

Revenge Is Harder than Stone

A One Round Adventure for the Living City

By Richard Reiter III

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag 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 to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsulize their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module 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 bold italics. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Tier Structure

Add the levels of the PCs to determine which tier they are on. For multi-class and dual-class characters, take the highest level and add one for each additional class. Tiered events and foes are marked throughout the text.

Tier 1:	Total levels 4-13
Tier 2:	Total levels 14-25
Tier 3:	Total levels 26-37
Tier 4:	Total levels 38-56
Tier 5:	Total levels 57+

Background for the DM

Many years ago, a group of druids in the Vilhon Reach acting on the wishes of a Druidical Circle attacked a temple of Sseth. In the attack, the High Priestess's husband and child were slain.

Distraught at having caused the deaths of several innocents, the High Druid of the region stepped down from his position and returned home. The druid's name is Marcus Dandelion. After his return home, he settled down and married a young woman in the nearby city of Ravens Bluff. He was surprised to learn that relatives of his had become famous in the service of the city.

Marcus, who didn't want to be publicly linked with his more illustrious relatives or drawn into their struggles, decided to relocate his wife and child to a grove in the Highbank Forest, the place of his birth. Then tragedy struck -- his wife died due to complications from a second pregnancy. Heartbroken, Marcus turned his son over as a ward to the Grove of Silvanus, packed up his things, and left for Highbank. The old druid feared that his wife's death was nature's way of balancing the acts of his past, and he feared that his son would die if he kept him near.

Several years passed, and he and his son grew very close, though at no time did the old druid allow his son to come and live with him. Then, just a few months ago, the boy -- now almost a man -- felt a calling for the faith. He sent a letter to his father confirming his decision to become a Druid, and his father replied that he was overwhelmed by happiness. In an effort to show support for the son that he had rarely seen, Marcus decided to go to Ravens Bluff several weeks early and spend time with Samuel, his son. As he was preparing to leave, a disturbing event occurred: A few of his forest friends told him that something evil had recently moved into an old Temple of Rillifane nearby.

Enter an old enemy. Since her family was slain all those years ago in the Villhon Reach, Sisseth Re, the Medusa Priestess of Sseth, has been plotting revenge on their slayers. Having carefully tracked down each of the druids responsible, and having put to death all but the one that authorized the attack, she is near her goal. Recently arrived in the area, the Medusa intends to slay the man responsible for her loss, but first she must destroy his temple as he did hers.

Not wanting to leave Highbank for any length of time without checking on the rumors of this evil, Marcus began asking questions about the temple at the elven village near his home. Several of the elves told him what they knew, and hoped that it was enough.

Marcus's fears grew as he began to investigate the area, and so he sent word to his son and to an old friend of his, Devoul, a wizard who lived nearby. Letters sent and help supposedly on the way, Marcus went to the old temple to discover whether his suspicions about what had made the place its lair were correct. However, he was totally unprepared for what he found, and was captured. The Medusa keeps him alive so that he will know that she has destroyed his Grove and life. Then she will put him to death in a sacrifice to Sseth.

A pair of elves that had come to check on Marcus interrupted her plans. They discovered the imprisoned druid and tried to free him, but were defeated by the overwhelming odds against them. Sisseth Re realized that

the nearby crossroads tavern might be a threat, and sent her minions to attack and lay waste to the place. Devoul the wizard fell victim soon after when a spell he was weaving misfired and he appeared in the villain's den. He was overwhelmed by sheer numbers and slain by an envenomed dagger. Marcus realized he had only one chance for rescue.

Things are most grim, but this is where the PCs come in. Samuel, now Shamrock, is worried about his father, as he never received any of the final letters sent by his father telling of his suspicions. As the Druids of the grove near the city know how Marcus feels concerning his past and his family, they are not worried over the man's absence. They told the young initiate so and are not going to take any action on the matter. Shamrock decided to take matters into his own hands, and has set out to hire the PCs to check on his father for him.

After they agree, they will have several places to check and stop along the way to the Highbank Forest. After arriving, they will have to deal with the Yuan-ti allies of the Medusa and finally the Medusa Priestess herself.

Even after all of the fighting is done, there will be the matter of cleaning up the Grove and reuniting Samuel and his father.

NOTE: This module will involve a bit of *stone to flesh* and *flesh to stone* magic. Remember that in either case a successful system shock check must be made to survive the transformation.

Player's Beginning: To Find the Greenbrick Road

The past week has been nothing but rain and bad weather. Then, just before dawn this day, the clouds broke and the sun came out. By mid-morning the city was alive and the air was crisp and fresh. A pleasant offshore breeze helped to air out all of the damp, and the mood of the city seemed to improve by the minute. As the good mood was catching, you decided that it would be a good time to get out and do a few errands. So after getting your armor polished, weapons cleaned, prayers delivered, and spells memorized, you began to just wander about, enjoying the sun's gentle warmth.

As you wandered, your stomach began to rumble. Looking about, you spotted a café just off the main thoroughfare with a cheery placard announcing the restaurant as the Le PoTeete Café. You walked through the door and into the interior, and a gnome waitress came up and took you to a seat. Handing you a menu

(Player's Handout #1), *she said that she would be right back to get your order.*

As she moved away, you took a glance around, pleased by the simple decor, and noticed some familiar faces dining in this out-of-the way café.

At this time, have the characters describe themselves to each other. If any of them are familiar with each other, they have a chance to join tables and talk. After a few minutes, the little gnome waitress, Dinii, will begin to circulate and take orders.

Le PoTeete offers two dishes for lunch: Brick, a mushroom and cheddar stuffed loaf, or Rosto, which is a roast rothe sandwich on rye. For drink, Le PoTeete serves three gnomish pale ales – Rockgrit (a hard liquor distilled from potatoes), Stint (a smelly fermented mushroom beverage), and Greentart (a thin fruity beverage with a slightly apple aftertaste). The specialty of the establishment is a delicious dessert called Chocolate Crab Cakes. Just like normal crab cakes, but dipped in a chocolate shell, they are a unique taste to say the least.

Encounter One: A Disheveled Hope

As the group is settling in to their meals, a disheveled young man wearing a brown robe and carrying a haversack enters, sits down at a table, and looks around at the other diners. The man is Samuel Dandelion, or Shamrock, as he is known to fellow druids in the area. He is currently looking for a way to get around the orders that the Druidic Circle has given him. Frustrated (and hungry), he enters the café.

A young man enters the café and glances about. He is wearing a disheveled brown robe, and his face, pale with sunken blue eyes rimmed by deep blue-black bruises, is framed by wild unkempt brown hair. After entering, he shuffles to the corner and slumps into a seat in the shadows. As Dinii, the waitress, comes over to take his order, he lunges to his feet, angrily muttering, "The Circle be damned!" Raising his voice, he cries out, "Are there any persons of stout heart here willing to help a man in need?" He stands trembling and staring about the room, his gaze lingering on you and [number of PCs minus one] others.

He will wait for a response. If none is forthcoming, he will plead for help once more. After that, he will begin to weep, and will flee from the restaurant. If he leaves, the adventurers have missed their chance and this round is over. Try to figure out some other way to get them to help the boy.

Once people offer help, he will ask them to gather at his table so that he can talk with them. He will offer to buy drinks for everyone.

“Well met. I am Samuel Dan... no, that is who I was. Forgive me, I am given to slips. I am Shamrock, an initiate druid of Silvanus. A very distressing thing has occurred, and I am in need of capable persons to help me. My father is a druid in charge of WyldeOak Grove, at the heart of the Highbank Forest. He and I have always been close, at least since my mother died four years ago, and so we communicate frequently. Three months ago, I sent him a letter telling him of my decision to join the faith. His reply was of course in support of my choice. I wrote him with the date of my initiation, held just two weeks ago. I received a letter from Dad stating that he had some things to take care of, but that he would be able to make the celebration.

“He never arrived. I spoke with the elders of my order and they are not worried. In fact, they have kept me extremely busy to keep my mind off his failure to arrive. They will not take action for another month or so, but I know something is wrong. My father would not just miss my acceptance into Silvanus’s embrace.

“That is why I need adventurers. I want to hire you, but I have only this ring, left me by my mother, to pay you with. It is worth a great deal, so if it is enough, will you go to the Highbank Forest and check on my father for me?”

He will pause at this point and await the group's response. As long as they accept, he will continue. If any do not accept he will look downcast, but will tell them that he understands -- as nature has a course known only to itself, so does every creature within it. He will wish them well in their travels and will ask that they leave. (That person is out of the adventure.) Those who remain will be told the following.

If anyone asks questions, he will be vague until he has their oath to help. After that, he will answer their questions to the best of his ability. If the party does not ask, volunteer the information. There are several small pieces of the puzzle here, and without them, the jigsaw is going to have gaps by the end.

If someone asks about his father, he will say:

“His name is Marcus. My father is a good and kind man, though I have not seen him since he left for the Highbank Forest three years ago after my mother’s death. He stated that Silvanus had some purpose for him and that he could not serve that purpose in the lands of civilized man.”

If the adventurers press Shamrock on what his father said he had to do, he will suddenly remember the following about the last letter he received:

“The letter did mention that my father planned on stopping in to see an old friend of his before he came here. Perhaps he would know something. The man’s name is Finius Devoul. He is a conjurer of some power and has a tower located near the Fire River, about five days’ ride east from here.”

If asked for the letter, Shamrock will inform them that he disposed of it after reading it. He didn’t think it was necessary to keep the actual sheet.

This is what you may need to volunteer. Shamrock knows that his father had a couple of places he always stopped at on his way to Ravens Bluff. Shamrock will suggest that the party visit these places to see whether his father stopped at any of them. In addition, he will draw out a small map on a piece of gauze from his bag (**Player’s Handout: Shamrock’s Map**).

“When traveling to and from Ravens Bluff, my father often stopped at a couple of places. He almost always stops at a small village of halflings called Flat Burrow, halfway between the Highbank Forest and Ravens Bluff. An old friend of my father owns an herb shop there. And he always mentions an inn called the Bearded Dwarf in Flat Burrow, because he loves the ale they serve. It’s very pleasant and always hospitable. My father loves his time there, and I’m sure he wouldn’t have missed it for the world.

“The other place he would have stopped would have been just north of Moss-Bridges, a small shrine to Eldath tended by a woman named Arianna. My father was her mentor for a time and he likes to check on her whenever he is around.”

If anyone asks about his mother, Shamrock will smile sadly and respond:

“She died giving birth to my little sister. Sadly, the baby didn’t make it either, but that is the way of nature sometimes.” (He will sniffle, and a tear or two will spring forth at this memory).

Beyond these questions, Shamrock cannot offer anything of any real substance. He is a mere vessel for his god and hopes that Silvanus has led him to heroes capable of discovering what happened to his father. When they are finally ready to proceed Shamrock will continue with the following:

“Your journey should take no more than a day or so on horseback, two on foot, but I can only hope that you will understand my desire to see you travel rapidly. An old friend of my mother owns a stable near here, and if you need mounts, I am sure that he will settle with us at a good price.

“Once you are mounted, you will need to travel to the northeast. When you reach the small town of Moss-Bridges it would be best to veer east, following the course of the Fire River. As you can see on the map I have drawn, the shrine to Eldath will be along the way. Before you reach the forest, look for both the halfling village and Devoul’s tower. Both are a bit off of the normal track, but are places my father may have stopped.

“Once you actually make it to the Highbank Forest, you will find a small fortified way stop, called Slowwood, nestled between the Fire River and the Highbank Forest. Check at the tavern there to find a guide who can lead you to WyldeOak Grove. Beyond that, I can only tell you to follow the signs you are given and hope that you are able to find my father, or help him if anything is truly wrong.”

Shamrock will be insistent that the group take mounts. Travel by foot would take another day, and he fears that his father may not have that much time to waste. He is very worried.

Shamrock will excuse himself to go and arrange things with the horse merchant.

Any who want to gather belongings or go get their own mounts are given an hour to do so. Shamrock will meet them at the stable, and will give directions on where it is to everyone. Plan it so that persons will arrive close to one other.

Encounter Two Buying a Mount

Following the directions that Shamrock gave you is easy enough. You soon find yourself outside a clean, well-kept stable near the north wall of the city. As you approach, you see that Shamrock is standing in the yard of the establishment talking with a large, dusky man of obvious Calishite origin. To the left of the stable is a large open corral with horses milling about. A massive white stallion commands this herd. Two dun-colored mares are prancing about with their manes dancing on the wind. A small brown pony runs after the two mares, while a large black stallion grazes near the fence. Paying no attention to any of it is a golden-brown gelding that is drinking from a trough. Rounding out the herd are a matched pair

of grey horses, one mare and one gelding, standing quietly and observing your approach.

As the last of you gather in the yard, Shamrock and the stable-master come over to you. The Calishite grins warmly. “Greetings and prosperity to your persons. Call me Hannable. I hope that you have come to purchase horses as my good friend here has said. I do love a good sale, and you look like some of the finest buyers I have seen in a while.”

Hannable is a fair, polite, but stern man who believes in the art of haggling. He understands the urgency of Shamrock’s quest, and thus has agreed to sell his horses for far less than he normally would. He will expect PCs to recognize this and provide him with at least a fair bargaining match in exchange for the discounts. He has eight horses for sale, all of good stock. The horses are:

#1) Midget - one of the dun-colored mares. She is a riding horse that is very tame and loves to nuzzle. (75 gp, will sell for 50 gp.)

#2) Macbeth - a black stallion of Cormyrian breeding stock. He is a riding horse that is a bit frisky and very curious. (80 gp, but will sell for 60 gp.)

#3) Dame - the other dun colored mare. She is a riding horse, and is very nervous and often bolts at loud noises. (75 gp, but will sell for 30 gp.)

#4) Tyler - a golden-brown gelding with a black smudge over his left eye. He is a medium war horse, and is very well trained. He has above-average endurance for a horse. (250 gp, but will sell for 200 gp.)

#5) Pickle - the grey mare and the smartest horse in the corral. She is the twin of Hunk, but is much smaller and has strange, brilliant green eyes. She is a light war horse with excellent instincts for combat. If charged into a combat with overwhelming odds, she will try to bank the charge to hit a flank and provide her rider with the best chance at survival. (200 gp, but will sell for 175 gp.)

#6) Lady - the light brown pony. She is very stable and docile. (50 gp, but will part for 45 gp.)

#7) Hunk - the gray gelding, too stupid to be anything other than a draft horse. He is the twin of Pickle and will always try to follow her lead. He is not very bright, but is exceptionally strong. (275 gp, but will sell for 200 gp.)

#8) Lightning - the massive white stallion with silver mane and tail. He is a heavy war horse and is of exceptional stock. (500 gp, but will sell for 425 gp.)

As per his love of haggling, Hannable will come down 10-25% more on any bargain as long as the exchange is very good. If he is insulted or a person will not haggle, he is likely to double for the offender.

If anyone is thoughtful enough to inquire about the relationship between Hannable and Shamrock's mother, Hannable will tell them that he and she were once members of a band of adventurers. For two years they traveled in the lands of the Vilhon Reach, working for the Druidic Circle there. In fact, it was there that Marcus and Jasminth, Shamrock's mom, met. Marcus was on some sort of special service for his god against the Yuan-ti in the area.

As soon as the group is mounted Shamrock will thank Hannable and will direct the group to the gates.

You're finally mounted and standing before the road to Moss-Bridges. Shamrock looks up at all of you and says, "I wish you the guidance of Silvanus. May your journey and my prayers be fulfilled, and my father found safe and well. When you have finished, seek me at the Grove of Silvanus outside the city, or send word. If I hear nothing within the month I will assume the worst, and the orders of the elders be cursed...I will come to see if there is anything that I can do."

You ride from the city with the sun hanging about halfway down in the sky. With luck, you should make Moss-Bridges or the Shrine by nightfall.

Encounter Three Pains, Grunts, and Chafing

This is where the PCs begin adjusting to life on a horse, and have their first night camping in the great outdoors.

You've traveled along the road for a few hours, and your backsides are beginning to complain and your horses are starting to seem tired. If you press on you may be able to make it to the Shrine, or without too much trouble you can settle down to make camp.

The group has two choices at this time. They can camp, in which case, read on; or they can decide to go to the shrine, in which case, go on to **Encounter Five**.

If the group decides to press on, have them make constitution checks (anyone with *endurance* checks against that first, and against constitution only if they fail). Those who fail will suffer blisters on their backsides and a -1 to all actions due to the difficulty of movement. If the afflicted person rests an entire day they will recover from the modifier and can make another check (constitution or

endurance as appropriate). Success indicates that the swelling goes down and they are able to continue without pain; failure indicates that the affliction continues.

Regardless, after a person suffers for one day in this manner, their rears start to callus and they are immune to the effects.

Persons riding Lady or Pickle, and those with *riding* non-weapon proficiency, are immune to this chafing pain.

If everyone camps, they actually are able to have a good night's sleep. They will awake refreshed and fully able to travel.

Encounter Five A Peaceful Rest???

This encounter occurs no matter what time the party actually arrives at the shrine. You may need to edit the boxed text to reflect the time of day.

A little over two hours beyond the small collection of buildings that is Moss-Bridges, you see a small pastoral grove down near the Fire River. The grove of trees frames a small, glassy pond. As you approach, you see within the grove a raven-haired young woman in a translucent blue and green gown, kneeling before the bank of the pond and dipping a crystal decanter into the calm waters.

As you approach, she glances in your direction and you see that she is a beautiful half-elf. Her robe is adorned with the symbols of Eldath, and as the light catches her gown, the symbols of Eldath seem to ripple like water on the sheer fabric.

"Welcome to Sweetwater Pond, a small shrine to Eldath. My name is Peacewoman Arianna. I hope that you bring no intent of violence to this sacred place. How can I help a group of travelers such as you?"

If the players ask for shelter she will immediately invite them in and offer to prepare a hot herbal tea for anyone needing it. In addition, if anyone is gravely injured she will offer to tend to their wounds with herbal poultices (ten doses that heal 1d4 h.p. each) and her meager healing magic.

Arianna, hef P(Sp)4. of Eldath: Int Average; AL N; AC 10; MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 15.

Spells (spells with an * are already cast): 1st level - *cure light wounds* x2, *protection from evil**, *sanctuary**; 2nd level - *hold person*, *withdraw**, *charm person*, *slow poison*

The cottage is a very simple structure containing two rooms: a shrine (the larger portion of the house) and a small bedroom. The PCs are invited into the shrine and offered rest around the room.

After she has seen to the needs of the PCs, Arianna will inquire what brought them to her grove. If they have already mentioned Shamrock, she will take the time of settling them in to observe their actions and demeanor. She will ask them subtle questions to probe their intentions. After she is reasonably certain that they are of good heart and not lying to her, she will sit down on the floor near them and begin to speak with them.

“I am fairly certain that you are persons to be trusted. At least, you have the bearing of heroes and I sense a true purpose about you that is not common among men. I consider it fortuitous indeed that you have come to my small shrine to seek shelter, because I have knowledge that may help you. I have here a letter that was on its way to Ravens Bluff to be delivered to Shamrock from Marcus. The scrawl on the envelope makes me think that it is urgent. If you believe that it will provide you with an answer, I will give you the letter and you may read it.”

If the PCs want to see the letter, Arianna will go and get it from her room. At this time, give the players **Player’s Handout #2**.

If anyone asks about her old mentor Marcus, she will smile and fondly reminisce about her time in his tutelage. Feel free to make up cute little stories about their times together, but it is important that in one story she recall how Marcus hated snakes -- something about his journeys south of here in a place called the Vilhon Reach.

While the group reads the letter, Arianna will start to bring out blankets and other bed stuffs to allow the group a good night’s rest. When she finishes she will stand around and watch them, waiting to hear what they think the letter may mean, and to see if there is anything she can do.

Encounter Six Two Roads Diverged

The party can choose to go to the out-of-the-way tower, or continue straight to the village and the forest, skipping the tower encounter.

After half a day’s ride through the rolling grasslands, you arrive at the point where, according to Shamrock’s map, you must either turn northward into the hills to find

the wizard Devoul’s tower, or continue along this road to the halfling village and the Highbank Forest beyond.

If anyone asks, going to the tower will take the party a day out of the way. If they continue straight, they will reach the village in a day and a half, the forest in three days.

Encounter Seven Devoul’s Tower

Roughly another half-day’s ride inland away from the Fire River, you enter a light forest. The woods eventually begin to thicken and you lose sight of the rolling plains altogether.

Hours later, the trail enters a large clearing, and at the center of the clearing is a squat black tower, about thirty feet high, simple and without adornment. Attached to the tower is a small enclosure just right for horses. Beyond that, nothing of any interest catches your eye.

This is Devoul’s Tower. Unfortunately, he is not here, having already gone to the elven village at the request of his friend Marcus. The only way to gain entrance to the tower is a plain oaken door. The door is *wizard locked* and *fire trapped*, so if forced it will explode for 1d4+10 h.p. of damage (moderate this for lower tier parties). Speaking the words “Honey, I’m home” will deactivate the *fire trap* and the *wizard lock* holding the door shut.

Anyone climbing to the top of the tower will find a trap door in the roof, similarly trapped and locked. The sentence to deactivate this one is, “I’m on top of the world.”

If the characters gain entrance to the tower, they will find that nobody is home. If they make a lot of noise, they will hear a sickly mewling sound from the ground floor, back room, which is the kitchen. Lying on the floor is a very sick-looking yellow cat. (He is suffering the shock of feeling his wizard master die). Clutched in his paws is a torn letter of some kind.

If the cat does not receive care, he will die. The quickest treatment would be a *find familiar* spell to bind him to a new master. Magical healing will only postpone the cat’s death, as he will continue to lose 1 h.p. per day due to the shock of losing his master. He needs someone to nurse him back to health, and will respond to anyone that attempts to pet him. If anyone casts *speak with animals*, or similar magic, they will learn the following:

The cat’s name is Simon. He was a familiar to Devoul, and recently felt the shock of separation from his master. He doesn’t know where his master has gone, but he does know

that the last impressions he had were of scaly slithery things and a terrible burning pain (poison, but don't tell them that).

The cat, if prompted, can also tell the PCs that his master left in a hurry after receiving a message from a talking owl. Simon was very upset that the bird was so smart, because he was unable to catch and eat him.

The owl delivered a letter to Devoul and then flew away with a reply of some kind. The letter is the one Simon was shredding when he felt Devoul die. It was left on the floor in the foyer, and he was just playing around with it.

When anyone goes to read the letter, hand them Player's Handout #3. If someone decides to take care of Simon, it will take him several weeks to recover. If the body of Devoul is recovered and Marcus's temple raises him at the end of the adventure, Devoul will want Simon returned to him.

Nothing else of interest is in the tower, though if the players begin to waste a lot of time tearing the place apart, feel free to include some random nasty surprises. It is a wizard's tower, after all, and he is named Devoul.

Encounter Eight

Flat Burrow and a Festival to Boot

In this section, it is assumed that the party has moved on to the halfling burrows to learn whether or not Marcus has come here recently. If the party decided to press on towards the Forest, go to Encounter Nine.

Following the course of the Fire River, you find the journey to the halfling village pleasant. As you make your way across the grassland, you're able to see a faint dark line rising from the horizon. The closer you come, the more the line begins to waver. Finally, less than a mile away, you are certain that it's a large column of smoke. Something ahead is burning, and, judging by the amount of smoke in the sky, it's something big.

Note whether the group takes any special precautions at this time.

The sun almost beyond the horizon, you top a gentle rise and get your first view of the village of Flat Burrow about two hundred yards away. The thick column of smoke comes from a great bonfire roaring atop one of the hills, with several small figures running about keeping it contained.

The village consists of seven burrow mounds, three wooden buildings, several strange wooden constructions in a great heap, and what looks to be a stone-walled inn.

The village is called Flat Burrow by those that live there. In all, thirty halflings, two humans, and a half-elf call the place home.

Flat Burrow consists mostly of halfling farmers, but there are a few services available here that are not available elsewhere.

If anyone approaches the bonfire they will notice that the halflings moving about it seem to be involved in some type of ritual dance. They are decorated with facial paints, and look rather strange. If they are disturbed, a female will leave the circle and approach those persons asking questions. She is Hawilla Cather, a priestess of Cyrrollalee, the Faithful. The bonfire festival is a renewal of the village's dedication to the goddess. The festival is also in remembrance of all the faithful that have died in the past year (with the slaughter of Big Moe, these halflings have many to remember). They plan on prancing about until the fall of the sun tomorrow night. Any halflings are welcome to join (actually expected to join) in the festivities, and will be taken to one of the two wooden buildings, the temple, to be prepared. A recruit is expected to take off all items of worth, and will be dressed in a coarse brown robe, painted to express vitality, and led back out to the dance. Once someone joins, the priestess and villagers will be very upset if he or she decides to leave. That will change at nightfall, when the festival will be disrupted by the arrival of a large predator looking for dinner.

The second wooden building, next to the temple of Cyrrollalee, is a temple dedicated to Avoreen. The two priests of this temple are not present, having gone to Big Moe to assist in the rebuilding and burial there. Though the church is uninhabited, it is open for worshippers to spend some time in.

The last wooden building is a small herbalist's shop run by Tames Grenwell, the half-elf. The shop is called the Red Berry, and specializes in ointments and anti-venoms. Tames is an old friend of Marcus, and if the PCs tells him what they are doing, he will be very interested. If people want to purchase any herbs, he has a broad selection. If asked about special concoctions, he will offer the party a brew he just devised called Purative, which neutralizes poisons. The cost for a vial of Purative is 500 gp. Tames has four such vials.

The strange wooden constructions look to be barricade walls. These are used when the village is under attack; they can be locked together to form a ring around the entire

town. While a very creative idea, this is not very practical. This will be apparent during the monster attack that night.

The only other location of note is the inn, called the Bearded Mug. It is run by a husband and his wife, both human. They are called Shy and Judy Rangees. They purchased the place from the old proprietor, who decided to up and leave one day. They used to own a farm about ten miles from the village, but leaped at the chance to move into this fine establishment and leave the back-breaking work behind. Out of respect for the old proprietor, they never changed the name. When the PCs arrive, they have plenty of rooms available for only 1 s.p./night. Food and drink are extra. Dinner at the inn is a boisterous occasion, what with all the halflings that come to eat and drink. Any traveler can see that the owners are doing well.

If anyone inquires, both of the Rangees are familiar with Marcus, but they haven't seen him in a while. If they learn he may be in trouble, they will express regret and comment that he was always a good customer, never complained or made a fuss. Both of them liked him very much.

Encounter Eight B

Bright Lights, Big Predators

It will be very important to note who has gone to sleep, who is awake, and if anyone is actually at the festival. All of the persons in these different locations will be able to act at very different times, and the course of the battle may be far grimmer for the town if the adventurers are slow to move. This encounter occurs just after sunset that evening.

Due to the constant motion, the loud chanting, and the presence of prey, a Dzalmaus has taken an interest in the festival. Just about eight o'clock, as the sunlight is fading from the sky, it will attack. The beast's plan is to attack the greatest number of potential victims. After killing three or more targets, it will drag them off to eat them. It will return every twenty minutes to eat until no easy food is to be found.

After the first attack, the halflings will begin to assemble the barricade. Moving each section into place takes 5 rounds, and there are 20 sections. In addition, the Dzalmaus can fly for short distances, and thus will just come over the barricade. However, this is comic relief, so ham it up. Halflings trying to assemble a wall in the darkness with a big beast trying to eat them is a sight not to be missed. Make sure to have fun with it, though it is really very deadly.

When the party finally gets a look at the Dzalmaus, this is what they see:

A deafening roar tears through the night. By the light of the bonfire, you see a massive, three-headed reptile dropping out of the darkness above you. With a savage snarl and a flap of its wings, it is upon you with tooth and nail.

Remember that it kills and takes its prey out into the grasslands with it. Every ten minutes after that, it will return and try to snatch more food. The creature prefers horseflesh, and so will go for the stables at the Bearded Mug on its third pass, thinking that everyone is diverted to the bonfire and those wounded there. Somewhere around the second to fourth pass, the party should be able to attack the beast and kill it. An incredibly aggressive hunter, but smart, the Dzalmaus will retreat if down to 25% of its hit points. Better to live and hunt another day, than die tonight by the hands of some adventurer.

If the Party should decide to track it down, it retreats about three hundred yards from the village to eat. It has no lair and thus has no treasure.

For the first attack, assume that three random halflings are slain and eaten, unless a PC is dancing with them; in this case, randomly determine whether the beast attacks the PC. After that, Hawilla will have organized a defense, and the PCs should be able to assist.

Halflings (8), F1: Int Average; AL NG; AC 7 (leather and dex); MV 6; hp 8 each; THAC0 20/18 (specialized in the sling); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA +1 to hit with sling; SD nil; SZ S; ML 20 (village defense).

Equipment: Sling w/ 10 stones, leather armor (though it takes a few minutes to put it on), and spears

Hawilla Cather, halff P6: Int Average; AL NG; AC 8 (dex); MV 6; hp 40; THAC0 18 (16 w/sling); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA +1 to hit with sling; SD nil; SZ S; ML 20.

Spells: 1st level - *cure light wounds* x2, *bless*, *magic stone*; 2nd level - *aid* x3; 3rd level - *cure serious wounds* x2.

Equipment: Sling w/10 stones, holy symbol, and a mace

Tier One

Dragon, Dzalmaus (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 6; MV 6, FL 30; HD 6; hp 40; THAC0 16; #AT 5; Dmg 1-6/ 1-6/ 3-18/ 3-18/ 3-18; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ H (10 ft. body, 7 ft. tail); ML 16.

No breath weapon at this level.

Tier Two

Dragon, Dzalmaus (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, FL 30; HD 8; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1-6/ 1-6/ 3-

18/ 3-18/ 3-18; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ H (40 ft. body, 37 ft. tail); ML 16.

No breath weapon at this level.

Tier Three

Dragon, Dzalmaus (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC 2; MV 6, FL 30; HD 8; hp 65; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1-6/ 1-6/ 3-18/ 3-18/ 3-18 + special; SA breath weapon; SD immune to *charm* and mind-affecting spells; MR 10%; SZ H (45 ft. body, 38 ft. tail); ML 16.

Breath weapon is a cone of life-draining energy. It is 60 ft. long, and 20 ft. wide at the base. Anyone inside the area must save vs. breath weapon or be drained one energy level. Hit points, spells, and combat ability are lost immediately.

The levels drained by the Dzalmaus are added to its own in the form of hit dice (and hit points). The additional hit dice do not alter the THAC0, size, or age of the creature. Once it has drained levels equal to its hit dice, or has used it three times in a day, the creature cannot use its breath weapon until the drained energy dissipates. Any damage suffered by the Dzalmaus comes from these shadow hit points first.

The energy drain is not permanent. Lost levels return in 1-4 hours.

Tier Four

Dragon, Dzalmaus (1): Int Average; AL CE; AC -4; MV 6, FL 30; HD 12; hp 120; THAC0 8; #AT 5; Dmg 1-6/ 1-6/ 3-18/ 3-18/ 3-18 + special; SA breath weapon (3 times/day), save at -6; SD immune to *charm* and mind-affecting spells; MR 40%; SZ G (100 ft. body, 92 ft. tail); ML 16.

Breath weapon is a cone of life-draining energy. It is 60 ft. long, and 20 ft. wide at the base. Anyone inside the area must save vs. breath weapon or be drained one energy level. Hit points, spells, and combat ability are lost immediately.

The levels drained by the Dzalmaus are added to its own in the form of hit dice (and hit points). The additional hit dice do not alter the THAC0, size, or age of the creature. Once it has drained levels equal to its hit dice, or has used it three times in a day, the creature cannot use its breath weapon until the drained energy dissipates. Any damage suffered by the Dzalmaus comes from these shadow hit points first.

The energy drain is not permanent. Lost levels return in 1-4 hours. As they return, the Dzalmaus loses the extra hit dice they represented.

As the creature's last cries of rage fade into the distance, the citizens of Flat Burrow begin to come out of their burrows to help the wounded. Several people come up to you and offer thanks and congratulations on dealing with the beast. Others are hailing the efforts of those brave heroes who died defending the village.

As thanks, the owners of the Bearded Mug will offer to house the PCs for free. They will also offer to refund the money spent on dinner, and will not accept any payment for breakfast.

Tames will come forward before the group leaves the next day and offer a poultice to the heroes to show his gratitude for their defense of his home. The poultice is really a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment*, with 3 doses remaining.

If Hawilla lives through the battle (if she didn't this will be one of the other halflings), she will offer the PCs her gratitude as well as whatever healing magic she can the next morning. In addition, she will offer the group the greatest treasure of the temple: A scroll with 2 *stone to flesh* spells on it, scribed at the 18th level of ability and dedicated to Silvanus. If asked about the scroll, Hawilla can tell the PCs that it was donated to the temple by a visiting wizard a few years ago.

Any halflings that are in the group are offered a special gift. They are named Burrow Wardens for the village of Flat Burrow.

Once the group has rested, regained spells, and so forth, they are able to set off for the Highbank Forest again.

Encounter Nine Slowwood

This is where the group makes it to Slowwood, only to find that all of the people there have been turned to stone or butchered in an attack. They will also discover, if they look, a couple of men in the service of the local lord in the woods about a hundred yards from the village. All of these men have been turned to stone.

Moving about the village is a pair of will-o'-the-wisps. If the group chases them, they will lead the PCs directly to the abandoned elven temple, hoping to force them to engage Sissith Re, the Medusa priestess of Sseth.

If the PCs choose not to follow the will-o'-the-wisps, they will have to follow the trails left by Sissith's yuan-ti minions.

A few hours past the village, the trail again begins to shadow the Fire River. Moving from grasslands into a light forest, you note that you seem to have finally made it to the Highbank Forest, as the woods gradually become thicker and thicker. As the sun begins to slip below the

horizon, you come around a bend in the trail to see a signpost. The sign is in both Elvish and Common.

The message is simple: “Half a mile to Slowwood. Wet your whistle at The Happy Manticore”. Be sure you have a rough marching or riding order at this point. In addition, remind any human players that the light is fading, and it is becoming hard for them to see under the cover of the forest.

As promised, half a mile past the sign, the woods begin to thin out and you see faint lights moving about in a clearing up ahead. Your approach down the main path takes you by two small cottages off to the right, then into the clearing where a small well stands bathed in moonlight. At the crossroads are five small cottages roughly ringed around the well, a larger building made of white marble, and a tavern with a wooden palisade around it. On the far side of the well stand two statues in strange poses. Looking past them, you see that the doors of the marble building have been rent asunder and the gate of the tavern’s palisade is broken open, with a large tree lying among the wreckage. The lights you noticed a few seconds ago are about two hundred yards off in the forest and moving farther away each second.

Several things are going on here.

First are the two statues. Upon inspection, they both appear to be statues of men in their prime, wearing leather armor and carrying spears in hand. A successful *observation*, *appraisal*, or *stonemasonry* check will determine that these were once living men.

The tavern is a scene of carnage. At least a dozen bodies, all of them in poses of defiance, lie around the room. Many appear to have died of claw marks and bite marks. Two of the bodies look to have been slain by bladed weapons of some kind. Nothing of any interest can be found in the tavern, though if the group needs supplies they can find a fully stocked cellar.

The houses of the village are very simple and none hold anything of interest.

Investigation of the marble building reveals that it is a shrine dedicated to Aerdrie Faenya, Goddess of Air and Weather. Inside is a terrifying sight. Bodies are strewn everywhere in a wholesale slaughter. Religious statues have been broken or destroyed, the white marble altar smashed and desecrated with large amounts of congealed blood.

If the party takes the time to investigate all of the bodies, they will find an old elf, slumped against the wall and trapped by a fallen statue. He was wounded by a blow to the head, but is still barely conscious. If he hears noise in the

temple, he will begin to rant and struggle to lift the stonework off himself. Given the chance, he will go for his sword, and then attempt to ascertain what has happened to the rest of the villagers. When PCs get close enough, they will see that he is blind and probably one of the oldest elves they have ever seen. If he is healed or given time to calm down, he can relate his story of what happened. His name is Rakathil Farstar, and he was a tracker and hunter in his youth.

After he calms down a bit, the ancient elf stares about for a few seconds and you realize that he is blind. He then begins to speak. “About a week ago I sent my son to check on old Marcus, a druid who lived near here. He had sent us word to expect him, but had not arrived, and I had heard nothing more from him. Marcus was never one to be late or tardy so I sent my boy out to check on him.

“Well, my boy said when he got back that though most of his things were home, Marcus was not around. We knew that he had been asking a lot of questions about an abandoned temple to Rillifane north of here, about a half-day’s ride, and so concluded that he must have gone up there to investigate. We waited another two days to hear from him, but when he never showed I asked a friend of mine to send two men up there to check on things.

“Those boys went, but what came back was I guess what got old Marcus too. I can’t tell you what they looked like, but I can tell you...I heard the sound of scales, and the hisses...some kind of reptile men would be my guess. Makes sense, too, because the old temple was abandoned when it began to sink into a bog. Just took some time for suitable denizens to move in. They must have thought we were trying to eliminate them.

“I am a hunter by trade, but they had no call to slaughter everyone because they may have felt threatened. It’s one thing to kill a man because he’s attacking you, but another entirely to slaughter people dedicated to peace and harmony. I have never asked this of anyone before, but will do so now. If I take you there, will you kill the beasts who killed my kin? If you won’t, I will do it myself, but as I have lost my sight and my strength is failing, without help I will surely fail.”

If the group desires (and manages to convince him of the need), he can also take them to WyldeOak Grove, but he will make it clear that he thinks the old temple is where everything is happening.

The last thing that the PCs could check is the two will-o’-wisps fleeing the area heading north. They were attracted to the area during the battle between the Yuan-ti and the elves by all of the suffering. They will try to lure the party to the Medusa priestess’s lair, to feed on the life energy of those

who will die in the ensuing battle. They will remain just ten or twenty yards from the PCs, but will be obscured by the forest so as to be unseen.

Will-o'-Wisps (2): Int Exceptional; AL CE; AC -8; MV Fl 18 (A); HD 9; hp 45 each; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16 (electrical discharge); SA nil; SD only *protection from evil*, *magic missile*, and *maze* affect them; SZ S; ML 17.

These monsters will not seek to attack. They will only try to lure persons to the medusa's lair. If they are caught, attacked, or unable to lure their victims to the ruined temple, they will flee.

If the group does not go into the temple and find the old man, or does not decide to follow the will-o'-the-wisps, the Yuan-ti attackers left a trail going north out of the village to the temple. A successful *tracking* check at -4 should find it.

Encounter Ten

Ruins of Rillifane's Temple

Whatever the route by which the party approaches, the temple does not change. Sissith Re feels that, with the destruction of the elven village, any threats in the area have been dealt with. She has ordered her Yuan-ti minions to be on guard, but they have recently fed and thus are lounging around expecting no trouble.

Sissith Re has already left for the Grove to complete the destruction of the man who destroyed her own temple years ago in Chondath. She has left the Yuan-Ti here to guard Marcus, and will deal with him when she has finished with his Grove.

For more on the relations between these two, see Appendix 2: A Long Time Ago.

Just before the PCs reach the temple, the two will-o'-wisps (if they haven't been driven off) wink out and hover nearby in the forest waiting for the carnage.

The moonlight filters through the trees and plays across the ground in strange undulating motions. Each eddy and swirl of light causes you to start and spin, seeking an enemy behind every tree.

Up ahead you see the forest begin to thin again. Less than two miles from the village, the land starts to slope downward. The air is moist here, and the smell of rotting wood and leaves fills your nostrils. As the ground begins to squelch underfoot, you get your first look at the ruined temple of Rillifane.

The back section of the once-grand stone-and-wood structure has sunk into the bog, and the front half is overgrown with weeds and vines. In the front, barely visible in the moonlight, you see what looks to be a set of silvery gates, recessed and falling off their hinges. Beyond actually climbing the walls, the only entrance you can see is through them.

From this point on, the areas will be denoted as Area 1, Area 2, etc. to coincide with the accompanying map.

Area One: Just inside the Gate

The tarnished old silver gates are no obstacle. You step through the gap and into the interior of the temple. The little light provided by the moon reveals a chamber about twenty feet square and covered by moss and vines. A set of double doors is opposite you. The ground around them looks to have been cleared of debris to provide them room to swing outward. As you glance about, your nose detects the faint aroma of rotting meat to your left.

A search of this room will reveal a half-eaten elven corpse in the corner. The body is too badly decomposed to tell what killed it. If the old elf is with the party and someone describes the corpse to him, he will state that it was one of the two scouts they sent, probably the one called Masika.

A *speak with dead* spell on the corpse to ask him how he died will elicit the terrified response, "Snakes!" He died fighting the Yuan-ti (snake men). If asked, he will state that they are controlled by a beautiful woman wearing a black veil. Sissith Re charmed him when he tried to attack her. He does not know what happened to his companion, but assumes he fled.

Area Two: The Temple Proper

As one of the heavy oaken doors creaks slowly open, you see a large chamber bathed in moonlight from several holes in the ceiling. The entire back portion of the chamber has fallen away into the bog, and vines and moss cover everything. Several rotting benches and pews are strewn about, as if to accommodate something large.

Chained to the floor in the center of the room is a gaunt, pathetic-looking man. He raises his head at your entrance and gasps, "Look out!" As he slumps back to the floor, you see creatures in the shadows of the room – half-snake, half-human abominations staring at you in apparent surprise. They rise, hissing and swaying, and move to attack.

The man on the floor is Marcus. He has passed out from exhaustion and lack of food.

Tier One

Yuan-ti, Histachii (2): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Tier Two

Yuan-ti, Histachii (4): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Yuan-ti, pureblood (1: Sseb): Int Genius; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 45 each; THAC0 13; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; SD nil; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14.

Spells (useable once/day): *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, and *polymorph other* (will always make victim a snake).

Equipment: long swords, heavy crossbows w/6 bolts each.

The pureblood will hang back and allow the Histachii to engage his foes. He will look for spell casters and use *cause fear* or *suggestion* on them. He will not use his *polymorph other* ability at this Tier. Finally, he uses crossbows until forced into melee.

Tier Three

Yuan-ti, Histachii (6): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Yuan-ti, pureblood (2: Sseb, Choss): Int Genius; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 45 each; THAC0 13; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; SD nil; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14.

Spells (useable once/day): *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, and *polymorph other* (will always make victim a snake).

Equipment: long swords, heavy crossbows w/6 bolts each.

The two purebloods will hang back and allow the Histachii to engage their foes. First, they will attempt to *polymorph* any obvious fighters into snakes. Then they will look for spell casters and use *cause fear* or *suggestion* on

them. Finally, they will rely on their crossbows until forced to engage in melee.

Tier Four

Yuan-ti, Histachii (8): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Yuan-ti, pureblood (3: Darniss, Scholath, and Viper): Int Genius; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6; hp 45 each; THAC0 13; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; SD nil; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 14.

Spells (useable once/day): *cause fear*, *darkness 15' radius*, *snake charm*, *sticks to snakes*, *neutralize poison*, *suggestion*, and *polymorph other* (will always make victim a snake).

Equipment: long swords, heavy crossbows w/6 bolts each.

The three purebloods will hang back and allow the Histachii to engage their foes. First, they will look for spell casters and try to *polymorph* those individuals into snakes. Then they will target fighters with their *cause fear* and *suggestion* abilities. Finally, they will rely on crossbows until forced to engage in melee.

While the Histachii are just mindless creations, the purebloods can provide a small amount of useful information. If captured and interrogated (they speak Yuan-ti, the language of snakes, and a small amount of Common), they will reveal that they serve a medusa who has left to fulfill their mission here in the north, and that the man on the floor is Marcus. They also know that Devoul's body is in the water at the back of the room. Other reasonable information lackeys would know, they know.

As soon as the battle is over, the group has the chance to help Marcus. One of the purebloods has the key to his chains. He can be brought to consciousness after a few moments, but will be very delirious and frightened. A *potion of vitality* or other such sustaining magic will rouse him immediately. If given normal food, he will take more time to recover, but after ten minutes will be well enough to talk. Marcus will want to know who they are, why they are here, and if they stopped Sissith Re from destroying the Grove.

If the last one is a negative, Marcus will struggle to his feet and lurch towards the door, very distressed. He will turn to the party and beg that they help him.

“I am weak from my ordeal, but you must press on. About an hour ago, Sissith Re, a priestess of Sseth, the Yuan-ti snake god, left here to destroy the Grove of Silvanus I was tending. Though its power is not great, the Grove is all that I have to show for my wife’s memory. I buried her ashes under the heart oak, the tree at the center of the grove.

“The reason that Sissith Re seeks to destroy my work is because, years ago, I destroyed her temple in Chondath. Fire elementals consumed the temple, and her mate was apparently caught in the inferno. If she were to kill me, I would consider my debt to her fulfilled, but you must not allow her to destroy the legacy of my wife and a place holy to Silvanus. If the grove is destroyed, the heart of the wood will be lost, and Sissith Re will spread the vile taint of evil that is her religion through the land.

“Take this medallion in your hand, hold it aloft, and speak the name of Silvanus. It will guide you to the Grove of WyldeOak. Once there, you must stop whatever diabolical evil she has planned.”

If the room is searched, a little treasure (50 gp per dead foe) lies among the beds of the dead Yuan-ti.

If PCs search the sunken section of the building, they will find the corpse of a human male just under the surface of the water. This is the body of Devoul. His face and arms are covered with small bite marks. He has been stripped of all valuables.

Nothing else of value is in the chamber.

Encounter Eleven The Grove

Following the empathic prompting of the amulet, you once again race through the night, now rapidly becoming dawn. About five miles west of the ruined temple, the feeling begins to fade, and at the top of a wooded hill you see the grove. It’s a stand of twelve trees fringing the hillock. As you approach, you can see that inside the ring of trees grows a large oak beside a pool. The water from the pool flows out the far side of the grove and down into the forest. The amulet stops tugging at you as you approach the gap between two of the trees.

There is a slight shimmer in the air as you pass between the trees, and the scene atop the hill suddenly changes. Standing on the bank of the creek, chanting, is a thin woman of medium height in a black veil and dark green robe. As you pass through the mystic shimmer, you see a small vial of black liquid slip from her fingers and fall into the pool.

Her chanting stops, and dark shapes drop from the trees all around you.

NOTE: Sissith Re will seek to escape after having poisoned the waters. If she is prevented from escaping, she will fight only to get clear and flee.

Tier One

Yuan-ti, Histachii (6): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Sissith Re, Medusa P4 of Sseth: Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA petrification, poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 13.

Spells (all spells marked with an asterisk have been pre-cast): 1st level - *cause light wounds, command, curse, protection from good**, *sanctuary**; 2nd level - *heat metal, hold person, charm person, silence 15’ radius*.

Sissith Re will use her spells, and then her gaze attack, and finally will engage with her hair.

Tier Two

Yuan-ti, Histachii (12): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Sissith Re, Medusa P6 of Sseth: Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA petrification, poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 13.

Spells (all spells marked with an asterisk have been pre-cast): 1st level - *cause light wounds, command, curse, protection from good**, *sanctuary**; 2nd level - *heat metal, hold person, charm person, silence 15’ radius*; 3rd level - *dispel magic, venom of varae, emotion control*.

Sissith Re will use her spells (starting with the *dispel magic* to eliminate any *gaze reflection* or protective magic spells the enemy has), then her gaze attack, and finally will engage with her hair.

Tier Three

Yuan-ti, Histachii (15): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day.

Sissith Re, Medusa P8 of Sseth: Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 75; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA petrification, poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 13.

Spells (all spells marked with an asterisk have been pre-cast): 1st level - *cause light wounds, command x2, curse, protection from good**, *sanctuary**; 2nd level - *heat metal, hold person x2, charm person, silence 15' radius*; 3rd level - *dispel magic, invisibility purge, venom of varae, emotion control*; 4th level - *animal summoning I** (summons a group of pit vipers, detailed below), *spell immunity* (lightning bolt), free action**.

Sissith Re will use her spells (starting with *dispel magic* to eliminate any *gaze reflection* or protective magic spells the enemy has), then her gaze attack, and finally will engage with her hair.

Her *animal summoning* spell has summoned a group of pit vipers that will defend her to the death.

Poisonous Snakes (8): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SD Nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML special.

Poison: Persons bitten must save vs. poison at +1 or suffer 2-8 damage in 2d6 rounds.

Tier Four

Yuan-ti, Histachii (20): Int Low; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3; SA berserk; SD immune to *hold* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 20 (Fanatic).

While berserk, the Histachii gain +2 to attack and damage for 2d6 rounds. They can do this only once per day. One round after the combat begins, they drop from the trees into the midst of the fight. They will not look at the medusa.

Sissith Re, Medusa P10 of Sseth: Int Exceptional; AL NE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 75; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon; SA petrification, poison; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 13

Spells (all spells marked with an asterisk have been pre-cast): 1st level - *cause light wounds, command x2, curse, protection from good**, *sanctuary**; 2nd level - *heat metal, hold person x2, charm person, silence 15' radius*; 3rd level - *dispel magic, invisibility purge, venom of varae, emotion control*; 4th level - *animal summoning I** (summons a group of pit vipers, detailed below), *spell immunity* (lightning bolt), sticks to snakes, free action**; 5th level - *dispel good, wall of fire*.

Sissith Re will use her spells (starting with *dispel magic* to eliminate any *gaze reflection* or protective magic spells the enemy has), then her gaze attack, and finally will engage with her hair.

Her *animal summoning* spell has summoned a group of pit vipers that will arrive on the second round of the combat.

Poisonous Snakes (8): Int Animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SD Nil; MR nil; SZ S; ML special.

Poison: Persons bitten must save vs. poison at +2 or die in 1d4+1 rounds.

Cleanup

The waters of the pond have been fouled by the black elixir. The elixir is draining from the pool into the stream, and is beginning to foul the waters downstream. The bottle the elixir came in lies at the bottom of the pool.

The poisonous elixir is a concentrated solution of the formula used to create Histachii. Touching the water is not dangerous. However, anyone who drinks it must save vs. poison. Demi-humans who fail this save will die. Humans who fail will suffer the effects of a magical transformation, over the course of 6 days, will turn the PC into a Histachii. Even if a human passes the saving throw, he or she will fall into a coma (onset 1d4 rounds) and die within an hour without help.

As the water has been poisoned, the grove will begin to suffer almost immediately. The trees will begin to die and the grass and moss on the banks will begin to turn brown. In twenty-four hours, the grove will be dead, its magic leached away by the evil poison.

The danger is that the pool atop WyldOak drains into the Fire River, and thus to several villages and ultimately to Ravens Bluff. Though highly diluted, the poison in the river will still be dangerous. Every so often, a person drinking from the waters of the river will be stricken by the poison, and either die or be turned into a Histachii.

Only a *purify water* spell, a *potion of sweetwater*, or similar magic will be able to clear the pond's water. Also, the poison vial must be retrieved from the water, or the poison will just continue to seep out. Since the pond is 10 feet deep, someone will have to submerge to find the vial (5% chance/round of locating it). Immersion in the water means a 25% chance of coming into contact with tainted water, which requires a save vs. poison as described above. This risk is negated for two rounds after a *purify water* spell or *sweet water* potion is used.

If the party lacks the ability to purify the water, Marcus will be able to once he is healed and has had a chance to regain his spells.

Anyone who looks will notice that the trees of the grove have all had their lower bark stripped in a ring, and have begun to wither and die. It will take some type of plant-healing magic to save these trees. They used to form a protective circle around the grove, providing both a magical glamour (still active) and a *protection from evil*, but after being stripped, they lost their second power, and the protective ring of the grove failed. This allowed Sissith and her minions entrance.

A simple cottage lies north of the pond, and opening the door reveals a simple abode. The cottage has four rooms, all on the ground floor, and a cellar underneath. The four rooms are, in order, a study, a bedroom, a kitchen, and a small shrine and animal care room.

Study - A search reveals an old oak desk, a simple oak chair, a locked trunk, and a staff leaning in the corner. The desk holds several blank pieces of rolled parchment, an inkwell, and a letter to Shamrock from Marcus explaining that he is not going to be able to make it to the Initiation (**Player's Handout #4**).

Bedroom - A search reveals little except for a collection of simple robes, an old backpack under the bed with nothing inside.

Kitchen - Nothing of interest, just a random scattering of food and cookware. The kitchen does not look like it was used in the past week.

Shrine/Hospital - A search reveals two small jars of ointment, a pouch with twenty berries in it, and a small silver oak leaf. The oak leaf will glow a soft white if any worshipper of Silvanus comes near it. There are also wrappings, ointments, and herbs in the room to take care of wounded animals.

The severe damage to the grove will require a lot of work to repair. Any priest of Silvanus should realize that this kind of devastation is akin to assaulting Silvanus himself. Marcus will be distraught when he learns of the destruction, but will see repairing it as his atonement for the violence and bloodshed that have been caused in his name.

The Wrap-Up

If anyone was turned to stone, Marcus will assist the group in taking the afflicted back to Ravens Bluff to receive help. The Druidic Circle will cast the spell *stone to flesh* for normal cost. The group will also have a scroll with two *stone to flesh* spells on it from Flat Burrow, if they aided that village.

Marcus will purify the water, but allow the PCs the chance to get the bottle. If they don't do this, Marcus decides that he deals with the problem before they leave the Grove. First, Marcus wants to go to Ravens Bluff with the PCs and see his son.

Back in the City of Ravens Bluff

You're finally back in the City of Ravens Bluff. Marcus and his son Shamrock invite you to the Grove of Silvanus just outside the city a few days after you get back. They come out to greet you, and you note that Marcus looks much better.

Shamrock says, "Good fellows, had you not assisted me, my father would be lost to me. For that I owe you, and I hope that you will accept this simple token of my gratitude." He holds out to you a small gold ring, adorned with a green emerald. (He will be insistent, and will feel that he owes the party some type of debt if they will not accept the ring).

Marcus comes forward smiling. "I owe you much, and would like to give each of you a gift. My boon to you is a pouch sewn of leaves and ensorcelled, leaves from the heart-tree of my grove. Ten times this bag will produce a goodberry, and I hope that each serves you well. If any of you are willing, I will need assistance in caring for WyldeOak...and any who are given to the path of Silvanus may decide to make that small grove their home with me".

They turn to leave, promising to keep in touch. Good, after much sacrifice, has triumphed over evil.

Wrap it up and score it. Hope everyone had fun.

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for Living City events.

1. Sum the experience listed below for objectives.
2. Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-500 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the PC interacted socially.
3. Finally, multiply the total by the tier according to this chart:

Levels 6-13	Tier 1
Levels 14-25	Tier 2
Levels 26-37	Tier 3
Levels 38-56	Tier 4
Levels 57+	Tier 5

PCs should get the experience points of the tier for which they qualify, regardless of which tier is actually played. For example, if you have a Tier 3 group and you have to bump the combats by one tier to challenge them, they still get the experience points for a Tier 3 group, not for a Tier 4 group.

Encounter Three

Deciding to camp	25 xp
or	
Pressing on to the Shrine	50 xp

Encounter Five

Getting information from Arianna	50 xp
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Encounter Seven

Saving the cat	50 xp
Getting information from the cat	50 xp
Finding & reading the letter	25 xp

Encounter Eight

Saving village (no more than 3 innocents died)	100 xp
Killing the dragon	200 xp

Encounter Nine

Saving the old elf	50 xp
Gaining his help	25 xp
Discovering all of the clues	50 xp

Encounter Ten

Defeating the Yuan-ti and saving Marcus	100 xp
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Encounter Eleven

Defeating Sissith Re and her minions	100 xp
Saving the Grove	50 xp
or	
Just managing to clean the water	25 xp

Total Experience for Objectives:	900 xp
Discretionary Roleplaying	0-500 xp

Total Possible Experience	1,400 xp
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Tier Two	2,800 xp
Tier Three	4,200 xp
Tier Four	5,600 xp

Treasure Summary

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot keep it. This is a house rule which overrides what they may actually acquire in the scenario.

From Shamrock:

- *ring of fortitude* (provides the system shock and resurrection check of an 18 con, but nothing else)

From Marcus:

- bag of *goodberries* (will produce 10)
- residence in the Grove -- a follower of Silvanus who wants to help tend the WyldOak grove may take up residence there. This requires semi-retirement, as duties in the grove will take away time from adventuring. If the PC is not a druid, he or she may dual-class to druid (following normal dual-class rules) and Marcus will serve as the PC's mentor.

From Tames:

- *Keoghtom's ointment* (3 doses)
- 4 *potions of neutralize poison* (must be purchased; 50% chance of failing to neutralize the particular poison drank for)

From Hawilla:

- wizard scroll w/2 *stone to flesh* spells on it.

Mounts (must be purchased):

1. Midget - one of the dun-colored mares. She is a riding horse that is very tame and loves to nuzzle **Riding horse**: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 7.
2. Macbeth - a black stallion of Cormyrian breeding stock. He is a riding horse that is a bit frisky and very curious. **Riding horse**: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 7.
3. Dame - the other dun colored mare. She is a riding horse, and is very nervous and often bolts at loud noises. **Riding horse**: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 7.
4. Tyler - a golden-brown gelding with a black smudge over his left eye. He is a medium war horse, and is very well trained. He has above-average endurance for a horse. **Medium war horse**: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1-6/1-6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 7.
5. Pickle - the grey mare and the smartest horse in the corral. She is the twin of Hunk, but is much smaller and has strange, brilliant green eyes. She is a light war horse with excellent instincts for combat. If charged into a combat with overwhelming odds, she will try to bank the charge to hit a flank and provide her rider with the best chance at survival. **Light war horse**: Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 15; THAC0

19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 7.

6. Lady - the light brown pony. She is very stable and docile. **Pony:** Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2; hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 6.
7. Hunk - the gray gelding, too stupid to be anything other than a draft horse. He is the twin of Pickle and will always try to follow her lead. He is not very bright, but is exceptionally strong. **Draft horse:** Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 22; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 6.
8. Lightning - the massive white stallion with silver mane and tail. He is a heavy war horse and is of exceptional stock. **Heavy war horse:** Int Animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 26; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-8/1-8; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M; ML 8.

Player's Handout #1

The Mid-Day Menu for Le PoTeete Small Things Made Good

Lunch Dishes

BRICK 5 SP

A loaf of wheat bread filled with mushrooms and cheddar, baked to a crunchy shell and served with a white sauce

ROSTO 1 GP

A sliced roast of rothe served on rye bread with either mushroom gravy or dill sauce

Salads & Soups

TOSSED ALGAE SALAD 1 SP

A delightful selection of several different algae mixed and served with either oil & vinegar or a creamy cheese dressing

CHUNKY POTATO SOUP 3 CP

A thick, hearty brew of potatoes, pork, and spices, served with a chunk of wheat bread

Beverages

GREENMINT 2 CP

A slightly tangy blend of apples, grapes, and mint leaves

STINT 7 CP

A strong fermented brew of mushrooms and spices

ROCKGRIT 1 CP

An alcoholic beverage distilled from potatoes

DESSERTS

CHOCOLATE CRAB CAKES 1 GP

Crab cakes dipped in a thick chocolate syrup

BERRY BOWLS

A selection of berries served in a sugar sauce (berries depend on season)

PLAYER'S HANDOUT #2

The letter is a more than a week old. The writing is somewhat sloppy and blurred, as if written in a hurry.

Samuel,

I may be a few nights late, son. I need to speak with Finius Devoul about an issue that has arisen here at the Grove. I hope that the old wizard will be able to provide me some insight. No matter, I plan on arriving well before the ceremony, and I look forward to seeing you. I am very proud of you, son.

Love Always,

Marcus Dandelion
Keeper of WyldeOak Grove

PLAYER’S HANDOUT #3

The letter is torn and shredded. Only parts of it are legible, but the handwriting matches that of the letter Arianna gave you.

Finius,

I need you now. Certain things to expect. Understand that this is based concrete evidence. Most I have not slept well lately memories of that day.

Old friend, most important moments of my life to let Samuel down after I have not been there all these years. Silvanus himself is the only thing that will

Faith and Honor,

Mar.....

tear off this part

If the group casts *superior mending*, the letter can be read in its entirety as follows:

Finius,

I need you now. Certain things are occurring and I know not what to expect. Understand that this is based upon my opinions, and not upon concrete evidence. At times, I almost feel as if she is here and that it is time for me to pay. I have not slept well lately because of recurring memories of that day.

Old friend, I have missed some of the most important moments of my life and I will not miss another. I do not want to let Samuel down after I have not been there all these years. Silvanus himself is the only thing that will keep me away this time.

Faith and Honor,
Marcus Dandelion
Keeper of the WyldeOak Grove

PLAYER'S HANDOUT #4

The writing is smeared in places, as if drops of water fell on the page while the ink was wet.

Samuel,

Please understand that you are the most precious thing to me in all the world. That said, I must now tell you that something has come up and I do not believe that I will be able to attend your initiation. I will make this up to you, I swear on my heart that I will, but as you will learn, the calling of one's god comes before that of one's heart.

So, you will understand I have a grave matter to deal with. This is something from my past, something I brought upon myself in trying to do the will of Silvanus. I am not proud of everything I have done, and if the Balance requires that I pay yet again for those innocents that I slew in an attempt to destroy an evil god, so be it.

Know that I love you, son, and always will. By the time that this letter reaches you, you will already be a member of the faith, and I can only encourage you to follow your heart and thereby your god. Silvanus is in all nature and all nature is Silvanus, but never be deceived -- it is that very duality that demands we be ready to sacrifice that which we love, to pull up a flower so that a weed may grow.

Love Undying,

Marcus Dandelion

Shamrock's Hand-Drawn Map



Temple of Rillifane





