

KEO6-06

The Price of Hospitality

A One-Round D&D® LIVING GREYHAWK™

Keoland Regional Adventure

Version 1.2

by Wayne Rosen

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Playtesters: The Brotherhood.

As political tensions run high in Keoland, our mighty heroes escape to the backwater Barony of Mill Creek. Surely danger couldn't follow them to this isolated area. Surely the scheming Keoish nobility would leave this boring farming community alone. Surely you must be joking. A Keoland regional adventure for APLs 2-8,

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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For questions specific to this document and your region please e-mail your triad point of contact (POC) at keolandpoc@adelphia.net. For LIVING GREYHAWK campaign questions email rpgahq@wizards.com.

RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2007.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on

running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in the *Appendices*.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

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

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

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

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in Keoland. Characters native to Keoland pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character who does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a Survival check (DC 20), the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Baron Vorgax of Mill Creek has never been a major player in Keoland's political scene. Wielding neither money nor might in sufficient quantity to have much say in matters of state, he contents himself with his favorite pastime, hunting. His Barony is known throughout Keoland as an idyllic retreat for the wealthy who frequently return from his trips refreshed and relaxed.

Despite his small impact on Keoland's internal policies, Vorgax has managed to make an enemy in a powerful place, Count Orloc. Vorgax supports Stokedor, Orloc and Stokedor are political enemies, and so Orloc sets his sights on the small barony, determined to use political pressure to demonstrate his power to the other nobles. Under a guise of a hunting trip, Count Orloc brings a massive retinue to Castle Vorgax and immediately begins to bankrupt the young baron by demanding the finest he has to offer. Being of lesser social station, it is Vorgax's duty to provide as well as he can without complaint. Only someone of Orloc's political stature can settle this affair, and strangely none of them are around at the moment...but the heroes are!

Orloc has some other shady side deals going on in the Barony of Mill Creek, and he uses this opportunity to check up on them personally. If his dealings are brought to light, it will be just the lever Baron Vorgax needs to make Orloc leave before the baron is bankrupt.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In Encounter one, the heroes are introduced to the Baron's son, Dublevex, and escort him on a fox hunt that quickly goes awry.

In Encounter two, the heroes meet Baron Vorgax after saving the life of his son.

In Encounter three, the heroes are abruptly introduced to Count Orloc and his retinue, including his apprentice Cedric and Orloc's new bride-to-be.

In Encounter four, the heroes do some digging to find leverage against Count Orloc.

In Encounter five, the heroes witness Orloc's apprentice conducting some shady business and have the option to attack or follow him.

In Encounter six, the heroes arrive and explore a summer house belonging to Orloc's apprentice.

In Encounter seven, the heroes penetrate the apprentice's laboratory.

In Encounter eight, the heroes confront the terrifying results of the apprentice's work.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

The Barony of Mill Creek is a relatively blank slate for Keoland in Living Greyhawk. The players will probably want to know what in-game knowledge their characters may possess.

Any hero native whose home region is Keoland automatically knows the following:

1. The Barony of Mill Creek lies nestled on Keoland's northeastern border. It is part of the shared border with Gran March and the Duchy of Ulek. Within Keoland, it is bordered by the Duchy of Dorlin, the County of Marlbridge and the Barony of Axewood.

2. Considered a backwater by much of the kingdom, it boasts only one sizeable town, Black Pike. Black Pike sits on the shore of the Sheldomar River, making it the starting point for many merchants returning through the Duchy of Ulek. Castle Vorgax is a half day's ride from Black Pike and is where Baron Vorgax resides.

3. Other than the Royal District and City of Niolo Dra, Mill Creek is the smallest province within the kingdom. Despite being the gateway to a fair bit of trade, the Barony suffers from an economic standpoint. The roads and villages are of lesser quality than one might find throughout the rest of the Kingdom. The exact reason for this is unknown, although it is said that Baron Vorgax prefers a more "rustic" feel.

Any hero may attempt a **Knowledge: Sheldomar Valley Metaregion** check at the beginning of the adventure, with the results listed below.

DC 10: All the above information, plus the knowledge that Baron Vorgax is a widower. His wife drowned in a boating accident on the Sheldomar. He has a young son named Dublevex. Mill Creek is almost entirely covered in light deciduous forests with small breaks in farmland, and boasts some of the best game in the Kingdom. Nobles frequently call upon Baron Vorgax when they feel a need for a diversion.

DC 15: The Baron is a supporter of Stokedor, although he does not wield much in the way of influence.

DC 20: The Baron eschews life in Niolo Dra and the life of the council. He trusts in his minister Erelan Marsham to see to the affairs of the barony in Niolo Dra.

INTRODUCTION

When scholars in the field of fox hunting meet to debate the subject, virtually all agree that one of the top places to go is the bucolic County of Mill Creek in Keoland. Its ruler, Baron Vorgax, has turned this otherwise poor and isolated farming region into a vacation spot for wealthy nobility. Castle Vorgax, while tiny by Keoish standards, is well-appointed, with numerous servants to look after the needs of its guests. To many observers, it functions more as

an inn or a waystation than as a castle built for defense.

For any of a myriad number of reasons, you and your companions have come together and joined in the first caravan of the hunting season to travel to Castle Vorgax. There are six coaches and a healthy mix of people mounted and afoot moving with the caravan as it winds its way along what the Barony calls Grand Trade Road. From the derisive comments of the two merchants traveling with you, you gather that this twin tracked road is the best the Barony has to offer.

A number of people hoping to hire on with the baron for seasonal work tell you that the Baron runs several hunts a week, each for different game. The most common are the fox hunts, the most dangerous are the boar hunts, and the most popular the deer hunts. Despite the frequency of his hunting expeditions the Baron has a reputation for not putting undue strain on the wildlife of his region and has been known to call off an entire season's hunts if the game was in danger of extinction in the area.

One of the more colorful people on the trip is a tracker by the name of Sefi Arrinfulk. Tall and slender, with sandy hair and beard, he has invited you to come with him on the first fox hunt of the season, which he will be attending with the Baron's son, Dublevex.

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves to each other. If necessary, play up the role of Sefi as a man of all trades who is friendly and talkative, and who refuses to take no for an answer. He takes a shine to the PCs and continues to hound them until they agree to come to the first hunt.

ENCOUNTER 1: THE SAVIORS OF PETUNIA

At this point, the PCs have just settled into their quarters at Castle Vorgax. The rooms, while sparse, are more comfortable than the typical servant's quarters. Those PCs who were looking for work have been hired as escorts for the rate of 10 sp/week, plus room and board. They are told to report at dawn the following morning to escort the Baron's 9 year old son, Dublevex, on a hunt. The hunt is quite large at first but will split off into several splinter groups of six to ten people.

Castle Vorgax is the epitome of a defensive fortification allowed to go to pasture. The Barony of Mill Creek has had a very long and storied existence; unfortunately most details of interest seem to have taken place many years in the past. The castle gates are never closed and sealed, even in the dead of night. Most of the guardsmen are out of shape and out of practice, with equipment that hasn't

seen the practice fields in months, if not years. Trees grow almost to the walls around the castle, providing cover for any attacking force that should decide to assault the out of the way Barony.

One thing Castle Vorgax does have is a teeming marketplace seemingly out of place with the Barony's position. A small clergy of Pelor administers to the spiritual needs of the castle, and providing any spells needed to hunting expeditions. Clerical spells up to fifth level are available to purchase at any time at standard PHB pricing.

Allow the heroes time to adjust their spell lists and equipment for the morning's Encounter.

Read the following when the PCs arrive next morning for the hunt:

A young black-haired boy approaches you, dressed in finely made clothes suitable for a warm day outside. The boy carries a shortbow, and wears a dagger at his belt. Slung under his arm is a small cat with brownish-orange fur.

Following the boy are two men. The first, who appears to be in his twenties, sports a deep tan, and holds the leashes of two hunting dogs. The second, an older man, carries a cage with a black cloth thrown over it. All three wear surcoats, a white field with a fox's head in black.

The boy introduces himself as Lord Dublevex, son of Baron Jerren Vorgax. The boy sounds like a well-educated 9 year old. His manners are impeccable and he treats the heroes with respect and kindness even though they are likely not of his social station. Should any hero be a noble or knight of equivalent ranking, Dublevex will extend them all due courtesy and refrain from remarking on whatever circumstances have driven the hero to be forced to adventure for a living.

Next, he introduces his beloved cat, Petunia. Finally, he introduces his servants (note that he introduces the servants after his cat). The first, Winston, is the master of the hounds, and will accompany Dublevex and the PCs on the hunt. The older man, Dublevex's manservant Chauncey, will release the fox, but will not be accompanying the hunt.

What is Petunia?

Petunia is Dublevex's seemingly normal housecat who follows him everywhere. Allow PCs to believe that it is a simple animal, at best an animal companion such as a ranger or druid might have. In reality, Petunia is a rogue from the Earldom of Gand named Eltana who fled here to avoid justice. She is in possession of a unique magical item that allows him to shift from his native form into Petunia's when he so desires. Petunia is in the process of training Dublevex in the stealthy arts, without the knowledge of Baron Vorgax. Any hero casting *detect magic* while Petunia is around will detect a faint aura of

transmutation from him. Petunia will never be caught in human form anywhere near the PCs in this adventure.

A Knowledge: Nobility check **DC: 10** will tell the heroes identify the crest on the surcoats as belonging to the House of Vorgax. **DC: 15** will tell the heroes that the House of Vorgax is typically regarded with derision by most of the other nobility within Keoland. **DC: 20** will tell the heroes that Baron Vorgax and his family have been staunch supporters of King Skotti throughout his reign, and that the Baron himself was rumored to be personal friends with the king.

After getting introductions from the PCs, he will explain the hunt. Chauncey will release the fox from its cage. The group will then wait 10 minutes to give the fox some time to run, after which the group will try to track the fox and capture it. Certain types of heroes may balk at the idea of hunting the fox. If this occurs, Dublevex will assure the heroes that the fox has not been hobbled or maimed in any way, and that should the hunt be unable to locate the fox, that it will be free to live out its life. Any hero who chooses to do so may remain at Castle Vorgax instead of going on the hunt, but this means missing out on the following Encounter and the rewards for it.

You and your companions travel for about an hour before cresting a small hill with a good view of the Countryside. Dublevex nods at his manservant, and the cage is opened. The captive fox becomes a reddish streak as it runs for the treeline.

After 10 minutes, the hunt begins. The hounds will track the fox through some light woods. After a half hour, the hounds get more excited, and Winston announces that the fox must be nearby.

The hounds' barking becomes faster and louder – they must be almost on top of their target. They break from Winston and run into a grove of trees, followed by the daring Petunia.

Moments later, you hear loud growling sounds from inside the grove, clearly not from the hounds. You hear what must be the sound of a hound being ripped apart.

"Petunia!" Dublevex shouts. "You must save Petunia!"

The terrified Winston speaks up.

"Um, sir, it wouldn't hurt for them to save the other hounds while they're at it."

From the grove, the bloody body of one of the canines comes flying out, landing close to your group. This doesn't look good.

A Track check **DC: APL +2** will tell the heroes ahead of time what type of creatures lurk in the clearing.

Inside the grove is a pair of magical beasts or aberrations. Fortunately, they don't seem to notice Petunia, who is

hiding in some bushes. Unfortunately, they notice the heroes as soon as they enter.

APL 2 (EL 3)

🔥 **Krenshar**: hp 11; see *Monster Manual*, page 163.

🔥 **Hippogriff**: hp 25; see *Monster Manual*, page 152

APL 4 (EL 5)

🔥 **Hippogriff**: hp 25; see *Monster Manual*, page 152

🔥 **Owlbear**: hp 52; see *Monster Manual*, page 206

APL 6 (EL 7)

🔥 **Owlbear**: hp 52; see *Monster Manual*, page 206

🔥 **Girallon**: hp 58, see *Monster Manual*, page 126

APL 8 (EL 9)

🔥 **Umbur Hulks (2)**: hp 71; see *Monster Manual*, page 249

Combat and Tactics:

No map is included for this combat, as the clearing is simply a large patch in the woods measuring 40' on a side.

The creatures attack the heroes relentlessly and without quarter, stopping only when slain.

Once the PCs dispatch the foul creatures, Dublevex thanks them profusely for saving Petunia. Winston is scared witless by the monsters. While magical beasts are not strange by an adventurer's standards, they are terrifying for the average Keoish peasant, especially one living in an isolated rural setting. The possible appearance of aberrations is only worse.

A **Knowledge: Nature** check DC: 10 + APL will tell the heroes that none of the creatures (with the possible exception of the Hippogriff) are likely to call this area home. In fact, in several of the creatures cases, they are entirely out of place.

When the heroes are cleaning up from the combat, Dublevex will start yelling to the heroes and pointing to the creatures' necks. On each of the creatures is a large iron collar.

If the heroes try to track the beasts, have them make a **Track** check DC 10. Success will let the heroes track the beasts to a road, where a tiny cart can be found. A human driver and a pair of horses are dead, both obviously attacked by the creatures the PCs fought earlier. A pair of shattered wooden cages (large enough to fit the two beasts) lies in back of the cart.

No identification can be found on the driver.

Heroes who are interested may make a **Search** check DC: 20. Success indicates that they find several small patches of fine red hair or fur near the cages. The slain driver of the caravan does have red hair.

A **Heal** check DC: 15 will tell the heroes that the driver was taken by surprise by the creatures and that the horses were slaughtered without being able to flee since the carriage's brake is engaged.

An **Open Locks** check DC: 10 will reveal that the locks were picked as opposed to having been opened by a key. This is evident from scratching around the lock.

If the PCs continue to track the caravan's path, it travels for about ten minutes walk to a small stream and then ends abruptly. Skilled trackers will realize that there is no way to determine how far the caravan traveled in the stream for, or which direction it came from.

Dublevex and the terrified Winston will want to return to Baron Vorgax to explain what happened.

ENCOUNTER 2: MEETING THE BARON

It is now afternoon of the same day. News of your victory has spread around Castle Vorgax, and you have been moved from your spartan accommodations to the Master Suite, a series of rooms fit for a baron and his retinue. After settling in, you are now relaxing by one of the clear pools in the castle grounds. Servants have brought out a late lunch of fine sausages and mugs of Keoish beer.

As you are taking in your well-deserved rest, a short man of obviously pure Suel heritage strides towards you. He wears matching leggings and shirt of bright crimson cloth, broken by a black belt. Over this is layered a tabard you've already seen earlier today, the white field and black fox's head present again.

Hurrying to keep pace with the man is Dublevex. Side by side it is easy to see the familial resemblance even though Dublevex has a much darker skin tone and black hair.

"Here they are, papa! They saved poor Petunia and Winston! I wasn't scared one bit!"

The man is indeed Baron Vorgax. He will gesture for the heroes to remain seated and comfortable. Clearly he is not a man who stands on pomp and circumstance. His voice, when he speaks, is warm and friendly. He smiles almost constantly, and tousles Dublevex's hair playfully when the boy talks too much.

Baron Vorgax will thank the PCs for rescuing Dublevex. He also mentions that Dublevex has declared the PCs to be the "Saviors of Petunia", and seems to idolize the heroes. He explains to them that while the strange creatures they fought may have been normal foes for adventurers to face, they are horrific to the average citizen in this isolated County.

Already rumors of the creatures, no doubt fueled by the terrified Winston, have been wildly exaggerated (e.g., creatures with 10 heads or tentacles instead of eyes), and

peasants are whispering that foul necromantic magics are responsible. He asks the PCs to describe what they fought, and any information they have that could shed light on why these creatures are present. Note that the Baron is unfamiliar with magical beasts, but he is not as frightened by them as the average peasant.

If the heroes brought the bodies of the beasts back, the Baron will thank them and ask them more directed questions, in an attempt to understand what the creatures were and how they fought. He will explain that he wants to forewarn his guards to keep an eye out for more strangeness.

Should any hero bring up the fact that Dublevex is quite obviously not pure Suel, the Baron will go very quiet and say

"You are my guests, and saved my son today, so I owe you a debt of gratitude. Please do not cancel that debt through rudeness."

Finally, the Baron will want to attempt to identify the creatures.

Knowledge: Arcana or Bardic Knowledge check DC:10 will reveal the following:

1. The creatures were magical beasts (a DC: 15 check will identify exactly what they were).
2. The creatures are definitely not normally found in this region.

The Baron offers to hire the PCs to solve this mystery. He mentions that he has connections that the PCs may find useful should they succeed.

Knowledge: Nobility or Bardic Knowledge check DC:20 will reveal the Baron to be a crafty, but not especially powerful ally of Stokedor. Because of Mill Creek's isolated location, few nobles pay much attention to the Baron.

Allow the heroes to discuss the Baron's offer. Accept or decline, they are still his guests and he will inform them that the evening meal will be in their honor.

ENCOUNTER 3: NOBLISSE OBLIGE

It is now evening of the same day. You are about to sit down to a supper in your honor. The servants announce that the meal will include fine wine to go with squab and roasted leeks with potatoes. Baron Vorgax and Dublevex sit with you at their table, smiling.

Suddenly, the Baron's manservant runs into the room and whispers in the Baron's ear. Vorgax's face goes white for a few seconds until he recovers his composure.

"Listen carefully to my instructions, Tayo. Bring Orloc to the salon, and keep him waiting for precisely fifteen minutes. That is the most time we can spare without breaking etiquette. At that point, have Chauncey bring the Orloc a platter of sweetmeats. Etiquette will not allow him to refuse this generous display of hospitality, and will allow us additional time. At precisely 15 minutes later, please invite him into our hall for supper."

"And Tayo. Do find out how many extra seats we will need to accommodate Count Orloc and his retinue. I'm guessing 10 should probably be sufficient."

Tayo scowls. "I already have, my lord, and I regret to inform you that your estimate is a bit off. Count Orloc wishes to inform you that 200 extra seats will be necessary this evening."

For a second, a look of stark terror comes over the Baron's face, but Vorgax quickly gains composure, as if nothing of importance had happened.

As the Baron's servants scramble to accommodate their new "guests", Vorgax will explain that he is a supporter of Lord Stokedor, Count Orloc's nemesis. While Baron Vorgax is on bad terms with Count Orloc, the Count is significantly higher ranking than the Baron, so Vorgax is obligated to provide whatever hospitality Count Orloc requests.

While the servants manage to put together a meal for everyone, Tayodore introduces Count Orloc and his retinue. Read the following to the players:

Tayodore finally introduces Count Orloc and the other "guests". The Count is a hideous, decrepit man with withered limbs, dressed in rich garments. His pale face indicates that he probably sees little daylight. In your estimation, he is at least 70 years of age, but probably much older.

Next to the Count is a gorgeous Suel woman with long blonde hair who appears to be in her mid-teens. Tayodore announces her as Lady Ashtungia, Count Orloc's bride-to-be.

Tayodore then goes through a long list of introductions for the rest of Count Orloc's retinue.

Any heroes with **Knowledge: Nobility, Knowledge: Local, or Bardic Knowledge** may attempt to make a DC APL +5 check. Success means that the PC has heard of one of the retinue, Sir Cedric, a Suel noble in his late 20s, who is rumored to be a wizard of unknown power. "Sir" Cedric is not part of any recognized Knighthood, it is simply an honorific. Make it quite clear that Cedric is not a noble to any who succeed on this check.

The heroes also may try a separate DC 5 **Knowledge: Nobility, Knowledge: Local, or Bardic Knowledge** on Count Orloc. A success indicates that the Count is one of the most powerful nobles in Keoland. He has a

reputation as a powerful mage who conducts strange experiments deep in the depths of his castle.

Baron Vorgax will sit at Count Orloc's table. He will arrange for the heroes to be seated within earshot of the Count, but at another table to avoid Orloc noticing them.

The heroes learn the following information over supper. Roleplaying this out is encouraged.

1. Count Orloc isn't just staying for a day. His visit will go on for at least a month.

A **Knowledge: Nobility** check DC: 10 reveals the following information: Typically a visiting noble will visit for varying lengths of time depending on the relations between the nobles. Staying for one day is considered a courtesy call at best, but can also be considered a slight against the host. Staying for three to five days is seen as a sign of friendship, not wanting to overstay a welcome. Staying for a period longer than a tenday can either be construed as a close alliance or as a subtle declaration of power.

It is the duty of the host nobility to provide fine accommodations for the guests as befitting their station. For a retinue as large as Orloc's, it would obviously bankrupt the Baron within the month.

2. Count Orloc quickly changes the subject when Baron Vorgax brings up the surprising news about Lady Ashtungia.

The heroes may attempt relevant knowledge checks to find out information on Orloc's bride to be, but they will fail. No one has ever seen or heard of this young lady before.

Lady Ashtungia

The Lady being introduced as Orloc's bride-to-be is unheard of in Keoland. This will be developed at a later date, although a hero who makes a **Knowledge: Local** check DC 10 will know that Count Orloc is supposed to be already wed

3. Allow each hero a **Sense Motive** check DC 20. A success indicates that during the supper, Cedric seem to keep staring at the Baron's son, Dublevex. The heroes will note that Dublevex notices the staring, and the boy appears to be uncomfortable with the attention.

During the meal's warmer moments, Baron Vorgax will introduce the heroes as his guests of honor and relay that they saved his son from monsters such as the area has never seen. Orloc will look each hero over and speak to them as a group.

"Sounds like you had quite a little...adventure today. Come, relay to me the sordid details of your heroics. It's been so terribly long since I've heard a good monster-slaying story. How many heads did you say they had, again?"

Orloc is subtly mocking the heroes here, allowing them to engage in a conversation with their betters, as if he were throwing a treat to his wolfhounds. When the heroes are telling the story, have Orloc interrupt them.

"Bah! That's not how it goes! Tell it better. Tell me about the blood...yes....tell me about....the blood." Orloc's eyes widen and he smiles revealing perfectly straight, perfectly white teeth.

Suel nobles have a reputation for being eccentric, as do powerful mages. Orloc is both. For those who have any experience with Dilwyth, Orloc looks like a candidate for admission.

Lady Ashtungia will be silent during the dinner. She refuses to acknowledge any of the Baron's men other than the Baron himself. Naturally, the PCs are beneath her contempt, and she will completely ignore them.

When the meal is finished, the heroes are informed that Count Orloc will now be using their quarters for this evening. Every available room in the castle is being turned over to the Count's entourage, leaving only the stables or under the stars as places for the heroes to bed down. No matter which they choose, a heavy thunderstorm will sweep in about an hour after dinner ends. Either they sleep in a downpour, or they sleep in a musty smelling, somewhat leaky stable while the Count's lowest lackey sleeps in a comfortable bed.

Count Orloc and Sir Cedric will also be unavailable at this time to talk to the adventurers.

If the heroes talk to either Baron Vorgax or Dublevex, both will have noticed that Sir Cedric seemed a little too interested in Dublevex. The Baron will make plans to have Dublevex secretly leave Castle Vorgax during the night.

ENCOUNTER 4: THE APPRENTICE

The Baron's stables aren't conducive to a great night's sleep. You arrive at breakfast, still groggy and sore. Count Orloc's retinue is already seated, eating the finest in ham, eggs, fruit and breads. Baron Vorgax puts out a fine feast for the Count's men, but they continue to demand more food. They resemble nothing so much as a horde of locusts descended upon the harvest.

When the harried Baron finally notices you, he calls you into another room.

Baron Vorgax is worried. He explains to the PCs that Count Orloc's retinue is demanding so much food and entertainment that at the current rate, the Vorgax family will bankrupt within a month. Vorgax knows that Count Orloc hates him for his alliance with Lord Stokedor, but wonders why the Count is going to all the trouble to bankrupt him. After all, the Baron is hardly one of

Stokedor's more powerful allies, and the Count's plan means that Orloc and most of his retinue will be in isolated Mill Creek for a month if not more.

The Baron is even more concerned with Orloc's interest in Dublevex. Vorgax notes that the Count's dalliance with the young Lady Ashtungia is creepy enough, but the thought of the decrepit old noble leering at 9-year old Dublevex terrifies the Baron. Fortunately, Dublevex left during the night with Chauncey and Petunia to go stay with an obscure cousin of the Baron's and is out of the Count's grasp.

Vorgax asks the PCs to ask around to see if they can find any clues as to what Count Orloc is up to. He warns the PCs not to attract Orloc's attention, since it wouldn't be uncharacteristic of Count Orloc to have his men "deal with" nosy adventurers.

Lead One: "Just making conversation"

The PCs may start by trying a Gather Information check each day. Keep track of how many days it takes for the PCs to move on from this point as it will affect the end of the adventure. This time window is increased from the 1d4+1 hours listed in the PHB to account for the difficulty in tracing the comings and goings of everyone in the castle. Refer to the table below:

DC 10: One of the servants noticed that during the supper on the first night, Dublevex's cat Petunia was hiding near one of the doorways to the dining room. The servant swore that he heard Petunia hissing and staring at someone in the dining room, but the servant couldn't make out who it was.

DC 15: A chambermaid remembers hearing two men talking in Count Orloc's room as she walked by the door. One of them sounded like Orloc, but she couldn't make out the other voice, only that it was a man's voice. The only words she could make out were that the mystery man was expecting a message to be delivered soon.

She couldn't get any more information, as several guards were posted outside of Count Orloc's room.

DC 20: A butler tells the PCs that a messenger arrived at the crack of dawn with a note for one of the Count's men, Sir Cedric. The butler can show the PCs to Sir Cedric's room. The butler noticed that Sir Cedric left the castle with a few men soon after that. Oddly enough, at one point, the butler thought he saw a cat that looked like Petunia following Sir Cedric, but the butler was told by another servant that Petunia had left last night with Dublevex and Chauncey.

The PCs should eventually get enough information to check Sir Cedric's room. Cedric is being housed in a different wing from Count Orloc. If the players are reticent to enter Cedric's room, Petunia (who is supposed to be with Dublevex, far away from the Castle) will run past the heroes at an appropriate time, hissing and squealing, and will then slam into the door to Cedric's

room, opening it. If and when they investigate, Petunia will be gone.

Lead Two: Cedric's room

A Search check will reveal the following

DC 0: It appears that Sir Cedric left quickly. He left most of his clothes here, as if he were planning to come back. Oddly, nothing has been cleaned up in his absence. He must have left orders with the scullery maids to not enter his room.

DC 10: Brownish-orange hairs are found right outside the doorway to Cedric's room (if the players ask, confirm that they are the same color as Petunia's).

DC 15: A small trail of the brownish-orange hairs can be found leading up to the top of a desk, where the note shown in **Handout #1** is found. On the back of the note is a small, hand drawn map. Castle Vorgax is recognizable, as is other landmarks in the area.

DC 20: A small bit of residue is found on some of Cedric's clothing. A **Profession: Alchemy** or **Knowledge: Arcana** check of **DC 20** reveals the residue to be a substance known as "Stangg's Solvent", which is a popular reagent for basic magical theory and experimentation. Without more information it is impossible to determine what sort of experiments Cedric has been involved in recently.

The note from **Handout #1** should lead the PCs to Cedric's secret meeting with Jacordis.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE SECRET MEETING

The map you found in Sir Cedric's chambers leads to a wooded area roughly two hours north of Castle Vorgax. Ahead, you see four figures talking in a clearing. They appear to be unaware of your presence.

At this juncture, allow the heroes to decide what they wish to do. If they decide to eavesdrop they will be able to move into position fairly easily without being discovered. If the heroes stride boldly into the clearing and accost Cedric, he and his friends will stall for time for a minute or so while they argue with the heroes about what they are doing here. Once the NPCs have an accurate count of the heroes' numbers, the NPCs will attack.

If the heroes eavesdrop:

A short man with three fingers on his left hand speaks to Cedric. From here you can see that he wears modest attire and has an unremarkable face, well suited to blending in with crowds.

"Cedric, the first part of our contract has gone well. Some quality weapons are making their way to my

contact in the Earldom of Gand. This letter of introduction will allow you to procure them."

"Excellent, Vartimus. Your fees are high, but I know the weapons will be worth it."

Vartimus scowls before continuing.

"Unfortunately, there is some bad news concerning the second part of our arrangement. I believe Eltana murdered a couple of my men soon before you came. And she had help. One of the caravans was broken into and burned."

"Help?" Cedric's eyes widen.

"Yes, two new partners of some stripe. By the footprints I'd say one was a Halfling. We caught another one of their accomplices but he didn't tell us anything useful before he died."

At this, one of the other men opens a sack that has been soaked through with blood. He lifts the head of a human male out by the hair. Even from this distance you recognize it as Chuncey, Dubblevex's manservant.

Sir Cedric winces at Vartimus' gift. "Are you seriously carrying a severed head around...in a sack? It's no wonder Ironwatch hunts you so."

Vartimus frowns. "Do not question my means and I shall not question your motives. Regardless, there is more bad news. The wagon they destroyed was headed for your summer home. There is every indication that they have found its location."

Cedric laughs. "What? Well then, we will have to make haste if we wish to dispatch Eltana and her accomplices before they cause further trouble."

"Milord, one more question. May I ask what you plan to do with the weapons I sent you?"

"Vartimus, curiosity killed the cat. And in this case, that saying is rather fitting."

A **Knowledge: Local** check DC: 15 or a Bardic **Knowledge** check DC: 20 will reveal Eltana to be a famous rogue from Gand known for her crypt robbing. She was rumored to have disappeared several months ago under mysterious circumstances. A **Knowledge: Local** check DC: 10 will tell the heroes that the "Ironwatch" mentioned in passing is a notable dwarven mercenary company that is also based in the Earldom of Gand.

If the PCs attack, they will gain a surprise round on Sir Cedric and his minions. If they decide to wait more than a few rounds, the group will gather to go Northeast to Sir Cedric's summer home (obviously, an easy way to find out its location is for Sir Cedric to lead the PCs to it).

If the PCs don't attack Cedric's gang immediately, they may still attack the villains at a later time. In this case, they may gain surprise, but Cedric and his minions may

get any applicable Spot and Listen checks to avoid surprise.

If the PCs do not attack Cedric and his retinue here at all, they will be present at the summer home when the heroes invariably break and enter.

APL 2 (EL 4)

➤ Cedric, Human Male Wiz2: hp 10; see Appendix 1.

➤ Vartimus, Human Male Ftr2: hp 20; see Appendix 1

APL 4 (EL 6)

➤ Cedric, Human Male Wiz2: hp 10; see Appendix 2.

➤ Vartimus, Human Male Ftr2: hp 20; see Appendix 2

➤ Shellen, Human Male Ftr2: hp 20; see Appendix 2

➤ Pellinus, Human Male Ftr2: hp 20; see Appendix 2

APL 6 (EL 8)

➤ Cedric, Human Male Wiz4: hp 20; see Appendix 3.

➤ Vartimus, Human Male Ftr4: hp 40; see Appendix 3

➤ Shellen, Human Male Ftr4: hp 40; see Appendix 3

➤ Pellinus, Human Male Ftr4: hp 40; see Appendix 3

APL 8 (EL 10)

➤ Cedric, Human Male Wiz6: hp 30; see Appendix 3.

➤ Vartimus, Human Male Ftr6: hp 60; see Appendix 3

➤ Shellen, Human Male Ftr6: hp 60; see Appendix 3

➤ Pellinus, Human Male Ftr6: hp 60; see Appendix 3

Searching Cedric's Possessions:

If the heroes kill or detain Cedric they can loot him. He has several items as listed on the AR, and a blue diamond that has been cut in the shape of a pure sphere. The diamond itself is quite large, about the size of a man's thumb, and glows with a reddish light equivalent to that of a candle. Careful examination reveals several floating magical sigils within the diamond. A **Spellcraft** check DC: 10+APL will tell the heroes that the sigils represent

the words “twisted” and “wretched”, but other than that they are meaningless.

This diamond is the key to Cedric's inner laboratory.

The next item is a letter of introduction to the Outriders of Fall, a notable Elven trading house who does much business in the Earldom of Gand (Player Handout 2).

Finally, Cedric's Spellbook appears to be normal, but when someone who is not him opens it, all the writing in the book erases itself. This is a precaution Orloc requires of all his students, and as such his spellbook is not part of the items available on the Adventure Record.

Finding the Summer Home:

If the PCs don't follow Sir Cedric's gang back to his summer home, they have other methods for finding its location:

1. If the PCs don't kill the whole gang, they may do an Interrogation (Intimidate) check on any member still alive (note that Diplomacy won't work in this situation).
2. Alternatively, the PCs could try a Bluff check with a -3 Circumstance penalty to trick a gang member to accidentally reveal the location.
3. The PCs could also use Track. The DC is 15, and the PCs get a +1 Circumstance bonus for tracking a group of 3 people (Vartimus and his 2 henchmen).

Failure to locate the Summer Home:

Should the heroes decide to return to Castle Vorgax without following Cedric's group, or getting the location of the summer home from one of them, Vorgax will be extremely upset. He will ask the heroes to return to the clearing and will loan them two of his bloodhounds to track Cedric by scent. Telling the Baron of Chauncey's death and the possible involvement of a rogue's troupe from Gand will only cause him sorrow and confusion. Regardless, he will ask the heroes to travel as quickly as possible to the summer home and ransack it for possible leverage against Count Orloc.

If the heroes are forced to use the Baron's bloodhounds to track Cedric, they will discover one unintended side effect. When bloodhounds hunt, they bay wildly. This sound will alert Cedric and his minions that something is amiss and as such it will be impossible to surprise anything in the summer home.

Should the heroes kill everyone and be unable to locate the summer home, the use of the bloodhounds will still be possible, it will simply take longer for them to locate another trail of Cedric's to his house. This will cause a day's delay.

ENCOUNTER 6: THE SUMMER GETAWAY

It is six hours walking time to the summer house. Due to the nature of the land, it's not practical to ride a horse for very long. The fastest way requires a person to lead their horse over the knots and stumps of the forest.

After walking through the isolated wilderness of Mill Creek, you come upon a small game trail that has been widened and worked into a small road. Wheel ruts run along the road and around a bend the road ends.

There, in an isolated clearing, stands a large one-story house, bigger than the occasional farmstead you have passed. While nice looking, it hardly seems like the dwelling of a noble. The front door is open, but it is dark inside.

When the heroes get closer:

Surrounding the house is a gruesome sight. Six bloody human bodies lie in the area, their eyes scratched out, with several obvious stab wounds on their legs. All are dressed in some sort of uniform.

The uniforms are immediately recognizable as belonging to Count Orloc's retinue. Due to the size of Orloc's retinue it is impossible to determine if the heroes recognize any of the men as having been at Castle Vorgax earlier.

A **Heal** check of **DC 5** determines that the wounds are recent. A **DC 10** check also reveals that most of the stab wounds are at the height of a human child, or an adult gnome or halfling, and the eye wounds are scratches consistent with a house cat. A **DC 15** check reveals that the attackers seemed to have an excellent knowledge of weak points on the human body.

A **Track** check will also reveal information:

DC 5: Footprints consistent with a small human, or adult gnome or halfling go into the front of the house. Near these prints are paw prints consistent with a house cat's. The paw prints are bloody. The prints were fairly recent.

DC 15: The same prints can be seen leaving the house from an open window in the back. The cat prints are significantly bloodier. In addition, a trail of blood is near the humanoid's prints. The blood seems to indicate that the small humanoid was bleeding profusely. The tracks continue to a river and disappear.

The summer house consists of 2 floors. See the attached DM Aids for the maps.

Ground Floor

The ground floor includes a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, a latrine, guard quarters (suitable for 4 men), and Cedric's bedroom. The furnishings are consistent with a noble of minor wealth.

Cedric's bedroom contains a secret trap door leading to a staircase descending to his basement laboratory. PCs can find the stairway with a **DC 15 Search** check. Alternatively, any PC making a **DC 15 Track** check will find bloody cat prints leading away from the trap door. If the heroes did not fight Cedric and company in Encounter Five, the trapdoor will be open and visible, and the group will be Encountered in the main laboratory downstairs, hurriedly packing and preparing to leave the house.

ENCOUNTER 7: THE LABORATORY

You descend down the secret stairway about 40 feet. The stairs are wide enough for two people to walk abreast. The stairs end at a short hallway and an open door. Through the door you can see a large H-shaped room that is obviously a laboratory, now thrown into disarray. The body of some large creature lies in the middle of the room amidst broken tables and equipment. An eerie blue radiance plays over the room, centered on three black iron poles set around the room. One of the poles was knocked over during the recent fighting and casts disconcerting shadows about the room and out into the hall. At the east end of the room is an archway that swirls with green and red colors, and is entirely opaque.

If Cedric and friends are here:

Facing you are the men you saw in the clearing, with Cedric standing behind them. His face is red and he has obviously been crying. Seeing you his features contort in rage. He says one thing.

"Curiosity."

And begins moving his hands in a series of arcane gestures.

After the combat (if there is one), the heroes are free to search the room. The dead creature in the room is recognizable with a **DC 20 Spellcraft** check as a Sphinx. Magical creatures of legend, they are typically used as guards for something of value. A **DC 10 + APL Heal** check reveals that the Sphinx was killed by much the same means as the guards upstairs, although its paws and mouth are bloody, as if it gave as good as it got.

The laboratory is in ruins. The fight destroyed priceless equipment. If Cedric and his men are here, they have several bags half-filled with surviving magical materials, obviously they were planning on salvaging what they could and leaving.

At the back end of the laboratory is a single doorway, which is what the Sphinx was actually set here to guard.

The Doorway

This doorway leads to Cedric's inner sanctum, and as such is guarded in three ways. Luckily for the heroes, the Sphinx was one of the guards. Unluckily for the heroes, the Sphinx was also the key to the second step of the guards. The Sphinx would normally have been bound to challenge would be passers with a riddle. With the Sphinx dead the heroes are going to have to piece it together on their own. The final guard is a key mechanism that Cedric carries at all times (and the heroes have likely relieved him of already).

If the heroes touch the colors or attempt to force their way through, they will suffer no harm. Particularly industrious PCs may attempt to work around the portal via excavation. This method can succeed but requires the PCs to start from at least five feet away from the portal, and requires a lot of time. If the PCs fail a **Knowledge: Architecture and Engineering** check **DC 20** their tunnel collapses halfway through, doing 2d6 damage to everyone in 5' of the hole and forcing them to start over.

The doorway itself is a simple portal closed off with a magical radiance that is a swirl of bright red and green colors and entirely opaque. A small square nodule juts out from the wall near the door, with a small circular notch cut into it. If the heroes place the gem from Cedric in the notch, the red radiance fades away, leaving only the green barrier to pass. When that occurs:

The red layer in the archway fades to nothing, leaving a shimmering wall of green energy. Now that the red is gone you can clearly see writing on the green layer that reads

"Neither wholly dead nor wholly living be allowed entry here."

Normally the Sphinx would have been bound to assist the heroes here, but that is no longer an option. No amount of coercion or threats will make Cedric reveal the deceptively simple answer to his final riddle, as he knows that he faces a fate worse than death should his deeds be brought to light.

Any hero who has any hit point (not nonlethal) damage may pass through the green radiance without hindrance. Clever heroes may also attempt to use the bodies of one of the dead guards upstairs to mask their presence as wholly living. If they carry the body of a dead person through the portal, it fools the door in an effective yet grisly manner.

If the heroes should be stumped, they can **Search** through Cedric's laboratory notes, but doing so will require a full eight hours to locate any clues of use. A check of **DC 10 + APL** will yield the following passage in one of Cedric's texts.

"Neither living nor dead. Simple, really. A little cut never hurt anyone much. I shall use that."

ENCOUNTER 8: FOUL FINDINGS

Entering through the portal you are in a short hallway ending at an open door. A rank, animal smell permeates the air. Something growls from the next room and the rattle of chains on the floor reaches your ears.

This room contains one of Cedric's experiments. He has been infusing creatures with his magic for his own purposes.

Once combat starts, allow the heroes a **Spot** check DC 10 + **APL**. Success indicates that the hero sees that the creature(s) is chained around the neck, and that the length of chain runs to the back wall. It appears as though the chain prevents the creature(s) from leaving the room. In the case of the Cryohydra, at APL 8 the chain is securely fastened to a harness around its chest.

APL 2 (EL 5)

☛ "Anger", Spellwarped Tiger; see Appendix 1.

APL 4 (EL 7)

☛ "Pustulent", Spellwarped Digester: see Appendix 2.

APL 6 (EL 9)

☛ "Rippex", Spellwarped Gray Render: see Appendix 3.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ "Deathcoil", Spellwarped Nine-headed Cryohydra; see Appendix 4.

Tactics: The creatures within the room are guard animals. As such, they will viciously attack anyone entering the room. They are chained into the room which prevents them from leaving. If assaulted with ranged attacks, they will move adjacent to the door so as to be out of line of sight and wait for someone to enter. The chain anchor is located on the map in **DM AID 2** and is 50' long.

Development: It is entirely possible that the heroes are unable to defeat such a powerful guardian. Luckily for them, the creature is unable to come after them. The heroes can undertake a wide variety of actions, including returning to Castle Vorgax and calling for aid. If this occurs, the Baron will send twenty of his men-at-arms to slay the beast. Add two days to the timeline if this occurs.

If the heroes find an ingenious way to deal with the creatures, including the above option, award full XP for the Encounter.

When the combat is finished, the heroes will find a large collection of incriminating materials that can be used to lever Count Orloc off of Baron Vorgax's lands.

- First is a collection of treatises written by Cedric, who identifies himself as Orloc's apprentice. These treatises are a collection of notes on magical experimentation with unwilling subjects. The subject material quickly runs into the foulest of magical circles.
- Second is a leather bound ledger that appears to be a collection of timetables such as a large merchant house might use. These show house Orloc moving an inordinate amount of material through the Earldom of Gand, at a hefty profit that is likely being underreported to the crown.
- Third is an example of the cargo. A small box holds a collection of fifty Murlynd's spoons. It's obvious that Orloc is going to great pains to make a great deal of money quickly and quietly. Even though they do not necessarily know why Orloc is doing this, it will be enough to hasten his departure from Mill Creek.
- Finally, Cedric has a large collection of magical sundries, as detailed on the Adventure Record. Most are stored in boxes, apparently waiting to be shipped elsewhere.

At this point the heroes have to make a decision. They can bring the evidence to Baron Vorgax, confront Count Orloc directly, or attempt to contact the Silent Ones, since it appears that Count Orloc's apprentice has been trafficking in magic of the blackest kind. Each option is detailed here with their ramifications. Inventive PCs may wish to bring these items to the attention of some other Keoish organization such as the NAW or King Skotti himself. In general, turning the materials over to the NAW or another magical institution will yield the same results as turning over the information to the Silent Ones. Approaching Stoakdor, King Skotti or another powerful noble will yield the same results as if the PCs approached Vorgax. It is very important that the heroes realize that they will only be able to share the evidence with one party, and should decide wisely. No matter whom they give the evidence to, that party will not want it becoming public Keoish knowledge.

Approaching Baron Vorgax

If the heroes decide to give Baron Vorgax the evidence they have uncovered, he will thank them profusely and tell them that he will approach Orloc on his own. In this manner, the heroes will be shielded from Orloc's wrath but Vorgax will certainly make a lifelong enemy of one of the most powerful mages in Keoland.

If this is the choice the heroes make, proceed to **Conclusion A**.

Approaching Count Orloc

If the heroes decide to approach Orloc directly they will shield Baron Vorgax from future retaliation, at a cost to themselves. They will appear to Orloc as dangerous

people who cannot be controlled, and therefore he should entertain the possibility of destroying them either physically or politically. Making an enemy of Count Orloc is not something many boast of living through.

If this is the choice the heroes make, proceed to **Conclusion B**.

Contacting the Silent Ones

One or more heroes may potentially be a member of the Silent Ones metaorganization. If this is the case, they are easily able to get in touch with their superiors and pass on the pertinent details. A team of Silent Ones will arrive and confront Count Orloc, and his retinue will pack up and leave the following day. This takes two days to arrange. If no hero is a member of the Silent Ones, they are still able to find and pass word to a representative should they wish to do so, but it will take an additional two days. In this case, the heroes are largely shielded from any retribution, but are unable to make any claim of success to Vorgax, as the Silent Ones will request that the heroes speak to no one of the Count's potential transgressions.

If this is the choice the heroes make, proceed to **Conclusion C**.

Finally, if the heroes directly inform Vorgax that they believe that his son is more than a simple nine year old, and that his cat is more that is appears, he will be very confused and promise to look into it more, and to keep an eye on the both of them, clearly disbelieving the heroes.

CONCLUSION A: APPROACHING BARON VORGAX

Returning to Castle Vorgax, you are quickly ushered into the Baron's private rooms. He looks even more harried and worried than when you left, if possible. His eyes widen as you tell your tale and present your evidence.

"Such foulness! I suspected Orloc was hiding something, but plans within plans? An apprentice dabbling in the black arts and some kind of smuggling operation to boot? I never gave him that much credit. If it weren't coming from the mouths and hands of men who saved my son's life I could scarce believe it.

Well, I thank you for all you've done. I believe Count Orloc and I shall have a rather interesting discussion over tea today. Fear not, I shall shield you from his prying eyes and words. For what you've done, I thank you. Mill Creek will forever be open to you."

That evening, Castle Vorgax is a beehive of activity as Orloc and his retinue fairly flies from the hospitality of the Vorgax family. The scullery maids

and servants speak of rumors that there was a death in the Orloc family, and that the bereaved Count is leaving to return to his villa.

As you watch the activity, a young boy's voice speaks from behind you.

"Thank you again for all you've done for my father."

Dubblevex stands there, arm wrapped in a sling and a beauty of a black eye swelling his face.

"Our carriage crashed when one of the horses bolted from a skunk. Poor Chauncey was trampled. It's tragic, really."

A loud purring sound reaches your ears as Petunia begins to move amongst you, rubbing up against your legs one by one. Dubblevex speaks again.

"Mill Creek has always been off the beaten path, but we hope you'll come back someday. There's so much to do here."

CONCLUSION B: CONFRONTING COUNT ORLOC

Returning to Castle Vorgax, you are quickly ushered into the Baron's private rooms. He looks even more harried and worried than when you left, if possible. His eyes widen as you tell your tale and present your evidence.

"Such foulness! I suspected Orloc was hiding something, but plans within plans? An apprentice dabbling in the black arts and some kind of smuggling operation to boot? I never gave him that much credit. If it weren't coming from the mouths and hands of men who saved my son's life I could scarce believe it.

You wish to confront him yourself you say? A bold and dangerous plan, and I shall let you see this through to the end. I'll not lie, it's a danger to you, but it will deflect his sight from my son and me."

You are kept waiting for nearly an hour by Count Orloc. When you finally are ushered into his august presence, he fairly sneers at you.

"Well, pups? What is it you want from me? Don't like the stables all that well? Perhaps you'd rather sleep with the hogs?" he rasps and coughs in choking laughter.

(Allow the heroes to say what they will to Orloc)

"Hmm. Perhaps I've misjudged you. You're awfully resourceful for some silver-ante guardsmen of Vorgax's. What did you say your names were? I'll surely not forget them again.

Well, anyway, how about this...you maintain your silence in my affairs, and I'll leave your poor Baron alone. It's apparently more trouble than it's worth to break him on the wheel."

That evening, Castle Vorgax is a beehive of activity as Orloc and his retinue fairly flies from the hospitality of the Vorgax family. The scullery maids and servants speak of rumors that there was a death in the Orloc family, and that the bereaved Count is leaving to return to his villa.

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"Our carriage crashed when one of the horses bolted from a skunk. Poor Chauncey was trampled. It's tragic, really."

A loud purring sound reaches your ears as Petunia begins to move amongst you, rubbing up against your legs one by one. Dubblevex speaks again.

"Mill Creek has always been off the beaten path, but we hope you'll come back someday. There's so much to do here."

CONCLUSION C: INVOLVING THE SILENT ONES

It takes some time to track down a proper representative of the Silent Ones, but in the end it's easier than you thought it could be. Presented with the evidence of Cedric's black magics, the Silent Ones send a representative to you. A young woman with pale skin and brown eyes introduces herself as "Miss Dremia", and she listens attentively to your description of the affairs.

"I thank you for your efforts. Orloc's apprentice could have been acting on his own, or he could have had directions from his master. Either way, we will ferret out the truth. None are so high in Keoland that they may flaunt our laws and our will. Too often those who do unleash powers and events they cannot control. Rest assured that we will deal with Count Orloc."

That evening, Castle Vorgax is a beehive of activity as Orloc and his retinue fairly flies from the hospitality of the Vorgax family. The scullery maids and servants speak of rumors that there was a death in the Orloc family, and that the bereaved Count is leaving to return to his villa.

As you watch the activity, a young boy's voice speaks from behind you.

"Thank you again for all you've done for my father."

Dubblevex stands there, arm wrapped in a sling and a beauty of a black eye swelling his face.

"Our carriage crashed when one of the horses bolted from a skunk. Poor Chauncey was trampled. It's tragic, really."

A loud purring sound reaches your ears as Petunia begins to move amongst you, rubbing up against your legs one by one. Dubblevex speaks again.

"Mill Creek has always been off the beaten path, but we hope you'll come back someday. There's so much to do here."

The End

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter 1

Defeat the creatures in the clearing.

APL 2: 90 xp.

APL 4: 150 xp.

APL 6: 210 xp.

APL 8: 270 xp.

Encounter 5 or 7

Defeat Cedric and his henchmen.

APL 2: 120 xp.

APL 4: 180 xp.

APL 6: 240 xp.

APL 8: 300 xp.

Encounter 8

Defeat Cedric's experiment.

APL 2: 150 xp.

APL 4: 210 xp.

APL 6: 270 xp.

APL 8: 330 xp.

Story Award

Convince Count Orloc to leave Vorgax lands.

APL 2: 90 xp.

APL 4: 135 xp.

APL 6: 180 xp.

APL 8: 225 xp.

Discretionary Roleplaying Award

APL 2: 90 xp.

APL 4: 135 xp.

APL 6: 180 xp.

APL 8: 225 xp.

Total possible experience

APL 2: 450 xp.

APL 4: 675 xp.

APL 6: 900 xp.

APL 8: 1,125 xp.

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters Encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every Encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the Encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the Encounter’s treasure.

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

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

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the

adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

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

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

Encounter 5 or 7:

APL 2: L: 1,870 gp, C: 1,150 gp, M: - (0 gp).

APL 4: L: 5,505 gp, C: 1,850 gp, M: - (0 gp).

APL 6: L: 5,505 gp, C: 4,100 gp, M: Bracers of Armor +1 (1,000 gp).

APL 8: L: 3,870 gp, C: 9,200 gp, M: +1 full plate (3), Bracers of Armor +1 (6,400 gp).

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed)

APL 2: L: 1,870 gp, C: 1,160 gp, M: 0 gp – Total: 3,030 gp (450 gp).

APL 4: L: 5,505 gp, C: 1,850 gp, M: 0 gp – Total: 7,355 gp (650 gp).

APL 6: L: 5,505 gp, C: 4,100 gp, M: 1,000 gp – Total: 10,605 gp (900 gp).

APL 8: L: 3,870 gp, C: 9,200 gp, M: 6,400 gp – Total: 19,470 gp (1,300 gp).

ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

Special

✦ **Enmity of Orloc:** An old wizard never forgets who crosses him. You’ve made a dangerous enemy of one of the most powerful mages in the region. The cost of learning/scribing any new spell during an adventure set in Keoland is tripled for one year from the date on this Adventure Record. Ignore this effect if you are a member of the Silent Ones metaorganization.

☛ **Gratitude of House Vorgax:** For saving the Baron Vorgax from bankruptcy, a fate worse than death, he has seen fit to grant you his resources. He grants you access

(Frequency: Regional) to purchase an upgrade for one weapon with the *deadly precision* weapon special ability (*Complete Adventurer*). Mark this Gratitude as USED when the access is purchased.

☛ **The Shield of Mill Creek:** By confronting Count Orloc yourself, you have made yourself a protector of this small Barony. You gain a +4 circumstance bonus on all Cha-based skill checks made within the Barony of Mill Creek.

☛ **The Unknown Heroes:** Your stealth and discretion in dealing with the matter in Mill Creek has brought you the attention of a more secretive branch of Keoland's underworld. This PC may choose to spend 4 additional TUs training with these compatriots. If you choose to do so, you gain access to the Nightsong Enforcer and Nightsong Infiltrator prestige classes (*Complete Adventurer*).

☛ **An Aberration's Weakness:** In the papers of Orloc's apprentice you locate several old and forgotten treatises on creating aberrations. Specific key weaknesses are also mentioned, and the means to exploit them. This PC may spend 10 additional TUs of time to gain access to the following feats and prestige classes from *Lords of Madness*: Feats – Aberration Banemagic, Music of the Outer Spheres; Prestige Classes – Abolisher, Darkrunner, Keeper of the Cerulean Sign.

☛ **The Silent Ones See All:** By approaching the Silent Ones to take care of a dirty little problem in Mill Creek (or allowing them to find out by approaching another magical brotherhood such as the National Academy of Wizards or the Sea Mages), you have turned their eye to you. Although they are grateful for your assistance, they enthusiastically encourage you to give up the life of adventuring. This adventure costs an additional TU, but this PC gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Cha-based skill checks when dealing with any NPC arcane caster within Keoland for one year from the date on this Adventure Record.

🔮 **Cedric's Spellbook:** 1st – *magic missile, sleep, shield, silent image, reduce person, mount*; 2nd – *glitterdust, web, protection from arrows, touch of idiocy*; 3rd – *fireball, haste, slow, rage*. Price: 1,300 gp; Weight: 3 lbs.

Item Access

APL 2:

- Armbands of Might (*Adventure; Complete Adventurer*)
- Cedric's Spellbook (*Adventure; See Above*)
- Choker of Eloquence, Lesser (*Adventure; Complete Adventurer*)
- Elixir of Vision (*Adventure; Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Murlynd's Spoon (*Regional; Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Pipes of the Sewers (*Adventure; Dungeon Master's Guide*)

APL 4 (all of APL 2 plus the following):

- Dagger of Entry (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)
- Necklace of the Marauding Beast, Raging Bear (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)
- Steadfast Boots (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)
- Vial of the Last Gasp (*Adventure; Complete Adventurer*)

APL 6 (all of APLs 2, 4 plus the following):

- Lance of Mangling (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)
- Lute of the Wandering Minstrel (*Adventure; Complete Adventurer*)
- Pipes of Pain (*Adventure; Dungeon Master's Guide*)

APL 8 (all of APLs 2, 4, 6 plus the following):

- Horned Helm (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)
- Mageblade (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)
- Mask of Lies (*Adventure; Complete Adventurer*)
- Scabbard of Keen Edges (*Adventure; Dungeon Master's Guide*)
- Singing Bowl (*Adventure; Arms & Equipment Guide*)

APPENDIX 1 – APL 2

ENCOUNTER 5 OR 7

Cedric, Human Male Wiz2: Medium Humanoid; CR 2; HD 2d4+2; hp 10; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex source); Base Atk/Grp: +1/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, club) or +3 ranged (1d6, light crossbow) or spells; SA spells; SQ spells; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Knowledge: Arcana +5, Concentration +5, Craft (Alchemy) +5, Listen +3, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Common, Elven, Infernal.

Spells Known/Prepared (4/3, save DC = 12 + spell level): 0 – Detect Magic, Read Magic, Daze; 1st – Magic Missile, Sleep, Shield;

Spellbook: 0 – All; 1st – Magic Missile, Sleep, Shield, Silent Image, Reduce Person, Mount;

Possessions: Spellbook, Masterwork Light Crossbow.

Vartimus, Human Male Ftr2: Medium Humanoid; CR 2; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 half-plate, +2 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +4/+4; Full Atk +7 longsword (1d8+2/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +1, Jump +3, Swim +1; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Power Attack, Cleave.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Half-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

ENCOUNTER 8

“Anger”, Spellwarped Tiger: Large Aberration; Space/Reach: 10ft./5ft.; CR 5; HD 6d8+30; hp 66; Init +3; Spd 40 ft.; AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, -1 size); Base Atk/Grp: +6/+16; Full Atk 2 claws +11 melee (1d8+8), bite +6 melee (2d6+4); SA Improved grab, pounce, rake 1d8+3; SQ Spell Resistance 17, Spell Absorption, Low-light vision, Scent; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 27, Dex 17, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 6. *Spellwarped template, monster manual III, page 162.*

Skills & Feats: Balance +6, Hide +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +9, Spot +3, Swim +11; Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claw).

Spell Absorption (Su): Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped creature's spell resistance, the creature gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time the spell resolves.

Might: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped creature gains temporary hit points equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Speed: The spellwarped creature's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Resistance: The spellwarped creature gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic).

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a tiger must hit with a claw or bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If a tiger charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +9 melee, damage 1d8+3.

Skills: Tigers have a +4 racial bonus on Balance, Hide, and Move Silently checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the Hide bonus improves to +8.

APPENDIX 2 – APL 4

ENCOUNTER 5 OR 7

Cedric, Human Male Wiz2: Medium Humanoid; CR 2; HD 2d4+2; hp 10; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex source); Base Atk/Grp: +1/+1; Full Atk +1 melee (1d6, club) or +3 ranged (1d6, light crossbow) or spells; SA spells; SQ spells; AL NE; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Knowledge: Arcana +5, Concentration +5, Craft (Alchemy) +5, Listen +3, Spellcraft +5; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

Languages: Common, Elven, Infernal.

Spells Known/Prepared (4/3, save DC = 12 + spell level): 0 – Detect Magic, Read Magic, Daze; 1st – Magic Missile, Sleep, Shield;

Spellbook: 0 – All; 1st – Magic Missile, Sleep, Shield, Silent Image, Reduce Person, Mount;

Possessions: Spellbook, Masterwork Light Crossbow.

Vartimus, Human Male Ftr2: Medium Humanoid; CR 2; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 half-plate, +2 shield); Base Atk/Grp: +4/+4; Full Atk +7 longsword (1d8+2/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +1, Jump +3, Swim +1; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Power Attack, Cleave.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Half-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

Shellen, Human Male Ftr2: Medium Humanoid; CR 2; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 half-plate, +2 shield); Base Atk/Grp: +4/+4; Full Atk +7 longsword (1d8+2/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +1, Jump +3, Swim +1; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Power Attack, Cleave.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Half-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

Pellinus, Human Male Ftr2: Medium Humanoid; CR 2; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+7 half-plate, +2 shield); Base Atk/Grp: +4/+4; Full Atk +7 longsword (1d8+2/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +1, Jump +3, Swim +1; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Power Attack, Cleave.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Half-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

ENCOUNTER 8

“Pustulent”, Spellwarped Digester: Medium Aberration; Space/Reach: 5ft./5ft; CR 7; HD 8d10+40; hp 96; Init +7; Spd 60 ft.; AC 20, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +7 natural); Base Atk/Grp: +10/+13; Full Atk claws +13 melee (1d8+6) SA Acid Spray; SQ low-light vision, darkvision 60ft, scent, Spell Resistance 19, Spell Absorption; AL N; SV Fort +11, Ref +11, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 17, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12. *Spellwarped template, monster manual III, page 162.*

Skills & Feats: Hide +9, Listen +6, Jump +21, Spot +6; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

Acid Spray (Ex): A digester can spray acid in a 20-foot cone, dealing 4d8 points of damage to everything in the area. Once a digester uses this ability, it can't use it again until 1d4 rounds later. The creature can also produce a concentrated stream of acid that deals 8d8 points of damage to a single target within 5 feet. In either case, a DC 19 reflex save halves the damage. The save DC is constitution-based

Spell Absorption (Su): Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped creature's spell resistance, the creature gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time the spell resolves.

Might: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped creature gains temporary hit points equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Speed: The spellwarped creature's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Resistance: The spellwarped creature gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic).

APPENDIX 3 – APL 6

ENCOUNTER 5 OR 7

Cedric, Human Male Wiz4: Medium Humanoid; CR 4; HD 4d4+8; hp 20; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex, +1 armor); Base Atk/Grp: +2/+2; Full Atk +2 melee (1d6, club) or +4 ranged (1d6, light crossbow) or spells; SA spells; SQ spells; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8. *Skills & Feats:* Knowledge: Arcana +7, Concentration +7, Craft (Alchemy) +7, Listen +5, Spellcraft +7; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Eschew Materials.

Languages: Common, Elven, Infernal.

Spells Known/Prepared (4/4/3, save DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – Detect Magic, Read Magic, Daze; 1st – Magic Missile x2, Sleep, Shield; 2nd – Glitterdust, Web, Protection from Arrows

Spellbook: 0 – All; 1st – Magic Missile, Sleep, Shield, Silent Image, Reduce Person, Mount; Glitterdust, Web, Protection from Arrows, Touch of Idiocy

Possessions: Spellbook, Masterwork Light Crossbow, Bracers of Armor +1

Vartimus, Human Male Ftr4: Medium Humanoid; CR 4; HD 4d10+8; hp 40; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+8 half-plate, +2 shield, +1 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +7/+7; Full Atk +10 longsword (1d8+5/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +3, Jump +4, Swim +3; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Specialization (Longsword).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: full-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, 1150 gp

Shellen, Human Male Ftr4: Medium Humanoid; CR 4; HD 4d10+8; hp 40; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+8 half-plate, +1 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +7/+7; Full Atk +10 greataxe (1d12+7); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +3, Jump +4, Swim +3; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: full-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork greataxe, 1150 gp

Pellinus, Human Male Ftr4: Medium Humanoid; CR 4; HD 4d10+8; hp 40; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+8 half-plate, +1 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +7/+7; Full Atk +10 greataxe (1d12+7); AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +3, Jump +4, Swim +3; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Languages: Common.

Possessions: full-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork greataxe, 1150 gp

ENCOUNTER 8

“Rippex”, Spellwarped Gray Render: Large Aberration; Space/Reach: 10ft./10ft; CR 9; HD 10d10+90; hp 160; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural); Base Atk/Grp: +12/+22; Full Atk Bite +17 melee (2d6+8) and 2 claws +12 melee (1d6+4) SA Improved grab, rend 2d6+9; SQ low-light vision, scent, Spell Absorption, Spell Resistance 21; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 27, Dex 12, Con 28, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Hide +2, Spot +10, Survival +2; Cleave, Power Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Track

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a gray render must hit with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Rend (Ex): A grey render that wins a grapple check after a successful bite attack establishes a hold, latching onto the opponent's body and tearing the flesh. This attack automatically deals 2d6+9 points of damage.

Skills: Gray renders have a +4 racial bonus on Spot checks due to their six keen eyes.

Spell Absorption (Su): Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped creature's spell resistance, the creature gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time the spell resolves.

Might: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped creature gains temporary hit points equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Speed: The spellwarped creature's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Resistance: The spellwarped creature gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic).

APPENDIX 4 – APL 8

ENCOUNTER 5 OR 7

Cedric, Human Male Wiz6: Medium Humanoid; CR 6; HD 6d4+12; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +3/+3; Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, club) or +5 ranged (1d6, light crossbow) or spells; SA spells; SQ spells; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Knowledge: Arcana +9, Concentration +9, Craft (Alchemy) +9, Listen +7, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Eschew Materials, Still Spell.

Languages: Common, Elven, Infernal.

Spells Known/Prepared (4/4/4/3, save DC = 13 + spell level): 0 – Detect Magic, Read Magic, Daze; 1st – Magic Missile x2, Sleep, Shield; 2nd – Glitterdust, Web, Protection from Arrows, Touch of Idiocy; 3rd – Fireball, Stilled Web, Haste

*Domain spell. Domains: X (Y), A (B).

Spellbook: 0 – All; 1st – Magic Missile, Sleep, Shield, Silent Image, Reduce Person, Mount; Glitterdust, Web, Protection from Arrows, Touch of Idiocy; 3rd – Fireball, Haste, Slow, Rage

Possessions: Spellbook, Masterwork Light Crossbow, Bracers of Armor +1.

Vartimus, Human Male Ftr6: Medium Humanoid; CR 6; HD 6d10+12; hp 60; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+10 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +9/+9; Full Atk +12 longsword (1d8+5/19-20); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +4, Jump +5, Swim +4; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Specialization (Longsword), Diehard, Blind-Fight.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: +1 full-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, 2300 gp

Pellinus, Human Male Ftr6: Medium Humanoid; CR 4; HD 6d10+12; hp 60; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+9 full-plate, +1 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +9/+9; Full Atk +12 greataxe (1d12+7); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +4, Jump +5, Swim +4; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Specialization (greataxe) Diehard, Blind-Fight.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: +1 full-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork greataxe, masterwork longsword 2300 gp

Shellen, Human Male Ftr6: Medium Humanoid; CR 4; HD 6d10+12; hp 60; Init +6; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+9 full-plate, +1 Dex); Base Atk/Grp: +9/+9;

Full Atk +12 greataxe (1d12+7); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills & Feats: Climb +4, Jump +5, Swim +4; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Specialization (greataxe) Diehard, Blind-Fight.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: +1 full-plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork greataxe, masterwork longsword, 2300 gp

ENCOUNTER 8

“Deathcoil”, Spellwarped nine-headed cryohydra: Huge Aberration; Space/Reach: 15ft./10ft; CR 11; HD 9d10+66; hp 129; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., swim 20ft.; AC 22, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (-2 size, +2 Dex, +12 natural); Base Atk/Grp: +11/+24; Full Atk 9 bites +15 melee (1d10+7) SA Breath Weapon ; SQ low-light vision, scent, darkvision 60ft, fast healing 19, Immunity to cold, Spell Resistance 20, Spell Absorption; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +5; Str 25, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills & Feats: Listen +8, Spot +8, Swim +13; Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): These purplish hydras can breathe jets of frost 10 feet high, 10 feet wide and 20 feet long. All heads breathe once every 1d4 rounds. Each jet deals 3d6 points of cold damage per head. A successful reflex save halves the damage. The save DC is 10 + 1/2 hydra's original number of head + con modifier. (DC 25 for Deathcoil)

Spell Absorption (Su): Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped creature's spell resistance, the creature gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time the spell resolves.

Might: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.

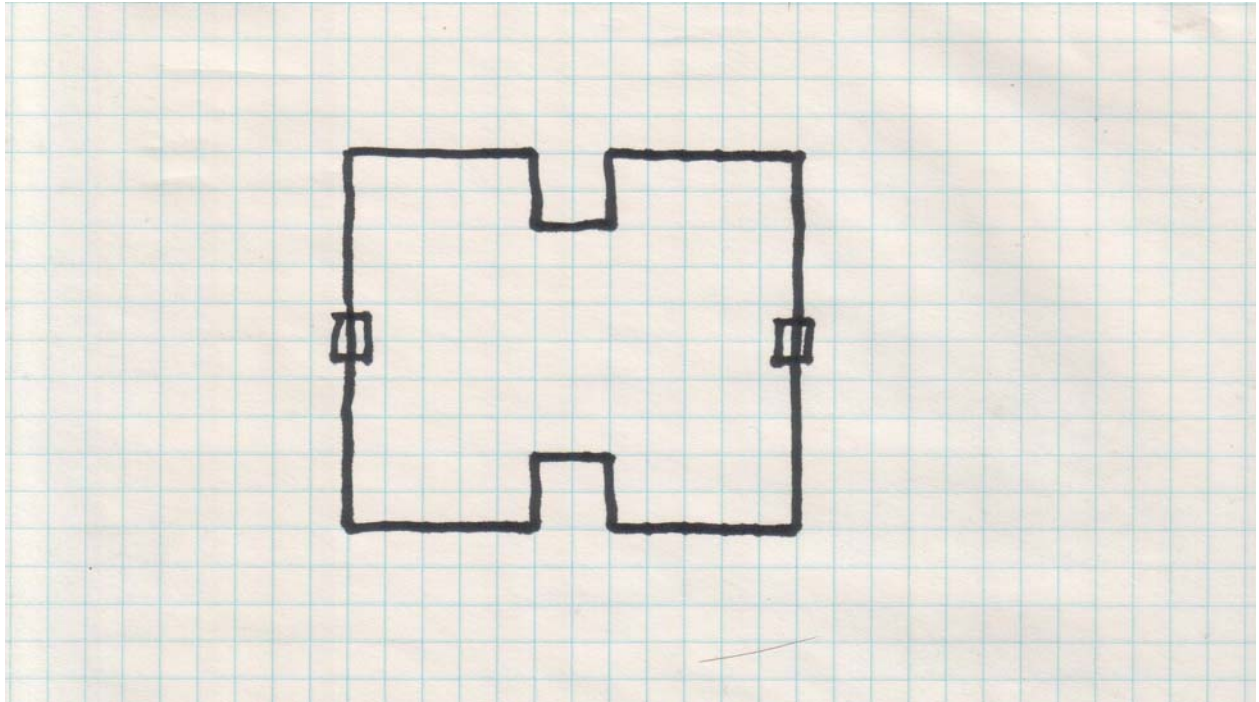
Endurance: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped creature gains temporary hit points equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

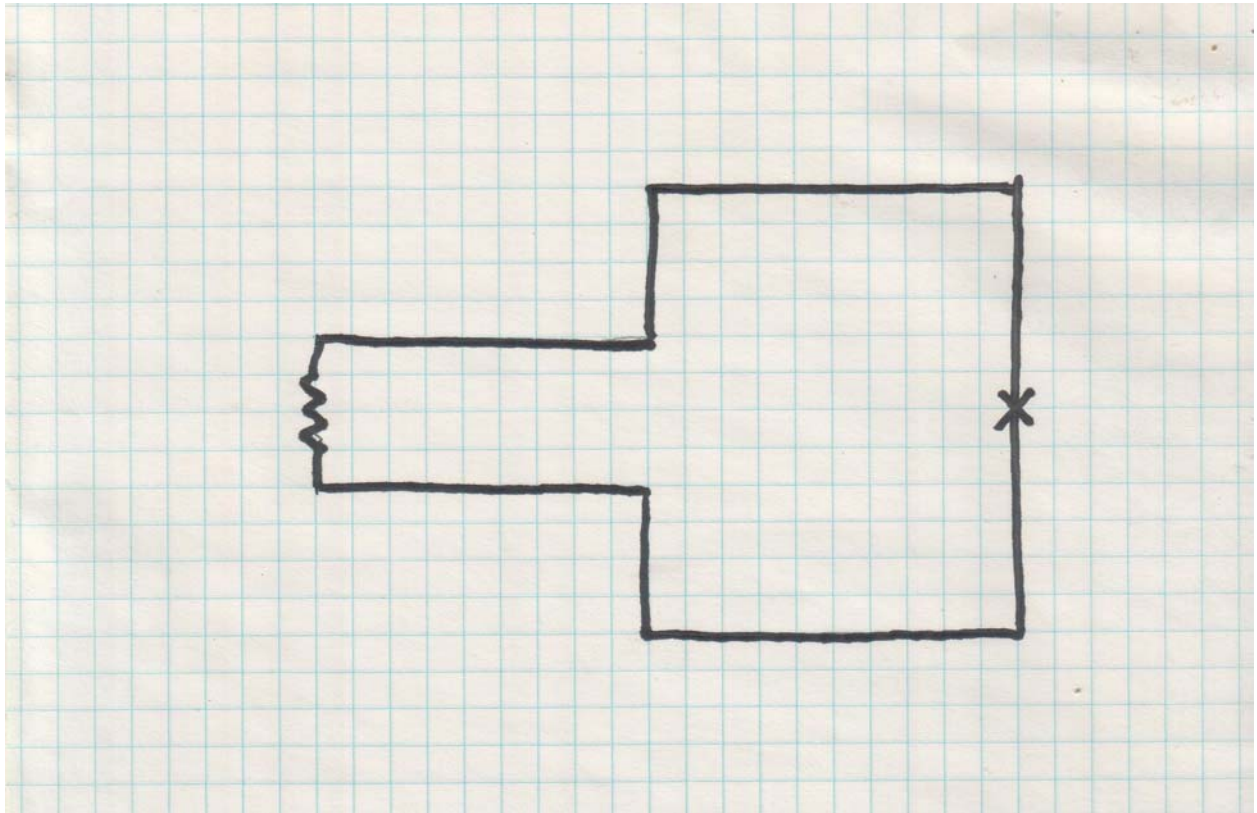
Speed: The spellwarped creature's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Resistance: The spellwarped creature gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic).

DM AID: MAP #1 – BASEMENT



DM AID: MAP #2 – BASEMENT BEYOND THE PORTAL



X = Anchor point for 50' chain attached to guardian. See Encounter Eight.

DM AID: NEW RULES

Spellwarped Creature (Monster Manual III, Page 162-163)

"Spellwarped" is an inherited template that can be added to any corporeal aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, plant or vermin (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to aberration. Do not recalculate the creature's Hit Dice, base attack bonus, saves or skill points if its type changes. The creature gains the augmented subtype if necessary. Size is unchanged.

Armor Class: Natural armor bonus increases by 2 (this stacks with any natural armor bonus the creature has)

Special Qualities: A spellwarped creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A spellwarped creature gains spell resistance equal to 11 + its hit dice. If the creature already has spell resistance, use the greater of the two values.

Spell Absorption (Su): Whenever a spell fails to penetrate a spellwarped creature's spell resistance, the creature gains one of the following benefits, chosen at the time the spell resolves.

Might: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 minute.

Agility: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 minute.

Endurance: The spellwarped creature gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 minute.

Life: The spellwarped creature gains temporary hit points equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Speed: The spellwarped creature's base speed increases by a number of feet equal to 5 X the level of the failed spell.

Resistance: The spellwarped creature gains resistance 10 to one energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire or sonic).

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Con +4, Int +4

Challenge Rating: HD 3 or less, as base creature; HD 4 to 10 as base creature +1, HD 11 or more, as base creature +2.

Alignment: Usually evil (any). Spellwarped creatures are typically selfish and cruel.

Level Adjustment: +3.

PLAYER HANDOUT #1 – A HASTILY SCRAWLED NOTE

Cedric~

You must meet me at the enclosed location as quickly as possible. You are endangered by an old acquaintance. Make haste.

-Vartimus

(When you flip the note over, you see a map is drawn on the back. Castle Vorgax is evident, as is a well-known hunstman's clearing.)

PLAYER HANDOUT #2 – LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The following is translated from elvish.

Honored Spoken One,

Please treat the bearer of this letter, Cedric of swanhollow, as my liaison in all things. Deal with him as you would deal with me, for he is my new mouthpiece. He will be overseeing my affairs in the south. He is my trusted confidante; speak to him as if you were speaking to my ears directly.

The bottom of the letter is marked with a symbol you have never seen before, in place of a signature.