

KEO2-03



STUCK IN A MOMENT

A One-Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[®]
Keoland Regional Adventure
Version 1

by Steven Eng

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Clues found in a destroyed caravan point to a town in trouble. An adventure for characters levels 1-10.

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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This is an RPGA Network scenario for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. Most sanctioned events delegate a four-hour time block for each round of this scenario, with actual playing time will around three hours. The rest of the time is spent in preparation before game play, and reward distribution and scoring after the game. The following guidelines are here to help you with both the preparation and voting segment of the game. Read this page carefully so that you know and can communicate to your players the special aspects of playing an RPGA scenario.

PREPARATION

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

Read this entire adventure at least once before running the event. Familiarize yourself with any special rules, spells, or equipment presented in the adventure. It may help to highlight particularly important passages.

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

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

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

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

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

Text that appears in ***bold italics*** is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase as appropriate. Text in appendixes contains important DM notes, for you, offering insight to issues particular to the adventure. Monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form. Full monster statistics for standard monsters are provided in the *Monster Manual*, while statistics for unusual monster and unique individuals are profiled in the Appendix at the end

of the adventure. You should review all of these statistics before the game starts to refresh your memory of the creatures' abilities.

SCORING

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. The RPGA has three ways to score its games. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use for this scenario:

1-No-vote scoring: The players write their names and RPGA numbers on the scoring packet grid. You fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.

2-Partial scoring: The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the event coordinator wants information on how the DMs are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.

3-Voting: Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the "best" amongst the group, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes.

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

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

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

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

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

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

1) Determine the character level for each character participating in the adventure.

2) If characters bring animals that have been trained for combat (usually war horses and riding dogs), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars, a paladin's mounts, and so forth) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single character may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

CR	1	2	3	4
1/4 and 1/6 0	0	0	1	
1/3 and 1/2 0	0	1	1	
1	1	1	2	3
2	2	3	4	5
3	3	4	5	6
4	4	5	6	7

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

4) If you are running a table of six characters, add one to that average.

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

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL that this adventure is played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that

either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Three or four, or sometimes even five 1st-level characters may find difficulty with the challenges in a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure. If your group is APL 1 there are three things that you can do to help even the score.

1) Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.

2) Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. Characters who want their dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is usually a free action (see DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide Chapter 2: Characters) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist an iconic." The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Miale, Lidda and Jozan are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to join them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure set in Keoland. All characters playing in region pay one Time Unit to participate in the adventure. Adventures' Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp, and Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp. Characters playing out of region pay double these amounts.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

A war between two powerful forces took place in the Dreadwood before the coming of man. The troops that fought in that battle are long dead; however, their descendants still feel the hatred for each other. The Dreadwalkers and their allies have kept this ancient war from spreading outside the Dreadwood, but one of those forces has set forth to regain their heritage. This new enemy hopes to gain access to a portal that lies deep in the Dreadwood. The Dreadwalkers' constant watch has prevented it from being activated thus far.

An earthquake that rocked the Sheldomar Valley gave the new enemy a way to bring minions into the Dreadwood; a gate to the Abyss was opened. The portal is newly opened and needs to be studied before it can be used to maximum affect. An aranea, a descendant of those long-gone forces in the Dreadwood, has posed as an evil gnoll cleric in order to recruit other humanoids to its cause. This band of humanoids is being sent to attack

caravans in and near the Dreadwood, thus distracting the Dreadwalkers away from the portal.

The forces behind the aranea have used divinations in an attempt to open the portal further. Part of their mystic insights has pointed to a half-elf girl from a nearby village. She may hold part of the key to opening the gate.

Encounter 1: I Will Follow

The party, on their way around the edge of the Dreadwood, finds two destroyed wagons. The wagons were carting timber from the town of Tanglewoods to Oakroot and then Niolo Dra. They discover a letter to a little girl named Lia from her father, along with a birthday gift. The party has the option of returning her father's body to the town, along with the letter and the gift.

Encounter 2: Where the Streets have No Names

The town and Lia are informed of the destruction of the caravan. They hold an elven funeral for the dead. There is an elven bard at the inn that can tell the characters more about his vision of the elven culture. A particularly interesting segment deals with Lolth. Later that night, a band of bugbears kidnaps Lia, tries to kidnap the innkeeper's son, and ambushes anyone who tries to follow. After the bugbears are defeated, Lia's mother pleads with the party to find her daughter.

Encounter 3: Shadows and Tall Trees

The party runs into denizens of the Dreadwood on their rescue mission.

Encounter 4: One Minute Warning

The party finds the mound where Lia is being held. They must deal with the band of humanoids before they can enter.

Encounter 5: Sunday, Bloody Sunday

The party may walk into a trap laid by the aranea and the abyssal spiders. They have a chance to rescue both Lia and a captured Dreadwalker and escape the mound after the spiders are defeated, but the mound returns to its own plane after the spiders die, and it takes with it whomever is still inside when the mound collapses.

Conclusion

The party runs into members of the Dreadwalkers back in Tanglewoods. There is a happy reunion between Lia and her mother if everything is successful. The Dreadwalkers want a report of what has happened from the party. If they tell the truth, they receive a clue as to what is happening in the Dreadwood. An eternity of trouble awaits any character that did not make it out of the mound in time.

INTRODUCTION

It is a cool and rainy afternoon on the road north of the Dreadwood. The weather started out as a downpour, and the rains have not let up. Since traveling so close to the Dreadwood can be dangerous business, several adventurers like you have

gathered together, going the same way. To pass time, some tell stories of their past exploits while others just listen. After a few hours of travel, you see smoke in the far distance. As you move closer, you smell something foul. Rounding a small hill, you see a wagon on fire with bodies still inside. It lies off to the left side of the road. All around the burning wagon are what look to be remains. Further off in the forest there is a flock of crows gathered around a body.

ENCOUNTER 1: I WILL FOLLOW

When the party gets closer to the crows, the flock flies away to reveal the body of a human slain by arrows and crossbow bolts. A successful Heal check (DC 15) reveals the body had been dead for just a couple of hours. The body has been thoroughly searched and valuables have been removed. When the party moves further up the road, a horrific scene awaits them. An empty cart with a broken axle lies off the side of the road. The body of a male elf with black hair lies face down in the mud a few feet away from a dead human. The elf body has many slash marks and one huge wound through his back. This elf did not die easily and suffered greatly before someone finally finished him off. Several yards into the forest are what appear to be four dead bodies of caravan guards, with broken shields and weapons littered around them.

A successful Track check (DC 20) reveals that the tracks were made by goblinoids and gnolls. Anyone searching the elf's body easily finds a small wooden hairpin in its left hand. A few inches away from that body is a crumpled piece of paper. The writing (in Common) is smeared from the mud, blood, and rain, but it can still be read. It is a birthday letter to a girl bearing an elven name. See *Player's Handout 1*. The letter reveals that the elf was traveling with a caravan carrying timber and wine to Niolo Dra from the villages of Tanglewoods and Oakroot. A successful Knowledge (Local or Geography) check (DC 10) reveals that Tanglewoods and Oakroot are villages in the northern region of the Dreadwood. The party can pick up the letter and hairpin and go to Tanglewoods to give Lia the present and report the lost caravan.

If the characters start to leave the elf's body behind, have them make a Religion check (DC 15) to know that a murdered elf's spirit cannot go into Arvanath (the elven afterlife) and await its return to the grand cycle unless the body is returned to its place of birth. The spirit is instead cast out and swallowed by the surrounding void, joining the restless dead.

The downpour erased most of the tracks around the woods. A powerful force is blocking any divination attempts to find the humanoids who did the killing. This power is extended to include the animals around the area. The animals refuse to approach the scene of the carnage.

ENCOUNTER 2: WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO NAME

The rain lightens for the ride to Tanglewoods. It takes five hours to arrive. Once in a while, what sounds like a loud, rumbling, guttural laughter can be heard from within the forest, although it may just be distant thunder. The party arrives at the village during the early evening. Two village guards meet the party a few feet from the village limits, asking the party about their business. They let the party in when they hear about the ambushed convoy, escorting them into the village to the village mayor Bandomere Schnee. Bandomere is not surprised that the wagons were destroyed. They have had this problem for two months. A group of villagers take the dead elf's body to the local temple.

By simply asking a few questions, the characters can learn that the Dreadwalkers have been trying to track the ambushers, but cannot find them. Several Dreadwalker patrols have been sent into the Dreadwood, but so far nothing has been found. One of the groups sent has not yet returned. The people who took part in the caravan knew the risk involved, but the timber industry is the lifeblood of Tanglewoods. The caravan was to take lumber first to Oakroot, trade the lumber there for some wine, and then take the wine and the remaining lumber to Niole Dra. The humans of the village refuse to go deep into the Dreadwood out of fear and superstition. The elves refuse to discuss anything related to the Dreadwood. They all turn to the Dreadwalkers to solve this problem. If the party asks for Lia, someone points out that she lives at the village's edge with her mother, Alissa.

A successful Gather Information check (DC 20) or the appropriate questions reveal that an earthquake was felt in the town several weeks ago. The attacks on caravans began shortly after that.

TWO HEARTS BEAT AS ONE

The party finds Lia's home in an isolated part of the village. It is a small one-story house on a small plot of land. There is a small garden in the front of the house where vegetables and herbs grow.

By the time a party member walks up to the door, a human female with light hair and fair skin named Alissa Siannodel comes back from a well near the house with a bucket of water. She is dressed as a commoner. She is curious about the group of people at her door. When she hears the news of the death of her husband, she drops the bucket and falls to her knees to weep.

As Alissa weeps at the news of her beloved husband's death, a small child with long white hair and commoner's dress appears on the path from the village. She drops a basket of vegetables that she was carrying and rushes up to her mother. When she rushes past by you, you noticed her slightly pointy ears. She says, "What's wrong? Mother?" Alissa says between sobs, "Lia, your father . . ." They both start to cry, and then Lia stands up and starts throwing wild punches at [name one of the characters present].

☞ **Lia Siannodel:** Female half-elf Com1.

☞ **Alissa Siannodel:** Female human Com1.

The two cannot be comforted for several minutes. Lia struggles if anyone tries to stop her from punching them. Finally the girl drops to the ground and weeps beside her mother. Lia accepts the hairpin and the letter from her father with gratitude once her anger and grief pass for the moment. When everyone regains their composure, Lia and Alissa go to the local shrine of Corellon Larethian. The shrine is located on the way back to the village. If the party did not return the body, they are not welcomed at the funeral, and you can skip to the section entitled "Mysterious Ways." The party is asked to attend the funeral if they returned the body. They are also offered a free night's lodging and meal at the village's inn. At the funeral, the human residents give their condolences to Alissa but seem to ignore Lia. Characters can overhear a group of human children who refer to Lia as "the half-elf" but refuse to go up to her. When Alissa and Lia head in the direction of the human children after the funeral, the children run away. If the party questions the children, the young ones answer that Lia doesn't look like them or any other races and are afraid of her. Then the funeral moves to the shrine of Corellon Larethian, and the humans do not attend. The characters asked to stay if they returned the body. When Alissa and Lia go through the portions of the village inhabited by elves, the two receive condolences. Another group of children, these elven, whisper and refer to Lia as "the half-human." The children scatter as Alissa and Lia move toward them. If the party questions the elves, they can learn that Lia's father was in charge of selecting the lumber that was to be harvested and that he went with the recent caravan to ensure its safety. They were also picking up wine in the village of Oakroot before heading to the markets in Niole Dra. Two elven clerics meet the family members outside a shrine to Corellon Larethian.

If the body is not brought back to the town by the characters, a large group of elves gather together and retrieve the body, and the funeral does not take place until the next day, meaning the kidnapping takes place before the funeral and its aftermath. The characters are not invited to stay at the elven funeral in that case, although they are welcome to stay at the inn. Below is a description of the elven funeral:

Drizzling rain does not seem to bother anyone at the outdoor ceremony. An elder elf cleric steps out of the crowd and gives a low-pitched cry. Seconds later the entire crowd mimics the same sound. After a few minutes of crying, a lone elf speaks within the sea of crying. He says with a strong voice, "I have known him since childhood. He was an honorable one and may his spirit lay in rest in Arvanaith." Another voice replaces his and after he has finished, more voices praise the departed elf. The cries die down as the last speaker finishes. The elves mingle with the family, giving their condolences.

A Listen check (DC 20) reveals that the elves keep on referring to Lia as “the half-human.”

The elves take the body out into the forest as the family follows behind. The elves will not answer any questions by the party.

Six elves cover the body with a funeral shroud. After the body is completely wrapped in cloth, the crowd becomes silent as they reconvene behind the body. Two clerics pick the body up and carry it around the crowd. The people silently pay their respects to the fallen elf. This moment of silence is observed as the elves collect wood and stack them into a pile. Everyone gives out a loud cry as the body begins to burn. While their sorrow and the crackling of the fire distract the crowd, a lone voice can be heard. It is Lia, and she is babbling, “Look underneath the surface! The prisoners in the ... are coming to destroy what was once ... too long since the sky is seen ... all hope is gone if ... look under the surface ... must get away now.” The crowd does not seem to notice Lia’s babbling. Lia finally stops as the crying stops and the body turns to ash.

The ashes are gathered and given to Lia. The elves leave as she spreads the ashes all over the forest. When the funeral ceremony is complete, Lia and Alissa go home and are too tired to talk. Neither Lia nor her mother knows what Lia was mumbling or that she was mumbling at all. Neither do the elves. By the time the party gets back to town, it is dark. The Red Wine Inn is the only place the party could take a meal and a room. If they returned the body, the innkeeper offers a free meal and stay in a common room for the characters.

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

The Red Wine Inn is located near the center of town. It is operated by a human Dreadwalker ally named Rumbus. His ten-year-old son, Talmos, assists him. Rumbus calls himself the best provider of wine in all the Dreadwood, even though most of his stock comes from Oakroot. He is usually in one of the corner telling tales of his adventures against fierce owlbeats and griffons of the Dreadwood. He tells the tale of the day he lost his leg to a bugbear. After being serenaded by stories of the Dreadwood, a lone elf bard from the funeral plays a ballad about the creation of the elven race. Hand out *Player’s Handout 2*. He drinks a glass of feywine and remembers the good time he had with all his elven friends who have been killed in the Dreadwood over the years. He recites the creation story in honor of the fallen elf. If anyone wants to stay and hear, the bard will answer any questions at the end of his song. He will not review too much on the history of the elves, but he will enlighten anyone about the significance of his story. If anyone stays after the bard has finished his song, the party receives more detailed history of the elves. At the end, if anyone wants to stay, they hear the story about the betrayal of Lolth. Hand out *Player’s Handout 3*. His answer to any questions about the story of Lolth is to “look to the story and find the answer.”

☛ **Darius Songbright:** Male Elf Brd10.

RUNNING TO STAND STILL

In the middle of the night, anyone succeeding at a Listen check (DC 10) hears very loud cries for help outside the inn. If they are awake, the characters automatically hear. A wounded village guard yells that bugbears are attacking the stables and inn. Anyone who rushes outside after that announcement sees a bugbear fleeing the innkeeper’s home, which is connected to the inn. These bugbears were sent to grab Talmos and divert the party’s attention to cover the escape of the other members of their band who have taken Lia.

APL 2 (EL 3)

☛ **Bugbears (2):** hp 16, 16; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 4 (EL 5)

☛ **Bugbears (4):** hp 16, 16, 16, 16; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Bugbears (6):** hp 16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 8 (EL 9)

☛ **Bugbears (5):** Male bugbear Rog2; hp 31; see Appendix I.

APL 10 (EL 11)

☛ **Bugbears (8):** Male bugbear Rog3; hp 36; see Appendix I.

When the first members of the party arrive outside, they see only one bugbear carrying the boy, who is still in his nightclothes. The bugbear is heading out of town toward the south, and the Dreadwood. The other bugbears are hiding behind two buildings at the edge of town. The fleeing bugbear attempts to lead the characters between these two buildings and into the ambush.

If the fleeing bugbear makes it to the tree line with the boy, 250 feet from the ambush point, the characters hear a horse speeding away on a forest path. If Talmos was not saved, he is another hostage (like Lia) and Rumbus asks the party to find his son after a feeble attempt to chase the horses. He is grateful if his son is saved. If Talmos was taken, Rumbus tries to go after the monsters until the villagers stop him. He then asks for someone to save his son.

WITH OR WITHOUT YOU

The commotion grows as more villagers rush to see what has happened. At the center of a crowd, Alissa lies wounded. Two of the villagers are attending to her wounds. She has been stabbed and a trail of blood can be seen from her house to the spot where she now lies. An old woman is holding Alissa, trying to calm her down. Alissa tries to get to her feet, but she immediately collapses back to the ground. She says weakly, “Monsters have taken Lia.

They came into our house. I heard a noise. As soon as I opened my door, something stabbed me. I followed Lia's cries, but I couldn't catch up. Please find my daughter, she means everything to me now. I don't know what I would do without her... They laughed at me ... said they were going to sacrifice her to their god at dawn ... please stop them." After her plea, she collapses into unconsciousness. The villagers look at each other, and most of them are in shock. They seem very hesitant to go out into the Dreadwood at night.

Searching the town reveals that several horses were taken from the stable and used to get away. Two wounded guards come hobbling up to and yell that there was an attack. A local cleric is fetched to help heal Alissa. All the other village guards were injured or killed in the attack. The villagers cannot summon any Dreadwalkers until daybreak and the nearest Dreadwalker outpost is a few hours away.

Then the villagers begin to bicker amongst themselves. The lines are drawn between the elf and human population. These are some of the random lines that the party can hear:

"We should go after the half-elf. No, we can't, we don't have enough people to spare to go after the half-human. We don't have enough time to get the Dreadwalkers. You wouldn't hesitate if she were one of you. But I was the one who sold her some wood when you turned her away. I built her a chair. Come on, we have to find a way to rescue her. What can you tell us about the woods? Does she have any elven powers that can save her? I don't know if she does or not. She's just a child."

If Talmos was kidnapped, a group of humans begin to muster, but they take until morning to get everyone ready and equipped. They cannot hope to win against the enemies they face. If the party waits, the adventure is over when the Dreadwalkers arrive in the morning to take over.

The mayor of the town allows the party to use the remaining horses to track down the kidnappers. The horses are all light riding horses. There are enough horse prints on the road for the party to track. The rain begins to fall much more heavily and the wind picks up while the party is on the road.

ENCOUNTER 3: SHADOWS AND TALL TREES

After two hours of tracking on the road, the cry of a little girl can be heard off the road. Following the cry is a chorus of laughter. Suddenly out of the darkness the sounds of hooves coming toward the party.

Ask the characters what they want to do. You may even have them roll initiative and act upon hearing the approaching horses. After they take one round's worth of actions, read the following:

When the horses reach the party, there is nobody riding them. More laughter can be heard through the forest. It sounds like they are taunting and challenging you to come deeper.

A brief Search check (DC 15) reveals where the kidnappers dismounted and moved into the Dreadwood.

The rain no longer reaches the ground, but the sounds of drops on the leaves and branches can still be heard. The wind becomes a howl and there is still more laughter from the forest. You have entered the deep forest of the Dreadwood. Before you towers the forest canopy, composed of old-growth trees. There are some trees that reach higher than you can see. Some of the trees' trunks are as thick as a giant's head, spaced several feet apart. The canopy is thick enough to block out any outside light.

All those with darkvision can see clearly for 60 feet. Those with low-light vision can see about 20 feet away. The rest can see about 10 feet away unless a light source is used. After tracking for half an hour, a Spot check (DC 18) reveals a small piece of cloth that belonged to Lia caught on a twig. Spot checks (DC 20) reveal movement caused by a rabbit, squirrel, or a raccoon. If the party is using torches or lanterns, this attracts the attention of wolves. A Listen check (DC 25) allows the party to hear the movements of a pack of wolves approaching. If the party goes for a closer look, they see six wolves. The pack is merely curious and flees after the real threat attacks. The wolves should be enough of a distraction that the real threat gets a surprise round.

There is a pack of wolves off in the distance. It appears they have tracked you but made no threatening moves. One wolf moves closer and sniffs into the air, then darts back with its pack. They slowly melt away back into the forest. From behind you, another denizen of the forest charges forward with a roar.

APL 2 (EL 2)

☛ **Worg:** hp 30; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 4 (EL 4)

☛ **Owlbear:** hp 47; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 6)

☛ **Owlbears (2):** hp 47, 47; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 8 (EL 8)

☛ **Owlbears (4):** hp 47, 47, 47, 47; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 10 (EL 10)

☛ **Owlbears, Advanced (4):** hp 88, 88, 88, 88; see Appendix I.

ENCOUNTER 4: ONE MINUTE WARNING

After defeating the creatures, the party again hears the laughter. Following the sounds for less than a mile, they see a clearing with hedges obviously planted, trimmed, and maintained. The hedges provide dense foliage concealment (30% miss chance). There is a 10 foot wide opening in the middle of these hedges. This clearing begins 90 feet in front of a mound. The mound is roughly 100 feet across and 80 feet tall with a 15-foot opening. There are thorn bushes behind the mound that cause 2d4 points of damage and reduce movement by half for anyone other than a druid trying to come at the mound from behind. There is only one opening to the mound.

The forest gradually becomes lighter as you see a small fire up ahead. Toward the light are a clearing and a ring of hedges. The clearing is 90 feet wide within a ring of hedges that are 5 feet thick. Within the clearing you spot a campfire and hear the guttural voices of some humanoid creatures. Towering behind the camp is a mound some 80 feet tall.

If the party tries to sneak up to the camp, they can make Move Silently and Hide checks opposed by the Listen and Spot checks of two guards. The other five humanoids sit around the fire eating. If the party fails to sneak, the guards alert the camp. Note that at APL 10 the two gnoll ranger guards have cast *alarm* (mental ping) centered on the opening in the hedges, so unless characters take extraordinary precautions, the gnolls are alerted silently and are in a position to surprise the characters who may think they are about to surprise the gnolls. At lower APLs, the gnolls have been changed out for goblins or hobgoblins.

APL 2 (EL 2)

☛Goblins (7): hp 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4, 4; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 4 (EL 4)

☛Hobgoblins (7): hp 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 6 (EL 6)

☛Gnolls (7): hp 11, 11, 11, 11, 11, 11, 11; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 8 (EL 8)

☛Gnolls (7): Male gnoll Rgr1; hp 22, 22, 22, 22, 22, 22, 22; see Appendix I.

APL 10 (EL 10)

☛Gnolls (6): Male gnoll Rgr4; hp 43, 43, 43, 43, 43, 43; see Appendix I.

The creatures seem to be sitting down to a meal, and what they were eating seems vaguely human, or possibly elven. A quick search of the area turns up some cloaks. Symbols on the cloaks tell anyone familiar with the Dreadwalkers that these cloaks belonged to members of that group. A small cache of gold coins is kept with the cloaks. See *Treasure Summary* for more details.

ENCOUNTER 5: SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY

The mound's opening is 15 feet tall and 15 feet wide. Allow the group to move inside the cave. A Spot check (DC 25) allows a character to see that something is wrong with the floor. It is covered with a web. The inside of the mound is about 100 feet in diameter and 80 from the floor to the ceiling. Lia is suspended 30 feet up and requires another Spot check (DC 21) to see her. She's right above the party. At the back of the mound, trapped in another web, is Dreadwalker Vayleran Moonchild, whom the characters met in the adventure KEO1-06 *Evil in the Woods*. It is also a Spot check (DC 18) to see Vayleran. The aranea attempts to use a *silent image* of the girl at the back of the mound to lure the party into a web. Allow the party to finish moving before they are stuck. The aranea has covered the entire floor with webbing and hid it under a fine layer of dirt. See the *Monster Manual* description of the monstrous spider for details about the web.

The mound is a piece of another plane that has extended itself onto Oerth. The entire mound acts as a persistent unhallowed site, as per the spell *unhallow*. Any player that enters and stays is affected by a *bane* spell with no saving throw. You should not inform the players of this, unless their characters would know.

It is dry and warm inside the mound, missing the damp and cool feelings that are associated with most caves. All over the ground is fine layer of dried dirt. An unseen source lights up the mound with an evil glow. Before you, at the back of the mound, stands a gnoll who taunts you to come forward. Before him on the ground is Lia, lying silent, but moving slightly as if in pain.

If the party refuses to enter, the aranea pretends to slit the image's throat and starts stabbing it to draw the party in. The hidden abyssal spider(s) come out when the party moves into the mound. The spider(s) get a surprise round unless the characters beat a Spot check (DC 14). The spiders were summoned from the Abyss earlier. If any fire sources touch the web, the web rapidly catches fire. In four rounds, the fire races up a string and might kill Lia and Vayleran, or Talmos if he was not rescued earlier. The aranea does not enter combat and takes total cover behind a large rock pile after luring the party into the mound. If the party manages to break free and regroup outside, the abyssal spiders break through the mound wall to get to the characters.

ALL APLS

➤ **Aranea:** hp 24; see *Monster Manual*.

APL 2 (EL 3)

➤ **Fiendish Medium-size Monstrous Spiders (3):** hp 11, 11, 11; see Appendix I.

APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ **Fiendish Large Monstrous Spiders (2):** hp 22, 22; see Appendix I.

APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Fiendish Large Monstrous Spiders (4):** hp 22, 22, 22, 22; see Appendix I.

APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Fiendish Huge Monstrous Spiders (3):** hp 55, 55, 55; see Appendix I.

APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Fiendish Monstrous Gargantuan Spiders (2)** hp 132, 132; see Appendix I.

If fire is set to the web, a Spot check (DC 20) reveals web strands going up the wall and supporting Lia and Vayleran. The strands have an AC 15 and take 10 hp to sever.

If the aranea is forced to flee or the spiders are defeated, it reveals its true spider form. If the web strands are still there, it sets fire to the strands to cover its escape.

The gnoll laughs as four extra arms spout out from its back and it falls forward. The face contorts into two huge eyes and its fur turns a sickening yellow. The hands stretch out into long claws. The fur withdraws into spurts of thick hair and the arms become long, thin legs. The body contorts to form a huge hump. It has become a 6-foot long spider, and it hisses out laughter at the party. The mound starts to collapse back into the earth.

It hisses out with glee, "Fools, you have doomed yourselves. You have yet to know the real meaning of suffering. The darkness will rise again and take this land to its rightful place with everything beneath us. We'll be back to flood Oerth with blood." The structure begins to shake and rumble, and debris begins to rain down from the ceiling. The walls are cracking. It will not be long before this place collapses.

This is an attempt to lure the party into certain death. Without the abyssal spiders to keep the mound on this plane, the structure returns to the Abyss. The party has ten rounds to save Lia and Vayleran Moonchild and get out before the entire structure collapses into the ground and then back to the Abyss. Characters who are still in the mound in the tenth round after the abyssal spiders die are sucked into the Abyss with the mound. Take their characters and adventure sheets. Only a special mission is able to retrieve them now.

CONCLUSION

The laughter dies away as the mound seems to disappear into the earth. A loud blast shakes the trees and a bright beam of light shoots out from the ground and at the sky. Suddenly, it is over. There is nothing but rubble where the structure once stood. The trip back to Tanglewoods is silent and uneventful. Even the Dreadwood beasts have fled the area.

If the party was successful in rescuing Lia and Vayleran, use *Conclusion A*.

If the party did not rescue Lia or Vayleran, use *Conclusion B*.

If a character does not make it out of the mound, use *Conclusion C* for that character only.

CONCLUSION A

There is a happy reunion between mother and child. You have earned Alissa and Lia's gratitude. A Dreadwalker contingent arrives in Tanglewoods and tends to everyone's wounds, especially Vayleran.

The Dreadwalkers ask the characters what they encountered. They particularly ask about the humanoids that were raiding the caravans. Since the Dreadwalkers never saw the mound themselves, they know nothing about it. Whether the characters mention the mound or not, they receive an influence point from the Dreadwalkers. If they do tell about the shape-shifting spider and the mound, proceed with the following:

The following day, the injured Dreadwalker Vayleran Moonchild recovers enough to speak, and he addresses the party. "You have saved my life and done a great service to Keoland."

If the characters hold a favor of the Dreadwalkers from another adventure, add the following:

"You have proven your valor and courage on more than one occasion. I must leave with my associates, but don't underestimate the depth of my gratitude. Your honesty and integrity have proven that you are worthy to know more of what is happening in the area. There are secret forces at work here, and the answers to defeating those forces may lie in the depths of the Hool Marshes. I can say no more at this time, for I know no more than that."

If the characters do not tell the Dreadwalkers about the spider and the mound, read the following:

The following day, the injured Dreadwalker Vayleran Moonchild recovers enough to speak, and he addresses the party. "You have saved my life and done a great service to Keoland."

If the characters hold a favor of the Dreadwalkers from another adventure, add the following:

"You have proven your valor and courage on more than one occasion. I must leave with my associates, but don't underestimate the depth of my gratitude. However, I know you have not been forthcoming with my fellow Walkers. Secrets kept are dangerous in the wrong hands. Please be careful in your travels.

The party earns a point of influence with the Dreadwalkers either way.

CONCLUSION B

Alissa thanks the party for trying to help, and although she weeps for her daughter, she is glad that the monsters will harm no more people. She will try to carry on without her family. There will be another funeral pyre tonight for Lia.

The party earns a point of influence with the Dreadwalkers.

CONCLUSION C

Darkness is all around as thousands of spiders surround you. A figure of a spider with an ebony face that resembles an elf dominates the background. It stares at you with fierce red eyes. It blows a harsh wind toward you and you find yourself covered in a green web. The spiders turn to each other and made clicking sounds. Drool and venom begins to drip from their mouths as they look at you. This is definitely not good.

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 to each character.

Encounter 2: Where The Streets Have No Name

Defeat the bugbears.

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP

Encounter 3: Shadows and Tall Trees

Defeat the worg or owlbear(s).

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP

Encounter 4: One Minute Warning

Defeat the goblins or hobgoblins or gnolls.

APL 2	60 XP
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APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP

Encounter 5: Sunday, Bloody Sunday

Defeat the monstrous spiders.

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP

Conclusion

Save Lia and Vayleran.

APL 2	60 XP
APL 4	120 XP
APL 6	180 XP
APL 8	240 XP
APL 10	300 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 2	300 XP
APL 4	600 XP
APL 6	900 XP
APL 8	1200 XP
APL 10	1500 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 treasurer.

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 minute 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 (that is., 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 piece 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 treasures from each encounter add it up and that is 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.

TREASURE KEY:

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

Encounter 2: Where The Streets Have No Name

Defeat the bugbears and strip their gear and gold.

APL 2: L: 5 gp; C: 10 gp; M: 0
APL 4: L: 8 gp; C: 20 gp; M: 0
APL 6: L: 11 gp; C: 30 gp; M: 0
APL 8: L: 14 gp; C: 60 gp; M: 0
APL 10: L: 25 gp; C: 65 gp; M: 0

Encounter 4: One Minute Warning

Defeat the goblins or hobgoblins or gnolls and strip their gear and find their gold.

APL 2: L: 25 gp; C: 260 gp; M: 0
APL 4: L: 32 gp; C: 340 gp; M: 0
APL 6: L: 69 gp; C: 490 gp; M: 0
APL 8: L: 291 gp; C: 835 gp; M: 0
APL 10: L: 340 gp; C: 1270 gp; M: 0

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: 300 gp
APL 4: 400 gp
APL 6: 600 gp
APL 8: 1200 gp
APL 10: 1700 gp

All APLs

One influence point with the Dreadwalkers

Note to DM: Since this adventure begins and ends in a village in Keoland, no items of a value greater than 200 gp may be purchased at the table.

APPENDIX I: NPCs

ENCOUNTER 2: WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO NAME

APL 8 (EL 9)

➤ **Bugbears (5):** Male bugbear Rog2; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+2d6+5; hp 31; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atk +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +4 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA Sneak attack (+1d6); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., evasion; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Hide +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: longsword, leather armor, 5 javelins, small wooden shield.

APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Bugbears (8):** Male bugbear Rog3; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (goblinoid); HD 3d8+3d6+6; hp 36; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or +5 ranged (1d6+2, javelin); SA Sneak attack (+2d6); SQ Darkvision 60 ft., evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Hide +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Spot +8; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Possessions: longsword, leather armor, 5 javelins, small wooden shield.

ENCOUNTER 3: SHADOWS AND TALL TREES

APL 10 (EL 10)

➤ **Owlbears, Advanced (4):** CR 6; Huge beast; HD 8d10+48; hp 88; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 8, flat-footed 16); Atk +13 melee (1d8+9, 2 claws) and +8 melee (2d6+4, bite); SA Improved grab; SQ Scent; AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 29, Dex 10, Con 23, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +10, Spot +9

ENCOUNTER 4: ONE MINUTE WARNING

APL 8 (EL 8)

➤ **Gnolls (7):** Male gnoll Rgr1; CR 2; Medium-size humanoid (gnoll); HD 2d8+1d10+3; hp 22; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) and +2 melee (1d6+2/x3 handaxe); SA Favored enemy (humans); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Wil +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Spot +3; Wilderness Lore +3; Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Possessions: masterwork battleaxe, handaxe, chain shirt.

APL 10 (EL 10)

➤ **Gnolls (6):** Male gnoll Rgr4; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid (gnoll); HD 2d8+4d10+6; hp 43; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe) and +5 melee (1d6+2/x3 handaxe); SA Favored enemy (humans); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Wil +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7; Wilderness Lore +7; Cleave, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Focus (battleaxe).

Possessions: masterwork battleaxe, handaxe, masterwork chain shirt.

Spells Prepared (1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 1st – alarm.

ENCOUNTER 5: SUNDAY, BLOODY SUNDAY

APL 2 (EL 3)

➤ **Fiendish Medium-size Monstrous Spiders (3):** CR 1; Medium-size vermin; HD 2d8+2; hp 11; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (touch 13, flat-footed 11); Atk +4 melee (1d6 and poison, bite); SA Poison, web, smite good; SQ Vermin, darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance 5; SR 4; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +0; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +12, Hide +10 Jump +0, Spot +7; Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Bite (DC 14); Initial and Secondary Damage (1d4 Str).

APL 4 (EL 5)

➤ **Fiendish Large Monstrous Spiders (2):** CR 3; Large vermin; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat footed 11); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./ 5 ft.; SA Poison, web, smite good; SQ Vermin, darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance 10, DR 5/+1; SR 8; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +6 Jump +2, Spot +7; Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Bite (DC 16); Initial and Secondary Damage (1d6 Str).

APL 6 (EL 7)

➤ **Fiendish Large Monstrous Spiders (4):** CR 3; Large vermin; HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 14 (touch 12, flat footed 11); Atk +4 melee (1d8+3 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./ 5 ft.; SA Poison, web, smite good; SQ Vermin, darkvision

60 ft., cold and fire resistance 10, DR 5/+1; SR 8; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Hide +6 Jump +2, Spot +7; Weapon Finesse (bite).

Poison (Ex): Bite (DC 16); Initial and Secondary Damage (1d6 Str).

APL 8 (EL 9)

☛ **Fiendish Huge Monstrous Spiders (3):** CR 6; Huge vermin; HD 10d8+10; hp 55; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 11, flat-footed 13); Atk +9 melee (2d6+6 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 15 ft. by 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison, web, smite good; SQ Vermin, darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance 15, DR 5/+2; SR 20; AL CE; SV Fort +8 Ref +6 Will +3; Str 19, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and Feats: Climb +16, Hide +2 Jump +4, Spot +7.

Poison (Ex): Bite (DC 22); Initial and Secondary Damage (1d8 Str).

APL 10 (EL 11)

☛ **Fiendish Monstrous Gargantuan Spiders (2)** CR 9; Gargantuan vermin; HD 24d8+24; hp 132; Init +3; Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 18 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +20 melee (2d8+9 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 20 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Poison, web, smite good; SQ Vermin, darkvision 60 ft., cold and fire resistance 20, DR 10/+3; SR 25; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +11, Will +8; Str 23, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Skills and feats: Climb +18, Hide -2 Jump +6, Spot +7.

Poison (Ex): Bite (DC 31); Initial and Secondary Damage (2d6 Str).

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

My dearest Lia,

It is all too lonely to be away from you, and I am saddened that I will miss your seventh birthday. But you know that there have been several attacks on our wagons, and I must be sure that this wagon is safe. We have safely reached Oakroot, and I must now travel from Oakroot to Niole Dra. The finest warriors in the Dreadwood have trained me, and I am traveling with the best warriors in the village. I am not accustomed to the big cities, but I will bring you back something from the capitol. The humans there are always so busy, and they don't appreciate the beauty of life. I've lived in Tanglewoods my whole life and I love it just like I love you. But, I must admit that Tanglewoods is not as beautiful as you are. Here is a present that I've been working on during my trip. Remember me whenever you wear it, and I will see you again soon.

Your loving father...

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

When the god Gruumsh saw the creation of the Seldarine, the Elves, he regarded it as an abomination and he became enraged. For the first time, a desire for blood pulsed in a god's veins. Gruumsh prepared to crush the Seldarine, and some gods flocked to his standard while others stood aside. Still more, such as Moradin Soul-Forger and Garl Glittergold, aligned with the Seldarine, for they had set aside areas of the world for their own purposes.

When the inflamed Gruumsh attacked Corellon Larethian, the leader of the Seldarine, a mighty battle began: the Godswar. How long it raged over the pristine fields of the planes, no one knows. Each combatant drew great wounds from the spirit and the body of his or her foe. While the other contenders fell by the wayside, badly hurt, though not mortally wounded, Gruumsh and Corellon would not break off. Instead, they continued their fierce combat. They traversed the planes, and they splashed the other's blood across the lands.

As night drew near, the powers of Gruumsh strengthened, while those of Corellon waned. All seemed lost for the Seldarine. Tears from the moon landed on Corellon's upturned, stricken face, and they mingled freely with his blood. Then Corellon looked to his companions, and it was there he found fortitude. He drew back his sword and, with one fearful blow, clove out the orb of Gruumsh, who became known as Gruumsh One-Eye. The god howled in pain, black ichor spewing from the wound. Gruumsh turned and fled to the netherworld. There he nursed his hate, seeking forever after ways to shape the enemies of the Seldarine. And the greatest of his creations, made in the burning heat of rage and the blackness of his blood, were the orcs. That is why, to this day, the orcs and the elves are such bitter enemies. From the beginning, even before their creation, the very essences of their gods strove against one another.

With Gruumsh's defeat, the Seldarine and their allies continued with their works. The Seldarine gathered the moon's tears and the blood shed by Corellon in that great battle, and placed these into the vessels they had created, and infused them with their own spirit. Each god imparted virtue into his or her creation, feeding and nurturing the newly formed race. Thus were the elves born from the blood of Corellon Larethian, mixed with the soil of the world, blessed with the tears of the moon, and given their nearness to divinity.

The other gods saw this example and set about infusing life into their own sadly misshapen vessels, with varied results. Alas, all other races were but sad imitations of the elves.

Player's Handout 3

After the Godswar, the deities divided the world among themselves so that their creations could prosper and grow. The Seldarine chose the forests for their children, the elves, but secretly encouraged them to spread as they would. The other gods did likewise, and the races fought for land. The hatred introduced by Gruumsh the Cursed One had spread to the mortal species.

The elves were, at this time, all one people. There were variations, but these were individual, rather than any sort of societal rift. All differences were a matter of personal inclination, and the elves lived in harmony with one another.

There were those who lusted for power, and those who could not bear to live within the confining walls of a city. Others were rabidly xenophobic, wanting to bar outsiders such as humans and dwarves from the Elflands, keeping away the taint of those "unfavored by the gods." Still others, more moderate in most things, were scorned by their brothers or even despised.

Each elf thought he knew best, and each tried to impose his views on his brother. Evil flourished in this atmosphere of distrust and dissent. The great elf cities of old deteriorated, and the Spider Queen Lolth gained a foothold in the hearts of many elves. They used her to gain greater power and influence, and her evil ways led them even further astray. These elves practiced dark magic and forbidden lore to make themselves mighty, and they turned from the light they had loved so much.

The tension grew unbearable. The elves that had embraced the teachings of Lolth marched into the cities and slaughtered their brethren. The first attack came under cover of darkness, and the other elves could not mount a defense, but they had seen the dark time to come, and they had readied themselves for war. Their preparations were not in vain. They returned fire.

The Elfwar raged for decades, neither side gaining victory. Thousands of elves perished on both sides, and the number of wounded grew ever higher. The elves of Lolth took the name Drow to signify their new allegiance, and they took the cities they had captured as their homes. They massed for the final battle, and Lolth covered the land in loathsome clouds of black to strike fear in the hearts of mortal elves. The Drow were prepared to win, but then the gods themselves intervened.

Corellon Larethian and his companions struck deep into the heart of Drow territory. Long and hard they fought, seeking the evil in that land. Finally, Corellon Larethian came upon the dread Spider Queen, and he attacked. Magic flared and spat; blood merged in rivulets. Then Corellon struck Lolth a telling blow, driving her deep into the earth. With her defeat, the haze over the battlefield lifted, allowing the bright light of the sun to bathe the land in its healing rays.

The Drow turned their faces away from the sun's purification, preferring instead their fallen goddess. They consciously chose the shadows over light, and Corellon decreed that such treachery would forever show upon their faces. It is for this reason that the skin of the Drow is dark.

Corellon forced the evil elves into the rift where he had banished Lolth the Spider. After the last Drow was driven underground, Corellon and his fellow gods abandoned the elves to their own devices, preferring instead the plane of Arvandor.