

KEO3-07

Old Secrets Never Die

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®]

Keoland Regional Adventure

Version 1.0

by Joe and Rich Marflak

“Wanted: An experienced reconnaissance and recovery team for a mission of national security. All interested and qualified parties should report to Viscount Richart Jorgos in Jaedrae.” The Viscount grows more nervous by the day – it sounds like another of his missions into the Hool Marsh to report on the massing lizardfolk forces. An adventure for APLs 4-12. This is the fourth module in the Hool Series which included *KEO2-05 Royal Rescue*, *KEO 2-06 Hunt in the Hool*, and *KEO3-02 Predators and Prey*.

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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Introduction

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the

Dungeon Master's Guide when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the Monster Manual when confronted with a monster.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in gray boxes. It's strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text instead of reading it aloud. Some of this text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Scoring

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

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 game masters 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, 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 PCs participating in the adventure. To determine the Average Party Level (APL):

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 being war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e. animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc) use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
3. Sum the results of 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.

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

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of the adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower

than the APL this adventure is being 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. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

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

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 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

Adventure Background

The Early History of Baltron's Beacon

North of the vast meanders of the Javan River, where the Hool Marsh verges upon the dark boughs of the Dreadwood, lies an expanse of swamp some hundred square miles in size. It is thickly overgrown with a mixture of cypress trees, saw grass, and other stranger botanical specimens. The flora grows out of the muck to create mire—difficult passage for any would-be explorers. The region is principally known for the dull green glow that emanates from its center, which can be seen for miles and serves as a local landmark during murky Hool nights. The light's purported origin attracts marshfolk of all kinds and has been a source of mystery for years since the light first shone forth. The luminescence is reported to intensify as one approaches its source—the upper reaches of the central keep of a small, ruined fort. The structure resembles a ghostly lighthouse, but the few who have seen it and returned consider it an infernal beacon.

Located on one of the few patches of solid ground in the region, the long-abandoned structure was once a Keoish foothold. It is one of a chain of similar forts constructed more than a century ago to protect the kingdom's southern border during Keoland's ill-fated imperial age. The keep suffered a series of enervating attacks by local tribes of lizardfolk. Exhausted, the Keoish finally abandoned it. Keoland subsequently decided to establish the kingdom's southern frontier north of the Hool in the Salinmoor Province.

The Cult of the Black Flame

A century ago, the diabolical Cult of the Black Flame, led by a charismatic Suloise high priest known as Ohjos (the "Eye of God"), swept in to claim the deserted keep. When several youths, including the children of nobility, disappeared from the neighboring Viscounty of Salinmoor, the local lord, Count Arthemene, assembled a small army, even bidding reluctant King Nyhan IV to contribute a contingent of Dreadwalkers. The host marched on the cult's fort, but much to their surprise, they found no evidence of the cult. It had vanished, leaving the keep empty save for the grisly remains of the Keoish abductees.

The Coming of Baltron

The keep remained vacant until about twenty years ago, when a mage, Baltron of Linth, exiled from Keoland took up residence in the lonely fort. Despite longstanding Keoish prohibitions, the infamous wizard had spent a good deal of his life combing the

depths of the Dreadwood looking for the lost magic of the notorious (and extinct) Suel House of Malhel. According to legend, the Malhel came to a cataclysmic end at their own hands after dabbling in long-lost magic in the years following the Great Migrations.

Expelled from the National Academy of Wizardry and pressured from Niole Dra for their efforts, Baltron and Leptor (his protégé) originally traveled to this deserted keep together to glean what they could of the forbidden arcane lore. Baltron found many clues and sequestered items of interest that had been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame.

He also discovered a series of dormant teleportation portals, through which the Cult of the Black Flame had escaped the tower. Upon further research, he discovered that an ornately carved dragon's tooth was the magical key needed to activate the portals. Baltron was unable to find this tooth. Finally giving up, he moved on to other projects.

Leptor's Betrayal and the Explosion

Baltron shared what he felt was safe with Leptor, and all seemed to go well for several months. During that time Baltron learned much about the Cult, their forbidden magic and their ties to the Scarlet Brotherhood and possibly the Malhel.

Meanwhile, Leptor grew in both power and confidence under Baltron's tutelage. He also came to privately believe that he was a descendent of the Malhel and the rightful heir to the secret knowledge that Baltron hoarded. Leptor was so confident in his lineage that he took it upon himself to conduct a ritual only a true Malhel could hope to succeed in completing—calling the spirit of the Hool Marsh to serve him. The results were spectacular, but not what Leptor desired. A horde of vitrioli (a new monster described in Appendix VI) came after the younger wizard. He fled the ritual chamber in the tower to awaken Baltron.

Battling vitrioli on the way back to the summoning room, Baltron entered the area as more of the creatures kept pouring through the rift in the brazier of Black Flame that had been the ritual's focus.

Leptor abandoned his mentor and immediately fled to his home in Niole Dra. There, he devised a tale that would wholly blame Baltron for the failed experiment with forbidden magic.

The diminutive vitrioli did not attack Baltron. Instead they concentrated on welding material onto the brazier to enlarge its size. The brazier's size was limiting what could come through the rift. Baltron

was stuck between a rock and a hard place. He knew, from his research, that this brazier was all that was keeping the Black Flame from spreading out of control, so he could not destroy it. However, letting the vitrioli complete their task would seem to have equally cataclysmic results.

Baltron had learned of an extra-dimensional space the Cult of the Black Flame could prepared as a “safe zone” where the brazier was to be held during the Ritual of Calling. Baltron chanted the words to this other spell that supposedly would send the brazier to this otherworldly space. A great explosion shook the entire keep at the completion of the Ritual of Calling, bringing down many of the outer defenses and blasting holes in the walls and roof of the tower. The brazier vanished, and Baltron found his weary body bathed in a strange green light. The light emanated from one of the ferlow seeds that were part of the Ritual of Calling. The tiny seed now hung suspended in mid-air at the top of his tower, displaying an awesome radiance that could be seen from a great distance.

Baltron passed out and when he awoke, he was outside the tower, and was shocked to discover that his spirit had been fettered to the body of a black dragon. Gazing at his reflection in a pool of water, Baltron noticed that his two great draconic fangs were engraved with symbols that somehow seemed familiar. The wizard had attempted to seize the magical power of the Malhel for himself, but he had been snared by it instead. He also now felt compelled to defend the Hool Marsh from intruders.

Returning to the tower, he discovered that all of the records and writings of the Cult of the Black Flame he had found, along with his own research, had been destroyed in the magical blast. Baltron, however, was now able to activate the teleporters using either of his tusks.

Baltron explored the destinations of these teleporters. Some of the destinations remained unknown to him—the teleporters would fail to function if their destination points could not accommodate the dragon’s bulk — but one seemed to be a demi-plane. Amazingly, this entire demi-plane of existence was trapped within the once-humble ferlow seed that now bathed the Hool in green light. The Cult’s ritual created an interim safe haven for the Brazier!

The Lizardfolk of the Beacon and Leptor’s Return

Baltron felt that all of the activity in the Tower—and whatever tale his wayward apprentice would tell to

cover his involvement in the Malhel research—would attract a great deal of attention by sages and adventurers alike. He made contact with the superstitious lizardfolk of the marsh, and utilizing his new form, he presented himself as an Avatar of Sess’Innek. He ordered his lizardfolk followers to defend the “holy place” from all nonbelievers. Word of the presence of such an avatar spread among the lizardfolk, and tribes began to arrive to worship at the beacon in ever-growing numbers. To cement their relationship, Baltron presented the tip of one of his fangs to the lizardfolks’ high priest, allowing him to use the teleporter in the swamp to enter and leave the tower as he pleased. In this way, Baltron could issue orders to the lizardfolk worshippers without having to leave the brazier unguarded.

The Silent Ones of Nirole Dra, guardians of Keoland’s magical secrets, attempted an exploration of the ruins shortly after the explosion, to discover Baltron’s fate, but the small party was driven away by powerful and evil denizens of the swamp.

Just prior to the Greyhawk Wars, Leptor led a party to explore the ruins as part of an expedition sponsored by an organization of adventuring explorers known as the Seekers, who once claimed Baltron as a member. The expedition included the infamous ranger Lord Arcturus of Sayre, known throughout the kingdom for his treachery, along with a rag-tag mercenary retinue. Leptor and his band sought out not only Baltron’s dark knowledge, but the treasure said to have been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame, hidden and undiscovered somewhere within the citadel. Repeated lizardfolk attacks drove off the mercenaries and forced Leptor to flee to the only place they would not follow—into the “holy green light of Sess’Innek.” The exposure to the light warped Leptor into a reptilian creature as well – in his case, a lowly kobold. The disgraced wizard has gathered a group of kobold thugs and now assaults travelers, seeking enough coin to pay to be changed back into his true form.

More recently the Cult of the Shadowed Moon’s failed experiments, to bring down the green light, have actually made it more difficult to enter the tower. They inadvertently caused an impenetrable force field to encase the Hool Beacon Tower and summoned a fearsome creature into the area. Adventures have dealt with the beast and several of the Shadowed Moon’s more expendable members, but the wall of force is still a problem. See *KEO3-02 Predators and Prey* for more details. Baltron has also dealt with a number of their members, who had

convinced the lizardfolk high priest to bring them to meet the Avatar of Sess'Innek.

Adventure Summary

Encounter One– The Return of Leptor: On their way to Jaedrae, the PCs find themselves climbing a ridge path next to a large stream. Some cunning kobolds, lead by Leptor, spot the PCs coming up the path and attempt to ambush them. Fighting or avoiding the ambush are both possibilities. If Leptor is taken alive, he can provide information that might be of value to both the PCs and the Viscount.

Encounter Two – The Mission: The PCs find their way to Jaedrae in the Province of Nume Eor, to speak with the Viscount Richart Jorgos. Jorgos wants the PCs to travel to the beacon (for some PCs, this may be their second foray to the place). If they accept the mission to investigate the beacon, they are allowed to speak with a lizardfolk druid of Semuanya (that race's god of survival and propagation) named Sselyuuna. This lizardfolk druid may have been met by some of the PCs in *KEO1-08 Warts and All*.

The druid tells the PCs of lizardfolk worshipers at the beacon, and the presence of an avatar of Sess'Innek (demon lord and lizardfolk god of might and destruction). Previous attempts to enter the Hool Beacon have failed (see *KEO3-02 Predators and Prey*) but Sselyuuna claims to know a way into the tower. He describes a teleportation portal within a lizardfolk camp that seems to allow free passage in and out of the tower, despite the magical wards that otherwise prevent it. His most important contribution is giving the PCs the dragon tooth that he carries with him. It is a key that activates the teleporter in question.

The Viscount will suggest that the PCs travel to the main lizardfolk camp.

Encounter Three– The Lizardfolk Camp: PC's must fight or sneak their way to the odd structure in the center of the camp that houses the teleporter.

Encounter Four– The Swamp Teleporter: The PCs must get past a strange force wall and puzzle out how the teleporter functions, or take their chances by teleporting blindly into one of several locations.

Encounter Five – The Tower: The PCs teleport into the old Keoish stronghold, but all that remains are the stone walls, a strange green light and a skewed and fractured teleporter with five more ancient Suel carvings on it. Time is passing very quickly – hair

and beards grow long and gray. Balance, puzzle solving and reading Ancient Suel are key skills to have here.

Encounter Six – The Shrine: The PCs teleport into a small dark shrine with some interesting statues, a consecrated (destroyed) altar of the Cult of the Black Flame, a few ferlow seeds, a trap, and yet another teleporter. Earth elementals guard the area as well.

Encounter Seven – The Mountain: An outpost of giants in the Joten Mountains guards this teleporter pad to keep anyone from using it to sneak in behind their lines.

Encounter Eight – The Island: This forlorn place holds a puzzle for the PCs to discern – a challenge that might prove fatal to those that fail!

Encounter Nine – The Heart: The PCs find themselves standing on a teleporter in a huge cave on the shore of an island surrounded by a stagnant lake. The PCs are actually inside a pocket demi-plane, contained within a single glowing seed whose green light is the source of the Hool Beacon's illumination. A stone brazier at the center of the island contains a strange ebon fire. Everything inside the seed appears black, gray or white, and stinks of decay. In this scene, the heroes will finally encounter Baltron, and should work with him to prevent malevolent creatures from widening a gate from their world into Oerth.

Encounter Ten – Return to the Lizardfolk Encampment: The PCs return to the swamp to find that the Marshgrove tribe has conquered it. The PCs are escorted back to Jaedrae.

Conclusion: Where the heroes earn their rewards!

Encounter One

The DM should refer to *DM Aid 1* and *DM Aid 2*.

The PCs have received word that the Viscount of Nume Eor, Richart Jorgos, is seeking adventurers. If the PCs have performed services for Richart Jorgos in the past, he may have contacted them directly via messenger. The PCs have met along the road to Jaedrae and should be traveling together. Flying and teleporting are things that could still get you burnt as a witch in Keoland.

Ask the players for a marching order and watch schedule, then let them introduce themselves to you and each other. The PCs have been climbing the ridge trail that rises from the right bank of a large stream for over an hour, when the ambush takes

place. The kobolds, led by Leptor, have been watching them as they climbed the path. They have set up a little welcome that they have used very successfully on small groups of merchants and farmers as well as wild boar and other game. They have gotten a little cocky.

If the party is taking precautions (e.g. scouting ahead) they have a chance to spot the ambush in time to avoid it. If the scout cannot be seen or heard by the kobolds, and she approaches to the left of the path, she may close without provoking the ambush.

The sun creeps up from the east, promising another hot but beautiful day. If the messages you have heard are true, in two days' time you will be in Jaedrae and gainfully employed. The trail ahead of you climbs toward the top of a small rise.

Allow the PCs to describe how they will proceed. If they simply move forward, read on. If they take precautions, adjust the encounter to fit their actions.

At the top of a rise in the trail, two crossbows bolts burst out from the tree line downhill to the left. Ambush! The underbrush churns as the shooters rush off into the woods.

APL 4 (EL 6)

4 (3) Kobold Rog 1: See *Appendix I*

Leptor, Kobold Wiz 4: See *Appendix I*

Trap (Gravel Slope and Drop-Off): See below

APL 6 (EL 8)

4 (3) Kobold Ftr 1/Rog 1: See *Appendix II*

Leptor, Kobold Wiz 6: See *Appendix II*

Trap (Gravel Slope and Drop-Off): See below

Trap (Ramming Log): See below

APL 8 (EL 10)

4 (3) Kobold Ftr 2/Rog 3: See *Appendix III*

Leptor, Kobold Wiz 8: See *Appendix III*

Trap (Gravel Slope and Drop-Off): See below

Trap (Ramming Log): See below

APL 10 (EL 13)

4 Kobold Ftr 3/Rog 3/Snp 1: See *Appendix IV*

Leptor, Kobold Wiz 10: See *Appendix IV*

Trap (Gravel Slope and Drop-Off): See below

Trap (Ramming Log): See below

APL 12 (EL 15)

4 Kobolds Ftr 3/Rog 3/Snp 4: See *Appendix V*

Leptor, Kobold Wiz 12: See *Appendix V*

Trap (Gravel Slope and Drop-Off): See below

Trap (Ramming Log): See below

Creatures: The kobolds are at a –1 due to their *Light Sensitivity* disadvantage (see the *Monster Manual* for details).

Tactics: Two kobolds (A & B – See Map 1A) are 100' downhill to the left of the road behind a row of trees giving them cover (+4 to AC +2 to Reflex Saves). They can see the PCs (unless hiding or invisible) at 140'. They fire upon PCs in the center of the party when they get to the X on the encounter map (see DM Aid 1a). Following their initial volley, they take off down the slope away from the PCs, shouting insults in Draconic (thus warning those below) as they go. They move through another row of trees 20' farther down the slope, sling their crossbows, grab onto vines and swing out and back under an overhang and onto a fifteen foot deep by sixty foot wide shelf, ten feet below the drop off. The other kobolds (including Leptor) wait on the shelf and in the cave behind it (see DM Aid 1b). They will be hiding behind three foot high stonewalls that give them cover (+4 to AC, +2 to Reflex Saves) or total cover (+8 to AC, +4 to Reflex Saves).

Note: At APL 4-8, one of the Kobolds slips off the vine and falls to his death (PCs can hear a terrified scream that stops abruptly with a Listen check (DC 12).

Leptor will only fight as long as he thinks he can win. Once his troupe is outnumbered three to one, or he has cast all of his offensive spells, he tries to escape. If that is impossible, he will surrender. He is very intelligent and does not wish to die. He is interested in being returned to his own form and is not above begging for the PCs' help.

Traps: If the PCs pursue beyond the second row of trees, they will hit loose gravel on a steep slope. When gravel starts spilling over the drop off, at APL 6 and above kobold C springs the second trap (spiked logs that swing out of the trees up the slope) on PCs that saved against the first trap. At APL 10 and above Kobold D is present and gets his crossbows ready.

Leptor is ready to cast appropriate spells (such as *grease* on the vines) and will use any spare rounds to cast enhancement spells upon himself or his companions.

Loose Gravel Slope (60 feet in either direction from the center, 10 feet wide, at a 40° slope) **and Drop Off** (5 feet Times APL): CR varies; no attack roll necessary, damage is equal to 1d6 per two APL of the party; Reflex save (DC 14 + APL) avoids; Search (DC 14 + APL); Disable Device not applicable (trap is rendered harmless by skirting the gravel slope). A PC that fails the Reflex save on this trap slides down the slope and falls over the edge and into the streambed below.

Ramming Log (APL6 and above): CR varies; melee touch attack (attack bonus equal to APL of the party), damage is equal to 1d4 per APL of the party); Search (DC 16 + APL); Disable Device (DC 16 + APL). A PC struck by the log must make a Balance check (DC equal to 4 + the APL of the party) or fall to the streambed below. This fall will cause damage equal to 1d6 per two APL of the party.

Development: Leptor will share his tale about the Beacon (see DM Background) if captured and given the opportunity to speak. Play him as shrewd, conniving and slimy. He also bargains with the following pieces of information:

- “An army of the denizens of the Hool is encamped around the tower. They worship the green light.” (True)
- “The green light rapidly ages anyone or anything it shines upon.” (True)
- “Baltron released the forbidden power with magic of the Cult of the Black Flame.” (False)
- “Although I didn’t see him do it, I know Baltron transformed me into a kobold and teleported me out into the middle of the Hool to die. But I managed to maintain my memory and arcane abilities.” (Believed by him to be true)
- “I don’t know how long I’ve been trapped in this form. Time has all run together for me.” true
- “Baltron had discovered much about the Cult of the Black Flame. He even created a bit of Black Flame himself before he went mad with his quest for power.” true then lie
- “Baltron forced me to help with his tainted research. I ran when he started getting too close to completing his foul work, but I worried about him and came back to try to rescue him.” (False)

- And what thanks do I get? He turns me into a kobold! But I’m still *me* inside. I just need to get enough money to pay for a wizard to change me back. That’s why I attacked you—just for your wealth. Please don’t hurt me. You would do the same, if you were I.” (True)
- “Baltron is surely dead. If he exists, he must be a lich. How else could he protect himself against the hordes of Hool creatures that now worship his beacon?” (Believed to be true)

Encounter Two: The Mission

The Viscount Richart Jorgos continues to be troubled by the buildup of a lizardfolk army and rumors about an avatar of the god Sess’Innek (demon lord and lizardfolk god of might and destruction) that has come to aid them in their conquest. He will acknowledge any PCs that helped him in any of the previous modules in the Hool series (*KEO 2-05 Royal Rescue*, *KEO2-06 Hunt in the Hool*, and/or *KEO3-02 Predators and Prey*). If the players have captured Leptor, he will be very interested in his story and will take the kobold leader off the PCs’ hands.

Bills posted outside Jaedrae read: “*Wanted: Experienced reconnaissance and recovery team for a mission of national security. All interested and qualified parties should report to Viscount Richart Jorgos.*” *It is a safe bet that this task has something to do with the rumored army of lizardfolk that continue to threaten the fledgling county of Nume Eor.*

Upon arriving at Jaedrae – named for the beloved Queen of the land who fell prey to an assassin - you are given just enough time to dust yourself off and grab a quick meal before the guards rush you off to meet with the Viscount and several of his advisors. It is clear that whatever is happening, your presence is urgently needed.

Entering the audience chamber, Viscount Richart Jorgos’ disconcerted look disappears as you are led in. The Viscount greets each of you warmly in turn, as his advisors patiently look on.

Richart then looks to his advisors and asks, “Are we secure to proceed?”

The Viscount is a gregarious and friendly man with an affable demeanor. He is very close to his subjects and often travels among them and works alongside them. He is no stranger to hard work; he has large hands and broad shoulders. Jorgos is very unlike many of the scheming and conniving nobles in the

Kingdom of Keoland. He is also a cautious man and has his advisors detecting evil, alignment and magic. A great many odd things are afoot in his county, and he is taking no chances.

Anyone radiating evil will be asked to leave the meeting. If someone points out they detect as evil due to a curse or a cursed item, Richart will offer to have Durmaunt (9th level Cleric of Bralm) remove the curse (price as per the LGCS) before he shares any information with them. Any PC that refuses is escorted from the meeting and not hired for this mission. The player may opt to bring in another PC.

If any PC is the recipient of a curse that cannot be removed, the Viscount asks for either of two things in exchange for allowing the cursed PC to participate. First, he will accept the solemn oath of a noble PC, or one that belongs to a recognized metaorganization in good standing in Keoland that vouches for a cursed PC's good character. Alternatively, the Viscount will ask the PC to voluntarily submit to a *geas* spell from Durmaunt. If neither is acceptable or available, the Viscount dismisses the PC. (The player may bring another PC of more appropriate level and disposition into the adventure if they wish, *or the original character may attempt to rejoin the party once they leave the meeting. Such original PCs will not receive the 200 gold from Jorgos*).

Once this is resolved the councilors concur with:

"Proceed as you wish my lord."

Richart continues, "To the point, then! You are doubtless aware of the Lizardfolk army amassing in the Hool Marsh, and that is a major concern. However, the strange green light that is called the Hool Beacon has returned. We believe it to have an influence on the disposition of the lizardfolk. What we lack is proper reconnaissance. You are to infiltrate that edifice and extract as much information as possible. Since time is of the essence and we have no time for negotiations, we offer each of you two hundred golden lions, as well as any plunder that is declared immaterial by my council. What say you?"

If they accept, give them *Players' Handout #1*. If not, show them out—it is the end of the adventure for this PC, although you can opt to allow a player to bring in another PC more suitable for the module.

The Viscount will not take questions at this time, as he states: "an expert on the situation at hand will be joining us shortly."

Assuming the PCs accept the offer:

"Very well then!" exclaims Richart. "We have already tried the direct approach of sending scouts to investigate the Tower on foot, by air and even using teleportation. Predators and enemy spells cut down the aerial scouts. The ground scouts brought back some meager intelligence, but could not get in to the beacon. Those that attempted to teleport into the tower found themselves unable to do so."

Richart pauses pensively. Then he says, "In the past, I confess I have fallen prey to prejudice against the lizardfolk of the Hool. But over time, my stance has shifted on the matter. The lizardfolk's Marshgrove tribe worships the god Semuyana, who is apparently a deity of survival and propagation. These lizardfolk are not evil, and are as distressed about the massing of an army of their fellows as we. Our common enemies are their kin that worship Sess'Innek, the lizardfolk god of death and war."

"I would like to present Sselyuuna. Some of you may already know him." A lizardfolk enters from a door behind the Viscount. "He is a druid of Semuanyana and has offered to provide us with some additional information."

If Sselyuuna met any of the PCs in *KEO1-06 Warts and All*, he will take an appropriate attitude toward them, but he has agreed to tell his story in any case. Sselyuuna speaks Common fairly well, but his S and Z tend to linger. He speaks softly and slowly, occasionally stumbling over a word or pausing to think of the correct translation. He is a non-stereotypical, unassuming character with a subtle wit and charm. He is sincere in what he says here and about wanting to establish a relationship between Keoland and his people (the Marshgrove tribe and others that worship Semuanyana).

"Esteemed mammal-folk," whispers Sselyuuna, "your people and mine have common enemies – the worshipers of Sess'Innek, a force of evil and destruction. They have formed a great alliance of many tribes in the Hool to make war on your people, and they have enslaved or coerced many of my people to take up arms. I pray to Semuanyana that you may find what I have to tell useful."

"Many worshipers of Sess'Innek surround the beacon's tower. Its green light rapidly ages anyone or anything entering it, except stone."

Sselyuuna's voice lowers even further. "It is said that Sess'Innek has sent his personal agents to show his pleasure with his followers. These agents are known as avatars. It is rumored that more than one has haunted the area around the tower. One

such avatar seems to be the guardian of the tower. This avatar rallies its followers to sacrifice all sentient mammals to their god. Some reports say that it is the reincarnated form of the great Sakatha, the legendary vampire king of our people. Other tales call this avatar a reptilian beast from the ancient past."

"Previous attempts to penetrate the tower have been stymied by a field of green energy that surrounds it, preventing magical and mundane passage alike. But I believe we have found another way into the tower."

"My followers and I infiltrated a large enemy camp near another ruined fortress a days travel from the beacon tower. From a platform there, priests of Sess'Innek would disappear. Later they would reappear at the same place, seeming somewhat more aged and bringing the words of their god with them. Some of my tribe managed to infiltrate this camp and attack a priest of Sess'Innek. They recovered this from his remains."

Sselyuuna offers the PC with the highest Charisma an engraved, curved ivory spike an inch in diameter and thirteen inches long. This spike is actually a dragon's tooth, although the druid does not know this, and the PCs may not either.

"It would seem that this method of transport allows entry to the beacon's tower." The druid's face grows sad. "Only one of our number, Tsselyu, escaped from the attack on the priest. He stood by to keep watch while the others attacked. He said that after the battle, his armored companions were trapped behind an invisible barrier. They could not escape it, so they threw the artifact through the barrier and told him to run, to survive and deliver it to me. He took the artifact, leaving the others behind the barriers to their fate."

After a brief pause, he composes himself. "Written upon it, in a tongue I magically translated, are the words, 'In chaos, order.' I do not know what that means, but the spike possesses strong powers of transmutation, abjuration and divination. More of this writing is reported to adorn the magical gate my people found"

Sselyuuna cast *detect magic* on the spike shortly after receiving it. The PCs can verify the schools of magic present if they cast the spell upon the spike themselves and check. An *identify* spell reveals that it is a key and must be placed in a proper lock to function. A *legend lore* spell reveals "even a Malhel should forsake the ultimate use of this solution." A

Knowledge: Nature (DC 20) or bardic knowledge check (DC 25) reveals it is the tooth of a dragon and the writing is ancient Suloise.

"Thank you, Sselyuuna," says the Viscount. "Do our champions have any questions for our friend?"

Sselyuuna has told all, but will happily clarify what he can and beg pardon for what he cannot. He is then shown out of the meeting.

The Viscount continues. "Here are your orders. By stealth or might reach this teleporter and use it to gain access to the Beacon Tower. If you make it inside, it is vital that you figure out what force is manipulating these lizardfolk and if possible put an end to it."

Jorgos will answer any other questions as best he can. He will provide clerics to heal any wounds the PCs may have suffered, and will provide them with any basic supplies that they feel they might need. He will also provide them with three scrolls of comprehend languages.

Encounter Three: The Lizardfolk Camp

[Note to the DM: PCs can get to the lizardfolk camp without any troubles. Refer to DM Aid 2 for a map of the encampment. Attempts to sneak through the camp should be handled with an eye towards getting the PCs to Encounter Four as quickly as possible. If a combat ensues, the PCs *should* tear through their adversaries quickly. Many will run off blowing signal horns, a hint to the PCs that they shouldn't dawdle.]

A series of crude leather and hide tents encircle a stone structure. This stone building is circular, with an arched stone roof supported by six stone pillars. In the center of it, a raised platform can be seen. A few lizardfolk guards mill about the area or walk less-than-thorough foot patrols.

The lizardfolk are not especially attentive. Since they lost the Key to the teleporter, this camp has dwindled in importance, as most of the lizard folk are now back at the Hool Beacon praying for guidance. Unless the PCs cause some kind of obvious disturbance, the bored guards suffer a -2 circumstance penalty to Listen and Spot checks. Six pairs of guards are evenly distributed around the perimeter of the camp. No lizardfolk patrol inside the encampment. Four more lizardfolk can be found inside the camp. The lizardfolk that have been left here are guards pressed into service; their morale is

very low. At the first sign of trouble, they will sound signal horns (a hint to the PCs that they should get moving before reinforcements arrive) and rush off into the Hool.

All APLs (EL 8)

Lizardfolk (12): See *Monster Manual*, page 169.

Lizardfolk Females and Young (40): Noncombatant, hp 4 (females) and 1 (young) each; see *Monster Manual*, page 169.

Encounter Four: The Swamp Teleporter

The DM should refer to *DM Aid 4*.

In the center of the camp sits a structure: its perimeter forms a thirty-foot circle. It is fifteen feet high and has six equally spaced pillars supporting its domed roof. It looks exceptionally old. Inside is a round platform raised six inches off the ground and fifteen feet in diameter. The platform is made of green stone, with a silver rim and a one-inch diameter hole in its exact center. To the right of this platform, you see a twelve-foot tall statue of a rampant dragon. Its head extends down with an open mouth, as if it were ready to unleash its breath weapon across the platform. There are carvings around the edge of the roof. Dragonflies and other smaller insects buzz in and out of the open area. Moisture drips from the roof, arcing to the ground as if running along a slightly curved, unseen wall.

Anyone that can read ancient Suel, by magical or mundane means, or that makes a successful Decipher Script check (DC 20) can read the words carved around the roof:

ARM THE DRAGON TO LOWER ITS SHIELD

The barrier allows only organic material (that is, animal or vegetable-based material) through it. Clothing, leather armor, wooden clubs and so forth are unaffected by the barrier. Metal, stone or other non-organic material is prevented from passing through the barrier. If someone wearing or carrying only organic material attempts to pass through the portal, they are able to do so. Others will find the barrier absolutely impenetrable. A *disintegrate* spell will bring down the barrier altogether. For attempts to dispel the magical barrier, it is a caster level of 16. Being organic, the dragon's tooth will pass through the barrier without a problem.

Any PC that examines the dragon statue will notice the empty socket in the dragon's mouth. If the spike is placed in the socket the barrier comes down until the spike is again removed.

Activating the Teleporter

The DM should refer to *DM Aid 9* for a flowchart of how the teleporters in the module connect to each other. The platform has complex runes on its surface near the rim. These runes are written in ancient Suel letters and resemble the ones on the ivory spike that Sselyuuna gave the party. However, they make no sense, as the letters are scrambled words (forming real but meaningless wrong words when possible). Anyone that speaks ancient Suel, makes a decipher script check (DC 20) or that casts a spell such as *comprehend languages* can read the letters. Only parties that can translate the runes in some fashion have a chance at unscrambling the words. They *could* just teleport without knowing what the runes say, but that would be foolhardy.

When the curved tooth is placed in the hole, a glowing light appears in the form of an arrow. This arrow points in the direction towards which the curve of the tooth points. By rotating the tooth in the socket, the arrow can be made to point to different sets of runes. When the arrow points to a particular set of runes, it begins to glow and increases in brightness for three rounds, at which time there is a flash of white light. The key, and everyone standing upon the platform, is transported to the indicated location.

If the key is removed from the hole before activating the teleporter, the rune stops glowing, the arrow vanishes, and nothing happens until it is placed in the hole again.

This teleporter has the runes for ANNOTIUM ("mountain"), WROTE ("tower") and DALINS ("island").

If the players are stumped by what the runes might mean, the PC with the highest Wisdom remembers the Lizardfolk Druid's translation of the runes on the spike: "*In chaos, order.*"

If the PCs teleport to the Tower, proceed to *Encounter Five*. If the Mountain is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Seven*. If the Island is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Eight*.

Encounter Five: The Tower

Refer to *DM Aid 5* (Inside and Outside)

This is a 60' square tower with a cracked 15' diameter teleportation leaning against the north wall. It is 120 feet to the top from here on the basement floor.

A dizzying buzz assaults your ears. You find yourself on a tilted platform. All who were on the original platform are here in this stone tower that is filled with a strange green light.

All PCs must make simple Balance checks (DC 10) or tumble to the ground for 1d6 damage (as opposed to non-lethal damage, thanks to the somewhat jagged rocks that comprise the debris on the floor).

You notice that the platform here must have fallen from somewhere above since all the floors above you are completely missing. The cracked, skewed platform and stone walls are all that remain inside this tower. It seems that the tower's floors fell downwards upon each other, ruining the interior but leaving the exterior walls intact. Thankfully, the platform must have been on the uppermost floor of this place, allowing it to survive the collapse, but not without damage. There are four inscriptions around the platform's edge and a hole in its center.

Some openings exist higher up in the edifice—probably arrow slits. Ragged holes dot the tower's ceiling, and a doorway sits forty feet up one wall. A great throng of creatures creates a great ruckus in the distance.

The Green Light: The green light ages PCs at a vastly accelerated rate. There is no place within or outside of the tower that the PCs can go that will protect them from the aging effects of the tower. Thus, time is of the essence – literally!

Roll initiative and give each player in turn his or her chance to act and speak as you would in combat. You must keep track of how many rounds the PCs spend in this light.

The rate of aging is one day per second of exposure to the light. The PCs will be stuck in the light for at least three rounds (eighteen seconds), as this is the minimum amount of time it takes to operate the teleporter (see below). There is no saving throw against this effect; creatures with SR may make a check once per round to avoid that round's exposure (for this purpose, assume the caster level of the green light to be 20).

As a guide for the DM to describe the aging effects, note the following:

1 st Round: Male PCs have several days' growth on their beards.
--

2 nd Round: Both the fingernails and the hair on the PCs heads have grown noticeably. Male PCs that were clean-shaven now have very short beards.
--

3 rd Round: Beards, fingernails and hair continue to grow noticeably. Hair with a lesser growth rate (such as eyebrows) is starting to thicken.
--

4 th Round: Metallic object begin to show signs of tarnish. Leather begins to dry and look dull.

5 th Round: Male PCs that were clean-shaven now have regular-length beards. Leather dries out and cracks. More tarnish can be seen on metal objects.

The DM should extrapolate from the above for additional rounds of exposure. Food will spoil, any spell effects will run out, etc.

Outside (if anyone takes the time to look) an enormous assembly of swamp creatures chant and worship the beacon's ghastly green light. Lizardfolk, trolls, hags, kobolds and other unsavory creatures can be seen. They sway in a seemingly religious fervor. Your view of them is somewhat obscured by the green field of light that keeps them a dozen yards from the tower. Refer to *DM Aid 5* for a map of the remnants of the tower and its immediate environs.

The Worshipers: The PCs and the worshippers cannot hurt each other, even if they wanted to, thanks to the green field. The creatures chant in Draconic, praising Sess'Innek and thanking him for the great avatar and beacon he has granted them. They will react with anger if the PCs make their presence within the tower known. The creatures will throw arrows, spells, axes and even (in the case of the trolls) nearby kobolds at the tower, but to no avail, thanks to the energy barrier. Likewise, the PCs cannot project attacks or spells outside the barrier. Unlike the lesser barrier surrounding the swamp teleporter, the green field cannot be brought down by any means at the PCs disposal.

The Teleporter: The platform has a set of complex runes on its surface near the rim, similar to those found on the swamp teleporter. The device is activated in the same way, using the curved dragon's tooth key. Anyone that speaks ancient Suel, makes a decipher script check (DC 20) or casts a spell such as *comprehend languages*, can read the letters surrounding the rim.

The broken Tower teleporter has three intact runes: DALINS ("island"), ANNOTIUM ("mountain") and SHINER ("shrine"). Another rune was broken when the teleporter platform fell from above - NOU....NG (NOUDENG, "dungeon").

Proceed to *Encounter Six* if the PCs teleport to the Shrine. If the Mountain is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Seven*. If the Island is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Eight*. An attempt to teleport to the Dungeon will result in the three-round teleport sequence going off, but the teleportation fails.

Encounter Six: The Shrine

Refer to *DM Aid 6*.

You find yourselves in an unlit room.

If the PCs are able to see in some fashion, continue:

The interior of this place resembles that of the edifice you found in the lizardfolk camp, except it is 60 feet in diameter and 60 feet high. The teleporter platform is in the center and six pillars are evenly spaced around its perimeter. The platform has a hole in its center and is ringed with runes.

A single open doorway can be seen. In front of the wall opposite the doorway, there is a large pile of rubble that looks as if it might have once been an altar or some other similarly shaped stone block. A symbol of a flame with an onyx inset is carved just above the rubble on that wall. There is a statue of a dragon between the door and the rubble, and a statue of a monk against the wall opposite the dragon. Because of the nature of your arrival, you're not certain what direction you currently face. The air here is very dry and stale, and there is a fair amount of sand on the floor.

The doorway opens into a passageway that is choked with rubble and sand from a ceiling collapse about fifteen feet inside. This was once a shrine to the Cult of the Black Flame, and the PCs are located in an underground area within the Sea of Dust.

The onyx inset detects as strong magic (abjuration and conjuration).

Approaching within five feet of the altar's remains, or the symbol, will cause the glyph to flash, *summoning* the guardian(s) of the Cult's shrine.

APL 4 (EL 5)

Earth Elementals, Medium (2): See *Monster Manual* page 99.

APL 6 (EL 7)

Earth Elemental, Huge: See *Monster Manual* page 99.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Earth Elemental, Greater: See *Monster Manual* page 99.

APL 10 (EL 11)

Earth Elemental, Elder: See *Monster Manual* page 99.

APL 12 (EL 13)

Earth Elemental, Elder (2): See *Monster Manual* page 99.

PCs may opt to fight the creatures, or may immediately activate the teleporter and escape after three rounds – but note that ALL creatures on the teleporter pad will be transported with them... This battle will then conclude wherever the teleportation takes them to, and creatures present there might join in the fray. This could be bad news for the PCs.

Traps: The dragon statue looks identical to the one found within the swamp teleporter and bears a similar socket for the tooth key. However, this one is trapped. If the key is inserted into the mouth, the glyph will be activated, *summoning* the elemental(s) as described above. However, the key will remain stuck in the socket – prohibiting the PCs from using the teleporter to escape the rampaging elemental(s)! The key may be freed only by turning it clockwise, counter-clockwise, and clockwise once more, a full revolution each time (Disable Device, DC 10 + APL to deduce this), or by ripping it free (using a Strength check, DC 18 + APL). Removing the key will take 1d4 rounds, using either method.

The monk statue depicts a Suel man in robes. He does not wear any identifying symbols. A Search check (DC 15) will reveal a small secret compartment in the statue's chest. This statue was once magically trapped, but Baltron disarmed it and took the books and a single ferlow seed out of here to perform the Ritual of Calling. The PCs find a small green stone urn that contains just 6 small roasted seeds and a parchment written in ancient Suel (distribute *Player Handout 2*), the component list for the Ritual that Baltron performed on the ferlow seed).

PCs may know something of ferlow seeds. Have the PCs make a Survival, Bardic Knowledge, or Knowledge: Nature check (they can use whichever ones they have and keep the highest result) and consult the table below:

DC 10: Ferlow plants are rare and grow only in hot swampy conditions.
--

DC 15: Ferlow plants only grow where swamp water is flowing.

DC 20: Pools of quicksand are commonly found near patches of ferlow. Stories are still told of an eccentric or perhaps crazy old man named Demetrios, who some twenty years ago or so, was paying a king's ransom for ferlow seeds.

DC 25: Ferlow is an ancient Baklunish word for funnel. Some claim Demetrios was a member of the seekers, who wanted vengeance on the Cult of the Ebon Flame. He blamed the cult for his son's death.

DC 30: There is an old Flan fable that says Ferlow plants actually cause water to flow in a swamp or marsh and can be used to clear a bog or even destroy a dam.

The teleporter: The shrine's teleporter pad looks like, and functions identically to, the other pads found at previous locations. This teleporter has runes spelling: ANNOTIUM ("mountain"), NOUDENG ("dungeon" not functioning), WROTE ("tower") DALINS ("island") and EARTH ("heart").

Proceed to *Encounter Seven* if the Mountain is chosen. If the Island is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Eight*. If tower is chosen, go back to *Encounter Five*. If the Heart is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Nine*. An attempt to teleport to the Dungeon will result in the three-round teleport sequence going off, but the teleportation fails.

Encounter Seven: The Mountain

Refer to *DM Aid 7*.

You find yourselves magically transported to a place high within some mountain range. It is quite cold. You stand within a structure identical in dimensions and appearance to the one you found in the center of the swamp. The runes around the teleportation pad are different, however.

There is a loud bark in a guttural tongue as giants leap to attention and rush forward. Clearly, they were on guard for an arrival such as yours.

The PCs find themselves high in the Joten Mountains in Sterich. This area is under the control of the giant armies that menace the Grand Duchy of Geoff and other nations of the Sheldomar. This teleportation pad was discovered early in their campaign. Although the giants were unable to use it without the dragon's tooth key, the wizards among their number recognized the device for what it was. As a result,

giants were stationed here to prevent enemies from using the device. The giants used the powerful magic at their disposal to dispel the neutron barrier, so they may freely enter the area armed and armored.

APL 4 (EL 5)

Ogres (2): See *Monster Manual* page 199.

APL 6 (EL 7)

Troll (2): See *Monster Manual* page 247.

APL 8 (EL 9)

Hill Giants (2): See *Monster Manual* page 123.

APL 10 (EL 11)

Frost Giants (2): See *Monster Manual* page 122.

APL 12 (EL 13)

Fire Giants (3): See *Monster Manual* page 121.

Tactics:

The giants on guard duty are 100 feet to the west of the teleporter, arguing when the PCs arrive. This buys the PCs one free round before the giants notice them and attack.

The giants carry various pieces of mundane giant-sized armor and weapons (if applicable), but not much else (this is considered a dead-end assignment in the giant army, handed out for dereliction of duty).

A series of large tents can be seen about fifty yards from the teleportation pad. They contain oversized bedrolls and mundane supplies (dried beef, water, whetstones, and so forth).

The PCs certainly could wander off-track from their mission and begin exploring this area. They will run into giant patrols (double the number of giants shown above at the PCs APL) and find nothing of interest. (Use as many giant patrols as it takes for the players to take a hint!)

The teleporter: The mountain teleporter pad looks and functions identically to other pads found at previous locations. This teleporter has runes spelling: DALINS ("island"), WROTE ("tower") PAWMS ("swamp").

Proceed to *Encounter Eight* if the Island is chosen. If the Tower is chosen, go to *Encounter Five*. Choosing the Swamp will return the PCs to the teleportation

pad in the lizardfolk encampment as outlined in *Encounter Ten*.

Encounter Eight: The Island

The teleporter pad upon which you find yourselves stands in the open air. Four sets of runes line the pad's perimeter. Unlike the other pads you have seen, this one has no socket into which to insert the ivory spike that you carry. Instead, there is a dial with a pointer set into where the key has previously fit. This dial appears to be able to be turned towards a particular set of runes. The sun is high in the sky, and the immediate area around you appears to be a beach. Waves break against the shore. A number of palm trees dot the flat terrain. The air is warm and slightly humid, smelling of salt.

Several yards to your left, a nine-foot tall monolithic stone statue can be seen. The statue is cylindrical, and appears to represent only a head; no limbs can be seen.

The island is about two hundred yards in diameter. (DMs should describe the statue as similar to the “tiki” kinds seen in places like Easter Island, Fiji or elsewhere in the real world.) This speck of an island is in an ocean half a world away from Keoland.

If the PCs search the statue, they can find a socket the size of the ivory spike that they carry. They will also note writing in ancient Sueloise on its forehead:

NOUDENG

SHINER

PAWMS

WROTE

EARTH

If the key is inserted, the PCs will see the eyes of the statue glow, and the oversized mouth will slide open. The statue will speak the following words in Common:

Make order from chaos.

Once this concept is grasped,

Take the first from the first,

And the last from the last.

Each must pay tribute

According to place.

Then one gives the answer,

While touching my face.

Solution: The riddle can be puzzled out by the PCs in the following manner:

1. Unscramble the five words (Dungeon, Shrine, Swamp, Tower, Heart).
2. Take the first letter of Dungeon; the second from Shrine; the third from Swamp; the fourth from Tower; and the last from Heart (DHAET).
3. Unscramble DHAET (Death).
4. Say “Death” (in either Common or ancient Sueloise) while touching the statue's face.

If a PC offers an incorrect answer *while touching the face*, or if the PCs attempt to remove the key before the riddle has been answered, a trap will be set off (a blast of energy emanates from the statue, to a radius of five feet per APL, doing a number of d6 damage equal to half the APL of the adventure). This trap goes off each time a wrong answer is given until dispelled or the correct answer is supplied. **A single speaker who is the sole person touching the stone in the statue's face is not affected!** (The Cult arranged this in case one was forced to operate the teleporter. They could bring their captors here, and deliberately give the wrong answer, leaving themselves safe while killing their captors who presumably would be standing nearby and allowing the cultist to take the “risk” of touching the statue and answering the riddle.) If more than one person is touching the stone, none of those doing so are afforded any protection from the trap.

All APL's (EL = APL +1)

Magic Energy Trap: See above. This magic trap may only be detected by magical divination, and can only be “disabled” by dispelling it (caster level of 16). Note that the trap should be considered a Force effect.

There is nothing else of interest or value to the PCs.

The teleporter: The island's teleporter pad looks and functions identically to other pads found at previous locations. This teleporter has runes spelling: ANNOTIUM (“mountain”), WROTE (“tower”) and PAWMS (“swamp”).

Proceed to *Encounter Seven* if the Mountain is chosen. If Tower is chosen go to *Encounter Five*. Choosing the Swamp will return the PCs to the teleportation pad in the lizardfolk encampment as outlined in *Encounter Ten*.

Encounter Nine: The Heart

Refer to *DM Aid* 8.

You find yourselves standing on a teleportation pad within a huge cave. It is two hundred feet in width and five times that in length. A magnificent natural ceiling vaults to a height of a hundred feet above your heads. The cave has a concave floor and ceiling. There is a total lack of color here; everything seems a shade of gray, black or white. There is a strong smell of rot and decay, like that of the heart of a fetid swamp.

You stand on the shore of an island surrounded by a stagnant lake. Rubble is strewn everywhere along with the melted and mangled remains of a half-dozen humans. A stone brazier at the center of the island contains a strange ebony fire. The brazier is oddly shaped, as if bits and pieces of stone had been somehow cemented pell-mell to it.

The PCs have been teleported into an extra-dimensional demiplane. This demiplane is inside a ferlow seed floating high in the tower, and the seed is in fact the source of the light. The human remains were Cult of the Shadowed Moon members that tried to convince Baltron to surrender his secrets. If searched, none of their equipment is usable, but the tattoo of a crescent moon can be found behind their right ears.

Give the PCs ten rounds (one minute) to look around. A Spot check (DC 20 + APL) will notice a pair of large, reptilian eyes, barely piercing the surface of the lake, watching the PCs closely. If the PCs notice, or once a minute has passed, Baltron will make his presence known to the party:

The water of the lake erupts, showering the interior of the cavern with a stinking, acidic liquid that stings your eyes and sizzles on your equipment. The ground shakes as an ebony dragon, the largest such beast you have ever seen, lands on the ground between you and the brazier. The creature's great weight shakes the floor of the cavern. The dragon's mouth does not conceal its fangs, the two largest are the length of a greatsword. Most of the beast's scales are the size of a huge shield. The beast is forty feet or higher at the shoulder.

A spot check (DC 16 + APL) notices one of the great tusks has had its tip broken off, and another spot (DC 26 + APL) reveals the tip of the other tusk has been engraved with runes.

The creature sucks in a breath... but the blast from its deadly breath never comes. Instead, the air is

rushed back out, passing across the beast's serpentine tongue to form a question in an ancient tongue.

"Eclanus tuae Malhel, ute venae tue aquirae sont clandestemanti?" The beast takes in a second great draught of air as it turns one ear your way.

The language is ancient Suel. If no one answers immediately, the dragon will resort to (dated) Common:

The black dragon drools acid from its maw and hisses in the Common tongue of man, "Are you Malhel, or do you come to steal their secrets?"

A Sense Motive Check (DC 12 + APL) reveals a hit of contempt in the Dragons voice at the word "Malhel."

All APLs (EL 22)

Baltron, Great Wyrms Black Dragon: See *Monster Manual*, page 70. (Note that Baltron's alignment is Neutral, unlike a regular black dragon)

Fighting Baltron is likely beyond the capability of any APL party playing this module, and you should not hesitate to inform *players* of such. PCs subject to fear effects must make a save against Baltron's *Frightful Presence* power (Will DC 33). For dramatic effect, the DM should have the PCs frozen in fear of the dragon, so they can endure his withering presence, as opposed to the normal effect of running for their lives.

DM Note: Allow party members with 4HD or less that become *panicked* by the *Frightful Presence* to instead revert to *shaken* as the dragon parlays with them and it becomes clear that the dragon doesn't have any immediate intentions of killing them. This effect will wear off entirely if the PCs ally with Baltron to fight the Vitrioli.

Do *not* call for initiative unless the PCs expressly ask for it. The PCs aren't meant to fight the dragon. This is instead a role-playing encounter—and a chance for the PCs to glean the backstory of the module and Baltron's Beacon.

As the PCs interact with the dragon, Baltron will be listening carefully for any falsehoods the PCs speak to see if they are being truthful. The dragon will catch any major falsehoods that the PCs attempt. Baltron will roar in anger if they lie to him, warning, "another falsehood will be your end, mortals!"

If the PCs continue to lie about anything major, Baltron is prepared to kill them – but he won't get the chance. Proceed to the **Vitrioli Attack!** section below.

If the PCs are truthful and sincere, the dragon will eye them warily and ask, "Do you wish to know my tale, mortals? It has been a long time since I have spoken of it. I would have the world of men know of my story, and how I have come to protect them." If the PCs agree, distribute *Player Handout Three*. Once they have had time to digest it, proceed to the **Vitrioli Attack!** section below.

If the PCs, for some reason, don't want to hear Baltron's tale, he will become exceptionally irritated with them, but before he gets the chance to take out his anger on the PCs, proceed to **Vitrioli Attack!**

The Stone Brazier: The brazier is three feet in height and (presently) five feet in diameter. The brazier has a hardness of 8 and 200 hit points. It is also the only known vessel that can contain the Black Flame and keep it from spreading. It radiates strong abjuration and transmutation magic. It is possible that the brazier could become damaged in the coming battle – the DM should review the section of the *Player's Handbook* dealing with damaging objects. If it is destroyed, proceed to the combat conclusion labeled "Uh Oh!"

The Black Flame: The black flame burning in the brazier is a terrible danger to any foolish enough to touch it. The stuff burns cold and cannot be extinguished by any known means. It sets "blackfire" to any living tissue it contacts, except aberrations, slimes and fungi. However, *resist cold* and *protection from cold* confers immunity for the duration of the spell. When burning tissue, the flames can be extinguished by *dispel magic* (caster level 10th), *limited wish*, *wish* or a *miracle* spell (the latter three spells work automatically). A victim set on "blackfire" takes two points of Constitution damage per round (no save). The victim takes no visible damage, but feels excruciating pain (-4 to all rolls) and becomes a lifeless husk when its Constitution reaches 0. The flames do not affect aberrations, slimes and fungi, mineral objects or undead. In fact undead and other evil creatures are attracted by its presence.

The Acid Lake: Wading into the waters of the lake inflict acid damage per round equal to the APL of the party. Full immersion deals double this damage.

The Teleporter: This teleporter has the runes for the letters SHINER ("shrine"), ANNOTIUM

("mountain"), and WROTE ("tower"). (This is why the vitrioli cannot escape the green light of the tower and survive. They would be forced into the tower. They age so quickly that they die in less than three rounds.)

If the PCs teleport to the Tower, proceed to *Encounter Five*. If they choose the Shrine, proceed to *Encounter Six*. If the Mountain is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Seven*. Note that the DM may need to modify descriptions accordingly if PCs teleport back to an area that they have already visited.

If the Swamp is chosen, proceed to *Encounter Ten*. (This is the presumed last teleport for the PCs, but they may wish to investigate other teleporters for one reason or another).

Vitrioli Attack!

This is the climax of the encounter. The vitrioli have been massing on their demi-plane and are going to make one final push through the brazier. The green light of the Beacon ages the Vitrioli so fast they cannot escape the demi-plane and survive. So their job is to enlarge the portal to allow later passage of more formidable foes in greater numbers. These creatures will deal with Baltron and escape the pocket dimension into Oerth.

DM Note: The Vitrioli start at the brazier, which is 40 feet from Baltron and 120 feet from the teleporter.

Your dialogue with Baltron comes to an abrupt halt as you hear a sound like that of burlap being ripped. The dragon's head swings about and it releases an ear-splitting roar.

Slithering out of the Brazier come bizarre, faceless, vaguely humanoid creatures. Dozens of the creatures flow towards the dragon. The rest direct their attention to the brazier. They pay you no heed.

Baltron hisses. "No! Not now!" The great dragon unfurls his wings, but before he can take flight, the creatures swarm upon him. A mighty lash of his tail nearly kills the lot of you, bringing down a nearby stalactite. The dragon releases an enormous gout of acid, but the geyser of death does little to slow the attack – the horrors seem to be immune to acid. You hurry backwards, away from the flailing black colossus for fear of being trampled.

"Protect the brazier," Baltron bellows. "Destroy the ones around the brazier, but not the brazier itself!" The creatures are swarming over the dragon's eyes, blinding him. "Do not touch the ebony flame, or it will be your doom!"

DM Note: This encounter's EL has been reduced by 1, as the creatures will not attack the PCs unless attacked first.

APL 4 (EL 7)

Vitriolus (6): See *Appendix II*.

Target Brazier Weight = 25 lbs.

APL 6 (EL 9)

Vitriolus (12): See *Appendix II*

Target Brazier Weight = 50 lbs.

APL 8 (EL 11)

Advanced Vitriolus (4 HD) (15): See *Appendix III*.

Target Brazier Weight = 100 lbs.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Advanced Vitriolus (6 HD) (18): See *Appendix IV*.

Target Brazier Weight = 180 lbs

APL 12 (EL 15)

Advanced Vitriolus (10 HD) (15): See *Appendix V*.

Target Brazier Weight = 250 lbs.

The primary goal of the Vitrioli is to weld enough stone and grit onto the brazier to expand the planar rift.

The DM should describe how, as they do so, the size of the ebon flame seems to grow. Each Vitriolus can add a number of pounds of sediment (thereby expanding the size of the Brazier) equal to half their hit dice, per round. PCs could fight the vitrioli one at a time, but allowing the other Vitrioli to work unhindered could prove fatal (see **Development**, below)!

Baltron will have a devil of a time dealing with the vitrioli that swarm on him; there are dozens of them (far more than can fit on the brazier; hence their task of stopping Baltron), and all of them are immune to Baltron's breath weapon. He is killing several each round with his natural attacks, but it is slow going. It's clear that he will not be available to aid the PCs anytime soon.

Development:

A great elemental beast lies beyond the gate formed by the black flame, waiting for the vitrioli to expand the Brazier—and thereby the flame—to a size

suitable to allow it to pass into the ferlow seed demi-plane.

If the vitrioli manage to add a certain total number of pounds of material to the Brazier, this will be accomplished. This amount is listed in the creature statistic blocks above, as "Target Brazier Weight." In general, the creatures, working uninterrupted, can complete the expansion in approximately four rounds.

Remember that an uninterrupted vitrioli can weld one pound of material to the brazier per two hit dice.

It is important for the DM to make it clear to the players that starting at the end of combat round two, the vitrioli are busily expanding the brazier, and thereby the black flame gate, as they are left to their own devices. It takes them one round to prepare to weld and they automatically go last in initiative (at –4).

Tactics: Any Vitriolus that is not attacked or threatened will spend the round enlarging the brazier. A Vitriolus that is attacked by a missile weapon will not stop its work to attack unless there is a non-Vitriolus target within reach. Damaging a vitriolus for even a single point of damage will be enough to tear it away from its task and send it to pursue its attacker (although if it does not find a target or take no damage the subsequent round, the Aberration will return to its task). The vitrioli will not grapple, nor will they use any strategies like flanking (except by coincidence), as they have no intelligence. Their sole motivation is to kill the PCs quickly, and return to their first priority, the expansion of the brazier.

If the PCs manage to destroy the vitrioli before they add the target amount of weight of material to the brazier, read **Success!** below. If they fail in this task, read the section entitled **Failure!** instead.

If the PCs, by accident or design, destroy the Brazier, the Black Flame will flare and the gate will yawn wide. Proceed to the **Uh-Oh!** section.

Note: At the lower APLs, it is unlikely that the Vitrioli will be able to expand the brazier before they are destroyed or kill the PCs that try and interrupt them; the primary threat to lower level heroes are the creatures themselves and the incidental damage that they cause. At the higher APLs, however, the success of the larger Vitrioli is a much greater possibility!

Success!

Defeating the Vitrioli before they complete their task, you turn back towards the melee with Baltron

and the creatures that plague him. The membranes of the dragon's wings have many bloody tears, but Baltron seems otherwise unhurt. The dragon's claws and teeth make short work of the few remaining abominations.

Calm settles on the cavern as the great beast's skull-like head tilts towards you. "Well done, adventurers. They are unlikely to attempt such an attack in the near future... but they will try again, and so I must remain here to guard the portal." He takes a few steps forward, the ground trembling beneath each step, and proceeds to roll a boulder backwards with one of his enormous talons, revealing a small pit filled with treasure.

"Take these," the dragon hisses. "Trinkets given to me by the lizardfolk; sacrifices to their god and his avatar. I have no use for them; perhaps you might."

After waiting for you to gather up the contents of the small pit, Baltron motions towards the teleporter pad. "The time has come for you to go. Bring word to your leaders of what has happened here. I will remain behind and guard the portal, and I will do my utmost to calm the lizardfolk that even now speak of marching on your settlements. I believe I know who is stirring up the lizardfolk. My suspicion is the Scarlet Brotherhood; they would be likely seekers of the ancient knowledge of the Malhel." He nods towards the human bodies.

"But," he says, "something must be done about the Hool Beacon. I cannot guard this place forever, and the Vitrioli are legion, as you have seen. The seed that hangs above the beacon must be destroyed. Find the Seeker known as Dimitrius. He will know how to deal with the ferlow seed. Now... go."

Saying nothing more, Baltron moves with serpentine swiftness and slips into the lake of acid.

The treasure granted by Baltron is reflected on the AR for this adventure. See **The Teleporter** above for information about PC destinations from here.

Failure!

Despite your best efforts, you cannot prevent the industrious little horrors from expanding the brazier so wide that something begins coming through. The Vitrioli, their purpose complete, stop and become motionless. A slimy hand the size of a banquet table pushes through the Black Flame gate!

Baltron roars in protest; whatever is coming through, it is the size of the dragon himself. Baltron is now free of his Vitrioli attackers; the swarm has

dropped away and lies still just as yours did. Taking in the situation, Baltron roars, "RUN! Head for the teleporter! Get out of here!"

The creature has now torn the gate open and the fire is beginning to drip off the brazier, growing as it somehow feeds on the dead soil of this place. The creature pushing through the gate resembles an enormous clay golem except that it is composed entirely of muck and slime.

Make it clear to the PCs that they should leave; it is readily apparent that the muck elemental is well beyond their abilities (let alone the rapidly spreading Black Flame) — and should they die here, their task to relate to Viscount Richart Jorgos the information they have gathered will be for naught.

Read this as the PCs begin the activation sequence:

Baltron falls upon the creature, and the very walls of the place begin to tremble as the two struggle against each other. "Tell your leaders that I am not behind the massing lizardfolk!" he shouts. A tremendous fist of muck closes around the dragon's neck, and he gurgles. "The seed... the time is coming... the seed must be destroyed or else... Find Dimitrius of the See..." Baltron's words are cut off as the mighty elemental snaps the dragon's neck and throws the corpse aside. It turns towards you.

Refer to **The Teleporter** above to determine where the PCs end up.

Uh-Oh!

The destruction of the brazier causes the now-unfettered Black Flame to swell in size and begin burning the very lifeless soil around it. As it grows, something begins coming through. The Vitrioli, their purpose complete, stop and become motionless. A slimy hand the size of a banquet table pushes through the Black Flame gate!

Baltron roars in protest; whatever is coming through, it is the size of the dragon himself. Baltron is now free of his vitrioli attackers; the swarm has dropped away and lies still just as yours did. Taking in the situation, Baltron roars, "RUN! Head for the teleporter! Get out of here!"

The intruder has now torn the gate open and the fire is beginning to burn in all directions. The creature pushing through the gate resembles an enormous clay golem except that it is composed entirely of muck and slime.

Make it clear to the PCs that they should leave; it is readily apparent that the muck elemental is well

beyond their abilities (let alone the rapidly spreading Black Flame) — and should they die here, their task to relate to Viscount Richart Jorgos the information they have gathered will be for naught.

Read this as the PCs begin the activation sequence:

Baltron falls upon the creature, and the very walls of the place begin to tremble as the two struggle against each other. “Tell your leaders that I am not behind the massing lizardfolk!” he shouts. A tremendous fist of muck closes around the dragon’s neck, and he gurgles. “The seed... the time is coming... the seed must be destroyed or else... Find Dimitrius of the See...” Baltron’s words are cut off as the mighty elemental snaps the dragon’s neck and throws the corpse aside. It turns towards you.

Refer to **The Teleporter** above to determine where the PCs end up.

Encounter Ten: Return to the Lizardfolk Encampment

Bracing yourself, you activate the teleporter that will return you to the lizardfolk encampment. You ready your blades, expecting trouble, as the lizardfolk of the encampment may have discovered your intrusion by now. As you arrive, your worst fears are confirmed. Several dozen lizardfolk surround the edifice. It seems clear that they have no intention of letting you escape... but wait! Stepping between the reptilian humanoids is a lizardfolk that you recognize - Sselyuuna!

He gives a gentle smile. “Mammal-folk! We followed you into the encampment and ambushed the Sess’Innek followers who responded to the warning horns. It is a small victory, to be sure, but an important one. Were you able to reach the Beacon? What did you discover?”

Sselyuuna will listen to the PCs stories with interest. He is especially fascinated if the PCs reached the beacon tower. If the PCs encountered the “avatar” and confirm for him that the dragon is not a servant of Sess’Innek, the druid will thank the heroes for a job well done and offers to escort them back to Jaedrae. Proceed to the **Conclusion A**.

If the PCs have not yet ascertained the disposition of the avatar, Sselyuuna will insist that they continue their mission until they do so, insisting (rightly) that the Hool and Jaedrae will not be safe until the avatar is defeated.

Conclusion

There is only one conclusion for the adventure, as the PCs will have either returned with the requisite information, not done so (in which case Sselyuuna and/or Jorgos will send them back to try again) or died trying.

Viscount Richart Jorgos listens to your experience, prompting you to tell him every last detail as his scribes and advisors take notes. When you are finished, he is smiling. “Well done. You have certainly earned your reward – two hundred lions for each of you. My council will evaluate all else that you have recovered and present all immaterial items to you as well. We will need the ivory key given to you by Sselyuuna, of course. You have deepest appreciation of both the Crown of Keoland as well as my own. We will set to work discussing what you have told us and devising a final plan to root out the forces behind the massing lizardfolk once and for all.” His mood becomes pensive, “And what of this Dimitrius?”

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 role-playing) to each character.

Encounter One

Defeating or avoiding the kobold ambush:

APL4 180 xp; APL6 240 xp; APL8 300 xp; APL10 360 xp; APL12 450 xp

Encounter Three & Four

Fighting or sneaking through the camp to the teleportation pad and deducing how it functions:

APL4 120 xp; APL6 180 xp; APL8 240 xp; APL10 300 xp; APL12 360 xp

Encounter Six

Defeating or avoiding the elemental(s) (the PCs must have been aware of their being a threat in the first place):

APL4 150 xp; APL6 180 xp; APL8 210 xp; APL10 240 xp; APL12 300 xp

Encounter Seven

Defeating or avoiding the giants:

APL4 150 xp; APL6 180 xp; APL8 210 xp; APL10 240 xp; APL12 300 xp

Encounter Eight

Successfully overcoming the trap and activating the teleportation pad:

APL4 150 xp; APL6 180 xp; APL8 210 xp; APL10 240 xp; APL12 300 xp

Encounter Nine

Defeating the vitrioli before they successfully widen the gate:

APL4 210 xp; APL6 270 xp; APL8 330 xp; APL10 390 xp; APL12 450 xp

Total possible experience:

APL4 675 xp; APL6 900 xp; APL8 1,125 xp; APL10 1,350 xp; APL12 1,575 xp

Note: The amount of possible earned XP exceeds the XP cap. The PCs cannot earn more XP than listed above under “Total Possible Experience.”

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 scenario, 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.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter One:

APL 4: L: 181 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 131 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 391 gp

APL 8: L: 35 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1170 gp

APL 10: L: 44 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2170 gp

APL 12: L: 54 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 4170 gp

Encounter Seven:

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 10 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 20 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 30 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 40 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 50 gp; M: 0 gp

Encounter Nine:

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 596 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1414 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2914 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 4597 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 6530 gp

Conclusion:

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 200 gp; M: 0 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 4: L: 181 gp; C: 210 gp; M: 596 gp Max = 600 gp

APL 6: L: 131 gp; C: 220 gp; M: 1805 gp Max = 800 gp

APL 8: L: 35 gp; C: 230 gp; M: 4084 gp Max = 1,250 gp

APL10: L: 44 gp; C: 240 gp; M: 6767 gp Max = 2,100 gp

APL12: L: 54 gp; C: 250 gp; M: 10700 gp Max = 3,000 gp

Special

Favor of Viscount Richart Jorgos: (Frequency: Regional; Power Rank: Noble. Political: Royal). See the Meta-Organization Book 0 for details, or contact the Keoland triad for further information.

For your continued efforts against the evil forces menacing the Hool, you have received the favor of Richart Jorgos. With your valiant penetration of the Hool Beacon, the time has come for you to be rewarded for your efforts. Tally the amount of influence you have earned with Richart Jorgos (from the Keoland regional modules *Royal Rescue*, *Hunt in the Hool*, and/or *Predators and Prey*), and consult the table below. You may expend some or all of this influence at the end of any module set in the Sheldomar Metaregion to gain one-time access of “Adventure” to your choice of ONE item listed. You may choose to expend less than the full number of points you have earned, and you may choose to gain access to several lesser items whose influence point cost does not exceed your current total. When expended, mark an X through the influence point on the AR(s) in question.

Expend One Point: Dragonhide plate, *caster’s shield*, *Thundering* enhancement to existing +1 or better weapon, *ring of swimming*, *wand of magic missiles* (5th level caster), or *druid’s vestment*.

Expend Two Points: *Spell Resistance (13)* enhancement to existing +1 or better armor or shield, *Wounding* enhancement to existing +1 or better weapon, *immovable rod*, *wand of magic missiles* (7th level caster), or *folding boat*.

Expend Three Points: *Lion’s shield*, *trident of warning*, *ring of force shield*, *cloak of the manta ray*, or *amulet of mighty fists* +2.

Expend Four Points: *Wild* enhancement to existing +1 or better armor or shield, *trident of fish command*, *ring of minor acid resistance*, *python rod*, *torc of animal speech* (from *Masters of the Wild*), or *goggles of night*.

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 4:

Caster’s Shield

Leptor’s Spellbook

Ring of Counterspells

APL 6:

APL 4 Items

Amulet of Mighty Fists +1

Scroll of Mass Heal

APL 8:

APL 4 & 6 Items

Decanter of Endless Water

Metamagic Rod of Lesser Empower

APL 10:

APL 4, 6 & 8 Items

+2 *Light Crossbow*

+2 *Studded Leather Armor*

Necklace of Adaptation

Wand of Slow

APL 12:

APL 4, 6, 8 & 10 Items

Adamantine Breastplate

Cloak of Resistance +3

Headband of Intellect +2

Monk’s Belt

Appendix I: APL 4 Encounters

Encounter One

Kobold Brigands, Male Kobold Rog1; CR 1; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 1d6+2; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 18 (Flatfooted 15, Touch 14); Base Attack/Grapple +0/-2; Attack shortsword +1 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or masterwork light crossbow +5 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); Full Attack shortsword +1 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or masterwork light crossbow +5 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL LE; SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Darkvision 60', Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +0; STR 10, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +7, Craft (Trapmaking) +4, Escape Artist +7, Hide +7, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +4, Tumble +7 Point Blank Shot.

Possessions: Masterwork light crossbow, masterwork studded leather armor, quiver and forty bolts.

Leptor, Male Kobold Wiz4; CR 4; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 4d4+8; hp 21; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 16, Touch 18); Base Attack/Grapple +2/-2; Attack dagger +2 melee (1d3-1, 19-20/x2) or light crossbow +6 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL NE; SQ Darkvision 60', Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; STR 8, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 18, WIS 10, CHA 8

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Concentration +9 (+13), Knowledge: Arcana +11, Knowledge: History +11, Knowledge: Planes +11, Spellcraft +11; Alertness, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll

Prepared Spells (4/4/3 per day; DC 14 + spell level): 0 – *daze, flare, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st – *feather fall, grease, ~~mage armor~~, shield*; 2nd – *scare x2, web*.

Spell Book: All 0 level Wizard spells plus 1st – *feather fall, grease, mage armor, shield*; 2nd – *levitate, scare, web*

Possessions: Dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, spell component pouches, spell book.

Encounter Nine

Vitrioli; CR 3; Small Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar): HD 2d10+12; hp 23; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 6 (Flatfooted 6, Touch 6); Base Attack/Grapple +1/+0; Attack Slam +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid plus 1d3 fire); Full Attack Slam +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid plus 1d3 fire); AL N; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid plus 1d3 fire, improved grab, weld stone; SQ Acid immunity, Blindsight 60 ft., fire resistance 5, weapon resistance; SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will -2; STR 17, DEX 1, CON 22, INT --, WIS 1, CHA 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11.

Appendix II: APL 6 Encounters

Encounter One

Kobold Brigands, Male Kobold Ftr1/Rog2; CR 3; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 2d6+1d10+6; hp 22; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 16, Touch 14); Base Attack/Grapple +2/+0; Attack shortsword +3 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or masterwork light crossbow +8 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); Full Attack shortsword +3 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or masterwork light crossbow +8 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL LE; SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Darkvision 60', Evasion, Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +0; STR 10, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +8, Craft (Trapmaking) +5, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +5, Move Silently +8, Spot +5, Tumble +9 Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus: light crossbow.

Possessions: Masterwork light crossbow, *studded leather armor* +1, quiver and forty bolts.

Leptor, Male Kobold Wiz6; CR 6; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 6d4+12; hp 31; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 16, Touch 18); Base Attack/Grapple +3/-1; Attack dagger +3 melee (1d3-1, 19-20/x2) or light crossbow +7 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL NE; SQ Darkvision 60', Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; STR 8, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 18, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +3, Concentration +11 (+15), Knowledge: Arcana +13, Knowledge: History +13, Knowledge: Planes +13, Spellcraft +13; Alertness, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell

Prepared Spells (4/4/4/3 per day; DC 14 + spell level): 0 – *daze, flare, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st – *feather fall, grease, ~~mage armor~~, shield*; 2nd – *invisibility, protection from arrows, scare, web*; 3rd – *fireball x2, fly*.

Spell Book: All 0 level Wizard spells plus 1st – *feather fall, grease, mage armor, shield*; 2nd – *invisibility, levitate, protection from arrows, scare, web*; 3rd – *fireball, fly, haste*

Possessions: Dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, spell component pouches, spell book.

Encounter Nine

Vitrioli; CR 3; Small Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar): HD 2d10+12; hp 23; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 6 (Flatfooted 6, Touch 6); Base Attack/Grapple +1/+0; Attack Slam +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid plus 1d3 fire); Full Attack Slam +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid plus 1d3 fire); AL N; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid plus 1d3 fire, improved grab, weld stone; SQ Acid immunity, Blindsight 60 ft., fire resistance 5, weapon resistance; SV Fort +6, Ref -2, Will -2; STR 17, DEX 1, CON 22, INT --, WIS 1, CHA 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11.

Appendix III: APL 8 Encounters

Encounter One

Kobold Brigands, Male Kobold Ftr2/Rog3; CR 5; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 3d6+2d10+10; hp 36; Init +2; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 19, Touch 14); Base Attack/Grapple +4/+2; Attack shortsword +5 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or +1 *light crossbow* +10 ranged (1d6+1, 19-20/x2); Full Attack shortsword +5 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or +1 *light crossbow* +10 ranged (1d6+1, 19-20/x2); AL LE; SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Darkvision 60', Evasion, Light Sensitivity, Uncanny Dodge; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +1; STR 10, DEX 17, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Craft (Trapmaking) +6, Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +6, Tumble +11; Far Shot; Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus: light crossbow.

Possessions: +1 *light crossbow*, *studded leather armor* +1, quiver and forty bolts.

Leptor, Male Kobold Wiz8; CR 8; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 8d4+16; hp 41; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 16, Touch 18); Base Attack/Grapple +4/+0; Attack dagger +4 melee (1d3-1, 19-20/x2) or light crossbow +8 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL NE; SQ Darkvision 60', Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6; STR 8, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 19, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Concentration +13 (+17), Knowledge: Arcana +15, Knowledge: History +15, Knowledge: Planes +15, Spellcraft +15; Alertness, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell

Prepared Spells (4/5/4/4/3 per day; DC 14 + spell level): 0 – *daze, flare, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st – *feather fall, grease, ~~mage armor~~, magic missile, shield*; 2nd – *invisibility, protection from arrows, scare, web*; 3rd – Empowered *magic missile, fireball x2, fly*; 4th – *charm monster, dimension door, lesser globe of invulnerability*.

Spell Book: All 0 level Wizard spells plus 1st – *feather fall, grease, mage armor, magic missile, shield*; 2nd – *invisibility, levitate, protection from arrows, scare, web*; 3rd – *fireball, fly, haste, vampiric touch*; 4th – *charm monster, dimension door, lesser globe of invulnerability*

Possessions: Dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, spell component pouches, spell book.

Encounter Nine

Advanced Vitrioli; CR 4; Medium Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar): HD 4d10+24; hp 46; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 5 (Flatfooted 5, Touch 5); Base Attack/Grapple +3/+8; Attack Slam +8 melee (1d6+5 plus 1d4 acid plus 1d4 fire); Full Attack Slam +8 melee (1d6+5 plus 1d4 acid plus 1d4 fire); AL N; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 1d6+5 plus 1d4 acid plus 1d4 fire, improved grab, weld stone; SQ Acid immunity, Blindsight 60 ft., fire resistance 5, weapon resistance; SV Fort +7, Ref -1, Will -1; STR 21, DEX 1, CON 22, INT --, WIS 1, CHA 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13.

Appendix IV: APL 10 Encounters

Encounter One

Kobold Deepwood Snipers, Male Kobold Ftr3/Rog3/Snp1; CR 7; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 3d6+3d10+1d8+14; hp 51; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 20 (Flatfooted 20, Touch 14); Base Attack/Grapple +6/+4; Attack shortsword +7 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or +1 *light crossbow* +12 ranged (1d6+1, 17-20/x2); Full Attack shortsword +7 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or +1 *light crossbow* +12 ranged (1d6+1, 17-20/x2) or +1 *light crossbow* +10/+10 ranged (1d6+1, 17-20/x2); AL LE; SA Keen Bolts, Range Increment Bonus +10 ft., Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Darkvision 60', Evasion, Light Sensitivity, Uncanny Dodge; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +2; STR 10, DEX 17, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Craft (Trapmaking) +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +8, Tumble +11; Far Shot; Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus: light crossbow.

Possessions: +1 *light crossbow*, *studded leather armor* +2, quiver and forty bolts.

Leptor, Male Kobold Wiz10; CR 10; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 10d4+20; hp 51; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 16, Touch 18); Base Attack/Grapple +5/+1; Attack dagger +5 melee (1d3-1, 19-20/x2) or light crossbow +9 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL NE; SQ Darkvision 60', Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +7; STR 8, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 19, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +5, Concentration +15 (+19), Knowledge: Arcana +17, Knowledge: History +17, Knowledge: Planes +17, Spellcraft +17; Alertness, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Quicken Spell, Reach Spell, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell

Prepared Spells (4/5/5/4/4/2 per day; DC 14 + spell level): 0 – *daze, flare, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1st – *feather fall, grease, ~~mage armor~~, magic missile, shield*; 2nd – *invisibility, protection from arrows, scare, web* x2; 3rd – Empowered *magic missile, fireball* x2, *fly*; 4th – *charm monster* x2, *dimension door, lesser globe of invulnerability*; 5th – *cone of cold, Empowered fireball*..

Spell Book: All 0 level Wizard spells plus 1st – *feather fall, grease, mage armor, magic missile, shield*; 2nd – *invisibility, levitate, protection from arrows, scare, web*; 3rd – *fireball, fly, haste; vampiric touch*; 4th – *charm monster, dimension door, lesser globe of invulnerability*; 5th – *cloudkill, cone of cold*.

Possessions: Dagger, light crossbow, 20 bolts, spell component pouches, spell book.

Encounter Nine

Advanced Vitrioli; CR 5; Medium Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar): HD 6d10+36; hp 69; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 5 (Flatfooted 5, Touch 5); Base Attack/Grapple +4/+9; Attack Slam +9 melee (1d6+5 plus 1d4 acid plus 1d4 fire); Full Attack Slam +9 melee (1d6+5 plus 1d4 acid plus 1d4 fire); AL N; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 1d6+5 plus 1d4 acid plus 1d4 fire, improved grab, weld stone; SQ Acid immunity, Blindsight 60 ft., fire resistance 5, weapon resistance; SV Fort +8, Ref +0, Will +0; STR 21, DEX 1, CON 22, INT --, WIS 1, CHA 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +13.

Appendix V: APL 12 Encounters

Encounter One

Kobold Deepwood Snipers, Male Kobold Ftr3/Rog3/Snp4; CR 10; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 3d6+3d10+4d8+20; hp 72; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 21 (Flatfooted 21, Touch 15); Base Attack/Grapple +9/+7; Attack shortsword +10 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or +2 *light crossbow* +16 ranged (1d6+2, 17-20/x3); Full Attack shortsword +9 melee (1d4, 19-20/x2) or +2 *light crossbow* +16 ranged (1d6+2, 17-20/x3) or +2 *light crossbow* +14/+14 ranged (1d6+2, 17-20/x3); AL LE; SA Concealment Reduction 10%, Keen Bolts, *Magic Weapon*, Range Increment Bonus +10 ft., Safe Poison Use, Sneak attack +2d6, Take Aim +2; SQ Darkvision 60', Evasion, Light Sensitivity, Uncanny Dodge; SV Fort +7, Ref +12, Will +3; STR 10, DEX 18, CON 14, INT 10, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +9, Craft (Trapmaking) +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Spot +8, Tumble +11; Far Shot; Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus: light crossbow.

Possessions: +2 *light crossbow*, *studded leather armor* +2, *potion of aid*, quiver and forty bolts.

Leptor, Male Kobold Wiz12; CR 12; Small Reptilian Humanoid: HD 12d4+24; hp 61; Init +3; Spd 30; AC 19 (Flatfooted 16, Touch 18); Base Attack/Grapple +6/+2; Attack dagger +6 melee (1d3-1, 19-20/x2) or light crossbow +10 ranged (1d6, 19-20/x2); AL NE; SQ Darkvision 60', Light Sensitivity; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +11; STR 8, DEX 16, CON 14, INT 22, WIS 10, CHA 8.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +12, Concentration +18 (+22), Knowledge: Arcana +20, Knowledge: History +20, Knowledge: Planes +20, Spellcraft +20; Alertness, Combat Casting, Empower Spell, Quicken Spell, Reach Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus: Evocation, Still Spell

Prepared Spells (4/6/6/5/4/4/3 per day; DC 16 + spell level, Evocation spells DC 17 + spell level): 0 – *daze*, *flare*, *mage hand*, *ray of frost*; 1st – *feather fall*, *grease* x2, ~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile* x2, *shield*; 2nd – *magic missile* (memorized in lieu of a higher level spell), *protection from arrows*, *scare*, *web* x2; 3rd – Empowered *magic missile* x2, *fireball* x2, *fly*; 4th – *charm monster* x2, *crushing despair*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*; 5th – *cone of cold*, Empowered *fireball*, *Reach vampiric touch*, *Silent dimension door*; 6th – *Bigby's forceful hand*, *chain lightning*, *Quickened invisibility*

Spell Book: All 0 level Wizard spells plus 1st – *feather fall*, *grease* x2, ~~*mage armor*~~, *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd – *invisibility* x2, *levitate*, *protection from arrows*, *scare*, *web*; 3rd – *fireball* x2, *fly*, *haste*, *vampiric touch*; 4th – *charm monster*, *crushing despair*, *dimension door*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*; 5th – *cone of cold*, *transmute rock to mud*; 6th – *Bigby's forceful hand*, *chain lightning*, *legend lore*.

Possessions: *Cloak of resistance* +3, *Headband of Intellect* +2, *Dagger*, *light crossbow*, 20 bolts, spell component pouches, spell book.

Encounter Nine

Advanced Vitrioli; CR 7; Large Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar): HD 10d10+60; hp 115; Init -5; Spd 20 ft., Climb 20 ft.; AC 4 (Flatfooted 4, Touch 4); Base Attack/Grapple +7/+20; Attack Slam +15 melee (1d6+9 plus 1d6 acid plus 1d6 fire); Full Attack Slam +15 melee (1d6+9 plus 1d6 acid plus 1d6 fire); AL N; Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Acid, constrict 1d6+9 plus 1d6 acid plus 1d6 fire, improved grab, weld stone; SQ Acid immunity, Blindsight 60 ft., fire resistance 5, weapon resistance; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +1; STR 29, DEX 1, CON 22, INT --, WIS 1, CHA 1.

Skills and Feats: Climb +17.

Appendix VI: New Rules

New Monster - Vitriolus

	Small Outsider (Earth, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice:	2d10+12 (23 hp)
Initiative:	–5
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.
Armor Class:	6 (–5 Dex, +1 Size), touch 6, flat-footed 6
Base	+1 / 0
Attack/Grapple:	
Attack:	Slam +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid and 1d3 fire)
Full Attack:	Slam +5 melee (1d4+3 plus 1d3 acid and 1d3 fire)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Acid, weld stone
Special Qualities:	Acid immunity, blindsight 60 ft., resistances, weapon resistance
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref –2, Will –2
Abilities:	Str 17, Dex 1, Con 22, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1
Skills:	Climb +11
Feats:	—
Environment:	Underground
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	3
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	3–6 HD (Medium); 7–12 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	—

Vitrioli are enchanted monsters native to the Para-Elemental Planes. They appear on the Prime Material Plane as faceless humanoids made of sediment and sand. They stand about three feet tall and weigh around one hundred pounds. They glow with dim green phosphorescence. They function as builders using sand and grit they carry embedded in their bodies to construct or repair structures for their masters from their home plane. Vitrioli are easily distracted; if an individual Vitriolus is attacked it will immediately stop its work and fight its attacker.

Combat: A Vitriolus will attack only if directed to do so by their masters or if something attacks it personally. Attacking another of its kind will not bother a Vitriolus one way or the other. If it cannot reach its attacker (e.g. the attacker is flying), It will return to work. until it is finished or killed.

Acid (Ex): The creature's acidic secretions dissolve only flesh and organic materials. The secretions have an adhesive affect on stone. The acid has no effect on metal (see Weld Stone below).

Resistances (Ex): Vitrioli have fire resistance 5.

Weapon Resistance (Ex): The Vitriolus is unaffected by bludgeoning weapons and takes ½ damage from piercing weapons. Slashing weapons affect the creature normally.

Weld Stone (Ex): Besides being able to permanently and seamlessly join two pieces of stone (one pound of stone per two hit dice of the Vitriolus, per round) in one round, the creature's odd physical properties have an affect in combat. Upon reaching 0 hp or less, they burst into a spray of acid, flame and adhesive sand. When this occurs:

- All targets (except other vitrioli) within five feet (one square) to the exploding vitriol take acid and flame damage equal to their Slam attack.
- The weapon that reduced the creature to 0 hp or less is left caked in hardened muck. Each time this happens, the damage done by the weapon is reduced by –2 points of damage. Breaking this muck off the weapon requires ten minutes of effort per –2 penalty to the weapon.

Skills: A vitriolus has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

New Prestige Class

Deepwood Sniper (from *Masters of the Wild*) (abridged version)

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks, Spot 4 ranks.

Feats: Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (any bow or crossbow).

Class Skills

The Deepwood Sniper's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (bow-making) (Int), Escape Artist (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (Nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following are class features of the Deepwood Sniper prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Deepwood Snipers gain no weapon or armor proficiencies. All weapon-related abilities of this prestige class apply only to projectile ranged weapons with which the character is proficient.

Deepwood Sniper

Class level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Keen arrows, range increment bonus +10 feet/level
2 nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Concealment reduction 10%, <i>magic weapon</i> , projectile improved critical +1
3 rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Safe poison use
4 th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Take aim +2

Keen Arrows (Ex): At 1st level, all projectiles the deepwood sniper fires behave as if they were keen weapons in addition to any other properties they might possess. Thus, a normal arrow fired by a deepwood sniper has a threat range of 19--20 instead of 20. This effect does not stack with any other keen effect.

Range Increment Bonus (Ex): With each level the deepwood sniper gains, the range increments of her projectile weapons increase by +10 feet (added after all multipliers). Thus, a 10th-level deepwood sniper who has the Far Shot feat would have a 280-foot range increment with a heavy crossbow (120 feet x 1.5 + 100 feet).

Concealment Reduction (Ex): When the deepwood sniper reaches 2nd level, her miss chance against opponents with concealment drops by 10%. Thus, she has a miss chance of 10% rather than 20% against an opponent with one-half concealment. Her miss chance drops by an additional 10% per four deepwood sniper levels she gains thereafter, but this ability never reduces her miss chance against any opponent below 0%.

Magic Weapon (Sp): At 2nd level, the character can produce an effect identical to that of a magic weapon spell cast by a cleric of her deepwood sniper level. This ability is usable once per day on projectile weapons only.

Projectile Improved Critical (Ex): When the deepwood sniper reaches 2nd level, the critical damage multipliers of all her projectile weapons increase by +1. Thus, an arrow that normally deals damage $\times 3$ on a critical hit instead does damage $\times 4$ in her hands. When she reaches 7th level, these critical multipliers increase by an additional +1.

Safe Poison Use (Ex): At 3rd level, a deepwood sniper can use poison without any chance of poisoning herself (see Perils of Using Poison in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

Take Aim (Ex): A 4th-level deepwood sniper can gain a +2 bonus on her attack rolls against a stationary target by aiming carefully. Taking aim is a full-round action, and if the target moves more than 5 feet during that period, the bonus is lost. No additional benefit exists for spending more than 1 round aiming. This bonus increases to +4 at 8th level.

New Feats

Reach Spell (Metamagic) (from *Defenders of the Faith*)

You can cast touch spells without touching the recipient.

Benefit: You may cast a spell that normally has a range of “touch” at any distance up to 30'. The spell effectively becomes a ray, so you must succeed at a ranged touch attack to bestow the spell upon the recipient. A reach spell uses up a spell slot two levels higher than the spell's actual level.

Player Handout One

Known History of the Hool Beacon:

North of the vast meanders of the Javan River, where the Hool Marsh verges upon the dark boughs of the Dreadwood, lies an expanse of swamp some hundred square miles in size. It is thickly overgrown with a mixture of cypress trees, saw grass, and other stranger botanical specimens. The flora grows out of the muck to create mire - difficult passage for any would-be explorers. The region is principally known for the dull green glow at its center, which emanates for miles and serves as a local landmark during murky Hool nights. The light's purported origin frightens away even the heartiest marshfolk, and has been a source of mystery for years since the light first shone forth. The luminescence intensifies as one approaches its source—the upper reaches of the central keep of a small, ruined fort. The structure resembles a ghostly lighthouse, but most who have seen it consider it an infernal beacon.

Located on a low hillock, one of the few patches of solid ground in the region, the long-abandoned structure was once a Keoish foothold. It is one of a chain of similar forts constructed more than a century ago to protect the kingdom's southern border during Keoland's ill-fated imperial age. The incomplete keep suffered a series of enervating attacks by local tribes of lizardfolk, who inhabited the place after the exhausted Keolanders finally abandoned it. Keoland subsequently decided to establish the kingdom's southern frontier in the Dreadwood.

The Cult of the Black Flame

The lizardfolk did not hold sway for long. A century ago, the diabolical Cult of the Black Flame, led by a charismatic Suloise high priest known as Ohjos (the "Eye of God"), swept in to claim the ruined works and complete construction of the fort. Although denizens of the marsh shunned the place, word of the cult's increasing outrages soon spread beyond the borders of the Hool. When several youths, including the children of nobility, disappeared from the neighboring Viscounty of Salinmoor, the local lord, Count Arthemene, assembled a small army, even bidding reluctant old King Nyhan IV to contribute a contingent of grizzled Dreadwalkers. The host marched on the cult's fort, but much to their surprise, they found no evidence of the cult. It had vanished, leaving the keep empty save for the grisly remains of the Keolandish younglings.

The Coming of Baltron

The keep remained vacant until about twenty years ago, when a mage exiled from Keoland took up residence in the lonely fort. Called Baltron of Linth, the infamous wizard had spent a good deal of his life combing the depths of the Dreadwood looking for the lost magic of

the notorious (and extinct) Suel House of Malhel. According to legend, the Malhel came to a cataclysmic end at their own hands after dabbling in long-lost magic in the years following the Great Migrations. Despite longstanding Keoish prohibitions against seeking out the dark heritage of the Malhel, Baltron craved this knowledge and could not be dissuaded from its pursuit.

Expelled from the National Academy of Wizardry and pressured from Niole Dra for their efforts, Baltron and Leptor (his protégé and a formidable wizard in his own right) originally traveled to this deserted keep together to glean what they could of the forbidden arcane lore. Baltron found many clues and sequestered items of interest that had been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame. Baltron was able to continue his research undisturbed in the lonely keep in the Hool Marsh. His research reportedly involved the summoning of a lost elemental power of great might, which he hoped to bend to his will and make his servant. After many years of isolation, Baltron finally succeeded in his summoning, but was unable to control the forces which he unleashed, resulting in a calamitous backfire which destroyed the mage, damaged the keep, and set off the eerie green glow now visible in all directions from the heights of the central tower.

The Silent Ones of Niole Dra, guardians of Keoland's magical secrets, attempted an exploration of the ruins shortly after the explosion, eager to discover Baltron's fate and whereabouts, but the small party was driven away by certain powerful and evil denizens of the swamp, who flocked to the disturbing beacon.

Just prior to the Greyhawk Wars, a man named Leptor, a protégé of Baltron and a moderately powerful wizard in his own right, led a party to explore the ruins as part of an expedition sponsored by an organization of adventuring explorers known as the Seekers, who once claimed Baltron as a member. The expedition included the infamous ranger lord Arcturus of Sayre, known throughout the kingdom for his treachery, along with a rag-tag mercenary retinue. Leptor and his band sought out not only Baltron's dark knowledge, but the treasure said to have been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame, hidden and undiscovered somewhere within the citadel. The party's fate remains unknown. Some say that Leptor spent many months trying to reclaim the ruins and their secrets amid the omnipresent threat of lizardfolk attack only to disappear one forlorn night, never to be seen since. Some say the Cult of the Black Flame has finally returned. Though rumors abound of treasure and mystery at the site, few in the past decade have attempted to claim the place for themselves.

Player Handout Two

Written in ancient Suel:

[illegible]

Translation:

One Ferlow Seed
One Fertile Black Dragon's Egg
Six feet of Mangrove Root
One Stone Brazier
A pinch of dried, powdered peas
A dash of powdered horse's hoof
A hemispherical clear crystal
A hemispherical piece of Gum Arabic
A forked glass rod
A loadstone
A dash of iron filings
A dusting of powdered corn extract
A twisted loop of parchment

Player Handout Three

The tale of Baltron's Beacon, as told by Baltron:

"I took up residence in the tower about twenty years ago. I had spent a good deal of my life combing the depths of the Dreadwood looking for the lost magic of the notorious (and extinct) Suel House of Malhel. According to legend, the Malhel came to a cataclysmic end at their own hands after dabbling in long-lost magic in the years following the Great Migrations. Despite longstanding Keoish prohibitions against seeking out the dark heritage of the Malhel, I craved this knowledge and would not be dissuaded from its pursuit. Having been expelled from the National Academy of Wizardry and pressured from Niole Dra, my apprentice Leptor and I traveled to this keep together to glean what we could of the forbidden arcane lore. I found many clues and sequestered items of interest that had been abandoned by the Cult of the Black Flame."

"I also discovered a series of dormant teleportation portals, through which the Cult of the Black Flame had escaped the tower. If the portals could somehow be reactivated, the teleporters could be utilized. Upon further research, I discovered that an ornately carved dragon's tooth was a magical key that was needed to use the portals. But I found myself unable to reactivate the teleporters, and I finally gave up and moved on to other projects. I shared what I felt was safe to do so with Leptor, and all seemed to go well for several months. During that time I learned much about the Cult, their forbidden magic and their possible ties to the Scarlet Brotherhood and possibly the Malhel. Meanwhile, Leptor came to privately believe that he was a descendent of the Malhel and the rightful heir to the secret knowledge that I was researching – this was unknown to me at the time of course. Leptor was so confident in his lineage that he took it upon himself to conduct the ritual only a true Malhel could hope to succeed in competing – calling the spirit of the Hool Marsh to serve him. The results were spectacular, but not what Leptor desired. A host of Vitrioli came after him. He fled the ritual chamber in the tower to awaken me."

"Battling Vitrioli on the way back to the summoning room, we entered the area as more of the creatures kept pouring through the rift in the brazier of black flame. Leptor, frightened out of his mind, abandoned me to my fate. But the diminutive Vitrioli did not attack me. Instead they concentrated on welding material onto the brazier to enlarge its size, which was limiting what could come through. I realized that unless I got rid of the brazier, the rift would burst asunder, with cataclysmic results."

"In my research I had learned of an extra-dimensional space the Cult of the Black Flame had prepared as a "safe place" to perform the Ritual of Calling. The brazier of black flame was to be sent there before the ritual. I incanted another spell I had discovered in my research, one that supposedly would send the brazier to this otherworldly space. A great explosion shook the entire keep at the completion of this second ritual, bringing down many of the outer defenses and blasting holes in the walls and roof

of the tower. The brazier vanished, and I found my body bathed in a strange green light. The light emanated from the ferlow seed that was part of the Ritual of Calling. The tiny seed now hung suspended in mid-air at the top of my tower, displaying an awesome radiance that could be seen for a great distance."

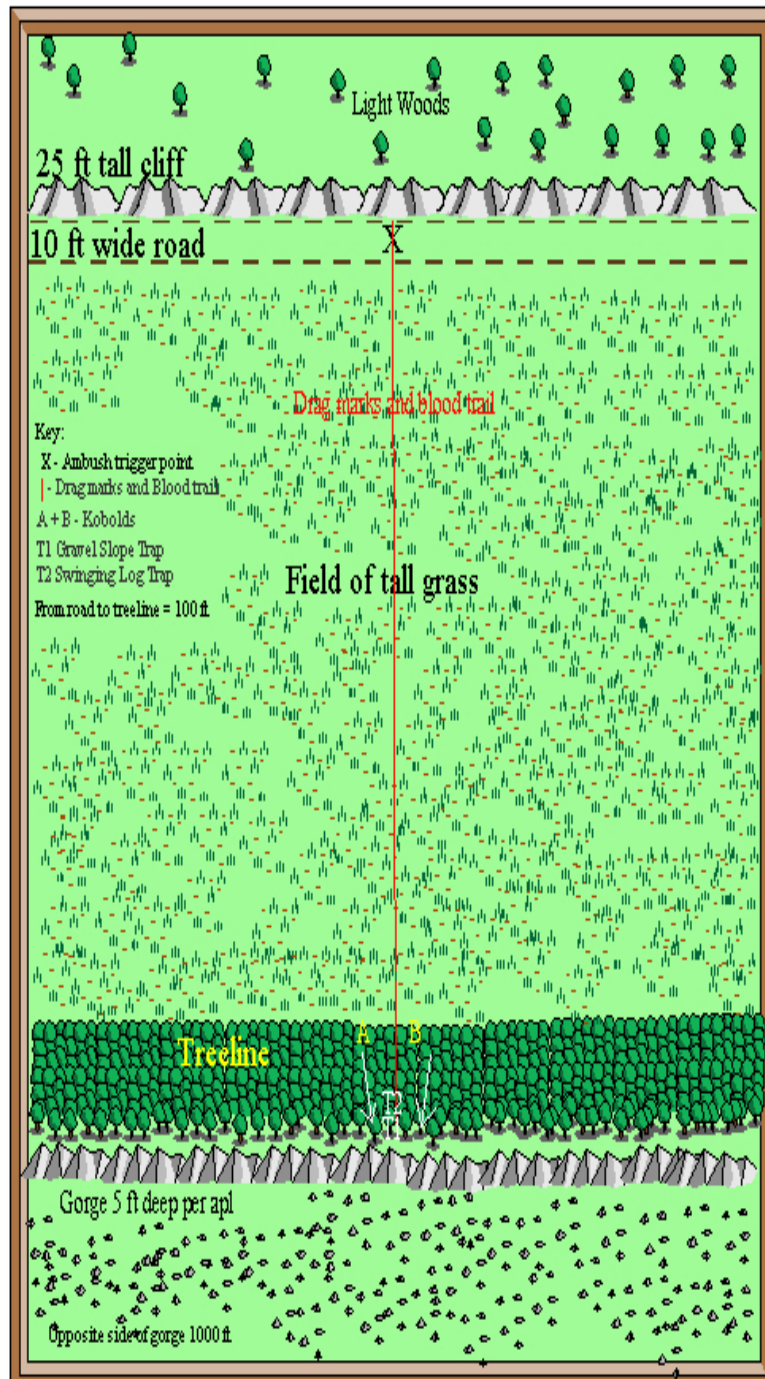
"I felt myself ageing rapidly. My hair came down below my face, and I felt my joints stiffening. I fell to the floor. And there I died... temporarily. When I awoke outside the tower, I was shocked to discover that my spirit had been fettered to that of a black dragon. Leptor had attempted to seize the magical power of the Hool for himself, but now I had been snared by it instead. I now felt compelled to defend the Hool Marsh from intruders."

"Returning to the tower I discovered that all of the records and writings of the Cult of the Black Flame I had found, along with my own research, had been destroyed in the magical blast. But the blast had done something unexpected. I could now activate the dormant teleportation portals, with my great fangs. I explored the destinations of these teleporters. Some of the destinations remained unknown to me. I assume the teleporters fail to function if their destination points cannot accommodate my bulk – but one brought me to this place. This entire pocket dimension is contained within the tiny ferlow seed that now bathes the Hool in green light. The Cult's ritual had created a safe haven within it!"

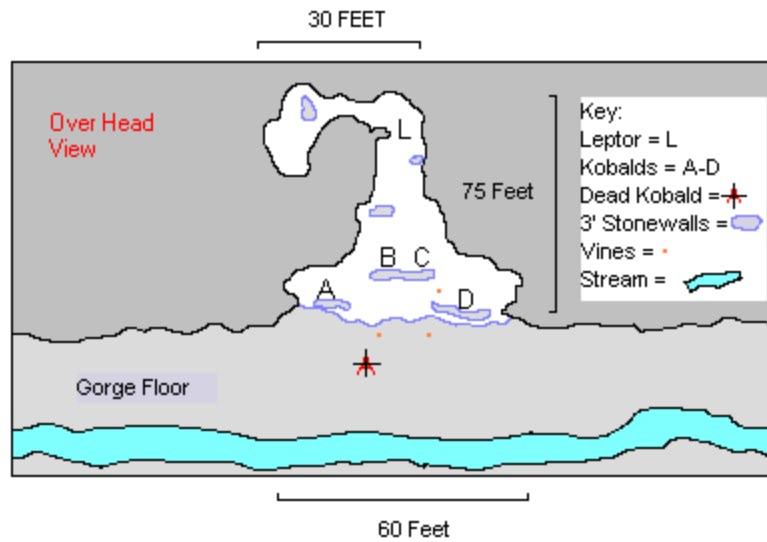
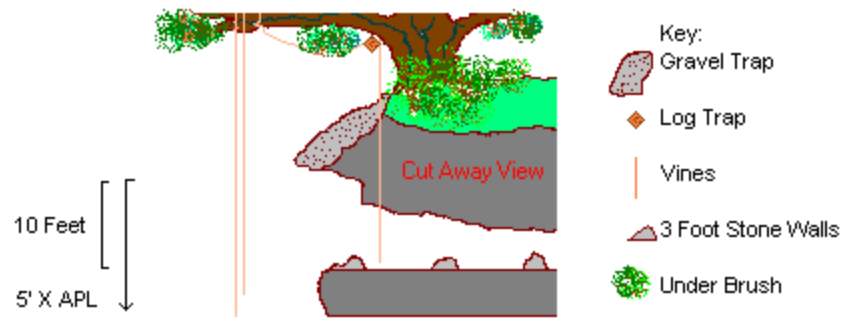
"I knew that all of the activity in the Tower – and whatever tale my wayward apprentice would tell to cover his involvement in the Malhel research – would attract a great deal of attention by sages and adventurers alike. I made contact with the superstitious lizardfolk of the marsh. Utilizing my new form, I passed myself off as an Avatar of Sess'Innek. I ordered his lizardfolk followers to defend the "holy place" from all nonbelievers. Word of the presence of such an avatar spread among the lizardfolk, and tribes began to arrive to worship at the beacon in ever-growing numbers. To cement our relationship, I presented the tip of one of my fangs to the lizardfolk high priest, allowing him to use the outside teleporter in the swamp to enter and leave the tower as he pleased. In this way, I could issue orders to the lizardfolk worshippers without having to leave the defensible tower."

"With the tower protected from the outside, I remain here within the demi-plane. I am now the guardian of the black flame. I stand ready to destroy interlopers seeking to steal the flame or the secret of its creation. I also protect the Hool against the threat of the vitrioli. Those creatures would swarm this place if not for my vigilance. Should they somehow pass into our own world, they would destroy the Hool – as well as the rest of the land of men. I cannot destroy the brazier – to do so would allow the black flame to burn freely and widen the gate to the plane of Aberration. So here I remain."

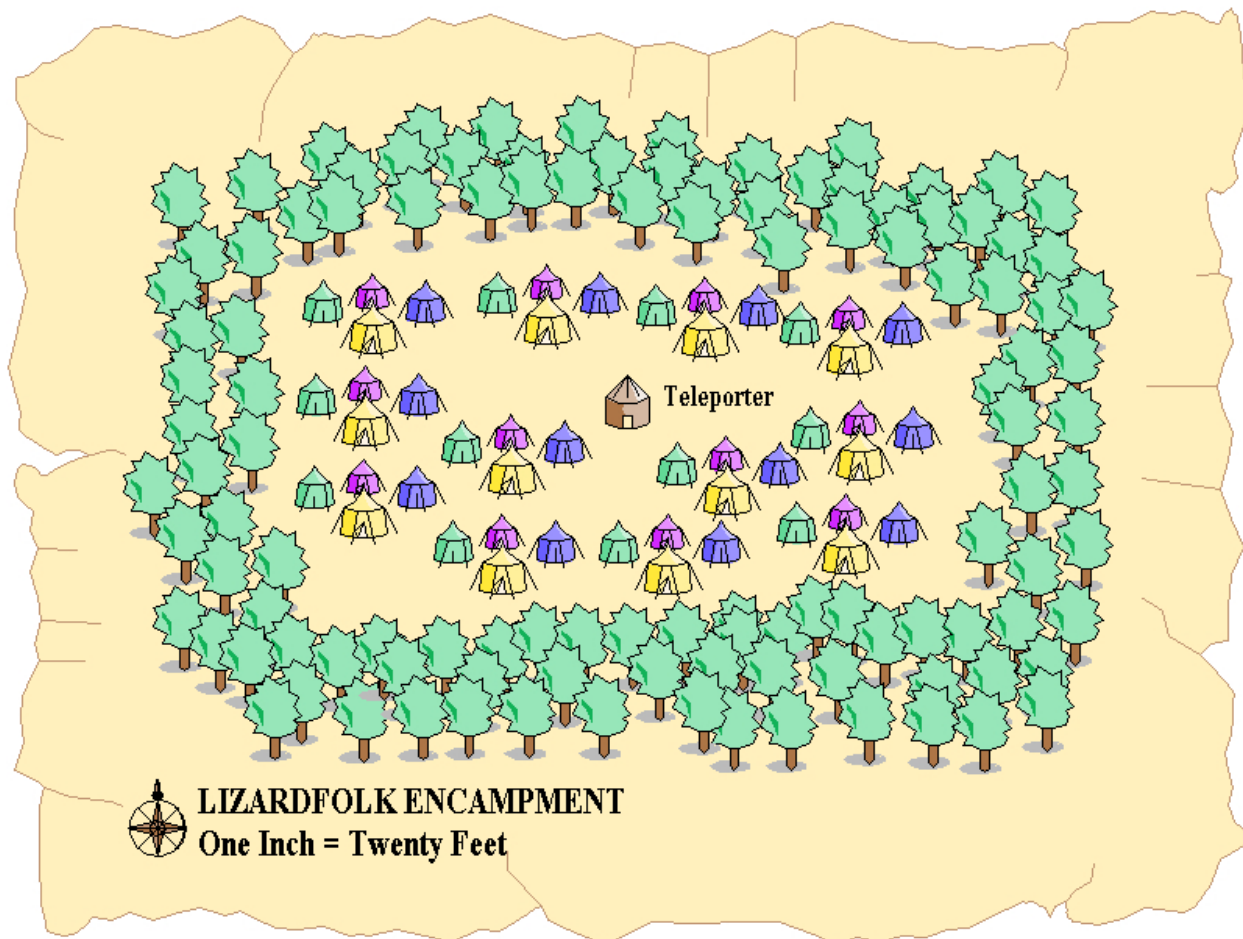
DM Aid 1



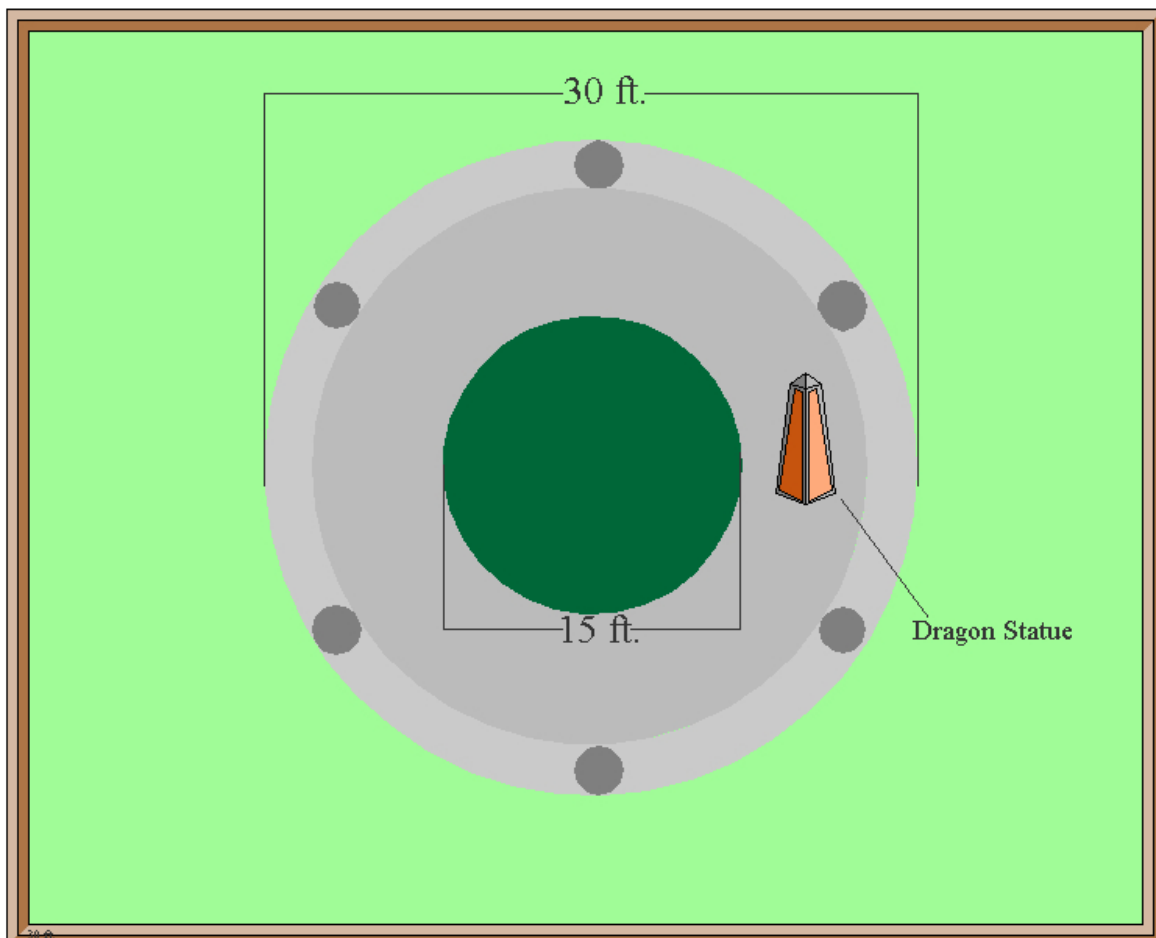
DM Aid 2



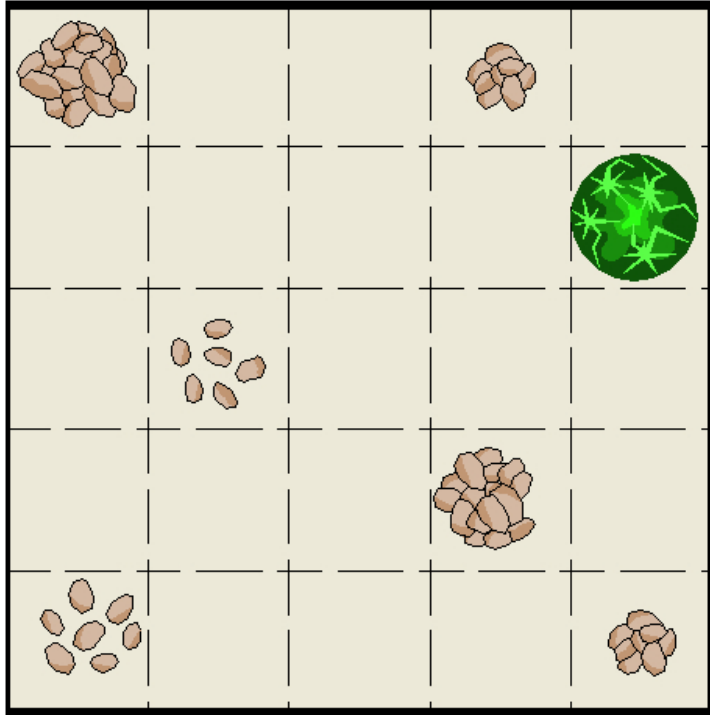
DM Aid 3



DM Aid 4



DM Aid 5 Inside



Rubble



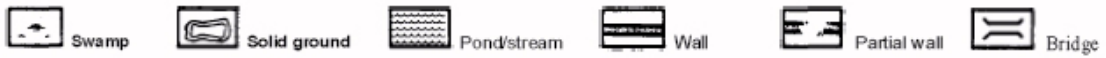
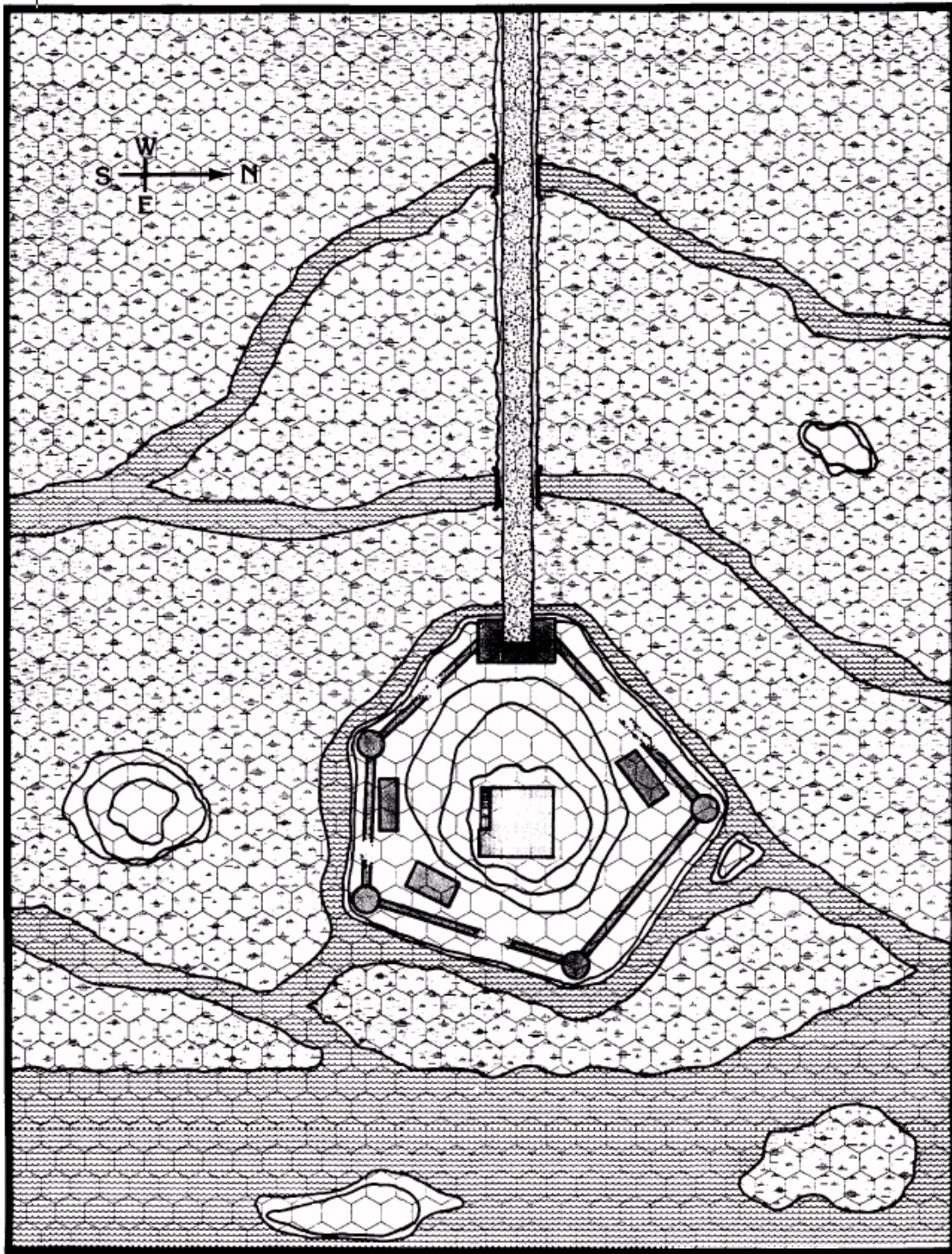
**Teleporter
Pad**

One Square = Five Feet

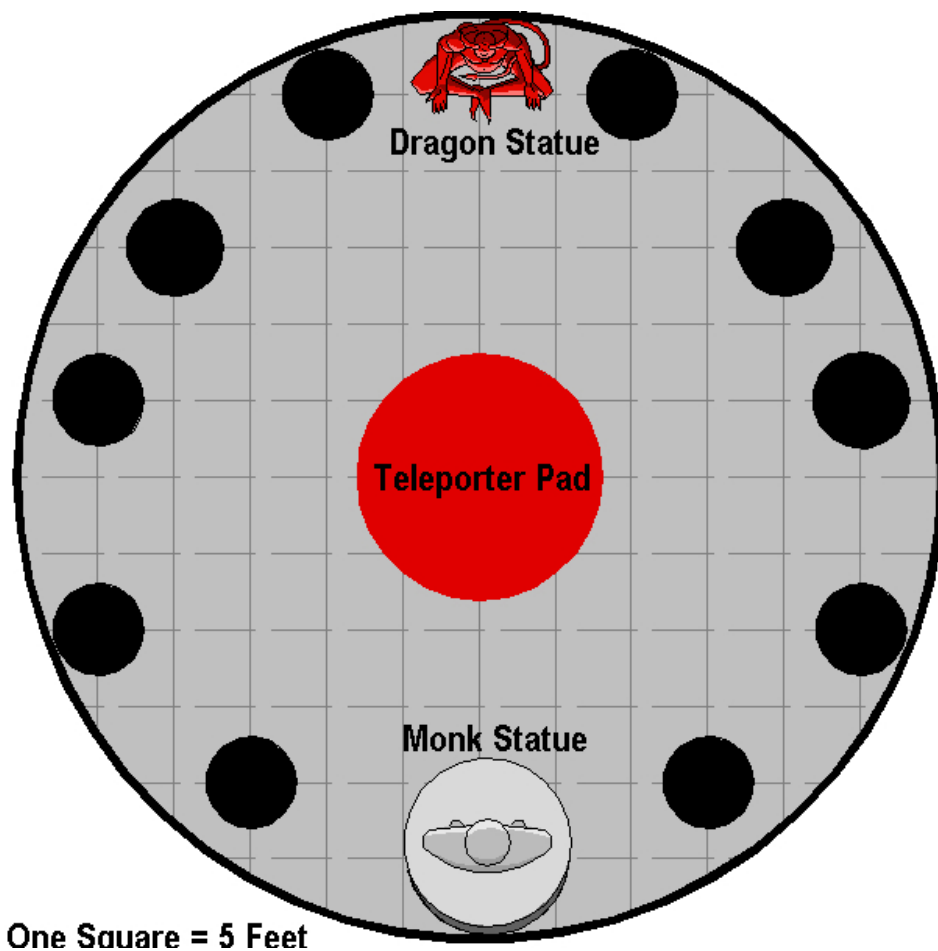
***Hool Beacon
Tower***

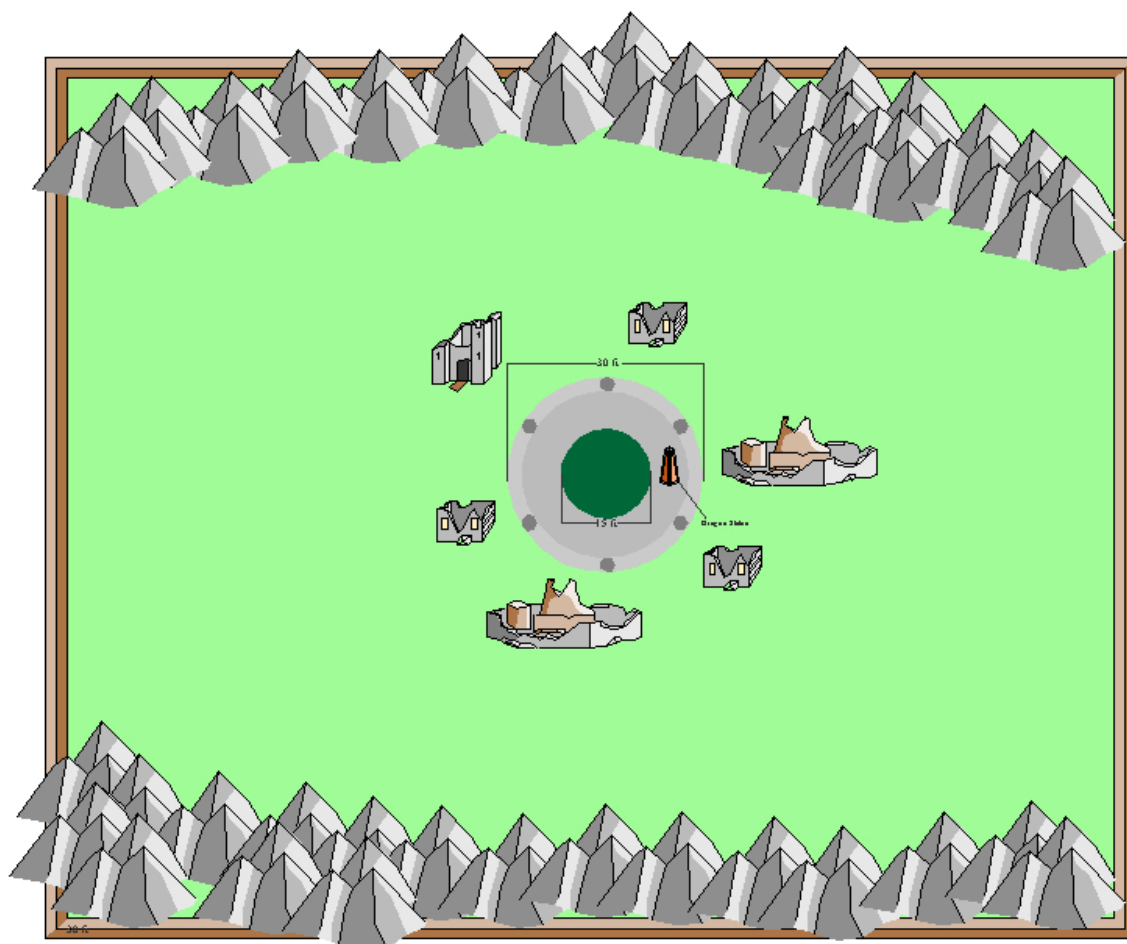
DM Aid 5 Outside

PLAYERS' MAP

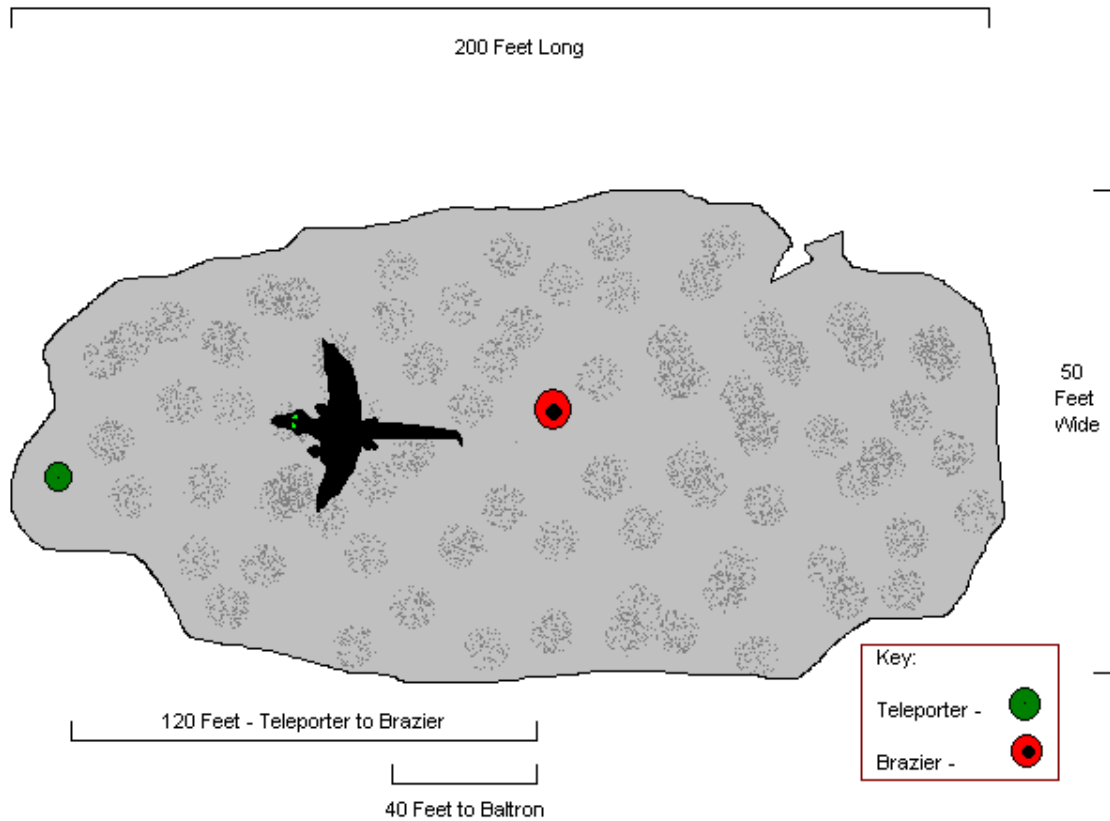


DM Aid 6



DM Aid 7

DM Aid 8



This cave is 1000 feet long and 200 feet wide.

The ceiling is 100 feet high.

The Island is roughly in the caves center.

There are no physical exits from the cave.

DM Aid 9

