

**KEOI3-04**

# **Runaway Bride**

**An Introductory D&D LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>®</sup>  
Keoland Regional Adventure**

Version 1.2

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Invitations have been sent. The Decorations are in place. Guests are starting to arrive, but the bride is nowhere to be found. The Lord of Montvale has summoned all available bodies to find his daughter. Will your group of stalwart companions be able to find her before it's too late? An introductory adventure for 1<sup>st</sup> level characters.

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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 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.

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

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

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. It 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**

As an introductory adventure, no characters above 1<sup>st</sup> level are permitted to play. Players who have characters above this level limit should choose another PC or create a new one with which to play this adventure.

## **Time Units and Upkeep**

This is a standard one-round Introductory 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 round. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per round. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per round.

## **Adventure Summary and Background**

Lord Wilmot has arranged a marriage between his daughter, Amerise, and another minor noble from House Rhola in the Gray Hills. His daughter, however, is in love with an Elven Dreadwalker named Ularion and has run away to join her love

in the Dreadwood. Lord Wilmot insists, however, that his daughter has been kidnapped and requests that the adventurers go into the Dreadwood and bring her back to the safety of Montvale and the arms of her future husband.

It is up to the adventurers to unravel the mystery of what has happened to the daughter, track her into the Dreadwood where untold horrors await, and finally overcome the dilemma once (if) they rescue her: return her to her father, or allow her to follow her heart?

## **Key Event Summary**

Encounter #1: PCs interrupt the goblin Ambush and may find out about the wedding if they travel with the ribbon merchant Mahoney.

Encounter #2: PCs have a difficult time securing lodging for the evening.

Encounter #3: PCs meet Kendall DeMontvale and discover that Amerise is missing.

Encounter #4: PCs meet Lord Wilmot DeMontvale and his wife Lady Illysha.

Encounter #5: PCs may search Montvale Manor House for clues regarding Amerise's disappearance.

Encounter #6: PCs stumble upon Old Widow Maggie's and their first Pseudonatural critters.

Encounter #7: PCs follow the trail to Lover's Rock and discover the unconscious Ularien.

Encounter #8: PCs may or may not stumble into an assassin vine.

Encounter #9: PCs discover the Darien ready to sacrifice Amerise to Erythnul [and hopefully prevent it from happening!]

## **Conclusions:**

There are *many* possible conclusions to this module. Keep track of the PCs' actions and include all of those which apply.

## **Introduction**

***Montvale is a small village in the Barony of Westgate that serves as a trade center for the local farms, mines, and the occasional traveler from the Dreadwood. As its name implies, the village is set in a small valley nestled amongst the Good Hills. It's just to the Westgate side of the border of the Barony of Grayhill, about two days travel south of Curget, and only a few hours' walk north of the Dreadwood. For one reason or another, each of you has found***

***yourselves here at this crossroads of trade between the Yeomanry in the west and Gradsul to the East.***

Allow PCs to introduce themselves to each other.

***As you approach the top of one of the many foothills around Montvale, you make out the sound of battle and hear a cry for help.***

Assuming the PCs move forward to investigate, continue to Encounter #1.

## **Encounter One: Help!**

***Cresting the hill you are greeted by a grisly sight. About a hundred feet away, a merchant wagon is under attack by a pack of vicious creatures. The merchant's two guards have already been struck down and a few of the creatures have begun ransacking the wagon sending spools of brightly colored ribbon sailing into the air. The unfortunate merchant has been cornered against a tree and is desperately trying to defend himself.***

## **APL 2 (EL 3)**

**Goblins (8):** hp 4; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

### **Tactics:**

Once the PCs intervene the creatures will quickly lose interest in the wagon's contents and their merchant-playtoy, instead turning their full attention to the threat at hand.

Roll individual initiative for the goblins. The goblins begin 100' feet away from the adventurers. They immediately rush the PCs, throwing their javelins on the way in.

Individual goblins will flee if they are reduced below 2 hp. Once six of the goblins have fled or been knocked unconscious or killed, the remainder will scatter and flee down the road in the direction the PCs came from [away from Montvale]. PCs will be unable to find any tracks deeper into the woods, only those around the ambush site.

If the goblins are captured alive and questioned, the DM should allow Intimidate (DC 10), Bluff (DC 15) or a Diplomacy (DC 20) checks by the PCs. Choose one skill according to the method by which the PCs attempt to interrogate the goblins. Violent actions should be given a circumstance bonus while "kind" gestures will only

convince the goblins that the PC is weak and result in a penalty. The goblins are simply looking to restock their equipment, foodstuffs, and coin purses. Pickings have been good of late [due to the upcoming wedding, though the goblins don't know that], and they've gotten too bold for their own good.

#### **Treasure:**

Per goblin: L=2 gp; C= 2.5 gp; M=None

#### **Mahoney, ribbon merchant:** Male human Exp2.

If the PCs are successful in saving Mahoney he will be very grateful and offer them a bag of coin in return for their help [20 gp each]. He would love to offer more, but until he makes it into Montvale he really has little more to offer.

A successful Heal check (DC 15) confirms that both of Mahoney's guards are dead (-10 hp). The PCs may act as his guards the rest of the way to Montvale, or they may take leave of the merchant and continue on their own. [If the PCs do not accompany him, they do **not** gain the Favor of Mahoney the Ribbon Merchant, nor will he offer it to them as compensation. PCs must travel with him willingly.]

If the PCs travel with Mahoney, he informs them that the Lord of Montvale's daughter is going to be married the day after tomorrow. He must get there in time to meet with Huffin Guffin III to coordinate the wedding cake icing with his decorative ribbons.

PCs may choose to make Knowledge (Nobility & Royalty), Knowledge (Local, Metaregion I/Sheldomar Valley), or Bardic Knowledge checks. See DM Aid #1 for details. If none of the PCs have any ranks in it, remember they can always attempt any Knowledge check of DC 10 or less.

## **Encounter Two: The Blazing Torch**

*When you arrive in town, there is barely a spare bed to be found at the local inns. It takes you three tries before you finally hit upon the Blazing Torch and, according to One-Ale, the Gnomish innkeeper, you got the absolutely last room he had available for the night.*

*Over a hearty (if expensive) dinner you are able to confirm (or discover, if the PCs did not travel with Mahoney) that the Lord of Montvale's daughter is to be wed in just under a week. A joyous occasion to be sure, but little solace for tired adventurers just trying to get some shut-eye who discover that their "private room" is already occupied. By the time you get back downstairs to complain that your room is already full, the bar is deserted and the little gnome nowhere to be found. With dawn's light but a few hours away and little else to do, you warily made your way back to your cramped quarters.*

One-Ale is notorious in Montvale for "pulling one over" on his guests. The adventurers have all been stuffed into the same room with just two beds. There's not exactly a lot of elbow room, but the party should be able to fit in, if a little uncomfortably. PCs can work out watch shifts, sleeping arrangements, plans to "get that good for nothing gnome", etc.

*It seems like only a few minutes after you closed your eyes when the crowing of the rooster startles you out of your sleep. Then the hammering starts up again. Giving up on trying to sleep, you pack up your belongings and head downstairs either for breakfast or to wring that scrawny gnome's neck...maybe both.*

### **Dealing With One-Ale**

Some PCs may want to try and get a hold of One-Ale. He will be unable to be found until morning, at which point One-Ale will be totally apologetic and point out that were they to simply have told him about the problem last night he would have certainly corrected it with all due haste. However, since the evening has passed already, there's nothing he can do to correct the situation.

If the PCs persist or become violent, the dwarves at one of the tables are a pair of Town Guards. They'll offer to take down the complaint. It's very unlikely that One-Ale will receive more than a warning for unethical business practices. (He has a stack of them behind the bar.)

## Encounter Three: Little Boy's Blue

*Entering the common room of the Blazing Torch, you find it almost totally empty. Sitting in the center of the room, a trio of Dwarves seems to be haggling over the price of their meal with the Innkeeper. The sole other occupant of the room is a young boy, probably just into his teens, dressed in a black and gold page's uniform, sitting with his head on the table in the corner.*

The page is Kendell DeMontvale, Lord Wilmot DeMontvale's fifteen year-old son. A Knowledge: Local (Metaregion One, or Knowledge: Nobility & Royalty check (DC 15) would recognize the lad's colors as that of the local lord. A Bardic Knowledge check (DC 20) - or simply asking One-Ale the Innkeep - would reveal the identity of the boy. One-Ale will mention to any PCs asking about the boy that it is the first time any DeMontvale has set foot in the Inn.

Kendell is a good kid, but today is simply not his day. His sister has run off and his father is insisting that she was kidnapped. With his brother busily preparing the keep, it has fallen on Kendell's shoulders to find his sister. He's (frankly) afraid to go home without having found her. Worst of all, he knows that she wasn't kidnapped, but he can't say a thing about it because it would just make his father even angrier.

If someone speaks to him, Kendell will wipe his eyes, sniffle and smile weakly back at them. It'll take some convincing to get Kendell to spill the beans, but it shouldn't be too hard. (DC10 diplomacy check, +2 circumstance for being female, -2 for being heavily armed/armored, -5 for being a half-orc)

Once the party convinces Kendell to explain why he's crying, he'll try to introduce himself. Kendell speaks with a stutter on his best days and today he's really worried about his sister.

*I-I-I am Kendell DeMontvale, the son of Lord Wilmot of Montvale. M-m-my sister is supposed to be married tomorrow and well (he gets even quieter) she's missing. I've been looking for her all morning and I just don't know where she's gone. M-m-maybe a group of adventurers like you could help? If you are n-n-not too busy, would you be willing to accompany me to the manor and speak to my f-f-father?*

No doubt the PCs will have some questions for Kendell. Kendell will deflect questions (Sense Motive DC10) suggesting the adventurers wait to speak to his father, but how much information Kendell is willing to give out depends on the party's Diplomacy skills. Apply the same circumstance modifiers above.

Here is what Kendell knows:

| DC   | Information Gained                                                                         |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5    | His father mentioned that the wedding would have to be called off if Amerise wasn't found. |
| 10   | His father says his sister Amerise has been kidnapped...                                   |
| 15   | ...by creatures from (he whispers) the Dreadwood.                                          |
| 20 + | But he believes she's just as likely run off with that Dreadwood Ranger boyfriend of hers. |

If asked about pay, Kendell will respond that he's certain his father will reward them handsomely.

Once the PCs have agreed to accompany Kendell to the manor, proceed to *Encounter Four*. If the adventurers decide not to accompany Kendell, he will dismiss himself and go look for another group of adventurers. The PCs may decide to go look for Amerise on their own, and may proceed to *Encounter Six*. If the PCs choose not to look for Amerise, the adventure is over.

## Encounter Four: House on a Hill

*Kendell leads you outside of the inn where a coach is waiting to transport you to Montvale Manor. As you head north and west out of town and into the hills you finally get a break from the constant clamor. After about ten minutes the carriage approaches the Manor house. From its hilltop perch you have a splendid view of the village. You can easily make out the Market Square in the center of town currently dominated by numerous gaily-colored party tents. On a slightly lower hill to the east, the keep, still under construction, stands as a silent watcher over the village though it too seems to have succumbed to the pending festivities and is decorated with bright colors. Finally there is the miner's quarter on the northern end of town, grubby and gray, stubbornly refusing to be swallowed up by the*

*wave of color that seems to have enveloped the rest of the town.*

*A solid ten-foot high wall surrounds the large two-story manor house. Kendell leads you through the gateway and up the main walk, trees on either side forming a canopy that would easily shelter from all but the harshest storms. Halfway up the walk you pass a statue of a mounted knight, his horse reared up and his lance seeming to challenge all that approach.*

*Finally you come to the doors of Montvale Manor. Kendell directs you inside to a small room just off the main hallway and politely asks you to wait while he goes to find his father.*

If Kendell is asked he will point out that the statue is of Lord Sir Gabriel DeMontvale, the previous Lord of the Manor and once Captain of the Baron of Westgate's personal guard. Lord Sir Gabriel was lost in the Dreadwood during the campaign to reclaim Nume Eor.

*On the far wall of the trophy room, a pair of full suits of plate armor flank what looks to be the Montvale family crest. Several weapon collections line the side walls, as well as an impressive collection of stuffed creatures, the largest of which looks like a bear with feathers and a beak. A huge, empty plaque in the center of the left wall displays an inscription plaque "Green Dragon of the Dreadwood". You are able to circle the room and the displays several times, and yet the manor lord still has not arrived.*

A Knowledge (Nature) DC 10 will confirm the feathery creature to be an Owlbear. A Bardic Knowledge or Knowledge Local check DC 15 confirm rumors of a green dragon that is supposed to live in the Dreadwood. PCs from the Dreadwood or bordering lands have heard of the rumor even without making the appropriate Knowledge check.

PCs who make a Knowledge(Nobility & Royalty) DC 10 realize that they have been waiting an unusually long time. Whether or not it is a reflection of the PCs lowly status, or of the lord's own importance, remains to be seen, however.

*More time goes by before the young boy who introduced himself to you earlier steps into the room and clears his throat. "L...L...Lord Wilmot DeMontvale" he announces before stepping to the side of the door. The man you*

*would assume to be Lord Wilmot steps into the room, shaking his head. He is a tall man, clearly of Suel blood, blonde hair and beard neatly trimmed and immaculately kept. His hand rests at all times on the pommel of a beautifully crafted longsword belted to his waist. Coming from such a well-groomed man his raspy voice and manners almost seem like the breaking of glass.*

*"My stuttering son here informs me that you are the most impressive band of adventurers that Montvale has to offer. Good. I have need of your assistance. Creatures from the Dreadwood have kidnapped my daughter. Find her and bring her back and I will reward you handsomely." He pats a pouch on his belt. "Find her and get her back before the sun sets and I'll double the reward."*

Lord Wilmot is in a bit of a pickle. He knows full well that his daughter was not kidnapped by anyone, let alone by some creature from the Dreadwood. However, tomorrow morning his daughter is bound to be married into House Rhola.

The fact that she has decided to run away now is not only inconvenient, but could spell the end of Lord Wilmot's political aspirations. To that end he is willing to take whatever means necessary to get her back.

The party will find Lord Wilmot a very shrewd negotiator and while he will chuckle, he will be completely business-like about their reward. He will not agree to any further payment beyond what is in the pouch, 100 gold lions each. He will defer any questions about the situation to his wife, Lady Illysha, but will agree to show the party to Amerise's room once they have agreed to find the girl and bring her back. If the party has found out about Amerise's Dreadwood Ranger "boyfriend" and mentions it to Lord Wilmot, he will become incensed. His immediate response will be to spin and glare at Kendell who will promptly flee the room.

*"That little rat had better not have had anything to do with Amerise's disappearance or I'll have his head on a spit. He's been warned more than once to stay away from my daughter. It wouldn't surprise me in the least if he were involved. Right now concern yourself with getting Amerise back."*

Once the party has agreed to look for Amerise, Lord Wilmot will lead them out of the trophy room and up to Amerise's Room. If Kendell is still present he will follow along, staying behind the

party and mostly out of the sight of his father. Here the party will be introduced to Lady Illysha DeMontvale who will be accompanying them on their search of the estate. Unless dismissed or otherwise noted, Kendell will follow the party around (at a safe distance) as long as they are in the estate.

***Lord Wilmot leads you out of the trophy room into the main hallway of the Manor and up a flight of stairs. At the top of the stairs a well-decorated and colorful hallway runs around the inside of the house. Off to your left you can hear the sound of children playing some sort of counting game, but Lord Wilmot turns to the right and leads you to the first and only open doorway in the hall. "This is Amerise's room. My wife, Lady Illysha." As he announces her, a beautiful blonde-haired woman probably in her late thirties steps out into the hallway. Like her husband, the Lady DeMontvale is also immaculately dressed. Unlike her husband, she has a smile that almost sets your mind at ease just for seeing it. "Lady Illysha will be accompanying you during your investigation here at the manor. If you require anything, please do not hesitate to ask her. I, unfortunately, must make other preparations for the wedding. Good day."***

At this point the investigation of the manor can go a number of ways:

- The investigation of Amerise's room is the next logical step. Proceed to Encounter 3.
- The PCs may want to question other family members. Lady Illysha will gladly speak to PCs. The information Lady Illysha may share is below. Illysha's stats are in Appendix A.
- Lord Wilmot will leave the manor shortly after he has left the PCs and head for the Keep in town. If the PCs follow him or seek him out there it will be explained to them by some of the guards that Lord Wilmot would prefer they take up any matters with Lady Illysha. If they press the issue, Lord Wilmot will send out Tevin to see what the problem is.
- Tevin, Lord Wilmot's oldest son will make himself scarce at the Keep. In fact, he hopes that the PCs fail to find his sister, because then he'll inherit the title to Montvale. He fails to realize that if she marries into House Lizhal the position will be his anyway...
- Kendell, unless he has been scared away in the Trophy Room, will wait for an opportune

moment (when Lady Illysha is out of the room) and then "accidentally" reveal the place that Amerise hides her secret diary.

- Lady Illysha will not let the PCs disturb Lambert and Joveta down the hall.

Lady Illysha is aware of Amerise's frequent rendezvous with Ularien (the Dreadwood Ranger) Amerise often came to her to seek her advice on the issue. While Illysha would have much preferred to see Amerise married into a good Suel household, when Amerise came to her with the intent of running away, Lady Illysha's advice was that she follow her heart. Amerise did - right out her bedroom window and into the Dreadwood. Lady Illysha is equally aware that no Dreadwood creature is involved in her kidnapping. However, as that is the story her husband has cooked up, it's the story that she'll stick with.

The one flaw in her plan to delay the PCs and give Amerise and Ularien a head-start is that Lady Illysha will behave as the perfect hostess: offering to send for breakfast if the PCs haven't eaten, politely answering any request that is within the bounds of civility, and graciously showing the PCs about the manor house and grounds. A suspicious PC might notice (with a Sense Motive Check), that while Lady Illysha seems generally concerned for her step-daughter's safety she doesn't seem in a terrible hurry for them to continue their investigation (DC 20) or seem terribly forthcoming with information of any use (DC 15).

As far as searching about the manor and grounds Illysha will insist that she stay in the general vicinity of the PCs.

She will freely share details on her family history:

- She loves to talk about her son Gabriel and how proud she is that he has progressed so well as a Knight of the Watch. She is, however, still worried that someday he will meet the same fate as his father and wishes that he had stuck with his harp lessons.
- She is the cousin of Baron Gavyn DeRosse, the Baron of Westgate.
- She is very fond of her new children, save Tevin and doesn't even mind Lord Wilmot - though he can never replace her lost love. Lady Illysha has not given up hope that Lord Sir Gabriel will someday return to sweep her into his arms again.

## Encounter Five: In Search of...

The PCs are free to search about the following places in the Manor. Should a PC stray into one of the “off-limits” area they will encounter a servant who will kindly suggest they might want to snoop about elsewhere...

See DM Aids #2 & #3 for a map of the Manor.

### Room A: The Entryway

*This room has a polished marble floor and is flanked by a pair of staircases that curve up the east and west walls to the manor's second floor. An open door on the east wall leads into the Trophy Room, another door on the west wall leads into a room with several large, comfortable looking chairs and a pair of closed double doors occupy the north wall between the stairways.*

There is nothing of interest here.

### Room B: Sitting Room

*This room contains a number of chairs and couches for the entertaining of guests and/or the family. Around the walls of the room there are a number of portraits; a beautiful blonde-haired woman of Suloise decent seated at a harp with a young man of similar appearance standing beside her, a young man with pale white skin, ice blue eyes and shockingly red hair, and a trio of darker skinned children (including the page you met earlier) seated at the feet of a young maiden with long auburn hair and darkish-complexion. The most prominent portrait is of Lord Wilmot in full battle regalia hung above an unlit fireplace in the back of the room.*

The portraits are of Lady Illysha and her son Gabriel, Tevin, and Amerise, Kendell, Lambert and Joveta. There is nothing else of note in this room.

### Room C: Conservatory

*This brightly colored room contains a fairly extensive collection of harps, varying in size from a small lap harp to a pair of enormous floor harps.*

If any PC should express an interest in the musical arts, Lady Illysha will be happy to show them here to the Conservatory. Lady Illysha is a talented harpist and has a fairly extensive collection of the instruments. All are of masterwork quality. Aside

from the harps and assorted sheets of music there is nothing of interest in this room.

### Room D: Trophy Room

*Lord Wilmot's trophy room is very reflective of his military nature. There are a number of weapons displayed about the room, several hunting trophies, and a pair of full suits of plate armor. There is, oddly enough, nowhere to sit. A Knowledge: Nature or Knowledge: Local (Metaregion One) check (DC 15) will identify each of the trophies as a native of the Dreadwood.*

### Room E: Library

This room is locked (Open Locks, DC 30) and off-limits. Should a PC get inside it is a well appointed if sparsely filled library. The works along one wall are all of poetry, music history, and language. Along the opposite wall are books on military strategy, tactics, and history. In the middle of the room, couches stand to either side of a large wooden coffee table and the walls are decorated with a painting of Lord Wilmot and his children, Lord Wilmot in battle dress, and finally Lady Illysha sitting astride her harp with a young blonde haired child (her son Gabriel) sitting at her feet. Aside from those interested in the subject matter of the library's books, there is nothing of interest in this room.

### Room F: Dining Room

*This room is dominated by a huge oak dining table that runs the length of the room. It is currently laden down with all manner of fine silver plates, tableware, and goblets. Half a dozen servants are in the process of preparing for the evening meal, which clearly is going to be playing to some fairly important visitors.*

The servants will quickly shoo the party out of the room to allow them to continue their work. There are stairs that lead down into the kitchen and the servant's quarters under the stairs leading up to the second floor. The downstairs are off-limits.

### Room H: Gabriel's Room/Guest Room

This room is currently occupied by Lord Wilmot's Mother and is therefore locked (Open Locks DC 20) and off-limits. It originally belonged to Lady Illysha's son, Gabriel. Since he joined the Knights of the Watch, Lord Wilmot has converted it into a guestroom. Should someone get within, the room is identical to Amerise's room, save the damage from the “break-in”.



### **Room I: Nursery**

A simple Listen check (DC 5) will reveal that there are at least two young children in this room playing a counting game with another, older woman. Lady Illysha may allow the PC's to look inside, but she will not allow the PCs near the children.

***Inside the room, a pair of Oeridian children are playing with wooden blocks and counting as they see how high they can stack the blocks before they come tumbling down.***

There is nothing of interest in this room.

### **Room J: Lord Wilmot's Office**

This room is locked (Open Locks, DC 20) and off-limits.

### **Room K: Master Bedroom**

This room is locked (Open Locks, DC 20) and off-limits.

### **Room L: Amerise's Room**

***This beautiful room smells richly of flowers. A soft breeze blows in through an open window that looks out across the back lawn of the manor. Surprisingly everything here seems to be in perfect order and there is no sign of a struggle.***

***The room is occupied by a large four-poster bed, a writing desk and chair, a large wardrobe, several bookcases, and a small reading chair set by the window.***

If asked about the condition of the room, Lady Illysha will feign ignorance (a Sense Motive check of DC 20 will reveal that she is hiding something) and explain that perhaps the servants came and cleaned up since the attack. Lady Illysha will, ever so helpfully, attempt to make it impossible for any single PC to have enough uninterrupted time to make taking twenty on a Search check possible.

A search of the area around the window (Search DC 5) will reveal that it has been broken near the bottom left side, but there is no broken glass inside the room or on the ground outside. Ularien threw a stone through the window trying to get Amerise's attention about a week ago. The window looks out over the back of the manor. Directly below the window is a small flower garden. Lady Illysha will explain that Amerise is very interested in horticulture and maintains the garden herself.

An in-depth review of the area around the window may reveal (Search DC 20) that there is a book, a

stoppered pot of ink, a small bundle of cloth, and a quill hidden on the underside of the reading chair. The book is Amerise's Diary. The bundle of cloth contains the broken glass from the window. If the search is not going well and depending on how the PCs have treated Kendell, he may try to reveal the secret hiding place of the diary by tipping back in and spilling over the chair. If the PCs find the diary, give them *Player Handout Two*.

The bookcases are filled with books on flowers, herbs, and plant husbandry, including several personal texts (written by Amerise) on the various species known to grow on the outskirts of the Dreadwood. If the personal texts are thoroughly examined, any PC with Knowledge: Local (Metaregion One) or a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 15 for either) will be able to determine that they are referencing a single area around a place called Lover's Rock. The location of Lover's Rock is not revealed in the text, however a Gather Information check (DC 20, or DC 15 if teens are specifically asked, or DC 10 if Kendell DeMontvale is asked) will reveal that it is a local hangout for the teenagers of Montvale. It's just outside of town, past Old Widow Maggie's place, right on the edge of the Dreadwood.

Under the bed is the stone that Ularien tossed through the window a week ago.

There are no signs of any struggle.

### **Room M: Kendell's Room**

If Kendell is not with the party this room is locked (Open Locks, DC 20) and off-limits. If Kendell is with the party he will moan and groan about the PCs wanting to look in his room, but at Lady Illysha's request he will open the door.

***This room is a complete mess. There is a large bed, a desk, a chair, and a wardrobe. While the room is a mess it is obviously so because of the inhabitant. Lady Illysha berates Kendell that he was supposed to have cleaned this mess up yesterday.***

Lady Illysha will ground Kendell to his room until he has cleaned up the mess. There is nothing more of interest

### **Room N: Tevin's Room**

To Lady Illysha's surprise, this room is locked (Open Locks, DC 35) and off-limits. PCs attempting to look in from an outside window will be met with pulled shades and locked (Open Locks, DC 30 – probably unattainable by a party of 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs) windows. If the room is somehow

opened, it will be found to be immaculate, with an almost antiseptic smell and look to it. The room is so Spartan and neat as to look almost unlivin.

### **The Garden**

Below Amerise's window at the back of the manor house is a small flower garden. PCs who want to track Amerise's kidnappers will no doubt be drawn here eventually.

There is no sign of a violent disturbance in the garden. There are, however several sets of footprints in the soft earth. They seem to be consistent with a gardener tending their garden. Additionally, there is a pair of small foot- and handprints below the window, slightly deeper than the rest in the garden.

The prints by the window are consistent with someone jumping from the window, then moving carefully along the wall where the tracks disappear at the lawn. The tracks, now barely visible, continue across the lawn to the wall. At the top of the wall there are telltale dirty handprints that seem to indicate the person climbed up and over the wall.

A Survival check (DC 15) on the other side of the manor wall will reveal that a single horse headed southeast, but around the town. Three more such checks (DC 15 each) will allow the PCs to follow the tracks around the town and up to *Encounter Six*.

If there are no rangers or PCs in the party who can track, anyone who asks for Lady Illysha's assistance will be able to borrow one of the manor's hounds during the search.

## **Encounter Six: Catastrophe at Old Widow Maggie's**

***The path you are following heads directly towards the dark and foreboding edge of the largest forest in the kingdom of Keoland. Known as the Dreadwood, this ancient and overgrown forest is rumored to be the hiding place and home of countless bizarre, unnatural, and twisted creatures perhaps spawned by a long forgotten mad scientist or created by some darker power. Regardless of the source, the ever-watchful Dreadwalkers are known to patrol the wood and are relentless in their attempts to contain the darkness hidden within.***

***Having traveled half an hour off of the main road, the scene directly before you stands in stark contrast to that reputation. A brightly coloured cottage sits in the middle of a small clearing surrounded by a white picket fence. A swinging gate opens onto a stone walk leading up to the porch. A trio of scraggly-looking cats bounces playfully around the yard batting about a small toy of some sort on the lawn, while other equally scruffy-looking cats rest quietly on the steps or the porch railing. On the porch, a white-haired woman sits quietly in her rocking chair, her head resting peacefully on her chest with another of the cats perched on her lap.***

See DM Aid #4 for a map of Widow Maggie's.

Welcome to the Dreadwood! Now is the chance to show the players where the Dreadwood gets its reputation. Build on the horror of the scene about to unfold before the PCs. Do your best to contrast the idyllic tranquility of the setting with little observations that things "aren't quite right". Shutters slapping absently in the breeze, creaky steps and floorboards, perhaps they notice that the ever-present noise of the crickets and birds is strangely absent? Once they've begun to get suspicious they'll create their own nightmarish conclusions. Run with them, within reason.

### **Old Widow Maggie**

The old woman is Old Widow Maggie. She will not answer any calls or otherwise acknowledge the adventurers because she is... well, dead. It would be difficult to discern her condition from the gate (a DC 20 Spot check followed by a DC 15 Heal check). However anyone going to the porch and checking will have no trouble determining that she is not sleeping.

When Old Widow Maggie started taking in stray cats recently she got more than she expected. When she picked one up this morning, it "transformed" and scared the poor old woman so badly that she had a heart attack and died. Her face, hidden from view until specifically checked, is still locked in a look of absolute terror. If Widow Maggie's body is moved or the cat in her lap is pushed aside, the cats will attack.

### **The Cats' "Toy"**

Approaching the cats playing in the yard it will seem that a trio of them are batting around a large ball of black yarn. A Spot check (Base DC of 5 plus 5 per five feet distance) will reveal that the ball of yarn is actually the black-haired head of a

goblin. The cats are playfully batting at it, pouncing away, and then stalking back in to bat at it again. The goblin's body (devoured) is nowhere to be seen. Should someone attempt to take the head from the cats, they will attack.

### **Here Kitty, Kitty**

Several of the cats are lounging around the cabin. There are several varieties of cat - tabby, calico, and even a Siamese. They are fairly scruffy looking and missing patches of fur from various parts of their bodies. PCs can pet them to their hearts content. However, if someone should try to pick one up, the cats will attack.

### **The Cabin**

The cabin is twenty feet square and has several windows and a single door opening onto the front porch. The door to the cabin is unlocked and opens to a room with a small potbelly stove, bed, and table with two chairs. There are herbs drying along one wall and four small ceramic pots rest on a bench against the back wall (see treasure below). If anyone attempts to take something out of the cabin, or disturbs Old Widow Maggie, the cats will attack.

### **APL 2 (EL 3)**

**Pseudonatural Cats (8):** (see Appendix C)

#### **Tactics:**

The cats stand a good chance of having a surprise round on the PCs. They will use this round not to attack, but to use their *alternate form* ability. Be sure to provide a colorful description, but keep in mind the audience at the table.

If the cats transform during a surprise round, have each PC make a Will save of DC 8. If they fail, they are now the proud possessors of *Ailurophobia*, as described on the AR for this adventure.

Note that the cats are **not** animals anymore; their type has changed to *outsider*. As such, any animal-based spells [Calm Animal, Charm Animal, Hide from Animal, and the like] do not work against them.

The cats are tiny creatures, with no reach. As such must enter the PC's square to attack, possibly provoking an attack of opportunity. Don't forget to use their once per day *True Strike* ability. The cats will fight to the death.

#### **Treasure:**

The four crocks each contain a *potion of cure light wounds* and are labeled "Healing Draught." If the PCs search the house, they are able to find a pouch with gold coins hidden beneath the mattress.

#### **What next?**

PCs who take the time to search the area have two options. They may follow the small and barely visible trail off to the left that leads towards Lover's Rock (*proceed to Encounter Seven*), or they may choose to follow the more obvious trail to the right - one that looks like it may have been caused by goblins fleeing from Pseudonatural kittens. (*Encounter Eight*.)

## **Encounter Seven: Lover's Rock**

***You follow the small winding trail several hundred yards through the Dreadwood. Looking back over your shoulder, Old Widow Maggie's is now completely blocked from view by the trees. Peering ahead you can make out a small clearing with a large boulder at its center. This must be the place called The Lover's Rock.***

Thanks to a 'tip' from Tevin, the goblins discovered the runaways here. Ularien was knocked unconscious and left to die; Amerise was dragged away by the creatures and taken to their hidden temple to be sacrificed.

As the PCs enter the clearing the signs of the struggle will quickly become evident. There are easily noticeable bloodstains on the rock itself. PCs may take twenty on a Search roll. Consult the chart below.

| <b><u>DC</u></b> | <b><u>Information Gained</u></b>                                                                                                                            |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10               | There are clear signs of a violent struggle. There is blood on the rock and a broken bow discarded amongst the trees to the southeast side of the clearing. |
| 15               | It appears that someone was dragged out of the clearing to the east.                                                                                        |
| 20               | Just outside the clearing, about twenty feet from the broken bow, there is a pool of blood and the body of a dead wolf.                                     |
| 25+              | Another ten feet from the dead wolf, you find the unconscious and badly wounded body of an high elf. (A Knowledge: Local                                    |

(Metaregion One) or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 10) will recognize that the elf is dressed like a Dreadwalker. Should a PC belong to the Dreadwalkers (unlikely at this point in their careers but possible), she will automatically recognize the garb.)

**Ularien, Male Elf Rgr 4:** CR 4; Medium Humanoid (Elf); HD 4d10+8; hp –2 (of 35); Init +2; Spd 30 ft. AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14) [+4 armor, +2 Dex]; Atk +6 melee (1d4+1, dagger); SQ racial abilities; AL CG; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Hide +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Search +12, Spot +12, Survival +7. **Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (Composite Longbow).

**Spells:** None (Expend)

**Equipment:** Broken composite longbow, chain shirt, twelve arrows, dagger, *Cloak of Elvenkind*, *Boots of Elvenkind*.

The Elf is Ularien, a low-ranking Dreadwalker and Amerise's true love. He is currently stabilized at -2 hp. The players have several options:

#### **PCs are unable to heal Ularien**

If the PCs are unable to heal Ularien, they may bring him back to Widow Maggie's for safekeeping.

#### **PCs return Ularien to Montvale Manor**

If the PCs decide to return him to Montvale Manor for healing and/or consider him captured, note this and be sure to read the appropriate conclusion.

#### **PCs heal Ularien**

If the PCs either heal him or use one of Widow Maggie's potions, they will discover the following:

When the creatures attacked Ularien, he and Amerise were taken completely by surprise. Ularien's bow was smashed, and his animal companion Greyfang (the dead wolf) didn't last much longer. Ularien made a valiant attempt to hold off their attackers, but was quickly overwhelmed. The last thing he remembers seeing is the goblins dragging his sweet Amerise away to the east and then blackness.

If the party is willing to go after the creatures that took Amerise, Ularien will offer to accompany them. If they mention that they are working for her father, however, he will look for his first chance to get away and go after her on his own.

Picking up the track of the creatures that have stolen away Amerise is fairly simple (Survival, DC 15) and leads deeper into the Dreadwood and to *Encounter Eight*. **Note:** If the PCs healed Ularien and he is with them, he will offer to track [PCs may assist].

## **Encounter Eight: Putting the Dread into the Dreadwood**

*The further you follow these tracks into the forest, the darker and darker it gets. You've been walking almost an hour now and the familiar sounds of the forest have disappeared to be replaced with an almost oppressive silence. Ahead of you the ground is covered with a thin fog that seems most certainly unnatural. Unseen eyes seem to peer out at you from every shadow. Your pulse quickens and you can almost hear the blood pounding in your ears...wait a minute, that's not your pulse...those are drums.*

At this point the PCs are still a good ways off from the ruined temple. Likewise, the goblins and their dark master are far too wrapped up in their ceremony to hear any kind of a commotion. However, the Dreadwood has earned its name and the PCs are about to find out why.

If the PCs take their time and begin cautiously moving forward there is a chance that they will notice the assassin vine that lies in wait ahead.

*As you move carefully toward the sound of the drums you catch a faint movement out of the corner of your eye. You stop, not sure whether you saw something or if the fog and the dim light of the forest light is playing tricks on you.*

Allow cautious PCs a chance to make a Knowledge: Nature, Spot or Survival check (player's choice, DC 20). Any PCs that succeed notice the assassin vine before it attacks and will have a chance to respond. PCs that notice the assassin vine should be allowed to move in a path around it and avoid it.

If the PCs have informed Ularien that they intend to turn him in to Lord Wilmot and he makes one of the above skill checks, he will take this opportunity to vanish into the woods, leaving the PCs to their fate. If the PCs seem to be on his side, he will help the PCs fight.

Those that fail to spot the creature (and those that simply rush forward) will be taken completely by

surprise. Adjust the description below accordingly.

***Suddenly, the vines around seem to come alive clutching and grabbing at your arms, your legs, and your throat! It's as if the entire forest around has come to life and, worse, it's trying to kill you!***

### **APL 2 (EL 3)**

**Assassin Vine:** hp 15; see *Monster Manual* page 20.

#### **Tactics:**

The Assassin Vine will kick off the combat by using its control plants ability to entangle PCs within its spell reach (30').

## **Encounter Nine: The Ruins**

***You press even deeper into the ever-darkening Dreadwood. Now you think can make out the sound of chanting in the distance along with the incessant drumming. The path begins to widen and ahead of you, barely visible through the forest, you can see a ruined temple. Braziers around its perimeter belch out sickly black. In the center of the temple, a black robed figure chants, one hand glowing with unholy energy and the other stretched out over the unmoving form of a woman chained to a basalt altar. All around the altar are creatures similar to those you faced when you came to the Merchant's rescue on the road. They feverishly pound at drums easily the size of their twisted bodies.***

Roll initiative at this point. Give the PCs a surprise round to react. Darian has 50% cover at this point and any shot that misses because of the cover has a 25% chance of hitting Amerise instead. *Be certain to inform the PCs of this fact!* The PCs start one hundred feet away from the temple. If Ularien is still with the party he will vanish into the woods during the surprise round.

Assuming he is not stopped, Darian's first action will be to use his domain ability of Death Touch on Amerise, completing his ritual and probably killing the poor druid.

If he is attacked, targeted by a spell, or even called out by a PC, Darian will abort his *death touch* on Amerise and fight the PCs. If he is not stopped, roll the damage. It may very well be too

late for young Amerise. At the end of the surprise round (if Darian is able) continue.

***As the drumming reaches a crescendo the robed figure calls out "Erythnul takes your soul!" Dark energy crackles all around him as he presses his glowing hand to the woman's head. Her body convulses and her scream pierces your ears with its agony. The drumming stops and one by one the beady eyes of the little creatures and finally the dark priest turn towards you....***

Either way, Darian will order his minions to attack. As they are defending their temple, the NPCs will fight to the death.

### **APL 2 (EL 3)**

**Goblins (4):** hp 4; see *Monster Manual* page 133.

**Darian the Dark:** See *Appendix C*.

#### **Tactics:**

Once the fight starts, Darian will order his goblins to attack. He'll cast Cause Fear on the character in the heaviest armor and then invisibility before moving to engage the weakest looking opponents first. The goblins will attack the closest targets.

Meanwhile, Ularien is worried that the PCs will take Amerise back to her father and he will lose her. As a result, it is his intention to steal her away during the battle. Using his *Cloak and Boots of Elvenkind*, he'll sneak up to the altar, grab Amerise (dead or alive), and then try to sneak her away. Make note of Ularien's profile in *Encounter Six* and be sure to roll all necessary checks. The NPCs will be too busy fighting to pay much attention to the sneaky elf, but the PCs may see him.

Once the battle is done, assess the situation:

#### **Ularien succeeded in sneaking away with Amerise:**

***The sounds of battle die down and the forest around you returns to its unnatural silence. Your gaze turns to the altar where the young woman lay, but she is gone. Racing to the altar you discover telltale signs that perhaps someone managed to sneak up to the altar during your battle. Whatever the case, Amerise is gone and there is no trace of where she may have disappeared to this time...***

#### **Ularien was caught by the PCs and Amerise dies:**

*The sounds of battle die down and the forest around you returns to its unnatural silence. Your gaze turns to the altar where the corpse of the young woman lays, but it is too late for her. The young elven ranger shifts uneasily ...*

**Ularien was caught by the PCs and Amerise survives:**

*The sounds of battle die down and the forest around you returns to its unnatural silence. Your gaze turns to the altar where the young woman still lays. Racing up the steps to the altar you manage to restore her to consciousness. Amidst tears of joy at her rescue she looks past you to the young elf and calls out, "Ularien! My Ularien!" She looks at you again. "Please. I know my father must have sent you to drag me back to that horrid wedding of his, but, please, just let us go in peace. I will never love another besides my dear sweet Ularien."*

**Ularien was slain by the PCs and Amerise survived:**

*The sounds of battle die down and the forest around you returns to its unnatural silence. Your gaze turns to the altar where the young woman still lays. Racing up the steps to the altar you manage to restore her to consciousness. Amidst tears of joy at her rescue she looks over past you to the body of the young elf and calls out, "Ularien! My Ularien!" She looks at you again. "Why?!?" she cries out in anguish. "Why could you and my father not just leave us alone!"*

**Ularien and Amerise were both slain (ouch!):**

*The sounds of battle die down and the forest around you returns to its unnatural silence. Your gaze turns to the altar where the young woman lay, but it is too late for her. The young elf has passed on as well. Lord Wilmot is not likely to be pleased...*

**The PCs take flight from the battle (by choice or circumstance):**

*The sounds of battle begin to fade behind you as you flee through the forest. Before long you realize that you have become lost. It could take days for a trained Dreadwood Ranger to find their way out of this accursed forest, but even should you escape the wood alive, what will you tell Lord Wilmot? Suddenly you step out of the forest, as if the Dreadwood itself did not wish to wait any longer to find out the answer to that question...*

Allow the PCs to decide amongst themselves how to proceed here.

Amerise (if she's alive) is assuming that the PCs work for her father, they may be able to convince her otherwise. She truly loves Ularien and resolute about not going back. She is a teenager in love. Some of her arguments might include:

- "I'd rather you left me to die."
- "I'll just run away again."
- "I can pay you whatever my father is paying you."

What Ularien believes will depend on whether or not they found him at Lover's Rock, what he's been told since, and also what he has seen of the party in action. He is also deeply in love, but has more worldly experience in the matter. He harbors a growing hatred for Lord Wilmot and will agree with Amerise that they will just try again. He will not go peacefully back to Montvale as though he detests the man, he has no doubt that Lord Wilmot will live up to his word and have him hanged if he is seen in town. Amerise will confirm this. If the PCs insist on taking him into town both he and Amerise will resist, fighting if necessary.

Regardless of how the final encounter ended, the PCs will likely have some interesting personal decisions to make with how to proceed. If the decision-making process is running long, you can make it known that the sun is starting to set and being in (or near) the Dreadwood is dangerous only a fool stays after dark.

## Conclusions

### **Bluffing the Baron**

If Amerise and Ularien are both alive, PCs may attempt to convince her father otherwise. They must make a bluff check DC 20. Reduce this by 5 if they bring back "evidence" [ie piece of bloody dress, holy symbol of Erythnul if they defeated the evil cleric, etc.]. Reduce it by another 5 if PCs tell the tale of the actual battle with the cleric [or by 2 if they make up another story], for a minimum bluff check of DC 10. Up to 2 PCs may "aid" with the bluff check, and the "Wink and a Smile" campaign card may be used if it has not been used already.

- ◆ If the Bluff check **succeeds**, use Conclusion A [Amerise is Dead], and any others that apply
- ◆ If the Bluff check **fails**, use Conclusion C, and any others that apply

**THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF POSSIBLE CONCLUSIONS: READ ALL THAT APPLY AND MARK THE APPROPRIATE ITEMS ON THE AR.**

CONCLUSION A - Amerise is Dead [no influence]

CONCLUSION B - Amerise is returned to Lord Wilmot and is Married [no influence]

CONCLUSION C - Amerise remains in the Dreadwood, and Lord Wilmot is aware [Favor of Lady Illysha DeMontvale]

CONCLUSION D - Amerise and Ularien are both alive in the Dreadwood [Favor of Lady Illysha DeMontvale and Notice of the Dreadwalkers (Favorable)]

CONCLUSION E - PCs never return to Montvale Manor [Wanted!]

CONCLUSION F - Ularien is never found by PCs, escapes the PCs, or is killed by NPCs [Notice of the Dreadwalkers (Recognition)]

CONCLUSION G - Ularien is alive and turned over to Lord Wilmot [Notice of the Dreadwalkers (Unfavorable)]

CONCLUSION H - Ularien is killed by the PCs [Dreadwalker Hunted!]

CONCLUSION A - Amerise is Dead

*Lord Wilmot "mourns" Amerise's loss and sends you on your way, with Lady DeMontvale offering compensation of 25 gp for your efforts.*

CONCLUSION B - Amerise is returned to Lord Wilmot and is Married

*Lord Wilmot is overjoyed and gives you the appropriate amount of gold. The wedding goes on as planned, and despite the festively enribboned hall and Huffin Guffin's Masterwork Wedding Cake, you've never seen a more miserable bride. You also have a sneaking suspicion that the mother-of-the-bride's tears are not tears of joy.*

CONCLUSION C - Amerise remains in the Dreadwood, and Lord Wilmot is aware

*Perhaps you underestimated the man; perhaps you underestimated his rank, but whatever the case, you now understand exactly what it means to anger a Keoish Noble. After all, what else is there to do in jail?*

*Noble PCs [must have documented Triad Approval] will spend 4 TUs in jail; everyone else sits for 20 TUs. PCs do NOT receive any gold from Lord Wilmot.*

CONCLUSION D - Amerise and Ularien are both alive in the Dreadwood

*A week later, a courier with a sealed letter intercepts you at your favorite hangout. The letter contains just two words, "Thank You", and the signature of Lady Illysha DeMontvale. [Amerise secretly sent word back to her mother that she is still alive].*

CONCLUSION E - PCs never return to Montvale Manor

*For whatever you reason, you never returned to Montvale Manor. Now, it doesn't seem like you ever will - if the rumors that your face is showing up on "Wanted" posters around the barony are true.*

CONCLUSION F - Ularien is never found by PCs, escapes the PCs, or is killed by NPCs

*As you leave the Dreadwood, you hear the twang of a bowstring as an arrow pierces the ground two paces in front of you. The fletching is green with a gold sighter. Whomever shot it is nowhere to be found. You may not have seen them, but they certainly have seen you.*

CONCLUSION G - Ularien is alive and turned over to Lord Wilmot

*Some choose love at the risk of death - and you seem to have made that choice for Ularien. As soon as Ularien is turned over, Lord Wilmot sends word to the hangman. The elf is hung without a trial, and the body is quickly removed and tossed outside the city walls so as not to overly upset the stomachs of the more delicate members of Montvale.*

*As you leave Montvale, an arrow arcs towards you, seemingly from out of nowhere, and pierces your cloak. A tiny message is written on the shaft of the arrow. "You have chosen your loyalties. We will remember."*

CONCLUSION H - Ularien is killed by the PCs

*As you leave the Dreadwood, a blur catches the corner of your eye - and then it is in front of you! Seeming to melt from the shadows, a pair of jaguars flank you. One seems to - shimmer? - and then a tallish, lean, cloaked human stands in its place, holding out a piece of bloody tunic you recognize as Ularien's. "This is your last safe passage through the Dreadwood. Leave, and never return."*

Knowledge (Local) or (Bardic) DC 15 will recognize the brooch of the Dreadwalkers as the clasp on his cloak. If PCs cast Detect Magic, nearly all of his equipment glows [he is outfitted as a rogue/ranger], as does a collar on the remaining jaguar.

If PCs look like they are going to try to attack either of the two, he will warn them once **“Don’t be foolish”**. If the PCs actually attack either the Dreadwalker or his animal companion, he will kill that PC outright. [Do not bother with combat - he is a well-equipped 10<sup>th</sup> level character.] Any who choose to flee after that will be allowed to escape ONLY if they leave the Dreadwood. If PCs try to grab the body of a killed party member, he will allow them to do so with a **“At least your retain some honor”**.

PCs may choose to report the incident to Lord Wilmot. He will tell them not to worry about it, but a Sense Motive (DC 15) informs them he is a bit concerned. A Sense Motive (DC 20) will enable that PC to realize that Lord Wilmot is secretly glad that the PCs are essentially taking the fall for following his wishes.

### The End

## Experience Point Summary

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

### Encounter One

Defeating the goblins: 90 xp

### Encounter Three

Discovering that Amerise has run away: 20 xp

### Encounter Six

Defeating the pseudonatural cats: 90 xp

### Encounter Seven

Finding Ularien: 20 xp

### Encounter Eight

Defeating or avoiding the assassin vine: 90 xp

### Encounter Nine

Defeating Darian and his minions: 90 xp

### Discretionary roleplaying award

Up to 50 xp

### Total possible experience:

450 xp maximum

## 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.

#### Encounter One:

L=16 gp; C=20 (or 40) gp; M=None

#### Encounter Six:

L=0 gp; C=20 gp; M=Potion of Cure Light Wounds (4) (17gp)

#### Encounter Nine:

L=30 gp; C=22 gp; M=None

#### Conclusion (Pick One):

200 gp each if Amerise is returned before sunset

100 gp each if Amerise is returned alive the following day

25 gp each if Amerise is returned dead (or if the PCs convince Lord Montvale she is dead.)

#### Total Possible Treasure

345 gp each

### Special

☛ **Ailurophobia:** Since that sweet little kitty grew six fanged mouths and went for your throat, you've found that being around feline creatures makes your stomach feel a bit... peculiar. Until 52 TUs have passed since your encounter with the pseudo-kitties, you suffer a -1 morale penalty to hit against feline or feline-like creatures. Wizards with feline familiars suffer no such feelings of dread around their companions, only other such creatures.

☛ **Gift of Mahoney the Ribbon Merchant:** In grateful recognition of your playing the part of caravan guard the remainder of the trip to Montvale, Mahoney offers you a 20% discount on decorating costs should you ever require a wedding reception. Normal costs are  $[2 * (\text{PC Level}) * (\text{spouse level}) * (\text{Usual Lifestyle})]$ . Minimum spouse level is 1, and normal cost for 1 TU of Lifestyle must be used, even if the PC normally has their living expenses paid for. NOTE: This cost *triples* if the PC has a jealous cohort, curse, or other spouse.

☛ **Favor of Lady Illysha DeMontvale:** You have saved Amerise DeMontvale, and have opted to let her follow her heart and leave with Ularion. This PC may receive, during any adventure set wholly or in part in Westgate, assistance from Lady DeMontvale. See the Metaorg Book 0 or contact the Keoland Metaorg PoC for details.

☛ **Notice of the Dreadwalkers:** The PC has now met a member of the Dreadwalkers, and has left the following impression (Circle ONE):

Favorable: This PC allowed the Dreadwalker Ularion to be with his beloved - even though it may have gotten you in a bit of trouble. Cannot be given to members of the Dreadwalkers.

Recognition: This PC has wandered the Dreadwood and made themselves known to the Dreadwalkers. Cannot be given to members of the Dreadwalkers.

Unfavorable: The PC proved that they value money more than life - or love. You can never gain influence with the Dreadwalkers and your actions will be closely monitored any time you are in lands that are either political allies of them or under their direct control.

#### ☛ **WANTED!**

You have been banished from the Barony of Westgate due to the fact that you have 'dissed' a noble. This PC may not participate in any adventure that is set in the Barony of Westgate. For adventures partially set in the Barony of Westgate, you may not participate in those encounters (and subsequently lose access to anything you might have gained during those encounters, including xp, gp, and item access). Contact the Keoland Triad at keoland\_marf\_poc@yahoo.com for details about removing your WANTED! status.

#### ☛ **DREADWALKER HUNTED!**

You have killed the Dreadwalker Ularion in cold blood and have now become a member of Keoland's "Dead or Alive" list. This PC may not participate in any module that takes place wholly or in part in the Dreadwood or Royal politically-aligned lands. All Royal and Dreadwalker influence, favors, gifts, etc. are lost and can never be regained. Any player who ignores this penalty will have their PC removed from play. Contact the Keoland Triad at keoland\_marf\_poc@yahoo.com for further details.

## **Appendix A: The DeMontvale Family (in order of appearance)**

### **Kendell DeMontvale, human male (NG)**

Kendell is a bright young boy (age 15) with dirty blonde hair and a ruddy complexion. His blue eyes are constantly alert, but he has very little self-confidence when it comes to speaking in public. Lord Wilmot expects his sons to follow in his footsteps and become warriors in their own right. Kendell is slight of build and simply hasn't the strength or the desire to fight. He spends a good deal of time listening and learning from his mother how to play the harp and sing. As a result his older brother Tevin frequently picks on him and his father does little to stop the bullying. The fact that his stepmother does try to intervene only tends to make things worse between Tevin and Kendell.

### **Lord Wilmot DeMontvale, human male (LN)**

Lord Wilmot is a tall Sueloise man, with blonde hair and beard neatly trimmed. His hand rests at all times on the pommel of a beautifully crafted longsword belted to his waist. His raspy voice and coarse manners with those of a lower social class often create an appearance of tyranny, but he is not a bad person. He is, however, very ambitious and his ambitions tend to step on the toes of those around him. The marriage of his daughter is a perfect example. It is beyond his comprehension that Amerise could actually be concerned with such an idiotic concept as love. He agreed to take on Lady Illysha as a wife solely to gain the title of Lord of Montvale. For anyone else in his family to think of marriage as something more than that is unacceptable to him. He is stern and gruff, and does not like to be contradicted.

### **Lady Illysha DeMontvale, human female (CG)**

Like her husband, the Lady DeMontvale is also immaculately dressed, golden blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes. Unlike her husband she has a smile that almost sets one's mind at ease just for seeing it. Lady Illysha is the June Cleaver of Westgate. There is not one noble's child that wouldn't be thrilled to have her as their mother. Lord Wilmot's children have found here to be warm beyond belief and, aside from Tevin, absolutely adore her as they would their own mother were she still alive. Lady Illysha has genuine love for her stepchildren as well. She holds a special place in her heart, however, for her only son Gabriel DeMontvale. He is the spitting image of his father, the Late Lord Sir Gabriel DeMontvale, and she does everything she can (behind the scenes) to make sure he does not come to the same fate.

### **Lambert and Joveta DeMontvale, human male and female children**

Lord Wilmot's first wife, Odela of Applegate, died giving birth to these two auburn-haired and dark skinned twins just over six years ago. They are always together and spend most of their time enjoying the blocks in the nursery.

### **Amerise DeMontvale, human female (N)**

Amerise has long auburn hair and darkish-complexion that shows her Oeridian ancestry. Though her father can't see it, the eighteen year-old is every bit the free spirit her mother was. It is because of her mother that Amerise is willing to take such risks to run away. She was ten when her mother passed away giving birth to Lambert and Joveta. In all the years before that, Amerise had watched her mother live in a marriage devoid of love. It didn't surprise Amerise at all that her father re-married so quickly. It was while she was packing up the family's belongings that she discovered her mother's books on the local plants and animals. Amerise decided then that she would not let what happened to her mother happen to her. She was surprised to find such a friend in her new stepmother. Lady Illysha has helped her add to her collection of books and frequently covers for her rendezvous with Ularien by sending her out on "chores" about town. Her biggest regret about running away is that she will never see Lady Illysha again.

### **Tevin DeMontvale, human male (LE)**

Tevin is very nearly albino pale with ice blue eyes and shockingly red hair. The seventeen year-old is every bit the spoiled brat that his step-mother thinks he is. Lord Wilmot is thrilled that Tevin wants to follow in his footsteps. So happy, in fact, that he is blind to the means that Tevin is using to do so. One night, Tevin overheard that Amerise was going to run away with Ularien. He sent word along to some of his "friends" that they'd be at Lover's Rock...

## Appendix B: New Rules

### New Templates

#### Pseudonatural (As presented in *Tome & Blood*)

Pseudonatural creatures dwell past the eons that lie between the stars, beyond the planes as we know them, nestled in far realms of insanity. When summoned to the Material Plane they often take the form of, and emulate the abilities of familiar creatures, though they are more gruesome in appearance than their earthly counterparts. Alternatively, they may appear in a manner more consistent with their origins: A mass of writhing tentacles is a favorite, although other terrible forms are always possible.

#### Creating A Pseudonatural Creature

"Pseudonatural" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to "outsider." It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Special Attacks:** A pseudonatural creature retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains the following:

**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, the creature can make a normal attack with a +20 insight modifier on a single attack roll. The creature is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

**Special Qualities:** A pseudonatural creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following:

- ❖ Electricity and Acid Resistance (see the table below).
- ❖ Damage Reduction (see the table below).
- ❖ SR equal to double the creature's HD (maximum 25).

| Hit Dice | Electricity/Acid Resistance | Damage Reduction |
|----------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1-3      | 5                           | ---              |
| 4-7      | 10                          | 5/+1             |
| 8-11     | 15                          | 5/+2             |
| 12+      | 20                          | 10/+3            |

If the base creature already has one or more of these special qualities, use the better value.

**Alternate Form (Su):** At will, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form determined by the DM), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. Changing shape is a standard action. Other creatures receive a –1 morale penalty to their attack rolls against pseudonatural creatures in this alternate form.

|                   |                                                                                                |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saves:            | Same as the base creature.                                                                     |
| Abilities:        | Same as the base creature, but Intelligence is at least 3.                                     |
| Skills:           | Same as the base creature.                                                                     |
| Feats:            | Same as the base creature.                                                                     |
| Climate/Terrain:  | Same as the base creature.                                                                     |
| Organization:     | Same as the base creature.                                                                     |
| Challenge Rating: | Up to 3 HD, as base creature<br>4HD to 7 HD, as base creature +1<br>8+ HD, as base creature +2 |
| Treasure:         | Same as the base creature.                                                                     |
| Alignment:        | Same as base creature.                                                                         |

Advancement: Same as the base creature.

## Appendix C: Monsters and NPCs

### Encounter Five

**Pseudonatural Cats (8):** CR ¼; Tiny Animal; HD ½ d8; hp 3; Init +2; Spd 30 ft. (6 squares); AC 14 (touch 14, flat-footed 12) [+2 size, +2 Dex]; Atk +4 melee (1d2-4, claw); Full Atk +4/+4 melee (1d2-4, claws) and –1 melee (1d3-4, bite); Face/Reach 2½ x 2½ ft./0 ft.; SA *True Strike* 1/day; SQ Acid and Electrical Resistance 5, Alternate Form, SR 1; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 7.

*Skills:* Balance +10, Climb +5, Hide +17\*, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Spot +4; *Feats:* Weapon Finesse (claw, bite).

**True Strike (Su):** Once per day, the creature can make a normal attack with a +20 insight modifier on a single attack roll. The creature is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

**Alternate Form (Su):** At will, a pseudonatural creature can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass (or another appropriately gruesome form determined by the DM), but all its abilities remain unchanged despite the alien appearance. Changing shape is a standard action. Other creatures receive a –1 morale penalty to their attack rolls against pseudonatural creatures in this alternate form.

### Encounter Eight

**Darian the Dark, Male Human Clr 2 of Erythnul:** CR 2; Medium Humanoid; HD 2d8+2; hp 15; Init +5; Spd 20 ft. (4 squares); AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16) [armor +6, Dex +1]; Atk +3 melee [1d4+2, dagger; SA Rebuke Undead; SQ Spontaneous Casting; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10.

*Skills:* Concentration +6, Knowledge: Religion +6, Spellcraft +6. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Improved Initiative.

*Equipment:* Banded mail, dagger, wooden holy symbol of Erythnul.

*Spells Prepared* (4/4; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—[*cure minor* (x2), *guidance*, *light*]; 1st—[*cause fear*, *command*, *doom*, *protection from good*\*].

\*Domain spell. *Domains:* [Evil, Trickery].

## DM AID #1 – Knowledge Checks

### **KNOWLEDGE (Nobility & Royalty) or (Metaregion 1), DC 10; BARDIC KNOWLEDGE (DC 15)**

- PCs know the names of both the Baron of Westgate and the Baron of Montvale and their wives (q.v.)

### **KNOWLEDGE (Nobility & Royalty) or (Metaregion 1), DC 15; BARDIC KNOWLEDGE (DC 20)**

- As DC 10, but PCs also know 1) personalities of those listed above 2) names of adult family members.

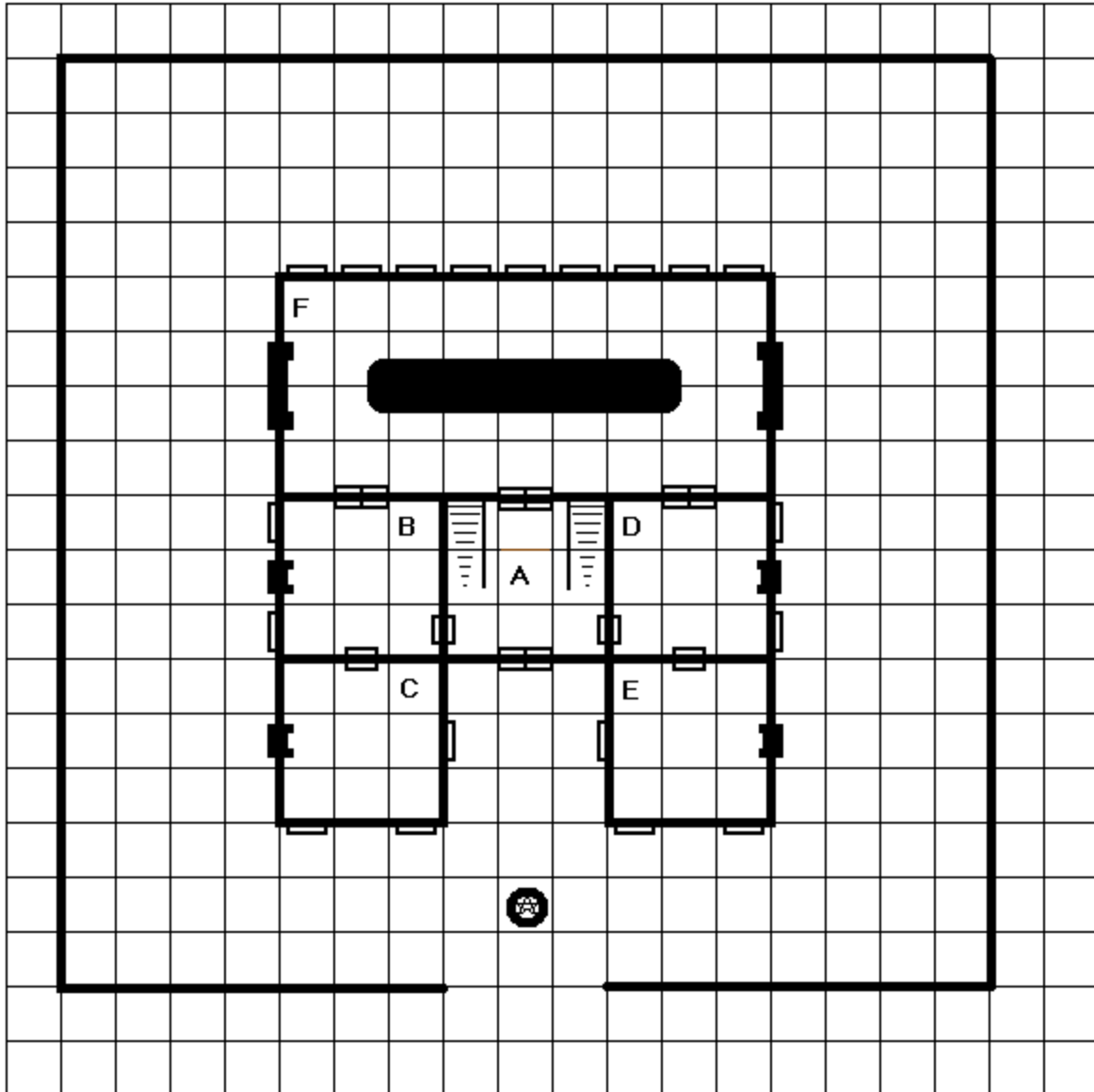
### **KNOWLEDGE (Nobility & Royalty) or (Metaregion 1), DC 20; BARDIC KNOWLEDGE (DC 25)**

Montvale is a small village on the eastern border of the Barony of Westgate that serves as the trade center for the local farms, mines, and the occasional traveler from the Dreadwood. As its name implies, Montvale is set in a small valley nestled amongst the Good Hills. It is just to the Westgate side of the border of the Barony of Grayhill, about two days travel south of Curget, and only a few hours walk North of the Dreadwood. In 575, Baron Galyn DeRosse of Westgate awarded the village of Montvale and its surrounding lands to his then Captain of the Guard, Sir Gabriel, a Suel of the House of Rhola on the occasion of his marriage to the Baron's cousin Illysha. Over the next ten years Lord Sir Gabriel DeMontvale and Lady Illysha DeMontvale lived the proverbial "Happily-ever-after" life. In 576, Illysha gave birth to their son Gabriel and he quickly grew into a strapping young boy. Young Gabriel grew up in a town that had the distinct pleasure of being home away from home for a wider variety of individuals than you are likely to find anywhere else in Keoland. Owing to its proximity to both the Dreadwood and the Good Hills neither Elves nor Dwarves are a rarity in Montvale. Even the occasional Gnome or Halfling passes through looking for supplies before returning to the hills or forest to conduct their "business". Indeed, Montvale is a nice and peaceful place for one to grow up, or grow old...

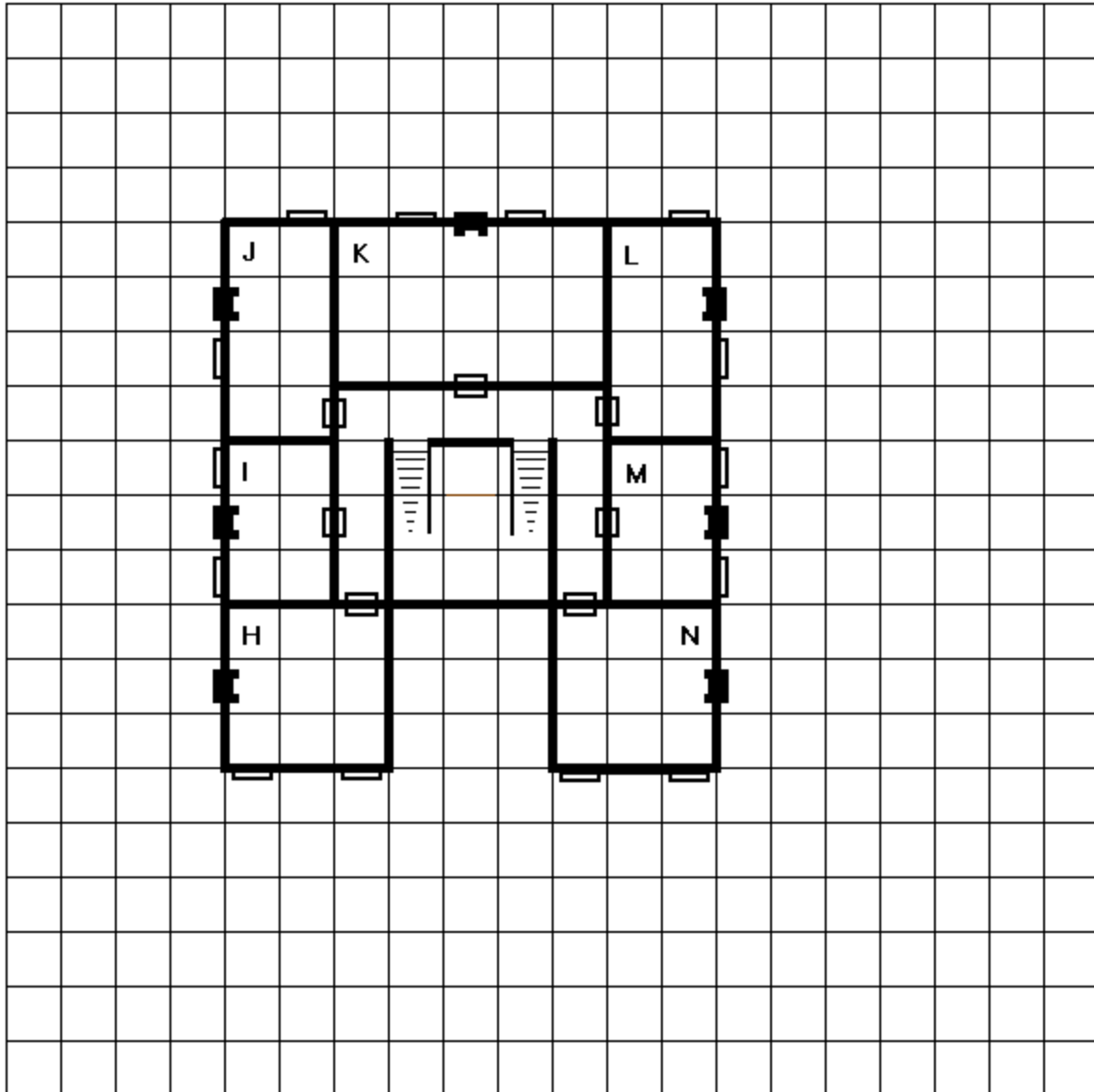
Unfortunately, the campaigns to liberate Nume Eor in the South kept Lord Sir Gabriel away much of his son's childhood and in 586 Lord Sir Gabriel DeMontvale was lost on an expedition to Nume Eor somewhere in the Dreadwood. Illysha DeMontvale retained the title Lady Montvale, but by 590 Montvale was in great disrepair. Lady Illysha never fully recovered from the loss of her husband and became absolutely opposed to the concept of warfare. Rather than invest in defenses for her people, Illysha squandered her meager fortune by being overly protective of her only son, Gabriel. Between 587 and 590 Illysha had managed to almost bankrupt the Montvale fortune on bardic training her son did not even want in hopes of keeping him from following in his father's footsteps. As a result brigand raids in the surrounding area went largely unpunished. Mining operations in the hills outside of town began to go belly up. Reports of foul creatures from the Dreadwood prowling the night began to spread like wildfire.

By the spring of 591, the Baron of Westgate had to step in. Unwilling to strip his cousin of her title, the Baron instead insisted that she re-marry. His choice for her was one Lord Wilmot Applegate of the Gray Hills. What Lord Wilmot lacked in personality, he more than made up for in ambition. With him came his three sons (Tevin – 17, Kendell – 15, and Lambert – 6) and two daughters (Amerise – 18 and Joveta – 6) all from a prior marriage to Odela of Applegate (an Oeridian merchant's daughter who died giving birth to Lambert and Joveta). Lord Wilmot also brought a more than capable company of soldiers to deal with the problems in and around Montvale. In return the Baron DeRosse agreed that the title to Montvale would pass through Wilmot's bloodline. In the six months since, Montvale has become a bustling burg once again. With the easy pickings quickly becoming not so easy the brigands have moved on back to the Gradsul Road and the minions of the Dreadwood have been put back in check. But who knows how long it'll last, especially given the rumblings from Lord Wilmot that he wants something more than 'a pleasant little manor'...

## DM AID #2 – Montvale Manor 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

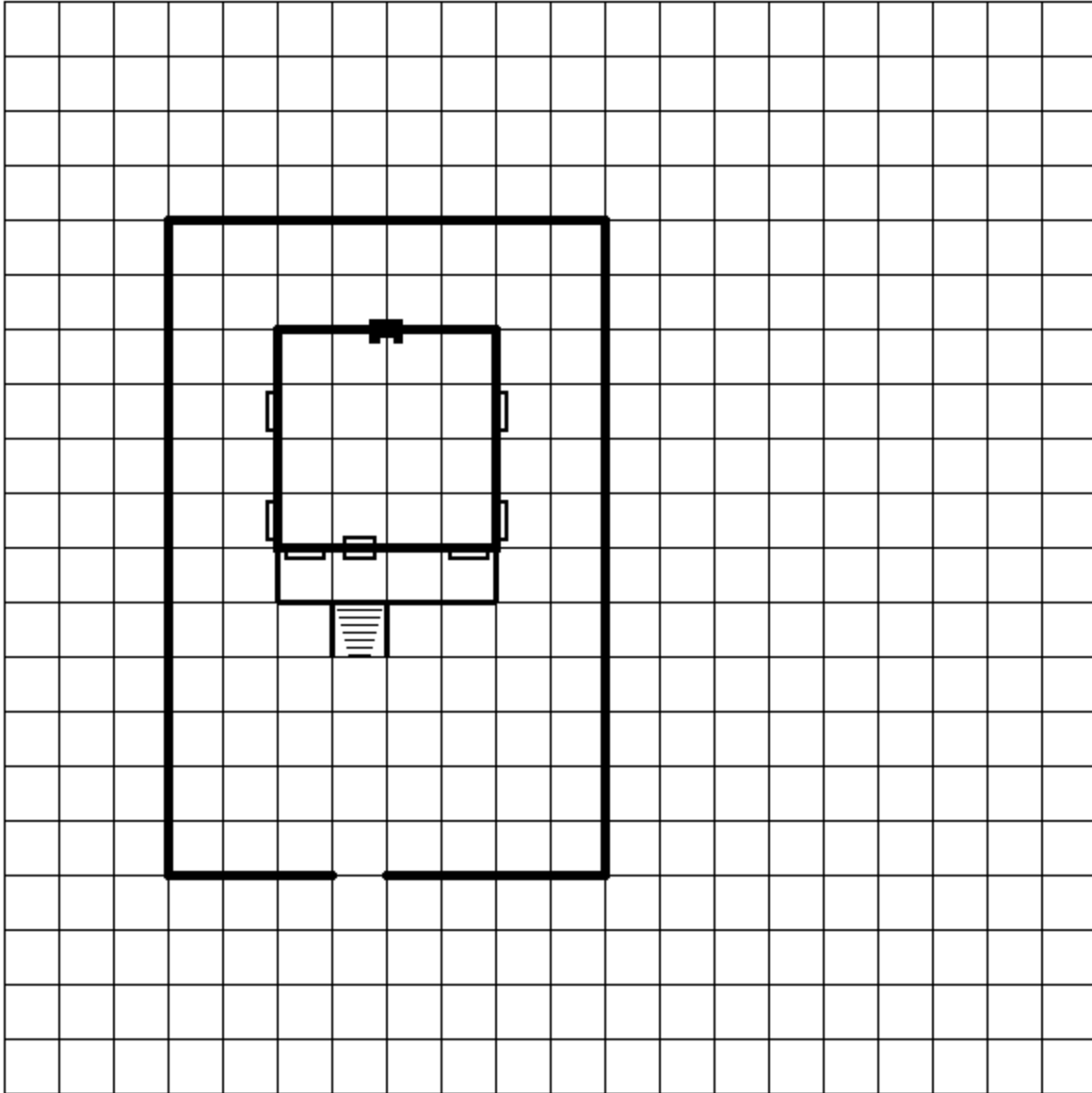


## DM AID #3 – Montvale Manor 2nd Floor





## DM AID #4 – Old Widow Maggie's



## Player Handout #1 - Map of Keoland



- |                                         |                         |                             |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Royal District and City of Niole Dra | 10) Good Hills Union    | 19) Barony of Riverwatch    |
| 2) Duchy of Dorlin                      | 11) March of Mandismoor | 20) Barony of Axewood       |
| 3) Duchy of Gradsul                     | 12) March of Mareman    | 21) Barony of Mill Creek    |
| 4) Earldom of Gand                      | 13) March of Sedenna    | 22) Barony of Dilwyth       |
| 5) Earldom of Linth                     | 14) March of Middlemead | 23) Barony of Raya          |
| 6) County of Nimlee                     | 15) March of Blerfield  | 24) Viscounty of Salinmoor  |
| 7) County of Marlbridge                 | 16) Barony of Sayre     | 25) Viscounty of Nume Eor   |
| 8) County of Flen                       | 17) Barony of Grayhill  | 26) Dreadwood Preserve      |
| 9) County of Cryllor                    | 18) Barony of Westgate  | 27) Hool Marsh Protectorate |

## **Player Handout #2**

(The final entry of the Diary of Amerise DeMontvale)

*Dearest Diary,*

*The Writ of Nuptuals authorized by the King arrived today via Heraldic messenger. I can barely believe that we are going to go through with this. My heart was pounding so loud at dinner that I was certain it would give me away. Lady Illysha must have noticed because she gave me permission to dismiss myself early from the table. She even covered for me with father, explaining that it was only to be expected that a bride would be nervous so close to her wedding day. I should go pack,*

*I am finally packed, now there is just to wait for the moon to rise enough to give me light. I hope that Ularien remembered to tether the horse outside the wall as he said he would. I don't fancy a walk to Lover's Rock alone, especially at night. Someone's at the door...soon I'll be free.*