

Family Matters

A Two-Round D&D Adventure

Round 1

by Theron Martin

Great deeds sometimes come at a terrible price, as Janna now knows all too well. In her darkest hour who else could she turn to but family? The call has been issued, an oath must be kept: the six siblings must come together again. An adventure for characters levels 7-8, characters provided.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Pass out the player characters based on class, gender, and/or race. Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described below. When they have prepared their characters, you may continue with the game.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. **No-vote scoring:** The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. **Partial scoring:** The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. **Voting:** Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

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

Scenario Preparation

Begin by passing out character sheets face down on the basis of class only. Do *not* mention the races (this is particularly important in one case). In the case of Clarice, the rogue/bard, announce her only as a bard. Alternatively, you may just assign characters in the following order, going left to right around the table: Dominic, Janna, Cedrick, Sharon, Susan, Clarice. In either case the players of the two rangers (Sharon and Susan) should sit beside each other, for reasons that will become clear when you read their character sheets. Read the Player's Introduction first, then allow players time to review their characters and choose spells. Once everyone is prepared, proceed to Encounter #1.

The Player Characters

It is especially important for you to review the PCs in detail before running this scenario since there are special circumstances involved with most of them—for instance one is a doppelganger, while another is suffering from a dreadful curse. These circumstances are detailed fully on the character sheets but are also summarized on the DM Reference Sheet for your convenience.

DM's Background: The Camarillo Family

Most of the important background details are described in the various PC's profiles and the Player's Introduction, below. The details that are not covered in those sources are included here.

Forty-one years ago the necromancer Martinic Camarillo married the onetime Lady Evangela and, shortly thereafter, moved his bride and research facilities to Hallisburg, a walled town located on the fringe of civilization. He hoped Hallisburg would be far enough away from the intrigues and rivalries of the big city magic guilds to keep his future family and studies safe. He actually wanted to move even farther out into the wild, but living in a town was a concession to his wife's desire to not be completely isolated from other people. For several years he was content to support his research and gradually expanding family. He received income by performing minor magical services for travelers and locals. Eventually, though, he found this to be too limiting, so he started taking "business trips" of ever-increasing length. During his last trip he was defeated by a rival in a spell combat and left for dead. Thanks to a clever *contingency* spell Martinic survived, but the encounter changed him. He experienced an epiphany and believes that he has undergone a subtle but powerful transformation into something beyond what he had been before. He has not really undergone any transformation, other than the transformation from sanity to madness. In his new delusional existence he had no need for family, so he sent messages to his former home and family that

made it seem like he had died, and then went ahead with his new life.

His wife and children, believing him dead, carried on as best they could. The eldest brother helped raise the family, which included a sixth child that Martinic had fathered but has never seen. Eventually all the children went their separate ways. One became a mage, another a priestess, another a soldier, two others became rangers, and the sixth ran away to join the circus. Although all achieved success and fame to one degree or another, one earned particular fame: Janna, the eldest daughter. She became a priestess, and met and married a crusading knight. During their last adventure together, the couple, along with group of knights, destroyed the gauntlet of lamentation, a powerful evil artifact capable of inflicting all manner of suffering on those within its grasp. Janna was the sole survivor of the episode, but the gauntlet, as its last retribution before being destroyed, inflicted a serious curse on her. The curse is described on her character sheet as well as on the DM Reference Sheet. Shortly after the artifact spun its curse on the priestess, Janna discovered that she was pregnant. She knew the curse would not allow her to live long enough to carry the baby to term, so she sought spiritual guidance. How could she live long enough for her child to survive, even if it meant she wouldn't survive herself?

As an indirect reward for destroying the gauntlet (for other Powers were angered by its destruction), Janna received aid from her patron goddess. She found out that the Oracle of the Temple of the Seer on Catclaw Mountain would be able to give her the answer she sought. Knowing that she could not make the trip on her own in her current state, she decided to use a special prearranged form of magical messaging to call her kin home, in hopes that they would be able to come together to help her on her last fateful quest.

What Janna and the rest of her siblings are unaware of is that Marinol, Janna's patron goddess, deliberately gave her an indirect answer so that her family would be gathered together again. The goddess knew that it would take their combined strength and influence to deal with the solution to Janna's quest: the one person capable of lifting the curse is their long-believed-dead father Martinic, who is now the prophet-leader of a death cult.

One additional twist in this scenario is the replacement of Cedrick, the younger of the two sons, by a doppelganger. By the time the PCs reach Hallisburg Cedrick has discovered the deception and divined the location of the culprit. He starts on an intercept course as the PCs leave Hallisburg for Catclaw Mountain and catches up with them at the end of the round.

Player's Introduction

Hallisburg is not a large town, but it is known for a few things. Its position on the fringes of civilization makes it one of the first lines of defense against invasions from the south. It serves as the last stop for adventurers and spice caravans before they depart into the untamed hinterlands. It is also the regional center for logging, trapping, and farming trades. For

the six of you, though, it is most important for another reason, it is the place you all once called home, and it is the place to which you now return.

Your father was a potent mage who took his new bride, the Lady Evangela, and settled here in order to get away from the political turmoil that embroiled wizards of the great cities to the north and west. Not long afterwards the family began to expand. First came Dominic, and for several years it was just the three of them. Then Janna was born, and then followed Cedrick. Susan and Sharon were next. When the Lady Evangela became pregnant with her sixth child, it seemed the family would be complete; after all, both she and your father had come from families of six children. Then your father disappeared while on a journey, and not long afterward you received word that he had been killed in a battle. The sixth and final child, Clarice, was born to a fatherless family.

Growing up without a father around was rough, but the Camarillo children always stuck together and, with your mother's guidance, you all got through it. As each of you grew old enough you departed Hallisburg to seek success and fortune in the wide and wondrous (and dangerous!) world. All of you found it to one degree or another. Perhaps it was the perseverance and ingenuity fostered in you by the conditions of your childhoods, or perhaps some deity was repaying all of you for the troubles of your early years. Whatever the case, none of you ever forgot your roots. When a special event - the marriage of one of your own - came about, all of you returned to Hallisburg from your various professions to celebrate the glorious event together, as a family should.

Although some old animosities arose, a great time was had by all. You all knew that your lives have drifted too far apart for you to stay together, though, and because of some of your chosen professions even staying in regular contact with each other would be difficult. Dominic proposed that a method should be arranged for all of you to be gathered again should some event of great importance to the family arise. All of you agreed to this, so Dominic commissioned a colleague of his to create six mystical tablets. These tablets could be worn as necklaces or fitted into a piece of clothing or jewelry, as each individual saw fit. Together the tablets are a special kind of magical contact device; if any one of you breaks one and speaks a few words, that message is relayed to the other five bearers of the tablets. All of you agreed that these tablets should not be used frivolously; they are only for extreme circumstances. Because of that all of you swore an oath to respond promptly, regardless of what other commitments you had, if the tablets were ever used. After the wedding the six of you once again went your separate ways, but this time you were secure in the knowledge that a link to your siblings existed if it was needed.

Seven years have passed and now, for the first time, the tablets have been used. The other five of you were startled when your tablets broke one afternoon and a message from Janna suddenly whispered into your ears: return and gather at the Wild Boar Inn in Hallisburg with all due haste, a matter of great family importance has arisen. Nothing more was communicated, but the urgency of the message was absolutely clear. Now each of you is returning to your onetime home. What matter could possibly be so important that Janna would use the summons? This question is on the forefront of the minds of the others among you. When you reach Hallisburg

you will surely find out, although some of you already dread the answer.

Additional Notes

After reading the Player's Introduction tell the players to turn their character sheets over and prepare their character's spells. The player who has Janna (the cleric) should be specifically told to read that character's Profile first, as it will explain circumstances elsewhere on the character sheet.

Because the PCs are coming together in Encounter 1, role-play between PCs prior to that is limited. Sharon and Susan may interact with each other, as may "Cedrick" and Clarice, since in both cases they are traveling in pairs. Dominic and Janna may also interact with each other since Dominic arrives home first. All other role-playing between PCs is prohibited until Encounter 1.

If the players ask about mounts, inform them that all of the PCs have normal riding horses with standard tack (bit and bridle, harness, saddle, saddlebag, etc.). Stats for these horses are provided on the DM Reference Sheet should they become relevant in an encounter.

Encounter 1: Home Is Where The Heart Is

Due to magical assists, Dominic is the first PC to join Janna back home. At the beginning of this encounter or at some point prior it takes the players for these two characters aside and read the following to them:

The original Wild Boar Inn was a popular hangout for all the local youth because it had a special room set aside just for them. It burned down years ago, but its newest incarnation is a definite improvement—a lot cleaner, for one, and in a lot better repair. There's even a porter who takes your cloak at the door! When you, Dominic, mention to the serving maid that you are here for the Camarillo gathering, she immediately leads you to a curtained-off back room where Janna awaits—only this isn't the vibrant, happy Janna that you remember. Oh, it's most definitely her, no doubt about that, but she looks like she has seen far better days. Her face is pale, scarred, and drawn and the smile she flashes at you is strained, as if it takes obvious effort. When she rises to meet you, it is with a stiffness and frailty you normally only see in the old and infirm. She is obviously not well.

Allow them a couple of minutes to role-play their greeting if the players are so inclined. While they are doing so go back to the table and read the following for the rest of the players:

For Susan and Sharon the journey back to Harrisburg has been a long and tiring one. You finally arrive at the gates to Harrisburg as a crowd is lining up for admittance before the gates close at sunset. Ahead in the line you notice two familiar figures: that of your older brother Cedric and your younger

sister Clarice! (Or at least you think it's Clarice; she used to have the same hair color as yours but now she's a brunette.)

Allow them a couple of minutes to role-play this meeting if they are so inclined. When everyone is done and together give the player for the false Cedrick Player Handout #1 and then read the following:

All of you remember spending time in the Wild Boar Inn during your teen years, but it looks like the place has been torn down and completely rebuilt since then. It's a definite improvement. When you enter you find yourself in a more formal atmosphere, complete with a porter to take your cloak. You don't see Janna anywhere in the common room, but as you are looking around you do see your oldest brother step through curtains cordoning off a back room and wave to you.

All of you are curious how Dominic could have beaten you here, since all of you had thought that he had to come from the greatest distance, but you are more curious why he is greeting you instead of Janna. When you walk over and enter the back room, you get a hint of the reason why: Janna looks terrible. She was never a model of health in her youth, but now she is pale and gaunt. Her hair has thinned and frayed and her body has a frailty about it that suggests prolonged sickness and unhealthy weight loss. She smiles weakly at you as you move to greet her.

It is up to the players to role-play the next exchange, including their PCs' greetings for each other, Janna's explanation for why they were all called together and their individual reactions to it. This should take several minutes. After a little while, or if any of them call for food or drink, a serving maid enters. She is an averaged-sized and moderately pretty girl who looks to be about 15 years old and has features that are vaguely familiar to most of the PCs. She introduces herself as Sarah (female human Com1; Sense Motive +4, Will +1 save; Read #4 for Cedrick) and is very proper and demure in the way she addresses the PCs. She expresses concern about the evident poor health of Janna. She comments that she herself has been ill the last few days with a nasty flu that's been going around, and recommends a special blend of honeyed herbal tea that she swears by the Lady Marinol helped her get through her recent bout. (If Janna's player asks, she recognizes this as a popular folk remedy that is known to have some genuine medicinal value.) She also takes orders from any of the other PCs. All but the most exotic of drinks is available, and main course options include fish, mutton, and beef with various side items included. Total cost for a meal is 1 gp, but it's worth it.

If any PC tries to identify the serving maid, Janna or the twins can, on a successful Intelligence check (DC 10 or DC 15 for Clarice), realize that Sarah's features bear a distinct resemblance to a girl named Jacinda who was one of Janna's friends her early teen years. If a PC remarks on this, Sarah admits that Jacinda is - was - her mother (the gods rest her soul). If a PC remark that they knew Jacinda, Sarah looks all of the PCs over again, staring at the twins in particular. She then asks if they are the famous (she will slip up and say "infamous" first) Camarillo twins that

her parents both talked about knowing as children. If the PCs inquire further about her parents, Sarah admits that her mother died three years ago in a carriage accident but her father Severin is still around—he's the head cook here at the Wild Boar Inn.

All of the PCs (except Cedrick, but don't mention this) recognize Severin as the name of a friend of the family who was about Dominic's age who helped Dominic and their mother out on various occasions when heavier work needed to be done at their home. They also recall that he had been invited to Janna's wedding but sent his regrets about not being able to attend because it was near the end of the harvest season and he was trying to get his crops to market. None of the PCs were aware that he had married Jacinda, though. They might also be curious about how he ended up back in Harrisburg if he was farming a homestead. If they ask about this, Sarah will shrug and say that the farming thing was mostly Mom's dream and that Dad didn't have the heart to keep it up after she died.

At some point after the PCs indicate that they know Sarah's father, she insists that he would want to come out and meet them and, with their permission, she leaves to get him. (If it never gets to this point, have Sarah recognize the twins from the descriptions of her parents and go back to the kitchen on her own to tell her father about them. He will, in that case, want to come investigate.) When she comes back with him, read the following:

A tall, thin moustache-sporting man wearing a long stained white apron follows Sarah in through the curtains. Although the man's appearance has aged greatly over the years, there's still no mistaking those features. This is definitely Severin, or "Uncle Sevvie" as the younger among you used to call him. He stops and stares in shock at all of you, then shakes his head.

"Well, I'll be an orc's uncle," he says with a broad smile. "The Camarillo kids, all together once again. That's not a sight I would have ever expected to see!" Then his gaze falls on Janna. "Oh, my. I'll take a wild guess that you aren't just assembled here for a casual family reunion."

Severin (male human Com2; Profession: Cooking +6, Profession: Farming +4, Will save +2; Read #7 for Cedrick) is a man beaten down by age and hardship. He quickly brightens in the presence of the PCs, though, and greets them warmly. He is especially charming in greeting the twins, whom he fancied quite a bit before falling in love with Jacinda, and greets Cedric and Dominic like old school buddies. If the PCs don't offer up the details about Janna then he asks about her situation at the first opportunity, since he is deeply concerned. If the PCs fill him in, he grows grim and looks like he's trying to make up his mind about a difficult decision. He eventually says that, under the circumstances, he thinks they all should visit their mother before leaving for Catclaw Mountain—he says this with obvious reluctance.

At this point inform the PCs that Severin's suggestion seems highly impractical to them, since they all know that their mother moved to Bay City three years ago to be near some of her cousins. Journeying there first

would entail a month-long side trip. If told this, Severin shakes his head and asks them if any of them have ever visited their mother there. None of them have. Read the following when the PCs answer:

Severin sighs. "Yep, that's exactly what your mother intended. She chose Bay City 'cause she knew it was so far away from all of you that it would be difficult for you to come and visit her. Truth is, she never left Hallisburg."

Allow an opportunity for PC response and then continue:

"Y'see, about three years ago your mother started to develop some...problems. She could see what was coming and knew nothing would stop it, so she set up that whole charade before committing herself because she didn't want you all to know about it. For the last two and a half years she's been living in the Hallisburg Sanatorium. The Healer there says she's got a full-blown case of dementia. Most of the time her mind isn't quite all there."

If the PCs press Severin for details, he tells them that their mother didn't tell any of them about this because she wanted her children to remember her as she was. He was sworn to secrecy about it, so technically he's breaking a sacred oath by telling them about it. He has been looking in on her on a regular basis since moving back to Hallisburg to make sure she's doing all right and being treated well. At first she had her good days and bad, but now her memory's mostly gone and she sometimes babbles incoherently. Even so, he still feels that the PCs ought to let her know what's happened. She is, after all, their mother.

It is well into the evening by the time all of this is resolved. Once the PCs seem to have settled on their plans remind them of how late it is getting to be. All of the PCs have rooms reserved at the Wild Boar (arranged by Janna), so they will not have to seek accommodations. If the players ask what the PCs know about the terrain between Hallisburg and Catclaw Mountain, tell them that the twins have scouted it before and so are at least generally familiar with the area. It is composed of heavily forested foothills that gradually meld into the mountains themselves. That stretch of land has never been patrolled by any organized military, so it has long been known as a haven for raiders, less pleasant humanoids, and the occasional true monster.

If the PCs decide to visit their mother the next morning, go to Encounter #2.

If the PCs decide to honor their mother's wishes and skip the visit, go to Encounter #3.

Encounter 2: Mother Dearest

The skies are overcast and the hint of rain is in the air as you head through town to the Sanatorium. During your youth the block-shaped, whitewashed building served as the town's school and storm shelter, but it has been remodeled extensively since then to serve as a regional center for treating chronic diseases and infirmities. Unlike Janna's hospice, which focuses

on short-term and mid-term care, patients who come to a place like this usually stay for the duration of their lives.

Upon entering you are greeted by a tall, fair-haired woman wearing simple white robes. Her only adornment is a medallion in the form of a wreath of roses encircling a staff.

“Welcome to the Hallisburg Sanatorium, where we strive to provide aid and comfort to the sick and infirm,” she declares with a distinct country accent as she clasps her hands together before her. “Are you here to visit a friend or relative or,” she eyes Janna carefully, “are you here to admit someone?” Then she narrows her gaze as she gives Janna a more careful second look. With a start, Janna recognizes her as Cornina, a girl from a nearby village who was indoctrinated into the teachings of Marinol at the same time she was.

If Janna’s player asks for clarification, she and Corrina (Read #10 for Cedrick) were casual friends at the time but the two didn’t keep in touch after she left to start her hospice. In fact, this is the first time they have seen each other in more than twelve years. In the time since then Corrina has become a very confident and self-assured woman. Although friendly in general, she is bluntly direct when it comes to speaking her mind and tends to have a one-track mind about things. She instantly recognizes Janna’s condition as potentially terminal and offers to attempt a *remove disease* on her. If she is allowed to try, the spell fails. She then offers a copious list of possible herbal treatments, all of which Janna has futilely tried herself. If Corrina is informed that the illness is the result of a curse, she does, with only a little hesitation, offer to pull out a *remove curse* spell that she has on a scroll penned by a much more powerful priestess (14th, to be precise). She tells Janna that she wouldn’t just do this for anyone, but Janna is a fellow Healer and former friend. If she is allowed to try, the *remove curse* fails; the curse is beyond Corrina’s ability to break. She then offers to admit Janna for “proper long-term care,” with the assurance that no place in this part of the continent is better prepared to tend to her needs.

It should take considerable effort to convince Corrina that the PCs are here for any other reason. When they tell her that they are here to see their mother, she will look at them blankly, since she is not aware that the Lady Evangela (whom she knows only as Evangela) is Janna’s mother. She is amazed at this revelation, since she had always believed that Severin was Evangela’s only living relative. After this it takes some effort to convince her that Severin isn’t a brother or cousin to Janna. Corrina does, however, eventually lead the PCs to their mother:

Corrina leads you down a long hall to a door with a small window in it. A plaque on the door reads “Mental Ward.” As she pulls a ring of keys out of a pocket of her robes, she explains to you that they have to keep this room locked up at all times because the patients kept here have a bad tendency to stray outside and get in harm’s way. She opens the door to reveal a room set up much like a military barracks, only with a partition down the center to separate it into sides for male and female patients. On each side there are a score of beds stacked in two-high bunks, about half of which are occupied. Corrina leads you to the next to last one on the woman’s side, where a

white-haired, frail-looking woman of at least sixty years is still sleeping. It is undoubtedly Lady Evangela, your mother, although it’s quite a shock to see her this way. Even in her later years all of you remember her as a healthy, robust woman who always rose at the crack of dawn.

Corrina reaches down and gently shakes her awake. “Evangela,” she says gently, “you’ve got some visitors. It’s your children.”

“My what?” Your mother mumbles as she awakens and rubs her eyes. When she looks at all of you there is no hint of recognition in her eyes.

Lady Evangela suffers from a form of dementia that would be diagnosed as Alzheimer’s disease by a modern doctor. It cannot be cured by any means available to the PCs. She constantly seems confused and has only a 25% chance to recognize any of the PCs who speak to her. If she does not recognize one of the male PCs she refers to him as Clarence, and any female PC she does not recognize she refers to as Cynthia. If the players ask if the names sound familiar, all of the PCs except Cedrick and Dominic can, on a successful Intelligence check (DC 15), place them as the names of two of their mother’s cousins who visited her for a while not long after Dominic left home. Clarence was a representative of a merchant house specializing in the cloth trade, while Cynthia was a retired dancer with two mostly grown daughters at home. She believes the misidentified PCs to be these two and will converse with them accordingly, asking how the daughters are, how business is going, etc. Any PCs she does recognize she treats as if they are little children. She is enthusiastic about the encounter, since she doesn’t get many visitors and has been lonely lately.

The PCs can only communicate anything useful with their mother if they play along with her delusions. When informed that Janna is very sick, she tells her that she should go to bed and rest while she fixes some of her special soup - and then promptly forgets about it a minute later. At some point during the conversation she makes the comment that “there are some tricky, tricky people out there who make you think they’re not what they appear. You’d better keep a watch out for them.” At another point she says to Cedrick (whether she identifies him or not), “oh, a friend of yours is looking for you, but I can’t remember his name. Something that rhymed, I think.” After the PCs attempt to tell her about what happened to Janna, Lady Evangela looks Janna straight in the eye and say:

“Daughter (or Cynthia), you’ve been a bad girl and some nasty, ugly people think you should keep on being punished for it, but you’ve got friends who think you’ve already been whupped good enough. They’ll help you if you let ‘em.”

This is a cryptic reference to Marinol’s subtle efforts to help Janna in the face of the wrath of the evil forces displeased with the Gauntlet of Lamentation’s destruction. It and the other comments were whispered into Evangela’s ear by an agent of Marinol, and in her addled state she assumed that they were her own

thoughts and repeated them. After she says them she goes right back to her normal dialogue.

How much time the PCs spend in this encounter is up to the players. When they are ready to go Corrina escorts them back out and wishes them luck in finding a cure for Janna's condition.

Corrina, human female Clr7 (Marinol): Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 7d8; hp 35; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10 (+1 Dex, +2 ring); Atk unarmed +5 (1d3 subdual); SA Turn undead; SQ Healing and Protection domains; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +7.

Str 10, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Chr 12.

Skills: Concentration +7, Healing +16; Knowledge (Religion) +7, Profession (Herbalist) +11; Feats: Skill Focus: Healing, Empower Spell, Dodge, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (6/5/4/2/1): 0-lvl—create water, mending (x2), resistance, detect poison (x2); 1st-lvl—bless water, cure light wounds*, death watch (x2), remove fear (x2); 2nd-lvl—calm emotions, delay poison, gentle repose, hold person, cure moderate wounds*; 3rd-lvl—remove disease (x2), cure serious wounds*; 4th-lvl—neutralize poison, cure critical wounds*.

*domain spells

ENCOUNTER 3: The Trappers

The journey to Catclaw Mountain would normally take a full two days by horseback, but the PCs' journey will require three days due to the need for Janna to travel slower and take long breaks. If the PCs are, for some reason, not mounted most of the way, add an extra day to the journey for every day they do not travel while mounted. If the PCs wish to purchase extra mounts, good-quality riding horses can be purchased for 80 gp, average-quality ones for 60 gp. Additional supplies, within reason, may also be purchased for standard book prices. Weaponry is available for book prices, although nothing that would be considered exotic or would have to be custom-made (such as a strength bow) is available. If the PCs take what you would judge to be more than a couple of hours to make preparations and also have gone through Encounter #2 before leaving Hallisburg, use the slower timetable described in this and later encounters.

The rain that threatened at daybreak has not arrived by the time you set out for Catclaw Mountain on this cool, cloudy day. After three hours of travel you pass the last of the hamlets and homesteads in this direction and enter the untamed wilderness. At this point the road you have been following fades into a faint path heading off into the forested hills. The ruts of wagon wheels in the path prove that it has been used before, although they are not recent. Ahead the terrain becomes increasingly hilly and broken, with forests covering much of it.

At this point have the PCs establish a riding or marching order. Riding up to two abreast is possible. If the twins are scouting out ahead and/or to the sides of the rest of the PCs, have them make three Tracking checks during the

day (DC 15, firm ground)—one shortly after they start out, one at mid-afternoon, and one just before they camp for the evening. Each time they succeed roll on the following chart:

Roll (1d8)	Result
1-2	Small animal tracks: beaver, wolverine, and the like
3	Deer (white-tailed)
4	Wild boar
5	Bear, black
6	Human (three sets, booted, about a day old, traveling light)
7	Bugbear war party (10-12 members)
8	Clawed, vaguely humanoid prints of a type they can't identify

Results 6 and 7 are automatic on the third check if they don't come up sooner. Of the animal footprints, only the bear tracks are relatively recent; the rest are at least several hours old. The twins have to go well off the path (a mile or more) if they wish to track those animals down. The humans and bugbear war party tracks can be followed for about a mile, going in the general direction that the PCs are, before they are lost at a stream. (Both groups traveled almost half a mile downstream.)

Regardless of how late they got started, the PCs find themselves near a deep ravine when they are ready to camp for the night (the trail parallels it for four miles before winding around the ravine's far end). If the twins make a circuit around the camp before settling in, they automatically discover a great deal of tracks and the signs of a fight a hundred yards away. If they do not do such a circuit, have the twins notice distinct tracks on the edge of their chosen campsite that lead to the scene of the fight. A more careful search of the area reveals bloodstains and a scrap of cloth on a thorny bush right on the ravine's edge. A torn and emptied backpack can also be found under another bush a few yards away. A successful Tracking check (DC 15) reveals evidence that two distinct sets of tracks—one set belonging to a group of bugbears, the other to three human-sized pairs of boot prints—go into the area but only the bugbear prints leave.

The evidence should convince one or more of the PCs to check over the edge of the 100-foot deep ravine. The fading light makes details difficult to discern, but if a light source is shone down over the edge the glint of metal is seen about halfway down. This catches the attention of Derrick, a 12-year old boy who, along with his father, is lying on a rocky outcropping 50 feet below the top of the ravine. He calls out for help in a ragged voice, saying that he's badly hurt and his father is, too, but he can't wake his father up. Derrick is very afraid and cries out if the PCs leave him, even with the promise of getting more help. He is clearly on the edge of panic throughout the entire ordeal, although a song or tune from Clarice can calm him down a bit.

Rescuing Derrick and Cormac, his father, shouldn't be too difficult for the PCs, but it shouldn't be a cakewalk, either. The ledge they are on is just barely big enough for the two of them, and Derrick himself is too badly injured

to do any rope tying should the PCs decide to toss him down a rope. Either magic has to be used or one of the PCs has to climb or rappel down to the ledge, and possibly both will be needed. Derrick is 5 feet tall and weighs 100 pounds, and his father is 5 foot 9 inches tall with a stocky build that weighs nearly 200 pounds. Neither has any more serious injuries than a couple of broken bones, but Cormac is stabilized at -1 hit points when found. He comes around if given healing equal to a *cure light wounds* and is fully restored to health with a combination of Janna's Healing skill (DC 20) and 21 or more points of healing. Derrick requires 9 or more points of healing to be fully restored, but both are profusely grateful for any healing that the PCs give them, since they both thought they were goners (Cormac in particular sees the PCs as angels).

Once they have been at least partially restored, Cormac and Derrick gladly answer the PCs' questions. If asked about his predicament, Cormac explains that he and his sons are from one of the hamlets near Hallisburg. He was out teaching Derrick and Carl the basics of trapping beaver and wolverine (which are plentiful in this area) when they ran afoul of a group of bugbears. They were able to run and hide from the bugbears for a while, but they eventually were trapped within the ravine. A fight happened and Carl, Cormac's oldest son, took a nasty blow to the head. Cormac thought he was still alive at that point, but one of the bugbears picked him up and threw him in the ravine. The other bugbears apparently decided that this was good sport, so they also pushed him and Derrick over the edge. Fortunately for them the bugbears didn't check to see if they were dead before moving on. That was early in the afternoon, so they were on the ledge for several hours before the PCs found them.

After explaining this Cormac asks the PCs (although he hates to do so) if they can recover Carl's body before wolves get to it. If a PC does this, he or she can easily find the bloodied and broken body of a 16-year old boy lying at the bottom of the ravine. Cormac and Derrick are heartbroken over seeing Carl's body and ask Janna to give it a proper consecration and blessing.

Cormac asks if he and Derrick can spend the night with the PCs if they don't offer it first; he feels that the presence of the well-armed group may discourage the bugbears from another attack if they are still in the area. As a show of gratitude, Cormac offers to cook for the PCs while Derrick tends to their mounts. The PCs don't regret it if they agree, since both are very good at these tasks (Derrick has been trained as a groom and it shows). They don't ask the PCs about their business other than to inquire where they are headed with such an obviously sick lady, since they don't consider it their place to pry into other people's affairs. Both also offer to take turns on night watch if allowed to do so, although anyone on watch with Derrick notes that he gets jumpy at every little sound—he is still jittery from the whole bugbear experience.

The night passes uneventfully, although you can play on PC paranoia and give them a couple of sounds to check out if you choose. The next morning begins cool, overcast, and blustery. After breakfast Cormac takes the

body of Carl and, with Derrick, heads directly back to Hallisburg - this time promising to be much more careful about running afoul of bugbears. He thanks the PCs again for their assistance and invites them to stop by and visit them on their way home. If they agree, Cormac tells them, they'll be treated to a truly fine meal—roasted beaver tail is his specialty, and his wife does a mean home-brewed ale.

When Cormac has left and the PCs are ready to continue their journey (changed spells, etc.), go to Encounter #4.

Cormac, human male Rgr3: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 9 in. tall, 200 lbs); HD 3d10+3; hp 20 (-1 [stabilized] currently); Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 13 (+3 Dex); Atk melee +5 (1d6 +3, hand axe); SA favored enemy (goblinoids); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2.

Str 15, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 12, Chr 12.

Skills: Animal Empathy +5, Hide +5, Profession (cooking) +2, Profession (trapping) +6, Search +5, Swim +5, Track +7, Wilderness Lore +7; **Feats** Ambidexterity Dodge, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Two-Weapon Fighting

Possessions: hand axe, dagger, hunting trap (one still left in belt pouch), short bow (destroyed)

Cormac is 40 years old and solidly built, with dark hair and eyes. He is a retired military scout now devoted to raising his family. He carries on trapping as his profession, although he does a bit of farming, too (but he's not very good at it). He is Read #2 for Cedrick.

Derrick, human male Com1: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. tall, 100 lbs); HD 1d4; hp 4 (0 currently); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 11 (+1 Dex); Atk melee +0 (1d6, hand axe); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1.

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Chr 12.

Skills: Profession (farming) +1, Profession (Trapping) +2, Wilderness Lore +2; **Feats:** Tracking, Run.

Derrick is a slender 12-year old who very much resembles his father except in build. He is scared and shaken up by his experiences, so much so that he isn't even trying to put up a good front. He has a lot of respect (bordering on awe) for "hero-types." He is Read #8 for Cedrick.

Encounter 4: Outsiders In Wolves' Clothing

Find out if the PCs follow the same traveling procedures as the previous day, then read the following:

The wind whips cloaks and sends fallen leaves drifting across your path as you continue your journey. By the time the path you are following skirts around the end of the ravine - it turns out to actually be a box canyon - the rain has begun. Though light at first, it becomes a steady downpour that continues throughout the afternoon with no sign of abatement. The wind blowing it in your face makes it a constant nuisance as

you pass through the foothills on the other side of the ravine. Ahead the Catclaw Mountains loom large above you.

Find out if the PCs intend to do anything special during the day, particularly in light of the weather and possible threat from bugbears. Janna's cloak is waterproofed and Dominic's effectively is by virtue of being magical, but the rest of the PCs do not have such protection unless they specifically purchased it before leaving Hallisburg. Unless some form of magic is used to regulate the weather's effects, the other PCs will be cold, soaked, and miserable by the end of the day, whereas Janna and Dominic will only be miserable and a little wet and, in Janna's case, completely exhausted. (And don't they just love the smell of wet horse!) Play this up.

If the twins are scouting out ahead or to the sides of the group once they get around the ravine, have them make a Tracking check (DC 22). If one or both succeed they again cut across the track of the bugbear group, but these tracks are at least a day old and head back in the direction that the PCs have come. The bugbears headed off to the northwest after encountering Cormac and his sons. They have since encountered and been dealt with by Cedrick and his soldiers, who are cutting cross-country in an effort to catch up with the PCs. No matter how much extra time the PCs take on their journey, though, Cedrick will not catch up to them until after Encounter 6.

The twins may also decide to do some hunting and foraging. This is necessary if the PCs did not purchase any additional provisions before leaving Hallisburg because most of them are only carrying one day's rations. If both of them do this at any time other than when the PCs camp for the night, they are automatically be able to hunt and forage for sufficient food for the entire group; their bonuses to Wilderness Lore checks are high enough that no roll is needed. If only one of the twins hunts and forages, a Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) must be made. In either case the need for them to move at half speed while doing so won't slow the group down since they are moving slower than normal anyway.

If the twins attempt to do some hunting and foraging when the PCs stop to camp for the night, regardless of where this happens (see below), the Wilderness Lore check to provide for all the PCs has risen to a DC of 28 if one of them is doing it, a DC of 22 each if both are doing it. A successful Knowledge (nature) check at a (DC 20) gives them a hint of the reason why. All the animals in the area seem to have either scattered or gone into hiding, and this can't be accounted for just by the weather. This is because the animal population can sense the entrance of an unnatural evil into the area (see below). The twins also get the aforementioned Knowledge (nature) check if they scout around their campsite when the PCs stop for the night.

Except for the continuing rain the day is uneventful. If the PCs have not been significantly delayed then they are at the foot of the Catclaw Mountains as night approaches; if they have been delayed or are traveling on foot they will still be in forested foothills. A suitable campsite can be found just off the trail in both cases, but these are out in the open. Unless the PCs purchased tents

they may decide to search for a campsite more sheltered from the weather. PCs who search at the foot of the mountain can, on a Spot check (DC of 15), find a dry cave of more than ample size—roughly 30 by 40 feet in size with a brush-secluded opening 8 feet wide and 7 feet high. Any PCs searching in the foothills can also find a cave with a successful Spot check (DC 15), but this cave is much more cramped (about 20 by 20 feet in size) and has a water leak. Two PCs chosen at random will get dripped on as they try to sleep within this game. Without the caves or some other form of shelter the PCs need to use magic to get a fire going and have a difficult time getting much good sleep for the night.

The real action happens during the night. One of the dark gods angered at the destruction of the *gauntlet of lamentation* has sent his demonic servants after Janna. On this world and in this environment the demons take the form of supernatural variants of dire wolves. They have been on Janna's trail for the better part of a week and have now finally caught up to her. If Janna is keeping watch, the demon wolves attack on her watch. Presumably she won't be keeping watch due to the state of her health, though, determine randomly during which watch the attack occurs. If the PCs are not, for some reason, keeping a watch, the attack occurs 1d6 hours after they retire for the night. Shortly before the attack commences give Player Handout #2 to Janna's player. Meanwhile inform any PCs on watch at the time that the storm had developed into a thunderstorm for a little while but seems to be dying off. In its wake they can hear the howling of a wolf. Any PC (even the twins) estimates the howl to be coming from a good distance away. In reality its source is very nearby, using a magical trick to mislead the PCs.

Janna, once she awakens, has one minute of real time (slowly and silently count to 60) to act before the attack commences. When it does begin the battle circumstances depend on whether the PCs are camped outside or in a cave. If they are outdoors, the demon wolves circle the camp. Five swarm in from different directions while the sixth (the largest) holds back. If the PCs are in a cave, the demon wolves attempt to storm into the cave. If PCs are blocking the entrance, the first two demon wolves leap at the PCs to attempt to knock them out of the way (treat as bull rushes, with the demon wolves getting a +6 to the opposed Strength check due to size and charging). If they are somehow prevented from approaching the PCs (such as by a *magic circle*) the demon wolves hover around the outside of the protected area, growling Janna's name, while using spell abilities to attempt to break through/bypass the protection. If spells don't work they try to force their way through the protection by using their spell resistance.

Regardless of where the attack takes place, the main goal of the demon wolves is to get to Janna, drag her off, and tear her to pieces. (In fact the largest demon wolf holds back and telepathically tells the PCs exactly that, albeit in much more colorful terms, in addition to going on about how Janna has offended their master - who is never named but implied to be an evil god of great prominence. If you saw the TV miniseries *The Tenth Kingdom*, characterize him as Wolf, only with a nastier

disposition.) The only way the PCs can prevent the demon wolves from getting to Janna is to physically block their path, such as by completely encircling Janna; nothing less than this works, since the demon wolves always choose Janna as their first target if she is one of multiple attack options.

Any demon wolf that hits Janna and succeeds with a trip instead latches onto her with its jaws and attempts to drag her away. Janna must defeat the demon wolf on an opposed Strength check to resist being dragged away. Each PC helping her adds a +2 to this die roll plus their own Strength bonuses. Inflicting 10 or more damage on the offending demon wolf also breaks the grapple. If the demon wolf succeeds in dragging Janna, it pulls her 20 feet away each of the next two rounds unless the PCs manage to break the grapple. On the third round after the dragging began all the demon wolves turn away from the combat and converge on Janna. At this point successfully casting a *protection from evil* or *magic circle* is her only hope for survival, as it instantly breaks the grapple and forces the demon wolves to keep their distance.

The largest demon wolf holds back, using its spell abilities and telepathically coordinating the attacks of the others, unless it is directly attacked or two of the others have fallen. At that point it leaps into the fray itself. The demon wolves cannot be driven off; they fight to the death.

After the attack the rest of the night passes uneventfully.

Greater Fiendish Dire Wolves (6): Large Outsider (8 feet long, 700 pounds). HD 6d8+18; hp 52, 5x45; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 50; AC 17 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural); Atk melee +13 (1d8 +10, bite); Face/Reach 5ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SA trip, spell-like abilities; SQ scent, damage reduction (5/+1), cold and fire resistance 10, darkvision 60 feet; SR 12; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +7.

Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 14, Chr 10.

Skills: Hide +7, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Spot +7, Concentration +7, Search +7, Track +7; Feats: Power Attack.

SA: Trip(Ex)—A greater fiendish dire wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip an opponent as a free action (see the “Special Attacks and Damage” section in Chapter 9: Combat of the PHB). Spell-Like Abilities—*see invisibility* at will, *dispel magic*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *major image*, *find the path* once per day as a 6th level sorcerer.

These lesser demons are a special form of outsider that manifests in different physical forms on different planes. On this world they appear as dire wolves. Their specialty is tracking and hunting down the enemies of their masters. Towards this end their viciousness and cruelty know no bounds; to hinder them or cross them in any capacity is to invite death. They are quite intelligent and will carefully coordinate their search and battle plans with their packs via telepathic communication. Though utterly dedicated to completing their current task, they are not above taunting their opponents.

Demon wolves can communicate telepathically or speak any language. If Cedrick attempts to read them, they are Read #5.

Encounter 5: The Tests

When spellcasting PCs are preparing spells the next day, keep in mind the eight-hour rule on replacing spells if the battle in Encounter #4 happened during the second watch or later. (Of course, the PCs could also decide to delay in the morning until all the spellcasters can recoup all their spells.) If they camped at the base of the mountain the night before and do not delay significantly in the morning, the PCs will reach the Gate of the Oracle shortly before noon. If they delay significantly in the morning or started farther away, they will reach the Gate of the Oracle in mid-afternoon or early evening, depending on circumstances:

A heavy cloud cover occasionally broken by rays of sunlight greets you as you begin your travels the next morning. You are now in the most difficult phase of the journey: the trek up the side of the mountain itself. The trail you have been following is substantial enough that you don't have to dismount, but the going is much slower as it winds back and forth up the rocky mountainside. Above you the imposing heights of the jagged peaks of Mount Catclaw looms.

After a few hours of diligently picking your way up the rock-strewn trail you come across the first sign that you are getting close to your destination: a sturdy wooden bridge spanning a deep chasm. Carved into a post at the downward end of the bridge is the symbol of an eye.

There isn't anything remarkable about the bridge, but give the PCs a chance to do something if they wish. It is quite safe. Read the following when the PCs continue:

After passing over the bridge you follow the path around a wide bend in the mountain. On its opposite side you find the path blocked by an imposing wall of granite, only this time it's a literal one that fills the gap between two spurs of the mountain. An archway in its center frames gates of ironbound wood. Painted on the closed gates is a giant eye whose pupil glimmers as a ray of sunlight breaks through the clouds overhead and falls upon it. You all get the very distinct impression that it is watching you as you approach.

Standing to either side of the gate is an ogre-sized stone statue of a woman dressed in a simple gown, her face turned upwards and her hands raised to the heavens. Standing between the statues, in front of the gate itself, are two human-sized figures dressed in full plate armor and bearing halberds. On their armor is a symbol identical to the one on the gate. One of them levels its halberd at you as you approach.

“You stand before the Gate of the Seer,” says a woman's voice from within the visored helm. “Halt and identify yourselves and your purpose.”

The speaker is Colonia, one of the appointed Protectors of the Seer. The armor she wears is an illusion, a specialized combination of *minor illusion* and *mage armor*; she is

actually wearing robes and a heavy cloak. The halberd is also an illusionary disguise. It is actually a special magical staff that, when activated, allows a representative of the Oracle at the temple to hear and see whatever its wielder hears and sees. (Colonia activated it when she pointed it at the PCs.) The other guard, however, is real, as is the stone golem nature of the two statues to either side of the gate. The golems have been instructed to activate only if the human gate guards are imperiled or someone attempts to breach the gate. In such a case they attack any offender until the offender withdraws.

Colonia actually does not care who the PCs are and what their purpose is, for that is the concern of the Oracle. Her concern is to prevent any with hostile or evil intent from disturbing the sanctity of the Temple. Once the PCs have stated their identity and purpose, she asks what request they intend to make of the Oracle. If, for some reason, the PCs give a frivolous answer, Colonia brusquely tells them to turn back and not waste the Oracle's time and efforts on such pettiness. When the PCs give a serious answer, Colonia seems to consider for a while (actually she's allowing those listening in the Temple time to react), then motions towards the gates, which open at her direction (another function of her staff):

The armored woman points her halberd towards the heavy gates, which smoothly and soundlessly swing inward, revealing a path continuing up the mountainside.

"You may pass," she says. "At the top of the Path of Worthiness you will find the Temple of the Seer." Her voice lowers ominously. "Be forewarned that not all prove worthy to finish the journey."

If the PCs are mounted, she will add:

"Your mounts must remain here, for none are allowed at the Temple. We will look after them until you return."

If Colonia is asked what exactly she meant by her "not all prove worthy" statement, she shrugs and says that it is a different experience for all who make the journey. Some return without ever reaching the Temple. She does not comment more about it unless the PCs employ magical coercion or Janna makes a Diplomacy check (DC 25). In these cases, or if "Cedrick" uses his mind-reading ability, they can learn that the path will test them - usually three tests, and it does vary from traveler to traveler.

There are three tests, but they are actually more stall tactics than trials of worthiness (although they do accomplish the task of discouraging all but the most determined of visitors). Their true purpose is to allow the Oracle and her attendants to investigate the question that the visitors intend to ask. All are tailored according to the nature of the visitors.

Colonia, human female Sor12: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 12d4; hp 33; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 20 (+2 Dex, +3 ring, +5 *mage armor*); Atk melee +8/+3 (1d6+2, +2 *quarterstaff*); SA/SQ spells (DC 13+ spell level); AL NG; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +12.

Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 16, Wis 14, Chr 17.

Skills: Concentration +15, Craft (painting) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Scry +12, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +18, Spot +5; **Feats:** Combat Casting, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Craft Rod, Craft Staff.

Spells Known (6/7/6/7/6/5/3): 0-lvl—*daze*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *detect magic*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *wizard mark*; 1st-lvl—*sleep*, *magic missile*, *true strike*, *color spray*, *reduce*; 2nd-lvl—*protection from normal missiles*, *see invisibility*, *scare*, *darkvision*, *improved mage armor* (armor is visible, gives +5 bonus, and may appear as chosen armor type); 3rd-lvl—*lightning bolt*, *fly*, *slow*, *phantom steed*, *flame arrow*; 4th-lvl—*shout*, *scry*, *emotion*; 5th-lvl—*sending*, *teleport*; 6th-lvl—*mass suggestion*.

Note: One 2nd level spell has already been cast this day.

Possessions: +3 ring of protection, +2 *quarterstaff* (special; see above), *brooch of shielding*.

Colonia is 45 years old (but looks 10 years younger), with long black hair, sharp blue eyes, and medium build. She is attractive but clearly doesn't try to show it off. She is fiercely dedicated to protecting the Oracle, whose advice (she feels) saved her life by encouraging her to get out of a dangerously bad marriage. Her main task is to coordinate operations at the front gate, report on those who do pass through, and hinder those who seem to have violent intent. She is utterly uncompromising, generally distrusting, and harsh-tempered, but not hostile unless threatened or provoked. She is Read #12 for Cedrick.

Gate guard, human female Ftr8: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 11 in. tall); HD 8d10+16; hp 80; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Init); Spd 20; AC 19 (+1 Dex, +8 full plate); Atk melee +13/+8 (1d10+4, halberd) or +11/6 (1d6+3, short sword); AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +5 (helm).

Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Chr 11.

Skills: Ride +10, Listen +5, Spot +5, Handle Animal +7, Jump +5; **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Improved Critical (halberd), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (halberd).

Possessions: full plate, +1 halberd, short sword, +2 *helm of resistance vs. mental attacks*.

This 32-year old, broad-shouldered guard doesn't talk or take initiative; she only follows Colonia's lead. Like Colonia, she is fiercely loyal to the Oracle and will fight to the death for her. She is Read #3 for Cedrick.

Stone Golems (2): Large Construct (9 feet tall, 2000 pounds); HD 14d10; hp 80; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 (can't run); AC 26 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +18 natural); Atk melee +18/+18 (2d10+9, slam); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SA *slow* (as 11th level sorcerer) once every other round, 10 foot range; SQ construct, magical immunities, damage reduction (30/+2), darkvision 60 feet; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4.

Str 29, Dex 9, Con n/a; Int n/a; Wis 11; Chr 1.

SQ: Construct—immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. *Magical Immunity* (Ex)—

Stone golems are immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. *Transmute rock to mud* slows a stone golem for 2d6 rounds, while *transmute mud to rock* heals a stone golem of all damage. *Stone to flesh* makes a stone golem vulnerable to any normal attack for the following round.

Encounter 5a: Test the First

NOTE: If time is running short, you should skip or simplify one or both of Encounters 5a and 5b. Having time to do Encounter 6 and at least get Encounter 7 started is more important than playing these two out.

After passing through the gates the path winds around another turn in the mountain before opening onto a long, gradually ascending windswept plateau. On the opposite side of it the trail continues but there seems to be a problem, namely a chasm at least sixty feet wide that cuts across the trail. At the edge of the chasm is a waist-high pedestal with an impression in the shape of an eye on its top.

The chasm is actually a permanent image cast at 15th level. The pedestal is an operating device that, when a medallion shaped like an eye is fitted into its impression, will cause a 5 foot wide bridge to extend across the “chasm” (actually a persistent image at 15th level that overlays the original illusion). Give the PCs a few moments to contemplate how to deal with this obstacle then read the following:

From somewhere off to your right the sound of a crying child drifts to your ears. Upon investigating you see a small figure stumbling out of the side of a large pile of rocks. As the figure gets closer you can identify it as a girl of perhaps six or seven years of age. Her dark hair is gathered into wagging ponytails on each side and her clothing made of what looks like fitted animal hides decorated with elaborate beadwork. Her skin tone is considerably darker than what is normally found in this area - almost a reddish color, in fact - and her features are distinctively foreign. She's definitely human, though, and right now she is bawling her eyes out.

The girl is Running Doe, and she is from a land so far from Hallisburg that none of the PCs have even heard of it. Her mother is spending a stint as one of the assistants to the Oracle and Running Doe was originally just tagging along, but she proved so adept at role-playing that she is sometimes used in lower-risk tests. She is being constantly monitored by scrying during this encounter, which Dominic can notice on a successful Scry check (DC of 20, Roll this secretly for him; his total bonus is +12).

If the PCs calm Running Doe, she tells them (between sobs) that her pet Poochie has been snarling and snapping at her and doesn't seem to like her anymore and won't come out of the cave and she thinks he's hurt and can the grown-ups do anything about it? This is all a game to her, but her performance is very sincere-seeming; an opposed Sense Motive check is required to determine

that she is just acting, and the PCs only get this check if they ask for it.

If the PCs agree to help, Running Doe leads them over to the pile of boulders, which actually hides a cave entrance, and down into the cave. Poochie is, indeed, in the roughly 25 by 25 foot cave, but Poochie is actually a very large and irascible cave bear who wears a gold collar with an eye medallion hanging from it. The reason for Poochie's behavior is an arrow with a broken-off shaft sticking out of his front right paw. A greenish ooze can be seen dribbling out of the wound, which Janna will recognize as a type of natural poison if she asks (the Healing check is automatic for her). On a Healing check against a DC of 25 she can identify the poison as a type that likely isn't strong enough to kill something as large as the bear but it could definitely cause it a great deal of pain. If Running Doe is asked about the arrow she sniffs and says that the last visitor to come along shot Poochie to get him out of the way.

The PCs can probably find a way across the chasm without messing with the bear, but it should be hard for them to resist getting involved. They first have to get the bear calmed down before Janna can treat the arrow wound and poisoning, or else Poochie takes a swipe at any PC that approaches him. The PCs can calm Poochie down by using a spell or by the twins succeeding on an Animal Empathy check. If the twins attempt the latter, Poochie should be considered Unfriendly. Turning him Indifferent (a roll of 15 or better on the skill check) allows Running Doe to get in and calm Poochie down enough for PCs to safely approach. Turning him Friendly (a roll of 25 or better on the skill check) allows any PC to safely approach Poochie. Clarice could also try bardic *fascination*, but that will be negated the instant the arrow is pulled out of Poochie's paw, whereas the other effects won't.

Janna needs to make Healing checks against a DC of 25 for both the wound and the poison to treat them without having to resort to spells. First, though, the arrow has to be pulled out, which has to be done by someone who is not trying to keep Poochie calm. This requires a Strength check with a DC of 8, since it's imbedded pretty far into the paw and not much remains of the shaft to grip. If the arrow is removed and the wound treated, Poochie becomes much calmer and Running Doe is much happier. She thanks the PCs and asks them if they are going up to see the Seer (she giggles at this). If they tell her they will she will take the medallion from Poochie's collar, give it to the PCs, and tells them that it will get them past the chasm. When they leave she wishes them luck and tell them that she hopes they get a happy message from the Seer.

The PCs can, of course, also get the eye medallion by just killing the bear and taking it. If they take this approach, the bear fights back and Running Doe screams at them to stop and cries and demand to know why the PCs are doing it. If Running Doe is, at any point, even threatened, she is immediately *teleported* away and the PCs can expect a much less friendly reception at the Temple.

Running Doe, human female Com1: Small Humanoid (3 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 2; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20; AC 11

(+1 Dex); Atk unarmed -2 (1d3-2 subdual); AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0.

Str 6, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 15.

Skills: Animal Empathy +3 (+20 with Poochie), Perform +7 (acting only), Looking Really Cute +10.

Running Doe is a typical seven-year-old, out to play and have fun. She is a good actress who sees this duty as a kind of game. She has absolutely no ill will towards the PCs or anyone else. She is Read #14 for Cedrick.

Poochie, the cave bear: Large Animal (12 feet long); HD 6d8+24, hp 71 (59 currently); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 40; AC 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural); AT melee +11/+11/+6 (1d8+8 each [2 claws], 2d8+4 bite); Face/Reach 5' by 10'/5'; SA improved grab, hug (not currently available due to injury); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3.

Str 27, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Chr 6.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +7, Swim +14

Special Abilities: Improved Grab (Ex)—On a successful claw attack, a cave bear can start a hug (treat as a grapple) as a free action and without provoking an attack of opportunity. Each successful grapple check on ensuing rounds deals 1d8+8 damage.

Possessions: gold collar (200 gp value) with eye medallion

Encounter 5b: Test the Second

After passing the chasm the path continues to work its way up and around the mountainside. It is getting progressively steeper, enough so that Janna is really starting to struggle. It is also getting narrower as it hugs closely to the mountain, leaving only barely enough space for two people to safely walk beside each other. You can now see some kind of structure farther up the mountainside, but before you can get closer to it you have to stop for a rest break. As you do so you hear a cackling laugh coming from around the next bend.

"Yeah, go and take your rest," a high-pitched voice berates you, "you're gonna need your energy to deal with me, he-he-he!"

If the PCs don't investigate immediately, the voice continues to make snide comments about how they aren't up to the challenge. When they do investigate:

Sitting in a small chair hovering in the center of the path is a very short figure, not more than two feet tall, with vaguely elfin features. It wears what appears to be a jester's outfit as it looks at you with a wide, toothy grin.

"Yup, I'm 'nother one of the Oracle's tests," the figure says. "You gotta figure a way by me if you wanna see her, and that ain't gonna be easy! He-he-he! Pay my price and I'll be nice! O-hoo, hey that rhymes!"

This cackling imp is actually Glim, a gnome under the effect of an *alter self* spell. He came to see the Oracle a couple of weeks ago and is paying off his debt to her by participating in some of the tests of other seekers. His assignment is to slow down the PCs in some manner,

although he must give them some way to get around him. He is using his magical chair to generate an invisible barrier equivalent to a *wall of force*, which is currently blocking the path to a height of 15 feet. (The chair does not levitate on its own, though, that is Glim's doing.) The PCs have no means at their disposal to break through the barrier, and it should be very difficult for them all to get around it. The twins and Clarice might be able to climb around by making Climb checks at a DC of 20 and Dominic might be able to pass it if he has a *dimension door* spell prepared, but Janna and "Cedrick" have no such means. Glim deters any attempts to climb by using *grease* on the slope above the barrier if he sees PCs trying it. PCs trying to go around through the air or over the top are met by a *gust of wind* spell. The only realistic way for them to pass Glim is the way he prefers: by entertaining him. Glim even tells the PCs so if they ask him about his price.

Glim is very discriminating on what is good enough to meet his "price." The best way is the performance of a heroic story or ballad, complete with musical accompaniment. If the PCs go this route, the player for the performing PC (probably Clarice) must give the actual story. Base the necessary Perform check on the caliber of story the player tells; if it's good, entertaining, and very heroic, the necessary Perform check is only a 20 (15 if Cedrick is accompanying). A less stellar recitation by the player should result in a Perform check of 25 or even 30, depending on how bad it is. The struggle of Janna and her companions should make excellent fodder for a story, and Glim is clearly interested to hear about the destruction of the Gauntlet of Lamentation. He is put off by the tragic downside of the story, though, and tells the PCs to lay off on the "downer parts." Other similarly dramatic stories might also interest him. Glim also appreciates slapstick humor and funny jokes.

There are other ways to convince Glim. Clarice might succeed with a bardic *suggestion* or Janna can convince him to drop the barrier with two successive Diplomacy checks at a DC of 20 (but only allow these checks if the player is giving a convincing argument). A successful *charm person* spell would also do the trick. Any way they do it, once the PCs convince Glim or sufficiently entertain him he lowers the barrier and hovers his chair up so the PCs can pass under him. He much more soberly wishes them luck with their visit to the Oracle as they move on.

If the PCs should find some way to deal with Glim in a violent manner, he uses his spells to defend himself as well as possible until he can *dimension door* himself and his chair away. (He does not go on the offensive—that isn't in his nature.)

Glim, male gnome Wiz10 (Illusionist): Small Humanoid (3 ft. 3 in., 60 lbs); HD 10d4+10; hp 35; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 20; AC 20 (size +1, Dex +3, magic +6); Atk melee +6 (1d4+1, +1 dagger); SA spells, *speaking with animals* (spell-like ability), *dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, and *prestidigitation* each once/day; SQ spells (DC of 15+level for illusions, 13+level for other), low-light vision, +2 on saves vs. illusions, +4

dodge bonus vs. giants and ogres; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +9.

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Chr 13.

Skills: Alchemy +10, Bluff +5, Concentration +14, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (artifacts) +5, Scry +12, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +12; Feats: Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Penetration, Craft Wand

Spells (5/6/6/5/4/3, illusion spells listed in bold): 0-Level—*daze*, **dancing lights**, **ghost sound**, *mage hand*(x2); 1st Level—**change self** (already cast - 90 min. left), **silent image**, **ventriloquism**, *grease*, *unseen servant*, *color spray*; 2nd Level—**blur**, **minor image**, **mirror image**, **invisibility**, *levitate* (already cast - 90 min. left), *blindness*; 3rd Level—**displacement**, **major image**, *gust of wind*, *hold person*, *clairaudience* (already cast - used to listen in on PCs as they approached); 4th Level—**improved invisibility**, **rainbow pattern**, *wall of fire*, *dimension door*; 5th Level—**persistent image**, **shadow evocation**, *hold monster*

Possessions: +6 bracers of armor, +1 dagger, luckstone, wand of major images (30 charges), 35 gp, necklace (300 gp).

Glim is an energetic and light-hearted individual whose main goal in life is entertainment (whether giving or receiving). He is not shy about having fun at someone else's expense as long as no one gets hurt. He abhors violence, to the point that he will severely chastise anyone who threatens it, and will only resort to it himself as an absolute last resort. Although he can be bribed with gems, the PCs are not carrying enough collectively to do it (2,000 gp in gems in his asking price, from which he will not sway). He is Read #11 for Cedrick.

Encounter 5c: Test the Third

After passing the imp you continue higher up the mountain. The temperature has dropped noticeably and the wind has picked up considerably, now whipping your cloaks around as if some elemental pranksters were at work. Fortunately the path is not quite as steep here as it was earlier or you'd probably be carrying Janna.

Finally, after traversing the path for a short while longer, you come into sight of your destination. The Temple of the Seers looms above you, an imposing structure of granite built into the side of the mountain itself. If not for the tall, narrow windows well above ground level that look out over the path, the temple would look more like a shelter or fortress than a monastery and place of worship. Its outside surface is completely undecorated, and only a single stone door in a recessed space directly below the windows provides obvious access. The path you are on ends at that door.

The door is the only means for entering the temple that the PCs can find. *Dimension door* does not work, since the temple is screened against that. The door is in a 10 foot wide by 7-foot deep niche in the outer wall of the temple, of which at its bottom level is actually just carved out of the mountainside. The niche is big enough that the PCs can all get in out of the wind but only if they crowd in. The door is 2-foot thick granite that has been magically reinforced. It has no lock and its only obvious handle is a

2-foot long metal bar attached to the door at its center. PCs who test the bar discover that it can be rotated clockwise with little effort.

The PCs cannot force this door open, nor does a *knock* spell accomplish anything. They do not have the means available to break it. The first time a PC actually touches the door some *illusory script* keyed to the PCs appears on its surface at eye level. The contents of this script are listed below and also on Player's Handout #3. (If you are familiar with the song *Turn! Turn! Turn!* by The Byrds, you can have a *magic mouth* also appear and sing these lines to that tune with the appropriate accompanying music audible in the background.)

For every visitor (turn, turn, turn)
There is a question (turn, turn, turn)
And a way to pass this door and enter.

A time for age, a time for youth,
A time to fight, a time to heal,
A time for two to work as one,
A time to push in and then you're done.

The lines, of course, are a riddle describing how the PCs can open the door. The PCs must each step up to the door in a certain order and turn the metal bar completely clockwise three times. The lines tell the order: Dominic (age), Clarice (youth), Cedrick (fight), Janna (heal), and the twins at the same time (two working as one). After all the PCs have completed their part of the problem an audible click is heard. After the twins have done their part a ratcheting sound is also heard. If two or more PCs push on the door at this point it slides inward and pivots to the side, revealing a 10-foot wide tunnel leading into the temple.

The riddle should be obvious enough that the players won't get stuck on it for long. If they do, have Glim from encounter 5b wander up and give them hints couched in snide, taunting comments. Go to Encounter 6 once the PCs go down the tunnel.

Encounter 6: The Oracle

The tunnel continues for about sixty feet before ending in a short staircase. Upon ascending to the top of the stairs you find yourself exiting into a large, airy courtyard, easily a hundred feet long, forty feet across, and forty or more feet high. Colonnades of pillars support overhanging balconies above doors on the three opposite sides, while light streams into the place from the windows directly above you, the same ones you had seen on the outside. In the center of the courtyard is a pool, in the middle of which is a statue of a woman pouring a pitcher of water into the pool—only the water coming out of the pitcher is real. You can see several people clad in simple white robes strolling around the courtyard or coming in and out of doors. All are human or half-elfen, and most are women.

If the PCs acted hostilely in encounters 5, 5a, or 5b, add:

As you are taking in the scene, you hear a shout and clanking of metal. Turning, you see a column of heavily armored, halberd-wielding guards streaming out of a door to your right. They stop and form a defensive line in front of you, halberds poised.

If the PCs have not acted hostility, add:

As you are taking in the scene you notice a human woman approaching you. Her faded hair and wrinkled face suggest an age well past sixty, though she moves with the vitality of a younger woman. She bears a staff with a bronze emblem depicting an open eye at its top.

"Welcome to the Temple of the Seer," she says. "I am Amelia, the Coordinator of this place. The Oracle is aware of your arrival and will see you shortly." She looks around at all of you, then fixes her gaze pityingly on Janna. "Poor dear, you look like you could use a rest. Everyone, please come with me. I will take you to a place where you can rest and refresh yourselves."

If the PCs received the hostile greeting, give them time to react. If they make no offensive gesture, the guards hold their place while Amelia comes forward to speak with the PCs. She expresses her severe displeasure with them and says that they (the PCs) would be turned back if their need (looking at Janna) clearly wasn't so desperate. Janna is allowed a place to rest but the other PCs are required to wait in a holding cell until the Oracle is ready to see them. They are also not be allowed to stay one second after the PCs business is done and the Oracle's price (see below) is doubled. If the PCs fight this, the guards attempt to subdue and imprison them (use the stats for the guard in encounter 5, but there are eight of them and they are Read #16s for Cedrick), in which case the round is done.

If the PCs received the friendly greeting, they are led to a comfortably-appointed waiting room, complete with a couch on which Janna can stretch out, other padded chairs, a pool of water, towels, and refreshments in the form of a light wine and fruit or meat pastries (all very tasty). If the PCs ask Amelia about the tests they just went through, she explains that they are designed to weed out those with more violent intent or frivolous questions, since the latter aren't likely to endure the challenges. If asked about the participants, she explains that Running Doe is the daughter of one of the temple assistants and that Glim is paying off a debt to the temple - as are many of the guards working here. (This gives her a good opening to get into the payment issue; see below.) If the PCs ask how long they have to wait, Amelia says that it will be anywhere from "just a few minutes" to "about an hour", depending on how slowly or quickly the PCs got up the mountainside.

At some point, or if the PCs do not ask any questions, Amelia brings-up the issue of payment. The Temple of the Seer depends heavily on the fees of its visitors for its day-to-day operations and expenses, so all that visit the Oracle with a question must offer some form of payment. Based on what she has seen of the PCs through scrying, Amelia says, she believes they may be able to offer payment in

spells rather than money or services. The temple has two rings of spell storing used by their assistants, which are in need of refilling. A total of a dozen spell levels should do it, and they would like to get a mix of both arcane and divine spells that aren't strictly combat spells. Amelia will also take a spell scroll with an equivalent number of spell levels as partial or total payment, but won't mention this unless the PCs offer it. If the PCs refuse they have to offer up 1,200 gp in gems and coins, which should just about clean them out.

If the PCs agree to Amelia's cost she is delighted and declares that the PCs can get this business taken care of while they are waiting. She is seen to cast a spell (*sending*, if any PC tries to identify it), and a few moments later a young acolyte brings in two gold rings. The PCs only have to cast their spells into the rings (six levels into each) to recharge them.

Once the payment is out of the way, Amelia tells them that she will return for them when the Oracle is ready. This will be in just a couple of minutes if the PCs took a long time going through encounters 5a-5c, close to an hour if they went through very quickly (or skipped some due to time constraints), and appropriately in between if the PCs were not particularly fast or slow. When they are sent for:

A female acolyte with long and flowing black hair enters the room and says pleasantly, "the Oracle will see you now. Please follow me."

The acolyte leads you out into the courtyard and across to a set of doors directly opposite where you came in. These doors distinguish themselves from all the others only by the painted engraving of an eye on them. The acolyte leads you through them and into a large room, easily forty feet square and more than thrice your height, which has been carved out of the mountain itself. On the opposite side of the room stands a large stone statue of Althenia the All-Seeing, goddess of knowledge and wisdom, and before it a small, simple altar. In the center of the room is a large, circular pool of dark water. Between it and the altar sets a wooden chair, and in that chair sits a figure in dark robes. Although a hood is pulled down over her face, the smooth, slender hands extending from its sleeves suggest a woman, and not a very old one at that. Her voice when she speaks only reinforces your belief that this is a young woman, younger than any of you.

"Greetings, scions of the Camarillo name," the Oracle says. "I have been expecting you. Please, step forward to the pool so that I may reveal to you what you seek."

The speaker is Patricia, a 21-year old human woman (Adp3; Scry +25, Sense Motive +25). She was a young acolyte who became the chosen replacement of the former Oracle when she died five years ago. Since then she has been infused with the very genuine power of the Oracle, which allows her divination abilities far beyond that which is available to other mortals. (If Cedrick tries to "read" her, he will automatically fail; tell him Read #1 applies.) She knows what question the PCs will ask, but still insists on them formally stating it once they step up to the pool - and since it is Janna's question to ask, the Oracle does not allow anyone but Janna to speak it. The

question should be something along the lines of “what will allow me to live long enough for my baby to be born” or “what can break my curse?” If the question is significantly different from these, adjust the following text accordingly. In either case play up the dramatics of the scene, since this is the key revelation of the entire first round for the PCs.

The Oracle nods. “Very well, then, you shall have an answer.”

The Oracle lowers her head and begins to hum as she waves her arms in a faintly mesmerizing pattern. She motions at the pool, which begins to shimmer with a magical glow. A magical resonance fills the air, causing your flesh to crawl.

“There is an answer to your question,” the Oracle says ominously, “but it is an answer some of you may not like to hear. The curse can be broken, allowing you, Janna, to live to see your child’s birth, but there is only one person in all this land who is capable of the task. That is the person you must seek out. His image will appear to you in the pool.”

Flickerings of light appear in the pool, first as glimmering motes of light but gradually coalescing into an image. For reasons you can’t explain, goose bumps form on all your arms as the image sharpens and refines. When complete, it is the face of a middle-aged man, a handsome man with dark blond hair and a neatly trimmed beard and moustache. Each of you has a different reaction to it: for Clarice and Cedrick the image means nothing, while the twins find it vaguely familiar. Janna knows that face, though, and for Dominic it is like staring into a mirror.

Allow a moment for shocked reactions, since the players should be able to piece together very quickly that the image is Martinic Camarillo, the PCs’ father. One or more PCs are likely to protest that he’s dead. (If someone doesn’t, paraphrase the following appropriately.) When they do:

“The man you see is not dead,” the Oracle says firmly, “although death does surround him greatly. The image you see is of the man as he was. This is how he looks now.”

With a wave of the Oracle’s hand the image dissolves and then reforms. Although it is definitely the same man, the only similarities are the features; everything else has changed. This man is bald and clean-shaven and his face is painted white, with dark shadings here and there, which makes his visage look eerily reminiscent of a skull. His shoulders are bare and marked with arcane tattoos. His wild-eyed stare suggests of madness.

“He is now known as the Dead Man,” the Oracle continues. “You will find him at the Fortress of the Damned not far from the town of Geran’s Creek. He is the answer to your prayers, Janna Camarillo, but be forewarned: he is not the same man you once called father.”

The PCs can try to ask further questions of the Oracle, but she only repeats or clarifies what she has already said. If they attempt to state another unrelated question, she declares that the question has been answered, so this audience is at an end. The PCs are then escorted out.

The only PC who has even heard of the Fortress of the Damned is Clarice. She only knows of it because it is

mentioned in an old ghost story about a tyrannical warlord betrayed by his men; she is only able to recall this much if she makes a successful bardic knowledge check (DC of 15). The name Geran’s Creek is not familiar to any of the PCs, either (the real Cedrick knows of it, but the doppelganger imitating him doesn’t), but mention to the PCs that they do know that there is a cartography center in Hallisburg. When the PCs are ready to leave they are escorted out of the temple by Amelia, who wishes them luck in the pursuit of the answers to their problems. When this happens, go to Encounter 7; the surprises aren’t done yet for the PCs!

Amelia, female human Sorio: If her stats and spells become relevant use the ones listed for Colonia in encounter #5. Amelia is a woman in her late 60s. She has devoted her entire life to the service of the Oracle. Conversation with her reveals a sense of devoutness and purpose about her duties. She is, essentially, the temple’s steward. Use Read #13 for Cedrick if the PCs were peaceful in getting to the temple, Read #6 if they weren’t.

Encounter #7: Will the Real Cedrick Please Step Forward?

The trip from the Gate of the Oracle to the Temple of the Seer and time spent inside takes the PCs about two hours unless they took a long rest break along the way. The return trip down to the gate will only take a half-hour since they won’t have to deal with any obstacles. If the PCs first reached the Gate of the Oracle in mid-morning, it is midday when they return. If it was mid-afternoon when they arrived, it is early evening when they depart, and if it was early evening when they arrived then it is night when they return. In the first case this encounter takes place during the PCs’ trip back to Hallisburg, when they first stop for a rest break. In the latter two cases this encounter happens when the PCs make camp for the night (they won’t be allowed to camp within sight of the Gate of the Oracle, so they will probably want to descend the mountain first).

The players may be inclined to do some role-playing after the revelations of the previous encounter. If so, then let them and assume that they are doing it while descending the path from the Temple of the Seer. It is important, however, that at least the beginning of this encounter gets played out before time expires, even if there isn’t time for the fight itself.

The journey back down the mountainside is far quicker than when you went up, as none of the obstacles you encounter—not even the chasm, curiously—are present. You all barely notice it, though, because there’s a lot going through your minds. Could the Oracle’s revelation have been any more stunning? Just as importantly, what does this mean for all of you?

Upon returning to the Gate of the Oracle you find the armored woman waiting with your mounts.

"Looks like the Oracle told you something good," she comments as she hands the reins over to you. "I hope it's what you wanted or needed to hear."

Allow the PCs a moment to respond if they wish. Their horses and gear are all present and accounted for. When they continue:

If it is daytime:

The sky has cleared a bit since the morning, allowing the sun to poke through more frequently to warm your journey back to Hallisburg. Your hearts and minds are heavy with the implications of what you have learned this day when you stop for a rest break for Janna. The snap of a twig and sound of something rustling through the woods off to the right of the trail chases all such thoughts from your mind. You are not alone.

If it is nighttime:

The clouds have mostly passed since nightfall, allowing the stars and crescent moon to shine down on you as you make camp for the evening. The implications of what you have learned this day weighed heavily on you as you descended the mountain and searched out a campsite. Preparing to settle in for the night did not make those thoughts go away, but the snap of a twig in the woods nearby and the sound of someone rustling through the underbrush certainly did. You can see a light flare to life only a short distance away through the trees.

In both cases the PCs have one round of reaction time. If any PCs move out into the woods they intercept the two approaching guards before they reach the camp. If the PCs just prepare themselves, read the following:

From out of the woods steps a pair of human men wearing chain mail and carrying swords and shields. Each wears a cloak and a tabard over his armor bearing heraldry commonly used on City Watch uniforms in this part of the continent. Their eyes widen as they see you.

"Hold, friends," says one as he raises his hand. "We have been looking for you. Our captain wants to speak with you." He raises a whistle from a cord around his neck and blows a shrill signal.

"He will be here in just a moment to explain everything," says the other. "Please stay calm."

The PCs have two rounds before the rest of the guards arrive. These two do not answer any of the PCs' questions, instead claiming that all will become apparent when their captain arrives. Slip the player of the false Cedrick a note saying that he recognizes the uniforms as belonging to soldiers of Silverdale, where the real Cedrick comes from, and get his immediate reaction. If he tries to "read" them, give him to use Read #15 (they are magically screened against detect thoughts). Cedrick might decide to flee, in which case the two guards draw swords and attempt to pursue him. At this point any other PC who specifically states that they are looking for something odd notices, on a successful Spot check (DC of 15), that the guards are

moving awfully smoothly for people who are supposed to be wearing armor, but so, for that matter, is the false Cedrick. If a fight or pursuit ensues before the additional guards arrive, those on the scene will not break character unless out of sight of the PCs (see below). In this case, read Option #1, below. If the false Cedrick stands his ground, read Option #2.

Option #1:

"Cease this foolishness at once!" shouts a powerful voice from out of the woods nearby. You all turn to look in that direction, for the voice is all too familiar. Is there no end to the surprises this day? Apparently not, because the man who steps out of the woods in the company of four more guards is none other than Cedrick!

"There is an imposter here," he says angrily, "and I'm damn sure it isn't me."

Option #2:

After a few tense seconds of a noisy approach five more figures step into the camp. Four others are clearly guards of the same unit as the first two, although one does not wear armor. The fifth figure, who is a bit taller and bulkier than the rest, also wears armor and carries a sword, but that is not what causes your jaws to drop at the sight of him. Is there no end to the surprises today?

"There is an imposter here," the man says in an all-too-familiar voice, "and I'm damn sure it isn't me." The man is your brother Cedrick!

In both cases give the PCs a moment to react and the players a moment to collect themselves. Exactly how the encounter goes from this point depends on the false Cedrick. If he admits to the deception, the other guards decide it is time to act (see below). If he denies it and/or fires back accusations, Cedrick steadfastly insists that he is the real person and the other one stole his identity, even his sword and shield and the message medallion. It is likely that a PC will bring up the point that intimate knowledge of Cedrick's past could be used to reveal the real person. If they do the real Cedrick shakes his head at this and claims that the better shapeshifters are mind-readers, too, so the imposter would be able to just pick the answer out of his brain. If Janna has a lie detection spell prepared that could reveal the truth, but if that option isn't available and the PCs can present no other means of determining which is the real Cedrick, the real one declares that there's only one way to find out for sure. As he draws his sword he states that no accused shapeshifter is going to be as skilled a warrior as he is.

This threat may be enough to get the false Cedrick to flee, in which case the guards pursue him while the real Cedrick stays to talk to the PCs. If this happens without the PCs getting involved in the pursuit, go to the Epilogue. If they get involved in the pursuit, the PCs eventually catch up with the guards as they have the false Cedrick trapped against the edge of a ravine. Continue with the combat scenario, below, in this case.

If the situation with the false Cedrick cannot be resolved away from the PCs, the “guards” eventually decide it is time to reveal themselves:

NOTE: When reading the following part, speak the rhyming lines *exactly as printed* (unless you can make up a better rhyme on the spot) and stress the rhyming scheme, even if you are paraphrasing the rest. This is important.

One of the guards looks pointedly at the Cedrick in your group. “The time for games is done, and you have not won,” he says. “You have lost, your life will be the cost.”

“You bring our business before these others,” another one sneers, “you disgrace us and our brothers. It is too late to save you from your fate.”

This should immediately tip off the false Cedrick as to the true identity of the guards - all but the real Cedrick are doppelgangers, part of a special hunter-killer group, in fact—rhyme scheme should catch the attention of everyone else. The real Cedrick looks at his guards and says, “say what?” The false Cedrick may decide to reveal the truth at this point. If he does, the other doppelgangers do not hesitate to attack everyone; they can’t afford to leave any witnesses to their business. In fact, they attack the PCs and real Cedrick under almost any possible circumstances where they can’t confront the false Cedrick away from the rest of the PCs. They see the PCs as loose ends (and witnesses to private clan business) and don’t like leaving loose ends around.

When the combat begins roll initiative separately for the doppelgangers and for the real Cedrick. In the first round each doppelganger except for the sorcerer changes into the form of one of the PCs as it moves to attack that PC; this constitutes a standard action. The only PC that is not duplicated is Janna, who is regarded as too weak to be a threat. (The doppelgangers continue to ignore her during the combat as long as she doesn’t prove to be an offensive or spellcasting threat to them. They intend to finish her off last.) The doppelganger sorcerer first attempts to take the real Cedrick out of the picture with a *hold person* spell, then turn its efforts on the PCs offering up the most resistance.

Because of the doppelgangers’ mimicry ability, PCs and the real Cedrick are unable to distinguish other PCs from their duplicates without stopping and taking a standard action to observe the combatants. Even then the PC can only distinguish between the two if he or she succeeds at an opposed Spot check with a +6 bonus. The exceptions are the twins, who can clearly tell each other apart from duplicates because of their link. If a PC attempts to attack or cast spells at another PC or duplicate without one of the above circumstances then there is a 50% chance the wrong one is targeted. Certain actions, such as some forms of spellcasting, may alter the Spot checks or give additional ones as you see fit.

When the combat has concluded, have the false Cedrick role-play out his situation if he is still around. He certainly has some serious explaining to do in this case. The real Cedrick is very angry but not uncompromising if his duplicate stood and fought well during the combat.

He may let the PC doppelganger go if the other PCs can talk him into it and he gets his stuff back. Once his disposition is settled, go to the Epilogue.

If the false Cedrick slipped away during the combat then go to the Epilogue immediately after the combat is concluded.

Doppelganger warriors, War3 (5): Medium Shapechanger; HD 4d8+4 (doppelganger) + 3d8+3 (warrior); hp 42 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural); Atk melee +8/+8 (1d6+2, slams appearing as weapon wielded by duplicated individual); SA *alter self* (as 18th-level sorcerer) at will as standard action, *detect thoughts* continuously (as 18th-level sorcerer, DC of 13); SQ immune to sleep and charm effects; AL N; Saves Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +9 (charm).

Str 15, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Chr 13.

Skills: Bluff +14, Disguise +14, Listen +12, Sense Motive +8, Spot +10; **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Two-Weapon Fighting

Possessions: magical charm that shields the wielder against *detect thoughts* and gives a +2 resistance bonus to Will saving throws.

These doppelgangers are the toughest of the tough from among their kind, so they are assigned the more dangerous combat-related tasks and duplications. The survivors attempt a retreat when three or more of their number are killed.

Doppelganger Sor6: Medium Shapechanger; HD 4d8+4 (doppelganger) + 6d4+6 (Sorcerer); hp 46; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +4 natural, +2 magic); Atk melee +7/+7 (1d6+1, slams appearing as weapon wielded by duplicated individual); SA spells (DC of 12), *alter self* (as 18th-level sorcerer) at will as standard action, *detect thoughts* continuously (as 18th level sorcerer, DC of 13); SD spells, immune to sleep and charm effects; AL N; Saves Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +13.

Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Chr 15.

Skills: Bluff +12, Disguise +12, Listen +10, Sense Motive +6, Spot +8, Spellcraft +5, Concentration +8; **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Combat Casting

Spells (6/7/6/3): 0-lvl—*daze, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost*; 1th-lvl—*magic missile, Tenser’s floating disk, shocking grasp, spider climb*; 2nd-lvl—*Melf’s acid arrow, misdirection*; 3 d-lvl—*hold person*

Possessions: +2 ring of protection, magical charm that shields the wielder against *detect thoughts* and gives a +2 resistance bonus to Will saving throws.

This rare individual is the elite of the tiny doppelganger spellcasting community. He acts exclusively with spells, attacking physically only if his spells are exhausted or not practical. He targets the strongest-looking PCs first unless another is successfully targeting him with spells. If the warrior doppelgangers flee then this one also tries to flee.

The real Cedrick Camarillo, male human Ftr7: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall, 230 lbs); HD 7d10+21; hp 70; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 20; AC 20

(+7 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex); Atk melee +12/+7 (1d8+6, longsword), ranged +10 (1d8+1); AL LN; Saves Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +5.

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 12, Chr 10.

Skills: Climb +3, Handle Animal +7, Jump +6, Ride +10, Swim +6, Intimidate +4; Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword), Weapon Specialization (long sword), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (repeating crossbow)

Possessions: +2 breastplate, +2 cloak of resistance, Heward's handy haversack, amulet of light generation (sheds light equivalent to a light spell on command), long sword, small shield, repeating crossbow with 15 +1 bolts, light mace, 50 gp, gold wedding band (100 gp value)

Cedrick has long black hair, blue eyes, a moustache, and several battle scars on both arms. He is currently royally ticked off about someone masquerading around as him, and becomes even angrier when he discovers that his guards are doppelgangers, too. His stance against the false Cedrick softens some if the fake actively fights against the other doppelgangers, explains his actions, and has other PCs vouch for the fact that he has been pulling his weight with them. Cedrick isn't unreasonable, but he accepts no less than the return of all of his equipment and money and a debt to be paid in services to him when he returns to his town.

worry, we'll get that cure from that bastard if I have to beat it out of him. Gods, and to think I once thought he was a great guy!"

Cedrick turns to the rest of you. "Well, what are we waiting for? We have Janna to save and a long-absent father to find. Let's get going!"

The End

EPILOGUE

Paraphrase the following appropriately if the PCs did not have to deal with the doppelgangers.

Now that the matter of the shapeshifters has been dealt with, Cedrick turns his attention to the rest of you.

"I woke up in the morning nearly a fortnight ago and found that some of my stuff was missing, including my tablet," he explains. "I thought it was just common thievery until I heard a report of someone seeing me out on the road headed towards Hallisburg with someone else that matched Clarice's description! I had some divinations done and found out what was going on, so I took some guards and came after you guys. Man! I never would have believed they were shapeshifters, too! They were so damn convincing.

"Anyway, it's great to see you all again, but I assume something big is up for you all to be together. I get the impression it ain't anything good, either. Fill me in?"

If there's still time left you can have the players role-play this out. If so, then paraphrase the following appropriately. Otherwise just read it verbatim:

Cedrick's expression darkens as you give him all the details about Janna's problems. He reacts with as much stunned disbelief as the rest of you when you lay the revelation about father on him.

"Oh, Janna, I'm so sorry about Gerrard and what happened to you," he says as he comes over and gives Janna and affectionate hug. His expression grows grim. "And don't

DM's Reference Sheet - Round 1

THE PCs - SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Dominic, the mage: No special circumstances.

Janna, the cleric: Janna suffers from a powerful and debilitating curse that affects her like a wasting disease. Every ten days she loses one point each of Strength and Constitution and has a 50% chance of losing one point of Dexterity. General weakness and painful stiffness of joints brought about by the curse's effects gives her a -1 inherent penalty to AC and attack rolls and reduces her movement rate by half. She cannot walk any distance without her staff, can travel only half the normal duration before requiring rest, requires at least 10 hours of sleep to be adequately rested, and heals naturally at 1/3 the normal rate. The curse is so powerful that either a wish or miracle from a 20th level or higher priest or necromancer can only remove it.

Janna is also 15 weeks pregnant when the scenario begins. The curse has exacerbated the effects of the pregnancy and vice versa. Partly as a result, Janna suffers from extremely bad morning sickness. She cannot keep down anything she eats in the mornings and must make a Concentration check at a DC of 20 in order to complete her daily devotionals in the mornings. (This check does not apply at other times during the day.) Other effects may be role-played as Janna's player sees fit, but emphasize that the effects are more pronounced than normal.

"Cedrick," the fighter: In this round Cedrick is an imposter, a doppelganger to be precise. Like all doppelgangers, he has a mind-reading ability equivalent to a *detect thoughts* spell cast by an 18th level sorcerer, except that it is always active unless he suppresses it (this and reactivating it count as free actions). For purposes of this scenario, assume that he gets one free read of all the other PCs at the beginning of Encounter #1. Secretly roll a Will save for all PCs and NPCs at all other times. Player's Handout #1 lists what he gets when he uses his ability on the PCs in Encounter #1 and on various NPCs. The text in each encounter tells you what number on the list to tell him to read for each NPC, with #1 being the choice for anyone who resists his mind reading.

Susan and Sharon, the rangers: These two are identical twins, but their similarities go beyond even the norm for such twins. (They are not aware that they are an unknown and unintended side effect of the magical contamination of their father, who was experimenting with cloning at the time of their conception. They are, in effect, absolutely stable coexisting clones of each other - a circumstance that will have massive consequences if anyone ever discovers it!) They share a constant telepathic link, which gives them the following benefits and drawbacks, most of which they know about:

- They can telepathically communicate with each other (but no one else) as a free action. Initiating this ability is automatic if both are conscious and a Concentration check to continue it is only required in cases with extenuating circumstances, such as if one is being mentally controlled, is somehow shielded from mental contact, or in cases where concentrating enough to maintain normal speech would be difficult. In these cases a check with a DC of 10 or 15 should be required, depending on circumstances. The range limit for basic contact is unlimited, although they must be within five miles of each other to carry on a full conversation.

- If one twin is sleeping, the other twin can mentally wake her up on a Wisdom check with a DC of 10. This can be attempted once per round and counts as a move-equivalent action. The twins also have a sense of what each other is dreaming, which means that if one is subjected to a dream-related attack, the other is affected as well - but is aware that it is an attack if awake at that point!

- Each twin is automatically aware of the other's knowledge of being in imminent danger. This includes bleeding to death.

- If the twins have a line of sight to each other, they are only caught flat-footed if both are individually flat-footed.

- If both twins are conscious, their base Will saving throw bonuses are cumulative with each other's. (They have learned to support each other against mental attacks.)

- The twins can locate each other with absolute accuracy, regardless of magical interferences. Treat this as a free action for distances under a mile, a standard action for distances over a mile (some concentration is required at longer distances of separation).

- Because of their link and inherent familiarity with how each other thinks and acts, the twins can coordinate with each other in combat as a free action.

- Because of their link and inherent familiarity with how each other thinks and acts, their bonuses are doubled when combining their efforts on a skill check or Aiding Another combat action.

- If either twin is abruptly rendered unconscious by injury or a spell, the sudden loss of connection stuns the other for one round and a Fortitude save at a DC of 10, with no magical bonuses applicable, must be made or the conscious twin is stunned for an additional 2d4 rounds. This does not happen when one twin falls asleep normally, although they usually fall asleep at precisely the same time unless one is trying to stay awake.

- If one of the twins is slain, the other twin must make a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 (no magical bonuses applicable) or die herself from the shock. If the roll is successful, the surviving twin goes catatonic for 2d4 days unless a Will save vs. a DC of 15 is made, with no magical bonuses applicable. (The twins aren't aware of this drawback.)

Also, the Profiles for both twins state that they actively foster cases of mistaken identity. If their players wish to deliberately mislead the other players on which is which, allow them to do so, but remind them that *you* must always know which is which!

Clarice, the rogue/bard: She pretends to be solely a bard; her rogue nature isn't known to the other PCs. Play along if she tries to claim that she is only a bard or a 7th level bard. She is also practiced in using sleight-of-hand and other misdirection techniques to make it appear that she is casting spells when she is actually using magic items. If someone attempts a Spellcraft check against her, that person must make an opposed roll vs. a Perform check by Clarice to detect her ruse.

PC MOUNT STATS

Riding horses: Large Animal (5 ft. at shoulder); HD 3d8+6; hp 19 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 60; AC 13 (+3 natural, +1 Dex, -1 size); Atk melee +2/+2 (1d4+1 each, hoof); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2.

Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Chr 6.

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6

BRIEF PC SUMMARY

Save Bonuses:

<u>PC(class/level)</u>	<u>AC</u>	<u>Fort.</u>	<u>Reflex</u>	<u>Will</u>
Dominic (Wiz8)	18	+6	+7	+11
Janna (Clr8)	13	+3	+1	+10
False Cedrick (Ftr3)	18	+9	+7	+7
Sharon (Rgr7)	17	+8	+5	+4(+8)
Susan (Rgr7)	17	+8	+5	+4(+8)
Clarice(Rog6/Brd1)	18	+3	+13	+3

Player's Handout #1: False Cedrick's "Reads"

These are the "reads" you get off of people when using your *detect thoughts* ability. The PC reads are what you get when you first come into that PC's presence in the first encounter. The numbered entries refer to particular NPCs later in the round. The DM will tell you which number is appropriate for which NPC. (NOTE: At least a couple of these may be red herrings or only applicable in certain situations.)

Dominic: My, this one feels like he's got to be in charge because it's some kind of duty for him. His current overriding thought is deep concern for Janna. He is most definitely a wizard.

Janna: Gods, reading her is *not* pleasant; she's in a world of discomfit, and she looks a mess. There's a confusing mixture of great sorrow and joy about her, like she's lost someone and has gained something but is in danger of losing it, too. There's also a nagging background read on her that you can't quite put your metaphorical finger on, almost like there's a second mind present. Oh, and the foremost thought in her mind is that she's dying, and how is she going to break the news to everyone?

Susan and Sharon: Which is which? You thought telling them apart would be easy for you, but you're having a hard time separating their identities mentally as well. It's almost like they are two people merged together into one collective mind. You've detected this before, but never in humans. How strange! Reading them is very difficult (it's like having to slip by both their mental defenses at the same time) but you get the sense that they are absolutely devoted to misleading everyone else about who is who. They are also greatly concerned about Janna.

Read #1: You can't get any reading off this person. You are either being blocked or they are resisting.

Read #2: He is very grateful to get out of that situation and sorrowful about losing his son. Not a hint of deception or intent to mislead about him; this is one honest individual.

Read #3: This woman is fiercely devoted to the Oracle. Booring! Oh, wait, she thinks Dominic is handsome. Now *that* is a little interesting.

Read #4: She finds this job generally dull and tiring, but believes a customer should never know she feels like that. She finds your group genuinely interesting, though, particularly the twins.

Read #5: Ugh! What awful, malevolent creatures! Their sole focus is on killing and destroying.

Read #6: She isn't a happy camper. She wants you guys to get your business done and leave A.S.A.P.

Read #7: He thinks it's fantastic that he gets to see "all the family" together again after so long (particularly the twins; you sense he has some sort of interest in them), but something is troubling him, some kind of secret concerning these siblings.

Read #8: This kid is jittery and uptight; that's about all you can get from him.

Read #9: Lots of secrets to this one, but he is very hostile. He means you all harm, particularly Janna.

Read #10: She thinks that Janna really should be staying here for proper medical care and is displeased that she isn't. This thought overrides everything else you can read about her.

Read #11: He isn't who he appears to be; a gnome spellcaster of some sort, you think. He's trying to delay you for some reason you can't quite make out, but he also doesn't want to hurt you.

Read #12: This one doesn't trust anyone. She is completely devoted to serving the Oracle. She also isn't what she appears to be; you get the sense that she's really a disguised sorceress!

Read #13: She sees the siblings as the ones the Oracle has been awaiting for some time now. She badly wants everything to go smoothly.

Read #14: Hmm, she sees her current spiel as all just "pretend," like it's part of some game. She's a happy, generally fun-loving kid.

Read #15: You can't read them, any of them. They are blanked out against you. For some reason that makes you nervous.

Read #16: Oooh, this lot isn't happy at all. They think you guys have committed some kind of offense.

Read #17: No need to read him! Man, is he ticked off! He thinks you all are jerks.

Player Handout #2

You experience the following as a dream (or as a vision if you are awake):

It is a dark and stormy night. You are running through woods when a vine catches your foot, causing you to trip and fall. As you lay there, trying to recover your wits, you hear the cracking of branches from somewhere behind you. The pursuer is closing on you. You get up to run again but you have twisted your ankle and are now only stumbling. The sounds of pursuit are getting closer, and now you can hear a deep-throated growling as well. As you turn to look behind you, lightning flashes in the sky overhead. You catch a brief glimpse of a massive wolf, its eyes glowing bright yellow, streaking towards you. In your mind you can hear words:

"Your time has come, Destroyer," the voice of the wolf—for what else can it be?—speaks into your mind. "My master wants you dead. I will tear you apart and feast on your corpse!"

Just as the wolf leaps for you a pale, faintly glowing figure wielding a pair of strange bladed weapons steps in its path. A brief but intense battle ensues before the wolf is turned back. You gasp as the bloodied figure turns around. Although the features are vaguely human, it is definitely something more than that.

"Awake, Janna," the figure speaks to you, his voice strong and urgent. It takes a moment to register: he's speaking in the language of the celestials! "Quickly! Danger comes!"

A mighty crack of thunder reverberates through the night. You awake in a cold sweat to the howling of a wolf, one that sounds uncomfortably close by. Its voice is the same as the wolf from your dream.

Player's Handout #3

For every visitor (turn, turn, turn)
There is a question (turn, turn, turn)
And a way to pass this door and enter.

A time for age, a time for youth,
A time to fight, a time to heal,
A time for two to work as one,
A time to push in and then you're done.

Dominic Camarillo

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Male
 Class: Wizard (Evoker) Level: 8 Align: LG
 Height: 5 ft., 11 in. Weight: 175 Age: 40
 Hair: Black Eyes: Blue
 Other: Neatly-trimmed moustache and beard

polymorph other at 8th level), potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of protection from fire

Equipment: dagger, backpack with bedroll, waterskin, one day's rations, waterproof scroll tube, notebook, pen and ink; stylish high-quality traveler's outfit; belt pouches; spell components, 80 gp in mixed coins, 6 50 gp and 1 100 gp gems.

Profile: You are by far the eldest of six siblings. Because of that the task of helping to raise your brothers and sisters fell heavily upon you when your father "died" while you were in your teens. Although you resented it, you felt too duty-bound not to do it; you were the man of the house at that point, after all. Your skill with mathematics earned you a position as one of your hometown's accountants, so you worked your rear off to support the family while trying to help Mother keep order at home. You don't think your siblings ever fully appreciated that. Several years were wasted before most of them were old enough to look after themselves, so when you were able to finally strike out on your own you didn't look back for a long time. Only then did you finally begin your career in magic.

Father was a wizard of some power, although he was always pretty secretive about it. When he discovered that you had a knack for it, too, he started training you in some of the basics. Then he went away on a series of long trips, coming back for only a few days at a time before going off again, and never came back the last time. A letter that Mother received a few months later claimed that he had been killed in battle, but you knew enough about magic at that point to find the circumstances described about his death to be very suspicious. In fact, you think he actually just skipped out on Mother for whatever reason and faked his death as a cover. Finding out what really happened to him was in the back of your mind for years, but you couldn't do anything about it until you resumed your magical training. When you finally had enough power to do the divinations to find out the truth, you resisted the temptation. Why? You're not sure. Maybe you're just too ashamed of what you might discover. What you do know is that you hate Father for putting you in the situation of having to look after your kid brothers and sisters. Whenever you've needed a focus over the years, that's done the job. You never told any of your family about your suspicions, though. What purpose would it serve for them to have to dwell on something like that? It's the right and responsibility of the first-born to protect the rest of his siblings, and in this case that includes protecting them from hurtful feelings.

You were an orderly and disciplined individual even before becoming the man of the house. You firmly believe that this is the way everything should be, so you've always tried to impress this view on those around you, to varying degrees of success. It has certainly helped you with your magic. Although you have become fairly powerful and successful, you are very careful not to flaunt or abuse your wealth and power; that would be unethical. Besides, it would also be inefficient. Why use overkill when a less powerful spell will do the job? You adventured with an orderly and highly competent company for several years, but now you're getting older and that kind of life doesn't have the appeal that it once did. Although you've had a relationship with a lady friend for several years now, you've held off getting married and settling down because you want to be absolutely sure you're ready for it. You don't want to make the same mistakes Father did (he and Mother were married young, perhaps too young). Now you feel you may be ready. In fact, you were mustering up the courage to pop the question to your lady friend when Janna sent the summons. Of all the times for that to be used, but you did make a solemn oath to respond immediately upon its use, and responsibility is something you never shirk, no matter how inconvenient.

Although you stayed in contact with Mother, you haven't seen most of your siblings since Janna's wedding, seven years ago. It should be interesting to see how they've turned out.

Knowledge of the rest of the characters:

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability Mod	Misc Mod
Strength	13	+1	Type	Total =	Base			
Dexterity	15	+2	Fortitude	+6	+2		+1	+3
Constitution	12	+1	Reflex	+7	+2		+2	+3
Intelligence	18	+4	Will	+11	+6		+2	+3
Wisdom	15	+2						
Charisma	14	+2						

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod
18 =	10	+0	+0	+2	+0	+6

Hit Points: 30

Armor Worn: None Dex Total = Mod +
 Check Penalty: 0 Movement: 30 ft.
 Misc.
 Weight: 55 Initiative +2 = +2

Melee Attack	Base Attack	+ Mod	Str + Mod	Size Mod	Ranged Attack	Base Attack	+ Dex Mod	+ Size Mod
+5 =	+4	+1			+6 =	+4	+2	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 rod of thunder	of +7	1d6+3	x2	-	-	B
Dagger	+5	1d4+1	19-20/x2	10 ft.		P

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Mod	Ability + Misc Mod
Alchemy (Int)	+13	=	9	-4	
Concentration (Con)	+12*	=	11	+1	+4*
Knowledge/arcana (Int)	+15	=	11	+4	
Knowledge/planes (Int)	+10	=	6	+4	
Knowledge/math (Int)	+10	=	6	+4	
Profession (bookkeep)	+8	=	6	+2	
Ride (cc, Dex)	+6	=	4	+2	
Scry (Int)	+15	=	11	+3	
Spellcraft (Int)	+15	=	11	+4	
Spot (c.c. Wis)	+10	=	5	+3	+2 (alertness)

* - +16 when on the defensive in combat.

Languages: Common, draconic, elvish, dwarvish, human foreign.

Heroic Feats:

Combat Casting
 Craft Wands
 Scribe Scrolls
 Simple Weapon Proficiency
 Spell Focus (Evocation)
 Spell Penetration

Magical Items: +3 cloak of protection, +3 ring of protection and resistance (applies to saving throws as well as defense), Boccob's blessed book (contains all your spells), +2 rod of thunder and lightning, figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl), spell scroll (grease, wizard lock, magic circle vs. evil,

Thicker than Water

Janna is the oldest after you, even though she's eight years younger. She was always quiet and reserved as a kid; the only times she really spoke out were when family bickering got to be too much for her, but when she stepped in everyone (even you) paid attention. She had a definite knack for calming people down, which was a big help to you and Mother. When you left to live your own life, she was the one who helped Mother with the others. Although she always did what you instructed, you often had the feeling that she was doing it only because she didn't want to rock the boat. She must have found new assertiveness when she entered the priesthood, because when you came back for her wedding she was quite firm with you. It angered you for a while, but you've decided to let bygones be bygones if she will. Besides, she's too responsible to use the summons without very good reason, so it must be something life threatening, and that concerns you greatly.

Cedrick, the third oldest (10 years your junior), was always a bit of a hothead and one of the fiercest competitors you've ever met. He had to be the best at everything, and was always competing against the twins and other village kids to prove it. Thing is, he really was the best kid in the region when it came to shooting a bow or fencing with a sword. He didn't understand discipline, though, so he eventually became so much trouble that you talked Mother into putting him in a strict military school. Apparently it paid off, because he learned discipline and was an army officer when he came back for Janna's wedding. You've met him a couple of times since then and know he has settled down into a respectable position as a guard captain and begun a family of his own. You've always felt he was your greatest success story as a surrogate parent. Susan and Sharon, the identical twin rangers, are the second and third-youngest, about 11 years younger than you. These tomboys were always quite a handful as kids, always mixing it up with Cedrick or other neighborhood ruffians or wandering out much farther into the forest than they had any right to be going. They had a very annoying habit of absolutely conforming on appearance and behavior, to the point of even answering for one another (honestly, you were their brother and lived with them for years and still weren't completely sure which one you were talking to at any given time), and had an uncanny way of silently communicating with each other. Perhaps it's that connection which made them so exceedingly strong-willed; even Cedrick didn't give you as much grief as these two. Hopefully age has brought maturity to them and they will listen to you this time.

Clarice, the youngest (14 years your junior), was still being carried by Mother when Father "died", so you are the only father-figure she's ever known. She used to cry a lot and complain about everything, but you could always settle her down with a good story or a few gentle words. In fact, she's the only one of your siblings you ever truly felt close to. It broke your heart almost as much as Mother's when she ran off to join the circus at age twelve. When she came back for Janna's wedding you could barely say a word to her. You are proud of her recent successes as a bard, though, and hope that you can reestablish a rapport with her this time.

Spells available:

Note: spells in bold are evocations. DC is 16+ level for evocations, 14+ level for others

Cantrips (prepare 4)	1st level (prepare 5)
_detect magic	_burning hands
_detect poison	_color spray
_disrupt undead	_enlarge
_flare	_feather fall
_light	_magic missile
_mage hand	_message
_mending	_shield
_open/close	_Tenser's floating disk
_unseen servant	
2nd level (prepare 4)	3rd level (prepare 4)
_continual flame	_dispel magic
_daylight	_flame arrow
_flaming sphere	_gust of wind
_knock	_Leomund's tiny hut
_Melf's acid arrow	_lightning bolt
_see invisibility	_slow
_strength	_tongues
_web	_water breathing
4th level (prepare 3)	
_dimension door	
_fire shield	
_ice storm	
_minor globe of invulnerability	
_polymorph self	
_wall of fire	

Janna Camarillo

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Female
 Class: Cleric Level: 8 Align: NG
 Height: 5 ft., 3 in. Weight: 85 Age: 32
 Hair: Thinned long dark blond Eyes: Blue
 Other: gaunt and wasted appearance

any distance without your staff, can travel only half the normal duration before requiring rest, require at least 10 hours of sleep to be adequately rested, and heal naturally at 1/3 the normal rate. This curse cannot be lifted, nor its affect abated, by any means within your power. (See your Profile for further details.)

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability Mod	Misc Mod
Strength	5 (10)	-3	Type	Total =	Base			
Dexterity	8 (13)	-1	Fort	+3	+6		-3	
Constitution	5 (10)	-3	Reflex	+1	+2		-1	
Intelligence	13	+1	Will	+10	+6		+4	
Wisdom	18	+4						
Charisma	15	+2						

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod
13	10	+0	+0	-1	--	+4

Pregnancy: At the time the scenario starts you are 16 weeks into your first pregnancy. At this stage you are suffering from particularly severe morning sickness (you've given up on trying to eat breakfast or do your devotionals first thing in the morning). You remember that Mom also suffered mightily from morning sickness so its severity for you may not be related to the curse at all. You are taking an herbal remedy that helps a little.

Magical Items: +2 *quarterstaff of disruption* (carving of sunburst at each end, otherwise can pass as walking staff), +5 *bracers of armor, self-replenishing healer's kit* (magically restocks itself each morning, gives +2 to Heal checks when used), *vestments of faith* (appear as clerical robes that are white with blue trim and adorned with Marinol's symbol), *Keoghtom's ointments* (five applications), *horn of goodness/evil*, divine spell scroll (*locate object, dispel magic, tongues* at 8th level)

Equipment: silver holy symbol (staff encircled by wreath), leather belt with two pouches, pouch of assorted herbs, hooded waterproof cloak, light clothing (worn under *vestments*), water-tight scroll tube, ink and pen, backpack with bedroll, waterskin, two day's rations, journal, devotional book, 40 gp

Profile: You are the second oldest of six siblings. As a kid you were always the quiet and shy one, the one that held back and watched when the others went to play with the town kids. That was partly because you weren't very physically sturdy as a kid and partly because you had almost no self-confidence at the time. You were also the responsible one, the one who would volunteer to stay home and help Mom with the chores or look after the village's babies while everyone else was actively having fun at the town festivals. You often found yourself supervising your younger brothers and sisters, but you didn't mind; after all, family is more important than anything. You also felt it was your duty as one of the oldest ones, particularly after Dad died on some trip when you were only six years of age. It was everything you could do to get them to behave, and it got really frustrating at times. You just kept reminding yourself that family is more important than anything.

About the only time you really asserted yourself as a kid was when people started to get into arguments or fights. You can't stand violence or loud noises (thunder unnerves you even to this day), so you always tried to step in and break it up, get everyone to calm down. Amazingly, it worked most of the time. In fact, you got so good at it after a while that you appointed yourself your town's peacemaker. No one ever objected, although some of the kids snickered behind your back about it.

As you got a little older you discovered your life's calling: medicine. You got some training with one of the town's herbalists and started observing the town surgeon carefully. By the time you reached adolescence you were able to administer to most simple medical needs and even some more complicated ones. Somewhere around that time you found religion as well. You'd always paid homage to Marinol, the patron goddess of health and medicine, but didn't fully appreciate what it meant to actually devote one's self to a goddess until a traveling priestess offered to teach you about Her ways. The more you learned, the more the teachings drew you in. By the time you were old enough to leave home you were a fully-indoctrinated Healer of Marinol. As many Healers do, you helped establish a hospice on a major trade route and prepared to dedicate your life to helping the sick and infirm.

Hit Points: 18 (42, when stats were full)

Armor Worn: None				Dex			
Check Penalty: 0		Movement: 15 ft.		Total	= Mod + Misc.		
Weight: 0		Initiative -1		= -1			
Melee Attack	Base Attack	+ Str Mod	curse	Ranged Attack	Base Attac k	+De x Mod	+Size Mod
+2/-3	+6/+1	+3	-1	+5/+0	+6/+1		
Weapon	Attack	Damage		Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 <i>quarterstaff of disruption</i>	+4/-1	1d6-1		x2	-	-	B
Skill	Total		=	Ranks	+Ability Mod	+ Misc Mod	
Concentration (Con)	+7		=	6	-3	+4	
Diplomacy (Cha)	+10		=	8	+2	+4	
Healing (Wis)	+19		=	11	+4	+4	
Knowledge/religion (Int)	+8		=	7	+1		
Profession/herbalism (Wis)	+10		=	6	+4		
Ride (cc, Dex)	+1		=	2	-1		
Spellcraft	+5		=	4	+1		

Languages: Common, celestial.

Heroic Feats:

Combat Casting
Expertise
Scribe Scroll
Skill Focus (Heal)

Domains:

Healing and Protection

Curse: You are suffering from a powerful and debilitating curse that affects you like a wasting disease. Every ten days you lose one point each of Strength and Constitution and have a 50% chance of losing one point of Dexterity. General weakness and painful stiffness of joints brought about by the curse's effects gives you a -1 inherent penalty to AC and melee attack rolls and reduces your movement rate by half. You also cannot walk

Funny how things often don't work out the way you plan, isn't it? You'd been at the hospice a couple of years when a badly-wound warrior stumbled in and collapsed, half-dead, at your feet. You healed him, and while he was recuperating learned that he was a Crusader, a member of a brotherhood of knights dedicated to traveling the land to combat evil in whatever form it took. He was brave, handsome, articulate, dedicated, and, most importantly to you, compassionate. You were smitten and so, you could see, was he. Over the next several days he convinced you that, while healing and helping the ill and injured was a worthy profession, sometimes it was necessary to take a stand against the greater evils that often caused these conditions. He also convinced you to go with him on his next campaign. It was awful and bloody and messy, but in the end a large number of rampaging bandits were dealt with. When the knight's fellow Crusaders remarked on how useful you had been to their cause by tending to their wounds so they could continue to fight, you nervously decided, with a little encouragement from your new love, to give this new lifestyle a try. After a couple of months the knight convinced you of something else: to take his hand in marriage.

The wedding brought all your kin back together for the first time in years. Afterwards you and Sir Gerrard continued your campaign against evil in the world, always traveling together. It was a wonderful time. Sure, it wasn't always great adventure, but you were traveling around, doing good and, just as importantly, doing it with the man you loved. Unfortunately it wasn't destined to last forever.

Just as you and Gerrard were considering retiring to raise a family you got word of the resurfacing of the Gauntlet of Lamentation, a powerful artifact of evil that fostered disease, suffering, and disaster wherever it could be found. It represented everything you stood against, so you and Gerrard gathered his fellow knights and went on one final, fateful mission together: to find and destroy the gauntlet. Finding it was no problem, given the trail of devastation its bearer left behind. When you saw the plagues and calamities left in its wake you resolved that nothing would stop you from seeing it destroyed. You would even give your life if that's what it took to see it removed from the world. It ended up coming to that.

Sir Jaffery and Sir Corman both fell deathly ill while carrying the gauntlet to the volcano where it could be destroyed. They both died despite your best efforts. Sir James also took sick while carrying it (something you hadn't thought possible for a paladin), but he was able to survive until you actually reached the volcano. He died while battling the demons that sought to keep you from destroying the gauntlet. Although the demons were defeated, the other knight and wizard that had been traveling with you also died in the battle when their bones became brittle and easily broke under their opponents' blows. (The Gauntlet again!) That left you and Gerrard to carry it the final few yards and hurl it into the volcano's underground cauldron of molten rock. A tremendous explosion resulted, causing the ceiling of the cave to collapse. You were barely able to jump free, but were so badly injured by falling rocks that you couldn't move. Gerrard wasn't so lucky.

A day later another group of Crusaders who had been following your group's path found you still clinging to life. They gave Gerrard a proper funeral pyre and then carried you back to civilization. Although you eventually recovered from the physical trauma, the grief overwhelmed you for some time. Yes, you and Gerrard had both acknowledged that something like this might happen some day, but it's a hard thing to deal with when it actually happens. Once you finally started to come out of your most intense grief you realized that something was wrong. You weren't healing as well as you should and felt ill much of the time. Some divinations by your sister Healers revealed the awful truth: although the Gauntlet had failed to kill you, its parting act had been to inflict a dreadful curse on you. The curse's insidious effect is much like a powerful wasting disease, one that gradually saps your strength and ruins your health until you eventually die. The Healers tried and failed to get the curse lifted; it's just too powerful. The Great Healer herself estimated that you had only

about four months left to live and they wouldn't be pleasant ones. With Gerrard already dead you felt you had nothing left to live for, and so resolved yourself to your fate.

After another month and a half signs that something else was amiss with you finally caught your attention. At first the effects of the curse and your grief distracted you from the obvious truth, but as a Healer you couldn't deny it for long: you're pregnant! By the degree of development you estimated that you were about three months along, which means the child was conceived right before you started on that last ghastly quest. For a short while you were filled with hope, but then grim reality set in. With only a bit over two months to live you won't have time to carry the baby to term and you've never heard of a baby surviving being borne four months premature. There's also the consideration that the taxing effect of your first pregnancy will speed along the curse's effect on you. You screamed at the heavens when you realized that the Gauntlet would deny you a child as well as your own life, then fervently prayed to Marinol for some way to stay alive long enough for the child you carry to be borne. You don't care about your own life, but the child would be a living reminder of Gerrard and you both and in any case shouldn't have to die for the actions of its parents.

After several nights Marinol answered with a revelation: there was a way, and the Oracle at the Temple of the Seers, on Mount Catclaw, could provide the solution. You know the place, and it's only a couple of days' journey from Hallisburg, your childhood home. The problem is that the land around it is rough, untamed, and dangerous. In your current state of health (you're sick most of the time now and ache like an old woman) there's no way you can make the journey without a lot of help. The Crusaders have been looking in on you but are currently out of contact, so you have to find someone else. There's only one other answer, really. When it comes right down to it, family is more important than anything. You broke Dominic's tablet and summoned everyone home. Although your siblings have all scattered to the four winds since last gathering at your wedding, you hope that all the old differences can be set aside and you can all unite this one final time.

Knowledge of the rest of the characters:

Dominic is the oldest, eight years older than you. He's the only one besides you that can clearly remember Dad, and he takes after Dad more than he probably realizes. You're not just talking about going into magic, either; his whole attitude, the I'm-in-charge-because-I-have-to-be personality, is the same as Dad's, and he definitely takes after Dad far more than Mom in appearance. He tried to act like he was Dad after Dad died, too, always telling the rest of you what to do and expecting you to obey. You didn't much care for that, but you were old enough to have some idea of the stress he was under trying to help provide for the family so you tolerated it. Besides, causing strife just isn't in your nature. You're no longer kids, so there's no reason to put up with it anymore, but there also isn't any point in antagonizing him; you all need to be united for this. Cedrick is the next sibling after you by a little less than two years. He was a rough-and-tumble kid, always trying to pick fights and prove that he's better than someone. That often got him in trouble. He didn't really get straightened out until Dominic put him in a program to foster military-style discipline. He really took to that and became an excellent warrior. Although he was difficult to deal with when he was younger, the two of you grew closer as you both got into your teens. He served as one of the groomsmen at your wedding and was the happiest and most approving of your choice for a mate. You regret not keeping in closer contact with him since then. You've heard he's settled down to raise a family, so you're dying to hear about his kids. (Oops, better be careful what you say; that could be literally true!)

Susan and Sharon, the next two oldest (three years younger), are the twins of the family - absolutely identical twins, in fact, down even to the way they dress, act, and seem to think. Their ability to finish each other's sentences and carry on one-sided conversations with each other was uncanny. They were almost impossible to tell apart, and to make it harder they often wouldn't even admit which was which. From helping to raise

them you know that Sharon tends to take the initiative a bit more and Susan is the slightly more cautious one, but they followed each other's lead so closely that you had to pay very careful attention to them to notice this. Although they gave Dominic a heap of trouble they mostly cooperated with you, so you look forward to seeing them again. Their ranger skills should be very helpful on this mission.

Clarice, or "Clarice the Nimble" as she likes to be called, is the dark sheep of the family. As the youngest (three years younger than the twins), she was alternately put upon and spoiled as a child. That's why she ended up so screwed up. She was a constant problem case as a kid, but nothing was more upsetting than her running away to join the circus. After seeing one of her shows a couple of years later, though, you realized that it was probably the right move for her; she's actually very talented at performing for an audience. That helped you to sit down and work things out with her when she came back for the wedding. She claimed at the time that she was planning to become a bard. You've heard her name a few times in the past few years, so she must have succeeded. Good for her!

MARINOL, Goddess of Health and Medicine: Marinol, your deity, is a Neutral Good goddess who is the patron of medical professionals, herbalists, those dedicated to physical fitness, and the sick or injured; her spheres are Healing and Protection. Ordained, empowered worshipers are called Healers. They swear an oath similar to the Hippocratic oath: never to intentionally harm a sentient creature except in self-defense or the defense of others (and then only if it can't be avoided) and always to provide aid and healing to those who require it, whether friend or foe. Undead, infernal creatures, and devout worshipers of Kaal, God of Disease and Vermin, are exempt from this restriction. Directly damaging spells are not allowed. Daily devotions may be performed at any time, although most Healers do it at daybreak.

Spells available (DC of 13 + spell level):

Orisons (prepare 6)	1st level (prepare 5)
_ create water	_ bless
_ cure minor wounds	_ bless water
_ detect magic	_ cause fear
_ detect poison	_ command
_ guidance	_ comprehend languages
_ light	_ cure light wounds
_ mending	_ death watch
_ purify food/drink	_ detect evil
_ read magic	_ detect undead
_ resistance	_ endure elements
_ virtue	_ entropic shield
Domain spells	_ guiding hand
1 st level:	_ invisibility to undead
_ cure light wounds or	_ magical stone
_ sanctuary	_ obscuring mist
2 nd level:	_ protection from evil
_ cure moderate wounds or	_ random action
_ shield other	_ remove fear
3 rd level:	_ sanctuary
_ cure serious wounds or	_ shield of faith
_ protection from elements	_ summon monsters I
4 th level:	
_ cure critical wounds or	
_ spell immunity	
2nd level (prepare 4)	3rd level (prepare 4)
_ aid	_ animate dead
_ animal messenger	_ continual flame
_ augury	_ create food and water
_ calm emotions	_ cure serious wounds
_ consecrate	_ daylight
_ cure moderate wounds	_ deeper darkness
_ darkness	_ dispel magic
_ endurance	_ helping hand

_ enthrall	_ invisibility purge
_ find traps	_ locate object
_ gentle repose	_ magical vestment
_ hold person	_ magic circle vs. evil
_ lesser restoration	_ meld into stone
_ make whole	_ negative plane protection
_ remove paralysis	_ obscure object
_ resist elements	_ prayer
_ shatter	_ protection from elements
_ shield other	_ remove blindness/ deafness
	_ remove curse
_ slow poison	_ remove disease
_ sound burst	_ restoration
_ searing light	_ sending
_ spiritual weapon	_ speak with dead
_ undetectable alignment	_ water breathing
_ zone of truth	_ water walk
	_ wind wall

4th level (prepare 3)

_ air walk	_ neutralize poison
_ control water	_ repel vermin
_ cure critical wounds	_ restoration
_ death ward	_ sending
_ detect lie	_ spell immunity
_ dimensional anchor	_ status
_ dismissal	_ tongues
_ divination	
_ divine power	
_ free action	
_ imbue with spell ability	
_ lesser planar ally	

Cedrik Camarillo (apparent) – Bjorn Arnor (actual)

Race: Doppelganger Size: Medium Gender: Male
 Class: Fighter Level: 3 (4d8+8 HD) Align: N
 Height: 6 ft., 2 in. (6 ft.) Weight: 230 (160) Age: 30
 Hair: Long black hair Eyes: Blue

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability	Misc
Strength	15	+2	Type	Total =	Base		Mod	Mod
Dexterity	15	+2	Fort	+9	+4		+3	+2
Constitution	14	+2	Reflex	+7	+4		+1	+2
Intelligence	13	+1	Will	+7	+4		+1	+2
Wisdom	14	+2						
Charisma	13	+1						

Armor	Base	Armor	Shield	Dex	Size	Misc.
Class		Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
18	10	+0	+2	+2	–	+4

Hit Points: 53

Armor Worn: +1 *small shield*, +4 natural
 Check Penalty: -1 Movement: 30 ft.
 Weight: Initiative +2 Total = Mod + Misc. = +2

Melee	Base	+ Str	Ranged	Base	+Dex	+Size
Attack =	Attack	Mod	Attack =	Attack	Mod	Mod
+8/+3	+6/+1	+2	+8/+3	+6/+1	+2	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 <i>longsword of speed</i>	+10/+10/+5	1d8+4	19-20/x2	-	-	S
slams	+8/+3	1d6+2	x2			B
light crossbow	+8/+3	1d8	19-20/x2	80'		P

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Ability	+ Misc
Bluff (Cha)	+12	=	7	+1	+4
Disguise (Cha)	+12	=	7	+1	+4
Jump (Str)	+6	=	4	+2	
Listen (Wis)	+11	=	7	+2	+2
Perform (cc, Cha)	+6	=	5	+1	
Ride (Dex)	+6	=	4	+2	
Sense Motive (Wis)	+6	=	4	+2	
Spot (Wis)	+12	=	8	+2	+2

Languages: Common, doppelganger, elvish.

Heroic Feats:

Alertness
Combat Reflexes
Deflect Arrows
Dodge
Improved Unarmed Strike
Mobility

Special Attacks:

Detect Thoughts (Su)—A doppelganger can continuously detect thoughts as the spell cast by an 18th-level sorcerer (save DC 13). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Special Qualities:

Alter Self (Su)—A doppelganger can assume the shape of any Small or Medium size humanoid. This works like alter self as cast by an 18th-level sorcerer, but the doppelganger can remain in the chosen form indefinitely. It can assume a new form or return to its own as a standard action.

Darkvision (Ex)—A doppelganger has 60 foot darkvision.

Immunities (Ex)—Doppelgangers are immune to sleep and charm effects.

Skills—A doppelganger receives a +4 racial bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks. When using *alter self*, a doppelganger receives an additional +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks. If it can read an opponents mind, it gets a further +4 circumstance bonus to Bluff and Disguise checks.

Magical Items: *ring of mind shielding*, +2 *longsword of speed*, +1 *small shield*, *potion of invisibility* (one dose)

Equipment: backpack with bedroll, waterskin, and two day's rations, light crossbow, quiver with 20 bolts, belt with two pouches (all real; you also duplicate the appearance of a breastplate under a dark blue tabard, a cloak, and sturdy high traveling boots), 48 gp, 10 50 gp and 8 100 gp gems

Profile: Human you appear to be, but a doppelganger you are truly. You are Bjorn Arnor of subclan Ton Darlor. A renegade from your clan you are, and from them you have fled very far. Their murderous ways were not for you, so what else could you do? Seeking you for some time are they, but always have you gotten away...

No, wait, you're going to have to stop this. If you're going to protect your secret and truly pretend to be human, you're going to have to start thinking like a human, too; if you slip up in a crisis and start speaking in the sing-song verse that usually results when your native language is translated into Common, you're going to get found out, and you've been successfully hiding from your subclan for too long now to want to risk getting caught. You betrayed them, so there's no going back. You have no doubts that they will kill you if they catch you.

The reason you're in this mess in the first place is because you're not an ordinary doppelganger. Most of your species are almost identical in personality, but occasionally one comes into being with a personality flaw that makes it resistant to the violence and avarice to which doppelgangers are normally prone and gives it an uncharacteristic sense of compassion. Normally such individuals are killed while young, but you managed to hide those traits until you could escape your clan. You've been on the run ever since, with your most recent journeys taking you to the town of Silverdale in the guise of a wandering minstrel. You knew you'd have to ditch that disguise sooner or later, so you scouted out a couple of likely candidates to duplicate, one being the Captain of the Guard of the town, a family man named Cedrick Camarillo. He had a wife and young kids so you really didn't want to kill him, just copy him if it became necessary. It did, when some of your fellows who knew of your current identity came to town. You stole some of the guard captain's equipment while he and his family were sleeping, left town under the guise of a farmer, then switched to the guard captain when you were well away from the city, your plan being to claim that you were on family business.

Then something weird happened. A tablet on an amulet you stole from the guard captain broke, and suddenly you had a sense that you should be going to someplace named Hallisburg because someone named Janna was urgently requesting your presence. You had no idea what that was about and were planning to ignore it, but then three days later you crossed paths with a bard who greeted you as her brother! She asked you if you'd heard the call and were en route, too. Oh, my, was this getting complicated! From scanning her with your *detect thought* ability you got the sense that this call was something magical set up quite some time ago for emergency use and all the siblings (there's six of them altogether, including the one you duplicated) had agreed to answer it. You couldn't think of a way to refuse, so you agreed and traveled with her. Although

you started out looking for an opportunity to slip away, the more this bard talked the more you became intrigued by this whole family business. It's like nothing you ever experienced in your clan. Since you had the tablet and the real guard captain didn't, he likely didn't get the call himself, so you've decided to play this out as far as it will go. It sounds like most of these brothers and sisters are well-traveled, so at worst you'll find someone good to copy.

Compared to other doppelgangers you are fairly bold in combat. An extensive amount of time spent pretending to be a military cadet has given you a formal training in weaponry and fighting skills, so you have a much greater combat prowess than the norm for your race. You're still inclined to rely on deception and misdirection when possible without going out of character, but you have no qualms about a stand-up fight. Killing doesn't bother you as long as there's a purpose to it, but you won't do it just for the sake of killing or because it's expected when you duplicate someone. You've struggled mightily to overcome the air of superiority that creeps up whenever you're around humans and humanlike species - they are amazingly easy to dupe - but sometimes a little bit of that slips through into your characterizations.

From what you have picked up from reading the thoughts of this bard and the original guard captain, you are supposed to be the third of six siblings. The captain's view is that he's a bit better than everyone else (won't be hard to fake that!) and very proud of his wife Theresa, five-year-old son Dirk, and infant daughter Deandrea. He sees himself as a great warrior and soldier who went on many adventures but is now retired to the guard captain position to be there for his family - boy, this whole thing about family must be great, it was his overriding mental image! The bard sees him as a bully, so he must not have been particularly nice in his younger days. You also picked up some details on the other family members, too, so you should be able to wing it; after all, doppelgangers are nothing if not consummate actors! From what you've been able to gather, the rest of the family members are:

Knowledge of the rest of the characters:

Father, who's been dead for many years and so won't be at this meeting you're going to.

Mother, who's strongly respected by these two, a woman of great resilience, apparently. She may or may not be at this meeting.

Dominic, who's the much older brother and some sort of wizard. He might be trouble, since wizards tend to have spells that can detect the true nature of things. You'll have to be wary around him. The bard liked him but the guard captain saw him as overbearing.

Janna, the one who put out the call, is the oldest sister. She's a priestess of some sort and married to a knight - or maybe a squire, you aren't clear which from what the bard has been saying. Apparently the last time all the siblings were together was for her wedding. The bard used to have a bit of a problem with this Janna, but apparently that was settled at their last meeting. The guard captain always got along pretty well with her.

Sharon and Susan are the next-oldest sisters. They're supposed to be identical in every way, which is common with doppelgangers but something you never realized could happen among humans. How intriguing! The guard captain had clear memories of wrestling and fighting with them; they must not have gotten along too well. The bard doesn't like them, either, so they must be pretty bad. They are also warriors of some sort.

Clarice the Nimble (as she likes to call herself) is the bard you've been traveling with - although she might actually be more or less than that, because you keep getting the sense that she's hiding something. She is the youngest of these siblings and resents that fact a lot. Still, she's a very talented musician and respectable singer. Though she's a bit on the short side for your preference, she would make an excellent future disguise; you've always liked duplicating musicians.

Susan Camarillo

Race: Human
Class: Ranger
Height: 5 ft., 6 in.
Hair: blond, very short

Size: Medium
Level: 7
Weight: 140
Eyes: blue

Gender: Female
Align: CG
Age: 29

Favored Enemies:
Magical beasts +2
Shapechangers +1

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability Misc
			Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod
Strength	16	+3	Fortitude	+8	+5	+3	
Dexterity	16	+3	Reflex	+5	+2	+3	
Constitution	17	+3	Will	+4/+8*	+2	+2	+4*
Intelligence	14	+2	* - see	Twin	Link,	Below	
Wisdom	14	+2					
Charisma	13	+1					

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod
18	=	10	+5	+0	+3	--

Hit Points: 67

Armor Worn: +2 *studded leather*
Check Penalty: -1
Weight: 55
Movement: 30 ft.
Initiative +3
Dex
Total = Mod+ Misc.
= +3

Melee Attack =	Base Attack	+ Mod	Str+ Mod	Size	Ranged Attack =	Base Attack	+ Dex+ Mod	Size
+10/+5	+7/+2	+3			+10/+5	+7/+2	+3	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 <i>longsword</i>	+13/+8	1d8+5	19-20	-	-	S
+2 <i>longsword*</i>	+11/+6	1d8+5	19-20			S
+1 <i>hand axe</i>	+11/+6	1d6+4	x3	-		S
+1 <i>hand axe*</i>	+9	1d6+2	x3	-		S
Dagger	+10/+5	1d4+3	19-20			P
Mighty composite shortbow (+3)	+10/+5	1d6+3	x3	70 ft.		P

* - Use these lines when fighting with two weapons.

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Mod	Ability + Misc Mod
Animal Empathy (Cha)	+9	=	8	+1	
Climb (Str)	+7	=	5	+3	-1 (armor)
Intuit Direction (Wis)	+8	=	6	+2	
Knowledge/nature (Int)	+12	=	10	+2	
Move Silently (Dex)	+8	=	6	+3	-1 (armor)
Ride (Dex)	+7	=	4	+3	
Search (Int)	+8	=	6	+2	
Spot (Wis)	+8	=	6	+2	
Swim (Str)	+7	=	5	+3	-1 (armor)
Use Rope (Dex)	+8	=	5	+3	
Wilderness Lore (Wis)	+16	=	10	+2	+4

Languages: Common, orcish, goblin

Heroic Feats:

Ambidexterity
Endurance
Point Blank Shot
Run
Tracking
Two Weapon Fighting
Weapon Focus (longsword)

Special Twin Link:

You have a mental connection to your twin sister Sharon that puts you in constant low-level telepathic contact with her. This link allows you the following abilities/benefits (all count as free actions unless otherwise noted):

- You can communicate telepathically with Sharon (but no one else) at will. No activation roll or Concentration checks are required for this ability except in special circumstances (DM's judgment). You have never established a range limit on this ability, but know that carrying on a full conversation with Sharon is possible at a distance of over a mile.
- If Sharon is sleeping, you can mentally wake her up on a Wisdom check at a DC of 10. You can attempt this once per round as a move-equivalent action. You also have a sense of what she dreams, which often makes for interesting conversation the next morning! Both of you instantly know when the other twin knows that she is in danger. This includes being aware of when the other twin is unconscious and not stable.
- Since two sets of senses are better than one, if the two of you have a line of sight to each other then both of you must be caught flat-footed for either one to be caught flat-footed.
- All of your non-magical Will saving throw bonuses are cumulative with Sharon's and vice versa. (This is because the two of you have learned to assist each other in resisting mental attacks.) The additional bonuses are negated if one of you is sleeping or unconscious.
- You can "home in" on Sharon's current location with absolute accuracy, regardless of distance or effects that would normally block divinations and magical means of location.

A combination of your link and inherent familiarity with how Sharon acts and thinks gives you the following additional benefits:

- You and Sharon may coordinate your actions in combat without restrictions about table talk.
- If you use the combat action Aiding Another with Sharon, or the two of you combine your efforts for a skill check, the normal bonuses for such a combined effort are doubled.

Your link also gives you a significant drawback: if Sharon is abruptly rendered unconscious (such as by an injury), you are stunned for one round and must make a Fortitude saving throw against a DC of 10, with no magical bonuses applicable, or be rendered unconscious yourself for 2-8 rounds. This does not happen when you fall asleep normally, although the two of you generally fall asleep at the same time unless one is trying to stay awake.

See the description given in your Profile for further details.

Magical Items: +2 *studded leather armor*, +2 *longsword*, +1 *hand axe*, 8 +1 *arrows of shocking*, *eyes of night*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *potion of moderate healing* (one dose)

Equipment: dagger (kept in boot); mighty composite short bow (+3 bonus); quiver with 10 arrows; backpack with bedroll, waterskin, flint and steel, one day's rations, bar of soap, pot of weaponblack (six applications for Medium or smaller bladed weapons); explorer's outfit (forest tone colors); military badge (not usually worn, see Profile); 40 gp, 2 100 gp gems, silver charm necklace (identical to Sharon's, 100 gp value)

Profile: You are not alone in this world - never have been, never ever want to be. That's because you have an identical twin. Her name is Sharon, and she is more than just a sister to you; she is an extension of you. A philosopher that you've lately been seeing socially has a theory that the two of you may just be a single persona whose physical incarnation is split into two different bodies. He may or may not be right, but you do know that the similarities between you and Sharon run more than skin deep. You not only look alike but think alike, to the point that you can finish each other's sentences. This freaks people out, but it can be entertaining to watch their reactions.

The connection goes beyond that, though. You and Sharon actually share your thoughts with each other. It's a link similar to how you've heard telepathy described, although it only connects the two of you and is always active. If one of you is hurt, afraid, or in danger, the other will immediately know it, and what one of you learns or experiences can be instantly shared with the other. This has allowed the two of you to coordinate actions even when out of sight of one another and carry on private conversations in even the noisiest of places. Conveying more than simple messages requires a fair amount of concentration, though, and tends to isolate you from your surroundings, so the two of you still talk out loud to each other much of the time. (Sharon finds it amusing to sometimes confuse listeners by carrying on conversations where one of you is talking out loud and the other is using your link. Although you play along, it doesn't interest you as much as it does her so you usually aren't the one to start it.)

You and Sharon have met some other sets of twins who try to differentiate themselves from each other, but that's not the case with the two of you. You both figured out early on that there can be some real advantages to fostering cases of mistaken identity, so over the years the two of you have taken painstaking efforts to make sure that your appearances and behaviors remain absolutely identical in the presence of others. If one of you changes something about her hair or personal hygiene (usually Sharon), the other has to, too. If one of you gets something new or different for clothing or equipment (usually you), the other has to match it as closely as possible. Magic items also have to be as similar as possible. You and Sharon have even gone as far as making sure that scars and bruises that don't match are either promptly removed or duplicated on the other one. This also extends to behavior. When in other company, if one of you laughs, cries, or gets angry, so does the other one. If one of you picks a fight, the other will be there in an instant to back her up. You also publicly express the same tastes and distastes, particularly in food and men, even if it isn't necessarily true. (The last part is the only duplication that's been a trial for you to maintain, since your preferences in food and men are a bit more bland than Sharon's.) And if someone seems able to figure out which one of you is which, then you just start answering to each other's names.

Such attention to duplication can be a pain, and it's been labeled as silly and/or obsessive by family and friends, but complete duplicity has been way too useful way too many times for either of you to consider giving it up any time soon. There's been several times when even a few heartbeats of confusion over seeing two completely identical warriors has saved both of your lives and the utility of one of you being able to stand in for the other at a moment's notice has been proven over and over again.

There are a few slight differences between the two of you, though. Both of you are very serious-minded and businesslike when it comes to completing a job, but in casual times Sharon is always the first one to loosen up; she's the one responsible for most of the drinking and partying binges the two of you have been on in the past. She also has a much better sense of humor. You, on the other twin (as you both like to put it) are the more naturally cautious, suspicious, and analytical one. It's a good balance, though, as you can both check each other; she keeps you from getting too uptight, while you keep her from getting too wild.

Both of you have always been far more at home outdoors. Staying in a cramped town dwelling most of the time is the worst fate imaginable, so the two of you were always outside exploring. That used to exasperate Mom to no end; you don't think she ever really understood either of you. You're both naturals when it comes to scouting and woodlore and came

into the service of Lord Reynard (the leader of a powerful city-state) when his military commanders recommended the two of you be put on contract after you did some freelance scouting for them. That was ten years ago. You've worked on and off for him ever since, with adventuring taken up the rest of your time. (The military badge you carry signifies you as one of his special agents.) Neither of you currently has any intentions of settling down anytime soon, although if you meet a pair of handsome twin guys, who knows?

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Sharon, your twin, is described above.

Dominic is the oldest of your brothers and sisters by several years. He's the only one who took after Daddy (whom neither of you really remember, since he died when you were quite young) and became a wizard - but that was only after he helped Mom raise the rest of you. You always thought he was strict and mean when you were growing up, but you've since come to understand that he was under a lot of stress at the time and now regret much of the hassle you both gave him. He was still acting like he was the boss the last time you saw him, though. If he does it again this time, it will be easy to fall back into old habits.

Janna, the second oldest (three years older than you), was always the sensible one and the peacemaker in the family. She was always the one who would step in whenever someone was getting on someone else's nerves too much and put a stop to it. She also was the only one of you that was particularly religious, so it wasn't a surprise when she joined the priesthood. What did surprise you was when she married a crusading knight and started going on campaigns with him; she always seemed too fragile for that sort of thing. She was always kind, understanding, and nurturing towards the two of you, so you never gave her half the grief that you did Dominic. If she asked something of you, you would do it. That's why the two of you broke off in the middle of your recent adventure to head back here so quickly. You fear something's terribly wrong with her.

Cedrick is the third oldest and, at only a year older, the closest to the two of you in age. Because of that the two of you roughhoused around with him much more than your other siblings. As kids you were always competitive with him about everything, even silly stuff like how fast you could eat or how far you could spit. He's the only one of your siblings who proved better than either of you when it came to fighting, so it was no surprise that he became a soldier and, later, an adventurer. You've heard that he has settled down in the last few years, so maybe his competitive fire has gone out. You'll have to find out one way or another.

Clarice, at three years younger than the two of you, is the baby of the family. She always hated to be reminded of that, but she whined so much as a kid that it was hard to resist. She was always unhappy with town life, but it was still a big shock when she ran away to join a traveling circus. Typical brattish behavior! When you all gathered for Janna's wedding seven years ago she claimed that she was saving up money to attend a college for the performing arts. She must have done it because she's since become a fairly well-known bard. Should be interesting to see if she's matured at all, since she was still behaving like a brat at the wedding.

Spells Available:

1st level (prepare 2) DC of 13 — alarm — animal friendship — detect animals or plants — detect snares and pits — entangle — pass without trace — resist poison — speak with animals — summon natural creatures I
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Sharon Camarillo

Race: Human
Class: Ranger
Height: 5 ft., 6 in.
Hair: blond, very short

Size: Medium
Level: 7
Weight: 140
Eyes: blue

Gender: Female
Align: CG
Age: 29

Favored Enemies:
Magical beasts +2
Shapechangers +1

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability	Misc
			Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod	
Strength	16	+3	Fortitude	+8	+5	+3		
Dexterity	16	+3	Reflex	+5	+2	+3		
Constitution	17	+3	Will	+4/+8*	+2	+2	+4*	
Intelligence	14	+2	* - see	Twin	Link,	Below		
Wisdom	14	+2						
Charisma	13	+1						

Armor		Armor	Shield	Dex	Size	Misc.
Class	Base	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
18	=	10	+5	+0	+3	--

Hit Points: 67

Armor Worn: +2 *studded leather*
Check Penalty: -1 Movement: 30 ft. Total = Mod+ Misc.
Weight: 55 Initiative +3 = +3

Melee	Base	+	Str+	Size	Ranged	Base	+	Dex+	Size
Attack =	Attack	Mod	Mod		Attack =	Attack	Mod	Mod	
+10/+5	+7/+2	+3			+10/+5	+7/+2	+3		

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 <i>longsword</i>	+13/+8	1d8+5	19-20	-	-	S
+2 <i>longsword*</i>	+11/+6	1d8+5	19-20			S
+1 <i>hand axe</i>	+11/+6	1d6+4	x3	-		S
+1 <i>hand axe*</i>	+9	1d6+2	x3	-		S
Dagger	+10/+5	1d4+3	19-20			P
Mighty	+10/+5	1d6+3	x3	70 ft.		P
composite						
shortbow (+3)						

* - Use these lines when fighting with two weapons.

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Ability	+ Misc
				Mod	Mod
Animal Empathy (Cha)	+9	=	8	+1	
Climb (Str)	+7	=	5	+3	-1 (armor)
Intuit Direction (Wis)	+8	=	6	+2	
Knowledge/nature (Int)	+12	=	10	+2	
Move Silently (Dex)	+8	=	6	+3	-1 (armor)
Ride (Dex)	+7	=	4	+3	
Search (Int)	+8	=	6	+2	
Spot (Wis)	+8	=	6	+2	
Swim (Str)	+7	=	5	+3	-1 (armor)
Use Rope (Dex)	+8	=	5	+3	
Wilderness Lore (Wis)	+16	=	10	+2	+4

Languages: Common, orcish, goblin

Heroic Feats:

Ambidexterity
Endurance
Point Blank Shot
Run
Tracking
Two Weapon Fighting
Weapon Focus (longsword)

Special Ability: Twin Link:

You have a mental connection to your twin sister Susan that puts you in constant low-level telepathic contact with her. This link allows you the following abilities/benefits (all count as free actions unless otherwise noted):

- You can communicate telepathically with Susan (but no one else) at will. No activation roll or Concentration checks are required for this ability except in special circumstances (DM's judgment). You have never established a range limit on this ability, but know that carrying on a full conversation with Susan is possible at a distance of over a mile.
- If Susan is sleeping, you can mentally wake her up on a Wisdom check at a DC of 10. You can attempt this once per round as a move-equivalent action. You also have a sense of what she dreams, which often makes for interesting conversation the next morning! Both of you instantly know when the other twin knows that she is in danger. This includes being aware of when the other twin is unconscious and not stable.
- Since two sets of senses are better than one, if the two of you have a line of sight to each other then both of you must be caught flat-footed for either one to be caught flat-footed.
- All of your non-magical Will saving throw bonuses are cumulative with Susan's and vice versa. (This is because the two of you have learned to assist each other in resisting mental attacks.) The additional bonuses are negated if one of you is sleeping or unconscious.
- You can "home in" on Susan's current location with absolute accuracy, regardless of distance or effects that would normally block divinations and magical means of location.

A combination of your link and inherent familiarity with how Susan acts and thinks gives you the following additional benefits:

- You and Susan may coordinate your actions in combat without restrictions about table talk.
- If you use the combat action Aiding Another with Susan, or the two of you combine your efforts for a skill check, the normal bonuses for such a combined check are doubled.

Your link also gives you a significant drawback: if Susan is abruptly rendered unconscious (such as by an injury), you are stunned for one round and must make a Fortitude saving throw against a DC of 10, with no magical bonuses applicable, or be rendered unconscious yourself for 2-8 rounds. This does not happen when you fall asleep normally, although the two of you generally fall asleep at the same time unless one is trying to stay awake.

See the description given in your Profile for further details.

Magical Items: +2 *studded leather armor*, +2 *longsword*, +1 *hand axe*, 8 +1 *arrows of flame*, *eyes of night*, *cloak of elvenkind*, *potion of strength* (one dose)

Equipment: dagger (kept in boot); mighty composite short bow (+3 bonus); quiver with 10 arrows; backpack with bedroll, waterskin, flint and steel, one day's rations, bar of soap, pot of eyeblack (ten applications; you know, the stuff athletes put under their eyes); explorer's outfit (forest tone colors); military badge (not usually worn, see Profile); 40 gp, 100 gp gems, silver charm necklace (identical to Susan's, 100 gp value)

Profile: You are not alone in this world - never have been, never ever want to be. That's because you have an identical twin. Her name is Susan,

and she is more than just a sister to you; she is an extension of you. It's like you're both avatars of the same being - at least that's what a druid you once saw socially said about the two of you. Whatever; what you know for sure is that the similarities between you and Susan run more than skin deep. You not only look alike but think alike as well, to the point where you can finish each other's sentences. This freaks people out, but it's just so damn amusing to watch people's reactions to it. (Ooops, sorry, you forgot you're not supposed to swear because Susan doesn't. That's one of the very few instances where the two of you differ.)

The connection goes beyond that, though. You and Susan actually share your thoughts with each other. It's sort of a telepathic link, you guess, although neither of you has ever been able to "connect" with someone else and it's always on. If one of you is hurt, afraid, or in danger, the other will immediately know it, and what one of you learns or experiences can be instantly shared with the other. This has allowed the two of you to coordinate actions even when out of sight of one another and carry on private conversations in even the noisiest of places. Conveying more than simple messages requires a fair amount of concentration, though (it takes a little bit of effort to figure out which one of you is thinking what!), so the two of you still talk out loud to each other much of the time. A great gag you like pulling is talking out loud in a conversation with your sister while Susan only speaks through your link. The confused expressions on the faces of those nearby is just so funny! (Susan doesn't seem to appreciate it as much, though, so you usually have to talk her into it. She can be such a stick-in-the-mud at times!)

You and Susan have met other sets of twins who try to differentiate themselves from each other, but that's not the case with the two of you. You both figured out early on that there can be some real advantages to fostering cases of mistaken identity, so over the years the two of you have made painstaking efforts to keep your appearances absolutely identical in the presence of others. If one of you changes something about her hair or personal hygiene (usually you), the other has to, too. If one of you gets something new or different for clothing or equipment (usually Susan), the other has to match it as closely as possible. You and Susan have even gone as far as making sure that scars and bruises that don't match are either promptly removed or duplicated on the other one. This also extends to behavior. When in other company, if one of you laughs, cries, or gets angry, so does the other one. If one of you picks a fight, the other will be there in an instant to back her up. You also publicly express the same tastes and distastes, particularly in food and men, even if it isn't necessarily true. (The last part is the only duplication that's been a trial for you to maintain, since Susan's preferences in food and particularly men are dull compared to yours.) And if someone seems able to figure out which one of you is which, then you just start answering to each other's names.

Such attention to duplication can be a pain, and it's been labeled as silly and/or obsessive by family and friends, but complete duplicity has been way too useful way too many times for either of you to consider giving it up any time soon. There's been several times when even a few heartbeats of confusion over seeing two completely identical warriors has saved both of your lives and the utility of one of you being able to stand in for the other at a moment's notice has been proven over and over again.

There are a few slight differences between the two of you, though. Both of you are very serious-minded and businesslike when it comes to completing a job, but Susan is the more serious and responsible one in casual times, while you're more inclined to carousing and partying and have a much better sense of humor. You know she hates going on the wild drinking binges that you love so much, but she's a good sport and plays along so you don't give her any grief when she wants to be agonizingly cautious and suspicious or stop to carefully study something or think it through. Overall it's a good balance of traits, since you both check each other; she keeps you from getting too careless, while you help her loosen up.

Both of you have always been far more at home outdoors. Staying in a cramped town dwelling most of the time is the worst fate imaginable, so the two of you were always outside exploring as kids. That used to exasperate Mom to no end; you don't think she ever really understood either of you. You're both naturals when it comes to scouting and woodlore and came into the service of Lord Reynard (the leader of a powerful city-state) when his military commanders recommended the two of you be put on contract after you did some freelance scouting for them. That was ten years ago. You've worked on and off for him ever since, with

adventuring taken up the rest of your time. (The military badge you carry signifies you as one of his special agents.) Neither of you currently has any intentions of settling down anytime soon, although a stunning looking pair of twin guys might convince you otherwise. . .

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Susan, your twin, is described above.

Dominic is the oldest of your brothers and sisters by several years. He's the only one who took after Daddy (whom neither of you really remember, since he died when you were quite young) and became a wizard - but that was only after he helped Mom raise the rest of you. You always thought he was strict and mean when you were growing up, but you've since come to understand that he was under a lot of stress at the time and now regret much of the hassle you both gave him. He was still acting like he was the boss the last time you saw him, though. If he does it this time, then he'll find out again why he had such problems with the two of you during your youth.

Janna, the second oldest (three years older than you), was always the sensible one and the peacemaker in the family. She was always the one who would step in whenever someone was getting on someone else's nerves too much and put a stop to it. She also was the only one of you that was particularly religious, so it wasn't a surprise when she joined the priesthood. What did surprise you was when she married a crusading knight and started going on campaigns with him; she always seemed too fragile for that sort of thing, but at least she had great taste in men. She was always kind, understanding, and nurturing towards the two of you, so you never gave her half the grief that you did Dominic. If she asked something of you, you would do it. That's why the two of you broke off in the middle of your recent adventure to head back here so quickly. You fear something's terribly wrong with her.

Cedrick is the third oldest and, at only a year older, the closest to the two of you in age. Because of that the two of you roughhoused around with him much more than your other siblings. As kids you were always competitive with him about everything, even silly stuff like how fast you could eat or how loud you could crack your knuckles. He's the only one of your siblings who proved better than either of you when it came to fighting, so it was no surprise that he became a soldier and, later, an adventurer. You've heard that he has settled down in the last few years, so maybe his competitive fire has gone out. You'll have to find out one way or another.

Clarice, at three years younger than the two of you, is the baby of the family. She always hated to be reminded of that, but she whined so much as a kid that it was hard to resist. She was always unhappy with town life, but it was still a big shock when she ran away to join a traveling circus. What a brat! When you all gathered for Janna's wedding seven years ago she claimed that she was saving up money to attend a college for the performing arts. She must have done it because she's since become a fairly well-known bard. Should be interesting to see if she's matured at all, since she was still behaving like a brat at the wedding.

Spells Available:

1st level (prepare 2) DC of 13 — alarm — animal friendship — detect animals or plants — detect snares and pits — entangle — pass without trace — resist poison — speak with animals — summon natural creatures I
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Clarice Camarillo (a.k.a. Clarice the Nimble)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Female
 Class: Rogue/Bard Level: 6/1 Align: CN
 Height: 5 ft., 2 in. Weight: 100 Age: 26
 Hair: blond (currently), black (naturally) Eyes: blue

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability	Misc
Strength	12	+1	Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod	
Dexterity	19	+4	Fortitude	+3	+2	+1		
Constitution	13	+1	Reflex	+13	+7	+4		+2
Intelligence	16	+3	Will	+5	+4	+1		
Wisdom	12	+1						
Charisma	16	+3						

Armor	Base	Armor	Shield	Dex	Size	Misc.
Class		Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod
18	= 10	+2	+0	+4	-	+2

Hit Points: 35

Armor Worn: leather Dex
 Check Penalty: -1 Movement: 30 ft. Total = Mod + Misc.
 Weight: 30 Initiative +8 = +4 +4

Melee	Base	+	Str+	Size	Ranged	Base	+	Dex+	Size
Attack =	Attack	Mod	Mod		Attack =	Attack	Mod	Mod	
+5	+4	+1			+8	+4	+4		

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 shortsword	+7	1d6+3	19-20	-	-	P
dagger	+8	1d4+1	19-20			P

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+	Ability+ Misc
Balance (Dex)	+11	=	5	+4	+2
Bluff (Cha)	+12	=	9	+3	
Climb (Str)	+7	=	6	+1	
Disable Device (Int)	+9	=	6	+3	
Forgery (Int)	+9	=	6	+3	
Hide (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Jump (Str)	+8	=	5	+1	+2
Knowl./history (Int)	+7	=	4	+3	
Knowl./legends (Int)	+7	=	4	+3	
Listen (Wis)	+8	=	5	+1	+2
Move Silently (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Open Locks (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Perform* (Cha)	+12	=	9	+3	
Pick Pockets (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Search (Int)	+9	=	6	+3	
Sense Motive (Wis)	+9	=	8	+1	
Spot (Wis)	+8	=	5	+1	+2
Tumble (Dex)	+15	=	9	+4	+2
Use Magical Device (Cha)	+12	=	9	+3	

* - specific areas are juggling, ballads, melody, mandolin, flute, epics, storytelling, odes, sleight-of-hand.

Languages: Common, elvish, gnomish, goblin

Heroic Feats:

Alertness
 Dodge
 Improved Initiative
 Lightning Reflexes

Magical Items: +2 *short sword of fear* (as normal *short sword* +2, but wielder can generate a *cause fear* once/day as the spell at wielder's level, with a range of 30 feet), +2 *ring of protection*, *ring of spell storing* (currently holds *sleep* x2, *feather fall*, *slow*, *spectral force* at 7th level), *wand of levitation* (16 charges, 6th level), *glove of storing* (typically holds mandolin), *dust of disappearance* (three uses), *potion of alter self* (two doses, as 6th level)

NOTE: You have practiced extensively using sleight-of-hand and other misdirection to make it look like you're actually casting a spell when using any of the above spell effects from magic items (save for the potions, which are a little too obvious). You even keep the wand in a hidden sheath up your sleeve, never carried openly. Anyone with Spellcraft who observes you carefully can detect this ruse on an opposed roll vs. your Perform skill.

Equipment: leather armor, bandolier of three throwing daggers (worn across chest), masterwork thieves' tools (+2 on Disable Device and Open Locks checks), masterwork mandolin (+2 to Perform checks when used), masterwork flute (+2 to Perform checks when used), backpack, bedroll, waterskin, two day's rations, spell component pouch, explorer's outfit (normally worn), entertainer's outfit (carried), juggling balls, vial of perfume (lilac-scented), masterwork forgery of Royal Academy of Performing Arts graduation certificate (kept in waterproofed sheath in inside pocket); 50 gp, 10 50 gp gems, diamond earrings with matching necklace (550 gp for set, usually only worn when performing)

Profile: You are the youngest of six siblings by a span of more than three years. That makes you the baby of the family, a title which irks you even to this day. You weren't called the baby because you were spoiled. In fact, you actually had it rougher than any of your brothers and sisters (they would probably disagree, but they didn't have to live your life). Not that anyone's life was easy, what with Father (who was a wizard of some sort) having died before you were even born and all, but it just seemed like they dumped on you a lot. You don't remember ever getting a single stitch of clothing that wasn't a hand-me-down and having to do a lot of work that the others didn't. And man, were they a drag! They never let you have any fun or get away with anything, while some of them could get away with murder. They never respected you for the intelligence you did have, either. When, at age twelve, it got to be too much, you did what any self-respecting adventure seeker would do: you ran away and joined a traveling circus.

When you joined the circus you didn't have anything in mind other than getting away from home and how cool it would be to travel and hang around with those kind of people. For a while you assisted the animal trainers, but then one day some of the performers put you through an impromptu tryout as a joke and discovered that you were actually phenomenally talented at juggling, acrobatics, sleight-of-hand - anything that involved a high degree of dexterity. After that you were quickly adopted into the circus's highly selective acrobatics troupe and spent most of your teen years as a regular performer with them. It was great fun, and you did get to travel wide and meet a lot of people. You also picked up a lot of useful skills. One-Arm Charlie taught you to gamble and pick pockets and locks, The Human Shadow taught you how to be sneaky, the psychic Madame Maria taught you how to second-guess people by studying their body language, and you learned from Rattlesnake Risa how to forge documents. The Borage Brothers even taught you to fight a little. The biggest influence, though, was the bard that joined the circus for a while. Silas the Songsmith was your first love, but just as importantly he taught you how to play the mandolin and got you interested in music. When it came time to part ways with the circus, you used some money you'd saved back to travel to Amasce to attend the legendary Royal Academy for the Performing Arts.

My, wasn't that a disaster! You were cold, wet, and half-sick from traveling through days of rain when you arrived, and so turned in an awful audition. They turned you down flat and refused to give you a second chance. You'd told everyone (even your family, whom you had gotten back in contact with by that point) that you were going to become this great bard and couldn't stand the humiliation of admitting that you'd failed, so you adapted the old circus philosophy: you decided to fake it. You used up the rest of your money getting some extra musical and singing training from itinerant bards, did a lot of studying up on various legends, and then forged a graduation certificate from the Academy. You joined a couple of adventuring companies and grabbed up every magical item you could find that could duplicate a spell-like effect, no matter how minor, even at the expense of protective items (risky for an adventurer, yes, but you figured you had to take some chances). Finally you decided you were ready.

You've been carrying on this deception for almost six years now and so far it's worked pretty well (some connections you made during your circus years certainly didn't hurt). Although you haven't become rich doing it, you live comfortably enough and your reputation as the bard Clarice the Nimble is gradually becoming widely-known. You eventually did learn enough to become a true bard, but you still aren't anywhere near as proficient with bardic abilities as you claim, so you're very careful to maintain the deception. Yes, much of it's still an act, but putting on a convincing performance is what you're best at, and this is the performance of a lifetime - literally.

Although they were a bother, you didn't totally leave your family behind when you ran away. You sent Mother letters every so often to let her know that you were doing fine and did come back for your sister's wedding, seven years ago. THAT was interesting, indeed; lots of strained emotions all around. You haven't seen most of them since then, which suits you fine. Getting back together again at your sister's summons is going to stir up all the old resentments, but you can't ignore the call. Guess you'll just have to grit your teeth and bear it.

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Dominic, the eldest by far (14 years more than you), is the only one that you truly missed. When you were a little girl he used to read stories to you and tried to be your best friend. He was, for a while, until he struck out on his own when you were ten. He became some big wizard, just like Father.

When you were back for the wedding he barely said a word to you, so he must have been ticked about you running off. He's got to understand that you did it for the same reasons that he left: you had to get out of there. If he can accept that, then maybe you can go back to being friends again.

Janna, your oldest sister, is six years older. She was the one who looked after you much of the time as a youngster. Although she was never exactly mean to you, she did order you around a lot. You didn't much like listening to her, but Mother said you had to. The one thing she was good at, besides bossing people around, was getting people to calm down when they got angry. (She even did it to you a few times, and you must admit that it's hard to resist her in that respect.) Oh, and she did find herself one hunk of a guy to get hitched to. The two of you talked a lot at her wedding and settled some things between you, so you should get along a bit better now. She became a priestess of some sort soon after she left home.

Cedrick, your other brother, is four years older than you. He taunted you quite a bit when you were kids and beat you up a couple of times when you (his words) blabbed about something you should have kept to yourself. To be fair, though, he treated everyone his age or younger like that. In fact, he was just a big bully. And what better job for a child bully to grow up into than a Captain of the Watch in some town? (Actually a criminal enforcer would have been even more appropriate. It's what you had expected of him.) You've met him a couple of times in your travels in the past few years and he's mellowed out a lot, but you still have trouble seeing him as anything other than a bully. He's been oddly calm and distant since you met him on the road on the way back to Hallisburg; something must be bothering him, because both are out of character.

Sharon and Susan are the closest in age to you - only three years older. They picked on you mercilessly, calling you "baby brat" and, when they got old enough to know the words, much less pleasant things, too. No one could more easily get you to cry as a kid than these two. Normally you

could put up with that kind of thing, but with them it was always a double-team effort - which you suppose is natural, given that they are identical twins. (And kick you if you could ever tell them apart, and you were their sister!) They still got on your nerves when you went back for the wedding, but then you didn't have a great reputation to stuff in their faces. Now you do. They were always the outdoorsy types, so you weren't surprised when you heard they had become rangers.

Spells Available:

o level (prepare 2)
_ daze
_ detect magic
_ light
_ mending

Thicker than Water

A Two-Round D&D Adventure

Round 2

by Theron Martin

Great deeds sometimes come at a terrible price, as Janna now knows all too well. In her darkest hour whom else could she turn to but family? The call has been issued, an oath must be kept: the six siblings must come together again."

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Pass out the player characters based on class, gender, and/or race. Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described below. When they have prepared their characters, you may continue with the game.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

4. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
5. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
6. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

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

Scenario Preparation

Begin by passing out characters, face down, by name or class; although these are, with one exception, the same PCs that the players played in the first round, there have been some changes and updates. Alternatively, you may assign characters in the following order, going left to right around the table: Dominic, Janna, Cedrick, Sharon, Susan, Clarice. In either case the players of the two rangers (Sharon and Susan) should sit beside each other. No player should be allowed to play the same PC he or she played in the first round, and a player that played one of the twins in the first round should not be allowed to play the other twin this round unless it cannot be avoided. Read the Player's Introduction first, then allow players time to review their characters and choose spells. Once everyone is prepared, proceed to Encounter 1.

DISCLAIMER (Please also read it to the players): Nothing in this round should be interpreted to reflect the writer's opinions on any current real-world issue. The writer is not attempting to make a "statement" about any issue through the characters and events of this scenario.

The Player Characters

It is especially important for you to review the PCs in detail before running this scenario, since there are special circumstances involved with some of them. These circumstances are detailed fully on the character sheets but are also summarized on the DM Reference Sheet for your convenience. If you are running this scenario on short notice and don't have time to read completely through the character sheets, make sure you at least thoroughly review the DM Reference Sheet. Do this again even if you did it before running the first round, since there have been some changes!

DM's Background: My Dad is a Cult Leader

As described in round one, Martinic Camarillo established his family in the town of Hallisburg for its own protection from possible rivals. Several years later, while traveling on a "business trip," he ran into one of his former rivals and lost the ensuing spell duel. Although a *contingency* spell allowed him to survive, he became a changed man in the wake of that incident. The dark hallucinations he experienced during his recovery (the lingering effects of the *prismatic spray* that had been the duel's deciding factor) have led him to believe that his near-death experience has given him a glimpse of the ultimate universal truth; that death is the defining factor of all existence, and only in death can one achieve true understanding. Life, as he came to see it, was merely a burden, and if it must be endured it should be used to prepare for unity with the universal truth upon death. He saw this epiphany as a call to action; someone needed to tell people this truth and prepare them for it, and it would be him. With this line of thinking his first task was to

sever all ties to his family, make them believe he was already dead; after all, when one is preparing to be united with the universal truth, such considerations as family are irrelevant.

Martinic is a highly charismatic figure who arrived on the public scene at precisely the right time. When he started expounding his new philosophy he attracted a significant following of young people who had become disenchanted with their current circumstances in the wake of a major war. The followers became Martinic's disciples, and eventually a cult formed around him. The cult's membership never grew very large because of a high rate of turnover (many of its members died once they were deemed "fully prepared"), but a steady influx of new blood kept its numbers stable.

Although the cult's actions were not technically criminal, it eventually attracted what Martinic felt was an uncomfortable amount of attention from authorities. He relocated his cult to the Fortress of the Damned, a long-abandoned warlord's castle so named because the ghosts of the evil warlord and his men were said to haunt it. It was the perfect location. It was far away from major concentrations of society yet close enough to a population center (Geran's Creek) that it could conveniently obtain supplies for its living members. The haunting of the place was real, but Martinic destroyed some of the spirits and turned the others to his bidding, then set up shop. It has now been his base of operations for more than twenty years.

Martinic's cult, which has come to be known as the Order of Universal Truth (abbreviated as OUT elsewhere in this text), has survived without interference for so long primarily because its members take great pains to remain inconspicuous. The cult does not overly trouble anyone, particularly the locals; that's why the PCs have not heard of it before. The only people that are killed are the cult's members, who are mostly recruited from distant cities, and they never kill members who don't believe they are "prepared." Although some of its members are evil, the cult itself is not; they're just rabidly obsessed with death. No deity or other Power is directly involved in the cult, either, although some have taken interest in it and a few members are clerics of death-related deities. The only leading force most of the OUT members need is Martinic, the Dead Man (so called because he is believed by himself and the cult to exist at least partially in a state of death). It is a true cult of personality.

Martinic was delusional at the time he had the visions that led to the formation of OUT, and over time the actions of the cult and his own views about his role in the scheme of things have warped him into full-blown insanity. This is a fact that neither he nor any of the cultists realize (or, in some cases, care to admit). This actually gives the PCs the "in" they may need to convince their father to cooperate, because while their mother's dementia isn't curable, their father's mental problems are. Marinol, Janna's patron goddess, has foreseen this, which is why she has arranged for Janna to obtain a ring with a *heal* spell in it. The evil forces angered by the destruction of the gauntlet of lamentations are still on her trail, though,

and have discovered her intent. They will attempt to stop the PCs if they can.

Player's Introduction

You were once called the Camarillo Six. You were all born and raised in the town of Hallisburg. Each of you eventually grew beyond the boundaries of that town, leaving it to explore the wide world. Each of you met with success in your own right. One became a wizard, another a cleric, another a soldier and Captain of the Guard of his own town, two became rangers, and the last a renowned performer. Hallisburg was still your birthplace, though, that special place that all of you once called home. Twice you all returned to it, once for the marriage of one of your own, the other in response to a magical summons from one of your own—the same person in both cases. Though all of you considered yourselves world-wise, nothing could prepare you for the surprises that awaited you this second time back.

Janna, the second-eldest of you and the one who issued the summons, revealed to you the first pair of surprises, a real double-whammy: not only is she dying from a dreadful curse, but she is pregnant as well! And, worst of all, the curse will kill her before the child can be born unless all of you can find a way to prevent it. How could something like this come about?

Janna told you a story of an artifact called the Gauntlet of Lamentations, a terrible item that fostered suffering and catastrophe wherever its wearer went. She and her husband and her husband's companion knights set out on a quest to recover and destroy this item, a quest that succeeded at the cost of everyone's lives, including her husband. Only Janna herself survived, barely, but not long after she discovered that the Gauntlet's last act had been to inflict her with an extremely powerful curse that caused her to gradually waste away until she died. The curse was too powerful to be broken, so Janna admitted that she was prepared to join her husband in death until she learned that she carried her husband's child. Now she wanted to find away to either break the curse or at least live long enough for the child to be born. Her goddess's answer to her prayers gave her one hope: the Oracle at the Temple of the Seer on Catclaw Mountain could provide a solution to her dilemma. The curse had weakened her greatly, though, so she needed the help of the rest of you to get there. None of you could possibly refuse her; she is, after all, your sister, and if you cannot count on family, who can you count on?

Before you left for Catclaw Mountain, you met a family friend from your childhoods who dropped the next surprise on you: your mother, whom you had all thought had moved far away from Hallisburg, still resided there but now lived in the Sanatorium, a victim of dementia. Going there to see her like that was difficult, but you felt obligated to tell her what was happening even if she couldn't understand you. And though she didn't even recognize most of you, some of her words struck very close to home, as if her confused ramblings revealed a hidden wisdom. Afterwards you left on your journey.

The journey itself was not without event. The first night you found and rescued a hunter and his son, who had been beset by bugbears and thrown into a ravine. Although you never did encounter the culprits, the incident left you on your guard the next day. That proved beneficial, because the next

night an attack did come, only it was wolves instead of bugbears—huge, demonic wolves that howled their intention to kill Janna for her role in destroying the Gauntlet. Only by physically surrounding her could the rest of you keep the wolves off her. The battle that ensued was a mighty and bloody one, but you all proved that the Camarillos don't stand alone; together you are a force to be reckoned with. The demon wolves were vanquished, and the next day you reached the Gate of the Oracle, the portals that guard the path to the Temple of the Seer.

Although you passed the gates without trouble, you were warned of challenges that seekers of a revelation would have to overcome on their way up to the temple. Although they delayed you for a while, cooperation and the exercise of your various skills enabled you to pass each obstacle and reach the Temple itself. There the Oracle told you the answer that Janna had sought: there is one person who is capable of curing her. You were absolutely unprepared for the person's identity, though: it is your father, who was supposed to have died more than twenty-five years ago.

That wasn't even the final surprise that fate had in store for you. As you left to return to Hallisburg to plot your next course of action, you were confronted by a group of city guards—a group whose leader was Cedrick, the third eldest among you! But Cedrick had been with you the whole time! Who was the imposter? The one that had traveled with you, it turned out, was a doppelganger, but so were the guards that had accompanied the real Cedrick. Apparently you were caught in the midst of some sort of doppelganger family feud, and the others didn't want to leave witnesses to their affairs. A very confusing battle ensued, where all of you found yourselves fighting against those that appeared to be your own family members. Ultimately, though, the battle turned on the shape-changers' inability to duplicate the special link between the twins. Each of them could tell who was their real twin and who wasn't, and with their clarity as a center you eventually defeated or chased off all the doppelgangers. The one that had posed as Cedrick during your recent escapades also slipped away, but you let him go; after all, he had worked alongside the rest of you, just like he was family.

Now that the real Cedrick was back among you, the Camarillo Six were whole once again. After you brought Cedrick up to speed on recent events, he was able to provide you with a key bit of information to your current dilemma. He had heard of Geran's Creek, the town near the fortress where the Oracle said your father can be found, and knew where it is. Once you get to Geran's Creek the Fortress of the Damned is supposed to be only a short distance away. The problem was that Geran's Creek is far out into the hinterlands, not even remotely near Hallisburg, and Janna was not fit for a long journey. By pulling in a lot of favors Dominic and Cedrick were able to arrange the speediest possible transportation, but even so the journey has taken a fortnight. Last night the riverboat you had been traveling on reached its final destination, the aptly named River City. From here you have to travel the remaining two days on horseback, so you set out as soon as Janna was able.

Only three or four days now separate you from a meeting with your father, who is apparently the leader of some kind of twisted death cult; he even goes by the name Dead Man. All of you are apprehensive about the impending reunion; this is,

after all, the man who left your mother alone to raise you and let you all believe that he was dead. Why did he do it? That's the question on all your minds. It's a good thing you won't have to wait long, though, because Janna is rapidly getting worse. As bad as she looked before, she's now clearly on her last legs. You've all heard it said that the closest-knit families come together in times of crisis. Now it's time for all of you to prove that you are such a family.

Additional Notes

If the players ask about it, the PCs all have standard riding horses for mounts, complete with saddle and tack; stats are provided on the DM Reference sheet if they should become relevant. The PCs also can purchase any standard book equipment, within reason, at listed book prices before Encounter 1 begins. Items that are magical, exotic, or would require specialized construction, such as mighty composite bows, are not considered to be "within reason," nor are animals other than extra horses.

SPECIAL NOTE: Unlike with round one, there are no restrictions to pre-start role-play between the PCs in this round.

Encounter 1: The Military Post

The PCs begin on the road, so they should have a group marching/riding order established at the start. They are traveling on an unpaved road that allows two to ride abreast.

The sun is still low in the cloudless sky when you set out from River City on the dusty road to Geran's Creek. It is a warm enough morning that all of you but Janna doff your heavier cloaks before long, a pleasant change from the cooler weather more typical for this time of year. Once you crest the last of a series of low hills around the city you find yourself faced with the flat open prairie that dominates this part of the continent. The dirt road you follow crosses it, a brown ribbon winding its way through fields of high grass for as far as the eye can see. Nowhere within sight is there any sign of habitation.

The grass is waist high on a walking human, easily high enough to hide something. At this time it doesn't, although you should make a point of asking how exactly the PCs are going to be advancing, i.e. are the going to be staying on the road or scouting through the grass to either side? If the twins scout more than 100 yards out from the road they find occasional clearings with stonework that might have once been building foundations or low stone walls. These are the remnants of settlements and farmsteads destroyed in a war a few decades ago. For various reasons the region was never repopulated, and what few hardy souls do remain avoid any contact with strangers. Because of this the PCs will have no encounters of any kind during the day. As the day draws to a close they will sight the first firm sign of habitation:

As the sun begins to sink towards the horizon, you spot the first break in the monotony of the plains: a walled structure with towers in each corner lies on the road ahead, on the edge of a river running across your path. It is large enough to suggest that it might house a small village, though you recall seeing none on a map of the region you looked at in River City. It definitely guards the only visible bridge across the river, though, and there are a fair number of people heading towards its gates. Surrounding it are cultivated fields scattered with barns and homesteads.

This hamlet of 120 people is still technically known as Cawtawkwa, although locals have come to call it by the name of the military outpost built around it: Fort Outreach. It was established here three decades ago to guard a key bridge during a series of Orc Wars, but the local military abandoned it two decades ago when its strategic importance diminished and it became too costly to maintain. Three years ago a band of mercenaries passing through the area and discovered that the Fort saw a fair amount of traffic even as isolated as it was. They set upon a scam to occupy the Fort as the rightful military force, declaring that the region was under martial law, and thus not allowing anyone but locals to pass over the bridge—although they could be enticed to look the other way for the proper price. Thanks in large part to the traffic of the prospective members of OUT, the scam has been so successful that the mercenary leader now has thirty men working for him. The inhabitants of Cawtawkwa regard the mercenaries as leeches and ruffians, but they don't cause (much) trouble and their presence has discouraged raids by bandits and humanoids, so they are tolerated. If any of the locals are asked about their feelings about living under "martial law," they state that it's not an ideal situation but there are far worse possibilities.

The PCs may choose to bypass Fort Outreach entirely and camp out in the open, in which case you should skip to Encounter 2. If they do approach the Fort, the PCs receive only passing attention from the farm workers heading into the fort; they are used to travelers, after all.

As you approach the gates you can see that a single soldier who stands guard at the ground. The soldier wears a suit of scale mail with helm and a wooden shield bearing a marking that vaguely looks like a stylized eagle. He wields a spear for a weapon, with a battleaxe slung on his back, and his stance suggests that he is well capable with its use. He lowers the spear across your path when you reach the gates.

"State your destination and business, travelers," he demands. "The good people of Fort Outreach will tolerate no ruffians or bandits."

The soldier, a young but world-wise man by the name of Corporal Crypton, doesn't believe for a second that the PCs are bandits or ruffians; that's just the standard spiel he's been ordered to give all newcomers. (When speaking with Crypton give him a bit of a hillbilly accent and mannerisms if you can manage it. He plays up his heritage to convince people that he's not as bright as he actually is.) He suspects that the PCs are either

adventurers come to investigate OUT or new supplicants for OUT—and his belief in the latter will be cemented if he gets a good look at Janna. Either way, they fit the profile of a "paying traveler" given to him by his commander.

When the PCs declare their intent to head for Geran's Creek, Corporal Crypton tells them that it's impossible; the whole region's under martial law due to a recent orc uprising and they are under strict orders to keep everyone out. (This is an outright lie if Janna happens to be using a *discern lies* spell.) If the PCs argue or insist that they have special circumstances, Crypton shrugs and tells them that such things aren't his concern; the PCs will have to talk to the Captain. They are welcome to stay the night in Fort Outreach's inn in any case—providing they can pay, of course. At their request he directs the PCs to his Captain's office (just look for the building flying the banner with the symbol the same as the one on his shield).

If the PCs specifically state that they are looking for signs of other guards, a half-dozen can be spotted on catwalks behind the wall and in corner towers.

On the inside of the wooden palisade that forms Fort Outreach's walls you find a hamlet of perhaps thirty buildings centered around what appears to be a military barracks. Suspended from a horizontal flagpole on one side of the barracks is a banner bearing the same symbol you saw on the gate guard's shield. Only two other buildings within the walls seem to be anything other than private dwellings: one has the look of a trading post, the other might be an inn or meeting hall. The only other feature of note is a well near the barracks. About a hundred or so people are out and about, as are a half-dozen soldiers all equipped as the one at the gate. Most of them don't even give you a second glance.

The trading post is closed for the day, so the only other places the PCs can go are to the inn or the barracks. The former is suitably named the Outreach Inn. Upon entering it the PCs are immediately struck by how exceptionally maintained it is on both the outside and inside, and the decorations in its common room could easily make it pass for a mid-range inn in a large city. Two private rooms capable of bedding up to four people each can be purchased for the group rate of 3 gp each, which includes a meal. These rooms are simply furnished but, like with the rest of the inn, they are clean and all furnishings are in good repair. The meal and drinks are nothing special but still a distinct step up from what the PCs expect from inns in such small locales. If they inquire about this or make compliments to the innkeeper (a middle-aged man named Samuel: Com3, hp 7; Sense Motive +5, Bluff +5), he declares that the whole community takes great pride in maintaining the inn as a statement for their entire community.

There is not much of any use that the PCs can learn by talking to Samuel or the other locals who come into the inn for a drink, and there are no other travelers but the PCs present at this time. What they can learn, by asking the rights questions, is listed below:

The soldiers are the Gray Eagles, a branch of the military of the local power sent here to regulate passage along the road and protect the hamlet from bandits. (This isn't true and the speaker knows it, but for sake of peace with the mercenaries the hamlet's inhabitants have agreed to play along.)

There have been some orc attacks of late, which is why the region is under martial law. (The first part is true—or at least the speaker believes it is—but the second isn't.)

- The leader of the Gray Eagles, one Captain Copton, is a fair man and may let the PCs pass if they can prove they can defend themselves and offer a “toll payment.” (Mostly true)
- Supplicants to some kind of cult based near Geran's Creek have been passing this way for years now. They don't generally cause trouble so the locals leave them alone. (True)
- The story of the Fort's founding at the hamlet, as described above.

The other locale the PCs might visit is the barracks. If they go there, a guard (equipped as the one at the gate) stationed at the entrance demands to know their business. If they state that they are here to see the Captain, they are instructed to enter and take the first door on the left. There they find a simply furnished military-style office where Captain Copton resides. The captain is an average height, well-built man of thirty-five years with red hair and a full moustache. He wears chain mail under a red uniform emblazoned with the same symbol that is on the guards' shields. Cedrick and the twins can recognize a diamond-shaped pin attached to the guard's collar as a commonly used form of rank insignia in more northern lands. When the Captain speaks it is with a slight drawl; feel free to characterize him as a Southern gentlemen.

Captain Copton is a clever, quick-witted man as skilled at running a con as he is at being a soldier. As long as the PCs show no signs of hostility he is relaxed, friendly and very courteous, particularly to Clarice and Janna (he treats the twins, after a double take, as soldiers since they are more clearly dressed and equipped as such). He will try to find out as much as possible about the PCs and the reason they have come this way before deciding a proper price for their right of passage. If they ask about martial law or the orc uprisings or anything connected to them, Captain Copton tells the PCs that his unit is under strict orders to prevent anyone from traveling into the region across the river. This is both for their own safety and to assure that the orcs don't get any outside assistance (this has happened in the past, he explains). If the PCs insist that they have to get through to Geran's Creek the Captain appears to consider their request. After a few moments he tells the PCs that normally he isn't supposed to let anyone through, but since the PCs are obviously capable of defending themselves and don't appear to be working with the orcs, he and his men might be convinced to “look the other way.”

The Captain's price is 50 gp per PC, 60 gp each if the PCs try to pass themselves off as being affiliated with OUT (since OUT members never come back, Captain Copton reasons that they are more likely to pay a higher fee), but he can be bargained with. If the PCs can convince him that it's a matter of life and death, or Janna attempts to use Diplomacy (DC 20), he knocks it down to 40 gp each, but no lower. If the PCs attempt some form of magical coercion and it fails, the price will instantly jump to 100 gp each and cannot be bargained lower. If the PCs threaten hostility they are escorted out, and if they start a fight then they are attacked by a total of 20 guards who arrive over the next few rounds. In this case the round is probably over unless they immediately flee Fort Outreach.

Once the PCs have paid their fee, the Captain signs off on a special writ that gives them right of passage through the region across the river. They will be allowed to leave the next morning, since the gates to Fort Outreach are closed and barred at sundown. Go next to Encounter 3.

Captain Copton, male human Ftr7: Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 7d10+21; hp 70; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 19 (+6 +1 chainmail, +1 shield, +2 Dex); Atk melee +12/+7 (1d8+6/19-20x2 each, +1 longsword); AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +5 (includes ring).

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +9 (+5 with armor), Jump +9 (+5 with armor), Listen +5, Ride +12, Sense Motive +6; **Feats:** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (long sword), Weapon Specialization (long sword)

Possessions: +1 chainmail, +1 longsword, +2 ring of resistance, small shield, pouch containing 50 gp and 5 100 gp gems.

Soldiers, human male Ftr3 (30): Medium Humanoid (5½-6 ft. tall); HD 3d10+6; hp 25 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +1 shield, +1 Dex); Atk melee +6 (1d8+2/x3, battleaxe, or 1d6+2/x3, spear), ranged +4 (1d6/x3, shortbow); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Ride +7, Jump +8 (+4 with armor), Spot +3; **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus (spear), Weapon Focus (battle axe).

Possessions: scale mail, small shield, battleaxe, shortspear, pouch with 10 gp; those on wall also have shortbow and 20 arrows.

Encounter 2: Camping Out

Run this encounter only if the PCs skipped Fort Outreach in Encounter 1. Otherwise skip it.

The PCs have to swing wide around Fort Outreach for them to not be seen. Dusk falls at about the time they reach the river. The river is 80-yards wide and about 8-feet deep for most of its width (enough that both PCs and horses will have to swim to get across; the DC for Swim

checks is 12) and has a steep 10-foot high embankment on both sides. Janna cannot manage the swim herself, so the PCs have to make some provision for her.

If the PCs make camp out in the grasslands then they have to spend a few minutes clearing a suitable spot or the twins can, if they specifically declare they are looking for one, find a suitable clearing on a Wilderness Lore check (DC 20). Wood is harder to find since there aren't many trees in this area and it's getting dark; the DC for this on a Wilderness Lore check is 25 and the search takes an hour. If the PCs do not use a fire then they have no further encounter for the evening, although it will be uncomfortably cool without one (the temperature drops to around 45 degrees F overnight). If they do have a fire then read the following once the PCs have set their watches:

Just as you are settling in for the evening you hear the sound of hoof beats. Looking around, you spot several lights, as if from torches, approaching your position from the west. They are about a hundred yards away and seem to be headed directly towards you.

The riders are, indeed, headed directly towards the PCs. They are a patrol of Grey Eagles from Fort Outreach heading back in for the evening. They sped up upon seeing the light of the PCs' fire so the PCs only have two rounds to react before the patrol reaches them. If the PCs do not hide from the patrol read the following:

As the riders come within the range of your light sources you can see seven of them, each wearing a reddish cloak over a suit of scale mail. A wooden shield slung at the side of their horses' bears a symbol that looks vaguely like a stylized eagle. Each is armed with a lance and has both long sword and flail on their mounts.

"Evenin', folks," the foremost of them says, "good thing we found you all on our last sweep, 'cause you probably don't know that this here land's under martial law. Ain't nobody allowed to be camping out overnight. You'll have to come into the fort, for your own protection."

If Cedrick or the twins ask, the riders were in proper military formation as they approached and are exercising proper military protocols while their leader speaks to the PCs. At a close look a silver pin that might be some sort of rank insignia can be seen on the collar of the speaker.

It should be clear by the speech patterns of the lead soldier that he is not the most sophisticated or best educated of men. It should also be clear that, although he will be polite about it, he won't take "no" for an answer. If the PCs ask why martial law is in effect, the soldier says that's there's been too many problems lately with rampaging orcs, and they are most apt to come out at night. If the PCs insist they can adequately defend themselves, the soldier replies that such a thing isn't for him to say; he's got his orders. The PCs need to pick up their things and come into the fort.

There are two ways the PCs can be rid of the patrol. One is to attack and kill them all before any escape, although this would be pushing against the alignments of

many of the PCs since the patrol hasn't shown any clear signs of hostility. If the PCs do attack or use magic on them and at least one either escapes or isn't affected, the PCs can expect a party of 15 guards, headed by Captain Copton himself, to be pursuing them the next morning. (Refer to the stats in Encounter 1 in the unlikely event that this happens.) The second way the PCs can be rid of them is to pay them off. The soldier won't directly say that this is an option, but if the PCs seems reluctant to cooperate he comments that he and his patrol might be convinced to look the other way. A fee of 200 gp—40 gp for each person, he says—would be sufficient. (His math is off, and any PC watching the other soldiers at this point notices a couple looking rather perturbed, but they won't say anything.) If the PCs provide sufficiently convincing arguments (your judgment, or Janna could use Diplomacy against a DC of 20) they can bargain down to 175 gp, but no lower.

If the PCs don't do either of the above, or if they just decide to cooperate in the first place, then they have to go with the patrol back to the fort. Refer back to Encounter 1 at this point.

Riders, human male Ftr3 (7): Medium Humanoids (5½-6 ft. tall); HD 3d10+6; hp 1x30 (the leader), 6x25; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +1 shield, +1 Dex); Atk melee (1d8+2/x3, heavy lance or 1d8+2/x2 light flail, or 1d8+2/10-20x2, longsword), ranged +5 (1d6/x3, shortbow); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with lance); SA double damage when charging with lance; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Ride +7, Jump +6 (+2 with armor), Spot +2;

Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack.

Possessions: scale mail, small shield, heavy lance, sword, flail, pouch with 20 gp; two also have shortbow and 20 arrows.

Rider's horses (7): Large Animal (5 ft. 6 in. at shoulder); HD 2d8+6; hp 15 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 60; AC 13 (+2 natural, +2 Dex, -1 size); Atk melee +1/+1 (1d4+4 each, hoof); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 10 ft./5 ft.; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +1.

Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Spot +6

Encounter 3: The Raiders

The "orc uprising" mentioned by the Grey Eagles is actually little more than a couple of tribes doing some extensive raiding. The real threat is an ogre mage and his troupe of ogre henchmen, who have been periodically foraging out from a hidden stronghold more than a day's journey to the east to raid the trade routes and mining centers around Geran's Creek. Toru'Okī, the ogre mage, has decided that messing with Fort Outreach and the Grey Eagles is not worth the effort so he has strictly avoided a direct confrontation with them. This is why the Grey Eagles don't know about him (much of the damage

the Grey Eagles are attributing to the uprising has actually been caused by Toru'Okí and his henchmen). He has also been careful to make sure that no one successfully flees the raids to report to either Fort Outreach or Geran's Creek, and he is careful to leave no clear evidence of the presence of himself or his henchmen. Because the PCs are traveling in a relatively small group, Toru'Okí has marked them as a vulnerable target. He doesn't take major chances, though, so he is going to try to use a captive to lure the PCs into an ambush off the road. It will happen only about an hour out from Geran's Creek.

The day begins bright and sunny as you continue across the plains towards Geran's Creek, but clouds roll in as the day progresses. For most of the afternoon you keep a wary eye on the skies to the northwest, from where the distant rumblings of thunder can be heard. Thankfully, nothing more than a few brief sprinkles fall across your path.

The monotony of the plains continues, broken only by occasional clumps of trees and a creek that begins paralleling the path several hundred yards off to your right. You pass the ruins of what look like old military checkpoints and even a cluster of broken-down buildings that might have once been a hamlet, but you see no signs of current habitation. You encounter no one on the road, either; in fact, the day is pretty dull until you stop for a rest-break in mid-afternoon. Just as you are getting ready to mount up again you hear a voice calling out to you. Those of you looking towards the creek spot a human-sized figure stumbling towards you through the high grass. As the figure gets closer you can tell that it is a young human woman with long dark hair. She is noticeably limping as she approaches you and calls out and waves to you.

The woman is Misha. She is 30 yards away at this point. If the PCs go out to meet her, she stops and catches her breath; if they stay in place she approaches to speaking distance. When the PCs get close enough to get a good look at her they can see that she is wearing a simple, dirty, and very disheveled dress. Although she is quite pretty, she is also very much a wreck, with a bad cut on her forehead and obvious bruises on her arms, right shoulder, and the left side of her face. She is distinctly favoring her right leg as she walks, is holding her right arm up against her chest (her right wrist is broken and, upon examination, badly swollen) and looks completely exhausted.

When the PCs are within speaking distance with Misha she gasps that she needs help. She and her traveling companions were bringing a wagon in to Geran's Creek when they had a bad accident while trying to cross the creek (which, incidentally is the creek after which Geran's Creek is named). The others were hurt badly, and she thinks one might be dead. She was the only one fit enough to go for help, and thank the gods that the PCs were around!

The situation is staged, although there is a grain of truth to it. Misha was, indeed, traveling to Geran's Creek in a wagon with her husband, brother-in-law, and two friends, all of whom intended to join OUT. That was two weeks ago, though, and their "accident" was caused by Toru'Okí and his henchmen. Toru'Okí kept her alive

because she was pretty to look at and could be used in their ambushes, but she has been forced to watch him and his henchmen cook and eat everyone else she was traveling with. She has been promised a similar fate if she does not help lead other unsuspecting groups into Toru'Okí's ambushes. This and general terrorizing has left Misha completely subject to Toru'Okí's will, so she has already led one other group into an ambush. She hates doing it but is too frightened to resist doing it again, and she knows that Toru'Okí is following her invisibly to keep her honest. In fact, he is hovering above and just behind her with the tip of his sword resting on her shoulder—unless the PCs' positioning won't allow it—while Misha is speaking to the PCs.

When Misha gets a good look at the PCs and sees that they are well-armed she starts to think that they might be able to defeat Toru'Okí, so she will try to drop subtle hints to the PCs about the real situation. One hint she can automatically provide comes if Janna's player specifically asks whether or not her injuries are consistent with being thrown from a wagon in an accident. On a Healing proficiency check against a DC of 20 she can determine that they are, but many of the injuries don't look fresh enough to have been caused by a recent accident. If asked about this, Misha babbles about Janna being mistaken and then tries to deflect the focus towards the PCs going with her to help her companions. If the PCs try to press her for further information or ask her about her business or the extent of her companions' injuries or anything else, Misha is blatantly evasive about it. She will say that it was a BIG accident (with appropriate emphasis) and that it was a complete surprise to them that they didn't see coming—this comment earns her a jab from Toru'Okí unless a PC is positioned such that he can't be behind her. She will pass it off as a painful spasm, but will overact it. Another sign that all is not what it appears comes from the horses, which start to act jittery soon after Misha's approach.

This should be more than enough to make the PCs suspicious. If the PCs try to ignore her request and pass her by, she pleads with them for help, even getting down on her knees before Janna, and in this case she is completely sincere and earnest (she really does want the PCs' help, just not for the reason she's stating). If they do go with her, Misha will lead the way, with Toru'Okí hovering just high enough above her so that he won't give himself away by pushing the grass aside. If a PC is walking with her, she turns her head so her face is out of sight of Toru'Okí and silently mouths "expect trouble" to the PC. If she is riding on a horse with a PC, she reclines into the PC as if about to fall asleep and whispers those same words to the PC when she lolls her head towards one of the PC's ears. Other circumstances may require her to find some other creative way to drop a hint to the PCs.

Misha leads the PCs five hundred yards off the trail to a spot on the creek where there is, indeed, a wrecked wagon laying in the middle of the creek. There are shapes that look like bodies poking out of the wreckage, but upon close examination they are revealed to be dummies. It is at this point the attack will commence while the PCs are down investigating the wreckage:

Suddenly a mighty shout comes from behind you. On both sides of the creek banks hidden pit covers are tossed aside and ogres jump out, spears at ready!

The pit covers are so well disguised that they will only be noticed in advance if someone is specifically looking for something hidden and makes a Search check at a DC of 20. If the PCs have not specifically declared that they are on guard then they are caught flat-footed and must roll for surprise. Unless the PCs are very widely spaced apart the ogres begin at a range of 30 feet and hurl their spears at the most physically threatening PCs (namely Cedrick and the twins) on the first round. On the second round they close to attack in melee if the PCs haven't already done so.

Toru'Okī observes the combat on the first round from his aerial vantage point, then on the second round he tries to catch any spellcasting PCs (or any other PCs who have isolated themselves from the group) in a *darkness* spell. He then lands and proceeds to shoot at any unengaged PCs from a distance of 60 feet. When he is spotted he turns *invisible*, spends one full action moving to a new location, then fires again, and continues this until a PC is successfully able to engage him in melee. If a single PC engages Toru'Okī, he attempts a *charm person*. If two or more PCs attempt to melee with him, he softens them up with his *cone of cold* before resorting to melee. If he feels he is being seriously threatened (less than 15 hp and clearly not winning) then he uses his *bead of force* to buy himself time to fly up out of melee range, turn *invisible*, and flee. If he does not have time for this then he turns to *gaseous form*. In either case he abandons his ogre henchmen to their fate and will not be encountered again this round.

Misha does her best to stay clear of the combat but will not flee it. She knows from past experience that she cannot outrun Toru'Okī (and he will be much harsher on her if he has to chase her down), and if the PCs happen to win then she wants the protection that an escort into Geran's Creek would offer her. Doubtless the PCs will want to talk to her again after the combat. Refer to Appendix A: Dealing With Misha for further details on that and full stats on Misha.

Toru'Okī, ogre mage: Large Giant (10 ft. tall, 600 lbs); HD 6d8+18; hp 50; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30, Fly 40 (good); AC 18 (+5 natural, +4 chain shirt, -1 size); Atk melee +7 (2d8+7/19-20x2, huge greatsword) or ranged +2 (2d6/x3, huge longbow); Face/Reach 5 ft.x 5 ft./10 ft.; SA spell-like abilities; SQ spell-like abilities, regeneration 1; SR 18; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3.

Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills: Concentration +6, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5; Feats: Improved Initiative.

SQ: Spell-Like Abilities—all as 9th level sorcerer with a DC of 14+ spell level: *darkness* and *invisibility* at will, *charm person*, *cone of cold*, *gaseous form*, *polymorph self*, and *sleep* each once/day; Flight (Su)—Cease or resume flight as a free action but cannot take a Run move action while flying. While in *gaseous form* fly at normal speed with Perfect

maneuverability; *Regeneration* (Ex)—Normal damage is suffered from fire and acid. Severed limbs may be reattached, although this takes one round. If beheaded, an ogre mage will only die if the head is not reattached within 10 minutes.

Possessions: +2 ring of protection, bead of force, huge greatsword, huge longbow, quiver with 15 huge arrows, gold link belt (composed of necklaces linked together, 500 gp), 8 100 gp gems

Toru'Okī is a clever and devious character who is always looking to exploit every possible advantage. He is also cautious almost to a fault. He will not risk his own safety in melee unless he feels he has a reasonable chance of winning, preferring instead to attack with magic or bow. He has light blue skin with dark hair and dark eyes with strikingly white pupils. A pair of ivory horns protrudes from his forehead, and his teeth and claws are jet black. He wears loose-fitting silk clothing under a chain mail shirt. He can speak Common and Giant.

Ogre henchmen (6): Large Giant (9 feet tall, 350 lbs); HD 4d8+8; hp 30 each; Init -1 (Dex); Speed 30; AC 16 (+5 natural, +3 hide, -1 Dex, -1 size); Atk melee +7 (2d6+7/x2, huge greatclub) or ranged +1 (2d6+7/x3, huge longspear); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1.

Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7.

Skills: Climb +5, Listen +3, Spot +3; Feats: Weapon Focus (greatclub)

Possessions: huge longspear, huge greatclub, hide armor

Encounter 4: Geran's Creek

As you continue your journey to Geran's Creek the temperature drops noticeably and the light breeze that has been a constant companion throughout the day abruptly increases in strength. By the time you come into sight of clumps of farmhouses surrounded by cultivated land it is becoming clear that the storms that have missed you most of the day aren't going to for much longer. Off to the left and right of the path you see farmers hastily gathering herds of animals into barns or pens. Up ahead, over a rise in the ground, you hear the distant clanging of a bell.

If the PCs pick up the pace they can make it into Geran's Creek before the rains hit. If not, they get thoroughly drenched.

As you crest the top of the rise you see a valley unfolding out before you, through which the creek that has been off to your left runs in a meandering course. In the distance beyond the valley are steep hills leading towards the peaks of a mountain range; in the center of the valley, along the creek, is a medium-sized town. Its central part is walled, while a scattering of homes and buildings surround it on three sides. The bell you heard comes from a high tower situated within the walls. A great amount of activity is going on everywhere you look as people scurry to gather animals, family members, and

belongings, and head for shelter. As you ride down towards the buildings, you are passed by several people, most of whom don't give you a second glance. A wooden framework at the edge of the area where the first buildings are located bears a sign painted with ornate lettering: Geran's Creek.

Geran's Creek is a town of 5,000 people, almost entirely human, that was originally built to service the various mining camps in the mountains but has since become the center of commerce for the entire region. Its militia is also the strongest military presence in the region. Normally they patrol the land immediately around Geran's Creek very thoroughly, but the PCs will not meet them today because the patrols have already ridden back in due to the threatening weather.

The locals completely ignore the PCs when they pass through the part of the town outside the wall, even if the PCs try to get their attention. If they decide to find a place to stay outside the walls, the PCs can easily find a sizable inn called The Outer Limits, which is built like a miniature fortress, complete with iron-plated window shutters. (Use the interior description for Karl's Place, below, but replace Karl with Frank.) If the PCs take this option they entirely avoid getting wet, but just barely. If they decide to enter the walls instead, they are waved through after only a cursory examination by the gate guards. On the inside the walls, the PCs can easily find three inns:

THE GOLDEN PICK INN AND TAVERN—A crowded low-end establishment that caters mostly to miners who are visiting town from the mining camps. It is a loud place marked by raucous laughter and scantily clad dancers for entertainment. Only common bunkrooms that sleep up to eight people are available, for a total cost of 3 gp to the PCs, or one can sleep on the floor in the common room for 1 sp each. One poor-quality meal (hard bread, stewed turnips, soup) is included with a room. Clarice can make quite an impression with this crowd by volunteering to perform and making a successful Perform check; the DC is only 15 if she uses a bawdy or comical ballad, 20 if she tries something more serious. There isn't enough room for her to do any kind of acrobatics. The twins also draw a lot of attention if they spend any amount of time in the bar, while Cedrick isn't be given a second glance and Dominic gets disdainful looks that suggest that he is quite out of place.

KARL'S PLACE—A common-quality establishment that caters to traveling merchants and adventurers, it is noticeably cleaner and in better repair than the Golden Pick, and quite a bit more sedate. Private rooms that sleep up to two people are available for 2 gp a night, including an evening and morning common-quality meal (bread, cheese, beef stew, boiled veggies for evening, oatmeal and berries in the morning); There is no entertainment, but there is a small stage. If Clarice wants to put on a show it is greatly appreciated if she makes her Perform check; this audience prefers odes, ballads, or storytelling set to instrument (DC of 15 for these, 20 for anything else). The twins draw attention if they hang out together in the bar

for any length of time, although it is a bit more polite than it would be at the Golden Pick. (Karl, the proprietor, is particularly intrigued by them.) The crowd is indifferent towards the other PCs.

GERAN'S CREEK INN—This is a good-quality establishment that caters to more well-to-do visitors. Furnishings are nicer on the inside, and private one-bed or two-bed rooms can be bought at a cost of 3 gp per person, including evening and morning meal (bread, cheese, pastries, beef, vegetables, wine for the evening meal, eggs and ham for breakfast). A bath is available. A local bard is providing light entertainment and regards Clarice challengingly if she offers to perform, although he will not stop her. Patrons here are used to a higher standard of entertainment, so Clarice will need to make a Perform check at a DC of 20 to impress them. The common room is not as busy as in the other two inns, and the patrons are more discreet; the twins draw curious looks but nothing more and none of the other PCs attract particular attention unless they are trying to do so.

Which inn the PCs choose matters little as far as what information they can learn and what happens that night; the differences are mostly for window-dressing and role-playing considerations. Regardless of which one they choose, the PCs are caught in the first heavy downpour of the storm while getting there. The rain will remain heavy until well after sunset, which should discourage the PCs from wanting to go out and look around.

If the PCs treated Misha well and expressed interest in joining OUT or traveling to the Fortress of the Damned to learn more about the organization, she offers to sleep on the floor of one of the PC's rooms and connect them up with her contact in the morning. She claims extreme fatigue and retires as soon as she politely can, and will be particularly insistent about this if the PCs choose to stay in the Golden Pick (she doesn't like that kind of scene). If the PCs did not treat her well or expressed no positive interest in OUT to her, she parts company with the PCs once they reach an inn and slips outside when she thinks they are not looking. If a PC does not follow her at this point then they will not see her again until they reach the Fortress. If a PC does follow her, she will go to meet her contact; refer to Encounter 5.

The people of Geran's Creek and the surrounding area are a practical people. Although they claim they keep out of each other's business, they actually gossip at least as much as any normal townsfolk and don't shy from gossiping with strangers if the strangers get on their good side. Any of the PCs can do this by offering to buy drinks for the house (5 gp expenditure required). Clarice can also do it by making an impression on the crowd and then sharing drinks with them, and the twins can manage it by just being nice and sharing drinks with the locals. By asking the right questions, the PCs can learn the following:

- There has been some humanoid raiding in the area lately, and a common rumor claims that something other than orcs is responsible for a lot of it. (If the PCs claim that they dealt with some ogres that were

responsible and can offer some proof of it, they will be advised to go to the Magistrate's Office the next morning because there is a posted bounty on the raiders.)

- The death cult (some people know the real name but still call it this) has been holed up in the Fortress of the Damned for something like twenty years now.
- The leader of the cult is some guy named the Dead Man. No one knows much about him; all that is known is that he's a wizard, at least in his sixties, and comes from a good distance away (he has a bit of an accent by local standards, and the speaker remarks that the PCs have the same kind of accent). He only comes into town himself about once or twice a year. There is a 25% chance that the speaker will know that the Dead Man comes into town for magic-related supplies.
- The death cult mostly keeps to itself; they sometimes send groups into town for supplies or to escort new members back to the Fortress, but otherwise they leave the townsfolk alone. It's an arrangement that everyone seems content with. Although their presence makes some people nervous, there have never been any major problems.
- The death cult members don't try to recruit in town or the area villages and camps, although a few locals have joined them anyway. They don't preach while in town, either, although they will talk to you about their beliefs if asked. Anyone in town talking about the death cult a lot is probably some new recruit on his or her way to the Fortress.
- New supplicants for the death cult come into town on a regular basis; rarely does a fortnight go by without at least a small group of them heading out to the Fortress. Haven't been any through here recently, though. (This is due to the raiding by Toru-Oki mentioned in Encounter 3.)
- The Fortress of the Damned is located out in the hinterlands to the southeast of town, well away from any farms or mining camps. It's about a half-day journey. There isn't a regular trail because the cultists won't allow one to be made; they don't like visitors that aren't supplicants. There is a map to its exact location in the town Surveyor's Office, though.
- The Fortress of the Damned is so called because it was said to be haunted by the ghosts of a mighty warlord and his henchmen, who centuries ago ruled the surrounding land for dozens of miles in each direction. No one dared go near it until the cultists moved in. Either the ghosts weren't real or the cultists dealt with them.
- (Only if Dominic is doing some questioning:) Say, did anyone ever tell you that you look an awful lot like a younger version of the Dead Man?

Regardless of what inn the PCs are at, they attract the attention of an OUT agent posted there. If the PCs seem to be just asking a lot of questions and aren't expressing any outward interest in joining out, the agent (a middle-aged man dressed exactly like the rest of the crowd) slips

out and reports to his superior about it. He also reports about the startling resemblance Dominic has to the Dead Man. If the PCs express apparently sincere interest in joining OUT, the agent merely watches. He will not make any attempt to contact the PCs until Encounter 5. The general townsfolk do not care one way or the other, although if the PCs make it clear that they are investigating the cult the townsfolk warn them not to stir up trouble; getting the cultists all riled up is the last thing they want.

Someone else is also watching the PCs. He is Seel, a cleric of Kaal, God of Disease and Vermin. Kaal is one of the gods angered by the destruction of the Gauntlet of Lamentation, so he sent Seel here to Geran's Creek to intercept the PCs when other agents of Kaal learned they might be headed here. He was watching the approach to Geran's Creek from one of the buildings on the outskirts when the PCs arrived, so he covertly followed them to whichever inn they are staying at. He is dressed in clothing typical of the townsfolk and has hidden all indications of his affiliation to Kaal (not a popular deity locally), so the PCs have no chance to recognize him for what he is. If Clarice or one of the twins declares that they are scanning the crowd for anything unusual they might, on a successful Spot check (DC 20), notice that Seel, who is sitting in a corner, is watching them intently. That's not unusual, but he looks away very quickly when he notices the PC looking at him. He slips out of the inn at the first opportunity in this case.

Seel has been charged with doing harm to the PCs in any way possible. Since he can't fight them on his own he has decided to resort to a little arson. Once everyone has retired for the night (an hour or so after midnight) he takes action. If the PCs paid for private rooms then Seel puts on a dark cloak and mask, sneaks up to the second floor (where the rooms will be regardless of which inn the PCs stay at), pours oil in front of the doors to the PCs' rooms and on the doors themselves, and then use a *produce flame* spell to set the oil on fire. He then uncovers a rock enchanted with *deeper darkness* and drops it in the hall. Kaal has given the spell a special power boost so that its effect will seep even through walls and floors, thus effectively casting the entire inn into blackness. He then slips out under cover of the confusion. If the PCs are sleeping in the common room then Seel pours the oil in front of all the exits, uses *produce flame* to set it aflame, then tosses the enchanted stone into the center of the room.

If any of the PCs have specifically stated that they are awake late for some reason, then they might hear what Seel is doing on a successful Listen check (DC 15). If they do, describe it as some kind of movement directly outside the door to the room. If a PC investigates, she opens the door just in time to see flames rolling down the hall and a dark-cloaked figure uncovering something that suddenly plunges everything into total blackness. Otherwise the first hint of trouble is the smell of smoke and the heat of the flames. If the PCs are all in one room, choose two at random and pull their players aside and read the following to them. If the PCs are split among separate rooms, choose one at random from each room.

You awaken to the smell of smoke and the sound of distant shouts. Somewhere nearby is a source of heat as hot as a blazing bonfire but you can't see it. For that matter, you can't see anything at all; you have been swallowed up by utter and total darkness, beyond even what you would expect from nighttime on an overcast night. Oh, and breathing is starting to become difficult. You begin to cough and sputter.

The effect of the *deeper darkness* can be canceled out by all the normal means, but otherwise the PCs are operating completely blind. The twins can automatically wake each other up but shouting is only 50% likely to wake up the other PCs. It takes one round of stumbling around in the darkness to locate and wake up each additional person in the room and another round and a successful Wisdom check at a DC of 10 to locate any particular large item that the PC in question wouldn't have been sleeping with. Finding a particular small item requires one round and a Wisdom check (DC 15). Gathering all large items requires two rounds and two Wisdom check at a (DC 12), with a failure on either indicating that some items were missed (determine randomly). Finding a particular feature of the room—such as a window or doorway—also requires a Wisdom check (DC 10), with PCs possessing Intuit Direction gaining a +2 bonus on the roll. If a PC attempts to find the doorway she senses the intense heat as she approaches it.

One round after the above description is read each PC (whether awake or not) must make a Constitution check (DC 8) or take 1d4 points of subdual damage from smoke inhalation. The check must be made on each succeeding round, with the DC increasing by 2 each round (e.g. a DC of 10 on round two, a DC of 12 on round three, etc.) After two checks are failed the smoke inhalation damage is automatic. If the PCs try to burst out through the flaming door to their room(s) the lead PC needs to make a Strength check (DC 10) to succeed, with 1d6 fire damage taken regardless of whether or not the attempt is successful. The hallway outside is roaring with flames. If the *deeper darkness* has been canceled then any PC other than Janna is able to run down the hall in one round, taking 1d6 damage in the process. Descending to the main floor and exiting the building takes two additional rounds and 1d6 additional damage (in addition to smoke inhalation checks). Double these times if the *deeper darkness* is still in effect and the PCs are exercising any caution in trying to get out. If the PC is recklessly running out through darkness, a Dexterity check (DC 15) is required to do it without tripping and falling or running into someone or something, each of which costs the PC an extra round. The PCs also start to take 1d6 fire damage every round if they stay in their rooms more than three rounds (at which point the room is on fire).

The PCs might instead try to exit through their rooms' windows. Breaking out a window enough for a person to pass through requires one round. Since the PCs are on the second floor it is about a 12-foot drop to the ground. If a PC jumps and can see what he/she is doing, then 1d6 subdual damage is suffered. If the PC cannot see what he/she is doing or otherwise just blindly leaps

through the window then 1d6 real damage is taken. (Clarice can negate the damage in either case on a successful Tumbling check with a DC of 15, or 20 if she can't see anything.) If a rope is tied off and thrown out the window then any PC except Janna can climb out safely in one round; Janna can't do it without help, although she can be dropped down and caught by someone on the ground without harm.

Another possibility is that the PCs will try to put out the fire. If Janna directs a *create water* orison at a flaming surface it quenches the fire in a 10-foot area for two rounds, but substantially more than the PCs have access to is required to stop the whole fire. *Ice storm* stops the fire in its area of effect for three rounds, and the PCs may come up with other creative magic-based ways to keep the fire at bay. If they do, rate the merits of the attempts on a case-by-case basis. If the PCs take particular precautions against the flames or smoke (such as covering themselves with wetted sheets in the former and covering their faces with wet rags in the latter), reduce any damage from the appropriate source by half.

Five minutes after the fire started a fire brigade and wizard with a *rod of flame extinguishing* arrive on the scene. It takes them and the rain about 10 minutes to extinguish the fire completely. If the PCs were able to deal with the *deeper darkness* then all the guests and staff got out safely, although several were injured in the process (many of them smoke inhalation). If the *deeper darkness* was not dealt with, then the fire claims 1d4+2 casualties. Local healers, who arrive on the scene shortly after the fire brigade, offer to do up to one *cure light wounds* worth of healing on each PC.

The town constabulary arrives on the scene at the same times as the healers and questions everyone present, including the PCs. If any PCs were able to see a flaming door then those PCs can realize, on successful Intelligence checks at a DC of 10, that the doors went up much too easily for their type of construction. Any of the spellcasting PCs also know that the darkness wasn't natural. After asking the PCs if they heard or saw anything, the constabulary shows them a wooden disk with a picture of a rat painted on one side and the words "death to the Destroyer" crudely carved into the other side. They say that it was found near the inn. Janna can, on a successful Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 15), will recognize the rat painting as resembling the holy symbol for Kaal. The constabulary takes a very dim view of the PCs if they admit that the disk refers to them.

The fire shouldn't seriously harm the PCs (except, maybe, for Janna), but it should cost them some sleep and likely some possessions. Any possession left in the flaming building must make a saving throw against fire or be considered destroyed. Items that were left can't be recovered unless the PCs use some magical means to return to their rooms (the fire burned out the staircase) or get a ladder from somewhere. Even then there is a 25% chance that the floor collapses under them while they do so, resulting in a fall through to the ground floor for 1d6 damage. The fire brigade and constabulary discourage the PCs from going back up to their rooms for precisely this

reason. The PCs have to find another place to stay for the night (remember, it is still raining) or they can let themselves be moved into the town hall, which is being set up as a temporary shelter. Seel, the culprit is long gone in any case, and nothing short of some form of divination will locate him or reveal him as the culprit.

Once the PCs are settled in again, the rest of the night passes uneventfully.

Seel, human male Clr7 (Kaal): Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 7 in. tall); HD 7d8; hp 35; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 ring); Atk melee +5 (1d6/x2, light mace); SA/SQ spells, evil spells cast as if 8th level, rebuke undead; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +7.

Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Skills: Concentration +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Profession (Tailor) +5, Bluff +4, Disguise +4; **Feats:** Dodge, Empower Spell, Mobility, Scribe Scroll

SA: *Death touch* (Sp)—Requires a successful touch attack, slays the creature touched if a 7d6 roll equals or exceeds the creature's current hit points (usable 1/day).

Spells Prepared (6/5/4/2/1): Orisons—*detect magic*, *guidance* (x2), *mending* (x3); 1st—*cause fear*, *bane* (x2), *protection from good**, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*cure moderate wounds*, *death knell*, *produce flame*, *shatter*, *spiritual weapon*; 3rd—*animate dead*, *contagion*, *speak with dead*; 4th—*giant vermin*, *unholy blight*.

*Domain spells

Possessions: +2 ring of protection, ring of mind shielding, light mace (hidden), unholy symbol of Kaal (hidden)

Seel is a very thin man (130 lbs) in his late 20s, with dark hair and eyes and sharp features. The PCs shouldn't have an opportunity to communicate with him, but if they somehow do they find him to be a very unfriendly man with a nasty disposition who is also more than a bit of a coward.

Encounter 5: The Day After

The rain stops shortly before dawn, leaving a cool and foggy morning. When the PCs prepare spells in the morning keep in mind that any spells used during the fire in Encounter 4 count against them for their daily spell selection unless they specifically state that they are allowing eight hours of rest after the fire. When they are ready to set out there are several things they may do. The PCs can go shopping to replace supplies lost in the fire; go to the Magistrate's office; go to the Surveyor's office; go with Misha to see her contact; or just set out in the general direction of the Fortress of the Damned and hope to find it. If the PCs do the last of these (or whenever they are ready to head to the Fortress), go to Encounter 6.

Gone Shopping

Geran's Creek has a typical array of grocers, dry goods stores, clothiers, jewelers, and the like. Any non-exotic items listed in the PHB can be found and purchased for book price. The only weapons available are those that fall

into the Simple Weapons category and common bows (long bows, short bows, and light crossbows) and arrows. No magical items are available.

Magistrate's Office

If PCs ask for directions, any of the townsfolk can tell them that the Magistrate's office is located directly opposite the City Hall (the large stone building in the center of town with the flagpoles directly in front of it). It is a squat stone building with barred windows running down one side. Posted outside the building are a couple of "wanted" posters, including one offering a 500 gp reward for the leader of the bandits who have been raiding north of the town (dead or alive) and a 100 gp reward for any of the bandits themselves (dead or alive). If the PCs go in and try to claim this reward they will have to offer some physical proof; the account of Misha alone isn't good enough. If any of the PCs, for whatever reason, caused enough trouble the night before and they were arrested for disorderly conduct, they will be held here and will only be released if they pay a fine of 50 gp plus the cost of any damage they may have caused.

The Surveyor's Office

If the PCs ask for direction, any of the townsfolk can tell them that the Surveyor's Office can be found in the City Hall (the large stone building in the center of town with the flagpoles directly in front of it). Once there, a constable on duty at the entrance can direct them to the correct room:

Near the end of a long hall you find a plain door bearing a plaque etched with the words "Surveyor's Office" in elegant lettering. Inside you find a small room that is brightly-lit by a glass globe suspended from the ceiling in its center. Most of one wall of the windowless is occupied by a very detailed map of the town and its outlying areas, while almost every bit of available space on the other walls is taken up by shelves bearing thick, leather-bound books. The only furnishings are a table, a desk strewn with papers, and a couple of chairs. There is no one currently in the office, but you can hear humming coming from an open doorway on the opposite side of the room.

If the PCs call for attention, a large, heavy-set man with graying hair and a receded hairline ambles in from the back room and greets the PCs in a hoarse voice. He introduces himself as Mr. Gruss, the office's Chief Clerk (male human Com1; Profession-Cartography +4); actually he's the only clerk, but Chief Clerk sounds much more impressive, doesn't it? He then asks what he can do for the PCs. If they tell him that they are trying to find a map showing where the Fortress of the Damned is, Gruss frowns, thinks for a moment (tapping a finger on his chin as he does so), and tells the PCs to wait while he shuffles into the back room. A couple of minutes later he returns bearing a large, wood-bound atlas. He lays it out on the table, flips through a few pages, and opens it to a map showing the surrounding area for a fifty-mile radius around Geran's Creek.

The Fortress of the Damned is clearly marked on the atlas map. Any PC who carefully studies the map can pick out enough landmarks to assure that the PCs can get there without getting lost. If the PCs ask about copying the map, Gruss tells them that it's a 1 gp fee and takes a day or so if he has to do it, but he'll let the PCs copy it themselves as long as they have their own paper and don't damage the atlas.

Gruss's voice is naturally hoarse so there's nothing that Janna can do to improve it, although he will appreciate the offer. He thinks the PCs are adventurers, so while they are studying the map he comments that the Fortress may not be the best place to go adventuring because it's currently occupied by a death cult. They are generally peaceful but well capable of defending themselves, he says. If the PCs ask Gruss what he means by this, he tells them that twice in the last few years the town has heard reports about large groups of humanoids attacking the Fortress. In both cases the humanoids weren't heard from or about again after that.

The Contact

If Misha is still with the PCs at this point and they have convinced her that they are interested in joining OUT, she takes them with her to meet the contact she was told about in town. The contact is a cobbler named Bartholomew who can be found at the Sergio and Son Footwear store in town (he's the son).

After stopping to ask for directions a couple of times, Misha leads you into the town's business district and down a side street. She stops before a shop, which has a sign bearing a picture of a boot sole being nailed onto a boot. Below it is engraved the words Sergio and Son Footwear.

"This is the place, I think," Misha tells you. "I was told to meet a cobbler here. You'd better let me do the introductions since I know the key phrase."

Misha can only tell the PCs what is listed above about her contact. Once they agree, read the following (alter this description accordingly if Dominic is somehow disguising himself):

Misha leads you inside the shop, a quaint place whose walls are lined with shelves holding sample boots, shoes, and sandals. A strong but not overpowering scent of leather and shoe polish fills the air. A counter lines the back wall, behind which is an opening into a back room where you can see at least three people diligently at work at tables containing various shoemaking and repairing paraphernalia. An aged, white-haired man who is standing behind the counter examining a boot looks up at your entrance.

"Welcome, folks!" He says. "What c'n I do fer you today?"

"I need to speak to Bartholomew," Misha replies, a bit nervously. "I need to hear the truth from him."

The old man blinks and the sighs. "Oh, of course. Let me go get him." He goes into the back room and says something to one of the men working there. A moment later an average-height, slightly built man of perhaps thirty years age walks forward into the store. He is still wearing a leather apron and

tool belt. He nods when Misha asks if he is Bartholomew and listens as she repeats her request, but all the while his gaze is firmly fixed on Dominic and his eyes widen.

"Bart" has seen the Dead Man before without his face paint, so the striking resemblance Dominic bears to him is not lost on Bart. He knows that Dominic really isn't the Dead Man (he's too young), but he can't deny the similarity. With this on his mind he also notices the passing resemblance that the twins bear to the Dead Man (the features of the other PCs exclusively favor their mother's side of the family). Although Bart is the not the brightest of men, he realizes that this is a Big Deal and Potential Trouble, so he is quite clearly nervous during this whole exchange. He won't admit to this if asked about it, however. He otherwise comes across as a Good Ol' Country Boy.

Bart asks Misha if the PCs also seek to join the Order. When she responds with an affirmative, he asks the PCs directly to state one of the basic principles of the Order's beliefs. If they answer that they are seeking to join the Order to learn that isn't sufficient. If the PCs have gotten to this point with Misha then they should know enough to be able to give a reasonable answer. If the answer does not resemble anything about OUT's beliefs as described in the DM's Introduction then Bart turns them away, saying that they aren't yet ready to join the Order.

If the PCs answer correctly, Bart tells them and Misha how to get to the Fortress of the Damned:

"To get to the Fortress," Bartholomew says to all of you in a low voice, "ya gotta go southeast of town for oh, 'bout half a day until you reach a dry streambed. Follow that for about an hour until you see a rock formation on a hill that looks sort of like a giant sleeping on its back. Go in the direction the giant's legs are pointin' for about another hour and you'll see the Fortress."

"Oh, one other thing: ya gotta give the sentries at the Fortress a pass phrase to get in." He lowers his voice to a whisper. "Right now it's 'the truth will set you free.'"

This is not the correct pass phrase; it's actually "only when you are set free will you see the truth." The alternate phrase is used to indicate someone who may be trouble. Misha doesn't know the difference, although she does later comment to the PCs that it's kind of an odd pass phrase given what the Order believes. Other PCs might also sense that something is not right about what they are being told if the player makes an opposed Sense Motive check against Bart's Bluff rating—but only give this check if the player asks for it. If Dominic has somehow disguised his appearance then Bart gives Misha and the PCs the correct phrase instead.

Bart uses the excuse that he's got a lot of work to do in an attempt to move the PCs on as quickly as possible. He then hurries to the back of the shop, attaches a message to a carrier bird, and send it off to the Fortress to alert them about Dominic.

Bartholomew the Cobbler, male human Exp2: Medium Humanoid (5 ft 9 in. tall, 140 lbs); HD 2d6; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 11 (+1 leather apron); Atk melee +1 (1d6/x2, club); AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3.

Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Craft (cobbler) +6, Bluff +5, Handle Animal (birds) +5, Sense Motive +5, Knowledge (local geography) +5; **Feats:** Simple Weapon Proficiency, Light Armor Proficiency, Shield Proficiency.

Possessions: leather apron, tool belt, shillelagh (treat as club, behind counter)

The Contact 2

If the PCs are not with Misha but were openly talking as if they were interested in joining OUT the night before then a middle-aged man dressed like a local shop owner joins them for breakfast. He introduces himself as Chad and says that he heard the PCs talking last night about the Order of Universal Truth. If the PCs ask Chad why he's interested, Chad says that he's a member who is keeping an eye out for those that might wish to learn the truth. If the PCs can convince him that they are honestly interested (requires success on an opposed Bluff check against Chad's Sense Motive), then Chad tells them to speak to Bartholomew at the Sergio and Sons Footwear store in town (he has a tough time saying this right, getting badly tongue-tied in the process). He adds that the PCs should tell Bartholomew that they "need to hear the truth him." Bartholomew will tell the PCs what they need to know to get to the Fortress, Chad tells them.

If the PCs fail to convince Chad of their sincerity, Chad tells them that they are not ready yet to join the Order. He advises them to come back to Geran's Creek when they are ready.

If the PCs get a positive reaction here and get the contact information from Chad, go to The Contact, above, and alter the description to eliminate Misha's participation.

Chad, human male Com1: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall, 170 lbs); 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10; Atk unarmed strike +0 (1d3 subdual); AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3.

Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Profession (grocer) +3, Sense Motive +3; **Feats:** Iron Will, Run

Possessions: pouch containing 18 sp

Chad is a 45-year old man with brown hair showing streaks of gray and brown eyes. He is not particularly handsome but is charming. His style is casual and laid-back, as is the manner of his dress, and he comes across as friendly, as if everyone in the world is a potential drinking buddy.

ENCOUNTER 6: Fortress of the Damned

If the PCs have a map or directions then they will be able to find the Fortress without any problem. It is a five-hour journey by horse and an eight-hour journey by foot. If they do not have either a map or directions then it takes them a full day to locate and reach the Fortress unless they use some means of aerial reconnaissance, in which case the trip takes them eight hours by horse and twelve by foot. The trip itself is uneventful, although you can play it out if the players have been moving quickly so far. Keep in mind, though, that the last two encounters are the most important, so sufficient time should remain for them if you take this approach.

Depending on how late the PCs get out of Geran's Creek and how long they took getting here, they might arrive at the Fortress at nighttime (sunset is at 6 p.m.). Read the first paragraph below for a daytime arrival, the second for a nighttime arrival.

The mountains you had seen in the distance now loom larger as you pass through their rocky foothills. On one such hilltop is what you had thought to be just another rock formation when you first glimpsed it. As the distance to it closes, though, you get a more clear look at it: that's a castle situated atop that hill, one whose central tower seems to have partially collapsed but otherwise looks quite formidable and imposing. A path just wide enough for a wagon winds its way up the hillside to the gates in the castle's outer wall, where you can see two figures standing guard. This must be the Fortress of the Damned.

You lost sight of the mountains looming ahead as sky faded first to twilight and then to dusk, but the distant glimmering of lights on one of the hilltops ahead catches your attention. As you get closer you can see what appears to be several small bonfires outlining the top of a structure, maybe a castle. This must be the Fortress of the Damned.

If the PCs are with Misha, she insists that they all just go up the path to the gates if they show any kind of hesitation or reluctance; to encourage them she reminds the PCs that the end of their long journey—and the truth—awaits. (Words far more true than she realizes!) If the PCs are not with Misha, they may decide to wait until the cover of darkness and try to sneak into the Fortress over a wall. Point out to them that this will not be easy, since the hillside is steep, the walls are 20-feet high on top of that, and Janna is in no condition to be climbing anything. If the PCs are still inclined to try, refer to Encounter 6b, below.

Encounter 6a: At the Front Gates

The guards at the gate wear chain mail and are armed with halberds and long swords at their sides. Although they are wary of interlopers they are also the official greeters for OUT, so they are more cordial towards the PCs than guards might otherwise be. They ask the PCs to

state their reason for coming here. They are seeking to hear one thing: “only when you are set free will you see the truth.” If they hear this and Dominic is disguised, the PCs are instructed to enter and see the acolyte in Admissions, first door on the right. If the PCs ignore these instructions and try to bypass Admissions, one of the guards calls out to them and tell them their mistake. If the PCs do go into Admissions, go to Encounter 6c, below. If they still refuse to go in even after a warning, they will be treated as if hostile; see below.

If the PCs instead give the phrase “the truth will set you free” to the guards, they scrutinize the PCs carefully. In this case they have been alerted by Bartholomew’s message to look for an imposter masquerading as the Dead Man. Any PC who is covering their face or shadowing it with a hood will be asked to reveal it. When the guards see Dominic’s face (or if the PCs give the correct phrase and Dominic wasn’t disguised), they try not to react visibly. Clarice, can, on a successful Sense Motive check with a DC of 20, tell that they have suddenly gotten very uptight (but only give her this check if the player asks for it). One guard reaches into a belt pouch and produce a blue wooden disk, which he gives to the PCs and instructs them to give it to the acolyte in Admissions, first door on the right. Go to Encounter 6c, below.

The PCs might also decide to use magic on the guards or simply overpower them. If they attempt this and Misha is still with them, she looks at the PCs in horror before fleeing from them. If the guards are not instantly restrained, one uses his first action to pull a cord that rings a bell up on the wall, an action that gives any PC attempting to melee with him an attack of opportunity. At the sound of the bell guards in the gatehouse lower the inner portcullis (takes two rounds) while more guards rush to the scene. Four more arrive each round until a dozen total are present, with a wizard also arriving on the third round. He steps up to the portcullis and shouts to the PCs that those who wish to commit violence are not welcome in this place, and if the PCs do not leave immediately they will be shot down by archers on the wall (who are assembling as he speaks). The cultists live up to this if the PCs don’t back off.

If the PCs seek entrance to the Fortress but do not have either of the code phrases mentioned above, they are denied entrance by the guards, even if they try to explain that they are here to seek admission. If they ask why they are not being allowed in, the guards explain that they don’t know the proper pass phrases, so they might be spies. The only argument that has any impact on the guards is claiming to be the family of, or related to, the Dead Man. The guards scoff at this, saying that the Dead Man neither has nor needs any family other than the Order, but a good look at an undisguised Dominic shakes them up. They also notice at this point that the twins bear a distinct resemblance to the Dead Man; they won’t notice it if the idea of a family connection hasn’t already been put on their minds, though. In this case the guards order the PCs to wait there while one of them summons their superior, the Master of Security (the wizard mentioned above).

When the Master of Security arrives on the scene, he gapes at Dominic and the twins for a moment, then demands to know why the PCs are here. If the PCs state that the Dead Man is their father the Master tries to deny it, claiming that the Dead Man has no family except for the Order, but his denials shouldn’t sound convincing since he is no longer sure himself. If the PCs insist on a meeting with the Dead Man the Master think about it and then tells the PCs that it can be arranged (he figures the Dead Man would be the best person to sort this out anyway). He leads the PCs to one of the Fortress’s study rooms and tells them to wait there while he makes arrangements. If the PCs agree to this, they will be locked into the room. A PC making a Listen check through the door can determine that there are at least two guards stationed directly outside the door. The room has no visible exits. If the PCs wait patiently, go to Encounter 7. If they decide to break out and explore, refer to Encounter 6b, below.

Encounter 6b: Doing It the Hard Way

If the PCs decide to try to sneak in, they first have to scale a 40-foot high hillside, which is too steep to simply walk up. The DC for the Climb check is 0, but Janna has a -4 penalty in addition to her Strength penalty to this check and has to rest once she reaches the top. At the top the PCs find themselves at the base of a 20-foot-high stone wall. Although the wall is crumbling a bit in places, it is still intact enough that the DC for climbing it is 25 unless the PCs use ropes or other means to make it simpler. At the top of the wall are lit braziers every 40 feet. Although there are only a few sentries on the wall, they spot the PCs on a Spot check at a DC of 10 unless the PCs are taking extraordinary measures to hide themselves. If they are doing so, the guards get an opposed Spot check. Any guard that spots an intruder blows a signal whistle to raise an alarm, and within three rounds a dozen guards and the Master of Security arrive on the scene. If the PCs are still around at that point then they have a lot of explaining to do.

If the PCs manage to sneak in undetected they have an opportunity to look around. Use the location descriptions given in Appendix B. There are regular patrols and an occasional OUT member wandering around, so the PCs either have to disguise themselves as cultists or be very careful to avoid them. If they aren’t taking precautions, there is a 50% chance each round that someone will spot the PCs and raise the alarm. The PCs can disguise themselves by picking up some of the shifts that the OUT members wear from one of the bunk rooms, but anyone they meet has a 50% chance to see through the disguise since it will be fairly obvious that they are wearing something underneath. Reduce this chance to 25% if the PCs take this into account and remove armor and other bulky equipment before putting the shifts on. If an alarm is raised, a dozen guards and the Master of Security locate the PCs and begin a pursuit within three rounds. Eventually they should corner the

PCs. If the PCs decide to fight their way out instead of surrendering then the guards and wizard try to subdue them. If it looks like the PCs might win out, then Martinic himself shows up and imprison them in a *forcecage*. When the PCs surrender or are taken prisoner, go to Encounter 7.

Encounter 6c: Admittance

Following the gate guard's directions leads you into a small, simply appointed office, containing only a desk, a couple of chairs, and a large locked trunk. One guard stands on duty here, and a thin, handsome man dressed in a long blue shift sits behind the desk. He looks up at you as you enter and smiles.

"Greetings, and welcome to the Fortress!" he says. "My name is David. I have been charged with admitting new supplicants to the Order. Trust me, you are about to embark on the greatest journey of revelation in your lives."

David (male human Com1: Profession-Bookkeeping +4) is unfailingly pleasant and cheerful. He is utterly devoted to the Order and makes some reference to "discovering the truth" or "the journey before you" or something of this nature in almost everything he says. If Misha is present she tells David that she eagerly anticipates the journey. David expects a similar response from the PCs but only frowns if he doesn't get it. If the PCs do not present him with a blue token then he asks each for their name, place of birth, and prior profession, which he writes down in a ledger before him. If asked why the Order needs such details, David explains that they like to keep track of where they are reaching people and what kind of people they are reaching. He is not aware that the Dead Man's real surname is Camarillo (Martinic never uses it), so he will make no connection based solely on that.

After David writes down this information he tells the PCs (and Misha, if present) that they are invited and encouraged to attend an evening devotional meeting led by the Dead Man himself so that they can get a feel for what life in the Order will be like, but they will understand if the PCs wish to spend the evening resting from their journey. They are expected to attend an indoctrination session the next morning. The PCs are allowed to carry their weapons until then, David says, but the weapons must be peace-knotted and they should expect to be under close scrutiny of the guards in that case. Once indoctrinated, they are expected to give up all armor and armaments to the common armory and dress as the other Order members. If the PCs show even a hint of resistance to this, David sternly tells them that the Order doesn't maintain strict discipline but it does expect everyone's experience to be as free from violence and distraction as possible. Also, there are some fairly powerful wizards among the higher-ups who are experts at restraining people who are disruptive.

Once this has been explained, David pulls a cord on the wall behind his desk, which summons a short, young woman of perhaps 17 years whom David introduces as Patrice (human female Com1). She leads the PCs to quarters (separate ones for the men and women) where

they can rest until the time of the devotional. Patrice performs the task as quietly and meekly as possible—she's very shy around strangers—and lead the PCs to one of the Bunk Rooms indicated on the Fortress map. Without looking up at them, and in a voice barely above a whisper, Patrice tells them to come to the big central building when the bell rings three times if they want to join in the devotionals. She also tells them that there is a common meal after the devotionals and a strict curfew, which begins an hour after that, when the bells ring four times. She leaves hastily before the PCs have a chance to ask questions.

If the PCs decide to have a look around, refer to the location descriptions given in Appendix B. Otherwise tell the PCs that, shortly after sunset, they hear the ringing of three bells. A look outside reveals many individuals dressed in blue shifts headed towards the Fortress's large central building. Misha, if she is still with the PCs, immediately leaves to join the other cultists. When the PCs decide to head there themselves, go to Encounter 7.

If the PCs present a blue disk or if Dominic enters undisguised, David is as polite and cordial as described above even as he slips a hand under his desk and rings a silent magical alarm. (A PC who has been specified as closely studying David can, on a successful Sense Motive check at a DC of 20, determine that David suddenly became nervous after the PCs gave him the disk.) This summons the Master of Security and a dozen guards, who arrive outside the room in three rounds. The wizard and three guards enter and insist that the PCs surrender their weapons; the guards level swords at them (and the wizard a wand) to reinforce this point. If the PCs ask why they are being treated so, the Master of Security informs them that they are being detained on suspicion of being spies; the Dead Man himself will determine the truth.

If the PCs try to fight their way out of this situation, refer to Encounter 6b, above. If the PCs relent, they are disarmed and led to one of the Fortress's study rooms, where they are locked in. A PC making a Listen check through the door can determine that there are at least two guards stationed directly outside the door. The room has no visible exits. If the PCs wait patiently, go to Encounter 7. If they decide to break out and explore, refer to Encounter 6b, above.

Guards, human male Ftr4 (up to 20): Medium Humanoid (5-6 ft. tall); HD 4d10+8; hp 32 each; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex); Atk melee +7 (1d10+2/x3, halberd, or 1d8+2/19-20x2, longsword), ranged +5 (1d6/x3, shortbow); AL variable but non-evil; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5, Climb +7 (+2 with armor), Jump +6 (+2 with armor); **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Focus (long sword)

Possessions: chain mail, halberd, longsword; those on wall also have shortbow and 20 arrows.

Master of Security, human male WIZ10: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 9 in. tall); HD 10d4 +10; hp 35; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 17 (+4 bracers, +3 Dex); Atk melee +7 (1d6+2/x2, +2 quarterstaff); SA/SQ spells (DC 13 + spell level); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +11 (includes ring).

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +13, Craft (woodcarving) +9, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Scry +15, Spellcraft +15, Spot +8; Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll.

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/3/2): 0—light, mage hand, detect magic, open/close; 1st—shield, unseen servant, color spray, magic missile; 2nd—web, see invisibility, protection from arrows, Tasha's hideous laughter; 3rd—dispel magic, flame arrow, hold person; 4th—dimension door, minor globe of invulnerability, stoneskin; 5th—hold monster, sending

Possessions: +4 bracers of armor, +2 ring of resistance, +2 quarterstaff, wand of Otiluke's resilient sphere (25 charges)

The Master of Security is a 50-year old human male with graying hair and slender build. He is a stern and authoritative figure who is good at organizing and administrative duties but not high on violence; as such, he will use his magic as much as possible to restrain opponents and will only resort to damaging spells if absolutely necessary.

ENCOUNTER 7: Dear Old Dad

NOTE: If remaining time is VERY limited when you reach this point, skip the combat portion of this encounter. At least a few minutes must remain for Encounter 8 to be played out.

There are three ways the PCs can reach this encounter: by being brought before the Dead Man as prisoners, by answering the call to the devotional, or by sneaking around without getting caught and checking out the devotional while it is in session. In the former case use encounter 7a, below; in the latter two cases use Encounter 7b. This is the pivotal encounter of the entire second round, so play up the drama as much as possible.

Encounter 7a: Prisoners

If the PCs were captured without the use of Otiluke's resilient spheres, they are disarmed and encased in these before being brought into the main hall. Otherwise they are brought into the hall as is.

The magical spheres you have been encased in are rolled into the main building by guards, unceremoniously flopping you around inside as they do so. Once you get your bearings you find yourselves in a large hall, easily sixty feet long and half as wide. A vaulted ceiling ascends to a height of nearly thirty feet above you, with a balcony running around the perimeter of the hall about halfway up. The room is lit by a succession of flaming braziers spaced evenly down its length between numerous rows of wooden pews, forming an aisle that runs the length of the hall.

At the front of the hall is a dais on which sits a stone altar of some sort. Standing at the altar with his arms crossed is a bare-chested male figure wearing a blood-red cape with a stiff collar. You can't make out his features from this distance but his face seems to be white. Although you can see a few figures dressed in blue shifts standing on the balcony, the only other people present on the ground floor are the guards that brought you in and a few others stationed here and there.

The figure at the end of the hall is, of course, Martinic, a.k.a. Dead Man. Allow the PCs time to react. If they shout out or try to talk to each other, the guards rattle the spheres until the PCs take the hint. The spheres are then rolled down the aisle until they are brought before Martinic.

As you are rolled to the front of the hall and finally get a good look at the figure at the altar, all of your doubts are erased: the old man with his face painted like a skull is the same one you saw in the pool at the Oracle. This is the man that all of you, except Clarice, once called "father."

"So," he says as he glares down at all of you. The sound of his voice sends a shiver down the spines of Dominic, Janna, and Cedrick. "You are the intruders who have been so much trouble. Those who seek the mysteries of the Universal Truth are welcome here. Those who merely seek to cause trouble or poke their noses in where they don't belong are not. What do you have to say for yourselves, hmmm?"

Go to Encounter 7c, below.

Encounter 7b: Visitors

The description given below assumes that the PCs' vantage-point is from the ground level and that they have entered through the main doors. If it is not, alter the description accordingly.

The hall you have entered is large and airy, at least sixty feet long and half that wide, with a vaulted ceiling easily thirty feet above. A balcony about halfway up to the roof encircles the hall. The room is lit by a succession of flaming braziers spaced evenly down its length between numerous rows of wooden pews, forming an aisle that runs the length of the hall. Many of these pews are occupied by humans, most of them thirty years of age or younger, dressed in simple blue shifts. More stand on the balconies above. Everyone's attention is riveted on the front of the hall, where a stone altar stands atop a dais.

If Misha has been with the PCs, add:

Misha is present among the cultists, sitting near the front.

As you watch, a bare-chested man wearing a blood red cape with a stiff collar steps up to the altar. Although you cannot make out his features from this distance, he appears to be much older than most of the audience and his face is painted white, with black around his eyes to give the impression of a skull-like visage. He peers out at the audience and raises his arms.

“My children,” he declares to the assemblage in a booming voice. A shiver runs down the spines of everyone except Clarice as the five oldest among vaguely or clearly remember that voice. “I welcome you all to this devotional. You have come to study the essence of the universe, to discover its core truths and in the process come to peace with yourself. It is my duty, as the one who straddles the line between life and death, to guide you down this path, and to serve as the conduit through which you may achieve your ultimate goal. Tonight we have with us some who have been declared to be prepared for their glorious final journey. Will those blessed individuals please step forward?”

The PCs may do something to interrupt this, such as shouting out and trying to get the Dead Man's attention. It's also possible that the PCs may just decide to play along and step forward with the three others who do, although they get some strange looks if they do so. If the PCs are still clearly dressed in “civilian” clothes they also draw the attention of the guards, who step out from the shadows along the edges of the hall and encircle them. This part you have to play by ear, since it is impossible to anticipate all the methods the PCs might employ to get their father's attention. Once they have done something that causes Martinic to directly interact with them, go to Encounter 7c.

Encounter 7c: The Reunion

Due to his mental state, Martinic does not recognize the PCs at all. He denies that he is the PCs' father or is in any way related to any of them. He is, after all, “the guide to the universal truth and the conduit through which that truth can be attained!” He accuses Dominic of being a spy (although to what end he's not sure) if the similarity in appearance is pointed out to him; perhaps Dominic is some sort of shapechanger. If the features he shares with the twins are pointed out, he shrugs and claims that it is merely a coincidence. If the PCs mention Hallisburg, Martinic comments that it is a drab little town that he once visited but he certainly wouldn't want to live there.

If the PCs attempt to call Martinic by his real name, he denies that he is that person; Martinic Camarillo died many years ago, he says, and with him all his past. He is the Dead Man. If the PCs forego attempts to convince Martinic that he is their father and instead just appeal to him to save Janna, Martinic looks sadly at her and insists that saving lives is not what he is about. He prepares supplicants for the peace and understanding that can only be achieved in death is the purpose of OUT. Janna would be better off in a hospice or the care of a priest if her life is endangered, he says. If the PCs insist that he is the only one who can remedy Janna's problem, he admits that he might have the magic to do it, but again, it is not the principle of OUT to *preserve* lives so he won't do it. If the PCs try to convince him that he is insane or cursed and needs help, he laughs and says that he has never seen things more clearly.

The PCs should have a difficult time getting any cooperation from Martinic or convincing him of who he really is. Unless Janna can somehow connive a way to get

close enough to Martinic to touch him and use her *heal* spell, there is only one way for the PCs to make a breakthrough with Martinic: mention Lady Evangela, their mother. The emotions he once felt for his wife are buried deeply but still there, so he ponders the name for a moment and then replies thoughtfully that he once knew a woman by that name. She was the loveliest of creatures, he says fondly, a rare woman of intelligence, wit, and sophistication. If the PCs start pressing Martinic from this angle, they can get him to admit that the Lady Evangela did have several children, including a pair of twins, and accept that they could be the children of Lady Evangela since a couple of them do look like her.

If the PCs at this point try to insist that the Lady Evangela was Martinic's wife and thus they are his children, have Martinic make an Intelligence Check (DC 15). If he fails he continues to deny it but will sound less than convinced; if the PCs keep pressing their arguments, give Martinic additional checks until he finally makes one. When he does, he starts to admit that it's possible the PCs could be his children, but that doesn't have any bearing on anything...but at that point he gets interrupted by the scene described below. (This scene also happens if Janna moves to get close enough to Martinic to touch him.)

Encounter 7d: The Truth Comes Out

One final obstacle remains to the PCs' reunion with their father. Beltras, a cultist standing on the balcony, has long pretended to be just another cultist but is actually an agent of Kaal. He was originally stationed here to monitor the activity of OUT to see if it would ever become an interest or threat to Kaal. In the last month his status has been upgraded to that of the last line of defense against any efforts by Janna to have her curse removed. Other agents of Kaal and his divine allies have learned that Martinic is the one of the very few mortals who can do so. He has been instructed to not kill Martinic unless absolutely necessary, since that would draw unwanted attention towards Kaal, but was given the means to do so.

The “means” is an amulet Beltras carries that is imbued with the one-shot ability to open a *gate* and summon through it some of Kaal's personal demonic servants. These demons have standing orders to attack the person known as the Dead Man and the person known as Janna Camarillo and any defenders that either has if they are called upon. Beltras also is imbued with some of the power of his god's avatar, to be used towards the completion of this task. (That this will burn out Beltras and likely kill him even if he succeeds does not matter to him; it's an honor to die for his god.)

“No!” cries a voice from the balcony off to the right. Everyone turns toward the direction of the voice, where one of the cultists has stepped up to the edge and raised some sort of object in his hand.

“This will not be allowed to happen!” the cultist shouts as he throws the object to the ground floor. “Kaal demands

unfettered justice against The Destroyer, and he shall have it this day!"

The object the cultist threw shatters upon striking the ground. Greenish-grey smoke billows up from it and out of that smoke step creatures that look like crosses between large humans and vultures. Their sinewy limbs are covered with fine gray feathers and end in wicked claws, while terrible vulture heads sit atop the end of long, unseemly necks.

"Slay The Destroyer!" the cultist shouts as others around you scream (and head for the exits, if this encounter takes place while a meeting is in session). "Slay her and the Dead Man, too!"

Two of the vrock's go after Martinic, although one is caught by a *banishment* spell from Martinic in the first round of combat. The Master of Security and guards occupy a third, while the other two head for the PCs. Beltras also concentrates his efforts on Martinic. If the PCs are encased in Otiluke's resilient spheres, the first action of the vrock's is to use *dispel magic* on them; this automatically succeeds. If the PCs had their weapons taken from them, the first action of the guards holding those weapons is to hastily give them back.

The first and foremost goal of the vrock's attacking the PCs is to get to Janna. The rest of the PCs have to actively block the vrock's to prevent this, because they will try to move around the PCs if they can do so without provoking attacks of opportunity. On the first round that they engage PCs (or on the second round if they used *dispel magic* on the first) they use their spore attack, but will not resort to it again later in the combat unless three or more PCs gang up on them. The vrock's are intelligent, so they do use some degree of decision-making about their attacks. If they are only being effectively combated in melee then they concentrate their efforts on melee. If they are being effectively hampered or hurt by a continuing spell effect then one uses *dispel magic* to attempt to disrupt it. If they are not effectively being harmed by either and are being blocked by only one PC then they attempt to use *telekinesis* to move that PC out of the way. This automatically fails against Cedrick because he's too heavy with armor on; the vrock may realize this before the attempt on a successful Intelligence check at a DC of 10. *Telekinesis* could also be used in other situations if the vrock could reasonably believe that it would get an advantage from doing so.

When confronted by multiple opponents the preference of the vrock is to deal with the strongest and most dangerous-seeming opponent first. If two opponents appear to be of about equal threat level then the vrock alternates between those two targets, although all attacks for one round are always concentrated on one target. (Thus, for example, a vrock beset by both twins would attack them equally, while one beset by Cedrick and Clarice would concentrate primarily on Cedrick unless Clarice is also getting in good blows.)

If a vrock is being attacked by three or more PCs, and is effectively being damaged by them, it uses *mirror image*. If a vrock is seriously threatened (under 15 hp left and equivalent damage has not been inflicted on PC opponents), it uses *darkness* centered on itself and, under

cover of that, emits its deafening screech. PCs affected by both have no sense of direction, miss 90% of the time in combat, and have a 20% chance of spell failure for any spell that has a verbal component. While under cover of both, the vrock exits the scene via *teleport without error*.

Although the PCs should be able to survive the two vrock's, it will be a bloody battle due to the vrock's offensive capability, high AC, and spell resistance. If one of the vrock's breaks past the PCs and assaults an unprotected Janna (unlikely, given her ability to generate *protection from evil* and/or *magic circle against evil*), two guards that had been keeping their distance jump to her aid. Even though the PCs are intruders, they don't take kindly to a demon attacking an apparently defenseless woman. They will likely quickly be cut down by the vrock, but it should buy the PCs and Janna enough time to react. If Janna is struck down but not killed, she automatically makes the roll to stabilize the next round; this is the only case where this exception applies. If a PC isn't able to get to her immediately then an NPC cleric steps in cast a *cure moderate wounds* spell on her. Basically, every effort short of actual *deus ex machina* or playing the vrock totally out of character should be taken to keep Janna from getting killed in this encounter, since the ending of the round is irrelevant without her alive.

The battle between the OUT security forces and the fourth vrock can be fought out or it can be assumed, as a time-saving feature, that the security forces eventually triumph, though not before losing six guards and having three others seriously injured. Likewise, the battle between Martinic and the fifth vrock and Beltras can be fought out or you can assume that the following happens: Martinic is able to deal with the demon by putting it in *temporal stasis*, but this gives Beltras an opening to get in for some serious damage. The two then exchange spells, counterspells, and defenses back and forth, each taking damage. Their battle climaxes on the eighth round (or the round after the PCs finish their battle with the vrock's if it takes longer than that) when Beltras drops a *flame strike* on Martinic at the same time that Martinic fires off a *disintegration* spell. Martinic survives but collapses, reduced to -7 hit points; Beltras fails his save and is completely destroyed. Describe this very dramatically if the PCs are able to watch. When the PCs react to it, presumably to try to save Martinic's life, go to Encounter 8.

Martinic Camarillo, a.k.a. Dead Man, human male Wizzo (Necromancer): Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 1 in. tall); HD 20d4; hp 60; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 22 (+10 magic, +2 Dex); Atk melee +10/+5 (1d6+2/x2 each, *quarterstaff of thunder and lightning*); SA/SQ spells (DC 16 + spell level for necromancy, 14 + spell level for other); AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +15.

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 17.

Skills: Alchemy +19, Concentration +21, Diplomacy +12, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (human biology) +25, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Scry +25, Spellcraft +25; **Feats:** Scribe Scroll, Brew Potion, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Leadership, Combat Casting,

Spell Mastery (x3), Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration, Maximize Spell.

Spells Prepared (5/6/6/6/6/5/5/5/5/5; necromancy spells in bold): 0—**disrupt undead**, light, mage hand (x2), read magic; 1st—**cause fear**, **chill touch**, magic missile, Tenser's floating Disk, message, endure elements; 2nd—see invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, daylight, levitate, **scare**, **spectral hand**; 3rd—**gentle repose**(x2), **halt undead**, fly, dispel magic, lightning bolt, remove curse; 4th—minor globe of invulnerability, **enervation**, **fear**, Otiluke's resilient sphere, scrying; 5th—dismissal, wall of force, **animate dead**, telekinesis, teleport; 6th—greater dispelling, true seeing, mass suggestion, **circle of death**, disintegrate; 7th—banishment, forcecage, **control undead**, **finger of death**, prismatic spray; 8th—horrid wilting, symbol, demand, polymorph any object, Bigby's clenched fist; 9th—**soul bind**, **astral projection**, temporal stasis, **energy drain**, wish.

Possessions: +6 bracers of armor, +4 cloak of protection, staff of thunder and lightning (15 charges), amulet of proof against detection and location, ring of minor fire resistance.

Guards, human male Ftr4 (12): Medium Humanoid (5½-6 ft. tall); HD 4d10+8; hp 32 each; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20; AC 17 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield); Atk melee +8 (1d8+5/19-20x2, +1 longsword); AL variable but non-evil; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1.

Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5, Climb +7 (+3 with armor), Jump +6 (+2 with armor); Feats: Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Possessions: chain mail, +1 longsword, small shield.

Master of Security, human male Wiz10: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 9 in. tall); HD 10d4 +10; hp 35; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 17 (+4 bracers, +3 Dex); Atk melee +7 (1d6+2/x2, +2 quarterstaff); SA/SQ spells (DC 13 + spell level); AL LN; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +11 (includes ring).

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +13, Craft (woodcarving) +9, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Scry +15, Spellcraft +15, Spot +8; Feats: Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/3/2): 0—light, mage hand, detect magic, open/close; 1st—shield, unseen servant, color spray, magic missile; 2nd—web, see invisibility, protection from arrows, Tasha's hideous laughter; 3rd—dispel magic, flame arrow, hold person; 4th—dimension door, minor globe of invulnerability, stoneskin; 5th—hold monster, sending

Possessions: +4 bracers of armor, +2 ring of resistance, +2 quarterstaff, wand of Otiluke's resilient sphere (25 charges)

The Master of Security is a 50-year old human male with graying hair and slender build. He is a stern and authoritative figure who is good at organizing and administrative duties but not high on violence; as such, he will use his magic as much as possible to restrain opponents and will only resort to damaging spells if absolutely necessary.

Vrock (Tanar'ri) Demon (5): Large Outsider (8 ft. tall); HD 8d8+24; hp 68 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30, fly 50 (average); AC 25 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural); Atk +11/+11/+9/+9/+9 (1d8+4 [x2], claws; 1d6+2, bite; 1d4+2 [x2], rake; Face/Reach 5ft. x 5ft./10ft.; SA spell-like abilities, spores, screech, dance of ruin, summon tanar'ri; SQ damage reduction 20/+2, immune to poison and electricity, resistance 20 to cold, fire, and acid, telepathy (100 foot range), darkvision 60 feet; SR 22; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +8.

Str 19, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +14, Hide +9, Knowledge (lower planes) +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +13, Search +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +12, Spot +12; Feats: Cleave, Multiattack, Power Attack

SA: Spores (Ex)—Once every three rounds a vrock may eject a spray of spores affecting all opponents within 5 feet, inflicting 1d8 damage; this counts as a standard action. Victims suffer an additional 1d2 damage each round for 10 rounds, at which point they are covered by thick, vine-like growths. Bless, neutralize poison, remove disease, or sprinkling the victim with a vial of holy water destroys the spores, while delay poison stops the growth for its duration. (Janna knows the correct treatment on a successful Healing check at a DC of 30.); Stunning Screech (Su)—Once per hour a vrock can emit a piercing screech. Everyone within a 30 foot radius must make a Fortitude save at a DC of 17 or be stunned for one round; Dance of Ruin (Su)—To use this ability, a group of five or more vocks join hands in a circle, dancing wildly and chanting. If they dance for three rounds, a wave of crackling energy flashes outward in a 100-foot radius. All nondemon creatures within the radius take 2d20 points of damage (Reflex save half DC 15). Forcing vocks to break the circle stops the dance.

SQ: Spell-Like Abilities—Each usable at will as 12th level sorcerer (DC 11 + spell level): darkness, desecrate, detect good, detect magic, mass charm, mirror image, telekinesis, teleport without error (self plus 50 pounds only); Summon Tanar'ri (Sp)—Not available in this encounter.

Beltras, human male Clr16 (effective): Medium Humanoid (6 ft. tall); 16d8; hp 80; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 bracers of armor); Atk melee +15/+10/+5 (1d6+3/x2 each, +2 light mace); SA spells, death touch, evil spells cast as if 17th level, rebuke undead; SQ spells in effect (see below); AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +15 (Iron Will).

Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +8, Craft (woodcarving) +4, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Spellcraft +4, Bluff +6; Feats: Combat Casting, Skill Focus (Bluff), Dodge, Iron Will

Special Abilities: Death touch (Sp)—Requires a successful touch attack, slays the creature touched if a 16d6 roll equals or exceeds the creature's current hit points (usable 1/day).

Spells Prepared (6/6/6/6/4/4/3/3/2): Sphere—*,*,*,*,*, y; Orisons—guidance(x2), mending(x2), resistance(x2); 1st—cause fear, command(x2), bane (x2), ~~protection from good~~*, shield of faith; 2nd—death knell*, desecrate, enthrall, shatter, silence, spiritual weapon (x2); 3rd—animate dead*, bestow curse,

contagion(x2), dispel magic(x2), stone shape; 4th—divine power, giant vermin(x2), greater magic weapon, unholy blight*; 5th—flame strike(x2), insect plague, slay living* ~~spell resistance~~; 6th—blade barrier, create undead*, greater dispelling, harm; 7th—blasphemy (x2)*, regenerate, repulsion; 8th—firestorm, symbol, unholy aura*.

* Domain spells

Spells that are strikethrough are spell in effect at the beginning of combat.

Possessions: +5 bracers of armor, +2 light mace, ring of spectral hand (use equivalent of spectral hand spell for a total of up to 16 minutes per day as an 8th level sorcerer), unholy symbol of Kaal

Beltras is 30 years old, with dark hair, normally black eyes, and a medium build. He is handsome but in a cold way. Normally Beltras is a 7th level cleric of Kaal but, while imbued with the essence of his god, he functions as the stats and spell capability given above. In this state his sole intent is to destroy Martinic. He ignores all other targets unless one directly imposes itself in front of him and will not make any further statements. While imbued with his god's essence his eyes glow a sickly yellow.

ENCOUNTER 8: The Moment of Truth

This encounter assumes that the PCs triumphed over the vrock in Encounter 7d, Janna survived the battle, and Martinic survived but was reduced to negative hp in the final strike. If the PCs somehow intervened enough in Martinic's duel with Beltras for him to have not been reduced to negative hp, alter the following events accordingly.

After the end of the battle between Martinic and Beltras, the PCs will have two rounds to get to Martinic and either heal or stabilize him; he dies on the third round unless he makes one of his 10% check to stabilize on his own. The ideal situation is, of course, for Janna to use the *heal* spell on her ring on Martinic. This may not be possible if the spell has already been used for other purposes this round. Use the most appropriate of the following two options:

Martinic is restored to positive hit points by means other than the *heal* spell. In this case he thanks the PCs for healing him (he was not properly prepared to experience the Universal Truth, he says) and for their assistance against the vrock; anyone who would help fight off those who attack the Order cannot be a threat to the Order, he says. He also wonders aloud about why Beltras—who had always been a bit incompetent when it came to proper meditations and such, and now he knows why—would also attack the PCs. If the PCs mention at this point that Martinic is the only person who can save Janna's life, he wonders why that is such a big deal. If Janna explains why she is cursed, Martinic agrees that such an item needed to be destroyed since it throws off the balance of things and kills people before they are ready.

Janna can now, with some chance for success, try to convince Martinic to remove her curse. Either the argument that she is not yet prepared herself for death or that Martinic owes it to the PCs may work. If she uses one argument and succeeds on a Diplomacy check (DC 15), Martinic agrees to do it. If she uses both arguments then no Diplomacy check is necessary. If Martinic has acknowledged that the PCs may be his children, that fact will not have any bearing on his decision.

Janna uses the *heal* spell on Martinic. This cures his insanity. He sits up and stares at Janna and says something like, "Janna, is that you? Oh, my dear girl, what has happened to you?" as his eyes tear up and he gives her a big hug. He also warmly greets Dominic and Cedrick if they are nearby, and asks if Susan and Sharon are his twins (their appearance has changed markedly from when they were toddlers). He still does not recognize Clarice, though, and stares at her blankly if she greets him as "father." The other PCs have to explain about her, since Martinic did not even know that Lady Evangela was pregnant when he last parted company from her. He briefly asks how they have been and about their mother and expresses regret about leaving her behind. If asked why he left the family behind, he explains that he was badly injured in a battle and it must have affected his mind; for a long, long time he hasn't been aware that he had any family. This will not read as a lie if the PCs are checking for them, and any successful Sense Motive attempt by has the PC believing that Martinic is being utterly sincere.

If the conversation seems to be going long, Martinic cuts his children short and insists on knowing Janna's story. Because of his field of specialty and the recent focus of his activities, he can sense both the new life in Janna and the pall of death that hangs over her, and he is very concerned. When the PCs have explained things to him, Martinic tells them that he'll have to see if there's something he can do about it. He's not about to see one of his children die just after he's been reunited with them again, nor is he about to lose a potential grandchild.

NOTE: If time allows and the players are getting into the emotional part of this reunion then you are encouraged to play it up for all it's worth. You can leave out the more emotional part of it if time is short or the players are not willing and just skip to the cure.

THE CURE

The way the PCs get to this point is mostly irrelevant to how it plays out; the only difference it makes is that Martinic will be more clearly emotional and concerned if he has been cured by the *heal* spell and will be more cold and distant if he hasn't. He will also not acknowledge any PC as "son" or "daughter" if he has not been cured. Color the description given below accordingly.

Martinic invites the PCs to join him in a private workroom, where he has Janna lay out on a worktable so that he can examine her thoroughly. As the other PCs

watch or not, he gives Janna a complete physical and magical examination which includes the use of a *detect magic* spell and a variant of *true seeing* specially altered for magical analysis purpose. (Any spellcasting PC recognizes the former, but a Spellcraft check (DC 25) is required to identify the nature of the latter.) He also refers to some reference books during this time. This takes about an hour. When he is done, he turns to the PCs and makes the following announcement:

"I believe I can break the death curse," your father says. "It will take my most powerful magic—a wish—but it should work. There is one catch, though," he looks at Janna sadly, "and I suspect you may already know what it is." (Dramatic pause, allow the PCs a chance to react if they are so inclined.) "Yes, breaking the curse will not undo the damage it has done. Its effects are permanent. Janna may be able to regain a little of her lost health but likely she will remain as she is. With proper care and attention she should live to carry the child to term, but I don't think I need to tell you that she can't survive the birthing." He turns to face Janna. "Before I do this, daughter, I need to know, first of all, do you value the child's life over yours? I can end the pregnancy now, painlessly and safely, if you would prefer not to risk your life."

If Janna wants the pregnancy ended, Martinic uses a selectively targeted version of *energy drain* to force the miscarriage after breaking the curse. If this happens you can dump the entire Epilogue, but this would be so utterly out of character that, if it does happen, you should take it into consideration when voting for placement at the table. A response from Janna that she would die for her child is expected. When she responds in this way, continue:

"Very well," says your father with a nod. "The second thing I must know, then, is who will raise this child after Janna is gone? I will not be able to, so it should be one of you. The babe should be raised by family instead of some stranger."

If the PCs ask why Martinic cannot raise the child, his response depends on whether or not he has been cured. If he hasn't, he states that raising children isn't his task in life. If he has been cured, he explains that he now realizes that this whole Order of Universal Truth thing is wrong and sickeningly twisted, but there's still a lot of people here at the Fortress that wholeheartedly believe in it. It's going to take a lot of time and his complete effort to undo that damage.

This is the chance for the players to get into one final bit of role-playing with each other. All of the PCs have opinions on this matter stated in their Profiles, so the players have to role-play out the decision over who will raise Janna's child. Do not interfere, because this is an exercise solely for the players. There is also not any correct answer, although Cedrick (as the only one who already has a stable home life) is probably the best choice. An agreement whereby multiple PCs will cooperatively raise the child is also acceptable to Martinic. When the PCs have agreed on a choice, continue.

Martinic first has Janna lay back down on the table, then tells all of you to stand well back. He inscribes a magic circle on the floor around the table, then begins a complex incantation. All of you can feel the hairs raising on the back of your neck; this is the most powerful magic that you have ever been in the presence of as it was being performed. As Martinic's voice and spell reach a crescendo you can feel the reverberation of energy throughout the room, as if you were standing in the wake of the beating of a giant drum. When Martinic slashes his hand down at the spell's climax and shouts for the evil curse to be broken, Janna screams as her body convulses. Those of you watching see a faint, sickly green aura peel away from Janna, much like a soul ripping itself free from its body. The aura hovers briefly in mid-air. It is a horrid image of death and despair, before dispersing into nothingness. Janna lays limp on the table, but you can still see her shallow breathing.

"It is done," Martinic says, sweat staining his face and exhaustion clear in his expression. "The curse put up a fight, but it is broken. Janna will live until the babe can be born."

This is the conclusion of the activity in this scenario. Allow the PCs to react if they choose to do so, but otherwise the round is done. If the players want to know how things turn out, read the Epilogue to them.

EPILOGUE

You return to civilization in the wake of the events at the Fortress of the Damned, and the months pass. In time you are all drawn together again for the imminent birth of Janna's child. This time Cedrick's family joins you, as does Dominic's former lady friend and current fiancée (and Martinic, if he was cured of his insanity), to make it a true family gathering. Janna looks a little better than she did when the curse was broken and she has a glow about her such as only expectant mothers can have, but it is a melancholy time for all of you since you all know what will likely happen. While reminiscing on old times Janna goes into labor. It is a long and difficult process for her that lasts through the night and well into the next day. Priestesses of Marinol attend her constantly, but it is clear that this is her battle and hers alone.

Cedrick's wife and the women among you watch as Janna fights and strains with every ounce of her energy to bring this child into the world, for the birthing is not without complications, but in the end she succeeds. Dominic and Cedrick hear the baby's cry and rush in to witness a wondrous sight: Janna has given birth to a healthy baby girl. As the child is placed in her arms for the first and last time—for she is clearly at her end—Janna murmurs, "my baby, my darling Evangela, oh Gerrard, if only you could see. . ." And then her eyes close and her head sags to the pillow. The attendants of Marinol check her life signs and sadly declare that they are no more.

Janna is gone, and all of you mourn, for you have lost one of your own. Yet it is also a time for rejoicing, for in her passing she has brought a new life into the world. In the baby girl Evangela she and her husband will live on.

**THE END (for now)
AND A NEW BEGINNING**

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Appendix A: Dealing with Misha

This information is included separately from the regular encounters because Misha can potentially appear in several different encounters.

Misha comes from an aristocratic background, so her speech patterns and behavior should reflect education and a proper upbringing. She is also a very passionate and temperamental person; although normally polite and friendly, she quickly switches to indignant and argumentative in the face of insults, accusations, and/or recriminations, and she is quick to laugh or come to tears. She is wary around the obviously sick Janna unless the PCs explain that her condition is the result of a curse, but much more at ease around Clarice and Dominic. She finds the twins to be intriguing, and treats Cedrick like a bodyguard unless the PCs make it clear that he's family.

If the PCs ask Misha about her attackers, she relates to them a tearful account of the events described in Encounter #3. She refers to Toru'Okī as a demon and thank the PCs profusely for saving her from that mess. She admits to having done some "awful things" while the prisoner of the ogres (although she won't elaborate), but she was too weak and terrified to resist. It's one more thing she will have to atone for to be properly purified, she says.

If the PCs ask Misha about her background or the reason why she was traveling to Geran's Creek, she explains that she and her family hail from a large port town out on the coast. There they heard about the Order of Universal Truth and felt as if the preaching of its representatives opened their eyes. She, her husband, her brother-in-law, and two friends decided to travel to Geran's Creek to visit the main conclave of the Order in hope of learning the Universal Truth and perhaps joining the order. If asked what the main tenets of the Order are, Misha explains that the Order believes that, by properly preparing and purifying one's self before death, a person can become one with the universe upon death and thus achieve total peace and understanding of everything. (She says this with a look of rapture on her face and tone of wonder in her voice.) If the PCs point out to Misha that joining the Order will probably result in her own death, she shrugs and say that it's a price worth paying for the reward that she would earn. The whole situation with the ogres, though, that was a painful and senseless way to go, she says; one who died so violently could certainly not be at peace, and thus would never experience the Universal Truth and Harmony. That is the worst of all fates.

Misha is a fanatic and cannot be easily dissuaded from her views. In fact, she tries to persuade the PCs of her viewpoint if given half a chance. The only PC she will not try this with is Janna, since she recognizes her as a priestess and thus beholden to a different Truth. Also, Janna is clearly too close to her own death for there to be time for her to be indoctrinated (she only mentions this if directly questioned about it, however, since she considers it rude to speak ill of someone on Death's Door, as she puts it). If the PCs mention the Dead Man, Misha replies that she has never met him but he's supposed to be the

director of the Order of Universal Truth, one who sacrificed his own peace to lead others along the path. If the PCs express interest in joining OUT themselves, Misha happily offers to introduce them when they arrive; she knows the proper contact information, after all, which is necessary for one who wants to join the Order.

As long as the PCs treat her courteously and are not obviously acting against OUT, Misha is as helpful as possible. After the initial role-playing with her she stays in the background for all further encounters unless the circumstances of the specific encounter dictate otherwise or the PCs involve her in it.

NOTE: Stats in parenthesis apply when Misha is first encountered. Use normal values if she is healed by the PCs. An additional 10 points of healing beyond what she has lost is required for her wrist and ankle to be fixed as well, or Janna can set her wrist in a cast automatically with a Healing proficiency check.

Misha, human female Com1: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. 4 in. tall, 110 lbs); HD 1d4; hp 4(1); Init +1 (+0; Dex); Spd 30 (20); AC 11 (10; +1 Dex); Atk unarmed strike -1 (1d3-1 subdual); AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1(+0), Will +1.

Str 8, Dex 12(10), Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Chr 16.

Skills: Craft (cloth-weaving) +4, Diplomacy +4

Misha is a 20-year old woman with slender build, black hair that falls halfway down her back and hazel eyes. She is remarkably pretty when fully healed.

Appendix B: Fortress of the Damned Location

Unless otherwise noted, all interior rooms are eight feet high and all interior building walls are one foot thick.

Fortress Walls: The walls are 20 feet high and eight feet thick, made of reinforced stone with battlements at their front. Although crumbling a bit in places they are still quite sturdy.

Interior Gate: Although it's clear that there used to be a gate in the interior wall, one hasn't existed there since OUT has occupied this place.

Common Cultists: Most of these are humans between the ages of 16 and 30, although a few are older and one in ten is a half-elf. Although some of the cultists are actually Experts or Warriors, the following stats apply to most of them:

Cultist, human Comr: Medium Humanoid (5 ft. to 6 ft. tall); HD 1d4; hp 3; Init +0; Spd 30; AC 10; Atk unarmed strike +0 (1d3 subdual); AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +1. Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Chr 10
Skills: Craft or Profession +4
Possessions: blue shift (that's about it)

1. Entrance - There is an overhang 10 feet above ground level, which can be accessed through the gate towers, which has murder holes in its floor and contains the mechanisms for both the portcullis and the gate. The portcullis is normally up and the gate is normally open during the day.

2. Gate Towers - These 30-foot high towers have three levels, with arrow slits at the top two levels and a spiral staircase that accesses the upper levels. Access to the wall can be gained from the top floor, and access to the overhang at the entrance can be gained from the second floor. A light ballista can be found on the third level of each tower and a heavy catapult on the roof, as well as ammunition suitable for twenty shots by each. Ten shortbows and locked cabinets containing 20 bundles of ten arrows each can also be found here. Three guards are on duty in each at all times. (See stats in Encounter #6.)

3. Corner Towers - These 30-foot high towers do not have access to an overhang but otherwise conform to the description given for the Gate Towers. One guard is on duty in each at all times. (See stats in Encounter #6.)

4. Common Hall - This serves as a common dining hall, meeting place, and craft area for the cultists. The sectioned-off area is the kitchen. 4d4 cultists will be present here at any given time except during the devotional, quadruple that number immediately after the devotional.

5. Well - A standard well complete with winch and crossbar. It is 30 feet deep, the bottom 10 feet of which has water in it. The water is clean and good.

6. Admissions Office - See Encounter #6c.

7. Guard Barracks - This is a two-story building with sleeping accommodations for 20 guards on each level, with 1d10 guards present at any given time (some sleeping). The Master of Security has a private room on the second floor which contains his spellbooks, extra spell components and a locked chest holding 1,280 gp in mixed coins and small gems and three *potions of healing*.

7a. Armory - The door to this room is locked and reinforced, with the Master of Security and two senior guards holding keys. Inside at any given time can be found 30 suits of human-sized chain mail, 40 small shields, 25 halberds, 30 longswords, 100 spears, 50 shortbows, 500 arrows, and an assortment of other individual weapons representing almost every simple and martial weapon type listed in the PHB (80% chance for any given weapon type to be present). These items are all well-organized and categorized.

8. Stables/General Storage - The ground level is a stables with stall suitable for up to a dozen horses (four are currently present). A pair each of carts and wagons are parked to the right of this building. The second floor loft contains bales of hay, while the cellar holds various goods such as barrels of oil and water, cords of rope, carpentry supplies, dried foodstuffs, and so forth.

9. Barracks - These two-story buildings are the halls where the common cultists sleep. The left-hand halls are for men, the right-hand halls are for women. The upper floor in each hall is composed of small private rooms for leading cultists.

Nothing more valuable than personal effects and extra clothing can be found in these barracks. 1d10-1 cultists of the appropriate gender are present in any particular barracks during the day, while 1d10 +15 are present after the evening devotional and meal.

10. Work Areas - The northernmost of these three buildings is a blacksmith's shop, the building next to it is a carpentry work area, and the southernmost one is a laundry. Each has accouterments appropriate to the job performed there. They are all unoccupied after dusk.

11. Bath - This building has five areas separated by folding screens, each containing a tub. A fire pit with a kettle for heating water is in the center. There is a 25% chance at any given time that 1d4 bathers (equal chances for each gender) and one attendant are present.

12. Study Rooms - The walls of these rooms are sectioned off into several small alcoves, each of which has a kneeling bench and a shelf with candle holders. Each room also has a small closet containing several folded-up

cots. The rooms are used for private study and devotionals, although they can also serve as guest rooms and extra sleeping quarters. They are also used whenever someone must be confined, since the doors can be locked from the outside. If the PCs are taken to a study room as described in Encounter #6, it is one of these.

13. Tutorial Halls - Each of these rooms is equipped with several student-like desks, a blackboard, and shelves with scrolls and books, most of them treatises penned by Martinic and other prominent cultists that describe the various beliefs of the Order of Universal Truth. A locked wall cabinet in each contains various writing supplies, since these rooms are also used for scribing purposes. The halls are empty in the evening, although there is a 50% chance of 2d4 cultists being present at any time during the day, taking lessons from an older teacher or doing scribe work.

14. Halls - Each of these halls has narrow staircases down its interior sides which lead up to the balcony in the Main Hall and down to the Cellar. They are always lit by lanterns.

15. Main Hall - This location is more thoroughly described in Encounter #7. The door to area 16 is concealed behind a tapestry. There are no cultists present except during the events described in Encounter #7.

16. Martinic's Rooms - The outer room is Martinic's private room, the inner one his private study and work area. Although the outer room has better furnishings than anywhere else in the Fortress - the bed actually has a decent mattress, for instance - it is still simply furnished by most civilized standards. The inner room, whose door is *arcane locked* at 20th level, has three large work tables and several shelves containing books, scrolls, and various magic-related substances. The books are mostly works related to necromancy and humanoid anatomy, although a careful perusal of them will turn up one book on cloning techniques and Martinic's spellbooks. The latter are trapped with *glyphs of warding* that trigger *hold person* on the offender and also trip off a magical alarm on Martinic's belt. Other magic items in the room include three *potions of healing* and two doses of *universal antidote* (does exactly what you think it does).

Cellar - Located below the main building, this 40 foot by 50 foot area consists of a small central room and three side rooms. Two of the side rooms are middens; the third is the Fortress treasury. Its door is made of magically-reinforced steel and *arcane locked* at 20th level. On the inside are several bags and locked coffers and chests that hold a total of 5,200 gp, 3,500 sp, 50 gems with an average value of 100 gp each, 25 pieces of jewelry with an average value of 300 gp each, eight +1 longswords, four +1 small shields, a *staff of passage* (35 charges), and a *staff of earth and stone* (22 charges), the latter two of which are stored in marked wooden cases.

The vault room is guarded by eight wraiths, who are what's left of the contingent that used to haunt this

fortress. They have been instructed to attack anyone who enters who is not Martinic or the Master of Security, accompanied by one of them or wearing an amulet bearing their personal marks. They inhabit cubbyholes in the walls and spring out at intruders when they don't seem to be paying attention, so they do gain a chance for surprise. They will not pursue out of this room anyone who leaves the room without any of its contents.

Wraiths (8): Medium Undead (Incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 40 each; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Init); Spd 30, fly 60 (good); AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection); Atk melee +5 (1d4 incorporeal touch plus 1d6 permanent Con drain); SA Constitution drain (Fortitude save at DC 14 or permanently lose 1d6 Con), create spawn; SQ undead, incorporeal, +2 turn resistance, unnatural aura, powerless in natural sunlight; AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6.

Str -, Dex 16, Con -, Int 14, Wis 14, Chr 15.

Skills: Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12; **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Special Attacks: **Create Spawn:** Any humanoid slain by a wraith becomes a wight in 1d4 rounds under the command of the wraith. **Special Qualities:** **Unnatural Aura:** Both wild and domesticated animals can sense a wraith at a distance of 30 feet. **Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. **Incorporeal:** Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will and ignores armor when attacking. Always moves silently.

Dominic Camarillo (Round 2 version)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Male
 Class: Wizard (Evoker) Level: 8 Align: LG
 Height: 5 ft., 11 in. Weight: 175 Age: 40
 Hair: Black Eyes: Blue
 Other: neatly-trimmed beard and moustache

Simple Weapon Proficiency
 Spell Focus (Evocation)
 Spell Penetration

Magical Items: +3 cloak of protection, +3 ring of protection and resistance (applies to saving throws as well as defense), Boccob's blessed book (contains all your spells), +2 rod of thunder and lightning, figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl), spell scroll (grease, wizard lock, magic circle vs. evil, polymorph other at 8th level), potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of protection from fire

Equipment: dagger, backpack with bedroll, waterskin, one day's rations, waterproof scroll tube, notebook, pen and ink; stylish high-quality traveler's outfit; belt pouches; spell components, 80 gp in mixed coins, 6 50 gp and 1 100 gp gems.

Profile: You are by far the eldest of six siblings. Because of that the task of helping to raise your brothers and sisters fell heavily upon you when your father "died" while you were in your teens. Although you resented it, you felt too duty-bound not to do it; you were the man of the house at that point, after all. Your skill with mathematics earned you a position as one of your hometown's accountants, so you worked your rear off to support the family while trying to help Mother keep order at home. You don't think your siblings ever fully appreciated that. Several years were wasted before most of them were old enough to look after themselves, so when you were able to finally strike out on your own you didn't look back for a long time. Only then did you finally begin your career in magic.

Father was a wizard of some power, although he was always pretty secretive about it. When he discovered that you had a knack for it, too, he started training you in some of the basics. Then he went away on a series of long trips, coming back for only a few days at a time before going off again, and never came back the last time. A letter that Mother received a few months later claimed that he had been killed in battle, but you knew enough about magic at that point to find the circumstances described about his death to be very suspicious. Now you know that he didn't die and did skip out on Mother, as you had always suspected, but you still don't know why. That's the main thing you want to learn when you finally meet him. You've hated Father for years for putting you in the situation that he did; whenever you've needed a focus over the years, that's done the job. He's got a lot to explain and answer for, and saving Janna would be a very good start.

You were an orderly and disciplined individual even before becoming the man of the house. You firmly believe that this is the way everything should be, so you've always tried to impress this view on those around you, to varying degrees of success. It has certainly helped you with your magic. Although you have become fairly powerful and successful, you are very careful not to flaunt or abuse your wealth and power; that would be unethical. Besides, it would also be inefficient. Why use overkill when a less powerful spell will do the job? You adventured with an orderly and highly competent company for several years, but now you're getting older and that kind of life doesn't have the appeal that it once did. Although you've had a relationship with a lady friend for several years now, you've held off getting married and settling down because you want to be absolutely sure you're ready for it.

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability	Misc
Strength	13	+1	Type	Total =	Base		Mod	Mod
Dexterity	15	+2	Fortitude	+6	+2		+1	+3
Constitution	12	+1	Reflex	+7*	+2		+2	+3
Intelligence	18	+4	Will	+11	+6		+2	+3
Wisdom	15	+2						
Charisma	14	+2						

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod
18	= 10	+0	+0	+2	+1	+6

Hit Points: 30

Armor Worn: None Dex
 Check Penalty: 0 Movement: 30 ft. Total = Mod + Misc.
 Weight: 25 Initiative +2 = +2

Melee Attack	Base	+ Str	+ Size	Ranged Attack	Base	+ Dex	+ Size
+5	+4	+1		+6	+4	+2	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 rod of thunder	+7	1d6+3	x2	-	-	B
dagger	+5	1d4+1	19-20/x2	10 ft.		P

Skill	Total	= Ranks	+ Ability Mod	+ Misc Mod
Alchemy (Int)	+13	= 9	+4	
Concentration (Con)*	+12	= 11	+1	+4
Knowledge/arcana (Int)	+15	= 11	+4	
Knowledge/planes (Int)	+10	= 6	+4	
Knowledge/math (Int)	+10	= 6	+4	
Profession (bookkeep)	+8	= 6	+2	
Ride (cc, Dex)	+6	= 4	+2	
Scry (Int)	+15	= 11	+3	
Spellcraft (Int)	+15	= 11	+4	
Spot (c.c. Wis)	+10	= 5	+3	+2 (alertness)

* - +16 when on the defensive in combat.

Languages: Common, draconic, elvish, dwarvish, human foreign.

Heroic Feats:

Combat Casting
 Craft Wands
 Scribe Scrolls

You don't want to make the same mistakes Father did (he and Mother were married young, perhaps too young). Now you feel you may be ready. In fact, you were mustering up the courage to pop the question to your lady friend when Janna sent the summons. Of all the times for that to be used. . . . But you did make a solemn oath to respond immediately upon its use, and responsibility is something you never shirk, no matter how inconvenient.

This situation with Janna has really thrown you for a loop. You always believed that it was your right and responsibility as the oldest to lead, look after, and help protect your younger siblings. It pains you greatly that you can't save Janna yourself. The two of you only ever barely tolerated each other, something which you now deeply regret. It's left you feeling distinctly uncomfortable in her presence. You have resolved to do whatever you can to help her through this crisis, and hopefully along the way the two of you can make peace. That's very important to you since you know as well as she does that there's a very real chance she won't survive to raise her child even if she does live long enough for it to be born. (The effects of curses like hers often don't reverse completely when the source is removed.) As much as you once resented raising your siblings, you would be honored and take it as a solemn responsibility if she asked you to raise her child. You know that Rachelle (your lady friend) would agree to it; she's always said she wants children.

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Cedrick, the third oldest (10 years your junior), was always a bit of a hothead and one of the fiercest competitors you've ever met. He had to be the best at everything, and was always competing against the twins and other village kids to prove it. Thing is, he really was the best kid in the region when it came to shooting a bow or fencing with a sword. He didn't understand discipline, though, so he eventually became so much trouble that you talked Mother into putting him in a strict military school. Apparently it paid off, because he learned discipline and was an army officer when he came back for Janna's wedding. He has since settled down into a respectable position as a guard captain and has clearly come to appreciate what you did to help shape his career; he's not angry with you anymore about it. Although the two of you have conflicted a bit about planning strategy, you generally work well together. You can't believe you didn't figure out that he had been replaced by a doppelganger on your way to see the Oracle.

Susan and **Sharon**, the identical twin rangers, are the second and third-youngest, about 11 years younger than you. These tomboys were always quite a handful as kids, always mixing it up with Cedrick or other neighborhood ruffians or wandering out much farther into the forest than they had any right to be going. They still have their very annoying childhood habit of absolutely conforming on appearance and behavior, to the point of even answering for one another (honestly, you are their brother and lived with them for years and still aren't completely sure which one you are talking to at any given time), and have an uncanny way of silently communicating with each other. Perhaps it's that connection which makes them so exceedingly strong-willed; even Cedrick wasn't as hard to deal with as these two. Although they have matured some, they seem to be actively resisting your leadership efforts when they think Janna won't notice. Arrrrgh!

Clarice, the youngest (14 years your junior), was still being carried by Mother when Father "died", so you are the only father-figure she's ever known. She used to cry a lot and complain about

everything, but you could always settle her down with a good story or a few gentle words. In fact, she's the only one of your siblings you ever truly felt close to. It broke your heart almost as much as Mother's when she ran off to join the circus at age twelve. Although hurt by this for a long time, you are proud of her recent successes as a bard and now understand her reason for leaving: she couldn't stand to stay in Hallisburg any longer, just like you felt when you left. You have been able to reestablish a rapport with her since you reunited for Janna's quest. Now she's the one who tells you stories, something which you enjoy greatly.

Spells available:

Note: spells in bold are evocations. DC is 16+ level for evocations, 14+ level for others

Cantrips (prepare 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none">_ detect magic_ detect poison_ disrupt undead_ flame_ light_ mage hand_ mending_ open/close_ unseen servant	1st level (prepare 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none">_ burning hands_ color spray_ enlarge_ feather fall_ magic missile_ message_ shield_ Tenser's floating disk
2nd level (prepare 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none">_ continual flame_ daylight_ flaming sphere_ knock_ Melf's acid arrow_ see invisibility_ strength_ web	3rd level (prepare 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none">_ dispel magic_ flame arrow_ gust of wind_ Leomund's tiny hut_ lightning bolt_ slow_ tongues_ water breathing
4th level (prepare 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none">_ dimension door_ fire shield_ ice storm_ minor globe of invulnerability_ polymorph self_ wall of fire	

Janna Camarillo (Round 2 version)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Female
 Class: Cleric Level: 8 Align: NG
 Height: 5 ft, 3 in. Weight: 75 Age: 32
 Hair: Thinned long dark blond Eyes: Blue
 Other: Extremely gaunt and wasted appearance

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws		Ability Mod	Misc Mod
Strength	3 (10)	-4	Type	Total =	Base	
Dexterity	5 (13)	-3	Fort	+2	+6	-4
Constitution	3 (10)	-4	Reflex	-1	+2	-3
Intelligence	13	+1	Will	+10	+6	+4
Wisdom	18	+4				
Charisma	15	+2				

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc Mod
	10	10	+0	+0	-3	+3

Hit Points: 12 (42, when stats were full)

Armor Worn: None Dex = Mod + Misc.
 Check Penalty: 0 Movement: 10 ft. Total = -3
 Weight: 0 Initiative -3

Melee Attack	Base	+	Str	curse	Ranged Attack	Base	+	Dex	curse
	+0/-5	+6/+1	-4	-2		+3/-2	+6/+1	-3	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
quarterstaff of disruption	+2	+2/-3	1d6-2	x2	-	B

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Ability Mod	+ Misc Mod
Concentration (Con)	+2*	=	6	-4	+4
Diplomacy (Cha)	+10	=	8	+2	+4
Healing (Wis)	+19	=	11	+4	+4
Knowledge/religion (Int)	+8	=	7	+1	
Profession/herbalism (Wis)	+10	=	6	+4	
Ride (cc, Dex)	-1	=	2	-3	
Spellcraft	+5	=	4	+1	

*- +6 when on the defensive in combat

Languages: Common, celestial.

Heroic Feats:

Combat Casting
 Expertise
 Scribe Scroll
 Skill Focus (Heal)

Domains:
 Healing and Protection

Magical Items: +2 quarterstaff of disruption (carving of sunburst at each end, otherwise can pass as walking staff), +5 bracers of armor, self-replenishing healer's kit (magically restocks itself each morning, gives +2 to Heal checks when used), vestments of faith (appear as clerical robes that are white with blue trim and adorned with Marinol's symbol), Keoghtom's ointments (five applications), horn of goodness/evil, divine spell scroll (locate object, dispel magic, tongues at 8th level), special ring of spell storing (contains one heal at 12th level)

Equipment: silver holy symbol (staff encircled by wreath), leather belt with two pouches, pouch of assorted herbs, hooded waterproof cloak, light clothing (worn under vestments), water-tight scroll tube, ink and pen, backpack with bedroll, waterskin, two day's rations, journal, devotional book, 40 gp

NOTE: You are no longer able to carry your backpack and the items it contains yourself.

Curse: You are suffering from a powerful and debilitating curse that affects you like a wasting disease. The effect of the curse is now clearly being exacerbated by your pregnancy. You are now losing one point each of Strength, Constitution, and Dexterity every six days. You feel weak, fatigued, cold, and ill all the time and suffer from painful stiffness in your joints. This combination of effects gives you a -2 penalty to AC and attack rolls above and beyond your ability score penalties. You cannot stand for any length of time without something to lean on and cannot walk more than a few steps without your staff or someone's help. This effectively gives you 1/3 your normal movement rate and makes hustling and running impossible. You also require at least 11 hours of sleep to be adequately rested and heal naturally at 1/3 the normal rate.

This curse cannot be lifted, nor its effects abated, by any means within your power.

Pregnancy: At the time this round starts you are 18 weeks into your first pregnancy. Due to your wasted physical condition it is showing more significantly than it normally would at this stage. Although the morning sickness has mostly faded you still get nauseous a lot. The pregnancy's other physical effects are included with the curse's effects, above.

Profile: You are dying.

With each passing day you can feel the icy grip of Death closing tighter around you. It's a terrible, scary feeling, worse even than the pain and sickness that are constant reminders of your plight. By the best estimates of your fellow Healers you now have only about a fortnight (two weeks) left to live. That's not enough time. You're not concerned about your own life anymore; you knew the risks and accept the cost of what you did. Your own death and that of your husband are paltry prices to pay for ridding the world of the Gauntlet of Lamentations. The child you carry is the only reason you struggle to survive, but what a reason! You will endure anything that's required to make sure that child has a chance to be born. A Healer and protector of life you have always been, and that you will remain until the bitter end.

Your life has always been a bit complicated, you suppose. As the second-oldest (and oldest girl) in a family of six siblings, you had to help Mom and Dominic raise and look after your younger brothers and sisters when your Dad (supposedly) died. You never felt that the responsibility caused you to miss out on much because you weren't a very social kid; you weren't physically sturdy enough to roughhouse with the other kids, and were painfully shy and lacking in self-confidence on top of that. In fact, the only time you really asserted yourself was when it came to breaking up arguments and fights. You can't stand violence or lots of shouting, so you always tried to step in and end it whenever you could. To everyone's surprise (including yours), you were amazingly good at it. You eventually became known as the town peacemaker, a title that earned respect from some and sniggering from others. Your lack of assertiveness otherwise made dealing with your younger siblings difficult. It did get really frustrating at times, but you never let yourself forget that, when it comes right down to it, family is more important than anything.

As you got a little older you discovered your life's calling: medicine. You dedicated all your free time to studying it, and by the time you reached adolescence you were able to administer to most simple medical needs and even some more complicated ones. You found religion when a traveling priestess of Marinol, a goddess to whom you regularly paid homage, passed through Hallisburg and offered to teach you Her ways. By the time you were old enough to leave home you were a fully-indoctrinated Healer of Marinol. As many Healers do, you helped establish a hospice on a major trade route and prepared to dedicate your life to helping the sick and infirm. A couple of years later, though, the badly-injured knight Sir Gerrard entered your hospice and life and everything changed.

Gerrard was so compassionate and charming that you fell in love with him as you nursed him back to health. He eventually enticed you to join him and his fellow Crusaders on a quest. It was a bloody and awful experience but you got through it. The praise from the Crusaders about your usefulness to their cause, along with Gerrard's own encouraging, convinced you that you could do as much good supporting them in their efforts to combat evil as you could at your hospice. You agreed to stay with them for the long term and with Gerrard forever, as his wife. Yes, those decisions put you on the fateful path to your own eventual destruction, but you don't regret it for a second. The years that followed weren't always great adventure, but you were traveling around, doing good and, just as importantly, doing it all with the man you loved. That all ended when the Gauntlet of Lamentation came into the picture.

Although you and Gerrard were thinking about retiring to raise a family, you could not ignore an opportunity to rid the world of an item that represented everything you stood against. The two of you and the Crusaders all swore to give your lives if necessary to see the Gauntlet destroyed. Unfortunately it came to that; the rest died just getting the Gauntlet to the volcano where it could be destroyed, and Gerrard died (and you almost did) performing the actual deed. A few days later, while still overcome with grief about your losses, you discovered the curse that the Gauntlet had inflicted on you in its final act. When your fellow Healers could not find a way to break the curse you resigned yourself to your fate; after all, with Gerrard and your friends already dead, what was left to try to live for? A lot, as it turned out.

When you discovered that you were pregnant you were at first overjoyed, since something of Gerrard would be living on. Then awful reality set in: you weren't going to live long enough for the child to be born. You screamed at the heavens when you realized that the Gauntlet would deny you a child as well as your own life, then fervently prayed to Marinol for some way to stay alive long enough for the child you carry to be born. She gave you an answer which led you to call your siblings back home. You are now very glad you did it because you're going to need them around to help deal with what the Oracle revealed. You are as angry as your siblings at Dad for abandoning all of you, but that can't stand in the way of what has to be done. He has to be convinced that his family matters enough to him to help save you and, more importantly, your child. Maybe your new magical ring, which was given to you by another Healer before you started this journey, is intended to help with that? But how?

One other thing troubles you. While you were training to become a Healer you remember being told that removing a curse doesn't necessarily reverse any long-term physical effects. There's a very good chance that, even if the curse is removed, your health has been permanently ruined. You know that someone in your physical condition can't possibly survive childbirth, so arrangements have to be made for someone to raise the child after you are gone. Ideally it should be someone in the family, but who?

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Dominic is the oldest, eight years older than you. His aging over the last few years has made him a dead ringer for how you remember Dad; the fact that he's the only one of you that really took to magic only furthers the comparison. He doesn't like to be reminded of this, and you can understand why he is bitter about the prospect of meeting Dad again. (After all, he did have to put his life on hold to help raise the rest of you.) He's always been a take-charge, authoritative type, and that used to get on your nerves a bit even though you tolerated it for sake of family peace. Now you need his strength of character and leadership more than ever, though. His reassurances and clear dedication to your cause are a comfort.

Cedrick is a bit less than two years younger than you. He was a real troublemaker as a kid, always picking fights, beating people up, and trying to prove that he was better than everyone. That got him into a lot of trouble until a stint in military school straightened him out. He's since become an excellent warrior and, the way it sounds, a devoted family man, too. Although the two of you had some problems relating to each other when you were younger, you grew closer as you both got into your teens. He even served as one of the groomsmen at your wedding! Now that the real one's around you've come to rely on his physical strength quite a bit. He has been nothing but supportive, though, and for that you are grateful.

Susan and **Sharon**, the next two oldest (three years younger), are the twins of the family - absolutely identical twins, in fact, down to the way they dress, act, and even seem to think. Their ability to finish each other's sentences and carry on one-sided conversations with each other is uncanny. They are still almost impossible to tell apart, and they haven't lost their irksome childhood habit of not admitting which of them is which. You do know that Sharon tends to take the initiative a bit more and Susan is the more cautious one, but they follow each other's lead so closely that you had to pay very careful attention to notice this. Their nature as twins has been quite valuable, though, as have their ranger skills.

Clarice, or “Clarice the Nimble” as she now likes to be called, is the dark sheep of the family. As the youngest (three years younger than the twins), she was alternately put upon and spoiled as a child. That’s probably why she ended up so screwed up. She was a constant problem case as a kid, but nothing was more upsetting than her running away to join the circus. It turned out to be the right move for her, though, because she’s become a successful entertainer and capable bard. The two of you settled most of your differences when she came back for your wedding, so you’ve been getting along pretty well recently. There’s been some friction with other family members that you’ve had to calm, as she’s even less of a team player than the twins, but she has been helpful, cooperative, and sympathetic towards you. If your child wants to be an entertainer when he or she grows up, you know a capable and caring teacher will be available.

MARINOL, Goddess of Health and Medicine: Marinol, your deity, is a Neutral Good goddess who is the patron of medical professionals, herbalists, those dedicated to physical fitness, and the sick or injured; her spheres are Healing and Protection. Ordained, empowered worshipers are called Healers. They swear an oath similar to the Hippocratic oath: never to intentionally harm a sentient creature except in self-defense or the defense of others (and then only if it can’t be avoided) and always to provide aid and healing to those who require it, whether friend or foe. Undead, infernal creatures, and devout worshipers of Kaal, God of Disease and Vermin, are exempt from this restriction. Directly damaging spells are not allowed. Daily devotions may be performed at any time, although most Healers do it at daybreak.

Spells available (DC of 13 + spell level):

Orisons (prepare 6)	1st level (prepare 5)
_ create water	_ bless
_ cure minor wounds	_ bless water
_ detect magic	_ cause fear
_ detect poison	_ command
_ guidance	_ comprehend languages
_ light	_ cure light wounds
_ mending	_ death watch
_ purify food/drink	_ detect evil
_ read magic	_ detect undead
_ resistance	_ endure elements
_ virtue	_ entropic shield
	_ guiding hand
Domain spells	_ invisibility to undead
1st level:	_ magical stone
_ cure light wounds or	_ obscuring mist
_ sanctuary	_ protection from evil
2nd level:	_ random action
_ cure moderate wounds or	_ remove fear
_ shield other	_ sanctuary
3rd level:	_ shield of faith
_ cure serious wounds or	_ summon monsters I
_ protection from elements	
4th level:	
_ cure critical wounds or	
_ spell immunity	
2nd level (prepare 4)	3rd level (prepare 4)
_ aid	_ animate dead

_ animal messenger	_ continual flame
_ augury	_ create food and water
_ calm emotions	_ cure serious wounds
_ consecrate	_ daylight
_ cure moderate wounds	_ deeper darkness
_ darkness	_ dispel magic
_ endurance	_ helping hand
_ enthrall	_ invisibility purge
_ find traps	_ locate object
_ gentle repose	_ magical vestment
_ hold person	_ magic circle vs. evil
_ lesser restoration	_ meld into stone
_ make whole	_ negative plane protection
_ remove paralysis	_ obscure object
_ resist elements	_ prayer
_ shatter	_ protection from elements
_ shield other	_ remove blindness/deafness
	_ remove curse
_ slow poison	_ remove disease
_ sound burst	_ restoration
_ searing light	_ sending
_ spiritual weapon	_ speak with dead
_ undetectable alignment	_ water breathing
_ zone of truth	_ water walk
	_ wind wall

4th level (prepare 3)

_ air walk	_ neutralize poison
_ control water	_ repel vermin
_ cure critical wounds	_ restoration
_ death ward	_ sending
_ detect lie	_ spell immunity
_ dimensional anchor	_ status
_ dismissal	_ tongues
_ divination	
_ divine power	
_ free action	
_ imbue with spell ability	
_ lesser planar ally	

Cedrik Camarillo (Round 2 version)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Male
 Class: Fighter Level: 7 Align: LN
 Height: 6 ft., 2 in. Weight: 230 Age: 30
 Hair: Long black hair Eyes: Blue

Magical Items: +2 *breastplate*, +2 *longsword of speed*, 15 +1 bolts, +2 *cloak of resistance*, Heward's handy *haversack*, *amulet of light generation* (see below), *potion of flying*

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability Misc
Strength	18	+4	Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod
Dexterity	15	+2	Fort	+10	+5	+3	+2
Constitution	17	+3	Reflex	+6	+2	+2	+2
Intelligence	12	+1	Will	+5	+2	+1	+2
Wisdom	12	+1					
Charisma	10	0					

Amulet of Light Generation: Usually worn as a necklace, this gold amulet is set with a circular piece of amber (500 gp value as jewelry). It can, on command, shed light equivalent to a *light* spell for a total of up to eight hours per day. (This time limit can consist of one long usage or multiple shorter ones.) If the maximum limit is reached in one 24-hour period, the amulet becomes inert for 12 hours.

Equipment: Small shield, light mace (in belt loop), sap, repeating crossbow, quiver with five normal bolts, bedroll, waterskin, three day's trail rations, 50' coil of silk rope with grappling hook, flint and steel, hammer and six pitons, sack, signet ring (worn; bears seal of an official of Silverdale), Captain of the Guard's uniform (stowed), captain's insignia (stowed), medals for valor, heroism, and distinguished military service (one each, worn only on formal occasions), signal whistle (worn on cord around neck), traveler's outfit (includes dark blue tabard); 50 gp, four silver and one gold trade bars (25 gp and 250 gp values, respectively; 5 lbs. each), gold wedding band (100 gp value)

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all equipment and the trade bars are carried in the *haversack* when not in use.

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc Mod
	20	10	+7	+1	+2	

Hit Points: 70

Armor Worn: *breastplate* +2, small steel shield

Check Penalty: -5				Dex.
Movement: 20 ft.			Total	= Mod + Misc.
Weight: 40		Initiative +6	= +2	+4

Melee	Base	+	Str	Ranged	Base	+	Dex	Size
Attack =	Attack	Mod		Attack =	Attack	Mod	Mod	
	+11/+6	+7/+2	+4		+9/+4	+7/+2	+2	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 <i>longsword of speed</i>	+14/+14/+9	1d8+8	19-20	-	-	S
Repeating crossbow	+10/+5*	1d8+1*	19-20	80 ft.		P
Light mace	+11/+6	1d6+4	x2			B

* - when using magical bolts; reduce by one with normal bolts

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Ability+ Misc Mod	Mod
Climb (Str)	+3	=	4	+4	-5
Handle Animal (Cha)	+7	=	7		
Intimidate (cc, Cha)	+4	=	4		
Jump (Str)	+6	=	7	+4	-5
Ride (Dex)	+10	=	7	+3	
Swim (Str)	+6	=	7	+4	-5

Languages: Common, orcish.

Heroic Feats:

Cleave
Combat Reflexes
Endurance
Improved Initiative
Power Attack
Weapon Focus (longsword)
Weapon Specialization (longsword)
Exotic Weapon Proficiency (repeating crossbow)

Profile: Man, you can't believe it! Some blasted doppelganger imitated you for more than a week, insinuating its way into your family! Nothing else that's happened to you in your life has angered you so much. You really wanted to throttle the creature, but in all fairness he didn't do any harm and by all the accounts of your brother and sisters he was actually quite helpful. And he did stand against those other shapechangers...still, it burns you that you ended up agreeing to let him go with only a slap on the wrist (he had to return the stuff he stole from you and take an oath to never again copy you or your siblings). It's left you in a bad mood ever since, and dire nature of Janna's situation isn't helping matters, either. You haven't been this foul-tempered since the waning days of your military career, more than eight years ago.

You grew up as the third in a family of six children. Life wasn't easy with the father you could only barely remember supposedly being dead, but you found enough time to carouse and get into trouble - quite a lot of it, actually. In fact, you're now ashamed to admit that you were a bully and ruffian as a youth. You were always big for your age, so that made it easy for you to push people around. If they tried to stand up to you, well, you were quite handy with fisticuffs and wrestling maneuvers; you once held another boy in a headlock for almost an hour just to prove a point. When, at age thirteen, you were arrested for instigating a brawl in the town market that almost turned into a riot, your mother and elder brother decided they'd had enough of your behavior and enrolled you in a strict military academy.

Gods, you hated that place, but it did train you how to fight, ride, shoot a bow, and plan battle strategies. Your time there also taught you some valuable lessons about behavior, too. One is that

aggression can be a good thing, but only to a point; you have to use some common sense about when you can and can't push an issue into a confrontation. Another is a more healthy respect for law enforcement and authority, without which a society descends into anarchy. The most important thing you learned, though, is that one can accomplish a lot more, and in a more efficient manner, through use of strict discipline. It took quite a while for your instructors to instill those principles in you (you can be stubborn as a mule), but you ultimately took to them so well that they recommend you for officer's training when you got old enough. A military career was starting to look good at that point - and it definitely allowed you to get away from Hallisburg - so you jumped at the opportunity. Two years later you earned a position as a lieutenant in an army-like security force being arranged by a small northern country.

Although you earned some medals and the rank of Captain for distinguishing yourself in suppressing a major orc uprising, you eventually became disenchanted with military life and, after almost four years, resigned to take up a career as an adventurer. After three years of that wild and reckless lifestyle you were faced with a sobering decision: Theresa, the gorgeous brunette seamstress that you had fallen head over heels for a few months earlier, was pregnant with your child. There wasn't a decision to be made, really; after living most your childhood without your father, you weren't going to have any son or daughter of yours grow up without a father around, too. You decided to marry Theresa and take a job as a constable in Silverdale, the town where Theresa's father was a town elder. It's a decision you've never regretted, since you were tiring of the adventurer's lifestyle anyway. Now you have a five-year old son named Dirk and baby daughter Deandrea, who was born only three months ago. You love them and their mother dearly; they are your pride and joy. Settling down was also good for your career, since you were quickly able to rise to the rank of Captain of the Guard in Silverdale, a well-paying position that also carries with it a goodly amount of responsibility and respect. That's really what you wanted most from the start.

You are, by nature, a fiercely competitive person, which was one of the reasons why you got into so many fights as a youngster. That trait served you well during your career as a soldier and, later, as an adventurer, but it doesn't have as much place in a prestigious position like Captain of the Guard, so you've had to tone it back quite a bit. You still can't resist a good athletic or military contest, though, and it's hard to pass up a challenge of any sort. You just avoid the really silly ones since you are, of course, now a respectable father and community leader. (Oh, if there's one thing you regret about your current life, it's that!)

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Dominic, the eldest (by eight years), had to play the role of father and chief provider after your real father "died" when you were four years old. He's the main authority figure you knew as you grew up, and the one primarily responsible for getting you put into military school. You hated him for quite a while for that, but it's no longer an issue for you; if anything, it helped you get on track for your current career. He still seems to be trying to assert himself as the authority figure among the six of you, which you suppose is his right as the eldest. You'll defer to him on general leadership and magical issues (he is a wizard, after all) as long as he's willing to accept your advice on strategic planning.

Janna, your eldest sister (two years older than you), was the family's peacemaker and babysitter during her youth. It's not surprising that she ended up becoming a Healer of Marinol - she always did have a gentle, caring nature - but it did surprise you a lot when you came back for her wedding and found her not only getting hitched to a crusading knight, but planning to go adventuring with him, too! (Then again, those who knew you in your earlier days would never have believed that you'd settle down with a homebody like Theresa, either.) She always seemed too fragile for that kind of lifestyle, but you can't honestly say that you would be bearing up any better under this awful curse that's killing her. And she's pregnant, too! Such a tragedy. She'll get the cure she needs, if you have to carry her on your back to your long-absent father and wring it out of him yourself. And if someone has to look after her child when it's born, well, you suppose there could be room in your home for one more. . .

Sharon and **Susan** are your identical twin sisters, both rangers. They were the nearest to you in age (a year younger) and were always quite the tomboys, so they were the ones you played with the most as a kid. They weren't gentle or fragile creatures like Janna, either; they'd stand up to you like no one else, couldn't be intimidated and could give you a real challenge in almost any kind of contest, from athletics to fighting and target-shooting to even more stupid stuff like how much you could drink before having to take a trip to the bushes. It's been hard not to fall into those old habits, although all of you are now respectable adults. They're still big into their annoying habit of passing themselves off as each other (you still can't tell them apart, you never could) and uncanny tricks like finishing each other's conversations. Their ability to wordlessly coordinate their actions in a battle or while scouting is a formidable and enviable advantage, though.

Clarice, the youngest (four years your junior), was also the most irresponsible. She was always griping about something as a kid and being a complete pest, so it was almost a relief when she ran off to join the circus. When you crossed paths with her troupe a few years later, you decided to attend a show in disguise and see how she was doing. To your amazement you discovered that she's a superb acrobat with a real flair for performance art. (She never showed that at home!) She later went on to become a bard and has proved just as good at singing and playing instruments, something you respect and envy since you were never good at either yourself. You thought the two of you had made peace when she performed in Silverdale a couple of years ago (she's the only sibling who's actually met Theresa), but she still seems a bit jumpy around you. Probably has to do with that doppelganger thing; surely she isn't still sore about the times you beat her up as kids?

Susan Camarillo (Round 2 version)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Female *Endurance*
 Class: Ranger Level: 7 Align: CG *Point Blank Shot*
 Height: 5 ft., 6 in. Weight: 140 Age: 29 *Run*
 Hair: blond, very short Eyes: blue *Tracking*
 Two Weapon Fighting
 Weapon Focus (longsword)

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability Misc	
Strength	16	+3	Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod	
Dexterity	16	+3	Fortitude	+8	+5	+3		
Constitution	17	+3	Reflex	+5	+2	+3		
Intelligence	14	+2	Will	+4/+8*	+2	+2	+4*	
Wisdom	14	+2	* - see	Twin	Link, below			
Charisma	13	+1						

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod
18	= 10	+5	+0	+3		

Hit Points: 67

Armor Worn: +2 *studded leather* Dex
 Check Penalty: -1 Movement: 30 ft. Total = Mod + Misc.
 Weight: 30 **Initiative** +3 = +3

Melee Attack	Base	+ Mod	Str+ Mod	Size Mod	Ranged Attack	Base	+ Dex+ Mod	Size Mod
+10/+5	+7/+2	+3			+10/+5	+7/+2	+3	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 longsword	+13/+8	1d8+5	19-20	-	-	S
+2 longsword*	+11/+6	1d8+5	19-20			S
+1 hand axe	+11/+6	1d6+4	x3	-		S
+1 hand axe*	+9	1d6+2	x3	-		S
dagger	+10/+5	1d4+3	19-20			P
Mighty composite shortbow (+3)	+10/+5	1d6+3	x3	70 ft.		P

* - Use these lines when fighting with two weapons.

Skill	Total	= Ranks	+ Ability+ Misc Mod	Mod
Animal (Cha)	Empathy+9	= 8	+1	
Climb (Str)	+7	= 5	+3	-1 (armor)
Intuit Direction (Wis)	+8	= 6	+2	
Knowledge/nature (Int)	+12	= 10	+2	
Move Silently (Dex)	+8	= 6	+3	-1 (armor)
Ride (Dex)	+7	= 4	+3	
Search (Int)	+8	= 6	+2	
Spot (Wis)	+8	= 6	+2	
Swim (Str)	+7	= 5	+3	-1 (armor)
Use Rope (Dex)	+8	= 5	+3	
Wilderness Lore (Wis)	+16	= 10	+2	+4

Languages: Common, orcish, goblin

Heroic Feats:

Ambidexterity

Favored Enemies:

Magical beasts +2
 Shapechangers +1

Special Twin Link:

You have a mental connection to your twin sister Sharon that puts you in constant low-level telepathic contact with her. This link allows you the following abilities/benefits (all count as free actions unless otherwise noted):

- You can communicate telepathically with Sharon (but no one else) at will. No activation roll or Concentration checks are required for this ability except in special circumstances (DM's judgment). You have never established a range limit on this ability, but know that carrying on a full conversation with Sharon is possible at a distance of over a mile.
- If Sharon is sleeping, you can mentally wake her up on a Wisdom check at a DC of 10. You can attempt this once per round as a move-equivalent action. You also have a sense of what she dreams, which often makes for interesting conversation the next morning! Both of you instantly know when the other twin knows that she is in danger. This includes being aware of when the other twin is unconscious and not stable.
- Since two sets of senses are better than one, if the two of you have a line of sight to each other then both of you must be caught flat-footed for either one to be caught flat-footed.
- All of your non-magical Will saving throw bonuses are cumulative with Sharon's and vice versa. (This is because the two of you have learned to assist each other in resisting mental attacks.) The additional bonuses are negated if one of you is sleeping or unconscious.
- You can "home in" on Sharon's current location with absolute accuracy, regardless of distance or effects that would normally block divinations and magical means of location.

A combination of your link and inherent familiarity with how Sharon acts and thinks gives you the following additional benefits:

- You and Sharon may coordinate your actions in combat without restrictions about table talk.
- If you use the combat action Aiding Another with Sharon, or the two of you combine your efforts for a skill check, the normal bonuses for such a combined effort are doubled.

Your link also gives you a significant drawback: if Sharon is abruptly rendered unconscious (such as by an injury), you are stunned for one round and must make a Fortitude saving throw against a DC of 10, with no magical bonuses applicable, or be rendered unconscious yourself for 2-8 rounds. This does not happen when you fall asleep normally, although the two of you generally fall asleep at the same time unless one is trying to stay awake.

See the description given in your Profile for further details.

Magical Items: +2 studded leather armor, +2 longsword, +1 hand axe, 8 +1 arrows of shocking, eyes of night, cloak of elvenkind, potion of moderate healing (one dose)

Equipment: dagger (kept in boot); mighty composite short bow (+3 bonus); quiver with 10 arrows; backpack with bedroll, waterskin, flint and steel, one day's rations, bar of soap, pot of weaponblack (six applications for Medium or smaller bladed weapons); explorer's outfit (forest tone colors); military badge (not usually worn, see Profile); 40 gp, 2 100 gp gems, silver charm necklace (identical to Sharon's, 100 gp value)

Profile: You are not alone in this world - never have been, never ever want to be. That's because you have an identical twin. Her name is Sharon, and she is more than just a sister to you; she is an extension of you. A philosopher that you've lately been seeing socially has a theory that the two of you may just be a single persona whose physical incarnation is split into two different bodies. He may or may not be right, but you do know that the similarities between you and Sharon run more than skin deep. You not only look alike but think alike, to the point that you can finish each other's sentences. This freaks people out, but it can be entertaining to watch their reactions.

The connection goes beyond that, though. You and Sharon actually share your thoughts with each other. It's a link similar to how you've heard telepathy described, although it only connects the two of you and is always active. If one of you is hurt, afraid, or in danger, the other will immediately know it, and what one of you learns or experiences can be instantly shared with the other. This has allowed the two of you to coordinate actions even when out of sight of one another and carry on private conversations in even the noisiest of places. Conveying more than simple messages requires a fair amount of concentration, though, and tends to isolate you from your surroundings, so the two of you still talk out loud to each other much of the time. (Sharon finds it amusing to sometimes confuse listeners by carrying on conversations where one of you is talking out loud and the other is using your link. Although you play along, it doesn't interest you as much as it does her so you usually aren't the one to start it.)

You and Sharon have met some other sets of twins who try to differentiate themselves from each other, but that's not the case with the two of you. You both figured out early on that there can be some real advantages to fostering cases of mistaken identity, so over the years the two of you have taken painstaking efforts to make sure that your appearances and behaviors remain absolutely identical in the presence of others. If one of you changes something about her hair or personal hygiene (usually Sharon), the other has to, too. If one of you gets something new or different for clothing or equipment (usually you), the other has to match it as closely as possible. Magic items also have to be as similar as possible. You and Sharon have even gone as far as making sure that scars and bruises that don't match are either promptly removed or duplicated on the other one. This also extends to behavior. When in other company, if one of you laughs, cries, or gets angry, so does the other one. If one of you picks a fight, the other will be there in an instant to back her up. You also publicly express the same tastes and distastes, particularly in food and men, even if it isn't necessarily true. (The last part is the only duplication that's been a trial for you to maintain, since your preferences in food and men are a bit more bland than Sharon's.) And if someone seems able to figure out which one of you is which, then you just start answering to each other's names.

Such attention to duplication can be a pain, and it's been labeled as silly and/or obsessive by family and friends, but complete duplicity has been way too useful way too many times for either of you to consider giving it up any time soon. There's been several times when even a few heartbeats of confusion over seeing two completely identical warriors has saved both of your lives and the utility of one of you being able to stand in for the other at a moment's notice has been proven over and over again.

There are a few slight differences between the two of you, though. Both of you are very serious-minded and businesslike when it comes to completing a job, but in casual times Sharon is always the first one to loosen up; she's the one responsible for most of the drinking and partying binges the two of you have been on in the past. She also has a much better sense of humor. You, on the other twin (as you both like to put it) are the more naturally cautious, suspicious, and analytical one. It's a good balance, though, as you can both check each other; she keeps you from getting too uptight, while you keep her from getting too wild.

Both of you have always been far more at home outdoors. Staying in a cramped town dwelling most of the time is the worst fate imaginable, so the two of you were always outside exploring. That used to exasperate Mom to no end; you don't think she ever really understood either of you. You're both naturals when it comes to scouting and woodlore and came into the service of Lord Reynard (the leader of a powerful city-state) when his military commanders recommended the two of you be put on contract after you did some freelance scouting for them. That was ten years ago. You've worked on and off for him ever since, with adventuring taken up the rest of your time. (The military badge you carry signifies you as one of his special agents.) Neither of you currently has any intentions of settling down anytime soon, although if you meet a pair of handsome twin guys, who knows?

Recent events have left both of you wondering about Daddy. Neither of you really remembers him that well, and before the revelation that he's still alive neither of you had given him any thought in a long, long time. Now you're both curious. Is he going to be like Dominic, who could almost be his twin? Or is he going to be better or worse? Since he's leading a death cult you're betting on worse, but you've resolved to keep an open mind. It will be great to meet him again even if he does look like he's a little "out there" now.

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Sharon, **your twin**, is described above.

Dominic is the oldest of your brothers and sisters by several years. He's the only one who took after Daddy and became a wizard - but that was only after he helped Mom raise the rest of you. You always thought he was strict and mean when you were growing up, but you've since come to understand that he was under a lot of stress at the time and, for a while, regretted some of the hassle you both gave him. He's still trying to act like the boss, though, and that irritates both of you. Although you won't do anything to endanger Janna's quest or upset her, you have both resolved to remind Dominic that you aren't little girls anymore and won't be bossed around.

Janna, the second oldest (three years older than you), was always the sensible one and the peacemaker in the family, the one who would step in whenever someone was getting on someone else's nerves too much. She also was the only one of you that was particularly religious, so it wasn't a surprise when she became a

cleric. What did surprise you was when she married a (very handsome) crusading knight and started going on campaigns with him; she always seemed too fragile for that sort of thing. She was always kind, understanding, and nurturing towards the two of you, so you never gave her the grief that you did Dominic. If she asked something of you, you would do it. Her current condition has only heightened that conviction. You're both particularly sad that she lost her husband; both of you really liked him. You've also both decided that you will take her child under your wings and take turns raising him or her if none of the others will; you owe Janna that much at least.

Cedrick is the third oldest and, at only a year older, the closest to the two of you in age. Because of that the two of you roughhoused around with him much more than your other siblings. As kids you were always competitive with him about everything, even silly stuff like how fast you could eat or how far you could spit. He's the only one of your siblings who proved better than either of you when it came to fighting, so it was no surprise that he became a soldier and, later, an adventurer. Although starting his own family has mellowed him out some, his competitive fires haven't gone out completely. Great! You're also glad the real Cedrick has joined you; you knew something didn't feel right about that doppelganger duplicate.

Clarice, at three years younger than the two of you, is the baby of the family. She always hated to be reminded of that, but she whined so much as a kid that it was hard to resist. She was always unhappy with town life, but it was still a big shock when she ran away to join a traveling circus. Typical brattish behavior! When you all assembled for Janna's wedding seven years ago she claimed that she was saving up money to attend a college for the performing arts. She must have done it because she's now a fairly well-known bard, which she has not failed to remind you of at every opportunity. Sharon really wants to come down on her for this behavior, and normally you'd be inclined to agree, but you feel that, for Janna's sake, the two of you should lay off it a bit. It's the biggest running disagreement the two of you have had in quite some time.

Spells Available: (DC of 13)

- | |
|--------------------------------|
| 1st level (prepare 2) |
| — alarm |
| — animal friendship |
| — detect animals or plants |
| — detect snares and pits |
| — entangle |
| — pass without trace |
| — resist poison |
| — speak with animals |
| — summon natural creatures |
| I |

Sharon Camarillo (Round 2 version)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Female *Point Blank Shot*
 Class: Ranger Level: 7 Align: CG *Run*
 Height: 5 ft., 6 in. Weight: 140 Age: 29 *Tracking*
 Hair: blond, very short Eyes: blue *Two Weapon Fighting*
 Weapon Focus (longsword)

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws		Ability Misc		
Strength	16	+3	Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod
Dexterity	16	+3	Fortitude	+8	+5	+3	
Constitution	17	+3	Reflex	+5	+2	+3	
Intelligence	14	+2	Will	+4/+8*	+2	+2	+4*
Wisdom	14	+2	* - see Twin Link, below				
Charisma	13	+1					
Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod	
	18	= 10	+5	+0	+3		

Hit Points: 67

Armor Worn: +2 *studded leather* Dex
 Check Penalty: -1 Movement: 30 ft. Total = Mod + Misc.
 Weight: 30 **Initiative** +3 = +3

Melee Attack	Base	+	Str	+	Size	Ranged Attack	Base	+	Dex	+	Size
	Attack	Mod			Mod		Attack	Mod			Mod
	+10/+5		+7/+2		+3		+10/+5		+7/+2		+3

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 longsword	+13/+8	1d8+5	19-20	-	-	S
+2 longsword*	+11/+6	1d8+5	19-20			S
+1 hand axe	+11/+6	1d6+4	x3	-		S
+1 hand axe*	+9	1d6+2	x3	-		S
Dagger	+10/+5	1d4+3	19-20			P
Mighty composite shortbow (+3)	+10/+5	1d6+3	x3	70 ft.		P

* - Use these lines when fighting with two weapons.

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Ability Mod	+ Misc Mod
Animal (Cha)	Empathy +9	=	8	+1	
Climb (Str)	+7	=	5	+3	-1 (armor)
Intuit Direction (Wis)	+8	=	6	+2	
Knowledge/nature (Int)	+12	=	10	+2	
Move Silently (Dex)	+8	=	6	+3	-1 (armor)
Ride (Dex)	+7	=	4	+3	
Search (Int)	+8	=	6	+2	
Spot (Wis)	+8	=	6	+2	
Swim (Str)	+7	=	5	+3	-1 (armor)
Use Rope (Dex)	+8	=	5	+3	
Wilderness Lore (Wis)	+16	=	10	+2	+4

Languages: Common, orcish, goblin

Heroic Feats:

Ambidexterity
Endurance

Favored Enemies:

Magical beasts +2
 Shapechangers +1

Special Twin Link:

You have a mental connection to your twin sister Sharon that puts you in constant low-level telepathic contact with her. This link allows you the following abilities/benefits (all count as free actions unless otherwise noted):

- You can communicate telepathically with Sharon (but no one else) at will. No activation roll or Concentration checks are required for this ability except in special circumstances (DM's judgment). You have never established a range limit on this ability, but know that carrying on a full conversation with Sharon is possible at a distance of over a mile.
- If Sharon is sleeping, you can mentally wake her up on a Wisdom check at a DC of 10. You can attempt this once per round as a move-equivalent action. You also have a sense of what she dreams, which often makes for interesting conversation the next morning! Both of you instantly know when the other twin knows that she is in danger. This includes being aware of when the other twin is unconscious and not stable.
- Since two sets of senses are better than one, if the two of you have a line of sight to each other then both of you must be caught flat-footed for either one to be caught flat-footed.
- All of your non-magical Will saving throw bonuses are cumulative with Sharon's and vice versa. (This is because the two of you have learned to assist each other in resisting mental attacks.) The additional bonuses are negated if one of you is sleeping or unconscious.
- You can "home in" on Sharon's current location with absolute accuracy, regardless of distance or effects that would normally block divinations and magical means of location.

A combination of your link and inherent familiarity with how Sharon acts and thinks gives you the following additional benefits:

- You and Sharon may coordinate your actions in combat without restrictions about table talk.
- If you use the combat action Aiding Another with Sharon, or the two of you combine your efforts for a skill check, the normal bonuses for such a combined effort are doubled.

Your link also gives you a significant drawback: if Sharon is abruptly rendered unconscious (such as by an injury), you are stunned for one round and must make a Fortitude saving throw against a DC of 10, with no magical bonuses applicable, or be rendered unconscious yourself for 2-8 rounds. This does not happen when you fall asleep normally, although the two of you generally fall asleep at the same time unless one is trying to stay awake.

See the description given in your Profile for further details.

Magical Items: +2 studded leather armor, +2 longsword, +1 hand axe, 8 +1 arrows of shocking, eyes of night, cloak of elvenkind, potion of moderate healing (one dose)

Equipment: dagger (kept in boot); mighty composite short bow (+3 bonus); quiver with 10 arrows; backpack with bedroll, waterskin, flint and steel, one day's rations, bar of soap, pot of weaponblack (six applications for Medium or smaller bladed weapons); explorer's outfit (forest tone colors); military badge (not usually worn, see Profile); 40 gp, 2 100 gp gems, silver charm necklace (identical to Sharon's, 100 gp value)

Profile: You are not alone in this world - never have been, never ever want to be. That's because you have an identical twin. Her name is Susan, and she is more than just a sister to you; she is an extension of you. It's like you're both avatars of the same being - at least that's what a druid you once saw socially said about the two of you. Whatever; what you know for sure is that the similarities between you and Susan run more than skin deep. You not only look alike but think alike as well, to the point where you can finish each other's sentences. This freaks people out, but it's just so damn amusing to watch people's reactions to it. (Ooops, sorry, you forgot you're not supposed to swear because Susan doesn't. That's one of the very few instances where the two of you differ.)

The connection goes beyond that, though. You and Susan actually share your thoughts with each other. It's sort of a telepathic link, you guess, although neither of you has ever been able to "connect" with someone else and it's always on. If one of you is hurt, afraid, or in danger, the other will immediately know it, and what one of you learns or experiences can be instantly shared with the other. This has allowed the two of you to coordinate actions even when out of sight of one another and carry on private conversations in even the noisiest of places. Conveying more than simple messages requires a fair amount of concentration, though (it takes a little bit of effort to figure out which one of you is thinking what!), so the two of you still talk out loud to each other much of the time. A great gag you like pulling is talking out loud in a conversation with your sister while Susan only speaks through your link. The confused expressions on the faces of those nearby is just so funny! (Susan doesn't seem to appreciate it as much, though, so you usually have to talk her into it. She can be such a stick-in-the-mud at times!)

You and Susan have met other sets of twins who try to differentiate themselves from each other, but that's not the case with the two of you. You both figured out early on that there can be some real advantages to fostering cases of mistaken identity, so over the years the two of you have made painstaking efforts to keep your appearances absolutely identical in the presence of others. If one of you changes something about her hair or personal hygiene (usually you), the other has to, too. If one of you gets something new or different for clothing or equipment (usually Susan), the other has to match it as closely as possible. You and Susan have even gone as far as making sure that scars and bruises that don't match are either promptly removed or duplicated on the other one. This also extends to behavior. When in other company, if one of you laughs, cries, or gets angry, so does the other one. If one of you picks a fight, the other will be there in an instant to back her up. You also publicly express the same tastes and distastes, particularly in food and men, even if it isn't necessarily true. (The last part is the only duplication that's been a trial for you to maintain, since Susan's preferences in food and particularly men are dull compared

to yours.) And if someone seems able to figure out which one of you is which, then you just start answering to each other's names.

Such attention to duplication can be a pain, and it's been labeled as silly and/or obsessive by family and friends, but complete duplicity has been way too useful way too many times for either of you to consider giving it up any time soon. There's been several times when even a few heartbeats of confusion over seeing two completely identical warriors has saved both of your lives and the utility of one of you being able to stand in for the other at a moment's notice has been proven over and over again.

There are a few slight differences between the two of you, though. Both of you are very serious-minded and businesslike when it comes to completing a job, but Susan is the more serious and responsible one in casual times, while you're more inclined to carousing and partying and have a much better sense of humor. You know she hates going on the wild drinking binges that you love so much, but she's a good sport and plays along so you don't give her any grief when she wants to be agonizingly cautious and suspicious or stop to carefully study something or think it through. Overall it's a good balance of traits, since you both check each other; she keeps you from getting too careless, while you help her loosen up.

Both of you have always been far more at home outdoors. Staying in a cramped town dwelling most of the time is the worst fate imaginable, so the two of you were always outside exploring as kids. That used to exasperate Mom to no end; you don't think she ever really understood either of you. You're both naturals when it comes to scouting and woodlore and came into the service of Lord Reynard (the leader of a powerful city-state) when his military commanders recommended the two of you be put on contract after you did some freelance scouting for them. That was ten years ago. You've worked on and off for him ever since, with adventuring taken up the rest of your time. (The military badge you carry signifies you as one of his special agents.)

Recent events have left both of you wondering about Daddy. Neither of you really remembers him that well, and before the revelation that he's still alive neither of you had given him any thought in a long, long time. Now you're both curious. Is he going to be like Dominic, who could almost be his twin? Or is he going to be better or worse? Since he's leading a death cult you're betting on worse, but you've resolved to keep an open mind. It will be great to meet him again even if he has flipped his lid. (Really, face make-up to give him a skull visage? A sure sign of a warped mind.)

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Susan, your twin, is described above.

Dominic is the oldest of your siblings by several years. He's the only one who took after Daddy and became a wizard - but that was only after he helped Mom raise the rest of you. You always thought he was strict and mean when you were growing up, but you've since come to understand that he was under a lot of stress at the time and, for a while, regretted some of the hassle you both gave him. He's still trying to act like the boss, though, and that irritates both of you. Although you won't do anything to endanger Janna's quest or upset her, you have both resolved to remind Dominic that you aren't little girls anymore and won't be bossed around.

Janna, the second oldest (three years older than you), was always the sensible one and the peacemaker in the family, the one who would step in whenever someone was getting on someone else's

nerves too much. She also was the only one of you that was particularly religious, so it wasn't a surprise when she became a cleric. What did surprise you was when she married a crusading knight and started going on campaigns with him; she always seemed too fragile for that sort of thing, but at least she had great taste in men. She was always kind, understanding, and nurturing towards the two of you, so you never gave her the grief that you did Dominic. If she asked something of you, you would do it. Her current condition has only heightened that conviction. You're both particularly sad that she lost her husband; both of you really liked him. You've also both decided that you will take her little rugrat under your wings and take turns raising him or her if none of the others will; you owe Janna that much at least.

Cedrick is the third oldest and, at only a year older, the closest to the two of you in age. Because of that the two of you roughhoused around with him much more than your other siblings. As kids you were always competitive with him about everything, even silly stuff like how fast you could eat or how loud you could crack your knuckles. He's the only one of your siblings who proved better than either of you when it came to fighting, so it was no surprise that he became a soldier and, later, an adventurer. Although starting his own family has mellowed him out some, his competitive fires haven't gone out completely. Great! You're also glad the real Cedrick has joined you; that doppelganger version was a real drag.

Clarice, at three years younger than the two of you, is the baby of the family. She always hated to be reminded of that, but she whined so much as a kid that it was hard to resist. She was always unhappy with town life, but it was still a big shock when she ran away to join a traveling circus. Typical brattish behavior! When you all assembled for Janna's wedding seven years ago she claimed that she was saving up money to attend a college for the performing arts. She must have done it because she's now a fairly well-known bard, which she has not failed to remind you two of it at every opportunity. Once a brat, always a brat. . . She's become such a nuisance about it that you'd love to put her in her place again, but Susan is strongly against it. You can sense that she wants to do it, too, but she's more concerned about not causing needless problems for Janna. You don't think it will come to that, but Susan's being uncommonly difficult about this. It's the biggest running disagreement the two of you have had in quite some time.

Spells Available:

1st level (prepare 2)
DC of 13
_ alarm
_ animal friendship
_ detect animals or plants
_ detect snares and pits
_ entangle
_ pass without trace
_ resist poison
_ speak with animals
_ summon nat. creatures I

Clarice Camarillo (a.k.a. Clarice the Nimble) (Round 2 Version)

Race: Human Size: Medium Gender: Female
 Class: Rogue/Bard Level: 6/1 Align: CN
 Height: 5 ft., 2 in. Weight: 100 Age: 26
 Hair: blond (currently), black (naturally) Eyes: blue

Ability	Score	Mod	Saving Throws				Ability	Misc
Strength	12	+1	Type	Total =	Base	Mod	Mod	
Dexterity	19	+4	Fortitude	+3	+2	+1		
Constitution	13	+1	Reflex	+13	+7	+4		+2
Intelligence	16	+3	Will	+5	+4	+1		
Wisdom	12	+1						
Charisma	16	+3						

Armor Class	Base	Armor Mod	Shield Mod	Dex Mod	Size Mod	Misc. Mod
18	= 10	+2	+0	+4	-	+2

Hit Points: 35

Armor Worn: leather Dex
 Check Penalty: -1 Movement: 30 ft. Total = Mod + Misc.
 Weight: 30 Initiative +8 = +4 +4

Melee Attack	Base Attack	+ Mod	Str+ Mod	Size Mod	Ranged Attack	Base Attack	+ Dex+ Mod	Size Mod
+5	+4	+1			+8	+4	+4	

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Crit	Range	Wt.	Type
+2 shortsword	+7	1d6+3	19-20	-	-	P
dagger	+8	1d4+1	19-20			P

Skill	Total	=	Ranks	+ Ability+ Misc Mod	Misc Mod
Balance (Dex)	+11	=	5	+4	+2
Bluff (Cha)	+12	=	9	+3	
Climb (Str)	+7	=	6	+1	
Disable Device (Int)	+9	=	6	+3	
Forgery (Int)	+9	=	6	+3	
Hide (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Jump (Str)	+8	=	5	+1	+2
Knowl./history (Int)	+7	=	4	+3	
Knowl./legends (Int)	+7	=	4	+3	
Listen (Wis)	+8	=	5	+1	+2
Move Silently (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Open Locks (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Perform* (Cha)	+12	=	9	+3	
Pick Pockets (Dex)	+10	=	6	+4	
Search (Int)	+9	=	6	+3	
Sense Motive (Wis)	+9	=	8	+1	
Spot (Wis)	+8	=	5	+1	+2
Tumble (Dex)	+15	=	9	+4	+2
Use Magical Device (Cha)	+12	=	9	+3	

* - specific areas are juggling, ballads, melody, mandolin, flute, epics, storytelling, odes, sleight-of-hand.

Languages: Common, elvish, gnomish, goblin

Heroic Feats:

Alertness
 Dodge
 Improved Initiative
 Lightning Reflexes

Magical Items: +2 short sword of fear (as normal short sword +2, but wielder can generate a *cause fear* once/day as the spell at wielder's level, with a range of 30 feet), +2 ring of protection, ring of spell storing (currently holds *sleep* x2, *feather fall*, *slow*, *spectral force* at 7th level), wand of levitation (16 charges, 6th level), glove of storing (typically holds mandolin), dust of disappearance (three uses), potion of alter self (two doses, as 6th level)

NOTE: You have practiced extensively using sleight-of-hand and other misdirection to make it look like you're actually casting a spell when using any of the above spell effects from magic items (save for the potions, which are a little too obvious). You even keep the wand in a hidden sheath up your sleeve, never carried openly. Anyone with Spellcraft who observes you carefully can detect this ruse on an opposed roll vs. your Perform skill.

Equipment: leather armor, bandolier of three throwing daggers (worn across chest), masterwork thieves' tools (+2 on Disable Device and Open Locks checks), masterwork mandolin (+2 to Perform checks when used), masterwork flute (+2 to Perform checks when used), backpack, bedroll, waterskin, two day's rations, spell component pouch, explorer's outfit (normally worn), entertainer's outfit (carried), juggling balls, vial of perfume (lilac-scented), masterwork forgery of Royal Academy of Performing Arts graduation certificate (kept in waterproofed sheath in inside pocket); 50 gp, 10 50 gp gems, diamond earrings with matching necklace (550 gp for set, usually only worn when performing)

Profile: You are the youngest of six siblings by a span of more than three years. That makes you the baby of the family, a title which irks you even to this day. You weren't called the baby because you were spoiled. In fact, you actually had it rougher than any of your brothers and sisters (they would probably disagree, but they didn't have to live your life). Not that anyone's life was easy, what with Father having apparently died before you were even born and all, but it just seemed like they dumped on you a lot. You don't remember ever getting a single stitch of clothing that wasn't a hand-me-down and having to do a lot of work that the others didn't. And man, were they a drag! They never let you have any fun or get away with anything, while some of them could get away with murder. They never respected you for the intelligence you did have, either. When, at age twelve, it got to be too much, you did what any self-respecting adventure seeker would do: you ran away and joined a traveling circus.

When you joined the circus you didn't have anything in mind other than getting away from home and how cool it would be to travel and hang around with those kind of people. For a while you assisted the animal trainers, but then one day some of the performers put you through an impromptu tryout as a joke and discovered that you were actually phenomenally talented at juggling, acrobatics, sleight-of-hand - anything that involved a high degree of dexterity. After that you were quickly adopted into the circus's highly selective acrobatics troupe and spent most of your teen years as a regular performer with them. It was great fun, and you did get to travel wide and meet a lot of people. You also picked up a lot of useful skills. One-Arm Charlie taught you to gamble and pick pockets and locks, The Human Shadow taught you how to be sneaky, the psychic Madame Maria taught you how to second-guess people by studying their body language, and you learned from Rattlesnake Risa how to forge documents. The Borage Brothers even taught you to fight a little. The biggest influence, though, was the bard that joined the circus for a while. Silas the Songsmith was your first love, but just as importantly he taught you how to play the mandolin and got you interested in music. When it came time to part ways with the circus, you used some money you'd saved back to travel to Amasce to attend the legendary Royal Academy for the Performing Arts.

My, wasn't that a disaster! You were cold, wet, and half-sick from traveling through days of rain when you arrived, and so turned in an awful audition. They turned you down flat and refused to give you a second chance. You'd told everyone (even your family, whom you had gotten back in contact with by that point) that you were going to become this great bard and couldn't stand the humiliation of admitting that you'd failed, so you adapted the old circus philosophy: you decided to fake it. You used up the rest of your money getting some extra musical and singing training from itinerant bards, did a lot of studying up on various legends, and then forged a graduation certificate from the Academy. You joined a couple of adventuring companies and grabbed up every magical item you could find that could duplicate a spell-like effect, no matter how minor. Finally you decided you were ready.

You've been carrying on this deception for almost six years now and so far it's worked pretty well. Although you haven't become rich doing it, you live comfortably enough and your reputation as the bard Clarice the Nimble is gradually becoming widely-known. You eventually did learn enough to become a true bard, but you still aren't anywhere near as proficient with bardic abilities as you claim, so you're very careful to maintain the deception. Yes, much of it's still an act, but putting on a convincing performance is what you're best at, and this is the performance of a lifetime - literally.

Although they were a bother, you didn't totally leave your family behind when you ran away. You sent Mother letters every so often to let her know that you were doing fine and did come back for your sister's wedding, seven years ago. Reuniting for this life-or-death mission of Janna's is the first time you have seen most of them since then, which suited you fine. Yeah, a lot of the old resentments have been stirred up, but the desperate grimness of Janna's situation - as well as Janna herself - have muted the conflicts. Then there's also the prospect of meeting your father for the first time. You aren't sure how to feel about that, but are definitely as nervous about meeting him as you've ever been about anything. Will he acknowledge you? Will he even care? He did reject everyone else, after all.

Knowledge of the Rest of the Characters:

Dominic, the eldest by far (14 years more than you), is the only one that you truly missed when you joined the circus. When you were a little girl he used to read stories to you and tried to be your best friend. He was, for a while, until he struck out on his own when you were ten. He became a wizard, just like your father was. When you were back for the wedding he barely said a word to you, so he must have been ticked about you running off. It's taken some convincing, but you've gotten him to understand that you did it for the same reasons that he left: you had to get out of there. That's allowed you to become friends again, and now you're the one that tells him stories.

Janna, your oldest sister, is six years older. She was the one who looked after you when you were a youngster, which meant that she got to boss you around a lot. You didn't much like listening to her, but Mother said you had to. The two of you really didn't get along until you went back for her wedding (man, did she marry a hunk of a guy!), where you sat down and talked and settled some things. You're now glad you did that, because you'd hate to still be carrying a grudge against her in her time of greatest need. And even with as bad a shape as she's in, she's still been busy healing all of you and keeping the family peace! (When she wants to break up an argument or smooth down ruffled feathers she's hard to resist.) Man, you respect her for that. If there's anything you can do for her, you will do it. Looking after her kid if she doesn't make it isn't a prospect you relish, but you're not going to let any niece or nephew of yours be raised by strangers, either.

Cedrick, your other brother, is four years older than you. He taunted you quite a bit when you were kids and beat you up a couple of times when you (his words) blabbed about something you should have kept to yourself. To be fair, though, he treated everyone his age or younger like that. In fact, he was just a big bully. And what better job for a child bully to grow up into than a Captain of the Watch in some town? You've met

him a couple of times in the past few years and he's mellowed out a lot, but you suppose a wife and children (you've met his wife Theresa, and she is surprisingly nice) will do that. You still have trouble seeing him as anything other than a bully, though. Oooh, you can't believe that you didn't figure out that the Cedrick who traveled with you to Hallisburg and then on to the Oracle was a doppelganger! That still irritates you and has left you feeling extra jumpy around him. He seems to be the real one now, but can you be completely sure?

Sharon and **Susan**, the ranger twins, are the closest in age to you - only three years older. They picked on you mercilessly as kids, calling you "baby brat" and, when they got old enough to know the words, much less pleasant things, too. No one could more easily get you to cry than these two. Normally you could put up with that kind of thing, but with them it was always a double-team effort - which you suppose is natural, given that they are identical twins. (And kick you if you could ever tell them apart, and you were their sister!) They still got on your nerves when you went back for the wedding, and picked up right where they left off when you all gathered for Janna's quest. Before you didn't have a great reputation to stuff in their faces, though. Now you do.

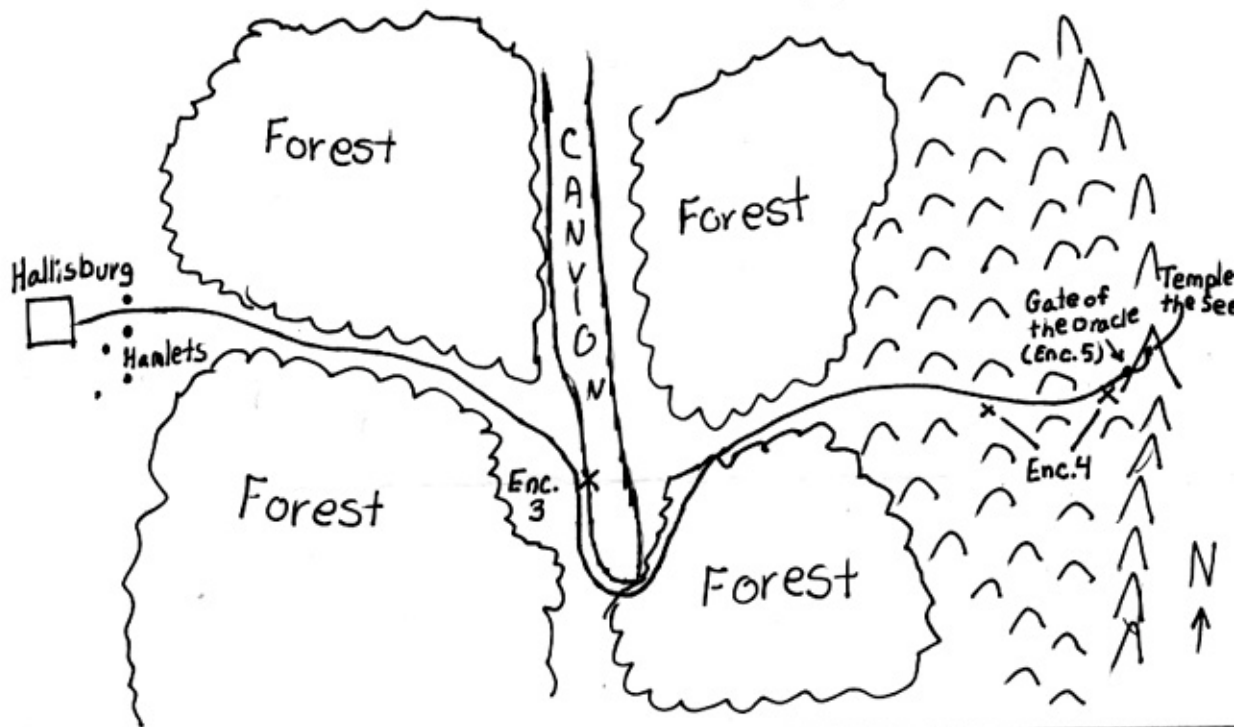
Spells Available:

o level (**prepare 2**)

DC of 13

- _ daze
- _ detect magic
- _ light
- _ mending

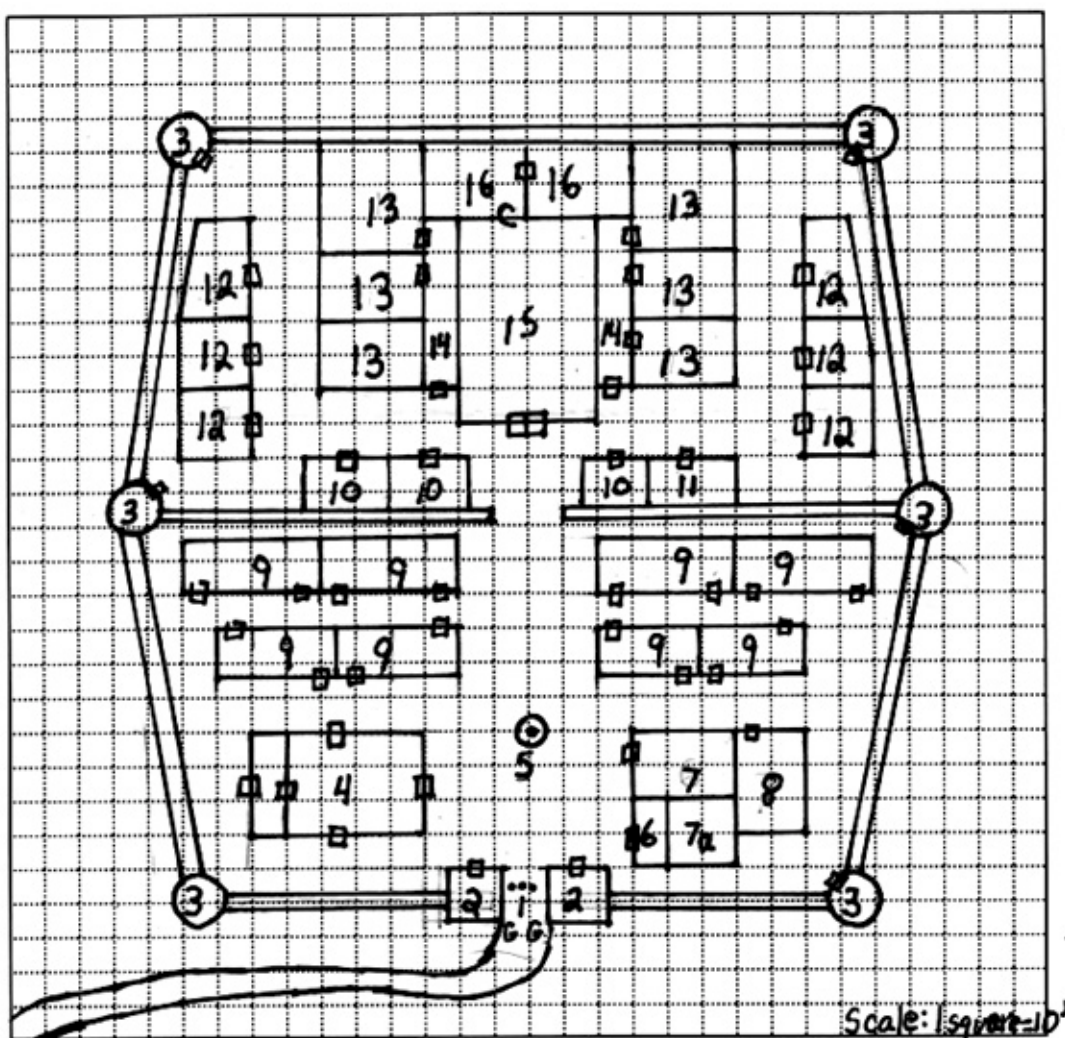
"Thicker Than Water" DM's Map, Round 1



DM's Map, Round 2



DM'S MAP: FORTRESS OF THE DAMNED (Round 2)



Scale: 1 square = 10'

G = Guards
 ... = portcullis
 ⊙ = well