

BIS5-IS1

Lizards in the Mist

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®] Bissel Regional Introductory Adventure

Version 1.4

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An undercover agent has disappeared in Thornward, lost behind enemy lines. You've been recruited to find out what happened to him, but you don't even know why he was there. Can you retrace his movements, finish his work, and get out alive? An introductory LG adventure set in the March of Bissel.

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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INTRODUCTION

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

PREPARATION

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

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

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

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

Keep in mind that you must have at least four players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than 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 the players (and the DM) to keep track of who is playing which character.

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

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

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, 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 PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

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

- If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Mundane Animals Effect on APL		# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

By following these four steps, you will have determined the APL. Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs will 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 the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL this adventure is being 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. 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 two things that you can do to help even the score.

- Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
- Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a move

action (spoken command) 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.

INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURES

Welcome to Living Greyhawk and the March of Bissel. This document is an introductory adventure designed to introduce characters and players to Living Greyhawk in general and the Bissel campaign in particular. As such, it can only be played by 1st level characters. Higher level characters must play standard regional, meta-regional, or core adventures. This adventure is only playable at APL 2.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round introductory Regional adventure, set in the March of Bissel. Characters native to Bissel pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Mist Chameleons are an organization of spies based out of the barony of Misty Hills. Their members work for the Margrave and the Bissel Ruling Council on a regular basis.

Recently, a Mist Chameleon agent has been on assignment in Thornward, investigating an enemy installation of strategic importance. When he attempted to infiltrate the facility, he triggered a trap and was subdued. Now, he is a prisoner within the complex.

The Mist Chameleons are troubled that an agent has disappeared, and want to recover him. However, they fear that the agent's identity may have been compromised, and his captors may be looking out for other agents. So, they set up a ruse to bring several 'unknown' adventurers to them, in hopes that they could undertake the mission without discovery.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs are hired on to guard a fake convoy, heading into the Misty Hills. They are stopped by a number of Mist Chameleon agents, and taken to Baroness Imycina, leader of their organization. She recruits them to help recover the missing agent.

The PCs travel to Thornward, locate the agent's safe house, and contact one of the agent's assets. This leads them to contact the Thornward resistance, who admit to

selling the agent information about a secret entrance to a nearby enemy facility. The PCs then infiltrate the installation, locate the missing agent, and flee to safety.

Introduction: Double Crossed - PCs are escorting a convoy through the Barony of Misty Hills. They are stopped by Mist Chameleon agents who wish to take them to the Baroness.

Encounter 1: Take Me to Your Leader - PCs meet Baroness Imycina. She admits that the Mist Chameleons funded the fake convoy to bring the PCs to them. She asks them to help find and recover a missing Mist Chameleon agent. She needs to use individuals outside the Mist Chameleon organization, as anyone that could have trapped the first agent may be looking for other agents.

Encounter 2: Ebb and Flow - PCs travel into Thornward with a Mist Chameleon guide. Some of the history of Bissel and the Evard conflict are related by the guide.

Encounter 3: Any Port in a Storm - PCs search the missing agent's safe house, and find a clue that reveals the location of one of his 'dead drops', a location where he could anonymously exchange information with his field contacts.

Encounter 4: Water Under the Bridge - PCs find the dead drop spot, and can exchange information with the missing agent's anonymous contact. If they ask the right questions, they learn that he was last meeting someone in the Stone Wind Taproom.

Encounter 5: Resistance is Futile - PCs investigate the Stone Wind Taproom, a local tavern where a number of local resistance members meet. They learn that the agent purchased information about a nearby installation held by Evard's forces.

Encounter 6: An Ominous View - PCs stake out the enemy installation, and learn something of the inhabitants. They catch a glimpse of one of the powerful undead that Evard commands.

Encounter 7: Entrance Exam - PCs locate the secret rear entrance to the installation, and defeat a puzzle to gain entrance.

Encounter 8: A Tangled Web - PCs locate the missing agent, and face a trap that protects his cell block. They defeat it to gain entrance and free him.

Encounter 9: Fourth and Goal - PCs try to escape with the recovered agent, and run into some installation guards.

Conclusion: Perchance To Dream - PCs awake in their beds, ready for another day of traveling with the convoy they have been escorting. They do not remember the mission as anything but a dream. A note of gratitude is the only proof that something occurred.

NOTE TO DMS

This scenario requires some physical preparation before being run. Player Handout 1 – The Coded Note contains a number of gray blocks. These sections of the handout should be cut out of the page ahead of time. If this is not done, the associated puzzle can not be solved as intended.

INTRODUCTION: DOUBLE CROSSED

"It's just a short trip", said the man with the scar on his left cheek. "A few days overland, a quick trip across the hills, and you're home free. Double the normal pay." He took a deep swig from his tankard, and continued with a reassuring smile. "Nothing to it."

In retrospect, perhaps you'll think twice before accepting work from someone who is smiling, while telling you how easy it will be.

You are two days out of the township of Sareden. You were hired on to guard a caravan carrying textiles to Cullen Drae. The first part of the journey was easy, following the Low Ridge Path towards Falsford. Then, the caravan master headed out of the Sardee River valley, and into the Barony of Misty Hills.

The Misty Hills live up to their reputation. It is a region of wooded hills with a frequent mist obscuring the paths within. You don't see how anyone could navigate through this maze, but the caravan master constantly reassures you that he knows exactly where you are.

All you can see are the drifting mists, and all you can hear besides the creaking of the wagon wheels is the soft sound of wind blowing between the hills. To pass the time, you've gotten to know the other guards of the caravan.

The PCs can take this opportunity to introduce themselves. When they have finished, continue on:

"Just a bit farther now," muses the caravan master. "A bit farther and you won't have to worry about these damnable mists any more."

As if on cue, a sudden sound pierces the fog. From just off the path, to the left, comes an eerie melody. Someone nearby is whistling.

The caravan master brings the horses to a halt. You look to him for an explanation, but he just shrugs and smiles. The whistling stops, and is replaced by an ownerless voice.

"Oh, now don't go blaming him," says the disembodied voice. "His job was just to bring you here. Nothing too sinister. Hey... hey, now... hands off the blades. Believe me, you'd hit the ground before you could pull 'em."

There is movement, obscured by the mists. Moments later, a cloaked figure steps into view. You see other shapes moving all around you, just past the limits of vision, hinting at the other dozen or so people watching you.

The leader throws back his hood, revealing strong Baklunish features. "Allow me to introduce myself. I am called Siraleth. You may call me that, as well." He bows slightly. "The lady wishes the pleasure of your council. You will come with us, please?"

This is Siraleth, a Mist Chameleon agent. That is, of course, not his real name; Any PC can instantly realize that the name doesn't sound typically Baklunish, and anyone that speaks Ancient Baklunish can tell that 'Siraleth' is similar to an old Baklunish phrase meaning 'last hope'.

Siraleth has been sent to bring the PCs to the Baroness, Lady Imycina Trefeloess.

The PCs may try to question Siraleth, but this will get them nowhere. Answering questions was not part of his orders, and so he will not do so. The most they can get out of him are these snippets:

- The lady wishes them brought to her unharmed. His allies will only harm them in self-defense, and he would not recommend forcing such a situation.
- The lady is his mistress. Anything more they wish to know about her, they will need to get from her directly.
- He does not know what she wants of them. Even if he did know, he would not tell them, as it was not part of his orders.
- He arranged the fake convoy that brought them here. The nature of the lady's business required that the PCs be hired under false pretenses.

Siraleth will not take no for an answer. His mistress has ordered that the PCs be brought to her, and he is extremely loyal. If the PCs wish to attack him and his agents, the PCs are quickly subdued. They wake up in a shoddy inn room, in Sareden. The adventure is over for them.

If the PCs agree to accompany Siraleth, continue on with Encounter 1.

All APLs

☛ **Siraleth:** Male human Rog5 (Bluff +12, Sense Motive +13); AL NG.

☛ **Mist Chameleon Agents:** Rog2; hp 14.

ENCOUNTER 1: TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER

The caravan master gives a nod of farewell, and the wagons continue moving down the road without you. Siraleth beckons for you to follow, and the cloaked figures silently fall in formation around you.

Your guide leads you down a long, well-traveled road. Every so often you can make out a tall, dark form, crowned by the glow of mist-piercing torch fire, about a dozen yards off of the trail. Siraleth notices your interest, and gestures towards one of the structures. "Watchtower Road," he says, to no one in particular. "Reminder of dark times. Darker than these."

The midday sun is at peak when the trail opens up before you, and a small village comes into view. The sounds of civilization are a welcome change from the silence of the hills. Children are at play, and from somewhere nearby comes the peal of a smith's hammer.

Siraleth leads you to a tavern, where hot meals await you, before wordlessly heading off to attend to his own business. The locals are friendly and easily engage you in idle conversation, but you can't shake the feeling that you are under constant scrutiny.

The PCs may be interested in questioning a few of the locals. Keep in mind that these people are very loyal to Lady Imycina and the Mist Chameleons, and the answers they give are carefully measured as such. The following information is available:

- This is the village of Borderwatch. It is named for its proximity to the Watchtower Road, which guards the borderlands of the barony.

- The lady that Siraleth mentioned is someone of importance... but they won't say whom. They expect that the PCs will be meeting her very shortly, and she can introduce herself.
- The men that are escorting them are Bissel patriots. They are the eyes and ears of the March, and can be trusted.
- A number of Bissel organizations are represented here. The PCs can notice the insignias of the Great Army, the Bissel Free Companies, and even a few from the Guild of the Arcane Path. However, they are still loyal to Imycina and the Chameleons, first and foremost.

When the PCs are ready to continue, continue reading:

Well-fed and rested, you are met in the early afternoon once more by Siraleth. He leads you to the edge of the village, where a number of men are assembled with loaded packhorses. He passes the reins of a horse to each of you, and then starts up a steep trail into the mist-shrouded hills.

You hike for hours. At many points the trail becomes treacherous, and the pace is slow. At others, you are mildly aware that you are backtracking. You are pretty sure that it would be impossible, if not foolhardy, to find one's way through the Misty Hills without a guide. These men, however, traverse them without hesitation.

Dusk is approaching as you reach your destination. Cresting a ridge, you look down upon a large valley, relatively empty of the ever-present haze. Nestled within is a town. The architecture is older than most in the region, and in the light of the setting sun, looks breathtaking.

Siraleth passes your pack horses off to other men, and the train continues off towards the town. He stands near you, for a moment, taking in the scene. "Mistyvale," he sighs. "Our capital. Count yourselves as fortunate. Few outsiders ever get to see her." With that, he leads you onwards.

You are led to an opulent estate near the edge of town. The gates are adorned with the serpent crest of the Barony. Heavily-armed soldiers stand guard, only nodding slightly at Siraleth as you pass into the grounds.

He leads you through the manor into a study. On the wall behind the desk is a large emblem of two vertical bars - one red and one white - behind a

large curved lizard. Sitting at the desk is a middle-aged woman with soft Oeridian features. Around her neck is a religious emblem - a small black mask. She spends several minutes finishing the letter she is writing, before looking up.

"My friend, back so soon? You never cease to amaze me." She slowly looks your group over, smiling to herself and nodding. "You were right... they will be perfect."

For the first time, she looks directly at you. "Please, come and sit with me. I am Imycina, Baroness of the Misty Hills. I asked that you be brought here, as I have a proposition for you."

"These are dark times, and dark times require that every good patriot do their part. Besides being the ruler of these lands, I also lead an organization called the Mist Chameleons. Our agents serve as the eyes and ears of Bissel, seeking information that others would prefer remain hidden behind closed doors. Perhaps you can understand why I could not just ask you to come. Secrets beget secrets."

"Therein lies the problem, I fear. Since the wars, the old capital city of Thornward has been occupied by a number of military forces, remnants of a past better put behind us. Just when it looked like the city would be turned back over to us, the Necromancer took the city by force. His banners still fly over its heights."

"One of our agents was on assignment within the city. We have not heard from him in over a week, and I am worried. Worse, if he has been caught, the possibility exists that his cover has been blown. If I send in a team of my agents... well, let's just say that they might be expected."

"Here is where my offer comes in. I would like you to find out what has become of our agent, and if at all possible, retrieve him. Where a team of Mist Chameleons may be noticed, you will blend right in. You are all at the beginning of promising careers, but not experienced enough to attract attention." She gestures towards your guide. "Siraleth will accompany you. He will be able to help you from the shadows. In exchange, you will be well compensated."

She sits down on the edge of her desk, and looks you over, reading your reactions. "Have I caught your interest?"

The PCs can make a Knowledge[religion] check (DC 10) to identify Lady Imycina's holy symbol as that of

Johydee, goddess of deception, espionage, and protection. She is not widely worshiped in Bissel.

The PCs may want to ask Lady Imycina a few questions. She can impart the following information:

- The missing agent was operating under the code name "Grey Egg".
- The agent had set himself up within Thornward, and was looking for possible military weak points.
- Until eight days ago, the agent was checking in every two to three days.
- The PCs will be paid at least 50 gp for investigating the disappearance, and more depending upon what the mission demands.

If the PCs decline the offer, Lady Imycina thanks them for their time, and has them escorted back to Border Watch. The adventure is over for them.

If the PCs accept the offer, continue on with Encounter 2.

All APLs

☛ **Lady Imycina Trefeloess:** Female human Rog5/Clr10 (Bluff +17, Diplomacy +24, Sense Motive +23); AL NG.

ENCOUNTER 2: EBB AND FLOW

The next morning at dawn, fast mounts are waiting for you at the Trefeloess stables. Without hesitation, you are quickly underway. By midmorning, you are back on the Watchtower Road, following it into the fens of Cullen Drae. A day later, you cross into Thornward Province.

Siraleth is much more talkative now - not exactly a quality one expects in a secret agent.

"When we get to the city, don't do anything stupid, no matter what you see. Dark things roam the streets, and the law is behind them." He shakes his head. "Believe me, I'd be thinking the same thing... just rush in and put them out. We just can't do it... not now."

"That there is the Fals River. Be careful not to cross it... terrible things lurk on the other side." His solemn gaze holds yours for a moment, before he bursts into laughter. "No, no... I'm kidding. Nothing but the Bramblewood on the other side. Means we're close to Thornward, though."

"This is tough country, though. A lot of these people signed away their souls in Baatezu blood when the Ketites came through. It's been hard for the rest of Bissel to forgive them. Memories are long."

Following the river, traffic picks up substantially as you near Thornward. Soon, the great gates come into view. A steady stream of people flows in and out of the city, under the watchful gaze of several soldiers in lacquered full plate armor.

Siraleth dismounts, and turns to the rest of your group. "So, how do you want to go about getting inside?"

The PCs need to come up with a plan for getting inside the city undetected. This should not be difficult at all, but they don't know that. Feel free to play up the tension.

The simplest way is to just walk through the front gates. The traffic is heavy enough, and the guards unmotivated enough that the PCs will never be noticed.

If the PCs spend time looking about, they can find several other gates into the city. These gates have fewer guards watching them. However, the traffic through these gates is also substantially slower, and so the guards pay closer attention.

Let the PCs sweat it out. At worst, the guards will rough them up a bit, before turning their attention to something else.

If the PCs ask Siraleth for advice, he laughs, and says that 'sometimes an answer can be found, just by paying attention'. If the PCs study the guards from afar, they can see that they aren't really paying attention to the travelers coming and going.

Once the PCs get by the gates, continue with Encounter 3.

ENCOUNTER 3: ANY PORT IN A STORM

Siraleth leads you through the streets of Thornward. At this time of the day the city is alive with activity, though somehow the whole atmosphere is subdued and depressing.

Every so often you get a clear glimpse of Thornward Keep, it's battlements rising high above the city proper. A crest, almost identical to the red and white of the Bissel heraldry but for an inverted

rook, flies over its peaks - a grim reminder of the evil that lurks within.

If the PCs can make a Knowledge[local - Sheldomar Valley] or Knowledge[nobility and royalty] (DC 10) they can identify the crest as belonging to Evard, the Necromancer. Evard adopted the crest presumably to mock the current leadership of the March.

You follow closely behind Siraeth, as he makes his way down a maze of back alleys. Suddenly, he stops at a nondescript residence and knocks on the door. He pauses for a moment, apparently counting to himself, and then knocks again with a slightly different pattern. A young woman opens the door, and greets Siraeth warmly. "Garith, it is good to see you! And these must be the children. Come, get out of the cold. We have so much catching up to do..." She ushers you inside, and closes the door behind you.

As soon as you are all inside, the woman's demeanor changes entirely. "Who are they, Siraeth?" She asks with displeasure, pointing at you. "I don't like surprises."

The agent turns to you, his voice calm. "Why don't you all head upstairs? I will join you in a moment."

The stairs lead to an upstairs bedroom that takes up the entire upper floor. There are two beds, a writing desk, an armoire and a closet. At first glance, the only sign that this room has been used is a small stack of books sitting on the desk, but upon closer examination, you can see that some clothing hangs in the closet, as well.

A few minutes pass, and Siraeth rejoins you. "It is as we feared... Grey Egg left here eight days ago, and hasn't returned." He sighs, and seems lost in a moment of thought. "Well, let's look about, and see if we can find any sign of where he was going."

Siraeth can provide the following information, if the PCs decide to question him:

- This is a Mist Chameleon safe house. It was established before the Ketite invasion, and has remained here in secret ever since. If Evard knows about this place, he hasn't acted on that knowledge.
- The woman downstairs is the keeper of the house, a Mist Chameleon sympathizer. He doesn't know her name, nor has it ever been offered. She keeps out of the agents' business, and doesn't know anything helpful.

- The housekeeper called him 'Garith', and them the 'children'. This is merely a code phrase, used to verify who they were.
- Grey Egg used this room up until he disappeared.

A successful Search check (DC 15) allows a PC to notice a series of small runes carved around the edges of the room. They can then make a Knowledge[arcana] check (DC 15) to determine that the runes are some sort of protection against scrying and divination magic.

The armoire and closet contain clothing for a medium-sized humanoid of slender build. In particular, the PCs can notice that there are only enough sets for a few days.

There are three books on the desk. The first is a work of fiction named "Open Doors and Broken Locks". The second is "Swords or Plowshares", a philosophical work about economics. The third is "Marine Life of the Nyr Dyv", a treatise on the undersea world of the Lake of Unknown Depths. There is also an inkwell and blank sheet of parchment on the desk.

On a Search check (DC 20) a PC can find a concealed switch in the armoire. If they push the switch, a muffled click is heard from the closet, and a section of one of the floor boards there can be lifted. Beneath is a hidden compartment containing a folded sheet of parchment. Give the PCs *Player Handout 1 - The Coded Note*.

The most noticeable feature of this note is the seemingly random cut out sections. However, if the PCs read the note, they may draw a connection between the note and the third book on the desk. If they ask to see page 21, give them *Player Handout 2 - The Book Excerpt*. If they lay the holes in the note over the page of the book, they should get the following message:

**Grey Egg -
Happy to work with you.
Dead drop at Thrushriver Bridge
Under third overhang from east end.
Be safe.**

If the PCs are having trouble with this puzzle, and they ask Siraeth for help, he will tell them that to decode a Mist Chameleon message one usually needs a decoder key. Grey Egg would have had such keys among his possessions, so the key must be something here in the room.

When the PCs decode the message, proceed to Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 4: WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

Siraleth looks over your shoulder at the newly-decoded message. "Excellent... this may be something we can use. I don't know who Grey Egg was contacting, but now we know how."

"This gives the location of a 'dead drop', a hidden cache in plain sight. If Grey needed to get a message or something small to this contact, he could leave it at this bridge." He points to the decoded note, emphasizing his point. "Then the contact would come by and collect it. The two never even have to meet."

"I think we should contact the author of this note. Get over to that bridge, and leave him our own message. Find out what he knows."

"I'm going to see what else I can dig up on our missing agent. When you've learned something, meet me back here. Don't do anything stupid."

If the PCs head over to the bridge described in the coded message, continue on with this:

Leaving the safe house behind, you once more make your way through the streets of Thornward. As before, people pay you little attention.

A few blocks away, you find a small covered bridge, traversing little more than a stream. A tarnished copper sign reads "Thrushriver Crossing".

As you walk under the cover of the bridge, you realize that you cannot easily see anything going on outside the bridge, and as well, anyone outside cannot see you.

Reaching under the third overhang from the left, you feel a small shelf. This must be the location described in the note. Within the hidden space you find a small piece of folded parchment. It contains a message - "Have not heard from you in a while. Please write me back. Love, your sweetheart."

The PCs can use this location to exchange messages with Grey Egg's secret contact. If they place a message in the hidden space under the bridge overhang, and leave the bridge for an hour, their message will be replaced with a reply from the contact.

If the PCs want to keep a close eye on the bridge after leaving a message, describe a number of random people crossing the bridge - for example:

- A few children with their mother, carrying buckets of water.
- A patrol of skeletons, led by a priest of Nerull.
- A couple of drunks, singing bawdy tavern songs.

In all cases, describe how they only disappear from view for a few seconds, before reappearing on the other side of the bridge. None of these are actually the contact, whom will remain unseen for now.

This is a list of likely questions the PCs may ask the contact, and suggested replies:

Who are you? - Darling, they say a proper lady never tells, and a gentleman never asks.

Why are you helping us? - Oh, my sweetheart... I long for the day there is not such distance between us, and we can be married.

What was Grey Egg looking for? - My dearest, I know there are those that would keep us apart forever. Perhaps we can find a way to change their minds. Or at worst, steal away in the middle of the night.

Where is Grey Egg? - My love, I told you that he meant nothing to me. It has been over a week since I've even spoken to him! If you do not believe me, contact Kendal at the Stone Wind Taproom - an old friend of the family. I'm sure he will provide no resistance to your inquiries.

If the PCs ask questions outside the bounds of this list, the contact will respond that either they don't know, or aren't telling.

Regardless, if the PCs ask about Grey Egg's current whereabouts, they will have a new destination - the Stone Wind Taproom. If they decide to head there, proceed to Encounter 5.

ENCOUNTER 5: RESISTANCE IS FUTILE

The Stone Wind Taproom is a small watering hole, halfway across the city. It must be popular; despite its size, it contains a decent sized crowd.

A quick word with the bartender points you towards a table near the back of the room. A man with Oeridian features sits alone.

"I understand you are looking for Kendal. Why would he want to be found by you?"

This is Kendal, a member of the local resistance movement. If the PCs mention Grey Egg, he will relax,

and answer any questions they have. He can provide the following information:

- Grey Egg contacted him about a week and a half ago.
- The agent was looking for information on a nearby building. This complex is occupied by some of Evard's soldiers, and may contain sensitive information.
- Kendal was able to provide the agent with a map of the complex, including information on a secret back entrance.
- Their best intelligence suggests that Evard's minions are not aware of this other entrance.

Kendal can furnish the PCs with a copy of the map he provided to Grey Egg. Give them Player Handout 3 - Map of the Complex.

When the PCs head to the complex, go to Encounter 6.

All APLs

◆ **Kendal:** Ftr 5 (Bluff +2, Sense Motive +3); AL LG.

ENCOUNTER 6: AN OMINOUS VIEW

If the PCs head directly for the Complex, without heading back to the safe house, Siraleth catches up with them on his own. Read the following:

As you are making your way through the city, there is a sudden whisper over your shoulder. "I finally managed to catch up with you." Siraleth steps from a nearby alley. "Find anything out?"

When the PCs head to the complex, continue with this next section:

You make your way to the eastern edge of town, and quickly locate the complex that the missing agent was supposedly investigating. Nearby, you find a spot where you can discretely survey the area.

The building is several stories tall, constructed of smooth grey stone. The windows are narrow arrow slits, and the gates into the courtyard are made of sturdy iron. A number of heavily-armed soldiers linger about, and patrols of undead frequently come and go. The whole place radiates an aura of 'go away'.

As you watch, a patrol of soldiers emerges from the complex, led by another in a much more

decorated uniform. His bald head is adorned with a number of patterned tattoos, and his face seems locked in a perpetual sneer. As you watch, he and his men pass through the gates, and head out into the city.

"That's Asper Orurn, captain of the Thornward stormtroopers. All the better that he's leaving."

Siraleth looks over the scene, a somber look on his face. "Alright, not too bad. If we can dodge past those soldiers, we shouldn't have too hard a time. You can handle a few undead, right? Don't worry about their handlers... I will take care of them."

As if on cue, the ground trembles beneath your feet. From a nearby street come several more soldiers, and a dark-robed priest. Behind them comes a terrifying sight: a giant humanoid, standing almost twenty feet tall. Its body is made of pure darkness, and even from this distance you can feel the supernatural cold that radiates from its body. It glares at one of the priests for a moment - a horrible, piercing gaze that even makes the cleric shrink back a bit - and then strides into the courtyard.

"Ahh... right. Change of plans." Siraleth scratches his head. "Let's not go in that way. That one is way out of my league. Any suggestions?"

The PCs can make a Knowledge[religion] check (DC 20) to identify the creature as a Nightwalker. If they insist upon tangling with it, it kills them with barely any effort.

If the PCs show Siraleth the map from Kendal, and mention the secret door, continue:

Siraleth looks over the map with a careful eye. "Yes... I think that could work. It's going to change our plans a bit, though. We need to get in, find Grey, and get out as quickly as possible.

"I wish we could spend time searching the rest of the building - I'm sure it holds some pretty valuable information. But we have our priorities. We'll have to make due with whatever he already learned."

Continue on with encounter 7.

All APLs (EL 16)

◆ **Soldiers** (10): Ftr 2; hp 14; AL LE.

◆ **Priests of Nerull** (3): Clr 5; hp 30; AL NE.

◆ **Nightwalker:** Huge undead; hp 231; see Monster Manual page 195.

ENCOUNTER 7: ENTRANCE EXAM

Following the map, you skirt the perimeter of the complex grounds. The back side of the building is separated from nearby buildings only by the width of an alleyway.

You find the point noted on the map. There is clearly the outline of a door here. Brushing some of the grime away from the stone wall, you find a series of words scratched onto the stone:

*I never was very good at reading
So extra help I did require
Until they took me out, and mixed me up
Now I'm a gem of meadow and mire
Speak my name.*

Siraeth looks over the words with a look of dismay. "Blast... never liked these things, myself. No argument from me if you just want to bash this door open, and forget the riddle. That just means they will hear us coming, and we'll have to be faster."

Give the PCs Player Handout 4 – Riddle on the Secret Entrance

The answer to the riddle is 'emerald'. If one of the PCs speaks this word, the door will open with a click.

The door hinges are in poor condition, so the door can easily be forced open. However, if they opt to do this, they will not earn the experience for completing this encounter. There is no keyhole, so the door cannot be opened with Open Lock.

Once the PCs bypass this door, continue with Encounter 8.

❖ **Concealed Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 8; AC 5; hp 60; Break DC 15.

ENCOUNTER 8: A TANGLED WEB

Passing through the concealed door, you find yourself in a hallway. Siraeth carefully looks down directions. He points down one direction.

"Alright, if this map is accurate, the prison section should be down that way. If Grey Egg is indeed still here, he'll be there. See if you can find him. I'll head this way, and see if I can't buy us some time to get back out of here."

With that, he quickly turns, cloak twirling behind him, and disappears down the passageway.

When the PCs are ready to search for the prison block, continue:

You make your way through the hallways of the complex unhindered. At several points, you stop to wait for patrols to pass, but none of them come close enough to cause you alarm.

With the aid of your map, you find a door with a barred window, leading into another hallway. Through the bars, you can see a number of holding cells. It looks like there may be someone in one of the cells.

The door into the prison block is locked and trapped.

❖ **Wooden Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 18; Open Locks DC 20.

❖ **Superior Masonry Walls:** 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 5; Break DC 35.

APL 2 (EL 3)

➦ **Poisoned Arrow Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +12 ranged (1d8 plus poison, arrow); poison (DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Dex/1d4 Dex); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 15.

Within the prison block is a pair of guards. If the PCs are explicitly moving silently, make Listen checks for the guards. Otherwise, they will hear the PCs opening the door (and possibly setting off the trap) and will be waiting for them. Refer to DM Aid - Map #1 - The Prison Block for the setup of this combat.

The guards will not attack until the PCs are clear of the trap – they know all too well what it could do to them if they were caught by it.

If the PCs make appreciable noise outside of the prison, then the guards will remain to the sides of the room (out of view to PCs looking through the barred window in the door. Unless they have reason to anticipate attack, they will not already have weapons drawn when the PCs enter.

Once the door is open, the PCs may make a Spot check (DC 10) to notice the guards, and act during the surprise round.

APL2 (EL 4)

➦ **Prison Guards (2):** Ftr 2 (Listen +2); hp 15; see Appendix One.

When the PCs successfully bypass these obstacles, continue:

The door to the prison block creaks open with a loud groan. The room beyond contains seven cells, containing nothing more than a sleeping pallet and a chamber pot. Only one of the cells is occupied. A pegboard on the far side of the room contains seven iron keys. Below the pegboard is a shelf holding a number of small bottles.

The prisoner laying on the floor can not easily be mistaken for someone else - certainly you have found the agent you have been looking for. His skin is a pale gray, and his oval face is featureless. His thin white hair hangs partially in front of his face, but through it you can see blank white eyes and a number of bruises - he has obviously been tortured.

He slowly looks up at you.

This is the missing agent. The door to his cell is locked, but the keys hang on the pegboard on the wall.

The shelf below the pegboard holds six clearly labeled potions of cure light wounds.

If the door is unlocked without saying the password ('Gyrathum'), an alarm spell goes off. There should be no way for the PCs to obtain this password. Continue with the following text once that occurs:

As the cell door swings open, a blaring alarm fills the air. Surely, the guards will be here any moment!

The creature within the cell strains for a second, and his alien gray form slowly shifts into that of a nondescript human peasant. He tries to stand, but is too weak to do so on his own.

When the PCs decide to make for the exit, continue with Encounter 9.

Grey Egg's injuries are heavy enough that he cannot defend himself in battle, so no combat statistics are needed.

All APLs

☛ **Agent Grey Egg:** Doppelganger Spy Rog6; hp 40; AL NG.

ENCOUNTER 9: FOURTH AND GOAL

You quickly retrace your path back through the complex. At several points, you hear the shouts and

heavy footsteps of guards, but they are headed for the alarm and not for you.

Coming around the last corner, you come face to face with a large group of skeletal forms. Inspecting the recently-opened concealed door - your only exit - are two dark-robed priests, adorned with polished skull-and-sickle symbols of the Reaper. Noticing you, one of them turns, and grins wickedly. She begins chanting a prayer in a soft, yet menacing voice.

Suddenly, there is a flurry of movement and the flash of a blade from the far corridor. A short sword slices through two of the skeletons, and the cleric's spell turns into screams of pain. "I've got this one," Siraeth shouts over the crowd. "Start working on those foul things!"

Siraeth will be able to dispatch one priest and a number of skeletons without any trouble, leaving one priest and eight skeletons for the PCs to defeat.

The hallway is only 10 feet wide here, so PCs should be able to use that to their advantage, only having to deal with a few skeletons at once. Refer to DM Aid - Map #2 - The Prison Hallway for the setup of this combat.

APL 2 (EL 5)

☛ **Priest of Nerull:** Clr 3; hp 24; see Appendix One.

☛ **Skeletons, Human Warrior** (8): hp 8; see Monster Manual page 225.

Tactics: The priest will hide behind his skeletons, intent on letting them do his dirty work.

If he has reason to believe that one of the PCs is a cleric (an exposed holy symbol, clerical robes, etc.), he will bolster the undead, and then cast *desecrate*.

The priest will try to retain his hold person spell to use in the case that a PC can directly threaten him.

In all cases, he will not use his spontaneously inflict ability on any of his spells above first level - these spells are too valuable to him.

If the PCs succeed, and escape with the missing agent, they earn both the *Favor of the Mist Chameleons* and *Enmity of the Thornward Guard* rewards.

Once the PCs opponents have been defeated, continue on to the Conclusion.

CONCLUSION: PERCHANCE TO DREAM

Your foes dispatched, you hear the sound of reinforcements running towards you from the hallways to either side. You waste no time getting through the concealed door, and out into the streets of Thornward.

The morning sun streaming through the window of your inn room wakes you. Yawning and stretching, you survey the scene outside. The horses are hitched and the wagons prepared for another day of travel. Another day of this, and you should be in Cullen Drae.

You spend a moment pondering the dream you had last night. It was so vivid and exciting! You marvel that you can recall almost every detail. Then, you notice the note and bag of coins sitting on the table next to the bed.

"My dearest heroes,

It is times like these that I resent the nature of our profession. I wish that I could extend my gratitude in person, but for our own security we must conclude it like this.

Bed rest has done our friend well, and he will make a full recovery. The knowledge he has brought home will do Bissel a great service, as we hoped. If it were not for you, he would not have come home to us at all.

I hope the coin we are leaving will help express our appreciativeness of your efforts. As well, always know that we will be keeping an eye on you from the shadows.

Good journeys and good destinations,

The Lady of the Mists"

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 (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 8

Survive the arrow trap

APL 2: 90 xp.

Defeat the prison guards

APL 2: 120 xp.

Encounter 9

Defeat the priest and undead patrol

APL 2: 150 xp.

Story Award

Successfully answer the riddle in Encounter 7

APL 2: 20 xp.

Escape from the complex with the missing agent in Encounter 9

APL 2: 20 xp.

Discretionary Roleplaying Award

APL2: 50 xp.

Total possible experience

APL2: 450 xp.

TREASURE SUMMARY

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

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

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

treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter 8:

APL 2: L: 163 gp; C: 0 gp; M: *potion of cure light wounds* x6 (4 gp each).

Encounter 9:

APL 2: L: 306 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp.

Conclusion:

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 100 gp; M: 0 gp.

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed):

APL 2: L: 469 gp; C: 100 gp; M: 25 gp – Total: 594 gp (450 gp).

ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

Special

☛ **Favor of the Mist Chameleons:** You have done a great favor for the spies of Bissel, and they will not forget it. You never know when having a hidden ally may come

in handy. This will have consequences in future adventures.

☛ **Enmity of the Thornward Guard:** You have broken past the security of Evard's guards, stolen something of importance, and then gotten away. The guards that failed to stop you were punished for your success. They will remember you. This will have consequences in future adventures.

APPENDIX ONE – MONSTER AND NPC STATISTICS

APL 2

ENCOUNTER 8

Prison Guard: Male human Ftr2; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 19; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +2; Grp +5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/19-20, masterwork short sword); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+3/19-20, masterwork short sword); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Listen +2; Improved Initiative, Improved Shield Bash, Skill Focus (intimidate), Weapon Focus (short sword).

Possessions: scale mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork short sword.

ENCOUNTER 9

Priest of Nerull: Male human Clr3; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 3d8+6; hp 24; Init 0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +2; Grp +4; Atk +5 melee (2d4+3/x4, masterwork scythe); Full Atk +5 melee (2d4+3/x4, masterwork scythe); SA rebuke undead, spells; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 10.

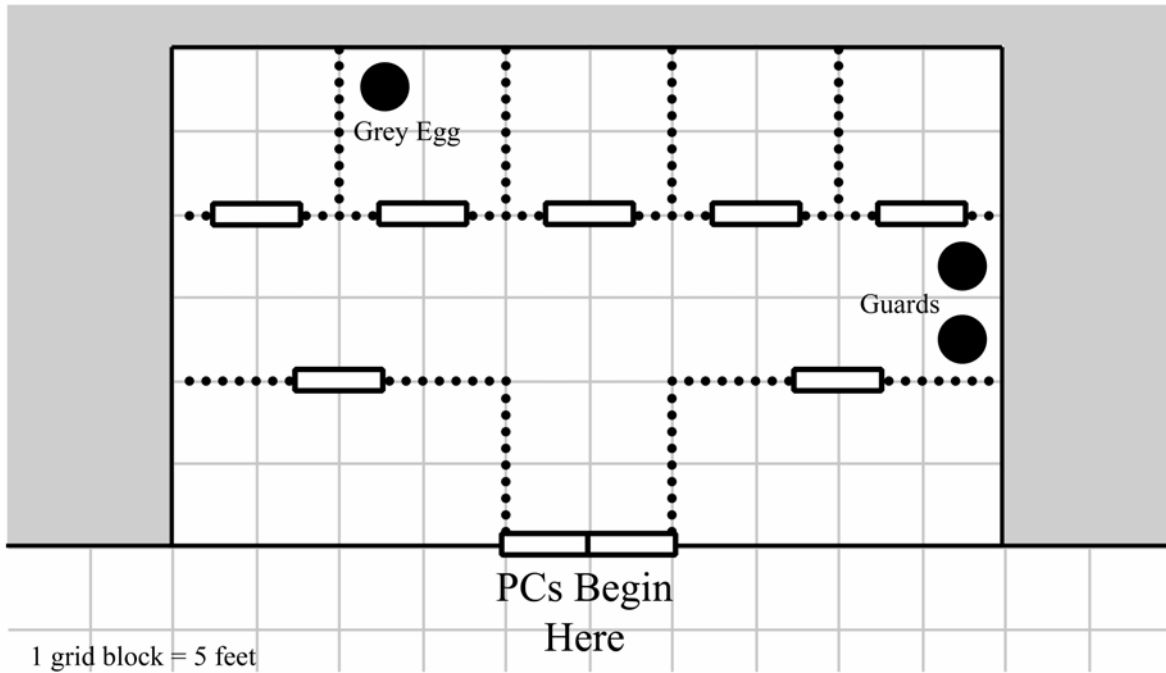
Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Diplomacy +6, Spellcraft +6; Combat Casting, Improved Turning, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scythe).

Possessions: half-plate, masterwork scythe.

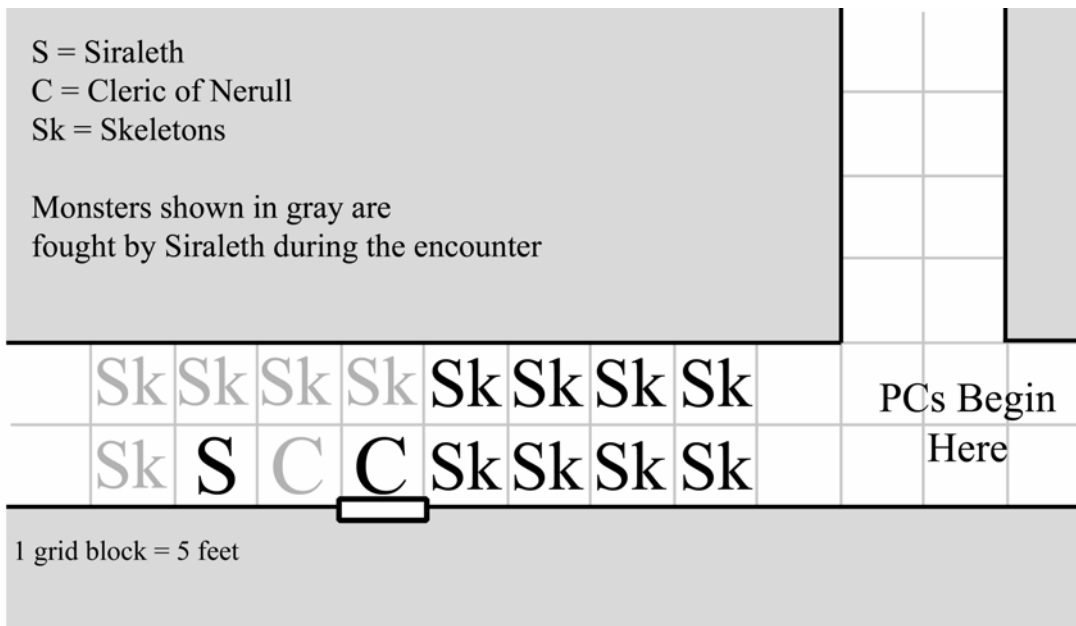
Spells Prepared (4/3+1/2+1; base DC = 13 + spell level): *o-guidance* (2), *resistance* (2); 1st-*bless*, *cause fear*, *doom*, *protection from good**; 2nd-*desecrate**, *hold person*, *silence*

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil (You cast evil spells at +1 caster level.); *Trickery* (Add Bluff, Disguise, and Hide to your list of cleric class skills.)

DM AID - MAP #1 – THE PRISON BLOCK



DM AID - MAP #2 – THE PRISON HALLWAY



PLAYER HANDOUT 1 – THE CODED NOTE

Dear Uncle Silas,

Thank you so much for offering to loan me a book from your collection! I have been so bored ever since I became ill. Books are such a terrific diversion.

I think I know which book I would like to borrow. I fear with my condition, I will never get to go fishing again, so I would like to borrow that one.

My Mother said you will be visiting again in twenty-one days. I look forward to seeing you again.

*Your nephew,
Thomas*

PLAYER HANDOUT 2 – THE BOOK EXCERPT

is, of course, the most interesting aspect of life in the Nyr Dyv to most observers. To the more enlightened academic, however, the most fascinating creatures are those that can not be seen - either due to extremely small size or the lack of daylight in the depths.

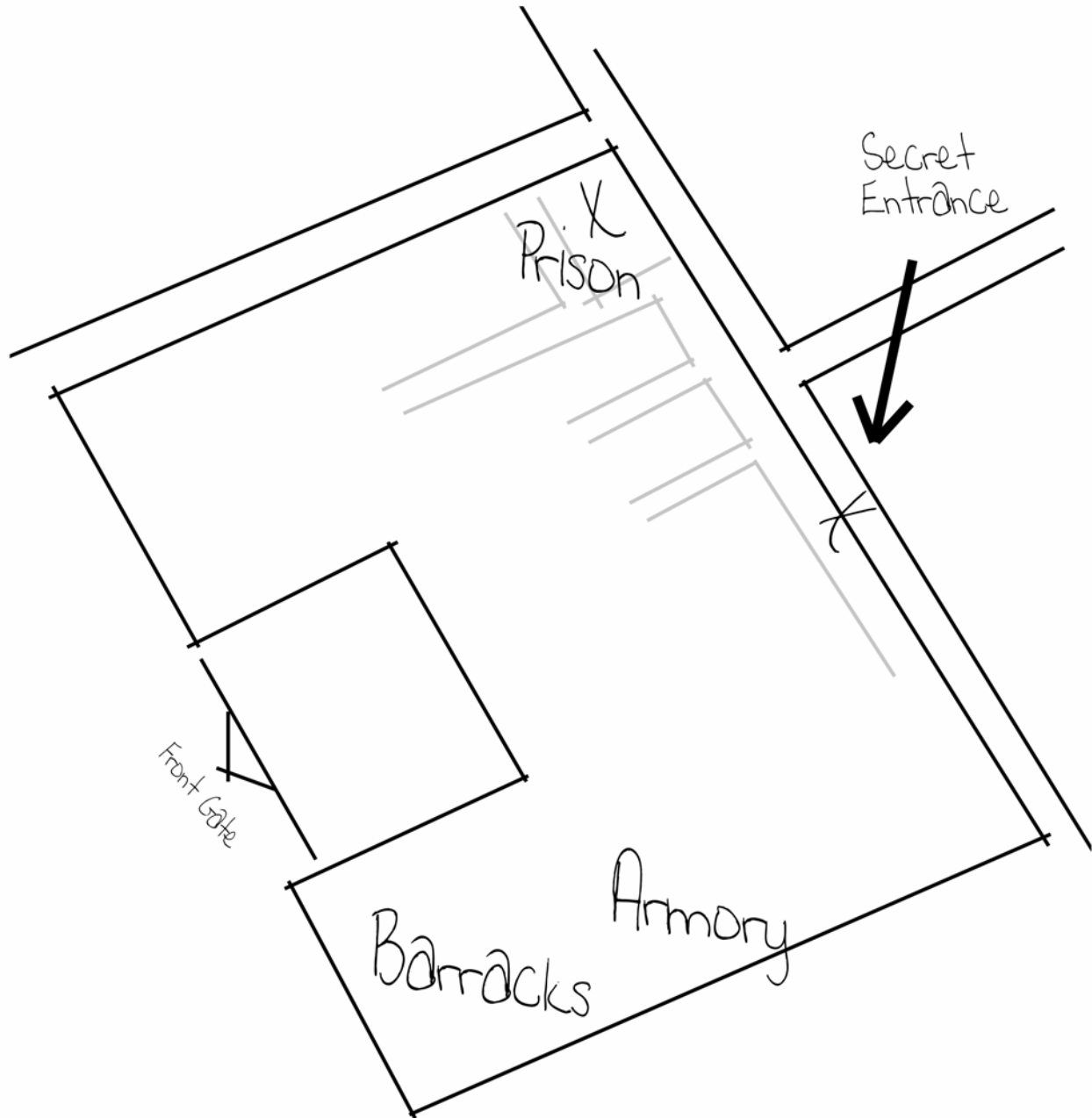
The deepest explored portions of the Lake of Unknown Depths harbor great numbers of species, many of which are still unknown. The greatest delves into the darkness have gained us extraordinary information - that entire circles of life happily survive together without influence from our surface world. Since there is no known authoritative inventory of the fauna of the depths, our studies must be conducted with the results of these expeditions.

Although a young science, the methods used by these intrepid explorers to catalog the creatures of the underwater deadlands has produced results of satisfactory potential. Looking at these results, early archivists rushed into the assumption that the lake depths were no more populated than a river bed. In modern times, we realize that each exploration is but a single ridge, in a mountain range of under-lake life.

The third recorded expedition into the Nyr Dyv, for example, explored a single overhang, where a large plate of stone stretched from a stable flooring out into open waters. No fewer than ten kinds of beast were discovered living within this domain. Obviously, to assume those ten creatures to be the only inhabitants of the lake would be folly.

A much safer - and more scientifically accurate - statement would certainly be to state that we know of a number of species noted in each individual expedition, but that our understanding ends there. Certainly, there are many thousands of forms of life to be found, and as our methods improve, both magical and mundane, we find that we

PLAYER HANDOUT 3 – MAP OF THE COMPLEX



PLAYER HANDOUT 4 – RIDDLE ON THE SECRET ENTRANCE

I never was very good at reading
So extra help I did require
Until they took me out, and mixed me up
Now I'm a gem of meadow and mire
Speak my name.