

The Scars That Never Heal

A Two-Round AD&D Living City Adventure

Round One

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BLURB

One year ago, the devil princess Glaysa battled an avatar of Sune Firehair on the streets of Ravens Bluff. Now, *Glaysa's Poniard*, a dagger that marred a goddess of beauty, has returned to the city!

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This is a standard two-round RPGA Network tournament. Two four-hour time blocks have 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 for each round will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used, with a different packet for each round. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

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

To determine the tier, add the level of all the characters. Multi-classed and dual-classed characters count as their highest level plus one for each additional class. In addition, add the levels of any adventuring NPCs the PCs bring, and the full hit dice of any animals which can enter combat on the side of the PCs. Compare the total to the chart below to find the tier.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41
T4:	33-42	36-46	39-50	42-54
T5:	43-52	47-57	51-62	55-67
T6:	53+	58+	63+	68+

Introduction

One year ago, the devil princess Glaysa fought an avatar of Sune Firehair on the streets of the Living City of Ravens Bluff. The princess wielded a terrible weapon in that conflict, *Glaysa's Poniard*, a straight-bladed dagger imbued with power seldom seen in the Forgotten Realms. Though unknown struggles, Glaysa had won or made for herself a dagger that appeared little more than extremely keen. In the fight with Sune, however, it made its terrible power known to all. When

the *poniard* was used to score a mark upon the avatar of Sune's face, the wound was magically transferred to Sune Firehair herself, marring that being's perfect visage. Suddenly, the goddess felt more vulnerable than at any time since the Time of Troubles, when she herself was cast from the heavens and forced to walk Faerun in mortal guise.

In a single blade, Glaysa had the power to do much more than scar her adversaries. Had she managed to slay the avatar, something not completely outside the abilities of a powerful devil princess, it is believed that Sune would actually have perished, leaving a vacuum in the pantheon of Abeir-Toril.

Word of the weapon passed quickly. Within hours of the battle, magicians and priests alike were aflutter with frightened imaginings of what the dagger might mean for the city, indeed for the entire world. In the heavens, and in the realms below, word spread as well. Beings who cared nothing for the fate of Toril became interested in *Glaysa's Poniard* not for its possible effects upon Toril, but for the weapon's impact throughout the multiverse. Certain plans were put into action to affect the capture of the dagger. Forces throughout all existence began to make their moves.

Glaysa, weakened in her battle with Sune's avatar, knew that she would not be able to protect the dagger in her own lair. The Lord of the Ninth Hell would look poorly upon the intrusions of the multiverse upon Baator. Besides, the dagger had been meant for a grander occasion, for an unspeakable act of supreme betrayal. Her decision to use it prematurely, in a foolish pursuit of artifacts and followers on the Prime Material Plane, had not enamored her in the courts of Hell. Thinking of no safer place, she entrusted the dagger to her most powerful cult on Toril, in the city of Procampur. There it stayed, under unscrutable conditions, for nearly a year.

Until two days ago, when internecine struggles within the Procampen Temple of Glaysa resulted in the theft of the dagger. The thief was none other than Regault Diamondice, a high-level priest of Glaysa tasked with organizing all cult activity in Ravens Bluff. Long had Diamondice coveted the favor cast upon Jacinda Lassars, the high priestess of Procampur. Long had he resented her whispered conferences, her willful decisions to keep him in the dark on issues important to the religion as a whole. To Regault Diamondice, *Glaysa's Poniard* was little more than a symbol in a local power struggle. Thus, when he and his followers stole the dagger from the temple in the south, they had no idea of the dangers they brought to the City of Ravens.

Adventure Summary

Though Glaysa's Poniard plays an important role in the backstory of the first round of *The Scars that Never Heal*, the players themselves will not become aware of its role until well into the adventure, and will not be able to do anything about the dagger until the second round of the event.

Ravens Bluff is the focal point of many struggles, and the recovery of an artifact like the *Poniard* is merely one of the tribulations that seem to pull at the city on a weekly basis. As *The Scars That Never Heal* opens, the heroes find themselves pulled into another struggle native to Ravens Bluff – the search for an evil artifact known as the *Heart of Bane*.

Encounter One

The PCs receive a request for help from the elven noble Belinda Moonglow, the Dean of Enchantment in the city's formidable Wizard's Guild. She wishes to retain their services for a brief mission, to locate her brother, who missed an engagement only this morning.

Encounter Two

The PCs venture to an inn favored by the missing brother, Lord Nieven Moonglow. There, they discover that he left in the middle of the previous night after gathering a group of adventurers. Further investigation leads the PCs to Bartros Bloodbound, an occasional companion of the elven lord's.

Encounter Three

Bartros turns out to be a mean, drunk old dwarf who is not particularly helpful. He does, however, reveal that Nieven was in fact gathering a group of adventurers to travel that night to the town of Mare's Crossing, on the outskirts of the territory claimed by Ravens Bluff. Lastly, he reveals that Nieven believed he had discovered the hiding place of the *Heart of Bane*, a terrible artifact that has caused much woe for Ravens Bluff.

Encounter Four

The party travels to Mare's Crossing (perhaps with the dwarf in tow), only to find the place completely destroyed, all of its inhabitants slain. Nieven, it appears, had been tricked. They discover his body, along with a note of warning from a drow house tired of Ravens Bluff's excursions into the Underdark. As a final present from the Realm Below, the PCs get to fight a group of drow servitors, and perhaps even the drow themselves.

Encounter Five

The PCs return to Ravens Bluff to give Lady Belinda the bad news. While they are consoling her, a strange magical globe in her office throbs with energy – a warning sign to the Dean of Enchantment that *Glaysa's Poniard* has returned to the city! She hustles the party to a location in the merchant quarter, asking them to watch a certain warehouse for her, until she can gather enough members of the guild and the clergy of Sune to siege the location in force. She warns the PCs not to interfere unless it looks like something terrible is about to happen.

Encounter Six

The group inhabits a derelict old building with a good window view of the warehouse. During the stakeout, the PCs hear something on the roof, and must investigate.

Encounter Seven

"Something terrible" happens, as dozens of robed figures rush the warehouse. Light begins to flash at the windows, signifying a great battle. The PCs likely rush to see what is happening, only to witness a group of elves, cultists of Shevarash, assaulting the Glaysans for ownership of *Glaysa's Poniard*. Somehow, the PCs become entangled in the struggle, and just as everything seems lost, reality begins to shift, and the PCs feel themselves being carried off to . . . elsewhere (namely, Round Two of *The Scars That Never Heal*).

A Note on Tiering: The Supertier

The Scars That Never Heal contains a "supertier," one level of difficulty that far exceeds a "Regular" adventure in the Living City of Ravens Bluff. The Supertier is available only to tables that can muster 78+ combined levels, regardless of how many players are seated at the table. All players should agree to play the Supertier before play begins. High-level tables who do not meet the requirements for the Supertier must play the adventure at Tier Six, though tables with 78 or more levels MUST play the Supertier, or choose a different combination of characters.

Encounter One Lady Moonglow

At some point late in the morning, the PCs are contacted by a porter from Ravens Bluff's Wizards Guild. The particulars of the encounter are not important, so judges should improvise a bit of role-playing with each player at the table, tailoring the invitation to each. A halfling priest who works at an orphanage, for instance, might find the porter asking for him, having heard tales of his mercy and willingness to

help those in need. A blood-soaked elven warrior might be contacted due to tales overheard of her prowess in battle. A complete zero, or someone who has only just begun adventuring, should be contacted last, as a sort of “last case scenario.” In such instances, the role-play encounter should be saved for last, and the porter should be played as extremely rushed, as if he only has a small amount of time to gather those needed for the assignment, and the PC in question will have to do.

The Porter: Relbus Baskiton is a human boy of about 18 years of age. His shock-orange hair appears somewhat odd under the hood of his simple green robes, which feature a patch bearing the symbol of Ravens Bluff’s Wizards Guild. He knows only somewhat incorrect stories about any PC with a “general” fame rating higher than 8 – he’s always wanted to be an adventurer, and hopes to make a good impression on the heroes – even if his low charisma (7) won’t always allow it. Relbus laughs at inappropriate times and flares his nostrils frequently for no particular reason. He is well-meaning, but not a favored companion of anyone.

A NOTE ON BARDS (if any are present): Normally, Relbus explains, the Guild wouldn’t allow any bards in its headquarters, but Lady Moonglow doesn’t share that particular guild prejudice. He’ll wink patronizingly at any bards in the party, whispering “Your secret’s safe with me!”

The following information should be imparted to each character:

1. He has been instructed to find “a half dozen competants” by one of the deans of the guild – the Lady Belinda Moonglow, Dean of Enchantment.
2. According to the dean, the heroes are to assemble outside the Tower of Philosophy, Ravens Bluff’s Wizards Guild headquarters, an hour before highsun.
3. He doesn’t know what the dean needs, only that her tone indicated that it wasn’t urgent – which is strange, because she’s offering 1,000 gold pieces each for the task.
4. Relbus has never seen 1,000 gold pieces, and wants to know what each and every PC is going to do with the money.

If you wish, you should play out Relbus’ gathering of the heroes, with the porter asking a little about each member of the party as it slowly grows. By the time he

has “finished his list” of adventurers, it is nearly an hour before highsun, the appointed meeting time.

When you are ready to continue, proceed.

As the sun rises high in the sky, you stand beneath the shadows of the impressive Tower of Philosophy, the recently constructed new home of the city’s Wizards Guild. Men and women in colorful robes crowd the streets, here, entering and exiting the structure, paying little attention to your assemblage. Far above you, you can make out the form of a woman on a small flying carpet, as she floats gently to a covered window on one of the higher stories, and finally into the structure. A number of birds roost at the top of the tallest tower, probably familiars of wizards studying inside.

Relbus the Porter beckons you forward. “Lady Moonglow asked me to bring you RIGHT to the tower, and I reckon I’ve done that.” He seems very proud to be in your company. He quickly ushers you up a small flight of wide steps, and into the main entrance.

From there, the porter takes you through a bewildering series of narrow passages, finally leading you to a steep set of stairs. Though he smiles widely all the while, you occasionally catch him turning his head to make sure none of you have wandered off – the Wizards Guild is notoriously paranoid about non-members meddling in their affairs.

After what seems like the hundredth flight of stairs, you come to a short landing, off which branches a hallway, which leads to a beautifully stained wooden door.

“Lady Belinda’s offices,” the porter says with a smile, gesturing you forward.

This is as far as Porter Relbus goes. He waits for all the PCs to enter the office before returning to duties downstairs.

As you open the wooden door, your senses are overcome by the pleasant aroma of fine elven perfumes. Faint music plays in the room beyond, seemingly coming from the air itself, as no instruments are present. The room is no larger than an average office, though the walls have been heavily curtained by lovely tapestries and hangings. In many ways, it is the typical office of a Wizards Guild dean, with magical trinkets sprinkled liberally throughout the room. The most striking of these objects is a faintly-glowing sphere of blue light, which sits near the back wall of the room, hovering about four feet from the floor.

An elven woman sits behind a desk carved from light wood, and she smiles as you enter. She wears robes of alternating light and dark blue bands,

gathered at her slim waist, only a few inches below a scandalously low-cut bodice. Her dark hair, arranged atop her head in a complex weave of knots and braids, contrasts her alabaster skin. The only mar to her otherwise perfect beauty is a mock-scar, drawn in make-up, running a vertical line down the left side of her face. You've seen many people in the city with a similar mark over the past year.

"Greetings," the elven woman says, with the slight accent of nobility, "I am Lady Belinda Moonglow."

(The Lady looks over the group, letting her gaze fall uncomfortably long on any particularly good looking men, particularly if that person is also an elf.)

"I see the porter chose. . . wisely," she says with a mischievous smile. "I like the looks of you. . . . but I don't know you. Please, validate the good work of my man Relbus. Tell me something of yourselves."

Allow the PCs a chance to introduce themselves to Lady Moonglow. Her interest in the stories of male party members is exactly proportional to their Charisma score. Though no one could consider her rude, she will brush over the affairs of ugly heroes rather quickly, while teasing good-looking adventurers to no end. This equates to little more than open flirting – it's highly unprofessional, but then Lady Belinda is a noble and a dean of the guild, as well, so she's used to getting whatever she wants – and what she wants is seldom unattractive.

She spends little time getting to know female adventurers, but is in no way rude to them, no matter what they look like.

Throughout this encounter, try to give the impression that Lady Belinda isn't all that worried about her current predicament – as if getting to meet handsome adventurers was as much the reason for calling the group together than whatever problem she's currently facing.

What the PC's Know About Lady Moonglow

Wizard Guild Members: All members of the Wizards Guild know that Lady Moonglow is well known to be as interested in the promiscuous revels of the temple of Sune as she is in the business of magic – and her school is suffering for it. Most enchanters in the guild worry more about currying favor (and, ahem, favors) with the dean than their studies, and hence rumors abound that Simon Regulus, the master of the guild, might be looking to replace her.

What the PC's Know About Lady Moonglow

Elves: Elven adventurers who have lived in the city for more than a year know that the Moonglow family is a group of moon elves from Sembia who have lived in the region since before Ravens Bluff ever existed. Their house is well known for magical skill. Belinda is one of three daughters of Lord Erendriel Moonglow, who also has a son.

After introductions have been made, or once the group appears to be tired and/or uncomfortable with the flirting, continue.

"Well," she says with a smile. "Like I said, it appears that Relbus chose wisely.

"I wish I could say that I'd invited you all here for a social call, but I'm afraid things are somewhat more complicated than cookies and wine. . . . Do you think it's too early for wine?"

"Hmmm. Well, it's more complicated than wine, I'm afraid. It's my brother, you see. Nieven. Well, Lord Nieven Moonglow, to be exact. I don't want to say he's missing, per se, but he hasn't shown up for a breakfast engagement, which is odd for him. He's irresponsible, and sometimes even lazy, but it's not like him to miss one of my breakfasts. . . . particularly since after breakfast we'd decided to teleport to Sembia to visit some beloved friends.

"I'm sure that nothing bad has happened to him, but it's just that, well, he's the youngest of our family, and I've always been the "big sister" to him. Sometimes Nieven spends time with the wrong class of people – I mean no offense, of course. . . . adventurers would be at least a step up from the riff-raff company he keeps.

"I decided to call on adventurers because, well, I had a friend at the guild cast a divination for me, and it was inconclusive, but suggested that Nieven might be in serious trouble."

At the word trouble, Lady Moonglow frowns, ever so slightly. "I don't mean to frighten you. . . . knowing Nieven, the trouble is that he ran out of money while drinking and some dirty barkeep is forcing him to wash dishes. . . . but it's trouble all the same. . . ."

"You see. . . . The Family Moonglow is an important one, here in Ravens Bluff. It would be a real shame for news of Nieven's problems to reach the wrong people. . . . like that wench who writes the society column for the Trumpeter. Anyway, I assume you can understand the delicate situation I'm in. I love my brother, but he needs to clean up his act. I figure hiring some adventurers to bail him out of whatever trouble he's in is probably the best way to

show him that I'm serious about getting him to shape up.

"I'd normally send the watch, but they talk as much as anyone. And since, if I hit my guess, Nieven is in Crow's End, I don't think the watch are going to get any answers out of the suspicious criminals who haunt the bars my brother favors. So, I'm hiring you people. 1,000 gold. That's my price. I realize it's probably overkill for rescuing a drunk and being quiet about it, but. . . well, what's money, after all?"

The PCs will likely have a number of questions. Here are a few answers:

Where do you think your brother might be?

"It's not so much a matter of where I think he is. . . I've got a pretty good idea, at least of where he's been. The divination revealed that he was, at least last night, at a dingy Crow's End inn called the Faun's Yawn. It was Nieven's favorite, and most of his cretin friends practically live there. It'd be a good place to start looking. He also spent some time at. . . hmmm. . . I know he sometimes spends time at Sign of the Legless Octopus and the Errant Fletcher, as well. Any of those would be good guesses."

What does Lord Nieven look like?

"Oh, my brother is handsome. Very, very handsome. He's tall for a moon elf, almost six feet. An inch shorter than me," she says with a smile.

"Let's see. . . he's probably wearing thigh-high brown leather boots of excellent quality, a blue cape. . . daggers at both sides. He's got a small scar that cuts his left eyebrow in half – some remnant from a barfight years ago. It's the cutest thing, really."

What should we do if we find him?

"Give him a good kick in the behind from his big sister, sober him up, if you can, and get him back here as soon as possible. Then collect. It should be easy money."

Who were you going to visit?

"We were going to visit some family friends, the sisters Feathersong and Lacewillow Pathdancer, fellow followers of Sune from Sembia. Nieven was very enamoured with both of them, and they returned the interest. How do I put this. . . last time we saw each other, the two of them gave Nieven. . . an offer he couldn't refuse, if you follow my meaning. Which makes it doubly odd that he didn't show up for breakfast."

She **WILL NOT** elaborate on what she's talking about, here. If the PCs (or the players, for that matter) are too sheltered to figure it out, she'll change the subject,

simply restating that it's odd that he wouldn't appear earlier this morning.

Do you have more details about the divination?

"Certainly. It was cast by my friend Micah Starfire, the Dean of Divination. He cast the spell magic mirror, and scried Nieven's apartment (it turns out he hasn't been there in several days, though people saw him about town since then) as well as a few bars. He told me that he saw no trace of my brother. . . but he also told me that he felt a sense of foreboding during the casting. Micah's the best diviner in the city, and he often senses things that others would miss completely. So, I'm a little worried."

Micah Starfire is too busy to see the PCs. Even if they find a way to talk to him (if, for instance, a party member is in the guild's Inner Circle), he is unhelpful – he can tell them no more than Lady Moonglow already has.

Note that any attempts on behalf of the PCs to divine Nieven's fate will also meet with failure, the result of particularly powerful magic put in place by enemies of the city in Mare's Crossing.

What's that glowing blue ball?

"Oh, that's something I cooked up last year. It's more wishful thinking than anything else, I'm afraid. Do you recall when that devil-spawn Glaysa fought my mistress, Sune, in the streets of this very city last year? In that fight, Glaysa scarred Sune with a special dagger, known as Glaysa's Poniard. It's an obscenely powerful artifact – what it does to a god's avatar, it does to the god itself. I've been studying the theories behind the dagger's construction, and I (and many others, I should say) believe that the scar on Sune's face could be healed if she was given the dagger. So, I designed our floating ball of light, here, to turn bright red should the dagger ever return to the city. Like I said, wishful thinking. It hasn't even hinted at anything other than blue since I created it."

What's up with the mock scar?

"Ever since my lady Sune was wounded in battle in this very city, many of her faithful have chosen to wear a mock scar as a memory of the fact that perfect beauty has been marred. I live for the day when her scars have been healed, but I'm just pessimistic enough to believe that, the way things often go when this city is concerned, that will never, ever happen. I'll continue to wear the scar, though, in memory of my lady's valiant sacrifice to save us all."

What, indeed, is money?

If the PCs attempt to haggle for more lucre, she throws up her hands in a mock show of frustration.

“Oh, very well. I’ll double it. 2,000 gold pieces each. Will that suffice?”

Though she won’t go higher than that, it ought to go down as one of the easiest haggles in a cheap PC’s long career of greed. Definitely one to tell the grandchildren about.

Howse about we blackmails ya? Huh? Huh?

“Very clever,” she says in a mocking tone. “No one’s ever thought of that, before. I don’t know, I suppose you could try blackmailing me. After you’ve gotten a chance to discuss whatever tactics you could have used with your new cellmates on Illwater, I’d love to hear about it, provided you can beat the odds and escape. In other words, don’t even bother. Just do the job I’ve given you, and take the 1,000 gold before I change my mind.”

At some point, the PCs will run out of questions. Thereafter, Lady Moonglow will stand to escort them out of the Tower of Philosophy. If anyone happened to flirt with her playfully, she will suggest to him, in private, that the two of them get together some time in the future. If multiple PCs were “friendly” to her, she’ll manufacture some way to offer a date to all of them.

Nieven’s Apartments?

In all likelihood, the PCs will investigate the Crow’s End inns and taverns frequented by Lord Nieven Moonglow. There’s an off chance they’ll want to check out his apartments – if they do, they will be directed to a nice building in uptown. Nieven’s quarters are messy, but nothing hints of any struggle. He has a number of nice clothes (mostly dirty and strewn about the floor), but almost no wealth to speak of. The PCs will find nothing of use here.

Once the PCs decide to look into Nieven’s favorite drinking establishments, proceed to the next encounter.

Encounter Two The Inns

Lady Moonglow might mention as many as three separate drinking establishments favored by her brother. Only one, the Faun’s Yawn, leads to any important clues. However, in the interest of completeness, information is provided for the other locales as well.

The Sign of the Legless Octopus

This run-down tavern features a regular cast of drunkards, even in the early afternoon. One fellow, Janus Balinor, a one-legged halfling well into his cups, asks the PCs for 100 gp, hinting that he might know something. After the PCs meet his bribe, he’ll reveal that Lord Nieven hasn’t been seen in the Sign of the Legless Octopus for at least a week. He lost a game of cards with the halfling, who thinks he’s hiding out because he’s unable to pay. If the PCs refuse to bribe him, he refuses to talk.

The Errant Fletcher

This inn/tavern, located in Crow’s End, was actually destroyed two years ago, when some adventurers started a fight with the inhabitants. PCs intimately familiar with Crow’s End will know this — others will have to ask residents, who will direct them to the rubble. Particularly brave parties will discover a ruined stairway leading to an underground basement. The chamber below is mostly collapsed and shows signs of having been the center of a great fire. No one has been here in more than a year, and no clues can be discovered here as to Nieven’s whereabouts.

The Faun’s Yawn

The real trail to Lord Nieven’s whereabouts can be found at the Faun’s Yawn, a two-story tavern/inn in the Burnt Gables section of Crow’s End. The Yawn, as it is known by most of its inhabitants, is actually a bit higher-class than most Crow’s End dives, mostly because its main clientele consists of adventurers “slumming it,” as opposed to genuinely destitute Ravenaars.

Though it’s (likely) still a bit early in the day when the PCs arrive, the Yawn is enjoying brisk business. There are a number of different customers the PCs may encounter.

Bartender, Old Arne: Old Arne is a tired-looking human well into his sixth decade. He’s spent most of his adult life as bartender at the Yawn, a job he enjoys. He’ll offer up a mug to anyone who enters his bar, asking them what’s on their minds. He’s a collector of stories, and knows that adventurers are a trove of this type of information. There’s no urgency to anything Arne does — he’s happy to run the Faun’s Yawn, and takes great pleasure in his work. He saw Lord Nieven Moonglow in the bar last night, but doesn’t remember serving him anything to drink. “Now that you mention it,” he says with a hint of mystification, “Nieven seemed like he hadn’t had a drop all night.”

If asked about Bartros Bloodbound (the PCs will learn about him from the patrons), Arne will direct them upstairs, to Room Four, where, he warns, the dwarf is sleeping off a particularly nasty hangover.

Waitress: Black Jemine: A comely lass with dark skin, who appears to be more than a little tired after working the night and day shifts. She remembers that Lord Nieven came in about an hour after midnight, with two elven companions. She doesn't remember anything about them, other than the fact that they were elves. Maybe they wore cloaks. . . she can't seem to recall. Jemine will tell the PCs that Nieven usually likes to flirt with her, but that he seemed "all business" last night, going from table to table, trying to find adventurers for some reason or other. He didn't stay to eat or drink, so she didn't pay much attention to him, and doesn't remember when he left.

Waitress: Concetta: Concetta is a young half-elf, perhaps 16 years of age. Still, working in Crow's End has hardened her, somewhat, and she's no stranger to barfights and course language. She remembers that Nieven was in last night for about two or three hours, going from table to table and talking to the various patrons. She also remembers that he was with two elves, but she remembers absolutely no detail about them — she knows only that they were elves, and that they left with Nieven about three or four hours after Midnight. She thinks, but isn't sure, that a group of adventurers from several different tables accompanied the three elves outside the bar.

Only three patrons are still in the bar from last night. Everyone else either doesn't know who Nieven is, or hasn't been to the Yawn for a few days. More than a few patrons will be rude to the PCs. Most of them are well into their cups.

Patron: Boof Biddlesticks: Boof Biddlesticks was once a chef to the noble House De Sheers, of Ravens Bluff. One day, the halfling sampled a little too much cooking wine, and was found dead drunk in the kitchen. Ever since, his reputation has been ruined among the elite of Ravens Bluff. When the PCs arrive, he is passed out, lying face down on top of the table, his peanut-shell-encrusted bare feet sticking out over the edge.

If woken, Boof remembers seeing Lord Nieven talking to his friend, the dwarf Bartros Bloodbound. He's pretty sure that Bartros was one of the group of adventurers standing around the elven noble, going from table to table throughout the night. Boof doesn't know anything about Nieven's elven companions.

Patrons: Vespín Valínade and Sharra Koth: This dark couple sits in a secluded corner of the bar, playing

cards with each other. They are on the run from a pair of Westgate assassins, and have managed to hole-up in the Faun's Yawn. Under no circumstances will they explain their predicament to the PCs, but they are plainly nervous about something, and it's clear they've been awake for hours. If the PCs approach them, they will notice that Vespín continually "looks past" them and to the door, as if he's expecting someone to arrive.

Both Vespín and Sharra remember talking to Nieven Moonglow last night. He came to their table about three hours after midnight and asked if the couple were adventurers. When they told him they were, he asked if they had any interest in accompanying him on a brief journey to some outlying town (both Vespín and Sharra are from Westgate, and don't remember the name of the place). Since both of them preferred to stay in the inn, they declined.

They add that one of the elf's companions, a drunk dwarven fighter named Bartros Bloodbound, really got in their face after they declined, calling them cowards and challenging them to a fight. At that, Nieven told the dwarf that "he'd had enough for one night," and took him over to the bartender to get him a room to sleep off his inebriation. Neither Vespín or Sharra remember seeing Lord Nieven after that.

Both do remember that he was in the company of two elves, but they know absolutely nothing about those companions. Vespín even comments about how odd that is, since he prides himself on his fine memory. He's sure he got a good look at them. . . but can't remember a thing.

Feel free to improvise brief encounters with several other patrons, none of whom know anything germane to the disappearance of Lord Nieven Moonglow. The PCs might be invited to drink with someone who recognizes them, or they might fall victim to a pickpocket or card shark. Try not to spend too much time on such encounters, however. Focus on the actions of PCs chatting with NPCs who can move the story along.

Eventually, the PCs should determine that their next step should be talking with the dwarf, Bartros Bloodbound. A brief discussion with Arne will reveal that he is staying in Room Four, upstairs. Arne at this point becomes very proper, insisting that it "wouldn't be right" to allow the PCs upstairs into the private part of the inn. What he means by this is that it wouldn't be right unless someone gives him at least 50 gp, or is a member of the City Watch (with a certificate to prove it).

When the PCs finally go to Room Four, proceed to the next encounter.

Encounter Three

Bartros Bloodbound

Any PC approaching the door to Room Four will be able to hear a loud snoring coming from the room beyond. No amount of knocking will suffice to wake up the sleeping dwarf. The PCs will either need to pick the lock (thieves receive a +20 percent bonus to their open locks check due to the cheapness of the lock), break down the door (incurring a 35 gp fine from Arne) or convince the barkeep to cough up a key (which will set them back 15 gp). Whichever method they choose will not wake up Bartros Bloodbound, who continues to snore loudly through the entire ordeal.

Room Four itself is small and dingy, about what you'd expect from a low-wage dive in Crow's End. One wall of the room is covered in soot stains, as if there might have been a fire here several years ago. The place smells of dry vomit and spilled liquor.

A red-bearded dwarf sleeps face down on a grubby bed near the back wall, clad in heavily dented full plate mail armor. The dwarf's gauntleted right hand clutches the haft of a huge battle axe, and a rusty, holed shield lies upside down on the floor, half under the bed.

His snores seem to echo off the thin walls of the inn, grating on your senses. One look at the man reveals him to be the source of most of the room's foul odors.

This is Bartros Bloodbound, occasional boon companion to Lord Nieven Moonglow. He is currently drunk. Really drunk. Really, really drunk.

At this point, about the only thing that will wake him up is a bucket of water or a hard slap to the face. No matter which tactic the PCs try, Bartros wakes up with a jolt.

The dwarf shoots out of bed, landing on his feet, swaying, but eventually assuming a battle position. Still closing his eyes, wringing out the sleep, he mutters, "All right, Nieven, I said I only wanted to rest. Let's get going, then."

He opens his eyes, looks at you for a moment, and asks: "Who're you suppost da be?"

Though it's been many hours since his friend left the Faun's Yawn, Bartros thinks it's only been a few minutes since Nieven instructed him to "take a little nap." The dwarf thinks himself sober (he isn't), and is confused when awoken by the PCs.

His first thought is that they are the other adventurers that Nieven has assembled, and in that regard he'll ask them what time they'll be leaving, and where Nieven

went off to. Eventually, he'll figure out the Nieven is long gone, and that the PCs are not the elf's recruits.

"Damn, " the dwarf says. "I slept too long, I guess. Oh, well, there's nothing to be done, I guess. I'm thirsty. Wouldja buy me a drink?"

Though most PCs will (rightfully) conclude that Bartros has had more than enough already, the dwarf does not share the opinion, and will not be dissuaded. Whether the PCs seem interested or not, he rather rudely attempts to push them aside, and heads for the bar.

If the party tells the dwarf that they are investigating Nieven's whereabouts, he mutters that he will help them, but not on a "dry stomach."

Some overly powerful good Samaritans will probably attempt to cast *neutralize poison* on Bartros. This brings about some lucidity in the dwarf (he'll no longer slur his words), but he will conclude that now, more than ever, he needs something to drink. Clearly, if further discussion is to commence, it will have to occur downstairs, in the common room.

Eventually, the PCs will ask Bartros about his discussion with Lord Nieven the previous night. Drunk or sober, it'll take the dwarf a while to remember all of the details.

"I was celebrating my great uncle's birthday last night, rest his soul, when in comes Nieven with these two friends. I dunno who they were, but they were elves — real regular looking guys. So, anyway, Nieven comes up to me right away, because, I mean, look around. . . who else is he going to approach first? So he comes up to me and he says, 'Bartros, I'm going to need your axe tonight.'

"When he said that, his eyes lit up, you know they way they do, when he's real excited about something. I've seen his eyes get all wide like that a hundred times, and it usually meant he was scheming something.

"So I says to him, I says, 'Nieven, you know, it's my great uncle's birthday and all, and I wouldn't want to dishonor him or nothing,' and he looked kind of offended at that. And you'll never believe what he says next. I know I didn't.

"First, he looked to his elven friends, who nodded to him, as if it was 'ok' to let me in on a little secret. So he says to me, 'Bartros, I've found it. I've found the Heart of Bane!'

"My first reaction was to laugh, you know, kind of nervously. I mean, we'd talked about what we'd do if we found it hundreds of times before — how we'd spend the reward money, and how famous it would

make us. But I never really imagined we'd find it. But, find it he did, and to see it in his eyes, he really believed it.

"So, I helped him walk around the bar and gather a small group of adventurers from the people here. He didn't tell any of them about the Heart, only that there was something brewing in a nearby village. . . Mare's Crossing, it was, a few hours by horse from the city, to the northeast.

"I guess I was celebratin' all along, and I guess I got a little insistent with some of the adventurers we were talkin' to. . . Nieven sent me up to a room to take a little rest. I never thought he'd leave without me, though."

Bartos knows more details than contained above, and the PCs will probably quiz him. More information can be gained on the following topics:

The Two Elves

Bartos didn't recognize either, and can't really remember anything about them. Nieven seemed to trust them both, though. Bartos thinks the tip about the *Heart* may have come from them.

The Heart of Bane

Bartos knows what virtually everyone else knows — the *Heart of Bane* is an evil artifact that was brought to the city by a group of adventurers a few years back. Ever since, it's acted like a beacon, drawing all sorts of fiends to the city. Hundreds of people have died thanks to these monster attacks. The dwarf doesn't know many details, but he thinks the big Underdark exploration that started last year is a search for some goodly artifact known as the *Orb of Protection*, that will nullify the powers of the *Heart of Bane*.

No one seems to know where the *Heart of Bane* really is, since it was hidden (ostensibly by the adventurers who brought it here) some time ago. Bartos has always suspected that the city government knew where it was all along, but Nieven seemed insistent that it was in Mare's Crossing, and since Nieven is a noble with lots of connections, he usually knows what he's talking about.

Lastly, Bartos remembers that Nieven thought for some reason that the Heart might be in the hands of a cult of Cyric worshippers, and that the outpost would be relatively unguarded.

Lord Nieven Moonglow

Bartos and Lord Nieven have been great friends for more than 30 years. For the most part, their relationship consists of watching each other's back during massive drinking binges, but the two occasionally adventure together, as well.

The Party Nieven Assembled

Though Bartos doesn't know any names, most of the men and women Nieven assembled were semi-regulars of the Faun's Yawn — certainly adventurers with some experience under their belts. The dwarf guesses that maybe seven people (not including Nieven and his two elven friends) were part of the group at the time Nieven took him up to Room Four to sleep.

Mare's Crossing

Bartos knows it's a little hamlet situated along a ford of the Spillstream, a minor stream northeast of the city. Bartos was there a few decades ago, and would be surprised if there were more than ten buildings to the entire place.

Wrapping it Up

Now that the PCs have a location, they'll either want to set out immediately or contact Lady Moonglow to see what she would prefer that they do. As they leave, however, it becomes clear that they have picked up another party member.

"It sounds to me like my friend may be in some trouble. I've put my blade against the bastard sons of the Prince of Lies before, and seldom have I come out the better without good steel at my back. I'm coming with you."

Bartos Bloodbound is a good fighter, despite the fact that he's a notorious lush. He will accompany the party unless physically restrained or verbally renounced by a particularly sharp-tongued party member.

Should the PCs allow him to accompany them, they will notice that he sports several canteens about his person, one of which is open at all times. He has a small pony, Motherlode, stabled near the city gates.

Bartos Bloodbound (dm F6): AL NG; AC 2 (plate mail, shield); MV 6; hp 42; THAC0 10; #AT 2/3; Dmg 1d8+8 (*battle axe* +2, specialization); SA None; SD None; Str 18/76, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 9; MR nil; SZ M; ML 14.

Magic items: *Battle Axe* +2, *periapt of wound closure*.

Back to Belinda?

Any return visit to the Tower of Philosophy will be brief — Lady Moonglow instructs the PCs to go to the village as soon as possible and find her brother. She rolls her eyes at the story of the *Heart of Bane*, telling the PCs that, though she hasn't the first clue where it really is, it's unlikely to be in some minor village. Despite whatever troubling evidence the PCs present to

her, she still doesn't seem to be overly worried about her missing brother.

Should We Tell the Watch?

Both Bartros and Belinda will emphatically urge the PCs not to involve any "outside agency." Though those who know Nieven well accept his excesses, there might be those who do not, and it wouldn't do to cause a scandal. Nieven is a lord, after all, and it was reckless of him to go off more or less alone. The dwarf suggests that the party checks out the situation. If it looks bad, then they can get help later.

Encounter Four – The Village

It should take the party about four and a half hours by horseback or six hours by foot to reach the outskirts of Mare's Crossing. Take a moment to establish a marching order for the party, and to ask spellcasters if they plan to cast any spells upon the party.

After traveling many hours in the darkness, you finally approach a road marker that reveals Mare's Crossing to be only a mile north, along Blackbrook Road. As you approach a rise of low hills, your nostrils flare at the smell of burnt wood and meat, coming from the north. Suddenly, you hear the rustling of leaves in the bushes to the left of the road!

Quickly ask the PCs what they wish to do. The noise is coming from an injured dog, who made the trip from the destroyed village all the way to the outskirts of the town. The hound is mad, and drags its backside behind it with its two forepaws. A small, black-fletched arrow sticks from its left flank. The wound is darker than it should be, the result of a black tarry substance that coats the front half of the shaft. A Herbalism check will reveal that the dog is the victim of poison — if the poison is not neutralized and the animal cured, soon, it will suffer a painful death.

At this point, the PCs will likely become very cautious, perhaps anticipating some trouble at Mare's Crossing. It is unlikely, however, that they anticipate just how much trouble awaits them. Some PCs may become so cautious that they will propose waiting until morning to investigate the village. Bartros has a word for this: Cowardice. He won't stand for it, and will brow-beat, loudly, anyone who appears to entertain the idea.

What's Happened in Mare's Crossing?

Poor Lord Nieven Moonglow has fallen victim to an elaborate assassination attempt. For two years, now, the city of Ravens Bluff has sponsored a vigorous campaign in the Underdark to locate the *Orb of*

Protection, a sacred artifact thought to hold the key to nullifying the demon-attracting powers of the *Heart of Bane*.

In the course of that campaign, many of Ravens Bluff's finest adventurers have ventured into the Underdark in search for the Orb. Many of these groups also have encountered parties of indigenous drow elves. More than a few of these encounters have resulted in fierce battles — battles that the well-trained heroes of Ravens Bluff seldom lose.

The loss of simple soldiers, scouts, and even priests is acceptable to the drow. The loss of nobles is not. Recently, operatives of Ravens Bluff have killed several drow nobles from notable houses of the drow city known as Nycathandar. This has sit poorly with the rulers of that fell place, who have decreed that a message needs to be sent to the City of Ravens Bluff. The enraged drow will settle for nothing less than the official withdrawal of all surface folk from the Realm Below. They are pragmatic overlords, however, and they understand the predicament the humans of the surface find themselves in thanks to the evil powers of the *Heart of Bane*. Therefore, their message is to be a declaration of terms: For every drow noble killed beneath the surface, a noble of Ravens Bluff will die.

Every surface creature in Mare's Crossing is dead. The roads are littered with the bodies of whole families. Beasts of burden and pets lie gutted in the streets.

The drow of Nycathandar are not playing games. They have had more than a year to observe the most powerful adventurers of Ravens Bluff, and they know full well what dangers they might face by engaging the enemy unprepared. The abduction of Lord Nieven Moonglow is the culmination of months of careful planning. To ensure that everything went according to plan, the drow sent a team of their best assassins, buttressed by help from undead and bound genies. In most cases, these powerful adversaries have already left Mare's Crossing by the time the PCs arrive. If the party is particularly powerful, however, they remain.

Setting up the Battle

As the PCs enter the hamlet of Mare's Crossing, be sure to explain the utter devastation the party encounters. Don't focus on gory details, but leave the impression that whatever swept through Mare's Crossing was thorough, and showed no mercy to anyone in the town. Most of the buildings are smoking ruins, especially near the outskirts of town. The structures near the village green, on the north bank of the Spillstream, seem to

remain intact (see the map included at the end of this adventure).

It is HIGHLY recommended that you draw out the entire village green portion of Mare's Crossing on a battle mat, and use miniatures to run the drow ambush. This is not required, but as the fight is likely to get complicated (particularly at the higher tiers), your players will thank you for putting in the extra effort.

The village green itself is a large clearing, about 80' east to west and 60' north to south. The clearing has a central fountain — a tall cylindrical stone carving of a tree serves as the main decoration of the fountain. The top of the tree has been cut off and lies next to the pool. The limp figure of a black-haired elven male, his head slumped downward, has been tied to the "tree," facing south. A black-shafted arrow protrudes from the figure's forehead.

The arrow is an *arrow of elf slaying* that will not work on drow. The body indeed belongs to Lord Nieven Moonglow. He is very dead. A piece of folded parchment has been pinned to his chest.

If a player indicates that his PC has taken the parchment, hand him a copy of Player's Handout One, folded in half. Watch carefully to see who opens the handout — that person's character has just gotten a facefull of *explosive runes*.

Magic-using PCs have a 5% per level chance of detecting the explosive runes before triggering them. Thieves have a flat 5% chance. If no one detects them, blammo. In all cases, the reader gets no saving throw to avoid the damage. Anyone standing within 10' suffers the same damage, but may make a saving throw vs. spells to have that damage halved.

Explosive Runes Damage Chart

Tier 1: 1d4+1
Tier 2: 1d6+2
Tier 3: 2d6+3
Tier 4: 4d6+4
Tier 5: 5d6+5
Tier 6: 6d6+6
Supertier: 10d6+10

The real notice to Ravens Bluff, Handout Two, is hidden within one of Lord Nieven's pockets.

The explosion of the runes, or any attempt on behalf of the PCs to disable them, triggers an ambush. Regardless of tier, the creatures that do battle in this encounter are not standard monsters. Be sure to review each and

every Monstrous Compendium page attached to this module, so you'll be able to improvise physical descriptions for your players, and so you'll have a better understanding of the unique abilities of some pretty unusual critters.

Tier 1

Lesser Wyrds (2): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (red spheres); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Lesser wyrds can be turned as wights. Their spheres immediately replenish themselves when thrown, and do 1d6+3 damage to elves.

Chitine (6): AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 12.

Tactics: The chitine and wyrds attack after the PCs set off the *explosive runes*, or after it looks like they've lost interest in the fountain area. The wyrds emerge from the building to the northwest of the village green. The Chitine emerge from the building directly north of the green.

Tier 2

Lesser Wyrds (3): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (red spheres); SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Lesser wyrds can be turned as wights. Their spheres immediately replenish themselves when thrown, and do 1d6+3 damage to elves.

Chitine (10): AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 12.

Tactics: The chitine and wyrds attack after the PCs set off the *explosive runes*, or after it looks like they've lost interest in the fountain area. The wyrds emerge from the building to the northwest of the village green. The Chitine emerge from the building directly north of the green.

Tier 3

Lesser Wyrds (3): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (red spheres); SA nil; SD silver or +1 or better weapons to hit; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Lesser wyrds can be turned as wights. Their spheres immediately replenish themselves when thrown, and do 1d6+3 damage to elves.

Chitine (10): AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 12.

Tactics: The chitine and wyrds attack after the PCs set off the *explosive runes*, or after it looks like they've lost interest in the fountain area. The wyrds emerge from the building to the northwest of the village green. The Chitine emerge from the building directly north of the green.

Tier 4

Lesser Wyrds (3): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (red spheres); SA nil; SD silver or +1 or better weapons to hit; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Lesser wyrds can be turned as wights. Their spheres immediately replenish themselves when thrown, and do 1d6+3 damage to elves.

Chitine (10): AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 12.

Spiderstone Golem: AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d12/1d12/1d12/1d12 (fists); SA ; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 20.

Tactics: The chitine and wyrds attack after the PCs set off the *explosive runes*, or after it looks like they've lost interest in the fountain area. The wyrds emerge from the building to the northwest of the village green. The Chitine emerge from the building directly north of the green. The spiderstone golem emerges from the building to the south of the green. It may be too much for some parties who lack magical weapons. If that's the case, have Bartros Bloodbound fight the golem to the mutual death.

Tier 5

Lesser Wyrds (3): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (red spheres); SA nil; SD silver or +1 or better weapons to hit; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Lesser wyrds can be turned as wights. Their spheres immediately replenish themselves when thrown, and do 1d6+3 damage to elves.

Chitine (15): AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 12.

Spiderstone Golems (2): AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d12/1d12/1d12/1d12 (fists); SA see sheet; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 20.

Tactics: The chitine and wyrds attack after the PCs set off the *explosive runes*, or after it looks like they've lost interest in the fountain area. The wyrds emerge from the building to the northwest of the village green. The Chitine emerge from the building directly north of the green. The spiderstone golems emerges from the building to the south of the green.

Tier 6

Greater Wyrd: AL CE; AC 0; MV 12, fl 24 (B); HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (green spheres); SA Paralysis, chill; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, turned as ghosts; MR Nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Any creature viewing a greater wyrd must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be stricken with a dreadful chill that causes a -3 penalty to all attack and damage rolls when fighting the wyrd. The wyrd attacks by throwing green spheres of energy (which are replenished as soon as they are thrown). The spheres do 1d10 points of damage upon a successful hit (1d10+5 points of damage to elves); those struck by the spheres must save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns. The wyrds stick to the air, and will not come down into melee combat with the party.

Lesser Wyrds (4): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6 (red spheres); SA nil; SD silver or +1 or better weapons to hit; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Lesser wyrds can be turned as wights. Their spheres immediately replenish themselves when thrown, and do 1d6+3 damage to elves.

Chitine (20): AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 3 (claw/claw/bite); Dmg 1d6/1d6/1d6; SA nil; SD nil; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 12.

Spiderstone Golems (3): AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d12/1d12/1d12/1d12 (fists); SA see sheet; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 20.

Tactics: The chitine and wyrds attack after the PCs set off the explosive runes, or after it looks like they've lost interest in the fountain area. The wyrds emerge from the building to the northwest of the village green. The Chitine emerge from the building directly north of the green. The spiderstone golems emerges from the building to the south of the green.

The Supertier (78+ levels)

In this instance, the battle takes on a completely different tone. The drow were alerted of the PCs by a telepathic plant in the Faun's Yawn. Believing that their accolades in Nycathandar will be richer if they take out

a group of powerful adventurers, the entire hit squad has elected to remain in Mare's Crossing, waiting.

The ambush is made easier by the presence of Ariq bin'Salamin, a noble efreet enslaved by the leader of the band, the drow lich known as Lavissian. The efreet may grant three *wishes* to a resident of the Prime Material Plane each day. All of its *wishes*, already expended, are important conditions in the fight (note that these are only active in the Supertier).

Wish 1: That no divination works within a 5-mile radius of Mare's Crossing.

Wish 2: That all who swear allegiance to Lavissian will be faster than their enemies (so long as Ariq bin'Salamin lives, the Lavissian and his servants **ALWAYS WIN INITIATIVE**. No, this isn't particularly fair. It's a *wish*).

Wish 3: That, upon the death of the material form of Lavissian, the drow lich's body, his efreet slave, and his phylactery (a gem in the efreet's pouch) will be transported to the drow city of Nykathandar.

Overall Group Tactics

Lavissian has survived for nearly 1000 years by planning well and not rushing into any combat — and by following the time-honored tradition of allowing his cronies to die while softening up his enemies for the coup de grace. If everything goes according to Lavissian's master plan, the combat will proceed as follows, triggered by the party setting off the *explosive runes*, or by the lich feeling uncomfortable about how things are progressing.

Round One: The spiderstone golems burst from the building north of the village green and move to intercept the party in melee. The greater wyrds emerge from the haylofts of the northwestern barn and begin to bombard the PCs with their green spheres. In the southern building, Lavissian casts *enlarge* upon Tariq the Slayer.

Round Two: Golems and wyrds continue their assault. Within the south building, Lavissian casts *haste* upon Tariq the Slayer.

Round Three: Golems and wyrds continue to attack. Lavissian casts *Abi Dalzim's horrid wilting*, causing 16d8 points of damage to as many PCs as he can fit into a 30' cube. Tariq stands to the side of the doorway, ready to intercept anyone who rushes to attack Lavissian.

Round Four: Any golems or wyrds that remain continue to fight. Tariq goes to town on anyone threatening Lavissian. Lavissian casts *bigby's grasping hand* (no save) on the nearest threat.

Round Five: Things will have degenerated for one side of the fight. Use your best judgment from this point forward.

If the enemies seem to be heavily enspelled, Lavissian will not hesitate to break his plans to cast *dispel magic* upon as many PCs as possible.

Spiderstone Golems (6): AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 11; hp 55; THAC0 9; #AT 4; Dmg 1d12/1d12/1d12/1d12 (fists); SA see sheet; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 50%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 20.

Tactics: These four-armed beasties are your basic cannon fodder. They burst from the large building north of the village green at an opportune time and attempt to mulch the party.

Greater Wyrds (6): AL CE; AC 0; MV 12, fl 24 (B); HD 8; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10/1d10 (green spheres); SA Paralysis, chill; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, turned as ghosts; MR Nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20.

Any creature viewing a greater wyrd must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be stricken with a dreadful chill that causes a -3 penalty to all attack and damage rolls when fighting the wyrd. The wyrd attacks by throwing green spheres of energy (which are replenished as soon as they are thrown). The spheres do 1d10 points of damage upon a successful hit (1d10+5 points of damage to elves); those struck by the spheres must save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns. The wyrds stick to the air, and will not come down into melee combat with the party.

Tactics: As the spiderstone golems break from their hiding place, the greater wyrds take to the sky from their location in the hayloft of the barn building just northwest of the village green. They attempt to throw spheres at the same PC (an elf if there are any, an obvious spellcaster if there are not) and look spooky until they are dead.

Lavissian (drow lich, W16): AL CE; AC 0; MV 12; hp 80; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10; SA Paralysis touch (save vs. paralysis to negate); SD Immune to *charm, sleep, enfeeblement, polymorph, cold, electricity, insanity, death*, cannot be turned by priests less than 8th level or paladins less than 10th level, immune to weapons less than +1 enchantment; MR 82%; SZ M; ML 14.

Like all drow, Lavissian can cast *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *levitate*, and *know alignment* once per day.

Stoneskins (11): () () () () () () () () () ()

Active Spells: *Shield*, *improved invisibility*, *stoneskin*.

Spells in memory: (1st) 5, *Enlarge*, *magic missile* (x3), *shield*; (2nd) 5, *Invisibility* (x2), *darkness*, *15' radius* (x3); (3rd) 5, *Haste*, *fly*, *dispel magic* (x2), *slow*; (4th) 5, *Stoneskin* (x3), *chill shield*, *improved invisibility*; (5th) 5, *Bigby's interposing hand*, *cloudkill*, *cone of cold* (x2), *feeblemind*; (6th) 3, *Chain lightning*, *disintegrate*, *flesh to stone*; (7th) 2, *Bigby's grasping hand*, *power word, stun*; (8th) 1, *Abi Dalzim's horrid wilting*.

Lavissian's phylactery is a gem in the pouch of his most trusted slave, the noble efreet Ariq bin'Salamin.

Tactics: Lavissian prefers to wait in the shadows while the PCs hit his weaker troops with their most powerful magic. When the fight begins, he is *improved invisible* (remember that thanks to the wish, he cannot be detected by magical means), hiding within the large building to the southwest of the village green (along with Tariq the Slayer). In round one of the combat, he casts *enlarge* upon Tariq, followed by *haste* in round two.

Tariq the Slayer (tasked genie, slayer): AL NE; AC -2; MV 12, Fl 30 (B); HD 12; hp 72; THAC0 5; #AT 2 (4); Dmg 2d6(x2.6)+10 (severs limb on 18-20)/2d6(x2.6)+10 (severs limb on 18-20) (great scimitars of sharpness); SA *produce flame*, *flame arrow*, *pyrotechnics* at will; SD Immune to non-magical fire, half damage from magical fire; MR 15%; SZ L (10' tall [26' tall]); ML 18.

Tariq enters combat on round 3, under the effects of Lavissian's *invisibility*, *enlarge* and *haste* spells.

Stoneskins (11): () () () () () () () () () ()

Active Spells: *Enlarge*, *invisibility*, *stoneskin*, *haste*.

Tactics: A tasked genie, Tariq's sole purpose is to kill the enemies of his master (Lavissian), namely, whichever PCs happen to be near him. He is hasted, and prefers to bring both of his *great scimitars of sharpness* to bear upon a single opponent, until that opponent is out of limbs.

Sadly, Tariq's twin scimitars function only for genie-kind, and may not be retained by the PCs should they happen to kill him.

NOTE: Tariq the Slayer wears a strange bundle of cloth hanging from a leather strap at his back. This is an

elven blade +2. Any non-moon elf who attempts to wield it suffers 5d8 points of damage. The slayer won the blade as treasure in some ancient battle. Tariq tried to use the sword, once, but it caused him immense pain. He knows its value, but is unwilling to part with it. Of course, if the PCs defeat Tariq, they may retain the item for themselves.

Ariq bin'Salamin (noble efreet): AL LE; AC -1; MV 12, Fl 30 (B); HD 13; hp 70; THAC0 7; #AT 2; Dmg 4d8/4d8 (hands); SA *produce flame*, *flame arrow*, *pyrotechnics* at will; SD Immune to non-magical fire, half damage from magical fire; MR 15%; SZ L (15' tall); ML 18.

Stoneskins (10): () () () () () () () () () ()

Tactics: As a noble efreet, Ariq bin'Salamin can create an illusion with visual, olfactory, tactile, and audio components three times per day. He is currently *polymorphed* into the form of a beaten human man, inside the northernmost square hut west of the village green. The entire hut is an illusion (the doors are eternally locked to anyone attempting to gain entry). The efreet can see through his own illusion, and will observe the battle on the village green. Basically, Ariq waits out the entire encounter here — for if he dies, the wishes he cast will end. However, he is extremely proud of his prowess. If the party splits up, or if a PC comes near his illusionary hut, he will attack them with a vengeance, possibly spoiling Lavissian's best-laid plans.

Our Friend, Bartros Bloodbound

Use Bartros Bloodbound as a way to save the PCs from trouble. If they don't have the magical weapons needed to damage a certain foe, the drunken dwarf can easily fill that role. There is one role he should fit perfectly by the end of the combat: Dead guy.

It's not crucial that Bartros survives this fight, nor is it crucial he dies. If you think it will either save a party member or add to the drama of the story during this encounter, feel free to do away with him.

He has no relatives or friends in town. The PCs should feel free to keep his equipment, which includes a *battle axe* +2 and a *periapt of wound closure*, which may not have helped him after all.

If by some miracle Bartros survives (assuming he came along in the first place), he gives the party his *periapt* and his *axe*, telling them quite solemnly that he is retiring from the adventurer business. Upon returning to Ravens Bluff, he heads for Crow's End, never to be seen again.

Encounter Five Back to the Guild

Sooner or later, the PCs are going to have to return to the guild to give Lady Belinda Moonglow the bad news. She takes it poorly, breaking down into tears right in front of the party. While she buries her head in grief, however, a funny thing happens. . .

The blue floating ball of energy behind her begins to change colors, finally becoming a bright shade of red. After a moment, Lady Belinda notices the change.

"Glaysa's Poniard! It's in the city!"

Lady Moonglow wipes tears from her eyes, smearing the red mock-scar across her left cheek. "It's clear what must be done. If my lady is to be healed, the city must retrieve that dagger and get it into Sune's hands. Oh, Lady of Beauty, let something good occur on this tragic day!"

"I've lately been in contact with a proxy of Sune, one of her most powerful servitors — a being known as Glimmerglade. Glimmerglade believes that if I can get the Poniard to her, she can use it in a ceremony that will not only cure Sune Firehair, but that will destroy the foul dagger forevermore."

At that, Lady Moonglow reaches behind her to grasp the ball of power in her hands. She closes her eyes. "Yes, " she says, "I can feel it now. It's in Crow's End, where we always suspected it might appear. There's a warehouse, there. . . it's being used by the cult of Glaysa.

"This must take precedence, now, despite what happened to Nieven. I need to muster my own forces. We've rented an apartment overlooking the Glaysan's warehouse entrance. Will you keep a watch for us until I can gather some wizards and heroes to raid the place?"

She waits impatiently for an answer. If the PCs seem to waffle, she reminds them that, had Sune not intervened last year, the city might have been destroyed by Glaysa. All in Ravens Bluff owe her a great debt. If that isn't enough, she scowls, saying "Oh, I'm sure you'll be paid."

If the PCs are greedy, they may request being paid immediately. Lady Moonglow will arrange it, but will not react kindly to the money-loving PC ever again.

Once the party consents, she smiles.

"Good," she says. She holds up her left hands and snaps her fingers. The stone walls of the Tower of Philosophy fade, replaced by the wooden walls of an ordinary building.

Encounter Six Stakeout

Lady Moonglow instructs the PCs to watch the entrance of the warehouse from their perch on the third story of an abandoned home. The window offers a good view of the entrance.

"Keep watch here, looking at the entrance of the warehouse. Try to catalogue anyone coming and leaving. Don't do anything that might tip off the cultists that we're on to them. It's crucial, to the city, and to me, that we pull this off."

"Above all, please, for the love of Sune, don't enter the building. The cult of Glaysa is subtle, and I doubt they're doing anything with the dagger that needs to be broken up immediately."

"However, if something catastrophic occurs, by all means, do what you must to ensure that our ability to retrieve the dagger is not compromised. If that means risking your lives, so be it. I'm sure the city will see fit to bring you back, and to honor you as heroes."

"Now, if you'll forgive me, I must go."

The PCs may have questions, but Lady Moonglow doesn't stick around to answer them. She *teleports* away immediately.

I Think I Know That Guy!

Over the next hour, the PCs will get a chance to catalogue the various folks coming to the temple of Glaysa. Read off the following descriptions, allowing all watching PCs a Local History proficiency check, made at a -4 penalty (due to the distance involved). If no one in the party has the Local History skill, allow all watchers to make Charisma checks at one quarter their usual chance to recognize one of the cultists. Note how many citizens were recognized — it'll be important later, when you're determining experience.

The PCs will get a chance to notice six different people enter the warehouse. The players will probably want more info than is given here. Feel free to improvise:

1. A tall, thin man wearing a blue-striped shirt and a floppy red hat. He walks up to the door of the warehouse without taking any precautions at all. He doesn't seem to be worried about being detected.

Who is he? Baldin Wendigo, a sailor on a ship known as *the Wanderer*.

2. A short, mousy human woman wearing heavy skirts. She approaches the warehouse furtively, casting several glances over her shoulder before entering.

Who is she? Greta Flander, a well-respected (though working class) seamstress from the merchant district.

3. A man of middling height who walks with a peculiar gait. He wears poor man's clothes, but even from this distance his black hair appears gray, thanks to what might be residue left over from a powdered wig.

Who is he? Alderman Cleftus, an upstanding member of the city government. Revealing his participation will be a real coup.

4. A young blond man, perhaps nineteen years of age, who seems to walk past the warehouse, before turning sharply and almost running into the front door of the warehouse-temple.

Who is he? Cafferty, the apprentice of Blacksmith Burlgard, who runs a shop off Devillar's Ride.

5. A beautiful woman who looks every bit the trollop one might expect to worship Sharess.

Who is she? A woman of the night well-known in Ravens Bluff by the name "the cat lady."

6. A dark-faced old man who walks heavily on a gnarled staff. From a distance, he could be cleric, druid, wizard, or just an elderly fellow in need of some walking support.

Who is he? Reggis Nensa, a prominent mage from Chessenta who has dealings with the Chessentan embassy.

As soon as the party has catalogued its sixth visitor, read the following.

Your quiet observations are interrupted by a loud THUMP above you. You know you're on the top story of the abandoned house. . . someone must be on the roof!

The PCs can get to the roof via a narrow wooden stairway leading to a door sporting a cheap lock. When they exit, read the following.

As you open the door to the roof and emerge outside, you are confronted by a strange figure. A being of roughly human dimensions stands before you, wearing tattered robes that cover its face completely. Ratty bandages run up the thing's arms, and shallow, belabored breathing can be heard from behind its deep hood.

It raises a grubby hand in your direction, and begins muttering incomprehensibly.

This "creature" is nothing more than Blind Boscoe, a long-time, harmless resident of the roof of this building.

The PCs heard him waking up, and now confront him face-to-face. Those who don't just blow him away out of habit will find him to be an incomprehensible man who mutters to himself, and poses little threat to anyone.

Blind Boscoe (hm 0): AL N; AC 10; MV 6; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dam Nil; SA None; SD None; Str 6, Dex 9, Con 3, Int 5, Wis 7, Cha 3; MR nil; SZ M; ML 8.

Boscoe should be played as a possible threat, though all he really wants is to be left alone.

After the party has found a way to deal with Boscoe, continue.

Encounter Seven The Fall of the House of Glaysa

No matter what precautions the PCs take, a group of bad guys are about the rush the warehouse. If the PCs have cast *forbiddance* on the door, they'll break through the windows. Or the walls. Whatever. They are prepared to give their lives to enter the warehouse — however many the PCs can stop (if any), there are more.

All seems quiet as darkness descends upon the streets of Ravens Bluff. From time to time, citizens stroll by, oblivious to the fact that an evil cult gathers mere feet away. After several hours, you begin to get bored. Surely, Lady Moonglow should have arrived, by now.

Suddenly, you catch movement on the street outside the warehouse! A number of human-shaped beings in dark cloaks rush from alleys and shadowy corners, converging on the door. With little care whether they're noticed, the cloaked skulker at the head of the bunch gestures with his right hand, and the door bursts inward, tearing an ugly hole in the front of the warehouse.

At this, the PCs will probably decide to act. If they don't, allow a perceptive PC to make an Intelligence roll to remember that Lady Moonglow instructed them to take action if "something catastrophic occurs."

The exact number of cloaked individuals is difficult to guess. Anyone watching closely would guess at least a dozen, perhaps more.

If the PCs dither, they begin to see and hear obvious signs of battle — flashes of light at the windows, noxious smoke pouring from the door. It's clear that the PCs should do something.

What's Happening

The minute the dagger appeared in Ravens Bluff, many forces representing many interests took notice. The most brash of these is a cell of the Cult of Shevarash, an elven sect that numbers the eradication of all drow among its principal goals. Accordingly, they believe *Glaysa's Poniard* can be used in a battle against an avatar of Lolth, the drow Spider Queen who heads the pantheon of the Dark Elves. If that avatar is slain, the elves believe, Lolth herself might be stricken from the multiverse.

It's an ambitious goal, and one that will become reality only through brave action. The elves are decided in their mission, and have planned accordingly. Plus, they have the assistance of The General, an elven being who transcends the abilities of mere mortals, and is in fact a powerful servant of Shevarash, himself. For that reason, the elves should be able to counter anything the PCs attempt to do to stop them from gaining entrance to the warehouse.

The players will probably be expecting a fight, here. Don't do anything to disabuse them of that suspicion. In fact, more than just the elves noticed when the dagger appeared in Ravens Bluff. The event triggered the attention of Raxtenos, a powerful member of the Rilmani, a race of outer-planar beings who observe the happenings of the multiverse, ever acting as agents of the Celestial Balance between good and evil.

Long has Toril, and the City of Ravens in particular, attracted the attention of Raxtenos' sect. They stood idly by, powerless to confront Ao during Toril's Time of Troubles. They stood idly by when adventurers brought the *Heart of Bane* to the city. They stood idly by as a proxy to Glaysa, Cerephane, entered Ravens Bluff and began to corrupt it from the inside out. Finally, they stood idly by when Glaysa and Sune had their titanic battle last year.

No longer will the agents of neutrality stand idly by while events in Ravens Bluff tempt all of Toril to chaos and evil.

So, fed up with the locals (and the not so locals) threatening the entire world over this incredibly powerful dagger, Raxtenos has come to a decision: *Glaysa's Poniard* cannot remain on the world of Toril, where it will surely cause great wars and much destruction.

To that end, he and his servitors have decided to draw all of the factions vying for the dagger to their home, in the Outlands, there to decide the fate of *Glaysa's Poniard*, once and for all.

However, the Rilmani are bound by certain compacts and immutable trans-planar strictures that bar them from dictating the course of events. Therefore, they need an impartial party to hear the case of all who

would claim the dagger as their own. The PCs are that impartial party.

As they enter to investigate the disturbance at the "temple" of Glaysa, continue with the following:

As you enter the warehouse, the sounds of battle emerge from the rear of the building, down a short hallway. The floor here is covered in a greenish, sickly gas, and your nose catches the hint of charred flesh. Several screams can be heard from the room ahead.

Allow the PCs to get scared, cast spells on themselves, or whatever.

You move forward, finally getting a view of the room beyond the hallway. Two forces are locked in battle, here — the first, mostly human men and women, wear purple robes with long, pointed hoods. You recognize many of these folk as the citizens who entered the building throughout the afternoon — obviously, the cultists of Glaysa.

They are locked in a bitter melee with a little more than a dozen elves, all of whom wear silver chain mail, blood red cloaks, and silver helms that cover the top half of their faces. Many bear holy symbols depicting a broken arrow.

As you watch, the elves tear into the cultists with a grim precision, slitting throats of the helpless, and maiming those who stand against them. Before you can react, the largest of the elves, a male whose armor seems to shine just a little brighter than that of his companions, plunges a blood-red shortsword into the chest of a prominent man in purple robes. That man drops a long, straight-bladed dagger to the floor, and when it hits, the entire building seems to be engulfed in a wave of some sort of reality warp. You feel sick to your stomach.

All around you, cultist and elf alike begin to fade from existence, and in seconds, the combatants no longer fight in the warehouse. With some trepidation, you realize that you, too, are fading, and within moments, you don't realize anything at all but a smooth, peaceful existence that slowly, ever so slowly, lulls you into a refreshing sleep.

END ROUND ONE

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.

- NEW: PCs get the experience for the tier for which their INDIVIDUAL level qualifies them, according to the chart below. If the PC falls into a higher individual tier than the party's tier, he or she gets the experience at the adventure tier level. Under no circumstances can a character's individual award exceed the party tier.

For example, if the party has a 2nd level PC, a 5th level PC, three 6th level PCs, and an 11th level PC, the group falls into tier 3. The 2nd level PC gets tier 1 experience, the four PCs on tier 3 get tier 3 experience, and the 11th level PC also gets tier 3 experience.

Tier 1:	Character levels 1 and 2
Tier 2:	Character levels 3 and 4
Tier 3:	Character levels 5 and 6
Tier 4:	Character levels 7 and 8
Tier 5:	Character levels 9 and 10
Tier 6:	Character levels 11+

Encounter One

Asking Lady Moonglow more than six questions: 50 xp

Encounter Two

Checking the Errant Fletcher: 25 xp
 Checking the Sign of the Legless Octopus: 25 xp
 Realizing that no one seems to know anything about Nieven's elven companions: 100 xp
 Discovering the existence of Bartros Bloodbound: 50 xp

Encounter Three

Waking a drunk, sleeping dwarf: 50 xp
 Sobering up Bartros or convincing him to stay at home: 100 xp

Encounter Four

Avoiding explosive runes: 50 xp
 Surviving: 100 xp

Encounter Five

Breaking the bad news gently: 50 xp

Encounter Six

Recognizing the following:
 Balin Wendigo: 25 xp
 Greta Flander: 25 xp
 Alderman Cleftus: 25 xp
 Cafferty: 25 xp
 The Cat Lady: 25 xp
 Reggis Nensa: 25 xp

Dealing with Blind Boscoe without killing him: 50 xp

Total Experience for Objectives: 800 xp
 Discretionary Role-playing award: 0-500 xp

Total Possible Experience: 1,300 xp
 For Tier 2: 2,600 xp
 For Tier 3: 3,900 xp
 For Tier 4: 5,200 xp
 For Tier 5: 6,500 xp
 For Tier 6: 7,800 xp

Supertier

For Supertier Experience, start with a base of 20,000 (which includes roleplaying xp), and subtract the above goal values (x 8) for goals the party did not meet.

For instance, if a Supertier party succeeded at everything in the module except sobering up Bartros Bloodbound or convincing him to stay at home, they would receive 19,200 xp.

Treasure Summary

PCs may keep items from the scenario which are listed on the treasure list 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 PCs 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 PC to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the PC. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
- Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some PCs. Items which are worth more than 5,000 gp, which are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and magical items will be discovered in the possession of the PC by one means or another. The PC who stole them must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives one Infamy point for being a known thief. For other items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment on 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.

Battle Axe +2

Arrow of elf slaying: This arrow does not work on drow.

Elven Longsword +2: This blade, a blue-tinted longsword with a slight curve from pommel to tip, features a number of personal runes (in Espruar), presumably from past owners. A faintly-glowing gem has been set near the base of the pommel.

The sword's wielder must be a moon elf. Any other creature attempting to wield it suffers 5d8 points of damage. Individuals of evil alignment who attempt to use the weapon must save vs. death magic or be instantly slain.

The blade may not be traded or given away under any circumstances.

1,000 (or maybe 2,000) gp each

First run only (Winter Fantasy 2000)

Periap of Wound Closure (first run)

So this is what

It feels like

To read

Explosive runes

Player's Handout Two

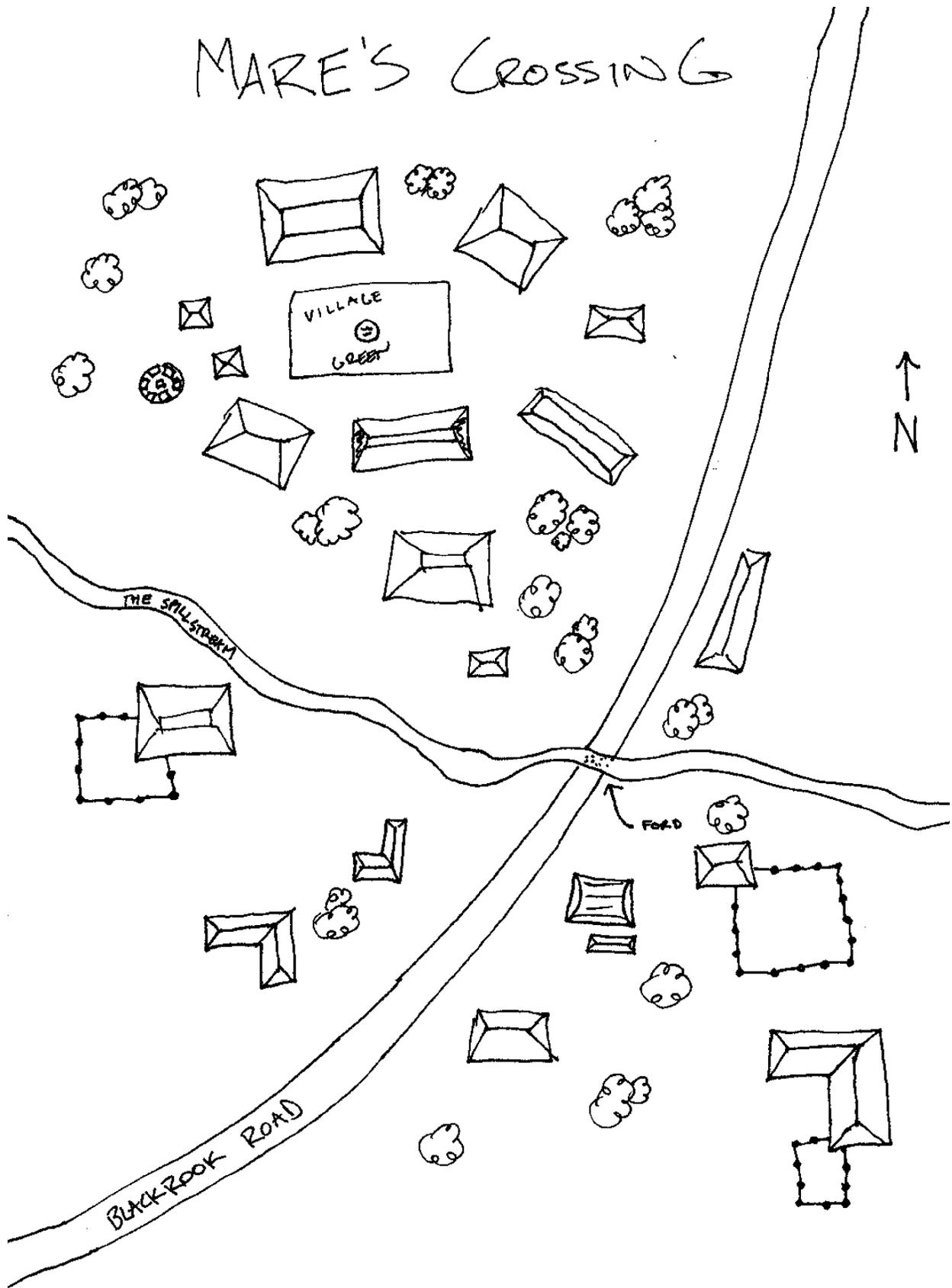
The people of Ravens Bluff have invaded our sovereign realm below. Already, they have killed many of the chosen, and have even committed the ultimate sin, killing our nobles.

People of Ravens Bluff, know this: From this point forward, for every noble killed beneath the surface, we will take one of yours. Nieven Moonglow was but the first. There will be others.

Give up your quest in the Underdark. Leave us to our own lives, and we will leave you to yours. If not. . . there are more lords in Ravens Bluff. . . and more helpless villages.

Lavissian of House Faen Tlabbar
Nycathandar

MARE'S CROSSING



Chitine

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribe
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (11-12)
TREASURE:	D (K, Q)
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1d6x10
ARMOR CLASS:	6 (9)
MOVEMENT:	12, Wb 9
HIT DICE:	2
THACO:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6 (x3)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Web traps
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (4' tall)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	120

Chitines are small humanoids who build with webbing in the same way that humans employ stone or wood. This diminutive race is noted for its four arms, which are jointed to allow for movement in ways that human limbs could never move. Their faces are human, although they have multifaceted eyes and mandibles protruding from their mouths. Long, stringy black hair falls in a tangle from their skulls and grows down their backs like the mane of a horse.

The skin of chitines is gray and mottled, secreting a special oil that negates the adhesive effects of their own spider webbing. Meanwhile, the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet are covered in dozens of tiny hooks which allow them to climb textured surfaces with no loss of speed.

Chitines wear clothing made from dried, processed silk; bits of colored rocks, carved bones, and such are frequently woven throughout. They always keep their hands and feet uncovered. They carry tools in pouches woven into their clothing.

Chitines speak the language of the drow and sometimes know a few other subterranean languages.

Combat: Chitines typically rely upon traps and ambushes. Frequently they build a normal-looking spider web with a seemingly natural way around it, but the web is a false trap and a pit, drop net, or similar trap is sprung when the alternate route is taken.

Because the chitines are able to build with webbing, they devise all sorts of nasty tricks. By sticking dust and rock chips to a mat of webbing, they can make a very convincing natural stone wall or floor. Also, by means of a process known only to them, they can harden webbing into a bony material that is slightly flexible, not sticky, and hard enough to slice or penetrate armor. With it they can weave spikes and edges into their traps that inflict 1d6 points of damage per spike or edge.

Chitine warriors commonly carry javelins and wear a webbing armor that is equivalent to studded leather. They also



carry short swords for melee combat. Usually, they wield weapons in three of their hands and a hardened web-shield in the fourth. (Note that they are sensitive to sunlight and fight at a -1 penalty to attack and damage rolls under those conditions.)

Weapons and armor made from hardened webbing work just like normal items made by humans. However, the items deteriorate after several months if not treated with the oil secreted by their skin. Hardened webbing is also susceptible to fire: Two rounds of contact with flame ignites it, burning the item away in 2d4 rounds. Body armor made of hardened webbing cannot exceed Armor Class 4.

Habitat/Society: Chitines are only found underground. Their cavern villages are located in the center of a maze of trap-laden webbing. The hard-web dwellings resemble domed houses, complete with windows and decorative shapes adorning them. These homes can be located on any surface, including the ceiling of a cave. Bridges of webbing cross the town, providing easy pathways. Suspended in the center of the cavern is often a heart-shaped temple devoted to the evil goddess Lolth.

Chitines are cast-off experiments of the drow. They have increased in numbers over the centuries, and even now plot to overthrow the drow. They are devoted to the spider queen and will do anything in her name. The priestesses of the chitines are rumored to be of a different and more powerful race, more akin to Lolth herself.

Ecology: A chitine can spin sticky spider webbing at the rate of one foot per round. The webbing is spun from an orifice in its stomach. Chitines eat anything that moves, sucking the fluids from the victim and leaving the dried remains on the cavern floor underneath their temple. Chitines are hunted by both drow and driders.

Wyrd



	Lesser	Greater
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Forest, ruins	Forest, ruins
FREQUENCY:	Rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night	Night
DIET:	Nil	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	B	B
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1d6	1d2
ARMOR CLASS:	4	0
MOVEMENT:	12	12, Fl 24 (B)
HIT DICE:	4	8
THACO:	17	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d6 (sphere)/ 1d6 (sphere)	1d10 (sphere)/ 1d10 (sphere)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil	Paralysis, chill
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil	Nil
SIZE:	M (6' tall)	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	420	5,000

Wyrd's are undead creatures with strong connections to the Positive Energy Plane. They are created when an evil spirit inhabits the dead body of an elf.

Wyrd's appear as immaterial figures clad in dark, hooded robes. A dark, skeletal face is faintly visible in the depths of the hood. A wyrd's feet appear to be booted; its hands have flesh but are thin and gnarled. A wyrd holds a small red or green sphere, about the size of a grapefruit, in the palm of each hand. The spheres glow faintly, like the last embers of a dying fire.

Combat: A lesser wyrd can create two glowing red spheres each round. It can use its spheres as hand-to-hand weapons, or

it can hurl them (range 30/60/90), or it can use one sphere for hand-to-hand combat and throw the other. When a sphere strikes a target, it bursts with a small thunderclap and a flash of brilliant energy that inflicts 1d6 points of damage on the target creature (1d6+3 points of damage if the victim is an elf). When a sphere explodes, a replacement instantly appears in the wyrd's hand, but the wyrd can never create more than two spheres per round, even if affected by a *haste* spell.

Wyrd's can be harmed only by silver or magical weapons. Being undead, they move silently and are immune to poison and to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells.

A wyrd can be turned as a wraith.

Wyrd's prefer to attack from a distance, concentrating on elves and on any character capable of returning the attack. Creatures killed by a wyrd tend to be badly burned by the energy spheres but can be raised normally; they do not return from death as undead.

Habitat/Society: Wyrd's can be found haunting caves, ruins, and forests. During daylight, a wyrd retreats into a dense thicket of undergrowth or into a lightless crypt or cave. Like most undead, wyrd's loathe the living and relentlessly attack any creature they encounter. Forest-dwelling wyrd's are a particular bane to good sylvan creatures such as unicorns and dryads, and these creatures do not hesitate to destroy a wyrd just as soon as they can muster enough force to do so. Elves, for obvious reasons, despise wyrd's and try to see that they are destroyed as quickly as possible.

Ecology: Except for their propensity to kill, wyrd's have no role in the ecology.

The process that creates wyrd's is a mystery. It seems to be clear, however, that the spirit that animates a wyrd prefers to occupy elves who have died violently and been left unburied. Elves who have been abandoned by their fellow elves and left to die alone seem to be the most likely to become wyrd's. Certain locales near places of ancient evil, such as ruined temples, battlefields where evil forces were once victorious, and scenes of great treachery also seem to be prone to produce wyrd's.

Greater Wyrd

This more hideous variety of wyrd, created when an undead spirit occupies the body of an exceptionally high-level elf, is justifiably feared. Any creature viewing a greater wyrd must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or be stricken with a dreadful chill that causes a -3 penalty to all attack and damage rolls when fighting the wyrd (successful attacks always inflict at least 1 point of damage). The penalty remains in force until the greater wyrd is destroyed, until the next sunrise, or until the victim receives a *remove curse* spell from a caster of at least 9th level. The victim, however, is still vulnerable and must roll another saving throw if the greater wyrd appears again, whereas those who make successful saving throws when first confronting the wyrd are immune to the effect until the next sunset.

A greater wyrd's globes glow a sickly green. They explode for 1d10 points of damage when they hit, and the victim must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or be paralyzed for 2d4 turns (elves suffer 1d10+5 points of damage from each globe but are immune to the paralysis effect).

Greater wyrd's are turned as ghosts.

Like the lesser wyrd, the greater wyrd can be hit only by magical or silver weapons and is immune to poison and to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells.



120

Golem, Spiderstone

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean (drow kingdoms)
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Non (0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	11 (55 hp)
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	4
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d12 (x4)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Web spit
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Spell immunities, +1 weapon to hit, spider climb
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	50%
SIZE:	L (7' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	8,000

Spiderstone golems, also known as obsidian golems, are the constructed servants of drow spellcasters. Unlike other golems, each of these is inhabited by the spirit of an unknown tanar'ri servant of the deity Lolth, ensuring that its use is not directed against Lolth or her servants. Because a spiderstone golem has a spirit that is not completely bound to its material form, it is considered to be a lesser golem.

Physically, this golem resembles a large statue of a four-armed drow carved out of glossy black obsidian. When inactive, no signs of animation are apparent, but when it activates, the golem's eyes glow a fiery red. It weighs about 1,000 lbs.

Combat: In combat, spiderstone golems attack with four fists or a *web spit*. This *spit* has a range of 90 yards and requires an attack roll. If it hits, anyone within 20 feet is affected as if they are the victim of a *web* spell; the being on which the web is centered gets no saving throw. If the attack roll fails, the "spit" splatters harmlessly (see the section on "Grenade-like Missiles" in the DMG) and dissipates in 1d4 rounds.

A weapon of at least +1 enchantment is needed to strike a spiderstone golem.

Spiderstone golems are able to use *spider climb* at will. They are immune to all spells except those of drow priests or invocation/evocation spells (though they still roll for magic resistance and gain a saving throw, if applicable).

Each week, there is a small chance for a spiderstone golem to "go wild." If commanded by a priest in the service of Lolth, the chance is only 1%. Otherwise, it varies from 5% to 100%, depending on what the golem is currently being used for: The chance is 5% if it's under the control of a wizard in the service of Lolth; 50% if it's being used to guard something of personal value to the master, but of no use to Lolth; or 100% if it is being used directly against Lolth.

When a spiderstone golem goes wild, it becomes more cunning, as its Intelligence rises to the Semi (2-4) category. It



always seeks to kill its master first, then follows the commands of Lolth. In this mode, the golem is capable of designing simple traps, maximizing its abilities fully.

Habitat/Society: Spiderstone golems are most often used for such tasks as guarding a temple or hunting down enemies of the priesthood. They can be as useful to wizards as any golem as well, but their propensity for wildness makes them a dangerous servant.

When under mortal control, a spiderstone golem has as much intelligence as any golem, though the presence of the tanar'ri "overseer" gives it an evil alignment. However, it is able to follow one different command per round, as long as the command does not exceed four words for a wizard or six for a priest. This command may be changed from round to round.

Ecology: Except in the service of drow elves, spiderstone golems are similar to other subterranean golems in that they neither give nor take anything from the ecology. However, the powdered remains of this golem are useful in the creation of magical scrolls and items related to spiders, webs, and the abilities of spiders (e.g., *scroll of spider climbing*, *cloak of arachnida*, *arrow of slaying arachnids*, etc.). The eyes of a spiderstone are rubies that may fetch up to 10,000 gp apiece on the open market.

Lich, Drow

	Drow	Drider
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Subterranean	Subterranean
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Night	Night
DIET:	Nil	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Supra-genius (19-20)	Genius (17-18)
TREASURE:	U (G)	Z (G)
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0	-1
MOVEMENT:	12	12
HIT DICE:	11	11
THACO:	9	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d10	1d4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Varies	Varies
SIZE:	M (6' tall)	L (9' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	9,000	9,000



Drow liches are perhaps the most terrible of these undead horrors. They are found in three varieties (wizard, priest, and drider), each with its own unique and ghastly powers.

Wizards and priests look much like other liches. They have a tall, skeletal form with dark skin stretched tight over their long bones. Their skin is, of course, a pale black, here and there spotted gray with decay and age. Mages tend to wear dark red robes with loose folds and numerous pockets in which to secret their spell components. Priestly liches often wear garb emblazoned with the image of their patron, the spider goddess Lolth.

Driders are much stranger creatures, and much more rare as well. In drow society, individuals who fail to please Lolth are either slain or transformed into driders by priestesses of the spider goddess. Driders have the upper torso of a drow (almost always male) and the lower half of a giant spider. The vast majority of driders are driven into battle by their kin and live short, violent lives. A very few have escaped to continue their studies, and perhaps even to seek revenge on those who twisted their bodies into their present state. Of these, a few have eventually pursued their black arts into the realm of lichdom. Drider liches are now macabre combinations of mummified torsos attached to the deteriorating carapaces of skeletal legs and abdomen.

All manner of drow liches speak the numerous languages they knew in life. In addition, they have a natural ability to converse freely with any manner of arachnid.

Combat: All drow and drider liches have the standard abilities of other liches, including an aura of magical power that surrounds the beast. Any creature of fewer than 5 Hit Dice (or 5th level) which sees it must save vs. spell or flee in terror for 5-20 (5d4) rounds.

Their touch is icy cold and delivers 1d10 points of damage to anyone who feels their evil caress. The victim must also make a saving throw vs. paralysis or become unable to move or act until a *dispel magic* or similar spell is cast upon them.

Liches can only be hit by weapons of at least +1 enchantment, by magical spells, or by monsters with 4+1 or more Hit Dice. The

magical nature of the lich and its undead state make it utterly immune to *charm*, *sleep*, *enfeeblement*, *polymorph*, *cold*, *electricity*, *insanity*, or *death* spells. Priests of at least 8th level can attempt to turn a drow lich, as can paladins of no less than 10th level.

Drow liches are able to use spells as they did in life, but each type has special abilities or powers that can affect this. All retain the natural drow ability to cast *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *facric fire*, *darkness*, *levitate*, and *know alignment* once per day.

One of the natural abilities they retain in unlife is their phenomenal resistance to magic. Drow liches have 50% magic resistance plus 2% per Hit Die.

Drow Wizard Liches

Drow wizards who transform themselves into liches are smoldering powder kegs of sorcerous energy threatening to destroy anything in the area. Though their thoughts may be cold and calculating, their fiery tempers often win out over logic.

These dark creatures hoard and covet magical items. Besides those found in the thing's treasure cache, every such lich will have a magical weapon such as a *staff of power*, *wand of fireballs*, or some other suitably powerful device. In addition, the creature will have some form of magical defense such as *bracers of defense*.

Mage liches have often imbued their raiment with other properties as well, such as the ability to render the wearer *invisible* three times per day. By combining such magical clothing with rings and other magical objects, the drow lich can unleash a terrible barrage of sorcery upon those who disturb them.

Mage liches frequently maintain nests of hairy spiders about their lair. These creatures swarm over anything that walks through their territory, often including the lich (though they can do this walking corpse no harm).

Drow Priestess Liches

Devout followers of the drow spider-goddess, Lolth, are sometimes rewarded with immortality through the transformation into

Genie, Noble Efreeti

MC13

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Elemental fire, desert
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Sultanate
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Day
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very to Exceptional (11-16)
TREASURE:	U
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-1
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 30 (B)
HIT DICE:	13
THACO:	7
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-32/4-32
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	L (15' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	11,000

These hulking warlords are the cruel rulers of the efreet, though in theory they all obey the Sultan of the City of Brass. They plot and scheme against one another with a degree of cunning and skill usually seen only in the Lower Planes. They care nothing for humans and generally try to corrupt those sha'ir powerful enough to command them. Their arrogance and lust for power have won them few friends on either the Elemental or Prime Material Planes.

A noble efreeti is even more massive and solid than a common efreeti, though they share the same appearance: skin the color of basalt, hair of brass, and eyes of flame. The noble efreet wear baggy pantaloons, a shoulder harness for swords and daggers, and massive jewelry, generally armbands and earrings. The males enjoy showing off their muscled chests and broad shoulders, and so only wear tunics and cloaks when cold demands it; this is a matter of status and pride in strength rather than pure vanity. Noble efreet are not as vain as other genie nobles, as they depend on force and treachery rather than wit, appearances, and skill to persuade their fellow nobles to follow them. Their goal in choosing weapons, clothes, and jewelry is as much to intimidate others as to adorn themselves.

Combat: Noble efreet are powerful warriors, trained in magical and physical combat from a very young age. Although they are masters of strategy and trickery, they delight in the raw power that bloodshed gives them, and they lead their followers in battle rather than skulking in the rear.

Noble efreet can perform each of the following spell-like functions three times per day: grant wishes to creatures from the Prime Material Plane, become invisible, assume gaseous form, detect magic, enlarge, polymorph themselves, create an illusion with visual, olfactory, tactile, and audio components which will last without concentration until touched or magically dispelled, sunscorch, misdirect, or create a wall of fire. When in gaseous form, noble efreet resemble smoke, often in an undefined pillar shape. When polymorphed among humans, a noble efreet often takes the form of a colorful rooster or a youth of sterling features. A noble efreet can also produce flame, flame arrows, sundazzle, or cause pyrotechnics at will. Fire attacks do no harm to noble efreet if the fire is nonmagical; magical fire causes half damage. In addition, once per day noble efreet can sow fire



seeds or surround themselves with a fire shield. Once per week they can use fire track. Once per month a noble efreet can cast conflagration. Noble efreet perform all magic at the 16th level of spell use.

Noble efreet can carry up to 3,000 pounds, afoot or flying, without tiring, though they will only do so if magically compelled or in fear of their lives. They can carry double weight for only a limited time—three turns afoot or one turn aloft. (For each 300 pounds under 6,000, add one turn to either walking or flying time permitted.) After tiring from extreme exertion, a noble efreeti must rest for six full turns. Normally, noble efreet command common efreet to perform all such tasks.

When hunting, noble efreet enjoy the kill but prefer not to do all the work of wearing down an opponent themselves. They prefer to watch as their common efreet hunters and summoned creatures (such as hell hounds) harry the prey, then throw themselves into battle at the last minute to claim a kill. Toying with one's opponents is considered an art form among the noble efreet, and their ability at playing "cat-and-mouse" is remarkable. They also employ flying creatures of the Elemental Plane of Fire as "hawks" in their hunts.

Habitat/Society: Noble efreet fall into two camps: those native to the City of Brass and those who command the efreet of the Prime Material Plane. The city itself hovers in the hot regions of the Plane of Elemental Fire and often borders seas of paraelemental magma and lakes of glowing lava. It is a huge, glittering haven of avarice and malice 40 miles wide, its base a hemisphere of golden, glowing brass. From the upper terrace rise the minarets of the great citadel of the Sultan's Palace, where great riches are said to be kept. The beys and amirs of the City of Brass serve the Sultan of the Efreet; though the lesser efreet are neutral, their rulers are more inclined to law and evil than their subjects. Though the streets of the city are kept clean and the palaces are showpieces in a gaudy way, an air of blood and suffering hangs over everything, due largely to the numberless glum servants found on every street and in every hallway.

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Genie, Tasked, Slayer

MC13

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	U
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral Evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	-2
MOVEMENT:	24, Fl 30 (B)
HIT DICE:	12
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-16/2-16 or by weapon type +9
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	L (10' tall)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
LEVEL/XP VALUE:	11,000



The tasked slayer genie's only purpose is to commit murder as often as possible—by stealth as long as possible or through berserker rages when discovered. As this sort of behavior tends to be noticed by sentient creatures nearby, slayer genies are usually very discreet about their activities, controlling the rage which motivates them because of their fear of discovery and punishment.

Slayer genies are massive genies with four arms and dark, polished skin and are usually naked to the waist. Two of their hands are human; the other two resemble lion's paws with ivory claws. Their red eyes sparkle with flame. Above and between their two eyes lies a third eye, which is green and resembles that of a panther. The third eye is centered between two horns. Their hair is coarse as horsetails. On their backs are two massive wings.

Combat: Slayer genies prefer to kill their targets quietly, and they are extremely well-equipped to do so, either by magical or physical means. They can cast *blindness*, *silence 15' radius*, *darkness*, *improved invisibility*, *ventriloquism*, *misdirection*, *assume gaseous form*, *polymorph self*, and *dimension door*. If they reveal their true form they can cause *fear* in creatures of 3 Hit Dice or less.

In melee, they attack either with their terrible claws or with a melee weapon in either normal hand (at no penalty). Their enormous Strength gives them a +9 damage bonus when using melee weapons. Slayer genies prefer scimitars, axes, cleaving polearms, morning stars, and maces. Slayer genies will use missile weapons in unusual circumstances. They suffer no penalty for using such weapons instead of their usual melee weapons.

Habitat/Society: It is believed that slayer genies were first created with the specific function of terrifying the enemies of the genie lords, but that they later began to serve as efficient assassins in noble genies' power struggles. Given their nature and their origin, it is not surprising that slayer genies are always servants. Those few slayer genies that become free generally have very short reigns of terror. They serve humans, demihumans, and other genies, but their masters always closely monitor their actions. An unwatched slayer genie is extremely dangerous, and may begin slaughtering its master's followers.

Slayer genies enjoy the company of other warriors, and will spend hours discussing the advantages and disadvantages of

various weapons, the fine points of anatomy, and the details of stealth, tactics, martial trickery, and armor with anyone willing to listen. Their fascination with violence and bloodshed goes far beyond the professional level. They have a disturbing fixation with the process for its own sake, and their descriptions of past battles are full of loving details of exactly how a foe looked as he died, how well each of their weapons performed, the quirks of various fighting styles and their appeal, and so on. The joy they have in battle and death extends to their own demise, which they all look forward to as a glorious occasion. Nothing spoils the mood of a slayer genie quite so much as the thought of dying some way other than in combat.

Slayer genies know neither shame nor pride when asked to complete some mission; they merely seek to fulfill their role, and boast about it afterward. No trick is too cruel, no tactic too immoral, no job too unsavory for them to undertake.

Ecology: When tasked genies are driven mad they become tasked slayer genies, genies unable to stay sane after long labor at the same task. They seek release in bloodshed, and they retain only a limited cunning.

Slayer genies view all other creatures as merely sets of abilities and attributes to be overcome, creatures whose only purpose is to meet their death at the hands of the slayer. Hearing a slayer genie inform creatures that they are denying their purpose (that is, not dying at its hands), and thus upsetting it, can be very alarming—refusal to admit that one wants to die by the slayer's hands just upsets it further. Living creatures rarely survive, much less profit, from meeting a slayer genie.

The only exception to this general rule are the undead; slayer genies are puzzled at whether or not they should bother to kill things that are already dead. Given a choice, slayer genies always leave undead creatures for last, and if there is any chance of discovery, they leave the undead alone. This often results in undead creatures being blamed and hunted as the perpetrators of slayer genies' crimes.

The Scars That Never Heal

A Two-Round AD&D Living City Adventure

Round Two

by Erik Mona

BLURB

No longer will the agents of neutrality stand idly by while events in Ravens Bluff tempt all of Toril to chaos and evil!

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This is a standard two-round RPGA Network tournament. Two four-hour time blocks have 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 for each round will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used, with a different packet for each round. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

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

To determine the tier, add the level of all the characters. Multi-classed and dual-classed characters count as their highest level plus one for each additional class. In addition, add the levels of any adventuring NPCs the PCs bring, and the full hit dice of any animals which can enter combat on the side of the PCs. Compare the total to the chart below to find the tier.

	<u>4 players</u>	<u>5 players</u>	<u>6 players</u>	<u>7 players</u>
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41
T4:	33-42	36-46	39-50	42-54
T5:	43-52	47-57	51-62	55-67
T6:	53+	58+	63+	68+

Round One Recap

At the end of the first round, the PCs were pulled from Glaysa's warehouse to the Outlands, abducted by the mysterious Rilmani, the interplanar agents of Balance. This particular Rilmani sect, led by an Aurumach named Raxtenos, has been tasked with watching over the Prime world of Toril. Many, many disturbances on that world have led to their subtle manipulations (they've no interest in seeing another event as upsetting to the Balance as the Time of Troubles), but none in

recent memory has been as troubling as the arrival of *Glaysa's Poniard* to the city of Ravens Bluff.

So, after long deliberations, the Rilmani decided to act (in a manner much more overt than their usual style) and drew all of the planar "interests" who had designs on the dagger to the Outlands, the hub of the Outer Planes. As a final act of balance, they also drew to their realm a group of "ordinary natives of the Prime" to speak for Ravens Bluff and indeed for all of Toril. Since the Rilmani are among the wisest beings in the multiverse, they have decided to leave the ultimate decision of what to do with the dagger up to the PCs, with the following caveats: 1) The dagger cannot, under any circumstances, remain in Ravens Bluff, and 2) The PCs must speak to all of the parties the Rilmani have brought to the Outlands.

The adventure will contain a fair amount of traveling. While under their protection, the Rilmani will ensure that the PCs will not have need for food or beverage. They give them a list of places, and a suggested order in which these places should be visited, but the ultimate choice of "where to go first" will be up to the PCs. Travel in the Outlands is very strange – a trip from one gate-town to another might take three days, while a return trip might take as long as three weeks.

During the events of this module, PCs will not be able to leave the Outlands for any reason, due to powerful interdicts on behalf of the Rilmani.

What's Going On?

The Rilmani themselves will explain the situation to the PCs in boxed text, and the summary above should help, but essentially, the situation is this: The Rilmani want the PCs, as representatives of a world wronged by *Glaysa's Poniard*, to decide the blade's ultimate fate. To do this, they will travel from place to place, talking to the various factions that the Rilmani plucked from Ravens Bluff, finding out who is the best owner of the powerful artifact.

A lot of PCs might immediately conclude that Sune is the best recipient, but the Rilmani know that decisions are seldom so obvious, and that the best solution is to allow the PCs to visit with the factions, and place their votes for who should get the dagger.

Whadda You Mean, Voting?

The Rilmani are genuinely interested in the PCs' points of view. As representatives of Toril, they have seen first-hand the devastation of *Glaysa's Poniard*, and (the Rilmani believe) they should be able to determine its future as rightfully as anyone.

To this end, each PC will be given the opportunity to "vote" for their chosen recipient, simply by stating "I

choose ____." Of course, the Rilmani would prefer that the group wait until they have spoken with all the factions before making their votes, but they cannot force them to do so.

They will, however, ensure that the PCs remain on the Outlands until every group has been encountered — if that takes forever, the Rilmani are willing to wait. They are functionally immortal, after all.

What's the Deal with the Outlands?

In general, most planar scholars prefer to look at the Outlands (or the Plane of Concordant Opposition, as it is sometimes called) as the top of a huge wheel, with an unimaginably huge spire sticking out of the middle, stretching out into infinity.

The "ground" of the Outlands resembles that of the prime material (of which Toril is a part), just as the sky looks like the sky of the PCs' home world. There's a day, and a night, but no sun. Light just "is" or "isn't."

The Outlands are structured along a number of rings that radiate from the central spire. Near the center of the Outlands, all magic, even that of the gods, is nullified. The events of round two of *The Scars that Never Heal*, however, take place on the outermost ring, where magic functions as normal (for the most part). The exceptions to this rule are Priest Magic and Magic Items.

Priest Magic

As the hub of the so-called "Great Wheel" of the planes, the Outlands is adjacent to all Outer Planes, the homes of the gods. Priests of gods who reside on the Outer Planes do not lose casting effectiveness.

Priests of gods who dwell in the elemental planes (Kossuth, Istishia, Grumbar, and Akadi) lose three levels of casting effectiveness when on the Outlands. (This also applies to granted powers.)

Priests of gods who reside on the astral plane lose no effectiveness.

Priests of gods who reside in the ethereal plane lose two levels of casting effectiveness. (This also applies to granted powers.)

Magic Items

All "plussed" magical items created on the Prime (unless the magic item certificate expressly says otherwise, assume all items are created on the Prime) operate at -2 effectiveness. Items reduced to +0 are still magical, and can strike creatures vulnerable only to magical weapons (though not if the weapon must be of +1 or greater enchantment). Upon falling to +0, all items lose "additional" powers (*a shortsword +2/+3 vs. giants* becomes simply a magical *shortsword +0*). This effect is temporary — items with reduced plusses return to normal upon returning to their plane of origin.

Note that this change only refers to "plussed" items. In certain circumstances, you as the judge may need to make a call as to what constitutes a "plussed" item. Try to err on the side of the player in most circumstances.

Movement in the Outlands

As stated above, movement in the Outlands is exceedingly strange, with a journey to a place often taking three times as long as the journey back. There is little reason to such travel. It, like other strange aspects of the plane, simply is.

To determine movement from encounter area to encounter area in this tournament, assume that any trip from one landmark (encounter area) to another takes 3d6 days of travel. While on the Outlands, the PCs are under the special protection of the Rilmani, and will not be accosted by wandering monsters.

Meeting with the Claimants

The Rilmani will send the PCs around the Outlands to meet with various claimants to *Glaysa's Poniard*. All of these people (except the elves of Shevarash, who were abducted in the same manner as the PCs) share the same story about how they got to the Outlands. On the same day the PCs were "abducted," two tall, silver-skinned men in white robes appeared and informed them of the situation, telling them that the ultimate decision was in the hands of the PCs.

The Shevarashans met with the silver-skinned Argonach Rilmani after they appeared in the Outlands.

IMPORTANT: Pre-Round Item Review

Before you begin round two of this event, take some time to review the magic items of everyone at the table. For low-level characters, this will take only a few minutes. Plan more time into your schedule for higher-level parties, since experienced players often have lots and lots of items you'll need to sort through.

What to Look For

Basically, you'll want to look for two things:

Items of a "planar" nature.

Be aware that some players may possess magic items that would normally allow them to escape the Outlands, whether by *plane shift*, divine intervention, or any number of methods too numerous to describe here. None of these will work during the course of this adventure, thanks to the powerful Rilmani magics at work.

Some magical items are especially tailored for Outer Planar travel. Make sure you understand the abilities of any items the PCs have that might augment the conditions of the module.

The Debt to Beliakas

Unknown to the PCs, one of the beings in Ravens Bluff with interest in *Glaysa's Poniard* is Beliakas, an enigmatic demon hunter who many believe to be aligned with the baatezu, the ancient devils of the Nine Hells.

Over the course of the last two years of Living City campaign play, many players have had a chance to encounter Beliakas, in such modules as *The Ebulon Affair*, and *The Guns of Azzagrat*.

In those events, PCs had a chance to enter into a bargain with Beliakas, usually gaining some minor magical item in exchange for a "service to be rendered at a later date." It just so happens that that "later date" has arrived for any member of the party who is in debt to this enigmatic NPC. Such characters have a certificate called "The Debt to Beliakas." Make a note of who in the party has such a certificate. It'll become important later.

Beginning the Module

As you remember, we left off with the party entering a warehouse used by the cult of Glaysa as a diabolical temple. After seeing the Glaysans locked in combat with a number of elven followers of Shevarash, all combatants and the PCs found themselves caught in a sort of reality warp, and ultimately in a blissful sleep. As round two of *The Scars That Never Heal* opens, the PCs are just beginning to emerge from that sleep. . . .

Encounter One Enter the Rilmani

All around you is a whiteness, a transcendent feeling that everything in the world is as it should be, and that your place, here, in comfort, is crucial to the balance of all that exists. It is a calming feeling, like the pleasant realm between sleep and wakefulness, and everything seems so. . . right, you're not sure you ever want to leave.

Slowly, however, the whiteness loses its intensity, becoming a dull cream, and finally a drab gray. The feeling of comfort fades, too, and ultimately you feel as you normally do. Eventually, your vision returns.

You stand with your companions from Ravens Bluff on a cliff overlooking a huge canyon. The area is heavily wooded, and you can hear the calls of strange wildlife in the distance. The area has an air of

the familiar about it, but everything seems just a little. . . off, somehow.

Surveying the scene, you notice a strange feature on the horizon. On the opposite side of the canyon, far, far off in the distance, is a sight that cannot possibly exist. There, a unimaginably huge spire grows from the very horizon, like some skinny, titanic mountain, daring the heights as far as you can see. Perhaps it thins out to a point, what must be several hundreds of miles up, but you cannot be sure.

From behind you comes a strangely-accented voice.

"The Great Spire," it says. You turn to behold a trio of three men. The being in the middle, the speaker, stands 10' tall, and cuts an imposing figure in fluted, golden plate mail armor. His skin shines with a luminous golden sheen, and his eyes pierce at you with an inner light that is impossible to look at directly. He is flanked by two shorter silver-skinned men in white robes. With their long, white mustaches, the robed men appear almost identical, as if they might be twins. The center figure speaks, again. "I am Raxtenos, of the Rilmani. Welcome to the Outlands."

The PCs will likely be a little put off by the appearance of these strange beings — inform the players that there is some almost indescribable quality about these beings that soothes the spirit, and calms the nerves. It's clear that the metallic-skinned men mean the party no harm.

"Long have we observed your world. Long indeed have we awaited the time to act. Finally, that time has come. This dagger— you must know of it — is a threat to the balance of your world. In a matter of hours, no fewer than five agencies sought to make war for it. The conflicts of the Planes are not meant to spill into the Prime. On your world, in your city, it has been happening of late with an altogether alarming frequency. So we have chosen you to represent the interests of your world in the struggle for Glaysa's Poniard. It is you who will decide the object's fate."

"You were chosen at random, for chance plays a role in the multiverse that few choose to acknowledge. We know nothing about you save that you are from a city on the world of Abier-Toril. Tell us of yourselves, so that we may judge our selection."

Raxtenos will not tolerate any questions before he has heard from each and every member of the party. He asks no questions of his own, but can *detect lie*, and will frown widely if a PC lies in his presence. Once the PCs have introduced themselves, he explains why they have been brought to the Outlands.

"Glaysa's Poniard is too powerful an artifact to remain on your world without causing another

cataclysm of the nature of the Time of Troubles that so recently plagued your sphere. That event was catastrophic for worlds that had never heard utterance of the word Toril, for the influence of your sphere is great, indeed.

"You are not the only ones we have drawn from the Prime. In addition, we have removed all those who covet the dagger, and have set them up throughout the Outlands. They are waiting to speak with you, for each in his or her heart believes their own claim to be truest of all. Some of these beings represent hope and goodness. Some of them represent hate and decay. It is not for us to make that judgement. It is for us to protect the Prime, and this we have done. The rest is in your hands."

The PCs will probably have a lot of questions. You will likely have to improvise the answers to many of them, but a number of suggestions can be found, below:

What are we supposed to do?

"Not including the cult of Glaysa, which has been dealt with, there are five beings or groups with a claim to the Poniard. You will find them at the following locations: The Palace of Judgment, which can be found by traveling directly away from the Great Spire. From the Palace, seek the Blessed Tor, by following the Great Road as it winds from the lands of the Palace. Thereafter, seek the Gate-Town known as Curst. There, in a place of business known as the Quartered Man, you will find the third claimant. From the Quartered Man, go left, until you enter the Vaunting Wood, where the fourth claimants wait in the shadows. Finally, on the other side of the wood lies the Gate-Town of Plague-Mort, entry to the Abyss. Seek out the town's dung cart for your final meeting. Your journey ends there. Once you have spoken to all of the claimants, we will arrive to take you back to your sphere. But not before you make your choice..."

What's this about choosing?

"You may choose your recipient at any time during your travels, but we expect you to be as fair as possible. We expended rather a lot of energy to get you here, and it would be disrespectful to choose before you have heard from everyone.

"To make your choice, simply speak the words 'I choose,' followed by the name of the person to whom you wish to entrust Glaysa's Poniard."

"Be sure in your selection. Once you have chosen, you may not change your mind."

Why shouldn't I just make my selection now?

"You may find, through your travels in the Outlands, that everything is not as simple as you think. We cannot stop you from making your choice at

any time, but it will be better for the multiverse if you reserve judgment until you must make a choice."

What happened to the cult of Glaysa?

"As I said, they have been dealt with. Since they instigated this atrocity, it did not seem fitting to offer them a chance to retain the Poniard, which they would undoubtedly return to your world. No, they seemed to serve little purpose to us.

"Their bodies line the canyon floor."

Sure enough, if anyone takes a careful look over the edge of the cliff, they can make out broken forms in purple robes far, far, below.

This might trigger some violence. The Rilmani are out of the PCs' league. WAY out of the PCs' league. Any attack they make on the metallic-skinned beings will be deflected harmlessly by energy shields.

Who are the claimants?

"You shall discover the answer to that question soon enough."

Raxtenos wishes for the PCs to make their own discoveries. If they get belligerent, saying something like "I'm not choosing until you tell me who I'm up against," the Rilmani simply shrug. Raxtenos says something along the lines of: "Your choice is a simple one. Aid the multiverse, or remain on the Outlands forever."

Where is the dagger now?

"In our safe keeping, but we cannot keep it forever. Even we are bound by certain rules and compacts."

Why don't you just decide?

"It is our place to salvage those lands that are put out of balance, not to guide the hand of fate. The Rilmani are allowed to go only so far. The final decision must be yours."

How do we travel, again? How long will this take?

Raxtenos will repeat his instructions (from the first question), and add some helpful advice:

"Travel in the Outlands is not logical. A trip from one point to another might take three days, whereas the same trip in reverse may take nine. Simply keep your mind focused on where you wish to go, and the land will take you."

What? Days? What are we supposed to eat?

"We have altered your bodies such that you will not need sustenance while doing our business on the Outlands. When that business is concluded, you will

find yourselves very hungry, but will not suffer any pain or damage to your health due to malnutrition."

Can't we just keep the dagger for ourselves?

"No."

Before the PCs go on their way, the Rilmani give them Handout One, a list of the locales where they might encounter the dagger claimants.

Encounter Two The Palace of Judgment

The Location: The Palace of Judgment is the headquarters for the Celestial Bureaucracy, a widely worshipped organization of gods known by some as the Chinese Pantheon. These gods are popular in the lands of Kara-Tur, in the Forgotten Realms. The lands surrounding the Palace of Judgment are dotted with eastern-style buildings and towers. Throughout the land, Kara-Turan men and women walk in lines toward the Palace of Judgment, there to be sent to their final resting place in the afterlife. All of these beings are souls, waiting for judgment.

Throughout this landscape range the Go-Zu oni, the soldiers of the Celestial Bureaucracy. These creatures stand just under 10' tall, have skin tones are gray, orange, or purple, and they have the heads of bulls, with large snouts, small ears, and two long horns. They wear polished armor and long, resplendent robes. These creatures speak all languages, and will approach the PCs as they enter the region.

The claimants have been waiting for the PCs, and the oni are aware of this. They can direct the party to a small tower about a mile from the main Palace of Judgment, where Captain Ming Lao-Tsing awaits their arrival. The souls of the Chinese dead are not helpful. On the off chance that the PCs can find some way to communicate with them, they will find the souls single-mindedly determined to reach final judgment.

The Claimants: The first claimants to *Glaysa's Poniard* are a group of Kara-Turan explorers who just happened to be in the City of Ravens Bluff in the months following Sune and Glaysa's battle. They were able to communicate with their sovereign, the Emperor of Shou Lung, the Rebuilder of the Dragon, Kai Tsao Shou Chin, who decided that he would like to have the artifact dagger as part of his collection of great magical artifice.

But something doesn't figure, here. The Rilmani don't want the dagger to return to Toril, so why would they bring this group to the Outlands? The answer to that question lies in the mind of Xiang Wu-Hai, the crew's wu jen (for the purposes of this tournament,

wizard). Wu-Hai is secretly a devotee of the being known in the Celestial Bureaucracy as Ma Yuan, the Killer of Gods. His interest in the dagger should be obvious. Here is Captain Ming Lao-Tsing's crew:

Captain Minh Lao-Tsing (hm F6): AL LN; AC 6 (leather, Dex); MV 12; hp 35; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 2d6+2 (katana, specialized); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Captain Minh Lao-Tsing is about 55 years of age. He wears his dark hair long, pulled together at his back in an ornate, decorative holder. He wears beautiful green silken robes, and has a long, thin moustache. Captain Minh is quick to smile, and is the talker of the bunch.

Despite his easy-going nature, the captain is unwaveringly dedicated to his emperor, and would willingly lay down his life for the glory of Shou Lung.

Xiang Wu-Hai (hm M7): AL CE; AC 1 (*Bracers AC 6*, Dex); MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Xiang Wu-Hai is short and a little chubby, though he sucks in his gut whenever he thinks he's likely to be seen. He wears yellow robes and a tall hat. He speaks only a smattering of Common, and chooses to stand at the rear of any discussion between the PCs and his captain. Despite his language difficulty, he seems to understand virtually everything around him, and he takes it all in with a careful gaze.

Ni (hf M8): AL LG; AC 6 (Dex); MV 12; hp 22; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Ni is a beautiful Shou-Lung woman who is only now beginning to warm to life in Ravens Bluff. Accordingly, the last few months have seen her emerge from a very studious ship's recorder to a constantly-smiling visitor who can't seem to get enough of the city. Still, she remains firmly rooted in the traditions of her people, and believes that honor and service to her empire are the most important things in her life.

NOTE: Anyone who played the low-tier of the module *Guns of Azzagrat*, which played at Weekend in Ravens Bluff '99, will recognize these three as part of the crew of the *Celestial Monitor*, a very special ship that recently docked in Ravens Bluff's harbor. You may wish to remind players of this connection, if they do not seem to pick it up, themselves.

Story: *"Greetings to you, my friends. I am Captain Minh Lao-Tsing, of the Celestial Monitor. My ship and crew have been in Ravens Bluff for several months, now, and we will bring commendation of the hospitality of your people to our emperor."*

"It is because of that great man, the Rebuilder of the Dragon, Kai Tsao Shou Chin, that we are here today. Using the magical abilities of my crew members Xaing Wu-Hai and Ni, we have opened communications with our blessed emperor.

"He seeks Glaysa's Poniard for the collection of priceless relics he keeps in the Forbidden City of the Imperial Capitol."

Bribe: *"I am certain our Emperor understands the great difficulties you must be under in having to decide what to do with the dagger. Therefore, I am prepared to present you an unprecedented offer."*

The man reaches into a large sack, removing a small jade chest. The stone alone must be worth thousands of gold, but the intricate carvings of intertwined dragons highlight the natural veins in the rock, creating what must be a priceless work of art.

A successful appraising check reveals that the jade chest is probably worth about 75,000 gp.

"Captain Minh opens the chest to reveal a small green gem that sparkles with an inner fire.

"This, my friends, is a Warfu stone. It was created by the Lords of Karma, and placed in the realm of Kara-Tur by the great Celestial Emperor. It is one of many, of course, but this particular specimen is among the most sought-after in all the Realms.

"Little has been written about the Warfu, but it is known that this stone, when possessed, enhances the life experience of the owner by leaps and bounds. Suddenly, he becomes better at arms. Suddenly, she knows spells previously blocked from her experience."

"This Warfu stone was given to me by the Emperor himself, to be used in recognition of a great service to the Empire of Shou Lung. Were you all to agree to give the dagger to me, I would give you chest and stone."

Tactics: Captain Minh's tactics are fairly simple. He hopes he can buy off the party with the promise of a powerful magical item and a nearly priceless jade chest. If the party does not accept the offer, he will have tried his best for his emperor.

Encounter Three Blessed Tor (The Last Hope of Atheron)

The Location: Blessed Tor is a tall mesa, perhaps 500' off the surface of the Outlands. The entire thing appears more like a huge cylinder than a mountain. As the PCs arrive, they are hailed by an elderly man wearing

ornamental plate-mail armor. This is Archul, leader of the band from the Prime world of Atheron.

The Claimants: The claimants from the Prime world of Atheron are four beings who appear upon first glance to be human. Once within talking range, however, it becomes clear that these folk have slightly elongated foreheads, and each sports only four fingers on each hand. All four look very, very weathered and tired.

Archul of the Way (hm Pal13): AL LG; AC 2 (plate mail, shield); MV 9; hp 88; THAC0 7; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 (*longsword*); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Archul of the Way is the leader of the delegation from Atheron, a Prime world locked in a bitter struggle for survival with an evil demigod known as Praxus (the story of the world is found in some detail, below).

Archul stands tall in his fine armor. His gray beard is full, and runs about half-way down his chest. He smiles often, though with the appearance that he is forcing the emotion. His eyes belie a terrible sadness apparent simply by looking at him.

Vanalia (hf M10): AL NG; AC 4 (*bracers AC 4*); MV 12; hp 42; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (*dagger*); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Vanalia is the picture of alien beauty. Her skin is glaringly white, and brings images of fine porcelain to the minds of any who see it. Her eyes are a deep green, unlike any shade seen on Toril. She wears robes that, while tasteful, are suggestive of an athletic, well-taken-care-of body. She wears a ring with a large ruby inset in it, and smiles warmly when approached.

Unfortunately, this appearance is a lie, the product of a special *illusionary ring* Vanalia wears on her left hand. The image she shows the world is how she once appeared, before the arrival of Praxus. Her true image that of a horrifically scarred woman of about sixty years. Her left eye has been gouged out, and three digits of her right hand are missing, victims of some long-ago torture at the hands of Praxus' servitors. Ritual scarring covers her body from head to toe — as a captive of Praxus, she was once used as a conduit to gate a horde of demons into her home city — an action that resulted in the destruction of all her friends and family.

Cargul of Baskar (hm F10): AL LG; AC 4 (banded mail); MV 12; hp 62; THAC0 8; #AT 2/3; Dmg 1d8+6 (*longsword*); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Cargul of Baskar stands almost seven feet tall, and cuts an impressive figure. His left hand was chewed off at the wrist by one of Praxus' chaos beasts. He is somber and quiet, preferring to let Archul do most of the talking.

Benaur of the Old Rites (hm D8): AL N; AC 8 (Dex); MV 12; hp 41; THAC0 16; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8 (*scimitar*); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

Benaur is a druid of the Midregal Forests, before that entire wildlands was consumed by chaotic elementals under the control of Praxus. The Hierophant of his order of druids ordered him to organize this band, following divinations several months ago that a dagger known as *Glaysa's Poniard* might be used as a weapon to slay Praxus — no weapons native to Atheron can harm the tyrant-king, as the land is not strong in material magics.

Story: The PCs arrive at Blessed Tor just as darkness settles upon the region. Archul invites them to share a fire, before telling them the story of the coming of Praxus.

"In the Seventh Age, before the birth of the father of Eskuar's current king, the wise wizards and priests of the Heartlands banded together in a ceremony that they thought would allow them a direct channel of communications with their god. They hoped to infuse a single being, a boy, with the ability to glimpse into the Realm Beyond Souls, there to communicate with our gods and act as an ambassador of humanity among their lands.

"To this day, no one knows if their rituals were a success or a failure, but in time, it became clear that the boy they had chosen, a child known as Praxus, had seen more than a mortal could bear.

"As years passed, Praxus became more and more violent, until, with the dawning of the Eighth Age of Eskuar, he conquered Baskar and enslaved its peoples. The old wizards and priests who had created him died, but he lived still, longer than any man should. He build great armies, buttressed by chaos beasts, creatures of Netherstuff summoned from his own twisted imaginings. Soon, he conquered all of Eskuar, and engulfed the entire continent of Forasus into a decades-long war.

"Hundreds of thousands of men and women have fallen prey to his evil. All of our champions have been sent against him, and all have failed. Praxus keeps a special corps in his army made up of the animated remains of those heroes who have tried to depose him.

"The anchors that hold our world together are starting to give. Only months ago, The Soldent, our largest mountain, became as mud. Many say that the Old Gods have abandoned us, and that they have ceded the world, and all of us, to Praxus.

"But we have not given up. The Hierophants of the Grand Cabal have discovered a gate to your world, to Toril. The Highest Druid spoke recently of a vision, of a devil-forged blade of straight steel that might be

used to pierce the heart of Praxus, and to return our world from the brink of chaos."

Bribe: The adventurers from Atheron have nothing of value to offer the PCs, save for the gratitude of thousands.

Tactics: Archul speaks kindly to the PCs, telling them that they were chosen for a reason, and that he is certain they will do the right thing.

Vanalia is more desperate. She will attempt to use her (illusionary) looks to seduce a male member of the party, telling him that she believes she is in love with that person, and that they had been fated to meet.

If a member of the party mentions that they hope to use the dagger to heal Sune's scar, Vanalia tears off her *illusion ring* in disgust, revealing the tortures and disfigurements she has suffered under the heel of Praxus. There were others not fit enough to come along on this mission, thanks to his *attentions*, she says bitterly. "You would squander this thing on a single being, when an entire world has been put under the knife?"

Cargul remains quiet unless spoken to. If asked about the chance of a straight-out attack on Praxus, he says it can be done, and with the dagger, it might even be successful. As in any fight, there's a certain amount of chance, but he's willing to bet that the heroes of Atheron stand a good chance against Praxus, if they had the dagger. If not, he does not believe the world will last the year.

Benaur attempts to appeal to any nature-lovers in the party, such as rangers or druids. He tells of the great devastation suffered by the plants and animals of Atheron. Of entire species wiped out by fire and the roamings of chaos beasts.

Encounter Four Gate Crashers

Not everyone was invited to the Rilmani party. A few people are torn up about it.

This encounter takes place during one of the PCs' travels from place-to-place.

The strange terrain of the Outlands seems to change with every hour. When you started the day's travels, you were trudging through a damp swamp. Eventually, that turned into craggy hills, which, out of nowhere, led to a deep forest. Now you're back to hills, again, with the exception that the area in which

you currently travel is dotted with low stone walls that hint of ancient buildings.

Tier One

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten sssssso easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus (1): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephit will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed until you run out of mephits or party members.

Tier Two

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten sssssso easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Behind Farkus, two additional smoke mephits appear out of nowhere.

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus and then some (3): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephits will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed until you run out of mephits or party members.

Tier Three

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten sssssso easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Behind Farkus, four additional smoke mephits appear out of nowhere.

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus and then some (5): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing

within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephits will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed until you run out of mephits or party members.

Tier Four

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten sssso easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Behind Farkus, four additional smoke mephits appear out of nowhere.

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus and then some (5): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day. Once per hour, mephits may attempt to gate in 1d2 smoke mephits (25% chance). These ones like company.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephits will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed (gating as necessary) until you run out of mephits or party members.

Tier Five

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten sssso easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Behind Farkus, six additional smoke mephits appear out of nowhere.

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus and then some (7): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day. Once per hour, mephits may attempt to gate in 1d2 smoke mephits (25% chance). These ones like company.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephits will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed (gating as necessary) until you run out of mephits or party members.

Tier Six

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended

belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainsssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten ssssss easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Behind Farkus, eight additional smoke mephits appear out of nowhere.

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus and then some (9): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day. Once per hour, mephits may attempt to gate in 1d2 smoke mephits (25% chance). These ones like company.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephits will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed (gating as necessary) until you run out of mephits or party members.

Supertier

Suddenly, your nose catches the odor of smoke, where none had been before. Before you, a haze of smoke appears, quickly solidifying into a little man about five feet tall. The creature has a long nose and a distended belly. It raises its hands in the air, speaking in a squeaky voice:

"Villainsssssssssss! Though the evil Rilmani have denied me my birthright, I will not be beaten ssssss easily! Give up the dagger! Declare it for Farkus the smoke mephit!"

Behind Farkus, a whole mass of additional smoke mephits appear out of nowhere.

Presumably, the PCs will say "no." In that case, he flies up in the air and starts spitting, all the while telling the PCs that they still have a chance to reconsider.

Smoke Mephit — Farkus and then some (40): AL N(E); AC 4; MV 12, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 18; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (claw/claw); Dmg 1d2/1d2; SA Breath weapon; SD When a smoke mephit dies, it disappears in a flash of flame causing 1 point of damage to all creatures within 10'; MR nil; SZ M (4' tall); ML 10.

Every other round, Farkus can spit a sooty ball that automatically strikes one creature of his choosing within 20' (1d4 damage and blinded for 1-2 rounds), no saving throw.

Smoke mephits can cast *invisibility* and *dancing lights* once each per day. Once per hour, mephits may attempt to gate in 1d2 smoke mephits (25% chance). These ones like company.

If by some miracle Farkus should get the PCs to "vote" for him — nothing happens. He expects it will be delivered to him some time later by the Rilmani, but it won't. The dagger must go to one of the folks the Rilmani had already chosen.

Strategy: The mephits will fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, and fly out, and fly in, spit, etc. Repeat as needed (gating as necessary) until you run out of mephits or party members.

Encounter Five Curst – The Quartered Man

The Location: Curst is a near-circular walled city, with a gate to Carceri right at the center of town. Four main streets lead straight out from the gate to exits in the wall. The people of Curst are refugees, the escaped refuse of ten thousand plots and intrigues across the planes. Getting directions to the Quartered Man once inside Curst's gates isn't easy, as most inhabitants of the gate town want little to do with strangers. Most of these beings appear human with slight variations — bright orange skin, fangs, elongated noses, etc. A few fiends walk the streets, as well — enough to drive a paladin mad — but they keep to themselves, just like everyone else in town.

The Quartered Man is a one-story alehouse that caters to dozens of exiled rulers, or the simply demented who imagine themselves the scions of threatened thrones. The place is dark, as is everything in Curst. There are no servers, those who wish to find provender must talk to Bloggish, an ogre-like being with a strange fin on its head, who runs the place. He accepts payment in the normal coinages — because

Curst is so depressing, it also happens to be cheap. A good ale can be had for a copper piece, here.

Most of the inhabitants of the Quartered Man pay the party little attention. One, however, stands out, both because of the striking fabric of his blue vest and red cape (which strike a contrast with the grays and blacks of the other patrons) and because he stares directly at the PCs. Some may recognize him. He is Beliakas, a Sembian demon hunter who has lived in Ravens Bluff for the past two years.

The Claimant: Beliakas, of 10 Broadcross Ave. (statistics unimportant — see below).

Beliakas appears as a well-refined human gentleman of Sembian origin. His accent matches his appearance. Every action he takes, every word he speaks, he accents with the properness of one who was raised in good living.

Beliakas has short-cut dark hair, and a tightly-trimmed chin beard with hints of gray at the edges. He carries a ruby-tipped cane, propped up against the chair in which he sits.

Story: *"Hello, my fellow citizens of Ravens Bluff. It appears as though we may have some. . . business to conduct."*

If there are any PCs at the table who have not met this NPC, he turns to them directly.

"Greetings. I am Beliakas, late of Sembia. I have lived in your City of Ravens Bluff for two years, now, and find that it is to my taste. Imagine my surprise, then, when a silver-skinned creature appeared in my study this afternoon, offering me a chance to talk to you about this trinket. . . this. . . Glaysa's Poniard."

"It is no secret that I am interested in the blade. As you may know, I have dedicated my existence to hunting those creatures known as Tanar'ri. . . demons. This dagger, it has powers over the gods themselves. I believe it might also have power over the Lords of the Abyss. Long have I sought a weapon of such. . . elegance to use against my foes."

"I have. . . certain contacts who could ensure that Glaysa's Poniard remains far from our world of Toril. Rest assured that I have not simply come here without putting serious thought into how to protect that which we, all of us, hold dear."

"If you should. . . choose to tell the Rilmani to give the dagger to me, I could insure that you would be compensated well. These Rilmani are entrusting you with an important responsibility. . . one you would not want to rush into."

Any PC with the Local History proficiency may make a check to remember reading something in the *Ravens Bluff Trumpeter* about how Beliakas was once going to be considered for nobility in the city, but that many agencies suspect him of having lower planar ties.

If accused of this, Beliakas smiles, saying that, in life, it is best that one follows one's convictions. Obviously, he says, someone believed him to traffic with "ghouls and phantoms from the lower pits," and, were the roles reversed, he probably would have denied himself the ennoblement as well, until the situation could be investigated more completely.

As is usual for his interactions with the heroes of Ravens Bluff, Beliakas admits or denies no relationships with anyone or anything.

"In the final analysis, the most important thing is that I seek to destroy demons, and to protect your city from their attentions. In that, I would hope, we are in agreement."

Bribe: How much Beliakas is willing to bribe depends upon how many members of the party own the 'Debt to Beliakas' certificate. If the majority of them do, he offers nothing. See the "tactics" section, below, to see how that plays out.

If, on the other hand, none or fewer than three of the party members own the debt, he will offer the following:

"Your consideration, I know, is not without. . . a certain cost, shall we say? I am prepared, I believe, to meet that cost."

The man reaches into his breast-pocket, and removes a rolled-up piece of cloth. He unrolls the cloth on the table in front of him, revealing a number of cameo pins that have been pinned in place on the soft, black swatch.

"These pins are planar locators. They function at all times. You wear one on some item of clothing, and when you touch it, you will instantly know the name of the plane on which you currently stand, and the name of the layer, if that layer has a commonly used name."

"I will guess that you were not given an option to come here, no? That you were taken from Ravens Bluff without your permission. And that you weren't sure where you were when you arrived. With one of these locator pins, this will never happen to you again."

"All I require to give them to you, is that you choose me as the recipient of Glaysa's Poniard. I swear to you on my very existence that it will never, ever cross the path of Toril again."

IMPORTANT NOTE: Beliakas WILL NOT give a pin to any party member who already owns the *Debt to Beliakas* certificate. Such individuals are already in his pocket, as he will prove if it looks like he can get a majority at any time (such as if three members of a seven member party have the debt, and two look like they'd really like one of his pins). See the "tactics" section to find out exactly how he pulls it off.

Tactics: Beliakas knows exactly who owes him debts. He will know instantly if there are enough *Debt to Beliakas* certificates in the party to get him a majority, or to get him within a vote or two of a majority.

If this is the case, after presenting the offer of the pins to the party, and mentioning to anyone who already owes him a debt that the deal is not open to them, he will turn to the debtors, and say the following, with the "blank" taken up by the debtors' full names:

"_____, *I call in your service to me. Select me as the recipient of Glaysa's Poniard. Now!*"

Ask the PCs you've named to give you their *Debt to Beliakas* certificates. They CANNOT RESIST choosing Beliakas as their recipient of the dagger. Even if covered head to toe in *scarabs of protection*, they signed a binding, magical contract with Beliakas, knowing full well that his "service to be rendered at a later time" could come back to haunt them. And now it has.

If more bargaining needs to be done, he will turn to the rest of the party, smile, and say:

"Well. That was interesting. I suggest you accept my offer. Best to leave the experience with something to show for it, eh?"

If he has already achieved a clear majority, he will thank the party, and vanish without a trace.

ROUGH AND TUMBLE: Some adventurers might get it into their heads to fight Beliakas, thinking something silly, like he may be a devil, or something. Well, they can try, and they'll probably succeed. Trouble is, the being they're talking to isn't really Beliakas, but is instead a *simulacrum* controlled from the Prime by a complicated series of mental spells. The *simulacrum* crumbles in the first round, quickly turning to so much melted ice.

Encounter Six Vaunting Woods

The Location: The Vaunting Wood is a thick deciduous forest broken by several man-sized boulders. No matter how bright the sky is above, strange shadows play in the forest deeps.

The Claimant: The General (Proxy of Shevarash, statistics unimportant, as he ain't fighting).

The general is a brooding man, tall for an elf. He wears silver chain mail and a silver half-helmet that covers the top half of his head. His cheeks are heavily scarred, and it's obvious that he is no stranger to battle. His face is locked in what appears like a permanent grimace. To look at him, one would guess he has never smiled in his long life.

The General has been present in Ravens Bluff for almost a year, now, tracking the city's progress in the Underdark, and doing what he can to help the ultimate genocide of the entire drow race.

Glaysa's Poniard seemed to him (and to his patron, Shevarash, with whom he regularly communicates) the perfect tool by which a major blow, indeed, the major blow, could be struck against his hated enemies. The General is strong. There's a chance that, in a one-on-one fight with an avatar of Lolth, he could win, or could at least strike some crippling blows. If those blows were scored with *Glaysa's Poniard*, Lolth herself could conceivably be destroyed.

Shevareshan Fighters (9) (em F7): AL CN; AC 4 (chain mail, Dex); MV 12; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 2/3; Dmg 1d8+2 (longsword, specialized); SA None; SD None; MR nil; SZ M; ML 16.

These warriors tend to stand in the shadows during this encounter. They should be played as eerily silent background scenery, to make the General that much more menacing. The impression should be that at any moment, he could order his men to snap to the attack.

Of course, as followers of Shevarash, these folks don't smile or laugh. Ever.

Story: *"And so it has come to this. Pulled on strings by the Rilmani puppetmasters. I tire of waiting here in these woods. I tire of waiting for you to make your circuit of the Outlands, with drow throats remain to be choked."*

"I will get to the point. I want Glaysa's Poniard. It hurts gods. I plan to use it to hurt a god. Lolth. I plan to kill her."

Bribe: *"Give the blade to me, or know that you will gain the enmity of the Cult of Shevarash forevermore. Know that we or anyone affiliated with us will not*

raise a finger to help you. Ever. If you fail to give us the dagger, you are dead to us."

Tactics: The General is very straightforward. He will not negotiate, though he will give elves a VERY hard time about helping Sune, a human goddess (and a trollop when compared to true elven beauty). If they express interest in helping Atheron, he will rebuke them for giving to a wasted effort.

If there are no elves in the group, however, he will not argue. He will simply remember.

If the PCs decide not to vote for him, he will nod, and say: "I shall remember this day. Shevarash shall remember this day."

Encounter Seven The Dung Cart of Plague-Mort

The Location: Plague-Mort is a gate-town, which is to say it's situated around a gate to the Abyss. The normal inhabitants of the place are very demonic in appearance, and many of them are out-and-out demons. Happily, since the dung cart the PCs seek is outside the town proper, they won't be interacting with the locals.

The town itself is a bundle of shacks and ruins clustered about the walls of a shining, silver-steel keep. Most of the buildings are abandoned, and Plague-Mort has a gray, wrecked tone to it.

Glimmerglade's dung cart, where the Rilmani told her to wait for the PCs, is some distance outside of town.

The Claimant: **Glimmerglade** (CG proxy of Sune Firehair — stats unimportant, but she's plenty powerful).

Glimmerglade has been living in Ravens Bluff for the past year, patiently awaiting the day when *Glaysa's Poniard* returned to the city. That day has now arrived, and she's thrilled about it.

Here in Plague-Mort, perhaps the ugliest place in all the Outlands, the existence of a proxy to a goddess of Beauty stands out. Currently, Glimmerglade appears as a human female wearing tattered, foul rags masquerading as some sort of full-body robes. She walks with bent posture, and appears very much like any of the wretches that inhabit Plague-Mort. The face within her hooded robes, however, literally glows with an inner beauty. Glimmerglade's face appears differently to all who view her — in her, all see their ideal image of beauty.

Her presence in this area has changed things, a bit. For starters, colorful flowers grow near the wheels of the massive dung cart, and the entire area smells faintly of strawberries.

Glimmerglade has been a proxy (servant) of Sune for several hundred years, now, and can't imagine doing anything else. She's had a few run-ins with the Rilmani, before, but doesn't find them anything to be worried about. After all, she thinks, after what my lady did for the City of Ravens Bluff, those adventurers will be falling all over themselves to choose me.

She's really, really expecting this to go off without a hitch. You see, Glimmerglade is so focused on devotion to her own beauty and service to her goddess that she tends to tune out other things and other people, particularly unattractive ones. She's a little aloof, a lot naïve, and will be absolutely shocked if this whole thing doesn't go her way.

Story: *"Ah! You've come at last. Blessed be! These demons and such who live here. . . ugh! It's not been easy waiting around for you, I can tell you that!"*

"The Rilmani told me that I'd need to sell you folks on the idea of giving the dagger to me, but I'm hoping we don't need to resort to that. I mean, you all live in Ravens Bluff, don't you? And who saved Ravens Bluff last year? That's right! Sune!"

She smiles widely, exposing perfect white teeth.

"So what's say you say the magic words, and I can get out of here?"

Bribe: Glimmerglade hasn't even considered the possibility that she'd need to offer the PCs anything. Her goddess saved their city not more than a year ago. Certainly, they wouldn't be ungrateful this soon!

Tactics: Once it becomes clear that there may actually be some sort of struggle to get the "votes" of the PCs, Glimmerglade becomes serious, reminding the PCs of the following facts:

- 1) Sune came to the aid of the city last year because she loves her followers there, and she hates the evil of people like Glaysa. She really didn't have to, you know.
- 2) Greed is, well, UGLY.
- 3) The process by which Sune will use the dagger to fix her face will destroy the item forever, making sure that another mess like this never has to happen.

Encounter Eight Conclusion

After the PCs have had a chance to hear the last claimant's side of the story, they hear a voice speak from behind them. It is Raxtenos the Rilmani.

If there are still votes to be "collected," he says the following:

"You have heard from all who wish to own Glaysa's Poniard. How do you judge their desires?"

If everyone has voted, he takes a different approach:

"You have heard from all who wish to own Glaysa's Poniard, and have seen to it in your hearts to pass judgment. We commend you for accepting this important task."

Vote-Counting Time

How did the vote turn out? In the case of a tie, the Rilmani will ask a party member (at random) to flip a coin to see who wins.

The "winner" is the claimant with the most votes, even if the most votes is 2. Everyone must vote. If you don't vote, you stay on the Outlands forever.

Once a clear winner has been chosen, the Rilmani thank the PCs again (they really don't care who ends up with the thing, just that it stays the heck away from Ravens Bluff — they'll even allow the Emperor of Shou Lung to keep it, if that's what the PCs want).

Once again, you feel a strange tingling sensation, and the world fades to a bright white. You spend some time in the half-sleep of this realm, enjoying the comfort it brings you. Eventually, you awaken and find yourselves in an abandoned warehouse. No sign of struggle save for a broken door remains here.

You hear a feminine voice from behind you. "You're back. What's happened?"

The voice belongs to Lady Belinda Moonglow, our elven dean friend from the first round. She's been monitoring the area since just after the PCs disappeared, and is eager to hear news about what happened to the dagger. She will be overjoyed if the PCs voted for Glimmerglade, and will be disappointed if they did not.

"It must have been a difficult decision to make," she says.

With that, she arranges any leftover payment that needs to be taken care of, and contacts any men with whom she flirted in the first round, trying to set up a time to meet for a liaison.

Her eyes are sad with the loss of her brother, but she smiles through her sadness, her beauty showing strong despite the mock-scar marring her perfect face.

The End

Experience Point Summary

Experience is calculated as follows for Living City events.

4. Sum the experience listed below for objectives.
5. 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.
6. NEW: PCs get the experience for the tier for which their INDIVIDUAL level qualifies them, according to the chart below. If the PC falls into a higher individual tier than the party's tier, he or she gets the experience at the adventure tier level. Under no circumstances can a character's individual award exceed the party tier.

For example, if the party has a 2nd level PC, a 5th level PC, three 6th level PCs, and an 11th level PC, the group falls into tier 3. The 2nd level PC gets tier 1 experience, the four PCs on tier 3 get tier 3 experience, and the 11th level PC also gets tier 3 experience.

Tier 1:	Character levels 1 and 2
Tier 2:	Character levels 3 and 4
Tier 3:	Character levels 5 and 6
Tier 4:	Character levels 7 and 8
Tier 5:	Character levels 9 and 10
Tier 6:	Character levels 11+

Encounter One

Quizzing the Rilmani: 50 xp

Encounter Two

Interacting with Captain Minh's crew: 100 xp

Encounter Three

Interacting with the folk of Atheron: 100 xp

Encounter Four

Defeating mephits: 100 xp

Encounter Five

Interacting with Beliakas: 100 xp

Encounter Six

Interacting with The General: 100 xp

Encounter Seven

Interacting with Glimmerglade: 100 xp

Total Experience for Objectives: 650 xp
Roleplaying Experience: 0-500 xp

Total Possible Experience: 1,150 xp

For Tier 2:	2,300 xp
For Tier 3:	3,450 xp
For Tier 4:	4,600 xp
For Tier 5:	5,750 xp
For Tier 6:	6,900 xp
For Supertier:	9,200 xp

Treasure Summary

PCs may keep items from the scenario which are listed on the treasure list 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 PCs 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 PC to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certified and cannot bring material benefit to the PC. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certified.
- Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some PCs. Items which are worth more than 5,000 gp, which are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and magical items will be discovered in the possession of the PC by one means or another. The PC who stole them must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives one Infamy point for being a known thief. For other items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment on 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.

Atheron

If the majority of the party voted for the Atheron claimants, each member of the party receives:

Medallion of Gratitude: This plain wooden medallion, inlaid with silver, depicts the heraldry of the Kingdom of Eskuar, on the distant world of Atheron. It signifies

the owner's role in the defeat of the evil demigod Praxus, and the gratitude of thousands. When worn, it protects the wearer against a single failed saving throw of his or her choice, after which the medallion crumbles to dust. The medallion arrives as a gift to the above-named PC six months after the event in which it was gained.

Start Date: _____ (Six months from today).

Beliakas

If the majority of the party voted for Beliakas, all members **who did not have** the *Debt to Beliakas* receive the following:

Planar Cameo Pin: This simple cameo pin is fashioned of iron and lead, and features a carving of a small rod on its surface. When touched, the pin reveals the generally accepted name of the plane and layer (if applicable) on which its owner currently stands. Oddly, it does not seem to function in the Nine Hells.

Crew of the Celestial Monitor

If the majority of the party voted for the crew of the Celestial Monitor and the Emperor of Shou Lung, they receive the following two items:

Jade Chest: Dozens of intertwining eastern dragons have been carved intricately into this beautiful small jade chest, crafted by the finest sculptors in all of Shou Lung. It is a nearly priceless work of art worth 75,000 gp to the right collector. A non-specialist might pay as high as 50,000 gp.

Green Warfu Stone: This green magical gem glows with an inner fire. Created by the Lords of Karma at the direction of the Celestial Emperor, this *Warfu stone* is a work of supernatural beauty. It cannot be crushed or melted, and, when in use, it floats over the head of its owner, as an *ioun stone*, granting him or her one additional experience level as long as it is in use. The Warfu stone has lost some power with age, and cannot bestow a level to anyone over 9th level to begin with.

The Elves of Shevarash

Any PC who *does not* choose the Elves of Shevarash receives the following certificate:

Enmity of Shevarash: The god Shevarash, through his mortal servant, The General, has taken notice of the above-mentioned character. This character is effectively dead to the clergy of Shevarash, who will not lift a finger to help him or her. Ever.

If this character is an elf, her or she has gained the *Hatred of Shevarash*, which may result in further developments in future tournaments.

Glimmerglade

If the majority of the party voted for Glimmerglade, they will receive the following:

Divine Remove Curse: This certificate entitles the above-named character to a remove curse spell channeled through an avatar of Sune Firehair, herself.

HANDOUT ONE

THOSE WHO SEEK

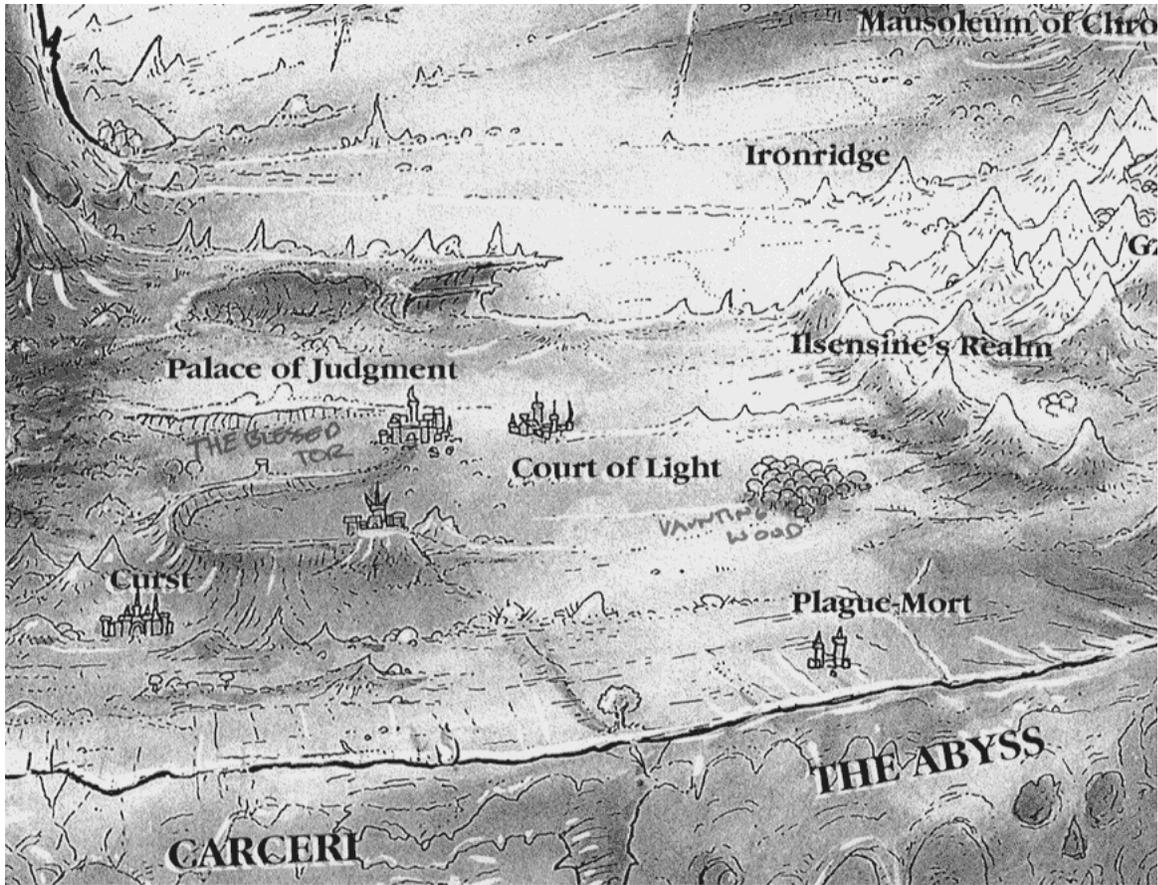
The Palace of Judgment

The Blessed Tor

Curst — The Quartered Man

Vaunting Woods

Plague-Mort — The Dung Cart



RILMANI, ARGENACH

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Spire, any prime world
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Genius (17-18)
TREASURE:	R, Z, U
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
<hr/>	
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-4 at the Spire)
ARMOR CLASS:	-1
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2 or 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d20/1d20 (rays) or 1d8+10 (weapon +3, +7 damage) or 1d10 (bare fists)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Beams, spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	+3 weapon to hit
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	55%
SIZE:	M (7' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	16,000

Wherever the Balance is threatened, that's where the argenachs'll be found. They're advisers and agitators, working to ensure that no one gains the upper hand for long in any part of the multiverse. Argenachs are the second-highest bloods among the rilmani, entrusted with the execution of the most delicate and subtle parts of the rilmani's grand purpose: the careful adjustment of the Balance in places where it's out of kilter and can't fix itself.

Argenachs are especially interested in the affairs of the countless prime worlds, since they believe that the war of good and evil, law and chaos, will be fought and won in the realms of mortals. Even now, they say, the powers that exemplify these causes squabble over the spirits of humankind. The Prime's the only theater that counts. Thus, argenachs spend a lot of time away from the Outlands, mired in endless struggles on the Prime Material Plane.

The argenachs' methods are subtle, but simple. They give advice and knowledge to whatever side's threatened, trying to even things out. Argenachs often conceal their true identity, since no one likes being played for a puppet. They'll be found masquerading as helpful sages who aid their proteges in a struggle against evil or chaos, or as cold-hearted bloods advising ambitious cutters on how to go about besting the forces of law or good. More often than not, argenachs'll take a neutral role and just watch to see how things are turning out.

Argenachs are tall, slender creatures with a silvery sheen to their skins. They often dress in white, flowing robes on their home plane, but can take on any shape or dress in the performance of their mission. Argenachs favor great, wide-bladed broad swords and long-handled axes in combat.

COMBAT: Argenachs avoid physical combat when possible. Their primary means of defense are rays of silvery light pro-

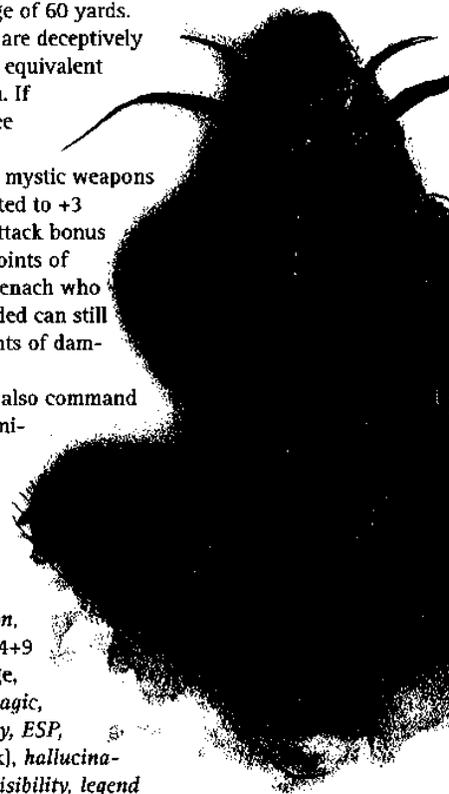
jected from their hands. These rays inflict 1d20 points of damage, and always strike as an energy form their target's vulnerable to. For example, baatezu are immune to fire, so the argenach's rays might strike as electricity or *magic missiles*. Argenachs can fire two rays per round, to a range of 60 yards.

Argenachs are deceptively strong, with the equivalent of a 19 Strength. If forced into melee combat, they strike with their mystic weapons (usually enchanted to +3 value) at a +3 attack bonus and inflict +7 points of damage. An argenach who fights bare-handed can still inflict 1d10 points of damage per hit.

Argenachs also command a battery of formidable spell-like powers, which they can use one at a time, once per round. These include: *advanced illusion*, *cone of cold* (9d4+9 points of damage, 3/day), *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *ESP*, *fly*, *geas* (1/week), *hallucinatory terrain*, *invisibility*, *legend lore* (1/day), *mass charm*, *mirror image*, *prismatic spray* (1/day), *slow*, *solid fog*, *suggestion*, and *wall of fire*. An argenach can also *lay on hands* once per day, duplicating the effects of a *heal* spell except that no more than 36 points of damage can be cured.

Argenachs can be damaged only by +3 or better weapons. They prefer to use their spell-like powers of *charm*, *illusion*, or *suggestion* to avoid physical confrontations, but fight with ruthless efficiency when required. Once per day argenachs can open a *gate* (75% chance of success), bringing 1 to 4 ferrumachs (60% chance) or 1 other argenach (40% chance) to their aid.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Argenachs are the loners of rilmani society, which is fairly reclusive to begin with. They answer directly to the aurumachs and are usually given only broad guidelines instead of specific orders. For example, an argenach might be ordered into a struggle with no instruction more detailed than "There's trouble on Toril. Deal with it." Of course, an argenach's extremely intelligent and resourceful, and that's all the orders he'll need to get the job done.



RILMANI, AURUMACH

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	The Spire
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Godlike (21+)
TREASURE:	R, U, V x 2
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
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NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-3 on the Spire)
ARMOR CLASS:	-3 (-7 in armor)
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	12
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1d10+11 (weapon +3, Strength bonus) or 2d8 (bare fists)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Aura, spells
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Aura, struck only by +4 or better weapons
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	65%
SIZE:	L (10' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17-18)
XP VALUE:	27,000

The Balance will be served. Shake your fist in the teeth of the hurricane, shout your defiance at the storm. Break your world into a thousand thousand pieces if you have the power. It will not matter. For whatever you do, there is another who will undo it — if not in your world, then in the next. The Balance will be served.

— Kaxanamos, aurumach general

Very few nonrilmani have ever seen one of these bloods. The aurumachs are the leaders of the rilmani race, the high-ups who call the shots and pull the strings. It's said that even the powers don't know half the darks the aurumachs do. More than any other creatures in the entire multiverse, they stand aside from the path of things and objectively measure the state of the Balance, acting to correct it when it leans too far to one side or the other.

The aurumachs'll almost never be found away from the Spire. As leaders and organizers, it's not their job to intervene personally, and only the most dangerous situations'll make them change their policy. Aurumachs don't make any special effort to avoid visitors, but a cutter'd have to have a tiefling's own luck to find one — it's said that there's only a hundred aurumachs on all the Outlands.

Aurumachs are tall, athletic humanoids with beatific features and metallic golden skin. Their eyes are too bright to look at directly, and an aura of power and patience surrounds their form. Aurumachs are occasionally found in fluted golden plate armor, bearing mighty swords or maces, but at the Spire they rarely need such martial trappings.

COMBAT: Although they're the size of ogres, aurumachs are far faster and more graceful than even the most agile humans.

They wield mighty, enchanted *vorpai swords* +3 with astounding speed and strength, striking 3 times per round with a +6 attack bonus. The aurumach's weapon is created by an act of will and materializes in her hand with a thought — she can never be disarmed or caught off-guard. An aurumach's armor is the equivalent of *field plate* +4 and can be summoned in a similar fashion to her weapon. Aurumachs have an effective Strength of 20 and can strike for 2d8 points of damage even without their great swords.

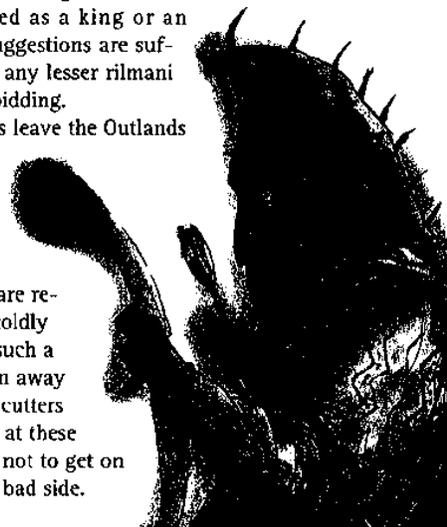
Aurumachs can attack with golden energy similar to the rays cast by an argenach. This energy automatically assumes a form that exploits an enemy's vulnerabilities: fire, ice, positive, negative, etc. Unlike that of the argenach, this energy is not directed in rays, but instead takes the form of a golden halo surrounding the aurumach at a 15-foot radius. Any hostile creature entering this area must successfully save vs. spell or suffer 2d12 points of damage from the aurumach's aura. The aura also functions as a *globe of invulnerability* with an added bonus: it stops missile attacks of any kind.

Aurumachs *detect magic and invisibility* by sight and can call upon the following spell-like powers: *advanced illusion*, *cone of cold* (12d4+12 points of damage), *ESP*, *fly*, *geas* (1/day), *hallucinatory terrain*, *improved invisibility*, *mass charm*, *mass suggestion*, *mirror image*, *prismatic spray*, *slow*, *solid fog* or *death fog*, and *wall of fire*, *of ice*, *of iron*, or *of force*. Once per day the aurumach can use any *symbol* or *time stop*. Once per year she can grant another's *wish*. Aurumachs can *lay on hands* three times per day, combining the effects of *heal*, *regeneration*, and *restoration*.

Aurumachs can be damaged only by weapons of +4 or better enchantment. At will they can *gate* in 1 to 8 ferrumachs (75%) or 1 to 3 argenachs (25%) with an 80% chance of success.

HABITAT/SOCIETY: Aurumachs know no peers among the rilmani and are the equal of the most powerful fiends or aasimon. The rilmani have no particular order, hierarchy, or system of government — aurumachs function as advisers and mentors to the entire race. Even though an aurumach isn't recognized as a king or an overlord, her suggestions are sufficient to make any lesser rilmani leap to do her bidding.

Aurumachs leave the Outlands only to deal with the gravest of threats to the balance of the universe. They are remorseless and coldly efficient when such a cause pulls them away from the Spire; cutters who meet them at these times'd be wise not to get on the aurumach's bad side.



RILMANI

To paraphrase a particularly wise prime, the rilmani are an *enigma cloaked in a riddle, wrapped in a mystery. Who can question their motives or their actions? They keep their own counsel. They're sworn never to come when called, but always to be there when needed; never to answer questions put to them, but always to provide what information is necessary; to aid and abet good, evil, law, and chaos alike in order to maintain the Balance, regardless of the cost or repercussions.*

At least with a tanar'ri, a cutter knows what to expect.

— Sazraen Tildoma, sage of Sigil

Each of the cornerstones of the Great Road's got its own bloods. Baator's home to the baatezu, the Abyss's the den of the tanar'ri, Mechanus is run by the modrons, and so on. Any berk knows that. But the rarest and most silent of all these planar races are the rilmani, the high-ups of the Outlands. They're the creatures of true neutrality, preserving its cause across the multiverse.

Some bashers might have a hard time understanding how it is that creatures like the rilmani can find anything to do with themselves. After all, neutrality is the absence of any other viewpoint, right? So, how can a cutter support the cause that ain't a cause? The rilmani don't care about law or chaos, they stand in the middle of good and evil, so what do they care about? What makes them tick?

The rilmani'll answer that question straight-up, without their customary double-talk and deceitfulness. It's all about the Balance, they'll say. The universe exists because certain forces counteract each other. If there wasn't any darkness, how could a cutter know light? What if the light grew so bright that all darkness everywhere ceased to be? Then light'd cease as well, the rilmani say. It's the same with the Great Wheel. If one of the rim-planes were removed, there wouldn't be a Great Wheel anymore. It'd be broken, and it couldn't work.

As creatures of neutrality, the rilmani keep the Balance. Whenever one side or the other gets too strong, they start aiding the disadvantaged sods until things even out. Sometimes their aid is direct, but more often than not rilmani even things out by pointing cutters in the right direction and letting them solve their own problems. 'Course, the rilmani themselves aren't entirely decided on the best way to address these issues, but that's another story.

Like the other principal races of the planes, the rilmani comprise several subspecies with similar powers, appearance, and beliefs. (Six subspecies are described in the upcoming pages: abiorachs, argenachs, aurumachs, cuprilachs, ferrumachs, and plumachs.) Rilmani appear human at first glance — far more so than archons or baatezu — but their skins've got a metallic sheen to them, and their eyes glow with pearly, opalescent light. More importantly, the rilmani's presence tends to overwhelm lesser creatures. Like a deva's aura of beauty and peace, or a tanar'ri's malignance and horror, the rilmani's tangible manifestation of reserve, watchfulness, and puissance is something even the most insensitive berk can't miss.

COMBAT: All rilmani share several basic spell-like powers that may be employed at will. These include: *continual light* or *darkness*, *dismissal*, *hold monster*, *know alignment* (always active), *polymorph self*, and *teleport without error*. In addition, rilmani are capable of *gating* their fellows to their aid. (See the individual rilmani descriptions.)

All rilmani possess an innate *telepathy* ability that allows them to communicate with any intelligent creature. With non-intelligent monsters or normal animals, the rilmani telepathy is empathic. Rilmani cannot be attacked by telepathic psionics, but they can be physically injured by psychokinetic or psychometabolic powers. All rilmani can be damaged only by enchanted weapons and have no special vulnerability to silver or cold-wrought iron weapons.

Rilmani are affected by the following attack forms:

ATTACK	DAMAGE
Acid	Half
Cold	Full
Electricity	None
Fire	Full
Gas	Half
Magic missile	Full
Poison	Half

PLANAR TRAVEL: Rilmani can travel to any of the Outer Planes or the Astral Plane freely, but they can't enter the Prime Material Plane *unless a creature of similar status is summoned at the same time*. In other words, if a powerful prime-material mage summons a glabrezu tanar'ri, a window is opened by which a rilmani can enter that same world. There isn't always a rilmani ready to drop what he's doing and go to investigate, but there's always a chance that a rilmani'll take an interest and "piggyback" on the other creature's summoning just to keep an eye on what's going on.

Rilmani can't be summoned directly by any spell.

RILMANI AND THE OUTLANDS:

Most rilmani inhabit the regions of the Outlands that're closest to the Spire. They're found in the regions where most or all magic is negated. The rilmani home regions can't be accessed from the Astral Plane, which probably explains why no cutter's invented a spell for summoning the rilmani. Rilmani can be found farther away from the Spire, in the more heavily populated areas of the Outlands, but they're generally visitors there and don't stay long.

THE CONCORDANACH: Once every hundred years, the wisest and most powerful individuals of each type of rilmani travel to the Spire in the center of the Outlands to discuss the state of the

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