

KEO4-02

Active Imagination

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK® Keoland Regional Adventure

Version 2.0

by Keith Palm and Judy Rudolph

A soul of evil comes closer to its twisted plan with every beat of its heart. In a dementation of a man's innocent dream, death and danger stalk the innocent. In sanity, a former madman finds no peace. How will they come together to decide the fate of the Barony of Dilwyth? A Keoland Regional adventure for APLs 2-12, and the third and final scenario in the Dilwyth series that includes **KEO2-04 Illegal Aliens** and **KEO3-05 Crimes of the Heart**.

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.

This game product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission of the author. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 system license, please visit www.wizards.com/d20

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, GREYHAWK and RPGA are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. LIVING GREYHAWK is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

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.

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 six players participating in the game.

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

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.

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.

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. 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 two 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.

Adventure Background

In the Keoland regional scenario **KEO3-05 Crimes of the Heart**, the traitor sage of Dilwyth was prevented from summoning a powerful Far Realms entity by using an artifact stolen from the depths of the Dreadwood. The artifact was destroyed; however the magical energies and life-force it contained were transferred to the Baron of Dilwyth's castle. The castle has now become a living thing, mentally bonded to the baron as it develops its own sinister sentience (similar to a genius loci from the *Epic Level Handbook*).

Following the destruction of the artifact, Baron Malweig regained his sanity. He now takes his responsibility as the Baron of Dilwyth very seriously. Malweig started to make several successful changes in Dilwyth. Subconsciously he feared that things were going too well and that something had to go wrong.

The castle responded to his subconscious thought by affecting Malweig's relative. When the man could no longer be found within the castle walls, Malweig wrote to his herald to find adventurers to track him down. Sensing the baron's new need in reassuring his relative was ok, the castle enabled the man to 'take care of himself', as it were.

Adventure Summary

Introduction

The PCs are contacted by the High Herald of Dilwyth at the behest of the baron. The herald delights at the thought of meeting lots of pretty, brave adventurers, and eagerly assumes the task.

Encounter One (Both Tracks)

The PCs arrive at Castle Draconis Imperius to find the baron concerned and uncharacteristically lucid. He fills in the information of what has occurred since he wrote his herald and divides the gathered PCs into teams; one to pursue his missing relative (Low Track – APLs 2 to 6), and the other to seek the rest of the insane residents and investigate the castle (High Track – APLs 8 to 12). This encounter may be played together by two tables (one High Track and one Low Track) if the event is played at a convention or game-day.

Encounter Two (Low Track)

The PCs journey down into the village to find it nearly deserted. They find clues of both murders and kidnappings of the villagers. They find the innkeeper and his family holed up in their home.

Encounter Three (Low Track)

The PCs enter Candyland and must fight marshmallow peep cockatrices in the chicken coop to save Gretta.

Encounter Four (Low Track)

The PCs follow the bunny trail through the forest, find both the baron's cousin, Wallace Wanker, and the missing children, but must fight chocolate Rambo-bunnies and an animated oven to get them home safe.

Encounter Five (Low Track)

The PCs take the low road back into the castle, possibly suffering the ill-effects of the forcewinds through the passageway. They find the missing herd animals, but must fight past the kaorti thralls animals in their midst to get inside the castle.

Encounter Two (High Track)

The PCs accompany the baron as he delves into the castle. They get hints of the baron's connection to the occurrences in the castle. Based on a thought by the baron, the castle manifests itself and attacks the party.

Encounter Three (High Track)

The party delves deeper into the castle with the baron. With another thought by the baron, the castle manifests itself again and attacks the party. Realizing that something is greatly amiss, the baron insists on consulting Vilharian, a magical blade in his keeping.

Encounter Four (High Track)

The PCs make their way to the baron's inner sanctum, but the castle presents them with a riddle to solve as a manifestation of Malweig's own hesitance to consult Vilharian.

Encounter Five (High Track)

The PCs encounter Vilharian. The PCs or Vilharian conclude that the events are linked to Malweig. While trying to understand this, Malweig unwittingly allows the castle to call a golem to attack the PCs.

Encounter Six (Both Tracks)

PCs meet and find out what has happened in the alternate tier from the one they played. Realizing that he and the link to his castle is the root of the menace to the PCs and his own subjects, Malweig agrees to have his soul enter Vilharian, and in so doing allows the magically crafted soul of the ancient blade into his former body. Before he can do so, however, Vilharian detects the Kaorti below and urges Malweig and the PCs to investigate.

Encounter Seven (Both Tracks)

PCs follow Malweig down beneath the castle, past the mural hallway and into the heart room [both seen in **Crimes of the Heart**]. PCs see the Kaorti sorcerer clearing out the last of Malweig's relatives-turned-thrall enter the portal to the Far Realms. PCs may or may not defeat the Kaorti, and any who try to go in after it will be

permanently lost and removed from play. When it is all over, Malweig realizes he has no other choice and soul-switches with Vilharian.

Conclusion

Malweig/Vilharian thanks the PCs for their efforts, rewarding them with treasure from the Barony's coffers, as well as magic gathered during Malweig's years of adventuring.

Introduction

A knock on the door awakes you, and you open the door to see a rather feminine boy dressed in pastel silks with a rather garish version of a herald's brooch clasping the half-cloak about his shoulders.

"Message for you, Sire <Madame>," he says in a slightly falsetto voice as he hands you a note.

Give the PCs **Player Handout #1**.

Any PCs who participated in **KEO2-04 Illegal Aliens** or **KEO3-05 Crimes of the Heart** will automatically recognize the heraldry on the half-cloak as that of the Barony of Dilwych. A Knowledge (local – Sheldomar Valley Metaregion) or Knowledge (nobility & royalty) or Bardic Knowledge check (DC 15) will also give the Baronial name. Success against DC 20 will let the PC know the Baron's name, Malweig, and the fact that he is known for being rather.... insane.

Assuming they are willing to follow the herald:

You travel the High Road between Gradsul and Geoff, or the Steel Road between Niole Dra and Flen on your way to an inn in Sedenna, which lies just south of Dilwych. Your arrival at the Respite Inn is timed to coincide with the evening meal - graciously paid for by the heraldic messenger. Apparently, it is also timed with the arrival of several other adventurer-types that look to be your companions - considering they are also being led and fed by similarly pastel-dressed heralds.

Allow PCs to introduce themselves here, and then continue on to **Encounter One**.

Encounter One (Both Tracks)

The boys bid you farewell as they return to High Herald Pliq in Niole Dra. The highway is easily followed to the seldom-used road leading into Dilwych. Surprisingly, it has seen recent maintenance and the occasional barony patrols are observed along the way.

Taking a shortcut suggested by a peddler, you bypass the hamlet of Dilwych and approach the baron's castle from the south. The imposing structure, Castle Draconis Imperius, is visible on the horizon long before you reach the hillock on which it sits.

Contrary to accounts and rumors from other travelers along the way, the castle is now maintained in a rather orderly fashion. None of the bizarre decorations previously described to you are seen anywhere. A lone banner displaying the Keoish lion flies from the highest tower. As you approach the front gate you see it is secured from the outside. A bell rope dangles lazily nearby.

When they pull the rope:

The bell rings a loud clear note as you look for some response from within.

Players of **Crimes of the Heart** may remember that the bell was cracked previously.

A distinguished looking Suel man with graying hair emerges into the courtyard wearing a black leather jerkin and knee high fencing boots. He smiles grimly at you as he reaches the gate. "I apologize that no one is here to greet you, but my men have been given other duties at the moment." He tosses a ring of keys through the gate. "Please let yourselves in. The gate will lock behind you."

When the PCs enter the courtyard:

Looking you over he says, "I see that Pliq has done his duty well - for once. Please follow me." You follow the baron into the castle and down several hallways. Along the way you see no servants, residents, or guards. You eventually stop in a large banquet hall where the baron gestures you to sit in the tables around him.

He pauses solemnly for a moment. "I must share a secret of Keoland with you if you are to help me. Anyone breaching my confidence will earn the ire of no less than the king himself. Will you swear to guard this secret with your lives, and take it to the grave?"

This is the chance for PCs to decline the mission, with no ire from the Baron. If they do not agree, of course, the module is over for that PC. Assuming all the PCs agree, however:

"The Barony of Dilwych exists as a sanctuary. The rumors speak true that many noble families suffer from insanity. It was decided long ago by the Court of the Land that the most unstable of us would be cared for here at the castle until either the madness passed or their lives came to a natural end. The people of Dilwych are aware of its purpose and have sworn an oath to help me uphold it." He flushes noticeably and says quietly, "I have been... less than diligent in my duties as Baron until recently. I have sought to make amends for that and made many improvements as of late. Surely you've noticed?"

This last question is directed at any PCs whom he has met previously. After a brief exchange with willing PCs, he continues:

"Things were going quite well, but then my cousin disappeared. Distant cousin, as it were, but I was always rather fond of him. He made the most delectable confections...."

"As if that were not enough, yesterday the rest of my charges disappeared as well. I fear they might be somewhere deep within my castle. Truthfully, I have not explored all the niches my home contains. Many of those in my ancestry have been touched with madness as well, and the castle contains much hidden construction and passages."

If one High Track and one Low Track are at the same table for the purposes of this first encounter:

"I need you to divide into two parties; one to find my missing cousin, the other to help me find the rest of those entrusted to my care."

Otherwise modify the above according to which Track the PCs are following.

At this point, allow the players to ask questions. The following information is available:

High Track

- *"How many other nobles disappeared yesterday?"* "There were nineteen in my care."
- *"Have there been any strange events leading up to these happenings?"* "Nothing out of the ordinary – well, out of the ordinary for an insane asylum, that is. Nothing I can point to, no."
- *"How did you regain your sanity?"* "The destruction of the artifact stolen by my former sage caused something to happen... something that aligned my thoughts once more. I am grateful for this lucidity, as it has empowered me to carry out the tasks for which I have been charged as Baron."

Low Track

- *"What is the name of your relative?"* "His name was Wallace Wanker, and he was the assistant guildmaster of the Chocolatiers Guild."
- *"What does he look like?"* "He looks to be a young boy of about ten years - though he is nearly twice that age - and, unlike most others here, he has Oeridian coloring, and a rather high, squeaky voice. There is an owl that follows him around. He is also a bit, well, delusional."
- *"Um.... didn't he die a horrible death or something about six months or so ago <when we were here last>?"* "Well, yes, but I had a scroll, you see, and brought him back because he promised me he would make his famous Death by Triple Chocolate Truffle Mousse Parfait for my birthday."

- *"Do you have any idea where he might be?"* "My location spells always direct me down into the hamlet, but I always seem to lose it just past the inn.... no pun intended," he winces.

DM NOTE: For ease of judging, **Encounters Two to Five** have been grouped by Track, one set of **Encounters Two to Five** for APLs 2 to 6 (Low Track) and one set of **Encounters Two to Five** for APLs 8 to 12 (High Track). Both Tracks participate in the same **Encounters Six and Seven**.

Low Track

Encounter Two (Low Track)

Refer to DM Aids: Map #4.

The baron escorts you out to the courtyard and leads you off to one side near the kitchens. "Since we locked ourselves in and of my guards have returned to let you out, we will have to use another method. This is one I used often as a child to explore the countryside without the supervision of the guards." He gestures to a rope net resting at the base of the wall. Dangling from the tower above, you see a rope hanging from the boom of a large crane. He gestures you on to the plank platform resting on the netting as he climbs the stairs to pull you up.

When they stand on the platform:

The baron slowly cranks the winch to pull you up above the castle wall. When you are clear, he swings the boom so that you hang many feet above the base of the hillock below. "READY?!" he shouts as he throws the lever on the winch. You begin to free-fall towards the ground at great speed. You stop abruptly mere feet from the ground.

The baron waves from above as he laughs heartily. "I always loved when my cousin Ludweig would do that to me so I thought you might enjoy it too! Go to the town and see what progress has been made on the search. If you find out anything of worth, come back and report." With a salute to you his head disappears back over the wall.

The PCs can make any preparations before heading towards the hamlet of Dilwyck. They may also collect any equipment, mounts, or animal companions they might have left outside the castle. When they proceed to the hamlet:

You follow the east road towards the town. You cannot help but appreciate the idyllic countryside that surrounds the castle. The isolated nature of the barony has allowed nature to go about its business nearly undisturbed. As you crest a hill, you look down upon the 'town'. It is better described as a cluster of small buildings with a creek running

through it. It lies in the center of a patchwork quilt of hedgerows. Tiny farmsteads are haphazardly sprinkled among the fields of various crops. The grand castle off in the distance seems at odds with this forgotten little hamlet.

*Descending down the hill into this grand metropolis, you see that what few buildings there are seem surprisingly well-maintained. New white-wash is apparent on all the buildings. Looking about you see two buildings worthy of note. One appears to house a fair-sized furnace apparently used as the community's crafting site for glass, pottery, and metal goods. The other building can only be described as merely a large house, and a placard identifying it as the *Insanity's End Inn* graces its humble front. Casting your glance further about you realize there are no folk to be seen. That may not be too strange normally, considering the shy and withdrawn manner of the people of this barony, but this is the height of planting season. No smoke escapes from any chimney, and not even a skulking cat or dog can be found.*

Have PCs make a Spot check (DC 10 + APL) to notice the following:

Taking a closer look you now notice that the small inn's windows have been boarded from the inside. You also notice that the inn and the furnace are the only buildings with a slate shingle roof instead of a thatched roof. Moving closer, you see a wild set of eyes spy you from between the boards across the window before they disappear quickly to the darkness within.

The PCs must break into the small two-story building. There is no chance that the people within will allow them entry. All of the small windows on the building are securely boarded up with not enough room for even a gnome or halfling to squeeze through.

▀ **Masonry Walls:** 1 ft. thick; break DC 35; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 2; climb DC 15.

▀ **Strong Wooden Doors:** 2 in. thick; break DC 15 (locked from inside); hardness 5; hp 20; AC 2.

▀ **Small-sized windows boarded with wood planks:** 1 in. thick; break DC 13; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 2.

The innkeeper is within, protecting his family from the creatures that attacked the hamlet the night before. He never saw the attackers so he is assuming that the stranger PCs must be involved. He is completely irrational with fear and worry, and cannot initially be reasoned with. When someone tries to enter the building on the first-floor he will attack them. If they enter through the guest-room windows on the second-floor, he will wait until they come down the stairs. He will make every effort to place himself above the root cellar hatch under which hide his wife, two daughters, and infant son. The encounter can only be resolved through combat,

Bluff, Intimidate, Diplomacy, Perform, or magic. All skill checks are at DC 15 + APL to succeed in calming the man enough to reason with him. If they subdue him through violence, they will hear a baby's scream in the cellar below. The remaining family will react with complete panic if the hatch is opened by anyone else but the innkeeper. Using the same skills it will be DC 20 + APL to remove them from the cellar without resorting to magic or violence. Everyone except the innkeeper speaks only Keoish. PCs speaking it during any of their skill checks will get a +2 reaction bonus to their rolls.

The innkeeper appears as a large, muscled, pale-haired, middle-aged Keolandish man. The wife and twin teenage daughters are comely with light reddish-blond hair. The male infant is very pale and has a hint of platinum blond hair beginning to grow.

APL 2 (EL 4)

♣ **Sahar the Innkeeper, Male Human War5:** hp 38; see Appendix One.

♣ **Women, Female Human Com1 (3):** hp 6 each; see Appendix One.

APL 4 (EL 6)

♣ **Sahar the Innkeeper, Male Human War7:** hp 53; see Appendix One.

♣ **Women, Female Human Com1 (3):** hp 6 each; see Appendix One.

APL 6 (EL 8)

♣ **Sahar the Innkeeper, Male Human War9:** hp 68; see Appendix One.

♣ **Women, Female Human Com1 (3):** hp 6 each; see Appendix One.

Tactics: The innkeeper will do his best to keep the PCs away from the cellar hatch door. Otherwise, he is a man fighting with the unrelenting fury of one who fights to defend his family. The women are armed with large cooking knives and will try to use them only if someone tries to enter the cellar to get them.

Development: This encounter can be useful for finding out information if the players are not ruffians with the innkeeper and his family. If they manage to calm him down by a successful skill check, then he will at least hear them out. When they mention the baron sent them he will become most agreeable and share whatever information he has. If they subdue him by force or magic, he and his family will act as uncooperative prisoners regardless if the baron is mentioned or not.

The following information can be gained through discussion with the innkeeper:

- He is a loyal servant of the baron. Like all men in Dilwyth, he takes his turn guarding at the castle on a rotating basis.
- He is not aware that other residents of the castle are missing since yesterday.
- Some sort of creatures attacked the village last night. He fended one off and then boarded up the inn to protect his family. No one else appeared at the inn asking for help.
- He heard screams and crashes from some of the other homes within earshot.
- They have never been attacked before.
- The creatures he fought were tall, broad, furred, and appeared to be humanoid but it was dark and hard to see at the time.
- His youngest daughter of six years, Gretta, snuck out this morning to check on his oldest daughter of nineteen years, who has a family of her own and lives on a nearby farmstead. She hasn't been seen or heard since.
- The baron is a good man. Sahar has known him since he was young. In recent months he has been much more lucid and done a good job of managing the barony.

Encounter Three (Low Track)

With the village apparently secure, the innkeeper will suggest the PCs check some of the other homes for townsfolk. He will come outside a ways but will not leave seeing distance to the inn. Examining the houses reveals the following information:

- Many people found dead have a pair of puncture wounds in the neck. Most appeared to have been defending themselves. All of the dead appear to be adults.
- It appears that most of the creatures broke in through the doors or windows, though some seem to have slipped in through the thresh roof.
- One body in an advanced state of decomposition is found. It resembles an emaciated human with mummy-like wrappings and a bulbous head. The remains lie in a pool of green resin. A Knowledge (the Planes) check (DC 20 + APL) will reveal the creature as a kaorti. NOTE: Dreadwalker and Silent One PCs automatically recognize it for what it is.

Concluding the search of nearby homes, you fail to find any other survivors. The innkeeper's family has finally found the courage to come out and peer around. The innkeeper strides up nervously, "Any sign of my other daughter?" Receiving your answer,

he walks back and comforts his quietly weeping wife.

You are about to decide what your next move should be when you notice a white rabbit with reddish eyes staring at you. It bares its teeth and you see two long fangs! Before you can react, an immense hole opens up underneath you and the rabbit.

PCs must make a Reflex save (DC 15 + the APL) to avoid falling into the hole. PCs may willingly fail the save (jump into the hole) in order not to split the party. Any PC who makes their save and also doesn't enter the hole willing may wander about the woods further. Eventually they feel a ripple of energy pass over them and find themselves approaching the same hamlet the PCs who fell through the hole encounter (see below). For those who fell into the hole:

You tumble out of a hole similar to the one you fell into too ... or is it the same one? It looks the same, though the woods near the hamlet appear to be much closer than before. The hole closes up behind you.

PCs who take the time to re-investigate appear to be in the same town, but there is no one here this time, not even the innkeeper or his family.

- Spot/Survival/Search checks (DC 10) notice rabbit tracks heading into the woods - except these tracks are much, much larger than the rabbit could have possibly made.
- With a Spot check (DC 15), PCs can find a pink ponytail-type ribbon on the ground just off the path to the west.
- A Listen check (DC 15) allows the PCs to hear low sounds of animals - chickens, perhaps? - coming from the direction of the coop, also to the west of the village.

PCs can either choose to investigate the noise first (see below) or follow the tracks first (**Encounter Four**).

Following the noise and the clue of the dropped hair-ribbon, you cut through town and head towards the chicken coop. The coop is about twenty feet wide and forty feet in length, and about fifteen feet high. There are a few small vents and windows near the top. The door appears to be padlocked locked from the outside. You can hear the "peep" sounds of small hatchling chicks from within.

If PCs make any kind of significant noise (breaking down the door, calling out Gretta's name, etc.), they hear a cry for help inside and a frantic pounding on the door.

🔑 **Lock, Simple** (Open Locks DC 20) **or** **Door, Good Wooden** (Break DC 18, hp 15, Hardness 5).

You finally manage to get inside the chicken coop, only to reveal a horrible sight. A young girl of no

more than five or six has tripped, and you see pastel-colored, bloated chicken hatchlings close in on her. They appear to be made of marshmallow. One of them pecks at her ankle, and she turns into a quartz-like stone right before your eyes!

APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ Marshmallow Cockatrice Peeps (2): hp 38 each; see MM.

APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ Marshmallow Cockatrice Peeps (4): hp 38 each; see MM.

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ Marshmallow Cockatrice Peeps (8): hp 38 each; see MM.

IMPORTANT DM NOTES: Yes, marshmallow peeps. We're serious. Really. The peeps are identical to cockatrices as found in the *Monster Manual* - with two exceptions. First, because they are made of marshmallow, they have *fire vulnerability* and take double-damage from fire-based attacks. They will stay away from any PC using fire as much as possible.

Second, PCs who are "turned to stone" are actually covered in a coating of rock candy. To any observers, it will be clear that the PC in question is *not* petrified - the PCs eyes are blinking inside, her mouth is moving, etc. A PC can be freed with a good solid whack from a bludgeoning weapon that does five or more points of damage; the process of being freed will leave the PC within *stunned* for the following round.

Because of the reduction in the abilities of these cockatrices, the EL of this encounter was reduced by one.

Tactics: Peck, peck, peck, baby.

Development: Gretta has 2 of 4 hp when she is initially turned to 'stone'. When she recovers, she will ask the PCs if they have rescued her cousin Hanel, too. He was taken away by the monsters that locked her up in the coop. The monsters had smooth skin, without any fur.

Any PC who was "turned to stone" in this encounter will receive the *Rock Candy Equipment* effect on the Adventure Record (see the **Treasure Summary** for details).

Encounter Four (Low Track)

The path you follow takes you through the woods for a short while. You pass over a river, and the woods seem to deepen, darken, and become more sinister. The trees have fewer and fewer leaves on them, yet the woods seem to grow even more dense. Soon, you are hard-pressed to hear the sound or see the sight of any natural woodland wildlife.

Animal companions, mounts, and even Gretta (if she is with the PCs) become very skittish and reluctant to travel. All can be coaxed to continue with a little roleplaying diplomacy.

The tracks seem to go on forever, and it is nearly nightfall - or so it would seem, by your fatigue and your stomach's rumbling. Stopping seems to be a good idea - though staying in these woods doesn't. That's when you smell it; the distinctive scent of peppermint and ginger and sugar, and something even more yummy.

The unknown scent is chocolate, if the PCs have ever sampled it.

Assuming that the PCs follow up the scent, read the following boxed text. If for some reason they don't, start having them encounter teams of Rambo-bunnies (see below), coming from the same direction as the scent, until they get the message.

You arrive at the source of the minty fresh scent - it appears to be a small house [40'x40'] made of gingerbread and chocolate. Red-striped columns of peppermint columns hold up the porch roof. The opaque window-panes are comprised of thin-spun sugar.

If any PCs try to eat part of the house, ask how many bites they take and mark it in your notes. Reduce their will save by that many bites when they are hit by the *suggestion* spell inside.

See **DM Aids: Map #5**.

When you enter, you are greeted by yet another strange sight. The entire cottage is filled with almost a dozen children. A handful are in one corner, obviously napping, but the rest seem to be gathered around the many wooden tables in the room. The house is only one room, and it seems to be all kitchen. There are bowls, pots, pans, baking sheets, handmixers, crème brulee dishes, and parchment paper everywhere. All of the children seem to be covered in a fine dust of either flour, powdered sugar, or cocoa powder. All of them seem rather on the pudgy side, for missing villagers, but deliriously happy.

One of the children, an Oeridian boy of about ten years old with a chef's hat looks up and waves his rolling pin at you. "Come on in. You've got to stay and try out our next dessert. It's a chocolate pudding tort with double-chocolate icing."

☛ Wallace Wanker: hp 36; see Appendix One.

☛ Children (12): hp 3 each; noncombatants.

This is Wallace Wanker, Baron Malweig's missing cousin. The other children are stuck here due to Wallace's spell-like ability of *suggestion*. All of the powdery ingredients act as a constant *mind fog* spell (DC 10 + the APL). This is

increased by the number of bites of the house PCs may have eaten, or increased by 10 if they approach within five feet of any of the tables with the powder effect (every other table).

Development: Wallace doesn't realize that his wishes have turned into *suggestions* for the other kids. He's trying to perfect his Death by Triple Chocolate Truffle Mousse Parfait Ganouche recipe for the Baron's birthday, and the other kids are helping him out as taste-testers. Each taste reduces their Will save, so they never want to leave.

The missing boy, Hanel, was able to make his saving throw and tried to leave, but the oven animated and ate him. All of the children have forgotten about it, since Wallace *suggested* that it was "too horrible to recall and we should all just put it out of our minds."

Not only doesn't Wallace have any idea of what's going on now, but he doesn't remember anything before the Baron asking him to be the new Dessert Chef at Castle Draconis Imperius. This is a side effect of the Baron not wanting Wallace to know of the horrible way in which he died. All of his prior memories were wiped out.

The best solution is to try to use Diplomacy to convince Wallace that it might be a better idea if they all leave. They can do this any number of ways (DM discretion as to if the reason is logical). The Diplomacy check is DC 12 + the APL if they do not try to force the kids to leave, or DC 20 + the APL if they do. Once they convince the chocolatier, Wallace will *suggest* it to the others, and the kids will all go willingly.

If the PCs attempt to take the children (or Wallace) by force, Wallace will respond with the full measure of his powers (note, however, that he will attempt to subdue opponents - most of his spells are geared towards this purpose). If he incapacitates the PCs, they will gain the *Stuck in Candyland* AR item (see the **Treasure Summary**). If PCs try to force the kids to leave, they will fight back (very poorly; they have a BAB of -1 and a Grapple check of -5).

When the PCs attempt to take the children out of the house - willingly or not - read the following:

As you attempt to leave, a number of chocolate rabbits bar the exit. Most of the rabbits are halfling-sized, but one (or two, at APL 6) is the size of a man. A chocolate cigar dangles out of his mouth; a bandolier of caramel squares is draped across his chest. "You're not going anywhere, flesh-dolls!" he growls.

At about the same time that happens, the large, dual-convection gas oven in the wall seems to tremble, then breaks free of the wall. "Feed me, Wallace!" it demands. It opens its oven door mouth and the wire-rack teeth grab at the chocolatier to swallow him whole, and you can see the charred remains of child-sized bones down its throat. You swallow hard;

it looks like you've found out what happened to poor Hanel...

APL 2 (EL 5)

🐰 **Wrought-Iron Coal Stove, Small Animated Object** (1): hp 15; see MM. **Note:** This construct has Hardness 5.

🐰 **Rambo Boss-Bunny, Medium Animated Object** (1): hp 30; see MM. **Note:** This construct has no Hardness, but does have DR 5/bludgeoning or slashing.

🐰 **Rambo Grunt-Bunnies, Small Animated Objects** (2): hp 15 each; see MM. **Note:** These constructs have no Hardness, but do have DR 5/bludgeoning or slashing.

APL 4 (EL 7)

🐰 **Wrought-Iron Coal Stove, Medium Animated Object** (1): hp 30; see MM. **Note:** This construct has Hardness 5, and deals an additional 1d6 fire damage on each successful Slam attack.

🐰 **Rambo Boss-Bunny, Medium Animated Object** (1): hp 30; see MM. **Note:** This construct has no Hardness, but does have DR 5/bludgeoning or slashing.

🐰 **Rambo Grunt-Bunnies, Small Animated Objects** (3): hp 15 each; see MM. **Note:** These constructs have no Hardness, but do have DR 5/bludgeoning or slashing.

APL 6 (EL 9)

🐰 **Wrought-Iron Coal Stove, Large Animated Object** (1): hp 53; see MM. **Note:** This construct has Hardness 10, and deals an additional 2d4 fire damage on each successful Slam attack.

🐰 **Rambo Boss-Bunnies, Medium Animated Objects** (2): hp 30 each; see MM. **Note:** These constructs have no Hardness, but do have DR 5/bludgeoning or slashing.

🐰 **Rambo Grunt-Bunnies, Small Animated Objects** (6): hp 15 each; see MM. **Note:** These constructs have no Hardness, but do have DR 5/bludgeoning or slashing.

Tactics: The bunnies will not engage in conversation or diplomacy. Each Rambo-bunny is armed with a pair of bags of caramel (treat as tanglefoot bags with Reflex save DC 12).

The rabbits will immobilize as many PCs as possible; the boss-bunny (or bunnies) will try to take Gretta (if she's there) or any small-sized PC that is not wearing medium or heavy armor with normal grapple rules.

DM NOTE: As the PCs slash into the creatures, they are sprayed with real blood. If any of the creatures are killed and PCs take the time to investigate, they discover the hacked corpses of real rabbits in the remains.

Development: If the PCs survive, they can go back and find Gretta (if they did not do that first), but they

eventually will be able to find their way to a tree stump with another “rabbit hole” that will return them to the real world. Any child or PC who “died” in Candyland but is brought back to the real world will revive in 4 days (Players who died but are brought back miss the rest of the adventure, but do not need to be raised, as Wallace assures the survivors that he is “Sure everything will turn out just fine for them, it’ll just take time.”).

If all of the PCs are ‘killed’, the adventure is over for them and they will not get the information from **Encounter 6** and **Encounter 7**. The Baron will eventually send other PCs in to rescue them (they are found inside chocolate coffins with gingersnap tombstones). PCs will earn the *Stuck in Candyland* effect on their AR (see the **Treasure Summary**).

Once Wallace is returned to the real world, his supernatural *suggestion* powers are gone.

If Gretta does not survive or is not brought back by the PCs, the innkeeper will demand revenge upon Wallace for her death. PCs from Keoland or from other regions with any ranks in Knowledge (nobility & royalty) or Knowledge (local – Sheldomar Valley Metaregion) will know that slaying a noble is a high crime. Only the Court of the Land has the power to sentence a noble to death. Wallace will tell him he is truly sorry, and will have his cousin the Baron send for someone to see if they can ‘heal’ her. (He avoids using the phrases “raising the dead” or “resurrection”) As noted above, however, she is only unconscious, and the party might be able to convince him to quell his anger if they point this out.

If the PCs kill Wallace, they receive the **Murderer!** effect on the AR (see the **Treasure Summary**).

Regardless of how the issue is decided, Wallace wants to return to the castle as soon as possible. Remind PCs, if they’ve forgotten, that several adults are still missing. If the PCs mention this, and that the animal trail headed north, or remember that the gates are locked, Wallace knows of a cave that leads to a secret passage below, and then into, the castle.

Encounter Five (Low Track)

By either following the tracks, Wallace’s directions, or simply searching around the base of the hillock upon which the castle stands, the party will find the cave mouth. At the entrance read the following:

You have found a natural cavern leading under the castle. It is large enough for two large men to walk abreast. Past the entrance, the walls of the cavern smooth and become a perfectly square corridor. No birds, bats, insects, or other creatures that you would expect to live in a cave are seen anywhere. There are no cracks or seams anywhere in the rock, as if the corridor was melted right through it. The construction is clearly recent. The passage stabs straight into the base of the hill under the castle.

As you walk deeper, however, you begin to hear (feel?) a slow, deep, ominous heartbeat. It grows louder and louder, and seems the loudest just off to one side of the cave where it seems a small passageway is filled with swirling, wind-swept dust.

The passageway is only a five-foot square alcove. If any PCs proceed inside to investigate, however, they must make a Will save (DC 10 + APL) or suffer a *touch of idiocy* spell effect. However, they will also realize one of the following (roll randomly; re-roll duplicates if multiple PCs enter the alcove):

- 1- The character realizes that the castle itself is a living thing. He also understands that the castle was brought to life by the magical energies released during the destruction of the heart artifact from **Crimes of the Heart**. (If the player hasn’t played the previous module, skip this one).
- 2- The character realizes that the baron’s subconscious thoughts while he used the *scroll of raise dead* on Wallace enabled Wallace to cause his creations to come alive, as it were.
- 3- The character knows that the creatures they are pursuing are the other missing residents of the castle. He knows that they were transformed, but doesn’t know details of what they were transformed into; only that it is linked to the resin coating on the cave wall somehow.
- 4- The character knows that this magical life-force flow is linked to the baron. It cannot exist without him... yet.
- 5- The baron is currently unaware of this link.
- 6- The castle is a living thing, growing stronger every moment and will reach full-sentence soon.

When the PCs are through the room, continue.

Leaving the pulsating alcove behind, you feel your bodies begin to relax the further away from it you move. The passage beyond takes on a tube-like quality as it winds itself beneath the castle. The walls are brownish-green from an aging resin that has begun to flake off the walls. Well ahead you hear over the ever-present thumping the faint sound of the grunts of farm animals. Getting within eyesight you see the missing villagers’ livestock has been herded into the castle’s catacombs. They huddle together, seemingly oblivious to your entrance.

The PCs have a chance to notice that some of the farm animals are in fact kaorti thralls. The kaorti thralls have an effective Disguise check modifier of the APL + 2; PCs may make a Survival check against the thralls’ Disguise check to notice that the animals are not natural. Druids automatically make this check if they are able to see the thralls.

APL 2 (EL 3)

🔥 Kaorti Thrall Bison (1): hp 38; see Appendix One.

APL 4 (EL 5)

🔥 Kaorti Thrall Boars (3): hp 27 each; see Appendix One.

APL 6 (EL 7)

🔥 Kaorti Thrall Bison (2): hp 38 each; see Appendix One.

🔥 Kaorti Thrall Boars (3): hp 27 each; see Appendix One.

Tactics: The kaorti thralls will attack when the PCs reach the center of the room, and will attempt to engage the PCs in melee the entire time. The kaorti thralls will fight to the death.

Wallace will NOT fight, but will heal anyone who falls (Wallace will not be attacked by the kaorti or their thralls; the castle is still beholden to Malweig's imagination, and he would never consider hurting his cousin). When the party is done with combat, continue with the following:

The battle over, you now have more time to take in your surroundings. You see there is a long corridor leading from the far end of the room. Scouting ahead you see it has nothing but some stairs leading up, probably into the castle. You can hear a man's voice as you climb the stairs. In the background, you feel the thumping 'heartbeat' suddenly begin race.

High Track

Encounter Two (High Track)

Refer to DM Aids: Map #1.

The baron leaves for while with the other party out into the courtyard before returning inside. He leads you into a large private office where he uses a series of keys to unlock a large elaborate steel trunk. From it he retrieves a variety of adventuring gear with which he equips himself. The equipment looks well used and maintained, and he handles it with practiced ease. He turns to you with a glum expression, "Shall we get on with it then? I fear that something left behind by one of my mad ancestors or my former 'sage' might be responsible for the disappearances. The castle is designed to keep people in but I leave them to their own devices inside, as long as they don't harm one another. As I said earlier, there is much of the castle that I have never seen. I left Dilwych early in my youth for formal schooling in Niolo Dra. When I returned to

be baron, I was not exactly in the right state of mind to give the castle my proper attention."

He leads you much deeper into the castle as he continues to speak. "I checked the main areas of the castle where we usually stay with no success, so I thought we had better look further in. The castle used to house more addled nobles in earlier days but cross-breeding noble lines seems to have imparted more stability of the mind. The castle received a great expansion when they planned to house King Gillum I here during his bout of insanity. He died before he ever set foot within but we reaped both the benefit and cost of owning this grand castle. Much of it has lain empty since that time." As he leads you further in, you notice architecture and furnishings of many styles and time periods. Layers of dust and sheets cover much of the inner castle contents. If you did not know it was asylum, you could almost imagine it as some long forgotten museum.

A haunting, sad melody becomes audible as you traverse the many halls. "Ludweig!" says the baron as he picks up his step and heads toward the direction of the music. You follow him into a great hall in which you spy a terribly emaciated man masterfully unleashing a flourish upon an enormous, steaming pipe organ. Malweig sighs wistfully, "My cousin has not been eating again. I always told him that steaming monster would be the death of him..."

As if on cue, the great steaming pipes begin to writhe and form into what appear to be almost snakelike heads. The oblivious musician continues to play as one of the heads rears back and then strikes forward to bite his head cleanly off. Malweig screams in horror as he backs to the wall and slumps to the floor, eyes open in utter terror.

Creatures: The now living pipe organ functions in all ways as a pseudonatural pyrohydra. Continue to describe the beast as a pipe organ that has come to life (breathing steam instead of fire like a normal pyrohydra). The castle, using a thought from the baron about the pipe organ being a killer monster, created the beast. It only exists to kill what it sees. When it is incapacitated or killed it will revert back to being normal pipe parts.

APL 8 (EL 9)

🔥 Pseudonatural Seven-headed Pyrohydra: hp 81; see Appendix One.

APL 10 (EL 11)

🔥 Pseudonatural Eight-headed Pyrohydra: hp 93; see Appendix One.

APL 12 (EL 13)

✦ Pseudonatural Ten-headed Pyrohydra: hp 115; see Appendix One.

Tactics: The organ-hydra creature has no tactics beyond attacking the nearest creature or creatures.

Malweig will not participate in this battle as he is frozen in horror and grief over the death of his childhood friend and cousin, Ludweig.

Encounter Three (High Track)

Refer to DM Aids: Map #2.

After the PCs have defeated the pipe organ creature or fled with Malweig, read the following:

The battle with bizarre creature ended, Malweig is only now returning to his senses. "Poor, wretched Ludweig. He was my only true childhood friend. He was mad, but his madness spawned such magnificent creativity." He weeps openly and without shame for several minutes before grabbing hold of his emotions. Malweig stands tall with newfound resolve, "I apologize for my outburst. Now is not the time to grieve. We must learn what is happening here. Perhaps a similar fate has befallen the other residents of the castle. I hesitate to say it, but I feel we must seek the counsel of the ancient blade, Vilharian. His millennia of experience may prove useful. He was a great aid to me during my recovery following the death of my former sage, and the destruction of the foul artifact the creature had acquired. Soon however, I sensed him trying to manipulate me to take a greater role in the kingdom. I simply do not have the ambition he seems to want from me."

Malweig will refuse to rest, insisting that they must make haste to find the missing people. Leading them further into the castle:

"I last left Vilharian in my collection room. I have not spoken to him in months. Let us pay him a visit." Baron Malweig leads you purposefully through a series of corridors that are more traveled than the previous. Along the way, you enter a large audience chamber. The room has black painted walls and tapestries with confusing and disturbing images upon them. There is a dais near the center of the room on which rests a large ornate chair carved of mahogany. In front of the dais is a large woven carpet with abstract shapes vaguely resembling eyes, fangs, and teeth. Malweig pauses in front of the carpet. "This strange thing belonged to my grandfather. When I was a child," he says a bit wistfully, "I always feared to walk on this carpet lest that it might eat m—"

Malweig freezes as he looks down at the rug. The eyes begin to blink and the teeth begin to gnash as the carpet undulates and comes to life. He steps back quickly and peers at you in disbelief to see if he is the only one seeing the carpet transform into a monster!

Creatures: The Baron's unfinished thought was "it might try to eat me," and in the blink of an eye, his random thoughts are made real. The carpet transforms into a pseudonatural gibbering moulder(s). Again, the castle created it based on a thought from the baron. Its only purpose is to attack what it can detect. If it is killed or incapacitated it will revert back to being a carpet.

Tactics: The creature(s) will attack the nearest creature(s). It will use its *ground manipulation* ability in the first round. It will use its *gibbering* and *spittle* abilities every round.

Malweig is shocked to see his thought made reality. He will attempt to tumble out of the way and will defend himself as needed, but only becomes involved in the battle if a PC is in danger of dying.

APL 8 (EL 10)

✦ Pseudonatural Advanced Gibbering Moulder (1): hp 144; see Appendix One.

APL 10 (EL 12)

✦ Pseudonatural Advanced Gibbering Moulders (2): hp 144 each; see Appendix One.

APL 12 (EL 14)

✦ Pseudonatural Advanced Gibbering Moulders (4): hp 144 each; see Appendix One.

Encounter Four (High Track)

After the party dispatches or flees from the moulders:

You take a few moments to rest in the aftermath of the battle with yet another manifested horror. Baron Malweig is visibly shaken by events and seems quite close to coming unhinged. He stares absently at the ceiling at a loss to explain what is occurring in his home.

After some prompting by PCs:

With an effort, the baron runs his fingers through his now disheveled hair; trying to get a grip of himself. He eyes each of you almost apologetically. "The burdens of leadership are many. I remember now why I feared to take over the barony after my father's death. All this and we are still no closer to an answer. I sincerely hope that Vilharian can provide some insight to our dilemma."

The baron ambles off, no longer checking to see if you follow. Soon the room sought is visible at the end of a long corridor. Malweig hesitates briefly as you approach the entrance, "I hope Vilharian is not too cross with me for leaving him here alone in here for several months. Once I began to think more clearly I wanted to try to lead without his counsel for a time. I needed to know if the change was within me or simply Vilharian exercising some measure of control over me. I am still not entirely sure but we have no choice but to seek his aid."

Steeling himself for the encounter, Malweig straightens as he moves towards the entrance. Quite suddenly, the surrounding walls magically 'pucker' shut to block the way. The baron seems as surprised as you. "I am not sure what this is about. I had magical protections on this room previously but this is not one of them. How are we going to get through..?" As if responding to his question, flowing letters write themselves upon the wall with a riddle.

Distribute **Player Handout #2** at this point.

The answer, of course, is IMAGINATION. The blockage is a response by the castle to Malweig's (and the castle's) underlying fear of seeing Vilharian. The riddle is drawn from the baron's subconscious mind by the castle in response to his conscious desire to speak with the blade. When the riddle is solved by speaking the answer out loud, the wall will 'unpucker' allowing the party through. Should the party be stumped by the riddle, allow Malweig to solve it after a period of trying. Anyone who has played the Keoland regional **Illegal Aliens** may make a Forgery check at DC 15 + APL to recognize the writing on the wall as the same as the baron's (in that adventure he gives the party one of his famous letters of marque). If confronted with this information, he will appear bewildered. Make the players make a bogus Sense Motive check to keep them guessing if he actually knows what is going on.

❖ **Superior Masonry Wall:** 1 ft. thick; break DC 35; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 2.

Encounter Five (High Track)

Refer to DM Aids: Map #3.

You move through the archway into a room of bizarre construction. The large room appears to be perfectly circular with a strange multi-color star-like pattern on the floor. Taking a quick count you see that there are nine points to the star; each has a circle in the dust at its point except one.

Players of **Crimes of the Heart** would realize that there were pedestals there previously.

At the tip of the occupied point stands a waist-high gray-white marble pedestal. On display upon it, point down, is an incredible long sword of ancient

manufacture. Though its design indicates it was forged ages ago, its luster and keen blade would make you swear it was perhaps forged only yesterday. "Hello Vilharian." says the baron almost meekly as he stands as far as possible across the room staring at the silver and aquamarine pommel as if it were a face.

DM NOTE - VILHARIAN AND ARIEL FIREHEART: If any PC has Ariel [or any other intelligent item], Vilharian will acknowledge its presence. Ariel knows the blade is a minor artifact, and reacts accordingly.

Ariel will 'look' at Vilharian, 'look' at the baron [Cha 18], and will immediately begin harassing the PC who possesses her with a guilt trip about how she is not in such a fine blade, doesn't belong to a noble, etc. The PC must pay Luxury lifestyle for this event and all future events (rather than the Rich lifestyle Ariel normally demands); failure to pay Luxury lifestyle results in the same effects failure to pay Rich lifestyle normally does with regards to Ariel. Please make note of this change on the AR of the PC(s) in question.

You hear an exasperated Suel-accented male voice in your head, "Greetings Malweig, my friend. What has happened? I know something is wrong by your demeanor and since you brought outsiders into the castle."

Allow the PCs to explain the situation, if they choose. By this time they should have perceived a link between events and Malweig. Have Vilharian encourage them to propose theories or possible explanations. He will listen, asking the occasional probing question without any sense of disbelief. If the players choose to not discuss the situation with the blade then Malweig will. Malweig cannot be discouraged from seeking advice from the artifact. When Vilharian has been filled in and someone (PC or NPC) has suggested some sort of link between the castle and the baron, He will speak:

"Hmmm... this brings to mind something I heard told long ago during the time of the Suel Imperium. If I recall correctly, the tale was of an island used for foul experiments by one of the greatest Suel sorcerers of the time. It was thought that the powerful magics released there allowed the land itself to develop its own malevolent sentience. However, though the land was able to display great powers within its confines it could not exist without being linked to the mind of the sorcerer who mistakenly created it. It was unclear if the link was kept with that original man or if he was replaced when he grew old and died. It is known that the nefarious isle existed for many centuries until it was likely destroyed during the Twin Cataclysms. The sages fancied calling it a genius loci, or local spirit. I know little more about it but what I have said. It may be possible that we are encountering a similar phenomenon."

Malweig snorts disbelievingly, "Vilharian, we came to you for sound counsel, not for tall tales from when it was possible to raze entire empires into seas of dust. With this tale you imply that this... spirit... is linked with me! None of you believe this drivel, do you...?!"

When even one PC shows any inkling of believing the blade's theory:

"Fine! And you think me mad? If this castle is alive, then lets just ask it what's going on, shall we?" He wheels around on his heel to face the wall and shouts dramatically with a hint of desperation, "What are you? WHO ARE YOU!?" He begins to shake his head in disgust when a gleaming face rises out of the smooth stone wall, a perfect image of the baron. They stare at each other dumbly before a tear trickles slowly down Malweig's cheek as he chokes out a weak "No..." The emerged face seems to observe the baron for a moment with amusement before displaying a wicked grin worthy of a demon. It pulls its huge form free from the wall and approaches you, menace evident in its twisted face.

APL 8 (EL 11)

☛ Stone Golem: hp 128; see MM.

APL 10 (EL 13)

☛ Iron Golem: hp 158; see MM.

APL 12 (EL 15)

☛ Advanced Clay Golem: hp 165; see Appendix One.

IMPORTANT DM NOTE: Vilharian is crafted of adamantine and is able to bypass the adamantine DR of the golems (but not the DR/bludgeoning of the clay golem at APL 12). He will communicate this information to the PCs *immediately*. Vilharian will 'jump' into the grip of any lawfully-aligned, longsword-proficient PC. Malweig will be unable to participate in the battle (though he will not be molested by the golem that has emerged from the wall). He can (and will) rouse himself enough to stabilize dying PCs, however.

Tactics: The castle has sensed that the PCs have unlocked its riddle, and has seized upon Malweig's outburst for a final assault against the PCs. The golem will attack the closest target, smashing it until it is incapacitated or killed before moving on to the next closest target. It has no other sense of tactics.

Development: When the combat is concluded, Malweig and Vilharian have both come to the realization of what must be done.

Both Tracks

Encounter Six (Both Tracks)

At this point, low-tier PCs can hear the following conversation:

Malweig slowly turns to face you, wiping the tears from his eyes. "I... understand now." he states rather matter-of-factly.

If Wallace is present, read the next paragraph; otherwise, skip it and continue reading with the second paragraph following.

He turns to his cousin Wallace and nods. "To the kitchens with you, cousin. Where I go, you cannot follow." Wallace nods emphatically and beats a hasty exit.

Malweig sighs. "Vilharian, even now I guard my thoughts, but a life without imagination is one I cannot bear. What can be done?"

The crystal voice of Vilharian is heard in your minds. "Malweig... I have a solution, but it is a drastic one indeed. In my forging, a soul was crafted and placed within me. I have the power to move my soul to another, but I am loathe to do so as it would destroy the soul of my new host. Likewise, I can draw the soul of another into this blade, but the recipient..." The blade pauses and finishes with great sadness, "... must be willing."

Malweig blinks, and then nods in understanding. "I... see. Vilharian... please see that my affairs are put in order. Now that I am aware of the link I am also aware that this... parasite... that has seized my castle as its host is not mature enough to survive without me."

The baron looks up as a second group of adventurers running down the hallway finally arrive at the nine-point chamber. He pauses as both groups eye one another questioningly, wondering what the other has been doing.

If there is more than one table playing the low and high tier together at a convention or game day then let them come together and report on their experiences. If the event is played by one table alone then the DM can act as the other party to fill them in on the others' part of the story (use the Adventure Summary for this). Allow the high-tier PCs to go first. When low-level PCs [or the DM] describe the resin-coated cave or the heartbeat, the ground shifts, as though an earthquake had struck, requiring a Balance check (DC 10 + APL) for PCs to stay on their feet. The castle is warning the Kaorti to flee, and Vilharian senses this:

Vilharian leaps unbidden into the Baron's hand as all of you clearly hear its voice in your head, fury and

hatred. *"Malhel magic! I can sense it! Malweig, we must return to the heart chamber!"*

Malweig pales, but he moves towards the section of the wall that released the golem. Heretofore unnoticed - but perhaps remembered by those who have been within this chamber before, he leads you down winding, twisting stairs into a narrow passageway.

The secret door may be remembered by the PCs from KEO3-05 Crimes of the Heart.

Encounter Seven (Both Tracks)

The passageway runs long and straight, and appears to be coated, floor-to-ceiling, in some sort of amber-type resin. Beneath the resin, indistinct color patterns can be seen, as though the resin was covering a tapestry or mural.

PCs who have played **Crimes of the Heart** should recognize this as the mural hallway where the left Malweig at the end of the module.

Indistinct shapes seem to form and rise out of the walls. Vilharian's voice is sharp and ringing in your minds. "No, Malweig! Concentrate. Do not let your imagination run wild, or you will destroy everyone." The baron's face turns a shade paler as he turns to the adventurers. "Help me," he pleads.

Put the players under pressure, but do not give them any assistance in how to help him. Let them be creative, or mundane - guidance or stat-boosting spells, reciting the alphabet or times tables. If the PCs come up with something, roll a few dice behind the screen, and continue on. Otherwise, the wall 'swallows' the PCs, separating them, and they must either hack their own way out or wait for Malweig to do the same.

◆ **Superior Masonry Wall:** 1 ft. thick; break DC 35; hardness 8; hp 90; AC 2.

Moving forward through several more rooms and corridors, you begin to feel and hear a rhythmic throbbing somewhere before you. As you draw closer to its source, you find that your muscles twitch slightly in time to the beat. Ahead you spy something large pulsating, perhaps the source of the beat. Coming to the end of the passageway, you come upon an unbelievable sight. You stand at the edge of a large circular room with an exit on the opposite side. The vaulted ceiling arcs thirty feet into the air. It is the very room itself that is pulsing and creating the throbbing force emanating outward. At the entrance where you stand, a large ghostly stream of force seems to flow into the room. The force flows into the room, changes to direction and seems to flow out through the wall to your right. Another stream of eldritch force flows in from the left wall, changed direction and flows out

towards the opposing exit before fading away. Close examination of the magical force brings forth fleeting images of swirling eyes, worms, teeth, and tentacles pumping in time with the room's compressions and expansions.

See **DM Aids: Map #6**. Any characters that played the Keoland regional adventure **Crimes of the Heart** will recognize this room as the one where the heart artifact was destroyed. A Heal or Knowledge (nature) check (DC 15) will reveal the force seems to follow the pattern of blood flowing through a four-chambered heart.

At the far side of the room, beyond the flow of force, you see what appear to have once been some of Malweig's relatives stepping into a portal that seems to open and close in time to the 'heartbeat'. Sickly green and violet flames of energy seem to surround the portal.

Partially blocking the portal is a tall, thin humanoid that appears to be wrapped in the same resin that coated the mural hallway. Its three fingers are wrapped around a similarly-coated 7-ft. tall staff that appears to be bracing the portal open.

Any PCs who played **Crimes of the Heart** recognize the creature as a seemingly more powerful type of the one seen there. A Knowledge (the Planes) check (DC 25) confirms them as kaorti (see Appendix One). Dreadwalkers and Silent Ones automatically recognize the kaorti for what they are. Members of the Keoish metaorganizations Haven or Nature's Sentinels make attempt a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25) to recognize the creatures.

If there are any obvious Silent Ones, Dreadwalkers, or clerics of Corellon Larethian/Keoish nature gods outfitted as a ranger or druid, the creature singles them out, pointing to them specifically and mocks them in Sylvan:

"Have you lost your way, Forestling? So very far from home...." The last of the kaorti thralls steps through the portal, and the creature backtracks into the extraplanar space.

Tactics, Round 1: A wall of force has been put up between the PCs and the flow protecting the Kaorti thralls and enabling them to enter the portal. PCs detecting it [through magic or by bouncing off of it] may attempt to dispel the wall (caster level 15th).

Any attempts to teleport, dimension door, etc. to the other side of the wall of force fail, and the PC must make a Fort save of DC (10 + the APL) or be dazed for the round.

Any attempts to manually bypass the wall via the castle [stone shaping, etc.] will fail cause the castle to scream and the floor to roll, requiring another Balance check (DC 15 + the APL) not to fall.

Summoned creatures will automatically arrive the next round five feet away from the portal as pseudonatural

variants of whatever was summoned that break free of the PCs control and hasten back through the portal.

The kaorti has a SR 25 against any spells directly targeting it. Non-magical standard melee attacks can only be made by a PC that crosses the portal; ranged attacks suffer a 50% miss chance due to the distortion of the planar bleed. It has an AC of 20, and 60 hp; if it dies, the portal snaps shut [ignore Round 2],

Round 2: If the wall of force has been brought down by the PCs, they must then move through the flow of force to reach the Kaorti, no matter how they approach it. If they do, an empowered, maximized touch of idiocy spell (for 9 points of mental ability score damage) will be cast upon them (saving throw DC 18 + APL; caster level 15th). Any PCs reduced to an Int or Wis below 3 will stop in their tracks, unsure what to do next.

The creature withdraws its staff with an evil grin. It issues a warning in an archaic tongue as the portal begins to shrink.

The creatures parting words are in Ancient Suel [Malweig will translate if none of the PCs speak it] - *"Do not worry, we shall return soon enough."*

If the PCs have not taken down the wall of force, Vilharian compels Malweig to wield the blade and shatter it.

"Do not go in after them!" Strangely enough, the warning is shouted in harmony by both Malweig and Vilharian.

If any PC goes through regardless, they earn the Lost in the Far Realms effect on the AR (see the **Treasure Summary**).

The portal snaps shut and the forceflow stops. All is quiet for a moment, and then you hear the heart beating faster. Malweig looks up at you, then down at his blade as he shows a sad smile. "I will not be responsible for an abomination in the heart of the kingdom."

"Keep me by your side, Vilharian. We shall rule wisely and well." He closes his eyes, and you feel your skin tingle with pinpricks of magical energy. After a few moments the sensation passes. A rumbling shriek echoes down the passages of the castle as the psychic parasite dies, and the form of Malweig straightens up, unaccustomed to sight and smell.

You again hear a voice in your minds... but this time, it is Malweig's. "May I present the new Baron of Dilwyth," he says. "Baron Vilharian the First."

Proceed to the Conclusion.

Conclusion

Vilharian speaks. "Malweig's noble sacrifice prevented a long chain of unfortunate events from

resulting in a catastrophe. You all have had a hand in preventing a greater tragedy and for that I will see that Malweig's wealth and influence is used to see you properly rewarded."

"Agreed," Malweig says telepathically. "I will travel immediately to Niole Dra and report what has happened here to the Lion Throne. I suspect our regent will allow Vilharian to rule in my stead. I will continue to aid in safeguarding the mad nobles that are sent to me for care."

Vilharian adds, "When the time comes I will step aside in favor of the chosen person but until that time I will rule as baron of Dilwyth"

You stand in the courtyard preparing to depart. Vilharian bids you farewell, holding the blade that once contained him.

A coach rumbles into the courtyard from the road. A number of guardsmen dismount wearing the livery of the County of Nimlee. From the coach they pull a Suel woman of exquisite beauty. She has been fitted with a leather jerkin designed to restrain her arms. Her long pale hair is in wild disarray and she stares at you with feverish intensity. A herald follows her from the coach and approaches the innkeeper. "By order of the Countess Lissen Rheyd, under the long-standing agreement in the Court of the Land, she charges the Baron of Dilwyth to care for her afflicted cousin until such a time that she is once more sane or until she passes peacefully from this world. Here are the papers with the Countess' seal." The exchange concludes and the castle guards take charge of the woman and take her into the castle. With a nod of assurance in your direction, Baron Vilharian turns and follows them into the castle.

The asylum of the Kingdom is once again at peace with itself. It is an ancient deception, to be sure, but perhaps this slim thread of secrecy keeps the fabric that is the Sleeping Lion of Imperial Keoland from unraveling altogether.

PCs can receive their rewards at this point; Malweig is from an old and prosperous family and, as he no longer has need of personal wealth, opens his coffers to the PCs as well as offering them choice pieces of magic from his personal vaults. The PCs also are entitled to receive training from the new Baron of Dilwyth (see **Training by Vilharian** in the **Treasure Summary**).

If any PC killed the Baron or his noble cousin, Wallace, during the adventure, they are in for serious trouble. They receive the **Murderer!** effect on their AR (see the **Treasure Summary**).

When you have finished resolving the adventure for the PCs, proceed to the **Epilogue** below.

Epilogue

Artemo was a simple man. Every man in his family had made bricks. It was hardly an exciting job, but one for which Artemo – admittedly not the deepest of thinkers – was well suited. The man's hands were rough and calloused; his face was deeply tanned as a result of years before a kiln.

The draft horses methodically plodded their way down the King's Road, towards his ultimate destination of Laketowne, within the Earldom of Linth. His cart, laden with the bricks that were his life's blood, creaked in time with the clop-clop noise of the animal's hooves. He was eager to make it to Laketowne before nightfall; there was an unnatural blight on this land, and the peasants here still walked the edge of open rebellion. They normally reserved their attacks for wealthy merchants and nobles; he eagerly hoped he looked enough like a commoner to avoid attracting attention.

Artemo's brow furrowed as something briefly obfuscated the light of the full moon. He looked upward, slowly, and perched on the edge of the seat behind him was a tall man whose landing had made absolutely no sound. The man smiled cordially, reached downward and smashed the merchant's skull open with one of his own bricks. The irony, thought the murderer, was delicious.

A few moments later the great draft horses lay in the dirt, necks broken by the man's bare hands. Those same hands now drifted across the surface of each of the bricks looking for the subtle imperfection that would... yes, the man smiled. He pulled out one brick, with a slight scar-like marking on it, and pressed it between his hands. His immense strength crumbled it, revealing a darkly beautiful gem. Almost immediately, terrified and mournful wailing could be heard, drifting up from the precious stone and barely audible.

It had taken the man a week to track this merchant down, but now he had his prize. He smiled. Count Traago Von Reiklande always got what he wanted.

"Your Majesty," said the Count, bowing at the waist to the gem in his outstretched hand.

From within it, the wailing and crying only continued.

The End

Experience Point Summary

The player characters receive the following experience point awards, by APL and encounter:

Encounter Three (Low Track)

Defeat the peeps

APL 2 – 120 xp.

APL 4 – 180 xp.

APL 6 – 240 xp.

Encounter Four (Low Track)

Defeat the bunnies and the oven

APL 2 – 150 xp.

APL 4 – 210 xp.

APL 6 – 270 xp.

Encounter Five (Low Track)

Defeat the Kaorti thrall

APL 2 – 90 xp.

APL 4 – 150 xp.

APL 6 – 210 xp.

Encounter Two (High Track)

Defeat the hydra

APL 2 – 270 xp.

APL 4 – 330 xp.

APL 6 – 390 xp.

Encounter Three (High Track)

Defeat the mouter(s)

APL 2 – 300 xp.

APL 4 – 360 xp.

APL 6 – 420 xp.

Encounter Five (High Track)

Defeat the golem

APL 2 – 330 xp.

APL 4 – 390 xp.

APL 6 – 450 xp.

Discretionary Roleplaying Award

Judge may allocate up to the following for good role-playing

APL 2 – 90 xp.

APL 4 – 135 xp.

APL 6 – 180 xp.

APL 8 – 225 xp.

APL 10 – 270 xp.

APL 12 – 315 xp.

Total Possible Experience

APL 2 – 450 xp.

APL 4 – 675 xp.

APL 6 – 900 xp.

APL 8 – 1,125 xp.

APL 10 – 1,350 xp.

APL 12 – 1,575 xp.

Treasure Summary

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

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

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

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional 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 2: L: 0 gp; C: 450 gp; M: 0 gp.
 APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 650 gp; M: 0 gp.
 APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 900 gp; M: 0 gp.
 APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 1,300 gp; M: 0 gp.
 APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 2,300 gp; M: 0 gp.
 APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 3,300 gp; M: 0 gp.

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed)

APL 2: L: 0 gp; C: 450 gp; M: 0 gp – Total: 450 gp (450 gp).

APL 4: L: 0 gp; C: 650 gp; M: 0 gp – Total: 650 gp (650 gp).

APL 6: L: 0 gp; C: 900 gp; M: 0 gp – Total: 900 gp (900 gp).

APL 8: L: 0 gp; C: 1,300 gp; M: 0 gp – Total: 1,300 gp (1,300 gp).

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 2,300 gp; M: 0 gp – Total: 2,300 gp (2,300 gp).

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 3,300 gp; M: 0 gp – Total: 3,300 gp (3,300 gp).

Special

☛ **Murderer!:** This PC was responsible for, or was an accessory to, the death of the Baron of Dilwyth and/or his noble cousin, Wallace. Both the DM and the Player should contact the Keoland Metaorganization and Regional Flavor POC at keoland_marf_poc@yahoo.com with their version of the events so that an appropriate punishment/restitution can be made. Until this matter is completely resolved with the Keoland Triad, this PC is permanently out of play.

☛ **Lost in the Far Realms:** This PC foolishly tried to follow the Kaorti through the planar portal, and is lost, probably permanently. Notify the Keoland Metaorganization and Regional Flavor POC at keoland_marf_poc@yahoo.com and be prepared to detail your character information. Until this matter is completely resolved with the Keoland Triad, this PC is permanently out of play.

☛ **Stuck in Candyland:** This PC has attained Death by Chocolate. This scenario costs 1 additional TU beyond its normal cost, and the PC can never eat chocolate again. Any mention of chocolate causes horrible flashbacks of Chocolate Rambo-Bunnies with missing ears.

☛ **Rock Candy Equipment:** Upon your recovery from being turned into candy, you notice that one mundane item in your possession did not return to its normal form. Choose a single mundane item that was in your possession at the time of the transformation and list it here: _____. That item is now rock candy; easy to break, but oh so tasty. The item can no longer be used for its original purpose, but can be worn/carried and eaten when desired.

☛ **Training by Vilharian:** The new Baron of Dilwyth has agreed to share some of his centuries of knowledge with you. At the end of any one Keoland Regional or Sheldomar Valley Metaregional adventure, you may spend an additional 8 TUs to gain one, and only one, of the following benefits (circle the one chosen):

- **Spell-slayer Training:** For the purposes of magic item creation only, you have access to create *rods of cancellation* and *rods of negation*.
- **Secrets of the Smiths:** For the purposes of magic item creation only, you have access to create weapons (or upgrade them) with the *axiomatic* weapon special ability. For the purposes of purchasing magic weapon upgrades, you have

access (Frequency: Adventure) to purchase the *axiomatic* weapon special ability for any one weapon you are already purchasing another upgrade for.

- ❖ **Lore of the Ancients:** You gain a permanent +2 insight bonus to checks with one of the following skills/abilities (circle the one chosen): Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local – Sheldomar Valley Metaregion), Knowledge (nobility & royalty), Bardic Knowledge, Lore.

- ❖ *Wand of Chaos Hammer* (Regional - Limit One, 8th level caster, DMG)

APL 12 (APL 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 Items plus):

- ❖ *Robe of Scintillating Colors* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Scimitar of Colors* (Regional - Limit One, A&EG)
- ❖ *Wand of Suggestion, Heightened 4th Level* (Regional - Limit One, 7th level caster, DMG)

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 2:

- ❖ *Chime of Opening* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Spined Shield* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Wand of Magic Missile* (Regional - Limit One, 3rd level caster, DMG)

APL 4 (APL 2 Items plus):

- ❖ *Murlynd's Spoon* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Rope of Climbing* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Wand of Eagle's Splendor* (Regional - Limit One, 3rd level caster, DMG)

APL 6 (APL 2, 4 Items plus):

- ❖ *Cape of the Mountebank* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Nolzur's Marvelous Pigments* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Wand of Mirror Image* (Regional - Limit One, 3rd level caster, DMG)

APL 8 (APL 2, 4, 6 Items plus):

- ❖ *Anarchic weapon* – PC's choice (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Rod of Wonder* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)
- ❖ *Wand of Major Image* (Regional - Limit One, 5th level caster, DMG)

APL 10 (APL 2, 4, 6, 8 Items plus):

- ❖ *Distracting armor or shield* – PC's choice (Regional - Limit One, A&EG)
- ❖ *Staff of Charming* (Regional - Limit One, DMG)

Appendix One – NPCs

All APLs

Malweig, Male Human Brd7/Ftr8: CR 15; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 7d6+8d10; hp 92; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (flat-footed 18, touch 13), Atks +15/+10 melee (*Keen Wounding* +1 *whip-dagger*, 1d6+3, 17-20/x2); SA: Bardic music, countersong, *fascinate*, inspire courage +1, inspire competence, *Suggestion*; SQ: Bardic knowledge; AL N (formerly CN); Sv: Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +9; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 18

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Balance +7, Bluff +6, Climb +5, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +5, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +5, Handle Animal +7, Hide +5, Intimidate +8, Jump +7, Knowledge (Arcana) +2, Knowledge (Geography) +1, Knowledge (Local) +1, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +2, Knowledge (Religion) +1, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Perform (Oratory) +11, Ride +8, Sense Motive +2, Sleight of Hand +5, Spellcraft +4, Swim +2, Tumble +15, Use Magic Device +12. Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Weapon Focus (Whip), Improved Critical (Whip), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Whip), Weapon Specialization (Whip)

Possessions: bracers of armor +8, +1 *keen wounding whip-dagger*.

Spells Known (3/4/3/1; base DC 14 + spell level): 0- [Detect Magic, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Read Magic] 1- [Cure Light Wounds, Detect Secret Doors, Expeditious Retreat, Identify], 2- [Cat's Grace, Cure Moderate Wounds, Eagle's Splendor, Silence] 3- [Dispel Magic, Haste].

Vilharian: Minor artifact, an *adamantine* +5 *bane* (spellcasters) long sword, renders wielder immunity to fire and cold, *control weather* at will (range 1,000 feet), speech, *telepathy*. Other powers unknown.

AL LN; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +9, Str -, Dex -, Con -, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 18, Ego 19.

Vilharian appears as an ancient Suloise blade with a silver and aquamarine pommel. The sword returned to Keoland after being purchased by Malweig for his artifact collection. Following the events of *Crimes of the Heart*, he and Malweig became confidantes. Over time, Vilharian encouraged Malweig to wield some of his political influence as a baron of Keoland. Malweig became suspicious of his motives (and magical abilities) and put the blade away until he could decide what to do on his own.

Vilharian, a sentient artifact from the time of the Suel Imperium, considers himself the steward of the surviving Suel families of Keoland, and through them the kingdom. He has no desire to return to being a king's showpiece and desires to manipulate events from behind the scenes for the betterment of the kingdom. Vilharian will allow himself to be wielded by

anyone if needed, although he prefers someone with skill in longsword and lawful alignment.

Wallace Wanker, Male Human Clr 4/Wiz 4: CR 8; Medium Humanoid (Human); HD 4d4 + 4d8; hp 36; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (flat-footed 16; touch 11); Base Atk/Grp +5/+4; Atk/Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff +2); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +10; AL CG. Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills & Feats: Concentration +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Profession (Chocolatier) +13, Spellcraft +16. Combat Expertise, Improved Familiar, Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item.

Possessions: Quarterstaff +2, spell component pouches, silver holy symbol of Zagyg, cookbook, spices, rolling pin.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/4/3 per day; DC 14 + spell level): 0 - [Daze x2, Flare, Prestidigitation], 1 - [Charm Person, Color Spray, Grease, Sleep], 2 - [Glitterdust, Scare, Web].

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/4 per day; DC 12 + spell level): 0 - [Detect Magic, Light, Read Magic, Resistance x2], 1 - [Bane, Bless, Entropic Shield, Protection from Law*, Sanctuary], 2 - [Shatter*, Hold Person, Silence, Sound Burst].

* Domain Spell. Domains: Chaos (cast all chaos spells at +1 caster level), Magic (Use scrolls, wands and other spell completion or spell trigger devices as a wizard of ½ your cleric levels; this stacks with existing wizard levels).

Kaorti (as presented in *Fiend Folio*)

Medium-size Outsider

HD: 2d8 (9hp)

Int: +2 (Dex)

Spd: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+2 Dex, +2 natural, +4 resin scale armor)

Atk: Bite +1 melee, or ribbon dagger +4 melee, or darts +4 ranged

Dam: Bite 1d6-2, dagger 1d4-2, darts 1d4-2

Face/Reach: 5 ft./ 5 ft.

Special Atk: Spell-like abilities, vile transformation

Special Qualities: Material vulnerability, outsider traits, poison immunity

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 7, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 16

Skills: Concentration +5, Craft (armorsmithing) +7, Craft (weaponsmithing) +7, Heal +13, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (the Planes) +7, Spellcraft +9 (+11 to decipher scrolls), Survival +5 (+7 on other planes), Use Magical Device +7 (+9 scrolls)

Feats: Exotic Weapon Proficiency (ribbon dagger), Weapon Finesse

Climate/Terrain: Any non-natural (Far Realm)

Organization: Solitary, patrol (2-9), cyst pilgrimage (10-20 plus 1-3 kaorti thralls), or cyst (21-60 plus 10-20 kaorti thralls and 1 skybleeder per 15 kaorti)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard, items only

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

Level adjustment: +2

Humanoid in shape, a kaorti must dress in form-fitting armor made of thick resins and tissues grown and cultivated by kaorti alchemists whenever one ventures from its cyst. A kaorti in a resin suit looks like an emaciated human with elongated arms and legs. It had three long fingers and a long thumb on each hand, and its motions are slithery and undulant. Its bulbous face is affixed to its body by a long neck. A kaorti's face almost always remains hidden behind windings of resin.

Outside its resin suit, a kaorti is decidedly non-human in appearance. Its skin, brownish green in color swirled with livid pinks and reds and purples, seems to be almost transparent and liquid as it slithers and runs over the creature's visible entrails. A kaorti's fingers are little more than boneless tendrils. Its face looks like that of a melted spider. Its palms constantly secrete a thick, green resin that can be crafted by kaorti smiths into weapons and armor or reinforcements for their lairs. The average kaorti is 7 feet tall and weighs 100 pounds.

Kaorti speak their own guttural language and have picked up smatterings of many other languages during the interrogation of prisoners. Most kaorti can speak Common and Sylvan.

Combat: Kaorti prefer to use magic against their enemies, while their transformed minions and thugs engage in melee. When magic fails, a kaorti tries to fight with ranged weapons if it can; kaorti are proficient with all simple ranger weapons as well as with shuriken. A kaorti caught in melee combat usually flees in an attempt to regain the needed distance for spells and ranged attacks.

Spell-like abilities: 1/day-alter self, color spray, feather fall, ray of enfeeblement, reduce, spider climb. Caster level 2nd; save DC 14 + spell level.

Vile Transformation (Su): A kaorti can infuse any living creature with otherworldly essence from the Far Realm, permanently transforming the target into a mockery of its previous form. This process takes 8 hours, during which time the kaorti's jaws must be locked onto the victim, who must either be willing or helpless for the duration. After 8 hours, the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 11). Failure indicates the victim transforms into a kaorti (if the victim is humanoid), or into a kaorti thrall. If the victim succeeds at the save, the kaorti can attempt the transformation again; each additional attempt to transform a victim increases the DC by +1.

Material Vulnerability (Ex): The Material Plane is painful to an unprotected kaorti. An unprotected kaorti must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and becomes fatigued. The fatigued condition

persists until the kaorti recovers from the nonlethal damage it took from exposure to the Material Plane. If the kaorti is rendered unconscious though the accumulation of nonlethal damage (from this ability or any other source), the Material Plane environs begin to deal normal damage at the same rate. A kaorti wearing a resin suit, or a kaorti inside a cyst, is protected from the effects of the material plane.

Outsider Traits: Kaorti have darkvision (60 foot range), and they cannot be raised or resurrected.

Skills: Kaorti have a +8 racial bonus on Heal checks.

APL 2

Encounter Two

Woman, Female Human Com1: CR ½; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d4+3; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (flatfooted 10, touch 11), Base Atk/Grp +0/+0; Atk/Full Atk +0 melee (dagger, 1d4, 19-20/x2); AL NG; Sv Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +6, Jump +2, Listen +2, Ride +3, Swim +2, Use Rope +3; Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness (1x).

Possessions: Dagger, peasant's clothes.

Sahar, Male Human Wars: CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 5d8+10; hp 38; Init +1; Move 30 ft.; AC 13 (flat-footed 12, touch 11), Base Atk/Grp +5/+7; Atk/Full Atk +9 melee (Darkwood greatclub, 1d10+3); AL NG; Sv Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Bluff +2, Climb +4, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +2, Listen +2, Ride +3, Sense Motive +2, Spot +2, Swim +4. Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (Greatclub).

Possessions: Darkwood greatclub, masterwork leather armor.

Encounter Five

Kaorti Thrall Bison: CR 3; Large outsider; HD 5d8+15; hp 38; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (flat-footed 13, touch 9); Base Atk/Grp +3/+13; Atk/Full Atk Gore +8 melee (1d8+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Stampede, True Strike; SQ Scent, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 10, DR 5/magic, Alternate Form; AL NE; Sv Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Endurance.

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.

APL 4

Encounter Two

Woman, Female Human Com1: CR ½; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d4+3; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (flatfooted 10, touch 11), Base Atk/Grp +0/+0; Atk/Full Atk +0 melee (dagger, 1d4, 19-20/x2); AL NG; Sv Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +6, Jump +2, Listen +2, Ride +3, Swim +2, Use Rope +3; Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness (1X).

Possessions: Dagger, peasant's clothes.

Sahar, Male Human War7: CR 6; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 7d8+14; hp 53; Init +1; Move 30 ft.; AC 13 (flat-footed 12, touch 11), Base Atk/Grp +7/+9; Atk +11 melee (Darkwood greatclub, 1d10+3); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (Darkwood greatclub, 1d10+3); AL NG; Sv Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Bluff +2, Climb +4, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +2, Listen +2, Ride +3, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Swim +4. Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (Greatclub).

Possessions: Darkwood greatclub, masterwork leather armor.

Encounter Five

Kaorti Thrall Boar: CR 2; Medium-size outsider; HD 3d8+12; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (flat-footed 16, touch 10); Base Atk/Grp +2/+4; Atk/Full Atk Gore +4 melee (1d8+3); SA Ferocity, True Strike; SQ Scent, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 6, Alternate Form; AL NE; Sv Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Toughness.

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.

APL 6

Encounter Two

Woman, Female Human Com1: CR ½; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d4+3; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (flatfooted 10, touch 11), Base Atk/Grp +0/+0; Atk/Full Atk +0 melee (dagger, 1d4, 19-20/x2); AL NG; Sv Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +6, Jump +2, Listen +2, Ride +3, Swim +2, Use Rope +3; Simple Weapon Proficiency, Toughness (1X).

Possessions: Dagger, peasant's clothes.

Sahar, Male Human War9: CR 8; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 9d8+18; hp 68; Init +1; Move 20 ft.; AC 14 (flat-footed 12, touch 11), Base Atk/Grp +9/+12; Atk +14 melee (Darkwood greatclub, 1d10+4, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (Darkwood greatclub, 1d10+4, 19-20/x2); AL NG; Sv Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +2, Bluff +2, Climb +3, Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +2, Listen +3, Ride +3, Sense Motive +4, Spot +4, Survival +2, Swim +4. Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greatclub), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (Greatclub).

Possessions: Darkwood greatclub, masterwork hide armor.

Encounter Five

Kaorti Thrall Bison: CR 3; Large outsider; HD 5d8+15; hp 38; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (flat-footed 13, touch 9); Base Atk/Grp +3/+13; Atk/Full Atk Gore +8 melee (1d8+9); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Stampede, True Strike; SQ Scent, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 10, DR 5/magic, Alternate Form; AL NE; Sv Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 22, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Endurance.

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.

Kaorti Thrall Boar: CR 2; Medium-size outsider; HD 3d8+12; hp 27; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (flat-footed 16, touch 10); Base Atk/Grp +2/+4; Atk/Full Atk Gore +4 melee (1d8+3); SA Ferocity, *True Strike*; SQ Scent, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, low-light vision, SR 6, *Alternate Form*; AL NE; Sv Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 13, Cha 4.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +5; Alertness, Toughness.

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.

APL 8

Encounter Two

Pseudonatural Seven-Headed Pyrohydra: CR 9; Huge outsider; HD 7d10+38; hp 81; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.; AC 17 (flat-footed 16, touch 9); Base Attack/Grapple +7/+19; Atk/Full Atk 7 Bites +10 melee (1d10+4); Face/Reach 15' / 10'; SA Breath weapon; SQ: Fast Healing 17, Scent, Darkvision (60'), DR 5/magic, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, *True Strike* 1/day, *Alternate Form*, SR 14; AL N; Sv Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +12. Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): These hydras can breathe jets of steam 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 20 feet long. All heads breathe once every 1d4 rounds. Each jet deals 3d6 points of fire damage per head. A successful Ref save halves the damage (DC 10 + ½ hydra's original number of heads + hydra's Con modifier = 18).

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 Three

Pseudonatural Advanced Gibbering Mouter: CR 10; Large outsider; HD 12d8+96; hp 144; Init +0; Spd Walk 10 ft., Swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (flat-footed 20, touch 8); Base Atk/Grp +9/+17; Ark Bite +10 melee (1d2) or spittle +10 ranged touch (1d4 acid + blindness); Full Atk 6 Bites +10 melee (1d2) or spittle +10 ranged touch (1d4 acid + blindness); Face/Reach 10' / 10'; SA: Amorphous, Blood Drain, Engulf, Gibbering, Ground Manipulation, Improved Grab, Spittle, *True Strike* 1/day, *Alternate Form*; SQ: Amorphous, DR 5/bludgeoning and 10/magic, Acid and Electricity Resistance 10, darkvision (60'), SR 24; AL N; Sv: Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +13, Swim +8. Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

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.

APL 10

Encounter Two

Pseudonatural Eight-Headed Pyrohydra: CR 11; Huge outsider; HD 8d10+43; hp 93; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.; AC 18 (flat-footed 17, touch 9); Base Attack/Grapple +8/+20; Atk/Full Atk 8 Bites +11 melee (1d10+4); Face/Reach 15' / 10'; SA Breath weapon; SQ: Fast Healing 18, Scent, Darkvision (60'), DR 5/magic, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, *True Strike* 1/day, *Alternate Form*, SR 16; AL N; Sv Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +7, Spot +8, Swim +12. Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): These hydras can breathe jets of steam 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 20 feet long. All heads breathe once every 1d4 rounds. Each jet deals 3d6 points of fire damage per head. A successful Ref save halves the damage (DC 10 + ½ hydra's original number of heads + hydra's Con modifier = 19).

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 Three

Pseudonatural Advanced Gibbering Moulder: CR 10; Large outsider; HD 12d8+96; hp 144; Init +0; Spd Walk 10 ft., Swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (flat-footed 20, touch 8); Base Atk/Grp +9/+17; Ark Bite +10 melee (1d2) or spittle +10 ranged touch (1d4 acid + blindness); Full Atk 6 Bites +10 melee (1d2) or spittle +10 ranged touch (1d4 acid + blindness); Face/Reach 10' / 10'; SA: Amorphous, Blood Drain, Engulf, Gibbering, Ground Manipulation, Improved Grab, Spittle, *True Strike* 1/day, *Alternate Form*; SQ: Amorphous, DR 5/bludgeoning and 10/magic, Acid and Electricity Resistance 10, darkvision (60'), SR 24; AL N; Sv: Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +13, Swim +8. Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

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.

APL 12

Encounter Two

Pseudonatural Ten-Headed Pyrohydra: CR 13; Huge outsider; HD 10d10+53; hp 115; Init +1; Spd 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (flat-footed 19, touch 9); Base Attack/Grapple +10/+23; Atk/Full Atk 10 Bites +14 melee (1d10+5); Face/Reach 15' / 10'; SA Breath weapon; SQ: Fast Healing 20, Scent, Darkvision (60'), DR 5/magic, Electricity and Acid Resistance 5, *True Strike* 1/day, *Alternate Form*, SR 20; AL N; Sv Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 3, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +9, Swim +13. Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Bite).

Breath Weapon (Su): These hydras can breathe jets of steam 10 feet high, 10 feet wide, and 20 feet long.

All heads breathe once every 1d4 rounds. Each jet deals 3d6 points of fire damage per head. A successful Ref save halves the damage (DC 10 + ½ hydra's original number of heads + hydra's Con modifier = 20).

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 Three

Pseudonatural Advanced Gibbering Moulder: CR 10; Large outsider; HD 12d8+96; hp 144; Init +0; Spd Walk 10 ft., Swim 20 ft.; AC 20 (flat-footed 20, touch 8); Base Atk/Grp +9/+17; Ark Bite +10 melee (1d2) or spittle +10 ranged touch (1d4 acid + blindness); Full Atk 6 Bites +10 melee (1d2) or spittle +10 ranged touch (1d4 acid + blindness); Face/Reach 10' / 10'; SA: Amorphous, Blood Drain, Engulf, Gibbering, Ground Manipulation, Improved Grab, Spittle, *True Strike* 1/day, *Alternate Form*; SQ: Amorphous, DR 5/bludgeoning and 10/magic, Acid and Electricity Resistance 10, darkvision (60'), SR 24; AL N; Sv: Fort +14, Ref +6, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Listen +8, Spot +13, Swim +8. Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.

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 Five

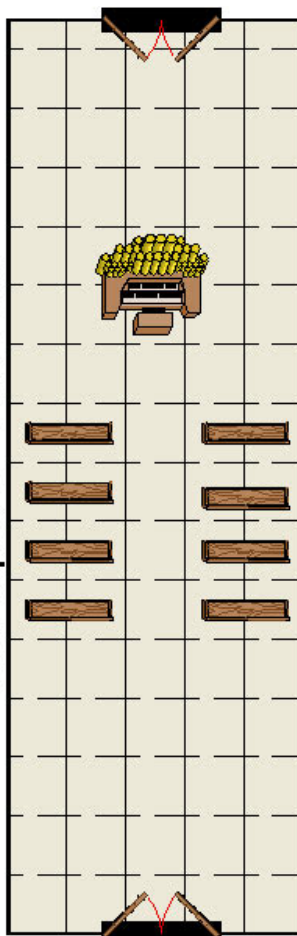
Advanced Clay Golem: CR 15; Huge construct; HD 19d10+30; hp 165; Init –2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 23 (flat-footed 23, touch 6); Base Atk/Grp +14/+33; Atk Slam +23 melee (2d10+11 and cursed wound); Full Atk 2 Slams +23 melee (2d10+11 and cursed wound); Face/Reach 15' / 15'; SA Berserk, cursed wound; SQ Construct traits, DR 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, darkvision 60'; haste, immune to magic, low-light vision; AL N; SV

Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 33, Dex 7, Con –, Int –, Wis
11, Cha 1.

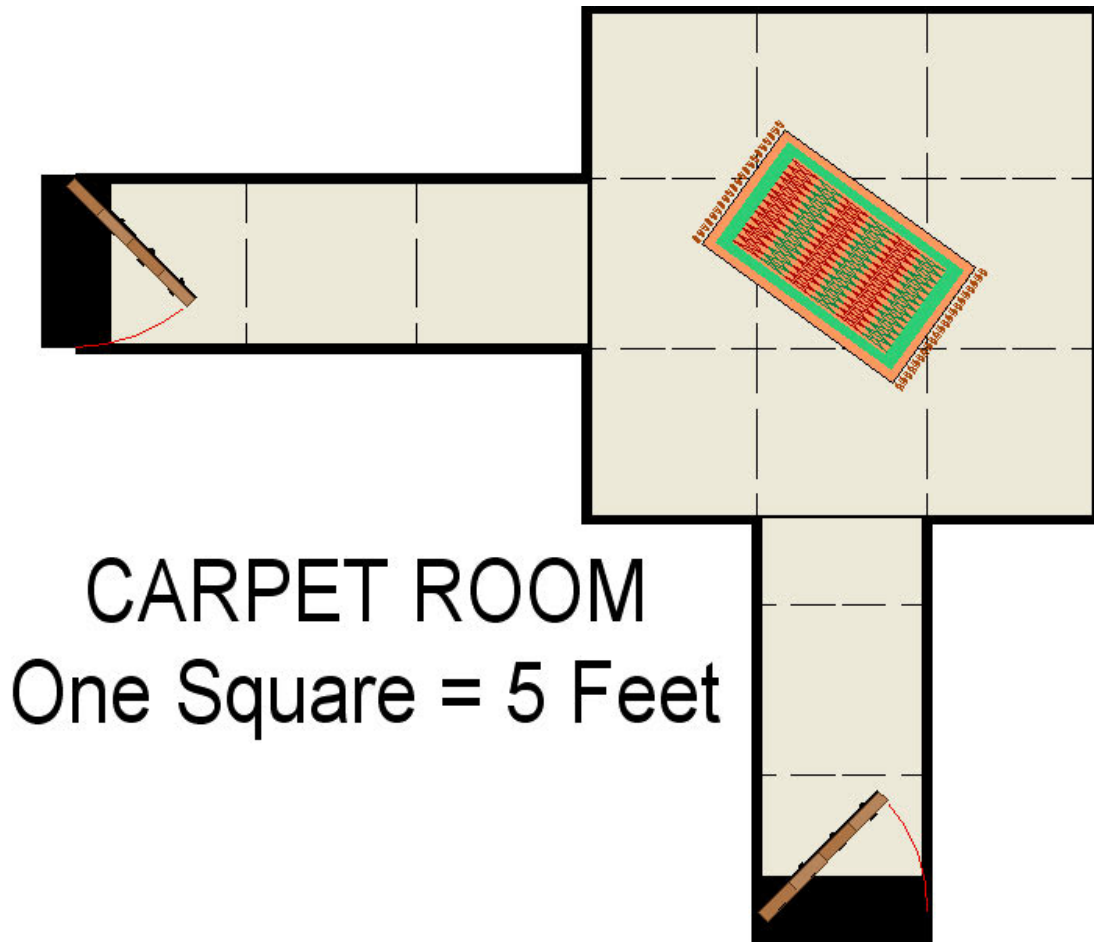
DM Aids: Map #1

ENCOUNTER 2B - LUDWIG

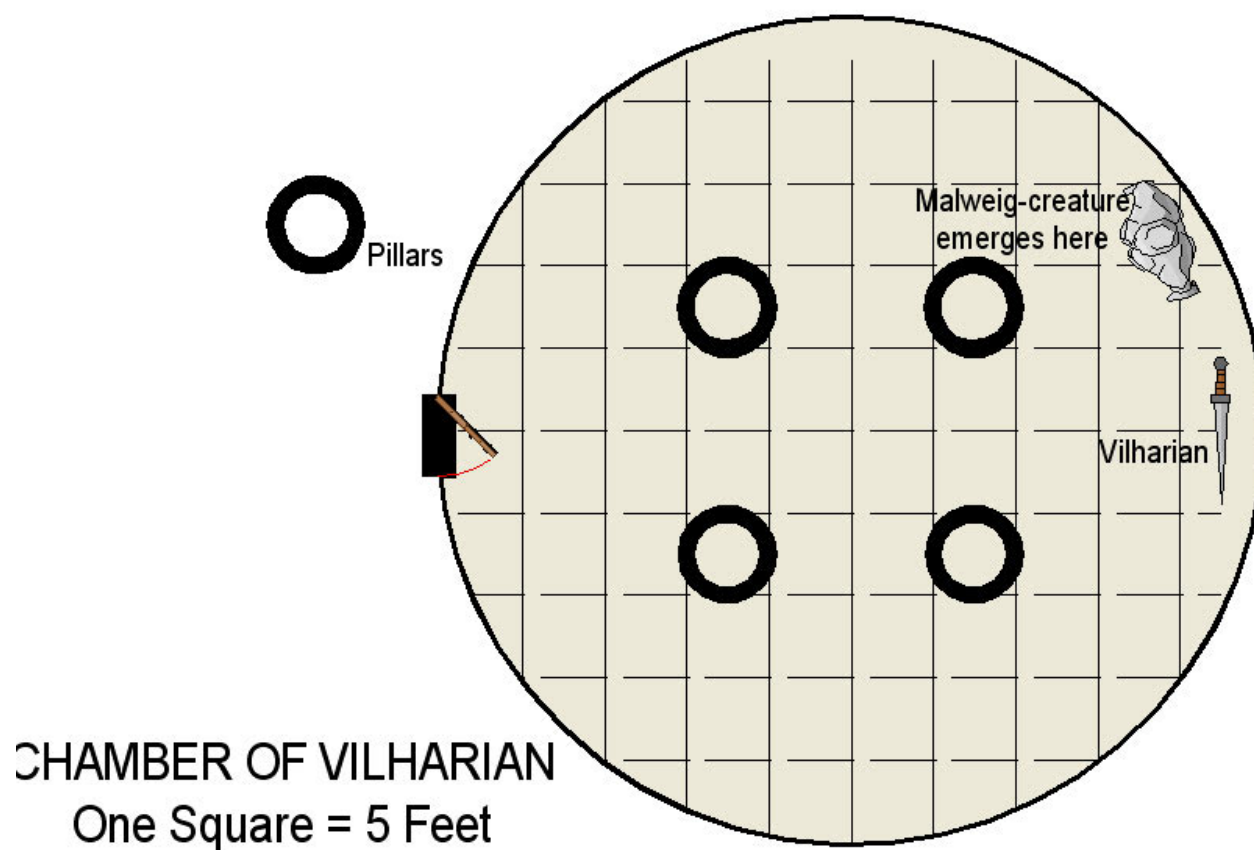
One Square = Five Feet



DM Aids: Map #2



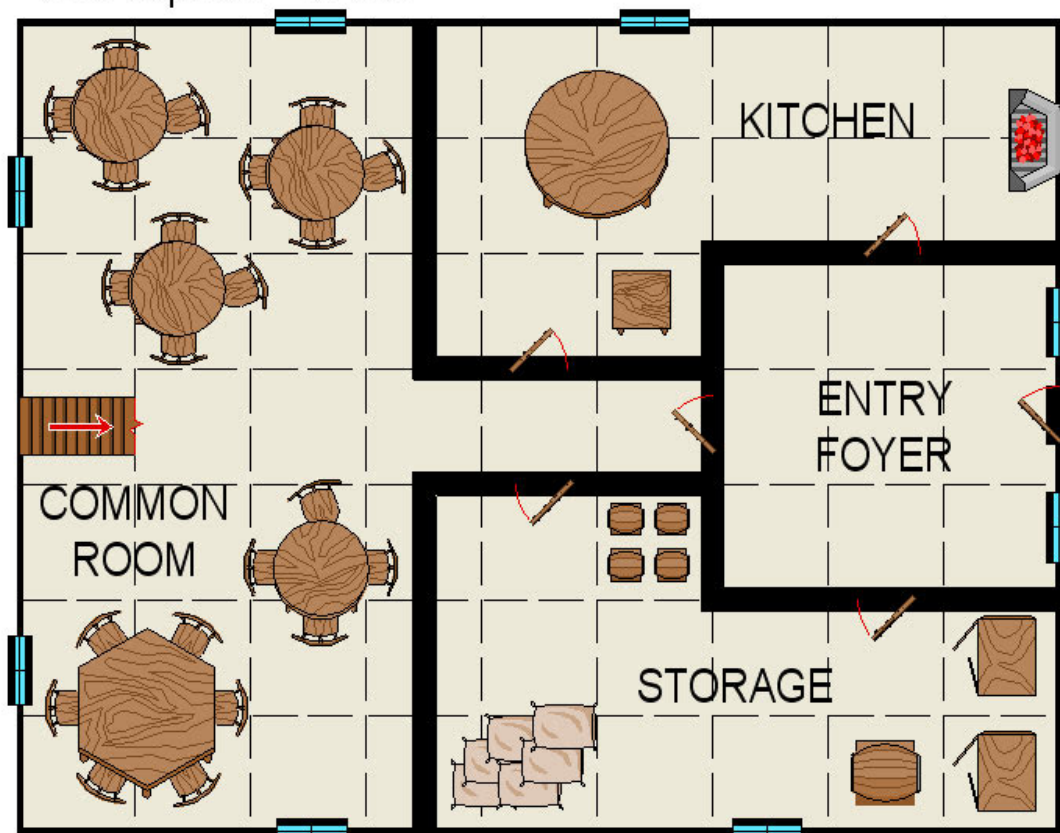
DM Aids: Map #3



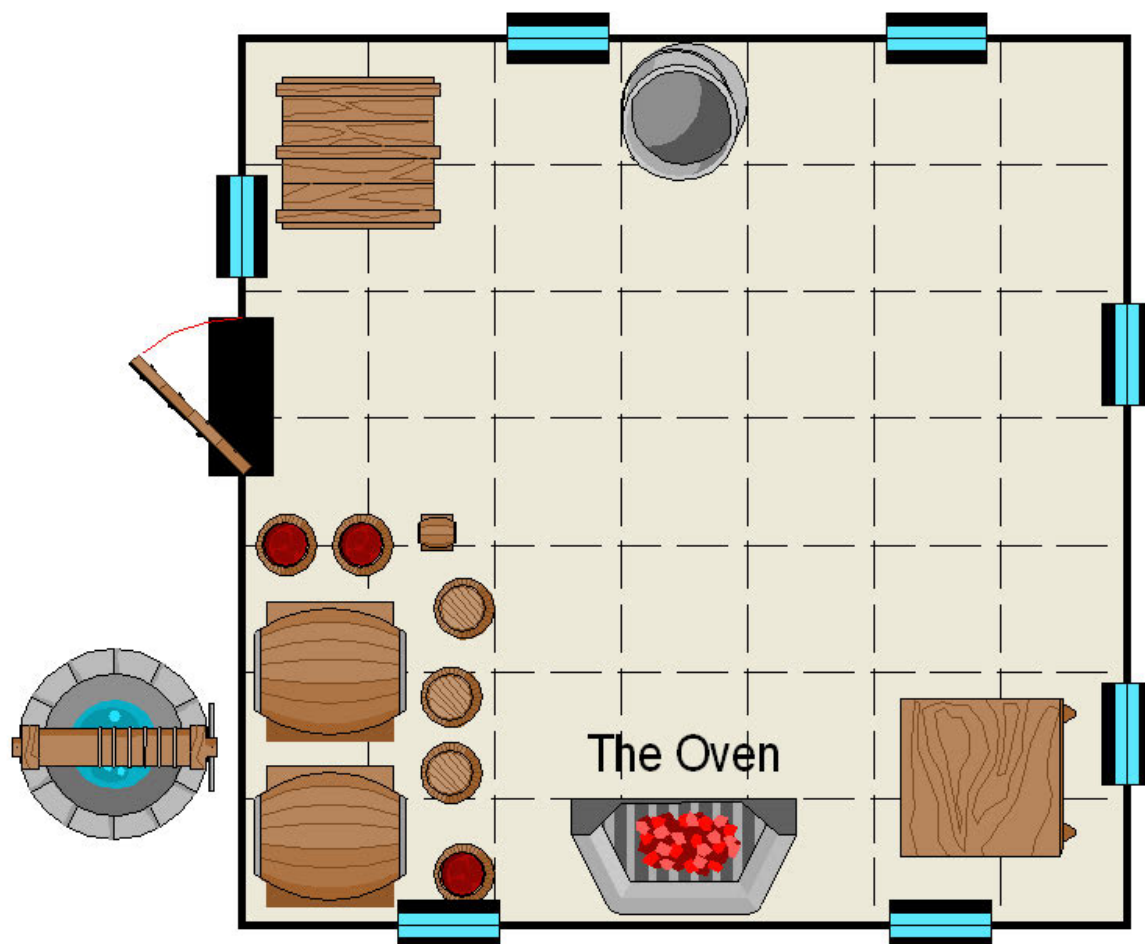
DM Aids: Map #4

INSANITY'S END INN

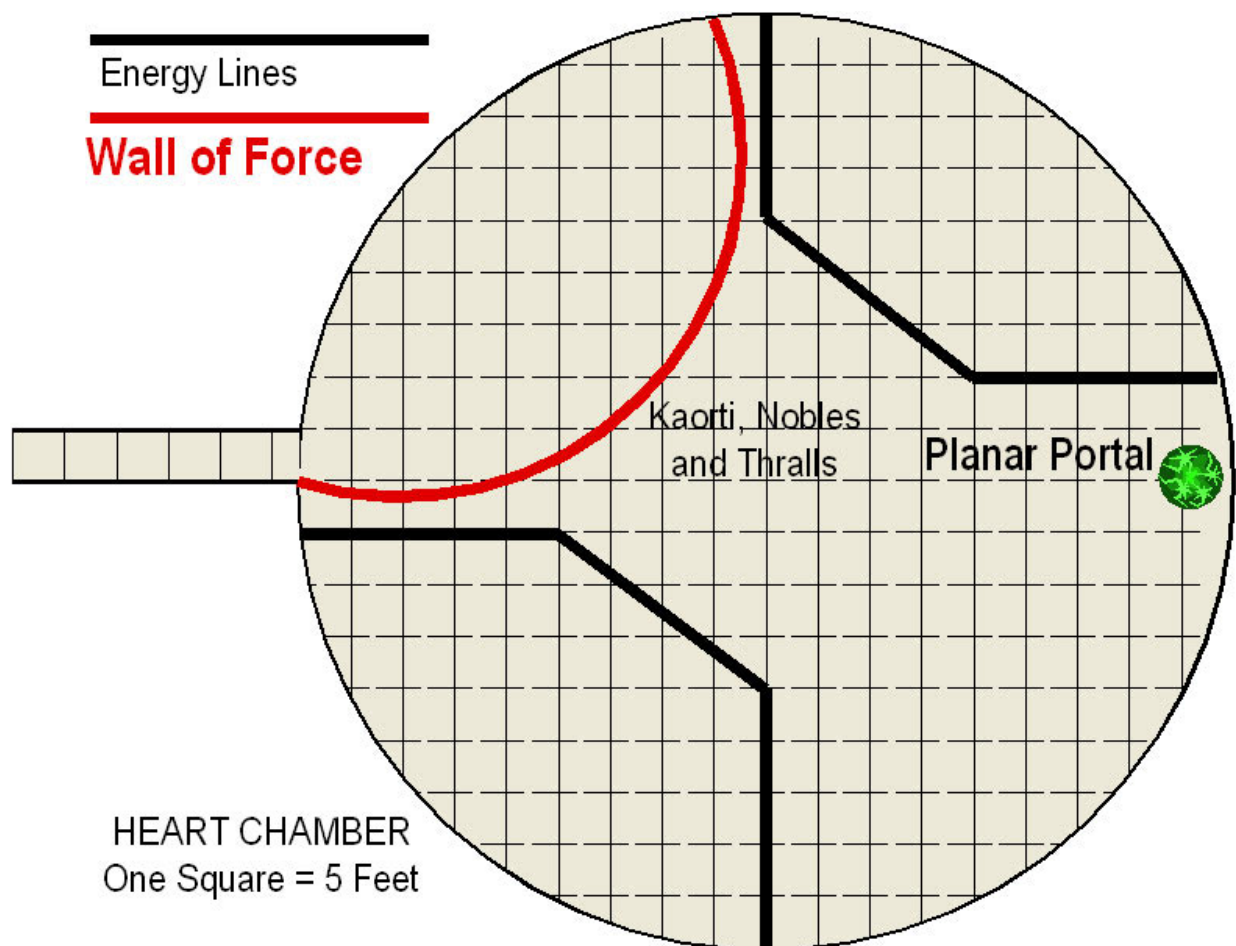
One Square = 5 Feet



DM Aids: Map #5



DM Aids: Map #6



Player Handout #1

My most esteemed servants of Keoland,

I write on behalf of the Lord High Baron Draconis Eternal of Dilwyth, Malweig the First. It is with humble apprehension that I hope to retain your services to provide timely succor to my lord at this moment of his need. I know not every detail of this request so I will leave it to my lord to express his wishes to you directly.

You have been chosen for this honor because you have either enjoyed the employ of the baron in the past or have a reputation for skill in your chosen profession. Service to the noble blood of Keoland is its own reward; however, you may feel deep assurance that Malweig is a most wealthy and generous patron.

You will accompany the exquisite young man who bore this letter to a rendezvous. From there you will proceed with other adventurers forthwith to Castle Draconis Imperius to receive your audience with the baron.

His servant and yours,

High Herald Thaddaus Pliq of Dilwyth

Player Handout #2

The key to life and death is everywhere to be found, but if you do not find it in your own house, you will find it nowhere. Yet it is before everyone's eyes; no one can live without it; everybody uses it. The poor usually possess more of it than the rich; children play with it in the streets. The uneducated esteem it highly, but the learned often throw it away.