

HIGH-11

A GNOME'S AFFAIR

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®]

Highfolk Regional Adventure

Version 1

by Andrea Paulinski

As an aspiring hero of Highfolk and the Flanaess, you are asked to come to a feast of small proportions to celebrate your deeds. A home-cooked meal, a warm cozy fire, a hearty tale from an old gnome, a journey deep in the Vesve again, where no one can hear you scream.... Recommended for Rangers of the Vesve, nature-based, and/or demihuman PCs. For characters 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 three players (not counting the DM), for the game session to be a sanctioned RPGA event. As well, you cannot have more than six players participating in the game.

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

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying. That said, you as the DM can bar the use of even core 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*.

DETERMINING AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL (APL)

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

- 1) Determine the character level for each PC participating in the adventure.
- 2) If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely war horses, dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (i.e., animal companions, familiars, paladin's mounts, etc.) use the following chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum above. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

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

- 3) Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure—round up.
- 4) If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

APL also affects the amount of experience you may gain at the end of an adventure. If your character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL that this adventure is played at, that character will receive only half of the experience points awarded for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either your character was not as challenged as normal, or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

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

- 1) Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
- 2) Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dog to attack they must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.
- 3) A group of APL 1 adventurers who desire an extra hand can "enlist an iconic." The stats for the 1st-level versions of Tordek, Mialee, Lidda and Jozan are given at the end of each adventure. The group may pick one of these characters to joint them on this adventure. The DM controls that NPC.

If you are using a 591 CY adventure (campaign year 1) that uses the old Tiers, assume that the Tier multiplied by 2 is the APL suitable for that encounter.

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

The Rangers of the Vesve are in a whole lot of trouble. Humanoid and bandit raids in the Highvale are a large cause of concern amongst their ranks, and the Rangers simply do not have enough people or money to deal with other problems that have risen. Enter, then, the Gnomish Consortium of Merchants, Moneylenders, Miners, and Gemcutters. Champions of equal affairs among all demihumans, they have taken interest in the Rangers' plight. Currently, the only beings admitted into the Rangers of the Vesve are those of human stock (humans and half-elves), as the Rangers have traditionally drawn many of their men and women from the woodsmen in the Vesve Forest. The Consortium has a simple deal: they give the Rangers money, as long as the Rangers allow demihumans into their ranks. Elrenn Walthair and a council of gnomes have been corresponding with each other for a while, and now plan to meet personally. They send off a dispatcher, a half-elven ranger named Sarall, with a message to Verbeeg Hill. That message contains the date of their meeting and other important information regarding this "transaction".

This message, however, was never to be received. Sarall was waylaid by an encampment of humanoids and killed. His message still remains in the camp, along with the body of a cleric of Norebo, from the Smiling Halls of Good Fortune in Verbeeg Hill.

In the meantime, old Bodri Glitterfoot, a retired gnome ranger and good friend of several members of the Gnomish Consortium, hears of Sarall's disappearance. He is a strong advocate of including demihumans to the Rangers' ranks, and tells the Consortium not to worry; he shall find worthy adventurers for this cause. The old gnome sends out several hundred letters to different heroes of the Flanaess, each with the promise of a good celebration in thanks of their good work. The Rangers of the Vesve send Dathgar, one of their own, to meet with all parties and ask for assistance.

Tanal Moonsteel, an elven weaponsmith, is also another advocate of the inclusion of the demihumans in the Rangers' ranks. He knows of Bodri's plan (and the heroes' journey to Quaalsten), and agrees to meet the party after they leave. A shipment of his goods to Quaalsten had never been received, and he hopes the PCs can help him in this matter. The same group of humanoids that killed the cleric of Norebo and Sarall, also stole Tanal's weapons. A sickly giant owl witnessed the acts. Her name is Velira, and she is an old friend of Bodri's. She wishes to see her gnomish friend again, to take care of her surviving egg before it is too late...

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins with players receiving a note from Bodri asking them to come to his home in Highfolk. After receiving a hearty meal and a long tale by the warmth of the fire, a Ranger of the Vesve interrupts their tranquillity. He desperately needs the help of the heroes, and after Bodri explains why he brought the heroes here, they leave.

They are met by Tanal Moonsteel outside, who asks them to look for clues on his missing wares. He offers a reward to those he's already met.

The heroes then journey deep into the Vesve, where they encounter a giant owl trying to fend off several humanoids. She tells them of what she witnessed, and asks any nature-based hero to take care of her egg, for she fears she will die soon.

The heroes then wander into the humanoid camp, where they find the mutilated body of the Ranger and his note, the body of a cleric of Norebo (with another strange note), the elven weapons, and the grandson of Bodri. The heroes are either stealthy or must fight their way through the small camp.

The heroes then enter Quaalsten, where they are thanked but told that a meeting is taking place in Verbeeg Hill. They may either give them the note here or decide to press further.

If they decide to continue, they journey along the Highvale and encounter a frantic woman worried about her husband. They find out about the raids and the

problems the Rangers are facing, and finally discover what this journey was all about.

Finally, they get to Verbeeg Hill and deliver the note to the meeting held in the Smiling Halls. Here they may deal with the body. Afterwards, they go return to Highfolk.

Rangers of the Vesve

For more information on the Rangers of the Vesve and their meta-organization, read Appendix I or go to the Highfolk webpage: www.highfolk.oerth.com. Players may be playing Ranger characters. This scenario counts for an event played in the Vesve Forest.

PLAYER INTRODUCTION

Hand out the letter that Bordi sends the PCs (Player Handout #1) before beginning the event. This way, a player can choose a different character if his/her currently selected character would never answer such a letter. Make sure to give demihuman (gnome, half-orc, elven, halfling) characters the postscript Bodri gives them (Player Handout #1a).

Now that players have chosen their characters (or left the table), it is time to begin:

"...Twas a long time ago, nearly forgotten by most, when young Tamoroy of Hardby ventured into our midst. He was a good lad, strong of heart but weak of flesh, and the fresh ideals of Highfolk stunned him. 'Where are the temples to Wee Jas, fellows?' he'd ask his companions. They'd laugh, and say she wasn't known much 'round these parts, and that angered him so much he'd get red in the face like a tomato does when it gets too ripe. 'And where are the women? This place, it's run by a man!' Well, they told him. Told him that if it was run at all, it would be run by everyone. 'This ain't old Ferrond anymore, boy. Look around.'

"But young Tamoroy was stubborn, he didn't see. He was accompanied by a young foolish little halfling named Mareth - she was quite the looker. There was also Berg, a farmer of the Highvale with a strong sickle. And the others, but I forget their names... They too have been lost in this old man's noggin. The group of them, six in all, had such grand adventures. Tamoroy and his friends would fight against evil and narrowly win almost every time. Yet even though he was saved by halflings and elves and other sorts of 'oddities', as he called 'em, he was still as stubborn as a Wastran, and—"

"Dad! Are you still telling that story? Don't bug them with your old adventure stories. It's time to eat. Come, all."

Bodri's story is interrupted by his daughter, Emila, who coaxes the adventurers to sit down at her table. Bodri stubbornly gets up and goes to the table, where dinner awaits the PCs.

The table is a medium-sized table, which Emila claims she got just for this meeting. It is difficult for small characters to eat, but she offers "booster chairs" to the smaller PCs.

The dinner is delicious. There are a variety of different foods offered, including rare gnomish

delicacies and Ilymirth wine ("One of the last bottles!"). Feel free to elaborate on the different kinds of food available.

There are three NPCs in the room: Bodri, Emila, and her young son Figil. Bodri is quiet throughout the meal, Emila polite and answering questions when asked, and Figil very enthusiastic about adventurers being in the house, asking several inane (and not so inane) questions about their adventures. Let this encounter last for only a few moments. The point to get across is that Figil really wants to join the Rangers of the Vesve to be just like "Grampa" someday.

Bodri, Rgr6

Personality: Bodri is a quiet and insightful old gnome, yet tends to forget details. He is pleasant to talk to, and will regale old tales about himself if asked for a story.

Bodri does not answer any questions concerning his postscript, claiming that he has forgotten, or that the answers "lie in due time".

Emila, Com3

Personality: Emila is the widowed daughter of Bodri. She is a pleasant woman and a wonderful cook, but quiet and reserved, only speaking when spoken to. She is also very apologetic about the smallest inconsistency.

Emila does not know anything about the Ranger problem, just that the letters her father sent are important.

Figil, Com1

Personality: Figil is the epitome of boyish curiosity. He strives to become as good as an adventurer as his grandfather was so long ago, and asks any adventurer he meets tons of questions.

Figil only knows that these people are heroes. Therefore, he must annoy them to no end. At one point, he says that he wishes to be a Ranger of the Vesve.

A pounding on the door interrupts the PC's dinner. Go to Encounter 1.

ENCOUNTER 1: INTERRUPTIONS

Your meal is interrupted by a loud pounding on the door. Bodri stands from his chair, and manages to wobble his way across the room. Opening the door reveals a half-elven male, his skin pale and shivering from the cold outside. Bodri steps aside and allows him entry without saying a word, and Emila lets out a gasp and scurries away to find a warm towel. Figil's constant yap has deceased, his jaw wide open.

"I...am sorry for the interruption, everyone." The old gnome nods and closes the door, while Emila quickly removes

his chill-covered cloak and hands him the towel. "Perhaps it is best if we go in the other room, Bodri."

"Yes." He looks to all of you. "Please, my friends, come with me."

He waits for everyone to follow him into his bedroom. If someone refuses to go, he asks that Emila and Figil go into the other room instead. Bodri refuses for the two to get involved. Once everyone is separated from his family, Bodri speaks:

"I must apologize for this, for this is strictly my own affair, and not my family's. Dathgar, this fine lad here, is a member of the Rangers of the Vesve, and I have called you here for something much more important than a simple meal and a chat. Can you forgive an old gnome for tricking you like this?"

If/when the PCs agree to hearing them out, Dathgar continues:

"Bodri is a good friend of ours and the Gnomish Consortium of Verbeeg Hill. He recommended you all to me, and told me that he would bring you here. For that, I am grateful. I thank you. You were called here because the Rangers are in need of assistance. We are missing an important member of our ranks, a Woods Lieutenant. I am in need of heroes to find him, or word of what became of him. Are you up to such a task?"

- Why is he so important to find?

"He was carrying a very important note from Quaalsten to Verbeeg Hill."

- What is a Woods Lieutenant?

"There are three ranks of the Rangers. It means that he leads a group of Rangers. But this time, he went alone."

- Can't the Rangers take care of themselves?

"Yes, but we have not heard from him in more than a month. Rangers, if on an important mission, somehow inform their companions that they will be late for duty. His silence must mean he is either captured, dead, or... something worse. We must find this out at once and deal with it."

- What was his name? What does he look like?

"His name is Sarall. He is a half-elf of around forty years of age, and wears deerskin leather and two short swords, has long dark hair, and has a scar across his nose and chin. Because he was on an important mission, he did not wear his sash. Sarall is very easy to pick out by his scar and uncouth demeanor."

- What is the Gnomish Consortium? What do they have to do with anything?

"The Gnomish Consortium of Merchants, Moneylenders, Miners, and Gemcutters are found all around the area, with major operations in Verbeeg Hill, Highfolk, and the Sepia Uplands. They lend money and deal with business, that sort of thing. I do not know much about them, nor know why we are corresponding with them. I am not of high ranking in the

Rangers, as I'm only a Protector. All I know is that Sarall was to deliver the message to them in Verbeeg Hill."

- Where in the world will we be able to find him?
"Adventurers have their ways, as do we. I am sure if we pool our resources together we shall find something. I will take you along the route that Sarall was to take. Perhaps we shall find something there."

Bodri speaks up. "An old friend of mine lives in the Vesve. Her name is Velira. If you talk to her, she may be able to help you. She can easily spot you."

- Who is Velira?

(Bodri) "She is a good friend of mine, but I've not seen her for quite a long time. Sarall knows the way to her home in the Vesve, if you want to talk to her. Velira has good eyes, and maybe she's seen somethin'. Please visit her and ask how she's been. I wish I could come with you, but these old bones of mine ache too much."

- How much will we get paid?

"I cannot pay you anything, but know that you will be greatly rewarded when the Old One is finally pushed out of the lands that were once ours."

- No, really. What do we get out of this?

"Perhaps I should ask less greedy adventurers, Bodri."

"I'm sorry, Dathgar. I must have sent the invitation by accident. My mind does tend to wander."

- Bodri, why can't your family know about this?

"It's strictly one gnome's affair, my own. My family has nothing to do with the Rangers, and I would like to keep it that way."

- When do we go?

"I would prefer as soon as possible. I shall wait for you here if you need any supplies or need to get things."

When all questions have been answered and the party agrees to it:

"Thank you, my friends. The Rangers are forever in your favor."

As the PCs leave the room, Figil scrambles away from the door. He has been listening to every word, but denies it. Emila wishes the PCs luck in whatever it is that they are doing.

Dathgar now accompanies the party to show them where to go.

☞ **Dathgar, male half-elf Rgr3:** Medium Humanoid (elf); HD 3d10+6; hp 28; Init +2*; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 12, flat-footed 13); Atks +4/+4 melee (1d6+2/19–20, short sword/short sword), or +5 ranged (1d8/x3, longbow); SA Favored Enemy (orc), SQ +2 Init bonus

during encounters in the Vesve, Vesve uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Hide +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +7; Weapon Focus (short sword), Alertness.

Possessions: studded leather armor, short sword (2), longbow, quiver of 20 arrows.

*Ranger of the Vesve: Initiative - receives a +2 bonus to Initiative rolls while in the Vesve forest. Vesve uncanny dodge – as a rogue or barbarian's first "level" of uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC) ability, but only in the Vesve.

ENCOUNTER 2: YET ANOTHER INTERRUPTION

As you exit the inviting warmth that was the gnome's home into the cold winter of Highfolk, you spot an elven man hurrying towards you. He waves and shouts for you to stop.

PCs who played *Of Elven Make* recognize the elven man as Tanal Moonsteel (male high elf Exp9), one of the weaponsmiths that they assisted. He tries to catch up to the PCs in hopes that they stop to chat.

The elf skids to a stop, nearly falling over. He rights himself and smiles, then looks over all of you. "Oh, thank Corellon! I've caught you in time."

If anyone who's played *Of Elven Make* is in the party, he says: "It is quite a coincidence that I've found you here. It would be an honor to ask for your assistance again."

"The truth is, I need a little favor. I am in a bit of a bind, and need your help. But come, come, let's get out of the cold." He points over to a tavern called the Vesve's Tankard. "This shall do nicely."

He is talking about the Vesve's Tankard, a well-known elven establishment. Tanal offers to buy them all drinks if they come with him. Dathgar remains silent throughout the whole ordeal. He knows what Tanal's problem is - that his weapons never made it to Quaalsten - and allows Tanal to explain it himself.

The Vesve's Tankard is a more than welcome stop to get out of the cold, and several patrons are seated around a table looking at an elven male dressed in black. He is serving them drinks and well-disguised jibes. An attractive elven woman is behind the bar, studying a book of arcane origin. Behind her on the wall is a painting of the Tankard's former barmistress, Sarindina, who was murdered a few months ago near that very spot. The Tankard seems to have regained its normal good-natured spirits.

Tanal sits at an empty table and calls out to the woman. "Ruana! Get my friends the best of the house!" The woman

looks up from her book, a bit startled, and moves to get the drinks.

- So, who were you again?

"Oh, yes. Forgive my manners. My name is Tanal Moonsteel, and I am a smith of elven weapons. They say I'm one of the best, but I don't believe them." He winks.

- What seems to be the problem?

"Well, I was delivering a wagon full of my goods to Quaalsten for the Rangers. I thought they could use some help in their efforts to help rid the Vesve of the evils that plague it. It turns out that they never got them, and no one knows where they went. This is the second time weapons have been stolen from me."

- The second time?

"Awhile ago, during the Brewfest festival - you must not be from around here - some weapons were stolen from me and my brother, Taral. The thieves were dealt with, but someone else must also want my work for some purpose, I guess."

- Who is Sarindina (the woman in the picture)?

"She was the head barmistress of this place, and she... knew things. Apparently she was the liaison between the elven clans of the Vesve, or so I've heard. One night, when she invited adventurers here to deal a problem amongst the elven clans, she received a death threat. Others went this way and that, and twenty or so heroes of Highfolk stayed behind to protect her. A nightmare creature showed up to assassinate her, and only two of the twenty adventurers stood their ground to fight the demon-thing. Sarindina was killed, as well as one of her two defenders. A bloody message 'that was the last time, traitor' was found with the bodies. Anyway, that girl serving drinks is one of her sisters."

- What do you want us to do?

"I want you to find out what's happened to my shipment. Any information you can find would be extremely helpful to the town."

- What's in it for us?

"If you come back with proof of the weapons' whereabouts, I can pay your group 200 golden solars. Also, there is that little favor that I've been meaning to pay some of you back."

"When you're done with your journey, just meet me back here. We can deal with transactions later. Thanks!"

PCs may also wish to talk to Ruana, the Owner of the bar, or several patrons. The patrons have nothing of import to say.

Ruana (female high elf Wiz8, ring of mind shielding) is a very easily startled and jumpy elven woman. She does not care to speak about her sister Sarindina, and refuses to make any comment.

The owner (male elf Rog8; Bluff +17) is a more open individual, however. He hits on any good-lucking woman, and is smooth and sly. The owner never reveals his name in any circumstance. He claims to know

nothing more than what Tanal has told them, but when asked about Sarindina:

"Ah, she was one of my best girls. So caring, so hard working, so spirited. I miss her greatly. It does not matter to me. Traitor or not, she was one of my own."

ENCOUNTER 3: VELIRA

After everything has been settled, the heroes can depart for the Vesve Forest, with Dathgar in tow. The judge should get marching order and watch schedule from the PCs at this time.

Several days have gone by since your talk with Bodri. You are now in the Vesve Forest, home of many creatures, both good and bad. Several light snow patches dot the foliage here and there. The days have passed uneventfully, save for a few run-ins with the abundant wildlife.

"It is a few more days till we reach Quaalsten, my friends," Dathgar finally says after your fourth day of travel ends in darkness. "We should rest for the night." As his words are spoken, a horrible screeching sound comes from up ahead in the wilderness.

The gnoll attack is fifty feet ahead. Thirty feet up is Velira, the giant owl mother, who is desperately trying to protect her egg.

Up ahead in the snowy trees is a strange sight. Several gnolls are attempting to poke at something up in the branches with longspears. The creature looks to be a large bird, and it refuses to fly away from its attackers. The bird turns its eyes towards you, as if pleading for your assistance.

APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Gnolls** (3): hp 10, 11, 12. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they are each carrying one longspear.

APL 4 (EL 6)

☛ **Gnolls** (6): hp 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they are each carrying one longspear.

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ **Gnolls** (12): hp 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they are each carrying one longspear.

Treasure (taken off the gnolls' bodies):

- 25 gp
- One has a silver owl pin with the initials GG (50 gp)

After your battle with the goblins, Dathgar rushes over to the ailing bird, who has hovered weakly to the snow-covered

ground. She stands an impressive nine feet tall, and now appears to be a large owl. However, her snowy white feathers are molting and are a bloody mess. She does not look well. Perhaps more startling to some of you, she begins to speak in Common.

"Thank you... for saving me... Had it not been for you, my child... would be dead... I only have so much time left for this world... Please... speak quickly..."

Velira has been poisoned with wyvern poison, and dies in just another minute or so (just long enough to have the heroes ask her a few quick questions). Anyone making a Heal skill check (DC 18; DC 13 with 5 or more ranks of Handle Animal or Wilderness Lore) can verify this, as well as the fact that she is beyond healing (both mundane and magical). Give the PCs a reasonable amount of information, but remind them that she is dying and cannot talk long.

- Are you Velira?

"Yes. I am she. You must be a friend of Bodri's...or the Rangers... Only they know who I am..."

- What is wrong with you?

"I fear I have been poisoned by the gnolls. Even now, it is taking the last of my strength to tell you this."

- Why were those gnolls attacking you?

"There is a gnoll camp not too far from here... They thought of me as some sport... I could have escaped and stayed alive longer, but my egg is more precious..."

- What can you tell us about the camp? / Has there been anyone else around?

"The camp is several hours north of here... I have seen three come around my domain... One a Ranger, one wearing robes of a priestly faith, and a small young boy..."

- What can you tell us about the Ranger?

"He looked like you, Dathgar... He wore deerskin leather and had a scar on his face... He was rather rude... and lost... I told him not to go further, but he did not listen to me... I am guessing the gnolls have him..."

- What can you tell us about the cleric?

"He was a nice human who called himself Wentland, who asked if he could heal me... and talked a lot about good luck and fortune... He asked me where to find Flameflower, but I could not tell him where... The human claimed to be from Verbeeg Hill..."

- What can you tell us about the young boy?

"He was a young adventurous gnome who reminded me of Bodri... He said he was trying to track his way to Quaalsten, and disappeared only a few hours ago..."

Once time is up, and if there is a nature-based PC (particularly woodlands) in the party, Velira says:

"I feel my death drawing nearer. Please, one of you, take care of my only child. ... His life depends on you..." She closes her eyes, and falls to the ground. The poison has run its course. Velira is dead.

Treasure (from Velira):

- Giant Owl Egg.

ENCOUNTER 4: GNOLL CAMP

The PCs may wish to rest near their encounter with the giant owl, as night is already upon them. Dathgar suggests as much, and also suggests that they remain ever vigilant while on watch tonight. In the morning, the heroes can trudge ahead to the encampment.

The gnoll camp is four hours north of Velira. It is a small camp, but blends well into the forest. Two tents are what make up the camp, and there are no guards present. The camp's dimensions are a simple 50' by 70', covered in the foliage of the forest; the tents are in the center. A covered pit is located in the back with the body of Wentland.

The dead owl's words were true. Ahead of you, some one hundred feet, is a small clearing. A dying fire illuminates the many tree stumps remain, as well as two tents. No guards can be seen, but there is a signpost up ahead next to what appears to be a large object on a stick. Snowflakes whip around in the air, and the wind begins to pick up.

A closer look, or a Spot check (DC 20), reveals this to be Sarall's head stuck on a javelin. There is no mistaking his scars (and if the PCs do cast doubt, Dathgar confirms that this is their man). The sign reads in Gnollish:

Keep out. This is what happens to those who defy us.

The Larger Tent

This tent is 20' by 30'. Two gnolls lie about in the room. Bodri's grandson, Figil, is tied and gagged, sleeping in the middle of the floor. There is nothing else in the room. If the PCs try to move in stealthily, make opposed Move Silently/Listen checks. If they untag Figil, he shouts out excitedly, and wakes up the gnolls. Any large amount of noise from the tent wakes up the gnolls in the other tent.

All APL (EL 3)

☛ **Gnolls** (2): hp 9, 13. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they each have one longspears.

The Other Tent

The other tent is 20' by 20'. Several gnolls lie about on mats, asleep, and a large pile of elven made weapons lie

in the corner of the room. They all bear the maker's symbol of Tanal Moonsteel. (20 longbows, 10 shortbows, 15 longswords, and 10 short swords remain.)

APL 2 (EL 3)

☛ **Gnolls** (2): hp 8, 12. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they each have one longspears.

APL 4 (EL 5)

☛ **Gnolls** (4): hp 8, 10, 12, 14. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they each have one longspears.

APL 6 (EL 7)

☛ **Gnolls** (8): hp 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. See the *Monster Manual* (pages 105-106); in addition to normal equipment, they each have one longspears.

The Pit

Inside the pit is the mangled body of Wentland, broken and battered after being tossed into the pit and being used as a chewtoy. On his body is a holy symbol that has a pair of eight-sided dice. Those followers of Norebo can easily make it out to be a holy symbol of their god, while a simple Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10) tells everyone else. On his body is also a note (Player Handout #2).

Just as the heroes investigate the pit, the leader of the band, a gnoll druid named Husul, comes back from walking his wolf pet. Of course, his guards were supposed to be alert and watchful for trouble, but they took the opportunity to nap. If he spots the heroes from the brush (opposed Spot/Hide skills checks; add +5 to the heroes' roll, as Husul has to see them through the forest), he hides (PCs looking out into the woods for more trouble can make opposed Spot/Hide checks to see him), and prepares his attack by casting a *summon nature's ally* spell (and possibly other spells). Once that is done, he leaps out from cover with his wolf pet, yells "Intruders!" in Gnollish, and attacks (not knowing that, most likely, all of his other gnolls have been killed).

APL 2 (EL 4)

☛ **Husul, male gnoll Drd3:** CR 4; Medium-size Humanoid (Gnoll); HD 5d8+10; hp 38; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atks +6 melee (1d6+3, club); SA Spells; SQ Nature sense, spells, trackless step, woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +2, Concentration +4, Handle Animal +2, Intuit Direction +4, Listen +6, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +6; Combat Casting, Power Attack.

Possessions: Oak club, hide armor, large wooden shield, pouch with 15 gp and 38 sp.

Spells Prepared (4/3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): o—create water, cure minor wounds, know direction, purify food and drink; 1st—cure light wounds, entangle, shillelagh; 2nd—barkskin, summon nature's ally II.

☛ **Wolf:** hp 15. See the *Monster Manual* (page 204).

APL 2 (EL 6)

☛ **Husul, male gnoll Drd5:** CR 6; Medium-size Humanoid (Gnoll); HD 7d8+14; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atks +7 melee (1d6+3, club); SA Spells, *wild shape* 1/day; SQ Nature sense, resist nature's lure, spells, trackless step, *wild shape* 1/day, woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +9, Ref +1, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +4, Concentration +5, Handle Animal +4, Intuit Direction +5, Listen +6, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +8; Combat Casting, Iron Will, Power Attack.

Possessions: Oak club, hide armor, large wooden shield, pouch with 15 gp and 38 sp.

Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): o—create water, cure minor wounds, guidance, know direction, purify food and drink; 1st—cure light wounds, entangle, faerie fire, shillelagh; 2nd—barkskin, chill metal, warp wood; 3rd—call lightning, summon nature's ally III.

☛ **Wolf:** hp 17. See the *Monster Manual* (page 204).

APL 6 (EL 8)

☛ **Husul, male gnoll Drd7:** CR 8; Medium-size Humanoid (Gnoll); HD 9d8+18; hp 76; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 10, flat-footed 16); Atks +9/+4 melee (1d6+3, club); SA Spells, *wild shape* 3/day; SQ Nature sense, resist nature's lure, spells, trackless step, *wild shape* 3/day, woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Animal Empathy +7, Concentration +6, Handle Animal +7, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +6, Spot +6, Wilderness Lore +10; Combat Casting, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

Possessions: Oak club, hide armor, large wooden shield, pouch with 15 gp and 38 sp.

Spells Prepared (6/5/4/3/2; base DC = 13 + spell level): o—create water, cure minor wounds, flare, guidance, know direction, purify food and drink; 1st—cure light wounds (x2), entangle, faerie fire, shillelagh; 2nd—barkskin, chill metal, resist elements, warp wood; 3rd—call lightning, poison (x2); 4th—flame strike, summon nature's ally IV.

☛ **Wolf:** hp 17. See the *Monster Manual* (page 204).

Tactics: Husul casts as many spells as possible before entering combat. At higher tiers, he starts off by casting *call lightning*; once that is done, he continues casting

other defensive spells. At Tier 3, he sets his *resist elements* to fire. Right before charging into combat, he casts his *summon nature's ally* spell, to confuse the heroes and add more combatants to his side.

Treasure on Husul's body:

- 15 gp and 38 sp.

Interrogating the Gnolls

All of the gnolls (except Husul) know nothing more than they were brought along to help Husul get weapons. They were promised good pay, and good food if they accepted. Most of them are lazy, and attempt to get away with whatever they can when Husul isn't around. The PCs need to communicate in Gnollish to get this information.

Husul can only speak and understand Gnollish, and the secret language of druids. He seeks only to cleanse the forest of the weak, and leave the strong - as is done in nature. If pressed, Husul can reveal that he has seen a dark cloaked humanoid in his dreams; the being spoke to him, and told him that great rewards could be had if he did what the being said to do. Husul accepted the task, and was told that when the time was right, the cloaked being would come for the weapons, and give Husul his reward. A Sense Motive check (DC 25) reveals that Husul is under a sort of magical influence. No other information can be gained from the gnolls.

Interrogating the NPCs

The Body of Sarall

PCs may want to cast *speak with dead* on the head of Sarall. Remember that his body is not mostly intact, so therefore gives only partial answers. Also remember the saving throw should the caster's alignment be different than his (CN).

- Who are you?
"I...*Sarall*..."
- What happened?
"*Lost... alone... Could not find Verbeeg... tortured...*"
- Where is your note?
"*In... pocket...*"
- Where is the rest of your body?
"*Don't... know...*"
- What do you want us to do with your head?
"*Rangers... bring back.... Or burn...*"

The Body of Wentland

Wentland is more intact and more cooperative.

- Who are you?
"*Ah, hello there. I am Wentland of Norebo.*"

- Why are you here?
"Interesting story, that. I was traveling to Flameflower when I seemed to get a bit lost. Met a curious talking owl on the way. She was quite interesting, indeed. Then these brutish gnolls showed up, and would have killed me right there, had I not surrendered. Lot of good that did me, eh?"

- What do you want us to do with your body?
"Take me to the Smiling Halls of Good Fortune in Verbeeg Hill. They will know what to do."

Figil

Figil is again talkative and thankful for his rescue from such strong adventurers.

"Well, uh, I kinda listened in when you were talkin' with gramps...and I wanted to go on an adventure with you. So I took off, and somehow got ahead of you and lost... Really embarrassing, but it was neat that I met gramps' old friend! Never knew she was an owl! She told me not to go out alone and to wait for someone to get me, but I kinda didn't listen, and took off and found this camp here. And... I got captured. But it was really neat. I put up a struggle and I found this really suspicious note." The young gnome holds up a piece of wrinkled parchment.

The parchment (Player Handout #3) is the note Sarall was to deliver to Verbeeg Hill.

Dathgar suggests rushing to Quaalsten to see if the note needs to be delivered. The PCs have a choice to go to Quaalsten, go to Verbeeg Hill, or go back to Highfolk. Their mission is technically over.

ENCOUNTER 5: QUAALSTEN

The journey to Quaalsten is three days away. Dathgar is anxious to go back there, but does not offer much in the way of conversation. He is constantly on guard for humanoid ambushes.

The PCs finally arrive in Quaalsten. They may visit the temple to Ehlonna (Hearth of the Unicorn's Heart) or just visit the sites here (a few inns, some homes). Dathgar immediately excuses himself and heads towards the Rangers headquarters, telling the PCs to meet them at the temple. After a few hours, he returns.

"It seems that this meeting is going off regardless of the delivery of this note.

(If there are any Rangers of the Vesve in the party):
"You fellow Rangers may want to come with me for this one."

"The rest of you are welcome to come along if you want." For the first time since you've met him, he smiles. "If you want to come, we must hurry to Verbeeg Hill. We shall take the Highvale route. I believe some of you may have taken this route before."

He is talking about the route taken in the annual Race of Heroes, which showed up in the first Highfolk adventure, *A Path Less Traveled*.

Again, he waits for everyone to stock up before they leave.

ENCOUNTER 6: FINALLY...

The quickest and easiest way to go to Verbeeg Hill is to take the Highvale path. It takes four days to get from Quaalsten to Verbeeg Hill.

The smells of eel jelly hits your nose as you make your way towards the town of Verbeeg Hill. In this town are many gambling establishments; but the one that stands out amongst them all is the Smiling Halls of Good Fortune. Dathgar remarks, "We should go to the Smiling Halls right away. That is where the meeting is taking place."

The Smiling Halls of Good Fortune is the temple of Norebo. Dathgar says that the meeting is private, and so only Rangers of the Vesve should come with him. He takes these heroes into one of the back rooms. The others may ask about Wentland or gamble as they so desire.

Returning Wentland

Asking about Wentland, the heroes get the response that he left several days before on a mission of his own accord. They are not sure what it was about, but if the heroes insist they shall contact them at a later date. Wentland was a higher-ranking cleric in their temple, and they are going to attempt to have him brought back from the dead. **If the heroes bring back Wentland's body, they receive an Influence Point in the Patron's Guild of Norebo.**

Gambling at the Temple

Heroes may play a form of craps (using two eight-sided dice):

1. Rolling a 2 always losses
2. Rolling a 9 or a 15 on the first roll wins
3. Rolling anything else (not 2, 9, or 15) requires you to roll that number again before rolling a 2, 9, or 15 to win
4. The shooter (rolling the dice) can only bet for himself and doubles his money if he wins
5. Others at the table can bet for the Shooter to win and double their money if he does, or bet that the shooter will lose (betting for the house) but they only get 1.5x their money if they take this option.
6. You cannot, ever, use your own dice! The temple provides all lucky dice!!!

Rangers of the Vesve

Dathgar leads you back into the back of the temple. A single gnome guard dressed in chain shirt nods at you and steps aside from the door. The Seeker knocks, and several "Enter"s come from inside.

The door open, you now stand before a large council of gnomes and a single human male. They are seated at a large table, and are looking at Dathgar expectantly.

"Lord Marshall, sir. We have found Sarall's body, or what is left of it, and the note. It seems that he was captured by a group of gnolls."

"You are quite timely, Rangers", one of the gnomes states. "Our deal has been already signed upon and concluded. We'd best be on our way." The half dozen gnomes stand and take their leave from the door.

Elrenn looks at Dathgar, then you. "It is done, Seekers. Our ranks shall soon be filled once again."

The gnomes and Elrenn go out a back exit. Dathgar excitedly tells the other PCs what has transpired - demihumans are now allowed into the Rangers' ranks - though he still does not know what the Gnomish Consortium has to do with it.

It is now time to go back to Highfolk.

CONCLUSION

The trip back to Highfolk is long but uneventful. You pass by several small villages and halfling inns, including Stoutstump and the Wanderers' Way, being rebuilt from a fire there a few months ago. Dathgar still accompanies you, chattering away about how wonderful it will be to finally have more Rangers on their side. Figil is also extremely excited. Now his dreams of becoming like his grandfather can come true.

The PCs have two things they can do: go see Tanal at the Vesve's Tankard and see Bodri.

Gnome Hill, Maple Leaf

At the sight of her son, Emila bursts into tears and thanks you all profusely. Dathgar claps his hand on Bodri's shoulder. "It's done. The races have been united under the Rangers' banner." Bodri simply nods, but under his long gray beard you can't help but notice a broad smile.

Bodri's family is extremely grateful. Emila offers the heroes food and shelter whenever they need it.

Vesve's Tankard

Tanal is waiting for the heroes to arrive. He orders another round of drinks and waits for the heroes' tale. When he receives his weapons, or proof, he gives the heroes their 200 gp.

To those who possess the Favor of Tanal Moonsteel (from the Highfolk regional scenario Of Elven Make):

"I have a friend, an excellent armorer, who owes me a mithral shirt. Because you've helped me before, I was wondering if you were interested in purchasing it from me... at a discount, of course."

In other words:

1 favor = Tanal sells it for 1000 gp

2 favors (pooled at the table) = Tanal sells it for 500 gp

3 favors (pooled at the table) = Tanal gives it for free

Heroes can still redeem their unused favors at some other point in time. This is only the second time that favors could have been redeemed. (The first time was the RubyCon III interactive, *Summer Blues*.)

Your long trek through the Vesve has finally ended, but more questions have arisen: Why are elven weapons still being stolen? What is the reason for the increase in humanoid raids? What lies in store for the Rangers of the Vesve, the Highvale, and the Town of Highfolk itself? The day draws to an end, bringing you closer to the end of the month of Sunsebb, and the end of this year. Who knows what may come in the Common Year 592? Only time will tell.

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 1

Agreeing to come with Dathgar	25 xp
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Encounter 2

Agreeing to help Tanal	25 xp
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Encounter 3

Defeating the gnolls	50 xp
Taking care of the egg	25 xp

Encounter 4

Defeating the humanoids in the tents	100 xp
Defeating Husul	125 xp
Interrogating Husul	25 xp

Encounter 5

Bringing back Sarall	25 xp
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Encounter 7

Bringing Wentland's body back to the temple	25 xp
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Discretionary roleplaying award	0-50 xp
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Maximum possible XP award:	475 xp
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TREASURE SUMMARY

Note that any magical or special items that do not have certificates cannot be obtained in the scenario. The following treasure could be obtained in the scenario:

- **Giant Owl Egg from Velira in **Encounter 3**:**
Giant Owl's Egg (10 lb., 500 gp): Velira, an ailing giant owl that lives in the Vesve Forest, has asked you to take care of her egg before she died. The egg is not like normal giant owl eggs, and is dull and deformed rather than shiny and perfect. You, as its caretaker, must decide what to do with Velira's remaining egg. Merchants will not take the egg for full value (2500 gp), but will buy it for 250 gp. If decided that you want to hatch the egg, you must make a Knowledge (nature), Heal, or Handle Animal check (DC 10) at the beginning of each scenario you play and have the DM record the results on the space provided below. If you fail at one check, the egg is ruined. If you play an out-of-region scenario, you may either make a donation of 75 gp to the Helping Hands of Ehlonna to take care of the egg while you are away or bring it with you (though they advise against it). Alternatively, if you do not wish to make the checks or do not have one or more of the skills, you may donate money to the Helping Hands in the form of 25 gp for each skill check needed. Unless a fellow PC is in the same adventuring company (a Highfolk meta-organization) as your character, no other characters may make the checks for you. If traded, the trade must be noted on the next available line along with 75 gp to the Helping Hands for proper transfer, and the new owner must continue the egg's care. All results/actions must be recorded on the space. Alternatively, you may spend 24 Time Units and pay 200 gp, and the egg is hatched. After twenty scenarios (not rounds) or after the Time Unit expenditure, turn the cert in to the Highfolk Triad.
- **Influence Points (**Encounter 7**):**
For delivering the note to the meeting in Verbeeg Hill: One Influence Point in the Gnomish Consortium of Merchants, Moneylenders, Miners, and Gemcutters.
For delivering the body of Wentland to the temple: One Influence Point in the Patron's Guild of Norebo.
- **Mithral shirt from Tanal in **Conclusion**:**
Mithral shirt (Value 1100 gp, Tradable? No, Rarity Unusual, Weight 10 lbs.): This green-tinted mithral shirt was given to you by Tanal Moonsteel for your aid to him. It is custom-made only to fit you.

HANDOUT 1

Dearest _____,

I know that you do not know me, but words spread about your deeds saving the Flanaess. I wish only to congratulate you on your efforts in this massive struggle. Please come to my address in the town of Highfolk, Gnome Hill of Maple Leaf Street, at the date of Sunsebb 15, 591. Several other adventurers have also been invited. I understand if you do not wish to attend. Please do so at your convenience. It will give an old gnome much pleasure.

Sincerely,
Bodri Glitterfoot of Highfolk

HANDOUT 1A

(In your native language - gnome, elven, halfling, or orc):

It is of the greatest importance that you attend. - Bodri

HANDOUT 2

This is a scrap of paper with scribbles written in common:

Elven Clans of the Vesve:

Clan Sharendeth - Flameflower (have to be an elf to enter??)

Clan Krysalyn

Clan Moonbow - quite orderly

Clan Oronodel

Clan Volmyrth - strange...

Clan Lilelyuna - equally strange...

Others that have been destroyed... Destroyed by what?

HANDOUT 3

Members of the Consortium,

I have gone over your proposals. The date shall be the 22nd of Sunsebb in the Smiling Halls. We shall go over details there.

Until then,

Elrenn Walthair, Lord Marshall

APPENDIX: RANGERS OF THE VESVE

The Rangers of the Vesve are a group of rangers and their allies that are dedicated to protecting the Vesve Forest from evil in any form. The Rangers have held watch over the Vesve since humans first ventured into the forest. They now guard all human settlements against the threat of humanoid bands and Iuz's forces. The recent threat of Iuz has had the Rangers fighting alongside the Knights of the High Forest, the Blood Owls, and other organizations that have allied themselves against Iuz.

The Rangers themselves are men (and women) of action, preferring active courses of resolution to long debates. Many of the Rangers are very rustic folk, who have chosen the wilderness life over that of the city of Highfolk. The organization numbers approximately 200 woodland warriors, all devoted to expelling Iuz from the forest. Their base of operations is Quaalsten, in the Heartland of the Vesve Forest.

The Rangers are not very organized, and they prefer to operate alone or in small groups. They do have a very simple rank structure: those without leadership (or operating alone) are called Protectors (or simply the title "Ranger" added before their first name), leaders of small groups "in the field" are known as Woods Lieutenants (or they add "Seeker" to their first name), and those that help coordinate matters with the Lord Marshal in Quaalsten are called Forest Captains (or "Tracker" before their name). Their formal titles are often appended with "of the Vesve", so that Kirila Layften becomes Kirila Layften, Woods Lieutenant of the Vesve; or informally, Seeker Kirila. The Lord Marshal is elected from the ranks of either the Woods Lieutenants or the Forest Captains, and commonly oversees all matters that are concerns of the Rangers.

Quaalsten is the base of operations, and it is the place where the Rangers will go to exchange information and return with reports from scouting missions. Here, in Quaalsten, also lies the personal residence of the Lord Marshal of the Vesve, Elrenn Walthair.

ENLISTING THE ICONIC

☛ **Tordek, male dwarf Ftr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (dwarf); HD 1d10+3; hp 13; Init +1; Spd 15 ft.; AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); Atks +4 melee (1d10+2/x3, dwarven waraxe), or +2 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Dwarven traits; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Climb +0, Jump +0; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, scale mail, large wooden shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow, quiver with 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack and flint and steel.

☛ **Miale, female elf Wizr:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (elf); HD 1d4+3; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 13, flat-footed 10); Atks +0 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or –6 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) and –10 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), or +3 ranged (1d6/x3, shortbow); SQ Elven traits; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +4, Knowledge (arcane) +6, Listen +3, Search +6, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3; Scribe Scroll (virtual), Toughness.

Spells Prepared (3/2; base DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, sleep*.

Spellbook: 0—all of them; 1st—*charm person, mage armor, magic missile, sleep, summon monster I*.

Possessions: Traveler's outfit, quarterstaff, shortbow, quiver of 20 arrows, backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 10 candles, map case, 3 pages parchment, ink and pen, spell pouch, spellbook.

☛ **Lidda, female halfling Rogr:** CR 1; Small humanoid (halfling); HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 13); Atks +1 melee (1d6/19-20, short sword) or +4 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow), or +1 melee (1d4/19-20, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4/19-20, dagger); SA Sneak attack +1d6; SQ Halfling traits; AL CG; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +6, Disable Device +6, Gather Information +1, Hide +11, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Open Locks +7, Search +6, Spot +4, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +1; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Explorer's outfit, leather armor, shortsword, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, dagger, Backpack with waterskin, 1 day trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, thieves' tools hooded lantern, 3 pints of lantern oil.

☛ **Jozan, male human Clr1:** CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 1d8+2; hp 10; Init –1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15 (touch 9, flat-footed 15); Atk +1 melee (1d8+1, heavy mace), or –1 ranged (1d8/19-20, light crossbow); SA Turn Undead 4/day 2d6+2; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref –1; Will +4; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +6, Heal +6, Listen +4, Knowledge (religion) +0, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4; Alertness, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (3/2+1; base DC 12 + spell level); 0—*detect poison, guidance, read magic*; 1st—*bless, protection from evil**, *shield of faith*.

* Domain spell; Deity: Pelor; Domains: Good (good spells cast at +1 caster level) and Healing (healing spells cast at +1 caster level).

Possessions: Cleric's vestments, scale mail, large wooden shield, heavy mace, light crossbow, 10 crossbow bolts, backpack with waterskin, 1 day of trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, wooden holy symbol (sun disk of Pelor), 3 torches.