COR1-06

The Forbidden Choice

A One-Round D&D Core Living Greyhawk™ Adventure

version 1

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Thought lost to antiquity, the remains of an ancient elven chest have been recovered. Why is this relic so important that Iuz's followers would take interest in it? An adventure for heroic characters of levels 1-6.

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

Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core rule books during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

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

Scoring

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is a Living Greyhawk Adventure. As a Living™ adventure, it is expected that players will 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, a character sheet, and a Living Greyhawk log 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 Tier Structure

Because players bring their own characters to Living Greyhawk campaigns, this adventure is tiered. Basically, the challenges in this adventure are proportioned to the average character level of the characters participating in the adventure. To determine the tier that you will use to run this adventure, add the character levels of all the characters. In addition, add the levels of any cohorts or animals according to the values on their certificates. Cross-reference the total and the number of players participating in the game using the chart below to determine the tier used for this adventure.

	4 players	5 players	6 players	7 players	Lvl Cap
T1:	4-12	5-13	6-14	7-15	4th
T2:	13-22	14-24	15-26	16-28	6th
T3:	23-32	25-35	27-38	29-41	8th

The level cap indicated is the highest level of character allowed to play this adventure. Characters of levels higher than the highest level shown for the highest tier cannot be played.

Is it a Full Moon?

Since the hazards of lycanthropy are a current part of the Living Greyhawk campaign, it may be necessary to determine if this adventure takes place during a full moon. For game purposes, the full moon lasts three days of each month. For a given scenario that does not state the phase of the moon, roll 1d10 before play begins. On a result of 1, the first day of the scenario is a night of the full moon (roll 1d3 to determine where in the sequence of three nights it falls).

Lifestyle

At the beginning of every scenario, each PC is required to pay upkeep costs matching the level of lifestyle they wish to maintain. The lifestyles, and the effects that each has on play, are:

Destitute You have no living space, and must carry all your gear everywhere. You eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, your only change of clothes.

Poor You sleep in poor accommodations, and eat poor quality food. You wear a peasant outfit, and have two sets of clothing.

Common You have common lodgings, and eat common quality food. You have normal clothing for your profession (adventuring); nothing fancy. You probably have two or three sets of clothing.

High You stay in good quality lodgings, and eat good quality food. You wear anything in value up to courtier's outfits, and generally buy a new set of clothing every two weeks.

Luxury You have luxurious accommodations (twice the cost of good accommodations), and you eat excellent foods. You can throw a banquet for your friends every day, and frequently do. You wear clothing up to the value of noble's outfit, and buy a new set of clothes every week.

Lifestyles come with bonuses or penalties to Diplomacy, Intimidate, Disguise, and Bluff skill checks. These penalties, shown below, should be applied at the DM's discretion, and can sometimes backfire—for example, a PC with a poor lifestyle would not have a penalty when talking to a beggar, but would when talking to a city official. A PC with a high lifestyle should have a penalty when dealing with a group of street thugs, where a PC with a destitute lifestyle might not.

DMs are encouraged to role-play these reactions whenever possible.

Lifestyle	Cost	Skill Modifier
Destitute	14 sp	-2
Poor	43 sp	-1
Common	12 gp	0
High	250 gp	+1
Luxury	500 gp	+2

DM's Introduction

Hundreds of years ago, a great evil rose up in the Vesve Forest. It ravaged the lands around it, rampaging through the Viceroyalty of Ferrond, leaving only death and suffering in its wake. The nameless thing eventually was defeated, but the victors knew that in due time it would rise again.

In the shadow of the ancient keep of Delvenbrass, several heroes sacrificed themselves in a ritual to bind the evil one to a prison of stone beneath the earth. As the last of the ritual participants fell, the spell focus of the ritual was plunged into the stone to seal the thing into its prison. The focus, a dagger named *Binder of the Souls,* has remained throughout the ages to keep the creature from returning to the world.

The high elves of Clan Volmiryth (a clan native to the Vesve), whose families had a great affinity for magic, sealed the prison and cast powerful spells to hide its presence. Those who participated in the spell then sealed up a map containing the only way to find the prison in an ornate chest. The chest was entrusted to one individual, and the rest of the clan members involved were subjected to a powerful spell that erased the knowledge of the binding from their minds.

The guardian of the chest secreted himself (or herself) away from their home. The original heroes who enacted the ritual to bind the evil were all dead The high elves from Clan Volmiryth had wiped their own thoughts of their role. No one remains who knows that the chest contained—the only means to find the ancient prison.

Recently, orcs attacked a caravan heading to Storm Keep from Hardby. The caravan guards held their ground, and slew many of the creatures. In one of the wagons was carrying a large chest. As the battle raged, the orc smashed the chest, and made off with the contents. When the orcs had been defeated, several were questioned before being put to the sword. They informed the caravan master that the item taken from the chest was a map. Some of the defeated orcs were wearing holy symbols of Iuz.

Bwirse, business manager for Auldon Brendingund, purchased the remains of the chest from the caravan. He had the chest returned to Greyhawk City, and had Wugut, a cleric of Fharlanghn, cast a *make whole* spell on what was salvaged. After gathering what information he could on the chest, he was intrigued. Thinking that this chest might be another fortune waiting to be found, he put out a summons for adventurers to help him uncover the mystery.

Adventure Summary

The PCs are invited to meet with Bwirse, Auldon Brendingund's business manager, at the Black Dragon Inn in Clerkburg (a district of Greyhawk City). Bwirse informs the heroes that he has recovered an interesting curiosity—an ancient elven chest that bears a cryptic message. He shows the heroes the chest (which is still a bit damaged, but all in one piece), and explains how it was recovered. Bwirse also mentions that he has heard of a sage who may be knowledge about such things. However, the man lives in Highfolk. His name is Hamdan, and he specializes in elven relics. The businessman asks the characters to take the chest to Highfolk, find out what they can, and see if they can recover whatever the strange inscriptions on the chest refer to. The PCs are informed that they are to receive a portion of any treasure found, and they should depart in the morning.

Asking around Greyhawk City does the PCs no good, but heading to the Great Library of Greyhawk turns up some valuable tidbits on the nature of the inscriptions on the chest.

The next day, the PCs begin their long trek to Highfolk. They travel across the Domain of Greyhawk, catching passage up the Velverdyva at Maraven. The town is reached without incident.

Heading to the Heroes' Rest in Highfolk, the characters speak with Hamdan the Cunning, a tavern owner and loremaster. He is able to tell the PCs that the place they seek is known as Delvenbrass, an ancient ruin located deep within the Vesve Forest, within hostile lands. He also informs them of other things that may help the PCs to unlock the mystery, and the heroes depart in the morning for the keep.

The journey to Delvenbrass, while tense, is uneventful. The fog near the keep is incredibly thick, so much so that the heroes wind up getting lost within it. After a short time of wandering about (and seeing strange shapes at the edge of their vision), a small veil in the fog lifts, revealing a patch of barren ground. A voice whispers in a character's mind telling them to "speak the Word"—a command word that causes the stone prison to rise from the earth.

Entering the prison, the PCs find four men kneeling as if in prayer. The men bear holy symbols of Iuz, and are all long dead. The nature of their deaths is not evident. The map taken from the chest can be found among their possessions. It provides clues to avoiding the traps laid throughout the rest of the prison. Exploring the other chambers in the stone prison reveals more deadly traps. While the PCs are exploring, each hears a voice in his/her head, calling out to him or her. That voice whispers pleas and dark thoughts. The heroes feel something that touches their minds, but as quickly as it arrives, it is gone.

Eventually, the heroes reach the final chamber, the prison that holds the nameless evil. Here, one of the followers of Iuz is found, the sole survivor of the group encountered in the first chamber. He is insane, driven mad by the voices in his mind. In most cases a fight ensues. Upon finishing the battle, the heroes spot a pile of ash in a stone sarcophagus located in the middle of the chamber. Stuck point down in the ash is a beautiful dagger (the *Binder of the Souls*). Here, the PCs must make a choice that no one was ever intended to make—pull the dagger from its spot, or leave the room as it was found. The voices provide support for the former choice.

Either way, the heroes head back to Greyhawk City, with little return for their troubles (except perhaps a fine dagger and a

map). Bwirse thanks the PCs for their efforts, and collects any "treasure" the characters may have brought him. He promises to provide the heroes with a service in the future as compensation for their efforts.

Players' Introduction

It is the last week of Patchwall in the Domain of Greyhawk. You have each spent several days in the Gem of the Flanaess, enjoying the sights and sounds that Greyhawk City has to offer. Just as you were beginning to get the itch to go out adventuring again, you noticed a parchment posted outside the Black Dragon Inn, a large establishment in the scholar's district of Clerkburg.

At this time, give the players Handout #1. If the PCs wish to do anything in the few hours until the meeting, they have some time. Note that unless the PCs commonly adventure together, they have not met one another as of yet.

Interested in the offer, you find yourself at the Black Dragon Inn with several others of adventuring stock. The inn is well kept, and appears to be rather a popular locale, as it is filled with patrons at this dinner hour. Above the din of the tavern-goers, you can hear the booming voice of a large, hairy beast of a man. He seems to be checking in on the hired help of the inn, going from bartender to serving girl to bouncer dispensing directions and comments. Bwirse, the person you are here to meet, has not yet arrived, and dinnertime will soon pass.

Let the PCs take this opportunity to introduce themselves to each other. Bwirse is running a little late, and arrives after a few minutes.

In the meantime, the heroes might be curious about the nature of the big fellow. His name is Miklos Dare (male human Ftr4; hp 26), and he is the owner of the Black Dragon Inn. He was a former adventurer. He loves swapping both stories and rumors. If asked, he can provide the following bits of information:

- I hear that the Moneychangers' and Pawnbrokers' Guildhall is thinking about raising the exchange fee for Dyvers and Duchy of Urnst coinage to 10%. That'll really cut hard into some of my business; a lot of travelers stop in here from those lands.
- Rainy's telling me that he's having a bit of trouble over at the Brass Dragon Inn. He says the patrons hear voices whispering to them late at night. Some are saying the place is haunted. Maybe after you're done working for Bwirse, you can go check it out.
- *If asked about Bwirse:* Yeah, he comes in here often with Auldon Brendingund, a merchant who lives just down the road. Auldon's hired him on as his new business manager, after he came into some money again—something about finding his family's inheritance. Bwirse is a good fellow, but can be a little bit absent-minded at times. He's supposed to stop by tonight. If you're here to see him, I'm sure he'll be around soon. Bwirse has a tendency to be a little late.

Encounter 1: Bwirse and the Chest

After the PCs have had an opportunity to get settled, Bwirse (male human Rog5; Profession (merchant) +5; hp 24) walks in the door. Read the following to the players:

After a little while longer, a human gentleman in his late thirties approaches your group. He has close-cut brown hair, and looks a bit feeble. After nodding briefly he says, "Thank you all for coming. My name is Bwirse. I am the Brendingund Merchant House's business manager. I have something very interesting to show you, so if you could come with me upstairs, it would be most appreciated."

Bwirse takes the heroes upstairs to one of the rooms. Inside the room are two men (both male humans) wearing chain shirts with short swords strapped to their sides; they are guarding a fine chest, which has obviously seen better days.

As you enter the room, two men, armored with chain shirts and wearing short swords at their sides, get up from their chairs. Bwirse takes a moment to pause and catch his breath, and then dismisses the guards, telling them to stand watch outside the door. On the desk in the room sits a chest, which looks a bit worn and cracked, but was obviously once very ornate. Bwirse walks over to the chest, and motions all of you to come closer.

The Chest

"A few weeks ago", Bwirse says, "the Burnweigh Caravan Company came upon this chest in a most unusual way. It seems that they were headed to Storm Keep when they were beset upon by an orc raiding party. One of the orcs was carrying this chest. As the orcs fled from the caravan guards, one of them smashed the chest, and took the contents.

After the battle, the caravan master interrogated some of the orcs before putting them to the sword. He found out that the item that was removed from the chest was a map. He also found holy symbols of Iuz on many of the orcs.

My employer purchased the chest, and sent me back to Greyhawk City with it to find some adventurers that might help in finding what this chest is all about. That's where you come in. I need you to uncover the mystery surrounding this relic, and find out if there's anything of value that might be gleaned from it."

Bwirse asks the heroes to take a look at the chest. Looking at the chest reveals the following information:

- The chest is a short sword's length, and about as high and deep. It is obviously of fine craftsmanship, but there is a large

hole in the bottom and a smaller one on the lid and along the right side. The edges of the chest are trimmed in gold, and there is an inscription that runs all the way along the trim, repeating itself.

- Those who succeed at a Craft (carpentry) skill check (DC 15), will glean the oak wood of the chest has obviously been treated with some sort of oil. The wood looks new.
- Those who succeed at an Appraise check (DC 22), know that this chest would fetch a couple hundred gold, if it were all in one piece. As it is, it's still worth about 50 gold orbs, especially to a collector of elven relics.
- The inscription is written in an old dialect of Elven, and repeats itself along the trim. It reads, "When the Handmaiden has strayed farthest from Sehanine's sight, the Keeper speaks the Word near Man's Great Stone Scar in the Tinklingice mists of the Home of Shandareth. That which has been for gotten will be revealed. May Corellon protect us." Give the players Handout 2 if someone in the party can read Elven. Otherwise, Bwirse can explain what it says (he had it translated).
- The chest radiates a faint magic. An *identify* spell reveals that it has been preserved with an *oil of timelessness*.

Bwirse has the following information to offer about the nature of the chest:

- I have discussed the meanings of the chest's message with others. Wugut, a cleric of Fharlanghn that has helped out the Brendingund House in the past, repaired the chest as best he could with a spell. He talked to several associates at the Temple of Celestian about the meaning of the moon phrase. They informed Wugut that the reference was to the time in which Celene is farthest from being full. The full cycle of Celene is sometimes known as the Handmaiden's Departure (when Celene is waning), the Handmaiden's Journey (when Celene is new), and the Handmaiden's Return (when Celene is waxing). The week of time known as the Handmaiden's Journey is coming up soon (during the middle of the next month).
- Tinklingice is the elven name for Ready'reat, which I'm sure some of you know.
- I have also done a bit of researching, and have found that the "Home of Shandareth" refers to an elven clan living in the Vesve Forest. I can only assume that this is the place mentioned in the inscription.
- I assume the "Keeper" is the possessor of the chest.
- There is much here I don't know, however. I still don't know what "Man's Stone Scar" is, nor do I know what "the Word" is. The final two lines also confuse me.

The Offer

After discussing the chest for a time, Bwirse tells the PCs the following:

"I have talked to other knowledgeable individuals who I find trustworthy, and one of them has informed me that someone far to the west might be of help. In fact, none other than Miklos Dare, the owner of this very establishment, suggested him. He used to adventure with a man by the name of Hamdan the Cunning, who apparently is a font of information about legends and myths. He lives in Highfolk, which is near the Vesve Forest, and owns a tavern called the Heroes' Rest.

I would like you to take the chest with you to Highfolk and speak with this man. Find out what you can about the cryptic writings on it. It seems as though you may have an opportunity to unravel the mystery as well, since you should be near the Vesve at the time mentioned in the inscription. Do all that you can to uncover this bizarre puzzle. If you bring back something to show for it, I'll gladly compensate you. If not, I'm certain we can make payment arrangements based on what you've learned—in either case, return here when you are finished."

Bwirse is not willing to discuss payment at this time, but he does give the heroes 80 gold orbs to cover their travel for the journey there and back. He informs the characters that they can take the River Road southwest to Ford Keep, and follow the Western Road to the town of Maraven. There, they should be able to book passage on a merchant ship headed up the Velverdyva to Highfolk, with possibly a stop or two along the way. Rooms have been paid for at the Black Dragon for the night, and the chest is left in the heroes' possession.

The PCs are encouraged to get some sleep, and start off first thing in the morning. Some PCs, however, might want to try finding out a little more of the mystery. A Gather Information check (DC 20), with an expenditure of 1 gp, points the inquiring hero toward the Great Library of Greyhawk. Of course, characters might think of this themselves without the gold loss. In either case, *do not* mention the library to the players unless they ask. The library is open all night long, and is only a short walk from the Black Dragon Inn.

Encounter 2: A Quick Stop at the Library

Read the following to those that make their way to the Great Library:

Ahead is the huge granite building known as the Great Library of Greyhawk. It's massive, with large stone columns and a long staircase reaching up to its entrance. Magical lanterns are positioned outside and within. Armor and weapons are prohibited inside.

The library is massive, but the public stacks are divided up into six areas: History, Geography, Artistic Studies, Poetry and Literature, Science and Engineering, and General (a catch-all cat-

egory). Finding information that is germane to the adventure requires either a Knowledge (history) roll at DC 15, or a Search skill check (DC 20). If either one of the rolls is successful, give the player Handout 3, which contains bits and pieces of things learned. The research takes a few hours.

If the PCs decide to seek some help in their research (or if they just want a bit of conversation) a librarian is more than happy to assist them, as long as they are civil. He also remarks upon the fact that the library is willing to pay for rare books, maps, and other writings - even copies of such things. He informs them that Iquander (the chief administrator/researcher of the library) would be more than happy to take a look at such curiosities and assess their academic worth.

Encounter 3: On to Highfolk

After traveling for many days, overland and on the Velverdyva River, you finally disembark at a small port near the town of Highfolk on the 10th day of Ready'reat. A coach takes you the rest of the way into the town.

You approach Highfolk from the east gate. The forested walls of the town hide archer platforms and wooden catwalks concealed in brown leaves and branches. People, mostly elves and humans, go about their business much like most other communities you've visited. You pass through what looks like a marketplace dominated by a huge tree in the center of the town, and are soon dropped off at your destination.

The Heroes' Rest is a single story tavern in what appears to be a fairly pleasant area of town. Its sign swings lazily in the cool autumn air. Looking through the windows, you can see many patrons talking and laughing with one another. It looks like a dinner meal is being served.

Give the PCs a chance to collect themselves, and when they are ready, read the following:

Entering the tavern, it appears to be a clean, respectable-looking place. The only feature that distinguishes the Heroes' Rest from several other taverns you've been in is the vast array of weapons, armor, and adventuring gear gracing the walls. As you enter the establishment, a rotund man with black hair and a goatee nods from behind the bar.

"May cold iron avail you, travelers. What can I get for you this evenin'?" The man grins, and before you can answer him, he begins to pour ale into a glass.

This is Hamdan the Cunning (male human Brd7/Lor3; Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (legends & myths) +17, Sense Motive +6; hp 59), the owner and barkeep of the Heroes' Rest. He has a quick wit, an easy smile, and a love for adventurers. In fact, his tavern is a shrine to fallen adventurers. Numerous mementos of those who have fallen while fighting the good fight hang along the walls. He is more than happy to share a tale or two about the various items around the common room. Since the heroes are here on business, eventually the conversation turns to the focus of their visit. Hamdan has the following information:

- *If the PCs let him examine the chest*, he takes a long look as if contemplating something, and then looks up at the heroes with a smile on his face. He says, "Lemme guess, you wanna know what all of this means, huh? Well, because I like you, the cost is only 500 golden solars…no, just joking with you there. I'll help you out. What parts haven't you figured out yet?"
- "Man's great stone scar" is what some older elves (especially wood elves) call Delvenbrass. It's a ruined keep that's deep in the Vesve Forest. Ancient Baklunish peoples built it long ago. Nowadays, it's said to be a lair of evil. Of course, it doesn't help matters that it's located on the border of Iuz's territory in the north. Nasty place. Wouldn't go there. That's not going to stop you,though, is it?
- Shandareth is the ruling clan in the Fairdells. They hold court at Flameflower, a community in the southern Vesve. No one but elves and those favored by the clan are allowed entrance to their home.
- The Vesve Forest is the largest forest of its kind in the Flanaess. There are a lot of people living in there, but it's still very wild. The south and west is pretty much in control of elven and human hands; Ironstead, Flameflower, and Quaalsten are the major communities there. Up north, gnomes are in the hilly western regions, and the grugach are sandwiched in between the gnomes and the evil humanoids. Iuz's forces are in control of much of the eastern region. Here, give me some parchment and I'll draw a map for you. Give the players Map 1.
- After some time of examination and thought, Hamdan says the following:

"Ya know, I think there's somethin' else to this as well. There's an old poem, most of which's been lost to time, written by some seer from Clan Volmiryth, a clan of elves that lives around these parts. I think there's a passage in there that might be what you're lookin' for. It goes something like this:

'And the Keeper of Lost Memories
Stands in the sight of the Stone Scar
Unlocking that which has been forgotten
Speaking the Word:
Quarrandar.'

I think this is what ya need to help find what you're seekin'. The elf that wrote it, and his name, are long gone, but it's said that he wrote many pieces of prose and poems that contained visions and prophecies. Quarrandar is an olven word from times past that means "freedom". Looks like if you want the mystery solved, you'll be needin' to head to Delvenbrass."

Clan Volmiryth is a predominately high elven clan that has a great affinity for arcane magic. Most of their ranks are spellcasters of some sort. They live all around the area, but are said to have a keep in the Vesve that can only be found by the clan members. Hamdan remarks that Delvenbrass is approximately seven or so days away on foot. It lies deep in the forest, and in hostile territory; humanoids control the area around it. Hamdan marks on the heroes' map the location of Delvenbrass. He suggests that the characters get some rest, and pack well for their trip.

Encounter 4: Delvenbrass Awaits

In the morning, the PCs can purchase equipment and prepare for their journey. The heroes can purchase anything normally available in the *Player's Handbook*, and according to the current version of the Living Greyhawk character creation rules. Once they are ready to depart, get a marching order and night watch schedule from them. Then read the following:

You travel through the Highvale, a lush farming area that lies between the Vesve and the mountains to the west. After a day or so of travel through this quaint terrain, you make it to the forest known as the Vesve. A sea of trees stretches as far north and east as you can see. Careful to follow the paths on the map given to you by Hamdan, you enter the tree line.

The weather in the forest, while cool and a bit rainy, isn't so bad for this time of year. Along the trail, you pass several homes, and talk to a few woodsmen. They all bear the same message: the humanoids have been on the move of late, so be careful. You stop for a night in Quaalsten, a stockade town in the heart of the forest, and receive the hospitality of the Hearth of the Unicorn's Heart, the largest temple devoted to Ehlonna in the area.

Once past Quaalsten, you enter the area of the Vesve which is controlled by evil humanoids: orcs, goblins, gnolls, and worse. Keeping your wits sharp, and your hand near your weapon, you continue deeper into the wood. Every so often, you can hear larger creatures moving around in the brush just out of sight. It is much cooler up here in the northern reaches of the forest, and there seems to be an ever-present mist in the air.

As afternoon begins to give way to dusk, a large structure is barely visible through the now-thickening fog. This must be it—Delvenbrass, the ancient ruin.

The PCs may wish to bed down for the evening, or may want to continue onward. Let them know that they are in the shadow of Delvenbrass, in enemy territory. They may change their minds. If they still wish to make camp, plague them with paranoia throughout the night. They hear unexplained noises, see things moving at the edge of their sight, and feel a cold chill descend upon them. All of the heroes have a tough time sleeping, but are able to get enough rest to function the next day. Paladins feel a dull throbbing in their head all night and during the next day.

A character that has the Track feat may attempt a Wilderness Lore roll (DC 12). If successful, they find the tracks of perhaps a half dozen booted humanoids moving off further into the mist, toward the ruin.

Lost in the Mists

When the heroes decide to continue forward, read the following:

As you get closer, the mists seem to thicken. No more of the structure is visible than before. You almost trip over the remains of a ruined wall, and as you cross the threshold, the fog surrounds you like a chilling, white-gray blanket. You can't see anything.

Attempting to get your bearings, you wander about for a short distance. All of a sudden, the mists part a bit, and you see all of your friends around you. In the blink of an eye, they vanish. You find yourself utterly alone. All that can be seen in any direction is a heavy shroud of fog. Strange shapes can be seen playing in the dense mist and a soft cackling can be heard in the distance.

The strange things that live in the fog have separated the characters from each other and obscured any sign of their passing. When the fog cleared initially, the each PC was surrounded by an illusion that appeared to be the rest of the group. This illusionary party then led each PC to a different location in the ruins. Then the illusion ended, leaving each PC alone in the strange mists. Only if the PCs are physically connected do they stay together. These things do not attack the PCs nor can they be chased down or tracked. Any PC who attempts to *detect evil* finds a strong presence surrounding them on all sides, but no specific sources.

The PCs should be a bit panicked right now. Allow each character to devise a strategy for finding his or her friends. No matter the plan chosen, the mists and rubble continue onward in every direction. No tracks left by the heroes can be found and no way out is present. PCs that were following humanoid tracks can continue to do so (these tracks are still present) but these now seem to lead the PC in circles. After a few minutes, allowing enough time for the PCs to get frustrated, continue on to the next section.

Speak the Word

The heavy mists seem to stretch on forever with no end in sight. You can only see those things on the ground directly below you: primarily crumbling stones and scattered bones.

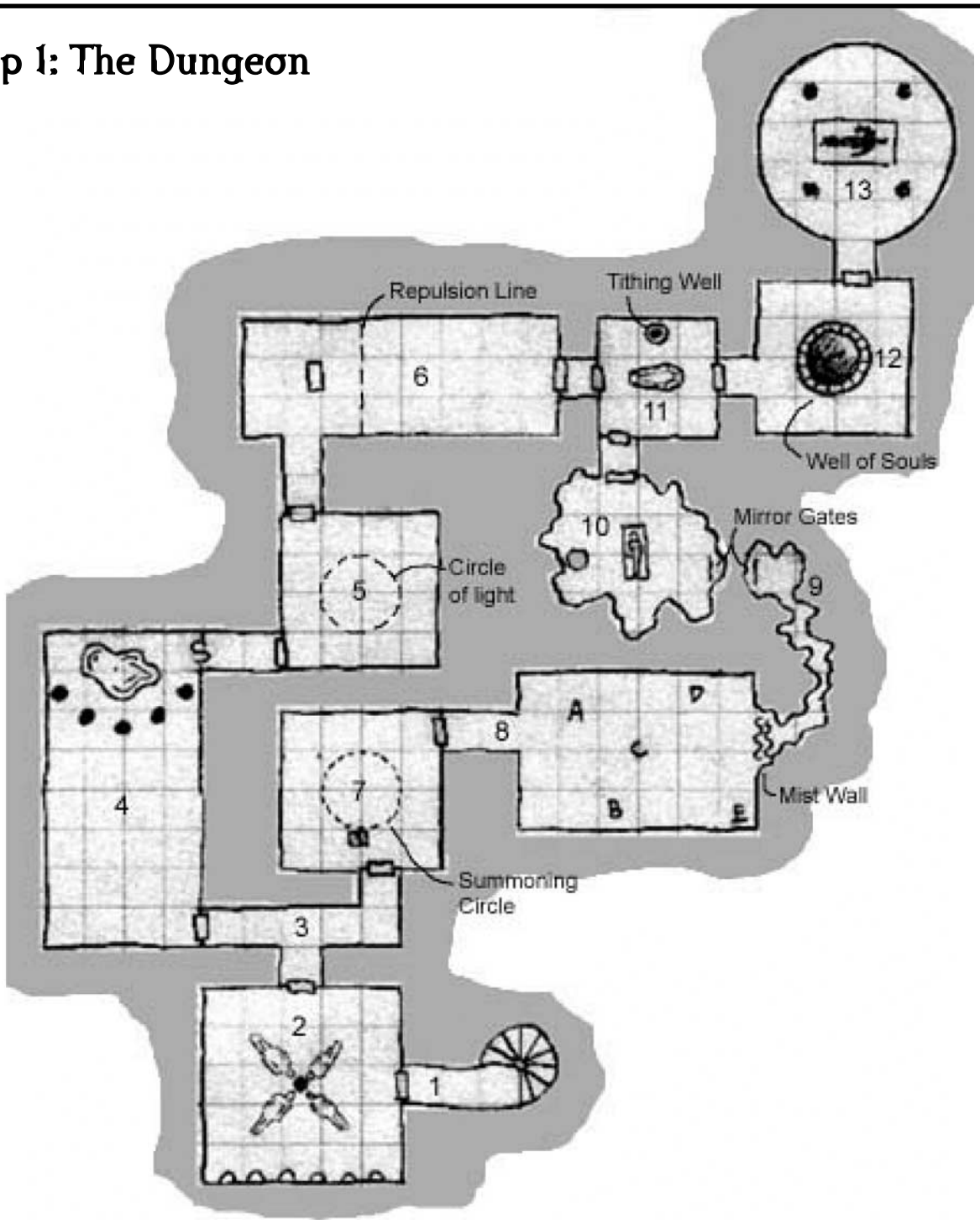
All of a sudden the mists seem to thin. The mists reveal a clearing of dull gray earth and thick black moss. All of your traveling partners come stumbling out of the mist from different directions, joining you in this desolate spot.

A soft hiss of laughter can be heard off in the distance.

At this point all of the PCs are reunited, although they may spend some time confirming that fact.

If the PCs look around the clearing they can notice the following two points. First, there are a number of footprints leading

Map 1: The Dungeon



into this clearing that were not made by the PCs. These prints end in the middle of the clearing abruptly. Second, there is a strong scent of fresh earth and mold in the air. Both of these small details can be noticed with a Spot skill check (DC 10). Characters with the Track feat can make a Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 15) to identify the tracks as the same ones encountered before. If the PCs follow the tracks back out of the clearing they eventually lead out of Delvenbrass.

Once the PCs have had a chance to look around, pick a PC that is of good alignment, and what you would consider to be the most just of the group (obviously, heroes such as paladins would be first on the list). Make a note of whom you've picked; this PC is now referred to as the "chosen". Take the player of the "chosen" character aside, and read him/her the following:

In your head, you hear a voice. It starts out soft, as if from afar, and gets closer with each utterance. It is a man's voice, more like a whisper than anything else. The voice says to you, "Speak the Word. The Word brings hope." After a few moments, the voice fades into nothingness.

The "Word" is quarrandar, which the PCs learned from Hamdan back in Highfolk. The PC that heard the voice need not be the one to speak the word. Once someone says "quarrandar", read the following:

The ground shakes, and a sound like the tearing of the earth can be heard. Something begins to push out of the ground! Rising up from the grass and mud like a coffin being rejected by the earth is a small stone structure, open on the side toward you. Stairs of stone descend into the dark recess of the earth. The laughing echoes from the mist surrounding you suddenly go silent.

I Don't Want to Go In!

If the PCs decide not to go in, then they do not discover the mystery. Some characters may wish to explore Delvenbrass itself; the ruin is a magnet for evil, and is beyond the scope of this adventure. If the heroes decide against entering, and want to explore, feel free to explain that the ruin is huge and very deadly. The adventure is essentially over for them if they do not proceed.

Encounter 5: Into the Maw

Read or paraphrase the following to all the PCs who descend the staircase.

Spiraling ever onward, the stairs seem to go on for hours. When you think the end is in sight, another flight reveals itself. Ahead of you every step of the way are a large number of muddy footprints. Finally the end of the stairs comes into view. A short narrow corridor is at its end.

The descent down the stairs takes about thirty minutes. After only three or four flights, it becomes apparent that there is no light source in the tunnel. The PCs have to provide their own unless everyone has darkvision.

Observation of the stairway reveals little. The stones are all dark gray granite and bear no markings. The steps are sized for medium-size creatures. A PC with the Track feat can make a Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 20) to reveal that the prints leading down the staircase consisted of roughly 4 to 6 humanoids wearing boots.

When the PCs reach the bottom, proceed to Encounter 6.

Dungeon Features

Unless otherwise noted, the following features apply to every room within the dungeon:

- There is no light in much of the dungeon. Unless all of the PCs are dwarves and half-orcs (and hence have darkvision) the heroes need to provide their own light source. Rooms that are lit are noted in the text and the source is described. The walls are all made of a polished gray stone unless otherwise noted. In general, they are far too thick to be breached without the use of spells such as *stone shape*. PCs without this magic will be driven insane by picking away at the wall long before they manage to tunnel through it.
- All doors throughout the dungeon are made of a strange black metal. They have no visible lock and only open when triggered by an element of the room that they are in. Once opened, they can be freely opened or closed from either side.
- The doors all have the following statistics.
  Black Iron Doors: 4 in. thick; Hard 10; hp 120; AC 5; Break DC 28 (locked).

The Voices

Deep within the dungeon is the eternal resting spot of the thing. Trapped in a dead body, the thing's mind is still quite active and the heroes have just entered its domain. Although not powerful enough to harm the PCs, it is strong enough to communicate with them telepathically. This has the effect of disturbing the PCs, but little else.

Some of the rooms note specific text to read to the "chosen". This PC was decided in Encounter 4 under the heading "Speak the Word". This text should only be read to the "chosen".

Listed below are a number of examples and guidelines for using the voice throughout the dungeon. The examples below can be used on any character but should not be used on the "chosen". Also note that this should not detract from game play too much but should instead be used to flavor the event properly.

Guidelines

The voice is bold, arrogant, and thoroughly evil. The only PC that it is nice to is the "chosen". Everyone else is useless in the mind of the thing.

- Communication with the voice is one way only. It does not have conversations with the PCs. The PCs hear the voice but cannot communicate with it.
- The voice speaks to the PC with telepathy using the racial language of the PC. Only the PC being spoken to can hear the voice.
- The voice may foretell the hero's doom, but be careful not to give away any clues to the dungeon. When suggesting a wrong course of action, make sure that there are multiple choices—do not give the real choice away.
- As a general rule, do not use the voice more than once per room in addition to any scripted voice that is in that room. *Protection from evil* and *magic circle versus evil* are the two simplest ways to block the voice. This protection only lasts for the duration of the spell. Other effects that block

telepathy are also effective.

- If the PCs decide to sleep within the confines of the dungeon, the voice focuses on one arcane spellcaster and prevents that individual from getting adequate rest. This has the effect of preventing that spellcaster from getting new spells the next day. If the PCs go back up to the surface, this interruption does not take place.
- Be aware of the sensitivity of the players at your table. It is okay to offend the characters so long as you do not offend the players.
- The thing should not reveal anything concerning itself, the dungeon, or its burial place.
- Note that the voice that the "chosen" hears is very nice and calm. All others hear an evil whisper. The two sound nothing alike even though they come from the same source.

Examples:

- Failure is your only choice. Accept that and you may yet live. Do you actually believe that you have the cunning to solve this? Soon, I will bring your corpse before me and ask the same question.
- I can smell your blood. Tell me, is it sweet?
- Nothing can save you now. I suggest that you pray to your meaningless gods, worm.
- Be careful, beyond that door is your death and the death of all your pathetic friends.
- The future lies within me. Pray to me and I may spare you for a short while.
- I will swallow your soul.
- When you die would you please scream loudly, I find that much more entertaining.
- Run coward, run now before your meager life comes to an abrupt and violent end.

Encounter 6: The Dungeon

Listed below is a room-by-room description of the entire dungeon. Refer to DM Map 1 for the layout and key.

1. Entry Corridor

This short corridor leads from the entry stairs to the door that leads into Area 2. The door at the end of this hallway is like any other in the dungeon, however it is not locked. The frame surrounding the door is made of the same gray stones as the walls but it is carved to look like a pair of ancient knights holding their swords over the entry. The ravages of time have worn away any interesting detail that may have been on the carvings but a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) skill check (DC 15) can confirm that they are roughly 500 years old.

2. Puzzle Room

Read or paraphrase the following to the PCs when they enter this room.

The heavy iron door slowly glides open with a sickening screech revealing a large open chamber. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all made of the same polished gray stone of the corridor with one exception. A fresco of men dying and strewn about a battlefield runs along the ceiling of all the walls of this room.

In the center of the room is a pedestal on which sits a shining golden coin. Along the south wall of the room are seven half pillars imbedded into the wall. Each bears a stone chalice on its top and strange carvings on the base. All of this is odd but does not remotely compare to the four bodies lying on the floor spread out around the pillar.

Two of them appear to be human; the other two appear to be orcs. All are in a position of prayer and all appear to be quite dead. As you look into this grim scene a ghastly shriek comes from the corpse nearest you as its head detaches from its body and flies toward you.

This room is the first chamber of the dungeon. The four bodies in the center of the room are most of what remains of the party sent by Iuz to investigate the dungeon. The fifth member of this party escaped the room and is now in room 13. The heads that detach from the corpses are the creatures noted below. The bodies of the fallen contain the only treasure in the room. The center pedestal and the four pillars are a trap and are the only way to get the door in the northern wall to open.

After the creatures are dealt with and the map is found, the "chosen" hears the following.

Suddenly, the voice in your head returns to you. "Follow the map and you will be rewarded" it says. "Already there is another here, he may reap the reward of my coming if you are too late".

Creatures: When the evil party entered the dungeon, one of their members went insane almost immediately by the mental probing of the thing. His first reaction was to cast a powerful spell that summoned a pair of vargouilles. These evil creatures attacked the party by surprise and a large melee ensued, during which one of the members drank a potion of *gaseous form* and escaped deeper into the dungeon. The rest were either killed by one another or slain by the vargouilles. After the spell ended, the original vargouilles returned to their evil plane, leaving a few spawn behind.

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Vargouille (2): hp 7, 4; see *Monster Manual*, page 182.

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Vargouille (4): hp 7, 5 (x2), 4; see *Monster Manual*, page 182.

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Vargouille, advanced (4): CR 4; HD 3d8+3; hp 13, 15, 15, 18; Atks +5 melee; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +4; *Skills*: Listen +6, Spot +5.

Tactics: The vargouilles open the attack by flying from their corpses to attack the party. This will surprise any PC that does not make a Spot check (DC 15). One vargouille should attempt to shriek each round until all have shrieked. Remember, the vargouilles' shriek attack is a standard action. Only if there are fewer paralyzed PCs then there are vargouilles should they attempt to kiss any PC.

Trap: The only way to get the door in the north wall to open is to solve the puzzle presented in the room. In the center of the room is a pedestal with an ancient golden coin resting on it. Along the south wall are six pillars, each topped by a stone chalice. To continue the PCs must put the coin in the proper chalice as indicated by the clue on the map (see the treasure below).

Each of the six pillars has a carving on it. This carving depicts the holy symbol of a specific god. The problem is that the symbols are from a long ago time and have since changed. Identifying the carving requires a successful Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) or Knowledge (history) check (DC 15). Each symbol must be identified individually. In addition to this any PC with levels of paladin, cleric, or druid automatically recognizes the symbol of their faith if it is present. Listed below are the symbols listed from west to east.

Pillar #1 – a twisted skull (Nerull)
Pillar #2 – a moon over a tree (Corellan Larethian)
Pillar #3 – a flaming hammer (Moradin)
Pillar #4 – a book on a gravestone (Wee Jas)
Pillar #5 – a woodwind instrument on a leaf (Obad-Hai)
Pillar #6 – a man holding up a globe (Kord)

To bypass the trap the heroes must "Pay Homage to the Protector" which in this case means to place the coin from the pedestal in the chalice of Corellan Larethian. If the coin is placed in any other chalice, the person placing the coin is struck by a *searing light* as per the spell and noted below. After the attack, the trap resets and the coin appears on the central pedestal again. Once the coin in placed in the correct chalice it disappears for good, and the door leading to area 3 is then opened.

Tier 1 (EL 3)
Searing Light **Trap:** CR 3; +10 ranged touch attack (2d8); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28); dispel (DC 20).

Tier 2 (EL 4)
Same as above, but the searing light does 3d8 damage, and the dispel check is DC 21.

Tier 3 (EL 5)
Same as above, but the searing light does 4d8 damage, and the dispel check is DC 23.

Treasure: It should be noted that present within this room are the basic gear of five individuals even though there are only four corpses present. The following things can be found in the room without difficulty:

- Most importantly, there is the map that the characters have been searching for. Once found, hand the players Map 2. This is a map of the dungeon and a list of clues to overcome the traps located therein. It is not magical in any way and the script appears to be a very old dialect of Common.
- Also scattered around the room are five backpacks with a bit of rancid provisions in each. Included in this mess is a nearly empty potion vial. This vial contained the *potion of gaseous form* that the final member of the party used to escape the room. The remaining liquid radiates magic but not poison. If ingested, the hero's hands become gaseous for a few seconds before returning to normal. This vial is found with the back pack and gear of the missing body. All of the others in the room are wearing their gear.
- All of the gear and weapons that are found on the bodies of the slain can be sold for 100 gp total if returned to Highfolk because of its disguise uses (only 75 gp if taken elsewhere). This gear consists primarily of longswords, leather armor, small steel shields, and holy symbols of Iuz. Everything else is of little value or very bad condition.
- There is one other item of note located on one of the bodies in this room. A *potion of bull's strength* is hidden away in the boot of one of the orcs. This potion can be found with a successful Search skill check (DC 10).

Development: The heroes may decide to leave at this point, having found what they are looking for. If they appear to be making their way out, the "chosen" hears the following:

As you are about to leave the voice from beyond returns to you again, this time it is loud and angry. "You cannot leave—not yet. I am nearly free. My friend here will soon release me and then you can see me in my true glory! This insolent fool is not the one I was hoping for, but I guess he will have to do."

After hearing this, the PCs may still leave. If they do so, their adventure ends here. Skip to the conclusion and finish the adventure.

3. Split Path

This corridor splits in two directions. The direction chosen will determine the next few rooms of the dungeon that the PCs encounter. The doors leading into rooms 4 and 7 are both open at first. Once one door is chosen, the other locks and cannot be opened.

Scribed on the wall between the two choices are a few words written in Elven. If any PC can read Elven, read them the following:

Now is a choice. Right shows its birth, the other its death. Both tell a tale, both are most grim.

Once a decision is made, proceed to room 4 or 7 as appropriate.

4. The Battlefield

When the heroes enter this room, read or paraphrase the following to them.

The heavy iron door slowly swings open to reveal a scene of carnage. Strewn about this half of the room are the bodies of many men. Some of them are in small heaps; others have been completely torn asunder. They appear to have been here for only a short time.

On the other half of the room are a number of trees made entirely of stone. They form a semicircle around a small dark pool that ripples in the faint light.

Through all of this is a clear path that begins in the wall near you, tears its way through the bodies and heads straight toward the dark waters at the far end. There is no apparent way out of this pit of decay.

The only way out of this room is by turning a stone handle at the bottom of the pool that opens a secret door in the east wall. The pool however, is a trap as noted below.

A quick search of the room reveals a number of things. A successful Heal skill check (DC 10) reveals that all the bodies are elven. Each of the bodies is dressed in a similar uniform. Each is wearing moldy bits of leather armor and one piece of shining metal plate. Each piece is different and if they are all found and reassembled it creates a suit of full plate. The armor has obvious elven designs and is very intricate. This suit of armor is the protection offered by the fallen as noted on the map. It is necessary to easily solve the puzzle to this room. Finding all of the pieces is a gruesome search requiring four successful Search skill checks (DC 15). Assembling the armor requires a successful Craft (armor) skill check (DC 15). PCs can take twenty on any of these rolls, but this costs them 20 minutes each. Note that the armor weighs 50 pounds once assembled, which results in a –10 penalty to any Swim skill checks while wearing it. No matter the outcome in the pool, the armor crumbles to dust upon leaving the room.

The stone trees at the end of the hall are carved from solid stone and do not radiate magic, although the pool radiates strong necromancy. The pool is also very cold, deep and apparently made of blood. See the trap below for further details.

Carved into the wall near the ceiling is a story written in Elven. Read the following to any PCs that can read Elven:

A hero rose from ashes of defeat and donned the armor of the fallen. He braved the woods in which it dwelled and found the pool of chilling blood. Courage was with him, so in he dove to find the key in its great shadow. He shed his iron skin and fled the icy grasp of a cold wet grave. The hero traveled forth to bring the news and continue the fight.

Read or paraphrase the following to the "chosen" PC.

Having taken a look around the room, the now familiar voice returns to your mind. "Lies, all lies! They only wish to keep me here because they fear me. You do not fear me, do you? I promise great power to those who show courage." The voice fades away into nothingness.

Trap: The PCs should eventually get the point that to continue onward they must swim to the bottom of the pool. The pool is incredibly cold and deep, not to mention completely black. The armor of the fallen removes most of these obstacles, allowing the PC wearing it to see and brave the cold while wearing it. PCs that do not wear the armor have only slim chances to swim to the bottom and find the latch. In addition to this, any PC attempting a swim without the armor suffers 1d6 points of cold damage per round while trying. Add +1 to this damage per consecutive round spent in the pool while not protected. Once the PC has entered the water, be sure to keep track of the number of rounds spent in the water for purposes of drowning as noted below.

PCs who don the completed armor and jump into the pool find themselves rapidly sinking to the bottom, which they reach in three rounds (a Swim skill check (DC 10) reduces this to 1 round). A Swim skill check (DC 5) gets an unarmored PC to the bottom in one round (otherwise, it takes 3 rounds). Once there, a successful Search check (DC 10) reveals the stone lever in the floor. If turned, this lever opens up the secret door leading to area 5. A hero without the armor on must succeed in a Search check, DC 30, in order to find the same lever.

Once the lever is pulled, the hero's will is tested. Emerging from a recess in the bottom of the pool is a shadow of complete darkness. The PC who is in the bottom of the pool must succeed at a Will save (DC 12 for tier 1, DC 14 for tier 2, and DC 16 for tier 3) or be affected by a dreadful panic. This panic lasts for 2d4 rounds, during which time the PC can do nothing but flail around and cower. Any attempts to swim during this time are made at a –5 penalty.

Eventually, the hero should be interested in returning to the surface. Swimming to the surface requires 3 successful Swim skill checks (DC 15). Note that the PC has a penalty of 10 to this roll while wearing the armor. If the PC attempts to rid himself of the armor it takes 1d3 minutes to perform (slightly less than normal because of the age of the armor), this time is reduced to 1 round if the character is being assisted in some way. This equates to 10-30 rounds. Note that the cold damage mentioned before does not apply to the return trip to the surface. Obviously, tying a rope to the character, or using magic, should aid considerably in the effort to rise to the surface. Any good plan should be given a reasonable chance of success.

Drowning

PCs can hold their breath equal to twice their Constitution scores in rounds. After this time the PC must succeed at a Constitution

check (DC 10+1 per round) or fall unconscious. Unconscious characters are immediately reduced to 0 hit points. On the following round, the PC is reduced to –1 and dying. The hero dies on the following round.

5. The Trap Room

When the PCs enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

Slowly, the door to the room swings open revealing a large square room paved with wide gray stones. The place is shrouded in darkness, save for one area. A large column of light descends from the ceiling to form a ten-foot wide circle on the floor in the center of the room.

Lying in this bright light is the carcass of some dead animal not unlike a horse. The coppery scent of blood is in the air and the buzz of flies can be heard throughout the room.

The large area of light in the middle of the room is actually the trap discussed below. The trap is set off the moment any PC touches the large carcass in the center of the room. The door leading to area 6 will only open once the trap has been sprung.

Heroes who investigate further notice that the some of the large 2-foot by 2-foot slabs of stone that make up the floor are rather loose and have soft earth underneath them. Dwarves automatically notice this fact upon entering the room. The horse carcass in the center of the room is an illusion. Touching the illusion dispels it and sets off the trap.

Read or paraphrase the following to the "chosen" hero once he or she enters the room.

"Beware my devoted," the voice suddenly returns to your mind. "This is the same trap they tried to kill me with. If you are not careful, it may kill you. We would not want that now, would we?"

Trap: Once a PC touching the carcass has set off the trap, a *wall of force* goes up, separating any PCs who are standing inside the circle of light from the rest of the party. This wall is circular and extends from the floor to the ceiling. It can be dispelled only by the use of a *disintegrate* spell. At the same time a *dimensional anchor* effect blankets the entire room.

One round after the wall has gone up, the ceiling inside slowly descends to crush any unfortunate PC caught inside of the wall. This descent takes ten rounds and results in the death of any PC within the wall at that time. No amount of bracing can stop the ceilings descent.

The only way out of this maniacal death trap is the same way that the creature used, down. One stone on the floor can be easily removed, revealing the fact that the *wall of force* does not extend beyond the plane of the floor. Digging out a small tunnel requires 8 rounds if only done from one side of the wall, 4 if done from both. Spells such as *stone shape* will reduce the digging time to two rounds. One medium sized or two small sized PCs may crawl through this hole per round. Any PC left inside the trap on round 10 may attempt a Reflex save (DC 20) to dive into the hole before being crushed. Note that only one PC can attempt this save, any others (determined by initiative) are out of luck.

Please take note that the DM should give the PCs adequate time to think about how to escape this trap and should not be charged time for working out a plan. Only testing ideas and actual work should take up any of their time. The DM is encouraged to be careful with this particular trap as more than one PC could lose their life if the solution is not found.

Crushing Ceiling Trap: CR 10; no roll required (death); Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 30). Note that if the trap is disarmed the door to area 6 opens and the PCs should be awarded full XP.

6. The Archery Room

Read or paraphrase the following to the heroes when they enter this room:

The door slowly swings open revealing a long narrow room. Directly in front of the door and in the center of the room is a stone pedestal on which rests a short bow and one arrow. On the far end of the room is an immense, shadowy form. The form appears vaguely humanoid, but is well over fifteen feet tall. In front of the menacing shadow is a tiny pinprick of light on the floor.

The PCs are free to enter the room and examine the bow and arrow as much as they like. They cannot however, cross the plane denoted by the dotted line on the map. The far end of the room is protected by a very powerful *repulsion* spell centered on the shadow. To pass this spell, the PCs must find some way to extinguish the shadow on the far end of the room. PCs attempting to cross the barrier must make a Will save (DC 27) to cross the plane. If the save is failed, that PC is physically unable to cross the intangible barrier that divides the room until the trap is dealt with. The details of the trap are noted below.

At the far end of the room is the shadowy image of the beast itself. Sitting directly in front of the form is a small pinprick of light. PCs that succeed at a Spot skill check (DC 15) notice the small light to actually be that of a tiny candle. It is this candle that must be extinguished to pass the room. If the candle is put out, the shadow disappears and the *repulsion* spell ends allowing the heroes to move on to area 11.

When the "chosen" hero enters the room, read or paraphrase the following to that player.

"Even this did not prove my undoing" the voice echoes from the deepest chamber of your mind. "It is a testament to my power, power that I may share with you when I am free."

Scrawled on the west wall of the room is short poem written in Elven. It reads as follows:

Only the true shot ended the thing.
Aimed not at the heart but the at the well of its being.
The champions aim true would not miss its mark.
To miss is the end; cloak the whole world in dark.

Heroes that examine the bow and arrow find nothing unusual about them other than their obvious age. They do not radiate any magic but are still in working order. This bow and arrow is the only way to affect the candle (spells and other weapons will not work). It may appear to the PCs that they only have one chance at this, but once the bow is fired, another arrow appears on the pedestal. The PCs may attempt to fire at many targets on the far end of the room. To facilitate this, there are seven Armor Classes provided below so that the heroes can test their luck. Any shot fired down the room that does not extinguish the candle sets off the trap as noted below.

Head of the Shadow		AC 15
Heart of the Shadow		AC 20
Body of the Shadow		AC 10
Tail of the Shadow		AC 12
Candle	(Tier 1)	AC 16
	(Tier 2)	AC 20
	(Tier 3)	AC 24

Trap: Any shot that does not extinguish the candle causes the shadow to extend its wispy tendrils down the room at the offending PC and attack them. The shadow attacks, then recedes and then the trap resets. Please note that the only way to disarm this magical trap is by use of *dispel magic* and the spells that created this room were cast by a 14th-level caster. Also note that a PC who makes the *repulsion* save can easily shoot the candle from close range, basically insuring an instant hit. PCs that think of this should be allowed to continue without penalty.

Tier 1 (EL 3)
Shadow Trap: CR 3; +10 melee touch attack (1d6 damage and 1 temporary Strength damage); Search (DC 28); dispel (DC 25).

Tier 2 (EL 4)
Same as above but the shadow does 2d6 damage and 1 temporary Strength damage.

Tier 3 (EL 6)
Same as above but the shadow does 3d6 damage and 2 temporary Strength damage.

7. The Summoning Chamber

Read or paraphrase the following to the heroes when they enter the room.

A loud grating sound accompanies the opening of the heavy iron door leading into this square chamber. In the middle of the floor is a strange circle of runes, in front of which stands a pedestal with a book resting on top of it. Three of the four walls are covered with what appears to be an identical set of figures and calculations. Another iron door is set into the far corner of the room.

This room is a replica of the chamber that was used by an insane wizard to summon the thing. The only way to exit the room is to reenact the summoning which is also a trap as noted below. There are a good number of things to examine in the room, each of which is outlined below.

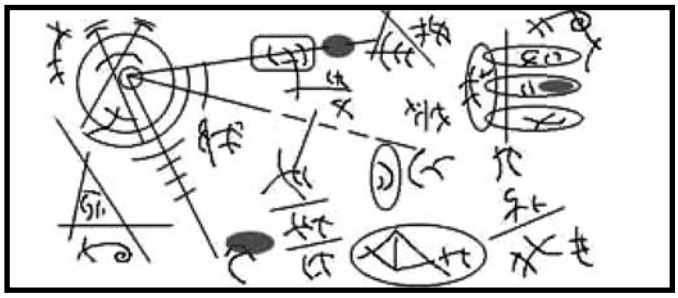
Read the following to the "chosen" PC when her or she enters the room:

The deep voice returns again, its soft voice whispering in your ears from unknown depths. "Now you see the place of my birth into this world. The fool thought he could control me. He ripped me from my home, and brought me here. I am nothing but a victim."

The pedestal in front of the summoning circle is made of the same stone as the rest of the dungeon. The book on top of the pedestal is made of stone as well, so only the open page can be read. The following is written in Elven upon the open page.

Log Entry:
Why won't it work? I have tried and tried, to no avail. It seems that something must be amiss with my calculations and carvings. If only I could find the flaw, all of the power would be mine to possess. My master called me a fool, but soon it shall be I who teaches the lessons.

This passage refers to the flaw in the figures and calculations set into the walls of the room. When the PCs investigate the walls, give them Handout #4. PCs who succeed at a Spellcraft check (DC 20) can recognize some of the symbols as those used in very powerful summoning spells. Upon further examination, two of the panels are identical. The north panel is missing three key symbols to complete the ritual. PCs that carve the remaining runes into the north wall trigger the trap, as well as open the door to area 8. The areas that contain the three mistakes in the north panel are shaded gray in the image below. Allow the heroes to find the mistakes on their own, only resort-



ing to a Spot check (DC 15) if the players are especially stumped (give them one clue for each Spot check made).

The only other thing to examine in the room is the summoning circle itself. The circle consists of a vast array of powerful and ancient symbols inscribed within a ring. Spellcasting heroes in the group may attempt a Spellcraft skill check (DC 15) to recognize the symbols as those used in powerful wards. If the heroes specifically check the integrity of the circle, allow them to make a Search skill check (DC 20) to realize that the circle has one tiny break. This break is what allowed the thing to escape initially. If the PCs seal the breach before finishing the wall calculations, then the trap has little effect. See the trap below for further details.

Trap: Once the inscriptions on the north wall are completed this trap is activated. From the center of the summoning circle, a think black vapor begins to pour into the room. If the PCs have found the flaw in the circle and repaired it, this mist takes on the form of a large humanoid form. The form then glares at the party and slowly evaporates, howling in pain. If they have not sealed the circle, read or paraphrase the following to them.

Thick black vapor begins pouring from the center of the summoning circle. Within moments, the mists coalesce into a form well over ten feet tall. Made of solid darkness, the form howls in triumph as it breaches the barrier that encases it. Soon its shadow encompasses the entire room and a bone chilling cold flows from it. Looking at you each in turn, the form slowly disappears, a hollow dry laughter trailing off into nothingness.

The cold from the creature can deal damage to all of the PCs that are in the room at the time of the summoning. Only a *dispel magic* has any chance of stopping this effect. The spells used to make the apparition and extreme cold were both cast at 14th-level of ability.

Tier 1 (EL 2)
Summoning Trap: CR 2; 15 ft radius blast of cold (1d6 damage); Reflex save (DC 14) for half damage; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28); Dispel (DC 25).

Tier 2 (EL 3)
Same as above, but the trap does 2d6 damage; Reflex save (DC 16) for half damage.

Tier 3 (EL 5)
Same as above, but the trap does 3d6 damage; Reflex save (DC 18) for half damage.

Once the trap has been set off, the door to area 8 becomes open. This trap resets itself in 24 hours.

8. The Doomed Room

Read or paraphrase the following to the heroes when they enter this room.

A pale blue light can be seen emanating from the room beyond the door that just opened. Ahead, you see a startling sight. Five glowing apparitions stand scattered about this rectangular room. Among them are a tall and proud elven woman, a young gnomish lass leaning against the wall, an aged Oeridian man leaning on a cane, a venerable dwarven male with an axe in hand, and a tiny halfling maiden sitting in the corner. All of them stare at you with sorrow in their eyes as you enter. Across the room is a large gaping maw, carved out of the rock. A thick mist obscures the way from view.

A chorus of hollow voices rings out from the spirits. "We are the doomed, the first victims of the thing—by fire, tooth, and claw. Nothing can save us. Rest is denied us, as is the knowledge of our demise. When and how might set us free." The spirits grow silent.

This room is a puzzle of sorts. Only by telling each spirit how they died and in what order can the PCs proceed. Once this is complete, the mists leading on to area 9 slowly part, revealing the passage beyond. These mists currently deny entry and are as solid as any wall. They can be removed by a *dispel magic* but were created by a 14th-level caster.

When the "chosen" PC enters the room, read or paraphrase the following to them:

"Lies, all lies." The voice returns to your mind. "Don't listen to any of them. These fools attacked me. I had to defend myself. You would have done the same."

The PCs are free to talk to the spirits as much as they like, but they only receive the same response over and over again. Listed below is a brief description of each spirit as well as what information they have to impart. Make certain to describe each spirit as the PCs converse with them. They say nothing, other than that which is listed below.

Spirit A – This spirit is that of an adult elven female in her prime. When spoken to, she says the following:

"I am neither first nor last. The elders did not perish by way of the tooth."

Spirit B – This spirit is that of a young gnomish maiden. She is leaning against the wall waiting for the end. When spoken to, she says the following:

"I am before the elf but after the dwarf. The young were too agile for the claw."

Spirit C – This spirit appears to be a venerable Oeridian man. He

stands hunched over, leaning on an oak walking stick. When spoken to, he says the following:

"I protected the young with my ancient life. No woman folk perished in the flames, or so I have heard."

Spirit D – The apparition appears to be that of a very old and battle-hardened dwarf. He still carries his ancient axe. When spoken to, he says the following:

"By my axe, I was the last man to die. No matter how grim the battle, only one died by its flames."

Spirit E – The spirit is sitting alone crouched up in the corner. The ghost appears to be that of a young halfling female. When spoken to, she has this to say:

"The elf and the human died to protect me, but alas, it was in vain. The dwarf and elf did not die by the claw."

After questioning all of the spirits, it should be relatively simple to determine in what order and by what method each spirit died. It is as follows:

Spirit A – 4th to perish, died by the tooth.
Spirit B – 3rd to perish, died by the tooth.
Spirit C – 1st to perish, died by the claw.
Spirit D – 2nd to perish, died by flame.
Spirit E – 5th to perish, died by the tooth.

When the PCs are ready to give their answer, they must present it loudly to the spirits. If they give the correct solution the spirits slowly fade and the mists part, giving them access to area 9. If the incorrect answer is given, the trap as noted below affects the offending PC.

Trap: This trap activates only if the PCs give the wrong answer to the puzzle. Only the hero that called out the answer is affected. Once triggered, the spirits howl in anguish and eternal torment. These cries of torment worm their way into the PCs mind, forcing him or her to constantly think of the consequences of their failure. This equates to a –2 luck penalty to all rolls for the remainder of this dungeon. This effect can be avoided by a successful Will save (DC 15 for tier 1, DC 18 for tier 2, and DC 21 for tier 3). This effect is cumulative, if the same PC guesses incorrectly twice, the penalty increases to a –4. After the second guess, the PC's guesses no longer count (the door does not open even for a correct answer), and another PC must guess.

9. Mirror Portal

This corridor is apparently made of natural stone and leads to a tall silver mirror. The corridor is in truth actually quite man made, but has been cleverly carved to appear natural. When the heroes approach the mirror, read or paraphrase the following to them.

The winding natural corridor has apparently ended in a small chamber. Standing in the center of the room is a tall silver mirror, the frame of which appears to be made out of humanoid forms, writhing in agony. Through the mirror you can easily see yourselves but the surroundings are different. It appears that you are standing inside of a grimly lit natural cavern. Surrounding your image are many racks of strange metal hooks and knives; all are stained a deep crimson. In the center of the room is a long stone table with a human form stretched out across it.

The image in the mirror is actually the view of area 10. The image is not very clear and very little information can be gained from this side. Any PC who touches the surface of the mirror is instantly transported into area 10. Although they disappear on this side, their image can still be seen in the mirror. A *detect magic* spell cast upon the mirror reveals powerful transmutation magic, as well as some divination.

When a hero touches the mirror, take the player aside and ask them to make a Will save (DC 15 for tier 1, DC 17 for tier 2, and DC 19 for tier 3). Have all of the PCs make this save as they touch the mirror, but take special note of the first PC who fails this save. The DC for this save increases by one for each PC to use the mirror. If none of the PCs fail the save, the last hero to use the mirror fails automatically. The PC that fails does not appear in area 10, but is instead transported onto the table and hidden underneath a powerful illusion; see area 10 for further details. From this side of the mirror, it appears as if the now trapped PC continues about their business on the other side. Once a PC fails the save, the results of all the others are irrelevant (but they should be made to roll anyway).

10. Torture Chamber

Once the heroes enter this room, read or paraphrase the following to them.

A low moan greets each of you as you appear in front of another mirror inside of a quite insidious room. The walls of this apparently natural chamber are just as they appeared in the mirror, covered with large racks displaying various hooked and bladed instruments. Each one is stained a deep crimson tone and appears to be quite sharp. In the center of the chamber is the apparent source of the low moan. A human man is bolted to the table by iron bars. Strange cuts and glyphs are carved all over his tortured flesh. The figure gives one final moan and then lies still.

After taking in all of this, something else becomes obvious to you. One member of your group is missing.

The figure on the table is indeed the missing hero, but has been

disguised quite cleverly. When that hero was *teleported* into the room, he or she was actually put under the effect of a *seeming* and placed on the table. This illusion is also under the effect of a *nystul's undetectable aura*, and hence cannot be detected. At the same time, the PC was attacked by a *harm* and enough *inflict minor wounds* to reduce him or her to –1 hit points. The PC was also automatically stabilized. All of the hero's gear was also removed and transported just outside the door of this room leading on to area 11.

Examining the body on the table reveals it to be an Oeridian male who is approximately thirty years old. A successful Heal skill check (DC 15) reveals that the body is near death because of all the terrible wounds inflicted upon it. A deep pool of blood covers the table. Note that examining the body does not allow an attempt to disbelieve the illusion, which is only really possible with a *true seeing*, or more direct physical action as noted below.

When the "chosen" hero enters the room read or paraphrase the following to them. Disregard this if the "chosen" hero is the on placed on the table.

The now familiar voice slowly creeps back into your mind; its tone is solemn and sad. "This was only a mistake, I did not know that your kind was so weak. Of course, this will never happen again."

The iron bars that hold the body in place are amazingly strong and require a successful Strength check (DC 27) to break. This check is required once for each of the bars holding each leg, each arm, and the neck. The bars are quite real and have no apparent lock. The will only unlock themselves under the conditions mentioned below.

The various tools that line the walls of this room are all obviously torture instruments. Nearly all of them are stained with blood. None are magical in any way and they hold no value.

Also in this room is another mirror that transports any PC touching it back into area 9. Any PC then returning to this room is not required succeed at a Will save. This time, the room is different from before. The frame on the mirror is a plain silver one, with a long inscription written around its edge. The inscription is written in Elven, and reads as follows:

Behold the tortures of the thing. Many man and elf, elder and child, husband and wife met their bitter end in this wicked hole. Mercy comes in many forms.

Freeing the trapped and hidden PC can come in one of two different forms. More mercenary PCs may decide to give mercy to the form by ending his pain. Doing so should be considered a coup de grace. This more than likely kills the trapped hero. This should not be a likely choice, but it may occur. The other likely choice is to use healing magic on the poor trapped soul. This application revives the trapped PC, and restores the hero to full hit points (regardless of the healing used). If either of these is performed the illusion fades and the iron bars unlock, as does the door leading to area 11.

The heroes may think to question the elven ideal on this situation. Elves of this region value all things living and only through the natural order should death come. This situation is obviously not natural, and hence the figure should be healed. Elven PCs automatically know this information if they ask for it. Non-elves must make a Knowledge (religion) skill check (DC 15) to learn the same information.

As mentioned above, freeing the trapped PC (in either manner) opens the door leading to area 11.

11. Memorial Room

The PCs may enter this room from one of two ways, either from area 10 or area 6. The only way out is either into room 12 or back the way they came. The door leading down the path the heroes did not take is not available to them.

When the PCs enter this room, read or paraphrase the following to them.

The door leading into this chamber glides open without making a single noise. The now open portal reveals to you a room unlike any that you have seen so far in this twisted dungeon. Pristine white marble veined with light blue covers the walls, floor, and ceiling of the room. Standing along the south wall is a small bench like those found in solemn temples. On the north wall is a tall urn glowing with a pale blue radiance. A pale blue globe in the ceiling illuminates the room.

All of this is secondary to the smooth marble coffin that rests in the center of the chamber. Resting on the top of the coffin is a marble relief carving of a proud and powerful elven knight. Tears stream down the statue's face only to flow down the side of the coffin. Surrounding the base is a shallow pool about one-foot wide, made from the knight's tears. Even the sound of your breathing seems like a sacrilege in this place of quiet contemplation.

Note that this is the only room in the entire dungeon where the voice does not speak to any of the PCs. The heroes may rest freely in this room without fear of nightmares.

Heroes that search the chamber can discover a few things. The bench is made of solid marble, just like everything else in the room. It is attached to the floor and bears no inscription.

The coffin is ornately carved with a repeating floral patter around the lid. Below this is an inscription that runs around the entire piece. It is written in Elven and reads as follows.

May he who slew the thing be granted eternal rest; let none disturb his slumber. The last blow delivered, his mortal wound took its toll. For days his suffering was unending, his price paid. Finally, on the end of the third day, true peace was his. One hundred days for each day of suffering, a tithe was made. One golden coin of worth for each day, a repayment for his valor. May they both rest eternal, one in torment and one in peace.

If the PCs are so blasphemous to actually try and open the coffin,

any offending PC is struck by a *bestow curse*. This spell can be avoided by a successful Will save (DC 18). Inside the coffin is a very old, but well-preserved corpse of an elven warrior. The warrior is dressed in simple chainmail and has a longbow and longsword at his side. Attempting to take any of these items causes a *slay living* to target the transgressor. Unless the offender makes a Fortitude save (DC 20) he or she falls over dead. Even if the save is successful, the target still takes 3d6+14 points of damage. There is nothing else of note inside the coffin.

The urn standing on the north wall of the crypt contains the only way to open the door to area 12. The urn itself glows with a pale blue radiance and if checked, radiates powerful illusion and transmutation magic. If the heroes look inside the urn, all they see is a single gold coin and a pale blue flower resting in the bottom. Both the flower and coin are illusions and cannot be removed. As hinted on the coffin, the only way to open the door into area 12 is to place at least 299 gp worth of items and money into the urn as a tithe (there is already one coin in the urn). This can be nearly anything, although it must be small enough to fit and the hole is only one foot in diameter. Anything placed inside the urn in such a manner is *disintegrated* as per the spell, and replaced with an illusion of the valuables given. Once 300 gp of valuables is placed inside, a loud click can be heard, and the door leading to area 12 swings open. Note that there is no way to bypass this through magic.

12. The Well of Souls

When the heroes enter this room read or paraphrase the following:

This square chamber is made of the same white marble found in the tomb you just left. The floors, wall, and ceiling are all highly polished and are pristine and clean. There is a door on the north wall carved with many runes. In the center of the room is a wide well rising three feet off of the floor. It to is made of the same white marble. Inside the well is turbulent black water. On the lip of the well is a polished silver ladle.

Read or paraphrase the following to the player of the "chosen" PC:

"You are close now" the voice calls to you from a distance. "Come quickly, my rebirth is nigh at hand."

This room is the final room before the tomb of the thing. As such, its creators decided that any who would wish to proceed must carry with them an understanding of the evil trapped within. To this effect, they created the Well of Souls.

PCs who observe the well itself find no auspicious markings or carvings anywhere on its surface. The water in the well is always turbulent, although no source of this motion can be found. The ladle itself bears only one small inscription written on the underside in Elven. It reads as follows.

The burden is great, like the waters of the soul.

The only way to proceed onward to the final chamber is for every PC to drink from the well. After this is done, the door leading to area 13 unlocks. The door itself is covered in many runes and glyphs of a strange origin. A successful Spellcraft skill check (DC 20) reveals them to be wards against passing, and glyphs that strengthen the door. If this skill check is made by more than 5, it is also revealed that the wards focus on keeping something in the room as opposed to preventing entry.

PCs who drink from the well gain a bit of knowledge about the thing, and are affected by the spirit they have ingested. In all cases these effects last for only one hour, but all PCs present in the room must be under the effect for the door to area 13 to open. The effects can be ended prematurely by a *dispel magic* versus a 14th-level caster. All bonuses and penalties are considered insight bonuses. When each PC drinks from the well, roll a d12 and consult the following table. You can inform the players of the benefit or hindrance. Identical results should be rolled again.

d12 roll	Result
1	**Sorrow** – The PC has visions of a youth who has lost everything and everyone precious to him. The PC is at a –1 to all rolls.
2	**Pain** – The PC sees images of endless torture at the hands of a shadowy form. The PC is a –1 to all attack rolls, damage, AC, and to initiative. The PC must also make a Concentration skill check (DC 10) to cast any spell.
3	**Valor** – The hero has visions of a youth who stands over the body of his fallen father, ready to face the oncoming darkness. This PC receives a +2 bonus to all attack and damage rolls.
4	**Helplessness** – The hero sees images of a knight fighting against a great blackness. No matter how hard or well placed the strike it seems to have no effect. The PC is at –2 to all attack and damage rolls.
5	**Joy** – The PC sees through the eyes of a maiden, who finally sees her husband returning from battle alive and victorious. This PC receives a +1 bonus to all rolls.
6	**Horror** – The hero sees through the eyes of a woman who stumbled upon a battlefield, and sees all of the carnage caused by the thing. This PC is at a –10 to all initiative rolls.
7	**Hope** – The PC sees images of flowers growing in the field that was once a battle ground. This PC is at +1 to all attack rolls, damage, AC, and initiative.
8	**Doom** – The PC receives visions of a shadow slowly covering the horizon and heading

toward him. The PC is at –2 to all saving throws, and an additional –2 to any fear effect saving throws (total penalty –4).

9 **Courage** – This hero sees visions of the troops rallying to battle, and feels the exhilaration of the first charge. This PC receives a +2 bonus to all saving throws and an additional +2 bonus to any fear based saving throws (for a total bonus of +4).

10 **Victory** – This PC has visions of the final arrow being shot into the great shadow. As the shadow falls, so does the hero. This hero is a +2 to all attack rolls but suffers a –2 penalty to his or her AC.

11 **Ceremony** – This hero sees images of two tombs being filled, one for the knight and one for a great blackness. The hero then sees the solemn ceremony to bury a great hero, and then sees four priests seal themselves in with the evil, forever. This PC is under the effects of a *sanctuary* that has a duration of 1 hour. This effect acts in all ways like the spell and hence is ended if the PC attacks.

12 **Cowardice** – The PC receives visions of a full-grown man running away from battle ignoring the pleas of help from his friends. On this PC's first combat turn, the PC must succeed at a Will save (DC 18) or flee from battle.

Once all of the PCs have drank from the well, the door to area 13 opens and the PCs may proceed to the final encounter.

13. The Last Tomb

Once the PCs enter this room, read or paraphrase the following to them.

The door gently swings open, revealing a room made entirely of black marble. Four burning torches light the room and reveal a four-foot by seven-foot pit in the room's center. Arranged around the pit are four piles of ash topped with a skull.

What the PCs do not immediately know is that a crazed man hiding under an *invisibility* spell is prepared to strike the first person to enter the room. The man's name is Volzern, and he is the leader of the group sent by Iuz to free the thing that now rests in the pit. Unfortunately this man, as noted below under the "Forbidden Choice", cannot free the thing. When the PCs enter the room read the following to them.

Appearing out of thin air is a man dressed in coal-black robes carrying a large mace. The grinning skull symbol of Iuz dangles from his neck. With a crazed howl, he attacks.

Creature: Volzern is a priest of Iuz who led the party here to free the thing. When things turned badly, he used his *potion of gaseous form* to flee the chamber and continue his quest. That was two days ago. Shortly after arriving, Volzern learned that he couldn't remove the dagger, known as the *Binder of the Souls*, to free the thing. Ever since, he has been slowly driven mad by the thing for its own amusement. Shortly before the PCs arrived, the thing warned Volzern of the PCs presence, giving him time to precast a few spells, which are presented in bold below. All of these effects have already been added to his statistics. Also note that Volzern can exchange any of his clerical spells for *inflict wounds* spells of an appropriate level.

Before combat begins, have each PC make a Listen skill check (DC 15) to hear Volzern just before he attacks. PCs who fail this roll are surprised for the first round of combat.

Volzern only has one guideline concerning his attacks; he cannot attack the "chosen" PC under any circumstances. The thing does not want the "chosen" harmed.

Tier 1 (EL 4)

Volzern, Priest of Iuz, male human Clr3/Wiz1: Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d8+1d4+8; hp 28; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13/20 on the facing with *shield* spell (Touch 13 [20 with *shield*], Flat-footed 12 [19 with *shield*]); Atks +5 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 11. (5 ft., 11 in. tall).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Concentration +13, Disguise +5, Heal +8, Hide +3, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +9; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Possessions: coal black robes, holy symbol of Iuz, heavy mace, 40gp, *ring of pain*, *wand of magic missile* (3rd-level caster; 6 charges), *scroll of detect pits and snares* (x2), *find traps*, and *lesser restoration*, *potion of invisibility*, and an *amulet of focus*.

Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze* (2), *flare*; 1st—*cause fear*, ~~*shield*~~.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/4/3; Spell DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic*, *guidance*; 1st— *cure light wounds* (2), *protection from good**, ~~*shield of faith*~~; 2nd— *cure moderate wounds*, ~~*invisibility*~~*, *shatter*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil (All evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Tier 2 (EL 6)

Volzern, Priest of Iuz, male human Clr5/Wiz1: Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d8+1d4+8; hp 44; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 13/20 from the front AC 13/20 on the facing with *shield* spell (Touch 13 [20 with *shield*], Flat-footed 12 [19 with *shield*]); Atks +7 melee (1d8+3, heavy mace); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +9; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 11. (5 ft. 11 in. tall).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +4, Concentration +15, Disguise +7, Heal +10, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +6, Spellcraft +11; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe

Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Possessions: coal black robes, holy symbol of Iuz, heavy mace, 40gp, *ring of pain*, *wand of magic missile* at 3rd level casting with 6 charges, *scroll w/ detect pits and snares* (x2), *find traps*, and *lesser restoration*, *potion of invisibility*, and an *amulet of focus*.

Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2; Spell DC = 12 + spell level): 0— *daze* (2), *flare*; 1st—*cause fear*, ~~*shield*~~.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/4/3; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0— *cure minor wounds* (3), *detect magic*, *guidance*; 1st— *cure light wounds* (2), ~~*magic weapon*~~, *protection from good**, ~~*shield of faith*~~; 2nd— *cure moderate wounds*, ~~*invisibility*~~*, *shatter*, *silence*; 3rd— *cure serious wounds*, *nondetection**, *searing light*.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil (All evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Tier 3 (EL 8)

Volzern, Priest of Iuz, male human Clr7/Wiz1: Medium-size humanoid; HD 7d8+1d4+8; hp 65; Init +5; Spd 30; AC 14/21 on the facing with *shield* spell (Touch 14 [21 with *shield*], Flat-footed 13 [20 with *shield*]); Atks +14/+9 melee (1d8+5, heavy mace); SA spells; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +11; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 11. (5 ft. 11 in. tall).

Skills and Feats: Bluff +6, Concentration +17, Disguise +7, Heal +12, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Knowledge (religion) +8, Spellcraft +13; Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Possessions: coal black robes, holy symbol of Iuz, heavy mace, 40gp, *ring of pain*, *wand of magic missile* at 3rd level casting with 6 charges, *scroll w/ detect pits and snares* (x2), *find traps*, and *lesser restoration*, *potion of invisibility*, and an *amulet of focus*.

Wizard Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0— *daze* (2), *flare*; 1st— *cause fear*, ~~*shield*~~.

Cleric Spells Prepared (5/5/4/3; base DC = 14 + spell level): 0— *cure minor wounds* (3), *detect magic*, *guidance* (2); 1st— *cure light wounds* (3), ~~*magic weapon*~~, *protection from good**, ~~*shield of faith*~~; 2nd— *cure moderate wounds*, ~~*invisibility*~~*, *shatter* (2), *silence*; 3rd— *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *nondetection**, *searing light*; *4th*— ~~*divine power*~~, *poison*, *unholy blight**.

*Domain spell. *Domains:* Evil (All evil spells are at +1 caster level); Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Note that the *ring of pain* allows the wearer to cast *inflict light wounds* once per day dealing 1d8+1 points of damage upon making a successful touch attack. Activating the ring is a standard action. The *amulet of focus* grants its wearer a +4 competence bonus to all Concentration skill checks. This bonus is already figured in.

Treasure: Searching the body of the priest reveals the following items. Volzern carries 40gp, a *ring of pain*, *wand of magic missile* at 3rd-level casting with 6 charges, *scroll w/ detect pits and snares* (x2), *find traps*, and *lesser restoration*, *potion of invisibility*, and an *amulet of focus*.

The Forbidden Choice

After defeating the crazed priest, the PCs have a few options at their disposal. They can search the room thoroughly and discover a few things. The four piles of ash located around the pit each contain shards of bone and a complete skull. A successful Heal skill check (DC 10) reveals that the skulls are elven. These are the remains of the four wizards who sealed themselves in the tomb to complete the ritual. The ashes are not magical and have no value.

On the far side of the chamber is an inscription written in Elven. It reads as follows.

> *Behold, the resting place of the thing whose terror is forgotten. Let it lie eternal, never to wake again. Close all the doors and be gone; a prayer to the Protector will seal this place again.*

Eventually, the PCs may investigate the pit itself. When they do so, read or paraphrase the following to the "chosen" PC.

> *Strong and clear now, the voice rings clearly in your ears. "Welcome to my resting place. Free me, and I will grant you power eternal. Fail me, and your thoughts, hopes, and dreams will know only torment."*

The pit itself is about 6 feet deep and is 4 feet wide by 7 feet long. In the bottom of the pit is a pile of ash in the vague shape of a humanoid. Sticking out of the center of the ash is a golden dagger with a blood red tinge. The dagger is encrusted with three black gemstones. A successful Appraise skill check (DC 15) estimates the value to be approximately 500 gp. It radiates powerful magic of a necromantic aura. This dagger is indeed the *binder of the souls* and is the only thing keeping the thing from stirring. Only a character of good alignment can remove the dagger, which is why the voice has tricked the PCs into coming all this way. If the dagger is removed, it acts as a masterwork dagger that radiates faint magic at this time.

If no appears PC appears to be going to remove the dagger, the "chosen" PC is hit with a powerful *suggestion* spell. The *suggestion* is made to have the "chosen" hero pull out the dagger from its resting spot. This *suggestion* can be avoided by a successful Will save (DC 18). If failed, the PC will should do anything within their power to pull forth the dagger. A *dispel magic* versus a 9th-level caster can end this compulsion. Fellow party members may also try to stop the dagger's removal. The spell lasts for 9 hours or until the affected PC is removed from the dungeon.

If the dagger is removed, the ash form in the bottom of the pit quickly blows away as if scattered by a powerful wind (although no wind exists). Once removed, it cannot be replaced. The dagger acts as a masterwork dagger that radiates strong necromantic magic at this time.

Leaving the Dungeon

As the PCs leave the dungeon, if they make sure to close all of the doors on their way out and say a prayer to Corellon, the dungeon

slowly sinks back into the earth. Failing to do any of these things leaves the dungeon open for further pillagers. If the dagger is not removed, and the PCs decide to leave the dungeon, the voice howls and screams at the "chosen" PC to return and complete what was begun. Use all manner of begging and pleading, thrown in with insults and threats. If the dagger is not removed and the PCs leave the dungeon, the "chosen" PC receives the Curse of the Voice as noted in the treasure section below.

Conclusion

The Journey Back

Despite being in enemy lands and near a ruin of evil, the journey back into the less hostile areas of the Vesve is uneventful. The heroes can chat with Hamdan about their discovery back in Highfolk town, if time permits. He listens to every word said about the place, and invites all the characters back whenever they're in town again.

As with the journey through the Vesve, the return trip to Greyhawk City is also without incident. Many weeks have passed since the characters first took on the job from Bwirse. It is possible that the PCs may wish to visit a couple of places upon their return.

Return to the Library

If a hero decides to bring the map, a well-made copy of the map (a DC 15 Craft (mapmaking), DC 15 Profession (cartographer), or DC 20 Forgery skill check), or the dagger back to the library, the staff is delighted to take such items off of the PC's hands. The librarians inform the hero that their donation to the halls of knowledge will not be without reward. After Iquander ascertains the intellectual value of the findings (which takes a few days), the hero that presented the item(s) receives a membership at the Great Library of Greyhawk; fees are waived for the first year. Only one PC may obtain this reward. If multiple heroes return to the library, give the reward to the character that interacts the most with the librarians and seems most interested in obtaining knowledge.

Back to Bwirse

Heading to the Black Dragon Inn, the heroes can have Miklos (the barkeep) send for Bwirse. After a long wait, he arrives, and ushers the PCs upstairs to the same room that contained the chest. The two guards are present in the room. If the PCs did not find anything (including the map), he is disappointed, but thanks the heroes for trying. If the PCs turn over either the map (copies are acceptable) or the dagger, he smiles, hands the item(s) to one of the guards, and says:

"Thank you for all you've done. I am certain that your journey was long and arduous. Even though my employer does not yet have the wealth of his predecessors, I can give you some material compensation for your efforts. I also am personally in your debt, and I will take efforts to repay you in full in the future."

The characters are each handed a small sack with 50 gp in it. Each PC receives a Favor of Bwirse certificate as well. There is no negotiating their payment; that is all the money that Bwirse brought with him, and all he is authorized to pay the heroes.

Final Thoughts

Modify the following based on the heroes' experiences.

Your harrowing journey into the ruins of Delvenbrass now complete, you take some time to enjoy the comforts of Greyhawk City. Every once in a while though, in the corners of your mind, or when you are at the edges of sleep, you think about the dreadful thing whose wretched heart beats below the Vesve Forest. You wonder, how long before it stirs again? And what may come if it awakens from its slumber? You can only hope that the knowledge of its existence lives on only with a small few, and remains forgotten by the minions of evil.

If a "chosen" PC received the Curse of the Voice, turn to him/her and read the following, after reading the above to the rest of the party:

As you are wondering about these things, a maniacal laughter reverberates through your skull, chilling your soul and weakening your heart. "Your path will soon be clear, Chosen One. I will guide you along the way. They will learn my name soon enough; it will be uttered first upon your lips. Then all will know why I was forgotten. Be patient; await my return." The deep, powerful voice fades in echoes from your mind.

The End

Experience Point Summary

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the discretionary roleplaying experience award. The roleplaying award should be given for consistent character portrayal and contribution to the fun of the game. You can award different roleplaying amounts to different characters.

Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

Encounter Two	
Checking with the Library	25 xp
Encounter Three	
Getting information from Hamdan	25 xp
Encounter Six	
Defeating the Vargouilles	65 xp
Getting the map in area 2	25 xp
Solving the puzzles in areas 4-6	100 xp
-or-	
Solving the puzzles in areas 7-11	100 xp
Tithing to the urn in area 12	25 xp
Defeating Volzern	135 xp
Leaving the binder of souls in place	50 xp
Total experience for objectives	450 xp
Discretionary roleplaying award	0-50 xp
Total possible experience	**500 xp**

Treasure Summary

Player characters may keep items from the scenario that are listed on the treasure list below or which meet the following conditions:

1. The item must be non-magical and specifically listed in the text of the adventure (e.g armor on foes). If it is not listed in the text, the characters cannot keep it. Items of this nature can be sold for 50% of book value, or recorded on a log sheet.
2. Animals, followers, monsters, henchmen, and so forth (any living being, basically) may not be kept from a scenario for any reason unless the treasure summary lists the being specifically. It is okay for the player characters to form relationships with NPCs, but these will not be certed and cannot bring material benefit to the character. Contacts (sources of extra information) must be specifically certed.
3. Theft is against the law, but may be practiced by some player characters. Items which are worth more than 250 gp that are of personal significance to the owner (including family heirlooms), and all magical items, will be discovered in the possession of the character by one means or another. The character must return the item and pay a fine equal to three times the value of the item stolen. In addition, the PC caught receives campaign-decided penalties for being known as a thief. For other stolen items which meet the criteria in #1 above, use your judgment and the circumstances within the game to determine whether a PC thief gets away with the theft or not.

Any item retained according to these rules, which does not have a certificate, will not ever have a certificate issued for it.

The campaign staff reserves the right to take away any item or gold acquired for things which it later finds unreasonable but which were allowed at the time.

Encounter Six

Area 2

- Miscellaneous gear worth 100 gp in Highfolk (75gp else where)
- *Potion of bull's strength* (300 gp, * lbs., tradable: yes, frequency: common)

Area 13

- 40gp
- *Ring of pain* (400 gp, _ lbs., tradable: yes, frequency: common): This small ring is made of carved bone. It is carved to look like a gaunt man wrapped around a wreath of flame. Once per day, the wearer may cast *inflict light wounds* that will deal 1d8+1 points of damage upon a successful touch attack. Activating this ring is a standard action. When the ring is activated it emits a low moan. This moan may be detected with a Listen skill check (DC 15).
- *Wand of magic missile* (45 gp per charge, 1 lbs, tradable: yes, frequency common): This wand was made at 3rd level casting and hence fires off two *magic missile*s per charge expended. This item begins with 6 charges.
- Divine Scroll (350 gp, 0 lbs, tradable: yes, frequency: common): This piece of parchment appears to be made of cured skin of a sinister origin. On it are the following spells: *detect pits and snares* (x2), *find traps*, and *lesser restoration*.
- *Potion of invisibility* (300 gp, * lbs., tradable: yes, frequency: common).
- *Amulet of focus* (320 gp, 1 lbs, tradable: yes, frequency: common): This basalt amulet is carved to look like a grinning skull with a very intent stare. The wearer of this amulet receives a +4 competence bonus to all Concentration skill checks. As this amulet is a boon of Iuz, his minions will go to significant lengths to retrieve it.
- *Binder of the Souls* (500 gp, 2 lbs, tradable: yes, frequency: uncommon): Wrought from pure silver, this dagger is encrusted with small black jewels on its pommel. The blade itself is covered with very fine elven runes depicting a horrible battle. The dagger radiates strong necromantic magic that cannot be identified. It currently serves as a masterwork dagger. The dagger also radiates a dreadful aura.

Any PC carrying this dagger also has a slight evil aura about them. This effect is so strong that no ordinary merchant will purchase it. This dagger cannot be sold to any NPC or traded in at any activity center. It may be sold to other PCs. The dagger was retrieved from a sacred tomb deep beneath the ruined fortress of Delvenbrass.

- Curse of the Voice (0 gp, 0 lbs, tradable: no, frequency: uncommon): The forgotten thing that lies dead beneath the dungeon of Delvenbrass has cursed the above named PC. Occasionally the voice of the thing echoes through the void of death to plague the hero. Once per game, the DM may decide to use the voice. This effect can come at any time of the DMs choosing. When the voice is used, the DM must roll as 1d6 and consult the following chart.
  1 – The voice whispers about the heroes impending doom. This acts just like the spell daze but without a HD cap. The PC receives a will save (DC 14) to avoid the effect.
  2 – The voice whispers dark secrets about the PC. This acts just like the spell daze but without a HD maximum. The PC receives a will save (DC 15) to avoid the effect.
  3 – The voice screams in rage at the hero. This acts just like the spell daze but without a HD maximum. The PC receives a will save (DC 16) to avoid the effect.
  4 – The voice speaks of its terrible revenge against the hero. This acts just like the spell daze but without a HD maximum. The PC receives a will save (DC 18) to avoid the effect.
  5-6 – The voice coalesces in the hero's head and says "Receive my blessing". Roll another 1d6 to determine the spell effect that is targeted at the PC. In all cases, the spells are cast at 10th level and require a DC 18 + the spell level to resist.
  1 – doom
  2 – aid
  3 – cause fear
  4 – divine favor
  5 – hold person
  6 – bull's strength
  This curse cannot be removed by a remove curse spell or other similar magic.

Conclusion

- Favor of Bwirse: The PC named above has done Bwirse, business manager for Auldon Brendingund's estate, a great service. In return, Bwirse promises to reward the PC in some fashion, to be determined at a later date. (rarity: unusual; tradable: no).
- Membership in the Great Library of Greyhawk: As a token of their thanks, the scholars at the Great Library in Greyhawk City have decided to award you with one year's worth of paid membership. You are entitled to enter the library as you please (but only during the normal operating hours of dusk until dawn), and have access to references that most visitors never lay eyes upon.

If you conduct research at the Great Library during the course of an adventure set in Greyhawk City or the nearby environs, you gain a bonus to a single Knowledge skill check pertaining to the matter at hand. For each hour you study, you gain a cumulative +1 circumstance bonus to an appropriate Knowledge skill check (to a maximum of +5). This bonus is halved for Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (the planes) skill rolls (to a maximum of +2 for four hours of study). If you do not have ranks in the Knowledge skill required, after 4 hours of study, you may still roll, but without a bonus. You may attempt more than one Knowledge roll in one night.
In addition, you have the privilege of being able to take up to three books from the library for up to one week's time. The books provide a +2 circumstance bonus to rolls in one related Knowledge skill (which you select when the books are taken), so long as an hour is spent in referencing them. Without the appropriate Knowledge skill, a roll can still be attempted after an hour's worth of page turning. Only one Knowledge skill can be selected, no matter how many books are taken. The bonus does not change with the number of books selected; and the judge may adjudicate how many books need to be taken in order to gain the bonus (between one and three). If a book is lost, you are expected to pay for it (the judge may adjudicate - typically each book is worth between 20 and 200 gp).
After one year, you have the option of renewing your membership with the Great Library. The cost for doing so is 250 gp. All benefits of the library are suspended until renewal. If you let your membership lapse for more than six months, the certificate is void.

Date on which certificate was awarded: -_____
(rarity: unusual; tradable: no) Only one certificate should be made.

PLAYER HANDOUT #1

To all interested:

I am in need of some persons of good stature to embark on a rather lengthy excursion. Compensation arrangements will be made based on performance. If you wish to inquire for further details, I can be found at the Black Dragon Inn, located in Clerkburg. Please call around dinnertime.

Bwirse
Agent for the Brendingund Estate

PLAYER HANDOUT #2

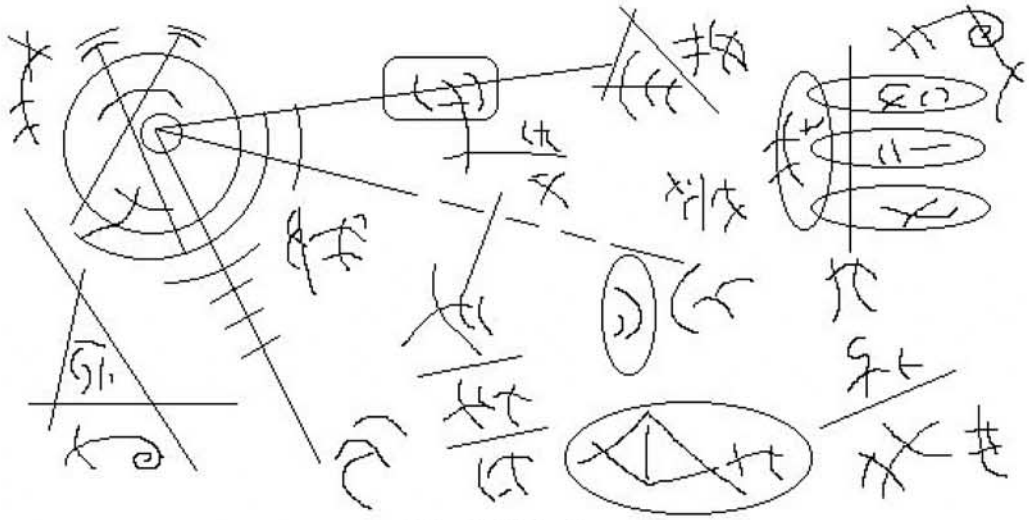
When the Handmaiden has strayed farthest from Sehanine's sight, the Keeper speaks the Word near Man's Great Stone Scar in the Tinklingice mists of the Home of Shandareth.
That which has been forgotten will be revealed.
May Corellon protect us.

PLAYER HANDOUT #3

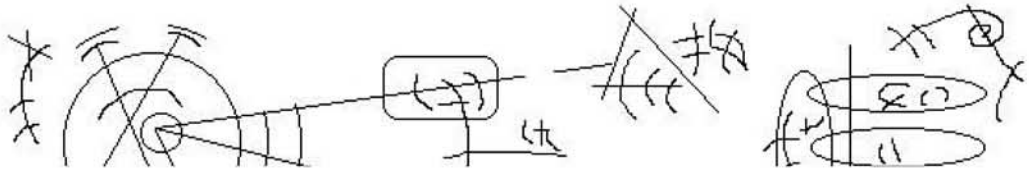
After several hours of searching through stacks of obscure text on various arcane and mysterious subjects, you were able to find out the following information from the Great Library of Greyhawk:

- You have verified that the information that Bwirse was certain about is indeed true.
- The Home of Shandareth is indeed the Vesve Forest. Clan Shandareth has been the ruling clan of the olven people there for many, many centuries. The clan's ruler is Kashafen Tamarel, who sits on the throne in the town of Flameflower. Flameflower is an all-elven community that lies in the southern Vesve Forest, and serves as the location of the High Elven Court. Non-elves are only allowed entrance in the most important circumstances.
- Man's Great Stone Scar is an older wood elven reference to Delvenbrass, a now ruined keep in the Vesve Forest. It is a derogatory name given by the wood elves for the place during the time of its construction, hundreds of years ago. Delvenbrass was built by ancient Baklunish people, and was occupied for a time. Apparently, some great tragedy befell it, and those who lived in and around the keep fled to other lands. It is considered a lair of evil now. The keep is located in lands controlled by Iuz and his minions. Unnamed creatures of unspeakable terror wander about the area, and many dark cults seek out the ruins as foci for rituals of death, disease, and suffering.
- Corellon protect us is a saying rarely invoked by the olven people. It is reserved for only the most desperate times, and is often associated with hopelessness or certain doom.

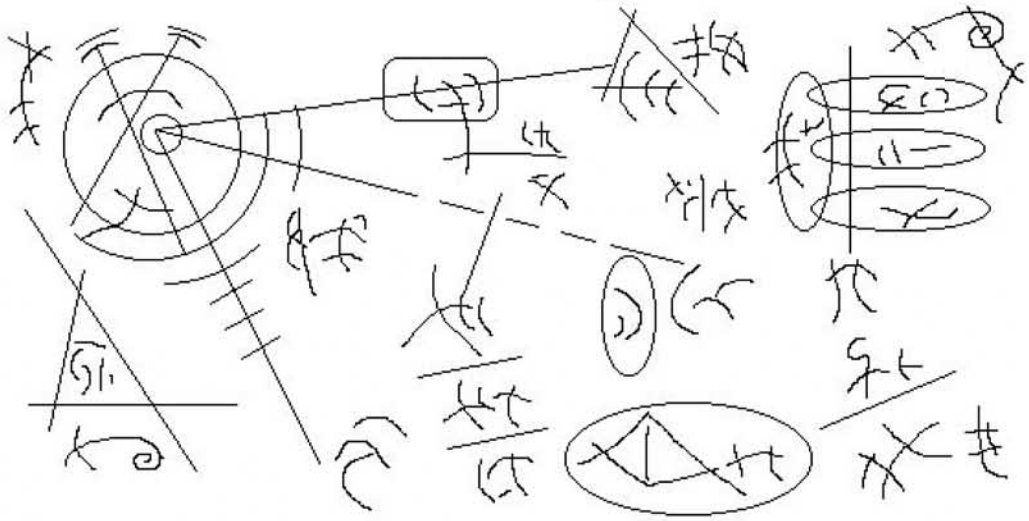
PLAYER HANDOUT #4



West Wall Carvings

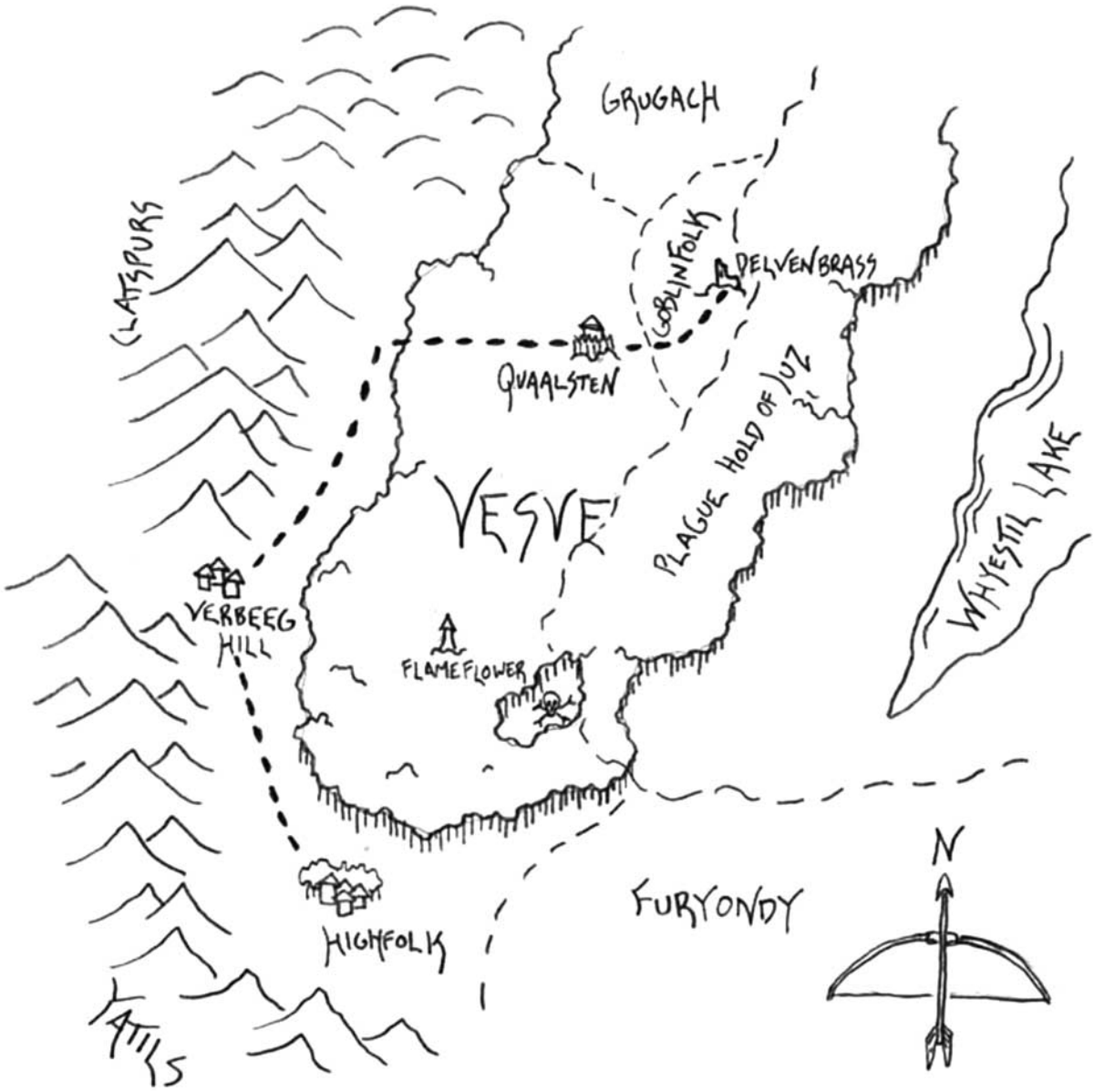


North Wall Carvings

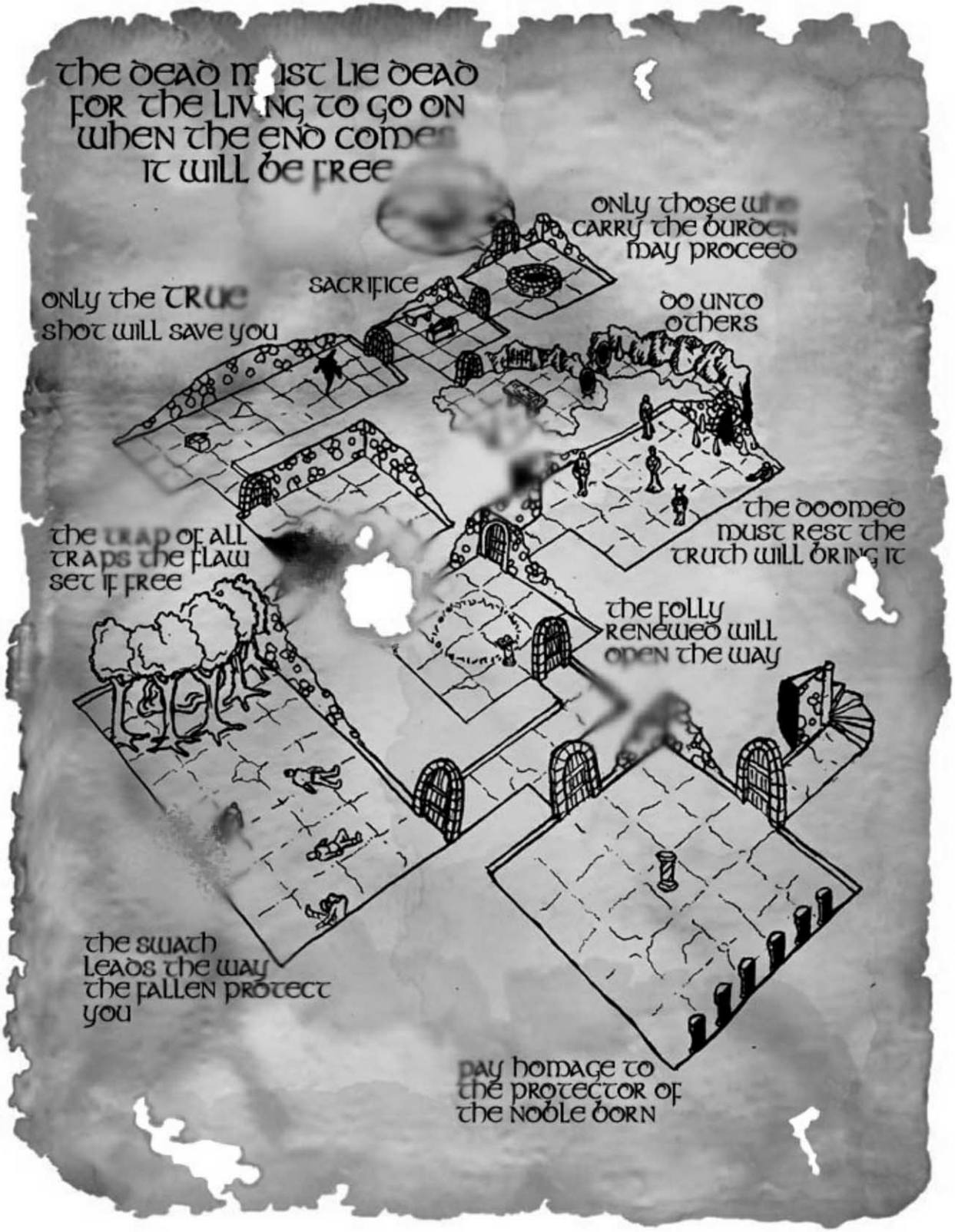


East Wall Carvings

PLAYER MAP #1


GRUGACH
CLATSPURS
GOBLINFOLK
DELVENBRASS
QUAALSTEN
PLAGUE HOLD OF LUZ
VESVE
WHYESTIL LAKE
VERBEEG HILL
FLAMEFLOWER
HIGHFOLK
FURYONDY
YATILS
N

PLAYER MAP #2


the dead must lie dead
for the living to go on
when the end comes
it will be free
only those who
carry the burden
may proceed
sacrifice
only the true
shot will save you
do unto
others
the doomed
must rest the
truth will bring it
the trap of all
traps the flaw
set it free
the folly
renewed will
open the way
the swath
leads the way
the fallen protect
you
pay homage to
the protector of
the noble born

Critical Event Summary for "The Forbidden Choice" GenCon 2001

Judges, please fill out this form at the end of the event and turn into HQ with your scoring packet. If this event is run after GenCon 2001, please disregard this summary.

1. Did the PCs visit the Library of Greyhawk?	Yes	No
2. Did the PCs retrieve the Map found in area 2?	Yes	No
3. Did the PCs go further into the dungeon beyond area 2?	Yes	No
4. Did the PCs choose the path that led to area 4 or 7?	4	7
5. Did any of the PCs die in area 5?	Yes	No
6. Did any of the PCs die in area 10?	Yes	No
7. Did the PCs make it past area 11?	Yes	No
8. Did the PCs defeat Volzern in area 13?	Yes	No
9. Did the PCs remove the binder of the souls?	Yes	No
9a. If yes, was the PC forced to remove it by suggestion?	Yes	No

9b. If yes, please list the player name, character name, and RPGA# of the player who kept the dagger (if any).

_____

_____

10. Did the PCs receive a membership of the great library?	Yes	No
11. Circle each NPC that the heroes told about the tomb	Hamdan Bwirse Librarians	
12. Did the PCs reseal the tomb when they left?	Yes	No
13. How many PCs died while playing this event?	_____	