there was a visiting spice merchant from the Lordship of the Isles that she is desperate to purchase supplies from. She doesn't suspect he will ever return to these parts again in

her lifetime so she wants to get as much from him as possible. And she came to visit some old friends.

About half way through the meal she tells the characters about a young man she is deeply concerned about (the main reason she came into town). He wrote her a letter a few weeks back and asked for her advice. She shows the characters the letter, which is *Player's Handout 1*. It is reproduced here for the DM.

Dear Lineene.

Thank you for the volume on ancient dwarven. It is a rare and valuable gift, which I will cherish.

I am afraid that is all the pleasantries I have to offer you. Things are grim in Critwall my lady, and tidings of ill are all around.

The Council of Lords still does not openly acknowledge the one group riddled with corruption, despite it being under their noses. It leads me to only one conclusion, they don't care. They are hoping that we do something about it; they are waiting for us to save them. They are afraid.

And our patron God Heironeous... where is he through all our suffering? Ah, of course, he is waiting for us to help ourselves.

A noble belief but not, I think, something that can save us. When the forces of Iuz sweep against us again, and they will come again, we are doomed, for our god has abandoned us.

We must turn to new leadership. We must find a higher power that will answer our prayers, a stronger god to fuel our rage and smite our foes.

I have met a man, who is unlike all men I have known. His passion for his church is unparalleled. At first I balked and considered turning him in for he does not follow one of our recognized religions but another, however I reconsidered. I thought if I learned from him, perhaps I might gain insight from his views that are the complete opposite of our own beliefs. His name is Gregon and his words fill with me confusion, anxiety and dare I say, a bit of hope.

I think I am going to attend a meeting with others like Gregon, in hope of finding at least a good tale or perhaps a stronger faith to save our lands.

Ever your servant,
Metticar,
Tale Spinner of old

She received the letter one week past and came as soon as she could. She tells them that Metticar is a bard and generally prayed to Heironeous. She does not know who this group is he claims is "riddled with corruption", though if characters have told her about Markuth she suspects, as they probably do, that he is referring to the Open Spirit.

Lineene does not know exactly where Metticar lives, but she believes it may be somewhere in tent town. In any case, that's probably a good place to start looking.

Allow the characters some time to roleplay with Lineene before she brings up the letter, perhaps catching her up to date on recent events. She was the bard who originally uncovered the "fact" that Markuth may have been an assassin of Iuz long ago. So she is very curious to hear of his plight now.

She also counsils the characters to ignore the jibs of the Knights of the Hart, though it's obvious their comments are irritating her. "They are drunk and know not what they say," she keeps saying. Any characters native to the Shield Lands know of the great rivalry between the Knights of the Hart and the Knights of Holy Shielding.

Sergeant Duc is very polite to Lineene, but he becomes more and more agitated at the Knights of the Hart.

Sgt. Duc does not know about the events surrounding Markuth yet, but is not surprised when (if) the characters tell him. He then launches into one of his famous "never depend on magic when you have good steel at your side, magic corrupts all too fast" speeches. Lineene chuckles at this.

After the meal is almost over Sgt. Duc invites the pathfinders and Lineene to his home sometime. He says he usually has several soldiers hanging around at his place so it's not usually very clean. He tells characters he lives a few minutes walk from the north gate.

Note: It is very important that the characters learn the location of Sgt. Duc's house. In all the roleplaying that occurs during this encounter, that one piece of information is the only thing that must be given to them. It may become important somewhere down the road.

When the characters are all about to leave read the following:

The lunch hour is almost over, lots of patrons have filtered out, yet the room is still about half full and the Knights of the Hart continue their verbal assault on the Knights of Holy Shielding.

"I find it fascinating!" one of them says, "The people here revere these Shield Knights as if they had any skill or honor. We are talking about the famous Knights of Holy Shielding who failed to intelligently defend their home lands not once but twice in ten years." His companions explode into laughter.

"That's it." Says Lineene. "Captain!" She calls out to the Knights. Everyone in the room turns their attention to her; despite her small frame she has a commanding voice. That and the fact that no one expected the tiny, elderly woman to call out to the Knights of the Hart in such a demanding tone.

"Captain, I see you wear the coat of arms of Duke Tyneman, of the Duchy of the Reach."

There is a slight pause from the table as the Captain stands up. "Yes, my family has a proud and noble heritage, what of it?"

"Noble yes, of course." Lineene smiles. "I just find it ironic that you slight the Knights of Holy Shielding when you come from a family of known scoundrels, rouges and thieves."

"Ahh, you'll have to do better than that to insult me old woman." The captain says.

"Captain, I wasn't trying to insult you. I was merely trying to teach you a new word. "Ironic." Are you aware of the meaning? Can you spell it?"

There is a pause again from the captain. A strange look crosses his face as if he is unsure if he should be insulted or not. "Do you mock me woman?"

"Oh no captain. You do quite an excellent job of making an ass of yourself without my help."

Several people in the room laugh. The Captain of the Knights scowls the room into silence and turns back to your

table. "And now the mighty defenders of the Shield Lands send an old woman to fight their battles. Perhaps they should put you in charge little one. Then perhaps you would have more of your land recovered from the Old One who whipped your forces from here to—"

He never gets a chance to finish as Sgt. Duc stands from the table abruptly, steps up to the Captain and punches him across the jaw.

"Big talk from someone on his arse."

As one the Knights of the Hart explode from their chairs, as do several patrons. Within a heartbeat the entire room explodes into fisticuffs.

Characters can enter the brawl voluntarily or get pulled in by one (or more) of the Knights. No weapons are used unless it's a mug or chair. Play the fight out as a chaotic, bar fight. There is really no danger of the characters dying, so all APLs are the same.

This is a very large fight and it sprawls across the entire room in seconds. No simple way of stopping the brawl would be feasible. For example, a web spell would only hit a portion of the combatants in its limited radius, as this is a large room after all.

Sergeant Duc is a hard-core soldier and lives for things like this bar fight. Lineene is also extremely patriotic and can only take the jibbing of the Knights for so long before she wants the Shield Lands people to kick the snot out of the Knights of the Hart.

Once the brawl starts, she would even go as far to say something to any non-participating character to "take out the trash", referring to the Knights of the Hart.

It's ok if characters don't get involved, but odd, then they just watch as the Knights beat the crap out of everyone in the room; even Sergeant Duc wouldn't be able to stand up long against twelve of them.

The Knights of the Hart pull them into it if they are just sitting around doing nothing. They are pretty young, arrogant and drunk.

Creatures:

♣ **Sergeant Duc:** Male human Ftr7; hp 80.

♣ **Lineene "The Bear" Blackford:** Female human Brd14; hp 72.

ALL APLS (EL 11)

♣ **Captain of the Knights of the Hart, from Furyondy:** Male human Pal6; hp 52; see Appendix I.

♣ **Knights of the Hart, from Furyondy (11):** Male human Ftr4; hp 36 each; see Appendix I.

Tactics: Although the Knights of the Hart are armed with longswords, they did not bring them to the table, instead leaving them at the front desk. Nor do they wear armor at the moment, as this is a luncheon. When the brawl starts, they do not use weapons of any kind—no bottles, no chairs, only their fists (nor do they ever strike any women, they grapple the women to the ground and push them to the side so they can go fight men). They don't really have any tactics here, it's just a bar fight after all.

There are about ten people in the bar that fight against the Knights of the Hart (mainly commoners), not counting the player characters. However, as knights, they believe in honorable combat, and do not double or triple team opponents.

Development: After two rounds of massive, chaotic combat, there is no need for further die rolling. The brawl goes on for a few minutes and lots of people are knocked unconscious from subdual damage, and lots of things break; the place gets trashed. At one point during the fight, one of the Knights of the Hart, escorts Lineene to a corner, out of harms way, then throws himself back into the brawl. At the end of the brawl, several members of the city watch burst in expecting trouble. At that point, caught like a bunch of school kids fighting, everyone stops, looks around guiltily, mumbling apologies and starts cleaning up and tossing coins to the tavern keeper to pay for damages. The watchmen expect a full report from the pathfinders and Sgt. Duc. The outcome of the brawl was never really in question; the twelve Knights of the Hart were kicking everyone's butts.

Lineene also tosses a few coins to the Tavern Keeper. It should also be noted that the two bouncers, three waitresses and the Tavern Keeper himself were all involved in the brawl. About a dozen people stayed out of it, mainly the elderly, although they were cheering your hopeful victory.

Sgt. Duc ends up taking the heat for this (he did start it) and his sergeant rank is striped from him until a time where he "acts in a manner that is fit to lead troops", but he makes sure no soldiers or pathfinders are punished.

After the brawl is broken up and everyone is thrown out (they would have been arrested but Sgt. Duc takes the heat), the characters get a chance to talk with the Knights of the Hart, the Knights basically tell them if they ever want an honorable rematch, they are staying at the Glowing Hearth, a high class Inn right next to the north gate. It's also pretty important that characters receive that information, the location of where the Knights are staying, near the north gate.

ENCOUNTER 5: SECRETS AND LIES

Once the soldiers have cleared the building they begin assessing the damages and let everyone but Sgt. Duc go. Read the following:

After the tavern brawl, Lineene asks you to escort her to the market to meet the spice merchant she's looking for. Along the way, she asks that while she haggles with the merchant, if you can see what you can find out about Metticar.

"I don't plan on letting this merchant go before buying everything of value from him, so I should be here a while." she says, "If you would be so kind as to come back here and tell me what you find about my dear friend, it would make an old woman very happy."

When the merchant comes out to greet Lineene, you notice her expression quickly change from one of concern to one of

determination. She's all business now and you have a feeling this merchant doesn't stand a chance against the fiery old bard. As you leave, Lineene calls over her shoulder, "If I'm not here, I'll be at the Bright Dawn Inn near the square."

The man in Metticar's letter is Gregon, a priest of Hextor. Lineene has heard of this man Gregon by reputation only, which is obviously dark, but doesn't know he is a cleric of Hextor, he's not the kind of "friend" she would wish on anyone. She admits to not knowing much about him that is not speculation or rumor (she won't elaborate on that), but she fears for Metticar if he's befriended Gregon. She asks if the characters can find out about the meeting mentioned in the letter and exactly what Gregon is up to.

The bottom line is, she is concerned for Metticar and suspects that this Gregon is an undesirable, but is not sure exactly what his game is. So instead of giving the characters information that may or may not be true, she lets the characters see what they can find on their own.

When characters are ready to begin looking for Metticar they have several options. They can attempt Gather Information checks, Renown checks or even simple things like "I'm a Bard, have I ever heard of him? Do I know where he hangs out? Is he a member of the college?"

Metticar is not a member of the Bardic College of Argidagh Cuach. He only has a Bardic Renown of 1 (two to people in Tent Town), so it's unlikely any of the characters know him.

Characters may come up with a variety of ways of searching for him, so instead of listing all the things they could do and the places they could go, here is a list of information they can uncover about him.

A DC is given for each bit of information, if characters are not just rolling dice to see if they find out information, they can also get the information from roleplaying. Just assume that if they go to logical places and have some sort of logical plan, they can uncover the first few bits but only if they come up with something exceptionally clever do they get the last bit of information. In other words, don't just hand that info out, make the characters work for it, and don't lead them to it either; let them find it on their own.

Also, each bit of information is successive; assume it takes a few hours to find out each one. Before the characters can make another roll and find out the next bit. Also, each successive Gather Information roll costs 3d4 gold pieces in bribes and "donations".

The names and locations of these meetings are arbitrary and are left open to the judge's discretion. The last one, if the characters get there, should be in a very secretive and secluded area. Something along the lines of the characters hear the informant but don't see the informant, perhaps he's standing in the shadows of an alley, make it dark and moody.

DC 10 (1 hour) Metticar spends a lot of time at most of the social gatherings in Tent Town. Everything from Pathfinder parties to Open Spirit volunteer meetings, where they discuss where to send

volunteers for which projects, etc. They have no problems finding people who know him but no one has seen him in a few days.

DC 15 (2 hours) The characters find someone who spoke with Metticar yesterday. This person says he seemed a bit upset about something but didn't really elaborate. He says that Metticar mentioned something about his "spiritual advisor", but didn't elaborate. If the characters press him about the "spiritual advisor", all he says is:

"I don't know, I wasn't really paying attention to him, he talks so much it's hard to pay attention to him all the time. He seemed like he was in a hurry too, so I didn't want to tie him up. Sorry."

DC 18 (4 hours) The characters find someone who knows something more. This person says:

"Actually I ran into him a few hours ago at an Open Spirit meeting. They were organizing volunteers to go help fortify the city's west wall.

Metticar asked me if I wanted to go to some meeting with him at midnight, after his shift ends. He made it sound real secret, I thought he was joking around. You know how he is. Anyway, he got kind of offended and left. I think he said his meeting was in Critwall at the Keep. I think that's what he said anyway. I wasn't really paying attention to him, I was trying to listen to the meeting coordinator."

DC 20 (8 hours) You find a very unsavory character who apparently "knows things about people". You don't expect this meeting to be cheap. (If characters don't pay him at least 50 knights (gp), he lies to them and tells them:

"I'm pretty sure Metticar was killed. There was price on his head. Even if he is still alive, he won't last long unless he gets protection, which no one is dumb enough to offer him. Forget him, he's a goner."

He won't elaborate on this story at all, and though he bluffs well, (Sense Motive, DC 20), it's all a lie. If characters pay him a decent sum (which he'll never ask for a price he'll just keep waiting until they pay him and if it's less than 50 gp he lies, if it's more he tells them the following:

"He's ruffling feathers; he keeps asking the wrong people the wrong questions. Something about looking for stories and songs, but he's asking about the Red Whisper and if you ain't never heard of them before, you didn't hear it from me.

He got himself tangled in a mess, alright! You may be blind, but the rest of us ain't, there are things in the dark worse en' any Iuz soldier. Monsters, and I ain't talking about monsters with wings and fangs, I'm talking about the worst kind of monster; the human kind. Think how close we are to the lands of Iuz. You know how easy it is for a cult to sneak into Critwall? No problem at all! Some of us look out for things like that only we're real discreet like, Metticar ain't.

He was asking about one thing and got caught up in something else. He got tangled up with Gregon, known as a bawdy bard of ill repute, but when the moon rises, he turns into something worsen than you can imagine; a high priest of Hextor.

Last I heard of Metticar was last night. Some people seen him recently but...don't think he'll last long. He's either converted by now ... or dead. Or both!"

Development: If the characters head for the west wall to try to find Metticar, they can find him there until midnight when his shift ends. Proceed to Encounter 6.

ENCOUNTER 6: THE SONGS OF HEXTOR

At this point, the characters probably want to head to the west wall to find Metticar while they still have a chance to find him. Lineene wants to know if he's all right and perhaps talk to him, but if the characters have learned about the connection to Hextor, things get more complicated.

It is illegal to worship Hextor and most other "evil" gods in the Shield Lands. Punishment depends on the level of involvement, but even admitting to worshipping an evil god can get you a good flogging and a few days hard labor. Followers of Iuz are treated as traitors and usually executed. Because of the history involved between Heironeous and Hextor, followers of Hextor aren't treated much better, but they are only executed when caught doing something decidedly antisocial or outright evil.

No matter what the characters have uncovered so far, they don't really have any hard evidence of Metticar doing anything wrong and they certainly don't have any authority to arrest him on suspicion of possibly converting to Hextor, and of course, since Metticar is a pathfinder himself, he has just as much influence with the law as the characters do, which isn't really all that much.

All they can hope for is some sort of confession, but at this point all that really is happening is that Lineene wants to talk to Metticar and wants the characters to bring him to her. The problem is if Metticar confesses to being a servant of Hextor, it is then their duty to arrest him and turn him over to the city watch, in which case Lineene won't get to talk to him at all.

Either way, right now all they can do is talk to him. If they don't go visit him then skip this encounter and proceed to Encounter 7. If they decide to go visit Metticar proceed with the following:

You head through the streets of Critwall occasionally nodding to a fellow pathfinder or soldier. Soon you arrive at the west wall where perhaps, two dozen men are working along a stretch or a hundred feet of the stone wall.

There are three men overseeing the site, one the obvious foreman. You scan the workers for a second and then notice that the foreman has noticed you.

He's an older man, in his late fifties or so but well muscled and tan, obviously no stranger to hard work.

"Can I help you gents?"

The Foreman can easily point out Metticar to the characters, though he is curious why they are interrupting the work schedule. He generally cooperates in any way but still is a bit concerned about anyone on his crew, especially someone who has worked for him several times, like Metticar has.

None of the other workers interfere unless a fight starts. Then they all side with Metticar. Though they do not participate in full-blown battle with the characters, they attempt break up any fight that starts until more information can be found or soldiers show up.

If Metticar goes peacefully, then the workers just watch. A few of them call out to him things like, "Everything OK Metticar?"

When characters meet Metticar read or paraphrase the following:

The foreman points out a thin, wiry looking man whose sleeves are cut off revealing tanned arms. Though he has a dark mustache, his hair is shaved close to his scalp. He looks young, barely sixteen.

"Metticar, these gents want to be talking to ya for a few minutes."

Metticar nods and wipes his hands off on a wet rag, then tosses the rag to a worker near by. "Sure...how bout over there?" He gestures to a bucket of water near a pile of stones.

The foreman just watches as you all head across the street to talk.

When characters are ready to talk Metticar just listens. If they say anything like, "We know you're a traitor", or they mention "Gregon" then Metticar assumes the game is up and he kind of breaks down and confesses to them.

If they don't mention anything like that then he just listens to them, reassures them he's fine, explains he'll go see Lineene tomorrow and says he'd like to get back to work. Even if he's detected as evil he just denies it and asks to get back to work. He only comes clean if one of those two things is mentioned or with a successful Intimidate check (DC 18).

If characters get Metticar to break read the following:

Metticar runs his hands over his scalp a few times and sighs, "Yeah ... yeah, I know what you're talking about. I don't know what to say. I mean...it's all very recent."

Tears well up in his eyes and he glances over his shoulder at the men working on the wall. When he speaks again his voice is calm, quiet and remorseful. "I was just like them for a while...and you. I believed then that everything would work out for the best. I believed that because that's what the priests of Heironeous kept telling us. I can't believe that anymore. There are too many things against us, too many dark moments, too many horrible memories."

He pauses to look up at you, searching for perhaps a sympathetic ear. "Heironeous has failed us again. We followed

his word and his ways and lost our cities, our homes and our loved ones."

He swallows hard, crying openly now. It doesn't seem like an act. You think he's about to break down completely. "We need a stronger god if we are to reclaim our lands and avenge our dead. I have seen a new light, a new vision. The followers of the Scourge of Battle (Hextor) have shown me a stronger path."

He stumbles over his next few words then pauses to regain his composure. "I know, you don't see things as I do. You believe the lies that are fed down your throat daily. You don't know...you just can't see."

With that he shuts up and lets them take him away. Only if Metticar does not confess and they try to arrest him anyway does a fight occur. The problem is he isn't armed and doesn't have his lute so there isn't much he can do in combat.

Metticar does not resist nor does he attempt to escape. He has only been a convert for a few weeks and he is wracked with guilt for betraying his friends, family, country, and patron god. Because of this, he refuses to see Lineene, asking the characters to bring him to the city watch to be punished for consorting with evil gods. He would rather face the inquisitors than Lineene's disappointed eyes. Also because of his guilt, sometime during the journey to the local watch house, he tells the characters something he believes to be true. If it is or not, is a matter of speculation.

He also launches into this tirade if the characters ask him who he was referring to in his letter when he mentions, "the one group riddled with corruption."

About half way to the city watch house Metticar stops sobbing and starts confessing more things.

"I know you may not believe me, but I need to tell you something I've found out from the followers of the god of conflict.

The proclamation by Lady Katarina was planned. Planned by her and the Council of Lords. They knew what they were doing. They knew the followers of Hextor would be with them, infiltrating everywhere. How could they be kept out?

Do you know how easy it is to sneak undesirables into the city? Child's play! So what do they do? They knew that the followers of Hextor would be everywhere around them when they retook their cities. So they proclaimed a great force of warriors and wizards, sorcerers and knights.

All who can must serve in the pathfinders. Why? Because they knew we were here and what better way to find us and route us out then by sending us out on missions with dozens of other soldiers hoping that the pathfinders are able to route us out, or perhaps just hoping that we would die in service to the Shield Lands. Wouldn't that be ironic?

They know their enemy. They knew if we were around we would not be able to resist the call of battle! Indeed what true follower of Hextor would ever be able to resist the call of, "All who can serve must serve for battle".

It matters not what the battle is for or whose side we are on! All that matters is that we live and die by the code of our god!

The pathfinders are so riddled with our people we might as well just take over the land ourselves!"

After this he seems to run out of steam as if, suddenly not sure of what he said. Although he sounded convinced of it at the

time but now that you have arrived, here in front of the watch house, his voice shatters and his eyes fade.

He whispers, "What have I done?"

With that characters can turn him over for his confessions of being a servant of Hextor.

Creatures:

ALL APLS (EL 2)

Metticar, Tale Spinner of Old: Male human Brd3; hp 14; see Appendix I.

Metticar is a Pathfinder but has recently been converted by a priest of Hextor who wooed him with songs and stories. Over several months he has changed his worldview, becoming neutral evil and a willing follower of Hextor.

Metticar has been singing the songs of Hextor in tent town and then slipping away before the watch arrives. This was not his original idea but the wishes of the man who converted him.

Metticar believes that Hextor could be a far superior patron god to the Shield Lands than Heironeous. He reasons that twice the Knights of Holy Shielding have failed to defend their homelands from encroaching invaders. The Clerics of Heironeous failed to heal or save Earl Homer and so many others. Their weakness will never save the Shield Lands.

Despite his new beliefs, he has only been a servant of Hextor for a few weeks and is amazingly guilty about betraying his friends and country.

Development After turning Metticar in and telling Lineene about everything, she asks them to stay and keep her company for a while for she does not wish to be alone.

ENCOUNTER 7: FUTILE ATTEMPTS

After characters get through with their investigations, no matter how long it took or what time it is, a runner catches up with them as they are headed home to sleep. The runner gives them a message from Captain Hebrin, their duty officer; they have been called to the keep immediately, despite the late hour. When they go, read the following:

It's late and the keep is closed for traffic when you arrive. The guards ask your business, but let you pass when you show them Captain Hebrin's message.

Captain Hebrin thanks you for joining him at the late hour and gets down to business. In an uncompassionate and monotone voice he lays out your mission.

"Markuth has admitted to high treason to the Council of Lords. Because of his actions in creating and maintaining the benevolent Open Spirit, his obvious desire to repent and exchange of information benefiting the Shield Lands, he is being exiled instead of executed. Your orders are to escort him to and

across the Critwall Bridge with a final warning to not return to the Shield Lands under punishment of death."

He hands over several, sealed travel and order papers. "Deliver these to Captain Rildilian at the Bridge, he is senior officer.

Do not discuss this with anyone; we do not want chaos on our hands because we exiled the leader of the Open Spirit and an elf to boot. Not with all the "Sidhee Nation" nonsense going on lately. This mission must go unnoticed and then be forgotten, is that clear?"

He waits for a response and then dismisses the characters.

At this point the characters are brought outside where a group of soldiers guard Markuth, his arms are shackled behind him and a hood pulled over his head. The characters are loaned riding horses for the journey, one for each, plus one for Markuth.

They are then told not to unshackle him until he is on the other side of the Bridge and not to remove the hood until they are well outside the city walls and replace it when they get near the bridge.

The journey to Critwall Bridge is uneventful, although Markuth attempts to talk his way out of his fate. Here are his key points:

- Markuth claims that justice is not being done; he should be exonerated or executed, not exiled.
- Releasing him, unprotected into another country will be worse than the death of him. He knows his former mistress will hunt, kill and reanimate him.
- He ends this speech with, "Do you want me to return to haunt the Shield Lands as an undead fiend?"
- He claims that his mistress is Dragotha and that the cult he started (Torment) was actually meant to serve her. (Dragotha is a very legendary name for anyone in the Shield Lands; it is the name of the undead dragon that is rumored to lair in the area north of White Plume Mountain).
- He tells of the woman Serene that his former cult members smuggled into the city a few nights previous. This woman appears young, though he suspects that she has been magically adjusted to appear this way. He knows she is evil, insane and has some sort of dark miracle she is planning on casting on the city. He does not know any specifics. She worships the dark god, the enemy of all the divinities. He insists he can stop her if he's let go.
- He asks to be taken to the Sidhee emissaries outside Critwall. He asks for sanctuary there. If characters agree to this remind them it is direct violation of their orders.
- He tells about his change over the years. Yes, he did many evil things but he wants to atone, wants to do his best to make things right. Refer to Appendix 2: Markuth the Raven of Desire for his story.

Despite his effort, he is most likely rejected. Also keep in mind he merely tries to talk his way out of things he

would never offer a bribe to them nor would he offer any ridiculous promises.

When they arrive to the bridge, three hours later proceed with the following:

As you get closer you see the candle lanterns lighting the Critwall Bridge at twenty-foot intervals. A garrison of soldiers is kept on both sides of the massive bridge.

The sentries call out a challenge to you as you approach and accept your reply. You meet up with their Sergeant who listens to you and goes to wake up the Captain.

☛ **Captain Rildilian:** Male human Ftr9.

☛ **Honorable Sareth of Heironeous:** Male human Clr8 (Heironeous).

ENCOUNTER 8: SERVANT OF THE DARK GOD

You wait for a few minutes, casually chatting with the sentries when Captain Rildilian comes out of watchtower. He is dressed in sleeping garments only as he cuts the seal on the orders and reads them over once. He orders a dozen men to walk across the Bridge with you.

He looks Markuth up and down for a few moments and a small grunt of contempt escapes from him.

Honorable Sareth of Heironeous, the priest of the garrison suddenly comes out of the tower dressed in clean blue robes with silver trim. He greets you in the early morn and prays a small blessing over all of you. (This is a nonmagical blessing)

At this point the characters may if they wish chat with the Captain and Sareth for a moment. Sareth is a known for his rigid yet peaceful interpretations of the word of the Just Lord. Captain Rildilian is not really in the mood for conversation and snaps at the characters to carry out their orders. He is particularly nasty to any half-orc characters (the Captain Hates! half orcs).

As the characters cross the bridge read this. The soldiers head out in front of you toward the far side of the bridge. The moon is low and bathes the dark river below in pale silence.

A cry of, "Business of armed men on the bridge?" is heard from the soldiers of Furyondy on the far side, to which the Shield Land soldiers in front of you reply, "Escort only!"

Markuth suddenly stops cold. He looks out over the night sky and whispers, "She's watching even now ... waiting."

Even as he says that the soldiers in front of you draw weapons and point to something materializing up ahead, on the far side of the bridge.

It simply shifts and forms as if from a red mist. There is a brief moment of confusion and then you hear sounds of combat from the Furyondy side of the Bridge, close to where this form materialized.

Allow the characters a moment to react when they are either ambushed from the side by the Barghest (APL

2) or attacked from the Rast (APLs 4 and 6), which flies up from the side of the Bridge.

Serene used her *ethereal jaunt* to appear on the other side of the Bridge (the Furyondian side) to attack the soldiers there while she has her thralls kill the characters and soldiers on the bridge. With a few quick spells she kills or maims most of the Furyondian soldiers.

Though she is way to far away for the characters to engage her, a few of her actions affect combat.

Before the melee, Serene prepared a carefully inscribed *symbol of pain* on a holy symbol of Tharizdun, which she then hung around the neck of one of her creatures sent to kill the characters. Per her wording, any non-evil creature that approaches the creature activates the symbol, inflicting the dread power across everyone within 60 feet, except the creatures themselves, it and any of its companions have been attuned to the spell. Characters must make a successful Fort save (DC 22) to avoid suffering wracking pains that reduce Dexterity scores by 2 and impose a -4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks. Both effects last 2d10x10 minutes.

On the third round of combat Serene casts earthquake (her 8th-level domain spell) on the riverbed underneath the Bridge, which causes a violent rift to open up under one of the support columns. When this happens, return here and read the following.

Suddenly the bridge itself rumbles and quakes and several areas split and break, wooden beams violently splinter and portions of the bridge underneath you simply slip down into the river below.

There is nowhere to run. All characters must succeed in a Reflex save (DC 15) or be thrown into the water. Even if they make the save they are still thrown to the bridge floor. It is important to note that no one may help "catch another person", as there is too much upheaval, especially if they are under the effects of the *symbol of pain*. Anyone attempting to help or catch another person automatically fails his or her Reflex save and tumbles into the water below. It is also important to note that although the bridge itself was damaged and portions of it slid into the water it is not in any way destroyed. There was only about 15% structural damage.

Whichever creature (s) they are facing also have to make a Reflex save, though it should be noted that the Barghest can levitate at will and the Rast can fly, so the battle may not be over no matter where the creature(s) ends up (water or bridge). Characters could be in a lot of trouble if half of their force is now effectively out of the combat. It takes a character in the water at least ten rounds to get back on the bridge and into the battle.

The earthquake effectively stops combat for a few rounds. When combat resumes, initiative must be rolled.

APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Barghest:** hp 33; see *Monster Manual*.

The frantic cries of agony and terror explode across the bridge. Some of the soldiers start moving in that direction when things leap at you from the sides of the bridge.

So fast was the movement that you didn't have a chance to prepare. The creature is a lupine beast with wicked climbing and raking claws with a demonic, twisted goblin face.

Tactics: There are actually 2 barghest, one attacks the soldiers while the other fights the characters. The Barghest that attacks the characters sneaks from behind by scrambling up the side of the bridge and leaping out of the darkness. After that it attempts to grapple any small characters (halflings and the like) and knock him over the edge of the bridge. This attack is extremely swift and should be considered a surprise attack even if characters are waiting for something to happen, it's just too fast to prepare for. If there are no small opponents available then it tries to charm a fighter type, assuming that would be its best chance for success.

On its first actual initiative round it uses *emotion (despair)*. This coupled with the *symbol of pain* around its neck should effectively cripple the party so that it can kill them. The first victim that falls under the claws and bite of the Barghest will be fed upon (with its *feed* ability) on the next round (as per their special attack).

If characters are getting slaughtered allow a few soldiers to come help them out and allow them a few rounds to recover and heal or escape. In a worst-case scenario if you table looks like it could be going for a TPK, Shield Land soldiers led by Captain Rildilian can come to their rescue, otherwise assume the soldiers are busy with their own problems and/or the soldiers are too far away to reach the characters in time.

APL 2 Development: While one Barghest fights the player characters, the other fights the soldiers using the same tactics. The one fighting the soldiers need not be roleplayed, storytell what happens after the combat. Once player characters are finished, they notice the soldiers also had a similar situation and a few of them are dead, or missing as they were tossed over or fed upon.

APL 4 (EL 6)

➔ **Rast, Advanced:** hp 36; see Appendix I.

APL 6 (EL 8)

➔ **Rast, Advanced (2):** hp 50, 50; see Appendix I.

The frantic cries of agony and terror explode across the bridge. Some of the soldiers start moving that direction when things leap at you from the sides of the bridge.

So fast was the movement that you didn't have a chance to prepare. The creature is a demonic red floating, fleshy sack of teeth and claws.

It has a dozen long, spindly claws that hang menacingly from its bulbous, floating body. Its round head is almost all mouth; its mouth almost all teeth.

Tactics: The rast(s) float over the side of the bridge and during the surprise round, tries to use their paralyzing gaze on any wizard, sorcerer or druidic looking character.

On the first non-surprise round they fly closer, so characters can engage it in melee which it was commanded to do, so the *symbol of pain* hits the characters, and continues to use its paralyzing gaze. Once a few of them are paralyzed and the rest are in extreme pain from the symbol it starts blood draining the non-paralyzed opponents.

Treasure: One of the creatures has a holy symbol of Tharizdun around its neck. It has no gold piece value, but does provide proof of who was behind the attack.

APL 4 and 6 Development: The soldiers are either attacked by creatures of their own and have to deal with them so they cannot help characters (unless as pointed out above). After (or during) combat, if characters attempt to heal or help the soldiers, they can only save two of the wounded and three are beyond their help. Otherwise if they don't have the means, or simply don't try to help the injured soldiers, then five die.

Overall Development: Anyone tossed (or falling) into the water, falls for 20 feet, taking no damage per the rules regarding falling into water presented in the DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide. Standard rules apply to sinking, and swimming with armor checks. If they successfully make a Swim check (DC 10), they eventually make it to shore.

Markuth is dumped into the Ritensa when the earthquake hits and is washed under. No amount of searching can locate him, but a successful Search check (DC 20) allows the characters to find the manacles and hood he was wearing.

When characters arrive at the Furyondian side of the bridge, they find the soldiers dead dried husks (a Spellcraft roll DC 15 reveals this as the after effects of a *circle of doom* spell), a large portion of the Furyondian tower has vanished (*disintegrate*) and the few soldiers alive, are cowering with fea, as they were hit with a *symbol of fear*.

If for some odd reason the characters let Markuth go before reaching the bridge, this encounter doesn't happen. When they report, their superiors eventually find out the characters freed Markuth willingly and punish them. Each character involved, even if they argued against freeing Markuth is charged with disobeying orders and sentenced to six months in prison. Each player should mark off 26 Time Units for that character. The character also earns five points of Shield Lands Infamy.

CONCLUSION

You help heal the survivors as best you can until Captain Rildilian orders you back to Critwall to inform them of the situation. You race back to the city at top speed on your horses.

Though you first report to Captain Hebrin, you are eventually told to report to Sir Rarlan Corton, the Shield Knight who is second in command of the Pathfinders.

He listens to your report and nods solemnly. In a deep baritone voice he says, "Yes, already we have divined that Markuth has returned to Critwall. He is a fool. He cannot escape us long. But that is not your concern. This ordeal of the elven traitor has been named a state secret. Do not discuss this evening's events unless it is to myself. This is no longer a pathfinder matter.

No one should know of the crimes Markuth has been accused of. There are too many in the Shield Lands that are...sympathetic to the cause of the Open Spirit and it seems, the group itself has no ill intent.

Besides, with the unfortunate uprising of these renegade elves we don't need to start a witch hunt for an elf. It might seem like an act of revenge for their brash and infamous actions and work against the Shield Lands in the future."

With this he thanks you for your efforts and dismisses you. As you leave, you can't help but feel that Sir Corton holds you partially responsible for Markuth's escape.

As you exit the keep, the cool early morning air hits your face and your thoughts turn to the previous day's events. Was Markuth telling the truth? Could a mad priestess of the Dark God Tharizdun be loose in Critwall, plotting its destruction? And what of Metticar? Were his warnings accurate? Are the followers of Hextor that widespread? Do they secretly walk among the defenders of the Shield Lands? Do they walk alongside you now?

Lost in thought, you find yourself at home, tired and dirty from a very long day. As you lay down to rest, your last thought is "How can the Shield Lands survive if three dark gods have turned their malevolent attention upon us?" Sadly, your fears follow you to sleep, turning your dreams dark and terrible.

The End

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 to each character.

Encounter 1: Out of the Shadows

Defeat the shadows.

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP

Encounter 3: Grave Robbers

Defeat the grave robbers.

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	150 XP
APL 6	210 XP

Encounter 6: The Songs of Hextor

Get Metticar to turn himself in without a fight.

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	60 XP
APL 6	60 XP

Encounter 8: Servant of the Dark God

Defeat Serene's creatures.

APL 2	90 XP
APL 4	180 XP
APL 6	240 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 2	300 XP
APL 4	540 XP
APL 6	720 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 treasurer.

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 minute 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 (that is, 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 piece 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 treasures from each encounter add it up and that is 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.

TREASURE KEY:

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

Encounter 3: Grave Robbers

Defeat the grave robbers and strip them of their gear.

APL 2: L: 60 gp; C: 16 gp; M: 0

APL 4: L: 60 gp; C: 16 gp; M: 0

APL 6: L: 39 gp; C: 16 gp; M: +1 *large darkwood shield*
(Value 194 gp per character).

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: 76 gp

APL 4: 76 gp

APL 6: 249 gp

APPENDIX I: NPCS

ENCOUNTER 3: GRAVE ROBBERS

APL 2 (EL 3)

➤ **Yargon:** Male human Ftr1; CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, long sword); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim -2; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack.

Possessions: long sword, studded leather armor, large darkwood shield, 55 gp.

➤ **Tenneman:** Male human Ftr1; CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3/19-20, long sword); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +3, Jump +3, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim -1; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack.

Possessions: long sword, studded leather armor, large darkwood shield, 25 gp.

APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ **Yargon:** Male human Ftr2; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 2d10+6; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, long sword); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Jump +5, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim -1; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword).

Possessions: long sword, studded leather armor, large darkwood shield, 55 gp.

➤ **Tenneman:** Male human Ftr2; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 2d10+6; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Atk +6 melee (1d8+3/19-20, long sword); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4, Jump +4, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +0; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword).

Possessions: long sword, studded leather armor, large darkwood shield, 25 gp.

APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Yargon:** Male human Ftr5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 5d10+15; hp 49; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 17); Atk +10 melee (1d8+6/19-20, long sword); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Jump +9, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +3; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword), Weapon Specialization (long sword).

Possessions: long sword, scale mail, +1 large darkwood shield, 55 gp.

➤ **Tenneman:** Male human Ftr4; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 4d10+16; hp 44; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk +8 melee (1d8+5/19-20, long sword); AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Jump +7, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim +3; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword), Weapon Specialization (long sword).

Possessions: long sword, scale mail, large darkwood shield, 25 gp.

ENCOUNTER 4: OLD FRIENDS AND NEW ALLIES

➤ **Captain of the Knights of the Hart, from Furyondy:** Male human Pal6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 6d10+12; hp 52; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +9/+4 melee (1d3+3 subdual, unarmed strike); SQ Smite evil; SQ Detect evil, divine grace, lay on hands, divine health, aura of courage, remove disease, turn undead, special mount; AL LG; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Diplomacy +4, Heal +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Ride +9, Search +3, Spot +5; *Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword).*

Possessions: long sword, large steel shield, full plate armor.

➤ **Knights of the Hart, from Furyondy (11):** Male human Ftr4; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 36 each; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (touch 11, flat-footed 10); Atk +6 melee (1d3+2 subdual, unarmed strike); AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Climb +5, Diplomacy +3, Jump +5, Listen +3, Ride +7, Search +3, Spot +3; Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword).

Possessions: long sword, large steel shield, full plate armor.

ENCOUNTER 6: THE SONGS OF HEXTOR

➤ **Metticar, Tale Spinner of Old:** Male human Brd3; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 3d6 hp 14; Init +3; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atk +3 melee (1d3+1 subdual, unarmed strike); SQ Bardic music, bardic knowledge; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (local – Critwall) +8, Perform +11 (dance, sing,

storytelling, lute), Tumble +9; Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perform).

Possessions: traveler's outfit.

Spells Known (3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – *dancing lights, daze, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic*; 1st – *charm person, expeditious retreat, sleep*.

ENCOUNTER 8: SERVANT OF THE DARK GOD

APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Rast, Advanced:** CR 6; Medium-size outsider (fire); HD 6d8+6; hp 36; Init +5; Spd Fly 50 ft. (good); AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 14); Atk +8 melee (1d4+2, 6 claws) and +8 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA Paralyzing gaze, improved grab, blood drain; SQ Fire subtype, flight; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ **Rast, Advanced (2):** CR 6; Medium-size outsider (fire); HD 6d8+6; hp 50 each; Init +5; Spd Fly 50 ft. (good); AC 15 (touch 11, flat-footed 14); Atk +8 melee (1d4+2, 6 claws) and +8 melee (1d8+3, bite); SA Paralyzing gaze, improved grab, blood drain; SQ Fire subtype, flight; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

APPENDIX II: MARKUTH, THE RAVEN OF DESIRE

Markuth is an elven warrior and sorcerer nearly four centuries old. His path has led him far and wide and in fact he has forgotten much of what he has accomplished and failed. He has followed many a leader, both good and evil. For the past one hundred years his path has driven him to a darker place. In 498 CY Markuth entered the service of Iuz becoming an assassin. For several years he killed at the word of Iuz.

Then in 505 CY, when Iuz was banished, Markuth slunk into the shadows for fifty years, hiding from the enemies of Iuz who hunted all of the former allies of the Old One. Finally in 542 CY, as Markuth remembers, he resurfaced at the foot of White Plume Mountain. In search of adventure and magic to increase his already tremendous abilities he followed an ancient road to the supposed lair of the Undead Dragon, Dragotha. Markuth, upon entering the lair of the undead wyrm knew he was without hope for defeating this foe. Though his encounter with the undead dragon remains a mystery, when he emerged from the lair of the dread beast, he called upon the savage human worshipers basking in the unholy blight that is Dragotha to serve him in its name.

For two decades Markuth trained the cult and formed an acceptable hierarchy all the while doing what he assumed was the bidding of the undead dragon. For even through his centuries of life and his vast intellect, he could not fathom its plans, schemes or even begin to comprehend the meanings behind his missions and rituals it demanded. He simply did as he was told.

Eventually Markuth became daring, and used the cult for his own purposes and designs. Dragotha did not seem to care, or even to notice. The elf began to train warriors to blindly obey his will, trained from birth to be assassins. In a dream, presumably from Dragotha, Markuth received knowledge of a ritual to cast upon his warriors making them permanently and impossibly silent. Markuth tattooed them with a random sign he faintly remembers from his past, an old rune of worship practiced centuries ago by the Old Faith that means "True Servant," to mark his warriors.

After thirty years of service Markuth earned the name "the Raven of Desire" from his master. It is an ancient elven title usually given to a female (although Markuth is male) warrior who was murdered and became a banshee. Not wanting to anger his master, he kept the title.

Now, after nearly four decades of service, something has changed inside Markuth. As he examined his life and the Cult of Torment, he realized that while he had no doubts he was evil, his evil was the result of choices and not the petty, ridiculous evil so many people aspired to. As he watched the Cult of Torment plot to kidnap children, poison water supplies and release plagues, he became disgusted at their actions. Evil was not something to aspire to or revel in. One didn't wake up each day and say, "How can I be evil today?" Evil was a byproduct of power. It was the result of making hard choices and taking actions that many are too weak to take. As he thought back, he realized he couldn't remember when he "turned" evil. He had not always been that way, but after years of war, conflict and pain, he found that the hard choices weren't hard any more, life meant very little and achieving his goals was reason enough to do whatever was required, however repugnant. He realized that without even knowing it, he had become evil and really didn't care. But now the joy that wanton chaos and destruction once held for him has faded. His soul was heavy, and finally, with the patience only a nearly immortal being can show he bided his time to plan. So for twenty years, he waited and planned, against his undead mistress.

Markuth formed the Open Spirit under the pretense of helping rebuild the Shield Lands. He told the leaders of his cult (called Torment) that he was going to use the sect to infiltrate the Shield Lands from within, something that even he believed at first. They had no reason to doubt him and so they helped.

For over three years Markuth and the Cult of Torment used well-intentioned pawns to form and spread the word of the Open Spirit. The teachings of the Open Spirit were a mish-mash of things Markuth had encountered during his long life (and honestly had always mocked as weak and silly). They revolved around respect for nature, compassion and good will to others. Several of the Members of the Cult of Torment had been trained in a rare form of martial arts and passed that knowledge on to the members of the open Spirit as a "path to enlightenment" (but really as a way to create a small army with no need for weapons or armor to arouse suspicions or cost gold). In the war torn Shield Lands, the humanitarian efforts of the Open Spirit were welcomed and many began to follow its teachings (if in word only) simply to ease their own suffering by receiving the Open Spirit's gifts, but a strange thing happened. The more good the Open Spirit accomplished, the more Markuth became proud of them and hoped for their efforts to succeed, and the less he wanted to use them for the selfish and evil plans of the Cult of Torment. This forced him to search his soul to see where his loyalties lay.

Most of the members of the Cult of Torment were killed in Bright Sentry the night of the big storm when a psychopathic barbarian vampire waged war on the cult and a mysterious robed man hunted the cult and Markuth as well. When the vampire Vanachek killed all but three of the Cult of Torment (besides Markuth) and nearly exposed the connection between them and the Open Spirit, Markuth found that he cared more for the continuation of the Open Spirit and not at all for the three remaining fools of the Cult of Torment. In fact, he wished the vampire had gotten them too. Of course it would mean that Dragotha would likely kill him for failing his mission, but he really could care less, so long as the Open Spirit had a chance to survive and prosper.

What happened next was the last straw for Markuth. When the young girl Jelial's parents came to Open Spirit to save their only child, he heard about it only by accident. On a whim, he visited the child. A visit from the mysterious

"Raven of Desire" and spiritual advisor of the Open Spirit would go over well with the masses. Jelial and her family were simple folk; former merchants stuck in Tent Town along with hundreds of other displaced Shield Landers with nowhere to go. He watched as the Open Spirit honestly tried to help the girl and ultimately failed. When she died, he was amazed by the obvious grief and deep sorrow felt by her parents and the Open Spirit members who had tried to help. It was something he knew he would never be capable of. At that moment, he knew he could not allow the idiotic fools of the Cult of Torment to twist and destroy the Open Spirit with their petty and useless plans, no matter what it meant for him.

Unfortunately, the three "fools" were not as foolish as he thought and they had begun to suspect Markuth of "losing faith in their mission". Behind Markuth's back, they proceeded with a plan that Markuth had forbidden; to form an alliance with a woman named Serene who was rumored to serve Tharizdun. She wished to perform some ritual in Critwall and afterwards offered to help the Cult of Torment in return. Markuth wanted no part of Tharizdun or his mad followers and forbade the plan when presented. In retrospect he saw that his reasons were lame and unconvincing, but he had already stopped caring what the Cult of Torment thought. That was a mistake.

After Jelial died, Markuth severed his direct ties with the Open Spirit and placed another in charge ordering him to explain that Markuth had never been the head of the Open Spirit, only its spiritual advisor. Reports to the contrary were simply errors made by over-enthusiastic members of the group enamored of the "Raven of Desire". Then he began to hunt.

Tracking down the last three members of the Cult of Torment proved to be more difficult than he thought. They were obviously smarter than he thought as well, but after a few weeks of finding and destroying the various safe houses they held, Markuth found them at the secret home of one of the three, but too late to stop them from sneaking Serene into the city and hiding her away. Markuth battled the three in the home, killing them, but not without suffering nearly fatal injuries himself. After the battle, Markuth stumbled out of the house and into the crowded street just as the characters are walking by on their way to meet Lineene for lunch. Markuth is poisoned, badly wounded and under the effects of many spells that make him incoherent and seemingly mad.

Note: Markuth has no idea if Dragotha is male or female and has long since decided it doesn't really matter, he refers to Dragotha as female simply because it was easier to choose a gender, and Dragotha has never corrected him. He has only seen Dragotha once and was so terrified of her that he scarcely remembers exactly what happened or what was said. If questioned about her, all he really says is, "She is beyond you, me, or your entire army. Choose life my friend and let other, higher powers gaze toward her."

➤ **Markuth:** Male elf Ftr10/Sor10; AL N.

APPENDIX III: THE OPEN SPIRIT

Within months of the recovery of Critwall, Markuth formed the Open Spirit as a charity organization to help the sick and wounded. So overwhelming was the need for this in Tent Town, he transformed it into a philosophy of life that he passed on to his volunteers and they in turn to the desperate people of the Shield Lands.

It was a philosophy he had encountered more than two centuries ago with a circle of druids who worshiped the Old Faith. Based off of this love of nature he added many things he had picked up over the years including the faith and justice of lawfulness. Thus was created the lawful neutral Open Spirit.

A few years passed and the Open Spirit grew in numbers and Markuth knew he could not keep his secret long. Markuth had some of them trained in the ways of several unarmed martial forms so that they could defend themselves. Over the course of a year several members of the Open Spirit, of Markuth's choosing, learned the ways of these martial forms but retained the spirituality and nobility of the Open Spirit. Thus, they became monks. All of this was done under guise of secrecy. Markuth explained to them that, "The enemy is all around, including within. It will be some time before we are safe enough to reveal our true cause and loyalty".

Markuth began sending the Open Spirit on missions in Critwall, rooting out hidden evil, and halting insidious cult plots. They grew to a level where they could train themselves and Markuth knew he could do no better and ended his, "leadership" of them, allowing them to govern themselves.

Over the years and through the guidance of Markuth an alignment shift happened to the Open Spirit, they became more a force for good than one of balance. Markuth encouraged this. Still he was able to hide this from prying eyes, lying to the Cult of Torment about the true purpose of the Open Spirit.

Now the Open Spirit has constructed its first temple of worship. Not a worship area of any god but a place to mediate and spread the word of kindness to others, defending those that require defense, being true to yourself and respecting nature. So while they respect Beory, they don't actually worship her (hence, no divine spells). Now the Open Spirit claims at least thirty monks in its number, with more training every day. The day-to-day operations of the Open Spirit are still led by volunteers, helping those in Tent Town. Only recently with the opening of the temple in Critwall are people beginning to see the other side of the Open Spirit, the marital side. This has brought a new level of respect from some and distrust from others. The Open Spirit has always preached peaceful solutions to problems. There are those who are having a hard time following the "peaceful" solutions coming from war-trained monks.

There is a cry from the religions as well, calling the Open Spirit liars at best, claiming that the people of the Shield Lands were deceived into thinking the Open Spirit were clerics who worshiped an unknown god. The Open Spirit claims it never mislead the people, it always told the people that the Open Spirit served no god but nature itself. They claim they never lied to anyone about this.

As to why they call their one temple, the "one true temple in the Shield Lands", they repeat only:

"The stars shine a victorious evening for Beltar of Malice. The tealeaves read a hideous poem of Erythnul the Many. The songs of Hextor the Champion of Evil invade the air. The deceitful eye of Iuz watches the deceptive eye of Vecna whom observes sleeping Critwal from afar and sees only the Black Rider approach. The chains that bind He of Eternal Darkness weaken. The Foe of all Good is near. We sense the most unholy of alliances coming. It is only the Open Spirit that is fully prepared. You are now beyond the pale."

APPENDIX IV: SERENE ATHANA, SERVANT OF THE DARK GOD

When Serene was young, too young to comprehend the vast and chaotic evils she was dealing with, she entered the service of Tharizdun as a flirtation with the dark side of life. Her mind was broken and consumed with indescribable evil before her 18th birthday and upon that, she became a willing servant to the Dark God, though she has now been in the service of Tharizdun for a decade, she looks as if she is still eighteen years of age.

She has always been able to cling onto a dark rage for losing nearly her entire childhood in servitude and now that she has the power, she wants to deal a little chaos and pain out on children because she mourns her lost innocence.

She has sold away portions of her soul to increase her knowledge of the dark, divine arts. She has made pacts with demons and devils alike. Many fiends are waiting for her to die so they may come claim their foul prizes, be it spiritual or magical. Her service of the Dark God has driven her completely insane.

She has long been in contact with a priest of Pyremius and they had planned on a few occasions to drive an entire city to madness before burning it to the ground. Recently the priest of Pyremius has contacted Serene and asked her to come to Critwall because, "the time for Damnation is upon us." She has traveled far across the Flanaess to the city of, she was giggling as her fire priest ally introduced her to very serious men, who then smuggled her into the city, avoiding the Knights of Holy Shielding.

Then they hid her away in a serious looking building with serious sounding neighbors. She got out of there as soon as the men left her alone. She walked the streets of Critwall and tent town until the sun came up. She marveled at the sheer number of people, specifically children. She played 'hide and seek' with a group of children for a few hours and then rented a room at an Inn under a ridiculous false name.

She slept and dreamt of an underground lair where she could pray to her god. The idea of a secret fort delighted her. When she woke, she prayed to Tharizdun and decided that this was the city for her. This was where she would make the children suffer, as she had to suffer when she was young.

Using *find the path* Serene found a very old sewer labyrinth under Critwall that brought her to the closest sort of "entrance" to the underdark cave she dreamt of. There was no actual entrance as everything was caved in and cut off to the underdark. However, this blockage posed no threat to Serene who used an *ethereal jaunt* spell to bypass all the debris and rock. She made her way to the under dark cave and found several creatures using it as a lair in various places. She opened the black spiral pit and watched as the inhabitants of the cave went mad and killed each other or fell to the will of her master.

The surviving creatures of the underdark heard the call of Tharizdun and fell into place beside Serene, but the call of the spiral soon reached out even further and a horde of creatures massed to the pit to dance an orgy of chaos. Serene bathed them in the spiral and now they bend knee to a new god and to Serene.

Unfortunately, her fire priest ally turns up dead before she can perform her ritual, but her servants tell her who is responsible. In a childish rage she decides to make sure Markuth suffers. She knows that afterward she can go to her secluded lair in the underdark and pray to Tharizdun to perform a miracle.

Serene's evil plans will be dealt with in a future Shield Lands adventure.

☛ **Serene Athana:** Female human Clr17; CR 17; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 17d8+17; hp 105; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); Atk: +14/+9/+4 melee (1d8+2; heavy mace); SA Spells, rebuke undead; AL CE; SV Fort +13, Ref +8, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 19, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Concentration +15, Escape Artist +5, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Ride +4, Scry +12, Search +3, Spellcraft +12, Spot +5, Swim +0; Combat Casting, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Silent Spell, Still Spell.

Possessions: leather armor, *amulet of natural armor* +4, *candle of invocation* (CE), +2 *heavy mace – nine lives stealer* (as per the sword, *nine lives stealer*).

Spells Prepared (6/6+1/6+1/6+1/4+1/4+1/3+1/2+1/1+1; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0 – *detect magic* (2), *read magic*, *virtue* (3); 1st – *bless*, *bane*, *command*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *inflict light wounds**, *shield of faith*; 2nd – *darkness*, *death knell*, *hold person* (2), *shatter**, *silence*, *sound burst*; 3rd – *contagion**, *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, *cure serious wounds* (2), *magic circle against good*, *searing light*; 4th – *cure critical wounds* (2), *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds**, *poison*, *spell immunity*; 5th – *ethereal jaunt*, *flame strike*, *righteous might*, *spell resistance*, *true seeing**; 6th – *blade barrier*, *harm**, *heal*, *greater dispelling*, *word of recall*; 7th – *blasphemy*, *destruction*, *disintegrate**, *repulsion*; 8th – *earthquake**, *symbol* (2); 9th – *implosion**, *miracle*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Destruction (You gain the smite power, the supernatural ability to make a single melee attack with a +4 attack bonus and a damage bonus equal to your cleric level (if you hit). You must declare the smite before making the attack. It is usable once per day.); Knowledge (All Knowledge skills are class skills. You cast divinations at +1 caster level).

APPENDIX V: LINEENE, “THE BEAR”

Lineene is an elderly bard who currently lives south of Bright Sentry on the coast of the Nyr Dyv. She is far too old to adventure but has accumulated a vast amount of knowledge, lore, and magic over the years. She has met several pathfinders on various occasions and contacts them for a lunch meeting upon her arrival in Critwall.

Lineene is entering Critwall to find a young Pathfinder who recently wrote her a letter; a friend of hers. She fears for this Pathfinder's journey into darkness and has come to council him. For now, she tells the Pathfinders she meets for lunch that she is here to purchase some supplies from a visiting spice merchant who is not going to Bright Sentry. The merchant is selling rare teas from exotic places and she wants to sample and buy some.

Lineene is the bard who originally discovered the connection between the elf Markuth, who was once an assassin and spy for Iuz and the elf Markuth, who led the Open Spirit. She believes, as do some pathfinders, that they are the same person, although no physical evidence to this could be salvaged at the time. When characters inform her of recent events she is relatively surprised. If characters tell her about any of the comments Markuth made regarding Serene, specifically if they mention “the dark god”, she becomes seriously concerned.

She knows the brief history of the god Tharizdun that she abridges for the characters, not wanting to terrify them. She tells them:

“An old and vile god of dark knowledge and insanity. His exact origin is uncertain but by the concerted effort of all of the gods, he has been imprisoned. If freed, the gods would again, perhaps, unite to lock him away, for his dark design is to unravel the very fabric of the universe. Despite the grandest efforts of the Gods, there are still some foul sites still keyed to him, and his relics still hold power.

Although no true depictions of him remain, he is thought to be an utterly black entity without a solid form, leaving cold, decay, and insanity in his wake. There are still several texts of his worship floating around the Flanaess, all sorts of evil are described therein; foul rituals of sacrifice, destruction, and horrors from beyond the world unleashed upon the innocent. His clerics are mad, deluded into thinking that his release will grant them privilege when he remakes the world. One secret of them I am sure of, because of their god's imprisonment, his clerics must be in contact with an object or site imbued with some of Tharizdun's power to prepare or cast spells.”

APPENDIX VI: RENOWN IN THE SHIELD LANDS

As the old cliché goes, adversity brings out the best in people. Few situations are as adverse as the Shield Lands' current state of war with Iuz the Old. Even in the looming presence of an evil demi-god, the people of the Shield Lands find the strength to continue to fight. While all of these people are heroes, a rare few manage to rise above the rest and gain a level of renown among their fellow Shield Landers. These stalwart defenders of the Holy Realm have earned a measure of Renown.

Renown is an expression of a character's reputation in the Shield Lands. People tend to react more favorably to people they have heard of and respect. Renown points are a way to determine in game if a character deserves such a reaction modifier.

Renown is earned during game play in Shield Lands' regional and adaptable events. In most cases renown is earned for performing exceptionally heroic deeds in the service of the Shield Lands. Awards may be given to a single character or to the whole group depending on the circumstances.

In game terms, renown is earned for good roleplaying and overcoming encounters in an exceptional way. Any time a character's or party's deeds could conceivably be talked about over an ale in taverns or put to verse by bards, there is a chance renown will be earned. Judges will award renown points based on the instructions provided by the event. In some cases, certs may award Renown without requiring a roll. The event in which the Renown cert is awarded will list whether a roll is required or not.

A character eligible to receive renown must make a renown check with a DC equal to his current renown. If the roll succeeds, he gains the renown award. On a natural 20, he gains double the award, but on a natural 1 he loses that amount due to poor retellings of his tale. If a bard is present at the table, Renown checks gain a +2 circumstantial modifier.

Renown points are written on the character log sheet. Each log entry should list the amount of renown gained and/or used during the event and the new current total.

Each renown point represents a 5% chance to be recognized by fellow Shield Landers. As a hero's renown grows, more and more people will have heard of him and hopefully react positively to him when he asks for aid.

In game term, renown points work like this. Whenever a player wishes to see if his character's renown can help his character, he must roll a Renown check (DC20) modified by the character's current renown score. If the roll is successful, the NPC in question has heard of the character. Only one roll may be made per encounter. A roll of a natural 1 is always a failure, but a roll of a 20 is only a guaranteed success if the character attempting the renown check has a positive renown score.

Renown can be used in two ways. First, a successful roll provides a +2 circumstantial modifier to any one Charisma based skill check used in reference to the NPC. Alternatively, in place of the +2 skill modifier, the character may receive a 10% reduction to the cost of any non-certed items being purchased. This costs one point of renown and can be used once per encounter.

Secondly, five renown points may be traded for the equivalent of a single Influence point with the NPC in question. While this is an expensive use of renown, it can be a lifesaver in the right situations. This may only be used once per event and only one influence point may be gained in this manner. Influence points earned this way are lost at the end of an event unless used. The character still loses the renown even if the influence point isn't used, so be careful to use this benefit wisely.

Infamy

While Renown is a measure of how well known a character is, Infamy is a measure of how positively or negatively people react to a character. The two are independent of one another, but work together to gauge the quality of people's reactions. A character with a high Renown score may be well known, but if the same character has a high Infamy score as well, he will not be very well liked by most people who recognize him.

Generally, characters earn Infamy for performing questionable actions, such as harming innocents, casually destroying property or betraying someone's trust. Whenever someone with a positive Infamy score tries to use Renown, they must avoid their own bad reputation. After a successful roll to use Renown, a character must try to avoid the effects of Infamy by rolling a Charisma check against a DC equal to the current Infamy score. If the roll fails, the NPC's reaction turns negative due to them having heard of the character's misdeeds.

Instead of gaining a positive skill modifier or decrease in the cost of goods, the character suffers from a -2 circumstantial modifier to all Charisma based skills except Intimidate (which receives the normal +2 modifier for successful use of

Renown) or a 10% increase to the cost of goods. The NPC has still heard of the character, they just didn't like what they heard and refuse to help them because of it.

Renown and Infamy may only be used in Shield Lands' regional and adaptable events. It has no in game benefit during out of region.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1: THE LETTER FROM METTICAR

Dear Lineene:

Thank you for the volume on ancient dwarven. It is a rare and valuable gift, which I will cherish.

I am afraid that is all the pleasantries I have to offer you. Things are grim in Critwall my lady, and tidings of ill are all around.

The Council of Lords still does not openly acknowledge the one group riddled with corruption, despite it being under their noses. It leads me to only one conclusion, they don't care. They are hoping that we do something about it; they are waiting for us to save them. They are afraid.

And our patron God Heironeous... where is he through all our suffering? Ah, of course, he is waiting for us to help ourselves.

A noble belief but not, I think, something that can save us. When the forces of Iuz sweep against us again, and they will come again, we are doomed, for our god has abandoned us.

We must turn to new leadership. We must find a higher power that will answer our prayers, a stronger god to fuel our rage and smite our foes.

I have met a man, who is unlike all men I have known. His passion for his church is unparalleled. At first I balked and considered turning him in for he does not follow one of our recognized religions but another, however I reconsidered. I thought if I learned from him, perhaps I might gain insight from his views that are the complete opposite of our own beliefs. His name is Gregon and his words fill with me confusion, anxiety and dare I say, a bit of hope.

I think I am going to attend a meeting with others like Gregon, in hope of finding at least a good tale or perhaps a stronger faith to save our lands.

*Ever your servant,
Metticar,
Tale Spinner of old*

Event Summary

Did characters prevent the robbers from digging up Jelial's grave? Yes / No

Did Metticar go peacefully with the characters? Yes / No

If no, explain briefly:

Was Markuth able to talk characters into letting him go? Yes / No

Anything else out of the ordinary?

ENLISTING THE ICONIC

☞ **Tordek, male dwarf Ftr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (dwarf); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 15 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atks +4 melee (1d10+2/x3, dwarven waraxe), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Dwarven traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +0, Jump +0; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, scale mail, large wooden shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack and flint and steel.

☞ **Mialee, female elf Wizr:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 1d4+3; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atks +0 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or -6 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) and -10 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Elven traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Listen +3, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3; Scribe Scroll (virtual), Toughness.

Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, sleep*.

Spellbook: 0—all of them; 1st—*charm person, mage armor, magic missile, sleep, summon monster I*.

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, quarterstaff, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 10 candles, map case, 3 pages parchment, ink and pen, spell pouch, spellbook.

☞ **Lidda, female halfling Rogr:** CR 1; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Atks +1 melee (1d6/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow), or +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Halfling traits; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +1, Hide +11, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +7, Search +6, Spot +4, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +1; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Explorer's outfit, leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, dagger, Backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, thieves' tools hooded lantern, 3 pints of lantern oil.

☞ **Jozan, male human Clr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init -1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace), or -1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Turn Undead 4/day 2d6+2; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref -1; Will +4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +6, Listen +4, Knowledge (religion) +0, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (3/2+1; base DC 12 + spell level); 0—*detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1st—*bles, protection from evil**, *shield of faith*.

* Domain spell; *Deity:* Pelor; *Domains:* Good (good spells cast at +1 caster level) and Healing (healing spells cast at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Cleric's vestments, scale mail, large wooden shield, heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, backpack with waterskin, 1 day of trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, wooden holy symbol (sun disk of Pelor), 3 torches.