

SHLI-12

THE ELDRITCH WAVE

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK®
Shield Lands Regional Adventure
Version 1

by Jon Cazares

One year ago a tomb was opened and a powerful artifact called, "Truth" was stolen. Soon there after an enigmatic group of prophets gave vision of a wretched sea demon summoned with this artifact to wreck havoc upon the Shield Lands. The race to recapture this relic and stop the summoning has ended abruptly, the Shield Lands have lost. Truth has opened, the demon has arrived, the Eldritch Wave bleeds. An adventure for characters level 3-8.

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

PREPARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core 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.

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:

- **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.
- **Partial scoring:** The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
- **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" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

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

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

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

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

DETERMINING AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL (APL)

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):

Determine the character level for each PC participating in the adventure.

If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely 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 following 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.

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

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

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

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 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.

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 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 a free 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.

A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can “enlist an iconic.” The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Miale, 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.

If you are using a 591 CY adventure (campaign year 1) that uses the old Tiers, assume that the Tier multiplied by 2 is the APL suitable for that encounter.

IS IT A FULL MOON?

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

LIFESTYLE

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

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

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

Common: You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession

(adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

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

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

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

Note: These costs are slightly higher than average for Living Greyhawk events. This is intended to simulate the effects of the Shield Lands' serious overpopulation problem on the local economy.

Lifestyle Cost	Skill Modifier	
Destitute	17 sp	-2
Poor	5 gp	-1
Common	15 gp	0
High	300 gp	+1
Luxury	600 gp	+2

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In several previous Shield Lands modules, the pathfinders have had the opportunity to gather information about a stolen artifact of kuo-toa design. It was discovered that this artifact, called "Truth" (a simple necklace of seaweed and shells) somehow housed the soul of a demon called, "The Eldritch Wave". The history behind this demon was scarce but from a colony of water naga (allied to the Shield Lands) it was found that three centuries ago the kuo-toa created this artifact and summoned the demon. For reasons unknown they lost control of it and it nearly destroyed their underwater city. A great priest of their order created a burning ritual to end the life of the demon for no other weapon or spell could harm it.

Thus slain, they carried it far away and entombed the artifact as they had no idea how to destroy it. They sealed it up and after centuries, forgot it existed except in their nightmares.

A few years ago Waqounis, the mad wizard who rules the occupying forces of Axeport, has uncovered the ritual to summon the water demon. One year ago he obtained the artifact itself. Over the course of the year he has made his final preparations to bring forth the demon.

Although he despises the Shield Lands and its people his true hatred is for someone else; Vayne, the

current leader of all the occupied forces in the Shield Lands.

Waqounis knows that Vayne is more powerful than him and an open confrontation is out of the question. Years of treachery and plotting have brought him here. He will summon this water demon and cast it against the city of Admundfort, where his hated enemy sleeps.

When the demon destroys the blockade and kills Vayne, Waqounis will declare himself the new leader of the Shield Lands.

Waqounis has gone to great lengths to prepare this and has even invited his new ally, General At-ur Rehmat into Axeport for the feud between the General and Vayne is legendary in the lands of Iuz.

General Rehmat has recently arrived in Axeport with a hundred troops and his personal bodyguards. He will enjoy watching Waqounis destroy Vayne although he himself is unsure how this will be accomplished.

Vayne himself has heard rumors and reports of the plotting of Waqounis but as of yet, he has not been able to determine exactly what is happening. His spies have not been able to uncover much. He knows enough to make him suspicious so he has secretly built a passenger ship and had it rendered invisible with mighty magic.

Over the year he has been stock piling undead and has packed them into the ship, which he has recently sent to the shore of Axeport. Vayne will unleash the undead upon the town if anything suspicious happens.

The summoning of the demon took place hours before the characters find out about any suspect events. In a previous module, ("Enter the Naga"), the pathfinders befriended a colony of water naga and now the Shield Lands have allied themselves with the creatures. The naga representative, Radiant Sparkle, has been sent to retrieve either those he knows or anyone who can help kill the Eldritch Wave.

He arrives in Critwall just as characters are returning from the excursion to Gensal ("The Invisible Hand").

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The characters have very recently returned from Gensal and are recovering from the journey when Radiant Sparkle, the water naga, contacts them. The naga tells them of the great danger, the Eldritch Wave has been summoned and its greatest power is that it can dominate the minds of water beasts and creatures both intelligent and simple. The naga gathers the characters and teleports them near Axeport.

Radiant Sparkle gives them a small black box, slightly warm to the touch and tells them they must use this against the Eldritch Wave, it is the only known way to destroy it. "You must open it in the water, within a stones throw of the creature". The naga cannot get close enough to use it or the creature will dominate their minds and control them. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the naga to resist the call of the beast, soon they will have to answer it and go to the side of the demon, as servants.

The naga also tells the characters to recover the artifact, it is probably untouched wherever Waqounis used it to transform the hag; find it!

Characters must sneak into Axeport (not hard since most of Waqounis troops are patrolling or watching the demon summon water creatures.

Characters meet a Djinni who says he is the unwilling servant of the "General" (that's all he calls him) and warns the characters he knows they are good and does not wish to kill them but if he is ordered, he is compelled to obey. He says he will do what he can to help. Characters sneak into and around Axeport, killing some guards. They probably get split up. Some find the sacrifice room and recover the artifact. The others overhear Waqounis and his visitors discussing plans and with the help of the Djinn, escape without notice. The characters then recover the artifact, regroup and head out to confront the sea beast, during which they have a chance to free some captives that may or may not be useful.

During the PCs' daring infiltration there is currently a war going on outside Axeport. Vayne unleashes his undead onto the unsuspecting humanoids on the beach. Chaos ensues as they battle each other.

Then Vayne teleports a circle of wizards in to kill Waqounis personally and deal with the demon.

Characters can constantly see signs of this battle as they sneak around the city. The outcome is never in question. Vayne's zombies start munching Waqounis' humanoids until the Eldritch Wave attacks. The wizards that are teleported in are powerless against it, their mightiest spells have no effect, and nothing seems to harm the beast. When Waqounis' humanoids see the Eldritch Wave killing all the wizards and zombies, they regroup and counter attack. Eventually, Waqounis' troops win.

As Characters get to the beach, the battle has already ended. Then Vayne teleports in with his high priest and they attack the Eldritch Wave. There is a great magic battle and if the characters want they can watch but once again, the outcome is never in question. The Eldritch Wave kills the high priest and injures Vayne (who escapes).

It's now or never. Characters have to enter the water (while avoiding the massing, writhing sea beasts that are everywhere!), and be within a hundred paces of the Eldritch Wave.

If successful, when they open the box a burning hand explodes out, through the air towards the Eldritch Wave. It engulfs the demon in magical flame that eventually burns it to death no matter what it tries.

Once it's dead most of the sea creatures it summoned frenzy. Some just swim off of course but some attack each other. Then Waqounis comes from his hiding spot when his master plan is destroyed. He swiftly finds the reason and sends off troops to kill the characters with overwhelming odds.

Then the naga come. It's simple, the naga tell characters to put the artifact in the box and give it to them, then the naga will rescue them and bring them back to Critwall. If characters refuse they are on their own.

Without the naga help, it would be possible, but very difficult to escape Waqounis and his troops.

When characters make it back to Critwall, there is a big celebration as the Eldritch Wave has killed and Gensal has been recovered.

GENERAL SHIELD LANDS INFORMATION

Because of 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.

INTRODUCTION

Note: Characters have been on patrol for five days, in which case the army has paid for their meals and has given them shelter (tents), lifestyle costs for this module are half normal costs.

With the recovery of Gensal, one week past, the weather has grown colder and the soldiers of the Shield Lands have been stretched to nearly their limits. The Pathfinders are on full alert and are detailed to patrol constantly. Five days on patrol, two days off. Your fifth day is over; you're cold, tired and miserable.

Unfortunately, your return to Critwall is not exactly heartwarming. A heavy fog has blanketed the land for the last few days and the air is frigid. No heroes' welcome as those returning from Torkeep or Gensal received. Only a few random cheers and sparse applause as you pass through tent town. Then as you near the east gate of Critwall, a member of the Open Spirit blesses you.

The streets of the city are as empty as they can be in the miserable weather. In the distance, you can hear several priests of Pholtus singing a somber prayer, while further away dogs bark furiously, voicing their displeasure at the grim mood.

A few passersby call out greetings of return, "May the Axe grow great pathfinders!" but other than that, nothing.

As your units break up heading to various homes the (# of players) of you are approached by a single man in a cream robe. He is pale, bald and has sharp yellow eyes.

For those that have met Radiant Sparkle and played previous Shield Lands modules read the following:

"Welcome home friends of the air. It is I, Radiant Sparkle. I am glad of your timely arrival for it has happened. The worst of all tidings, the mad wizard has summoned the Eldritch Wave, already as we speak the demon calls forth those from below the depths to its side. Creatures long since undisturbed; behemoths of

the Lake of Unknown Depths. I did not ... know how horrible this could be. I never imagined the destruction.

He pauses to gather his composure, "My queen has uncovered the burning ritual to end the demon but we dare not get close enough to perform it; our wills would bend before the Eldritch Wave. You must take it within a stone's throw of the demon while both of you are in the water. Then open this box but take care not to open it before you are close enough." He hands over a small wooden box, simple in design with one metal hinge. It is warm to the touch and very light, it couldn't hold anything larger than a dagger.

"There is something else as well. The divining of the queen has seen another outsider in your town of Axeport; however, she has seen its aura to be alive. Perhaps it can offer aid or assistance to you, although I must admit we are ignorant as to its exact nature. Further divining has been horribly unsuccessful, the Eldritch Wave seems to devour possibilities. Follow me, time grows short."

With that he turns quickly and heads off into the foggy streets of Critwall.

If the characters have not played SHL01-05 Enter the Naga, read the following introduction instead of the one above:

As reserve soldiers in the Shield Lands army, you pathfinders are summoned before your duty officer. Although you are not told what for, the runner made it sound important.

But then again, they always make it sound important. You are brought to a soldier's tent outside the city in Tent Town. There you are introduced to several soldiers and wizards.

The sergeant in charge is a tall, wiry man who looks tired and wears only common clothes.

"Pathfinders. This is Radiant Sparkle (indicating one of the wizards, with pale yellow eyes), he is a water naga and his race has helped us in the past. They have information about something important happening right now. You are assigned to assist the water naga in any way you can."

With that the human/naga says, "Thank you. The worst of all tidings, the mad wizard has summoned the Eldritch Wave, a water demon of great power. Already as we speak the demon calls forth those from below the depths to its side. Creatures long since undisturbed; behemoths of the Lake of Unknown Depths. I did not... know how horrible this could be. I never imagined the destruction."

He pauses to gather his composure, "My queen has uncovered the burning ritual to end the demon but we dare not get close enough to perform it; our wills would bend before the Eldritch Wave. You must take it within a stone's throw of the demon while both you and it are in the water. Then open this box but take care not to open it before you are close enough." He hands over a small wooden box, simple in design with one metal hinge. It is warm to the touch and very light, it couldn't hold anything larger than a dagger.

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Those that follow can ask him a few questions along the way, he knows the following if questioned.

- The summoning took place this morning, much earlier than anyone expected.
- He does not know the extent of the powers of the Eldritch Wave, only that it can dominate the minds of sea creatures.
- He knows that its first summoning, centuries ago, it almost destroyed an entire kuo-toa city before it was killed with the ritual of the burning man. Nothing could harm it, nothing could stop it.
- The Queen has read your aura's to be alive (some of them), it is in your destiny to help. (This is only for characters who played "Enter the Naga")
- If characters do not already know, he tells them that the artifact is, "a simple necklace of seaweed, shells and rock."

With that Radiant Sparkle leads them out of Critwall through the east gate and out of tent town. He is very frantic at this point; he has not spoken to any "superiors" of the Shield Lands yet. He is running through town to find someone to send, although he probably won't admit to that, perhaps making a lie or two to get the characters to go. Another thing of import, he never really says when/if/how the characters are going to get home. If characters ask about this his response is a pretty simple, "Preparations have been made."

He finally brings them to three other nagas (all in human form). Allow them to react to this as Radiant Sparkle joins the other human/naga in the preparation of the teleporting ritual.

Radiant Sparkle beckons you forth inside the rock circle they have formed on the ground.

"Enter the circle, we will send you to the shores of Axeport. Remember, find the artifact, it must return to the water where we can safeguard it. Go undisturbed...no, that is not the right word...undetected. The odds would be overwhelmingly against you should you be discovered. Good luck."

Suddenly, you are somewhere else.

Characters did not have time for much preparing nor for any excess gathering of equipment before they are ushered on this quest. Deny any sort of request for, "Can I make sure I have such and such with me before we leave". Unless the characters has an obviously good reason why he/she should be carrying something, allow a very minimum amount of gear. No animals (save animal

companions and familiars) are allowed to go. This is supposed to be a mission of infiltration, inform the characters of this obvious conclusion before they try to bring along their kegs of ale, backpacks of gear or whatever other inane things they may attempt to bring.

Time is important in this scenario, keep pressing them forward, don't let them hole up somewhere and try to rest, keep them moving. Remind them that things are happening all around them while they wait, or nap or rest or whatever.

A few times during the scenario they will encounter creatures attempting to alert others or sound a general alarm. Should anyone successfully sound an alarm, TRIPLE the encountered # of creatures (including further wandering encounters) for each Tier for the remainder of the scenario. This will reflect the tripling of guards in strategic places through the town. Should this happen, the characters are most likely doomed, which is unfortunate. This will blow the poor EL out of the water but they were warned in advance of the obvious danger.

A random encounter can happen during each of the encounters except for Encounter 5, which is essentially a wandering encounter in and of itself. Every Encounter will have a chance for its separate wandering encounter listed under the Development section, as well as what the wandering encounter would be.

Because of the possibility of these extra time consuming combat encounters, should the need arise to cut something because time is running short to finish the scenario, the Judge should cut Encounter 4 and if need be, Encounter 5. This will not change the scenario at all.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE DJINN OF AXEPORT

You are standing on the beach. The waves are crashing furiously against the rocky shore, though strangely enough, there isn't much wind. To the east you see the town of Axeport, even from here you can see a large gathering of men, perhaps humanoids on the coast.

More noticeably is the trashing, jumping mass of...creatures in the water in front of the city. The mass of water creatures is large. Very, very large.

The sun is high but the day is cold, even now your breath freezes and streams from your mouth.

You are perhaps an hour from the town, maybe a bit less, it's hard to tell with the surrounding terrain, which is covered in small hills.

Allow the characters to react before reading the following but not before they approach Axeport:

You've crossed about half the distance to Axeport. The land is hideously scarred. There are piles of refuse everywhere as you approach the town, garbage, corpses and worse. Were it not for the cold, carrion would be everywhere. As it is, there are several animal scavengers that pay you no mind as you pass. Starving, they dig into the filthy piles, searching for food.

You pass a small graveyard, long since over run by troops, weeds and worse. All the graves have been dug up, there are no bodies.

Several times you see simple symbols made from rock piles or markings of ill omen and once, a group of small wooden stakes about three feet high with skeletal human parts nailed to them. Most likely, religious offerings to Luz.

Then suddenly, where once there was nothing, a giant is standing.

Over 10 feet tall, he wears very little clothing, only saggy pants. He is well muscled with long dark hair, braided. He carries no weapons. His skin is the color of wet sand.

"I am Murzio, the 14th Baron of Zig, elder klessa and loyal retainer to She Who Breathes for the Air." He pauses, fills his voice with contempt and says, "Slave of the Master. You seem lost. Do not attack me, I am not your enemy."

The characters will obviously pelt him with questions of who, what, where, when, why. He pauses for a moment as he considers them (he detects evil). Then:

"Listen carefully, I do not have much time before I am missed. I am bound by ageless laws to serve my Master, much to my disgust. It is good that I sense the gentle air in your souls, I agree with the path you have chosen for your life. Perhaps you can halt this monstrous event. I'm sure you know of the outsider, a foul one this water demon. Even something I am unfamiliar with. I cannot, directly assist you, nor can I, in any way, betray my current Master. Do not disturb his belongs, nor engage him in combat in any way. I cannot even tell you his name but I can tell you I do not serve the mad human Waqounis. With that, it shouldn't be difficult to determine who pulls my ethereal strings. Perhaps I will be able to hold my tongue, if he asks the right way, yes with a bit of luck, I will be able to avoid speaking of you. I think I can offer you that."

He pauses again, this time you can see the conflict on his face, "They are everywhere. Do not ... there is a...Blood and Ashes I cannot say! I think I can...yes, it is the Master's true enemy, I can tell you that this demon has been summoned to kill a man named Vayne. My Master and the mad human hate this Vayne above all else. They will launch attack against a city called Adumndfort, where Vayne sleeps. My Master has come to watch this. I—"

The man stops speaking for a moment, then continues as if nothing stopped him, "They are calling me, I think before I leave I can dream something for you." He smiles a sad smile, "Ahhhhh, I am breaking rules I know, I will be punished for this when I return to Air, alas, the torture will be worth it. I give to you a gift." He picks up some dirt and rubs it together, it becomes a miniature whirlwind in his hands. While your eyes adjust to the odd beauty of it you notice a change in your armors (should you be wearing any), he has transformed your armor into simple, warm peasant clothing. "Yes, that will do. When you sleep next, you will wake very suddenly and most uncomfortably when they revert. Take great care in this town, danger is all around you. Should you ever become separated, I suggest a rendezvous point at the southwest corner, it is the least patrolled area. "

Then the man disappears instantly.

With that the characters can do nothing but continue to Axeport. Allow them to react to the strange visit. Several

magical knowledge skills (DC 15) may be appropriate to determine that the man was an outsider (DC 20 to know he was a Noble Djinn).

He used powerful magic to transform their armor into mundane clothing; however, the clothing still retains the potency of whatever armor the character was wearing (The Djinn just didn't tell them this). Thus if someone was wearing full plate, then they still receive the AC bonus of the plate but they have the mobility of someone in normal clothing. They receive the best of both possible worlds. An arcane knowledge of DC 20 reveals to the character that he or she is totally unfamiliar with any magic that could accomplish what the man seemed to perform so simply. When next they sleep, the clothing will transform back into what armor it was previously.

As they approach and enter Axeport:

The town of Axeport has been occupied for several years now and it no longer much resembles what it once did. Trappings, orcish graffiti and religious and superstitious paraphernalia litter the buildings walls.

In fact, the architecture of the buildings themselves have been altered. There are crude defensible fences everywhere and banners and other obvious signs of marking territories.

Immediately you see two distinct markers painted on walls or on cloth banners nailed to them. The first is a burning tree on a blood red background, the second, is an Orcish word (anyone who reads orcish can translate it as, "the favored") in bright red writing, over a blood red fist on a black back ground. These markings are on most of the buildings or tents. The latter is the more common.

Large, strange rock, sculptures of bizarrely twisted weapons is seen here and there. An impression of art perhaps?

Despite the crashing of the water from the beach, there is the odd assortment of town noises. Neighing horses, the fall of a metal workers' hammers, shouts, the popping and crackling of burning pit fires and occasional bouts of laughter.

There is an overwhelming stench of wet dog, and burning meat.

The territory markers belong to two separate clans of Orcs. The Burning Tree and Blood Fist (who call themselves "the favored"). Neither tribe likes the other much but that won't matter much to the invading characters, as they hate humans and demi-humans even more. The only possible advantage this brings the characters is with charm spells or any other magical way of manipulating the orcs. If charmed, it would be child's play to talk another orc into killing someone from the opposite tribe. No problem.

Every orc wears some sort of symbol of his clan, even it's as simple as the grip of his weapon being marked somehow.

Axeport, while being only a town, is still too large for an effective map. The characters will find a logical progression of where to go no matter where they enter the town. If they insist on going somewhere not detailed in the scenario, the Judge can either discourage them by saying something like, "As you near the (insert name) building, you get cut off by two check points, filled with armed guards. This is obviously not the best way to go."

But still, there are over a hundred buildings, tents, shops and structures the characters could potential enter, most just housing for troops or food storage; too many to detail in this adventure. The Judge is free to flesh some of them out for variety should characters have to enter any of them. Refer to the appendix on The Town of Axeport for some ideas of what may or may not be in the city; however, once characters enter the town, it will become pretty obvious for them where they should head and then they get caught up in things on the way.

The best way to get their destination would be to use a *detect magic* spell. The powerful magic that has been used is still in the ether of the area and a *detect magic* lights up Waqounis' house like a lantern. If characters head right to his house, skip to Encounter 3.

Creatures:

➤ **Murzio, Noble Djinn** (1): hp 65; see *Monster Manual* page 94-96.

Murzio's current master is General Rehmat. Murzio serves him very unwillingly. Until the General uses his third wish, Murzio is at the mercy of the General. Because Rehmat is too arrogant to ask anyone for help, he assumes he knows everything he needs to know about the Djinn. He is wrong. The ONLY requirement Murzio has to the General is to grant 3 wishes. This means that Murzio can lie to the General as much as he wants. There are certain, binding rules the djinn must follow however and is thus prevented from revealing information about its current master. Which is why he was not able to tell the characters any information but explains why can return to Rehmat's side and say, "I have searched the town again, here is no sign of enemy forces."

ALL APLS

➤ **Burning Tree Orcs** (4): hp 8; see *Monster Manual* page 146-7.

Development: On a 1 in 4 chance the characters, upon entering the city are spotted by 4 Burning Tree orcs. All three have two throwing spears each and great axes. They are currently stomping their feet around a pit fire for warmth when they spot the characters from a distance of 110-200 feet. None of them think of sounding the alarm. At first they do not think the characters are enemies. They know the General has brought in dozens of human soldiers. Only if they notice halflings, gnomes or dwarves do they know to attack immediately. If they see only humans, then they automatically have a 1 for initiative. If the characters do not immediately attack then on the next round the orcs notice they are enemies and attack.

Tactics: Two charge and two move cautiously up while throwing spears until they too are in melee range. If the first two charging orcs are killed immediately, they try to flee. If they flee and characters cannot catch them and/or kill them in 2 rounds, they get to a gong alarm and bang it three times. Within seconds, similar gongs are heard throughout the town.

ENCOUNTER 2: THE VISITOR

As you move through the dirt roads of Axeport, staying close to the buildings you hear a great noise from the shore.

Screaming rage and massive battle sounds filter through the town. You see a group of twenty or so human soldiers rushing towards the beach. Only seconds later, another dozen orcs follow. All of them were well armed. None of them even glanced in your direction.

Allow characters to react. They will probably want to move in for a closer look. If they don't head towards the beach to check things out, then skip this encounter and move on to Encounter Three.

You move towards the street, heading down a narrow alley behind several small buildings that are packed close together.

You finally come out and staying behind a shed and a thick wood fence, you see what's happening on the beach.

Combat. Hundreds of troops, mostly orcs, but with some men are battling lurching zombies. The orcs on the beach are falling back and crashing into the human and orc reinforcements who were rushing forward to flank the zombies, several human soldiers are shouting orders but no one can hear them over the deafening noise of combat and the writhing mass of water that is crashing onto the shore. There is a large beached ship down the shore, how you or anyone else missed it approaching is unknown. Of course how it got passed the sea creatures is a greater mystery.

Then you see it. The Eldritch Wave. It's about fifty or sixty feet off shore, floating a dozen feet above the water. It's a one eyed horror and looks to be about twice the size of a human. From this distance, you can't make out much detail.

All around it, in the water below, the creatures are trashing, jumping and attacking each other. It's chaotic, and very frightening. You have no clue how you will ever get close enough to open the box, not if you and the creature have to be in the water.

Not without dying anyway.

Allow the characters to react again. After a few moments of combat, read:

The battle continues, more human and orc soldiers are pouring onto the beach every minute. Soon the shore is covered with blood, corpses and the dying.

The screaming human sergeants regain some order and the troops start pushing the zombies back. Suddenly, from the water, all manner of...things crawl up.

Large fish-like creatures surf up onto the beach and smash into the zombies from behind, then they begin trashing back and forth, slowly moving back towards the water. Tentacles, explode out from the Nyr Dyv and drag zombies into the writhing mass of water creatures. Man shaped things, bloated and pale as rancid milk stagger out from the water to attack the undead. There seems to be no end of sea beasts. Once again there is nothing but chaos.

The Eldritch Wave remains unmoving through out the battle. You expect the combat to be over in seconds and as fascinating as this is, it is not helping you find the artifact.

If characters want to waste their time further by watching what happens, it's pretty dull. After the sea creatures crawl back into the water, the humans and orcs start stripping the dead of gear. Then large contingents of soldiers (human and orc) head off to try and drag the ship further up on to shore. This takes a few hours. If characters still are staying around watching, perhaps waiting for the Eldritch Wave to come closer, it doesn't. If they keep waiting, they automatically have their wandering encounter. Then remind them that they are not finding the artifact sitting here.

When they return to searching for the artifact, read the following:

You move back into Axeport, heading away from the beach where the soldiers are concentrated. You spot something out of place; a large grandiose tent. Not like the others, thicker, warmer and well guarded. It has two banners, one the banner of the armies of Iuz, the other a personal banner with a large black mountain being cracked in half by a silver spike.

There is a lot of activity in this part of town. There are several smaller tents and more than a dozen horses, tethered. There are also armed humans everywhere. You note however, none of them are wearing marking colors identifying themselves. Any of your fighters could blend right in, as long as they were human.

The personal banner is the mark of General At-ur Rehmat (Heraldry: DC 20). Any Shield Land native who recognized the banner knows who he is, Rehmat was the general who lead the vast army of Iuz into the Shield Lands and conquered the nation. Then he fortified himself in Critwall with a thousand troops. He was defeated by Katarina in 588 CY but escaped with about a third of his force. No one knew where he went. He is obviously visiting here.

Any human is able to walk around, unnoticed, unless they do something stupid. Or any rogue (DC 25) will be able to sneak around and hear some snippets of conversation. Ask them how long they want to wander through the visiting tent area to gather information.

For each ten minutes they stay wandering around, listening to conversations they hear one of the following, in order until they have heard all three. Despite the amount of time they are here, they are never questioned and those hiding are never discovered. Unless of course they do something idiotic.

Two soldiers talking about General Rehmat. They are mocking him for some reason and generally talking about what a miserable place this Axeport is. (Any Shield Land native hearing his name knows who he is)

A group of solders discussing the upcoming long march to Docamald. They are not looking forward to it. From the sound of it, it sounds like they are normally stationed there. Docomald is at a cross roads in the center of the Shield Lands, connecting all the major towns. It was the center for trade and commerce. It sounds like this General and these troops are stationed there.

For the briefest moment you get a chance to walk by the main tent of the General, the flap opens as an armed

woman steps out, you hear from inside: "They've taken Gensal and held Torkeep but the General is sure Katarina doesn't know about Delcomben yet. A new voice says; "What about the sidhee (pronounced "she")?" The original voice answers, "Nothing we can do, hopefully Katarina will kill them." Then the flap closes and you walk past without raising suspicion.

After that the characters receive no further information and eventually returns to the others for fear of being caught.

ALL APLS

Creatures:

➤ **Standard human soldiers** (14): (for all practical purposes treat them identically to orcs, except for languages and racial abilities); hp 9 each, see *Monster Manual* pages 146-47.

Tactics: The human soldiers only attack if a character does something extremely ridiculous while moving through them. They attack whomever they perceive as the enemy. Unless they are all killed on the first round of combat, one of them sounds the gong alarm. They all carry longswords and spears (2).

➤ **Orcs, Blood Fist** (6): hp: 8, see *Monster Manual* page 146-47.

Tactics: They furiously attack without provocation (see Development).

Development: While characters are watching the battle on the beach, there is a 1 in 4 chance that six Blood Fist orcs come leaping over the fence and smash into the party members, anyone failing a Dex or Tumble skill check DC 15 is sprawled on the ground. Two of the orcs end up on the ground after the collision. They were on their way to the beach battle and had to leap over the fence to get there. They accidentally run into the characters. They attack in fury!! They don't bother raising an alarm.

After the characters have been to the General's tent, they spot an orc shaman, chanting and carrying a burning pot on a chain, smoke pouring out from it. Behind him is a young orc, a child, carrying a small metal box in both hands as if it was made of glass and he didn't want to drop it. They move quickly into one of the larger buildings in town.

This should get the characters to enter Waqounis' house. If not, move on to Encounter 4.

ENCOUNTER 3: HIS HOUSE OF PAIN

This encounter occurs in two parts: A and/or B.

A:

(If characters did NOT follow the orcs into this house, alter the description below as it fits but no matter how they got there, they should still see the closing door.)

You move into the house and selfishly, the first thing you think of is, "Ahh, warmth". There is a great fireplace heating the entryway to this room. Sparsely furnished, the building has been converted into a house, you doubt that it was always so, it's much too large. The orcs are nowhere to be seen but you see something... something you have to react to fast!

The wall is closing shut, noiselessly, it slides across the floor, you notice how thick it is, almost six inches of stone. Who knows what magic will protect it when it shuts or how difficult it would be to open?

You have only seconds to react.

Don't bother giving any characters a description of the rest of the room until they decide what to do now. If they check they pull their eyes off the sliding secret door, then it closes and they don't get in, if they hesitate in their response as to what to do, then they miss their chance.

Have everyone attempting to make it through the wall, roll initiative against each other. Allow anyone to make a Dex check DC 15 to make it through the door. The next person who tries it must make DC 20, then 25, etc, etc.

This will probably mean the party just got split in two.

Once the door closes (For those who did NOT make it through read the following:

The enormous door slides shut and you hear a dull thumping noise, followed by another. Then, like a stone falling into a pond, the entire wall ripples. The wall changes to look like an ordinary stone wall.

There is no sign of the door.

This illusion effect is easy for the characters to pierce if they saw the secret door opening Will save DC 13. If not, they have no chance of detecting the illusion. Note, the illusion is actually on the entire building, this structure is a small yet thick, stone mini fortress. The illusion placed on it makes it appear as if it's a simple wooden structure.

If characters try to find the secret door, they must first pierce the illusion, then they must succeed on a Search roll DC 25 or they can't seem to open it. The searching will take approximately 15 minutes. Bashing the secret door down would be almost ridiculous as it's all stone. Read the following for anyone still in the room after the secret door closes:

The rest of the room is simple; an obvious greeting chamber, not too rich in design or furnishing. A few cloak racks hang off the wall next door the entry door; there is a servants' door in the far corner and a locked door in the opposite corner.

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

🔒 **Secret Door:** 6 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 50; AC 20; Break DC 30. Open Locks 35.

Breaking through either of the doors would be very loud, remind characters of this if they attempt it. Standing in front of the secret door, waiting for the rest of their party would also be ridiculous, remind characters of that if they start waiting. Keep them moving.

The servants' door opens into a small servants' quarters, sleeping blankets, urine pot, some wrapped, scraps of food. The servant is a scrawny woman in her early teens (Lysa; see creature section).

Once through the locked door characters have access to the rest of the house. There is nothing of interest, nor of value. A room with some food storage, a cooking room and a simple sleeping quarter. Once characters have poked through the rest of the house, finding nothing, they find the hallway that leads out the house into the summoning chamber. Read the following:

The hallway leads out of the back of the house into some sort of summoning chamber. There is a bloody mess in the room beyond. A large summoning circle has been chalked on the wooden floor, dozens of candles burn in various places. The body of a woman lays face down inside the circle. Dried, pooled blood covers most the area around her. Paintings of underwater creatures, fill the walls, the entire ceiling has some sort of enchantment on it that makes it look like you are underwater. There is an enormous door on the other side of the room.

When characters investigate the room they can uncover the following information:

The woman has had her throat slit. Although covered in dried blood, it's obvious she was only part human. Her hair is like rotting seaweed and her skin is sickly yellow and covered with warts. She wears a dainty necklace of seaweed, agates and shells (This is Truth, the artifact).

The ceiling is indeed a powerful illusion spell and anyone watching it gets a queasy feeling as the water lurches back and forth. (This effect is part of the summoning ritual).

All the paintings are underwater creatures; Kuo-Toa, giant fish, sharks, underwater behemoths, krakens and a several other monstrous looking things.

While the summoning circle itself radiates magic, the necklace does not (nor did it ever. Although it is indeed the artifact).

Any character that played in "Temple of the Burning Man" and remembers the dream sequence they had that showed the summoning of the Eldritch Wave, notices that the summoning here does not mimic the dream. They are in fact, distinctly different. That seems odd.

Once the characters retrieve Truth from the body they find nothing else of value. The large door is 15 feet tall and leads from the floor to the ceiling. Though difficult to open because of its size, it isn't locked. Characters struggle for a moment before it opens. If characters leave out the back door, they have a good view of the beach where there is more troops converging.

Remind characters of their missing comrades (if they have any). Let them speculate on their fate.

Creatures:

👉 **Lysa, human:** hp 2.

Lysa has been a slave as long as she can remember, since she was a child. She speaks only orcish, her common has slipped away from lack of use. She has suffered many horrors and is completely broken. She assumes the characters are with the General and will serve them in whatever capacity they desire.

If they tell her they are here to free her or anything else like that she becomes terrified and assumes they are the General's men and are trying to trick her into betraying Iuz. She does not under ANY circumstance help the characters if they reveal to her they are not with the occupied forces. Only if charmed (or some other sort of magical coercion is used) does she help the characters. She does not hesitate ringing an alarm. If the party contains elves, dwarves, gnomes or halflings she automatically assumes they are enemy spies and will try to get away and ring the alarm.

APL 4

👉 **Scrag (1):** hp 63; see *monster manual* page 180.

APL 6

👉 **Ogre Mage (1):** hp 37; see *monster manual* page 144.

APL 8

👉 **Hill Giant (1):** hp 109; see *monster manual* page 98.

AUGMENTED TIER

👉 **Hill Giant (1):** hp 109; see *Monster Manual* page 98.

👉 **Ogre Mage (1):** hp 37; see *monster manual* page 144.

Tactics: The creature(s) comes in to guard the body of the hag. It just tries to kill whatever is in the room. If it drops to half hit points it tries to run and sound the alarm. If it is not killed within two rounds of running, it gets to a gong alarm and rings it three times. Suddenly all around Axeport there are gong sounds.

Development: While characters are investigating the summoning chamber, there is a 75% chance that the large door will open suddenly and the wandering encounter will come through. Whatever it is was told to watch over the body.

B:

Read the following to anyone who makes it through the secret door:

The door slides shut silently, then there are two consecutive dull noises. Sounds like the door being locked in place. There are

circular stone, stairs leading down a long way and torches flicker along the wall.

You follow the stairs down into a map room. There are dozens of maps in racks along side the wall, a map table with clips at each corner lays empty in the center of the room. The orcs are nowhere in sight, there is a small antechamber on the far side of the room, covered by a thick red curtain.

Allow character(s) to react. They don't have much time to investigate before the secret door opens. A glance through the maps reveals that they are all maps of the Shield Lands and Nyr Dyv (navigation maps) and several maps of troops stationed at various points. There are also several blank parchments, inks and quills for notes, etc. There is a secret door in this room that leads to an escape tunnel near the beach. It is exceptionally difficult to find unless they are aware of it, (Search DC 30).

The antechamber has casks of ale and a few bottles of wine as well as a frisky gray cat playing with a string. The cat is not magical at all, he just got locked down here to kill any mice and or rats that might be chewing on the maps.

Allow a few minutes of investigating (but before they find the lever to open the upstairs door) and then have the characters hear the noise of the scraping secret door opening. The only place to hide is behind the curtain, in the dark, in the antechamber and hope they don't go for wine.

If character does, allow a Hide roll. DO NOT LET THE CHARACTER FIGHT! Any character (or group) of characters would be slaughtered by the NPCs entering the room. This is not a combat encounter. If you absolutely, positively cannot persuade the character that hiding would be the best course of action, then let the bodak, specter and flesh golem kill them while the others escape.

The door opens and men enter. The first is a very short man, barely over five feet tall. He has black, curly hair that is tucked under a silky red hat.

He is gesturing widely as he talks, "...didn't think he was that bold. He's been so passive recently. Thought the Master himself would come and strike him down for being a lazy bastard!"

As he enters he pulls a map out of the cases and slaps it down on the table. He unrolls it and pins it down as others enter.

A tall, imposing figure, well dressed, a two handed sword is strapped to his back is next. Then two orcs enter. Both look similar in armor and warm clothing, one has several tattoos and markings of a burning tree, the other has similar tattoos and markings of an orcish word (the favored).

The curly haired man continues, "General, why do you think he's ruled here so long?"

"It doesn't matter, you weren't expecting the attack though. Why not?" The General responds. Suddenly there is a very tall man standing next to him, he is as tall as the ceiling. It's Murzio.

"Yes, yes, yes. So he had some ship rendered invisible. Very impressive. He must have had it beached for a while. No way it could have gotten past the water beasts."

Then the hair on the back of your neck raises and your stomach tightens as things not human come into the room.

A small, perhaps dwarven form rises from the stone floor, silently. It remains to the left of the curly haired man, it's head hangs at an odd angle as if its neck was broken. You notice you can see through the figure.

The door opens and in walks a man, maybe. Its face is twisted into an expression of mingled madness and horror. It has gray, hairless flesh and empty, white eyes.

That is followed immediately by a thin ghoulish figure that appears to be stitched together from various human parts. It has sickly yellow flesh and no hair, it dresses in a pair of ragged trousers and moves with a stiff-jointed gait, as if not in complete control of its body.

The curly haired man looks up from the map and snaps, "Wait in the hall!"

The pale man jerks around and leaves the room.

"Damn thing gives me the creeps!" The curly haired man says.

The General chuckles, "It's your construct."

"Don't remind me. I'd much rather play with my nice scraggs." The curly haired man says.

"Now, this thing of yours. It can kill Vayne?" The General says.

"Oh yes. It will crush him."

"And you control it?" The General says.

"Yes. It doesn't even fight me. It's a beautiful demon."

"Hmm. We'll, see. Here's something I need to know. Tell me about Gensal. Very convenient of Gensal to fall."

The curly haired man smiles, "Yes, wasn't it now. I guess I never told you. Several months back I was fortunate enough to capture a few pathfinders. I let them escape with information about Gensal, you know, about it not being garrisoned very well. They fled Axeport with a few nobles, you see, to make the story sound better. Anyway, they brought the information back to Katarina who did exactly as I hoped she would. She attacked."

The General nodded. "I see. It kept Katarina busy enough, freeing Gensal, that she never even bothered looking our way. And now that Katarina has taken Gensal, it makes Vayne look even more incompetent. Perfect! No one in the Boneheart would dare come to his aid after he lost Gensal and Torkeep in two months."

"I agree. And Detarthay can take Vayne's place should the need arise and -"

"I'm not sure we can trust the doppelganger." The General said.

"Trust him? General, who can we trust?" The curly haired man says with a playful grin.

There is a moment of silence between them and they both break out into a hearty laughter.

One of the two orcs says something in a guttural language, (Anyone who speaks Orcish: Did you hear something?). He turns towards where you are hiding.

The General says, "What was that Elf-gutter?"

"I heard something, back here." He pulls out his axe.

"Master." Murzio says. "Vayne approaches."

"Excellent!" The curly haired man says. "The main attraction. General, let's go find a good seat on the beach and watch our hated enemy die screaming."

With that they file out of the room. The orc who heard something is the last to leave, he eyes the area you are hiding, turns and leaves, and he closes the door behind him.

You turn your head from your cramped hiding spot and see the gray cat that was fussing around in the back, the cat that almost got you killed.

Once they leave, characters will not be bothered down here again and should have plenty of time to do whatever they wish. It would be faster to steal the maps than to copy them but then obviously, if stolen, someone will know they are gone and all troop stations on the map may become inaccurate as the General changes them. The smartest thing to do is to copy the important ones. There are only about 5 of these. The non-essential ones are just maps of the area that Katarina already has. Anyone copying the maps must take about an hour to copy them as accurately as possible. If they have some sort of Cartography skill, cut that time in half.

Whenever the character wants to leave, they should leave by the stairs going up and back into the house. If they try to find exit out the secret door simply tell them, "You can't help but wonder if that flesh construct will be there when you open the secret door up?"

That should be enough to deter any characters. If they still try and find and open the secret door (Search, DC 15) then they see the Flesh Golem, it turns towards them as they open the door, most likely they will close the door and use the stairs.

They can find the opening mechanism to the door at the top of the stairs in the antechamber. They don't have enough time to find it before the bad guys show up and by the time they leave, the other characters (at the top of the stairs) should be investigating the rest of the house.

Creatures:

➤ **Bodak** (1): hp 58; see *Monster Manual* page 27.

➤ **Flesh Golem** (1): hp 49; see *Monster Manual* page 108-9.

➤ **Spectre** (1): hp 45; see *Monster Manual* page 169.

Tactics: While Waqounis (the curly haired man), and the General escape led by the two Orc chieftains and Murzio, the other creatures (listed above) kill any characters in the map room. Then the alarm is sounded.

Development: If somehow the characters end up getting together while everyone is still in the house, no big deal. Let them.

Most likely though, they'll be split up. If they remember the words of the Djinn, they'll rendezvous in the southwest corner. Otherwise let them come up with something on their own. Any logical plan should get them back together, the module is extremely difficult for them should they not get back together. The characters who recovered the artifact may even return to the secret door now that they have the necklace. That might get them together again. Whatever works.

ENCOUNTER 4: THE SLAVE PENS

At this point the characters may be split up and heading for a rendezvous in the southwest corner of Axeport to meet. One group should be allowed to arrive to the rendezvous point unmolested; the other has this encounter. It makes no difference which group has this encounter.

If the group is already together, then they are just heading back out into Axeport on route to where ever they are planning on heading.

Read the following:

As you move through Axeport, sneaking from building to building, you can occasionally see the beach. Although you don't think there is a battle right now, something else is taking place. From the quick glimpses you get, you are never able to determine exactly what.

Then you see the slave pens. You hadn't been in this part of Axeport yet, as there were too many patrols, now you see why.

A full score of men and woman are chained and locked down in pits covered in iron cages. There are a few fire pits, warming the area and a handful of orcs guarding. None appear to be very alert and most are straining for a better view of the beach by standing on tables or the crowd of wooden crates that litter the area. The orcs are talking and laughing amongst themselves while occasionally pointing to the shore.

All of them bear the symbol of the Blood Fist orcs.

The characters are encountered with a moral dilemma here, don't give them any hints, and let them come up with the problem and the solution themselves.

If they free the prisoners, which they could since the orcs would be completely surprised; however, if they free the prisoners, what then?

There are too many of them (22) to sneak out of Axeport, they would be discovered, hunted and overwhelmed, probably all captured or killed.

So then do the characters leave the slaves there? The slaves can't really been seen in detail unless someone sneaks up and investigates them.

The pits the slaves are in are 12 feet deep, the iron cage over the top is locked (Open Locks DC 20). The hardest thing for any rogue would be that there is no place to hide near the slave pits (although there are plenty of areas to hide on the way towards the pits with all the crates around). Near the pits themselves, nothing; they would be in the open and easy to spot.

If the characters free the slaves, they are obviously grateful. They are Rhennee sailors (most of them warriors) and have only been just captured a few days ago, Scraggs attacked their ship. They are still very healthy and are willing to attempt to get away on their own, they take the weapons off the orc guards and sneak off into Axeport.

The only kind of information the Rhennee could impart would be that, the slave pits were empty when they arrived so all the previous prisoners were probably killed, maybe recently. It should be noted that five of the Rhennee prisoners are evil.

Despite their gratitude at being freed, the Rhennee do not trust the people of the Shield Lands. They do not give anyone in the rescuing party their names. They are very superstitious and attempt to get away from the characters as soon as possible.

The reason all the other prisoners have been killed is that Waqounis thinks he is going to kill Vayne, then he's moving to Admundfort so he got rid of any excess baggage. Because Waqounis has allies in the Rhennee he is unsure what to do with these prisoners yet.

If they ignore the prisoners, continue to Encounter 5.

Sneaking up on the Orcs is easy, Move Silently DC 10, they are far too engrossed of what is happening on shore. For the first round of combat, should the characters attempt to attack from surprise, each successful hit automatically kills one orc. After that, roll for initiative. The numbers below DO NOT include any orcs killed by surprise attacks.

Creatures:

APL 4

👉Orcs (10): hp 8 each; see *Monster Manual* page 146-7.

APL 6

👉Orcs (14): hp 10 each; +6 melee; see *Monster Manual* page 146-7.

APL 8

👉Orcs (24): hp 16 each; +7 melee; see *Monster Manual* page 146-7.

AUGMENTED APL

👉Orcs (24): hp 20 each; +8 melee; see *Monster Manual* page 146-7.

ALL APLS

👉Bugbears (3): hp 16 each; see *Monster Manual* page 27.

Tactics: Those that survive the initial attack split into two even groups. The first tries to hold off the characters. The second heads for the gong alarm. It will take them only 1 round to get to the alarm and ring it three times. Once that happens, they all fight.

Development: If the alarm has already been sounded the demeanor at the slave pits is a bit different, there are three times as many orcs and they are all alert, only a few are slacking off and are trying to watch the shore action.

On a 2 in 6 chance DURING the battle with orcs, the fight attracts the attention of a patrolling group of

bugbears. They enter combat on the 3rd round. They don't try to raise the alarm at first since they think they can handle the problem. If two are killed, the last one tries to ring the alarm, it will take him one round to get to the alarm and ring it.

Incidentally (and perhaps miraculously), should the Rhennee be freed, they are able to get away.

ENCOUNTER 5: PATROLS

This encounter should happen after the characters have both retrieved the artifact and are now heading towards the shore to attempt to destroy the Eldritch Wave.

You are for the moment caught inside a house. You had to duck inside to avoid a very large patrol of soldiers, at least 30 orcs and humans. The house has all the trappings and markings of one of the orc tribes; symbols of the burning tree are everywhere. The house smells like death, although you find nothing.

As soon as the danger is passed you head back outside into the biting cold. Moving towards the beach, you hear a guttural cry of surprise. You don't even have to speak the language to know someone in your party was just spotted.

You turn to face your attackers.

Creatures:

TIER 2

👉Orcs (10): hp: 8 each; see *Monster Manual* page 146-6.

TIER 3

👉Gnolls (8): hp: 12 each; see *Monster Manual* page 105.

TIER 4

👉Ogres (6): hp 28 each; see *Monster Manual* page 144.

AUGMENTED TIER

👉Gnolls (6): hp 16 each; +5 melee; see *monster manual* page 105.

👉Ogres (6): hp 35 each; +10 melee; see *monster manual* page 144.

Tactics: This is a random patrol that was busting some heads in a near by house. The patrol was, "settling" a dispute between a Blood Fist orc and a Burning Tree orc. Now that the "settling" is finished, they step outside to see the characters. They assume that since they have superior numbers they can kill the party. Should half of their numbers fall, they will attempt to escape to the ring the alarm. There is no alarm close to them and they have to run for six rounds to get to one.

ENCOUNTER 6: THE ELDRITCH WAVE

As soon as characters are ready to try and kill the Eldritch Wave read the following:

You are moving through Axeport, keeping close lookout for sentries and patrols. The shore is getting closer and you can hear the water smashing against the beach.

Suddenly you hear screams and sounds of battle from ahead. Something is happening on beach again; more combat.

Allow the characters to react and find out how they want to proceed. There are plenty of sand dunes on the beach they could use for cover a further down the shore to the east.

Once they decide what to do and where to go read the following:

You can see the action on the beach. There are a group of warriors with their backs to the water, most well armed humans but there are a few large skeletons and a handful of black robed priests, or perhaps wizards.

At the moment, the beach is a swarming with combatants. The human warriors are regrouping, as are their orcish and human opponents.

The small band of invaders seems dwarfed by the much larger force of orcs but littered on the beach are dozens and dozens of orc warriors, some still smoldering.

It looks as if these new invaders are powerful. There is even some sort of invisible wall behind them where sea creatures have smashed themselves, thus preventing them from crawling up onto the beach.

Both sides regroup and then the orcs charge. From the invaders come bolts of lightning and balls of fire as well as whirling bladed protective barriers. The orcs are slaughtered in the charge and they retreat a few seconds later. The warriors and skeletons move down the beach to flank the invisible wall were the sea creatures have found the edges.

Then two more men suddenly appear. One in ebony black armor, his unholy aura bathes the beach. A high priest of Iuz!

The other is a tall man in red robes, and long dark hair. He yells out across the beach. "WAQOUNIS! YOUR TREACHERY WILL NOT GO UNPUNISHED. I SENTENCE YOU TO DEATH IN THE NAME OF IUZ!"

Then the man in red robes utters a quick incantation and disappears. The orcs fall back even further as the high priest walks towards them. They begin dropping to their knees, begging for forgiveness.

The priest tosses his hands up and explosions of fire blow through orcs, scattering them like leaves. Panic ensues and the orcs flee from the dark priest.

Then the Eldritch Wave disappears from its hovering spot above the water and appears on the beach.

It stands motionless as all manner of attacks are launched against it. Whirling magics and powerful warriors fling themselves against the 12-foot tall beast. Occasionally the force of a blow will stagger the demon but nothing seems to truly harm it... nothing.

Then the demon begins spitting blood from a gaping wound in its neck, engulfing poor victims in some sort of acid, killing them in seconds.

Without pausing, the Eldritch Wave begins to siphon water from the bodies of people nearby. The creature rips the moisture out of every orifice, causing tremendous agony in the process. The victims last only seconds before the dying on the beach, leaving nothing but dry, hollow husks.

Soon only the high priest and two of the warriors are left. The high priest commands the two to protect him. They renew their attacks, but the Eldritch Wave breaks their bodies apart with its green, scaly hands.

The priest however uses the time to finish an incantation and launches a wave of black magic at the demon.

There is a fierce ripple in the air and then a loud boom, as sand explodes around the creature. Then nothing. The Eldritch Wave remains unhurt.

The priest screams in terror and disbelief, "NO! THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE! YOU SHOULD BE BANISHED!"

In response, the demon spits blood on the priest and he dies screaming as he smolders into nothing from the acid-like blood.

Suddenly the invisible wall is gone and sea beasts and water crash down onto the beach. Water washes up the sand, engulfing all the bodies and encircling the Eldritch Wave's feet.

This is their chance. As the Eldritch Wave stands on the beach, its feet are submerged for about five rounds while the water washes across the shore, then back into the lake. After this the Eldritch Wave will teleport back to its vantage point, 15 feet above the water level, roughly 50 feet out.

So it becomes a now or never chance for the characters. They were told to follow these instructions to kill the Eldritch Wave:

The box must be opened within a stone's throw (i.e., within 100 ft.) of the Eldritch Wave.

Whoever opens the box must be in the water with the Eldritch Wave. Complete submersion is not necessary. Standing in a foot of water will do just fine.

If character opens the box from a distance greater than 100 feet, the ritual does not work.

Allow any decent plan to work, the characters have probably over planned to this point and now they have five rounds to decide what to do. If the Judge feels they are taking too much time to decide what to do, have the Eldritch Wave teleport to its vantage point above the water.

Characters will NOT get another chance.

If the Judge feels that the characters have come up with a logical and successful solution read the following (it may have to be slightly modified depending on circumstance):

As you splash into the icy, cold water you immediately see creatures moving in your direction.

Large, things not wholly fish, not wholly man. Jumping into the air and splashing down again, slithering across the surface of the Nyr Dyv and crawling out from the depths.

Almost instantly they are crashing towards you.

Finally, you open the small box. Inside is a blackened, burning, human sized hand. The hand spasms once and then pops out of the box, plunking into the water.

Instantly the smoldering hand extinguishes. A stone's throw away, the Eldritch Wave ignites into a roaring inferno.

Soundlessly it burns and instantly it becomes as rigid as a statue. In a frenzy of chaos and destruction the creatures of the sea turn upon each other, no longer controlled by the demon.

A horrific wave of tentacles, gigantic fish, sharks, and unidentifiable creatures explode all around you in the Nyr Dyv.

The sound is deafening and water is raining down from all sides from the colossal water battle.

Now would be a good time to run.

If the Judge feels the characters have not come up with a logical solution or have just not been successful in getting close enough to the Eldritch Wave read the following:

As you splash into the icy, cold water you immediately see creatures moving your direction. They are large things, not wholly fish and not wholly man. Some jump into the air and splash down again. Others slither across the surface of the water. Still others crawl out from the dark depths of the Nyr Dyv. They are all coming towards you!

You open the small box. Inside is a blackened, burning, human sized hand. Nothing happens. The burning hand lies still.

You have a gut wrenching feeling, you are not close enough.

The sea creatures pour forward and you have no choice but to flee, should you attempt to get closer, surely you will be devoured.

If character chooses to attempt to get forward make absolutely certain they understand it is certain death!

If they make the noble sacrifice, then read the following:

Abandoning all selfish hope you run forward as fast as you can, ignoring the shouts of warning from your comrades.

You are pummeled by waves but amazingly, manage to keep your footing. You crash through the water until you notice orcs on the beach have started shouting and shooting arrows at you.

The Eldritch Wave turns its one hideous eye in your direction, the water nears its ankles starts pulling back into the Nyr Dyv.

This is your last chance. You open the box. The burning hand spasms once and then pops out of the box, plunking into the water.

Instantly the smoldering hand extinguishes. A stone's throw away, the Eldritch Wave ignites into a roaring inferno.

Soundlessly it burns and instantly it becomes as rigid as a statue. In a frenzy of chaos and destruction the creatures of the sea turn upon each other, no longer controlled by the demon.

A horrific wave of tentacles, gigantic fish, sharks, and unidentifiable creatures explode all around you in the Nyr Dyv.

The sound is deafening and water is raining down from all sides from the colossal water battle.

You are caught in the midst of the orgy of destruction. Torn, smashed, blasted and drowned into oblivion. You're dead before your face hits the water.

As the water recedes, the remaining creatures continue fighting until there is nothing left and only then return to the depths. The water has cleared the beach of bodies, leaving nothing but sand.

For those of you watching helplessly on the beach, (insert name)'s body is gone as well. All you have left is the knowledge that (s)he sacrificed himself (herself) to save the Shield Lands. That and an insanely powerful gut reaction to run!

If the Judge feels that the character does not meet the requirements for killing the Eldritch Wave at all or is not close enough to get to the water in the 30 seconds he/she has while the Eldritch Wave's feet are submerged, and does not feel like sacrificing him/herself read the following:

For a second nothing happens. Then the Eldritch Wave teleports away, reappearing about a hundred feet out above the water.

You know the opportunity to kill the demon has passed. Suddenly, you remember the creatures crashing towards you. It doesn't take much to convince you to run for your lives.

Any character who wishes to make a stand here will almost certainly die or be captured. The Judge should tell them something like, "the beach is not a very defensible position, do you at least want to move further in shore to make your last stand?" That should get the characters moving, which is good, since anyone who stays on the beach and tries to fight will die.

The Judge should feel free to make the story as descriptive and heroic (but equally futile) as possible, giving the PCs a few chances to change their minds. The odds are overwhelmingly against the characters and eventually the PCs will be worn down. Every time they kill an orc or something else, three more creatures fill their place. The judge should try to convey the hopelessness of the situation without coming right out and saying it. If the players don't take the hint, play it out to the bitter end.

Should characters move inland to a more defensible position, move to Encounter 7.

Creatures:

ALL APLS

☠ **Axeport troops:** Enough orcs, human soldiers, ogres, giants, undead to wipe the party out should they choose to stand and fight.

APL 4

➡ **Bugbears** (3): hp: 18 each; see *Monster Manual* page 27.

APL 6

➡ **Bugbears** (6): hp: 22 each; +6 melee; see *Monster Manual* page 27.

APL 8

➔ **Bugbears (10):** hp: 25 each; +7 melee; see *Monster Manual* page 27.

AUGMENTED APL

➔ **Bugbears (12):** hp: 30 each; +8 melee; see *Monster Manual* page 27.

Tactics: The bugbears attempt to sneak up on the characters while they are hiding on the beach (or were ever they are hiding during this Encounter). Assume the bugbears have a DC 18 to sneak up on the characters. Allow the characters Spot rolls. The Judge should feel free to adjust (higher or lower) the bugbear DC based on current circumstances, whatever they may be, should that be necessary. Example: if the alarm has been sound, there are three times as many bugbears and that might be way too many to even attempt to sneak up on the characters, so maybe a third sneak up and the rest charge when the melee ensues. Whatever is needed to make the encounter more exciting and/or believable. If the bugbears surprise attack, they go for any obvious wizards first, then elves. After that, they just kill everyone in sight.

Development: There is a 50% chance the bugbears picked up the scent of the humans in Axeport and have been hunting them for the last hour or so. They finally track them down while characters are hiding and watching the confrontation between the Eldritch Wave and the Vayne's invaders. The bugbears are not stupid, they can tell the characters are waiting for something to happen on the beach. They wait for the most opportune moment to spring their sneak attack. Most likely they attack when the characters are trying to open the box in the water; however, another "best case scenario" for the bugbears would be if the characters split up. Then the bugbears would attack the weakest (physically looking) group first. They have no desire to ring the alarm, they want the kill, credit and glory all for themselves for capturing the spies.

ENCOUNTER 7: FUTILE ESCAPE

This encounter is only necessary should the characters have the wise sense to flee inland for a more defensible position after Encounter 6. The text below assumes the characters are heading away from Axeport, moving as fast as possible AND have killed the Eldritch Wave, if this is not the case, adjust the text as appropriate. The outcome remains the same.

As you retreat inland you hear horn blasts from behind. Someone has spotted you, pursuit will be short coming.

You move as fast as possible, away from the water. You cross the blasted landscape surrounding Axeport and spot a defensible

position. At least, it's the most defensible position you think you'll find.

A small three-walled structure stands alone. Several grave markers and random orc paraphernalia surround the hut.

As you get closer you see the structure is a blackened and vile shrine to Iuz.

The first of the troops come out of Axeport heading your way, they are still a few minutes away. A handful of orcs perhaps, you can't make them out from here.

From the shore you see more soldiers storming towards you. Looking all around you see nothing else and no better place to make a last stand.

Will you fight here, in the shadow of this temple of evil?

Let the characters react and decide, continue telling them how more troops are coming, describe some larger one's as well, ogres, giants, etc.

Whether they decide to move or not, it won't matter. As soon as they decide on something read the following:

Suddenly there is a great whirling in the air. Dirt and debris whip around you. Then there is a man standing in your way.

Murzio.

"I am sorry. My Master has called his last wish. You have done your people a great service by destroying the water demon. For that I will compose ballads and poems for you when I return to Air.

But the Master has wished for your retrieval, to be brought to his side. I am sorry. I must comply."

With that he attacks.

The characters are about to be rescued by the water naga but they don't know it yet. Allow one round of combat with the Djinn before reading the following (see the tactics section below for what Murzio does) The text assumes they cooperate with Radiant Sparkle, if they do not, see Development section below:

The huge whirlwind continues to pick up speed, growing and moving towards you. It seems to be trying to engulf you.

Play out the combat for a round and then continue reading:

Suddenly, there are several bolts of flashing light that that strike the Djinn in it's vortex form followed by two emerald green, giant snakes slithering past you. Each has a human face and mouth and utters strange incantations, launching spells into the Djinn.

A furious battle of magic rages in front of you as a horde of humanoids and soldiers race across the ground towards you.

"This way!" A voice behind you calls. It is Radiant Sparkle, in human form. "We must flee now!"

Give the PCs a chance to react to the naga's offer. If they follow him, continue:

You turn and run after him moving as fast as you can. He runs away from Axeport but is slowly veering towards the Nyr Dyv.

He breathlessly explains as he runs, “Must get... ::pant:: you out of here ::pant:: there is only one way ::pant:: must get to water ::pant:: magic stronger near water pant.”

He fumbles with a mesh bag and hands it back to you. “Place necklace in ::pant:: here ::pant:: You must not ::pant:: invoke the ::pant:: curse it by handling it long!”

Radiant Sparkle trips and crashes face first into the ground, tumbling head over heels for a second. Someone pulls him up and you continue to run.

The shore is in sight. Soon the water is very close. You don’t see a frenzy of sea creatures. It looks like they are still farther away, closer to Axeport.

There is a floating circle of leaves on the surface of the water. The leaves seem to resist the current, staying together in a group.

“Dive in the circle! Dive!”

Radiant Sparkle jumps into the air and shimmers, his body is transformed into his sleek, true form as he dives into the center of the circle, slipping beneath the surface with hardly a splash.

If everything went according to the plan, when the characters jump through the circle read the following:

You splash into the water and suddenly find yourself crashing into the hard, cold ground of Critwall. Soaking wet you find yourselves directly in front of the east gate, at least a dozen people are staring in wonder at their sudden arrival.

“Are you all ok?” Someone says out of the crowd. You check yourselves and look around at one another.

Radiant Sparkle is nowhere to be seen.

Creatures:

☛ **Murzio, Noble Djinn (1):** hp 65. see *Monster Manual* page 94-96.

Tier the damage for Murzio’s whirlwind attack (for complete details on his attack see *Monster Manual*):

APL 4

Whirlwind does 2d6 initially and 1d8 each round.

APL 6

Whirlwind does normal damage.

APL 8

Whirlwind does normal damage.

AUGMENTED APL

Whirlwind does normal damage.

ALL APLS

☛ **Radiant Sparkle, water naga:** hp 59; see *Monster Manual* page 138-9.

☛ **Water Naga (2):** hp 50 each. see *Monster Manual* page 138-9.

Tactics: Murzio will transform into his whirlwind form and engulf the characters, he can attack three times on the first round of combat. After the naga arrives he battles them. Ultimately, he loses the fight, gets killed and is sent back to the elemental plane of air. His servitude to General Rehmat is over.

Development: If characters did not trust Radiant Sparkle and did not give him the necklace then this is the WORST possible move for the characters.

It may be understandable that the characters are leery of him because if they didn’t kill the Eldritch Wave, they may think he is under the thrall of the demon.

He is not. If anyone brings it up to him while they are running, he simply says, “My aura is still alive!”

If they don’t give him the necklace right away he attempts to pursue them right before they jump into the water.

He simply reminds them that it is too dangerous to have in the air lands, the artifact’s curse would destroy too much; it’s safer underwater, where the naga can protect it, etc, etc.

Everything he says is true and he believes every word of it. If characters flat out refuse to give him the necklace he has no choice but to take it by force.

The text above can read the same as they run and jump into the water; however, they are not teleported anywhere.

While they are submerged in the dive, Radiant Sparkle attacks whoever has the necklace.

He bites them and then as they sputter in the water and pull themselves up he tries to charm them with his gaze attack. If either succeed the naga is able to take the necklace from the character. Either the characters reacted in pain and temporary confusion from the Con loss and the ice-cold water or the charm works and the naga pucks it away.

Then he surfaces about 30 feet away, apologizes to them for taking it by force. Assures them this is the best way. Apologizes again for having to deactivate the teleport circle but he couldn’t let them take the necklace.

He has no other way to get them home. He apologizes very sincerely and knows they are doomed. He slips away.

If characters somehow evade Radiant Sparkles retrieval attempt, remember there are two more naga close by. They are currently battling the Djinn but as soon as they kill him, the also come and attempt to get the necklace from characters. They don’t really want the characters dead so they try to charm them and use generally non-lethal spells.

Ask the characters what their general plan of escape is, what they would do over the next few weeks that it would take them to get home through the occupied territory. Allow them to come up with a plan, then inform a Triad member. The Judge and Triad member decide the fate of the characters which is most likely, “they are never heard from again”; however, perhaps a few live, or maybe just one. If no triad member is present the Judge must decide on his own, do not be lenient. The odds are

overwhelmingly against them at this point. Even the very, very best plans may still end up getting them all killed.

If it seems as if the characters are going to survive long periods of time on their own, through well thought out plans, perhaps a lenient judge could have the djinn noble send a djinn to rescue and guide them home to safety. Perhaps.

So, most likely, the characters are never heard from again as they are captured, tortured, killed and raised as zombies. But to be nice to them, just tell them they are never heard from again.

CONCLUSION

The following conclusion assumes the characters have successfully destroyed the Eldritch Wave and returned the Artifact to the naga.

For the next few days you explain your story again, and again and again. You're kept at the Temple of the Shield Reclaimed in Critwall because no one at the keep wanted the constant traffic. Different officials come in every hour and beg for further details. Clerics and sages, bards and high-ranking soldiers come in and seek a different perspective, asking different questions, but essentially you tell them the same story. Almost universally, their reaction is the same, "This entire ordeal was about two of our enemies trying to kill each other?" Then they shrug their shoulders as if it's not so surprising to them after all. Finally it ends. If you never have to tell that story again you'll die much happier.

But word is spreading that you did something big, stopped something huge. And some of you (despite yourselves) are expecting a big reward, some official commendation, or recommendations into guilds or even a possible Knighthood.

It doesn't happen. Despite your popularity in the city, nothing official ever comes to your front door. Eventually you find out why. There were quite a few people in the upper echelon that were very unhappy with you for not returning the artifact to the Shield Lands.

It looks like your reward is buried in politics. Sergeant Duc sums it up best for you when you meet him for ale a few days later.

"Officials. The same everywhere we go. Can't live with em', can't live without em', can't bury out back in the Shield Lands because they'll get raised as zombies and sent after you the next day."

He pauses as he takes another drink. "Course, then we'd get to kill em again." The drinking and merriment goes on for a time and when you break up to head off to sleep a great wind gust blows across you.

Oddly, nothing else around you is disturbed by the wind, just you (each character individually).

The air smells like a warm summer breeze and you hear singing voices in alien tongues. Though you don't understand a single word, the tone is clear.

It is a song of gracious thanks. Suddenly a sparkling blue stone whips through the air and bounces off your chest, you catch it before it hits the ground.

It's a beautiful sapphire. Then, as unexpectedly as they began, the wind and the song end.

The sapphire is a present from the noble djinn, sent from the elemental plane of air, but don't tell the players this.

AFTERMATH OF YEAR 1

This is basically a second conclusion but not one for the scenario, for the entire year. The information presented below will not be relevant for all characters but go ahead and read it for your table even if they did not play most (or any) of the previous Shield Lands modules.

It is especially important to tally up the fate points (see below) for the special cert.

The year has ended in the Restored Holy Realm of the Faithful of the Shield Lands. At the beginning of the year only two cities had been recovered. The current capital, Critwall and Bright Sentry, on Scragholm Isle.

Now, one year later, both Gensal and Torkeep have been recovered as well. The bridge that crosses the Ritensa River has been rebuilt and still stands, under heavy watch and guard.

Throughout the year there have been constant dangers in the lands. Vampire struggles in Bright Sentry, vile cults, rumors of assassins and spies. Or course, there are always rumors of assassins and spies.

And what of next year? Of these strange events, some questions are still unanswered. Mysteries still remain.

For those that dreamed of the demon, the Eldritch Wave, it was prophesized that the demon would, "kill you last." Nothing came of that, nothing at all. You feel fine. And from that same prophetic dream of which you saw the future, things were not quite the same as they unfolded. Strange.

And these cults, where are they? And just what is the Open Spirit? On the surface, the humanitarian religious sect who worship nature seem to be sincere in their efforts. Yet, information was revealed that an old evil elven sorcerer-assassin of Iuz may lead them. If this is so, why can't any of the clerics and paladins of Heironeous detect this evil? It doesn't matter, no one believed you about that anyway. Except maybe Sergeant Duc.

And what of this power struggle between Waqounis and Vayne? Was Vayne killed? Where are they all now? The forces of Axeport were greatly reduced by the events in the town. Will Katarina take advantage of that? What happens now that the blockade of Admundfort has been destroyed (obliterated by the mass of sea creatures fleeing back into the Nyr Dyv).

And the Eldritch Wave itself. You can only hope that Radiant Sparkle was right and that they can take care of it better than those of you on the land. It is part of their world after all.

Yes, all in all, a strange and dangerous year. You suspect next year will bring more of the same. Retaliatory strikes, spies, assassins, cultist, rising food prices, further crowding problems (although the recovery of Gensal and Torkeep will help for a while).

Yes, you suspect next year will be...interesting. The prophets say it's the year of the dragon. Whatever that means.

Finally the surviving characters all have a shot at receiving the special cert for the scenario. The following is a summary of things that could have happened in the scenario and a point base for each. Whichever character has the most points wins the certificate, "Destiny of Heironeous". Do not inform the characters what this is for, verbally read off the items and allow the characters to add up their own points. The points are based off honor, valor, victory and intelligence in combat situations and intuition shown through the scenario. Some of the answers require the characters to use the honor system which is why it's important to not let them know if this is good or bad. Once the winner is decided, read the text below to the character (text below the list):

- If you are a follower of Heironeous: 2 points.
- If you are a cleric or paladin of Heironeous: 3 points (in addition to the two points from above).
- If you trusted Murzio (the Djinn) when you first met him and generally believed he would try to help you: 1 point.
- If you argued to free the slaves: 1 point.
- If party went the entire scenario without having one creature ring the alarm gong: 1 point.
- For copying the maps: 2 points.
- For stealing the maps: -1 point.
- Agreeing with the decision to flee from overwhelming odds on the beach (this does not mean reluctantly going with the group, the character must have believed this to be the best, smartest course of action): 1 point.
- If you destroyed the Eldritch Wave (this is ONLY for the actual character who opened the box while in the water, thus killing the demon, it is not awarded to everyone): 3 points.
- If you trusted Radiant Sparkle at the end: 2 points.
- If you returned the artifact to the Shield Lands: 3 points.
- Agreeing to make your stand in front of the shrine of Iuz (even if they kicked it down or destroyed it, if they stood and readied to fight in front of the evil little temple, they are penalized): -2 points (or -5 points if they are followers of Heironeous).

Ties go to followers, clerics and paladins of Heironeous (in that order).

Whoever has the most points read this to them:

A few weeks later, after the events of Axeport you are wandering through tent town when a dirty child stumbles through the streets towards you.

You notice something special about this little boy immediately, a presence, a power. Your eyes tear in joy as he approaches you, your legs tremble in fear.

With burning devotion in his eyes he steps right up to you, no one pays the two of you any mind.

He points a finger at you and speaks. His voice is like sweet vanilla and as gentle as the sound of falling snow. "You have been chosen by Heironeous. Your destiny is no longer your own, but his. Choose wisely."

Suddenly the presence is gone from the child and he looks up at you innocently and smiles. He turns and bolts away into the crowd to go play with his friends.

Your legs give out from under you and you do nothing but weep for the next hour. Finally when you recover you only remember the voice that blessed you.

The savagely powerful and infinitely beautiful voice...of Heironeous.

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

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

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

Encounter One

Getting information from Murzio 50 xp

Encounter Two

Getting information from the soldiers 50 xp

Not getting caught by the soldiers 50 xp

Encounter Three

Finding the necklace 50 xp

Stealing / copying the maps 50 xp

Encounter Four

Freeing the slaves 50 xp

Defeating the guards 50 xp

Encounter Five

Defeating the wandering patrol 50 xp

Encounter Six

Destroying the Eldritch Wave 100 xp

For each defeated "wandering encounter" (200 xp maximum) 50xp

Total experience for objectives 700 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award 0-50 xp

Total possible experience 750 xp

TREASURE SUMMARY

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

- The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g. armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
- Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
- Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

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

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

Encounter One – Burning Tree Orcs

- Longspears, 2 per orc.
- Shortbow, 1 per orc; 12 arrows each

Encounter Two – Human soldiers, Blood Fist Orcs

- Each human soldier has a longsword and shield, as well as a chain shirt, 14 total
- Each Blood Fist orc has a great axe and 3 javelins, 6 total

Encounter Three - The cellar

- Each bottle of wine is worth 10 gp, there are 24 bottles in all

Encounter Four – Blood Fist orcs

- Each Blood Fist orc has a great axe and 3 javelins.

Encounter Five – Humanoids

- Each goblin has a morning star and a javelin
- Each orc has 2 long spears and short bow with 12 arrows.
- Each Gnoll has a battle axe
- Each Ogre has a huge great club

Encounter Six – Bugbears

- Each bugbear has a morning star and 2 javelins.

Conclusion – Djinn

- Each character receives a 200 gp sapphire

Aftermath of the Year–

The Destiny of Heironeous (0 gp, 0 pounds, uncommon, non-tradable) – You have a destiny in the eyes of the priests of Heironeous of the Shield Lands. Once per day, you may cast a bless spell that affects yourself, and only yourself, as if you were a 10th-level cleric. Clerics, priests and paladins of Heironeous go above and beyond the call of duty to help you. No one is exactly sure what the destiny is for, or if they do, no one is telling you. This cert also acts as a permanent influence point for all followers of Heironeous within the Shield Lands.

APPENDIX A – THE TOWN OF AXEPORT

The town of Axeport has been leveled and depopulated, twice. The first, in 579 CY when the Horned Society invaded the Shield Lands, thousands of Shield Landers gathered at Axeport to halt the invasion, but their line was broken and the town was razed. When the Horned Society fled the Shield Lands in 583 CY, the town was repopulated and partially rebuilt. It being the foremost trading center for the Shield Lands with counties and kingdoms across the Nyr Dyv.

Not less than one full year later, the armies of Iuz marched against the Shield Lands, Axeport fell again in early 584 CY, utterly destroyed.

Now, several years later, the occupying forces have rebuilt the town into their own image. Orc and hobgoblin architecture predominates throughout the town. The several dozen buildings are simple, defensible and compact. Each home bears the symbol of its orc tribe, either Burning Tree or Blood Fist. There are both simple and elaborate shrines to Iuz, throughout the town as well as concealed alters to Gruumsh, the orc God. They are small but can be found in most Burning Tree homes and a few Blood Fist homes. The shrines are hidden because the orcs don't want any priest of Iuz seeing the temples; they consider it blasphemy.

The two tribes are forced to serve here, neither enjoying the others company. In fact, there is down right antipathy between the two. Unless Waqounis and his leaders run the town with an iron fist, the orc tribes get restless and skirmish each other in hidden pit fights. These combat pits can be found in cellars of several homes. Burning Tree orcs use long spears and shortbows, Blood Fist orcs use great axes and javelins.

Despite the several dozen buildings, most of the population still lives in the tents that litter the town, clustered in groups for protection against their enemies, be that Shield Landers, or another tribe.

Neither tribe likes the leadership of Waqounis much. They think the wizard has long since lost his tiny human mind and they frequently refer to him in condescending and hostile ways (although never to his face). They generally think the human has lost his drive to conquer the Shield Lands, as Iuz has ordered and instead focuses all his attentions on the Nyr Dyv and those "beastly scraggs" he summons and plays with all the time. Even orcs hate scraggs.

The town itself is relatively clean, as Waqounis is a neat freak and constantly orders random patrols to cleaning details. The humanoid population despises this, but if they fail to obey they are fed to the scraggs.

Every once and a while there are crude gong towers, about twelve feet tall. Anyone can pull the rope and ring the gong. Once is for Iuz worship, twice is for leaders to come get instruction from Waqounis and three times is for invaders in Axeport.

APPENDIX B: THE ELDRITCH WAVE

This artifact was created by the Kuo-Toa many centuries ago. A great demon of the water was bound into the very fabric of the artifact. When the proper ritual is completed, the various components gathered and the sacrifice of the sea hag, the Eldritch Wave transforms into a powerful hybrid of the bound water demon, it becomes both a "live" creature but still remains the artifact. Thus, the Eldritch Wave becomes a 12-foot tall monstrosity that is virtually impervious to harm from mundane or magical means because it is in fact still an artifact. All spells that affect artifacts have similar chances of disrupting the Eldritch Wave. There is no known way to destroy the Eldritch Wave but a way to revert it to its necklace form was uncovered by the very priests who developed it.

The Rite of the Burning Man. A long lost rite of ever-burning fire and consumption, the rite was performed centuries ago by the desperate Kuo-Toa to stop the Eldritch Wave from destroying their city. The rite was successful and the flame consumed the body of the Eldritch Wave, burning it down to an ever-burning husk. The body was taken far away, hidden in a temple and pinned to an altar with a magic surface sword (complete history found in the module; SHLo1-02: Temple of the Burning Man).

The body remained in the temple for a few hundred years until an archeological dig uncovered it, then SL pathfinders removed the artifact from the temple but left the body behind (as no one had any means of moving it). This all took place in the module, "Temple of the Burning Man".

It was thought that once the body was burned, the demon inside the Artifact was killed, this has been proven false as Waquonis has summoned another Eldritch Wave. Where this second demon spirit came from is anyone's guess.

When in its demon form the Eldritch Wave stands twelve feet tall, it has green scaly skin with one massive eye embedded in its forehead, there is a gaping neck wound that constantly bleeds a thick, red acid-like blood.

In its necklace form the Eldritch Wave is a simple seaweed necklace woven into shells and agates. This is a common writing form for underwater civilizations, a comprehend language or anyone who can read Kuo-Toa can read the necklace. It is a simple poem that speaks of a young female Kuo-Toa, growing up to be as powerful as her father, who seems to be a priest. The title of the poem, is "Truth", that is also the name the Kuo-Toa have given the artifact. If the necklace is destroyed while the demon is awake, then when the demon is banished, the artifact is forever destroyed.

No one knows any powers or abilities of the necklace or the demon save that which is mentioned above. Like all powerful relics it comes with a dreaded curse.

Should any player character successfully steal and keep the artifact, inform a triad member immediately for consequences.

Critical Events Summary for The Eldritch Wave

Did the PCs remember and then tell superiors about the Sidhee?

Yes / No

Did the PCs steal / copy the maps?

Yes / No

Did the PCs free the Rhennee captives?

Yes / No

Were the PCs able to destroy the Eldritch Wave?

Yes / No

Did the PCs give the artifact to Radiant Sparkle?

Yes / No

Did the PCs somehow manage to kill Radiant Sparkle?

Yes / No

Did the PC's destroy the necklace?

Yes / No

Please list any other notable or interesting things that occurred:

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.