

NYR5-03

# For the Duchess of Woodwych

## A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK<sup>®</sup> Nyronnd Regional Scenario

Version 1.5

**by Robert Moon**

Gritting his teeth against the stabbing pain, the wood elf with decorative facial tattoos heaved the body of the half-elven lass over his right shoulder. Her bejeweled hand swung limply in response to his movements. Quickly, yet with care, he scooped up the bundle resting on the muddy floor with his other arm and cast a final gaze at the carnage before limping out of the cave. As he plodded through the muck, he could feel warm blood running down the side of his torso and down his leg as the strain of the unbalanced load put pressure on his grievous wounds. At long last, he reached his destination: the Knobs of Cullidor. It would be here he would take refuge. It would be here he would await the Duchess of Woodwych.

An outdoor-based Nyronnd regional "call to war" scenario that welcomes animal companions for adventurers of average party level 2 through 12. This adventure has an optional encounter that can be played for 1 extra TU.

Part 4 of the Woodwych series (Part 1: NYR1-07 The Great Pie Fest; Part 2: NYR2-02 Returned Mail; Part 3: NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree; Part 4: NYR5-03 For the Duchess of Woodwych)

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> 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 five-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.

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 Website, 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*.

### Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LIVING GREYHAWK Levels of Play

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

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

| Mundane<br>Animals Effect<br>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 |

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

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

Note: LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four, or sometimes even five 1<sup>st</sup>-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.

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 1<sup>st</sup>-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 DC 10 Handle Animal or Charisma check. 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 Nyrond. Characters native to Nyrond pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round. Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit.

## Background Recap

The following is a summary of the recent history of the Duchy of Woodwyck [WOOD-wick], previously known as the Barony of Woodwyck. This section is a compilation of common knowledge taken from the Nyrond website, as well as an update and incorporation of events from the Nyrond regional scenarios NYR2-02 Returned Mail and NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree.

### Baron Bastrayne's Rule

[The background pertaining to Baron Bastrayne does not play a part in this scenario, though it is included here for completeness.]

Prior to King Lynwerd's crowning, the land of Woodwyck was managed by a corrupt man, the Baron Bastrayne. He and his bailiff Radnen Gryppe conspired to skim off some 30-40% of the local populace's taxes for themselves and succeeded.

The other manner in which Bastrayne sought to fill his coffers was to exploit the resources of the Celadon Forest. His excessive logging angered the residents of that sylvan land so much, the group, the Brotherhood of the Bronze, appointed themselves protectors of the forest. Bastrayne denounced them as "terrorists" and gave glowing accounts of how his troops were imposing order and protecting the vital trade of the kingdom.

The Baron's greed and oppressive governance continued for quite a while until the abdication of King Archbold in favor of his son Lynwerd. When Lynwerd began making inquiries into every aspect of the kingdom, Bastrayne's house of cards came tumbling down. The new king learned the wayward baron had embezzled enormous amounts of gold from the crown and sparked much anger and violence in the lands of Woodwyck—especially within the Celadon.

Immediately Lynwerd sent Royal Guards to arrest the Baron. Because he still had the loyalty of his own militia, however, Bastrayne received advanced warning of the approach of the Guard,

and he and Radnen managed to flee. It is rumored they got away with wagonloads of gold, and speculation on where they are runs the gamut from the Shield Lands to the Pomarj to right inside Rel Mord.

Acting decisively, King Lynwerd appointed Verin Talnith, a powerful southern noble, as Baroness of Woodwych, giving her unprecedented autonomy in running the province. She immediately ordered a handful of lesser nobles exiled for their role in the Bastrayne Affair and sacked most of the former Baronial Guard, a body that had become unacceptably corrupt.

### **Verin Talnith**

Born into the noble House Orberend in 556 CY, Verin lived a life of privilege and leisure. She was a strong-headed girl who was married to Chaverston Talnith, Viscount Nor, a man 33 years her senior when she was just 16. Their arranged marriage strengthened both families' status in the then-king's court. Still, Verin despised her nearly 50-year old husband whom she considered a dullard. Even his children from his first marriage were older than she. Within the year, though, Verin became pregnant with their only child, Adrean, and she grew to love her husband greatly.

For eleven years, Verin enjoyed life as the Viscountess Consort Nor, raising her son and building alliances and relationships in Court. Shortly after his 60th birthday, Chaverston died of natural causes, and Verin was devastated. She grieved more for her child's loss than her own, but concealed her emotions with a facade of defiance.

In 588 CY, Verin was created Baroness of Woodwych by Lynwerd after the new king stripped the former Baron Bastrayne of his peerage and ordered the corrupt noble arrested.

### **Adrean's Plan for a New City**

[The background pertaining to Adrean's plans for a new city does not play a part in this scenario, though it is included here for completeness.]

An impetuous teen—just like his mother was—Adrean was eager to make a name for himself amongst the nobility in his mother's circle. To that end, he proposed the idea of building a new town on the Duntide River between Swan's Bore and Arnford. He believed a new city would restore confidence in the Barony—a symbol of change from the oppression of Bastrayne to that of renewal and growth. This new city would provide a convenient gathering place for farmers, traders and visiting travelers. It would serve secondary duty by becoming a sort of amusement park. Specialty shops and services would give

distraction to any who desired it. Indeed, it would be a jewel in Woodwych's crown, the envy of every province in Nyronnd.

While initially wary of the idea, the Baroness allowed her son to explore the idea further. She arranged for meetings with engineers, trade advisors, and other experts. Mostly she was allowing her son to learn and grow from the experience with little intention of following through with his idea.

When rumors spread that plans were in the works to build the new city, the residents of neighboring Swan Bore were infuriated. How could the Baroness consider building a new town from the ground up when she could expend a fraction of those funds to repair and improve their existing city?

Also alarmed were the residents of the Celadon who feared new construction on such a large scale would further negatively impact their homeland through the excessive harvesting of lumber. To be sure, all was not well in Woodwych.

### **Adrean's Assassination**

[The background pertaining to Adrean's assassination does not play a part in this scenario, though it is included here for completeness.]

There came a time in 589 when Adrean Talnith found himself at a farmhouse-inn on the road between Swan Bore and Arnford. He had arranged to meet with a man whom he thought was an elven ranger from the Celadon Forest to discuss responsibly harvesting lumber for his new, proposed city on the Duntide.

In actuality, the man was a glamered assassin of Nerull who had been hired by a merchant house in Swan Bore with connections to the Scarlet Brotherhood. The merchant house, secretly headed by a half-elf named Boland Thipp, smuggled exotic goods into Nyronnd through Nessermonth, bypassing both legitimate and corrupt tariffs of other port cities, such as Oldred and Mithat. Fearing his shipments would fall under greater scrutiny were this new trading center come to be built along his smuggling route, Boland sought to kill Adrean and thus his plans.

So on that fateful night the hired assassin, Parvis Thander, murdered Adrean and set the farmhouse ablaze. As fate would have it, though, an elderly cleric of Cyndor, Lahara Hestri, and her companion, Jinelle, were staying at the inn. As the farmhouse was burning down, Lahara, a priestess of the god of time, infinity, and continuity began gasping out a special incantation of ritual magic. Her intent was to shift the farmhouse's occupants out of the time-stream until the fire was over.

Unfortunately, she fell unconscious before she could finish the ritual. That did not mean her magic failed, though. On the contrary, it worked, but without completing the spell, no duration was set.

Not only did Lahara successfully phase out herself and the other guests, but Adrean's dead body and Parvis as well. Parvis had been standing outside, watching for anyone trying to escape the fire, and Lahara had simply targeted all she knew to have been in the house, not having realized Parvis was Adrean's killer.

### **The Aftermath and Adrean's Landing**

[The background pertaining to the aftermath and Adrean's Landing does not play a part in this scenario, though it is included here for completeness.]

For five years, no one knew what had happened to Adrean—or anyone else in the farmhouse for that matter. Through divination, Verin knew her son had been killed, but the unique nature of his timeless state confounded the gathering of any additional information. The chief suspects as far as Verin was concerned were members of the Brotherhood of the Bronze.

In fact, she was so bereaved by the death of Adrean and so angry at the elves of the Celadon that she ordered the immediate construction of her son's city on the Duntide, calling it Adrean's Landing. Not only would it be a center of commerce and entertainment, it would be a veritable monument to him. Any within the Baroness' court who even suggested the project should be kept within reason, or, worse, abandoned, was dismissed immediately. Whatever gains Boland hoped to acquire by killing Adrean resulted in the exact opposite.

The lofty construction project required a great deal of wood, and the Baroness was initially all too happy to extract it from the Celadon. This angered the Brotherhood of the Bronze, though Verin was savvy enough to pay them lip-service despite her anger towards them. She repeatedly claimed she was no threat to the Celadon, though this was not entirely true.

In 591 CY, an elven ranger named Arden Coquette broke off from the Brotherhood of the Bronze and founded the Celadon Resistance. Coquette believed the Brotherhood was too passive in their negotiations, and that the Baroness would only bow to an aggressive show of strength. In the defense of the Celadon, the Resistance began firing warning shots at ships traveling the Duntide, ambushing persons logging the forest, and undertaking various raids into Adrean's Landing (NYR1-02 You Ain't From Around Here).

Relations degenerated from there, leading to near-revolt. As her pain subsided and a more level head returned, Verin slowed down the construction and resumed talks with the forest folk. The two sides eventually came to an understanding (NYR2-02 Returned Mail), and Arden Coquette voluntarily left in exile for his role in disrupting the Barony.

In 593 CY, King Lynwerd elevated Verin Talnith from the courtly rank of Baroness to that of Duchess, citing her efforts in restoring peace to the region and service to the crown.

### **The Wisteria Tree**

[The background pertaining to the wisteria tree does not play a part in this scenario, though it is included here for completeness.]

Also in 593, on a fateful night of a full moon, a storm was brewing. A small branch segment from a wisteria vine two miles away was carried on the wind and landed near the crumbling chimney of the ruined farmhouse where Adrean had been murdered. Like mistletoe, belladonna, and many other forms of flora, wisteria possesses mystical properties in the right circumstances, especially those that pertain to time.

Nearing 2:30 in the morning, the moon Luna reached its highest position in the sky, as the rainstorm worsened. The pod of the wisteria bloom settled in the tall grass in the ruins of the farmhouse and was suddenly infused with temporal energy, the perfect confluence of circumstances having occurred. The surge caused the pod to sprout roots, which hungrily dug deep into the earth, as a winding trunk rose upwards. In a matter of moments, a full-grown wisteria tree towered 25 feet in the air, entwining the chimney along the way.

The years lost by the seven people trapped in the alternate phase of time were unleashed and channeled into the now-decades old wisteria tree. Yet the trapped were still not released... In fact, the anomaly created an invisible, one-way portal that surrounded the tree and led to the time flux.

It was through the efforts of a group of adventurers (NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree) who entered the portal and completed Lahara's time-spell incantation that allowed the temporally entrapped occupants of the farmhouse to return to the current timeline. The assassin was defeated, and the body of Adrean was returned to the Duchess. Much to Verin's dismay, resurrection spells failed to revive her son, his soul seemingly unwilling to return.

## **Jinelle's Not-So-Little Secret**

While the adventurers were in the time flux attempting to fix it, they were able to observe what happened throughout the farmhouse the night of Adrean's murder. At one point, the adventurers happened upon Adrean's bedroom and heard whispering beneath the covers. Later, they observed Jinelle, the half-elf handmaiden to the elderly cleric of Cyndor, sneak out of the room with disheveled hair.

Upon returning Adrean's body to Verin, the adventurers delicately informed the Duchess of the apparent tryst. Most felt it was important the Duchess knew she might become a grandmother, while others were concerned about succession issues. Indeed, were Jinelle to produce a female heir, the lass would inherit Verin's peerage as Duchess of Woodwych, as King Lynwerd created it with succession rights passing to either male or female heirs. On the other hand, were Jinelle to produce a male heir, the boy would not only inherit Verin's ducal title but also that of Adrean's viscountship, which Adrean would have inherited from his own father, Chaverston Talnith, Viscount Nor. That title was created centuries ago with succession rights passing only through male heirs.

(Chaverston Talnith's viscount title had actually passed to his first son, Dutalle, from his first marriage to Lady Anira. Dutalle died four years ago, leaving no male heirs, which means the viscountship would have passed to Chaverston's second-born son, Adrean, had he been alive or to his male descendants in the alternative.)

## **New Adventure Background**

The following is all new background information for this scenario. It's a long read but necessary to understand what happened in the past year to bring about the current situation. (It's always better to be fully informed as a judge than to have to fake an answer to a player's question due to inadequate background information, right? Don't you just hate those mods that don't tell you anything?)

### **Jinelle Odraya**

A young half-elf woman of Suel heritage, Jinelle Odraya is technically 30 years old, although having been removed from time for 5 years in the flux Lahara Hestri created the night Adrean Talnith was murdered, she is physiologically only 25 years old. Rather attractive with eyes of ice blue and lightly tinted lips which are quite striking against her porcelain skin, Jinelle had long ago mastered the art of flirting, stroking egos, and making her hair move just right when laughing in order to get what she wanted. Manipulation,

deceit, and connivance had set her on the road to Easy Street.

In her travels with Lahara, Jinelle had managed to acquire a small fortune in gifts from lonely men, including a townhouse in Greyhawk and a small pleasure craft docked in Dyvers. Some would argue this made her a professional working girl; she didn't see it that way. "If men want to give me things, who am I to refuse?" she would counter.

How Jinelle came to be such a woman is sadly similar to countless others. Her mother was a high elf who had been ostracized from her family for becoming involved with a human male—a rather abusive one at that. When she was merely four years old, Jinelle's father killed her mother in a drunken rage. He got away with the crime and began to raise Jinelle on his own, although most begrudgingly. Shortly thereafter, her father's abusive ways turned towards Jinelle. She endured several years of unspeakable treatment both physical and sexual. After her father was killed in yet another drunken rage—this time in a bar fight—Jinelle was placed in an orphanage, where she was raised until she was 15 years old.

It was then Lahara Hestri came into her life. The grandmotherly cleric of Cyndor was looking for a new handmaiden, and she sought one out at the orphanage in Greyhawk. She took Jinelle as her ward and sought to soothe and heal the lass' wounded soul. It would be a challenge with which Lahara would struggle for years.

### **Jinelle and Adrean**

The fateful night she met Adrean at that farmhouse-inn in 589 CY, Jinelle initially ignored the stout human lad. He had tried to strike up a conversation with her when she and Lahara first arrived at the farmhouse on their way to Beetu, but Jinelle was entirely uninterested. A boy his age certainly had little to nothing to offer her. It wasn't until she overheard his conversation in the dining hall with an elf from the Celadon Forest pertaining to building a new city on the Duntide that her interest was piqued. Scrutinizing Adrean further, Jinelle spotted the heraldic shield embroidered upon his cloak. She recognized it as the device of the Duchy of Woodwych, having seen it only a few days earlier when she and Lahara passed through the City of Woodwych.

Arching her right eyebrow and smirking in confidence, the young half-elf woman went on the prowl. She invited Adrean to her table to share some ale after his Celadon elf companion retired to bed. "You're so funny!" she praised after each of his jokes, her hand touching his arm in flirtatious approval.

By a quarter to ten, Jinelle and the inexperienced Adrean were sneaking into his room where after they enjoyed a tryst. Aside from the obvious, something else happened between them. For the first time ever, Jinelle felt something within her heart. Sure, she began the evening greedily looking for a way to enrich herself, but there was something about Adrean to which she was drawn. His quirky smile, the way he mispronounced "especiall", that youthful exuberance: it was all endearing to a now-smitten Jinelle. Her insides aflutter with giddy nervousness, this young half-elf lass had fallen in love for the first time. They say such near-instantaneous love only happens in fairy tales, but here it happened to Jinelle.

After her rendezvous, she snuck back into the room she shared with Lahara so as to not gain disapproval from her mistress—an act that saved her life. The assassin murdered Adrean in his room a few hours later.

After she was freed from the time flux five years later, Jinelle was crushed to learn that Adrean had died, and her heart was once again filled with sadness.

### **Jinelle's Lie to Verin**

Lady Woodwych, having been informed by the adventurers who rescued Jinelle from beyond the wisteria tree about the tryst she shared with Adrean, confronted Jinelle about it later that night. "Did you have sex with my son?" asked the Duchess point blank. Jinelle felt as if her love for Adrean was being questioned or somehow diminished to mere lust. The half-elven lass became defensive and flat-out lied to Verin.

"Absolutely not!"

Verin, whose mind wasn't in the right place having just learned of her son's assassination, was immediately apologetic and embarrassed she had asked the question.

Verin wasn't too concerned to press the matter anyhow. She would simply ask Adrean himself after he was resurrected. Little did Verin know, however, Adrean's soul would be unwilling to return, and the gut-wrenching grief the Duchess would have to endure yet again would preoccupy Verin and cause her to forget about the tryst issue entirely.

### **Indeed With Child**

A couple months later, after Lahara and Jinelle had returned to Greyhawk, the half-elven lass discovered she was pregnant. Jinelle wanted to avoid having to discuss her pregnancy with Lahara, so she kept her natal state secret and told her mentor she needed to evaluate her life—it

having nearly ended the night the farmhouse-inn burned down. "I must go on a mission of self-discovery," she lied. "Strike out on my own—at least for a while—and learn what it means to live a responsible life."

Lahara might normally have seen through the ruse, but since she was still rather guilt-ridden at having entrapped the occupants of the farmhouse for 5 years and still atoning at the Temple of Cyndor for interrupting the time-stream, she hugged and kissed Jinelle and let her go.

With that, Jinelle packed up her things and hitched a ride with a caravan headed to Nyrond. Instead of going to the Duchess, however, Jinelle wanted to first give birth to the baby to rule out the possibility the baby's father was the Baklunish merchant with whom she had slept the same week as she had slept with Adrean. She eventually arrived in Adrean's Landing and found work as a serving wench in one of the local taverns.

### **A Child is Born, Hingred Reacts**

In early 594 CY, Jinelle gave birth to a son that in no way had any Baklunish pigmentation, features, or characteristics. She was positive it was Adrean's baby. He even had Adrean's cleft chin. Overwhelmed with joy, Jinelle immediately quit her job and headed to Woodwych City, seeking audience with the Duchess.

Not only did she wish to introduce the Duchess to her grandchild, Jinelle wanted to give the honor of naming the baby to Verin. When she arrived in Woodwych City, Jinelle met with Verin's chamberlain, Hingred Vortossen.

This loyal servant of the Duchess was quite vigilant in separating the wheat from the chaff when it came to which matters should be brought before Verin. Jinelle's claim that her baby was fathered by Adrean obviously raised a red flag for Hingred. Verin was in Rel Mord at the time, so Hingred boarded Jinelle at a local inn and said he would call for her when the Duchess returned.

The chamberlain then proceeded to gather as much information about Jinelle as he could. Having been a life-long servant of the Orberend family (he was Verin's father's seneschal), Hingred had cultivated quite a network of contacts that stretched all the way to Greyhawk and beyond. He quickly found out Jinelle was a considered a harlot and swindler of old men in the Free City.

Jinelle's story about her baby's parentage was yet another con perpetrated by this whore from Greyhawk as far as Hingred was concerned. He knew Adrean quite well; the awkward, stocky lad with the crooked smile and annoying way of pronouncing "especiall" was definitely not the kind of guy who could bed someone as beautiful

as Jinelle. That, and the fact he had never even been with a woman before was all the proof Hingred needed to be certain Jinelle was nothing but a lying heap of garbage.

What enraged Verin's chamberlain more than the idea of Jinelle falsely laying claim to the ducal seat of Woodwych was the thought of the Duchess' wounds being ripped open yet again. Would she ever be able to put Adrean's death behind her?

Fuming with wrath, Hingred decided to put the fear of the gods into Jinelle. He marched to the inn with a group of Verin's elite ducal guard. While he waited outside, the guards burst into Jinelle's room with weapons drawn and shoved her against the wall. The lead guard, a man named Yulan, put a dagger to Jinelle's throat while he yanked back her hair. Another stood over her crying baby in a menacing manner.

"I am going to say this one time, and if you wish to live, you will listen carefully. The Duchess wants nothing to do with a vile, filthy harlot such as yourself. You will NEVER get one copper shaving from Her Grace. You will NEVER have any claim to the ducal seat of Woodwych. And you will NEVER step foot in this duchy again. Do I make myself clear?"

"I don't want her money! I loved him—"

Yanking her hair back harder, Yulan interrupted, "Do I make myself clear!?"

Sputtering through tears, Jinelle replied, "Yes."

"Good. Now take your bastard child, leave Woodwych right now, and be thankful you still live." And with that, the ducal guards left Jinelle's room.

Hingred was not proud of having a young woman roughed up, but when it came to protecting Verin, his fierce allegiance sometimes clouded his better judgment. Upon the Duchess' return from Rel Mord two days later, Hingred greeted her warmly, keeping everything regarding Jinelle's visit secret.

### **Beremen Contacted**

Jinelle, not realizing Verin was never made aware of Adrean's baby, was devastated at the thought the Duchess would dismiss her own grandson that way.

Rather than going back to Greyhawk, however, Jinelle and her baby headed to Beetu, the capital of the neighboring County of Brackenmoor. She thought she might seek help from Count Romadnen Beremen, hoping he might speak on her behalf with the Duchess once he got to know what a changed woman Jinelle was. Ignorant of the politics of Nyronnd, Jinelle did not

know the Count was looked down upon by many in King Lynwerd's court.

When she succeeded in meeting with him, her hopes were dashed even further when Beremen refused to help. Jinelle had admitted to having a sordid past but insisted the baby was Adrean's. Still, though, Beremen declined to help out of fear of getting on the bad side of Verin. Indeed, it was entirely within Verin's discretion to reject anyone she desired—including her own family members.

### **The Year Passes, a Coup Occurs**

After the great disappointment with Lord Brackenmoor, Jinelle slipped back into her old ways. Am embittered, hardened young woman again, she planned for the eventual day when she would march back into Woodwych upon Verin's death and take the ducal seat on behalf of her son. Jinelle remained in Beetu for the rest of 594, working in a tavern as a serving wench for room and board. On the side, she swindled lonely men to rebuild her once-sizable fortune in the event she would need to spend significant sums of gold to defend her son's noble claim.

Jinelle held off on naming her child until she could return to her elven mother's ancestral homeland near Greyhawk and be blessed by the tribal elders in a naming ceremony. Until such time, she affectionately referred to her baby as "Dandelion".

At the end of 594 CY, Prince Sewardnt seized control of the throne of Nyronnd in a coup against his brother, King Lynwerd (NYR4-07 And All the King's Men). Suddenly the kingdom was turned upside down.

### **Vote of Legitimacy**

As Sewardnt set about solidifying his claim to the throne, he called for a vote of legitimacy from the Council of Lords (the landed dukes and counts of Nyronnd). Woodwych, Mowbrenn, Orberend, Flinthill, and Gamboge, voted against Sewardnt's legitimacy, and Eventide, Brackenmoor, Korenfluss, Almor, and Womtham voted in favor of Sewardnt. Woodverge, being merely a protectorate and having no leader, did not vote. Therefore, Sewardnt's vote of legitimacy resulted in a tie!

Sewardnt was forced to cast the tie-breaking vote as the official leader of Justcrown Province. The vote of legitimacy, therefore, passed. But barely.

### **Beremen's Plan Is Hatched**

Sewardnt voting for himself in order to break the tie certainly diminished the value and symbolism of the vote. Soon thereafter, in

contemplating how he might help the Emperor and increase his own political power, Beremen remembered Jinelle approaching him almost a year earlier about her child being the heir to the ducal seat of Woodwych. If this were true, Beremen considered it an opportunity to swing the vote of legitimacy more heavily in favor of Sewardt.

Thus, the Count of Brackenmoor began executing a plan. Before contacting Sewardt, Beremen first had a diviner find out if Jinelle's baby was, indeed, the son of Adrean Talnith. The answer came back in the affirmative. Next, the Count tracked down the half-elf lass at the tavern at which she worked and told her he was willing to help her secure her son's birthright. When Beremen realized Jinelle now harbored ill feelings towards Verin, he became even more emboldened in his plan.

The Count moved Jinelle and her child into his estate and showered her with lavish gifts befitting a woman of stature. The *quid pro quo* was unabashedly obvious, yet Jinelle had little problem becoming the repulsive Count's mistress if it meant Verin's undoing.

When they were sharing a meal a few nights later, Beremen tested the waters further, hinting, "Wouldn't it be terrible if something were to ever happen to Verin?"

Jinelle thought for a moment and then replied, "Most unfortunate, indeed. I, of course, would fulfill my duty and rule Woodwych as Duchess Regent until my son came of age."

"Just as Sewardt has graciously stepped up to rule after his brother's abdication," offered the Count.

"Yes, I would rule just like Sewardt has."

In the following days, Beremen began secretly plotting how he would arrange for the assassination of Verin and then reveal Adrean's baby to Sewardt, hopefully finding great favor with the Emperor when Jinelle would reverse Woodwych's vote against Sewardt on behalf of her son, the heir to the ducal seat of the Duchy.

### **An Attempt on Verin's Life**

Within a few days, Beremen met with Estward Ventrose, the Count of Eventide. Estward was known among the scummier side of society as one of the most skilled rogues in the kingdom. Beremen proposed his assassination plan to Estward, hoping to tap into the rogue's extensive network of assassins and other dark figures in exchange for sharing the credit and goodwill from Sewardt that would likely follow.

The Count agreed, and arranged for a team of skilled assassins to kill Lady Woodwych. Two

weeks later, the attempt was made but failed, as Verin had become more vigilant in her own security in the wake of Sewardt taking the throne. Beremen became quite worried interrogations or divinations regarding the assassination attempt would lead back to Estward and himself.

Estward, on the other hand, was quite confident the powerful masking magic used by the experienced assassins would ensure the two nobles' anonymity. Beremen remained unconvinced, though, and the Count of Brackenmoor decided to use Jinelle's baby—Verin's grandchild—as leverage.

### **Jinelle Hidden, A Veiled Threat Made**

Beremen drugged Jinelle and had her and her baby brought to a Witch of the Bright named Thuldanora [THUL-duh-nor-uh] residing in the Gnatmarsh. Beremen had dealt with this witch in the past—mostly to bestow mild hexes upon his enemies in Court.

Thuldanora was among a minority of witches who stayed behind the previous month during the assault on Barren Keep, intended to capture Princess Archarzi (arr-CAR-zee) for later sacrifice upon an altar to fulfill a prophesy (NYR5-I03 Battle of the Prophesy). Thuldanora divined the time was not right for the assault, but the other witches disagreed and laid siege to Barren Keep. The assault failed, and many of the witches perished. Sewardt became displeased with the coven.

Now approached by the Count of Brackenmoor to hide Jinelle and her baby from the Duchess and, presumably, act in the interests of Sewardt, Thuldanora—one of the most powerful remaining Witches of the Bright—saw this as a way for the coven to redeem themselves in the eyes of the Emperor. Accordingly, Thuldanora agreed to keep the pair.

She took Jinelle and her baby to a secret cave where she keeps a massive crystal shard of great power. Every day thereafter, Thuldanora cast *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* and kept Jinelle and her baby "Dandelion" within this extra-dimensional space to thwart all but the most powerful divinations.

Jinelle had easily succumbed to Thuldanora's *charm monster* spell on the first day and believed her "trusted friend and ally" when the witch told Jinelle they were hiding from kidnappers sent by Verin to take Jinelle's baby away. Jinelle was relieved Thuldanora was there to protect the half-elven lass and enjoyed living in the magical mansion. To further protect their hiding spot, Thuldanora filled the cave and surrounding areas with monsters she had *charmed* and humanoids she had *dominated*.

Back in Beetu, a still-nervous Beremen sent an innuendo-laden missive to Verin that he thought would only make sense to the Duchess if she had already connected him to the assassination attempt. The letter included a cryptic hint that Jinelle and her baby were being held captive and would meet an untimely end should anything happen to Beremen.

Upon receiving the note, Verin, who had not yet made the connection that the assassination attempt had come from Beremen and Estward, suddenly put two and two together. (Beremen was never skilled at wordplay and court politics, and his "innuendo-laden" letter only served to out him.)

After scrutinizing the note further, Verin also decrypted the reference to Jinelle and her baby and became somewhat confused. What the hell was he talking about?

In discussing the matter with her chamberlain, Hingred finally came clean. He told Verin how Jinelle had come to Woodwych City with a baby a year before, claiming Adrean as its father, and how he had her run out of town. Lady Woodwych, who was well aware and appreciative of the fact Hingred maintained strict access to her, calmly replied, "Well, let's find out." Jinelle, after all, had initially insisted to Verin nothing happened between Adrean and the half-elven lass.

### **Verin's own Plan**

The next day, Verin called upon a cleric of Heironeous to divine the question of whether or not Jinelle had given birth to the Duchess' grandson. When Verin received the answer of "yes," she was floored. Worse, though, was the realization that that baby—Adrean's progeny—was now imperiled and being held captive as a pawn.

Verin properly concluded Beremen and Estward were not acting on orders of Sewardnt; they were most likely furthering their own greedy ends. With the incredible amount of resources and demonic armies under his command during the coup, Verin knew Sewardnt could have easily killed her had he desired it. She surmised the Emperor was allowing her to remain alive and in control of her Duchy to prevent an uprising of the citizenry. (Too many beloved nobles dying, disappearing, and "abdicating" when a suspect change in power occurs has a way of bringing out the torches and pitchforks.)

Verin further concluded Sewardnt was confident before the vote of legitimacy he had enough people behind him to make his claim on the throne stick. That would explain why the clearly pro-Lynwerd Duke Grevin Damar of Flinthill and Count Cunal Huldane of Mowbrenn were also

still in control of their lands: to make it appear to be business as usual in Nyrond.

But Sewardnt's backing was not as strong as he had thought, and Verin saw the perfect opportunity to weaken the Emperor even further. Ironically, just as Beremen had sought to get rid of Verin in order to bolster Sewardnt's barely-passed vote of legitimacy, so too was Verin now considering getting rid of Beremen and/or Estward to reverse the vote entirely. As Sewardnt had put so much emphasis on it earlier, a reversal of the vote would be a devastating blow to him and might help usher a revolt against the Black Prince thought she.

Thus began Verin's own plan: Lady Woodwych would muster her own army and march on the County of Brackenmoor and the County of Eventide! She would seize control of their lands and arrest Count Romadnen Beremen and Count Estward Ventrose, declaring them to be acting against the interest of their citizens. Indeed, it was no secret the majority of people in both provinces longed for Lynwerd and despised Sewardnt's presence on the throne. Once Verin was in control of those lands, she would reverse their provincial votes, and Sewardnt's symbolic legitimacy would be undone.

### **A Rescue Mission; an Invasion Force**

The only thing Lady Woodwych had to do first, though, was save Jinelle and her baby. Lacking any of Jinelle's personal effects to give to her seers for divining purposes, Verin got into contact with Lahara Hestri, the priestess of Cyndor for whom Jinelle was a handmaiden. After Lahara was unable to contact Jinelle via magic, the elderly cleric called upon her temple's high priest. He, having previously met Jinelle, was able to cast *discern location* and discovered she was in an extra-dimensional space. He pinpointed the specific location in the Gnatmarsh in which Thuldanora had cast *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* and passed the information onto Lahara and Verin.

The Duchess immediately began assembling a rescue team, while at the same time calling to duty all the troops she could muster, including her own militia and the part of Legion IX, which regrouped in Woodwych after the coup. Verin issued orders for all such troops to be at Adrean's Landing by the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime, though she did not yet announce the invasion.

With thousands of troops beginning to amass in that city on the Duntide, Verin had pretty much passed the point of no return with respect to her disloyalty to Sewardnt, and the Emperor began to reinforce the western border of Justcrown with his own troops to ward off any assault on the capital.

The rescue team, meanwhile, was ready to go within two days. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime, Led by Lahara, who had teleported to Woodwych, the team also consisted of a powerful sorcerer named Amerilo, a paladin knight of Heironeous named Sir Tevatt, a pegasus-mounted windrider of the Sipharel elves named Daethil [DAY-thil], a temple raider of Lirr named Condaer, and Yulan, the Elite Ducal Guardsman who had roughed up Jinelle when she had first come to Woodwych to present her baby to Verin. The team teleported into the cave and was instantly assailed by magic wards and monstrous guardians.

The team, however, was prepared for a fight, and they still managed to annihilate the guards—but not before the paladin and the temple raider were slain. The sorcerer then dispelled the invisible doorway into Thuldanora's *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*, purging Jinelle, her baby "Dandelion", Thuldanora, and the witch's remaining guards. Yet another fight ensued, and in the end the witch and her minions managed to kill all the remaining members of the rescue party except for the elven windrider, Daethil. Near death and almost out of spells, Thuldanora teleported away.

Jinelle was left screaming in hysterics at having seen Thuldanora disintegrate her mother-figure Lahara. Daethil, whose pegasus steed had been slain, pleaded for Jinelle to join him in escape, but she refused, her mind still clouded by Thuldanora's *charm monster* spell.

Verin, who had been linked to the rescue team with a *Rary's telepathic bond* and who was hearing their mental screams as they were being slain, instructed the windrider to bring Jinelle back by force. Daethil informed the Duchess he was badly wounded and needed to heal up before strong-arming Jinelle back to Woodwych. The windrider told Lady Woodwych he would take refuge in a safer region of the Gnatmarsh called the Knobs of Cullidor until ready to continue.

Unfortunately, Daethil had to subdue Jinelle into unconsciousness, who thought he was there to kidnap her baby for the Duchess' nefarious ends. The Sipharel windrider then heaved her body over his shoulder as he cradled her baby "Dandelion" in his arms and disappeared into the swamp. The *telepathic bond* ended an hour later, and Verin has not heard from Daethil since.

Subsequent divinations about Jinelle's captor revealed little else, though Verin's diviners were able to learn the Witch of the Bright possessed an incredibly powerful crystal, which was hidden in the very same cave from where Jinelle was rescued. Verin learned from further queries that this crystal was used to keep dozens of swamp monsters enthralled by this witch, and that these

monstrosities might be used to attack Verin's troops were she to invade Brackenmoor.

## **Daethil and Jinelle in the Swamp**

Daethil, meanwhile, made his way to the Knobs of Cullidor. The trip wasn't without its perils, though. A few swarms of mosquitoes attacked Daethil along the way and ended up biting Jinelle and "Dandelion" extensively. Daethil eventually exited the more vile section of the swamp and made it to the milder Knobs of Cullidor.

He headed to an earthen cave he had explored years earlier and took refuge in it. The bloody trail he left behind him, however, attracted the attention of a tentacle beast, and the creature soon followed them into the cave. Daethil, even in his wounded state, managed to fend off the creature, and he, Jinelle, and her baby retreated to a narrow, defensible position at the far back of the cave, which he trapped before falling unconscious from his wounds.

The tentacle creature decided to remain in the main part of the cave, lurking amongst the rotting vegetation in the water in hopes of surprising the trio as they exited. It has yet to feast, as the windrider, his half-elven 'prisoner', and her baby have stayed put. While Jinelle would have loved the opportunity to flee her captor while he was unconscious, she couldn't leave until the tentacle beast departed.

She did, though, tie up Daethil out of fear he would heal from his wounds and awaken to take "Dandelion" from her. By the next day, though, Jinelle and her baby had contracted filth fever, their wounds from the mosquitoes having become infected by the muck of the swamp.

## **A Plea for Aid**

With her most powerful vassals and allies involved with more important matters at that moment, such as guarding King Lynwerd, Verin sent out a plea for help. She personally wrote letters to the trusted individuals who had helped recover Adrean's body from beyond the wisteria tree. She also called to duty some Lynwerd loyalists to lend her aid and even sent word to other trusted sources, asking them to pass on her plea to those who might give assistance in this matter. And so begins the adventure.

## **Optional TU Mission Background**

For those parties who will go on the optional TU encounter, here is the background regarding it:

Thuldanora is in possession of a giant, magic crystal some 10 feet high. She has hidden it in a secret cave in the Gnatmarsh, the location of which is unknown even to other Witches of the

Bright. This crystal allows Thuldanora to maintain constant mental contact and control to every creature she has ensorcelled with her *charms* and *domination*. As long as the creature touches the crystal and remains on the same plane as it, Thuldanora has complete control over the being.

When Romadnen Beremen, the Count of Brackenmoor, approached her about hiding Jinelle from the Duchess of Woodwych so he could have leverage against Verin, Thuldanora agreed, since her coven had recently garnered the displeasure of Sewarndt, having failed to kidnap Lady Astra Callistor and Princess Archarzi from Barren Keep. Thuldanora hoped her assistance to Beremen—clearly a supporter of Sewarndt—would help restore the coven's relationship with the Emperor.

Thuldanora *charmed* Jinelle and teleported her and her baby to the secret crystal-cave in the Gnatmarsh. The witch then kept the pair hidden in the extra-dimensional space created by a *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*. As described earlier, Verin pinpointed this location, thanks to the Temple of Cyndor in Greyhawk, and sent a rescue team to recover Jinelle and her baby. Thuldanora and her minions were able to kill all the rescue members except for Daethil. Severely wounded and out of spells, Thuldanora teleported away. Daethil then seized Jinelle and "Dandelion".

Unfortunately for Thuldanora, she was never able to keep Jinelle attuned to the crystal, since every time Jinelle entered the extra-dimensional space of the *mansion*, the crystal's link was severed. Thuldanora's underlying *charm monster* spell, however, remained in effect, but without being able to receive sensory input from Jinelle, Thuldanora was unable to easily track her down.

Thus, Thuldanora sent out her minions to find Daethil and the half-elven lass while she tended to other matters involving her coven. There was, after all, the matter of settling what to do next after many of the Witches of the Bright perished at Barren Keep.

Thuldanora was confident Daethil never saw the magic crystal when he and his rescue party entered her cave on the 13<sup>th</sup> (the crystal was hidden behind an *illusory wall* in another room). Since the illusory magic made the cave appear just like one of the many other unremarkable dens and caves of the Gnatmarsh, Thuldanora was not worried about a follow-up team coming to retrieve the bodies. In fact, she thought it would actually look suspicious if she disposed of the bodies and re-warded the place, rather than making it appear she abandoned the now-worthless hiding spot. She did, though, strip the bodies of their magic items.

Leaving a guardian construct behind just in case, Thuldanora teleported to one of her coven's powerfully enchanted lairs where she planned for the future while being protected with *mindblank* and within a *dimensional lock*. When Verin's forces invade Brackenmoor, Thuldanora is alerted, and she orders all her creatures to attack the troops as they march from Beetu to Callistor.

If the party destroys Thuldanora's crystal, the special abilities it gave her over her thralls will end, and the swamp creatures will return to normal, ending their march on Verin's forces.

## Adventure Summary

**Encounter Zero: Give Player Handouts:**—PCs, depending upon their background, receive notice of the adventure. Each has different starting information and goals based upon their previous play experience, guild affiliations, and loyalty.

**Encounter One: Arrival at the Bartek Estate:**—The PCs arrive at the Bartek estate and meet with the Duchess of Woodwych, who gives them their mission of rescuing Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby, answering any questions she can.

**Encounter Two: Flight to the Celadon:**—Eight windriders arrive at the Bartek estate and team up with the PCs to fly them 135 miles to the drop off point in the Celadon Forest just north of the Brackenmoor border. There they make camp and encourage the PCs to wait until the morning to set out.

**Encounter Three: Hiking the Celadon at Night (Optional):**—This encounter only occurs if the PCs decide to ignore the warnings of the windriders and brave the Celadon at night.

**Encounter Four: Camped with the Windriders:**—For those parties who camp the first night in the Celadon, one of the PCs is covertly approached by a female windrider in love with Daethil and wishing to defy her tribal elders and give extra help to the party.

**Encounter Five: Down the Game Trail:**—The PCs hike 10 miles down a game trail to the Gnatmarsh. Along the way, they are beset by half-fey giant praying mantises.

**Encounter Six: In the Gnatmarsh:**—This encounter describes the Gnatmarsh and the related game mechanics for parties who make it there.

**Encounter Seven: The Knobs of Cullidor:**—Just as the party arrives at the Knobs of Cullidor, they encounter Nittle, the Talking Banana Slug who pleads with them to help pay the ransom for his best friend captured by a swamp witch. In actuality, Nittle is a mischievous pixie looking to have fun.

**Encounter Eight: Entering the Cave**—Once the PCs have tracked down the cave in which Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby are hiding, they encounter a tentacle creature lurking near the entrance. Following that are traps set by Daethil.

**Encounter Nine: Finding Jinelle**—PCs who go deeper in the cave finally find Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby who are still hopefully alive, depending on how long it took the party to reach them. PCs must then convince Jinelle to accompany them.

**Encounter Ten: Make-up Combat Encounter (Alternative)**—If the PCs completely avoided the mantis combat in Encounter Five (by teleporting directly from Adrean's Landing to the Gnatmarsh, for example), they can make up that lost combat XP here as they are leaving the cave.

**Encounter Eleven: Return to Adrean's Landing**—The PCs head back to the windrider encampment and then to Adrean's Landing.

**Encounter Twelve: Back at the Bartek Estate**—The PCs return to the Bartek estate, where the Duchess of Woodwych meets her grandchild for the first time.

**Primary Adventure Epilogue**—The PCs are invited to accompany Verin to the Coliseum where she announces to the assembled troops the invasion of Brackenmoor and Eventide.

**Encounter Thirteen: Thuldanora's Crystal-Cave**—Arriving safely at Thuldanora's crystal-cave, PCs encounter the construct guardian(s) where after they hopefully find and destroy the giant crystal cluster.

## DM Notes

### Butt-Kicker Option Removed

After the premier of this scenario in 2005 at Gamex and ConDuit, the Circle editor for Nyrond requested the Butt-Kicker Option be removed. It is no longer available to players and all references to it have been removed.

### Adventure Hooks

In Encounter Zero, For the Duchess of Woodwych begins with players receiving their adventure hooks in the form of handouts. Characters in the same party may end up having divergent goals. **It is important to keep in mind the Living Greyhawk campaign forbids player versus player combat.** You may need to remind the more bombastic players of this emphatic rule.

### Preparing for the Game

- Prepare for the game by reading this scenario at least twice.

- Print the scenario for your reference.
- Print at least 2 extra copies of Handouts #1–#4 (p. 75 to 79).
- Initiative cards containing all the combat information in stat-block format have been uploaded to the Nyrond website. If you would like to use this optional web enhancement for ease of use during battles, go to <https://www.nyrond.org/turbine/scenario-show?id=NYR5-03>, log in with your user ID, and click on the "updated information" link at the bottom of the page. You may then download the file containing the stat block cards to cut out and use during play.
- When the game begins, have each player pre-roll their Spot checks for Encounters Five and Eight. At APLs 2–8, two Spot checks for each PC are needed. At APL 10, three Spot checks for each PC are needed. At APL 12, four Spot checks for each PC are needed.
- At APLs 6–12, have each player pre-roll a Will save and a Sense Motive check for the Darktentacles' *charm monster* spell-like ability in Encounter Eight. (The save is for the person subjected to the spell, and the Sense Motive check (DC 25) is for everyone else to realize their friend was just enchanted.

## Monster Tactics

The encounters found in this scenario contain tactics the monsters use, broken down by round. These tactics are incorporated for several reasons, including:

- balancing the Encounter Levels beyond just the Challenge Ratings of the creatures involved;
- assisting newer judges who may not be familiar with the more obscure abilities and rules;
- allowing for a much more even gaming experience across most tables; and

The inclusion of these tactics in no way suggests you, as a judge, are incapable of running monsters your own way. They are merely here for the above-mentioned reasons and nothing more. As always, you will need to adjust these tactics for unanticipated character actions, which is where your skill as a judge will shine.

## Be Mindful of the Time

This adventure includes an optional TU mission. Therefore, be mindful of the time, and don't let players bog down the game with needless delays, such as going overboard on the details of night watches. (Miracle of all miracles, nothing actually attacks the party while they sleep in this

adventure.) It would be unfortunate for players to miss out on the optional mission because they wasted too much time elsewhere in the game.

## Windriders

Some NPCs in this scenario are referred to as "windriders." These are elven rangers from a tribe called the Sipharel in the Celadon Forest first referenced in NYR3-06 *Beyond the Wisteria Tree* and later detailed in NYR3-I04 *Force of Nature*. A windrider used to be a prestige class from the now-defunct *Masters of the Wild*. While windriders no longer technically exist as a class, these NPCs nevertheless refer to themselves as such and approximate the former class' abilities by taking the Leadership feat and using that as a means of possessing these unusual mounts as cohorts. As the Sipharel elves breed pegasi for their windriders anyway, this is merely a technicality.

## Weather and Moon

The weather and moon for this adventure are as follows:

- **All Days:** Vision during the day is only hindered while within the low-lying nimbostratus clouds at 3,000 feet and higher. The sun sets at 5:30 pm (becoming pitch dark at 7:00 pm) and rises at 7:00 am (with enough light by which to travel at 6:00 am). At night, fog accumulates on the ground from 2:00 am until 8:00 am. In clouds or fog, vision is reduced to 5 feet and everything within 5 feet gains concealment per p. 94 of the *DMG*.
- **Day 1** (the 20<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime): Overcast with moderate winds gusting regularly between 11–20 mph (50% chance of extinguishing small, unprotected flames, such as candles). Temperatures are slightly cooler than seasonally normal. Luna is waning to almost new.
- **Day 2** (the 21<sup>st</sup>): Overcast and drizzling with no to light winds (0–10 mph). Temperatures are slightly cooler than seasonally normal. This weather does not constitute the conditions needed for the deadlier version of the *call lightning* spell. Luna is down to a tiny sliver.
- **Day 3** (the 22<sup>nd</sup>): Overcast and drizzling with moderate winds gusting regularly between 11–20 mph. This weather does not constitute the conditions needed for the deadlier version of the *call lightning* spell unless in the Gnatmarsh, where the temperature is notably warmer and thus meets the "hot and cloudy" conditions requirement. The rain is not severe enough to have an effect on Spot, Listen, and

related checks, though. Luna is officially new and unseen in the night sky.

- **Day 4** (the 23<sup>rd</sup>): Weather is same as Day 3. Luna is new.
- **Day 5 and beyond:** The adventure should be over by now, but in case it matters, the weather is cloudy with light winds for the week hereafter.

## Terrain and Movement

As time is of the essence in this adventure, terrain modifiers to movement affect PCs as follows.

- **Land Around Adrean's Landing:** Considered Plains terrain. As no roads lead directly to the Celadon from Adrean's Landing, land-based movement is 3/4 normal.
- **Celadon Forest:** Considered Forest terrain. On the old game trail Verin directs the PCs to use, movement is unhindered. Off the trail, though, movement is 1/2 normal.
- **Gnatmarsh:** Considered Marsh terrain. There are no highways, roads, or trails in the Gnatmarsh near the Knobs of Cullidor, so all movement there is 1/2 normal. Water depth in the Knobs ranges from merely soggy ground to 4 feet in pockets, and a thick blanket of mist 12 to 18 inches high always covers the ground regardless of time of day, providing total concealment to anything on the ground itself or in the water beneath that layer.

## **Encounter Zero: Give Player Handouts**

There are a number of handouts to issue to players at the beginning of the game based on certain criteria. First, though, read or paraphrase the following:

***On a piece of paper write your character's name. Below that you will then write certain words as instructed by me, provided you meet specific criteria. Please write only the words requested without any qualifying or superfluous text. This pertains to your character's loyalty to King Lynwerd and Emperor Sewarndt. Some players will want to keep their character's loyalty private—even in an out-of-character context. Therefore, please do not share your answers with other players, as it will draw undue attention to those who wish to keep their answers private.***

- ***If your character has played the Nyrond regional scenario NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree and succeeded in speaking with the Duchess at the end of the***

*scenario, write the word "duchess" on your paper. Note, do not write down "duchess" if your character has ever sworn allegiance to Emperor Sewardt.*

- *If you are a member of a Nyrond meta-organization with the "call to war" requirement, write either the words "Military Lynwerd" or "Military Sewardt" on your piece of paper, depending on to whom you have officially sworn allegiance. If you have not yet sworn allegiance to one side or the other and you belong to one of these "call to war" meta-orgs, you must choose one side now. There are no exceptions, pursuant to the Nyrond triad.*
- *If you have not written anything down besides your name yet, write the word "Network" on a piece of paper.*

Then collect the papers. Below is a list of all player handouts available at the beginning of the game, followed by the criteria that must be met by an individual PC in order to receive them. Be sure to read those criteria to make sure each player does, indeed, qualify for a given handout.

After some of the player handout titles below are words in quotes that correspond to what players may have written on their scraps of paper to help you quickly distribute the appropriate handouts.

### **Player Handout #1—A Letter from the Duchess ("duchess"):**

Give this handout to all PCs who wrote "duchess" on their scraps of paper. They must have played NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree *and* succeeded in favorably speaking with the Duchess at the end of the scenario pertaining to the death of her son, Adrean. They must have been in the room during the final encounter with the Duchess and must not have angered or insulted her. Simply take a player's word for what transpired at his table when he played that game.

If the player doesn't remember whether or not he met with the Duchess at the end of Beyond the Wisteria Tree, then do NOT give him this handout; it is only for players of characters who were involved enough in the story to care to remember.

### **Player Handout #2— A Call to War for Lynwerd Loyalists ("military Lynwerd"):**

Give this handout to all PCs who wrote "military Lynwerd" on their scraps of paper; however, players do not receive it if they have the "Enmity of King Lynwerd" as described on the AR of NYR5-01 Don't Cry for Me Nyrond.

This handout is for all PCs who belong to one of the Nyrond meta-organizations with the "call to

war" requirement and who allied with King Lynwerd. This most likely includes the Grey Watch, Knights of the Realm, Royal Guard, and most army legions, militia groups, and naval fleets based in the Nyrond provinces of Flinthill, Gamboge, Mowbrenn, Orberend, and Woodwych. (Technical note: They Grey Watch has never had a "call to war" requirement, though the Nyrond Triad retroactively added it after Sewardt's coup.)

### **Player Handout #3—A Call to War for Sewardt Loyalists ("military Sewardt"):**

Give this handout to all PCs who wrote "military Sewardt" on their scraps of paper; however, the Nyrond triad has declared that no PCs may be sworn to both Sewardt and Lynwerd at the same time; *i.e.*, there are no double agent PCs allowed. Therefore, do not give any player both the "military Lynwerd" and "military Sewardt" handouts.

This handout is for all PCs who belong to one of the Nyrond meta-organizations with the "call to war" requirement and who allied with Emperor Sewardt. This most likely includes most PCs who have the "Enmity of King Lynwerd" as described on the AR of NYR5-01 Don't Cry for Me Nyrond.

### **Player Handout #4—A Network of Connections ("network"):**

Give this handout to all PCs who wrote "network" and nothing else besides their name on their scraps of paper.

This is the default handout for all other players. It includes out-of-region PCs, as well as both pro-Sewardt PCs who are not in a "call to war" meta-org. This handout is mutually exclusive with the "Duchess", "Lynwerd", and "Sewardt" handouts, so if a player has any of those three, he does not receive "Network".

The network of connections is what the desperate Duchess of Woodwych has tapped into in order to save her grandson after her initial rescue team was defeated. Because time is of the essence, she may not have been as careful as to who passes on this plea for aid, hence the mish-mash of respondents.

## **Knowledge Checks**

PCs may wish to make Knowledge checks based on things they read in their handouts as well as things they encounter later in the scenario. This section handles that information.

The following are the relevant Knowledge checks for the most likely topics. They are written in a way that you can read them as written to the players without accidentally giving out the information from checks they failed.

In some circumstances, using your best judgment, you may need to pull certain PCs aside to relate the information privately.

### **Woodwych; Verin Talnith**

- *DC 10 bardic lore or DC 11 Knowledge (Nobility) or DC 13 Knowledge (Local: Nyronnd Meta-region) or auto-success for anyone who has lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Woodwych:* Give Player Handout #5: Information on Verin Talnith.
- *DC 12 bardic lore or DC 12 Knowledge (Nobility) or DC 14 Knowledge (Local: Nyronnd Meta-region):* When Sewardt, after taking the crown, called for a Vote of Legitimacy from the provincial leaders of Nyronnd, the Duchess of Woodwych voted against his claim to the throne.

### **Adrean's Landing**

- *DC 10 bardic lore or DC 10 Knowledge (Geography) or DC 10 Knowledge (Local: Nyronnd Meta-region) or DC 15 Knowledge (History) or auto-success for anyone who has lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Adrean's Landing:* Verin Talnith, then the Baroness of Woodwych, ordered the construction of Adrean's Landing as a veritable monument to her son after he disappeared and was presumed dead in 589 CY. Idealized statues and other images of the young human lad are found throughout the town.

### **The Bartek Estate; Sir Domin Bartek**

- *Any PC who played NYR1-07 The Great Pie Fest:* Sir Domin Bartek was the elderly and rotund knight who judged the pie contest in Adrean's Landing in CY 591.
- *DC 13 Knowledge (Nobility) or DC 15 bardic lore:* Sir Domin Bartek of Adrean's Landing is an elderly knight of the realm who is a good friend of the Duchess of Woodwych.
- *DC 10 bardic lore or DC 12 Knowledge (Local: Nyronnd Meta-region) or DC 12 Knowledge (Nobility):* Sir Domin Bartek of Adrean's Landing was killed earlier in the year, reportedly by Sewardt himself in a public execution. It is said Sewardt demanded loyalty from Sir Domin, who, after a brief, whispered conversation with the Emperor gave it rather dispassionately. Sewardt stated he didn't believe Sir Domin, and then the Emperor drove his sword through the elderly knight's heart, killing him.

- *DC 15 Knowledge (Nobility):* Lurinda Bartek is the widow of Sir Domin Bartek, a knight of the realm who died earlier this year.

### **The Sipharel Elves**

- *DC 16 Intelligence check for anyone who has lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Woodwych or the Celadon Forest (of any region) or DC 21 Knowledge Local (Nyronnd Meta-region) or DC 25 bardic knowledge:* The Sipharel are a reclusive tribe of elves living in the Celadon forest near the border of the Duchy of Urnst. Amongst their numbers are pegasus-mounted Windriders, elite defenders of their region. While a few of the Sipharel joined the Celadon Resistance a few years back opposing the logging of their forest, the tribe as a whole has striven to stay out of political conflicts.

### **Brackenmoor; Romadnen Beremen**

- *DC 10 bardic lore or DC 11 Knowledge (Nobility) or DC 13 Knowledge (Local: Nyronnd Meta-region) or auto-success for anyone having lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Brackenmoor:* Give Player Handout #6: Information on Brackenmoor and the Gnatmarsh.
- *DC 12 bardic lore or DC 12 Knowledge (Nobility) or DC 14 Knowledge (Local: Nyronnd Meta-region) or auto-success for anyone currently living in or a member of a meta-org based in Brackenmoor:* When Sewardt, after taking the crown, called for a vote of legitimacy from the provincial leaders of Nyronnd, the Count of Brackenmoor voted in favor of Sewardt's claim to the throne.
  - o *If the previous check was successful and 5 higher than the target DC or the PC is currently living in or a member of a meta-org based in Brackenmoor:* The populace of Brackenmoor dislike their Count, and the majority of them are outraged he voted in favor of Sewardt during the recent Vote of Legitimacy called by the Emperor. Clearly, the Count does not reflect the will of his vassals.

### **The Gnatmarsh; Knobs of Cullidor**

- *DC 9 Knowledge (Local Nyronnd: Meta-region) or DC 10 Knowledge (Geography) or auto-success for anyone having lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Brackenmoor:* The region south of the Celadon Forest and west of the Duntide River is an immense swamp known as the Gnatmarsh, a fetid land that reeks of rotting garbage. It is the location

of where most people suspect Sewardt resided after his first coup attempt failed.

- *DC 15 Knowledge (Geography) for anyone having lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Brackenmoor or DC 25 Knowledge (Geography) for everyone else:* The Knobs of Cullidor is a small region of the northern reaches of the Gnatmarsh known for the sprawling roots of the huge cypress trees that grow there. These roots form 'knees', or 'knobs', that protrude above the surface of the water. While such trees grow elsewhere in the Gnatmarsh, this region has a particularly high concentration of them and was named after an explorer who first mapped the area hundreds of years ago.

### **Jinelle Odraya**

- *DC 25 bardic lore or DC 25 Knowledge (Religion) for clerics of Cyndor only or DC 30 Knowledge (Local: Core):* Jinelle Odraya is or was the handmaiden of an elderly priestess of Cyndor named Lahara Hestri but was better known to be a grifter from Greyhawk who bilked lonely old men of their money in exchange for intimate relations or the promise thereof.

### **Witches of the Bright (of the Sand)**

- *DC 12 bardic lore or DC 13 Knowledge (Local: Nyrond Meta-region or Bright Lands) or DC 14 Knowledge (Arcana) or auto-success for anyone having lived in or been a member of a meta-org based in Brackenmoor:* The first reports of the Witches of the Bright (also known as Witches of the Sand) occurred not long after Archbold III abdicated his throne. They are known to have migrated into the Gnatmarsh from the Bright Desert in the middle of the last decade, and many of the County of Brackenmoor locals have taken to calling them the Gnatmarsh Coven. There was significant evidence that the Witches of the Bright were working with Prince Sewardt to remove King Lynwerd from the throne. Although nothing is known of their motivations for the alliance, the widely-held speculation is that the traitor prince promised them the County of Brackenmoor in exchange for their assistance.
- *DC 13 bardic lore or DC 14 Knowledge (Local: Nyrond Meta-region):* The Witches of the Bright intend to restore the Kingdom of Sulm by sacrificing a female heir of Nyrond. A prophesy of theirs goes: "*In the fields on which you stand shall rise a kingdom that shall break free of another. When the unmarried woman who should be queen is sacrificed to me upon*

*this altar, your descendants shall once again know the glory of Sulm.*" Last month, a group of Witches of the Bright attempted to kidnap Lady Astra Callistor and the king's newborn daughter, Princess Archarzi. The Witch's siege on Barren Keep where the two royal heirs were hiding failed, however.

### **Thuldadora**

Only until the party questions Jinelle can they uncover the information about Thuldadora; however, it is possible to acquire the name of this witch through the clever use of magic, as adjudicated by you. When her identity is known, the following knowledge checks apply:

- *DC 25 bardic lore or DC 30 Knowledge (Arcana):* Thuldadora is known to be a powerful yet reclusive Witch of the Sands, a group who assaulted King Lynwerd's forces in Barren Keep this past month. The assault failed, and most of the witches were slain. Thuldadora's fate is unknown.

## **Divinations**

PCs who cast divination spells to learn more information are generally met with success. There is no magic blocking anything in this regard, though all *sendings* and telepathic contact to Daethyl, Jinelle, and her baby are met with silence.

Daethyl is unconscious, and Jinelle's baby simply lacks the cognizance to transmit a mental thought back to the caster. Jinelle, on the other hand, recognizes telepathic contact, having communicated with Lahara countless times before via *sending*, though she refuses to respond—even to those who rescued her in NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree. As Jinelle thinks the Duchess is hunting her down to steal her baby away, the half-elven lass trusts no one.

PCs receiving "no response" cannot determine the reason for the silence, though they are aware it could be because the respondent is dead, unconscious, telepathically shielded, or unable or unwilling to reply.

Thuldadora is currently at one of her coven's heavily enchanted lairs, previously belonging to a now-dead witch. She is protected by an ally's *mindblank* spell, which blocks all known divinations—even *discern location*, and is in an area warded by a *dimensional lock*, which blocks teleportation. She does not play any further role in this scenario, so try to dissuade PCs from wasting too much time trying to track her down.

## Refusing to Go

After the players have read their handouts, find out if any refuse to go on the adventure. For those that do, the scenario is over for them, though they still may be assessed TUs, gold, and other penalties, depending on their affiliations, as follows. (E-mail the Nyrond triad at [triad@nyrond.org](mailto:triad@nyrond.org) to report errant players.)

### **If the PC is a pro-Lynwerd member of a meta-org with the "call to war" requirement:**

Inform the player a warrant for his character's arrest has been issued, as the "call to war" requirement of his meta-org is not voluntary. Ask if he wishes to surrender to his superiors or go on the lam. If he surrenders, he is immediately demoted one rank (if in the military, to a minimum of the lowest possible rank), loses 26 TUs for court martial / jailing, is fined 500 gp times his level, and is subject to further action by the Nyrond Triad.

If the player decides to flee, however, the warrant for his arrest will be in effect at all times hereafter when in pro-Lynwerd lands. If he is later caught, he is arrested and jailed for 52 TU, fined 1,000 gp per character level, and permanently banned from any military, royal, or other meta-org with the "call to war" or similar requirement.

If such TU loss results in a negative TU balance for the current year, the remainder is carried over to the next calendar year. If the fine also results in a negative gold piece balance, the PC will be forced to pay it off through future adventures and may not make *\*any\** purchases beyond Standard Upkeep until such time as his gp balance is no longer negative.

### **If the PC is a pro-Sewarndt member of a meta-org with the "call to war" requirement:**

Inform the player a warrant for his character's arrest has been issued, as the "call to war" requirement of his meta-org is not voluntary. Ask if he wishes to surrender to his superiors or go on the lam. If he surrenders, he is immediately executed, and his character sheet and accompanying ARs should be turned over to the Nyrond triad for final adjudication.

If the player decides to flee, however, the warrant for his arrest will be in effect at all times hereafter when in pro-Sewarndt lands. If he is later caught, he will be executed as above-described.

### **Everyone else refusing the go:**

The scenario is simply over for them. They earn 0 gold and 0 XP but still lose the normal TU(s) appropriate to their home region.

## Breaking Orders

Several handouts warn players that they must take precautions in heading to Adrean's Landing, instructing them to tell no one of their orders, follow specific routes to the town, etc. These precautions were mandated by Verin and her military advisers to ensure Sewarndt forces did not discover the rescue mission. Verin's attempts were in vain, however, as Sewarndt's military did intercept one of her communiqués regarding the mission.

The handouts instruct the players to privately inform the judge if they wish to break any of the orders. The truth of the matter is, though, nothing really will come about as a result of breaking the orders, provided the PCs eventually make it to the Bartek estate by nine in the morning on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The precautions are included in the handouts to heighten and underscore the nervousness and uncertainty in Nyrond at this point in time.

If a player informs you he is breaking an order, simply listen to what orders are being broken, nod and appear to take mental note, and continue on with the game. Do not let this part of the scenario take up too much time—it is merely setting the tone.

## Away We Go!

Once all that preliminary stuff is finished, proceed to Encounter One: Arrival at the Bartek Manor.

### **Encounter One: Arrival at the Bartek Estate**

*As you arrived in Adrean's Landing, it was clear a major military operation was underway: the roads were choked with patrols bearing the uniforms of the militia and ducal guard of Woodwych; massive trebuchets and catapults were trundling into strategic positions at the edge of the town; and heavily guarded granaries were emptying their contents into supply wagons.*

*Today is the 20<sup>th</sup>, and it is just before nine o'clock in the morning on this overcast day. Wind gusts tug at people's clothes as you continue on toward the Bartek manor. Clearly catching your attention are the pavilions being erected near the town's coliseum. From the murmurs of passers by, it is obvious no one knows why they are being summoned to Adrean's Landing.*

*Eventually, you make your way to the Bartek manor. It is a sizable though unassuming place. A short stone path lined on*

***either side by small yellow flowers leads to the front door.***

A shy female servant named Nya (Oeridian human female) opens the door if PCs knock on it. She leads them into a sitting room in which Lady Bartek sits:

***The rich brown and amber tones of this sitting room are enhanced by the scent of allspice and cloves wafting from a serving tray containing cups of cider. Sitting in an overstuffed armchair near a smoldering fireplace is an elderly, frail woman with her grayish white hair braided and coiled neatly atop her head. She stands upon your entrance. "Good morrow, I am Widow Bartek."***

☞ **Nya Parr:** young adult female human Com-1; Cha 10; hp 7.

☞ **Lurinda Bartek:** old female human Ari-3; Cha 15; hp 15.

The good widow curtsies to the PCs in greeting and exchanges brief pleasantries. She then continues:

***"Please, have a seat, and someone will be with you shortly. Nya, the cider."***

***The elderly woman looks to the tray of cider and gestures to her servant girl, who nods in response. Widow Bartek then smiles and departs through doors on the far side of the room, closing them behind her. Nya proceeds to serve cider to those interested.***

The cider is delicious and non-poisonous. Nya and Widow Bartek know nothing of the mission, although the widow does know the Duchess of Woodwych is in the other room, waiting to meet with the party. She does not, however, reveal this to the PCs.

Once she departs, PCs, having heard Lady Bartek refer to herself as "widow" may wish to make Knowledge checks pertaining to her or the estate. (Her husband, Sir Domin, was reportedly executed by Sewarndt a few months ago.) See "Knowledge Checks" p. 15 for details.

Widow Bartek's current emotional state can best be described as one of 'resolve.' She is not emotional or outwardly grieving—merely hell-bent on bringing Sewarndt down, which is why she gladly allows her estate to be used by the Duchess for this meeting.

### **Verin and Company Enter**

After about two minutes, Verin enters with her guardsmen:

***The doors on the far side of the room open again as Widow Bartek and four well armed human males enter the sitting room. The men wear tabards bearing the image of a heraldic***

***shield with an acorn sprig in the upper right corner and three gold rings in the lower left. Striding gracefully into the room after them is a beautiful woman in her late 30's wearing a taupe colored silk riding jacket with a matching full length skirt. A sheer swag of fabric draped between the two steeples of her fairy tale headdress undulates with her movement. Widow Bartek announces, "I present Her Grace, the Duchess of Woodwych."***

☞ **Verin Talnith:** female human Ari-10; Cha 16; hp 63; see p. 61 for her full stat block.

☞ **Elite Ducal Guards of Woodwych (4):** male human Ftr-8/Rog-4; hp 78 each; see p. 61 for the full stat block.

Verin isn't concerned with making sure the PCs show proper deference, though she does politely wait for them to at least acknowledge her. For PCs who want to address her properly, Verin's form of reference is Lady Woodwych, and her forms of address include 'Your Grace', 'My Lady Duchess', 'My Lady', and 'Lady Woodwych'. A Duke or Duchess is the highest ranking noble title one may attain whose immediate better would be a prince or princess.

The heraldic shield on the guards' tabards is the device of the Duchy of Woodwych.

After the party greets the Duchess, read or paraphrase the following. If anyone except for a certified noble of knight rank or higher interrupts Verin, Lady Bartek snaps in courtly formality, ***"A Duchess of the Kingdom is speaking! Interrupt her not!"*** and then gestures for the Duchess to continue.

***Lady Woodwych speaks with a velvety, deep voice, "Thank you for coming. There is little time to act, so I am going to be brief. As I'm sure you know, my son, Adrean, was murdered in 589. Two weeks ago I learned, however, that a young half-elven lass named Jinelle Odraya whom he had come [clears her throat] 'to know' gave birth to my grandchild last year. Due to a terrible misunderstanding, Jinelle was never able to tell me she had borne my son's child and subsequently fell under the sway of the villainous Count of Brackenmoor.***

***"Last month, the Count, with help from the equally vile Count of Eventide, conspired to have me assassinated, most likely so that Jinelle's baby—my noble heir—would then inherit the ducal seat of Woodwych. The impressionable Jinelle, being manipulated by Brackenmoor no doubt, would be appointed as Duchess Regent in her baby's stead until he came of age to rule as Duke in his own right.***

**"Obviously the assassination attempt failed. Count Brackenmoor then sent me a letter two weeks later, threatening to harm my grandchild—whom I didn't even know yet existed—were I to retaliate against him. I suppose he thought I had already figured out it was he and Eventide who had tried to kill me. I hadn't, but I'm glad he was insecure enough to tip his hand. In any event, I learned I was, indeed, a grandmother, and that Jinelle and her baby were hiding in an extra-dimensional space in one of the many caves and hollowed out areas of the Gnatmarsh.**

**"I sent a rescue team, with whom I was linked telepathically, to retrieve Jinelle and my grandchild, but the team encountered heavy resistance. Jinelle was apparently being guarded by a Witch of the Bright who had filled her lair with enchanted monsters.**

**"When all was said and done, the entire rescue team lay dead with the exception of one, a windrider named Daethil [DAY-thil]. The witch fled, leaving Jinelle and her baby behind. Daethil then had to subdue Jinelle, who did not wish to be rescued. Afraid the witch would return, the windrider took Jinelle and her baby into a milder area of the swamp called 'the Knobs of Cullidor' to rest up from his near-fatal wounds before returning them to Woodwych.**

**"It has been seven days since the telepathic bond expired, and I have not heard from him since. Magical sendings to Daethil and Jinelle have gone unanswered. This could mean they are either dead, in an area shielded from telepathic magic, or otherwise not choosing to answer.**

**"I need you to go to the Knobs of Cullidor and rescue Daethil, Jinelle, and my grandchild.**

**"As you clearly saw on your way here, Adrean's Landing has a number of troops amassing. I will not disclose at this time the reasons for such, but know that due to this activity, the County of Brackenmoor is quite nervous. Therefore, I cannot allow you to enter Brackenmoor by any means that will reveal your presence; rather, you will have to covertly cross into Brackenmoor at the southernmost point of the Celadon where it meets the Gnatmarsh. That area will be devoid of Brackenmoor patrols and worried citizens.**

**"You will be taken into the Celadon by a few of my friends, dropping you off near the Brackenmoor border. You will then hike an old game trail south for about 10 miles before crossing into the County and thus the Gnatmarsh. From there, I am told you will need to head southwest for 8 miles or so until you**

**come upon an area of the swamp called the Knobs of Cullidor. You will know you have arrived when you see wooden 'knees' or 'knobs' sticking out of the ground amongst large trees. I do not know what these knobs are or why they are there.**

**"Once you have arrived, track down the exact location of Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby and guide them back the way you came to the point where you were dropped off in the Celadon. Your escorts will then return you and those you have rescued here, where Lady Bartek will give you all succor.**

**"If you return Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby by 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup>—that's 5 days from now—I may ask you to do a second mission, though this one will be optional for you. I am not at liberty to discuss that secondary mission at this time.**

**"Any questions?"**

### **Any Questions?**

Verin answers the following questions thusly:

- Who/where is Acorn?

**With a slight chuckle, the Duchess replies, "That would be me." She then gestures to the acorn image on the tabard of one of her guards.**

- What is with all the military action in Adrean's Landing?

**"I am not at liberty to discuss the matter as of yet. When you return, I will be able to tell you then."**

- What do you know of the Knobs of Cullidor?

**"Nothing, actually. Maybe one of you knowledgeable in geography or the Gnatmarsh might know."** [See "The Gnatmarsh; Knobs of Cullidor", p. 16, for appropriate Knowledge checks.]

- Would you like us to cast *divination* / *commune* / [other similar spell] to find out what happened to Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby?

**A look of hope mixed with anxiousness crosses the Duchess' face as she replies, "Oh, please do! I would be most grateful!"** [See "Divinations", p. 17, to adjudicate.]

- Who are these friends of yours who are dropping us off in the Celadon?

**"They are new allies of mine: the pegasus-mounted windriders of the Sipharel elven tribe. I'll go over those details in a moment."**

- Why won't the windriders help us save Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby?

***"The political landscape at the moment prevents them from becoming involved any further in this matter."***

- Our party possesses the ability to *teleport* and/or *windwalk*. Wouldn't it be better and faster if we found our own way there rather than going with your escorts?

***"If you are capable of rescuing Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby sooner by these alternate means, then please do! Their lives are clearly in danger, and the sooner you can rescue them, the better."***

- Do we have to take the route you set forth?

***"You are not obliged to follow the route I set forth, however, for reasons I cannot disclose at this time, you are forbidden from entering or traveling through the County of Brackenmoor where you may be seen by the populace. Only enter by way of the Celadon—even if flying."***

- Who is this Witch you spoke of earlier?

***"The rescue team who encountered her telepathically described her to me during their fight thusly: She was older Flan woman, maybe in her 50s; she wore a cloak embroidered with a symbol that is known to be used by the Witches of the Bright; and she was an arcane caster capable of casting at least 7<sup>th</sup> level spells, many of which were enchantments."***

- Do you think Jinelle is enchanted/enthralled?

***"It is certainly possible, though due to the misunderstanding last year, she may harbor ill will towards me well enough on her own."***

- What was this 'misunderstanding' that has Jinelle angry with you?

***"Jinelle came to Woodwych City last year, seeking audience with me to present her new-born baby. My chamberlain, Hingred, thought Jinelle was lying or trying to swindle me, though, so he made her leave town before she and I had a chance to meet. I never knew she had been there, much less given birth to my grandson."***

- Was Jinelle ever a prostitute / swindler / [any other term with a negative connotation]?

***Verin narrows her eyes a bit and her already deep voice huskily drops even lower as she states in a controlled and measured way with courtly formality, "Thou dost speak of the mother of the heir presumptive to the Duchy of Woodwych. Mayhap thou wouldst choose another topic to discuss, as this one is closed."*** [From

this point forward, Verin refuses to allow questions pertaining to Jinelle's past.]

- What if Jinelle refuses to come with us, and she's acting under her own free will?

***"You must convince her to return with you by any means necessary."***

- By 'convince', do you mean club her over the head?

***Verin intones, "You must convince her to return with you by any means necessary. My grandchild must be returned to Adrean's Landing."***

- What is your grandchild's name?

***"I do not know."***

- Where is Jinelle's mistress, Lahara,?

***"Lahara teleported in from Greyhawk to be part of the rescue team. When they fought the archmage in that watery cave in the Gnatmarsh, he disintegrated Lahara right in front of Jinelle. The poor girl became hysterical."***

- Where is King Lynwerd?

***"If you do not know, then you are not in a position to ask."***

- Whom do you support: Lynwerd or Sewarndt?

***"Sewarndt recently called for a vote of legitimacy from the Council of Lords: the provincial leaders of Nyronnd. My vote was against his legitimacy. That is all I shall say on the matter."***

- Are you forcing us to go on this mission? / What is the 'call to war' aspect?

***"If you are in a military organization required to muster to duty during times of war, I am empowered by His Majesty, King Lynwerd, to conscript you for this mission, and therefore you are obliged to go. For others, you are free to decline to participate if you desire."***

- Will you loan us stuff or buff us with spells to help us save your grandchild?

***"I would give and do anything in my power to save my grandson were this any other circumstance. Unfortunately, I have already allocated most of my resources to something more important than my own grandchild. That may sound cold and cruel, but I do have greater loyalties to attend to at the moment. As for casting spells on you, I have none, and the few spellcasters at my beck and call must save their protective magicks for other things. You will have to make do with whatever skills and powers you have."***

- How much will you pay us? / What's the going rate for saving grandchildren and ducal heirs?

***"For those in Nyronde military organizations called to war, this mission is simply part of your duty, and neither yields nor deserves a 'reward.' For others not so compelled to participate, while I am desperate in this hour of need, the resources of the Duchy are simply allocated elsewhere, and I am therefore unable to pay for mercenary services. And to be honest, my plea for aid was intended to be only for those who share my loyalties. If your heart is such that you shall only 'do what is right' provided you are paid, then please leave now, as I do not wish to put the life of my grandchild in the hands of those of questionable morality.***

- We're only 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level, why are you putting your grandchild's life in our inexperienced hands?

***"To be frank, I'm not exactly thrilled at the thought, but I have no choice, having already dedicated my most powerful allies and contacts elsewhere. I trust you shall do your best, though, and I am greatly appreciative of your willingness to step forward."***

Handle any other question based on Verin's knowledge of what happened. (See "Background Recap" p. 3 and "New Adventure Background" p. 6 for details.) She does not, however, yet reveal her plan to invade Brackenmoor and Eventide, since she wants to make sure her grandson is entirely out of danger first.

### **Getting Rid of Objectionable PCs**

Verin refuses to offer money and/or favors to PCs who ask for it—the mere thought of having to employ mercenaries sickens Verin; she'd rather have good-hearted people who want to help because it's the right thing to do. If PCs persist on reward issues, she abruptly dismisses them and tosses them out of the house. Her grandson has been used as a pawn once; she's not going to allow him to be made a bargaining chip as well by greedy PCs.

Verin also outright dismisses any PC who insults, antagonizes, or is otherwise disrespectful to her or the memory of Adrean. This includes crude remarks about Jinelle and Adrean's tryst back at the farmhouse-inn.

For PCs so dismissed, the adventure is over for them, and they receive 0 XP. They also suffer the same consequences, as appropriate to their meta-org affiliation, as having refused to go on the mission. (See "Refusing to Go", p. 18)

The only way Verin can be convinced to allow a dismissed party member back onto the team is by a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check (no 'aiding another' allowed) from the PC who was dismissed. An apology must be included in his roleplayed plea, or the check automatically fails. Additionally and alternatively, others in the party may try to convince the Duchess to return the errant PC to the team with a DC 25 Diplomacy check, with one player rolling and others aiding if desired.

### **Time to Go**

If the party has no further questions, read or paraphrase the following:

***Verin concludes, "I must be off now, and so must you. In fifteen minutes, eight pegasus-mounted windriders from the Sipharel elven tribe of the Celadon will arrive outside Lady Bartek's estate. You will each be partnered with one of them, and they will fly you to the drop off point in the south of the Celadon. There they will wait for you no more than three days for you to return to that place with Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby. When you do return, they will fly you back here to Lady Bartek's estate.***

***"The trip is about 135 miles and should take eight hours, with two of those hours spent hustling. If you have animal companions or other party members who are unable or unsuitable to ride upon pegasi, Lady Bartek will make special arrangements to have them transported by alternate means.***

***"Finally, this mission is to remain secret; do not reveal it to anyone. Avoid all settled areas of the County of Brackenmoor, entering that province only through the game trail shown to you by the windriders. Time is greatly of the essence, so unless you possess the ability to reach the Knobs of Cullidor faster than the method being offered you, please do not deviate from the plan.***

***"I thank you kindly for your assistance. Travel safely." And with that the Duchess wheels around and strides out through the doors whence she came, followed by her bodyguards. Widow Bartek invites you to wait here until the windriders arrive.***

The party now has 15 minutes to kill before the windriders arrive. They may wish to buff and/or fill open slots with spells. That's fine, but don't let them waste too much time on it, since no encounters happen today unless the party possesses the ability to *teleport*, *windwalk*, or otherwise arrive earlier at the Knobs of Cullidor.

If the party waits for the windriders, proceed to Encounter Two: Flight to the Celadon. Otherwise, proceed to whichever encounter is appropriate for their alternate actions.

## Encounter Two: Flight to the Celadon

Fifteen minutes after Verin departs, the windriders can be seen arriving. Just before they do, Lady Bartek ushers the PCs outside to the courtyard. If they comply read or paraphrase the following:

***Gazing west, you see the approach of what appears to be a flock of flying pegasi. Their white, winged forms are almost imperceptible against the grey of the overcast sky, but you can still observe their muscular legs maintaining stride as if in gallop. In a matter of moments, they gracefully land in the courtyard, their elven riders finally coming into full view. The clothing, weaponry, and even saddles of these elves are also various shades of creamy white, accented with pale blue and yellow trim, giving them an almost angelic appearance.***

***The lead rider dismounts his steed and approaches. He nods once before simply stating, "I am known as Amenlon [AH-men-lawn]."***

[After the briefest acknowledgement from the PCs, he continues, cutting off anyone long-winded.]

***"We are short on time; this way please." He gestures invitingly towards the pegasi while the other windriders make adjustments to their saddles to accommodate others.***

At this time the PCs are each expected to pair up with a windrider and take flight. There are 8 pegasus-mounted windriders: one for each PC, with the rest carrying excess feed and gear. The windriders' names are Amenlon [AH-men-lawn] (male lead windrider), Calrah [KAWL-ruh] (f), Elinae [EL-in-ay] (f), Firnison [FIR-niss-un] (m), Kanama [KUH-nah-muh] (f), Lamuathon [luh-MOO-ah-thun] (m), Rusar [roo-SAR] (m), and Zyeon [zy-EE-un] (m). All are wood elves.

🔮 **Windriders (8):** male and female elves Rgr-12; hp 75; see p. 63 for the full stat block.

🔮 **Warbeast Pegasi (8):** hp 94; see p. 63 for the full stat block.

Randomly determine which PC gets paired up with which windrider unless the PCs make specific requests. To evenly distribute weight amongst all the pegasi, male riders typically take on the lighter

PCs and the female windriders take on the heavier PCs.

Make special note of who is riding with Elinae, because it matters later in Encounter Four.

As these pegasi are warbeasts (bred for exceptional strength), they can carry 459 pounds before becoming encumbered. The male windriders, including their gear, weigh 190 pounds each, so they can carry an additional 269 pounds without problem. Females windriders weigh 170 pounds total. Excess gear of the PCs will have to be stored on the pack pegasi. Irregardless of weight limits, no pegasus carries more than its windrider, an accompanying PC (size Medium or smaller), and a Tiny or smaller familiar or animal companion carried by the PC.

Amenlon requests all PCs wearing armor spikes remove them for the trip while paired up with a windrider. PCs who refuse to do so are left behind but are welcome to still travel with Thilann later (see below).

### Animals and Others to Follow Later

If there are Small or larger animals the party would like to bring along, such as familiars or companions, who are unable to fly at a rate of at least 130, they will be unable to keep up with the windriders and will have to stay behind for 8 hours until transported by Thilann [thil-ANN], an elven druidess.

If requested by the PCs before they depart, Lady Bartek arranges for this druidess to arrive at the Bartek estate 7 hours from when the PCs depart. Thilann then casts *transport via plants* an hour after that, bringing along up to 3 creatures who were left behind, including any PCs. If there are Large or Huge animals left behind, she casts *reduce animal* on them first if she must in order to transport the most number of animals. (See the description of each spell for details.) The druidess then *transports* the animals to the exact location of where the PCs are dropped off by the windriders, *tree striding* away thereafter. They should arrive at about the same time as the windriders.

🔮 **Thilann:** female elf Drd-11; hp 58.

Thilann does not help out the PCs in any other way, including casting additional spells, answering questions, or even performing Heal checks. Like the windriders, she wishes to remain neutral in the political maneuverings at the moment, and she is risking enough as it is to play taxi for this mission. She also does not deviate from the destination of her spell. Any creatures Thilann is unable to *transport* are unfortunately unable to go on the trip without PC intervention.

## The Long Flight

After the PCs are paired up with the windriders read or paraphrase the following. (Skip this section if the PCs *windwalk*, *teleport*, or otherwise get to the Celadon/Gnatmarsh on their own.)

***With a broad lift of his hand, Amenlon [AH-men-lawn] commands the windriders to take flight. The pegasi canter a few steps and then leap into the air, bringing down their muscular, feathered wings in a near-silent whoosh that propels them some sixty feet diagonally upwards.***

***In a matter of moments, you are a few hundred feet above the ground. The pegasi, glistening with moisture from the misty air, fly in a triangular formation with Amenlon [AH-men-lawn] on point. Thus begins a journey well over one hundred miles across the Duchy of Woodwyck.***

If they are interested, allow PCs to roleplay for a bit with the windriders. Generally, the windriders are quite friendly to other elves, as well as current members of the Nyronid Wilderness Alliance meta-org and any PC who previously received a favor specifically from the Sipharel elves. Any PC who rides his own pegasus acquired from the Sipharel elves in NYR3-I04 Force of Nature is treated as a valued friend and ally. Other PCs are treated politely, but not exactly cordially. Rude or otherwise offensive PCs are treated poorly and risk being dropped off prematurely at your discretion.

Remember to note how the PC paired with Elinae interacts with her.

If a PC does anger his windrider or Amenlon enough to be dropped off prematurely (and most likely removed from the adventure), the Diplomacy DCs needed to convince the windriders to change their minds are the same as in the section Getting Rid of Objectionable PCs (p. 22), except all such DCs are 5 lower than those listed (or 2 lower in the case of half-orc PCs, whom windriders find exceptionally repugnant). The same penalties for refusing to go on the adventure are also attached to the PC, if applicable. (See "Refusing to Go", p. 18).

The 135 mile trip takes 8 hours, with 2 of them spent hustling. This would normally damage the pegasi, but the steeds are healed by their windriders along the way with *cure* spells, so no actual discomfort or damage occurs or remains. The route taken is essentially west-southwest towards Star Haunt for 80 miles, avoiding the border with Brackenmoor. Then they turn southwest for the remaining 55 miles.

## Arriving at Long Last

Once the pegasi reach the target destination, read or paraphrase the following:

***The journey at an end, the pegasi descend to the forest below. Deftly spiraling down, each noble steed passes through a gap in the forest canopy and lands amongst low-lying ferns near a brook. Muted thuds fill the air as their hooves strike solid ground for the first time in hours.***

***"We have arrived," announces the lead windrider, Amenlon [AH-men-lawn], as he walks his pegasus to the sparkling water of the brook. "We shall rest here the night, and you shall set out for the Gnatmarsh on the morrow while we wait here for three days." The other windriders dismount, inviting you to do the same, so they may unbuckle the saddles and allow the pegasi to roam and rest unfettered.***

The PCs and animals arriving from Adrean's Landing via Thilann's *transport via plants* spell also arrive at this time, provided nothing has happened to alter the arrivals of either group.

## Windriders to Wait for Three Days

If the PCs ask the windriders to accompany them to the Gnatmarsh, the Sipharel elves are quite emphatic they wish they could help—especially since one of their own, Daethyl, is also being rescued by the party—however, they are forbidden by their tribal chief from aiding the Duchess beyond escorting the party to this location. (The Sipharel and most of the other elves and woodsmen of the Celadon have long been on good terms with Romadnen Beremen, the Count of Brackenmoor. [See "Brackenmoor; Romadnen Beremen" in the section on Knowledge Checks, p. 16, for more information.]) While the elves are no longer enemies of Verin, they are barely her allies and therefore unwilling to enter Beremen's lands under these circumstances.

The windriders will remain here at the camp for three days, departing at 8:00 am on the 24<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime unless the PCs have returned earlier. If the party has not returned by the windriders' departure time on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the PCs will have to return to Adrean's Landing on their own.

## To Camp or Trudge Onward

It should now be around 5:30 pm on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime. The sun is just setting, and it will be completely dark by 7:00 pm. If the PCs contemplate pushing forward with the 10 mile trek to the Brackenmoor border, Amenlon warns them they are in a dangerous area of the Celadon, adding it is nearly nightfall. The creatures that hunt the forest at night tend to be far more dangerous

than those that hunt in the daylight. Further, thick fog rolls in during the night, which obscures vision, reduces movement, and makes it easier to get lost.

If the PCs ignore Amenlon's advice and decide to continue pushing forward with the 10 mile trek to the Brackenmoor border, proceed to Encounter Three: Hiking the Celadon at Night. Otherwise, if they camp with the windriders, skip to Encounter Four: Camped with the Windriders, p. 26.

## Encounter Three: Hiking the Celadon at Night

This encounter only occurs if the PCs are traveling by foot in the Celadon Forest at night. If they are *windwalking* or similarly bypassing this area at a very rapid pace, they avoid this encounter entirely.

Hiking the Celadon during the hours of darkness is against the advice of Amenlon. Be sure he has impressed upon the party the dangers involved, as described in "To Camp or Trudge Onward" in the preceding encounter. Those who do brave these woods at night risk getting lost and encountering a monster, as below-described.

It is officially dark at 7:00 pm. At 2:00 am, the fog rolls in, obscures vision, and slows movement as described in "Weather and Moon" on p. 14. Adjudicate accordingly.

### Darkness and Travel Time

Because the moon is new, there is only starlight by which to see, and even that is obscured by storm clouds. Therefore, it is very dark at night. Any PC without darkvision or a light source is effectively blind while traveling in such conditions and moves at half speed.

Furthermore, if parties move off the game trail, their movement is halved again, possibly resulting in quarter movement.

### The Risk of Getting Lost

The PC leading the rest of the party must have a light source or darkvision; otherwise, he automatically leads the party astray and causes them to become lost within the first hour of travel in the dark.

At 2:00 am, the fog rolls in and obscures the trail, so even with a light source or darkvision, the lead PC must make a DC 12 Survival check (and may take 10) each hour to stay on the trail; otherwise, he and his party become lost after following small side trails deeper into the woods that eventually disappear.

For parties who purposefully travel off the trail, even with a light source or darkvision, the lead PC must make a DC 15 Survival check (and may take 10) each hour or also become lost.

See "Getting Lost" on p. 86 of the *DMG* for details on how that affects the PCs and what it takes for them to find their way back to the trail, the Gnatmarsh, or the windrider camp. Adjudicate as necessary. It is certainly possible the PCs may fail this mission if the delays caused by them being lost result in the death's of Jinelle and her baby.

### The Risk of an Encounter

Starting at 7:00 pm—whether or not the party is lost—there is a 5% chance per hour of having one of the following encounters in addition to the praying mantises in Encounter Five. This chance increases by 20% for every light source used by the PCs. Even if the PCs stop and camp along the way, they still risk an encounter each hour as if they were traveling. (The only safe place to camp is the windrider camp and the Gnatmarsh.)

If an encounter is determined, consult the following table to see which creature it is, based on the APL at which the table is playing. No one can complain they weren't warned...

➤ **APL 2:** Owlbear (1); EL 4; hp 52; *Monster Manual*, p. 206. Tactics as per the *MM*.

➤ **APL 4:** Tendriculos (1); EL 6; hp 94; *Monster Manual*, p. 241. Tactics as per the *MM*.

➤ **APL 6:** Grey Render (1); EL 8; hp 125; *Monster Manual*, p. 138. Tactics as per the *MM*.

➤ **APL 8:** Dread Wraith (1); EL 11; 104 hp; *Monster Manual*, p. 258. Tactics as per the *MM*.

➤ **APL 10:** Beholder (1); EL 13; hp 142; *Monster Manual*, p. 25 and 26. Tactics as per the *MM*.

➤ **APL 12:** Nightwalker (1); EL 16; hp 178; *Monster Manual*, pp. 195 and 196–197. Tactics as per the "Tactics-by-Round" entry on p 197 except that it never uses the Crush Item supernatural ability.

On your battlemat, draw a generic forest layout, using Map #1: Mantis Ambush in Encounter Five for inspiration. The creature is encountered 2d6x10 feet away, the maximum spottable distance in a dense forest. This creature is not lying in wait for an ambush; its path has merely crossed that of the party's. Adjust the positioning as appropriate if spells, abilities, or other precautions taken by the party alerts them to the presence of the creature sooner.

These monsters are aggressive, either because they are territorial (owlbear, tendriculos, grey render) or are evil and looking to slay something (dread wraith, beholder, Nightwalker). If

the PCs flee back to the windrider encampment, the encountered creature does not pursue.

All creatures, however, pursue PCs who flee south closer to the Gnatmarsh border, breaking off the chase only when all PCs are 10 x the creature's movement speed away. This may prove quite deadly if the party flees into the praying mantises of Encounter Five. (See the section "Seven Miles Down the Trail..." on p. 28.)

## Encounter Four: Camped with the Windriders

If the PCs heed Amenlon's advice and camp with the windriders for the night before setting off to the Gnatmarsh, they find the Sipharel elves to be most skilled at setting up the campsite. Within an hour, the windriders, all of whom are rangers, catch enough game to feed the entire party.

They make a rather large campfire as the last vestiges of daylight disappear from the sky. Paranoid PCs may be perturbed at this, thinking the fire will attract encounters. The windriders, though, are quite confident the large group of 20-something rangers, adventurers, and warbeast pegasi will be able to handle anything that dares approach.

As all are seated around the campfire, the windriders maintain the same levels of friendliness as described in the section "The Long Flight" in Encounter Two.

### Elinae's Approach

Elinae Ruavel is a windrider secretly in love with Daethil. A daughter of the leader of the Sipharel tribe (himself a wood elf named Mithnarel [mith-NAR-uhl]), she regrets never having expressed her true feelings to Daethil prior to his disappearance in the Gnatmarsh, and now she longs to help rescue him. As she and the other windriders have been forbidden by their tribal chief from assisting the Duchess on this mission beyond merely flying the party to this drop-off point, she is very cautious about how she might further give aid.

First, Elinae decides which of the PCs she is going to approach. Her first choice is the PC who was paired up with her for the flight from Adrean's Landing, provided the PC is (a) not a half-orc, (b) obviously not lawful\*, which would be obvious in the case of a paladin or monk, and (c) has not angered or insulted her. Her second choice is any other non-lawful elven PC. Her third choice is any other non-lawful, non-half-orc PC. Her last choice is anyone else.

\* As she does not have a *detect law* ability, it is possible Elinae accidentally ends up

approaching a lawful PC who was not wearing his lawfulness on his sleeve.

If there are several PCs who fit the bill for her second, third, fourth choices, pick the PC of the shyest player who you think enjoys roleplaying encounters but normally gets overshadowed by the louder, more RP-aggressive players.

Once she has chosen a PC, pull the player aside and read or paraphrase the following:

*As the windriders sit around the campfire that crackles and casts dancing shadows about the campsite, you notice one of them has gotten up and is tending to her pegasus mare. It is the elven lass Elinae [EL-in-ay]. While brushing her steed's mane, she glances at you for a moment and then looks back to her mount. A moment later, she glances at you again, this time staring a moment longer before turning her back and taking a few steps further away from the campfire. With a final half-glance around her shoulder in your direction she steps into the darkness beyond.*

Wait for the PC's response, if any. If the PC wants to do a Sense Motive on her actions, a successful DC 10 check tells him Elinae probably wants to meet with him privately.

If the PC doesn't indicate a willingness to act upon this, the encounter is over. Elinae returns in less than a minute with some firewood she picked up and throws it on the campfire, having abandoned any plans to help the PCs further. The only way to salvage the encounter is if the PC later approaches Elinae to find out what was going on.

### Meeting with Elinae

🔮 **Elinae Ruavel:** female elf Rgr-12; hp 75; see p. 63 for the windriders stat block.

Once the PC approaches Elinae just outside the light radius of the campfire, she can be seen gathering some firewood. She looks up and smiles. *"I think it's going to be cold tonight,"* she initially offers. After a few exchanges of small talk with the PC, she gets to the purpose of the rendezvous.

*Clasping her hands together and exhaling in resolve, Elinae [EL-in-ay] cuts to the chase. "Because of the politics involved, we of the Sipharel have been forbidden by our tribal elders from helping you in any manner other than bringing you here from Adrean's Landing. I find myself struggling with that decree, however, as one of the people you are looking to rescue is someone I care deeply for."*

*She looks down for a moment before quietly continuing, "I love Daethil [DAY-thil], and I've yet to tell him so. I just can't sit back*

***now and not try to save his life." Looking up again with a slight look of concern, she says, "I do not wish to put you on the spot, but would you be willing to be discreet and not inform any of the other windriders if I gave you some things that might help you on your journey?"***

If the PC refuses to be discreet, Elinae apologizes for putting the PC on the spot and ends the encounter, returning to the campfire with her firewood. Otherwise, if the PC does agree to be discreet, read or paraphrase the following.

***Digging into a satchel slung across her chest, Elinae [EL-in-ay] continues, "I give unto your party these three things: a magic wand, two mystical elixirs, and this necklace of enchantment. These are all yours to keep. All that I ask is that you do what you can to bring Daethil home alive." She then hesitates briefly before adding, "And thank you for your discretion."***

Elinae has given the PC magic items that technically belong to the Sipharel elven tribe, but she is within her authority as daughter of the tribal leader to use them as she sees fit. The only order she is breaking here is helping the PCs in the first place; that such help is coming from the tribal reserves, though, is certainly salt on the wound.

The exact items given vary by APL, as follows:

**APL 2:** *wand of cure light wounds, a potion of barkskin +2, a potion of nature's favor +1\*, and a necklace of the wild beast with 2 beads of calming\*.*

**APL 4:** *wand of cure light wounds, a potion of barkskin +3, a potion of nature's favor +2\*, and a necklace of the wild beast with a bead of calming and a bead of servitude\*.*

**APL 6:** *wand of cure moderate wounds (10 charges), a potion of barkskin +4, a potion of nature's favor +3\*, and a necklace of the wild beast with a bead of servitude and a bead of the fang\*.*

**APL 8:** *wand of cure moderate wounds (10 charges), a potion of barkskin +5, a potion of nature's favor +4\*, necklace of the wild beast with a bead of calming, a bead of the fang, and a bead of beckoning\*.*

**APL 10:** *wand of cure serious wounds (10 charges), a potion of barkskin +5, a potion of nature's favor +5\*, and a necklace of the wild beast with a bead of calming, a bead of beckoning, and a bead of the great beast\*.*

**APL 12:** *wand of cure critical wounds (10 charges), a potion of barkskin +5, a potion of nature's favor +5\*, and a necklace of the wild beast with a bead of servitude, a bead of beckoning, and a bead of the great beast\*.*

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

She identifies the items fully by name if the PC asks for clarification.

### **Treasure:**

**APL 2:** *Goods: 0 gp; Loot: 0 gp; Magic: wand of cure light wounds (62.5 gp, minus 1.25 for every charge used), a potion of barkskin +2 (25 gp), a potion of nature's favor +1\* (25 gp), and necklace of the wild beast with 2 beads of calming (83.33 gp).*

**APL 4:** *Goods: 0 gp; Loot: 0 gp; Magic: wand of cure light wounds (62.5 gp, minus 1.25 for every charge used), a potion of barkskin +3 (CL 6<sup>th</sup>) (50 gp), a potion of nature's favor +2\* (CL 6<sup>th</sup>) (50 gp), and necklace of the wild beast with a bead of calming and a bead of servitude (166.66 gp).*

**APL 6:** *Goods: 0 gp; Loot: 0 gp; Magic: wand of cure moderate wounds (10 charges) (75 gp, minus 7.5 for every charge used), a potion of barkskin +4 (CL 9<sup>th</sup>) (75 gp), a potion of nature's favor +3\* (CL 9<sup>th</sup>) (75 gp), and necklace of the wild beast with a bead of servitude and a bead of the fang (250 gp).*

**APL 8:** *Goods: 0 gp; Loot: 0 gp; Magic: wand of cure moderate wounds (10 charges) (75 gp, minus 7.5 for every charge used), a potion of barkskin +5 (CL 12<sup>th</sup>) (100 gp), a potion of nature's favor +4\* (CL 12<sup>th</sup>) (100 gp), and necklace of the wild beast with a bead of calming, a bead of the fang, and a bead of beckoning (333.33 gp).*

**APL 10:** *Goods: 0 gp; Loot: 0 gp; Magic: wand of cure serious wounds (10 charges) (187.5 gp, minus 18.75 for every charge used), a potion of barkskin +5 (CL 12<sup>th</sup>) (100 gp), a potion of nature's favor +5\* (CL 15<sup>th</sup>) (125 gp), and necklace of the wild beast with a bead of calming, a bead of beckoning, and a bead of the great beast (416.66 gp).*

**APL 12:** *Goods: 0 gp; Loot: 0 gp; Magic: wand of cure critical wounds (10 charges) (350 gp, minus 35 for every charge used), a potion of barkskin +5 (CL 12<sup>th</sup>) (100 gp), a potion of nature's favor +5\* (CL 15<sup>th</sup>) (125 gp), and necklace of the wild beast with a bead of servitude, a bead of beckoning, and a bead of the great beast (500 gp).*

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

### **Time to Sleep**

When it is time to sleep, Amenlon informs the PCs the windriders will take all the watches, inviting the party to enjoy a full night's rest. He doesn't mind if PCs insist on taking a watch, though; he is just being courteous.

At around 2:00 am, the thick fog rolls in. The campfire, however, keeps it at bay at a distance of 15 ft. Nothing else of note occurs during the night.

### **The Next Morning**

*The sound of a drizzling rain falling upon the forest canopy fills the morning air. The fog bank that rolled in during the night is barely beginning to dissipate and will probably be gone by 8:00 am—an hour after sunrise. Amenlon [AH-men-lawn] stokes the campfire to stave off the chill of the wee hours, while another windrider prepares some breakfast.*

The PCs are free to depart whenever they desire, though they risk getting lost if they leave before 8:00 am when it is foggy. It is now the 21<sup>st</sup> of Flocktime. Amenlon reminds the party the windriders will remain here at the camp for three days, departing at 8:00 am on the 24<sup>th</sup> unless the PCs have returned earlier. Upon the PCs' return, the windriders will take them back to Adrean's Landing.

If the party proceeds down the game trail, continue on to Encounter Five: Down the Game Trail. Otherwise, proceed to whichever other encounter is appropriate.

## **Encounter Five: Down the Game Trail**

Whenever the PCs leave the windrider encampment and head down the game trail towards the Gnatmarsh/Brackenmoor border, read or paraphrase the following, adjusting for fog, lighting, and weather conditions as necessary:

*The game trail leading south from the windrider camp follows a brook cheerfully babbling over rocks, clumps of moss, and other obstacles.*

If the PCs are traveling at night, refer to Encounter Three: Hiking the Celadon at Night for special rules on darkness and fog and the chances for a nocturnal encounter.

### **Travel Time**

In overland movement, parties travel 1/10 their slowest member's movement rate in miles per hour. For example, a group whose slowest member has a movement rate of 15 ft moves at 1.5 miles per hour; 20 ft = 2 mph; 30 ft = 3 mph; etc. See "Darkness and Travel Time", p.25, in Encounter Three for details on the travel penalties for hiking at night and off the trail.

### **The Risk of Getting Lost**

There is no chance of getting lost if PCs stay on the game trail. For parties who purposefully

travel off the trail, not only do they move at half speed, the lead PC must make a DC 15 Survival check (and may take 10) each hour or become lost.

See "Getting Lost" on p. 86 of the *DMG* for details on how that affects the PCs and what it takes for them to find their way back to the trail, the Gnatmarsh, or the windrider camp. Adjudicate as necessary. It is certainly possible the PCs may fail this mission if the delays caused by them being lost result in the death's of Jinelle and her baby.

### **Seven Miles Down the Trail...**

As the PCs proceed down the trail, they enter the transitional area between forest and swamp. Describe how the temperature begins to rise slightly and how the humidity increases. The buzzing of insects also swells, and the ground becomes moist and spongy.

Seven miles down the trail from the windrider encampment, in an area long ago subjected to a *plant growth* spell, is one or more (depending on APL) half-fey giant praying mantises. These creatures, while acting mostly on insectile instinct, do have a measure of intelligence, and they patiently cling to the far sides of trees near the game trail, waiting to ambush anything that passes by.

The party's movement rate determines the time of day when these creatures are encountered. If the PCs are moving at a rate of 15 ft, it takes them 4 hrs, 40 mins to walk the 7 miles from the windrider camp. A rate of 20 ft means they arrive in 3 hrs, 30 mins. A rate of 30 ft yields an arrival time of 2 hrs, 20 mins. Etc.

### **The Attack**

Refer to Map #1: Mantis Ambush, p. 73, for positioning of the creatures in relation to the PCs when they are first encountered. The monsters initiate their attack sequence when the first opponent enters square O9 of the map, marked "Attack Zone".

If the party is Hiding and Moving Silently down the trail, it is possible the mantises fail their respective opposed Spot and Listen checks, allowing the party to sneak on by. If that occurs, the PCs earn full XP for the encounter. On the other hand, if the PCs bypass this ambush by flying high above the forest canopy, teleporting from the windrider encampment to the Gnatmarsh, etc., they do not receive XP for this encounter (but they can make it up later in Encounter Ten).

**Movement and Terrain Modifiers:** Every square through which the trail passes on the map is considered clear and unobstructed, imposing no movement penalties. The ground is also relatively

clear for every square adjacent to a trail square, also imposing no movement penalties. That means a huge 15'x15' creature can essentially 'straddle' the trail and not take any movement penalties as it passes through the area.

All other squares on the map, however, are considered light undergrowth and cost 2 squares to move into. They also provide concealment and increase the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2.

**Body Shape:** Due to the unique shape of the mantises' long, slender bodies, while they are clinging to the trees waiting in ambush, they essentially lie flat against them and do not obnoxiously stick out like 15-foot cubes stuck on the trunk. This would be one of those instances where the core rules conflict with common sense and a special adjudication is being made.

**Spell-like Attacks:** When a mantis invokes its spell-like abilities, it is merely by a stare, so unless the PCs have previously made their Spot checks, they will not know from where these attacks are coming if the mantises are still hiding in the trees. Also, the mantises do not have any ranks in Concentration and never try to invoke their spell-like abilities on the defensive. However, they are smart enough to take a five foot step back if possible before invoking if it would mean avoiding an attack of opportunity.

**Recognizing the Mantises:** While clinging to a tree, the giant praying mantises do not automatically appear fey-like (for APLs 2–6), though they do appear "corrupted" at APLs 8–12. When first spotted, PCs who make a DC 5 Knowledge (Nature) check recognize the creature as "a giant praying mantis with bright green and mottled brown coloration". Otherwise, the PCs merely see "a giant bright green insect creature with a long, slender body, a triangular head and massive forearms." When the mantises take flight (which sounds like a titanic June bug), the brilliant butterfly-patterned undersides of their wings may give them away as half-fey if a PC makes a DC 10 Knowledge (Nature) check. If that check is 15 or more, they also know half-fey creatures have DR 5/cold iron. If that check is 20 or more, they also learn half-fey are immune to enchantment effects.

At APLs 8–12, the mantises also have the Corrupted template from *Book of Vile Darkness* (see Appendix Three: New Monsters - Corrupted Template, p. 72). This changes the mantises' type to aberration, but they still retain the half-fey appearance, special abilities and qualities. The only physical difference in appearance are the heavily jagged claws, exaggeratedly large mandibles, and the mutated facial features, which appears to be that of melted wax. A DC 10 Knowledge (Dungeoneering) check identifies the

creature as an aberration; DC 15 Knowledge (Religion) identifies it as a corrupted creature which has DR/magic; DC 20 Knowledge (Religion) PCs learn of its acid immunity; DC 25 Knowledge (Religion) PCs learn it causes vile damage that can only be healed while within a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

Give additional information for both creature types for even higher Knowledge check results as you see fit.

**Tactics:** The tactics used by the mantises vary by APL, as set forth below. The Encounter Levels for this fight incorporate the Challenge Ratings of the monster(s) involved, as well as a +1 for the circumstance of 'waiting in ambush' and the tactics used by the creatures.

**The 'Claws' Attack:** The language used in the Praying Mantis entry of the *Monster Manual* regarding the "claws" attack may be confusing. For the purposes of this fight, the praying mantis' full attack routine is a single "claws" attack and a bite. It is not two claw attacks and a bite as some might interpret.

**A Note on Confusion:** While these insect-fey only have a 2 Intelligence, they learned long ago that creatures under the effects of *confusion* automatically attack the last person who attacked them while the spell is in effect, overriding the random roll on the *confusion* table (see Appendix Three: New Monsters - Half-Fey Template, p. 71 or p. 212 of the *PHB*.) Therefore, the mantises will not throw hostile spells or physically attack anyone who clearly exhibits a *confused* state, and that includes opponents who (a) babble or (b) attack their own allies.

If an opponent gets the result of "flees", "acts normally", or "attack the caster", the mantises mistakenly do not consider them *confused*, and target them normally with other effects and attacks. If all opponents remaining in combat are *confused* by Round 4, the mantises will go ahead and attack them normally, regardless of *confusion*.

Unless the PC has spotted the Mantis who *confused* him, a result of "attacks the caster" is impossible to resolve, so the PC merely babbles instead. A result of "flees from caster", however, does work even if the caster is unknown.

**Vile Damage:** At APLs 8–12, the mantises, in addition to their normal damage, deal 6 points of 'vile damage' with each melee attack, which might be described to PCs as a wound so corrupted with evil that the attack damages the character's very soul. This damage can only be healed while within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. See "Vile Damage" in Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66 for more information. PCs may make a DC 15 Knowledge (Religion) or DC 17 Spellcraft check

once they realize their wounds are not healing fully to know that *consecrate* or *hallow* will help them.

**Possible Targets:** When contemplating targets to attack and target with spell-like abilities, the mantises consider all creatures in the party equally, and that includes mounts, animal companions, etc. Tiny or smaller creatures in the party typically escape their initial notice, however, unless such creatures attack or otherwise draw attention to themselves. Additionally, the mantises, having no knowledge of such things, do not specifically target opponents based on what they think their favored saves are. For instance, they do not go out of their way to only target 'big dumb fighter types' with their Will-based spells.

**Party Flees / PCs Die:** If the party flees, the mantises will pursue, flying if necessary to catch the PCs, until each mantis has a corpse to feast upon. For instance, if at an APL 2 table an animal companion dies and the party flees, the mantis will not pursue if the animal's body is left behind. On the other hand, if at an APL 12 table a PC has been killed and the party decides to flee, two of the three mantises will pursue, with the third staying behind to eat the corpse. Bodies left behind are almost entirely consumed by the mantises, therefore requiring *resurrection* spells to return to life, provided the party can return and retrieve the remains.

## **APL 2 (EL 5)**

🔥 **One Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** hp 18; see Appendix One, p. 53.

**Special Lowbie Note:** If the party contains 3 or more PCs who are level 1, the mantis flees as soon as it has 6 hp or less remaining.

### **Tactics:**

Round 1 (surprise or normal)—*faerie fire* (purple) on the PCs in the front and remain hiding;

Round 2—*sleep* on the most number of opponents possible and remain hiding;

Round 3—move action to fly to the ground at a 45 degree angle and land, then a standard action to demoralize one opponent it threatens with an Intimidate check (see p. 76 PHB) by spreading its wings menacingly;

Round 4—having given the PCs essentially 3 free rounds to weaken or kill it, continue the rest of the fight in melee as you deem fit, spreading attacks amongst threatened opponents if possible.

## **APL 4 (EL 7)**

🔥 **One Advanced Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** hp 58; see Appendix One, p. 54.

### **Tactics:**

Round 1 (surprise or normal)—*confusion* on the most number of opponents possible and remain hiding;

Round 2—if all opponents are babbling or attacking each other, *protection from law*; otherwise, *glitterdust* on opponents obviously not *confused*;

Round 3—if all opponents are babbling or attacking each other, delay and remain hiding; otherwise, move action to fly to the ground at a 45 degree angle and land, then a standard action to invoke *Tasha's hideous laughter* at closest opponent not *confused* (even though *Tasha's* spell-like ability only requires a stare, the mantis nevertheless does a silly little dance as its 'joke' that doesn't translate well with non-fey per the spell);

Round 4—continue the rest of the fight in melee as you deem fit, spreading attacks amongst all threatened opponents if possible.

## **APL 6 (EL 9)**

🔥 **One Advanced Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** hp 78; see Appendix One, p. 55.

### **Tactics:**

Round 1 (surprise or normal)—quickened *glitterdust* on the front ranks of the party followed by *confusion* on the back ranks and remain hiding;

Round 2—if all opponents are babbling or attacking each other, *protection from law*; otherwise, *hold monster* on an opponent obviously not *confused*;

Round 3—move action to fly to the ground at a 45 degree angle and land, then a standard action to invoke *hold monster* if not used yet or *Tasha's hideous laughter* at closest opponent not obviously *confused*;

Round 4—continue the rest of the fight in melee, spreading attacks amongst all threatened opponents if possible and using other spell-like abilities as you see fit.

## **APL 8 (EL 11)**

🔥 **One Advanced Corrupted Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** hp 114; see Appendix One, p. 57.

### **Tactics:**

Round 1 (surprise or normal)—quickened *glitterdust* on the front ranks of the party followed by *confusion* on the back ranks and remain hiding;

Round 2—if all opponents are babbling or attacking each other, *protection from law*;

otherwise, *hold monster* on an opponent obviously not *confused*;

**Round 3**—move action to fly to the ground at any angle and land, then a standard action to invoke *hold monster* if not used yet or *Tasha's hideous laughter* at closest opponent not obviously *confused* (even though *Tasha's* spell-like ability only requires a stare, the mantis nevertheless does a silly little dance as its 'joke' that doesn't translate well with non-fey per the spell);

**Round 4**—continue the rest of the fight in melee, spreading attacks amongst all threatened opponents if possible and using other spell-like abilities as you see fit. If an opponent is dealing substantial damage to them, they may invoke their *eyebite* attack against him.

### **APL 10 (EL 13)**

🔥 **Two Advanced Corrupted Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantises:** hp 114, 114; see Appendix One, p. 58.

#### **Tactics:**

Mantises #1 and #2 are a mated pair (no, the female didn't bite off the male's head) and cooperate as a team.

**Round 1** (surprise or normal)—Each mantis invokes a quickened *glitterdust* on the party (#1 at front ranks, #2 at the back ranks) followed by *protection from law* on themselves, while still hiding;

**Round 2**—Each mantis invokes *confusion* on the opponents closest to them respectively (which may end up being the same PCs), while still hiding;

**Round 3**—If all opponents are babbling or attacking each other, then both mantises delay; otherwise, each mantis invokes *hold monster* on the opponent closest to them respectively (which may end up being the same PC), and takes a move action to fly down at any angle to land as close to that PC as possible;

**Round 4**—If they haven't done so already, both mantises fly down and engage in melee attacks as you deem fit, spreading attacks amongst all threatened opponents if possible. If an opponent is dealing substantial damage to them, they may invoke their *eyebite* attack against him.

### **APL 12 (EL 15)**

🔥 **Three Advanced Corrupted Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantises:** hp 114, 114, 114; see Appendix One, p. 59.

#### **Tactics:**

Mantises #1 and #2 follow the tactics exactly as in APL 10. Mantis #3, who is in competition with #1 and #2 for food, readies an action until he sees any opponents leaving the battlefield, either because they are fleeing from *confusion* or *eyebite* or because they just want to retreat. At that moment, his readied action goes off, and he targets his *hold monster* ability at that opponent, closing in with melee attacks and other spell-like abilities in subsequent rounds. If attacked sooner (maybe because a PC Spotted him hiding), he enters combat at that point, using whatever attacks you deem fit.

### **Aftermath**

If the party continues down the path towards the Gnatmarsh, proceed to Encounter Six: In the Gnatmarsh, otherwise proceed to whichever encounter is appropriate. Note, characters who suffered vile damage from the corrupted mantises at APLs 8–12 can only heal that damage while within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell.

## **Encounter Six: In the Gnatmarsh**

After the encounter with the mantises, the party need travel only three more miles before entering the Gnatmarsh proper. Compute travel time normally to determine what time of day they arrive. Unlike the Celadon, encounters in this part of the Gnatmarsh are not particularly deadlier at night, so only darkness and fog are factors for night forays. Whenever the party arrives here—be it via the game trail or through teleportation—read or paraphrase the following:

***The warm, sticky air and the buzzing of countless millions of insects are sure indicators you have arrived in the Gnatmarsh. Still quite close to the Celadon Forest, the stench of rotting garbage is practically absent. Tall, densely growing reeds compete for space with towering swamp trees. A thick layer of mist twelve to eighteen inches high covers what could be anything from muddy ground to deeper pools of standing water. There are no highways, roads, or obvious trails leading anywhere else.***

From here, the PCs will need to start heading towards the Knobs of Cullidor, which lies 8 miles to the southwest.

### **Travel Time**

Because there are no highways, roads, or trails anywhere in this area of the Gnatmarsh, the PCs' movement is one half their normal speed. In

overland movement, parties travel 1/10 their slowest member's movement rate in miles per hour. For example, a group whose slowest member has a modified movement rate of 7.5 ft moves at 3/4 a mile per hour (taking 10 hours, 40 minutes to walk the 8 mile trek from the end of the game trail to the Knobs of Cullidor); a movement rate of 10 ft. yields an overland speed of 1 mph (taking 8 hrs); 15 ft = 1.5 mph (taking 5 hrs, 20 mins; etc.

These speeds may be reduced even further—down to a quarter of normal movement—if the party travels at night without proper means of light or during the foggy hours of 2:00 am to 8:00 am.

Unlike the night fog, the blanket of mist that covers the ground is present at all times. Measuring 12 to 18 inches high, it swirls and parts somewhat easily as PCs move through it, giving glimpses of the terrain immediately in front of them. This allows PCs to avoid most terrain hazards without difficulty, though they may still be wary of stepping on a patch of quicksand or the like. The mist does not hinder or affect movement rates.

### **The Risk of Getting Lost**

The PC leading the party through the Gnatmarsh must make a DC 10 Survival check (and may take 10) each hour or cause the party to become lost. See "Getting Lost" on p. 86 of the *DMG* for details on how that affects the PCs and what it takes for them to find their way back on course. Adjudicate as necessary.

### **Needing to Camp?**

Depending on their movement rate, the PCs will most likely need to camp for the night before reaching the Knobs of Cullidor. A PC who makes a DC 12 Survival check (and may take 10) is able to find an appropriate place to camp for the night, nestled in the low-lying branches of a massive tree, in a hollow of a hillock, or otherwise off the water soaked ground and out of the muck.

Nothing happens during any night aside from the fog that creepily rolls in from 2:00 am to 8:00 am.

### **Arriving at the Knobs**

Provided the party generally maintains a southwesterly direction, they arrive at the Knobs of Cullidor. When that occurs, proceed to Encounter Seven: The Knobs of Cullidor. Otherwise, proceed to the encounter most appropriate.

## **Encounter Seven: The Knobs of Cullidor**

When the party arrives at the Knobs of Cullidor, they will have entered a waterier area of the swamp. Here, they must trudge through water that ranges in depth from 1 foot to 4 feet. As before, 12 to 18 inches of mist rests on the surface. The PC leading the party can easily move around the deeper pockets and stick to the shallower areas, so the heads of wee folk are never below water, although anything shorter than 2' 7" will be moving at half-rate through the obscuring mist at times.

Anyone having brought a skiff or a *folding boat* or similar item can use it without any problems in these shallow waters—and may find it preferable.

Once the PCs have made accommodations for this change in terrain, read or paraphrase the following:

***Based upon the descriptions given previously, it appears you have arrived in the area of the Gnatmarsh known as the Knobs of Cullidor. Rising from the perpetually present low-lying mist are massive swamp trees that tower some 70 feet in the air. Their trunks taper upward from their wide, flaring bases, where massive roots combine to form supporting buttresses. Hundreds of gnarled knobs can barely be seen peeking through the mist in the space between the trees. A few of these wooden protrusions rise a good 6 to 10 inches above the mist, but the majority are content to remain out of sight.***

[If even a single PC is capable of being seen by low-light vision, call for Listen checks. The DC is 9 for those at the front of the party; for the rest, the DC is modified by +1 for every 10 feet they are behind the front ranks. For a party that is flying, also modify the DC by +1 for every 10 feet of altitude. For those who make the check, read or paraphrase the following:]

***At about this time you hear a tiny voice crying out in a sad, belabored manner, "Help me..."***

If the party decides to investigate the cry, continue on to the subsection, "Nittle, the Talking Banana Slug" immediately following. Otherwise, if they don't trigger the encounter (for instance by being entirely *invisible*) or don't hear the cry or choose to ignore it, skip down to the subsection after that, "Finding the Cave".

### **Nittle, the Talking Banana Slug**

The party has encountered Nittle, the Talking Banana Slug—or more accurately, Nittle, the

mischievous pixie polymorphed into a talking banana slug.

Still within a few miles of the Celadon, Nittle has come here invisible looking to gather the delicious nectar of a rare flower that grows only in swampy areas. When the PCs arrive, he sees this as the perfect opportunity to trick any miserly folk out of their wealth. Nittle has no knowledge of Daethil, Jinelle, or her baby, having barely arrived here a few hours before the PCs.

After the party makes their Listen checks, they must make Spot checks to see him in slug form (his invisibility is gone) perched atop one of the knobs 30 feet away from the front-ranked PCs. The DC for those in the front is 15. If the party fails to spot him initially, he cries out, **"Over here! Over here!"**, allowing new checks with a lower DC of 11.

A PC who observes Nittle with *true seeing*—a spell that costs 250 gp to cast by the way—pierces the polymorph and sees Nittle as the pixie that he is.

🔮 **Nittle (as a banana slug):** asexual slug; hp 9; see p. 64 for the full stat block.

🔮 **Nittle (in his natural pixie form):** male pixie; hp 7; see p. 64 for the full stat block.

Once the party has spotted Nittle, read or paraphrase the following:

***Perched atop one of the knobs barely poking out of the mist is something bright yellow in coloration. It seems to be a huge slug—well, huge as far as naturally occurring slugs go. A good 8 to 10 inches in length, this bloated gastropod glistens with slime. Waving wildly are its two eyestalks which seem to be trying to catch your attention. Most odd of all, however, is a tiny cap on its head, adorned with a feather.***

From here a roleplaying encounter ensues. The goal of Nittle is to determine the greediness of the PCs, rewarding those who are good-natured about his ruse, as explained below.

### Sensing Motive

During Nittle's spiel, PCs may want to do a Sense Motive check on him. While Nittle is telling a whopper of a lie, Sense Motive does not detect lies. Rather, it opposes Bluff, which makes something implausible sound plausible. Nittle's Bluff check is +8 in either pixie or slug form at all APLs. Those who beat Nittle in this opposed roll may think the story somewhat implausible, but could theoretically happen.

PCs, if they specifically announce they are doing so, can also use Sense Motive to either get a sense of the social situation here or determine

Nittle's trustworthiness. The DC for either is 20, and if they make it, they think the situation sounds fishy or that Nittle might be a little untrustworthy, as appropriate.

### Roleplaying Nittle

As Nittle tells the story, he does it with absolute sincerity, conviction, and child-like innocence. Even during the most banal parts, he keeps a straight face—not even giving the slightest hint that he's hiding a smirk. Inside, though, he's bursting with laughter, which would be immediately detected with *detect thoughts*.

He doesn't know anything about Daethil or Jinelle, and is a little too wrapped up in his own story to drop the façade and offer to help.

### Continuing the Conversation

Once PCs approach Nittle and ask what's going on, read or paraphrase the following:

***With a bit of hope rising in his tiny voice, the yellow slug exclaims, "Oh thank you for coming to save me! My name is Nittle, the Talking Banana Slug." He then politely tips his cap to you in greeting, using a slimy eyestalk, and adds, "Nice to make your acquaintance."***

[He waits for the party to greet him then continues, not minding if the PCs interrupt him with questions or comments:]

***"I used to live a simple life of leisure," Nittle begins, bobbing his eyestalks about as one might 'talk' with their hands, "lazily napping under logs and eating mushrooms in the forest until a tall person with sticks and leaves in his hair came by that one day. This was before I could talk, you see. But after he spent all day and all night kneeling in front of me and muttering to the ground, I got all smart n' stuff and learned to talk. Boy was that neat! We became the best of friends. I called him 'Tall Person', because he was tall. And a person. And he called me 'Nittle'."***

***The slug continues, recalling with whimsy, "We would pal around the forest with me snuggled up on his shoulder, talking about all manner of things. He made me a cute little outfit—" suddenly, Nittle's eyestalks droop and his tiny voice grows sad, "Although, only this cap is all that remains." At that point, he coughs in a manner that might be interpreted as covering the quivering emotion in his voice, his right eyestalk swooping down to cover his mouth as he does so to ensure no germs are spread.***

[He pauses to see if anyone asks 'what happened' before continuing.]

***"About a month ago, we entered this swamp to pick some flowers that only grow here. That was when we came across the swamp witch. She captured Tall Person and told me that if I didn't pay her a ransom of 5,000 gp worth of gold or magic items, she would kill him. I'm supposed to leave that treasure here next to this stump by tonight! Do you have anything you can give me so that my best friend in the whole wide world doesn't die? I'm sure if I get at least some of the gold tonight, that will buy Tall Person some time. Please, please, please!?"***

From this point forward, improvise anything you want to further the ruse. Nittle answers any questions the PCs may have about the story in a manner that has it making the most sense. Since it's all a lie, you can embellish as much as you want, but don't go out of your way to make it obvious Nittle is lying.

Try to get the PCs to leave gold and/or treasure at the base of the knob. If the PCs indicate they'd like to ambush the swamp witch when she comes at night to collect the treasure, Nittle begs them not to make any such plans, as her powerful magicks will alert her to their presence, and she won't come, killing Tall Person in revenge instead.

### **Combat?**

If any PC attacks Nittle, he immediately, as a free action, invokes his *improved invisibility* spell-like ability and resumes his pixie form. He then tries his hardest to fly away, not using any hostile actions against the party unless absolutely necessary.

Nittle considers 'an attack' to be anything that endangers him, such as a physical attack (non-lethal or otherwise), a grapple, etc., as well as anything that causes him to make a saving throw like *hold monster*. Covert and passive spells like *detect thoughts* and *scrying*, are things he doesn't consider an attack, even though they allow a saving throw to resist. He also does not consider *dispel magic* an attack—even if aimed right at him (part of him enjoys being found out). Use your best judgment and the totality of the circumstance to determine if PC actions are hostile enough to warrant 'attack' status.

### **Resolution: Failure**

The encounter is considered an automatic failure if any of the following things happen, overriding any other circumstances that might have otherwise led to success:

- The PCs refuse to give Nittle anything and more than half of them react to him poorly.
- Any PC "attacks" Nittle as above-defined.

After such a failed resolution, Nittle sadly mopes away, slimily inching down the knob into the mist below before resuming, as a free action, his *improved invisibility*. He then ends his *polymorph* and flies away, never to bother the PCs again.

### **Resolution: Success**

The encounter is considered a success if either of the following things happen:

- The PCs end up giving him at least 100 gp worth of gold and/or magic items to help pay off the ransom.
- The PCs discover the ruse or otherwise refuse or cannot afford to pay, but at least half the PCs react good naturedly about it.

After such a successful resolution, read or paraphrase the following.

***"Oh!" exclaims the banana slug, "I forgot one last thing..." And with that, the eyes on Nittle's eyestalks scrunch closed in determined concentration before suddenly retracting into his head. Gossamer wings sprout from his back, immediately fluttering, as arms and legs begin to grow. Quickly he spirals upward two to three feet in a whirl of bright yellow that gently transforms into a pale peach. Before you know it, Nittle has completely transformed into a two and a half foot tall male pixie.***

***He wears bright orange breeches that taper just below the knee and an electric blue tunic of sheer fabric, belted around the waist. Pointy shoes that curl at the tip and a specially designed backpack to accommodate his wings complete the ensemble. Short, wispy hair of black crowns his beaming face as he concludes, "I forgot to tell you I've been pulling your leg! Tricked you! Tricked you!!"***

He playfully argues with PCs who claim they were not tricked, ***"Yes you were! Yes you were!"*** Giddily, he gives back any treasure donated to his fake cause.

After a few more moments, Nittle opens his *Heward's handy haversack*, and proclaims:

***"Well this backpack is getting really heavy! I was wondering if you would be willing to take some of this treasure off my hands so I can fly home."***

PCs who make a DC 15 Knowledge (Nature) check or a DC 20 Diplomacy check know it is customary for pixies to give treasure to those they have tricked and who demonstrate a good sense of humor without exhibiting greed. If the PCs agree to accept the treasure, Nittle reaches in and

pulls out a sack and offers it to the party. The sack contains a mishmash of items as follows:

a *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10, a *divine scroll of consecrate*, a *safewing emblem\**, *elixir of love*, *universal solvent*, and a *sashling\** (a kind of belt).

Furthermore, each APL has some gold and one additional item as follows: **APL 2:** bag of 1,260 gp, Small-sized masterwork elvencraft shortbow\*; **APL 4:** bag of 1,890 gp, Small-sized masterwork elvencraft shortbow\*; **APL 6:** bag of 312 gp, Small-sized masterwork elvencraft shortbow\*; **APL 8:** bag of 756 gp, *Small-sized +1 elvencraft shortbow\**; **APL 10:** bag of 132 gp, *Small-sized +1 merciful elvencraft shortbow\**; **APL 12:** bag of 60 gp, *Small-sized +1 merciful elvencraft shortbow\**

\*see Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

Nittle identifies each item in the sack and its function. Be sure to specifically mention the *potion of electricity resistance* at the APL 2 and 4 tables, because their parties are about to go up against a creature that has a touch attack which deals electricity damage.

### Treasure:

**APL 2:** Goods: sashling (0.83 gp), Small-sized masterwork elvencraft shortbow (52.5 gp); Loot: 210 gp; Magic: *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10 (25 gp), *divine scroll of consecrate* (16.67 gp), *safewing emblem* (20.83 gp), *elixir of love* (12.5 gp), *universal solvent* (4.16 gp).

**APL 4:** Goods: sashling (0.83 gp), Small-sized masterwork elvencraft shortbow (52.5 gp); Loot: 315 gp; Magic: *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10 (25 gp), *divine scroll of consecrate* (16.67 gp), *safewing emblem* (20.83 gp), *elixir of love* (12.5 gp), *universal solvent* (4.16 gp).

**APL 6:** Goods: sashling (0.83 gp), Small-sized masterwork elvencraft shortbow (52.5 gp); Loot: 52 gp; Magic: *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10 (25 gp), *divine scroll of consecrate* (16.67 gp), *safewing emblem* (20.83 gp), *elixir of love* (12.5 gp), *universal solvent* (4.16 gp).

**APL 8:** Goods: sashling (1 gp); Loot: 126 gp; Magic: *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10 (25 gp), *divine scroll of consecrate* (16.67 gp), *safewing emblem* (20.83 gp), *elixir of love* (12.5 gp), *universal solvent* (4.16 gp), *Small-sized +1 elvencraft shortbow* (219.16 gp).

**APL 10:** Goods: sashling (0.83 gp); Loot: 22 gp; Magic: *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10 (25 gp), *divine scroll of consecrate* (16.67 gp), *safewing emblem* (20.83 gp), *elixir of love* (12.5 gp), *universal solvent* (4.16 gp), *Small-sized +1 merciful elvencraft shortbow* (719.16 gp).

**APL 12:** Goods: sashling (0.83 gp); Loot: 10 gp; Magic: *potion of resist energy (electricity)* 10 (25 gp), *divine scroll of consecrate* (16.67 gp), *safewing emblem* (20.83 gp), *elixir of love* (12.5 gp), *universal solvent* (4.16 gp), *Small-sized +1 merciful elvencraft shortbow* (719.16 gp).

### Away He Goes:

After giving away his treasure, Nittle exclaims he must depart, thanking the party for the fun they allowed him to have. ***"I'm gonna tell all the other pixies about my new best friends!"*** Unless the party specifically instructs him not to, Nittle does, indeed, later tell the other pixies in his hidden pixie village about the fun he had with the party. This plays a part in NYR5-I04 Velvet Glove, Iron Fist.

If the party asks for his help in finding Jinelle and Daethil, Nittle declines, stating he must return to his home immediately. He then turns invisible and flies off, cheerfully calling out his goodbyes.

**Special Lowbie Note:** At APL 2 tables with 3 or more 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs, Nittle doesn't actually fly away; rather he hovers high overhead just to make sure the party doesn't run into any problems. If the party finds the cave and encounters the tentacle monster in Encounter Eight within 3 hours, Nittle rushes in to give aid, as set forth in that encounter.

Continue on to the next subsection, "Finding the Cave".

### Finding the Cave

Once Nittle flies off, the PCs will need to find the cave where Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby have been hiding out.

### Spotting the Smoke

Because Jinelle has lit a fire for warmth, have the PCs make Spot checks if the time is between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm. Those who make the DC 15 check see what might be a thin plume of white smoke about a mile deeper in the Knobs.

If the party heads towards the smoke, calculate the time it takes them to travel that mile, considering the half movement rate of the swamp, and proceed to Encounter Eight: Entering the Cave.

### Smelling the Smoke

If nobody succeeds in spotting the smoke, those with Scent notice it with a DC 15 Wisdom check. If nobody still notices the smoke, have the party make the same checks each subsequent hour the PCs spend in the Knobs of Cullidor, with the DCs decreasing by 1 each time until the smoke is noticed.

## Calling Out for Jinelle

If the PCs call out for Daethil or Jinelle, they get no response, as Daethil is either unconscious or dead (depending on when the PCs arrived at the Knobs), and Jinelle is keeping quiet, out of fear the Duchess has sent the team to steal her baby "Dandelion" away.

## Searching the Knobs

PCs who search around the Knobs instead of going to the cave have a cumulative 10% chance per hour of coming across the bloody trail left by the grievously wounded Daethil as he carried Jinelle and her baby to the cave days before. If they do come across the trail (which is more like blood smeared on plants as he trudged through the swamp), have the PCs make Spot checks with a DC of 12 + 1 for every 24 hours that have passed since the scenario began. If they make the check, they notice the blood and can follow the trail to the cave with a Track DC of 7 + 1 for the same 24 hours that have passed since the scenario began.

Once the party reaches the cave, proceed to Encounter Eight: Entering the Cave.

## Encounter Eight: Entering the Cave

Once the PCs have followed either the smoke or Daethil's blood trail to the cave where he took refuge, read or paraphrase the following.

***Amongst the mist and lofty swamp trees of the Knobs of Cullidor, you spy what appears to be a large cluster of them growing on an earthen knoll some 100 feet in diameter. Their roots encase the mound like an enormous ball-and-claw. A thin trail of smoke is drifting out of an opening that is well camouflaged by thick, clinging vines and drooping foliage.***

Refer to Map #2 for the schematics of the cave. What the map doesn't show—so as to keep it less cluttered—are the knobs sticking out of the water outside the cave. (There are no knobs inside the cave.) The knobs are wooden stumps that grow straight up from the root systems of the trees in the area. (This is a real-life phenomenon that modern-day scientists theorize helps the roots absorb oxygen.)

A tentacle creature which followed Daethil's bloody trail into the cave has been lurking inside, hoping to pounce upon the windrider and his companion when they finally leave their defensive position. This creature is now a threat to any PCs who enter.

## The Effects of a 'Deep Bog'

The water in and out of the cave is 4 feet deep and considered 'deep bog', per p. 88 of the *DMG*. It costs Medium or larger creatures 4 squares of movement to move into a square with a deep bog, or characters can swim if they wish. Small or smaller creatures must swim to move through a deep bog, and Tumbling is impossible in such squares regardless of size.

The water in a deep bog provides cover for Medium or larger creatures. Smaller creatures gain improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves). Medium or larger creatures can crouch as a move action to gain this improved cover. Creatures with improved cover take a –10 penalty on attacks against creatures that aren't underwater.

Deep bogs increase the DC of Move Silently checks by 2.

## Entering the Mound-Cave

Aside from magic, there are three ways to enter the mound cave: swim under the vines at the entrance, forcibly part them, or hack them away.

**Swimming Under:** Most PCs can easily swim under the foliage concealing the entrance. Small-sized and smaller creatures can do this without any more effort than holding their breath for the time it takes to swim 10 feet (4 feet down, a few feet across, and 4 feet up). As the vines reach 2 to 3 feet below the surface of the 4-foot deep water, Medium-sized creatures must make DC 10 Escape Artist or Strength check to squeeze through at half-speed while under water. The DC for Large and larger creatures increases by 4 for every size category above Medium.

**Parting the Vines:** Alternatively, the vines can be wiggled through or forcibly parted while above the waterline, requiring Escape Artist or Strength checks as follows: Smaller than Tiny: DC 0, Tiny 5, Small 10, Medium 15, Large 20, Huge 25. Anything larger than Huge cannot part the vines and still squeeze through; there just isn't enough room.

**Hacking Away:** As a last resort, the vines can be hacked away or destroyed. Every 5-foot section of the 'wall of foliage' has an AC 4, hardness of 3, and 50 hps.

## Inside the Cave

Once inside the cave, light may be an issue. For parties who left the vines intact, light barely peeks through the foliage during the day, providing only shadowy illumination in all squares touching the entrance and complete darkness everywhere else. During the day, parties who hack away or forcibly part and leave open the vines fill the cave

with light and have full illumination that emanates like a burst from each square of the entrance, reaching 40 feet into the cave. Every other area of the cave not affected by the burst has shadowy illumination.

For those who can see in the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

***The mixed scent of rotting vegetation, damp earth, and burning wood is heavy in the air. A thin layer of smoke hovers at the ceiling, enveloping dozens of small roots hanging down. Floating on the surface of the water are aquatic plants in various stages of decomposition. A dry path can be seen off to the left.***

[At APLs 2 & 4, continue reading if the PCs can see into square Q7:]

***What appears to be a skeleton in hide armor is slumped against the far wall on the dry path.***

The ceiling is 15' high near the entrance, tapering down to 11' high at the back of the cave where Daethil, Jinelle, and "Dandelion" are hiding. (The sloping ceiling is what is allowing the smoke from their fire to vent.)

As soon as the party can see in the cave, roll the tentacle creature's Hide check, which is opposed by the Spot checks the PCs should have made before the game began. The Hide modifier for the creature varies by APL as follows: **APL 2: +9, APL 4: +14, APL 6: +16, APL 8: +25, APL 10: +24, APL 12: +24**).

Even before it knows the party is there, the creature is 'crouching' in these deep bog squares and gains improved cover (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on Reflex saves), as above-described. Because the darktentacles creature has the innate special ability to flatten its squishy body across the ground so as to be inconspicuous, even the Huge-sized versions at APLs 10 and 12 can hide in the 4-foot deep water without any problem. The advanced version of the darktentacles even has the Tunnel Fighting feat, which allows it to squeeze without suffering the normal combat penalties.

### **Tentacle Attack**

As soon as the first party member reaches the Attack Zone as indicated on the map (square N9), the tentacle creature attacks. If the party is avoiding the dry path, the creature attacks as soon as an opponent enters column N on the map (or column M for APL 10 and 12 tables).

**Tactics:** The tactics used by the tentacle creature vary by APL, as set forth below. The Encounter Levels for this fight incorporate the Challenge Ratings of the monster involved (APL+1), as well as a +2 for 'waiting in ambush',

environmental factors that favor the creature but disadvantage the party, and monsters that are under-CR'd to begin with.

**Pursuit:** The creature does not pursue PCs who flee the cave unless they attack with ranged weapons or spells from outside. In such instances, the creature exits the cave and engages the PCs out there.

**Drowning:** PCs and others who fall unconscious in a bog square (which is anywhere on the map beside the dry path in the cave) immediately sink to the bottom if they are carrying more than 15 pounds of gear. For those less encumbered, there is a 60% chance they float on their back when falling unconscious and a 40% chance they land face-down in the water.

PCs so submerged or face down in the water begin drowning on their next turn. If they haven't been pulled out of the water by the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of drowning, they die.

It takes a move action to flip over a face-down person in the water, and a full round action to find someone submerged and pull them to the surface so they can breathe.

See p. 304 of the DMG for more information on drowning.

**Revealing Itself:** When the tentacle creature reveals itself, read or paraphrase the following, depending on APL:

#### **APLs 2 & 4:**

***The sound of crackling electricity suddenly fills the air as tentacles that were previously hidden in the rotting vegetation spring to life with bright sparks and flickers. They are attached to the back of an ugly, low-slung, six-legged creature, which reveals itself as it slowly rises from its crouched position in the boggy water of the cave. Its head is a forward-thrust protuberance consisting mostly of mouth, and it growls malevolently. An electrically charged tentacle curls up in a cobra-strike position near its front.***

#### **APLs 6–12:**

The darktentacles does not initially attack with melee weapons; rather, it uses its spell-like abilities first. Therefore, do not read this until it finally engages in melee, revealing its horrible self:

***The decomposing vegetation floating in the pool is suddenly hurled in all directions, as dozens of large octopus-like tentacles erupt up from the water. Rather than suction cups running along their undersides, however, these tentacles appear to be lined with eyes. Some of them coil around swords, clubs, and***

*other weapons, seemingly wielding them with skill.*

### **APL 2 (EL 5)**

The spark lasher at this APL is an adolescent, and therefore his electricity damage is 1d8 rather than the normal 3d8.

⚡ **Spark Lasher:** hp 16; see Appendix One, p. 53.

#### **Tactics:**

Round 1 (surprise or normal)—uncrouch, as above-described in the read-aloud text. This ends the spark lasher's "improved cover", but it still benefits from normal cover from still being in a deep bog;

Round 2—make a tentacle attack against any creature that moved up to within melee range; otherwise, move to block escape by taking a 'run' action to swim to square J14 or the closest open space to J14 if that square is occupied.

Round 3—Do a swim-charge attack against the closest opponent with the heaviest metal armor. PCs in metal armor are no easier to hit or damage than unarmored PCs; the lasher merely enjoys the extra 'zing' it feels when touching metal. (Plus, I'm sure the PCs will appreciate the fact the 5 hp wizard isn't the first target of the attack).

**Special Lowbie Note:** At tables with 3 or more 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs, Nittle enters the cave at the end of Round 3 in square J15 on the map, invisible and in pixie form if he previously gave the PCs his treasure in Encounter Seven. He then cries out,

*"I won't let my new best friends in the whole wide world get hurt!"*

Roll for his initiative; he starts acting in Round 4, starting with invoking *Otto's irresistible dance* and then closing in invisibly to deliver the touch attack. He attacks and uses his subsequent abilities as you see fit.

Round 4 and beyond—The creature uses the same tactics as in Round 3.

### **APL 4 (EL 7)**

⚡ **Advanced Spark Lasher:** hp 59; see Appendix One, p. 54.

#### **Tactics:**

Round 1—stand up, as above-described in the read-aloud text. This ends the spark lasher's "improved cover", but it still benefits from normal cover from still being in a deep bog. If this is the surprise round, its turn is done; however, if this is a standard round, it then performs a swim-charge against the closest opponent within 10 feet. If no

opponent is in range, it advances 10 feet towards the closet PC wearing heavy metallic armor;

Round 2 and beyond—Proceed to attack opponents with the heaviest metal armor first, avoiding anyone with resistance to electricity.

### **APL 6 (EL 9)**

⚡ **Darktentacles:** hp 67; see Appendix One, p. 55. Tactics: see below.

### **APL 8 (EL 11)**

⚡ **Advanced Darktentacles:** hp 127; see Appendix One, p. 57. Tactics: see below.

### **APL 10 (EL 13)**

⚡ **Advanced Darktentacles:** hp 220; see Appendix One, p.59. Tactics: see below.

### **APL 12 (EL 15)**

⚡ **Advanced Fiendish Darktentacles:** hp 220; see Appendix One, p. 61. Tactics: see below.

### **Tactics for APLs 6–12**

Unlike the spark lasher at APLs 2 and 4, the darktentacles does not engage in melee attacks right away, and therefore might remain hidden during the first 2 rounds of combat while it invokes spell-like abilities.

**Knowledge (Dungeoneering) Checks:** When PCs make their Knowledge (Dungeoneering) checks to know about certain aspects of the darktentacles (minimum DC 19), you might want to consider giving them the Tentacle Regeneration ability (an opponent can attack a darktentacles' tentacles as if they were weapons—see Sunder, p. 158 *PHB*) first if you feel they are inexperienced players and may not think to consider that tactic in order to save a grappled PC.

**Iterative Tentacle Attacks:** When a darktentacles attacks with its tentacles, it benefits from iterative and off-hand attacks as if it here a classed character wielding more than one weapon. (Most monsters never get iterative attacks based on BAB; this monster is an exception.) Therefore, when it takes the full attack action, it gets 2 or 3 whacks (based on APL) with its magic scimitar as its primary weapon, and then 11 off-hand attacks with its other tentacles, some of which also wield weapons.

No more than 3 tentacles (whether or not they are wielding weapons) can attack a single 5' square in a given round, and no more than 1 tentacle at a time can attack a Tiny or smaller sized creature. Because its primary tentacle gets iterative attacks, though, a darktentacles can attack a Small or Medium-sized opponent, for

example, 2 or 3 times with the scimitar and then follow it up with 2 more 'off-hand' tentacle attacks. Large or larger-sized opponents who occupy 4 squares can be subjected to all 12 tentacles at once, facing 13 or 14 attacks in one round! (I wonder how that *enlarged* spike chain wielder feels now...)

**A Note on Grappling:** Not only are the grapple rules in the *PHB* complicated, they are written from the perspective of bipedal and quadrupedal creatures. The darktentacles is a 36-tentacled monstrosity with special attack and grapple abilities that make the issue even more complicated. Therefore, for the purposes of this unique encounter, handle the grapple stuff as follows:

If a darktentacles hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with an unarmed tentacle slam attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. The darktentacles always takes a –20 on the check so it cannot be considered grappled by others, thereby keeping its Dexterity bonus to AC and being able to use its other tentacle attacks freely. If it wins the grapple check, it pulls its opponent into its space and immediately constricts for the indicated damage.

Its 2 unarmed tentacles can grapple 2 separate creatures, especially choosing to keep grappled creatures it finds hard to hit, such as those having a high AC, currently *displaced*, etc. If PCs disarm any of the darktentacles' weapons, those respective tentacles are then free to perform grapple attacks as well.

At the beginning of its turn, every tentacle currently grappling an opponent performs a grapple check at a –20 penalty to inflict constriction damage. Individual tentacles not grappling opponents are free to make melee attacks against other opponents on the battlefield.

In rounds in which the darktentacles initiates a spell-like ability while grappling opponents, it causes no constriction damage to any of them that round, but still maintains their respective grapples.

See p. 156–157 of the *PHB* for more information on grappling.

**Charmed PCs:** Anyone charmed by the darktentacles' *charm monster* spell-like ability views the creature as a trusted friend and ally and is unwilling to attack it or help other PCs attack it. Once combat breaks out, the darktentacles, which speaks Common, might issue an order for the charmed PC to help defend the darktentacles against the other PCs' attacks. Such requests might include disarming a fellow PC, who the

darktentacles claims is *confused*, 'attacking to aid' the darktentacles' armor class, etc.

Both of these requests are reasonable commands pursuant to the parameters of the spell and should be followed by the PC. If in your opinion, though, these commands are contrary to the nature of a particular PC, then the darktentacles must succeed in an opposed Charisma check to force the PC to follow the order. No command, however contrary to the PC, allows that PC a second Will save. Only if the *charm* is dispelled or the darktentacles attacks the PC is the spell prematurely broken.

**The Scythe at APLs 6 and 8:** At APLs 6 and 8 the darktentacles is Size Large. In order to benefit fully from its multiweapon fighting feats, it must have 'light weapons' in its 'off-hand' tentacles. The scythe, though, is not a 'light weapon' for Large-sized creatures (though it is for Huge-sized creatures), and therefore the darktentacles' stat blocks at APLs 6 and 8 correctly include a –2 penalty to all attacks when using the full attack action with the scythe. If at any time, though, the scythe is disarmed, that penalty goes away, as all the remaining weapons in its off-hand tentacles are considered light.

## Tactics

**Coup de Grace:** This darktentacles never performs a coup de grace.

### Tactics by Round:

Round 1—*charm monster* spell-like ability (itself a silent stare) on the opponent with the obviously highest Strength score and remain crouched and hiding (+8 AC and +4 Reflex saves). (This is where those pre-rolled Will saves and Sense Motive checks discussed in "Preparing for the Game on p. 13 come into play.) If the PC fails his Will save, he does not realize he's been *charmed*, though fellow party members who can see him and made their DC 25 Sense Motive check realize their friend is suddenly acting enchanted;

Round 2—*Wall of force* to seal off the cave entrance and remain hiding.

Round 3—*Hold monster* on the second-strongest party member and remain crouched and hiding;

Round 4—Attack from the crouched position (–10 to all attack rolls), and try to hit as many opponents as possible (except for the opponent it knows it *charmed*). All party members who had not yet spotted the darktentacles before this attack are caught flat-footed by it. The creature directs its primary attack (the iterative strikes with the scimitar) as well as off-hand attacks #1 and #2 (dire pick and Large club) on the creature against

which it just used its *hold monster* ability (successfully or not) if it is in range. Otherwise, it attacks any it can reach, grappling those who are subjected to its unarmed slam attacks as above-described.

**Round 5 and beyond**—If some opponents have moved out of the darktentacles' reach, it uncrouches as a move action which does not provoke an attack of opportunity and swims up to 10 feet to a better position in the cave (requiring a successful opposed grapple check from all grappled opponents). Otherwise, it continues to attack as normal, using the remaining *hold monster* spell-like abilities as needed.

### **Treasure:**

Treasure for APLs 2 & 4 are below.

**APL 6:** *Goods:* adamantine dire pick\* (252.5 gp), Large masterwork club (25 gp), scythe (1.5 gp), rapier (1.66 gp), flail (0.66 gp); *Loot:* 0 gp; *Magic:* +1 *sizing scimitar* (692.92 gp).

**APL 8:** *Goods:* Large masterwork club (25 gp), scythe (1.5 gp), rapier (1.66 gp), flail (0.66 gp); *Loot:* 0 gp; *Magic:* +1 *sizing scimitar* (692.92 gp), +1 *adamantine dire pick\** (419.16 gp).

**APL 10:** scythe (1.5 gp), rapier (1.66 gp), flail (0.66 gp); *Loot:* 0 gp; *Magic:* +1 *sizing scimitar* (692.92 gp), +1 *adamantine dire pick\** (419.16 gp), *Large +1 club* (191.66 gp).

**APL 12:** scythe (1.5 gp), rapier (1.66 gp), flail (0.66 gp); *Loot:* 0 gp; *Magic:* +1 *sizing scimitar* (692.92 gp), +1 *adamantine dire pick\** (419.16 gp), *Large +1 bane (undead) club* (691.66 gp).

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

### **Skeleton in Q7 (APLs 2 & 4):**

The skeleton in square Q7 is where APLs 2 & 4 get their treasure. (The treasure from the higher APLs come from the weaponry used by the darktentacles.)

Wearing rotting hide armor, it is the skeleton of Sootak, a True Neutral lizardfolk druid. Sootak died 4 years ago here in the cave and has nothing to do with the current situation. At his side is a +1 *scimitar*, the trusty Large club he wielded when in ape form, and a +1 *ring of protection*. At APL 4, he also wears a +1 *amulet of natural armor*.

### **Treasure:**

**APL 2:** *Goods:* Large masterwork club (25 gp); *Loot:* 0 gp; *Magic* +1 *scimitar* (192.92 gp), +1 *ring of protection* (166.66).

**APL 4:** *Goods:* Large masterwork club (25 gp); *Loot:* 0 gp; *Magic* +1 *scimitar* (192.92 gp), +1 *ring of protection* (166.66 gp), +1 *amulet of natural armor* (166.66 gp).

### **Aftermath**

If the PCs made any noise since entering the cave—as would almost certainly be the case if they fought the tentacle creature—Jinelle's baby "Dandelion" gets fussy, provided the party has arrived before 11:00 pm on the 28<sup>th</sup>. If the party arrives after this time, the baby is dead, and the party hears nothing.

If "Dandelion" is alive, though, have PCs make Listen checks with a DC 9, modified by 1 for every 10 feet between each respective PC and the back of the hiding place. Those who make the check hear Jinelle's cranky baby.

Jinelle, though, refuses to answer any calls to her, and Daethil is either unconscious or dead.

### **Entering the Far Back**

Daethil, Jinelle, and "Dandelion" are in the far back, having taken up a defensive position. To reach them without magic, the party will have to go through square R10 on the map. This is a 2-1/2 foot wide opening that Small and smaller sized creatures can pass through without difficulty. Medium-sized creatures will have to squeeze to get through the space, and Large or larger sized creatures will be entirely unable to fit. It takes 30 minutes of digging to make the opening large enough for Large-sized creatures to squeeze through.

Before he passed out, Daethil fought off an attack from the tentacle creature that tried to squeeze into the small space to get to them. The creature decided to camp outside the opening and wait for them to exit instead; they never left.

Fearful of another attack while they slept, Daethil, who is skilled in trapmaking, set two separate traps in squares S10 and U10 on the map, as follows:

### **Traps!**

#### **Square S10, Punji Pit**

Square S10 contains a shallow, camouflaged punji pit filled with sharpened reeds, daggers, and other similar items buried just below the surface. At most APLs, the items are coated in poison. The 'pit' fills the entire 5-foot square.

A combination of pit spikes and caltrops, anyone merely entering the square is attacked by 1d4 sharpened items at the indicated attack rating. For these attacks, the creature's shield bonus does not count, and it is considered flat-footed (unless the dirt is removed and the sharpened weapons exposed). If poison is indicated as being part of the trap, PCs only need to make 1 Fortitude save against an entire round's worth of attacks

even if they were damaged by more than one spike attack.

If any of the attacks cause damage, the creature's speed is reduced by one-half, because its foot is wounded. This movement penalty lasts for 24 hours, or until the creature is successfully treated with a DC 15 heal check, or until it receives at least 1 point of magical curing. A charging or running creature must immediately stop if it takes damage.

A rogue can disarm this trap as normal, though it can also be bypassed with common sense, such as digging up the sharpened items or laying a tower shield across the area.

↗ **APL 2:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; automatic-reset; 1d4 attacks; each +6 melee (1d3, spikes); Search DC 20; Disable Device 16.

↗ **APL 4:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; automatic-reset; 1d4 attacks; each +8 melee (1d4 [crit 19–20], spikes); Search DC 21; Disable Device 16.

↗ **APL 6:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; automatic-reset; 1d4 attacks; each +12 melee (1d4 [crit 19–20] plus poison on one of them, spikes); poison (black adder venom, DC 11 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); Search DC 22; Disable Device 16.

↗ **APL 8:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic-reset; 1d4 attacks; each +14 melee (1d4 [crit 19–20] plus poison on one of them, spikes); poison (sassone leaf residue, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 2d12 hps/1d6 Con); Search DC 24; Disable Device 15.

↗ **APL 10:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic-reset; 1d4 attacks; each +14 melee (1d4 [crit 19–20] plus poison on one of them, spikes); poison (sassone leaf residue, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 2d12 hps/1d6 Con); Search DC 24; Disable Device 24.

↗ **APL 12:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; automatic-reset; 1d4 attacks; each +16 melee (1d4 [crit 19–20] plus poison on one of them, spikes); poison (sassone leaf residue, DC 16 Fortitude save resists, 2d12 hps/1d6 Con); Search DC 24; Disable Device 24.

### Square U10, Arrow Trap

Square U10 has a taut trip wire hidden in the loosened earth of the cave floor. It leads to a jerry-rigged arrow trap assembly he created out of a crossbow he salvaged from one of his fallen comrades after the first botched rescue mission. It is completely hidden in square V11 behind some dangling roots in the ceiling. The first person who enters the square trips the trap unless flying or floating above the ground. It does not reset.

↗ **APL 2:** CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual-reset; +6 ranged (1d8 [crit 19–20], light bolt); Search DC 20; Disable Device 20.

↗ **APL 4:** CR 2; mechanical; location trigger; manual-reset; +10 ranged (1d10+1 [crit 19–20], +1 heavy bolt); Search DC 25; Disable Device 20.

↗ **APL 6:** CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual-reset; +14 ranged (1d10+1 [crit 19–20], +1 heavy bolt); Search DC 25; Disable Device 25.

↗ **APL 8:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual-reset; +14 ranged (1d10+1 [crit 19–20] plus poison, +1 heavy bolt); poison (black adder venom, DC 11 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con); Search DC 25; Disable Device 25.

↗ **APL 10:** CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; manual-reset; +14 ranged (1d10+1 [crit 19–20] plus poison, +1 heavy bolt); poison (deathblade, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 24; Disable Device 15.

↗ **APL 12:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; manual-reset; +14 ranged (1d10+1 [crit 19–20] plus poison, +1 heavy bolt); poison (deathblade, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 24; Disable Device 24.

### Moving On

Once the PCs round the corner at square U10 (most likely tripping the trap immediately), proceed to Encounter Nine: Finding Jinelle.

## Encounter Nine: Finding Jinelle

Daethyl, Jinelle, and her baby are lying at the far back section of the cave. Whether they are alive or not, depends on when the PCs get here.

### Failure: After 5:15 am on the 28<sup>th</sup>

Jinelle's baby "Dandelion" dies from filth fever at 5:15 am on the 28<sup>th</sup>. Overwhelmed with grief and rage, Jinelle slits the throat of the unconscious Daethyl before plunging the dagger into her own heart. When the party finally finds them, read or paraphrase the following:

*At the end of a short passage is a smoldering campfire. Clothes, equipment, and other debris are messily strewn about the cramped area, and the stench of death and human excrement overtake rotting vegetation as the predominate odor of the cave. A man with pointy ears lies face down in a coagulated pool of blood, his hands tied behind his back.*

*An utterly filthy woman is sitting next to him and leaning against the far wall facing you. Muck and grime cover her so heavily it is impossible to determine her race or even hair*

*color. All that is discernable are her sunken eyes of dull blue gazing distantly in your direction and a bloody dagger sticking out of the left side of her chest.*

*Most horrifying of all, however, is the dirty baby lying in the woman's lap. It is covered in what appear to be insect bites, and its mouth is agape and unmoving.*

The PCs have failed in this mission, and now all they have are three dead bodies and the broken hearts of Elinae and Verin. A search of the debris reveals the three to unmistakably be Daethil, Jinelle, and her baby.

DC 15 Heal checks reveal Daethil died from having his throat slit; the baby died from filth fever; and the woman, also suffering from filth fever stabbed herself in the chest.

If the PCs try to *raise* the dead, only Daethil's soul is willing to return, Jinelle and "Dandelion" remaining beyond the veil. If raised, Daethil expresses his gratitude for the effort made by the party and assists them in returning to Adrean's Landing.

### **Success: Before 5:15 am on the 28<sup>th</sup>**

If the party arrives before 5:15 am on the 28<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime, all three are alive, though Daethil is unconscious. Read or paraphrase the following after resolving the arrow trap in square U10 from the preceding encounter if triggered:

*At the end of a short passage is a smoldering campfire. Clothes, equipment, and other debris are messily strewn about the cramped area, and the strong smell of body odor overtakes rotting vegetation as the predominate smell of the cave. A man with pointy ears lies face down, his hands tied behind his back.*

*An utterly filthy woman bedecked in jewelry is sitting next to him and leaning against the far wall facing you. Muck and grime cover her so heavily it is impossible to determine her race or even hair color. On her lap is a dirty, cranky baby that appears to be feverish. The woman, also appearing somewhat ill, is aiming a drawn mighty composite longbow at you with a shaky hand as she declares with primal conviction, "This is an arrow of slaying and will kill anyone it touches. I will fire if you take one more step!"*

And thus begins a roleplaying encounter with Jinelle.

🔮 **Jinelle:** female half-elf Com-1/Exp-1; hp 10 (currently 1); see p. 64 for the full stat block.

🔮 **Daethil:** male wood elf Rgr-12; hp 75 (currently -8); see p. 64 for the full stat block.

🔮 **"Dandelion", Jinelle's Baby:** male half-elf; hp 0.

### **Escalating to a Fight**

If the party approaches, makes any sudden movements, or takes any action other than calmly talking to Jinelle, she shoots an arrow at them, thoroughly convinced they are going to steal her baby away. (Her filth fever isn't helping rationality any.)

**Attack:** +0 ranged (1d8+2 [crit x3] plus disease, +2 *mighty composite longbow* (+2 *Str*); SA disease (filth fever, Fort DC 12, incubation 1d3 days, 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con, see p. 292 *DMG*).

Despite Jinelle's claim, the arrow is not an *arrow of slaying*, though it is contaminated with filth fever, unbeknownst to Jinelle. Unless she is disarmed, Jinelle continues shooting at PCs who remain in her line of sight, needing to take move actions to knock subsequent arrows from the quiver at her side. She switches to her dagger (+0 melee, also contaminated with filth fever) if PCs approach within melee range. She is too weak stand, but not too weak to fight to her dying breath.

The only way to diffuse the situation after a fight breaks out is to render her unconscious, cast *calm emotions* on her, or otherwise quell her desperate mind.

If she is knocked unconscious, the party can begin negotiations anew when she comes around again, her fevered mind not exactly remembering how she 'fell asleep.'

### **Diplomacy to Calm Her Down**

Jinelle starts off as "hostile" to the party, but if the PCs shift her to "unfriendly" by making a DC 20 Diplomacy check, she is willing to put down her weapon and talk—although warily. The party gains a +4 bonus to their check if anyone present in the party rescued Jinelle in NYR3-06 Beyond the Wisteria Tree, though no other modifiers apply due to her fevered, irrational state. If the party mentions the Duchess of Woodwych, Jinelle spits at them and exclaims,

**"That bitch will never get my son!"**

Other than that outburst, Jinelle does not provide any further information or insight into her reasons for fearing the Duchess until the party has made the DC 20 Diplomacy check.

If the party gives up on using Diplomacy (no one having enough ranks to hit a DC 20, for example), they can always forcibly take her back to Adrean's Landing. Jinelle is far too sick to put up a decent fight, and can be manhandled all the way back to the Bartek estate if necessary. Adjudicate as you see fit.

## Beginning the Talks

If the party succeeds at the Diplomacy check, Jinelle puts down Daethil's bow and allows them to approach. To convince Jinelle to accompany them back to Adrean's Landing, they must do one of the following:

- dispel the extended *charm monster* spell Thuldadora cast upon her (evil enchantment, CL 15.)
- cast their own *charm person* or *charm monster* spell on Jinelle, making the party her new 'trusted friends and allies'.
- convince her through persuasive talk, requiring another DC 20 Diplomacy check.

If the party chooses to convince her with persuasive talk, they must include the assurance that the Duchess has no desire to take Jinelle's baby from her, or the Diplomacy check automatically fails. PCs who tell Jinelle the Duchess' chamberlain, Hingred, was acting on his own—unbeknownst to Verin—when he threw Jinelle out of Woodwych last year, and that the Duchess never knew Jinelle gave birth to Adrean's baby receive a +4 on their Diplomacy check to convince her to return to Adrean's Landing.

While feverish with filth fever, Jinelle is not lucid enough to provide any background or justifications for why she is fearful of the Duchess aside from thinking the Duchess wishes to take her baby away.

## Curing Disease, Healing Daethil

If the party removes Jinelle's disease, her mind clears up, and she shares anything you deem is appropriate in the Background Recap (pages 6–11) to help explain her actions, answer PCs' questions, etc. She does not, however, volunteer any unflattering facts about herself, including being a swindler of lonely, old men and having toyed around with the idea of Verin suffering a sudden, unfortunate death.

Unless the PCs have already told her it was Hingred, acting on his own, who was responsible for having her thrown out of Woodwych, Jinelle speaks of Verin with great disdain. Once she learns the truth, though, she softens her angry stance considerably.

**Daethil:** If the PCs heal Daethil, he can also help answer any questions the PCs may have, based on his own knowledge of what has happened (as set forth in the Background Recap).

If the party informs Daethil of Elinae's love for him, he appears taken aback, confessing he has always had feelings for her as well. Despite both of them being wood elves, he always thought his ways were too primal for Elinae's more refined

style and regrets having never done anything about it in the past.

**"Dandelion", Jinelle's baby:** Jinelle's baby, as yet unnamed but affectionately called "Dandelion" by Jinelle, is dying from filth fever. He has 0 hps (disabled) and a Con of 1 by the 27<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime. He dies at 5:15 am on the 28<sup>th</sup> unless the disease is treated or removed before then.

## Resolution

If the party entirely bypassed the mantis attack in Encounter Five due to *teleporting*, *windwalking*, etc., then they encounter the make-up combat now, so as to not be penalized on combat XP for having employed the right tools for the right job. Proceed to Encounter Ten: Make-up Combat Encounter.

On the other hand, if the party has fought its two battles and overcame Daethil's traps, and they are ready to head back to the windrider camp in the Celadon forest—be it with Jinelle's cooperation or not—proceed to Encounter Eleven: Back to Adrean's Landing. Otherwise, proceed to whichever other encounter is most appropriate.

## Encounter Ten: Make-up Combat Encounter

This combat only occurs if the party lost out on combat XP by entirely bypassing the mantis attack in Encounter Five due to *teleporting*, *windwalking*, etc. It occurs when the party is about to leave.

## Thuldadora's Minions

The Witch of the Bright, Thuldadora, who had hid Jinelle in her *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* on behalf of the Count of Brackenmoor, has been looking for her ever since Daethil's rescue team laid siege to the witch's crystal-cave and took off with the half-elven lass. Thuldadora had been getting closer to tracking down Jinelle, using monsters she charmed and dominated to scout out the nearby regions of the Gnatmarsh.

The party's sudden presence in the Knobs of Cullidor was noticed by more than one of these swamp creatures, and Thuldadora has sent in a team of creatures to recapture Jinelle, killing any who stand in their way. By using her powerful enchantment crystal, Thuldadora can impart mental imagery upon her thralls so they will be able to discern which of the targets is Jinelle and "Dandelion". Therefore, these creatures will not accidentally attack those two.

This encounter occurs either in the cave or outside it, as you deem the circumstances warrant. If it occurs outside the cave, the creatures are encountered 2d8x10 feet away, the maximum

spottable distance in a swamp. If Daethil is alive and conscious, he will be able to fight the creatures as well, greatly helping lower level APLs. Jinelle does not fight, taking full defensive actions while shielding her baby each round provided she is not tied up by the party.

➤ **APL 2:** Medium Viper Snakes (4); EL 5; hp 9 hp ea; *Monster Manual*, p. 280.

➤ **APL 4:** Harpies (3); EL 7; hp 31 each; *Monster Manual*, p. 150.

➤ **APL 6:** Will-o'-Wisps (4); EL 9; hp 40 each; *Monster Manual*, p. 255.

➤ **APL 8:** Ogre Magi (3); EL 11; hp 37 each; *Monster Manual*, p. 200.

➤ **APL 10:** Grey Slaadi (3); EL 13; hp 95 each; *Monster Manual*, p. 231.

➤ **APL 12:** Death Slaadi (2); EL 15; hp 203 each; *Monster Manual*, p. 231.

## Encounter Eleven: Return to Adrean's Landing

If Daethil is conscious and with the party, he can assist them in returning to the windrider encampment by choosing the least obstructed paths through the Gnatmarsh. Under his guidance, the party travels through the swamp at double their normal speed. Thereafter, it's a quick 10 mile trail hike north to the windrider camp.

The party can even safely travel the Celadon at night as long Daethil is leading them. If he is not, then hiking the Celadon at night has the same dangers now as it did a few days before. Refer to Encounter Three: Hiking the Celadon at Night (p. 25) for more information. If the party already encountered their APL's wandering monster on the way over, however, they do NOT encounter it again; they manage to hike the Celadon at night without incident.

### Back at the Windrider Camp

If the PCs have arrived after 8:00 am on the 24<sup>th</sup>, they find the windriders have left. The party will then have to find their own way back to Adrean's Landing for the 135 mile trip through forest and plains. If alive and conscious, Daethil accompanies the party to the Bartek estate. No encounters occur on the way home.

On the other hand, if the PCs make it to the windrider camp before 8:00 am on the 24<sup>th</sup>, the windriders welcome them back. If Daethil is alive and with the party, Elinae runs up to him and passionately kisses him on the lips. If the party has already told him of Elinae's love for him, Daethil immediately responds to the kiss and wraps his arms around her in kind. If he has not

been told of Elinae's love, however, his eyes widen as he is taken aback at the sudden kiss for a moment, before giving into his own feelings and wrapping his arms around her as he kisses her back.

This development impacts NYR5-I04 Velvet Glove, Iron Fist.

If Daethil is dead, however, Elinae does her best to cover her grief, tenderly touching his face if the party has brought back his body.

If there are at least 5 hours of light remaining in the day when the PCs return to the camp, the windriders immediately saddle up and take off; otherwise, they wait until 8:00 am in the morning.

The flight back to the Adrean's landing is uneventful, though the windriders hustle harder and longer than before.

## Encounter Twelve: Back at the Bartek Estate

When the party arrives back in Adrean's Landing (provided at least two days have passed), they notice some additional war machines have lined up in the southeastern section of the city. More pavilions have sprung up on the outskirts of town, as companies of armies assemble.

### Arrived Late: After 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup>

If the party arrives after 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime, they have missed Verin, who has gone off to lead her troops into battle against Counts Beremen and Eventide. That means they miss the roleplaying encounter with the Duchess (including Jinelle's baby-naming) and the opportunity to do the optional TU encounter of raiding Thuldadora's stronghold, though they do meet with Lady Bartek and a ducal guard who receive the party warmly. Lady Bartek takes into custody Jinelle and her baby (if she is a prisoner) and assures the party she will send word to the Duchess of the party's success. The scenario then ends; proceed to Conclusion.

The party is considered to have still succeeded in the mission if Jinelle and the baby come back alive, and they receive all applicable XP, treasure, and favors.

### Arrived On Time: Before 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup>

If the party arrives on time (before 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime), as would be the case if they flew back with the pegasi, Lady Bartek, Verin, the Duchess' entourage, and a priestess of Pelor named Pilar [pee-LAR] are there to greet the PCs.

They react as would be appropriate to the situation. Roleplay as you see fit, taking into account the following:

If Jinelle and her baby "Dandelion" are present and Jinelle was not forced to come as a prisoner of the party, Verin and Jinelle enjoy a tearful reunion, both asking for forgiveness for the misunderstandings brought about by Hingred, the Duchess' chamberlain. Verin explains everything that happened and how she never knew Jinelle had ever come to Woodwyck.

If Jinelle and/or the baby are still diseased, the priestess of Pelor cures them.

If Jinelle is a prisoner of the party, having been forced to return against her will, the scene is less pleasant, with Verin doing her best to ignore the ravings of Jinelle. Eventually, Verin has Jinelle brought into the manor where the priestess of Pelor may examine her and remove any enchantments that may be affecting her.

If Jinelle and/or "Dandelion" are dead, however, Verin reacts stoically, needing to keep her composure for the big speech she is about to deliver to the troops.

If Jinelle is a prisoner of the party or otherwise here against her will, skip the following section and proceed to "Offering the Optional TU Mission", below. If, however, Jinelle was convinced to accompany the party in "Beginning the Talks" on p. 43 of Encounter Nine, proceed to "What is the Baby's Name?".

### **What Is the Baby's Name?**

There comes a time during the conversation when the Duchess asks Jinelle what the baby's name is. Jinelle replies,

*"A year ago, Duchess, I came to Woodwyck with the intent of giving you the honor of naming your grandchild. After that misunderstanding with Hingred and your guards throwing me out of town, I decided to return to my mother's elven ancestral home near Greyhawk instead and have the elves name my child in a traditional naming ceremony."*

*"I have not made that trip yet. Now, though, with your blessing, I think I would like to name him in honor of one of my friends."*

*Jinelle turns to the party and gestures to you as she mentions 'friends'. Verin contemplates a moment before a satisfied smile crosses her lips. "Yes, I think that would be a fine idea. That is, of course, if the honored person Jinelle chooses does not mind."*

Jinelle is offering to name her baby after one of the PCs. While she seemingly includes the

entire party as prospective honorees, she really only means the PCs who were kind to her. Anyone treating her poorly is automatically disqualified in her mind. PCs both male and female, who indicate to Jinelle and Verin they would be honored to have the baby named after them are invited to send an e-mail to the author and the triad at the following addresses: [robertmoon@socal.rr.com](mailto:robertmoon@socal.rr.com) and [triad@nyrond.org](mailto:triad@nyrond.org).

They are to include a 200-word or less description of a roleplaying encounter that occurred during the scenario between them and the Duchess of Woodwyck and/or Jinelle. This scenario co-premieres in Southern California and Utah at the end of May 2005. Two weeks after it finally premieres in Arizona, a mutual decision between the above-mentioned individuals will be made and an announcement on the Nyrond website will be posted, revealing "Dandelion's" new name.

Proceed to "Offering the Optional TU Mission".

### **Offering the Optional TU Mission**

If the party returned to Adrean's Landing after 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup>, they are unable to do this optional TU mission. They are also unable to do it if Daethil is dead. Otherwise, the Duchess offers the mission as follows:

*"As I mentioned before you left, there is an optional mission available if you feel up to the challenge. It will take about another week to complete and will probably be extremely dangerous. I need a team to go to the cave where Jinelle and her baby had been originally hidden by the Witch of the Bright. There are two things that must be done there, the details of which I'll provide later."*

*"I do have a back-up team ready to go if you are unable or unwilling to do it yourselves. I understand how adventurers covet and carefully plan their time over the course of a year, as there is much to be done in Nyrond of late, so only do this if you have the time to spare. Plus, there will probably be very little to no gold gained on this mission, and you won't learn as much from your experience as you might have learned spending a week on a different mission. So keep all that in mind."*

*"Fear not: I shall not be disappointed or think any less of you if you decide against doing the mission. Like I said, I have a back-up team ready to go for this extremely dangerous task, and I completely trust your judgment if you feel your limited time would be better spent elsewhere. Think about it for now."*

*"I will be making a speech at eight of the clock on the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> at the*

***Coliseum, and you can give me your decision immediately following that. "***

Proceed to "To the Coliseum".

### **To the Coliseum**

After the roleplaying encounter with Verin concludes, she officially releases the PCs from duty, thanking them for their efforts. While she cannot afford at this moment to reward them appropriately for their duty, she assures them they have gained her favor.

The Duchess then invites the party to attend the ceremony at the Coliseum as her personal guests. Whether or not they accept, Verin takes her leave, bringing Jinelle and the baby with her if they are present.

If the PCs indicate they will attend the ceremony the next day (and they will need to attend if they are going on the Optional TU mission), proceed to the Primary Adventure Epilogue. Otherwise, proceed to the Conclusion.

## **Primary Adventure Epilogue**

***The morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> sees great activity around the Coliseum of Adrean's Landing. The thousands of troops who have amassed in this city on the Duntide pour into the iconic structure. As you make your way to the boxed seating near Verin and her entourage, your attention is drawn to the company of color guards standing in ceremonial attention in the large sandy pit in the center of the Coliseum. They each bear tall oaken staves on which are hung the standards of King Lynwerd and the Duchess of Woodwych.***

***A statue of Adrean is mounted in idealized glory over Verin's section of the Coliseum, the white marble glistening with morning dew.***

***Troops arranged by company take their seats elsewhere in the Coliseum. When all are assembled, the Duchess of Woodwych steps to the fore of her box with stately elegance and raises her right hand in a gestures of silence. It is a graceful hand swathed in a velvet glove, and you can see Verin holds a cluster of wisteria blooms in her other hand.***

***The murmuring of the troops dies down, leaving only wind gusts and the rippling of the sheer silk draped between the tips of her double-steepled headdress as the only remaining sounds.***

***"As you know," Verin begins in a commanding voice to the entire Coliseum, "the Council of Lords recently convened, summoned by Sewardt Nehron, self-titled 'Emperor of the Nyron Imperialium.' As the***

***Duchess of Woodwych, I appeared on behalf of this province. At the Council, a Vote of Legitimacy was called by the Emperor to settle once and for all the question of whether or not Sewardt's claim to the throne was rightful.***

***"The vote barely passed—and only because Sewardt voted in favor of himself as provincial leader of Justcrown. It wasn't until later, however, when I remembered a procedural error had occurred... You see, the Count of Brackenmoor and the Count of Eventide voted in favor of Sewardt's legitimacy. I happen to know, though, they did not reflect the will of their vassals as is required by the Edict of Toresse [TOR-ess], a proclamation passed by the then-Council of Lords 412 years ago.***

***"I thought to myself, 'what would be the remedy for such a situation.' The answer was clear: as the Vote of Legitimacy was fatally flawed, Sewardt's claim to the throne was not substantiated in my opinion. As this issue needed to be settled, and as is my duty as a member of the Council of Lords acting in the absence of a certified King, I have decided to ensure the people of Brackenmoor and Eventide have a leader who represents their wishes.***

***"To that end, I invited these two Counts to step down and abdicate their governance in favor of someone such as myself who shares the will of their people and who would cast a proper vote of legitimacy in the Council of Lords. Unfortunately, this decision has been difficult for them to make, and I have been loath to raise my sword against them to emphasize my point. Howe'er, in this blustery weather, my hand grows chilled in this velvet glove," she states as she upturns the palm of her hand, "and I think I shall don more appropriate garments."***

***A lady attendant moves up to Verin and slides a metal gauntlet over her extended hand. The Duchess then gazes down at the vibrant purple blooms held in her left hand for a brief moment before gesturing to Hingred, her loyal and sometimes misguided chamberlain. He nods in response and climbs the steps of the dais with her ducal sword. The Duchess of Woodwych then unsheathes the blade and thrusts it into the air. The symbolism of Verin raising her sword is unequivocally clear to nearly all in the coliseum, and the thousands of troops loyal to King Lynwerd leap to their feet in a triumphant cheer.***

## End of the Primary Adventure

If the party has decided against going on the Optional TU mission, skip the next section, and proceed to Conclusion; the scenario ends on this glorious note. Otherwise, proceed to "Optional TU Mission".

### Optional TU Mission

If the party returned to Adrean's Landing after 8:00 am on the 25<sup>th</sup>, they are unable to do this optional TU mission, and the adventure is over for them.

Otherwise, the party is approached by Verin immediately following her speech at the coliseum. Give Player Handout #7: Optional Mission (p. 82) to a player who has a good speaking voice and have him or her read it to the party. While he or she is doing that, now might be a good time for you to review the ARs and start crossing out the stuff the players are not entitled to receive.

### Backing out of the Mission

The handout that sets forth the optional TU mission gives PCs a chance to back out of it if they don't want to burn a TU. There are no in-character repercussions for doing so, as Verin has a back-up team ready to go if the PCs opt to spend their TUs elsewhere.

### Some Players Not Going

If only 1 or 2 of the PCs decide against doing the optional TU mission, the rest can still go, provided they still comprise a legal table. That means at least 4 players must still be willing to spend a TU to do the optional TU mission. If there are only 3 or less players willing to do it, they are unfortunately out of luck. As normal, cohorts do not count when determine the composition of a legal table.

If 1 or 2 players do drop out and the remaining 4 or 5 players go on the optional TU mission, those players who dropped out **may not participate in any way**. None of their existing spells, effects, or magic items carry over into the optional TU portion of the adventure, even if under normal circumstances such spells would still be in effect.

### Ready to Go

Once the players indicate they are ready to begin the optional TU mission, proceed to Encounter Thirteen—Thuldanora's Crystal-Cave.

## Encounter Thirteen: Thuldanora's Crystal-Cave

Using Daethil's map, which shows the safest route to Thuldanora's crystal-cave, the party can easily make it there without encountering monsters along the way. There is no need to roleplay a second week-long journey to the swamp—especially considering this is an optional TU encounter. The party is simply assumed to have arrived safely.

### Exterior of the Cave

Once they have arrived, refer to Map #3: Thuldanora's Crystal-Cave, p. 75, and then read or paraphrase the following:

***The slimy muck of the ground, the oppressive humidity, and the swarms of mosquitoes in this part of the Gnatmarsh provide sharp contrast to the far milder and actually beautiful Knobs of Cullidor. Having arrived here without much incident, you have found what you believe to be the entrance to the witch's cave. It is a poorly concealed opening in the side of one of the low-rising hills that sporadically dot this region. The sickening stench of rotting meat can be smelled within.***

### Interior of the Cave

When the PCs enter the interior of the cave, they are immediately assaulted with an unimaginably concentrated stench of rotting carcasses. Each PC who breathes the air must make a one-time DC 12 Fortitude save or become sickened (p. 312, *PHB*) for 6d10 minutes. Once they delve deeper into the cave, read or paraphrase the following:

***The decomposing bodies of a dozen or so creatures can easily be seen in this 25-foot wide cave that stretches a good 65 feet ahead. It is a good 10 to 15 degrees hotter in here than outside. Scorch marks, blood splatters, and other signs of combat are everywhere. All is now still, though, with the exception of the clouds of flies buzzing around the blackening corpses.***

The ceiling is 15 feet high throughout.

If the party examines the bodies, they find four humans, a pegasus, a giant crocodile, a bugbear, two harpies, a hydra, two lizardmen, and a manticore. All the bodies have been partially consumed by scavenging animals and are currently hosts to writhing masses of maggots.

Using the descriptions provided by Verin, the party can accurately identify the body of the sorcerer, the paladin knight of Heironeous, the

temple raider of Lirr, and the ducal guard of Woodwydh.

Lahara was disintegrated into a pile of dust somewhere in the room and subsequently absorbed into the damp ground. Only a *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle* can recover her mud/dust remains for *resurrection*.

### Illusory Wall

There is an *illusory wall* that runs along the right side of squares J9 through J12 of the map. Unless the PCs can see through illusions, such as when viewing the area with *true seeing*, they are automatically fooled by it unless they try to touch it. The *illusory wall* looks like all the other walls in the cave and conceals not only the iron grate immediately behind it, but the entire room beyond, as well. This and the other two *illusory walls* in this cave were cast at level 15 for dispel purposes.

Until a PC actually interacts with the wall or sees something or someone or else pass through it, they do not get a save to pierce the illusion. When they do get a chance, the Will save DC is 21, and each wall requires its own save. Those who do make the saving throw, can see through the wall thereafter.

### Iron Grate with Locked Doors

Behind the *illusory wall* is a 20-foot long, floor-to-ceiling iron grate. PCs can easily see through the 3-inch square gaps between the criss-crossed iron bands of the grate, peering into the seemingly empty inner sanctum of the cave. At the far end of the inner sanctum are the other two *illusory walls* that hide the guardian construct and the giant crystal cluster respectively.

A pair of iron banded doors are inset in the grate. Both are closed and locked. The quality of lock ranges by APL as follows: **APL 2:** simple (Open Lock DC 20); **APL 4:** average (DC 25); **APL 6:** good (DC 30); **APL 8–12:** superior (DC 40).

If the party cannot pick the lock, they can try to break the doors open (Break DC 28), hack their way through the grate (Hardness 10, 60 hps), or dig under or around the grate, requiring 8 man-hours of work.

### Encounter Trigger:

The guardian construct (an animated object at APLs 2–6 and a mud golem at APLs 8–12) can see through all the *illusory walls* in the cave, having been made aware of them previously. The creature charges the first visible person who passes through the *illusory wall* of Column R on the map.

If the party does not pass through the wall but hangs back and somehow damages the guardian

construct or otherwise forces it to make a saving throw, it charges through the wall and attacks the closest party member.

✚ **APL 2:** Animated Object—Large Earthen Statue; EL 5; hp 52; see Appendix One, p. 53.

✚ **APL 4:** Animated Object—Huge Earthen Statue; EL 7; hp 84; see Appendix One, p. 54.

✚ **APL 6:** Animated Object—Huge Mud-Rock Statue; EL 9; hp 100; see Appendix One, p. 56.

✚ **APL 8:** Mud Golem; EL 11; hp 112; see Appendix One, p. 57.

✚ **APL 10:** Advanced 22 HD Mud Golem; EL 13; hp 151; see Appendix One, p. 59.

✚ **APL 12:** Advanced (Huge) 27 HD Mud Golem; EL 15; hp 188; see Appendix One, p. 62.

### Tactics:

The tactics of the earthen statues at APLs 2–6 are pretty straight forward: bash stuff. The mud golems at APLs 8–12 are slightly more complicated, so be sure to read up on their abilities. As a rule of thumb, a mud golem should probably save its breath weapon for when he wants to make a particularly hard-to-hit opponent fall to the ground.

### Crystal Cluster

If the PCs pass through the *illusory wall* leading to the crystal cluster, read or paraphrase the following:

***Rising 10 feet into the air is a massive crystal shard of purple hue, jutting from a geodesic cluster of smaller crystals. While utterly silent, the shard pulses faintly with an inner light.***

If any PC tries to gain control of the crystal or otherwise tries to activate any of its powers, he or she is met with failure. Only after casting *analyze dweomer* can a PC begin to understand its powers. Even then, it takes three weeks of constant contact to re-attune the crystal to a new owner before the first power can be unlocked, which is outside the scope of this scenario.

If the PCs use the *rod of cancellation* on the crystal, read or paraphrase the following:

***Touching the onyx tip of the rod of cancellation to the purple shard, a loud crackling fills the air as arcs of blue-white magic dance up and down the crystalline structure for a brief moment. The magical energy is then suddenly sucked into the iron rod, and the inner light of the crystal is no more.***

## **Resolution**

When the party is ready to depart the cave, they can either rendezvous with the Duchess in Beetu to help with the siege of Callistor or go their own separate way. The actual invasion of Brackenmoor and Eventide will take place during the interactive at Gamex 2005, NYR5-I04 Velvet Glove, Iron First.

## **Conclusion**

### **Debriefings**

PCs who are in 'call to war' meta-organizations are debriefed by their superiors after the mission is over. For each such player, find out if he truthfully relates the events as they unfolded during the adventure. Pro-Sewarndt PCs were instructed in their handout to report the names of all the other party members present on the mission. Be sure to find out if any pro-Sewarndt PCs do indeed name names and rat them out.

### **Specials**

Review the ARs and cross out the 'specials' as follows:

- If Daethil is dead when the adventure ends, cross out the "Teaching the Air Walk Trick" and "Armor Enhancement" favors.
- If Jinelle's baby died during the scenario, cross out "Favor of Verin Talnith".
- Cross out the "Dismissal/Arrest Warrant (Lynwerd)" and "Dismissal/Death Warrant (Sewarndt)" entries unless a PC belonging to a "call to war" meta-org failed to go on the mission as explained in Refusing to Go", p. 18.

### **Item Access**

Review the ARs and cross out the item access as follows:

- If Elinae did not give any of her treasure to the party, cross out every *cure light*, *cure moderate*, *cure serious*, and *cure critical* wand.
- If Nittle did not give any of his treasure to the party, cross out all the versions of the *potion of nature's favor*, *potion of barkskin*, *necklace of the wild beast*, *elixir of love*, *universal solvent*, *safewing emblem*, *sashling*, and *Small-sized elvencraft shortbow*.
- If the party did not recover the treasure from the tentacle creature, cross out all versions of the *adamantine dire pick*, *Large-sized club*, and *+1 sizing scimitar*.

## **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 Three—Hiking the Celadon at Night**

Being unable to exceed the XP cap, PCs earn no XP for this encounter, and it is not possible to use bonus combat XP for missed roleplaying XP awards.

### **Encounter Five—Down the Game Trail OR**

### **Encounter Ten—Make-Up Combat Encounter (Alternative):**

If the party defeated the praying mantises in Encounter Five or if they had the make-up combat on the way back to Adrean's Landing instead, they earn the following combat XP:

**APL 2**—150 XP; **APL 4**—210 XP; **APL 6**—270 XP; **APL 8**—330 XP; **APL 10**—390 XP; **APL 12**—450 XP

### **Encounter Seven—The Knobs of Cullidor:**

If Nittle gave the party his treasure, they earn the following roleplaying XP.

**APL 2**—45 XP; **APL 4**—67 XP; **APL 6**—90 XP; **APL 8**—112 XP; **APL 10**—135 XP; **APL 12**—157 XP

### **Encounter Eight—Entering the Cave:**

If the party defeated the tentacle beast, they earn the following combat XP:

**APL 2**—150 XP; **APL 4**—210 XP; **APL 6**—270 XP; **APL 8**—330 XP; **APL 10**—390 XP; **APL 12**—450 XP

If the party overcame the punji pit trap in square S10 on the map, they earn the following combat XP:

**APL 2**—30 XP; **APL 4**—60 XP; **APL 6**—90 XP; **APL 8**—120 XP; **APL 10**—150 XP; **APL 12**—180 XP

If the party overcame the arrow trap in square U10 on the map, they earn the following combat XP:

**APL 2**—30 XP; **APL 4**—60 XP; **APL 6**—90 XP; **APL 8**—120 XP; **APL 10**—150 XP; **APL 12**—180 XP

### **Encounter Nine—Finding Jinelle:**

If the party found Jinelle and Dandelion still alive and were successful in getting Jinelle to

accompany them willingly (without using force), they earn the following roleplaying XP:

**APL 2**—45 XP; **APL 4**—68 XP; **APL 6**—90 XP; **APL 8**—113 XP; **APL 10**—135 XP; **APL 12**—158 XP

### **OPTIONAL TU Encounter Thirteen— Thuldadora's Crystal-Cave**

If the party defeated the construct guardian(s), they earn the following combat XP:

**APL 2**—150 XP; **APL 4**—210 XP; **APL 6**—270 XP; **APL 8**—330 XP; **APL 10**—390 XP; **APL 12**—450 XP

If the party destroys the crystal with the *rod of cancellation*, they earn the following story XP:

**APL 2**—37 XP; **APL 4**—52 XP; **APL 6**—67 XP; **APL 8**—82 XP; **APL 10**—97 XP; **APL 12**—112 XP

### **TOTAL POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE:**

**APL 2:** 450 XP or

With Optional TU Mission: 637 XP

**APL 4:** 675 XP or

With Optional TU Mission: 937 XP

**APL 6:** 900 XP or

With Optional TU Mission: 1,237 XP

**APL 8:** 1,125 XP or

With Optional TU Mission: 1,537 XP

**APL 10:** 1,350 XP

With Optional TU Mission: 1,837 XP

**APL 12:** 1,575 XP

With Optional TU Mission: 2,137 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.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy; Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; Magic = Magic Items.

### **Encounter Four: Camped with the Windriders**

**APL 2:** Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 195.83 gp; **APL 4:** Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 329.16 gp; **APL 6:** Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 475 gp; **APL 8:** Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 608.33 gp; **APL 10:** Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 829.16 gp; **APL 12:** Loot: 0 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,075 gp.

### **Encounter Seven: The Knobs of Cullidor**

**APL 2:** Loot: 53.33 gp; Coin: 210 gp; Magic: 79.16 gp; **APL 4:** Loot: 53.33 gp; Coin: 315 gp; Magic: 79.16 gp; **APL 6:** Loot: 53.33 gp; Coin: 52 gp; Magic: 79.16 gp; **APL 8:** Loot: 0.83 gp; Coin: 126 gp; Magic: 298.32gp; **APL 10:** Loot: 0.83 gp; Coin: 22 gp; Magic: 798.32 gp; **APL 12:** Loot: 0.83 gp; Coin: 10 gp; Magic: 798.32 gp.

### **Encounter Eight: Entering the Cave**

**APL 2:** Loot: 25 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 359.58 gp; **APL 4:** Loot: 25 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 526.24 gp; **APL 6:** Loot: 281.32 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 692.92 gp; **APL 8:** Loot: 28.82 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,112.08 gp; **APL 10:** Loot: 3.82 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,303.74 gp; **APL 12:** Loot: 3.82 gp; Coin: 0 gp; Magic: 1,803.74 gp.

## Total Possible Treasure

**Total possible treasure exceeds cap, so cap applies.** The breakdown is still listed below, though, for your information.

**APL 2:** (Loot: 78 gp; Coin: 210 gp; Magic: 635 gp - Total: 923 gp, capped at 450 gp)

**APL 4:** (Loot: 78 gp; Coin: 315 gp; Magic: 935 gp - Total: 1,328 gp, capped at 650 gp)

**APL 6:** (Loot: 335 gp; Coin: 52 gp; Magic: 1,247 gp - Total: 1,634 gp, capped at 900 gp)

**APL 8:** (Loot: 30 gp; Coin: 126 gp; Magic: 2,019 gp - Total: 2,174 gp, capped at 1,300 gp)

**APL 10:** (Loot: 5 gp; Coin: 22 gp; Magic: 2,931 gp - Total: 2,958 gp, capped at 2,300 gp)

**APL 12:** (Loot: 5 gp; Coin: 10 gp; Magic: 3,677 gp - Total: 3,692 gp, capped at 3,300 gp)

## Over-Cap:

PCs can recover gold in this scenario above and beyond what is permitted pursuant to the LGCS. This gold that exceeds the cap can only be used for certain things during the adventure. For example, it can be used to pay for services such as a room at the inn, NPC spellcasting (*raise dead* and its material component, etc), or bribing a local guard. What it cannot be used for is anything that happens after the adventure is over (unless it is paying for NPC spellcasting) or anything that will add an item to a character.

The amount of total over-cap gold per APL is as follows:

**APL 2:** 5,537.40 gp

**APL 4:** 7,967.34 gp

**APL 6:** 9,802.38 gp

**APL 8:** 13,046.28 gp

**APL 10:** 17,747.22 gp

**APL 12:** 22,150.26 gp

## Special

☛ **Teaching the Air Walk Trick:** The Sipharel tribe know much about flying beasts, and they will teach any animal of yours how to magically walk on the air while under the effects of the *air walk* spell. You may redeem this favor any number of times, and each time you do, it costs you 1 TU and applies to a single animal.

☛ **Armor Enhancement:** Having rescued one of their own, the grateful Sipharel grant you access to the following armor/shield enhancements: *beastskin* (CV), *wild* (DMG), *woodwalk* (armor only, RW). You must still pay the standard costs associated with upgrading the items.

Additionally, the Sipharel will teach you the art of crafting such enhancements yourself if you

have now or later acquire the Craft Arms and Armor feat. This favor, therefore, counts as access in that regard.

☛ **Time in the Gnatmarsh:** Your time in the Gnatmarsh during this adventure counts as 1 TU towards meeting the requirements of joining the Circle Wardens of the Broken Ring meta-organization of Nyronnd.

☛ **Favor of Verin Talnith:** For succeeding in your mission, the Duchess of Woodwyck has bestowed upon you her favor. This favor counts as 1 Royal Influence point loyal to King Lynwerd.

☛ **Dismissal/Arrest Warrant (Lynwerd):** For refusing to follow your call to war duties and going on the lam, you are immediately kicked out of all military, royal, and 'call to war' meta-orgs loyal to Lynwerd to which you belonged. An arrest warrant for you has been issued. If you ever return to lands loyal to King Lynwerd, you will be jailed for 52 TUs and fined 1,000 gp times your current level.

☛ **Dismissal/Death Warrant (Sewarndt):** For refusing to follow your call to war duties and going on the lam, you are immediately kicked out of all military, royal, and 'call to war' meta-orgs loyal to Sewarndt to which you belonged. A death warrant for you has also been issued. If you ever return to lands loyal to Emperor Sewarndt while he is in power, you will be executed.

## Item Access

APL 2 & 4

❖ *wand of cure light wounds* (Adv.; DMG; 750 gp)

❖ *potion of nature's favor +1* (Adv.; CV; 300 gp)

❖ *necklace of the wild beast* (no bead of awakening available) (Adv.; AaEG; price varies based on beads added)

❖ *elixir of love* (Adv.; DMG; 150 gp)

❖ *universal solvent* (Adv.; DMG 50 gp)

❖ *safewing emblem* (Adv.; RW; 250 gp)

❖ *sashling* (Adv.; RW; 10 gp)

❖ *Small m. work elvencraft shortbow* (Adv.; RW; 630 gp)

❖ *Large masterwork club* (Adv.; PHB; 300 gp)

APL 6 (All of APLs 2 & 4 plus the following)

❖ *wand of cure moderate wounds* (Adv.; DMG; 4,500 gp)

❖ *Medium adamantine dire pick* (Adv.; CW; 3,030 gp)

❖ *+1 sizing scimitar* (Adv.; RW; 8,315 gp)

APL 8 (All of APLs 2–6 plus the following)

❖ *potion of barkskin +5* (Adv.; DMG; 1,200 gp)

❖ *potion of nature's favor +4* (Adv.; CV; 1,200 gp)

APL 10 (All of APLs 2–8 plus the following)

- ❖ *wand of cure serious wounds* (Adv.; DMG; 11,250 gp)
- ❖ *Small +1 merciful elvencraft shortbow* (Adv.; RW; 8,630 gp)

APL 12 (All of APLs 2-10 plus the following)

- ❖ *wand of cure critical wounds* (Adv.; DMG; 21,000 gp)
- ❖ *Large +1 bane (undead) club*; DMG; 8,300 gp)

## Appendix One – Stat Blocks: APL 2

### Encounter Five, APL 2

**Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** CR 4; Large-sized Fey; HD 4d6+4; hp 18; **Init** +0; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); **AC** 16 (–1 size, +7 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 15; Bas Atk/Grapple +2/+10; **Atk** +5 melee (1d8+4, claws); **Full Atk** +5 melee (1d8+4, claws) and +0 melee (1d6+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SA Improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ DR 5/cold iron, immune to enchantment spells and effects, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Wil +7.

Str 19, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Hide +15 (includes +12 bonus for being in foliage and –4 penalty for being large), Spot +14; **Feats:** Ability Focus (*glitterdust*), Improved Natural Armor.

SA: **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, a giant praying mantis must hit with its claws attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and makes a bite as a primary attack (at its full +5 attack bonus). **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 4)**—At will: *charm person* (Will DC 13); 3/day: *detect law*, 1/day: *faerie fire*, *hypnotism* (Will DC 13), *sleep* (Will DC 13).

### Encounter Eight, APL 2

**Adolescent Spark Lasher:** CR 2; Medium-sized Aberration; HD 3d8+3; hp 16; **Init** +1; Spd 30 ft., swim 10 ft.; **AC** 14 plus 4 or 8 more for cover (+1 Dex, +3 natural); Bas Atk/Grapple +2/+1; **Atk** +3 melee touch (1d8 electricity, tentacle) or +3 melee (1d6–1, bite); SA Electricity damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., invulnerability to electricity; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Wil +2.

Str 8, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13.

**Skills:** Hide +1, or +9 when in a marsh, Intimidate +7, Survival +5, Swim +13; **Feats:** Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse.

SA: **Electricity Damage (Su)**—The touch of this adolescent spark lasher's tentacles deals 1d8\* electricity damage. **Skills:**—A spark lasher has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. Spark lashers have a +8 bonus on Hide checks when in a marsh.

### Encounter Thirteen, APL 2

**Animated Object—Large Earthen Statue:** CR 3; Large-sized construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 52; **Init** +0; Spd 30 ft.; **AC** 14 (–1 size, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14; Bas Atk/Grapple +3/+10; **Atk** +5

melee (1d8+4, slam); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ Hardness 0 or 2, construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Wil –4.

Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA: **Hardness**—At tables with 3 or more 1<sup>st</sup> level PCs, this earthen statue is made of dried mud and has a hardness of 0. At all other APL 2 tables, the mud was mixed with a mortar composite, giving the statue a hardness of 2. **Construct Traits**—Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and resurrection and necromantic effects. Not subject to critical hits, sneak attacks, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects). If reduced to 0 or less hit points, it is immediately destroyed.

## Appendix One – Stat Blocks: APL 4

### Encounter Five, APL 4

**Advanced Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** CR 6; Huge-sized Fey; HD 9d6+27; hp 58; **Init** –1; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); **AC** 17 (–1 Dex, –2 size, +10 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 16; Bas Atk/Grapple +4/+21; **Atk** +11 melee (2d6+9, claws); **Full Atk** +11 melee (2d6+9, claws) and +6 melee (1d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ DR 5/cold iron, immune to enchantment spells and effects, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Wil +9.

Str 28, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Hide +15 (includes +12 bonus for being in foliage and –8 for being huge), Spot +19; **Feats:** Ability Focus (*confusion*), Ability Focus (*glitterdust*), Improved Natural Armor; Improved Natural Attack (claws).

SA: **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, a giant praying mantis must hit with its claws attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and makes a bite as a primary attack (at its full +11 attack bonus). **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 9)**—At will: *charm person* (Will DC 13); 3/day: *detect law, protection from law*, 1/day: *confusion* (Will DC 18), ~~*eyebite* (Fort DC 18)\*~~, *glitterdust* (Will DC 16), *hypnotism* (Will DC 13), *sleep* (Will DC 13), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (Will DC 14).

\* ~~Strikethrough~~ text indicates *eyebite* is not used at this APL.

### Encounter Eight, APL 4

**Advanced Spark Lasher:** CR 4; Large-sized Aberration; HD 7d8+28; hp 59; **Init** +0; Spd 30 ft., swim 10 ft.; **AC** 14 plus 4 or 8 more for cover (–1 size, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14; Bas Atk/Grapple +5/+12; **Atk** +7 melee touch (3d8 electricity, tentacle) or +7 melee (1d6+3, bite); SA Electricity damage; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., invulnerability to electricity; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Wil +4.

Str 16, Dex 11, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13.

**Skills:** Hide +6, or +14 when in a marsh, Intimidate +9, Move Silently +2, Survival +7, Swim +21; **Feats:** Lightning Reflexes, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

SA: **Electricity Damage (Su)**—The touch of a spark lasher's tentacles deals 3d8 electricity damage. **Skills:**—A spark lasher has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while

swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. Spark lashers have a +8 bonus on Hide checks when in a marsh.

### Encounter Thirteen, APL 4

**Animated Object—Huge Earthen Statue:** CR 5; Large-sized construct; HD 8d10+40; hp 84; **Init** –1; Spd 30 ft.; **AC** 13 (–2 size, –1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 13; Bas Atk/Grapple +6/+19; **Atk** +9 melee (2d6+7, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SQ Hardness 4, construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Wil –3.

Str 20, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA: **Hardness**—This earthen statue is made of dried mud mixed with a strong mortar composite, giving the statue a hardness of 4. **Construct Traits**—Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and resurrection and necromantic effects. Not subject to critical hits, sneak attacks, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects). If reduced to 0 or less hit points, it is immediately destroyed.

## Appendix One – Stat Blocks: APL 6

### Encounter Five, APL 6

**Advanced Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** CR 7; Huge-sized Fey; HD 12d6+36; hp 78; **Init** –1; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (poor); **AC** 17 (–1 Dex, –2 size, +10 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 16; Bas Atk/Grapple +6/+23; **Atk** +13 melee (2d6+9, claws); **Full Atk** +13 melee (2d6+9, claws) and +8 melee (1d6+4, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ DR 5/cold iron, immune to enchantment spells and effects, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +11.

Str 28, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 16.

**Skills:** Hide +18 (includes +12 bonus for being in foliage and –8 for being huge), Spot +22; **Feats:** Ability Focus (*confusion*), Ability Focus (*glitterdust*), Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Quicken Spell-like Ability (*glitterdust*).

SA: **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, a giant praying mantis must hit with its claws attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and makes a bite as a primary attack (at its full +13 attack bonus). **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 12)**—At will: *charm person* (Will DC 14); 3/day: *detect law, protection from law*, 1/day: *confusion* (Will DC 19), ~~*eyebite* (Fort DC 19)\*~~, *Quickened glitterdust* (Will DC 17), *hold monster* (Will DC 18), *hypnotism* (Will DC 14), *sleep* (Will DC 14), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (Will DC 15).

\* ~~Strikethrough~~ text indicates *eyebite* is not used at this APL.

### Encounter Eight, APL 6

**Darktentacles:** CR 7; Large-sized Aberration; HD 9d8+27; hp 67; **Init** +2; Spd 5 ft., swim 20 ft.; **AC** 18 plus 4 more for bog cover or 8 more for 'crouching' (+2 Dex, –1 Size, +7 natural); Bas Atk/Grapple +6/+30 (–20 penalty to maintain grapple); **Atk** +10 melee (2d6+5 [crit 18–20], *Huge* +1 *sizing scimitar*); **Full Atk** 13 attacks (2 primary weapon attacks plus 11 'off-hand' attacks) with no more than 3 tentacles attacking a single 5' square in a given round and no more than 1 tentacle at a time attacking a Tiny or smaller sized creature:

\*\*\* If 'crouching' all attacks have a –10 penalty to hit. \*\*\*

**Primary Attack:** +8/+3 melee (2d6+5 [crit 18–20], *Huge* +1 *sizing scimitar*)

**Off-hand Attack 1:** +4 melee (1d8+2 [crit x4], adamantine dire pick)

**Off-hand Attack 2:** +8 melee (1d8+2, Large masterwork club)

**Off-hand Attack 3:** +7 melee (2d4+2 [crit x4], scythe)

**Off-hand Attack 4:** +7 melee (1d6+2 [crit 18–20], rapier)

**Off-hand Attack 5–9:** +7 melee (x5) (1d8+2, 5 flails)

**Off-hand Attacks 10–11:** +7 (x2) melee (1d4+2 plus improved grab, 2 slams)

Face/Reach 10 ft./15; SA Constrict 2d6+6, improved grab, spell-like abilities; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., enhanced multiweapon fighting, tentacle regeneration, tremorsense, weapon use; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +5 or +9 if 'crouching', Will +7.

Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +11, Hide +16, Listen +9, Move Silently +16, Spot +9; **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Stealthy.

SA: **Constrict (Ex)**—With a successful grapple check, a darktentacles can crush a grabbed opponent, dealing 2d6+6 points of bludgeoning damage. **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, it must hit with its unarmed slam attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately constrict. **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 10)**—5/day: *hold monster* (DC 16 Will); 3/day: *charm monster* (DC 15 Will); 1/day: *wall of force*. **Tentacle Regeneration (Ex)**—An opponent can attack a darktentacles' tentacles as if they were weapons—see Sunder, p. 158 PHB. A darktentacles' tentacles have 20 hit points. If the darktentacles is currently grappling a target with that tentacle, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing a tentacle deals damage to the creature equal to half the limb's hit points. A darktentacles regrows severed limbs within a day. **Tremorsense (Ex)**—A darktentacles is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within 60 feet.

**Equipment:** +1 *sizing scimitar*, adamantine dire pick\*, Large masterwork club, scythe, rapier, flail.

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

Continued next page.

### Encounter Thirteen, APL 6

**Animated Object—Huge Mud-Rock Statue:** CR 7; Large-sized construct; HD 8d10+40; hp 100; **Init** –1; Spd 30 ft.; **AC** 13 (–2 size, –1 Dex, +6 natural), touch 7, flat-footed 13; Bas Atk/Grapple +6/+19; **Atk** +9 melee (2d6+7, slam); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SQ Hardness 8, tougher, construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Wil –4.

Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA: **Hardness**—This earthen statue is made of a strong mortar mixed with mud, giving the statue a hardness of 8. **Tougher**—This creature has more hit points than average. **Construct Traits**—Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, and resurrection and necromantic effects.

Not subject to critical hits, sneak attacks, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It is immune to any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect also works on objects). If reduced to 0 or less hit points, it is immediately destroyed.

## Appendix One – Stat Blocks: APL 8

### Encounter Five, APL 8

**Advanced Corrupted Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis:** CR 10; Huge-sized Aberration; HD 12d8+60; hp 114; **Init** –2; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); **AC** 24 (–2 Dex, –2 size, +18 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 24; Bas Atk/Grapple +9/+28; **Atk** +18 melee (2d6+11+6 vile dmg\*, claws); **Full Atk** +18 melee (2d6+11+6 vile dmg\*, claws) and +13 melee (1d8+5+6 vile dmg\*, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, spell-like abilities, vile damage; SQ DR 10/magic, fast healing 6, acid immunity, immune to enchantment spells and effects, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Wil +10.

Str 32, Dex 6, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Hide +17 (includes +12 bonus for being in foliage and –8 for being huge), Spot +21; **Feats:** Ability Focus (*confusion*), Ability Focus (*glitterdust*), Improved Flight<sup>(new)</sup>, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claws)<sup>B</sup>, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*glitterdust*).

SA: **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, a giant praying mantis must hit with its claws attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and makes a bite as a primary attack (at its full +18 attack bonus). **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 12)**—At will: *charm person* (Will DC 17); 3/day: *detect law, protection from law*, 1/day: *confusion* (Will DC 22), *eyebite* (Fort DC 22), *Quicken glitterdust* (Will DC 20), *hold monster* (Will DC 21), *hypnotism* (Will DC 17), *sleep* (Will DC 17), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (Will DC 18).

\* See "vile damage" in the New Rules on p. 66.

### Encounter Eight, APL 8

**Advanced 17 HD Darktentacles:** CR 9; Large-sized Aberration; HD 17d8+51; hp 127; **Init** +3; Spd 5 ft., swim 20 ft.; **AC** 19 plus 4 more for bog cover or 8 more for 'crouching' (+3 Dex, –1 Size, +7 natural); Bas Atk/Grapple +12/+37 (–20 penalty to maintain grapple); **Atk** +17 melee (2d6+6, *Huge* +1 sizing scimitar); **Full Atk** 14 attacks (3 primary weapon attacks plus 11 'off-hand' attacks) with no more than 3 tentacles attacking a single 5' square in a given round:

\*\*\* If 'crouching' all attacks have a –10 penalty to hit. \*\*\*

**Primary Attack:** +15/+10/+5 melee (2d6+6 [crit 18–20], *Huge* +1 sizing scimitar)

**Off-hand Attack 1:** +11 melee (1d8+3 [crit x4], +1 *adamantine dire pick*)

**Off-hand Attack 2:** +15 melee (1d8+2, Large MW club)

**Off-hand Attack 3:** +14 melee (2d4+2 [crit x4], scythe)

**Off-hand Attack 4:** +14 melee (1d6+2 [crit 18–20], rapier)

**Off-hand Attack 5–9:** +14 melee (x5) (1d8+2, 2 flails)

**Off-hand Attacks 10–11:** +14 (x2) melee (1d4+2 plus improved grab, 2 slams)

Face/Reach 10 ft./15; **SA** Constrict 2d6+7, improved grab, spell-like abilities; **SQ** Darkvision 60 ft., enhanced multiweapon fighting, tentacle regeneration, tremorsense, weapon use; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +8 or +12 if 'crouching', Wil +13.

Str 20, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +19, Hide +25, Listen +9, Move Silently +25, Spot +9.; **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Stealthy, Tunnel Fighting\*.

SA: **Constrict (Ex)**—With a successful grapple check, a darktentacles can crush a grabbed opponent, dealing 2d6+7 points of bludgeoning damage. **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, it must hit with its unarmed slam attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately constrict. **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 17)**—5/day: *hold monster* (DC 16 Will); 3/day: *charm monster* (DC 15 Will); 1/day: *wall of force*. **Tentacle Regeneration (Ex)**—An opponent can attack a darktentacles' tentacles as if they were weapons—see Sunder, p. 158 *PHB*. A darktentacles' tentacles have 20 hit points. If the darktentacles is currently grappling a target with that tentacle, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing a tentacle deals damage to the creature equal to half the limb's hit points. A darktentacles regrows severed limbs within a day. **Tremorsense (Ex)**—A darktentacles is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within 60 feet.

**Equipment:** +1 sizing scimitar, +1 *adamantine dire pick*\*, Large masterwork club, scythe, rapier, flail.

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

Continued next page.

### Encounter Thirteen, APL 8

**Mud Golem:** CR 11; Large-sized Construct; HD 15d10+30; hp 112; **Init** –1; Spd 20 ft. (can't run), swim 20 ft.; **AC** 21 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +13 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 21; Bas Atk/Grapple +11/+22; **Atk** +17 melee (2d10+10, slam); **Full Atk** +17/+17 melee (2d10+10, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, engulf; SQ DR 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, construct traits, immunity to magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Wil +5.

Str 24, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Skills:** Hide –5 (or +10 when submerged in mud)\*, Swim +15; **Feats:** None.

SA: **Breath Weapon (Su)**—Spray of slippery mud; 15-foot cone, once every 1d3 rounds. This spray does no damage, but everyone in the area must make a DC 17 reflex save or be blinded for 1d3 rounds. In addition, the breath weapon leaves a very slippery mud residue, equivalent to a *grease* spell (Reflex DC 17). The mud remains slippery for 1 hour before it dries out. The save DCs are Constitution-based. **Engulf (Ex)**—A mud golem can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The mud golem attempts a grapple that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and slams the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on the attack roll. Attacks that hit an engulfing mud golem deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim. While engulfed, a victim can do nothing but try to break free, by succeeding on an opposed grapple check. A mud golem can engulf 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, 32 Diminutive, or 128 Fine opponents at a time. An engulfed creature has no air to breathe, and there is a chance it will begin to drown (see Drowning, page 304 of the *DMG*). **Immunity to Magic (Ex)**—A mud golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects that allow spell resistance, except as follows: a *transmute mud to rock* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. A *transmute rock to mud* spell heals all its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure, but it negates the mud golem's damage reduction for 1 round. **Skills:** A mud golem has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## Appendix One – Stat Blocks: APL 10

### Encounter Five, APL 10

**Advanced Corrupted Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis (2):** CR 10; Huge-sized Aberration; HD 12d8+60; hp 114 ea; **Init** –2; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); **AC 24 or 26 vs. law** (–2 Dex, –2 size, +2 *protect'n. law*, +18 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 24; Bas Atk/Grapple +9/+28; **Atk** +18 melee (2d6+11+6 vile dmg\*, claws); **Full Atk** +18 melee (2d6+11+6 vile dmg\*, claws) and +13 melee (1d8+5+6 vile dmg\*, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, spell-like abilities, vile damage; SQ DR 10/magic, fast healing 6, acid immunity, immune to enchantment spells and effects, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Wil +10.

Str 32, Dex 6, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Hide +17 (includes +12 bonus for being in foliage and –8 for being huge), Spot +21; **Feats:** Ability Focus (*confusion*), Ability Focus (*glitterdust*), Improved Flight <sup>(new)</sup>, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claws)<sup>B</sup>, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*glitterdust*).

SA: **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, a giant praying mantis must hit with its claws attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and makes a bite as a primary attack (at its full +18 attack bonus). **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 12)**—At will: *charm person* (Will DC 17); 3/day: *detect law*, *protection from law*, 1/day: *confusion* (Will DC 22), *eyebite* (Fort DC 22), *Quicken glitterdust* (Will DC 20), *hold monster* (Will DC 21), *hypnotism* (Will DC 17), *sleep* (Will DC 17), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (Will DC 18).

\* See "vile damage" in the New Rules on p. 66.

### Encounter Eight, APL 10

**Advanced 21 HD Darktentacles:** CR 11; Huge-sized Aberration; HD 21d8+126; hp 220; **Init** +2; Spd 5 ft., swim 20 ft.; **AC 20 plus 4 more for bog cover or 8 more for 'crouching'** (+2 Dex, –2 Size, +10 natural); Bas Atk/Grapple +15/+48 (–20 penalty to maintain grapple); **Atk** +23 melee (2d6+10, *Huge* +1 *sizing scimitar*); **Full Atk** 14 attacks (3 primary weapon attacks plus 11 'off-hand' attacks) with no more than 3 tentacles attacking a single 5' square in a given round:

\*\*\* If 'crouching' all attacks have a –10 penalty to hit. \*\*\*

**Primary Attack:** +23/+18/+13 melee (2d6+10 [crit 18–20], *Huge* +1 *sizing scimitar*)

**Off-hand Attack 1:** +19 melee (1d8+5 [crit x4], +1 *adamantine dire pick*)

**Off-hand Attack 2:** +23 melee (1d8+5, *Large* +1 *club*)

**Off-hand Attack 3:** +22 melee (2d4+4 [crit x4], scythe)

**Off-hand Attack 4:** +22 melee (1d6+4 [crit 18–20], rapier)

**Off-hand Attack 5–9:** +22 melee (x5) (1d8+4, 5 flails)

**Off-hand Attacks 6–11:** +22 (x2) melee (1d4+4 plus improved grab, 2 slams)

Face/Reach 15 ft./20; **SA** Constrict 2d6+13, improved grab, spell-like abilities; **SQ** Darkvision 60 ft., enhanced multiweapon fighting, tentacle regeneration, tremorsense, weapon use; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +11 or +15 if 'crouching', Wil +15.

Str 28, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +23, Hide +24, Listen +10, Move Silently +28, Spot +10.; **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Stealthy, Tunnel Fighting\*.

SA: **Constrict (Ex)**—With a successful grapple check, a darktentacles can crush a grabbed opponent, dealing 2d6+13 points of bludgeoning damage. **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, it must hit with its unarmed slam attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately constrict. **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 20)**—5/day: *hold monster* (DC 16 Will); 3/day: *charm monster* (DC 15 Will); 1/day: *wall of force*. **Tentacle Regeneration (Ex)**—An opponent can attack a darktentacles' tentacles as if they were weapons—see Sunder, p. 158 *PHB*. A darktentacles' tentacles have 20 hit points. If the darktentacles is currently grappling a target with that tentacle, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing a tentacle deals damage to the creature equal to half the limb's hit points. A darktentacles regrows severed limbs within a day. **Tremorsense (Ex)**—A darktentacles is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within 60 feet.

**Equipment:** +1 *sizing scimitar*, +1 *adamantine dire pick*\*, *Large* +1 *club*, scythe, rapier, flail.

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

Continued next page.

### Encounter Thirteen, APL 10

**Advanced 22 HD Mud Golem:** CR 13; Large-sized Construct; HD 22d10+30; hp 151; **Init** –1; Spd 20 ft. (can't run), swim 20 ft.; **AC** 21 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +13 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 21; Bas Atk/Grapple +16/+28; **Atk** +23 melee (2d10+12, slam); **Full Atk** +23/+23 melee (2d10+12, 2 slams); Space/Reach 10 ft./10 ft.; SA Breath weapon, engulf; SQ DR 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, construct traits, immunity to magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Wil +7.

Str 26, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Skills:** Hide –5 (or +10 when submerged in mud)\*, Swim +22; **Feats:** None.

SA: **Breath Weapon (Su)**—Spray of slippery mud; 15-foot cone, once every 1d3 rounds. This spray does no damage, but everyone in the area must make a DC 17 reflex save or be blinded for 1d3 rounds. In addition, the breath weapon leaves a very slippery mud residue, equivalent to a *grease* spell (Reflex DC 17). The mud remains slippery for 1 hour before it dries out. The save DCs are Constitution-based. **Engulf (Ex)**—A mud golem can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The mud golem attempts a grapple that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and slams the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on the attack roll. Attacks that hit an engulfing mud golem deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim. While engulfed, a victim can do nothing but try to break free, by succeeding on an opposed grapple check. A mud golem can engulf 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, 32 Diminutive, or 128 Fine opponents at a time. An engulfed creature has no air to breathe, and there is a chance it will begin to drown (see Drowning, page 304 of the *DMG*). **Immunity to Magic (Ex)**—A mud golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects that allow spell resistance, except as follows: a *transmute mud to rock* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. A *transmute rock to mud* spell heals all its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure, but it negates the mud golem's damage reduction for 1 round. **Skills:** A mud golem has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## Appendix One – Stat Blocks: APL 12

### Encounter Five, APL 12

**Advanced Corrupted Half-Fey Giant Praying Mantis (3):** CR 10; Huge-sized Aberration; HD 12d8+60; hp 114 ea; **Init** –2; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); **AC 24 or 26 vs. law** (–2 Dex, –2 size, +2 *protect'n. law*, +18 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 24; Bas Atk/Grapple +9/+28; **Atk** +18 melee (2d6+11+6 vile dmg\*, claws); **Full Atk** +18 melee (2d6+11+6 vile dmg\*, claws) and +13 melee (1d8+5+6 vile dmg\*, bite); Space/Reach 15 ft./10 ft.; SA Improved grab, spell-like abilities, vile damage; SQ DR 10/magic, fast healing 6, acid immunity, immune to enchantment spells and effects, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Wil +10.

Str 32, Dex 6, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 14.

**Skills:** Hide +17 (includes +12 bonus for being in foliage and –8 for being huge), Spot +21; **Feats:** Ability Focus (*confusion*), Ability Focus (*glitterdust*), Improved Flight<sup>(new)</sup>, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite, claws)<sup>B</sup>, Quicken Spell-like Ability (*glitterdust*).

SA: **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, a giant praying mantis must hit with its claws attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and makes a bite as a primary attack (at its full +18 attack bonus). **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 12)**—At will: *charm person* (Will DC 17); 3/day: *detect law*, *protection from law*, 1/day: *confusion* (Will DC 22), *eyebite* (Fort DC 22), *Quicken glitterdust* (Will DC 20), *hold monster* (Will DC 21), *hypnotism* (Will DC 17), *sleep* (Will DC 17), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (Will DC 18).

\* See "vile damage" in the New Rules on p. 66.

### Encounter Eight, APL 12

**Advanced 21 HD Fiendish Darktentacles:** CR 13; Huge-sized Aberration [Extra-planar]; HD 21d8+126; hp 220; **Init** +2; Spd 5 ft., swim 20 ft.; **AC 20 plus 4 more for bog cover or 8 more for 'crouching'** (+2 Dex, –2 Size, +10 natural); Bas Atk/Grapple +15/+48 (–20 penalty to maintain grapple); **Atk** +23 melee (2d6+10, *Huge* +1 *sizing scimitar*); **Full Atk** 14 attacks (3 primary weapon attacks plus 11 'off-hand' attacks) with no more than 3 tentacles attacking a single 5' square in a given round:

\*\*\* If 'crouching' all attacks have a –10 penalty to hit. \*\*\*

**Primary Attack:** +23/+18/+13 melee (2d6+10 [crit 18–20], *Huge* +1 *sizing scimitar*)

**Off-hand Attack 1:** +19 melee (1d8+5 [crit x4], +1 *adamantine dire pick*)

**Off-hand Attack 2:** +23 melee (1d8+5 plus 2d6 vs. undead, *Large* +1 *bane [undead] club*)

**Off-hand Attack 3:** +22 melee (2d4+4 [crit x4], scythe)

**Off-hand Attack 4:** +22 melee (1d6+4 [crit 18–20], rapier)

**Off-hand Attack 5–9:** +22 melee (x5) (1d8+4, 5 flails)

**Off-hand Attacks 10–11:** +22 (x2) melee (1d4+4 plus improved grab, 2 slams considered magical for DR purposes)

Face/Reach 15 ft./20; SA smite good +20 dmg; constrict 2d6+13, improved grab, spell-like abilities, SQ DR 10/magic, SR 25, cold and fire resistance 10, darkvision 60 ft., enhanced multiweapon fighting, tentacle regeneration, tremorsense, weapon use; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +11 or +15 if 'crouching', Wil +15.

Str 28, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12.

**Skills:** Concentration +23, Hide +24, Listen +10, Move Silently +28, Spot +10.; **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Stealthy, Tunnel Fighting\*.

SA: **Constrict (Ex)**—With a successful grapple check, a darktentacles can crush a grabbed opponent, dealing 2d6+13 points of bludgeoning damage. **Improved Grab (Ex)**—To use this ability, it must hit with its unarmed slam attack. If it wins the ensuing grapple check, it establishes a hold and can immediately constrict. **Spell-Like Abilities (caster level 20)**—5/day: *hold monster* (DC 16 Will); 3/day: *charm monster* (DC 15 Will); 1/day: *wall of force*. **Tentacle Regeneration (Ex)**—An opponent can attack a darktentacles' tentacles as if they were weapons—see Sunder, p. 158 PHB. A darktentacles' tentacles have 20 hit points. If the darktentacles is currently grappling a target with that tentacle, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing a tentacle deals damage to the creature equal to half the limb's hit points. A darktentacles regrows severed limbs within a day. **Tremorsense (Ex)**—A darktentacles is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within 60 feet.

**Equipment:** +1 *sizing scimitar*, +1 *adamantine dire pick*\*, *Large* +1 *bane (undead) club*, scythe, rapier, flail.

\* See Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66.

### Encounter Thirteen, APL 12

**Advanced 27 HD Mud Golem:** CR 15; Huge-sized Construct; HD 27d10+40; hp 188; **Init** –3; Spd 20 ft. (can't run), swim 20 ft.; **AC** 22 (–2 size, –2 Dex, +16 natural), touch 6, flat-footed 22; Bas Atk/Grapple +20/+40; **Atk** +30 melee (4d8+18, slam); **Full Atk** +30/+30 melee (4d8+18, 2 slams); Space/Reach 15 ft./15 ft.; SA Breath weapon, engulf; SQ DR 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, construct traits, immunity to magic, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Wil +9.

Str 34, Dex 7, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

**Skills:** Hide –6 (or +9 when submerged in mud)\*, Swim +27; **Feats:** None.

SA: **Breath Weapon (Su)**—Spray of slippery mud; 15-foot cone, once every 1d3 rounds. This spray does no damage, but everyone in the area must make a DC 17 reflex save or be blinded for 1d3 rounds. In addition, the breath weapon leaves a very slippery mud residue, equivalent to a *grease* spell (Reflex DC 17). The mud remains slippery for 1 hour before it dries out. The save DCs are Constitution-based. **Engulf (Ex)**—A Huge mud golem can try to wrap a Large or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The mud golem attempts a grapple that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and slams the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on the attack roll. Attacks that hit an engulfing mud golem deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim. While engulfed, a victim can do nothing but try to break free, by succeeding on an opposed grapple check. A **Huge-sized** mud golem can engulf 1 Large, 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, 128 Diminutive, or 512 Fine opponents at a time. An engulfed creature has no air to breathe, and there is a chance it will begin to drown (see Drowning, page 304 of the *DMG*). **Immunity to Magic (Ex)**—A mud golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects that allow spell resistance, except as follows: a *transmute mud to rock* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. A *transmute rock to mud* spell heals all its lost hit points. A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure, but it negates the mud golem's damage reduction for 1 round. **Skills:** A mud golem has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

## Appendix One – Untiered Stat Blocks: All APLs

### Encounter One, All APLs

**Verin Talnith, Duchess of Woodwych, female human Ari-10:** Medium Humanoid (5'5" tall, 110 lbs); HD 10d8+10; hp 63; **Init +4**; Spd 30 ft.; **AC 19** (+5 armor, +4 dex), touch 14, flat-footed 15; Base Atk/Grapple +7/+6; **Full Atk** +7/+2 melee (1d4-1 [crit 19–20], +1 *silvered dagger*) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8 +1d6 fire [crit x3 +2d10 fire], +1 *flaming burst longbow of distance*); SQ DR 5/magic; AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +7;

Str 8, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16;

**Skills:** Bluff +18, Diplomacy +22, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (history) +7, Knowledge (nobility) +7, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perform (Oratory) +12, Ride +19, Sense Motive +7, Speak Language +5, Spot +1; **Feats:** Leadership, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Persuasive, Point Blank Shot.

**Languages:** Common, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Nyrondeese, Old Oeridian, Ancient Suloise.

**Equipment:** Noble's outfit, +1 *glamered mithral chain shirt of invulnerability*, +1 *flaming burst longbow of distance*, +1 *silvered dagger*, +4 *gloves of Dexterity*, *amulet of proof against detection and location*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of invisibility*, *boots of teleportation*, *cube of force*.

### Encounter One, All APLs

**Elite Ducal Bodyguard of Woodwych, male human Ftr-8/Rog-4 (4):** Medium Humanoid (5' 11" tall, 175 lbs); HD 4d6+8d10+12; hp 78 ea; **Init +6**; Spd 30 ft.; **AC 26** (+7 armor, +6 Dex, +3 deflection), touch 17, flat-footed 26; Base Atk/Grapple +11/+13; **Full Atk** +20/+15/+10 melee (2d4+5, +2 *cold iron spiked chain*) or +18/+13/+8 melee (1d6+1 [crit 18–20], +1 *silvered rapier*) or +15/+10/+5 melee (1d6+2 [crit 19–20], MW short sword) or +16/+11/+6 ranged (1d8+3 [crit x3], +1 *composite longbow (Str +2)*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Sneak attack 2d6; SQ Evasion, uncanny dodge;

AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +10, Will +4;

Str 14, Dex 22, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 10;

**Skills:** Balance +15, Bluff +11, Diplomacy +4, Intimidate +17, Jump +19, Listen +6, Profession (Bodyguard) +6, Ride +14, Search +8, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6, Tumble +15; **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Improved Trip, Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Spiked Chain), Iron Will, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Spiked Chain)

**Languages:** Common, Elven.

**Equipment:** +2 *cold iron spiked chain*, +1 *silvered rapier*, MW short sword, +1 *mighty composite longbow (Str +2)*, +3 *mithral chain shirt*, +3 *ring of protection*, +4 *gloves of Dexterity*, courtier's outfit, 50 gp worth of jewelry, 10 pp, 30 gp, 15 sp.

### Encounter Two, All APLs

**Windriders, male and female wood elves Rgr-12 (8):** Medium Humanoid (5'6" tall, 150 lbs); HD 12d8+12; hp 75; **Init +5**; Spd 30 ft.; **AC 22** (+5 armor, +2 shield, +5 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk/Grapple +12/+14; **Full Atk** +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+4 [crit x3], +2 *composite longbow (+2 Str)*) or +15/+10/+5 melee (1d8+3 [crit 19–20], MW longsword);

AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +4;

Str 14, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 10;

**Skills:** Handle Animal +15, Knowledge (nature) +18, Listen +18, Ride +22, Spot +18, Survival +16; **Feats:** Endurance, Improved Precise Shot, Leadership, Manyshot, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track;

**Spells prepared:** (1<sup>st</sup>) *hide from animals*, *pass without trace*, *speak with animals*;

**Languages:** Common, Elven;

**Equipment:** Traveler's outfit, +1 *mithral chain shirt*, +1 *buckler*, +2 *mgty comp longbow (Str +2)*, MW longsword, short sword, +2 *gloves of Dexterity*, +2 *periapt of Wisdom*, *ring of feather fall*, 25 gp, 12 sp.

### Encounter Two, All APLs

**Advanced Warbeast Pegasi (8):** Large Magical Beast; HD 9d10+45; hp 94 ea; **Init +3**; Spd 70 ft., fly 130 ft. (good); **AC 15** (–1 size, +3 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +9/+18; **Atk** +13 melee (1d6+5, hoof); **Full Atk** +13/+13 melee (1d6+5, 2 hooves) and +8 melee (1d3+2, bite); Space/Reach 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, spell-like abilities, combative mount;

AL CG; SV Fort +11, Ref +9, Will +7;

Str 21, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 13;

**Skills:** Diplomacy +5, Listen +12, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12; **Feats:** Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Flight, Iron Will;

**SA: Spell-Like Abilities**—At will: *detect good* and *detect evil* within a 60-foot radius. Caster level 5<sup>th</sup>. **Carrying Capacity**—Light load 459 pounds; medium load 918 pounds; heavy load 1,380.

**Combative Mount (Ex)**—A rider on a trained warbeast mount gets a +2 circumstance bonus on all Ride checks. A trained warbeast is proficient with light, medium, and heavy armor.

**Languages:** Cannot speak but understands Common.

**Equipment:** +2 amulet of health, masterwork exotic saddle (pegasus).

### Encounter Seven, All APLs

**Nittle, Advanced Pixie (Pixie Form):** CR 5, Small Fey (2' 6" tall, 30 lbs); HD 2d6; hp 7; **Init +4**; Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); **AC 16** (+1 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base Atk/Grapple +0/−6; **Full Atk** +5 melee (1d4−2 [crit 19−20], small short sword) or +5 ranged (1d6−2 [crit x3], small longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, *Otto's irresistible dance*; SQ DR 10/cold iron, *greater invisibility*, low-light vision, SR 15; AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +7, Will +5;

Str 7, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 16;

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Concentration +5, Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +9, Ride +8, Search +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +9; **Feats:** Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse.

SA: **Greater Invisibility (Su)**—Naturally invisible; can suppress or resume as a free action. **Spell-Like Abilities** (caster level 9)—1/day: *lesser confusion* (DC 14), *dancing lights*, *detect chaos*, *detect good*, *detect evil*, *detect law*, *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *dispel magic*, *entangle* (DC 14), *Otto's Irresistible dance*, *permanent image* (DC 19; visual and auditory elements only), ~~*polymorph*~~ (self only).

**Languages:** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Gnome, Halfling.

**Equipment:** Pixie clothes, diminutive feathered cap, small short sword, small longbow, 12 small arrows (currently out of special arrows), Heward's handy haversack, treasure for party as listed in Encounter Seven.

### Encounter Seven, All APLs

**Nittle, Advanced Pixie (Slug Form):** CR 5, Diminutive vermin; HD 2d6; hp 9; **Init −5**; Spd 1 ft.; **AC 11** (+4 size, +2 natural, −5 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 11; Base Atk/Grapple +0/−17; **Full Atk** N/A; Space/Reach 1 ft./1 ft.; SA Spell-like abilities, *Otto's irresistible dance*; SQ DR 10/cold iron, *greater invisibility*, low-light vision, SR 15; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref −2, Will +5;

Str 1, Dex 1, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 16;

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Concentration +0, Escape Artist +0, Hide +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +0, Ride −

1, Search +10, Sense Motive +7, Spot +9; **Feats:** Dodge<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Finesse.

SA: **Greater Invisibility (Su)**—Naturally invisible; can suppress or resume as a free action. **Spell-Like Abilities** (caster level 9)—1/day: *lesser confusion* (DC 14), *dancing lights*, *detect chaos*, *detect good*, *detect evil*, *detect law*, *detect thoughts* (DC 15), *dispel magic*, *entangle* (DC 14), *Otto's Irresistible dance*, *permanent image* (DC 19; visual and auditory elements only), ~~*polymorph*~~ (self only).

**Languages:** Common, Elven, Sylvan, Gnome, Halfling.

**Equipment:** Diminutive feathered cap.

### Encounter Nine, All APLs

**Jinelle Odraya, female half-elf Com-1/Exp-1:**

Medium Humanoid (5'3" tall, 97 lbs); HD 1d4+1d6+2; hp 10 (1\*); **Init +1**; Spd 30 ft.; **AC 11** (10\*) (+1 dex), touch 11 (10\*), flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grapple +0/+0; **Full Atk** +0 melee (1d4 [crit 19−20], dagger) or +0 ranged (1d8 [crit x3], Daethil's +2 *mighty composite longbow* (+2 Str);

AL N; SV Fort +1 (−1\*), Ref +1 (+0\*), Will +1;

Str 10, Dex 13 (10\*), Con 12 (7\*), Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 15;

**Skills:** Appraise +3, Bluff +8, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +3 (+2\*), Forgery +3, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +4, Profession (Grifter) +4, Sleight of Hand +2 (+1\*), Spot +4; **Feats:** Skill Focus (Bluff);

**Equipment:** Courtier's outfit, large ruby ring (5,450 gp), sapphire and emerald ring (2,320 gp), platinum bracelet with ruby charms (3,750 gp), platinum pendant inset with diamond (2, 210 gp), Daethil's bow, dagger. Carries sick baby (Com-1, hp 0)

\* Denotes current stat due to the effects of filth fever

### Encounter Nine, All APLs

**Daethil, male wood elf Rgr-12:** Medium Humanoid (5'6" tall, 150 lbs); HD 12d8+12; hp 75; **Init +5**; Spd 30 ft.; **AC 22** (+5 armor, +2 shield, +5 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 17; Base Atk/Grapple +12/+15; **Full Atk** +19/+14/+9 ranged (1d8+4 [crit x3], +2 *composite longbow* (+2 Str)) or +16/+11/+6 melee (1d8+3 [crit 19−20], MW longsword);

AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +13, Will +4;

Str 16, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10;

**Skills:** Craft (Trapmaking) +10, Handle Animal +15, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +17, Ride +22, Spot +17, Survival +15; **Feats:** Endurance,

Improved Precise Shot, Leadership, Manyshot, Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track;

Spells prepared: (1<sup>st</sup>) ~~endure elements~~, ~~endure elements~~, ~~entangle~~;

Languages: Common, Elven;

Equipment: Traveler's outfit, +1 mithral chain shirt, +1 buckler, +2 mgty comp longbow (Str +2), ring of feather fall, MW longsword, short sword, +2 gloves of Dexterity, +2 periapt of Wisdom, snare and trapmaking supplies, 25 gp, 12 sp.

~~Strikethrough~~ text indicates spell already cast.

## Appendix Two: New Rules & Items

### New Spells

#### **Nature's Favor**

Evocation

**Level:** Druid 2, ranger 2

**Components:** V,S,DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** Animal touched

**Duration:** 1 minute

By calling on the powers of nature, you grant the subject animal a +1 luck bonus on attack and damage rolls for every three caster levels you possess, to a maximum bonus of +5 at 15<sup>th</sup> level.

**Source:** *Complete Adventurer*, p. 151.

### New Feats

#### **Improved Flight**

You have gained greater maneuverability when flying than you would normally have.

**Prerequisites:** Natural fly speed.

**Benefit:** Your maneuverability while flying improves by one category (see page 312 of the *Monster Manual*). For example, if your normal maneuverability is poor, it becomes average.

**Source:** *Races of the Wild*, p. 151.

### New Items

#### **Dire Pick**

A dire pick resembles a heavy pick, but with a longer shaft and a more massive head. A dire pick is too large to use in one hand without special training (the appropriate Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat). A character can use a dire pick two-handed as a martial weapon.

**Source:** *Complete Warrior*, p. 157.

#### **Elvencraft Bow**

An elvencraft bow is thicker and heavier than a normal bow. An elvencraft shortbow functions as a club when wielded as a melee weapon. An elvencraft longbow functions as a quarterstaff when wielded as a melee weapon. The wielder incurs no penalty on attack rolls when using an elvencraft bow as a melee weapon.

A character wielding an elvencraft bow can freely interchange melee and ranged attacks during the same round. When wielding an elvencraft bow, the user threatens the squares around him no matter how he last used the weapon.

Magical enhancements to an elvencraft bow only affect its use as a bow. Enhancements to the melee capabilities of the weapon must be added separately.

An elvencraft bow costs 300 gp more than a normal bow.

**Source:** *Races of the Wild*, p. 166.

#### **Necklace of the Wild Beast**

A necklace of this sort appears to be a normal piece of nonvaluable jewelry until it is placed about the neck of a character with the Animal Companion class feature. The *necklace of the wild beast* has one or more special beads.

| Special Bead Type              | Special Bead Ability                    |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <i>Bead of calming</i>         | Wearer can cast calm animals            |
| <i>Bead of servitude</i>       | Wearer can cast dominate animal         |
| <i>Bead of the fang</i>        | Wearer can cast greater magic fang      |
| <i>Bead of beckoning</i>       | Wearer can cast summon nature's ally IV |
| <i>Bead of the great beast</i> | Wearer can cast animal growth           |

Each special bead can be used only once, and then becomes forever inert. The power of a special bead is lost if removed from the necklace.

Unlike the version in *Arms and Equipment Guide*, this necklace does not give you access to the *bead of awakening*.

Caster Level: 10th; Prerequisites; Craft Wondrous Item, Animal Companion class feature, and one or more of the following spells: *animal growth*, *calm animals*, *dominate animal*, *greater magic fang*, *summon nature's ally IV* (as appropriate); Market Price: 500 gp (*bead of calming*), 1,200 gp (*bead of servitude*), 1,500 gp (*bead of the fang*), 2,000 gp (*bead of beckoning*), 2,500 gp (*bead of the great beast*); Weight —.

**Source:** *Arms and Equipment Guide*, p. 135.

#### **Safewing Emblem**

This small feathered token can be worn or carried. If the owner falls at least 5 feet, the emblem becomes a set of feathery wings that allow her to use a *feather fall* effect to descend safely from any height up to 180 feet. The emblem requires no activation. When the owner lands, the token disappears, its magic expended.

Faint transmutation; CL 3<sup>rd</sup>; Craft Wondrous Item, *feather fall*; Price 250 gp.

**Source:** *Races of the Wild*, p. 173.

### Sashling

This broad, pleated cloth belt hides a great many interior pockets. Ten pockets are sewn into the folds of a sashling, each capable of holding an item weighing about a quarter-pound. A sashling's pleats can conceal almost anything that may be placed inside the belt: An object up to the size of a hen's egg leaves no visible bulge on the sashling's exterior. A sashling is idea for carrying small items such as coins, gems, vials, material components, and pieces of jewelry unobtrusively. It grants a +2 circumstance bonus on Sleight of Hand checks made to hide small objects on your body (see Sleight of Hand, page 81 of the *Player's Handbook*).

For wearers who need to carry more supplies, many sashlings are made with hooks on the outer side. The wearer can hang pouches and other items from the outside of the sashling as well, just as with a normal belt.

**Source:** *Races of the Wild*, p. 170.

### Sizing (Weapon Enhancement)

The wielder of a sizing weapon can change the weapon's size category to any other size category as a standard action. Spellcasters who frequently polymorph themselves appreciate weapons with the sizing special ability.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9<sup>th</sup>; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *enlarge person*, *reduce person*; Price +1 bonus.

**Source:** *Complete Adventurer*, p. 127.

## New Rules

### Vile Damage

Vile damage, like regular damage, results in the loss of hit points or ability score points. Unlike regular damage, vile damage can only be healed by magic cast within the area of a *consecrate* or *hallow* spell. Vile damage represents such an evil violation to a character's body or soul that only in a holy place can healing magic repair the damage.

**Source:** *Book of Vile Darkness*, p. 34.

## New Creatures

Each new creature is described on its own page, immediately following this section.

### Darktentacles Picture

As the Darktentacles page is too crammed with information to include its picture, here it is.



## Appendix Three: New Monsters - Darktentacles

*Monster Manual II, p. 54 (w/ official 3.5 conversion)*

### Large Aberration

**Hit Dice:** 9d8+27 (67 hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 5 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Armor Class:** 18 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 16

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +6/+30

**Attack:** slam +9 melee or weapon +9 melee

**Full Attack:** 12 slams +9 melee or weapon +9/+4 melee and 11 light weapons +9 melee, or weapon +7/+2 melee and 11 weapons (at least one of which is not light) +7 melee

**Damage:** slam 1d4+4 or by weapon with full Strength damage bonus for primary hand and half Strength bonus for secondary attacks.

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./15 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Constrict 2d6+6, improved grab, spell-like abilities

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., enhanced multiweapon fighting, tentacle regeneration, tremorsense, weapon use

**Saves:** Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +7

**Abilities:** Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12

**Skills:** Concentration +11, Hide +16, Listen +9, Move Silently +16, Spot +9.

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Multidexterity, Multiweapon Fighting, Stealthy

**Environment:** Any marsh

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** 7

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always Chaotic Evil

**Advancement:** 10–18 HD (Large); 19–27 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** —

The darktentacles is a justly feared swamp monster. Both intelligent and malicious, it often leaves treasure from previous victims scattered about to attract new prey. The creature can flatten its squishy body across the ground so as to be inconspicuous, and it usually hides in or near water.

A darktentacles resembles an octopus with thirty-six tentacles, each of which can be up to 20 feet long. Instead of suction cups, each of its tentacles is lined with eyes. The creature uses some tentacles for movement and others for combat, striking with whichever tentacles are convenient.

The creature is capable of wielding weapons in its tentacles, and it often does so. It has no innate sense for magic items, but it tends to select the most effective weapons at its disposal. Because it hides so well, many characters have no idea that a darktentacles is present until abandoned weapons fly up from the ground and begin attacking them.

A darktentacles speaks Common and Aquan.

### COMBAT

When creatures approach, a darktentacles typically uses its *charm monster* and *hold monster* powers first,

concentrating these attacks on foes who seem to be physically powerful. Thereafter, it attacks anyone who comes within reach of its tentacles. If the darktentacles manages to grab someone, it uses its *wall of force* ability to keep any other opponents from lending the victim assistance.

A darktentacles can use only three tentacles at once against a Small or Medium-size opponent. Against a larger foe, it can use three additional tentacles for each extra five feet of face the opponent has, provided that it has the reach. Against Tiny or smaller opponents, the creature can use only one tentacle. It can use a maximum of three tentacles against all foes in any single 5-foot by 5-foot area.

**Constrict (Ex):** With a successful grapple check, a darktentacles can crush a grabbed opponent, dealing 2d6+6 points of bludgeoning damage.

**Improved Grab (Ex):** If a darktentacles hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with a slam attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +30; includes +16 racial bonus on grapple checks). If it gets a hold, it can also constrict in the same round. Thereafter, it has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use its tentacle to hold the opponent (–20 penalty on grapple check, but it is not considered grappled). In either case, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals slam and constrict damage.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** 5/day—*hold monster*; 3/day—*charm monster*; 1/day—*wall of force*. Caster level 10<sup>th</sup>; save DC 11+spell level.

**Enhanced Multiweapon Fighting (Ex):** This ability lessens the penalty for off-hand weapon use by 2 for both primary and off-hands. Combined with the Multidexterity and Multiweapon Fighting feats, this ability effectively negates all attack penalties for using 1 or more off-hand weapons.

**Tentacle Regeneration (Ex):** An opponent can attack a darktentacles' tentacles as if they were weapons—see Sunder, in Chapter 8 of the *PHB*. A darktentacles' tentacles have 20 hit points. If the darktentacles is currently grappling a target with that tentacle, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the sunder attempt. Severing a tentacle deals damage to the creature equal to half the limb's hit points. A darktentacles regrows severed limbs within a day.

**Tremorsense (Ex):** A darktentacles is sensitive to vibrations in the ground and can automatically pinpoint the location of anything that is in contact with the ground within 60 feet.

**Weapon Use (Ex):** A darktentacles of Large size can wield a melee weapon of up to Huge size in each tentacle. It is proficient with all simple and martial melee weapons.

**Skills:** A darktentacles receives a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

## Appendix Three: New Monsters - Mud Golem

*Monster Manual III, p. 70*

### Large Construct

**Hit Dice:** 15d10+30 (112 hp)

**Initiative:** –1

**Speed:** 20 ft., (can't run), swim 20 ft.

**Armor Class:** 21 (–1 size, –1 Dex, +13 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 21

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +11/+22

**Attack:** Slam +17 melee (2d10+10)

**Full Attack:** 2 slams +17 melee (2d10+10)

**Space/Reach:** 10 ft./10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Breath weapon, engulf

**Special Qualities:** Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine and bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, immunity to magic

**Saves:** Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +5

**Abilities:** Str 24, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

**Skills:** Hide –5\*, Swim +15.

**Feats:** —

**Environment:** Any

**Organization:** Solitary or gang (2–4)

**Challenge Rating:** 11

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral

**Advancement:** 16–22 HD (Large); 23–30 HD (Huge)

**Level Adjustment:** —

*This humanoid mass of mud stands twice the height of a normal human.*

Mud golems are large, anthropomorphic creatures composed entirely out of slippery mud. They are hulking figures with crudely shaped but strong limbs. Their faces are just as rough, with a mouth and two eye sockets that are just scooped-out holes with dim glowing red spheres burning in the depressions.

A mud golem stands about 10 feet tall and weighs 600 pounds. Mud golems cannot speak, other than utter groans and moans.

### COMBAT

A mud golem fights best from the bank of a river, lake, pool, or cistern, where it buries itself into the muck. Once an opponent comes by, it leaps out and tries to engulf the creature.

**Breath Weapon (Ex):** Spray of slippery mud; 15-foot cone, once every 1d3 rounds. This spray does no damage, but everyone in the area must make a DC 17 reflex save or be blinded for 1d3 rounds. In

addition, the breath weapon leaves a very slippery mud residue, equivalent to a *grease* spell (Reflex DC 17). The mud remains slippery for 1 hour before it dries out. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

**Engulf (Ex):** A mud golem can try to wrap a Medium or smaller creature in its body as a standard action. The mud golem attempts a grapple that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and slams the engulfed victim with a +4 bonus on the attack roll.

Attacks that hit an engulfing mud golem deal half their damage to the monster and half to the trapped victim.

While engulfed, a victim can do nothing but try to break free, by succeeding on an opposed grapple check. A mud golem can engulf 1 Medium, 2 Small, 8 Tiny, 32 Diminutive, or 128 Fine opponents at a time.

An engulfed creature has no air to breathe, and there is a chance it will begin to drown (see Drowning, page 304 of the *DMG*).

**Immunity to Magic (Ex):** A mud golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects that allow spell resistance, except as follows:

A *transmute mud to rock* spell slows it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw.

A *transmute rock to mud* spell heals all its lost hit points.

A *stone to flesh* spell does not actually change the golem's structure, but it negates the mud golem's damage reduction for 1 round.

**Skills:** A mud golem has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. \*A mud golem's body blends in extremely well when it is submerged in mud, conferring a +15 circumstance bonus on Hide checks in those situations.

### CONSTRUCTION

A mud golem's body is made from special mud found in magically charged areas or created through

magical means.

The golem cost includes 1,000 gp for the construction of the body. Creating the body is a complex task that requires a DC 15 Craft (pottery) or a DC 15 Craft (sculpting) check.

CL 14<sup>th</sup>; Craft Construct, *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, *polymorph any object*, *transmute rock to mud*, caster must be at least 14<sup>th</sup> level; Price 65,000 gp; cost 33,000 gp + 2,560 XP.



## Appendix Three: New Monsters - Spark Lasher

*Miniatures Handbook*, pp. 70–71

### Medium Aberration

**Hit Dice:** 3d8+3 (16 hp)

**Initiative:** +1

**Speed:** 30 ft., swim 10 ft.

**Armor Class:** 14 (+1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +2/+1

**Attack:** Tentacle +3 melee touch (3d8 electricity) or bite +3 melee (1d6–1)

**Full Attack:** Tentacle +3 melee touch (3d8 electricity) or bite +3 melee (1d6–1)

**Damage:** None

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Electricity damage

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft, invulnerability to electricity

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 8, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 13

**Skills:** Hide +1 or +9 when in a marsh, Intimidate +7, Survival +5, Swim +13

**Feats:** Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Warm marshes

**Organization:** Solitary, gang (2–5 plus 0, 1, or 2 shambling mounds)

**Challenge Rating:** 2

**Treasure:** 1/10 coins; 50% goods; 50% items

**Alignment:** Usually Chaotic Evil

**Advancement:** 4–6 HD (Medium); 7–9 HD (Large)

**Level Adjustment:** —

*What looks at first like a sodden swamp plant proves to be an ugly, low-slung, six-legged creature. Its head is a forward-thrust knob consisting mostly of mouth, while along its back is a mass of tentacles that spark and flicker.*

The swamp-dwelling spark lasher is often mistaken for a plant, until its charged tentacles lash forth.

Gray-green skin, folded and barklike, wraps a spark lasher in protective coloration. The creature trundles around low to the soggy ground on six legs.

Spark lashers swim through water with only their tentacles exposed to the air, giving the impression of a mat of floating vegetation. When a spark lasher encounters a creature it knows to be too strong for it, the lasher may attempt to intimidate its potential foe before making an escape.

Possessed of a twisted but considerable intelligence, spark lashers speak Aquan and

Infernal. Just who might want to speak to a spark lasher remains unclear.

### COMBAT

As loners, spark lashers prefer to leap out at unsuspecting intruders. If spotted, a spark lasher may simply submerge to come at the intruders from another direction. In groups, spark lashers try to surround intruders, preferably driving allied shambling mounds before them.

Faced with a creature that has immunity to its electricity, a spark lasher can resort its feeble bite, but it would rather just flee.

**Electricity Damage (Su):** The touch of a spark lasher's tentacles deals 3d8 electricity damage.

**Skills:** A spark lasher has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. Spark lashers have a +8 bonus on Hide checks when in a marsh.



## Appendix Three: New Monsters - Half-Fey Template

"Half-fey" is an inherited template that can be added to any corporeal living creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). The creature's type changes to fey. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**Hit Dice:** Changes to d6.

**Speed:** All half-fey have butterflylike wings unless the base creature has wings already. A half-fey that did not already have wings gains a fly speed equal to twice the base creature's fastest mode of movement, with good maneuverability.

**Special Attacks:** A half-fey with Wisdom or Charisma of 8 or higher (after the ability score adjustments noted below) gains spell-like abilities, using its Hit Dice as its caster level. The table below lists the abilities available. These abilities are cumulative; a half-fey with 3 HD can use the abilities of the 1–2 HD row on the table as well as those on the 3–4 row. When a half-fey gets a choice between two abilities (such as faerie fire or glitterdust at 1–2 HD), it can choose anew between these abilities each day.

| HD    | Abilities                                                                                           |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1–2   | <i>Charm person</i> at will, <i>hypnotism</i> 1/day, <i>faerie fire</i> or <i>glitterdust</i> 1/day |
| 3–4   | <i>Detect law</i> 3/day, <i>sleep</i> or <i>enthrall</i> 1/day                                      |
| 5–6   | <i>Protection from law</i> 3/day, <i>Tasha's hideous laughter</i> or <i>suggestion</i> 1/day        |
| 7–8   | <i>Confusion</i> or <i>emotion</i> 1/day                                                            |
| 9–10  | <i>Eyebite</i> or <i>lesser geas</i> 1/day                                                          |
| 11–12 | <i>Dominate person</i> or <i>hold monster</i> 1/day                                                 |
| 13–14 | <i>Mass invisibility</i> 1/day                                                                      |
| 15–16 | <i>Geas/quest</i> or <i>mass suggestion</i> 1/day                                                   |
| 17–18 | <i>Insanity</i> or <i>Mass charm</i> 1/day                                                          |
| 19+   | <i>Otto's irresistible dance</i> 1/day                                                              |

**Special Qualities:** Half-fey have low-light vision and are immune to enchantment spells and effects. They also gain, pursuant to the 3.5 conversion document for *Fiend Folio*, DR 5/cold iron.

**Abilities:** Adjust for the base creature as follows: Dex +2, Con –2, Wis +2, Cha +4.

**Skills:** A half-fey has skill points equal to (6 + its Int modifier) x (its Hit Dice +3). Treat skills possessed by the base creature as class skills and other skills as cross-class. If the creature has a class, it gains skill points for class levels normally.

**Challenge Rating:** Same as the base creature +1.

**Level Adjustment:** Same as the base creature +2.

**Alignment:** Usually chaotic (any).

**Spell Tables:** For easy reference the tables for confusion and eyebite are shown below.

### Confusion

Enchantment (Compulsion) [Mind-Affecting]

**Level:** 4

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Targets:** All creatures in a 15-ft. radius burst

**Duration:** 1 round/level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

| d%     | Behavior                                                                                     |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01–10  | Attack caster with melee or ranged weapons (or close with caster if attack is not possible). |
| 11–20  | Act normally.                                                                                |
| 21–50  | Do nothing but babble incoherently.                                                          |
| 51–70  | Flee away from caster at top possible speed.                                                 |
| 71–100 | Attack nearest creature (for this purpose, a familiar counts as part of the subject's self). |

### Eyebite

Necromancy [Evil]

**Level:** 6

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

**Target:** One living creature

**Duration:** 1 round per three levels; see text

**Saving Throw:** Fortitude negates

**Spell Resistance:** Yes

| Target's HD | Effect                       |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| 10 or more  | Sickened                     |
| 5–9         | Panicked, sickened           |
| 4 or less   | Comatose, panicked, sickened |

## Appendix Three: New Monsters - Corrupted Template

Powerful evil, unchecked and rampant, can horribly alter any aspect of the physical world, and creatures are no exception. Twisted by malevolence, corrupted creatures take on a hideous appearance and gain evil powers and dire intent.

Corrupted creatures have unique countenances, each reacting to the source of malevolence in a different way. Most have twisted, misshapen (often asymmetrical) forms; mottled, discolored flesh; and reddish eyes. Although one might be tempted to confuse a corrupted creature with a fiendish or half-fiend creature, the corrupted creature usually has a more mutated and ungainly appearance.

### Creating a Corrupted Creature

"Corrupted" is a template that can be added to any corporeal creature that is not an outsider (referred to hereafter as the base creature). Creatures that gain this template change their type to aberration. A corrupted creature uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**AC:** The flesh of corrupted creatures becomes tougher and more resilient. Add +4 to the natural armor bonus of the base creature if it is Large or smaller. If it is Huge or larger, add +8.

**Damage:** The corrupted creature's claws lengthen, teeth multiply, and muscles harden. The damage die used when the creature deals damage with natural attacks increases by one die type, so that 1d6 becomes 1d8, 1d8 becomes 2d6, and so on, as if the creature were one size larger.

**Special Attacks:** A corrupted creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature.

**Special Qualities:** A corrupted creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet plus acid immunity. It also gains the special qualities described below.

**Damage Reduction (Ex):** Corrupted creatures gain damage reduction according to their Hit Dice.

| Hit Dice | Damage Reduction |
|----------|------------------|
| 1–3      | —                |
| 4–11     | 5/magic          |
| 12+      | 10/magic         |

If the base creature already has damage reduction, use the better value.

**Disruptive Attack (Su):** The corrupt creature deals additional vile damage (see p. Appendix Two: New Rules & Items, p. 66) when it touches

uncorrupted, living, corporeal nonoutsiders. The amount of vile damage dealt is equal to half of the creature's Hit Dice (maximum 20 points of damage). For example, a 14-HD corrupted frost worm deals an additional 7 points of vile damage with its bite attack.

**Enhanced Power (Su):** The save DCs of any and all of the corrupt creature's special attacks increase by +4.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** Each round, a corrupted creature heals damage equal to half of its Hit Dice (maximum of 10 points healed). If the base creature already has fast healing, use the better value.

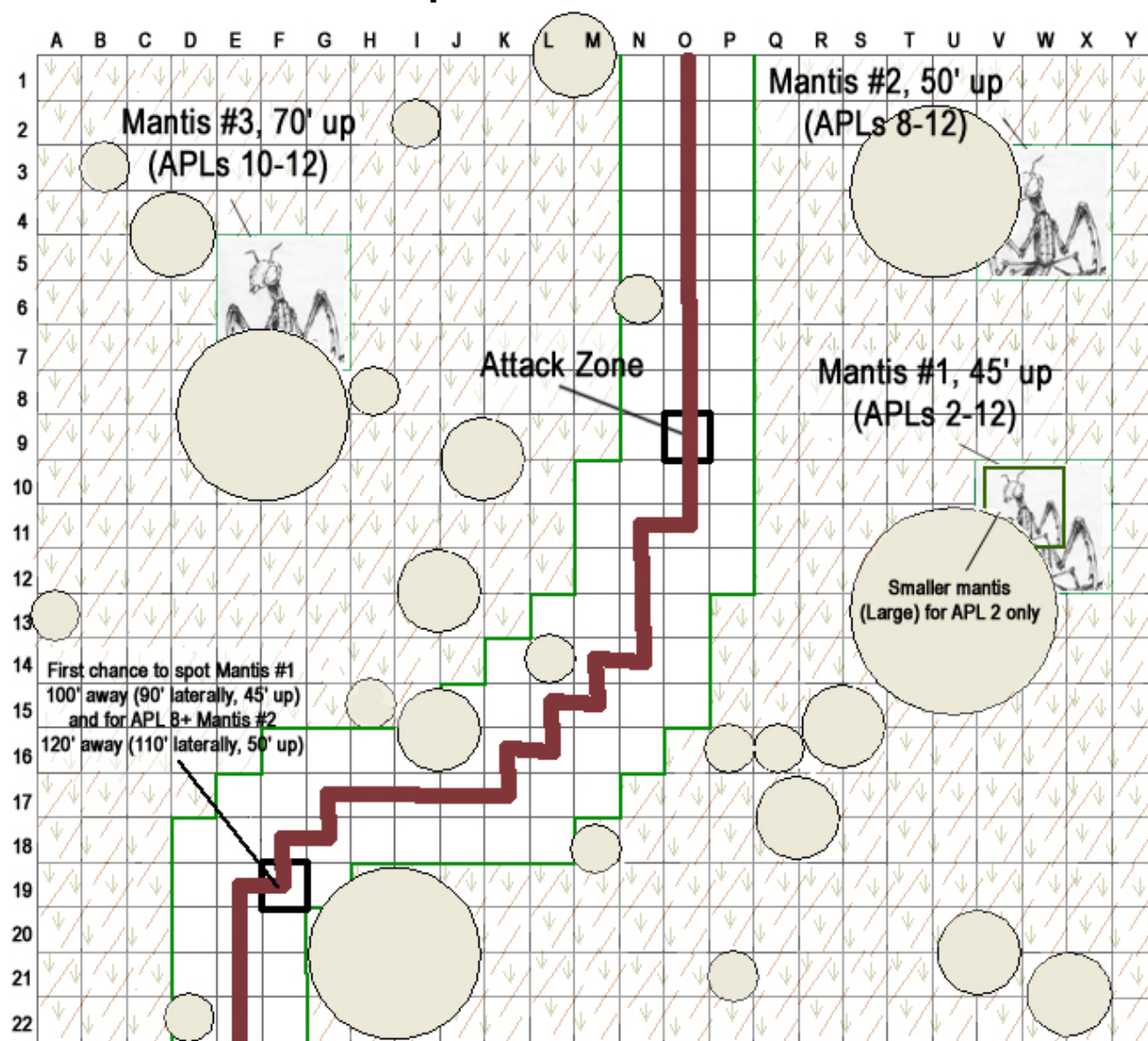
**Abilities:** Modify the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex –2, Con +4, Int +0, Wis –2, Cha –2.

**Climate/Terrain:** Any land and underground.

**Challenge Rating:** Up to 3 HD, same as the base creature +1. 4 HD to 7 HD, same as the base creature +2. 8+ HD, same as the base creature +3.

**Alignment:** Always evil.

## Map #1: Mantis Ambush in Encounter Five



### Encounter Distance:

This map, oriented in landscape, fits the square 22 x 25 battlemats given out as player rewards by the RPGA.

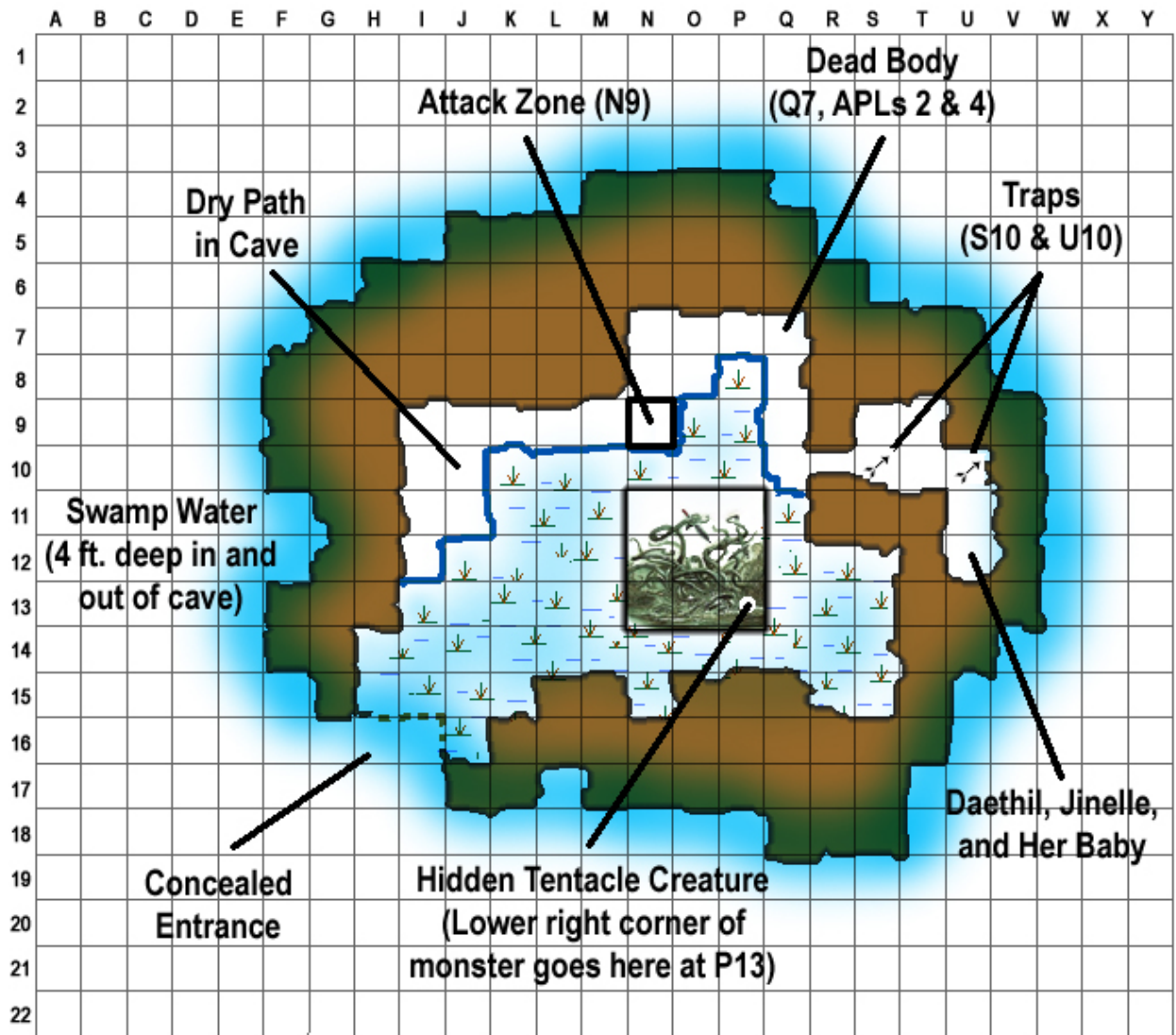
Mantis(es) attack as soon as the party enters the Attack Zone or crosses into row 9 if avoiding the road. It is possible, however, for the party to spot one or more mantises before the attack, thereby altering the encounter distance. Line of sight and effect are blocked by trees until the party reaches the marked square on at F19 (Column F, Row 19). That is the earliest the party can possibly spot the mantises, so when the party reaches that square, do the following:

1. Roll the mantises' Hide checks (+15, +17, or +18, depending on APL).
2. Reference the Spot checks you had players make at the beginning of the game—one for Mantis #1, applying a –10 penalty for distance, and, if running APL 8–12, one for Mantis #2, applying a –12 penalty for distance.
3. If all party members fail their Spot checks but still come within 6 of the opposed Hide check, calculate at which point they would have finally spotted the respective mantis once distance penalties were eliminated sufficiently (–1 for every 10 feet of distance).

### Terrain and Movement Note:

Every square through which the trail passes imposes no movement penalties. The ground is also relatively clear for every square adjacent to a trail square, also imposing no movement penalties. All other squares on the map, however, are considered "light undergrowth" and cost 2 squares to move into. They also provides concealment and increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2.

## Map #2: Jinelle's Cave in Encounter Eight



This map, oriented in landscape, fits the square 22 x 25 battlemats given out as player rewards by the RPGA. Place the lower right corner of the tentacle creature, regardless of size, in square P13. (The map shows the placement of the Huge version of the creature appearing in APLs 10 & 12.)

### Encounter Distance:

The tentacle creature (spark lasher at APLs 2 & 4 and darktentacles at APLs 6–12) attacks as soon as the first person enters the area marked "Attack Zone" (square N9) or crosses into column N if avoiding the path (or column M at APLs 10 and 12).

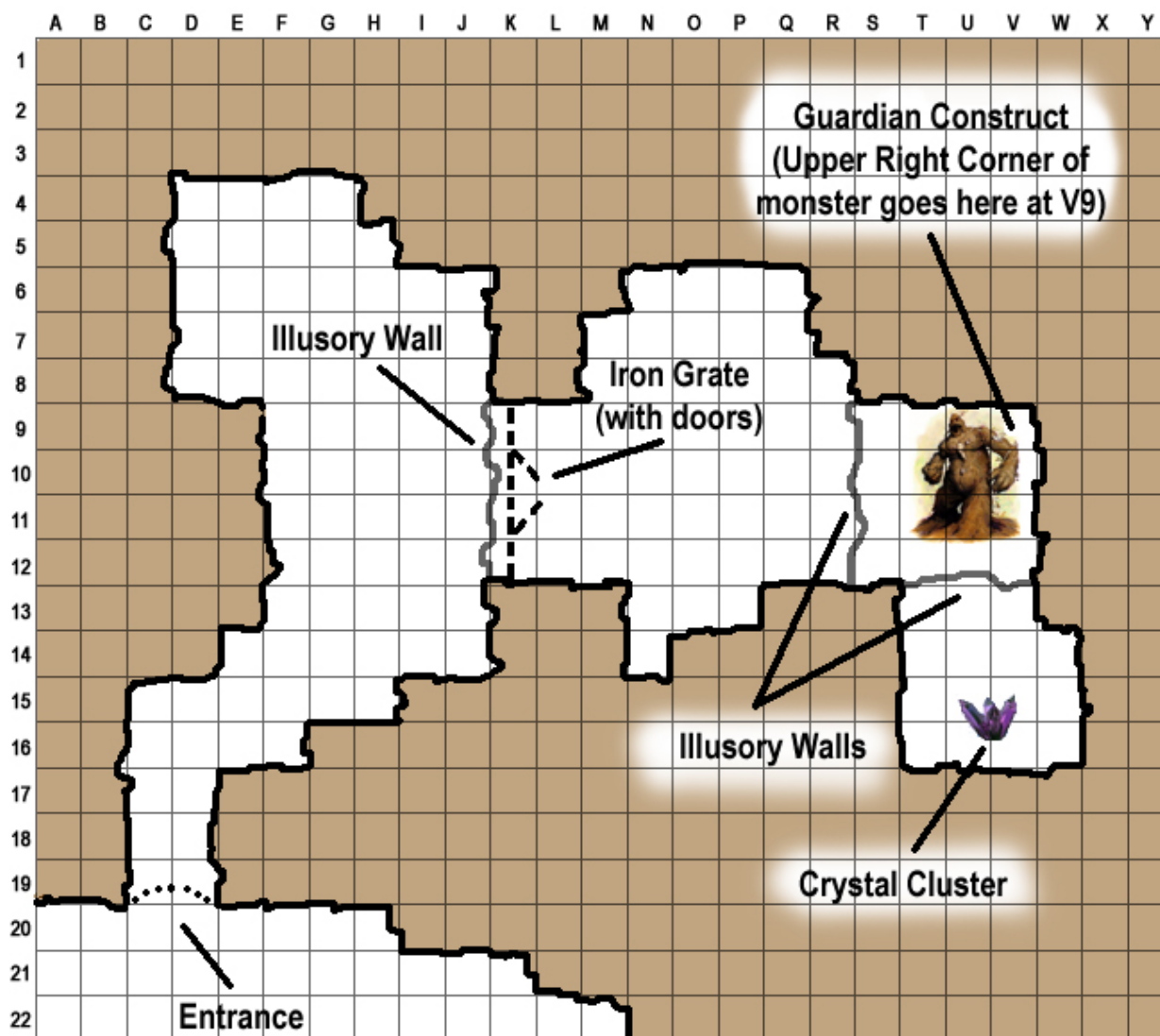
It is possible, however, for the party to spot the tentacle creature before the attack, thereby altering the encounter distance. Line of sight and effect are blocked by the hanging vines and foliage obscuring the entrance, so the earliest the party can possibly spot the submerged tentacle creature is when they enter the cave itself. When that happens, do the following:

- Roll the creature's Hide check (+9, +14, +16, +25, +24, +24, respectively by APL).
- Reference the Spot checks you had players make at the beginning of the game, applying a –1 for every 10 feet of distance.

### Terrain and Movement Note:

Every square on the map is considered deep bog (4' of water) except for the dry path. See "The Effects of a 'Deep Bog'", p. 36 for more information on how this effects movement, etc. As the tentacle creature is crouching even before it knows the party is coming, it enjoys the improved cover from the deep bog (+8 bonus to AC; +4 bonus to Reflex saves).

## Map #3: Thuldanora's Crystal-Cave



This map, oriented in landscape, fits the square 22 x 25 battlemats given out as player rewards by the RPGA. Place the upper right corner of the guardian construct, regardless of size, in square V9. (The map shows the placement of the Huge version of the creature.)

### Illusory Walls:

Don't draw the whole map! Unless the PCs can see through illusions, such as when viewing the area with *true seeing*, they are automatically fooled by the *illusory wall* of Column J. The *illusory wall* looks like all the other walls in the cave and conceals not only the iron grate immediately behind it, but the entire room beyond, as well. All the *illusory walls* on this map were cast at level 15 for dispel purposes. Until a PC actually interacts with a wall or sees something or someone or else pass through one, they do not get a save to pierce the illusion. When they do get a chance, the Will save DC is 21, and each wall requires its own save. Those who make the saving throw, can see through that particular wall thereafter.

### Encounter Trigger:

The guardian construct (an animated object at APLs 2—6 and a mud golem at APLs 8—12) can see through all the *illusory walls* in the cave, having been made aware of them previously. The creature charges the first visible person who passes through the *illusory wall* of Column R on the map. If the party does not pass through the wall but hangs back and somehow damages the guardian construct or otherwise forces it to make a saving throw, it charges through the wall and attacks the closest party member.

## Player Handout #1: A Letter from the Duchess

**Do not read this aloud or share this information with anyone else**

[OOO note: If your character has sworn allegiance to Emperor Sewardt, you were given this handout by mistake. Please return this to your DM and do not read any further.]

My Dear Friend,

It has been a while since you went beyond the wisteria tree and returned my lost son, Adrean, to me. As you may have heard, resurrections failed to bring him back to life, his soul contented to remain among the planes of angels. Where there was profound grief in his death, a beacon of hope has been lit.

You may or may not have heard by now, but the half-elven lass named Jinelle Odraya whom you rescued along with the others trapped in Cyndor's time flux gave birth to a baby in 594 CY. The baby's father was Adrean. As mentioned to me, they had come to know each other that fateful night.

Something now has happened, however, and I require your aid once again. It was no coincidence that you just happened to be at the right place at the right time when the wisteria tree led you to my lost child; fate brought you to me. I shan't squander the connection we share, so if you are able and willing, please come to the Bartek estate in Adrean's Landing on the morning of the 20th of this month [four days hence] at nine of the clock, and I will tell more.

It is absolutely imperative you do not tell anyone where you are going or that you even received word from me. In these uncertain times, your closest ally or even your lover may be acting against your interests—mayhap unbeknownst to them. I am putting profound trust in you to be discrete. Your life and the lives of many others may be at stake if you are not.

By my hand,        Verin Talnith,  
Duchess of Woodwych and Dowager Viscountess Nor

[Now that you have read the handout in its entirety, if you wish to defy the Duchess and reveal the contents of this letter to anyone else, including fellow players at the table, privately get the DM's permission at this time before doing so, letting the DM know whom you wish to tell. He or she will advise you appropriately. **Keep in mind, though, RPGA games only have about 4 hours in which to run, and there is an optional TU encounter to fit in, so please don't bog down the game with needless delays.** You may also refuse to go to Adrean's Landing on the 20th. If you do refuse, please tell the judge at this time before play begins.]

## Player Handout #2: A Call to War for Lynwerd Loyalists

**Do not read this aloud or share this information with anyone else**

Four days ago, you were called to duty and ordered to discretely report to the Bartek estate in Adrean's Landing at nine o'clock in the morning on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime to receive orders from a person with the codename of Acorn. You were directed to take a specific route to the city, which had you meandering all over the place before finally arriving. You were to travel with no one except for your cohort and/or animals, if any. These orders, which were absolute and emphatic, were given to you in private by your superior, and you were instructed to keep them secret—even from your best friends and family.

By following these orders, including the meandering path to Adrean's Landing, it would take you exactly four days travel time based on your starting position and normal land speed. You have no idea who else, if anyone else, has been ordered to also report to the Bartek estate.

If you possessed the ability, you were given permission to *teleport* directly to Adrean's Landing on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>, rather than spend the four days traveling there, but you were instructed to not *fly* there or otherwise arrive early.

**In summary, your mission objectives are:**

- Go to Adrean's Landing, following the route provided, and arrive in the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup>;
- Meet at the Bartek estate at nine o'clock;
- Receive orders from Acorn and follow them to the best of your ability;
- Return to normal duty after being released from service by Acorn.

OOO note: Even if your spouse, best friend, or other members of your character's meta-org are sitting at the table with you, you don't know in-character they're going on this mission, and you have been ordered to not ask around. Sure, there are probably some good roleplaying justifications or circumstances you can come up with to convince the DM why your character should be allowed to travel with so-and-so sitting across the table. Your orders, though, were to travel alone.

Nevertheless, you are free to disobey these orders if you wish (although there may be serious repercussions if you do). If you do violate your orders in any way, including passing on any information regarding your mission to any PC or NPC, taking a different route than the one stated in your orders, or traveling to Adrean's Landing with another PC, privately inform the judge at this time. He or she will advise you accordingly. **Keep in mind, though, RPGA games only have about 4 hours in which to run, and there is an optional TU encounter to fit in, so please don't bog down the game with needless delays.**

You may also refuse to go on this mission entirely. If you do refuse, please tell the judge at this time before play begins.

## Player Handout #3: A Call to War for Sewardt Loyalists

### Do not read this aloud or share this information with anyone else

Late this afternoon, just before dusk, you were called to duty and ordered to investigate what might be an uprising against His Most Supreme Magnificence, Sewardt, Emperor of the Nehron Imperium. Here is what you learned from your superior, who told you nothing further:

Troops are amassing in Adrean's Landing, a town on the Duntide River in the Duchy of Woodwych. They appear to be comprised mostly of the Duchess' own militia, as well as subversives. This activity has been sudden and swift, so as a precautionary maneuver, the Emperor has sent initial troops to defend the Justcrown border on the west in the event the Duchess plans to invade Rel Mord. This is highly unlikely, though, since, at best, the Duchess has 4,000 troops—far, far below the number that would be needed to take the fortress city.

The Emperor is aware an assassination attempt was made against the Duchess of Woodwych 22 days ago. As of yet, we are unaware who attempted to kill her or who ordered the hit, though we suspect, based upon her reaction, she may falsely think it was by order of the Emperor. The Duchess has refused to meet with an envoy sent from Rel Mord to discuss the situation, and magical communications and scrying are being blocked.

Four days ago, we intercepted a communiqué from military figures of the Duchy of Woodwych. We learned a call has gone out for certain individuals—most likely subversives—to assemble at the Bartek estate in Adrean's Landing at nine o'clock in the morning on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime. That is tomorrow. There is going to be a meeting with a person named Acorn who is going to issue orders for presumably some sort of mission.

You are going to go undercover and attend this meeting, posing as an adventurer who has heeded the call. We shall teleport you in the morning to the outskirts of Adrean's Landing, where after you will make your way to the Bartek estate as shown on this map. [Your superior shows you a map of the town.]

If Acorn sends you on a mission, you are to follow his orders and pursue the goals of the mission to the best of your ability with the following caveats: (1) You are to attempt to sabotage the mission—while still maintaining your cover—if it turns out to be against the Emperor. (2) **You are not to come into conflict with subversives; do not argue with them, and do not fight them.** Simply observe everything, try to mitigate damage against the Empire, and remain undercover. (3) Should your team capture a ranking member of the Empire who, in your opinion, has sensitive information that may be extracted by the subversives, you are to kill that

person any way you can that still maintains your cover.

You will want to leave your military uniform of the Empire, if any, behind, as subversives will capture and/or kill you should you be caught with it in Woodwych. Under no circumstances, though, are you to wear the old colors of the uniform of Lynwerd.

If you are questioned by any others involved in this mission, you are to deny any current affiliation with the Empire. Should you have ethical qualms about lying, you are still to respond in a manner that avoids answering the question. If the subversives discover you are working for the Empire, you are to immediately end your own life.

You have no choice but to accept this mission; report here tomorrow morning at nine o'clock for teleportation. You may bring a cohort and/or animal companion, if any, but no one else.

After the mission is over, return here for debriefing. In addition to reporting what the mission was and its final resolution, you will report the names of everyone involved in the mission, including everyone present at the Bartek manor.

#### In summary, your mission objectives are:

- Go undercover as an adventurer answering the plea for aid (most likely from subversives);
- Meet at the Bartek estate tomorrow at nine o'clock in Adrean's Landing;
- Receive orders from Acorn and follow them to the best of your ability, while covertly sabotaging any efforts to undermine the Empire;
- Do NOT under any circumstance come into conflict with other members of the mission;
- Kill yourself if you are discovered working on behalf of the Empire.
- Return for debriefing after being released from service by Acorn.

[OOC Note: As a pro-Sewardt PC, you are in the extreme minority. While, you have been given the opportunity to participate fully in this scenario with relative safety, you are not given free reign to be obnoxious and disrupt the table. **RPGA games only have about 4 hours in which to run, and there is an optional TU encounter to fit in, so please don't bog down the game with needless delays.** Also, please remember it is strictly against the rules of the LG campaign to engage in player vs. player combat. Before trying to work against the party, please make sure you have your judge's permission first.]

## **Player Handout #4: A Network of Connections**

**Do not read this aloud or share this information with anyone else**

Four days ago, you heard through the grapevine that a plea for adventurers had quietly but urgently gone out. It seems a somewhat secretive mission was to be had, and your source of the information was someone known to be reliable in such matters.

It was not clear if such a mission pertained to the succession controversy that has grown ever since Emperor Sewardt seized the throne at the end of 594 CY. This adventure may not even yield gold or glory, especially considering the plea was for 'good-hearted folk,' which is often code-speak for 'I want you to do this mission for free.'

If such incomplete information and vagueness was enough to pique your interest, your contact told you the gathering place for this mission will be at the Bartek estate in Adrean's Landing, a city on the Duntide River in the Duchy of Woodwych. You are to meet a person named Acorn there at nine o'clock in the morning on the 20<sup>th</sup> of Flocktime.

OOO note: You are not obliged to go on this mission. If your character is the kind of person who would not answer such a call, inform the judge at this time.

## Player Handout #5: Information on Verin Talnith

An Oeridian-Suel woman of notable beauty, Verin Talnith is the 36-year old Duchess of Woodwych. Verin's mixed heritage is evident in her brown eyes and fair skin. She is a slight woman of barely five and a half feet, but such diminutiveness is belied by her somewhat deep and resonating voice. Such vocal presence has made her an effective orator.

Born into the noble House Orberend in 558 CY, Verin lived a life of privilege and leisure. She was a strong-headed girl who was married to Chaverston Talnith, Viscount Nor, a man 33 years her senior when she was just 16. Their arranged marriage strengthened both families' status in the then-king's court. Still, it was quite clear Verin despised her nearly 50-year old husband whom she proclaimed a dullard to more than one person. Verin was even more bothered by the fact Chaverston's children from his first marriage to Lady Anira (now deceased) were older than she. Within the year, though, Verin became pregnant with their only child, Adrean, and she grew to love her husband greatly.

For eleven years, Verin enjoyed life as Viscountess Consort Nor, raising her son and building alliances and relationships in Court. Shortly after his 60th birthday in 585 CY, Chaverston died of natural causes, and Verin was said to have been devastated, despite the defiant façade she put up. Chaverston's viscount title passed to his only son, Dutalle, from his first marriage, and Verin became the Dowager Viscountess Nor.

In 589 CY, Verin was created Baroness of Woodwych by Lynwerd after the new king stripped the former Baron Bastrayne of his peerage and ordered the corrupt noble arrested. Woodwych was in a sorry state, and Lynwerd gave Verin unprecedented autonomy in running the province. She immediately ordered a handful of lesser nobles exiled for their roles in Bastrayne's affairs and sacked most of the former Baronial Guard, a body that had become unacceptably corrupt.

Later that same year, Verin's only child, Adrean, was murdered by an assassin hired by a merchant house in Swan Bore. Verin mistakenly suspected the Brotherhood of the Bronze, a rebellious group in the Celadon Forest who opposed Adrean's plans for the building of a new city on the Duntide River. The Baroness was so bereaved by the death of Adrean and so angry at the elves of the Celadon that she ordered the immediate construction of her son's city on the Duntide, calling it Adrean's Landing. Not only would it be a center of commerce and entertainment, it would be a veritable monument to him. Any within the Baroness' court who even suggested the project should be kept within reason, or, worse, abandoned, was dismissed immediately.

The lofty construction project required a great deal of wood, and the Baroness was initially all too happy to extract it from the Celadon. This angered the Brotherhood and the more militant splinter group the Celadon Resistance. Relations degenerated from there, leading to near-revolt. As her pain subsided and a more level head returned, Verin slowed down the construction and resumed talks with the forest folk. The two sides eventually came to an understanding, and the leader of the Celadon Resistance voluntarily left in exile for his role in disrupting the Barony in other matters.

In 593 CY, King Lynwerd elevated Verin Talnith from the courtly rank of Baroness to that of Duchess, citing her efforts in restoring peace to the region and service to the crown. At the end of 594 CY, Sewardt Nehron took control of the crown of Nyrond, claiming his brother Lynwerd had abdicated in favor of Sewardt. To cement his claim to the throne in the minds of the populace, Sewardt called for a vote of legitimacy in 595 CY from the provincial leaders of Nyrond. The Duchess of Woodwych voted against Sewardt's legitimacy as rightful ruler of Nyrond, though the vote passed anyway.

Her formal title is Verin Talnith, Duchess of Woodwych and Dowager Viscountess Nor. Her form of reference is Lady Woodwych. Her acceptable forms of address are Your Grace, My Lady Duchess, My Lady, and Lady Woodwych.

# **Player Handout #6: Information on Brackenmoor and the Gnatmarsh**

## **County of Brackenmoor**

The County of Brackenmoor is a province of Nyrond south of the Celadon Forest and west of the Duntide River. It is under the supervision of Count Romadnen Beremen, a man viewed by many as a spineless bootlicker whose policy on all problems is to hide and hope they go away. While such a weakling produces few admirers, it also produced few enemies, and quite clean boots for the king. So when the provinces were reorganized under King Lynwerd a few years back, Beremen gained an expanded province.

Brackenmoor has never been particularly fertile, making the province the most depressing, penniless region in all of Nyrond. The people here are poor, fearful folk, who are described as downtrodden, despairing, unfriendly to strangers, surly and inhospitable, and quick to lie or conceal anything they own or earn—especially when the taxman is around. And the taxman's visits are quite frequent, as Beremen tries to please the king with a high rate of tax revenue. Thieves and rogues here flourish; highwaymen are a real hazard.

Brackenmoor's saving grace is its relationship with the Celadon natives. Thanks to Beremen's craven refusal to anger the forest folk through excessive logging, he has maintained good relationships with the elves and woodsmen of the Celadon, even when former-King Archbold's directives instructed a harsher policy. For this reason, most of the forest trade flows through Beetu, the county seat of Brackenmoor.

## **The Gnatmarsh**

The Nesser River would be the preferred means of travel between the Nyr Dyv and Sea of Gearnat if not for the stinking mires known as the Gnatmarsh, a pathetic, blighted land only nominally claimed by the Kingdom of Nyrond. Though as unpleasant as any swamp, the primary bane of would-be travelers is simple: insects. High grasses and reeds hide hatcheries of stinging bugs, both mundane and giant. Completely bloodless corpses are found floating in the reeds from time to time, leaving many to give thanks that the larger varieties are relatively rare.

Folk living in or near the marsh are considered base yokels, primarily due to their filthy living conditions and longstanding tendency toward inbreeding. Superstition and poor education leads to widespread ill-feelings towards any non-humans. These folk brave the inconvenience of minor bites and the possibility of complete severe loss of blood to travel the marsh on flat-bottomed boats, fishing, trapping, harvesting and every once in a while, picking the pockets of the bloated dead. Products frequently sold are swamp hay, trapped animals and birds, and great eels. Living conditions are desperate and dangerous.

Locals use small punts, difficult to control and untrustworthy in the hands of the unskilled. Dangers include cunning lizardfolk using traps, snares, and spears with poison, troglodytes, ogres, alligators, human bandits, half-orc rebels, and other monsters. A green dragon is rumored to live here, as well as a sunken lich's tomb, swamp water elementals controlled by a magic stone, and other wild rumors fly about. But the great many lesser threats are a good deal more real than rumor. It is a disease-ridden, grim place.

## Player Handout #7: Optional Mission

### Verin Lays out the Mission

"As we speak, my top commanders are marshalling their troops and beginning a march upon the County of Brackenmoor, which we are declaring a protectorate of the Duchy of Woodwych. Within two and a half days, we will enter Brackenmoor's northernmost town, Arnford. We expect little to no resistance as we take the town. Thereafter, the real campaign begins, as we continue marching deeper into the County until we hit Beetu, the capital of Brackenmoor. It is here we will face our first major resistance.

"Should we capture Beetu, our troops will then march to the fortified city of Callistor. It is on this final leg of the Brackenmoor Offensive where the success or failure of your mission will come into play.

"What I need you to do is protect the flank of our troops as they advance upon Callistor from Beetu seven days from now. The best way you can do that is to go back to the Gnatmarsh and to the cave of the Witch of the Bright who had hidden Jinelle and my grandson on behalf of the Count of Brackenmoor. Once there, you must find and destroy what we believe is some kind of enchantment crystal. While divinations are never clear, we have learned this Witch of the Bright has been using a crystal device to help her enthrall many of the Gnatmarsh's monstrosities to do her bidding.

"If the witch sends these swamp creatures to attack our troops as they advance upon Callistor, our invasion may very well fail. If you destroy this crystal, however, we believe the witch's ensorcelment over these creatures will be broken, and our troops will be able to lay siege to Callistor without interference.

"Your secondary objective is to recover the bodies of the first team that tried to rescue Jinelle from this witch. As you may recall, Daethil was the only survivor of that mission, and he was forced to leave behind the bodies of five others." Handing you a sack and a parchment, Verin continues, "This parchment details the descriptions and unique characteristics of those people to help you identify them. This sack is a *bag of holding* that I am loaning you. You may put the bodies in here if you find them and return them to me."

As you peruse the parchment, you note it shows the descriptions and identifying equipment of five people: a sorcerer, a paladin knight of Heironeous, a temple raider of Lirr, an elite ducal guardsman of Woodwych, and an elderly priestess of Cyndor named Lahara, who was also the former mistress of Jinelle. The parchment indicates Lahara was disintegrated by the Witch of the Bright during the first rescue mission, so finding her remains will probably be impossible.

Verin continues, "So in summary, you are to go there, defeat whatever resistance you may find,

destroy the crystal, and recover the bodies of the first rescue team. To ensure the crystal's total destruction, you are to use this device." The Duchess then gestures to one of her attendants who opens a hardened leather case about three feet long, revealing an ornate rod of iron, tipped with an onyx sphere.

Verin continues, "This is a *rod of cancellation*. It will disenchant one single magic item of all its power. You are to use this on the witch's enchantment crystal, which I hope is obvious when you see it, and nothing else, as it can only be used once. To use the rod, you must hold it in your hand and touch the onyx tip to the magic item you wish to destroy and mentally will the rod to activate.

"While our divinations regarding this mission were unclear, as is often the case, we do know it will be extremely dangerous. If you wish to back out, you may, as my back-up team is still ready to go. Otherwise, here is a map provided to us by Daethil which shows the safest route to take to get to the cave. As the crystal must be destroyed soon, you must leave at once. When you are finished, you may rendezvous with my troops in Beetu if you would like to help with the assault on Callistor."

### Out-of-Character Note

#### Time Unit Cost

This optional mission is going to cost each PC 1 Time Unit above and beyond the normal TU costs for this scenario. You still must pay this TU even if you are a member of a Nyrond meta-org with the "call to war" provision and are playing the normal part of this scenario for 0 TUs.

#### Backing Out

If, after hearing the details of this mission, you are having second thoughts and want to back out of doing it before it begins, you may, and your character will not get punished for doing so. As Verin said, she has a back-up team ready to go.

#### Legal Tables

Not everyone in the party need participate in the optional mission, but the party must still be a legal Living Greyhawk table. That means the optional mission can only be taken if 4 or more players pay the TU and participate in it.

## Scenario Results:

When you have a moment, please take the time to enter the scenario results of this running of "For the Duchess of Woodwych" by going to this page on the Nyrond website:

<https://www.nyrond.org/turbine/scenario-results?id=NYR5-03>

You can also easily navigate there by following the link "report the results of your tables" from the scenario's entry on the [www.Nyrond.org](http://www.Nyrond.org) website.

The following questions will be asked. It might help you to preliminarily write the answers down now so you don't forget them by the time you have a chance to visit the website:

Question 1: This question has been invalidated; ignore it.

Question 2: How many PCs died?

Question 3: Did Jinelle die?

Question 4: Did Jinelle's baby die?

Question 5: Was Daethil dead when the scenario ended?

Question 6: Did Nittle give the party his treasure?

Question 7: Did the PCs succeed in destroying the enchantment crystal in the optional TU mission?

Question 8: List all PCs who gained the "Dismissed/Arrest Warrant" disfavor of Lynwerd.

Question 9: List all PCs who gained the "Dismissed/Death Warrant" disfavor of Sewardt.

Question 10: Did anyone, such as pro-Sewardt PCs, betray the Duchess' confidence and report her plans to invade Arnford, Beetu, and Callistor to Sewardt's forces?

Question 11: If any pro-Sewardt "call to war" PCs participated in the adventure and they followed their orders by reporting to their superiors the names of all the other PCs who went on this mission, list those PCs who were ratted out.