

HIG3-04

Ghostly View

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

Version 1.0

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Better hurry off to Highfolk town. Paxana needs your help again. She says it's urgent. An adventure for characters level 1-9 (APLs 2-8).

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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Introduction

This is an RPGA® Network scenario for the Dungeons & Dragons® game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for each round of this scenario. 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 rulebooks during certain times of play. For example, the players are not free to consult the *Dungeon Master's Guide* when confronted with a trap or hazard, or the *Monster Manual* when confronted with a monster.

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

Scoring

After the players have completed the scenario or the time allotted to run the scenario has run out, the players and DM score the game. Complete the RPGA scoring grid with names and RPGA numbers only, and the event information at the top. RPGA no longer uses voting for any reported results. Give the Scoring Packet to your event coordinator.

This is a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure. As a LIVING adventure it is expected that players bring their own characters with them. If players do not have a LIVING GREYHAWK character generated, get a copy of the current LIVING GREYHAWK character generation guidelines, and a character sheet from your convention coordinator or the RPGA Web site, and then have any players without a character create one. Once all players have a LIVING GREYHAWK character, play can begin.

Along with the other materials that you are assumed to have in order to run a D&D game, it is also recommended that you have a copy of the LIVING GREYHAWK *Gazetteer*.

Living Greyhawk Levels of Play

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

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

	Mundane Animals Effect on APL	# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

3. Sum the results of 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.

4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

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

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

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

1. Attempt to create a table of six 1st-level characters, or try to enlist higher-level characters to play at that table.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them. All riding dogs are considered trained to attack. PCs who want their dogs to attack must succeed at a Handle Animal or Charisma check (DC 10). Failure indicates that the animal will not attack that round. This is a free action (spoken command) that may be attempted each round. If an animal loses half or more hp in a single round it flees, unless another check is successful.

Time Units and Upkeep

This is a standard one-round Regional adventure, set in Highfolk. Characters native to Highfolk pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit.

Adventure Background

Every wizard worth his spellbook goes into any situation with multiple routes of escape. It leads to a longer, fuller life. One wizard, Thalon Zernea of Clan Volmiryth, has just such an escape route outside of Highfolk town.

About a mile outside of the town, there is a rather large, nondescript hill. There is a small, fortified bunker buried in the hill. The bunker is loaded with clothes, equipment, weapons, a small library, magically preserved food, barrels of water and more. This is the "safe house" on the receiving end of an emergency teleport pad out of a wizard's tower in the town.

Adventure Summary

The party is on its way back to Highfolk town on a summons from Paxana Eventhil, constable of Highfolk. Along the way, their attention is drawn to a pair of quarreling animals. They are fighting over some newfound treasure.

Shooing the animals off, or slaying them outright, the party is able to find the treasure the animals had found. It is an iron bound door that was previously buried under the surface of the hill.

Exploring the hill, the party finds that it is a 'safe house' of sorts. Riddled with security features and guardians, exploration of the base takes a bit of time.

As the party nears completion of the search, Thalon teleports to the shelter in *ghostform* and begins working against the party.

DM's Note

This adventure is a lesson in play. Or it is intended to be.

It is important that you allow the party to go off on any tangents they may believe they have found. They should feel free to do whatever it is they want. Red herrings abound, and this scenario is designed so that PCs take them and swallow them whole, while possibly missing the flesh of the module. Feel free to improvise as much as you desire in Encounter Two. Should the PCs catch on, though, allow them to immediately return to the track of the adventure.

Also, there are some deadly traps in this module at higher APLs (6 and 8). This is on purpose. Death comes to those who invade others privacy. I encourage you not to hold back. Adventuring is a dangerous business; it is important that the party remember that.

Introduction

The sun is bright and high, the air is clear and fresh, and the land is green and rolling. That's the way of

the Highvale in midsummer. It's almost possible to forget the turmoil plaguing Highfolk and its people in such cheery weather. Almost.

The letter from Paxana is troubling, to say the least. It was enough to pull you from a job on the north side of Verbeeg Hill.

Give the players Player Handout #1.

It's been a few days now, and most of the journey is behind you. A few more hours will put you within sight of the city. Another after that will put you within its wooden walls.

Along the way, you have fallen in with a group of adventurers much like yourself. They all strangely seem to be moving with the same urgency you exhibit.

If necessary, give the players the opportunity to introduce their characters to one another. Spellcasters should select spells at this time. Then continue on to Encounter 1.

Encounter One Dig baby! Dig!

Allow the PCs to attempt Spot or Listen checks at DC 15. Those who succeed hear a loud violent grunting or growling noise coming from around a bend in the road. When the party approaches, read or paraphrase the following:

Cresting a small rise in the road, and rounding a small bend, you come upon an odd sight. At the base of a rather large hill, a tiny herd of rather large boars appears to be fighting over some hidden treasure.

As you watch, one of the boars – the biggest of the bunch – rushes forward with a great squeal and jabs a long, sharp tusk into the neck of his target. With a warning grunt, the winner of the battle steps over his dead adversary, sending the remaining herd a few steps back. Whisking his tail fiercely, the obviously alpha boar snorts and begins to clap his hooves at the ground, as if digging.

There are ten boars (or dire boars at higher APLs) gathered around this hill. From this distance, the PCs can attempt a Spot check DC 25 to see that the boar is attempting to uncover some large slat of wood.

When the party approaches, read or paraphrase the following:

At your approach, one of the stout animals lets out a snort, moving his head wildly. From downwind, the entire herd of boars turns to face you. At some motion from the alpha, several of them run off into the nearby brush to take shelter.

This leaves exactly the number of boars as indicated by APL below.

APL 2 (EL 2)

🦋 **Alpha Boar:** hp 22; see *Monster Manual*, boar.

APL 4 (EL 4)

🦋 **Alpha Dire Boar:** hp 52; see *Monster Manual*, dire boar.

APL 6 (EL 6)

🦋 **Dire Boar & Alpha:** hp 52, 50; see *Monster Manual*, dire boar.

APL 8 (EL 8)

🦋 **Dire Boars (3) & Alpha:** hp 60, 52, 50, 48; see *Monster Manual*, dire boar.

Creatures: These boars (or dire boars) have wandered out of the forest proper in search of food. Recent increases in the number of humanoids within the Vesve have driven these boars to clearer lands.

The party may allow a druid or ranger in the group to attempt an Animal Empathy skill check. This requires one minute where no PC within the party makes any threatening motions. It also requires a DC 15 Animal Empathy check. If the PC succeeds, the boars will snort and stomp before moving off into the brush with their kin. If the PC fails, the boars will remain unfriendly and prevent the party from approaching their treasure. If the PC fails by 10 or more, the boars become hostile and attack.

PCs within the party may wish to converse with the boars via *speak with animals* or similar spells. The alpha boar (Smell of Jasmine in Spring near Crystal Pool is his name) is the only one who speaks, interposing himself between any of the party and the boars. He is initially gruff. Remember that the alpha is an animal, and as such should be played as one. He can answer the following questions.

🦋 *Why are you here?*

Herd search for eat. Two-legs in trees eat. Herd leave trees for eat. Smell eat there.

🦋 *What two legs?*

Same two-legs as ever. Live in trees. Not like boar, live on ground.

🦋 *You smell food? Where?*

Under flat dirt tree. (He is speaking of the wooden door he as found underneath the dirt).

When the PCs have defeated the boars (in combat or via Animal Empathy) they have a few options. They may decide to push on to Highfolk town (Encounter Two), or they may decide to stay and investigate (Encounters Three and Four)

Encounter Two But, I've Got a Duty

Some PCs may decide to push on to Highfolk Town. While they are 'lawful' and should be commended for their loyalty to the Green and White, it's their folly this time.

Rushing through the gates of Highfolk town, you beeline for the Militia Headquarters. The building is in a bustle, sashed militia running to and fro. Shoulder tapping a quickly moving elven woman, you alert her of your presence and tell her who you are here to see.

For a moment, her delicate features look startled, but she nods and disappears through a door, with orders to wait.

Two ... three ... four hours pass as you wait for an audience with Paxana. Your reminders to the guardsmen coming and going are met with a nod, and all disappear behind the same door. Finally, as you are about to shove your way through that door and into Paxana's office, the young militia woman you spoke to originally comes bustling out.

She looks apologetic as she hands you a simple piece of paper and then scurries off to do other, more important, work.

Give the party Player's Handout #2.

The party has been blown off. Paxana has truly given this task to another group of adventurers.

Feel free to allow the party to investigate the situation in Highfolk as thoroughly as they desire. This is a bit of a red herring to throw the party off of the true adventure (which can be found in the house in the hill).

When (or if) the PCs catch on, and decide to return to the door in the hill, continue to Encounter Three.

Encounter Three

The House In The Hill

The 'safe house' is buried underneath the hill the boars were digging up. It takes an hour for the party to remove all the dirt from the doorway.

Once they have removed it all, read or paraphrase the following:

Brushing off the last of the dirt from this hidden doorway, you can finally see the square wooden door. Completely flush with the hilltop, it blends in so very well.

Opening it reveals a dark, earthy smelling stairwell. Made of finely crafted, and fitted stone, the stairs descend down into unknown darkness.

This encounter is broken into four sections: Entryway, Room A, Room B, and Room C (a secret room).

Each doorway has the following Statistics, unless otherwise noted:

🔒 **Locked Wooden Doors:** 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 18, Open Locks DC 20.

The walls are of a superior masonry. They are one-foot thick stone coated in a light green coat of stucco. Swirls and patterns are drawn into them, but with no apparent method or purpose.

Entryway

The entryway consists of two sets of stairs, interrupted by a landing and portcullis. It ends at a pair of wooden double doors.

Descending the first set of stairs, you come to a small landing. Ahead of you, a solid-looking iron portcullis closes off the passage. An almost indiscernible lever rests upon the right wall. Beyond the portcullis, you can see more downward stairs ending at a set of double doors.

Opening the portcullis is a simple matter of flipping the lever.

Flipping the lever, the portcullis silently slides sideways, into a crevice in the passage side. Your way has been opened.

APLs 2, 4, & 8 (EL 2)

Trap: When any PC crosses the path of the portcullis, the trap is triggered. The trap remains triggered for 4 rounds, after which it resets itself.

↗ **Portcullis Trap:** CR 2; mechanical; proximity trigger (passing through the portcullis path), automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (2d6, spike); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20). Note: This can only apply to one or two PCs.

It isn't until the first PC attempts to cross the threshold of the portcullis that its nature as a trap is revealed.

With a quick crunching sound, the portcullis slams closed, its spiked ends attempting to punch through your shoulder and torso.

APL 6 (EL 6)

In place of the portcullis trap, the party encounters this trap if they fail to search the area between the portcullis and the doorway.

Stepping down slowly, you are caught unawares as the stairway opens up beneath you, and glistening spikes glow up at you in a vile smile.

Trap: When any PC (or pair of PCs) closes within 5 ft. of the double doors between the Entryway and Room A, the trap is triggered, dropping the PCs into the pit. The trap remains triggered for 5 minutes, after which it resets itself.

PCs must succeed at two successive DC 15 Climb checks to exit the trap. The use of a rope reduces this DC to 10 (or 5, if knotted). They may also use spells such as *fly* or *dimension door*.

↗ **Poisoned Spike Pit Trap (40 ft):** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger, automatic reset (5 min); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (+10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 plus poison each); poison (medium spider venom, Fortitude [DC 14] resists, 1d4 Str/1d4 Str); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

APL 8 (EL 10)

In addition to the portcullis trap, the party encounters this trap if they fail to search the area between the portcullis and the doorway.

Stepping down slowly, you are caught unawares as the stairway opens up beneath you, and glistening spikes glow up at you in a vile smile.

Trap: When any PC (or pair of PCs) closes within 5 ft. of the double doors between the Entryway and Room A, the trap is triggered, dropping the PCs into the pit. The trap remains triggered for 5 minutes, after which it resets itself.

PCs must succeed at four successive DC 15 Climb checks to exit the trap. The use of a rope reduces this DC to 10 (or 5, if knotted). They may also use spells such as *fly* or *dimension door*.

↗ **Poisoned Spike Pit Trap (60 ft):** CR 10; mechanical; location trigger, automatic reset (5 min); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 60 ft. deep (6d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (+10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 plus poison each); poison (deathblade, Fortitude [DC 20] resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Room A

This is a large room, approximately seventy feet wide and forty-five feet long. It is the main living space for the Thalon when he seeks sanctuary within its walls.

Crossing through the doors, into this sanctuary, you are greeted with a series of muted 'whoosh' sounds as one ... two ... three ... nine torches in all flare up in a silvery golden light to illuminate this space.

The floor is adorned in thick, Ketite rugs, and the walls bear ornate gilded carvings of elven runes. A solid, wooden table sits near the center of the room, surrounded by six equally solid looking chairs.

To the immediate left, a strange translucent bubble dome rests over a stash of barrels and boxes. Just beyond that, three bunks are aligned against the wall with two chests at their feet.

Along the back wall, one set of wooden double doors lies directly opposite the entryway you've crossed. Prominent upon them is the image of a severed hand cupping a single, disembodied eye. Unsettlingly, it appears to be looking directly at you.

On the right, the wall is dressed in shelves of books. Two books to be exact, but they are humongous. Maybe they give this underground chamber the mustier smell than it should rightly have.

Everything is lavish and overdone. The runes are ostentatious and prominent. The walls are pristine in their light green stucco. The doors are thick, solid looking wood. The shelves are not showing the

slightest sign of bending under the weight of the massive tomes.

A successful Knowledge(religion) check (DC 10) recognizes the hand and eye as a holy representation of Vecna, god of secrets and knowledge.

As the PCs are exploring this area, emphasize the ornate nature of it.

The Torches

The torches are *everburning torches*. They are attached to sconces that are bolted into the walls. They cannot be removed without a great force (Strength DC 25), or by breaking the sconces (hardness 10, hp 30 each).

The Rugs

They are plain Ketite design. Especially thick and plush, these rugs can be rolled up and taken, if the party desires to do so. Each one of the four weighs approximately 75 lbs and is worth 500gp.

The Table and Chairs

This dining area is arranged as indicated on the map. The chairs and table are all solid oak design.

The Bubble Dome

The bubble dome is an interesting work of magic. It's a modified *repulsion* spell. A Spellcraft check (DC 26) will identify it as such. It can be dispelled, at 13th caster level.

Passing through the bubble has no effect on the PCs. Animals, vermin, magical beasts (including familiars), beasts, and oozes cannot penetrate the dome.

Within the dome, the smell of grains, salted meats, and wine are prevalent. The following supplies are stored here: 4 barrels of water, 2 barrels of wine, 6 crates of breads and grains, 3 large wheels of cheese, 4 crates of lightly salted jerky meats, 1 crate of a trail-mix like mixture, and 3 bushels of apples.

The Bunks and Chests

There are six beds here, three pairs of two. At the end of each bunk rests two chests. Each chest has the following statistics:

♣ **Treasure Chest:** 1.5 in thick; hardness 5; hp 15, AC 5; Break DC 23; Open Lock 20.

All of the chests contain two sets of clothes. Both are elven in make. The first set of clothes is a common traveler's outfit. The second is a set of black robes, including cloak and deep hood.

In addition, some of the chests contain the following things:

Chest One: *wand of grease* (4 charges), two 50gp rubies

Chest Three: *Quaal's feather token* (whip)

Chest Four: *potion of fly*

Chest Five: a small silver key (which opens each of the doors in this place)

The Bookshelf

A miniature library, these shelves of books are a sad sight. Only two books are present on the expansive shelves, though they do appear to be rather large and unwieldy tomes. Unfortunately, each of the shelves is covered by a *wall of force* spell.

If the PCs have some way around a *wall of force* spell, then they have the opportunity to search through the tomes. They will find that many of them are historical tomes on the Highvale and its environs (see 'History of Highfolk').

The most valuable book in the collection is 'Weapons and Armor: the Art of Enchanting'. See the treasure section for details.

While searching this area, the party may uncover the secret door leading to Room B. It requires a Search check (DC 25). They need not bypass the *wall of force* to locate this.

All APLs—loot (132 gp), coin (8 gp), 9 *everburning torches* (7gp each), *wand of grease* (5 gp), *Quaal's feather token* (whip) (42 gp), *History of Highfolk* (4 gp), *Weapons and Armor* (200 gp).

Room B

The encounter in this room varies by APL. APLs 2 and 6 experience the same encounter, APL 4 experiences a slightly more difficult encounter, and APL 8 experiences a 'hint' about the final encounter yet to come.

APLs 2 and 6 (EL 4)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The large wooden doors glide open effortlessly and silently to reveal a long chamber. The door is framed in dark wiry stems, and silvery grey leaves. The walls are lined with a waist high stone worktable. Following the line of glass, stone, metal, and other strange materials, your glance travels to the back of the room.

There, a hideous looking creature is already lumbering towards you. Like some malformed earthworm, the segmented serpent slithers forward, its rubbery skin leaving a slick trail of slime across the stone floor. Rising from the floor, its rock colored body ends in four wicked tentacles surrounding a snapping beak and lashing tongue.

At this point, have the PCs roll Spot checks. For those who succeed at DC 10, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the hideous worm creature, a frightening sight reaches your vision. Floating there, a grinning apparition of an elf watches your group. Before you can react, or even point him out, though, the ghostly being dives into the floor, disappearing from view.

For those who succeed at DC 25, read or paraphrase the following:

Just over your shoulder, you catch a vision of another horrible sight. A man-sized monstrosity has maneuvered itself into the corner where it is obviously waiting for the right time to strike. Eight legs and poison-dripping mandibles almost smile maliciously at you.

Now roll initiative, and begin combat.

➤ **Monstrous Spider, Medium Size (Hunter Type):** hp 11; see *Monster Manual*, vermin.

➤ **Grick:** hp 9; see *Monster Manual*, grick.

Creatures: The grick begins the combat at the far end of the room. The spider is in the front of the room, hiding against the upper right hand corner ceiling.

The grick is single-minded in combat. It approaches directly, and attacks whoever is closest to it.

The spider, on the other hand, is a sly creature. It lies in wait, letting the party run up to attack the grick, and taking advantage of their preoccupation. If things turn bad, it attempts to run out of the room and out of the safe house.

APL 4 (EL 6)

The large wooden doors glide open effortlessly and silently to reveal a long chamber. The door is framed in dark wiry stems, and silvery grey leaves. The walls are lined with a waist high stone worktable. Following the line of glass, stone, metal, and other strange materials, your glance travels to the back of the room.

There, a pair of hideous looking creatures are already lumbering towards you. Like some malformed earthworms, the segmented serpents slither forward, their rubbery skin leaving a slick trail of slime across the stone floor. Rising from the floor, the rock colored bodies end in four wicked tentacles surrounding a snapping beak and lashing tongue.

At this point, have the PCs roll Spot checks. For those who succeed at DC 10, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the hideous worm creature, a frightening sight reaches your vision. Floating there, a grinning apparition of an elf watches your group. Before you can react, or even point him out, though, the ghostly being dives into the floor, disappearing from view.

For those who succeed at a DC 20 (Knowledge [nature]) check, read or paraphrase the following:

At your back, the wall is covered in silvery leaves and wiry vines. The thought is quick as the realization comes to you and the movement is noticed. That's no ordinary vine.

Now roll initiative, and begin combat.

✦ **Gricks (2):** hp 12, 9; see *Monster Manual*, grick.

✦ **Assassin Vine:** hp 30; see *Monster Manual*, grick.

Creatures: The gricks begins the combat at the far end of the room. The vine is in the front of the room, hiding against the upper right hand corner ceiling.

The gricks are single-minded in combat. They approach directly, and attack whoever is closest.

The vine, on the other hand, is a sly creature. It lies in wait, letting the party run up to attack the gricks, and taking advantage of their preoccupation.

APL 8 (No EL)

The large wooden doors glide open effortlessly and silently to reveal a long chamber. The door is framed in dark wiry stems, and silvery grey leaves. The walls are lined with a waist high stone worktable. Following the line of glass, stone, metal, and other strange materials, your glance travels to the back of the room.

There, a frightening sight reaches your vision. A floating, grinning apparition of an elf watches your group. Before you can react, or even point him out, though, the ghostly being dives into the floor, disappearing from view.

Once the combat has completed, or the party overcomes their shock of the grinning apparition, allow them to explore this room.

This chamber is a laboratory of sorts. The table is covered with a variety of alchemical equipment.

Treasure: The alchemical equipment can be gathered and sold as loot. This requires two hours of time to do properly. All of the equipment is worth 1000gp total.

On a successful Search check (DC 15), the party finds a small leaf-bound book. Give the players Player's Handout #3.

Some PCs may recall the name Durinithmal. If they do not, a Bardic Knowledge check (DC 15) is necessary to recognize the name as one of the nefarious Black Six, a coterie of wizards who worship Vecna and have gone into hiding.

Among the equipment the party will find the following treasure (by APL)

APL 2 – loot (83 gp), *scroll of lesser sonic orb* (2 gp), *pearl of power* (1st level) (83 gp).

APL 4 – as APL 2 plus *dust of appearance* (175 gp)

APL 6 – as APL 4 plus *sovereign glue* (200 gp)

APL 8 – as APL 6 plus *Quaal's feather token* (tree) (8 gp), *ioun stone* (clear spindle) (416 gp)

Whether or not the PCs have already investigated Room C, proceed to Encounter Four after they examine this room.

Room C

With a slow, muffled grating sound, the bookshelf slides around to reveal a dark room. Cold, stale air rolls out, penetrating your nose and causing a wave of nausea to hit your stomach. Inside, you can see nothing.

This room houses the teleport pad used by Thalon and his companions when they come to the safe house for shelter.

The ceiling in this room is different than the rest, being some fifteen feet high.

The room is rough-hewn stone. It lacks the pristine perfection found in the rest of the shelter. A 10-foot diameter *teleportation circle* adorns the center. A Spellcraft check (DC 29) will identify it as such.

There is nothing else of interest in this room until the PCs have explored Room B and proceed to Encounter Four.

Encounter Four

Pushing free of the tendril-covered doorway, you cross back into the main room of this underground hideaway to a surprise. One of the bookshelves has been spun away from the wall to reveal a large opening.

An eerie green light emanates from somewhere beyond, accompanied by a faint giggle.

Thalon is attempting to lure the party into the teleportation room, where he plans to *teleport* in some evil minions to finish them off.

The party may avoid entering this room. If they do and do anything other than leave the hill, Thalon *teleports* his minions in anyway and orders them to run out and attack - Thalon then *teleports* himself away.

If the party avoids entering the room and leaves the hill, Thalon just teleports away, taking most of the belongings left over with him.

If the party enters the room, read or paraphrase the following (Note: the PCs are free to interrupt this flavor text at any time they desire. They simply accelerate the encounter to the combat immediately.):

Where once it was empty, the room is full. An elfen man floats in its center, filling the room with his presence. He grins happily and giggles a bit.

"I'm not sure who sent you," he whispers, his voice otherworldly and distant. "But you have invaded our privacy. We will not tolerate invasion, even if we are in hiding." His voice suddenly grows to a solid boom. "You will pay for defying the Six!"

The elf snaps his fingers, causing the arcane marked floor to glow the same green he does. Instantly, the glow grows to a blinding intensity. When you vision finally recovers, the elf is gone... but he has left you some entertainment in his stead.

APL 2 (EL 4)

➤ **Abyssal Dire Rat (3):** hp 9, 7, 5; see Appendix One.

➤ **Mephit, Fire:** hp 13; see *Monster Manual*, mephit.

Tactics: The mephit quickly takes to the air. He makes intelligent use of his *heat metal* ability, targeting the party cleric (if there is one). He flies about the ceiling above the characters' heads. He uses his cone of flame judiciously, knowing the dire rats are immune to most of the fire damage.

The dire rats attack quickly, using their smite good ability immediately.

APL 4 (EL 6)

➤ **Minotaur:** hp 39; see *Monster Manual*, minotaur.

➤ **Imp (2):** hp 16, 13; see *Monster Manual*, devil.

Tactics: The imps and minotaur work in strange concert. The minotaur, using his cunning combat logic, senses those who are waiting for the imps to reappear and maneuvers himself near them before attacking.

The imps make good use of their *invisibility* to catch unarmored foes unaware.

APL 6 (EL 8)

➤ **Umbler Hulk:** hp 68; see *Monster Manual*, umbler hulk.

➤ **Wights (2):** hp 30, 26; see *Monster Manual*, wight.

Tactics: This is an advantageous pairing, as the wights are immune to the hulk's *confusing gaze*. The wights form a line ahead of the hulk, letting the monster use its reach to good advantage.

APL 8 (EL 10)

➤ **Wraiths (2):** hp 34, 32; see *Monster Manual*, wraith.

➤ **Minotaurs (6):** hp 41, 41, 39, 39, 27, 25; see *Monster Manual*, minotaur.

Tactics: The wraiths attack from above the party's head, gaining an attack bonus for higher ground, while the minotaurs work to keep the party focused on the ground level.

Conclusion

Your exploration complete, and your minds confused, you push up out of the underground hovel with more questions than you had going in.

Who was that elf ghost? Who was the 'Six' he spoke of? And what was that job Paxana wanted you to do?

Obviously, they'll all go unanswered. Maybe Verbeeg Hill still needs you ... someone in Highfolk must have something normal for you to do.

The End

Experience Point Summary

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

Encounter One

Deal with the boar heard

APL 2 60 xp; APL 4 120 xp; APL 6 180 xp;

APL 8 240 xp.

Encounter Three

Encountering the portcullis trap

APL 2 60 xp; APL 4 60 xp; APL 6 N/A;

APL 8 60 xp.

Encountering the pit trap

APL 6 180 xp; APL 8 300 xp.

Defeating the Laboratory monsters

APL 2 120 xp; APL 4 180 xp; APL 6 120 xp; APL 8 N/A.

Encounter Four

Defeating the teleported monsters

APL 2 120 xp; APL 4 180 xp; APL 6 240 xp; APL 8 300 xp.

Discretionary roleplaying award

APL 2 90 xp; APL 4 135 xp; APL 6 180 xp;

APL 8 225 xp.

Total possible experience:

APL 2 450 xp; APL 4 675 xp; APL 6 900 xp;

APL 8 1125 xp.

Treasure Summary

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

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

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

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

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the

number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L: Looted gear from enemy

C: Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables

M: Magic Items (sell value)

Encounter Two (Room A)

All APLs—loot (132 gp), coin (8 gp), *wand of grease* (5 gp), *Quaal's feather token (whip)* (42 gp), History of Highfolk (4 gp), Weapons and Armor (200 gp).

Encounter Two (Room B)

APL 2 – loot (83 gp), *scroll of lesser sonic orb* (2 gp), *pearl of power [1st level]* (83 gp).

APL 4 – as APL 2 plus *dust of appearance* (175 gp)

APL 6 – as APL 4 plus *sovereign glue* (200 gp)

APL 8 – as APL 6 plus *Quaal's feather token (tree)* (8 gp), *ioun stone (clear spindle)* (416 gp)

Total Possible Treasure

APL 2: L: 215 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 338 gp - Total: 400 gp

APL 4: L: 215 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 513 gp - Total: 600 gp

APL 6: L: 215 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 713 gp - Total: 800 gp

APL 8: L: 215 gp; C: 8 gp; M: 1137 gp - Total: 1200 gp

Special

History of Highfolk: A musty tome taken from the bowels of a hidden shelter, this book can be used to great benefit by those with the Knowledge (history - Highfolk) skill. A treatise on the long history of the Highfolk region (including before it was known as Highfolk), this book grants its readers a +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (history - Highfolk) skill checks if they take the time to page through it while making the check. *Market Price:* 50 gp; *Weight:* 15 lbs.

Weapons and Armor: The Art of Enchanting: A wizard's dream, this tome is an extensive book on enchanting weapons and armor. With it, arcane spellcasters with the Craft Arms and Armor feat gain access to create (and only create) weapons with the following enhancements: +2, *bane (humans)*, and *anarchic*. These spellcasters can also create (and only create) armor with the following enhancements: +2, *glamered*, and *shadow*. *Market Price:* 2400 gp; *Weight:* 20 lbs.

Lesser Sonic Orb

Evocation [Sonic]

Level: Sor/Wiz1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: Up to five creatures or objects, no two of which can be more than 15 ft. apart

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half

Spell Resistance: Yes

An orb of sound about 2 inches across shoots from your palm at its target, dealing 1d8 points of sonic damage. You must succeed at a ranged touch attack to hit your target. If you miss, there is no splash damage.

For every two levels of experience past 1st, you gain an additional orb that you shoot at the same time. You have two at 3rd level, three at 5th level, four at 7th level, and the maximum of five orbs at 9th level or higher. If you shoot multiple orbs, you can have them strike a single creature or several creatures. A single orb can strike only one creature. You must designate targets before you roll for SR or roll damage.

Reprinted from *Tome and Blood*, pages 92-3.

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 2:

Wand of grease (Adventure, DMG)

Quaal's feather token (whip) (Adventure, DMG)

History of Highfolk (Adventure, see above)

Weapons and Armor: The Art of Enchanting
(Regional, see above)

Scroll of lesser sonic orb (Adventure, see above)

Pearl of power (1st level) (Adventure, DMG)

Everburning torch (Adventure, DMG)

APL 4 (all items from APL 2, plus the following):

Dust of disappearance (Adventure, DMG)

APL 6 (all items from APLs 2-4, plus the following):

Sovereign glue (Adventure, DMG)

APL 8 (all items from APLs 2-6, plus the following):

Quaal's feather token (tree) (Adventure, DMG)

Ioun stone (clear spindle) (Adventure, DMG)

Appendix One

APL 2 Encounters

Encounter Four

🦇 **Abyssal Dire Rats:** Small Magical Beast; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk +4 melee (1d4 plus disease, bite); SA disease, smite good; SQ scent, darkvision 60ft, cold and fire resistance 5, SR 2; Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4.

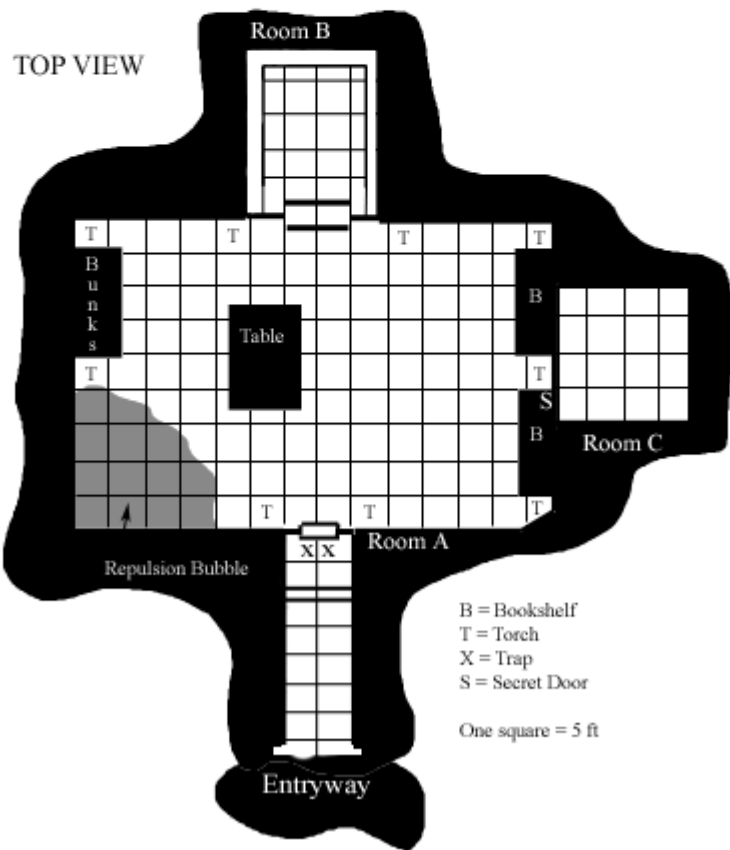
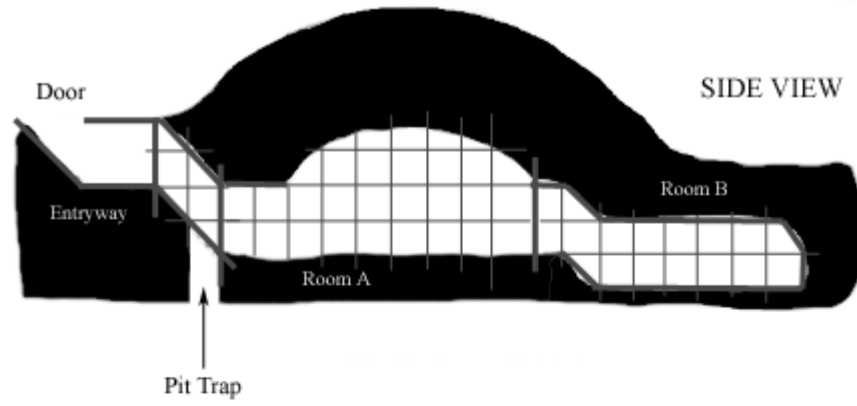
Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite).

SA: Disease (Ex): Filth fever—bite, Fortitude save (DC 12), incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 temporary Dex and 1d3 temporary Con (see pg 74 in DMG).

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the abyssal dire rat can make a normal attack to deal an additional 1 point of damage against a good foe.

DMs Map



Player Handout #1

Frequent Servant of Highfolk~

I have a situation most dire. I cannot disclose the details in this letter, should it fall into the wrong hands. I trust, though, that my word will be enough to draw you back to Highfolk town. Your assistance is necessary. The task is paramount. Come with great haste.

*Urgently,
Paxana Eventhil*

Player Handout #2

Thank you for your speed in arriving. Fortunately, others such as you were able to arrive with much greater speed. I have given them the task in your stead. They will serve as well as you, I am sure.

*Regards,
Paxana*

Player Handout #3

This golden laced book is found in the laboratory area of the house in the hill. The cover is made with a preserved leaves folded over a thin pieces of wood. It is twenty-five pages thick, and while most are empty, you are able to pick out the following (written in Draconic).

The latest entry is titled

Worg Creature - "Bloodfang"

The worg creature—calling itself Bloodfang—developed by those serving the Old One (under the direction of 'FMA') has proven to be most useful. Its fiendish abilities lend well to the missions we have developed for it. Durinithmal believes we may be able to breed the creature, given the proper facilities and mates. Perhaps he is right. It would be an amazing discovery, though I believe we should focus our efforts to finding demonic mates instead of forest creatures.

*FMA, identity otherwise unknown, may have ties to True Elven Order

Falling somewhere near the middle, is this entry

Wild Elf note

Normally, this would bear little notice, but the prudent are always prepared. It seems the grugach of the north have begun a migration south. It appears they have surrounded Quaalsten and laid siege to the Feathered City. The city will undoubtedly hold against the meager grugach forces. More importantly though, the grugach believe they are on some form of holy crusade. Rumors abound of Solonor Thelandira herself tasking the clan chief with conquest of the Vesve Forest. Dubious, but nonetheless bearing mention.

Almost going unnoticed, in the margin of an otherwise empty page is the following:

"whispering stone → serpent rock → druid staff → fo s"

The last bit of the word has been erased, like the rest of the book.