

Wealsun, 591

Starday (1):

Sunday (2):

Moonday (3):

Godsday (4):

Waterday (5):

Earthday (6):

Freeday (7):

Starday (8): Kael arrives in Hilltop

Sunday (9):

Moonday (10): Harvey, Halcyon, Katerine, and Sequel arrive in Hilltop.

Godsday (11): The party explores Burne's Tower and discovers that Burne and all the others inside have been slain. Burne was turned into a ghoul or something similar. Only clue about the assailants is a small piece of a cloak that appeared to have been ripped off. It has an emblem of a golden, flaming eye.

Katerine and Sequel have their little misunderstanding with Terjon and discover just what an ass the priest can be. Jaroo tells Katerine that individuals with the flaming eye symbol have been spotted near the old Moathouse.

Waterday (12): Party goes to the Moathouse to investigate. Explored most of the upper level. Bandit band looks to have been living in one corner but have fled by the time the party gets in that room. Find stairs down but Sequel gets "ticked" before they can go down so they return to Hilltop.

Medi reveals herself as more than just a stoneworker and joins the party.

A messenger from Lord Ashby arrives with a message for Halcyon.

Said messenger is murdered during the night.

Earthday (13): Messengers (Furn and Calmer) are sent to Verbobonc with missives from Harvey and Medi.

Party returns to the Moathouse. Make it down to the lower level and deal with Green Slime and fight some zombies. Discover secret passageway inside of one column in the "torture room" but leave due to Medi's near death status.

Visit Terjon for some healing.

Freeday (14): Harvey learns that the dagger he was given by Davi is evil and that one of the potions is not magical.

Battle at the Trader's--Harvey and Terjon head to the Trader's to confront Davi. Turns into a fight. Davi escapes almost immediately. Gremio fights and is captured (Medi has Germio's chainmail now). Terjon is killed by a poisoned dagger in the back.

After the battle, party discovers a secret stash in a small "mini-basement". Of primary interest are two crates of swords and a book that appears to be full of devotions to Lolth (written in Drow).

Gremio is questioned but he doesn't seem too concerned with things; almost seems resigned and content with the fact that he is about to die. He's later hung from the Tower and dies with a smile on his face. Creepy, no?

Bugbears attack and ransacks the Trader's (killing, I think, two villagers). They were obviously looking for something.

Starday (15): Party returns to the Moathouse. The gear that had been in the "bandits' room" is gone. The door to the lower level is closed. Once in the lower level, party finds that Zombie remains are gone and all doors have been shut. Party finds a Drow hanging from chains in the torture room--obviously has been tortured to death. Party encounters Lubash the Ogre and find his pantry filled with a gnome and two human merchants. Return to Hilltop with the merchants and gnome.

Ashby is at Hilltop when the party gets back. He's there for three reasons: 1) to deliver a "professional" militia; 2) appoint Harvey as Lord of Hilltop and suggest Ossic (the son of Ashby's Captain) as Harvey's Captain; and 3) fetch his rather willful and disobedient daughter to return her to Verbobonc for her wedding as since she has no STATION she has no say in the matter (yes, that was supposed to be a BIG hint).

Ossic is sworn in as Captain. Halcyon is "arrested". Ashby leaves for the Inn. Medi visits Ashby to discuss the lack of a priest in Hilltop with Terjon's death and is basically appointed as the interim religious head. Halcyon is released to "house arrest". Harvey has a rather tense and unappetizing dinner with Dad and ends up just walking out. Ossic visits Hal and tells her that he can't let her escape but he doesn't want her to marry someone she doesn't want to. Rosy, Guildy, & Hal plot escape most comical. Halcyon attempts to leave in R or G's armor through the front gate but Ossic is the guard. Ossic leads Hal up to Harvey's room. Ossic (sans gauntlet) slaps Harvey and says that Harvey is unfit to be a Lord and unworthy of his post. The shock gives Ossic the opportunity to escape Harvey's immediate wrath. Ossic rode straight for the Church and sought sanctuary--pledged his life and fealty to her Church (thinking it was St. Cuthbert). Harvey shows up (after swearing Halcyon in as his new Captain--the whole reason Ossic "threw his life away")--and tries to arrest Ossic. Medi intervenes. Ashby shows up and is about to hit Ossic when an alarm horn sounds.

All head off towards the horn and a fairly large battle with orcs and an ogre ensues. Halcyon w/ 5 men-at-arms is surrounded by the raiders but the arrival of the others turns the battle in favor of the good guys. Someone was casting spells from some nearby woods and tracks are found after the battle that appear to head in the general direction of the Moathouse.

Sunday (16): Ashby leaves in the morning before Harvey or the others got up.

Funeral services held for the slain from the night before.

Mira has an audience with Harvey but the gift (a silver ring of three intertwined oak leaves) he was going to give is missing.

The party heads off to follow the tracks of the "chanter" from the night before and wind up back at the Moathouse. Find that some "repairs" have been made to the Moathouse. Enter via the "back door" and are ambushed by a couple of Orcs. After defeating the Orcs, head to the door down and get ambushed by some ghouls. Head down and split up. H, H, & S head to the "torture room" and see that the column secret door is open but the drow is gone. Others head over to Lubash's room. Find that Lubash has been raised as a zombie. Defeat Lubash and then head down the column into ghoulish territory. Big fight. As the party reorganizes and recovers, they hear Orcs up above.

Running battles with Orcs, a crawfish, and some human guards. Fight with gnolls and orcs, oh my. Sequel demonstrates his bloodthirsty side and gets himself in trouble by attracting the attention of two gnolls. Eventually, with more guards approaching, party finds a secret stairway leading up.

Return to Hilltop and learn that Ashby's horse had returned earlier that day and that Ossic had ridden out to investigate. Hal rides out with a couple of guards and finds Ossic, unconscious and slung over his horse, with two other horses with bodies draped over them and dragging Furn behind. Halcyon returns with all of them to the Tower.

Furn is questioned and learn about Nedra and her bandits and that they ambushed Ashby. Also learn that Nedra had taken up with someone named Lareth the Beautiful and that he had been distancing himself from Nedra 'cause he didn't like the badness of Lareth. Ossic remains unconscious despite Medi's care as he was badly hurt.

Ashby comes stumbling back into town that night.

Monday (17): Ashby and guards leave for Verbobonc again.

Ossic is revived and is adamant that he saw Ashby's body lying dead. Confirmed that Furn was with the bandits. Harvey executes Furn.

Hal (along with Ossic and a couple of guards) goes after her dad and finds the bodies of the guards that left with "Ashby". Ossic leaves to go on to Verbobonc.

The miller's wife comes to see Harvey about her husband having disappeared the day before. Some investigations by Hal and Katerine turn up nothing.

Mira comes for an audience with Harvey.

Ostler lets Harvey know that three new individuals have arrived in town and have rooms at the Inn.

Jaroo returns to Hilltop. Harvey asks him for some healing potions and he agrees to make some and tells Harvey that the Temple near Nulb was still abandoned.

Evening is pretty much uneventful.

Godsday (18): Harvey goes to see Jaroo and get those potions, he's not around--Ostler said that Jaroo went out to get ingredients.

Party heads back to the Moathouse. The main gate is back down and broken. Find a "circle" drawn around the Moathouse. Enter courtyard and see the "summoning circle". Begin exploration and then the "golem" comes out of the building. Sequel lets all know that magic weapons will be needed. Harvey has to test it to make sure. It's true. Harvey orders a retreat. No one really backs off and the golem proceeds to beat on Harvey pretty good. Eventually all head out and go around to the "back door."

Make their way down the secret stairway. Gate/portcullis is down and so head out the other way around through Lubash's room. Run into three ghouls--one of which is Lord Ashby. Defeat Ashby ghoulish and Medi turned the other two.

Explore two small rooms not checked yet. Each door has a new lock but both rooms are pretty much empty.

Head towards torture chamber that leads to lower level. Encounter lots of zombies and the two ghouls. Big battle--party wins.

Rest in the crawfish room. Explore the pool and find some stuff. Kael and Sequel thought about committing suicide by drowning themselves in a small underwater tunnel but changed their minds.

Party heads out and gets ambushed by two drow. Chase them for a bit before the drow actually turn and fight. One of them escapes down a yet to be explored corridor.

While tending to their wounded, the party is kind of shocked by a guard coming down a nearby corridor and stating that "the Master" would like to speak with them. Party basically refuses so guard closes the door. Party heads after him a couple of minutes later.

Party comes upon Lareth and two guards. Long battle and party is victorious. Sort of search the rooms and find many things--of particular note, the stick with a string and magic sword packed in separate crates; some notes from a journal and two pages in an unknown language; a pouch which was eventually found to hold the "Stone of Tears".

Head back to town and squirrel jumps on Katerine. The nut it is carrying gives her the ability to understand it and it says that Jaroo is in trouble and needs help in a dirty, stinky foul place of people.

Waterday (19): Ostler lets Hal know that Jaroo met with Turuko.

Mira and Hal meet. Hal purchases a Potion of Healing and leaves the gems found at the Moathouse for him to appraise and exchange for coin.

Mary (the miller's wife) tells Harvey that her sons are now missing too. Investigation turns up a trail leading straight north from their home.

In the evening, party follows trail that leads away from the miller's. Eventually, as the rain starts beating down, come to a hill with a partially crumbled tower atop it. Explore the tower and hill. Find a hole in the tower floor and a rope that has obviously

been disturbed recently. Also, Kael found an entrance into the hill at its western base. Leave the horses in the semi-shelter of the tower and head to the opening after dropping the end of the rope down the hole and tying the other end around a rock. Head down to the opening in the hill. Find a door and much rock that looks blasted (might have been blocking the door previously). Enter and get ambushed. Turns out to be hobgoblins. Four of them but one escaped out the front entrance. Party head deeper into the hill. Find the children's bodies (dead) at the bottom of the hole. Hear something coming from down another corridor. Party holds position but Harvey gets hit by javelin from out of the darkness. Large zombie-like creature comes into room. Party retreats with the boys' bodies and head back to Hilltop.

Earthday (20): Party learns that the inn burned down.

Harvey talks to Ostler about it and learns that Jaroo didn't help to put out the fire. Also tells Mary about her sons. Jaroo is "arrested".

Medi finally regains consciousness. Heals herself and the others. She goes out and learns about the inn and other things that have happened. Tracks down Turuko and Ko on the outskirts of town and asks them to stay at least one more night (they agree since she's paid for them to stay with Mira). T suggests that they look for anyone who might benefit from the inn burning down.

Funeral for the children and Ashby is held. All but Zert attend (even T&K are there). Harvey speaks with T about the inn. T repeats his suggestion. Party observes that Ko looks like has been beaten but T & Ko both say it resulted during their escape from the burning inn.

Sequel translates the papers from Lareth's desk. A message from E to Lareth and from Lareth to E, both written in drow.

Harvey and Hal go see Mira with more stuff for him to appraise and exchange. Almost scare him to death when they show him the strange coins--drow coins. He agrees to keep it quiet and stay in town, for now at least.

Harvey and Hal see Zert coming out of the woods near the Tower. Harv detects evil and Zert is positive so Harv says that no additional guards are needed at the moment. Asked Zert about the fire at the Inn and he said that he saw Ko leaving the Inn late that night and that he couldn't have been as drunk as he appeared earlier.

Party checks on Jaroo who hasn't moved since tied up, gagged, blindfolded, and stuck in a cell in the Tower. Appears dead..no pulse..no response to poking..rigor has set in..but no change in color..and no apparent injuries. Detects as evil but not magic. Kael asks Medi to detect magic on him and the boots, sword, and dagger from the drow have a faint emanation but something in Kael's pack detects as magical--a platinum and ruby pin that Kael took from the dead drow. Jaroo's body is moved to the church.

Freeday (21): Jaroo's body is missing. Tracks turn from barefoot to booted in three steps (one step is literally half barefoot-half booted).

Harvey detects evil on all of the guards (none are) and watches are reorganized to be threesomes and Ostler and the guards are informed that a shapechanger is in town.

Party heads to Nulb.

Little to no activity in Nulb when party arrives that morning. Find one inn that has a couple of people passed out but nothing else. Knock on the door to another building and get "rudely" greeted ("What the feck do you want?") and, when Kael says that they have questions they'd like to ask, the door is slammed in his face.

Look around a bit and wind up at an Inn with about a dozen men, drinking and already half-drunk, and a barmaid. Halcyon announces that a new lord has been appointed at Hilltop and has jurisdiction over Nulb...the men laugh and are derisive and insulting about any new lord...asked if she's the new whore and has a bit of a run in (i.e., her knee to his groin) with one of the men...the rest laugh at it. Harvey asks the barmaid if she knows where the Temple of Elemental Evil is at...she shakes her head and just walks out a back door leaving her bar unattended...some of the drunks start getting "free" drinks...party leaves (after some propositioning of Katerine).

One of the men comes out and asks how much the info about the temple is worth to them...Kael pipes up and says 2sp (i.e., the price of two cheap ales at the inn). The guy just turns and heads back to the inn, flipping off Harvey when he calls to the guy to wait.

Party explores the general area of, and around, Nulb...find nothing really...head back to Nulb and go to the original inn. Kael and Katerine go in and Kael goes up to the bar and puts down a gold piece and asks questions. The barkeep keeps telling him to go to the Riverman's (presumably the other inn) for that kind of information.

Party then proceeds to explore the river that flows by Nulb and travel downriver (about 10 minutes it becomes very marshy) and then upriver (for a number of hours in woods)...camp for the evening...

Starday (22): Party returns to Nulb after the "camping" trip. Accosted/hailed by some of the Nulbites preparing to sail but party ignores them and returns to Hilltop.

Harvey speaks with Ostler about the location of the Temple. Ostler will ask around some of the older folks in town to see if they know. Ostle also informs Harvey that supplies will begin to get critically low if new supplies are not brought into town. Ostler is also preparing letters to go out to various merchants requesting additional supplies for Hilltop and the garrison.

Sequel settles down at the Church to use his Identify spell that he's decided he actually does have. With the pearls previously obtained from Mira and the one recovered from Jaroo's hut, he identified the half-plate from Lareth (wearer acts as if continually under the effect of a "Freedom of Movement" spell), the longsword found in the crate at Lareth's (+1 cold iron longsword with, possibly, other powers), the stick with a string bow (+1 composite longbow that definitely has other powers).

Harv and Hal did various community service around Hilltop to let the locals express their concerns and to just plain help out. Also stop at Mira's and obtain three more pearls for Sequel.

Sequel also identifies the ring that he had gotten from under the stairs (Ring of Lesser Fire Resistance), the armband taken from Lareth (equivalent of a Pearl of Power w/ 3 Spell Points), and the chain shirt that Medi has been wearing that was taken from Gremio (+3 Chainshirt of Lightness--treat as a mithral shirt for weight, armor check penalty, etc).

Party settles down for an uneventful evening and night.

Sunday (23): Party heads out to the Moathouse to finish exploring its dungeon. Katerine and Kael scout ahead and see no sign of the "golem" in the courtyard and start to proceed to the double doors. Golem was "hiding" in the tower right next to the courtyard entrance and comes crashing out of it. Katerine stands her ground at the steps and starts shooting at it. Kael runs for it. Golem says something about having a secret. Rest of the party hears the ruckus and heads to courtyard. Golem comes OUT to meet them--apparently its secret was that it was no longer confined. Battle ensues. Golem mentions that it had made a new friend. Offers to tell who its friend is if someone is willing to make a deal with it. Expands its offer to include the location of the Temple in exchange for a soul. Drops it on a first-born or Sequel's left hand and even offers, as a sign of its good faith, the name of Davi as its new "friend". Offers are rejected, duh, and party defeats the golem. Whatever spirit was possessing the body departs and the body just falls apart.

Proceeded into the moathouse and made their way to Lareth's "lair" with no problem or sign of others. Inside Lareth's lair, things were definitely different. Lareth's body had been covered by a tapestry and the other bodies had been covered with a tapestry in a "respectful" manner. The other two bodies had been stripped and looted. The guards' quarters had been looted of anything of remote value as had Lareth's chamber. The table had been smashed and broken to reveal a secret bottom/hidden compartment. It, and some papers, had been partially burned--Katerine figured that the fire just never really took in the dampness and low oxygen levels of the room. The papers, according to Medi who has a background as an engineer, look like initial sketches ("blueprints") for a building. Party assumes that they are maps for the Temple (but, if so, why were they left behind when pretty much everything else was taken).

Party heads down the unexplored tunnel that the Dark Elf had escaped down. After about 100', it opens into a natural tunnel. Explore a bit and find an underground stream, a larger chamber with a "bonfire" and some figures around it, and a small room that had recently had an entrance excavated. This room contained a body (skeletal with rotting leathers) on a natural looking slab and numerous carvings related to Ehlonna, Trithereon, and Pelor along the walls. The body and walls had all been desecrated recently. Party assumes that this is the tomb of Fyrdow referenced in Lareth's letter. Nothing of value or other interest in this room.

Party devises a plan to attract the attention of the figures around the fire (who are, according to Kael, speaking something similar to goblin). Sequel and Katerine shoot arrows at the figures from a far distance. Figures douse the fire--but not before Sequel drops one of them--and then approach in the darkness. Party takes up positions. A dozen or so hobgoblins appear along with an ogre. Battle ensues and party is victorious but the hobbies do some considerable damage and the party's plan didn't quite work as hoped (the hobbies had javelins and just crossed the stream to engage the party's archers). One hobgoblin, clearly the leader, retreats when it is clear the party is going to win the fight. Appeared to give some order to which the surviving hobbies responded as one--presumably he ordered them to fight to the death to cover his retreat. That shows some considerable discipline and organization. The hobbies all had similar armor and appearance--almost like they were part of a military unit.

Party proceeds down a tunnel out of the large chamber where the hobbies had been "camped". Goes for about a mile before coming out somewhere to the east of Hilltop (according to Katerine). The area around the tunnel's entrance has a number of tracks, including cart tracks (a little older) and the hobby leader's tracks. Both proceed to the south. A drow body is also found, stripped and looted, off in some bushes.

Party heads back to the hobbies' camp and check it out. Has bedrolls, spare weapons (Hal takes a couple of javelins), and a considerable amount of yucky rations. No money, nothing of "value".

Party returns to Hilltop (around midday/early afternoon). As they approach, they can see many men setting up camp near the laborers' tents. They're all military men with the symbol of Verbobonc predominantly displayed. One of the men approaches and introduces himself as Captain Yscan and explains that the Viscount had received message from Celene that a large army of Hobgoblins was heading towards Verbobonc and that he and his men were here as reinforcements.

Captain Yscan explained the situation with the hobgoblins (i.e., a large army slowly moving north from the Pomarj area and may be heading towards Verbobonc; numerous scout or advance units have been encountered; Celene is maintaining isolation and not engaging the horde). Also explained the role of he and his men--they are in service to the Viscount and will defer to Lord Hilltop unless Yscan believes doing so will be a threat to the Viscounty. They are here to protect the area from the advance units of the hobby army. He and his men (at Harvey's suggestion) displaced the laborers and began setting up camp.

Medi speaks to Stone about blocking up the tunnel entrance. Stone, Medi, Katerine, Yscan and some of his men all head over to the Moathouse and the tunnel entrance. Yscan, Stone, Harvey, and others discuss repairing the Moathouse's defenses and "paving" the dyke out to it. Stone and the laborers and Yscan's men will begin work on that stuff.

Mira has left Hilltop to seek direction from his superiors (turns out that he is a cleric of Zilchus) and left Harvey a note indicating such (among other things). Also returned the silver serving set, a pearl (which Sequel used to identify the platinum/ruby pin as a Brooch of Fire), and a fairly large amount of coin for Harvey to use on behalf of Hilltop. Also indicated that he hopes to return to Hilltop.

Harvey and Halcyon have to deal with R & G and their confusion (or attempted con) over promotion. Harvey cops out (again) and tells Halcyon to deal with it but then loudly argues (and others jump in) and pretty much vetos Halcyon's suggestion to "assign" them to guarding Mary and helping out at the Millhouse (apparently Harvey takes after his father more than he'd probably like to admit).

Medi discovers that Mira's pouch (with the ring) has been placed in the Church's "offering plate". Returns it to Harvey; the ring fits nicely and the pouch also had a dozen platinum and a dozen gold pieces.

Kael gives Harvey the platinum and ruby pin (which turns out to be sort of the equivalent of a Rod of Fire). Harvey and Halcyon sincerely thank him but he sneers and reacts negatively to Halcyon's thanks.

Ostler found one farmer, Medan, whose brother, Ascus, had been in the service of one of the priests of St. Cuthbert, Llyrence, who was involved in ransacking the Temple of Elemental Evil. Medan tells party that Ascus had retired to a monastic type life at some abandoned keep deep in the Gnarley Forest (in the area of Twilight Falls). Also explained that Ascus had told him that the Temple is hidden by some sort of magic that makes it nearly impossible to find unless one carries a "stone" from the Temple. Medan didn't know if that meant any old stone or some sort of special stone. He did know that Ascus had left Hilltop with such a stone. Ascus left years ago (not long after the Temple was sacked) but periodically visited Medan. However, Medan has not seen Ascus in something like five years.

Night passes uneventfully.

Moonday (24): After getting some supplies from the old tradehouse. Party leaves town to head towards Twilight Falls to seek out Ascus. Ostler scribed a letter to Ascus on behalf of Medan. The day of travel is quite uneventful and party camps for the evening.

Godsday (25): After about an hour or two of traveling in the morning, the party is ambushed by some hobgoblins. Katerine noticed them and negated the surprise of the ambush. Party battles some 10 "regular" hobgoblins, two hell hounds, and two other hobgoblins (one possibly a cleric and one possibly a fighter or a rogue). Hobgoblins attacked in two "waves"--the first ambush wave and then another group "hiding" in an abandoned building. Hobbies seem to be fairly organized and pose quite a challenge for the party.

Party is victorious but Kael is critically injured and, though stabilized by Medi's magics, is still unconscious. Party also stabilized the hobgoblin that they assume is a cleric and have him bound and gagged, etc. Also loot the bodies and find: magic Banded Mail, two magic shortwords, two magic potions, two scrolls (Spiritual Weapon and Summon Monster III), numerous heavy steel shields, numerous suits of chain mail, a very nice suit of studded leather (Harvey already claimed this to be his bedclothes), a heavy mace, four nice looking longbows, many arrows, and some javelins. Party gathers up as much as they can load on the horses (even to the point of walking instead of riding their horses) and continue on their way. Hobgoblins had no other treasure (e.g., coins) or supplies (e.g., food and bedrolls).

Arrive at Twilight Falls and are directed by a guard to seek out Captain Soranna (at the Old Tollhouse) to talk about the hobgoblins and Brother Deryn (at the Temple) for healing Kael. Pay, most likely inflated charge, to cross the river via ferry and head to the Old Tollhouse (Halcyon and Katerine) and to the Temple (the rest of 'em).

Brother Deryn heals Kael as best he can (but Kael remains unconscious and is put in a bed at the Temple). Harvey gets his first taste of a general lack of respect for "nobility" and "titles" at Twilight Falls from the old man and his gout-driven grumpiness. Deryn takes them to the Mayor's.

Captain Soranna is not at the Old Tollhouse but the guard takes the hobgoblin prisoner to a cell and tells Halcyon that the Captain is with the Mayor.

All PCs end up at the Mayor's (well, at the base of the tree that leads up) and a guard goes and fetches the Mayor. Mayor Greymantle (a middle-age half-elf) and Captain Soranna (human) discuss the hobgoblin issue with the PCs. Twilight Falls and the surrounding areas have been plagued by a few different warbands and they estimated maybe up to 100 hobgoblins. Mayor was shocked to hear that there is an army of thousands on its way. Mayor hopes the PCs can help with the hobgoblins but sees little hope in the face of an army of thousands!

PCs and Captain Soranna return to Tollhouse. Halcyon asks about places to stay and ends up offering half of the equipment they took from the hobgoblins the day before and Soranna says that they are welcome to stay at the Tollhouse for as long as they want (sets up a room with cots for them). Hobgoblin prisoner is still unconscious.

Sequel and Katerine go to see the "town wizard". Sertieren is an elderly halfling wizard (who seemed a wee bit absent-minded) who seemed to take an immediate liking to them (especially Katerine). Discuss various topics from Ascus to the Temple of Elemental Evil. Sertieren didn't have a whole lot of info readily available (beyond Tsuggtmoy being the Fungus Bitch) but would look into it. Did provide, at some point, a little info about Ascus and the keep. Said that Ascus had brought him a bunch of papers that had been found at the keep detailing some of its prior history before the papers were sent on to Verbobonc. The papers indicated that the Keep had been built by some dishonored and banished noble named Amery but Sertiern didn't really have more info than that. Sequel discussed possible magic purchases. Sertieren tried to convince Sequel to give up the "adventuring life" and settle down as his "apprentice" and invited both of them back for dinner. Dinner was delightfully delicious and pleasant. Sequel purchases (with Katerine's money) a scroll of Mage Armor and learns that Sertieren has a nice little selection of other magic stuff available for sale.

Halcyon talked a bit with Kellin Shadowbanks, the proprietor of the Old Bridge Inn. The halfling innkeep recognized her name and knew of the Ashby family. Offered his condolences for the loss of Brennus. Halcyon learned that neither Ascus nor any of the other "monks" from the Keep of the Silent Stream had been seen in town for the last few years. Kellin, now that he thought about it, found that odd as monks were typically seen at least once a year in Twilight Falls.

Harvey ends up at the Green Apple Inn and his lesson in Twilight Falls' disrespect for "title" continues with the dwarven barkeep, Tharrma. He also gets a lesson in a workingman's dinner and in dwarven drinking. Winds up spending a bunch of money and passes out from dwarven ale. Harvey thinks that he met someone who knew where the Keep was and has a vague memory of making a lot of new friends. Dragged back to the Tollhouse and dropped off for the Captain to deal with. Tharrma gives him a kiss and says, "Sweet dreams big guy", before heading back to the Inn.

Medi spent much of the day working at the Temple (to thank Deryn for healing Kael) and makes a couple of new pals in the boys (acolytes?) at the Temple with her hard work. Goes to the Old Bridge Inn and gets dinner. Learns from Kellin that he's heard rumors (from a merchant who heard it from a miner who heard it from a woodsman who heard it from a woodsman who heard it from a woodsman) that a dragon has taken up residence at the old bridge which crosses a gorge that then leads off to Narwell (a city in the Wild Coast region of the Flanaess).

All end up at the Tollhouse and the evening passes uneventfully.

Waterday (26): In the morning, after Harvey "lays on hands" on himself to get rid of his hangover, all head off to the Temple to check on Kael. Harvey "lays on hands" and heals Kael enough to bring him back to consciousness. He gets healed up more by Medi.

As the party is getting ready to get the day started, an alarm is sounded. They run out to see a guard on the roof of the Old Tollhouse banging a gong and see the Captain and a couple of guards come running out. They're looking to the sky and a three-headed semi-dragon like creature is flying over the town. It lands on the roof of the Old Tollhouse and tears the guard in half. Another such creature pops down right in front of the party by the Temple. Battle ensues. Another guard is quickly slain and the Captain is largely left facing one of the creatures on her own while the party takes on the other (though Katherine and others with ranged attacks do aid the Captain with the other one). Sertieren also shows up and hits the one with two Lightning Bolts and the second takes it out as it is flying away. The party defeats it as well. The Mayor is very thankful and says he'll get whatever deals he can for the party from the town's merchants.

Breakfast at the Old Bridge Inn is on the house and quite tasty. Kael asks about the town's merchants and learns that Kellin doesn't trust one of them, Jarrett, who owns the general store.

Party goes "shopping". Head to the town's smithy and trades the remaining weapons and armor taken from the hobgoblins for a +1 Heavy Steel Shield, +1 Longsword, +1 Chain Shirt, 50 +1 Arrows. Also leave a suit of leather armor to be transformed into Studded Leather armor (cost of 25gp) to pick up later that afternoon. Did I miss anything?

Medi is "given" a Potion of some sort of healing by one of the boys and receives another later on from Deryn (is that right?)

Sequel and Katherine go to Sertieren's and learn that the Mayor convinced him that the party had rights to the second Chimera. Work out a deal where the party trades the Chimera and a kiss on the cheek from Katherine for a +2 Ring of Protection and his identifying of three items. They get invited back for lunch and he'll have stuff identified then.

Party leaves the smithy and have a crowd of kids following them. Get guided to the general store. Guarded conversation with Jarrett but don't purchase anything. Leave to go back to the Tollhouse but Kael plans to stay and watch the general store for five hours. Goes to hide but some of the kids ask him what he's doing (can't hide if someone is watching you w/o an appropriate feat or special ability) and so he leaves.

Party decides to interrogate the hobgoblin prisoner. Medi heals him enough to bring him back to consciousness and, although he is influenced by Medi's Zone of Truth spell, he is uncooperative and starts casting Command spells. Halcyon is about to execute the prisoner when Soranna tells her to wait and that Sertieren might be able to help. Sertieren is fetched and casts some type of charm spell on the prisoner and starts questioning him. Learn the following information (in no specific order) from Zarr (he referred to himself by that name at one point):

- The leader of the Horde is High Wyrmlord Azarr Kul. Kul is the "chosen" of Tiamat.
- The Horde numbers in the thousands and is composed of more than just Hobgoblins; it has monsters and other humanoids too.
- Elves are very tasty.
- Lord Koth is a mighty sorcerer and is based in an old human keep in the forest. The warbands harassing the area report to him.
- The Horde will march on Twilight Falls but its ultimate goal is Verbobonc itself.
- He knows nothing about the Temple of Elemental Evil or Lareth or Davi or Jarrett.
- Elves are most tasty if only slightly cooked so the blood runs down the chin when you bite into the flesh.
- The humans will be conquered and have no chance against the might of the Horde. Rhaaaarrrrrr!!!!

Prisoner is executed.

Sertieren has lunch with Katherine and Sequel and lets them know that the Stick with a String is a +1 Composite Longbow, Bane vs. Hobgoblins (little different than what I said on Saturday but this puts it in 3.5 terms) and probably more but he couldn't discern anything else. Both shortswords are +1 Shortswords.

Harvey asks Soranna to have a letter taken to Captain Yscan in Hilltop describing the current situation and what's been learned (mostly from the prisoner). She says she'll ask for a volunteer to take it. Soranna also suggests that the party look for a man named Jorr as he knows the forest better than anyone else in this area and might be able to help get the party to the Keep and the like.

Medi talks to Brother Deryn about Ascius, the Keep, and the old bridge. Lets him know that the Hobgoblin army will likely use the bridge to cross and Deryn offers to prepare a scroll with Stone Shape for the party's use (if they need to destroy the bridge).

Kael's new armor is ready and picked up.

Katherine heads to Sertieren's to purchase some scrolls for Sequel (as he's busy rubbing Deryn's feet). Asks to buy Web and Fireball but Sequel had told her the wrong amount and so she's a bit short on cash. Sertieren mentions that his cheek is a bit jealous of the cheek that received the prior kiss and so Katherine gives him a little peck on the cheek. Sertieren hands over both scrolls as

well as two potions, Fly and Invisibility, as a gift to Katerine to use to get out of trouble or, more likely given that she's traveling with Sequel, to get into trouble.

Harvey goes to look for Tharrma. Gets a lesson on work from a few kids who lead him to Tharrma's house--Morlin's (they're siblings). Morlin doesn't let Harvey see her as he isn't interested in having some human try to get his sister drunk and sweet-talk her. Harvey asks about the bridge and learns that the dwarves would not want the bridge damaged as it is part of their heritage but, if the hobgoblins are using it, then what needs to be done needs to be done.

Medi and Halcyon spend the afternoon working at the Temple. Sequel spends much of it rubbing feet and then copying the new scrolls into his spellbook.

In the evening, everyone heads over to the Green Apple Inn. Tharrma messes with Harvey and almost has him convinced that they're going to be getting married as they had already consummated their relationship the night before. It's not too long before she busts out laughing and lets all know that it's just a joke. Spend some time talking with the dwarves about various topics (and Sequel being the butt of dwarven humor) before starting a near brawl/barfight by talking about destroying the old bridge. Learn the following before that:

- The bridge is very, very old and was built by dwarves (an older dwarf even said exactly which of his ancestors had worked on it).
- The bridge has two watchtowers on either side of it and is an arch-style bridge with "walls", most likely railings, running along either side.
- The dwarves are not thrilled about the idea of it being damaged just because the hobgoblins "might" use it to cross or to stop a small group of them crossing it.
- Leave before the arguing amongst the dwarves actually escalates to violence.

Settle down for the evening back at the Old Tollhouse.

Earthday (27): Harvey heads to the cliffside to find the mines. Old dwarf from the night before calls him a "bridge-breaker" and reiterates that they don't like the idea of destroying the bridge just because the hobgoblins "might" use it.

Tasty breakfast at the Old Bridge Inn for everyone else. Kellin proceeds to "teach" Kael a thing or two about playing Three Dragon Ante (the typical gambling card game).

Harvey heads to Morlin's and asks if he can help out in any way. Morlin tells him that he can help by going out and killing some goblins. (Is anybody getting the hint yet?!?)

Medi and Halcyon work around the Temple again until the scroll is ready (turns out to be two Scrolls of Stone Shape).

Party is ready to head out towards Sobanwyth and the Keep. Mayor runs up and asks for them to bring back some proof of the size and threat of this army. Soranna is asked if she can spare a man to travel with the party and confirm what is learned. Soranna says she'll take Halcyon's word for what is seen while scouting. And off the party goes.. .

About an hour out of Twilight Falls, a young woman/girl and small boy come running onto the road from a side trail and are quickly followed by three goblin worg riders. Battle ensues. The young woman is cut down by one of the goblins. Goblins are engaged. Kael drags the boy into the trees. Party dispatches all but one of the baddies. Halcyon and others start to go after the goblin that got away (down the side trail that the girl & boy came down) and are confronted by four hobgoblins and a hell hound. Magic flies (one of the hobbies casts a lightning bolt among other things) and battle ensues. The baddies are defeated. Kael is busy looting the goblin bodies while this is going on. (Note: the one goblin that got away in the prior fight was not found and can be assumed to have gotten away). All bodies are looted and the following is found: 2 suits of magical studded leather armor (size: Small), 2 composite shortbows (masterwork?), 2 scimitars (masterwork?), 2 bucklers (masterwork?), 3 suits of masterwork chainmail, 3 masterwork composite longbows, 3 masterwork longswords, 3 heavy steel shields, arrows, nice-looking longpear, magical cloak, and magical ring.

Talk to boy and girl--they had been out collecting berries when they heard the attack on their "village" and came back and saw the goblins attacking. Ran and were chased by the goblins and worgs (who were basically playing with them by catching them and letting them go and catching them again and so on). Go to the "village" and find three huts (woodsman type) and six dead bodies including two children. Leave to take the kids back to Twilight Falls. Bodies are just left as they were.

Arrive back in TF.

The children are taken to the Temple. Captain Soranna and the mayor are filled in on what happened. The mayor speaks to the children. An uncle is brought to the Temple and he takes the children stating that he is planning on leaving Twilight Falls.

Sequel & Katerine go see Sertieren. He has some info he wrote up for Sequel regarding the Temple of Elemental Evil (see the handout). He also identifies the ring and cloak: Ring of Protection +1 & Cloak of Resistance +1.

Rest of the day and evening pass rather uneventfully.

Freeday (28): Depart for Sobanwyth again in the morning.

Arrive at the site of the battle with the goblin worg riders and Harvey retrieves his lance that he had left behind the day before but not without incident. An eagle is perched on it eating something and poops on the lance before flying off to land on Katerine's shoulder and offers her some of the rabbit--Katerine has her animal companion.

Continue on and find the trail that Soranna indicated would lead to Jorr's cabin. After encountering Jorr's trio of pooches and speaking with Jorr, the following is learned and agreed upon:

- Jorr knows a back way to the Keep and will lead the party there and act as a guide. Cost is 5gp per day.

- Jorr's seen lots of goblins and the like about the woods.
- The monks at the Keep are all dead and have been for years. Apparently they somehow pissed off a bunch of Forest Giants in the area and the giants attacked the Keep. The monks and giants had been on fairly good terms so Jorr isn't sure what happened.
- Jorr wouldn't be at all surprised if the goblins are using the Keep as a "base".
- Party needs to leave the horses behind (Jorr shows them a sheltered spot and states that his dogs'll guard them) and everyone heads off. Jorr takes them across the lake (it takes a few trips) and then head down an overgrown road (Jorr says that the monks were building a new road through the forest but he hasn't been down it in awhile). Harvey switches to his leather armor (aka pajamas) to lessen the noise he makes and to speed up travel.

Party travels for a bit before settling down for the evening which passes uneventfully. Do learn that Soranna is Jorr's niece.

Richfest, 591

Starday (1): Party wakes and makes preparations to continue on their journey and notices that Jorr is missing. After waiting for a short period of time, head out without him. After about 45 minutes of travel or so, Katerine notices Jorr hiding in some trees and he signals for her to stop. He's spotted an overturned wagon in a marshy area with a sluggish river running through the middle of it. He also spotted a large snake by the wagon. Kael and Katerine proceed across a wooden bridge that spans the river and are attacked by three snakes bursting from the water when they reach the middle of the bridge. Kael is critically wounded and the rest of the party charges forward for battle (and Harvey saves Kael's life with a Lay on Hands). Eventually, as all of the party has reached the opposite side of the river and are leaving, the "snakes" come out of the water and can be seen to be part of a hydra (five-heads). Party defeats it but not without exhausting much of their resources (e.g., Spell Points, 5 charges of the Brooch of Fire). Prior to the fighting, Harvey did Detect Evil on Jorr and it can back negative. Kael recovers a magical breastplate from a body at the wagon (the body was all partially eaten and rotten...yuck).

Party reaches the Keep. Some scouting by Katerine, Kael, and Jorr shows that it was, indeed, attacked by Forest Giants sometime in the past. There are large boulders strewn about, much damage to the walls and the tower is largely collapsed, and a couple of giant skeletons can be seen. Tracks (both two-footed and four-footed) are obvious around the main entrance of the keep. After waiting for Harvey to put on his armor (aka Clang...Clang...Hi, we're here...come out and fight), the party approaches the keep. A small wooden shack (most likely an old gardening toolshed) is checked out...Halcyon looks in and it appears empty of threat or important stuff. Medi notes that the shack is very fragile and so party leaves it be.

Party enters keep through the main entrance. Remains of an old gate lie on the ground but there is nothing to block the party's entrance and no apparent guards. Kael and Katerine enter first and move to different sides of the keep's courtyard. Kael hears muffled voices on the other side of a large door in the northeast corner of the Keep that stop speaking as Harvey clanks his way into the courtyard. Party opens the large doors and is ready for battle but see no immediate threat. Turns out to be a large stable with a large open area and numerous stalls. Open area has a table with a couple of sticks on it and a bunch of small beetles running around on it. As Harvey heads down the stalls, a goblin riding a worg bursts from one stall and rides out an opening in the wall. A second soon follows. Both goblins start yelling ("Intruders"... "Help"...that kind of thing) while in the courtyard and a fight ensues. One goblin flees through the main gates of the keep and gets away.

At one point during the fight, it is noticed that a large lion-like creature with wings and a human like face is sitting atop another of the keep's "buildings" and is watching the party fight with the goblins. It doesn't appear to be taking any sort of hostile action.

Before the remaining goblin and worg is killed, four hobgoblins join the fight from another of the keep's buildings. A moment after they join in, a large minotaur emerges from the same building and tells the party to lay down their weapons or die. Sequel responds with a Scorching Ray so the minotaur charges him and gores him pretty good. Combat continues...

After defeating the various baddies in the courtyard, Halcyon begins a dialogue with the manticore atop the building and learns that it is being paid by Koth to kill people and has recently attacked a nearby village and to basically attack and kill whoever Koth tells it to. Koth comes out of the same building as the minotaur and hobgoblins and tells the manticore to attack the party. Halcyon says that they'll pay more for the manticore to attack Koth. Battle ensues, yet again, and Halcyon and the manticore continue negotiations which keeps it out of the fight and Koth actually blasts the manticore with a lightning bolt for its treachery. Koth is defeated and the manticore backs away from the edge of the roof such that the party can no longer see it.

Looting and searching ensues. Party looks through three rooms. One is obviously the quarters of the hobgoblins and minotaur (a bag of coins is found under a very large bed). Another of the rooms contains a large table (whose top is scarred with many nicks and cuts) and some chairs but nothing else. The third room is the lower level of the tower is probably Koth's quarters. An initial search of this room turns up nothing except a partially completed painting of a hobgoblin with wings and other "dragon-like" features (party assumes it is probably Azarr Kul). A more intense search of this room is started.

Koth's body is searched (as are the other bodies) and a number of things are found. Of particular note is a very large map (about 5' by 3') depicting the area of Verbobonc and Gnarley Forest with battle plans/timeline and various comments (all in Goblin). See Handout, Koth's Map. Also beheaded Koth and, after wrapping his head in his clothing, placed it in the "extra-dimensional" bag.

Manticore is seen flying off with a bag in its mouth. The building from which it flew away from is cursorily searched. Other than a bunch of curious, natural-looking spikes, nothing of interest or value is found. Halcyon took a few of the spike things.

Sequel finds a secret door in the wall under collapsed stairway of the tower. A shaft with ladder rungs in its wall is found behind this door. Shaft leads down to a small "vault" with three alcoves...each has a gate that is locked by a heavy chain and large padlock. It is pretty clear that no one has been down here for years. The first alcove has shelves with iron coffers. The second has a small desk with a skeletal body slumped over it. The third as a large trunk. Kael is unable to pick these locks and so Medi smashes them. She starts with the alcove with the body (Kael started with the alcove with the trunk). The body is that of Ascius and his journal is on the desk along with a small lead box. Journal gives story of the Keep of the Silent Stream (see Handout, Journal of Ascius) and makes note of two "treasures" related to the Temple of Elemental Evil. The stone on a chain around his neck and an evil gem that is in the leaden box. The alcove with the coffers has ten of them. Most of coins (silver and gold), a few have most likely worthless notes of credit, and one has the "deed" to the Keep. The trunk in the third alcove contains a variety of items.

Party gathers up all this stuff (it's a lot) and are currently discussing what to do next. Jorr suggested, in response to a question of the quickest way back to Twilight Falls, to go to Sobanwyck and see if they can get horses.

Treasure from the keep:

Bodies of Goblin, Hobgoblins, Minotaur & Koth

Goblin: Studded Leather Armor, Scimitar, Buckler; Hobgoblins: Chainmail x4, Heavy Steel Shield x4, Longsword x4; Minotaur: Big Axe; Koth: Bag ("extra-dimensional") w/ Lots of Coins and the map, morningstar, three vials (two are similar and one is different)

Alcove #1 (Coffers)

Six coffers contain coins (about an equal mixture of gold and silver with a handful of platinum thrown in); Three contain letters of credit that are so old as to be all but worthless (maybe a historian would buy them); One coffer contains the "deed" to the keep

Alcove #2 (Ascius)

Ascius' Journal; Chain necklace with a "stone" from the Temple of Elemental Evil; Small lead box (journal says it contains an evil gem related to the Temple but the party has not yet opened it)

Alcove #3 (Trunk)

Magic Bastard Sword, Magic Chain Shirt (possibly mithral?), Magic Gauntlets, Magic Rod, Big Magic Gauntlet (just one), a Dragon Skull, a string with a couple dozen large teeth strung upon it

Sunday (2): Party spends some time "consolidating" and examining the various treasures found at the Keep. The monies are all put into the "extra-dimensional" bag. Medi puts on the gauntlets and takes the bastard sword; she's also carrying the big, spiked gauntlet. Sequel takes the rod. Halcyon switches out her current magic chain shirt with the one found in the Keep. The dragon skull and teeth are also taken but all of the other mundane stuff is left behind.

Jorr is given Koth's head and the map to take to Twilight Falls as quickly as possible. He lets the party know that he plans on cutting through the woods and avoid the roads (to hopefully avoid an encounters with goblin types...it would kind of suck if he got caught and you guys lost the map, huh?).

Party heads off to Sobanwych. Only a few hundred yards away from the Keep, Katerine notices something at the edge of the road. She and Kael stop (they were scouting ahead of the rest of the party) to examine it. Party is concerned that they might be in danger but Harvey says, "Kael's not running away so I don't think there is any danger." It turns out that Katerine has spotted a large (12-15 feet tall) humanoid effigy. After clearing away some of the vines and other growth on it, Katerine is able to identify it as a territorial marker for forest giants. An overgrown track behind the effigy leads off deeper into the forest.

Party continues on to Sobanwych and arrive with no further incident. There is no sign of anyone in the village and it does not appear to have been attacked or pillaged. Party sets up camp off in the woods and Kael scouts out the village. All of the buildings look to be closed up and there is no sign of any inhabitants until Kael hears the shutter on one building close slightly...it could have just been the wind but he investigates. There is no response when he knocks on the door so he manages to open a shuttered window. Inside are two elderly humans who tell him to go away. Kael tries to talk to them but the man insists that Kael go away as "they might be watching." Kael leaves and returns to the party's camp. Party settles down for the night.

Moonday (3): The whole party goes to Sobanwych and looks around. There is still no sign of any inhabitants. The largest building in town turns out to be a brewery. There is no sign of stables or horses anywhere. The village is really pretty small (smaller than Hilltop). Party starts a door to door search but then decides to go to the building in which Kael had seen the two. Kael tries to open the shutter like before but it doesn't work. Turns out the shutter has been tied closed with something. Kael is able to cut through it to get the shutter open. Old man tells the party to leave but gives up when it is clear that they won't leave. Party learns that most of the village has already fled and that it has been attacked by the manticores. The old man is told to get everyone that is left ready to evacuate to Twilight Falls. The party will escort whoever is left after they take care of something else first.

Party heads off for the Gorge Bridge. As they near the bridge, a distinct smell of smoke is detected. Turns out that that forest has been burned back from the bridge to a distance of about 60-70 feet on this side and even farther on the opposite side.

Kael scouts about under the effects of an Invisibility spell. Three of the bridge towers have hobgoblins with bows atop them. The fourth has a fairly small, greenish-black dragon atop it. A hellhound is lounging at each end of the bridge and there are a few tents next to the far side of the bridge.

Party establishes a plan to take out the hobgoblin guards on the near towers and distract the Hell Hound and makes their attack. Big battle starts. Dragon is doing a good amount of damage and takes a good amount of damage...especially from Medi's new Bastard Sword which is vibrating during the fight and the nasty critical hit she scored with it. At one point the dragon flies back to its tower and simply disappears. Kael actually gets into the thick of the fight so Harvey isn't too badly outnumbered while he fights the five hobgoblins on the bridge. Sequel scores, yet again, the killing blow against the dragon. After reappearing right near the party on the bridge and breathing a cone of acidic gas, it had flown 150+ feet into the air. Sequel struck it with Magic Missiles, dragon drops and crashes on top of one of the towers (the one Sequel was standing atop and he was narrowly missed by the falling body).

Medi starts to examine the bridge to determine what might be the best way to "disable" it. Kael runs over and searches the tents. Sequel starts checking out the dragon's body. Sequel finds a ring around one of the dragon's teeth, an amulet, and three pearls (which are embedded in its scales). Sequel also takes some blood and scales from the beast. Its head is also chopped off and taken by the party. Kael doesn't find much except a few humans staked to the ground in the large tent. They've been tortured but he doesn't check to see if any of them are alive but he does look for treasure. Kael also checks out the tower that the dragon had been atop. He finds three empty vials but nothing else. Medi finds a crack in the bridge at one end that looks to run a significant

distance across. Using the two Stone Shape scrolls, she expands the crack and this causes the entire arch of the bridge to collapse and fall into the gorge. All four towers still stand but there is no more bridge.

Party returns to Sobanwych and finds six individuals waiting for them. All six look to be 60+ years old. Half of them are unable to travel on their own. Only Andrin, the "leader" of the group, will be able to walk on his own and keep up. There are no horses or wagons in the village. Instead the party makes some litters and Harvey somehow summons up a big warhorse with a pure snow-white coat. Halcyon and Katerine take off for Jorr's at a quick pace to get the horses. The others get started a bit later. The plan is for Hal and Kat to meet them with horses somewhere along the road.

H & K encounter a road blockade a few miles outside of Sobanwych. A wooden palisade crosses the road. Two hobgoblins are spotted atop the walls of the palisade. H & K head back to warn the others.

After meeting up again and while they're discussing what to do, Lilanor screams and falls from Harvey's horse with a javelin sticking out of her shoulder/neck. Two dragon humanoid things attack the party from above. One is slain but one flies away. The one that was slain had the following items with it: a falchion (most likely masterwork), belt of human skin, a pouch containing 5 vials (all magical) and 5 tigereye turquoises. Lilanor's life is saved by healing from Medi and Harvey.

Party splits up to try and throw off anyone following/tracking them. Medi and Kael head off to set a false trail while Katerine tries to hide the trail of the others. By nightfall, the two groups have not met up again (Medi and Kael got lost).

Godsday (4): In the morning, Katerine spends a few hours searching for M & K but does not find them so that group continues on towards Twilight Falls. Medi and Kael travel on as well and eventually come across the backroad. Two groups are still separated by nightfall.

Waterday (5): Medi and Kael eventually make it to Jorr's. (after skirting the lake at his place...the boat was on the other side of the lake which indicated that Jorr must have at least made it this far). Fetch the horses and head back towards Sobanwych on the Forest Road. Two groups meet up and proceed more quickly towards Twilight Falls. Make it there a couple of hours after dark.

The "gray panthers" are taken to Brother Deryn and he gets them bedding and food. Medi tells Deryn what happened and that they destroyed the Gorge Bridge.

Halcyon and Harvey speak with Soranna. She sends for the mayor. The town council is gathered and all meet at the Old Bridge Inn. Participants include: the Mayor, Soranna, Kellin, Brother Deryn, Delora (a woman they had not yet met), Iormel (an older man they had not yet met), one guard, and the PCs. Party tells their story. Iormel is dismissive of it and even accuses Harvey of trying to scare them away so he could take over Twilight Falls (and that the Viscount is in on this plot as well). Iormel calls for Jarrett to come in and explains that he asked her to look into what was going on just like the Mayor asked Harvey to find out what he could. Jarrett hired someone "independent" to scout around and calls for her to come in. An attractive but travel-worn woman enters and Jarrett introduces her as Nedra, yes that Nedra (or so the party assumes...remember, no one ever actually saw Nedra).

After some, um, heated accusations about Nedra's past actions and character and denials from Iormel, Jarrett, and Nedra, Nedra tells her story. Claims that she's found evidence of a band of hobgoblins but no massive army...maybe a couple of hundred hobgoblins at most. Also claims that she has found someone who can prove that Harvey is spreading rumors about a massive army in order to scare the smaller towns and outlying areas into his and the Viscount's direct protection and thus rule. Nedra drags in a bound and hooded individual. Removes the hood and it is a badly beaten Rosey/Guildy. Nedra tells him to give his confession and he says that Lord Harvey told him to spread the rumors and that there actually is no such army. Medi senses (i.e., Detect Magic) that R/G is enchanted and points this out. Iormel denies it and continues on with his claim that this is all a plot to steal away Twilight Falls' independence. Outright violence is pretty close to breaking out. Soranna and Delora had positioned themselves to intervene (Soranna has already tried to calm Halcyon) and Brother Deryn proposes that everyone calm down and back off and that they reconvene in the morning. All, more or less, agree. Nedra is taken into Soranna's custody for her own "protection". Rosey/Guildy is taken to the Church by Brother Deryn. At some point during the heated discussion, Jarrett made her exit (no one saw her leave). Party stays at the Old Bridge Inn that night.

Earthday(6): In the morning, Kat & Sequel head over to check on Sertieren (folks were surprised that he wasn't present at the Council meeting but it had been explained that he wasn't on the Council). Sertieren is busy packing up to leave Twilight Falls. Sequel starts to help with the "packing" of Sertieren's library.

Hal and Harv head to the Tollhouse and briefly speak with Soranna before the Council is reconvened at the Inn.

Nedra is tied up when brought in. Deryn is not at the Inn when the meeting starts so Medi heads over to the Temple. The "gray panthers" are not around. She finds Brother Deryn in the back, cradling the body of one of the Acolytes. Deryn explains that both Acolytes had been killed a couple of hours earlier. He had been woken by a scream from one of the acolytes. He found one of the acolytes scorched and burned to death in the front and the other killed by a weapon. The "gray panthers" were already gone at that point. Deryn is obviously distraught and deeply affected by the death of the acolytes. Rosey/Guildy was fine and was hiding in Deryn's office. Deryn says he'll need about an hour before he can make it to the meeting.

Deryn brings Rosey/Guildy with him and he's no longer "enchanted". R/G says that even though Harvey is a pompous ass, Harvey did not ask them to spread rumors about an approaching army. Tells of what happened...he and Rosey/Guildy had overheard Harvey saying that they weren't cut out for guards...decided to leave and go back to being shepherds...felt they owed it to Halcyon/Harvey to tell them...headed for Twilight Falls and got ambushed and captured by some men...beaten and tortured by Jarrett and then she cast a spell on him so he had to say what she wanted.

Iormel continues in his protest and Medi determines that he is enchanted as well. Deryn's attempt to dispel the enchantment fails so Kat goes to get Sertieren and Sequel. Sequel is able to dispel the enchantment. Iormel remains difficult and crotchety but

seems a little confused about what all is going on. Soranna gets up in his face about his attitude and greed. He protests so she punches him.

Soranna and Delora leave stating that they need to get folks started with evacuating. The Mayor hurries out after them. Iormel demands that Nedra be untied and released. Halcyon tells him that Nedra will be going to Hilltop as their prisoner and tells him of what Nedra is charged.

Nedra is questioned. Medi casts a Zone of Truth spell. Nedra says she was not involved with killing Lord Ashby but did arrange for his kidnapping. Lareth was involved with Ashby's death. Nedra refuses to ask other questions unless Harvey gives his word that she will not be killed, just imprisoned. After first acting pompous (e.g., why should you trust my word now when you've been calling me a liar), Harvey decides he can't make such a guarantee. So Nedra clams up. Sertieren is asked to do the same thing that he did with the Hobgoblin "priest" previously. Sertieren prepares to cast some sort of enchantment on Nedra to get her to talk. Sertieren tells Harvey and Halcyon they need to leave Inn while he casts spell on Nedra (as Nedra doesn't trust them and they've more or less threatened her with imprisonment/execution already). This leaves Kael, Katerine, Medi, and Sequel along with Kellin and Sertieren in the Inn.

Sertieren casts some enchantment spell on Nedra, starts asking questions.

Learn the following from Nedra:

- After abducting Rosey & Guildy on the road from Hilltop, she met with Jarrett out in the woods and gave both of them to her; Nedra doesn't know where the other one is.
- Nedra knows that Lareth is dead and she wants to kill whoever killed Lareth b/c he was good to her (she said something about Lareth also demonstrating incredible tenderness). Doesn't really know about "E" or for whom Lareth was working, doesn't know about Fairinth. Nedra did do some favors for Lareth like kidnapping Lord Ashby...Lareth saw Ashby's abduction as a great opportunity but he didn't attempt to ransom him or use him for leverage. Lareth also didn't want anyone leaving town, so Nedra and her men abducted them—they kidnapped and (accidentally) killed the acolyte from Terjon's church. Nedra had nothing to do with the messenger that was killed in the stables. She did let Furn pass with no problems.
- Nedra knows that Lareth was working with drow and Davi and Gremio (all seemed to work for Lareth). However, Nedra had not really talked about business with Lareth beyond what she did for him (doesn't know anything about the items he seemed to be looking for at the moathouse but did know that he was planning on leaving soon). She and her men had taken the remaining things from Lareth's quarters and covered Lareth's body, tried to burn what was left. We showed her the plans and asked if she had seen them, she said no and that they must have been hidden really well and be really important b/c she found another hidden compartment with a pouch full of valuable gems but not the one with the plans.
- Nedra said she didn't know anything about the Inn burning down. Doesn't know who killed Burne and Ruffio, but said they deserved to be killed.
- Doesn't know for sure who killed Terjon, but says it's very possible Davi did it.
- Only saw the miller once, when he came to moat house to see Lareth. Doesn't know anything about his or his children's disappearance or might have taken them. Nedra does know about the place where the children had been found but said that she and her men avoided it...it is supposed to be haunted.
- Furn did some favors for Nedra, told her and her men when Lord Ashby was leaving Hilltop so they could kidnap them. Nedra did not kill Ashby but was glad he had been killed. He was a greedy, conniving merchant like all the others.
- Nedra doesn't know anything about Toruko, Ko, or Zert (the three "strangers" that had been staying at the Inn).
- Doesn't know anything about who might be holding Jaroo...seemed quite surprised that Jaroo might be held or in trouble as he could turn into a bird and just fly away. Nedra knew Jaroo and had no problems with him. She and her men would often see him traveling in the woods.
- Jarrett has been helping Nedra exact revenge against Iormel. When Nedra was a young girl (maybe 10 or 11), her parents owed Iormel a large debt that they could not pay off. Iormel suggested that he take Nedra as payment instead and they agreed. Iormel then turned Nedra over to another merchant, Keyne, to absolve Iormel of a debt to him. Keyne proceeded to rape and beat her repeatedly for the next four or five years. Keyne beat her quite severely and left her for dead in the woods after she had matured a little too much for his tastes but some bandits found her and nursed her back to health. Nedra has already killed Keyne but just killing him didn't give her the vengeful satisfaction she had hoped for. So with Iormel, she plans on gaining his trust and then betraying him at the best possible time such that he sees everything destroyed that he has worked for and built. (Nedra's experience with Keyne and Iormel explains why she seems to hate merchants so much and she even lumped Lord Ashby in the same group and said that he deserved to die. Also mentioned something about Ashby's business moves having monopolized much of the trade in and out of Verbobonc).
- Nedra said that Jarrett was helping her setup Iormel and had become something of a confidante. After Iormel is ruined and dead and Nedra has her vengeance, she just wants to settle down somewhere and live comfortably off of the gems she found at Lareth's. Nedra did say that Jarrett can cast spells and that she had done so on Iormel.
- Nedra doesn't know anything about who had killed the acolytes at Deryn's temple or who might have taken the "gray panthers."
- Nedra doesn't know anything about Ossic.
- When asked if she knew of anyone else at Hilltop that shouldn't be trusted, she said not to trust anyone.

After questioning, Sertieren tells Nedra they are going to take a walk and go see Soranna (Nedra is put in a cell).

Harvey and Medi go to Temple to see Brother Deryn, he is scrubbing bloodstains from the floor. Deryn plans to leave with the rest of the town.

Kael, Halcyon, and Sequel head to Jarrett's, Halcyon knocks on the store door and tries doorknob, it's locked and there's no answer. Kael was at back doors (2 warehouse doors, locked) which face the woods. Halcyon goes back to get Katerine at Old Bridge Inn, brings Katerine back to Jarrett's. Katerine checks for tracks behind the place near warehouse doors. Only tracks are wagon tracks that look a little old, ruts that go around to the road.

- Kael tries to pick the lock on warehouse doors and sets off a trap...a blast of fire strikes and damages him.
- Halcyon goes to three nearby houses, asks if anyone has seen Jarrett—no one has, they have been inside and packing to evacuate. Halcyon comes back to Jarrett's, tells Kael he can try to get in—he's not able to pick lock on door so he opens shutter on window and breaks window; climbs in and opens the door. Sequel and Kael go in and search. Halcyon stands watch near the front. It looks like Jarrett packed and left in a hurry. An empty wagon is found in the empty warehouse. Nothing "interesting" or out of the ordinary is found anywhere at Jarrett's.
- Harvey comes and suggests they take the wagon from warehouse area; Soranna comes by—says she is claiming what is left for the town and we load up the wagon. Soranna specifically takes any foodstuffs and equipment that can be used for travel, defense, or construction purposes.

Harvey and Medi looked for the dwarves—saw no sign of them and no ropes going down to the mine entrance in mountainside.

At some point, Iormel is seen being "lead" by guards to the Old Tollhouse. He's bound and the guards are not overly friendly or gentle with him.

Sequel helps Sertieren finish packing. Sertieren is leaving the vast majority of his library behind but assures Sequel that there is a good chance that his house will be overlooked. Sertieren casts a Stone Shape spell to cause all of his windows and doors to be covered by stone. He then places the chimera scales on his cottage, casts a spell that makes it appear to be just a plain old hill.

Travel across the river is quite slow (just one ferry) when the party is ready to leave town. However, Sertieren shows up and does a stone shape spell to create a stone bridge across the river. He destroys it after everyone from the town has crossed. There are no dwarves with us, just the people from the town. Nedra is tied up, in a wagon with Katerine and Sequel. Iormel is tied up in a barred cage in a one of the wagons. Older and slower individuals are in wagons with equipment while the younger and more able are walking.

Soranna plans on having Iormel taken to Verbobonc for punishment for what he had done to Nedra.

About an hour out of Twilight Falls, while traveling through the woods, Katerine feels someone watching her—she looks up into the trees, sees something large flying above the trees. She calls out to Harvey, Halcyon, and Soranna (about 20 feet in front of her at the head of the "caravan") that something is flying overhead. Just then, something drops straight down and lands about 30 or 35 feet in front of Harvey and demands in common, "Who are you and where are you going?" It's a man in green and brown leather armor under his cloak, holding a bow in one hand with no arrow nocked at his side, kneeling down on one knee after hitting the ground. His cloak's hood is up and his face is hidden. No one is sure who or what he is.

Harvey introduces himself and states that they are escorting refugees from Twilight Falls away from the hobgoblin horde. The man refuses to answer questions but continues to ask his own. Harvey basically tells him that they've seen lots of evidence of the hobgoblins but that the horde probably hasn't crossed the Gorge Bridge as it has been destroyed and that, although he personally did not destroy it, Harvey takes full responsibility for its destruction. Harvey also mentions Koth's map. When the fellow asks to see it, the party demands that he tell who he is first.

Lowering his hood, it is obvious that he is an elf. He introduces himself as Killiar of the Tor Fens and states his title. It is meaningless to everyone but Sequel. It translates as something like "Master Hunter" and that he is the equivalent of a minor noble. Sequel knows of the Wood Elves of the Tor Fens but no one else does and it is a bit of a surprise to the Verbobonc natives that a group of elves is living, unknown, within Verbobonc's borders...the Tor Fens are not too far north of Hilltop.

Harvey shows Killiar the map and Killiar proceeds to ask many questions. Harvey shares that Koth was a bugbear sorcerer that they've already killed (at the keep). Harvey also informs Killiar that they killed a dragon at the Gorge Bridge and perhaps it was Ozyrradion but the party (or at least Harvey) doesn't have answers for Killiar's other questions about the map and the names on it. Harvey also informs Killiar that they're concerned about the Temple of Elemental Evil and that it may be "active" again. Drow elves also seem to be involved. This appears to significantly worry Killiar and he asks many questions about the party's encounters with the Drow.

Killiar also asks if the party has seen any other signs of elves (other than Sequel and the Drow). Doesn't go into detail as to why he is asking. However, he does share some other information. He lets the party know that there is a great deal of smoke coming a few miles from the east (Soranna indicates that Delora and a couple of guards remained behind to set fire to the town...they saw no reason to leave anything behind for the Horde). He also informs the party that agents of the Horde have proceeded deeper into Verbobonc than the party may know...dragonlike creatures have been active in the Fens. The "Master Hunter" also gives Harvey a wooden ring, intricately carved with flowing designs, and tells him to show it to any elves he may encounter in the Fens and say "Avara" (which means "refusal" in elvish). Killiar then departs, stating that he has far to travel (goes straight up and the creatures flying above the forest all depart).

Delora and the missing guards catch up with the "caravan" and look covered in soot. Caravan stops for the night.

Freeday(7): A day of slow, though uneventful, travel.

Reaping, 591

Starday (1): Caravan continues plodding on.

Sunday (2): Caravan continues plodding on.

A wooden watchtower is seen ahead along the road. It is manned by some of Captain Yscan's men. They're glad to see Lord Hilltop has returned.

As the party passes the road that leads to the Moathouse, they can see that it has been widened considerably.

A wooden palisade and watchtowers have been erected around the Tower in Hilltop.

The party is met by Ossic as they approach.

Talk with Ossic for awhile and learn the following:

- Ossic's been back in Hilltop for about a week. Ossic returned with a dozen more men and three clerics of St. Cuthbert. He's been sent here to protect the citizens of Hilltop (those that remain). The Church of Mayaheine in Verbobonc (at the suggestion of the Viscount) gave Ossic these orders and the men-at-arms that he now commands.
- The Moathouse has been repaired. Yscan and most of his original men are now stationed there.
- Drow attacked the tower (before Ossic was back). Several guards were killed and some drow got away. It isn't clear why they attacked but it did seem that they were after something specific.
- On his trip back to Verbobonc, Ossic got delayed. He was ambushed by a dozen or so bandits but was able to escape before losing consciousness (with a bunch of arrows sticking in him...again). Some gnomes found him and took him into care. Once he regained consciousness and the strength to travel (okay, probably before he was really fit to travel), he continued on to Verbobonc. Within a couple of days of arriving, he got an audience with the Viscount. Based on Ossic's information, the Viscount's forces captured the doppelganger posing as Lord Ashby. During the questioning of the creature, the following was uncovered:
 - The doppelganger was named Haxydo and worked for a Drow priestess named Eclavdra of House Eilserv (though Haxydo also reported to Lareth). His initial mission was to misdirect and confuse anyone investigating the happenings in the area.
 - Haxydo had impersonated the miller as well as Jaroo while in Hilltop.
 - When Lord Ashby arrived in Hilltop, his mission changed. He was to return to Verbobonc as Lord Ashby and feed misinformation to the Viscount and wait for further orders.

Head out to the Moathouse to talk with Yscan. The Moathouse is looking great. All the damage has already been repaired and the inner structure cleaned out and made livable. Talking to Yscan, learn the following:

- When the drow attacked, they did so with stealth and assassinated a number of guards before discovered. Three drow were killed but others fled when met with force.
- Yscan has a prisoner—a man who was lurking around, observing everything. Ostler let Yscan know some info about Zert (like Harvey had rejected Zert's request to join as a guard). Zert's refused to answer any questions.
- The Viscount has not yet decided how to confront the approaching Horde. He is thinking of meeting it before it reaches Verbobonc. This Moathouse may serve either as an initial staging area or an opportunity to house troops that could be used in a flanking maneuver against the Horde.

When shown Koth's map, Yscan says that it should go to Verbobonc. He'll have a group of guards take it to Verbobonc in the morning.

Go see Ostler, who is stocking a lot of supplies that have arrived down in the caverns. He's happy to see Lord Harvey as the Lord has been gone for far too long. Harvey has Medi give Ostler the "extradimensional" bag with all the money in it.

Medi, Kael, Sequel, and Katerine go to the church to meet the new clerics. They meet Togan. He's a full cleric but says that Emian is their leader. The other cleric is named Oliax. If they can't be found at the church, they're most likely at the Moathouse. Medi asks about getting some Cure Wounds potions, Togan says that she'd need to take that up with Emian. Togan is quite friendly.

Sequel visits Sertieren and asks if Sertieren might be able to "scry" out Jaroo. Sertieren says it requires a special mirror but that he left it back at his home in Twilight Falls. If only Sequel had asked before they left, he might have been able to do it.

Harvey and Halcyon head back to the Tower (Harvey's going to setup "shop" there again). Iormel and Nedra have both been put in cells (separate). Iormel keeps complaining about how he's being treated. Harvey tells Nedra that she'll be executed in the morning. She asks what will happen to Iormel and Harvey says that it's not his decision as Iormel is Soranna's prisoner. Nedra breaks down and starts crying. Harvey and Halcyon leave with Hal telling Harv that Iormel should be executed too.

H & H go see Soranna. She's gotten everyone from Twilight Falls settled down and that they plan on continuing towards Verbobonc in the morning. They discuss Iormel's fate. Soranna plans on taking him to Verbobonc and turning him over to the authorities there. She is concerned that Iormel may have friends who will get him freed somehow. She offers to turn him over to Harvey but Harv seems hesitant about that. Soranna says she'll come get Iormel later.

Halcyon arranges for the party (sans Harvey) to stay at Stone's. Stone's family (as well as Ostler's and Mary) have all left for Verbobonc. Turns out that much of the residents of Hilltop have already left.

Medi meets Emian out at the Moathouse. Emian knows Medi's father. Emian will consult with Yscan to see how many of the Cure Wounds potions they can spare (i.e., give to Medi). Medi also asks if Emian is capable of "scrying." He is capable, but it would have to wait until the next evening.

Soranna comes to the Tower to fetch her prisoner. Harv & Hal accompany her to the cells. Soranna drags Iormel out of his cell and stops in front of Nedra's cell. She asks Nedra if there is anything she wants to say to Iormel. Nedra starts crying again, asking if Iormel is going to live. Soranna says no and runs him through with her sword (even giving it a little twist when she pulls it out). Nedra's tears turn to tears of happiness.

Party gathers for dinner at the Tower before heading to Stone's for the night. A guard comes in stating that there is a woman at the palisade who is asking to see the lord. A paranoid party gets ready for a fight (sheesh, throw in one doppelganger and...). It turns out that the woman is the bartender from the Riverman's Inn in Nulb. Her name is Lodriss. She's here seeking help from the lord because some of her friends have gone missing. She's brought in and given food and drink. She seems very nervous and hesitant but tells the following story.

Her friend, Tolic, and some of his men were meeting with some individuals. They were meeting in some, um, caves beneath the Inn that are used for, um, storing supplies. She doesn't know what happened but they never came back and she suddenly felt "off" or ill. She went to check on them but the tunnel had some new stone wall blocking it. Another entrance to the caves was in the marshes nearby but it had a similar wall blocking it. The individuals Tolic was meeting with were from the Temple of Elemental Evil but she doesn't know who they are or why they were meeting. This was two days ago. Something very wrong has happened. No one in Nulb will go near the Inn...anyone approaching it has the hair on the back of their neck stand up, feels nauseous, a little dizzy, gets a headache, and just feel wrong. A group of Orcs then showed up yesterday demanding to know where the "diamond" was. They said something about having tracked it down to here. She had no idea what they were talking about but Lodriss took them to the tunnel leading into the caves. The stone wall that had blocked the tunnel before was gone. The orcs went in and, after they rounded a bend in the tunnel, the wall came back together behind them. Lodriss is very, very concerned about Tolic and really needs the Lord to investigate.

Harvey asks why they should be concerned and rush off to deal with this. Lodriss asks to speak with Harvey alone. Everyone is hesitant about this but Harvey takes her upstairs and they speak for just a couple of minutes before coming back down. Harvey says that they need to go to Nulb in the morning but doesn't say why...except that it is very important...like Viscounty important.

Sequel and Katerine head off to the Moathouse so Sequel can make a rough copy of Koth's map before it is sent off to Verbobonc.

Medi goes to see Emian and ask if he can do the scrying tonight. Explains that they'll be heading to Nulb in the morning on a very important mission (according to Lord Harvey). Emian does the scrying (Medi stays to observe) but he is unable to scry out Jaroo...he is either magically hidden or dead.

Moonday (3): Before leaving for Nulb, Harvey and Halcyon go down to deal with Nedra. Nedra doesn't struggle or protest and kneels to be beheaded. As Harvey's sword comes down, she looks at him and says, "I'll be sure to say hello to your father."

Goodbyes are said to all the Twilight Falls folk. Medi tells Derney that she'll find out who killed the acolytes. He thanks her and hopes that she finds who killed his sons.

Party heads off to Nulb with Lodriss. They arrive without incident. As they approach the Inn, they start to get the "off" feeling that Lodriss had described...queasy, headaches, hair on end, slight dizziness. Sequel seems to be affected by it the most. There is definitely something wrong with the area.

Lodriss shows the party down to the Inn's cellar (with the "off" feeling getting stronger). A large keg turns out to be false and opens into a natural looking tunnel. When she opens the keg, a warm, moist breeze blows out. After a few feet of natural stone, the tunnel appears made of a strange, moist-looking, gray stone. It is warm and slightly squishy to the touch. The party proceeds on. Lodriss will wait outside for them and care for the horses. After rounding the first bend in the tunnel, the tunnel behind begins to close. Four flaps start to come together to block the exit (kind of like the egg-pod thing from Alien but closing instead of opening). The closing doesn't stop at the entrance though...the tunnel continues closing behind the party and they have to hustle down the tunnel to avoid being crushed. Harvey stumbles and falls into a larger cave, with the rest of the party right behind him, in which a number of individuals are standing. The one standing closest to the tunnel is the fellow that Halcyon had previously kneed in the groin. He says smiling, "It's nice to see you lords and ladies again," and holds his hand out to help Harvey up.

Turns out that this fellow is Tolic and he's got some of his pirates with him.

A group of orcs is farther back in the cave. Two of them, a female and an orc that stands rather straight and with much better looking equipment than the others, immediately start arguing about attacking the new arrivals.

Another group of humans stands off to the right side of the cave.

A half-orc and a human are off to one side on their own...the human is curled up while the half-orc stands in front in a protective manner.

Everyone stumbles out of the tunnel and it closes pretty much all the way to the cave.

The cave is lit by various "flameless" lanterns scattered about. Four different tunnels lead out of this cave but one has been barricaded with various stuff (barrels, furniture, crates).

One of the humans with the group to the right recognizes Harvey and Halcyon...turns out he is Macus, one of the merchants that works for House Ashby. While Halcyon converses (i.e., distracts) Macus, Harvey detects evil and collapses to the floor in pain. A little blood trickles from his nostrils.

Various conversations begin and the party learns the following (mostly from Tolic)...

- Macus has done considerable business with Tolic and his pirates in the past. Macus is part of the Ring of Iron, a group of merchants that work for Ashby who know no bounds in what they'll do in order to advance the power and wealth of Ashby. Macus has actually "hired" Tolic and his pirates to attack the ships of Ashby's competitors. Macus has also purchased items that he knows come from the Temple of Elemental Evil.
- Ironclaw, the half-orc with the human, stole a large diamond from the Fire Faction at the Temple of Elemental Evil. This diamond had been enshrined and was considered holy by a tribe of orcs (including the bunch here) that worked for the Fire Faction.
- Ironclaw worked for a mage named Nihad (who, in turn, served Fairinth at the Temple of Elemental Evil). Nihad brought the diamond here to sell it. Nihad, Ironclaw, and Ofec, Nihad's apprentice and the human with Ironclaw, had all come here after Tolic arranged for the diamond's sale.
- Squint, Tolic's "first mate" and someone connected with the Water Faction at the Temple of Elemental Evil, is the one who contacted Tolic about the diamond and Tolic then contacted Macus.
- Tolic has no connections or ties to the Temple (or so he claims). He does admit at some point that many of his men, Squint in particular, are allied or connected to the various factions at the Temple. He also admits that Squint is looking for a chance to kill Tolic and take his place. He keeps Squint close because sometimes it is better to keep your enemies closer than your friends...he's also trying to goad Squint into attacking him so he can kill him legitimately.
- Tolic and his pirates, Macus and his guards, and Nihad and his companions all met in these caves beneath the Riverman's. The sale was arranged...Macus was to pay 15,000 gp for it which was significantly less than its true market value. The exchange wouldn't actually happen at that point.
- Tolic was negotiating his cut for arranging the exchange between Macus and Nihad. As he and Macus were making these arrangements, Ofec stabbed Nihad in the back killing him and splashing his blood on the diamond that Nihad was still holding. A flash of light blinded all as soon as the blood touched the diamond and, when their vision cleared, the walls of caves had been replaced with the warm, moist, gray stone and the exits had been blocked.
- Maybe a day or so later, the orcs showed up. They're from the Temple and were tasked with recovering the diamond. Their leader, Vadgral, is the daughter of the tribe's chief.
- Turns out, according to Ironclaw, that he stole the diamond as revenge against this orc tribe. He's actually Vadgral's half-brother and was very poorly treated as a child by the orcs. He left the Temple for a time before returning and working as a bodyguard for Nihad and now Ofec.
- A fight started when the orcs showed up. Turns out that the dead started getting up and attacking the living. That brought an end to hostilities between the orcs and the others and the building of the barricade. The "undead" are trapped back there. They've been wailing and calling the names of the living and the like. They periodically attempt to break down the barrier.

Various other actions and conversations take place and include the following:

- Medi is approached by the female orc, Vadgral, who assumes that Medi is the leader of your group. She demands food. Medi offers her some but it has already rotted. All of the food that the party has is in the same state. Vadgral makes comments about eating Sequel if they are trapped much longer.
- Medi attempts to turn undead, as a show of her power, but is unable to contact Mayaheine in any manner. She is still able to cast spells (as is Sequel).
- Medi and Vadgral meet privately. Medi is attempting to learn more about the diamond. Vadgral spends much time talking about the diamond being holy and how Fire is strong...much stronger than Medi's god...and how Vadgral will find the diamond and return it. Vadgral doesn't believe that the diamond caused the current situation and doesn't say much worth knowing.
- Medi, somewhat to her surprise, ends up forming a blood alliance with Vadgral. Vadgral seems to interpret that this alliance involves Medi's followers as well. Vadgral refers to Medi as her blood sister but Medi doesn't get any additional information regarding the diamond that might be useful for the current situation. It is pretty clear that Vadgral doesn't know anything about the diamond except that it is holy to her tribe (its been in their temple for generations) and that it was stolen by someone (she doesn't even seem to know who stole it).
- One of Macus' guards, a woman named Lydia, becomes a near permanent attachment to Sequel's arm. She's scared and wants someone "strong" to help protect her and get her out of here. Who better than the "dragon-slayer"? Sequel seems to bask in her attentions... you go Sequel...
- Party wants to talk to Ofec, the simpering human in the corner, but Ironclaw simply says that Ofec doesn't wish to be disturbed. He refuses to allow anyone to approach Ofec as Ofec has hired him as Ofec's guard now that Nihad is dead.
- Squint also says that Macus is basically a pirate and can't be trusted.
- Sequel concludes that whatever going on is extra-planar related. Given the nature of what's going in, it is most likely related to one of the "nastier" planes. He can't really say which one it might be though.
- One of the pirates, who had been in one of the side caves, walks over to the barrier. He starts to dismantle it. Harvey and Vadgral kill him and Vadgral chops him up. She yells something about fresh meat but Nazzek (the male orc that seems to be challenging Vadgral for rulership of the orcs group) says no as there are worm-like things burrowing into the dead body.

The pirates who were in the side cave with him are questioned. Turns out he had fallen asleep, leaning against a wall. He then just got up and walked out. Everyone gets paranoid about worms coming out of the walls or floor.

- A fight breaks out between Vadgral and Nazzek. The other orcs take sides as well. Vadgral attacks Nazzek and its pretty obvious that Nazzek will be able to win. He's holding back, fighting defensively, and letting Vadgral exhaust herself. Vadgral yells for her blood sister to help. Medi, in the hopes of stopping the fight, casts Hold Person on Nazzek. It works but Vadgral continues to attack him. Medi tries to cast Hold Person on Vadgral but it doesn't work. Nazzek is killed as are all of the other orcs (the last one to stand, other than Vadgral, attacks Halcyon in its beserk rage). Vadgral is the only orc to survive. Vadgral cuts off the head of Nazzek before his body is "absorbed" into the floor...which is what happens to all of the orc bodies.
- Medi casts Detect Magic but can't really get a "bead" on anything specific. The walls and the entire cavern is magically but in a rather twisted and unnatural manner. When she tries to follow one thread of the magic, it seems to twist and turn in impossible ways that she simply can't follow. Sequel confirms that magic works differently on different planes of existence but what Medi describes is really weird.
- Ironclaw is offered four gems to turn over Ofec. Since Ofec hasn't actually paid him to protect him (Ofec promised to do so once everyone got out), Ironclaw turns Ofec over. Ofec stops being snivelling and claims that he has now absorbed the soul of Nihad and has all of his mentor's former powers. His snivelling is explained as his struggle to dominate Nihad's soul. He claims to have killed Nihad in order to take his place under Fairinth. Ofec doesn't answer anything about the diamond but claims that only he can get them out of this situation. Casts a spell on Halcyon, which weakens her, to prove his power and then goes into a trance to work on getting them out of this situation.
- Medi and Halcyon question Squint and a couple of the other pirates about the Temple and the diamond. Squint won't say anything even when Medi starts beating him. The other pirates had only been to the Temple once or twice. They saw a priest sacrifice some people by drowning them but didn't really know much of anything. Squint, they claimed, is pretty tight with the folks at the Temple. They only went because Squint promised them women if they went.
- Tolic ends up killing Squint and the other two pirates. He claimed that he really didn't have a choice since he didn't step in and stop the group from questioning and beating them. Although he doesn't seem remorseful, it doesn't seem like it was something he wanted to do but it had to be done.
- Ofec wakes from his trance (after about four hours), laughing hysterically. Says that everyone is going to die...that Vog Mor is going to devour all of them. Sequel recalls reading a book, a book he wasn't supposed to read, that mentioned a being called Vogomoth, the Eater of Worlds, who is from the Far Realm. The Far Realm is a plane that sits at the very edge of reality and nothing seems to work according to reality's rules on that plane. Ofec says something about Vog Mor and Vogomoth being the same being.
- Ofec is totally insane. Babbles on and on...yells at Halcyon...claims that Vog Mor will eat him too but not in the same way as Ofec is now special...he rips off his own ear and starts eating it...starts eating his own fingers...when Ironclaw is given permission by the party to end Ofec's situation and guts him, Ofec starts eating his own intestines...Ofec dies doing exactly that.
- Everyone starts searching the walls and floor for secret doors or some other exit. After a few hours of such searching, tentacles spring, writhing, out of the walls and where the barricade had been, the tunnel has completely closed. The wall explodes open where the tunnel had been and a load rumbling is heard as the floor shakes. Coming down the newly opened tunnel is...



A total of 15 undead things and, presumably, Vog Mor enter the main cavern and a rather long combat ensues. Some key elements of the combat include:

- The small tentacles coming from the wall attempt to grab and hold the “good guys”.
- Sequel casts a Web spell to try and hold Vog Mor and the undead from coming into the cavern. Vog Mor just eats the web.
- Vog Mor grabs a guard and swallows him. At least three other individuals, including one of his own undead minions, are eaten by Vog Mor during the battle.
- Tolic keeps taunting Vog Mor in an attempt to attract and keep its attention on him. Tolic looks to be fighting very defensively against Vog Mor in order to give others the openings to attack it.
- Vog Mor melts into the floor only to reappear elsewhere...does this a couple of times during the fight.
- The tentacles disappear back into the walls only to reappear from the floor and start entangling everyone (except Vog Mor and his undead).
- Macus' guards take a shot at Vog Mor but two of them end up hitting Harvey instead. Sequel is pretty sure that he heard Macus tell the guards to aim at Harvey.
- Vog Mor is eventually defeated and the killing blow is struck by, yes you guessed it, Sequel...a Scorching Ray. Vog Mor roars and the walls of the cave start splitting open spewing forth green ichor. The tentacles burst apart. Large chunks start falling from the ceiling. Vog Mor is splitting open as well and spewing a similar green ichor all about. The original entrance re-opens and the tunnel out can be seen again.

Everyone makes it out and up to the Inn's main room. Vadgral and Ironclaw were two of the first out and, when the party arrives, they've already left. Lodriss is nowhere to be found but the icky/sick feeling is gone.

Harvey prepares to head back down into the caves to look for the diamond. Macus offers to go with him and bring the guards but Harvey tells them to wait here (he isn't too happy about having been shot in the back by the guards but doesn't press the issue too much). Harvey and Medi spend about a half-an-hour searching the caves using Detect Magic and Detect Evil in an attempt to find the diamond. Kael and Halcyon assist in the search. The diamond is not found but Kael's shortsword, which he had dropped during the fight, is recovered.

Sequel, Lydia, and Tolic go outside the Inn. They go to the river to clean up and Tolic notices that his ship and the Inn are damaged...they look like they've been burned or melted to a small degree. They head off to find Lodriss and find out what happened.

Katerine takes up a post at the inn's door to keep an eye on Sequel and be nearby if Harvey et al need some help.

Lodriss is found at the other inn in Nulb. Tolic also notices a large body lying on the ground near the bridge which crosses the river. Turns out to be a giant owl as well as an elf...both are dead. The elf is dressed in a manner similar to Killiar. Both look to have been partly melted. Lodriss tells that she had gone to Tolic's ship to wait with his crew and a small dragon-like creature with a goblin atop it flew overhead and attacked. The goblin shot arrows while the dragon was breathing stuff on the ship and inn that caused the melting-like damage. The elf and owl engaged the dragon and goblin but were slain in the battle. Sequel tells Tolic and Lodriss about having met Killiar (though not by name). Sequel takes the wooden ring that the elf was wearing (okay, Tolic takes it but gives it up) and Tolic loots the body of the elf.

Godsday (4): Everyone congregates at the Riverman's main room again.

Tolic tells Macus and his men that they are no longer welcome at the Inn and must leave as they had tried to kill Lord Harvey. Macus denies it, saying that he told his men to make sure that they didn't hit Lord Harvey but he seems really nervous. Tolic is firm that Macus must leave but Macus says it is just so Tolic can go get the diamond for himself.

Lodriss confirms that she would like for Macus and his guards to leave the Inn. Macus says that Lodriss is not the owner...Skole is the owner but Lodriss says that she actually is the owner...Skole just seems to be the owner. Macus and his men leave and head towards the other Inn. Lodriss, after Tolic prompts the party to ask about it, says that everyone else can stay at the Inn free of charge. She also makes some food for everyone.

Sequel, eventually, gets the opportunity to pass on the information about the elf and owl outside. The elf's body is taken to the Inn's cellar and the owl's body is burned.

Party settles down for some sleep but takes shifts at watch. Harvey sleeps in the cellar while everyone else takes rooms upstairs (Sequel is sharing a room with his new girlfriend).

Harvey is attacked during the night by Vadgral. Kael was on watch at the time but had gone into the caves to search for the diamond instead. Vadgral says nothing to Harvey except, “Die human!”. Harvey defeats Vadgral by the time Kael makes it back to the cellar with a lantern.

Kael winds up on Harvey's “I'm really pissed at you” list (probably just behind Macus and his guards) for not staying on watch. Harvey calls for Medi for some healing. Everyone except Sequel comes down to see what is going on. Vadgral is searched and is found to have one of the stones from the Temple. Halcyon has that stone.

The rest of the evening passes uneventfully.

In the morning (late morning...say 10am), everyone has breakfast made by Lodriss. She's also busy packing up her valuables. She'll be leaving with Tolic and his men as it is simply too dangerous to stay with this approaching hobgoblin horde and the Temple of Elemental Evil getting more active. She plans on burning her Inn before leaving...no point in letting the scum in Nulb reap any benefits from her leaving it.

Lodriss leads the group to the blacksmith's (the building where the guy was soooo rude when the party first visited Nulb) to get the horses. Only Halcyon's warhorse remains. The blacksmith explains that Macus and his men came and took the other horses during the night. Apparently the blacksmith didn't see much reason to let anyone know that this had happened. Some equipment will have been lost with the stolen horses so some characters may need to "replenish" their supplies when they get back to Hilltop.

Harvey summons his celestial horse, Halcyon drapes the dead elf's body over her horse, and the party heads off towards Hilltop (around noonish).

About a half-an-hour outside of Nulb, Ironclaw steps out from some bushes and tosses Harvey a pouch saying that it belongs to Harvey. The pouch turns out to be a pouch of gold coins that Macus gave Ironclaw as a down payment for killing Harvey. Ironclaw figures that he owes Harvey (and the party) for getting him out of the caves and, besides, fifty gold really isn't enough to hire him to kill someone. Ironclaw informs Harvey that Macus "hired" Vadgral to kill Harvey as well (Macus said he would tell her who had the diamond if she killed Harvey). Ironclaw didn't believe that Macus actually knew where the diamond was and that his half-sister was an idiot.

Ironclaw, in exchange for the pouch of fifty gold, agreed to answer questions about the Temple. He hadn't been willing to say anything where others, who might return to the Temple, might hear but out here, he'd be willing to provide information. The party learns the following:

- A variety of factions reside in the upper Temple. Four factions (Air, Earth, Fire, and Water) are associated with some sort of religious stuff while the fifth is headed by a wizard (necromancer) named Fairinth. Each faction controls a different portion of the upper Temple. The Earth faction controls the lowest level. The Fire faction controls the ground level. The Water faction controls the second floor. The Air faction controls the third floor. Fairinth controls sections of each floor as well as both of the major towers and the overlook.
- Fairinth is a very powerful individual. Ironclaw has seen him suck the soul from two individuals. One of the individuals fits the description of Jaroo. Fairinth is always seen fully covered in clothing such that none of his skin or features can be seen. A rumor, most likely spread by Fairinth, is that he was cursed with boils and other such skin problems. Ironclaw does not believe this as Fairinth does not move like a man who is afflicted with such problems.
- Fairinth is served by a number of individuals.
- Smigmal Redhand is Fairinth's right hand "man", personal bodyguard, enforcer, and disciplinarian. She is a half-orc who is bloodthirsty, vicious, cruel, and very efficient at what she does. She plays a central role in keeping Fairinth's underlings in line.
- Feldrin and Brunk are the commander and lieutenant of a group of bandits that serves Fairinth and reside in the Temple's Overlook. These bandits are not a very unified bunch. In fact, Brunk greatly dislikes Feldrin and it appears that the bandits are splitting into factions. Ironclaw had been approached by Brunk and asked him to join with his side of the bandits.
- Fairinth is also served by some demon-like creature that always seems to be nearby.
- Until Nihad and Ofec's recent demise, they also served him. Nihad was a relatively powerful necromancer but not anywhere near Fairinth's ability.
- Fairinth has also been attempting to gather new allies as well. Some trolls are visiting and Fairinth is "courting" them for their support. A goblin, named Saarvith, recently arrived on a small dragon and met with Fairinth. Fairinth seemed pleased with the outcome of the meeting they had. The fact that Saarvith arrived at the Temple on his own means that he (or the dragon he rode) have a stone.
- The bandits that serve Fairinth are holding Tillahi, a Countess from Celene, and her men. They were captured in the nearby area by Fairinth and have been tortured and interrogated by Smigmal. The last that Ironclaw knew at least some of them were alive and being held in the Overlook.
- The Fire faction is led by someone named Alrem.
- The Water faction is led by Belsoring.
- The Earth faction is led by Hartsch.
- Air and Earth factions, particularly Air, seem to be on the decline. Ironclaw figures that the factions are making alliances in order to make a move against the other factions or, most likely, Fairinth.
- The flaming eye symbol is all over the Temple—it represents the Elder Elemental God that all of the factions worship.
- It is rumored that Drow have been spotted in the Temple but Ironclaw hasn't actually seen any of them.
- The lower levels of the Temple are a different story. Ironclaw doesn't really know anything about the lower Temple.
- The orcs, who serve as the "muscle" for the Fire faction will likely be concerned if Vadgral, Nazzek and the others do not return. Others will probably be sent after the diamond.
- Ironclaw was shown the "blueprints" of the Temple and he said that it looked similar but not really what he knows of the Temple. Additionally, the central keep of the upper Temple really doesn't look damaged at all and, to the best of Ironclaw's recollection, it never really has (meaning that the Temple would have been repaired within some ten years of being "sacked" following the Battle of Emridy Meadows).
- The Temple is located somewhere between Nulb and Hilltop.
- Ironclaw had a Temple "stone" and sold it to Katerine for 10 gold pieces.

- When asked if he wanted a message given to anyone at the Temple, Ironclaw asked that the orc chieftain be told that it was Ironclaw who still their diamond.

A little later on the trip back to Hilltop, Katerine is suddenly attacked by a large green dragon-man thing that springs from the river along the road, spits a gob of acid at her, and then jumps back into the river. A battle ensues with the dragon-man playing hit-and-run and the party trying to take whatever shots they can at it. It is defeated and Sequel takes credit for the kill (a few arrows and his Fireball all hit it right about the same time). The body is searched but it has nothing...not even any clothing.

Party arrives in Hilltop and the town looks pretty abandoned until the Tower. The party talks to Ossic for a bit. Harvey asks Ossic about Macus and lets him know that Macus attempted to have Harvey killed. Ossic will have a message delivered to Harold in Verbobonc informing him of Macus' treachery.

Ossic lets everyone know that more troops have arrived from Verbobonc. The plan is for Yscan and the troops to be hidden in the Moathouse caverns. Once the main Horde passes through, then these troops can be used for flanking maneuvers against the invaders.

Turvon, an older elven wizard, recently arrived and he'll be the one to hide the troops...using magic of course.

Although Medi and Halcyon don't personally know Turvon, they do know a little about him. He is a wizard who specializes in large scale battles and the like. There are rumors that Turvon and the Viscount have some sort of connection prior to Langard having become Viscount.

Medi and others head out to the Moathouse while Harvey and Halcyon compose the letter that Ossic will have sent to Harold. They met Turvon and speak with Emian about some healing potions as well as asking about fetching their remaining belongings from the Church.

Party shares with Yscan, Emian, Ossic et al that the Temple is very active and about Tillahi being held there.

Everyone ends up moving into the Moathouse (the Tower and Hilltop will soon be completely abandoned). After arriving, the party meets with Turvon and have a nice little chat. They learn the following:

- Turvon is from Ulek (not Celene) but came to Verbobonc to serve the Viscount.
- He had served with the forces of Ulek at the Battle of Emridy Meadows but did not ever actually enter the Temple.
- He knows that Tillahi is from a minor house in Celene but little more about her (Turvon does not seem to think much of Celene's choice to isolate itself and not assist her neighbors).

Harvey, in Turvon's presence, decides to open the box from the Keep. As soon as he does, a low whispering is heard by all but the words cannot be made out and both Harvey and Medi can feel the evil emanating from the box. Harvey sees a small garnet floating within the box before he closes it.

Turvon is asked if he could identify some items and agrees. He goes to fetch some stuff that he'll need.

While Turvon is gone Sequel tells everyone a little bit about his past/background. He tells everyone that his mentor in Celene was attacked and killed by some Drow. Before he was killed, his mentor magically transported Sequel to safety and gave him a small (fist-sized) chest. He told Sequel that he'd be able to open it when he was ready. He also told Sequel to stay away from Celene as the Drow must have had some "inside" help to get inside Celene like they had. Prior to his death, he also told Sequel that some materials had gone missing from the library...they were related to some "old" spells.

Turvon is shown the chest and tells Sequel that it is an elven "puzzle box". Sequel focuses his will on it and it opens. As soon as it opens, there is a similar result as when Harvey opened the box from the Keep. Inside is floating a small carnelian.

Turvon identifies your magical items that you ask him to look at. He tells you the following:

- Chain Shirt: +2 Armor Bonus, +2 DEX Bonus, Evasion vs. Dragon Breath. It is made of dragon scales and metal.
- Gauntlets: +2 STR bonus, +2 on Grapple checks vs. Dragons
- Sword: +1 Dragonbane Bastard Sword
- All three of the above also hinder the wearer's/bearer's ability to peacefully interact with dragons.
- He cannot determine anything knew about the Stick with a String or the sword that Halcyon has been using that Harvey now has.
- He cannot determine anything about Sequel's snake-headed rod but believes that it is The Puissant Rod. This rod is said to have been enchanted using the blood of a god's children. It is rumored to give a wizard additional prowess in battle but is said to carry a curse...those who wield it die in battle.
- The five potions are identified as: Cure Moderate Wounds (x2), Potion of Invisibility (x2), Oil of Magic Weapon.

Turvon, after being asked if he knew anything about the elves in the Fens, said that he didn't really know anything about them but knew of someone that might. He knows a wizard who lives at the edge of the Fens...a wizard by the name of Dutomos. Turvon is shown the "unknown journal" and seems genuinely saddened. He knew Dutomos as a wizard with a driving curiosity and had served in the forces that fought against the Temple. He had not seen Dutomos in five to ten years but had heard a couple of years ago that Dutomos had started researching things that he probably shouldn't be researching. Dutomos had a small tower where Twilight Creek (the small river that runs through Twilight Falls) meets the Tor Fens. The tower can only be entered from the top as it has no other doors or windows.

Harvey also shows Dutomos the Stone of Tears and decides to put it on. When he does, he hears a voice in his head (no one else hears it). Harvey has a short conversation with the voice. The voice says that it can make his desires come true, that it knows his desires, that it can be used for good or evil, that it can help him establish a kingdom devoted to Heironeous, that it can find out if

Harold was behind what Macus did, that it can tell him what he needs to know about the Temple, and even that it could find and talk to Harvey's father. Harvey attempts to remove the amulet but isn't able to do so at first. However, when Harvey tells the voice that he doesn't want to talk anymore, the voice asks if that's what he really wants and, when Harvey says it is, Harvey is able to take the amulet off. While talking to the voice, Harvey did not seem to notice Halcyon attempting to talk to him.

Everyone settles down for the night.

Waterday (5): In the morning, Halcyon and Medi meet with Turvon again and ask him to identify the items that had been forgotten the previous evening. These turn out to be: Amulet of Mighty Fists +1 and Ring of Protection +2. Also ask Turvon if he knew anyone that had actually entered the Temple of Elemental Evil. According to Turvon, it was mainly the Verbobonc forces which did this and the only person that he personally knows who did enter was Dutomos. He could send a message to Verbobonc looking for others and did note that those who had entered typically came out somewhat scarred by their experiences within.

Harvey spoke with Ostler and obtained some "spending" funds as well as some supplies. Also met with Turvon, Yscan, and Ossic to inform them of where the party would be going (i.e., Dutomos' Tower and the Fens). Turvon would like to hear what is found.

Medi speaks with Emian and obtains a couple of Cure Moderate Wounds potions (as well as much general, but helpful, advice).

Sequel and Medi speak with Lydia privately and under the influence of Medi's Zone of Truth spell. Lydia shares the following:

- She had only started working for Macus a couple of weeks prior. She had been in Caltaran prior to that.
- She had been married previously to someone named Baebrudh. Stated that she didn't like him much (he was a jackass) and that she had left.
- When asked if she was still working for Macus, Lydia said that she was not. She had quit.
- When asked if she harbored any ill-will towards anyone in the party, Lydia answered yes. Medi asked who and Lydia answered Katerine. Lydia said that she believed that Katerine was jealous of her and felt threatened by Katerine. Medi said Katerine had no romantic interests in Sequel and that if Lydia did anything to harm Katerine, Medi would make her "answer" for it.

Party heads off for D's Tower and the Fens by traveling to Nulb and then following along the edge of the Fens. The Fens are more marshy than swampy and abut right up to the edge of the forest. The Fens are comprised of areas of open, dark brown water broken by small hillocks and boggy ground. Reeds are the dominant form of vegetation and reach up to five feet tall. Some small trees and bushes grow on the various hillocks. Traveling is fairly slow through the woods. At dark, the party sets up camp.

Earthday (6): In the morning, the party pushes on and reaches what they believe to be Twilight Creek. There is no sign of a tower and so they turn to the north and follow Twilight Creek deeper into the Fens in search of the tower. Travel is very, very slow. As night falls, the party sets up camp on a small hillock near the deeper waters of Twilight Creek.

During the night (third watch), Kael hears a fairly large splash coming from Twilight Creek. Harvey and Katerine are woken but no sign of anything or any other sounds are seen or heard.

Freeday (7): In the morning, the party pushes on and reaches a larger river flowing through the Fens. This is believed to be Imredys Run. Still no sign of a tower (or elves). Party decides to head for drier ground and heads back for Nulb by following the Run. After reaching Nulb, they push on towards Twilight Creek again. Push on for a bit after dark and reach the Creek. Camp for the night.

Starday (8): During the last watch, as Harvey is preparing for the upcoming day, he spots something out of the corner of his eye...something (maybe about slightly larger than the size of a small watermelon) sinks into the water of the creek. A brief investigation turns up nothing other than normal animal tracks.

Party heads upriver along Twilight Creek (a southeasterly direction) for about a quarter to a half mile before seeing a small tower. The tower sits on a rocky outcropping in a wider area of the Creek (much like a lake). It is about 70' on each side and about 50' high. There are no windows or doors visible but a small structure is visible atop the tower. The tower looks to be one solid piece of stone...no seams, handholds or footholds...obviously constructed with the use of magic. It takes up pretty much the entire rocky island and is about 15' or so from the opposite bank.

Using ropes and grappling hook, the party eventually (without one serious fall and some other minor mishaps) makes it to the top. The small structure is the only apparent entrance to the tower. It has a set of double doors. Painted on the doors is a large golden circle (such that half is on each door) with a pair of snakes with intertwined bodies around the edge of the circle with their heads coming to rest just above the handles of the doors.

In one corner of the tower's roof, Katerine finds an Adamantine Dagger. Very similar to the dagger that Kael took from the drow elf killed in the moathouse.

Sequel knocks on the door and one of the painted snake heads animates and states that Dutomos is not currently home. Using a rope and grappling hook, the party (well, Kael and Medi) opens one of the doors. One of the snake heads animates again and says, "You'll be sorry."

Inside are stairs leading down, a couple of cloaks hanging on pegs in the wall, two pairs of boots, and an Everburning Torch which is set in a sconce on one wall. Taking the torch, Harvey, with Kael in the lead, head down the stairs.

At the foot of these stairs, a small landing leads into the tower. Painted on the floor in the hallway that leads into the tower are two birdlike creatures facing each other (Sequel lets everyone know that they are cockatrices and their touch turns flesh to stone) and everyone avoids stepping on the painting.

The first floor is largely empty except for a few crates and casks which are left alone. All is well-lit by a set of Everburning Torches. Medi takes one.

Party presses on down another set of stairs to the next level of the tower. The main open area on this floor is an obvious kitchen/dining area. Everything is very clean and there is nothing to indicate how long ago someone might have used this area. All is well-lit by a set of Everburning Torches. A few closed doors are in a hallway leading out of the kitchen area.

A bunch of time is spent looking for traps on various furniture in the kitchen area as well as the doors in the hallway. The first door (which has a key sitting in its lock) opens into a nicely furnished bedroom. A painting hanging above the bed is by the famous artist, Parvis, probably Verbobonc's most famous painter in the last 100 years or so. Everything in the room is clean, undisturbed, and empty (i.e., nothing on the desk, nothing in the wardrobe, etc.).

Harvey opens the next door and the room beyond is another bedroom. Harvey sees nothing moving in the room and so heads on...others, who bother to wait for the GM to actually describe what they see before asking if there is anything in the room that is moving so it can be attacked, see that there is a body lying in the bed and is an obviously dead elderly elf. The elf is still under the covers (as though he had been sleeping) and has had his throat slit. The elf has probably been dead for a couple of months. Looking around the room there are only a couple of other things of interest. The wardrobe has fine but not overly fancy clothing that would fit the dead elf. There is also a large, lifesize and very lifelike portrait of the elf on the wall opposite the bed. The portrait displays the elf in his middle age and his right hand is resting on a crystal ball. The eyes in the portrait seem to look right through you. It is also by Parvis, the famous Verbobonc painter, and is probably worth a considerable sum.

The third door leads into a room with heavy gray drapes that hang from ceiling to floor with slits every five feet or so that go from the floor to about five feet up. The drapes are about five feet from each other, forming a narrow corridor that goes about fifteen feet. At the end, opposite the door, is an open barrel. Kael touches the drapes—both are cold but one side is considerably colder than the other. Looking in the barrel, Kael sees a liquid that looks like a dark red wine. Both drapes detect as magical and Sequel can discern that they are some type of Transmutation power. Kael leaves concerned about what might happen but Harvey goes in and looks behind the drapes. It is basically a refrigerator on one side (with fruits and veggies that still look good) and a freezer (with most of a deer's body hanging from a ceiling hook) on the other. Harvey tastes the liquid in the barrel, tastes like a spicy red wine and is a very good quality.

Head down another set of stairs found beyond the hallway and find what looks like it was once a big library. The shelves that had been in here probably had held hundreds of books and the furniture and accoutrements that had been in here were probably of very fine quality. However, it looks like everything has been smashed to tiny little pieces...books have been ripped into tiny pieces, a large rug has been separated into individual threads, bookshelves and other furniture have been reduced to little more than wood chips. The debris is scattered all over the floor and, in some areas, gathered up into small piles.

From one of the small piles, a few members of the party see a grayish green creature, maybe four-feet tall, with arms that hang down to the floor, a big belly, little horns coming from the sides of its head, and glowing red eyes. It chuckles, says something unintelligible and another one of them appears. Three others spring up from different areas of debris in the room and combat ensues. The little creatures "fart" and cause noxious clouds to engulf the party which nauseates most of them. Party wins the combat and the creatures dissolve into puddles of goo when killed.

Two doors are also in this large room. Kael checks one and then opens it. It opens into a smaller room dominated by a "dais" with something about 4' tall and covered by black silk cloth atop it. Harvey doesn't detect any evil but Medi does detect magic from whatever is under the cloth. Sequel removes the cloth to reveal a wrought iron stand with a 1' diameter sphere, impossibly smooth-looking and infinitely dark to the eye, which reflects absolutely nothing...not even the light from the various Everburning Torches in the room. The sphere is magical and related to divination. There are also shelves against the walls to either side of the door with various bottles, jars, etc. that contain common spell components (i.e., none of them look to be worth more than a gold piece).

Other door leads to stairs going down. At the bottom is another door with a painting of the elf hanging upon it. There is writing on the painting. Kael, who went first, reads the writing which says "Beyond this door" and then it goes boom and injures Kael (i.e., Explosive Runes). The writing is gone after the boom. Kael starts to open the door and the painting's mouth animates and says, "I wouldn't do that if I were you, no one is allowed in without Dutomos."

Kael opens the door anyways and boom...Kael takes more damage but Medi heals him. Beyond the door is a small room with a pair of double doors. These doors have a painting similar to the double doors atop the tower (i.e., golden circle with intertwined snakes whose heads rest just above the door handles). Medi attempts to open the door (as Kael won't do it) and the two snakes lash out from the painting...one at Medi and one at Kael (who is still in the room). Kael dodges the attack but Medi does not and is struck by the snake. She's engulfed in some sort of amber glow and appears to be completely immobilized. That's where we ended and maybe that's why the Rogue opens the doors and the Cleric doesn't! If the Rogue is hurt or something happens to him, the Cleric can heal or possibly help out but if the Cleric opens the door and is hurt or something happens, the Rogue typically can't do anything to help. Hmm...same reason why the Rogue opens the doors and the Fighter doesn't. If the Rogue opens the door and something happens to him and there is a big, nasty monster on the other side, the Fighter has a better chance to beat the monster than the Rogue which would give the Cleric the chance to help the Rogue afterwards (instead of the big nasty getting a nice tasty meal). Gosh, maybe that's the same reason why the Rogue opens the doors and the Wizard doesn't, the Wizard has those spells that can help a lot with both the big, bad monster and deal with whatever magical effect that trap might have caused that the Rogue typically doesn't have. And then, of course, there is the whole thing with Rogues having superior Reflex saves and Evasion and all that good stuff that makes them so good at avoiding the effects of traps which other classes simply don't have. But don't

listen to me...in fact, maybe next time, it would be a good idea to make sure that Medi **AND** Sequel open the doors instead of Kael so that all of your magical help gets “paralyzed” and no one can do anything about it! Yeah, that’s the ticket...

After pulling Medi away from the door and to the relative safety of being “propped up against a wall”, Sequel is not successful at dispelling the magic which has paralyzed Medi. Kael searches the door for traps again but doesn’t find any so he hooks his grappling hook around one of the door handles and, from the relative safety of the stairwell, everyone pulls on the rope to try and open the door. The attempt fails but the snakes don’t strike out at anyone. The leverage and angle is poor for opening the door. So, Kael goes into the room and pulls on the rope. The door doesn’t open but the snakes do strike out at Kael. One hits and Kael joins Medi in the joys of the paralysis of the amber glow.

Party proceeds to search the rest of the tower in the hopes of finding something to help. Nothing is really found except for the following (which really don’t seem to be of much help for the current situation): a bunch of dried foodstuffs (e.g., 50 lb bag of rice), three casks of a spicy red wine, and two smaller casks of Swandale Brandy (a cherry brandy made by gnomes in a community in Verbobonc).

Make one more attempt at pulling on the rope to open the door from the stairwell...still doesn’t open.

Party decides to head back to Hilltop to see if Emian or Turvon could offer some assistance with the amber duo. The horses are all missing. Katerine sees some three-toed, webbed, humanoidish tracks that come from Twilight Creek and go to where the horses had been tethered. It looks like the horses tried to flee as there are tracks leading deeper into the woods. The humanoid tracks also lead deeper into the woods. About fifty feet or so into the woods, the horses are found. Gryffindor, Halcyon’s warhorse, has blood covering his hooves and legs and there is a body lying on the ground nearby. It is a lizardman and is dead. It is pretty clear that Gryffindor killed it and was protecting the horses. Gryff has some scratches but no significant injuries. Nothing appears to be missing from the horses.

Head on for a bit before stopping for the night.

Sunday (9): In the morning, Sequel attempts another Dispel Magic on Medi. This time it works. The amber glow dissipates and Medi can move again. She remembers nothing after being struck by the snake (good thing since Harvey kept putting her in less than flattering poses). Medi attempts to dispel the glow around Kael but it is unsuccessful.

Party decides to go back to the Tower and recover a number of items that had been left behind (e.g., the crystal ball thing). A few go in the tower while the rest wait outside. Sequel grabs the crystal ball and replenishes some of his arcane supplies from the shelves in that room. Medi grabs some of the fruit and veggies from the “fridge” room.

Party decides to head for the Fens instead of Hilltop at this point. Cross to the other side of Twilight Creek and find a small trail (footpath) that runs along the outskirts of the Fens (along the eastern side). After following the trail for about half-a-day, the party strikes off into the Fens. Travel is very slow. Near dark, camp is setup on a relatively dry knoll.

Moonday (10): In the morning, the party wakes to find that Lydia is gone. Gone with her is Sequel’s pack containing the crystal ball thingee as well as the majority of Sequel’s belongings (including both spellbooks). Katerine lets everyone know that Lydia left during the night to go get help...it’s no big deal...if everyone just waits here, Lydia will be back soon with help. A quick Detect Magic shows that Katerine is under some enchantment and Sequel dispels it. Katerine points out the direction that Lydia left...the same way the party had come from.

Party heads back the way they came and, when they get to dry land, Katerine spots some strange markings on the ground but no “normal” tracks. The markings are a series of a dozen holes, about the size of spear shaft, that run in two sets of fairly parallel lines. The holes only go for a short distance before ending.

With no real hint as to where Lydia might have gone, the party decides that the Tower is the most likely place. So they press on with all due haste towards the Tower along the footpath. After running into a series of large webs that completely block the path and slow the party down, they eventually reach Twilight Creek and the Tower.

Medi, Harvey, Halcyon, and Sequel all climb to the top of the Tower (though not without incident...as Medi attempts to climb the first time, the knot in the rope unravels and she splashes into the creek). Katerine remains with the horses and Kael’s glowing, yet unmoving, body. The entry doors are closed (the party had left them open) and Harvey opens them (with the snakes giving the same warning about going in as before). Just inside, Sequel’s spellbook is sitting on the floor with a note atop it. The note reads, “Sorry Shnookems, here’s your spellbook. I suggest you take it and leave. –L”

The warning or threat is ignored and the party heads into the Tower. Nothing looks any different than when the party left. They make it down to the destroyed library. Halcyon and Sequel hear footsteps going down the stairs to the lowest level. They head down the stairs and see that the door with the elf’s portrait on it is closed (again, the party had left it open). Halcyon opens it and it gives the same message as before. The room beyond looks the same as before and the double doors inside are still closed. There is no one inside. Sequel begins to search for secret doors (he doesn’t find any before interrupted by other events).

Harvey heads back up to the ruined library to look around. He is attacked by a relatively large spider-like creature that dropped down from the ceiling. The creature shoots webs into the stairwell. Combat ensues. Medi and the others come rushing up the stairs to find them blocked by webs. Medi hacks her way through. By the time they get through, Harvey and the spider-thing have ended up in the “crystal ball” room. As the trio enters the room, Harvey falls to the floor in gales of uncontrollable laughter. The spider-icky is up on the ceiling near a corner of the room. Combat continues until Sequel casts a Scorching Ray at the thing. As it falls, dying, it screams out, “Shnookems...NOOOOOOO!” Needless to say, that kind of causes the party to pause for a moment and consider the implications...was this the true form of Lydia and Sequel has been sleeping with it...yuck!

Here is a picture of the spider-creepy...



Sequel's and Lydia's packs are found in the room (up on the top of one of the shelves). Everything is still in Sequel's (except his spellbook which was already recovered). Lydia's pack contains some rations, a handful of gold coins (16 total), and two potions.

After checking in with Katerine, the four head back down to the snake doors. Try to open it with the grappling hook by pulling from the stairwell again. Again, it fails. Go up and get a wardrobe to use as a fulcrum to give better leverage on opening the door but it still fails. So Harvey takes up Medi's heavy mace and starts smashing at the hinges of the door. After some heavy smashing, both hinges are broken and the door falls into the room beyond. Harvey takes a step into the room...avoiding the fallen door...and both snakes strike out at him. His turn to join the Amber Alliance. Halcyon steps up to pull Harvey back and spots a small imp-like creature chewing on Harvey's neck. It sees Halcyon, hisses, flies back a couple of feet and vanishes. Halcyon pulls Harvey back.

Sequel looks into the room. In the far left corner, a large circle has been inscribed in the floor. It is clearly some sort of summoning circle. A large bookstand sits near the circle and atop it sits a very large book that is open. The right side of the room is dominated by a large table. Atop it are at least two mutilated bodies. They are split open from groin to throat and look to be lizardmen. A book, smaller than the other book, sits on the table between the two bodies. The near corners of the room cannot be seen without actually poking a head into the room.

A Celestial Owl is summoned (did Sequel or Medi do this) into the room and flies around a bit. It flies out of the room and into the area where the party is standing. It then flies back into the room. The snakes do not attack the owl when it passes through the doorway coming out or going in.

Sequel takes a moment to examine the potions found on the Lydia spider beastie and determines that one is a Potion of Cure Light Wounds but is unable to determine what the other one is.

As Sequel is examining the potions, Medi notices that the pages of the large book in the room are being turned but cannot see anyone that is turning them. Halcyon then sees pages being ripped out of the book and disappearing into thin air. Sequel first shoots an arrow into the room (just hits the wall) and then casts Web into the room. It covers the book & about ¼ of the room.

Halcyon brings down Dutomos' body to see if the wards will recognize him but it is pretty clear that they do not. The rugs from the bedrooms above are then dragged down and laid over the downed door and the wardrobe is placed in front of the standing door (to cover the snake's head). After Sequel's Web spell expires, he casts Dispel Magic on the door and Halcyon steps into the room. No snakes attack her.

The pages in the book start turning again and a few more pages are ripped out and disappear. Halcyon goes over and takes a closer look at the book. The cover is stone, the pages are parchment, it is between 300 and 400 pages long, and the writing is completely unfamiliar to Halcyon. She notices a desk in a corner of the room and goes over to examine it. The desk has several pieces of parchment atop it which look to have been partially burned. The writing on the them is in Common and the scribbles within these pages is cramped, erratic, and fades in and out of writing that is comprehensible. The first line she sees reads something like, "When the sea of toes is at rest, parrots will burrow from the sand and sing notes of fire to a chorus of moss."

Sequel enters the room (still no snakes) and goes over to the big book. He tries to close it and the little impish creature appears and bites his hand and then disappears again. Sequel starts talking and asking it questions but it says Sequel has to pay him for answers. It tells Sequel that he can ask a question and make an offer of payment and it will determine if the payment is sufficient. It hints that it knows many things and can even go to Hell to learn more answers if paid the appropriate sum. It says that it knows how to unfreeze Sequel's friend—it's just two little words. Negotiations ensue as to an appropriate payment. The demon thing smells Sequel and notes that there is something very enticing about Sequel but he just can't put his finger on what it is. If Sequel would give it whatever makes Sequel smell so sweet, he would answer many questions. Party believes that it may be Lydia's scent

that the demonling smells and so her spider body is brought down but the demonling turns his nose up at it. The demonling emphasizes that if blood is to be offered it must be fresh, living blood. States that he'll take either two pints of Sequel's blood or a pint each from Harvey and Medi in exchange for the two words.

Sequel leaves room to discuss what to do with Medi. While he's gone, Halcyon goes over to desk, looks at parchment some more—it's all nonsense. She goes over to shelves—looks like spell components in jars, but Halcyon does not recognize them. She walks over to table and looks at the lizard men bodies. One of the bodies has had its arms removed and has no inner organs. There is no sign of where these things might have gone. The other body has been split open as well but its inner organs look to still be intact. The demonling comments on her nosiness, Halcyon said she was making sure he drank all of their blood. The demon gestures towards one of them and tells Halcyon that if she takes a closer look, she'll see something really interesting. Halcyon looks more closely at the more intact body and its intestines leap out and wrap themselves around her neck. Halcyon attacks the intestines, Medi attacks them as well and, after Halcyon takes some damage, Medi helps free her from them.

Sequel comes in and casts a fiery spell at the bodies. He succeeds in lighting the book that lay between the two bodies on fire. He puts it out quickly but a little damage was done to it. He also proceeds to threaten the demonling...who disappears stating that he'll just go nibble on Harvey a little more. Halcyon checks but it doesn't look like it is following up on its threat.

At some point while all of this is going on inside the Tower, outside the Tower, Katerine notices that the woods have grown very, very quiet. All the normal wildlife sounds have ceased and the horses look to be a bit nervous.

Sequel restarts negotiations with the demonling and offers a pint of his blood in exchange for the two words. The demonling quickly agrees to the deal and demands his payment before giving the words. Sequel gets a little hesitant about the deal and looks as though he may back out of it. The demonling tells Sequel that there will be some very grave consequences if Sequel reneges on the deal and it won't be the demonling dishing out these consequences. Sequel finally holds out his wrist and the demon bites and drinks deeply of Sequel's tasty blood. It then says that the words are "marjoram squash." Medi says the words over Harvey and he is revived. Halcyon runs up to the Tower's exit and crosses the river to say the words over Kael...he too is revived.

Katerine tells Halcyon that a little while ago everything got really quiet in the woods, the horses have been getting nervous. Halcyon tells Katerine about what happened in the tower. We hear an unnatural-sounding howl coming from south, a couple minutes later a second howl is heard and it sounds much closer.

- Katerine gets up in a tree with her stick with a string ready.
- Kael tries to keep the horses together and has his shortbow out.
- Halcyon gets on Gryffindor and has her sword out.

Back inside the Tower, the demonling attempts to negotiate with Sequel for additional services with, of course, additional payments. Harvey overhears this and learns of Sequel's prior dealings with the demonling and leaves muttering about how he cannot abide such evil actions. Harvey heads up towards the Tower exit.

Sequel ends his negotiations with the demonling and it tells Sequel to get out of its lab. Sequel and Medi gather up the papers and books and then head up for the exit as well.

Back outside, the trio is facing south and awaiting the arrival of whatever thing that howled. From the north, a large wolf-like creature leaps into the middle of the horses. The horses bolt (Kael let go right away). Another one comes from the direction we heard the howling. We fight them, but they blink in and out making it difficult to strike them. The wolf-like things run off after a few rounds of combat and taking some damage.

Katerine and Halcyon head out after horse tracks to find the horses. The horses look to have bolted off in a number of different directions.

After they've left and Kael is left on his own, Harvey comes across from the Tower. As Kael is telling Harvey what happened, one of the green dragon-like humanoids comes from out of the river and attacks. Medi and Sequel reach the top of the Tower at about this point.

Katerine and Halcyon make it about 200 to 300 yards when one of the wolf-like creatures attacks. It "charms" Halcyon but she doesn't understand what it says to her...language sounds vaguely goblinish. After Katerine and it exchange blows, the wolf-thing goes "blip" and is gone.

Meanwhile, the battle between Harvey, Kael, and the dragonman thingee is not going well. Harvey is dropped by its attacks and Kael flees deeper into the woods. The monster gives chase. Medi and Sequel climb down and cross the river. Kael has circled around (using a Potion of Invisibility) and brings the monster back towards Medi and Sequel. Medi and Sequel dispatch the beast. Medi checks on Harvey and finds that he is beyond her powers to revive..."he's dead, Jim."

As the trio ponder the death of their fearless leader and await the return of his sister and Katerine, two other dragon humanoid things attack. These have blackish colored scales and are armed with large falchions. Halcyon and Katerine arrive just as the fight begins. During the fight, Sequel resists a spell...neither of the dragonmen appear to have cast a spell so someone (or something) else made the attempt. The dragonmen are killed and no other opponents are apparent.

Halcyon takes Harvey's death in stride...obviously, there is no time to mourn him now. Medi casts *Gentle Repose* on Harvey and his body is loaded onto Gryff's back. The horses that fled are tracked down...three are found dead. Medi's horse is one of the dead ones and her pack is missing the potions and gold that had been in it. Tracks that switch from wolf-like to humanoid are seen around Medi's horse as well as the other dead horses. The dead elf is found on one of the horses that is still okay.

Party spends the night atop the tower...seems the safest place and lets them keep an eye on the horses.

Night passes uneventfully.

Godsday (11): Sequel, after prepping his spells for the day, looks over the books and papers from the Tower's lab. The large book found on the pedestal by the summoning circle contains a lot of Necromancy spells (to date, Sequel knows that it contains all zero-, first-, second-, and third-level Necromancy spells along with some specific higher level spells...however, he's not even looked

through half of the book). The book, found on the shelf with various jars and other containers, looks to be someone's journal—probably not Dutomos'—and talks about living in a desert, going crazy, and blaming the gods for the writer's descent into madness. It would require a close reading to determine if there is anything of value in it. The book that was on the table between the two bodies looks to be about aberrations and possibly contain some ritual...again, a closer read will be required. The loose parchments which look to be largely incomprehensible do contain some information about the Temple of Elemental Evil and it looks as though Dutomos has written some notes on the parchments. Again, you guessed it, a closer read will be required to glean the important information.

The party leaves the Tower and heads north on the footpath along the Fens and then turn west to travel through the Fens. After traveling a ways, they see an area of open water with hillocks on either side. On one hillock, there is a large eagle body halfway in the water and halfway on the land. There are bubbles in the water about 10 feet away from it. Katerine leads us up onto the hillock; While Medi and Sequel are still in the water with a horse, one of the green dragon-like things pops out of the water and comes after them. Medi is hit and loses consciousness, one of the horses goes down too. Halcyon goes in to get Medi and brings her to shore. Kael comes into water and gets the dead elf's body and brings him to shore. We all go up to the top of hill and bring the two horses. Medi remains unconscious as the party has no other potions of healing.

The green dragon-like thing (Harrowblade, as the elves call them) springs out of the water onto the hill. Katerine shoots and hits it and kills it; its body falls into the water. Party pulls the eagle's body up onto the hill, it has a saddle/seat on its back. Katerine checks around for a body, sees an elf foot (looks like it has been bitten off) on the edge of the shore but doesn't find anything else. The eagle has a jade ring around one leg.

Suddenly, a shout of "Murderers!" is heard from above and four elves, flying on eagles, are diving straight for the party. Halcyon holds up her hand with the wooden ring on it (the one given to Harvey by Killiar and which Halcyon took after Harvey's death) and yells "avara." One of the eagles lands, a female elf (dressed like Killiar was) gets off the eagle, asks who we are and what we're doing with her brother. Halcyon asks everyone to drop their weapons, walks toward elf with her hands up, introduces herself, says that they found this elf in Nulb, where he and his owl had been killed. She looks at the elf and says it's not her brother. She goes over to the eagle and looks at its leg, Sequel comes over to her and hands her the jade ring that had been around the eagle's leg. She asks if we had seen an elf, we said we had walked around and looked but had not found a whole body and point to the foot on the shore. She cuts open the Harrowblade, cries when she sees elf parts inside it. She reaches in and pulls something out, then mounts her eagle and leaves.

The other eagles with elves still circle around. One male elf lands and gets off the elf. Talks to the party and asks if they would go with him to meet with their speaker. Party agrees...he asks for them to wait until he returns. The elves fly off and return a shot time later with enough giant eagles to take the whole party. The horses are setup at the top of the hillock with feed and everyone heads off.

The elves lead the party to a larger landmass in the Fens covered with large trees. The trees have elvish buildings built in and amongst them. The elves take the party to one of the buildings. Inside is a very elderly female elf as well as the younger elf that the party had previously encountered. The elder elf is Sellyria, the speaker of the Tiri Tor. During the discussion, the party shares much of what they've experienced with the Horde, in the Fens, the meeting with Killiar, the knowledge about Tillahi being captured by Fairinth at the Temple, the apparent "rise" of the Temple again. Sellyria regrets that she and her people have little to offer. They have to devote their limited resources to their own protection as the lizard-folk of the Fens have been stirred up by something. That something has taken up residence in some ruins (once a place of learning...now just ruins) in the Fens and new evil, the harrowblades (the name she gives the green dragonman thingee) started showing up around the same time. A small (about the size of their eagles) dragon that is blackish in color resides in the ruins along with others. The party maps out the connection between the dragon, its goblin rider and the Horde. Tellara, the younger elf who is the tribe's "High Singer", wants to go after the Horde and it is connected with her brother's death. She stomps out in anger when Sellyria says there is little the tribe can do. Sellyria does "hint" that if the evil in the ruins was dealt with, then perhaps her people could be freed up to offer other aid. As it is, she offers the hospitality of their settlement, heals Medi, and offers to trade with the party. She also offers to have them transported anywhere they wish in the Fens. Sellyria will see to Harvey's body as well.

The party is shown some quarters where they can spend the evening. The funeral ceremonies for the dead elves is held...the singing can be heard by all. The party settles down for the evening...Sequel spends a little more time perusing the books and papers found at the Tower.

In the middle of the night, Sequel is woken by a load banging on his door. It is Trellara; they chat for a bit. She wants to know where the party is planning on going from here and if they are going to fight the Horde. Sequel says that they'll probably fight it and probably go to Hilltop. Trellara says that she'll see them in Hilltop and leaves. Sequel wakes Halcyon and tells her about the visit from Trellara. Halcyon tries to find Trellara but is not able to after an hour of looking around.

Waterday (12): In the morning, as individuals leave their rooms, they are greeted by Veslo (he's the elf that took the party from the hillock to Sellyria's) and he leads them to a dining area for breakfast. Sequel is still resting. Veslo is questioned about the ruins but he only says that the Tiri Tor do not go there out of respect for what happened there and says that the ruin's past probably has nothing to do with what is going on now.

Once Sequel is ready, the party visits with Sellyria again. Halcyon asks her about the ruins but Sellyria is firm that there is nothing at the ruins that would be of interest or could be used by those who are currently inhabiting the ruins.

Sellyria tells the party that she has something important to discuss. During the night, she was visited by a celestial creature, an angel, who told her that Harvey had died before his time, that there are great things he is still to do, that may be unrelated to what is currently going on. The angel asked Sellyria to reincarnate Harvey—Sellyria doesn't usually do this, but she did. She says Harvey is still the same person inside but is very different bodily than he had been, will have to get used to what he is now. Says that

Heironeous probably had Harvey reincarnated as he is for a particular reason. Sellyria goes to Harvey and he agrees to see the others. Veslo brings Harvey to us—he is now a bugbear, we talk to him. He is feeling sorry for himself and is self-conscious about his new form, wonders why Heironeous did this to him.

After learning that Sequel had been involved with a spider-beastie, Sellyria asks if it was a drow. Party explains that she appeared to be a woman and did not resemble drow. After a more detailed description of Lydia's spider form, Sellyria says it was an aranea...a shape-shifting spider beastie thing and thoroughly evil.

Trellara has left the encampment...Sellyria makes some comment about her being an impetuous youth but does not seem overly concerned about Trellara's safety.

Veslo, Harvey, Medi, and Halcyon go off to training grounds for Harvey to practice sparring with Veslo; running and jumping. Physical activity for Harvey to get used to his new form.

Katerine replenishes her arrows and gets some for Halcyon. She spends most of the day visiting the giant eagles and talking to the elf tending the eagles. Katerine gets a ride on one of the eagles.

Kael goes to check out the large, old crocodile. He naps most of the day just out of reach of the giant croc. Oh, that was all after he complained about breakfast not having any sausages (although everyone else found it to be very satisfying). Veslo lets Kael know that if he requires anything, he need just ask.

Sequel reads the loose pages from Dutomos' desk at the tower. It appears that most of them are written by Ozyciel but there are notes written in a different hand, presumably by Dutomos. They discuss the Temple, the existence of a god called the Great One. Says Temple was built by Tsugtmoy and luz, but that IT (the Great One) is the many who motivated them to build the Temple. [See handout] Sequel is stunned by what he reads.

Party and Veslo chat about the area around the ruins. Veslo describes the area there. There are a number of huts on either side of a lake with lizard-men in them. There are a number of ruins in the lake but only a few are intact and above the water. Of particular interest are two in the middle of the lake—one has two stories above the water and the other has one story above the water.

Earthday (13): In the morning, after a breakfast that includes sausages, Veslo and some other elves take the party to scout the ruins. Most of the party stops before reaching the ruins but Veslo, Sequel, and Katerine (who is riding a giant eagle on her own) push on closer. As they draw closer, Sequel casts Invisibility and Fly on himself and flies over the ruins (he has to cast the spells a number of times as the duration is too short for the time he spends scouting). He learns the following:

- One building in the center of the lake is largely intact but is missing its roof. It is two stories and there are maybe four large humanoids on top of building, sitting and leaning against the walls and not being overly alert. Lots of rubble scattered about and one area has a rather large hole in the floor. Stairways leading down are also visible. A wooden walkway has been built near the level of the lake and surrounds this building and leads to a nearby building as well.
- The nearby building is one-story and is missing most of its roof. The wooden walkway extends into the building but it otherwise looks to be filled with water. A dragon-like thing is seen to dive into the water from walkway and swim towards the other end of the building before going deeper into the water. The other end of the building has numerous egg-like things sticking up out of the water.
- The shore of the lake has a number (about ten total on one side) of huts scattered about but no sign of any activity. Some reed rafts are also visible on the lakeshore near the huts.

Sequel returns to Veslo and Katerine and they all head back to where the rest of the party/elves are waiting. In discussing options for getting to the buildings in the middle of the lake, Veslo indicates that they may be able to fly over and lightly drop the party down to the buildings. To do so, he'll need to go back to the elves' place to prepare and that would also allow Sequel to rest and recover from all of his spellcasting.

All head back to the elves'. During the rest of the day, Halcyon has Veslo train her on his agility based fighting style. Sequel tries to read the book about Aberrations but isn't able to really focus on it (his mind is too excited about scouting and the next day's adventuring).

Harvey summons his celestial horse. Cupcake appears in all his pure white glory, takes one look at Harvey and then at his own back; Cupcake snorts, winks and disappears. Harvey hears a snort behind him—turns and sees a big dark horse with long matted fur and mane behind him. The horse headbutts Harvey pretty hard and almost knocks him down. Harvey gets on him and the horse takes off at a gallop. It tries to knock Harvey off by riding near trees but Harvey stays on. The pair end up riding into the marsh (something about the horse needing a bath) and the horse goes deep into the muddy water such that Harvey is getting just as wet as the horse. Harvey doesn't lose the battle of wills with the mangy beast but he doesn't really win either.

Medi and Kael spend the day just hanging out and relaxing.

Freeday (14): Next morning, after another breakfast with sausages, Veslo hands out some woven reed bracelets—tells the party that the first time they drop more than 10 feet they'll basically float down (i.e., Feather Fall). This only will work once. Party asks to be dropped on the top floor of the two-story building, dropped in pairs: Harvey and Hal first, Medi and Sequel next, Katerine and Kael last. The idea is fly over, drop off the party, and get away before the guards or others realize what is happening and the elves/eagles are not spotted.

Halcyon and Harvey lands on the two-story building. In one corner there is a black dragon-like thing on two-legs with horns (like the ones fought outside of D's Tower). He drinks a potion and disappears. There are two ogres sitting down facing each other on the other wall, they don't seem to have noticed us.

Harvey goes towards the corner where black dragon-thing was, can scent that that it is still there but can't completely pinpoint its location.

Halcyon attacks one of the ogres and springs back away from it.

Sequel and Medi land. The dragon-thing (still invisible) apparently moves past Harvey and jumps down hole in floor as a splash is heard from the hole.

Medi attacks and kills one of the ogres; Halcyon attacks the other one.

Kael and Katerine land.

Five small lizard-like creatures come up the stairs, four of them surround Kael (Halcyon makes a surprise attack on one of them). One is in front of Hal.

Harvey attacks the standing ogre, strikes a killing blow. His sword shatters into pieces that go flying—two of the small lizards are killed. Harvey is still holding onto the hilt of his sword, it becomes an ornate sword with runes along the blade.

Two ogres come up the stairs, Katerine is attacked by one.

Four more small lizard creatures come up the stairs. Halcyon and Medi attack them. Medi kills one of them; Kael comes over and kills another.

Katerine attacks the ogre coming up the stairs.

Three more small lizard creatures come up over the wall.

Another ogre come up the stairs, Kael sneak attacks it from behind.

A black dragonman thing comes up the stairs. Medi, Katerine, and Harvey attack and kill it.

An ettin comes up the stairs by Medi—it is a giant with 2 heads. Medi, Harvey, Katerine, and Sequel attack and finally kill it.

Right after the ettin falls, a dark-colored dragon with a goblin atop its back flies out of the hole in the floor and up into the sky, circling about 150-200 feet above.

The dragon dives and when it is about 50 feet above the party, everything goes black. No one, even Harvey the Bugbear, in the party is able to see. Medi calls out for everyone to head downstairs. The party finds that the darkness does not extend to the next level of the building. The room is pretty much empty except for a large pile of furs against one wall. It smells very bad...like some large and unsanitary beast lives within. A set of double doors and two normal doors are obvious exits.

Harvey busts down the double doors and the room beyond looks like it was once a small library...there are a number of knocked over and broken bookshelves but no books are apparent. There is a large hole in the ceiling (corresponding to the hole seen in the floor on the level above) and in the floor. Water is visible within the latter hole just a few inches below the floor level.

Kael opens one of the single doors and sees a room that looks neat and tidy. A number of small barbed cages line one wall but they are all empty. They're large enough for a person to stand in but not sit. A cot and desk and a few barrels (later seen to be filled with water) are also in the room. A blood-stained mop leans against one of the barrels.

Katerine opens the other single door. Inside is a room with stuffed (i.e., taxidermy) bodies of a leopard, wild boar, and a crocodile standing/posing against one wall. There is a cot with fine furs piled atop it. A worktable has the body of a stirge nailed to it and the stirge is part way through the "stuffing" process. A large tapestry depicting a rather mean and angry-looking five-headed dragon dominates one of the walls.

A loud noise (i.e., a thump) is heard on the floor above and then the dragon roars. The darkness on the floor above is gone.

Kael sneaks up the stairs and sees the dragon sitting on the level above and staring right at him (Kael gets struck by the dragon's acidic breath).

Halcyon joins Harvey and Medi in the "library" and moves so that she can see as much as possible of the above level through the hole in the ceiling. She can see the dragon's wing and shoots an arrow at it but only seems to anger the beast.

Before much else can happen, a large lizard-dragon (greenish in color) jumps out of the water (in the hole in the floor) and attacks. It starts by breathing a cloud of acid at Sequel and Medi. Battle ensues and, after taking a good amount of damage, the creature retreats back through the hole in the floor.

During the fight, a voice—presumably the goblin atop the dragon—calls down and offers a less painful death if the party will surrender. It then calls down and says something about smelling elves and allowing the party to leave if the elves are turned over. A deeper and "bigger" sounding voice—presumably the dragon—makes a comment about a familiar smell.

The party heads back into the larger room to regroup.

A minute or two later, the dragon above chuckles and the other voice says that a deal should have been made while there was a chance and, that since there are elves here now, they'll (the dragon and goblin?) will no go attack the elves. He also says, "Go on down" to someone. A lot of movement is heard above and the party takes up positions around the two stairways from above.

A flood of lizardman charge down the stairs and come up through the hole in the floor of the other room. There are nearly two dozen of them. The party dispatches them with relative ease (especially with Sequel's Fireball and Halcyon's Whirlwind Attack). During the fight, the deeper voice from upstairs says that it is not leaving.

After the lizardmen are defeated, the lizard-dragon thing comes back up through the hole and attacks the party again. It tells Halcyon (who was the first engaged by it this time) to surrender and it will kill her last. She asks why if it is going to kill her anyways and the beastie says that she would at least be the last to day and have the pleasure of watching her allies die first. Combat continues and the thing is killed.

Katerine, who had explored the room earlier, mentions that there is a chest in the "taxidermy" room. Kael tries but cannot pick the lock on it.

Party regroups in the main room (Harvey closes the door to the "library") and decides to take the fight to the dragon since it doesn't seem willing to come down (Harvey has already attempted to "taunt" it). Both Medi and Harvey have Resist Energy to give them protection from the dragon's breath and head up the stairs (one on each stairway). Halcyon and Katerine are right behind them while Sequel and Kael are still below.

The dragon, who had been listening to the party's plans from the hole in the "library" floor opens the double doors. Kael runs up the stairs and yells for help. Sequel is hit by its acid breath and then casts a spell at it. The others come back down and the battle

ensues. During the battle, the dragon seems very, very angry with Medi and Halcyon in particular. It says something about Amery Vraath and the death of the dragon's family at his hands.

The dragon is slain and, in a switch from the normal course of things, it is NOT Sequel that strikes the killing blow.

Soon after the dragon is slain, Medi loses consciousness. Her Bear's Endurance spell expired and the extra Hit Points it granted were the only thing that had kept her going this long. Katherine makes sure that Medi is stable and not in danger of getting worse.

Sequel searches the bodies of the dragon and the lizard-dragon thing. He finds a magical amulet and magical ring on the dragon.

Kael takes his time to work on the lock of the chest from the "taxidermy" room. He is successful. Inside are six small leather sacks filled with coins (primarily silver but some gold) and a small wooden box. The box doesn't look to be trapped but it does smell somewhat odd...similar to patchouli. Inside the box are two pieces of folded paper.

One, which smells the strongest of the odd scent, is a note to Saarvith from someone named Ulwai—it is about keeping an enclosed "phylactery" hidden and safe (see handout).

The other is a letter to Saarvith from Fairinth—it is an introduction and invitation to negotiate an alliance between the Horde and the Temple of Elemental Evil (see handout).

Kael, Kat, and Sequel each take two of the sacks from the chest. They go search the other rooms further to see if they can find the phylactery. They do not find it but do find a small coffer under the cot in the neat and tidy room. It has some silver and gold coins and a gold bracelet (sculpted to look like a panther/mountain lion) with a ruby.

The rest of this building is searched as is the walkway outside of it. No sign of the phylactery or of the goblin.

Halcyon and Harvey head over to the next building via the wooden walkway. Harvey breaks down the door (it was locked), inside is a room with a pool of water and mud through the floor. There are a lot of eggs in the water, dark but with hints of different colors (some red, some white, some green, etc.). Halcyon jumps in and starts slashing at the eggs. Kael and Sequel come over and Sequel helps slash the eggs. After Halcyon thinks they're done, they go back to the other building.

Harvey gets a whiff of the patchouli-like smell from the one letter and he finds it somewhat arousing.

Party decides that the dragon must have hidden the phylactery (and maybe its treasure) down in the water. Harvey, with his Freedom of Movement armor and high Constitution, is selected as the best candidate to explore the waters. After a few trips down and a fright from one of the dead lizardman bodies floating in the water, Harvey learns that there is a level of this building below the water (similar layout to the level that the party is currently on) and finds the dragon's treasure.

Harvey starts bringing up the treasure, a backpack or two at a time. While he is doing so, Katherine hears some movement up on the level above. Party gets ready but it turns out that it is just Veslo. As he had not seen any signal from the party and had not seen any sign of danger for awhile, he decided to come check things out. After making a comment about the impressive carnage lying about, he went off to get the other elves and the eagles. The elves saw no sign of a goblin but will keep an eye out for it.

Harvey continues his salvage operation.

The elves return. Medi is given a potion of healing and is revived. Veslo also give Harvey and Halcyon potions that allow them to breathe underwater. This speeds up the salvage operation considerably. After a bit, Harvey and Halcyon think they've brought up everything. There are THOUSANDS of coins...most silver...some gold...some gems...a gold necklace. Also found a magical suit of plate armor, a magical heavy mace, a magical piece of jewelry (a pearl on a small chain), and a magical horn (like a signal horn). There is also a small iron coffer that is not magical but inside is a necklace...an adamantine chain with claws and teeth threaded upon it (see handout picture). Harvey senses its evil and Sequel detects very strong magic on it. It is most likely the phylactery mentioned in the letter from the Ulwai person.

Veslo insists that it is time to be leaving and is completely unconcerned about the monetary treasure. In fact, he has no intention of weighing down his eagles with such non-valuable things. Although Kael is pretty much struck speechless by such a callous dismissal of wealth, Harvey does comment that such coin could be used in the fight against the Horde. Veslo agrees but points out that there are still things that are of a much higher value that can contribute to the fight.

The party grabs up all the magic stuff, the jewelry and gems, and small amount of the coins and head back to the elves' place. Veslo takes them directly to Sellyria's home as she would like to speak with them. She asks about what was found at the ruins and what happened. When she is shown the phylactery, all the blood drains from her face and she looks faint. Veslo kneels at her side, she whispers something to him, and he starts to help her leave the room. He asks that the party wait a moment for him to return.

A little later, Veslo returns and escorts the party to their rooms. He says that Sellyria will be fine and will speak with them in the morning. Veslo seems a little terse and out of sorts but to let him know if they need anything. Party eats and then settles down for the night.

Sequel is woken during the night...it is Trellara. She is dirty, bloody, and disheveled and has just returned from Hilltop. Trellara has a wild grin and a hint of insanity in her eye...she got to kill some of the Horde and seems quite pleased with that. She tells him that the Horde hit Hilltop and the good guys didn't win. The battle seemed concentrated at the moathouse and at some spot a mile or so away near the road (i.e., the secret exit). Everything in Hilltop has been razed. She saw some survivors trying to flee but didn't seem that concerned with anything like that. She wanted a bath. Told Sequel to get her water. She starts undressing and tries to force herself on Sequel. He calls out for Katherine (who is in the next room) and convinces Trellara that what she is trying to do isn't a good idea. Sequel says he's just gotten out of a bad relationship with a spider woman. THAT convinces Trellara to leave just as Katherine is coming in. Trellara heads over to Kael's room and leaves after a, um, brief time...

Harvey's evening is also disturbed but only by a dream. He dreams of an angel of Heironeous—he doesn't know which one but he is pretty sure that it is one—who asks him if he would rather have the power to aid his allies or smite his enemies. He answers that he'd prefer the power to aid. The angel says so be it and the dream ends.

Starday (15): At breakfast, Katerine passes on what happened with Sequel during the night (he's still resting) and the info he learned from Trellara. Trellara comes in and still seems to be excited about the fighting. Says it was a massacre and that the Horde was still there when she left...she got chased off by a dragon.

Trellara sees Harvey the bugbear and threatens to kill him but backs off once some of the other elves explain the situation.

Sellyria meets with the party and apologizes for her behavior the night before. She explains that she was stunned and unprepared for seeing the phylactery and what it means. She explains...

- If the phylactery is indeed the Ghostlord's, then she knows who the Ghostlord once was...a human named Rion. The necklace had been his and she had last seen him nearly 800 years ago.
- The Ghostlord currently resides in an area between Celene and Verbobonc. He is a blight upon the land and defiles and corrupts everything with which he comes into contact. He takes living things and makes abominations of them.
- As a man, Rion was very passionate, curious, honorable and loving for most of his life. As he grew elderly though, he became distant, callous, cold, and calculating. Sellyria knows all of this because Rion had been her husband. He and his other human companions had become lost in the woods and Sellyria found them wandering. The elves took them in and offered them their hospitality. Although a few of these humans took advantage of the elves' hospitality, most became contributing members of the community.
- She and Rion were together for some 50 years and practiced the same faith most of their lives (she's obviously a druid). But as Rion grew old and she did not (being an elf and all), he changed. Eventually, he became so cold and distant that he even moved out of their home and occupied one of the empty buildings in the community.
- It was around this time that some strange things started happening around the community. Individuals who had been good friends or even lovers suddenly became cold and distant to those closest to them. Some would disappear and not be seen again. Her brother was one of these individuals...he became cold and callous and then simply was no longer anywhere to be found in the community or surrounding woods. A visiting elven prince, actually a cousin of Sellyria's, disappeared as well.
- This culminated, about 800 years ago, when a curse of some kind struck the area. All forms of life suddenly died. A once verdant and thriving section of the woods abruptly died. The elves were not immune from this curse. Many in the community simply dropped dead. The area covered by the Tor Fens today is the area that was impacted by the curse.
- Those that survived, weakened as they were, found the root of the curse...a complex of tunnels and rooms below the building in which Rion had lived. Contained within were many unnatural, corrupt things—dead that walked (they also found Sellyria's brother within with most of his head missing). Sellyria and the other surviving elves did what they could to destroy these creatures but they were hard-pressed to do so. Retreating out of the complex, they placed complex, magical wards to seal in whatever remained. Many of the elves died and many were unable to retreat and became trapped within when the wards went up including Sellyria and Rion's son, Tirmo. The only way to bring down the wards is with the blood of one of those that created them...Sellyria is the last living person to have been involved in their creation.
- Sellyria says that she and her people moved to the Fens for two reasons: 1) the Ghostlord had begun to encroach upon their previous homes; and 2) she chose to come "home" to day as her days are somewhat limited.
- She does not believe that Rion would have been powerful enough to bring such a curse on the area but she does not know if he was working with someone else or not. By that time, he would barely even speak with her.
- She offers to bring down the wards (she won't be able to put them back up) if the party would like to go in. Perhaps they could find something related to the Ghostlord that would be useful in their "quest". They might also find some of the magics that the elves carried with them when trapped.
- She draws a symbol of a skull with tendrils or worms coming out of it and says that it was carved into the floor of one of the rooms in the complex. Medi recognizes it as the symbol of Kyuss, the Wormgod—a god of undead, decay, and blight.

Sellyria heals everyone of the remaining damage suffered in the previous day's battle and gives Kael three healing potions (Cure Moderate Wounds) which are distributed to different party members. When asked if she can help in identifying any of the magical items found, Sellyria refers to the party to Trellara.

Veslo takes Sequel and Halcyon to see Trellara. She's busy polishing her sword and bickers a bit with Sequel but eventually things settle down. Sequel casts a thorough *Detect Magic* on the items found in the ruins and discovers the following:

- Amulet has Faint Evocation
- Ring has Faint Abjuration
- Pearl on Chain has Moderate Transmutation
- Horn has Faint Conjunction
- Heavy silvery mace has Moderate Enchantment
- Armor has Moderate Enchantment

Sequel uses the pearls to cast *Identify* on the amulet, pearl on chain, and armor and finds that they are an Amulet of Might Fists +1, a Periapt of Wisdom +2, and +2 Full Plate Armor.

Sequel asks Trellara if any of the elves could use the amulet and she takes it for her eagle. Sequel and Trellara have a heart to heart talk and Sequel apologizes for the night before (presumably for rejecting her). She breaks down and starts crying uncontrollably, sobbing about her family all being dead...about her brother being too young and innocent and sweet and that it should have been her instead. After a bit of crying on Sequel's shoulder (figuratively and literally), she composes herself and asks that this not be mentioned to anyone else. Her emotional instability is pretty clear.

Trellara asks Sequel and Halcyon what the plan is now and, when told that Sellyria is going to help them with something, immediately jumps to the conclusion that the wards will be coming down. Trellara is asked if she'd like to go with the party but declines, saying that she's heading back to Hilltop.

Party heads out to the ruins again accompanied by Sellyria and some other elves. They all land on a ruined building nearby to the ones in which Saarvith and been residing. Sellyria leads the way to a doorway, cuts her hand so that it bleeds freely, and holds it against a door. It opens. The door is above the waterline but, as Sellyria points out, most of the complex is below the surface of the lake. The wards would have kept the water out but the complex will likely fill with water in the near future and so the party should hurry.

Party heads down. Halcyon is last and, as she heads down, Sellyria asks that if they find her son's body to bring it back. He carried a magic elven blade called *Sunrazor*.

Going down a rather long way, the party can see worn and nearly destroyed murals on the wall and ceiling that depict a blasted and blighted forest under an overcast sky.

The stairway opens into a hall that leads to a room. On the floor is the symbol of the Wormlord in black marble and malachite. Piles of debris are scattered throughout the room—presumably rotted and destroyed furniture. Also scattered about are skeletal and dessicated remains mixed in with the debris. A small stone pedestal sits in the far corner of the room.

Party starts moving into the room. Harvey detects that there is evil around. Kael moves into one corner and is suddenly grabbed by something and paralyzed. Three dessicated undead bodies separate themselves from the debris and attack. Combat ensues but Harvey turns all three of them and they flee down one of the three unexplored corridors that lead out of this room.

Half of the party starts to take a closer look at the room (particularly the small stone pedestal) while others are getting ready to leave the room. The pedestal has carvings of Kyuss covering it and has old blood stains on it. On the wall above it is some writing. Sequel eventually deciphers it as saying, "You are entering a sacred realm of Kyuss. Non-believers shall be punished." The pedestal is a small "entry altar"—a place to make a small sacrifice when entering a temple.

Katerine hears the undead coming back. Fight. Party wins.

Party heads down one hallway, where the undead had fled initially, and, after rounding a corner, Harvey sees an area of darkness that he cannot see beyond (magical darkness?). The scene (or lack thereof) gives Harvey a preternatural chill. Party goes down a different hallway. About forty feet down, there's a doorway (the door has rotted away). Harvey checks it out. Beyond the doorway are a number of rotted wooden walls creating small chambers. There is debris from furniture that has rotted away in each. There are a total of six such rooms and Harvey looks in each. As he heads back to the main hallway, a spirit passes through him (came from behind him) and he feels weaker (- 2 Strength). Harvey turns it and it flies into (and through) a stone wall.

Continuing down the hallway, the party finds that it comes to a t-intersection. There is a set of double doors at the end of this hallway that are made of black iron with a large keyhole set in the wall next to it. In one direction, the hallway goes farther than anyone can see. In the other direction, it opens into a small chamber with stone double doors with the skull symbol of Kyuss carved upon it. The doorway is carved with gaunt bodies with worms crawling in and out of them around it. A keyhole sits in the wall next to this door as well.

Kael works on the iron doors first. He finds no traps but is not able to open the lock. He then moves to the stone doors. Again, he finds no traps but this time he is able to pick the lock. The door slides up into the ceiling with a loud grating noise. Harvey goes through and, after turning a corner, sees a small room at the end of a short corridor. A stone altar with censors on either side sit at the far end of the room. In front of the altar, a black-robed figure kneels with its back to Harvey. It looks like it is praying but there is no sound coming from it. However, a sound like bone grating on bone can be heard emanating from the room.

Party heads into the room towards the figure. About halfway through the room, an invisible wall stops the party from going any further. The robed figure rises and faces the party...its face is little more than a skull. It shrieks and then calls out to Kyuss to smite the intruders. Smoke starts to rise from the censors and begins to coalesce above the altar and the sound of grinding bone gets louder and louder. The party makes a relatively disorganized retreat leaving Medi standing alone in the room.

The smoke coalesces into a shambling, rotting, mass of vegetation of vaguely humanoid form and both it and the robed figure move forward through the invisible wall. Battle ensues. Party wins.

Party searches the room. Kael finds a key on the remains of the robed guy but it is not big enough to fit the double doors made of iron. The stone altar has etchings related to Kyuss, skulls, worms, decay motif. Very lovely. Harvey attempts to break the altar using his heavy pick. After chipping it a couple of times, the stone door starts to close. Everyone hustles out...Harvey just makes it before the door closes.

Party presses on.

Down the hallway, in the opposite direction of the altar room and beyond the iron doors, is a set of wooden double doors. These doors are in good shape. Kael looks for traps but doesn't find any and opens the door with the key found on the robed guy. The room beyond is obviously an old library. The floor is covered by a thin layer of grime, old bookcases—with the books rotted away—line the walls, and a table and some chairs fill the center of the room. Sitting in a high-backed chair is a skeleton. The top of its skull and the top of the chair have been sheared off just above eye-level. On the table, in front of the skeleton, is a large flask covered with grime and a slim book.

Katerine looks about the room for tracks and anything else of interest. She finds a "lump" on the floor...turns out to be the top of the skull from the skeleton.

Sequel pokes the skeleton (not that anyone else saw him do it) and it falls apart and out of the chair. Sequel finds a couple of keys under the chair with the skeleton and gives them to Kael. One looks much like the small brass key Kael found on the robed dude while the other is a big iron key. Sequel then checks out the flask and the book. The flask (more like a ceramic jar) has a magical aura and sounds like it has a small amount of fluid in it.

The book, which has a faint residual magical aura, looks like it belonged to Sellyria's brother and looks untouched by the ravages of time and decay that typifies everything else in the complex. It chronicles the deterioration of Sellyria and Rion's marriage, the strange dreams that the author began having, and talking to Rion and joining the temple of Kyuss. Also makes mention of some warded areas—a room of worms holy to Kyuss—and the phrases to bypass the wards (“All hail decay”, “All hail death”, and , “I beseech admittance in the name of the Wormlord.” Another warded area, that Rion apparently kept “secret” from the others in the temple, was bypassed with a different pass-phrase. The author over heard Rion say, “Eternal life to be,” and PASS through a set of doors. It ends with the author apparently partially shaking off something of an enchantment and lamenting what had happened to Orodil (an elven prince and cousin to Sellyria) but not being able to actually take any action. (See the handout)

Party returns to the large iron doors that they passed previously. Kael uses the big iron key to open the door. An unnatural, palpable darkness spills out of the room beyond. Inside the darkness is thick and seems to swallow any light, significantly hindering sight in the room. Chains hang from the ceiling throughout and many have bodies, or body parts, hanging from them. Body parts lie scattered about the floor or the room too (all told, probably two to three dozen skeletons). A more intact skeleton looks to be lying in the center of the room. Something on the far side of it appears to be glowing slightly...much like a smoldering ember.

Harvey concentrates and detects evil...he is stunned by the overwhelming evil. Everyone feels on edge...cold shivers and all.

Kael and Halcyon make their way around opposite walls towards the far side of the room. Halcyon reaches the glowing ember...it is an elven sword (a thinblade to be exact). The skeleton next to it is still dressed in a chain shirt and looks like it fell here and dropped the sword. As Halcyon reaches out to pick up the sword, the darkness begins to coalesce on either side of the room. Two creatures form...they are human-like but are covered in lengths of chain making it hard to get a good look at them. The chains hanging from the ceiling sprout razor blades and swing at Harvey and Halcyon. Halcyon picks up the sword, Harvey picks up the skeleton and starts to retreat from the room. One of the creatures moves towards Halcyon—its face looking just like her dear departed mother. It is quite demoralizing. The other moves towards Kael—its face looking like his dear departed mentor whose name he apparently doesn't remember. Combat ensues...party tries to retreat out of the room and trap the creatures inside but end up fighting them in the hallway instead. Party wins (one of the creatures ended up showing Medi the face of her dear departed mother as well).

Party gathers up the remains of the skeleton in Medi's pack...presuming they are the remains of Tirmo, Sellyria's son.

Party heads back to the “entry” room...the one with the big skull picture on the floor and different corridors leading out of it. The head out the north corridor. It turns and is blocked by a wooden door in very good condition. Kael looks for traps (sees none) and then attempts to pick the lock. He trips a glyph and is damaged by a blast of cold. After drinking a potion of healing, he takes his time picking the lock and, after some twenty minutes, is successful.

Beyond is a short corridor that is blocked by an iron door. Kael heads down the hallway and, about halfway down, trips another glyph and a zombie-thing with small, green worms squirming in and out of its flesh appears behind him. It strikes Kael and one of the worms squirms onto and into Kael. Zombie goes down under Harvey's attack. Within 20 seconds, Kael can feel that the worm thing has moved from his arm up into his head. Kael screams at Medi to cut out the worm...even though she is some 30 feet away and Harvey is standing right next to him. Sequel casts a Dispel Magic while Harvey does Lay on Hands and then Remove Disease. The pain in Kael's head slowly subsides after these actions.

Kael heads up to the iron doors. Looks for traps...sees none...and tries to pick the lock. Trips yet another glyph but he jumps out of the way of this blast of cold. Beyond the door is a room dominated by a large pit. About 40 to 45 down, the pit is filled with hundreds of small worms writhing around...very similar to the worm that had gotten in Kael. Party decides to leave this room alone for now...will come back later. Concerned that if this complex floods, the worms will get out.

Party heads back to the hallway with the unnatural darkness that no one can see beyond. Kael says, “Eternal life to be,” but nothing happens. An eerie baying is heard from the darkness and Sequel panics. He flees and runs to the “library” and curls up under a table. Katerine and Medi chase after him and find him. He comes to his senses and is wondering why he is under the table.

Two large black dog things come from the darkness and attack Kael, Harvey, and Halcyon. One of the dog things is slain and the other retreats back into the darkness. The other three return from their jog. Harvey takes a few steps into the darkness before getting bitten. He retreats back out of the darkness. Halcyon goes in the darkness and says, “Eternal life to be,” but nothing happens. She is attacked and she attacks back despite not being able to see. Her blade connects with something and she hears a thud of something falling. Reaching down, she feels the other dog-thing lying dead on the ground.

Halcyon comes back out and Harvey heads into the darkness...feeling along the walls. He finds an opening on the eastern side not too far from the edge of the darkness. He goes past the opening and estimates that the hallways goes at least forty feet before it turns to the west. He comes back to the group to explain and then heads to the opening he found. The opening is a narrow hallway that opens into a larger room beyond the edge of the darkness. As Harvey exits the darkness, something surprises him and attacks from behind...

It is another of the zombie-things with worms crawling in and out of it. Harvey is slammed by the thing and the worms from it attempt to burrow into Harvey but they sizzle and burn on contact with his body. Harvey attacks and Halcyon and Kael, hearing Harvey's battle shouts, head towards him. Harvey dispatches the thing relatively easily. The room looks like it was some sort of dining or common room—it has long tables and benches that have rotten and fallen to pieces. Kael starts searching one of the walls. Harvey checks out the body of the zombie as it didn't dissolve like the previous one. It looks like it was probably an elf and all of its clothing are rotted and tattered except for an elven style dagger. It is made of a metal that is not steel. Harvey notices that there is water seeping in from that wall and so tells Kael that there probably isn't a secret room. Halcyon sifts through some of the rubble but doesn't find anything.

All regroup at the edge of the darkness before Harvey heads back into it. He goes down the corridor to where it turned and follows it beyond the turn. The magical darkness ends a short distance after the turn. The corridor beyond the magical darkness splits into two directions (one a 10' wide corridor, the other a 5' wide corridor).

In one direction, the corridor continues past a small opening before turning. The opening leads to a small room that looks like it was once a storage room. There are rotted barrels and crates as well as a stone wall that cuts across half of the room. The wall looks like it has been largely smashed down. There is some kind of stain on the room's wall near this broken stone wall.

While Harvey heads down the wider corridor, Kael checks out the old storage room. The stain is about 2½ to 3 feet high and is in a line on the back wall. It is obviously old, dried blood. On the other side of the broken wall is what looks like an old door and a hole (about a foot across and slightly egg-shaped). There's a body stuffed in the hole. Kael pulls the body out. It is wearing a very fine linked chain shirt and has a shorter sword similar in style to Sunrazor and a pendant. Kael takes these three things before heading down the narrow corridor that goes past the storage room. This leads to a larger room that looks like it was once a kitchen. A large, overturned cauldron sits in one corner with skeletal hands spilling from it. They're not animated. Kael takes a quick look around but sees nothing of interest and leaves to catch up with the rest of the party.

While Kael was searching, Harvey and the rest of the group checked out a hallway off the wide corridor. It is about ten feet in before opening up into a larger room. This room is dominated by a large pit about 40 feet deep. Dust, and nothing else, looks to be at the bottom and the walls of the pit are quite smooth. A narrow walkway, maybe 2 to 3 feet wide, goes all the way around the top of the pit. The walkway has debris covering much of it that looks to be the remains of old shelves. The room is not searched (cursorily or otherwise).

The wide hallway continues on until ending in a set of preserved wooden doors. These doors look brand new. However, about 30 feet before the door, there is a pit (about 10 feet across) that fills the width of the hall. Harvey and Halcyon check it out. It looks to be about 20 feet deep. The sides and floor of the pit are painted in reds, yellows, and oranges to look like flames. The walls are pitted with smooth, little gouges that appear to have happened after the walls were painted (i.e., the gouges have damaged the paint). The floor has no such gouges.

The party prepares to jump across the pit. These preparations basically entail Harvey removing his armor. Halcyon jumps across no problem saying, 'Eternal life to be,' right before she jumps. Harvey jumps next. Medi tosses his armor and supplies across. Medi jumps next but...doesn't make it. She hits the opposite wall of the pit and isn't able to grab the lip of the pit. She falls and falls THROUGH the floor of the pit landing about another 10 feet down. The fall causes some damage but more disturbing is the ooze like thing that fills about half of the pit's bottom and is surging forward towards Medi. The ooze bubbles and pops, sending sprays of acid through the air...pitting the stone of the pit's walls. Halcyon has already prepared to throw a rope down and does so. Medi starts climbing up the rope before the ooze thing reaches her but, as she's climbing up, it shoots a stream of acid at her that causes some significant damage. With Harvey and Halcyon both pulling on the rope, Medi is out of the pit pretty quickly. The others all jump across successfully (Kael drank a Potion of Jump to get across since he's now weighed down—medium encumbrance—with a bunch of stuff).

Everyone pauses outside the door at the end of the hall. Harvey starts putting his armor back on with Katerine's help. While he's doing this, Kael says 'Eternal life to be' and passes THROUGH the door. Entering a room beyond, there is a cloying, inky darkness that seems to snuff out the light of the torch Kael is carrying. A glowing, green glyph in the shape of a large skull dominates the floor of the room. The light from it doesn't really illuminate the room...it only gives the darkness a greenish cast. A body is slumped over against the far wall and a skeletal/zombie-like humanoid body is standing in the center of the small room. It has a long, wormlike tongue hanging from its mouth. It emits a groan before raising a blade of darkness in a once ELVEN hand.

Sequel, Medi, and Halcyon all go through the door as well. Battle ensues. Sequel is paralyzed by the thing's tongue pretty much right away. The thing seems largely immune to the damage caused by the characters...most of its wounds seem to heal right away. Only pretty hefty damage and Medi's *Searing Light* spells seem to do much real damage to it. After attacking just once, Kael stands behind the thing in a completely defensive stance. The thing focuses its attacks on Halcyon. Its attacks feel like something icy grasping at her soul. Before losing consciousness, Halcyon lets Sunrazor emit a blast of its light at the thing. Like Medi's *Searing Light*, this blast seems to do significant damage to the creature. Halcyon falls. The creature turns its attention to Medi. Medi heals Halcyon so she regains consciousness before Medi falls unconscious from the thing's attacks. Halcyon stabilizes Medi and continues fighting the thing from a prone position. Kael moves away from behind the thing (removing the minor advantage Halcyon received from his flanking it) and starts to check out the body against the far wall. Halcyon angrily yells at Kael for abandoning her during a fight and goes down fighting. She is killed by the creature (despite Kael's subsequent attempt to stabilize her). The creature turns its attention to Kael and takes him down quickly (although Kael was not affected by the darkness of the thing's blade in the same manner that Halcyon and Medi were).

During this battle, Katerine and Harvey continued to work on getting Harvey's armor on. They heard no sounds of battle coming from beyond the doors and so had no idea that a fight was going on. Once his armor is donned, Harvey and Katerine pass through the doors. When they arrive, Sequel is still paralyzed in one corner of the room and the creature has its tongue embedded in Kael's abdomen...it turns to face them and worms can be seen squirming in and out of Kael's abdomen and dripping from the thing's tongue. While Harvey engages the thing in melee, Katerine gives Medi a potion of healing and Medi regains consciousness. The fight continues. Medi picks up Sunrazor and starts using it against the thing. Harvey's attacks do some damage but not much while Katerine's arrows have little, if any, effect on the creature. Sequel recovers from his paralysis and joins the fray with *Magic Missile* spells. Eventually, the thing is killed (Sequel got the killing blow).

When the creature is slain, its body implodes and then explodes in a wave of blackness. Everyone is stunned and momentarily blinded by it. A wave of nausea, fear, pain, and other negative emotions overwhelms everyone momentarily. After a few seconds, everyone can see again. The cloying darkness is no longer there and the room is fully lit by Sunrazor. The glyph is still on the floor but is no longer glowing. A pale, translucent, humanoid shape is floating in the middle of the room over the glyph—it looks like an elf and it looks stunned and disoriented.

After a moment of silence (and some prompting from a certain dead character's player), Katerine speaks to the spirit and asks who it is. The elf smiles and everyone feels a wave of goodness and intense gratitude. Kael asks if he is Orodil and the spirit nods its

head. He also nods his head when asked if he is now free. He is asked if there is anything else that the party needs to do and he shakes his head. When told about the pit of worms and asked if it needs to be taken care of, he nods. When asked if fire will kill the worms, he nods. Medi mentions that they'll tell Sellyria that he is at peace now and he smiles. When asked if he can help Kael and Halcyon, he nods and looks at Harvey (and yes, the GM had already said that bringing Halcyon back would take the intervention of her brother but that little hint wasn't taken to heart). After some more communication (all non-vocal on the spirit's part), Harvey understands that the spirit wants to channel through him to aid Kael and Halcyon. Harvey agrees. The spirit enters into Harvey's body and Harvey and his sword start to glow. Two rays of light shoot out of Harvey's sword, one each striking Halcyon and Kael. The glow subsides and both Kael and Halcyon are conscious and fully healed. There is a faint scent of brimstone that lingers after the glow fades.

Harvey, while glowing, has a vision. He sees Merikel, a creature that he recalls as being a fallen angel of Heironeous. He doesn't really remember much of anything else about Merikel but he instinctively knows that this is the same angel that he had seen in his dreams the night before. Only this time, it is much more infernal-looking than angelic-looking (see the before and after pictures on the website).

The body against the wall looks to have once been elven. It has a leather satchel that looks largely intact and undamaged. Inside are some loose papers and a handful of gems. The satchel weighs 15 pounds and seems to be considerable larger inside than out.

Everyone leaves (just passing through the wall where the door would be) and makes it successfully across the pit. Head over to the room with the pit of worms. Sequel casts *Fireball* multiple times into the pit until the bottom is seen (about 100 feet down) and there are no more wriggling worms visible. Skeletons are seen in the bottom of the pit but Sequel doesn't detect anything magical.

Halcyon goes to check out the room with the old wooden cubicles to see if the shadowy thing that attacked Harvey early on in the day is still there. She finds nothing.

Party heads up the stairs and get outside. Some elves are waiting for them and take them to the shore where Sellyria is waiting. As the party approaches her, she is talking to some other elves and they are telling her that they've found the goblin (i.e., Saarvith). He's on foot and headed to the west, about a day away from the western edge of the Fens. A sentry has been left to watch over the goblin's travels.

Sellyria is told about Orodil and about how he brought Kael and Halcyon back to life. She asks if they were changed before or after they were brought back to life. Kael's eyes are now a shadowy shifting gray instead of hazel and he has no white or apparent pupil. Halcyon's eyes also have no whites and are reddish-orange...looking much like flames. Halcyon offers Sellyria the weapons and other items that they found on the elves but Sellyria tells the party that they may keep them. Katherine does offer Sellyria the ring that was found after Orodil's spirit departed. It is a signet ring of an elven prince. Sellyria has Katherine give it to Veslo as he will be traveling to Enstad soon to try and enlist the aid of the Elven Court. The remains of Sellyria's son (along with the chainshirt they are in) are also handed over. Harvey also tells Sellyria about the vision he had of Merikel (the fallen angel) but she doesn't know anything about that human religion stuff other than it was not the same creature that came to her and requested she bring Harvey back to life.

Party heads back to their rooms to clean up and then have some food. Trellara is in the common room and tells everyone that she had flown back over Hilltop. She found a couple of survivors and brought them back...one of them is quite cute. After taking her sweet time eating and having a few drinks (obviously to annoy the party), she takes the party to see them. They are Ossic and Emian.

The two of them relay their story of what happened at Hilltop. It was basically a massacre. It was pretty clear that the Horde knew about the Moathouse and the troops stationed there and hidden in the caverns below. Lots of ogres, goblins, hobgoblins, a dragon, and other things were involved in the fighting. Lots of flames could be seen in the distance too indicating a large number of encamped troops. The Horde attacked the Moathouse and the secret and hidden entrance to the caverns at the same time. When it became clear that the defenders could not hold this position, Yscan and Turvon led a charge out of the Moathouse. Turvon's magics cleared enough space for the defenders to charge out but it was only seconds before they were engulfed by the Horde again.

Ossic and Emian has no idea how the two of them were even able to escape. He saw Yscan fall and saw the last location he saw Turvon bombarded by mighty magics. He and Emian found themselves in the marsh around the Moathouse beyond the Horde's lines and so they fled. They spent nearly two days of fleeing and fighting before they came to the edge of the Fens. They saw signs of others that had broken through the Horde's line but had been caught and slain. As they were getting ready to enter the Fens, Trellara found them and had them brought here. They plan on going to Verbobonc to report to the Viscount about what happened at the Moathouse.

Everyone settles down for the evening. After breakfast (and some practical jokes by Trellara involving spiders crawling out from under Sequel's plate), Sequel casts *Detect Magic* on the stuff found at the Temple of Kyuss/Rion's old place. Found the following info:

- Gold and sapphire pendant—not magical
- Chainshirt on body stuffed in hole—magical, moderate enchantment
- Elven Short sword—magical, moderate enchantment
- Elven dagger—magical, moderate enchantment
- Journal—lingering magical aura
- Liquid in ceramic jar—magical, one of the strongest, strong transmutation
- Satchel—magical
- Sunrazor—magical, one of the strongest, strong evocation

Party goes to see Sellyria again. She pretty much heals everyone up to full (although Harvey is reluctant to ask her for healing as it seems to “drain” her...Sellyria says something about having no time for fools). She also informs the party that the elves will be leaving the Fens. They will all be going to Verbobonc the following day to offer their assistance in the battle against the Horde. Ossic and Emian will be going with them. Veslo, however, will be going to Enstad to seek aid from the Elven Court. Someone can also act as a guide to the Ghostlord’s if the party intends on traveling there. And, of course, she’ll have a guide take them to where the goblin is traveling now.

After refilling quivers and packs with arrows and some rations, the party heads out after Saarvith. After a few hours, they find the elf that has been tracking Saarvith. He tells them that some bugbears and hobgoblins are now chasing after Saarvith and that the goblin has picked up the pace. The party decides to drop down in front of Saarvith and try to capture him alive for questioning. His pursuers are only a couple of minutes behind him.

The eagles swoop down to drop the party about 30 feet in front of Saarvith on some solid ground. As they do, Saarvith quickly shoots off an arrow at the lead elf (striking him and, as the party learns later, killing him) and then changes direction (going perpendicular to the direction he had been traveling). Sequel quickly casts a *Wall of Fire* to surround Saarvith and Harvey starts heading that way. The creatures pursuing Saarvith can be heard approaching and the party prepares to meet them.

Three bugbears (screaming, shouting, and foaming at the mouth) and three hobgoblins (armed with two shortswords each) appear from over a hillock. Two somewhat fiendish looking crocodiles also appear in the water near these attackers. Fight starts. During the fight, a *Fireball* hits Harvey, Sequel, and Katherine and another hobgoblin appears on a different hillock. Medi and Halcyon are attacked by maces that appear in the air (aka *Spiritual Weapon*). Harvey continues, slowly due to armor and difficult terrain) towards the *Wall of Fire* and, presumably, Saarvith. Another couple of Hobgoblins show up too (cleric types). Spells and blows are traded back and forth. Halcyon is paralyzed by a spell but Sequel dispels it. A large porcupine-like dog appears and attacks Harvey. Sequel flies over the *Wall of Fire* and sees that Saarvith is not inside it. It’s a tough battle but the party prevails.

Saarvith is nowhere to be seen but the still surviving elf is signaled and flies down with the eagles (now the party sees that the other elf is dead). The elf notes that the goblin is off to the south and the chase is on. Sequel flies off in the direction and, after a short distance, sees the goblin shoot someone through the chest...killing the person. A dwarf and a halfling appear to have been traveling with the individual shot. The goblin drops back down into the reeds of the marsh as the dwarf/halfling and the party members near his location. Niceties between the two demihumans and the party are exchanged but get interrupted as more foes show up on the scene.

A large beast, with one of the black dragonmen on its back, arrives on the scene from behind the party (close to Harvey). A battle starts and a couple of other black dragonmen along with some small green dragonmen engage the party. After the last of the foes is slain, the elf circles down on his eagle and informs the party that the goblin has made it about another mile south. The other eagles are brought down and the party takes off after the goblin.

As the party catches up to the goblin, he stops on a hillock and puts his hands in the air in a sign of surrender. Halcyon and Kael land first and have the goblin lie face down on the ground with his hands on the back of his head. He complies and they then have him take off his armor and weapons (some of which Medi has detected as being magical). After securing the goblin, the questioning begins.

In exchange for his safety, the goblin offers to answer all of the party’s questions as best he can. The goblin confirms that he is, in fact, Saarvith and, after some attempted intimidation/threats by Aetrid, Halcyon and Saarvith come to terms which “guarantee” his safety in exchange for information...a blood pact is made. The following information is garnered from Saarvith:

- Saarvith has failed in his mission and the horde is now after him. His mission was two-fold. He was responsible for the breeding of various dragonspawn that would increase the power of the Horde. Saarvith and Reg (the black dragon) would lead this unit. These were the eggs that the party destroyed at the ruins.
- Saarvith was also responsible for safeguarding the phylactery of the Ghostlord. The Ghostlord has essentially been blackmailed into creating undead for the Horde. Ulwai, another of the Wyrmlords, is currently at the Ghostlord’s lair awaiting the completion of these undead. As long as the Ghostlord thinks that the Horde has his phylactery, he is essentially under the Horde’s control. The Ghostlord’s lair is days south of the Fens but Saarvith was not aware of its exact location.
- Destroying the phylactery would likely have two effects. First, the Ghostlord would likely kill Ulwai and the other Horde members at his lair. Second, he would quickly track down and kill those responsible for destroying the phylactery (i.e., Saarvith really didn’t think it would be healthy to destroy it).
- Saarvith was also supposed to meet with Hravek Kharn the day before. Kharn, a hobgoblin warrior and priest, is the general who actually leads the Horde. Saarvith was supposed to lead Kharn to the Temple of Elemental Evil to meet with Fairinth. Fairinth had previously met with Saarvith and had offered an alliance between himself and the Horde. The Temple could be used as a base of operations for the Horde in exchange for Azarr Kul’s assistance against the other factions at the Temple.
- Azarr Kul is not with the Horde itself. Instead, he leads the Horde from afar. He is at some temple to Tiamat deep in the Lortmil Mountains.
- Saarvith did not know why the Horde attacked Hilltop despite Koth’s map indicating that it wasn’t worth burning. However, the Horde has numerous spies in the area that provide them with various information. Perhaps one of them learned something about Hilltop that tipped off the Horde to something. One of the spies in the area, Lydia, had informed Saarvith that she was traveling with a group of fools that was just aimlessly wandering around the Fens. They had previously found a powerful scrying device so she stole it and left.

After obtaining this info, Saarvith is released to go his way. He heads off to the northeast with the goal of reaching the Gnarley Forest (or so he said). He leaves with his armor, sword, and Kael's bow. Kael takes Saarvith's magic bow.

Party returns to the elf encampment in the Fens and talks with Sellyria about the Ghostlord. She doesn't know how to best kill a lich or what would happen if the phylactery was destroyed. She suggests that the party speak with a wizard about such things. Sequel attempts to use the black "crystal ball" again but gets no further than he had previously. Trellara attempts to use the item but fails as well. Sellyria mostly heals everyone and the party settles down for the night.

Sunday (16): In the morning, Sequel attempts to activate the "black ball" again. This time he is successful. Sequel feels himself sucked into the swirling blackness and, as he focuses on thoughts of Saarvith, the swirling blackness shifts into a vision of Saarvith walking through the fens under the morning sun. Sequel then attempts to focus his thoughts on the Ghostlord but he sees nothing but the swirling blackness. His thoughts are then focused on Turvon and the result is the same. Sequel then tries something easy and focuses his thoughts on Harvey. A vision of Harvey, along with the rest of the party, sitting in the room.

Sertieren is the next subject of Sequel's focus. A vision forms of Sertieren sitting a nice room, reading a book, and smoking a pipe with his feet propped up on a cushion. Sequel says "Hello" to Sertieren; the halfling wizard hears him and jumps up startled. Sequel convinces Sertieren that he is who he actually is. They have a discussion about Saarvith, the Ghostlord, adventuring wizards, and the like. Sertieren's best advice is that Sequel get divine intervention in order to kill a lich. He also shares that the goblin was probably correct about the Ghostlord tracking down and killing anyone responsible for destroying his phylactery.

Sequel also focuses on Stone, Ostler, Jarret, and Rosey/Guildey but sees nothing.

He also focuses on Tolic. He gets a vision of Tolic and other men, high in some mountains, desperately fighting against various dragonmen. Sequel ends the vision before the battle ends...Tolic's fate isn't known.

The party decides against heading to Verbobonc with the elves and to head to the Ghostlord's lair with Veslo. After making their goodbyes to the elves, they head off to the south with Veslo. The day's flight is uneventful. Camp for the evening.

Monday (17): Another day of uneventful travel. Camp for the evening.

Godsday (18): Around mid-day, the party gets their first sight of the Ghostlord's lair. Up ahead on a low hilltop sits a massive panther of stone—about 80 feet high and 250 feet long. This is where Veslo takes his leave of the party and suggests that they proceed on foot as the eagles would get very nervous if they got too close to the lair. Party follows his advice and heads off on foot.

Due to the very rough terrain, it takes the remainder of the afternoon for the party to reach the structure. About a mile from the lair, it starts raining. As the party gets closer they notice that there is an opening in the chest of panther (between its paws) as well as within its open mouth. As it gets darker due to the rain and the waning light, Katherine notices dozens of translucent panthers flying about as well as through the structure. Medi says that they look like ghosts.

Continuing closer, the ghost panthers do not appear to take any notice of the party. A stone ramp leads up to the opening in the panther's chest. There are stone stone panther skeletons (with stone worms entwined about their bones) flanking the ramp. Party approaches the ramp and Aetrid and Jemma both go up the ramp. Nothing happens as they pass through the statues. They reach the top and see a fairly large cave-like area with a nest of brambles, briars, and debris to one side and skeletons to the other. Jemma starts into the cave and a large, sinewy, dragonlike creature explodes out of the nest with an ear-splitting roar. Jemma runs back down the ramp leaving Aetrid to face the charge of the beast alone.

Combat ensues and a few highlights include: Sequel solidifying his reputation as pyromaniac, Medi and Halcyon attracting much of the wrath of the beast, and Sequel nearly being swallowed whole by the creature. Throughout the fight, the dragon-snake continues to roar very, very loudly. When Medi strikes the killing blow (no, for once it wasn't Sequel), the thing shrieks out the name of Azarr Kul.

Aetrid searches the body and finds a string of 7 black pearls around one leg. He gives it to Sequel. Aetrid, Kael, and Jemma all head up the ramp to check out the cave. They start to search through the nest, the bones, and then the walls of the cave.

While those three are searching the cave, the others wait outside under the shelter of the panther's head as the rain has turned into a pretty steady downpour. Sequel heads out to explore the rest of the statue. Casting fly, he circles about the whole statue. While doing so, one of the panther ghosts passes right through him...almost as though the ghost had no clue that Sequel was there. Sequel feels no effect from the experience (but thought it was pretty cool).

Sequel flies up to the open mouth and casts Dancing Lights to provide some illumination inside the gaping maw. He sees double doors at the back of the mouth. After calling out to those below that he found a door, he flies into the mouth. Once inside, he sees a rope ladder just inside the teeth. As he bends down to drop the ladder over the edge, something strikes him from behind and he is knocked unconscious but the rest of the party is unaware of what happened.

A minute or two after Sequel flew into the mouth to check out the door, a female voice calls out to the party to drop their weapons and, if they don't, the elf will be killed. Discussion ensues between the unknown female and the party. She seems to know quite a bit about the party (e.g., who everyone is, asks Medi Cus to swear upon her father's life, why Halcyon isn't off getting married, and where is Kael). She is confused by Harvey being a bugbear but Harvey explains that he died and was reincarnated. Party tells her that Saarvith told them that the Ghostlord was creating undead for the Horde and that they are here to stop it. They also tell her that they destroyed all the little demon dragon eggs. No one actually says anything about the phylactery for awhile but the female seems pretty sure that the party has it. She starts contemplating which one of them would be carrying it. Harvey offers himself as a hostage instead of Sequel. The woman agrees but Harvey has to leave his armor and weapons behind.

While this conversation is going on, Aetrid, Jemma, and Kael stop their searching of the cave and start to climb the panther to reach the mouth. About the time Harvey is halfway out of his armor, they make it to the top and see Sequel being held by a single, male hobgoblin. Aetrid shoots the hobgoblin. The female voice yells out to drop Sequel. Medi cries out that she has the phylactery

and that they're welcome to try and get it. The female voice yells out to get Medi. The visible hobgoblin tosses Sequel and then jumps over the edge. Two additional "thuds" are heard landing near Medi.

Harvey catches Sequel (probably saving his life) and the fight starts. Two more hobgoblins appear as they attack Medi and Halcyon. All three hobgoblins are killed.

Up in the panther's mouth, two Hell Hounds simply appear and attack the characters up there. Jemma senses that someone or something flew over his head and out of the mouth. The Hell Hounds are slain. Jemma drops the rope ladder down. Medi starts climbing up and is struck by a bolt of lightning (came down out of the cloudy skies). Halcyon sees someone flying about 100 feet up. Sequel goes invisible and flies up and throws a Fireball at the individual. The person simply vanishes after being struck by the Fireball.

Back up in the panther's mouth, two more hobgoblins appear in the door at the back of the mouth. They are dispatched fairly quickly. Everyone gathers together and the party pushes on into the lair.

The corridor beyond the double doors has carvings depicting panthers pouncing upon and slaying elves. Doors at the end of this corridor open to a room with a spiral staircase going down. Heading down the stairs, the party discovers a room that is empty except for a long, low stone bench against a wall. The wall has carvings of panthers such that it looks as though they are pouncing on anyone sitting on the bench. Two doors lead out of this room.

The first door opened leads to a room with a number of sleeping mats on the floor, a large statue of a dragon with five heads (one of each color: red, blue, green, white, and black), and numerous leather straps hanging from the ceiling and walls with dragon scales attached. Two additional doors lead from this room. One leads to a room with various crates and barrels that are labeled as various foodstuffs and supplies...all are nearly empty. Harvey estimates that there may have been enough supplies for a couple of weeks but may only be a day or two remaining (for a group under a dozen in number). The other room has a cot with many furs and blankets upon it and a table with papers upon it. The papers look to be an opera about dragons loyal to Tiamat killing good dragons. The papers, furs, and blankets all have the same smell as the letter from Ulwai to Saarvith.

Returning to the bench room, the party opens the other door. Inside is a low, stone table with bloodstains and various small bits of flesh upon it. A shelf is on the wall above the table and has various jars and vials upon it. All appear to contain various bodyparts of one sort or another. An open pit in one corner of the room has bloodstains around its edges and it is deeper than Harvey can see with his darkvision. While in this room, another hobgoblin suddenly appears and attacks the party. He is easily dispatched.

Another door leads out of this room and opens onto a short, unadorned corridor that ends in a door. Aetrid and Jemma head down this corridor while the bulk of the party is still in the "surgery" room. The door at the end opens into a corridor perpendicular to the current corridor with a door at one end and a corner at the other. Aetrid goes in and opens the door. Inside is a large room with a pool of some kind of liquid, a large panther statue, and numerous alcoves. Of immediate interest, however, are the tentacled, ghoulish creatures quickly coming out of the alcoves towards Aetrid.

About a half-dozen creatures flood into the corridor after Aetrid. He and Jemma are overrun by them. Jemma falls quickly and is carried off by one of the creatures. Aetrid disappears down the far corridor with some of the creatures in pursuit. The rest of the party engages and kills four of these creatures.

While Kael searches the body of the hobgoblin in the "lab" room (he eventually gets a set of bracers off of it), the rest of the party heads off to find Aetrid and Jemma. Harvey looks around a corner where Aetrid was last seen and sees no one. Halcyon heads in the direction that Jemma was taken and finds the door to be closed. She opens it and sees that Jemma is floating in the glowing mustard yellow pool along with a larger creature—looks like a panther. One of the undead is in the room and a fight starts. The undead thingee retreats INTO the wall of the room and then comes back out near Sequel, attacking him. The undead is defeated.

Halcyon reaches into the pool and pulls out Jemma. The liquid is kind of gel-like and Halcyon's arm gets tingly and numb from the liquid. Jemma has the liquid wiped off of him and Medi heals him. Medi can tell that he's alive and conscious but he does not move or speak.

There is a small hallway leading out of this room. It opens into a room with a 4-ft. diameter, black stone floating a couple of feet off of the floor. There are a number of small, orange translucent ghostly panthers swarming around the stone (but not through it). Harvey touches the stone lightly and feels an overwhelming evil emanating from it.

Party heads off to find Aetrid. That corridor ends with a door. Harvey opens it and the room beyond has a couch, shelves with books (all about panthers), and carvings of panthers on the walls. Aetrid is lying on the couch with one of the undead things over him with its fangs sunk in his neck. Combat ensues and the party dispatches the creature. Medi heals Aetrid but he is feeling weak and fragile (i.e., his Constitution has been drained). Kael searches this room but doesn't really find much worth taking.

Heading back into the room with the pool, the party starts searching. Katherine finds a secret door that opens to a corridor with a door at one end of it. It dead ends at the other end. Harvey, Katherine, and Sequel go into the room beyond the door. The room has a small stone rim on the floor; beyond it lies dirt. A barren, unnatural tree is growing in the soil and its branches take up about half of the room. There are six small, shrouded bodies on the ground near the trunk of the tree. A ghost of a panther flies out of the tree's trunk and passes through Harvey (weakening him). Medi, drawing upon the power of Mayaheine, causes the ghost to flee the area.

Aetrid finds a secret door at the end of the dead-end corridor. This door opens into a room that looks like a treasury that has been thoroughly trashed. Torn up paintings, broken glass, smashed artwork, scattered coins, gems, and other assorted and damaged treasures lie about the room. Kael spends some time searching through the debris for valuables while the rest of the party searches for additional secret doors.

Sequel finds a secret door that leads to a short, dead-end corridor. Another secret door is found here. It opens into a room containing the Ghostlord. The Ghostlord begins an attack on the party...hitting Aetrid with some ray that weakens him. Enough

dialogue occurs to get the Ghostlord to pause and demand that his phylactery be returned. Sequel hands it over and the Ghostlord demands that the party leave within five minutes or he will kill them all.

The party flees the lair. They make it out as they hear sounds like thunder coming from behind them...presumably an angry Ghostlord doing something. The party travels towards the spot that they originally had dismounted from the eagles. They camp here for the evening.

Waterday (19): The party spends the day camping in the woods and resting to allow Aetrid and Jemma to recover some and to allow Sequel to regain his arcane strength.

Harvey feels a tingling on his consciousness and the sense that someone is attempting to scry upon him. He resists it.

Sequel attempts to use his scrying ball but is unable to activate it.

New items recently recovered have Detect Magic cast upon them. The following are discovered to be magical:

- Satchel found in the Temple of Kyuss (Faint Transmutation)
- Short bow taken from Saarvith (Faint Enchantment)
- Shiny Dagger that Harvey found in the Temple (Moderate Enchantment)
- Slim Wooden Stick found in the Ghostlord's Treasury (Faint Conjuration)
- Kukri found in the Ghostlord's Treasury (Faint Enchantment)
- Elven Short Sword found in Temple's (Moderate Enchantment)
- Chain shirt found in Temple's privy (Moderate Enchantment)

Sequel later casts Identify using some of the pearls from the "bracelet" found on the dragon like thing in the front of the Ghostlord's lair. He finds that the "stick" above is a Wand of Web with 26 charges. He finds the horn found earlier to be a Horn of Fog and the ring found on "Reg" the black dragon to be a Ring of Minor Cold Resistance.

Earthday (20): Party continues on their way.

Harvey feels the tingling on his consciousness this time and resists again.

Freeday (21): Party continues on their way.

Harvey feels the tingling yet again but this time he doesn't resist. It is Sellyria contacting him. She has a message for him from the Viscount asking that Harvey and his companions make all due haste for Verbobonc.

As the party is packing up and getting ready for the day's travel, a large crashing noise—as though something large just dropped from the sky—is heard from off in the woods. A loud, deep voice says, "Lord Harvey Ashby and companions, you have committed crimes against Dragonkind. Prepare to die!" The group quickly spreads out around the trees and bushes in the area and get ready to face whatever creature is coming for them. Medi's sword is vibrating when she draws it. As they wait for something to come from the direction of the voice, a good number of small dragon-like creatures appear around them. They are more of the small, green dragonspawn that they party has fought before. Combat ensues. During the fight, a number of arrows are shot at the party from farther off in the woods but no archer is seen.

After the combat is over, Harvey, Kael, and Jemma head off in the direction that the arrows had been shot from but do not find anyone there. Katerine heads over in the direction from which the original deep had been heard but finds nothing—not even signs that something had fallen through the trees. During the fight, Katerine had heard laughter coming from somewhere in sky above. Some comments were also made about how educational it was to see the party fight. Katerine whistles for the eagles and the party heads on out.

By the end of the day, the party makes it to the burned and razed remains of Humming's End. Nothing has been left undamaged and many burned Halfling bodies can be seen around the village. The party decides to camp in the surrounding woods rather than stay in one of the burned out shells of a dwelling. As the party settles down, another loud crashing noise along with a thud is heard and the same voice again says, "Lord Harvey Ashby and companions, you have committed crimes against Dragonkind. Prepare to die!" Harvey calls for the party to form a defensive circle. Aetrid immediately heads off in the direction of the voice while the rest of the party follows Harvey's request.

A rather large and blue-colored dragonspawn carrying a very, very big sword comes crashing through the trees and attacks Aetrid. A second attack from the creature leaves Aetrid unconscious and gravely wounded. The party engages the creature and inflicts a rather significant amount of damage to it before it finally falls. Halcyon was nearly killed by the significant amount of damage that the creature dealt. It focused on attacking her.

During the fight, Katerine again hears voices in the sky above laughing and cackling. Sequel had started to fly up during the combat to get a better, and presumably safer, vantage from which to cast spells. Katerine's yell to him kept him from flying too far up. Instead, he casts See Invisibility and spots two human/dragon-like creatures flying in the sky. Sequel casts a Fireball at them which, of course, pisses them off and draws them into a fight. This fight is best described as the two creatures flying up high casting spells at the party, Sequel casting spells back, and those with missile weapons attempting to hit them (only Katerine's arrows seem to do much). It is a long, drawn out fight that sees lots of Fireballs tossed back and forth and sees a number of folks get badly damaged before the party is finally victorious.

During the fight, an area of magical darkness suddenly appeared above the party and seemed to obscure them from the dragonmen's line of sight (negating their ability to throw spells at folks under it). Jemma, who really couldn't do much against things so high up in the sky, noticed that arrows were being fired at the dragonmen from an area in which he couldn't see anyone. After the fight, Katerine found tracks in that same area and they headed right to where much of the party was currently standing and then suddenly seemed to stop. Sequel claimed that it was nothing to worry about but refused to go into any details as to how he knew that or what he knew which, as past history would clearly indicate, immensely pissed off Katerine (can anyone say Terjon???).

Party finds two pouches and a ring on each of the bad guys. One pouch from each has standard spell component stuff while the other has some type of non-magical dust. The rings detect as magical.

Party settles down for the night.

Starday (22): Party continues on their way to Verbobonc with no exciting stuff.

Sunday (23): Party continues on their way to Verbobonc with no exciting stuff.

Moonday (24): Party continues on their way to Verbobonc with no exciting stuff and arrives later in the afternoon. They are greeted by a patrol of Tiri Tor elves on eagle and escorted to the courtyard of Castle Greyfist and from there to the Great Hall. Inside the Great Hall are a large number of folks; they all fall silent and stare as the party enters the hall. All except for Medi's father. Although he rivals bugbear Harvey in height and build, he quickly and spryly runs over and envelopes his daughter in a huge hug.

The Viscount and a number of other individuals are grouped at a large table covered in maps, papers, half-eaten food, and mugs and clearly wait for the party to approach. He warmly welcomes the party and calls for food and drink and chairs for them. While they eat, he has the room cleared of all but a handful of individuals. Those that remain are:

- Viscount Langard (of course)
- Sir Simon Milinous (the Viscounty's Provost Marshall)
- Baron Rollof Avguston (the Viscounty's other Provost Marshall)
- Lord Ludovic Langmuir
- Lady Godelva "Iron Lady" Langmuir
- Obble Har, Magister of the Wrinkle Academy (Verbobonc's school for wizards)
- Bishop Haufren, the leader of the Church of St. Cuthbert in Verbobonc
- Lord Darius Velysin (Lord Mayor of the City of Verbobonc)
- Riis el Lendreer, Knight Bannerette of the Mounted Borderers (Verbobonc's elite military organization)
- Aesculapius (Medi's father and an expert in defensive fortifications)
- Waldgraf Corbin Deleveu, Knight Commander of the Mounted Borderers (commander of the 3rd Company and a noble in his own right)
- Sellyria, Trellara and Soranna

Once the party has refreshed themselves and the room has been cleared, the Viscount makes introductions. He introduces those that remain at his table and then, standing and approaching each character in turn, he introduces the party. It is clear that he has been briefed as to who is who and refers to the group as a "Company" of some sort. He then asks for a report from the party about their encounters with the Horde and what they've learned.

As Harvey and Halcyon (with some comments from other members of the "Company") relay their tale, a number of questions are asked. Sir Simon seems most interested in how the party has managed to defeat so many of the Horde's creatures as well as the information about its leaders. Bishop Haufren is rather disapproving of the kind of deals that the party has struck with various evil beings (e.g., the Ghostlord, Saarvith) despite it being done, as Halcyon put it, for the greater good. Riis pipes in with a couple of questions about the fights. Medi's father simply beams with pride and has a smile that goes from ear to ear. The Lord Mayor listens and watches the party intently (which apparently causes Kael some discomfort). Obble is particularly interested in the black scrying sphere which he states could be the Infinite Eye (one of the most powerful scrying devices ever created) as well as other magical things. Lord Ludovic Langmuir makes numerous comments pointing out the flaws of what the party has accomplished and is thoroughly negative.

At some point, as the party is relaying how the Horde minions seemed to have no problem finding them in recent days, Obble asks if anyone had ever been taken captive. When the answer is that Sequel had been, he informs everyone that it is possible that some item(s) may have been placed on the party to allow for ease of scrying. He suggests that everyone lay all of their items on the table to be examined. Kael doesn't look thrilled at the idea but things start with Aetrid and Sequel. Aetrid makes a comment about worrying that they won't get their stuff back. Obble finds that Sequel has a small rock with some carvings on it that neither Sequel nor anyone else in the party recognizes. He excuses himself for a moment to deal with it.

While Obble is gone, Lady Langmuir asks to speak. She stands and walks to the other side of the table to be in front of the Viscount and near the party. Here is her statement:

"Most Noble Lordship, I have an issue on which I have remained quiet to this point. It is an issue that I feel must be addressed before we go any further in discussing the role of these heroes [said with disdain]. We have all seen with our own eyes now that Haervieu, if that is truly who this odiferous being truly is, is no longer human. How can we trust that he can be trusted at this point?"

When Halcyon responds to her question with less than friendly words and demeanor, the "Iron Lady" continues with:

"My dear child, your tongue and temper are well-known as is your disobedience to your father. Before you speak more, think very carefully about any long-term consequences that your words may have. Your short-sighted disobedience already cost the life of your father and my dear friend Brennus. Any insults or angry words directed at me will not, I guarantee you, be forgotten."

A messenger then enters and hands Lady Langmuir a scroll tube. She continues with her "speech".

"I bring word from Lord Harold Ashby. He has asked, in his unavoidable absence, that I present the Viscount with this. [She hands the Viscount a sealed scroll tube and she allows him a moment to read it...his reaction is negative and he looks deflated at what he's read. Once he is finished reading it, she continues with obvious satisfaction and happiness...] This message from my dear friend and fellow noble simply states that both Haervieu and Halcyon are no longer considered members of House Ashby...both have been stripped of all rights and responsibilities that went with such a position. Both have acted in a manner that has harmed the interests of the House, attacked its duly appointed servants without provocation, and are ultimately responsible for the death of their father."

Lady Langmuir claims that she feels threatened by current company and claps twice. At that, Toruko walks into the room and comes to her side. Toruko, soon after arriving, walks over to Halcyon and whispers something such that only she can hear it. Lady Langmuir protests that she demands satisfaction for the insults that someone with no station (i.e., Halcyon) has made against her honor. Toruko attempts to whisper something into Halcyon's ear again but she simply refuses to allow him to do so and claims that this is neither the time nor the place for such infighting.

The Viscount finally shouts out, "Enough!" He then calls for EVERYONE except the party to leave the room. All head out of the Great Hall leaving the party alone with the Viscount.

After the hall is cleared, the Viscount asks the party to follow him and he leads them into a small side room. After Obble comes into the room and states that everything is good to go (i.e., Scry-block is up), the Viscount begins a discussion with the party. He first thanks the party for assisting a friend of his who was in trouble in Nulb. He never mentions this person by name but it is pretty clear (at least to some of the characters) to whom he is referring. He then goes on to explain that most of the "players" involved are both looking to protect Verbobonc and to advance their own interests. He fills the party in on the views and perspectives of different factions, focusing on a rift between those that wish to meet the Horde on the open field of battle away from Verbobonc and those that want to use Verbobonc as a defense against the Horde. He asks that the party provide their opinion (favors using Verbobonc as a defense) and then to do so in public.

The Viscount also touches on the issue of what is to be done with the party. They have been very successful in their encounters with the Horde and some will be wary of that or attempt to break up the group for other reasons (e.g., the Iron Bitch). He's afraid that he won't be able to stop such things. The party asks if Obble could identify or assist Sequel in identifying various pieces of magical equipment that they've recovered. He asks for them to put it all in a pile and that he'll get it back to them in the morning.

The "Defense Council" is reconvened to decide on the tactics to be taken. Various members make statements about how best to defend Verbobonc and the party is given an opportunity to do so as well. Jemma makes a comment about what good is having an intact city if everyone that could defend it has been slain during a battle a few miles away. The Viscount calls for a vote and it goes as he expected. As a recognition of Rolof Avgustin's long service as Provost Marshall of Verbobonc, the Viscount asks for his vote last. The vote is tied prior to Avgustin's vote. After milking the moment with a brief pause, the Provost Marshall votes by saying that the little fellow made a good point. Avgustin votes for staying within the city's walls and letting the Horde come to Verbobonc. This vote earns and Jemma's influence on it, earns the party some points with some of the Council but does not endear them to those from the opposing opinion.

The issue of the appropriate role for Harvey and the rest of the party comes up. The Viscount nips this in the bud by asking if each member of the party is here to fight in Verbobonc's defense. He asks if they are willing to swear fealty to Verbobonc. Katerine asks if they can swear fealty to the Viscount personally instead as she would have a concern about who they might serve if something unfortunate happened to the Viscount. The Viscount agrees and everyone agrees to personally serve the Viscount. Each party member has, essentially, been knighted and Medi's father points out that it was the strangest such knighthood ceremony he's ever seen but that he's also immensely proud (and thanks the Viscount profusely). This will allow him to personally command the party as a unit rather than allowing for others to politically manipulate the situation.

Again, some are not happy with this development. The Viscount also declares a sort of martial law and orders that all "non-combatants" be escorted from the Hall and that all non-combatants need to evacuate the city. Lady Langmuir is very displeased with this turn of events.

After the Hall has been cleared of non-combatants (though Sellyria still remains), more discussion occurs regarding the defense of the city. Sellyria, at some point, brings up a topic that none of the others seem willing to discuss...what happens if the Horde breaches the walls. The Viscount responds that then those that can fall back to the castle and any who can't fights a guerilla fight as best they can. That pretty much brings the evening's discussions to an end.

The party settles down for a mostly uneventful evening...though Halcyon has a rather hot dream.

Godsday (25): In the morning, the party gathers and finds that they've had a small seal of Verbobonc sewed onto their clothing. They are now part of H Company. Obble contacts the party and tells them some grave news. All of their items were stolen during the night by some dragonspawn thingeers. He leads the party to the small, side room again and all of the items are gone and the body of a dragonspawn lies on the ground. Many of the party are very concerned and start to say stuff when Jemma walks up the thing's body and puts his hand right through it. It is an illusion and part of a practical joke on Obble's part...Katerine was not pleased as she had left the Stick with a String to be examined. Obble tells the party about all the different items.

Sequel and Katerine decide to see if they can go do some research at the city's libraries but find them to be closed. Most of the city, in fact, is empty and boarded up.

Medi spends time with her father...working with different military units to blockade various city streets and reinforcing various defensive aspects of the city.

Harvey, Halcyon, and Kael head over to the Temple of Heironeous. Harvey asks to see the head priest to discuss the dreams that he had, the sword he has, the resurrection of Kael and Halcyon, and his own reincarnation. There is a good deal of interest in getting a look at Harvey's sword. The trio have a discussion with the head priest...Tehd. Harvey gives him the sword to examine and Tehd confirms that it is the sword of Merikel. The priest then gives a lesson, complete with knuckle-rapping for those that don't pay attention, about Merikel (the info has been posted to the website). Basically, Merikel was a powerful angel in the service of Heironeous whose pride grew to the point that Merikel challenged Heironeous for being the god of valor. Heironeous cast Merikel out and the angel fell to Hell. The sword, however, landed on the Flanaess. It has, over time, vascillated between representing Merikel the angel and Merikel the Demon Prince and has been born by both paladins and blackguards. Tehd basically says that Heironeous has given Harvey the task of redeeming the sword (that's why he was brought back to life).

As far as the resurrection of Kael and Halcyon, it is clear that the power of Heironeous was involved and thus it cannot be a purely bad thing. However, it is likely that Merikel had some hand in it as well. Tehd tasks Harvey with watching over both Kael and Halcyon. If either seems to be straying towards the evil of Merikel, Harvey should kill them. It would be the best thing to do for their souls. Kael, in particular, did not seem very comfortable with this order.

As this discussion winds down, the city's alarm bells begin to ring. All of the party member's, wherever they currently are, hurry back to Castle Grayfist and the Viscount's Great Hall. According to scouts, the Horde has begun to march towards the city. The Viscount discusses with the party how he will be communicating with them during the battle. Obble has prepared numerous scrolls and other magics to allow telepathic communication. The specific magic used with the party allows for communication between four individuals. Obble is one as he will be doing the magic. The Viscount will be another. Harvey, as the leader of the H Company, will be a third. The Viscount indicates that he would like for the fourth to be another member of the Defense Council. Either Simon Milinious (as the main commander of Verbobonc's forces) or Riis (as the commander of the Viscount's personal forces). The party goes with Riis (which doesn't win them points with Milinious).

The remainder of the day is spent in preparations for the attack. The Viscount provides each party member with two Potions of Cure Moderate Wounds. He indicates that resources are available if the party needs other things. The rest of the day is spent with nervous anticipation of the attack which comes shortly after nightfall. The sound of thousands of boots marching, drums and horns, and then loud things hitting against the walls of the city. The party is contacted by the Viscount and given their first mission...they need to take out a group of giants who are throwing boulders at the walls but are out of arrow range.

The party gets to the walls of the city and head outside. Sequel casts Invisibility on Kael and he heads out to scout the area. The party plans on waiting for him to return but Medi can tell that if the boulders continue to strike the walls that the rate they are, a breach will be created soon. The party heads out before Kael returns.

Kael finds a giant and then finds another about 60 feet away. He starts to head back towards the walls. The rest of the party finds the first giant shortly after Kael did and attacks. Kael joins in the fight and, eventually, a total of four giants join in the fight.

While the combat is going on, Harvey receives a telepathic message indicating that a dragon is attacking the city and that the western walls have been breached. The Viscount needs the party to get back to take care of the dragon. Harvey yells at most of the party to start heading back to the city before the last giant has fallen. All of the giants wind up dead and the party gathers again at the southern wall.

The Viscount gives Harvey the general area in which the dragon has been wreaking havoc. The party can see that many buildings are on fire. The party starts traveling through the city's streets to reach the dragon. They are interrupted by a figure in a hooded robe standing in the middle of the street ahead. The figure drops the hood and says that the party has gone far enough. It is Toruko and he states that his masters have ordered him to stop the party's interfering with the Horde. He offers to fight one party member in honorable combat. If he wins, the party will stop their actions and leave Verbobonc. If the party continues in their actions, then he'll start to attack those defending the city in an attempt to assist the Horde in taking the city. He says that he doesn't care about the Horde or Verbobonc or what ultimately happens...just that he must stop the party from interfering.

The party "rejects" his offer. Harvey and Jemma move to attack Toruko while the others head down another street to reach the dragon. Toruko moves with superhuman speed to cut off this latter group. He attacks Halcyon in a "run by" attack and goes around the corner of a building. Harvey and Jemma head after him while everyone else continues after the dragon. Harvey and Jemma engage Toruko with Jemma taunting him while the others continue on.

The others reach a small square and find the dragon. It is a colossal ancient red dragon and so Halcyon pulls out her "Easy Button" and transforms it into a large juvenile red dragon. Halcyon moves within 30 feet or so of it and it asks if she intends to fight. It seems quite pleased when she says yes. The battle with the dragon begins.

Harvey and Jemma continue to fight with Toruko. After they've done some significant damage to him, Toruko simply disappears. Harvey and Jemma head on to join the rest of the party.

The battle against the dragon is a difficult one. A number of characters, thanks to Sequel's *Fly* spell, engage the dragon in the air. Most of the party has a very difficult time actually damaging it (it has a very high AC). One of Katerine's arrows, however, strikes true and does a significant amount of damage to her. The dragon alternates between focusing its attacks on Medi, Halcyon, and Katerine or, if there are a group of characters bunched together, hitting them with its fiery breath. Eventually, the attacks take their toll on the dragon and Sequel, with a *Shocking Grasp*, slays the dragon...yes, Sequel got the killing blow on yet another dragon.

Harvey contacts the Viscount to let him know that the dragon has been slain. The Viscount informs Harvey that the Horde has flooded into the city. Battles are being fought throughout the city and the troops have been ordered to fall back to Castle Grayfist. Company H needs to head to one of the main streets and help hold the blockade there until the troops can reach the relative safety of the castle. Harvey requests that a couple of clerics meet the party to assist in some healing. The Viscount agrees to send a couple to meet and that a dozen troops will be at the blockade to assist Company H in its defense.

Aetrid...yadda, yadda, yadda...and dies.

Party reaches the area of the barricade that they are to hold and see a dozen or so bodies lie on the ground. Toruko is in the process of dispatching two other men (who fall dead from his attacks). Toruko hops up onto the barricade and, before sprinting away, states that he warned the party that he would start killing defenders if the party continued to participate in Verbobonc's defense.

The dead bodies are clearly the dozen men and two clerics. Medi finds some Potions of Cure Moderate Wounds and says a few quick words for the dead.

The barricade itself covers the twenty or so feet between parallel sets of buildings. It is approximately five feet high and made of rocks, wagons, and other such things. This particular street heads back to the plaza surrounding Castle Grayfist and is a direct

route for the Horde to take to reach the Castle. The party needs to hold the blockade until Verbobonc's men can fully retreat to the Castle from various parts of the city. Other units are manning other blockades on other streets that lead to the plaza.

The party spreads out in the area and prepares for what the Horde may throw at them. Katerine heads up on raised platform and soon spots some flying creature but it is too far away and too dim for her to make out what it is.

Sequel casts a Web from the wand that Kael has to cover a 20' diameter area about 20 feet beyond the barricade.

Manticores swoop out of the sky and begin an attack...initially by shooting their spikes. The party responds with missile fire.

Halcyon heads up onto a roof so she can see beyond the web and spots a guard tower about 20 feet past the web. She climbs across the rooftops until she reaches an open area next to the guard tower. She spots a group of hobgoblin archers who also spot her. Halcyon begins to fight the hobgoblins as Harvey and Jemma move to her aid. Sequel, Katerine, Kael, and Medi continue to battle the manticores (Sequel is incapacitated at one point).

Harvey charges (on Lily) through the webs but gets stuck.

Jemma, Kael and Katerine (after she kills one of the manticores) eventually engage the Hobgoblins along with Halcyon. Both Kael and Katerine have had Greater Invisibility cast upon them by Sequel.

Harvey eventually heads back to aid Medi and Sequel against the Manticores.

The party defeats the hobgoblins and the manticores and starts to search them (adventurers...go figure). Some potions are found (later found to be Potions of Cure Moderate Wounds). Halcyon takes some arrows and climbs the guard tower.

As Halcyon reaches the top of the tower, she hears a loud yell and can see eight bugbears charging down the road. Harvey is the only target visible to them and they completely surround him. Their attacks knock Harvey unconscious but Lily charges in, grabs him by the scruff, leaps back across the barrier, and drops Harvey near Medi before Lily succumbs to her own wounds and falls to her knees.

Battle ensues as most of the bugbears leap over the barrier. A couple remain on the other side to fight Jemma, Kael, and Halcyon.

Lily, despite her wounds, continues to fight until Harvey, after being healed by Medi, sends her away. She clearly resists his command but ultimately obeys.

After all of the bugbears are defeated, the party searches them (again, adventurers...go figure). Each has a potion (later found to be Potions of Cure Light Wounds).

As the party is searching the buggies, Harvey is struck by a rock. It has a piece of paper tied to it and Harvey reads it. It is a note from Toruko. He regrets to inform Harvey that he has killed all of the city's defenders that were retreating along this particular road. Harvey contacts the Viscount to inform him and to advise him to have any other defenders take a different route. From the choppiness and manner in which he and the Viscount communicate, Harvey gets the impression that the Viscount is directly involved in fighting as well (ooh...score another point for Langard with the common and adventuring folk).

As the party is regrouping back behind the barricade, a group of six, large, blue-dragon, rhino-like creatures with goblins atop them charge down the road towards the barricade. The dragon-rhino things have electricity crackling across their horns and bodies. Most of them crash right into the barricade and it is clear to Medi that the barricade will not hold against another such charge.

Battle ensues.

A second charge brings the barricade down and a couple of the rhino-dragons come through.

The party is successful in defeating all of these foes before any get past them.

Harvey contacts the Viscount to let him know that the barricade is down but that Company H is still holding position.

As everyone takes a breath (and presumably prepares to loot the dead...remember, we're talking about adventurers here), Kael can spot that more dragon creatures are coming down the street. The plan is to have Halcyon and Jemma meet the dragons outside the barricade while Harvey and Medi put the dragon bodies into the barricade and Sequel searches the goblin bodies behind the barricade for potions, arrows, etc. Kael is also outside the barricade already and will help meet the dragons outside the barricade. Katerine will provide covering fire from behind the barricade.

And here we stopped...