



From Bitter Searching of the Heart

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A One-Round Adventure for the *Legends of the Shining Jewel* Campaign

As one menace ends, another threatens. The hope of Amthydor rests upon the shoulders of one man...but will he save the city or bring about its ruin? Only you can decide! For heroes of levels 1-13. NOTE: This is a role-playing intensive event. Parties whose idea of diplomacy is to rage and charge into a discussion will probably not have a lot of fun.

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www.theshiningjewel.com

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Welcome to LSJ!

This is a *Legends of the Shining Jewel* campaign adventure. It is written to be played in a standard four-hour convention time slot.

It is a good idea to have the players and judge place some sort of name tag in front of them, so everyone can easily identify each other and the names of the characters they are playing.

Some of the text in this adventure is in ***bold italics***. This text is for the players to hear, although you are certainly free to paraphrase or summarize the text if you feel it is necessary.

LSJ GM Empowerment Clause

The coordinators of the campaign empower GMs to make changes to the module as necessary to accommodate any unforeseen actions taken by the PCs. If the players find another way to deal with the module, they should be successful and appropriately rewarded. The GM may also invent

new NPCs as needed to populate the city of Amthydor, which is not completely detailed due to practical limitations.

If the party is having trouble dealing with say, undead encounters, the GM can always have a patrol of priests or the like come along to finish the combat and save the PCs. Full XP awards should not be given for the encounter if this is necessary.

Do NOT save the PCs if their failure is a result of their own ill-advised actions or lack of forethought. Softening the blow from a bad set of rolls or simple bad luck is one thing, but stupid actions deserve what they get.

Calculating ATL (Average Table Level)

Add up the levels of all characters at the table (plus ECL adjustments) and any animals that will take part in combat that are not granted by class features (such as familiars, animal companions, or bonded mounts). Divide this total by 6, regardless of how many player characters are at the table. This gives you the Average Table Level (ATL) for running combats.

A Note About ATLs and the Power of PCs

Not all parties are created equal. Some level 1 parties can handle anything the GM can throw at them, and some level 3 parties are relatively weak for their levels. If the GM finds that the party at the table is really not up to the challenge of the tier, he should adjust the encounters DOWN for that party. This is particularly important if the party has a broad mix of experience levels, is lacking clerics and paladins who can heal, or is a “role-playing” rather than “battle-ready” party. The encounters should be a worthy challenge, not an impossible task or a slaughter fest. Regardless of what the instructions say, the GM should let common sense rule the day (and the module).

<p>SPECIAL NOTE FOR THIS EVENT: This adventure is designed so that there are some POTENTIAL combats, but no NECESSARY ones. If a party wishes to play the entire event without</p>

initiating any combats, they will be totally successful. If they do choose to fight, this might or might not negatively impact on their success. This is somewhat situational and, where the module does not provide exact guidance, the Gamemaster will have to make her own judgment. With that said, every effort will be made in the module text to provide that guidance so the burden is on the module, not the GM.

ANOTHER SPECIAL NOTE FOR THIS EVENT: This module is a serious role-playing challenge, not just for the players, but for the GM as well. It should be WELL-PREPARED before you try to run it, and NEVER run cold. You will need to take serious notes for the last test while running a conversation between the party and FIVE NPCs with differing points of view. I apologize to the GM for the extra effort this event will require!

This event will require a high level of participation and attention from the players, and problem-solving that does not necessarily involve die rolls. It is not suitable for a party of hack-and-slashers, and probably too tough for younger children to play. These groups may need more hints and help from the GM to succeed in the quest.

The enjoyment of the players should be paramount, so if necessary, give as much help and assistance as you can without actually solving the module for the players.

Adventure Background

During the recent undead uprising (detailed in LSJ MA1: Dead of the Night), a Diamond Legionnaire and paladin of Peliron, Lieutenant Deverin Stark, was on guard duty outside the Poor District. His experiences during that siege traumatized him and led to long-term depression that interfered with his ability to perform his duties. As a result he was placed on desk duty and given long-term clerical counseling.

Perhaps the matter would have ended here, but the Gods have a way of interfering in the ways of

mortals when it suits their purposes. Kunis Veritas (a cloistered cleric of Peliron) has been visiting Stark regularly and trying to guide him out of his depression. At Stark's request, the cleric cast a *divination* to help him determine what he should do to redeem himself. The result was far more dramatic than either would have hoped. Apparently, Stark was destined to play a key role in saving Amthydor from a future threat that could destroy the city. Without his efforts, the city was certain to be lost.

The cleric reported this to his superiors, who discussed the matter with the Quorum of Faith and the Diamond Legion. Clearly, Stark's recovery was now a matter of highest priority. After lengthy debate, it was decided that a holy pilgrimage to a monastery and sacred shrine of Peliron (located in the Delambir mountain range near Amthydor) was the best course of action. Since Stark was not fit to defend himself, or likely to complete such a quest alone given his condition, he would need guides to gently (but firmly) encourage him in his task, to defend him should need arise, and to set an example to inspire him.

Enter the PC heroes.

Adventure Summary

Introduction: The PCs are hired from one of several possible sources to accompany Stark on his pilgrimage. They are told the basics of the mission and given instructions. They are to aid Stark in completing five tests of virtue: acceptance, flexibility, openness, peace, and responsibility.

The results of these tests will (possibly) help towards the goal of helping Stark find his way back to a productive life again.

The Test of Peace is actually a floating, repeating encounter throughout the module. During each instance of down-time between other encounters, the PCs will have the opportunity to try to speak with Stark and help him come to terms with his troubles. Depending on what the PCs say and do, this can help him recover or send him further into

his depression. Don't push for them to take action, but keep mentioning rest stops and overnight camps, which are great opportunities for talking.

Use **GM Handout #1 and #2: The Test of Peace** as a set of guidelines for this recurring encounter, and as a checklist for goals accomplished and to tally the results. If the PCs get enough points to succeed by the end of the module, then Lt. Stark finds the virtue of Peace.

Encounter 1: *The Test of Openness:* On the way out of Amthydor, the party encounters Olek, the simple but friendly giant that now lives and works in the city. He asks about Stark's troubles and suggests that talking about it might help. He offers his own candid tale of regret. If enough PCs do the same, they pass the test of Openness. NOTE: This test can be solved at later points in the module as well. Pay attention!

Encounter 2: *The Test of Acceptance:* The party encounters a blind woodsman that is having some difficulty with a basic task. He does not want their help as he is capable of doing it himself. The test of Acceptance is passed if the PCs allow him to finish the task on his own, despite his handicap.

Encounter 3: *The Test of Flexibility:* The PCs encounter a vampire that has resisted the call to evil. The test is to examine the situation and try to determine a proper course of action, rather than just jumping in and destroying the undead as a reflex action. While laying this vampire to rest is a possibility, the only real test is that the PCs consider different options before settling on destruction. If they find out the facts and consider different possible ways to resolve the situation, they pass the test of Flexibility.

Encounter 4: *The Test of Responsibility:* The PCs encounter a group of elves. They are debating the issue of magical responsibility. While PCs may offer suggestions, in the end they must make it clear that it is the individual's responsibility, not another's, to handle their own affairs.

Conclusion: The PCs drop off Lt. Stark at the monastery. If they succeeded in at least three of the five Tests of Virtue, they have hope for the future.

Epilogue: If the PCS remember to return the locket to Daniel's lost sweetheart (assuming they know about her), they will be rewarded.

Introduction – The Call

Before starting the module, give **Player Handout #1** to any divine-classed clerics, druids or paladins that worship either Destine or Galvandt. If they ask, the two eyes definitely resemble the holy symbol of Galvandt. Give those players (if any) time to read and understand the handout before starting the boxed text below.

Explain to the players that they will find the module easier if they have some kind of basic character history figured out beforehand (this is helpful for the Test of Openness). A one-paragraph summary of what the PC's life has been like would probably do for starters. This is not required, but is definitely useful.

The skies above the city of Amthydor are overcast and dim. The dull haze of grey seems to cover the sky, barely allowing you to see the outline of Sorena's Orb. The air is still, such that you feel a rainstorm is coming, but have no idea when it will break.

All about the city is a sense of subdued calm. Voices are quieter than usual, even in the busy Market Square. It is as if the entire city is waiting for something to happen...but what, you have no idea.

As you are going about your business, a messenger brings a scroll and asks for you by name. Once your identity is established, you are handed the scroll, which is marked with a wax seal.

Give out copies of **Player Handout #2** to everyone. If any PCs are illiterate, the messenger will read it to them.

PCs that make a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 10 for most, 5 for a divine-classed PC, automatic for those worshipping Galvandt) will recognize the seal as the holy symbol of the god Galvandt, god of vigilance.

The message is reproduced below.

“Your presence is requested at the Tower of Vigilance in the Temple District at noontime today. A matter of grave import has come to our attention, one that requires your services.

“We look forward to your attendance.

“Respectfully,

“High Guardian Miekauf Nactrune”

If a player at the table feels for some reason that another of their characters would be more suitable to play this event, allow the player to switch to that PC (who will receive the same message). Try to keep the character levels at the table as balanced as possible, though if the players avoid potential combats (as the author intends) it should not matter what the level spread is as much as in other modules.

Any interested PCs should proceed to the meeting in boxed text below. Any that show no interest will not play this module.

The Tower of Vigilance is located in the area in which Temple Row bends towards the Merchant District. Unlike most of the temples in the city, the Tower is built more like a keep than a temple. Its namesake tower rises above the rectangular stone structure, granting easy view of anyone approaching, be they friend or foe. The images of two open eyes are painted upon the tower facing each of the four cardinal directions, seeing all, missing nothing.

The temple of Galvandt had a strong following for several hundred years, though after the ravages of the recent undead infestation his following has seen a sharp decline since then.

Passing the watchful statue representing Galvandt himself, a sword in one hand, a large shield in the other, you enter the temple. Upon presenting yourselves, you are quickly welcomed and ushered into a conference chamber. A perfectly round table with several chairs awaits you, as do several other adventurers of the city.

Have the players introduce their characters. Try to encourage roleplaying, but don't force it...there will be plenty of roleplaying in this module. Knowing our average LSJ players, odds are they will have to be cut off after a few minutes to allow time for the adventure! ☺ When that time comes (5-10 minutes of RP at most), proceed as follows:

Your conversation is cut short by the arrival of your host. Though clothed in exquisite clerical robes, he carries himself as if fully armed and armored. His left arm is bent slightly, as if bearing a heavy shield. His sharp blue eyes snap towards each of you in rapid succession, taking note of your positions, the furniture arrangement, and the availability of any possible exits, in a mere fraction of a second. Brushing a stray black hair from his field of vision, he nods and motions anyone still standing to the waiting chairs.

“I am High Guardian Miekauf Nactrune, High Priest of the Tower of Vigilance. I thank you for coming. Please introduce yourselves, and tell me briefly how you prefer to deal with challenges when you go adventuring. Then I shall explain why I asked you here.

Nactrune is trying to determine whether he has a group of bashers, blasters, talkers or whatnot. He is hoping for a team that tries negotiation and discussion as an ideal method to deal with problems, but he will settle for what he gets.

Allow the PCs to make brief introductions. If anyone goes on beyond a reasonable length (no more than 30 seconds maximum), Nactrune will interrupt them by thanking them (sharply) and then asking the next person to make their introductions. If this isn't enough to quiet the long-winded PC, let him make an Intimidate check vs. their PC's modified level check (1d20 + character level or Hit

Dice + target's Wisdom bonus [if any] + target's modifiers on saves against fear). Nactrune has a +14 modifier to get the desired result. Fudge the roll if necessary. ☺

When the PCs are all done with introductions, Nactrune will explain the mission. Apologies to all for the long stretch of Boxed Text that follows.

“Very good. Now let me tell you why you are here. A matter of great import has come to my attention, a serious threat that will destroy our city. Against this threat there is only one man who can prevent this tragedy and save the city...and I fear he will be unable to do so without your intervention.

“During the recent undead uprising in the Poor District, a Diamond Legionnaire and paladin of Galvandt, Lieutenant Deverin Stark, was on guard duty outside the infested area. Stark and his men were ordered to remain at their post and prevent any undead from getting past their position until ordered otherwise. This task was difficult for Stark on more than one level. Not only did he have to hold the line against multiple waves of undead, but he also had to watch the horror that was unfolding and accept it while he remained at his post. This, I fear, proved to be his undoing.

“During a particularly long and difficult siege, he spotted some civilians fleeing the Poor District. They had been squatting there, despite the dangers of the undead, for lack of anyplace else to truly go, and in part out of sheer pride. It was clear that they would not escape without help.

Stark had a choice: he could stay at his post and help his unit maintain the line, or break from his position to try to save the civilians, knowing that doing so might doom his unit, and allow the undead to break through to the city beyond the Poor District.

“Having weighed the odds, he chose to maintain his position, realizing that to do otherwise would probably unleash a greater threat than the loss of a few civilians. He and his unit tried their best to

encourage the citizens' flight to safe territory, but the undead were everywhere, and the civilians were killed before they could reach the Legionnaires. Their dying screams echoed loud and long in his ears, and in the end, I believe, it broke his heart.

“Stark got through that day and others that followed, and performed his duties as befits a Legionnaire. But the choice he made haunted him, even though it was, in many ways, the only reasonable choice to make. Certainly his superiors agreed with his conduct and found no fault with his choice. But he began to question his judgment and his ability to perform his duties, both to the city and to his god, Galvandt. Thus began his long, slow slide into depression.

“Stark's change in attitude did not go unnoticed. While he had always been serious about the execution of his duties, he was of good spirit and had a fairly positive attitude. His friends and fellow soldiers noticed the change in him: he was dour and grim, rarely showing emotion. While his service was still professional and efficient, he seemed to be almost mechanical in his functioning, going through the motions of his job without any sense of zeal or enjoyment.

“Once the chaos of the Uprising had passed, his superiors tried to help him. He received clerical counseling to deal with his mental trauma, but nothing seemed to really help. There were few spells that could cure a crisis of faith or depression, and those could only help by removing the memory of what had caused them...a measure deemed too desperate to take, and morally questionable besides. In the end, to avoid potential danger to his fellow officers due to his emotional decline, the Diamond Legion transferred Stark to desk duty - but this only hastened his downward spiral.

“Perhaps the matter would have ended there, but the Gods have a way of interfering in the ways of mortals when it suits their purposes.

“Around this time Stark began having a recurring dream. First there would be an image

of a glistening, gleaming diamond resting upon a stone altar, with a near-infinite number of facets, shining like Sorena's Orb itself! Then a hammer came down upon the gem, shattering it into millions of tiny shards, extinguishing the light. Everything went pitch black, save for a pair of eyes, crying tears for the loss of the precious treasure. These eyes were present from start to finish, first admiring the gem, then helpless to do anything to save it.

“Kunis Veritas, a cloistered cleric of our Lord Galvandt, had been visiting Stark regularly and trying to guide him out of his depression. At Stark's request, the cleric cast a divination to help him determine what the dream meant. The result was far more dramatic than either of them could have hoped, for Kunis received this message:

“One threat to the Jewel of Raia has ended, but another shall come. In that time of need, Deverin Stark shall play a critical role in her defense. Without him, Amthydor shall surely fall. The city's future hinges upon his recovery.

“Heed the words of Lord Vigilance well, for if Deverin Stark falls, so shall fall the city. He must seek the path to duty once more, though what form that path may take, he must discover for himself.”

“The cleric reported this to me, and I discussed the matter with the upper echelons of the Quorum of Faith, the Diamond Legion, and the Lord Monarch and his aides. It was clear to all that Stark's recovery is now a matter of highest priority, for we know not the form this threat will take, or when it will come. But...how to help Stark find his way back to himself?

“After lengthy debate, it was decided that a holy pilgrimage to a monastery and sacred shrine of Galvandt, located in the Delambir Mountains south and west of Amthydor, was the best course of action. Taking the South Gate exit west will lead you to the path up into the mountains. Since Stark is not fit to defend himself, or likely to complete such a quest alone given his condition,

he will need guides to gently (but firmly) encourage him in his task, to defend him should the need arise, and to set an example to inspire him.

“This is the task I present to you. Are you prepared to accept it?”

The above text is reproduced in Player Handout #3. Pass it out to players so they can consult for details and inspiration during the module.

Obviously, PCs that choose not to help will be asked to leave at this point. The PC gains 0 XP and no treasure, though lifestyle money and time units are still spent. If the player feels another character would be a better choice for this task, give her the option to change PCs and continue the adventure.

Obviously the PCs will have some questions for the High Guardian.

➤ **What will we be paid?**

The High Guardian looks slightly disappointed, but not surprised. “We realize that compensation is usually in order, even when it should be obvious that the deed is in one's own best interests. You will be paid 500 gp each, and given food and water for the trip. Should you require mountaineering gear, this will be lent to you for the journey there and back.”

➤ **Can we have mounts/bring mounts?**

“For this mission, you must travel on foot. Quests of this nature require a little effort for the journey. Besides, a mountain trek is difficult at best even for the sturdiest of mounts.”

Clever players will also probably realize that this will force Stark to take the initiative, at least in keeping one foot in front of the other.

➤ **What is our travel plan?**

“You will head south towards the farming village of Rainsford, about a five mile walk on foot, probably a bit more in armor. We will pay for

overnight accommodations there, after which you will head west along the foothills of the Delambir Mountains.

“There are a number of rocky trails that lead north into the mountain range. You will be watching for a marker in the shape of a tower, with the open-eyed symbol of Our Lord Galvandt watching down upon you from the top. This indicates the trail you are to take. After that you will continue up the trail until you come to the monastery. Odds are it will take you two days on the mountain trail to reach your destination.”

Clever players will also probably realize that this will force Stark to take the initiative, at least in keeping one foot in front of the other.

➤ **What is our role in this pilgrimage?**

“You are to serve as guides and guardians, and more. I expect that Lt. Stark will not take the initiative without encouragement due to his condition. Indeed, he may not even talk much. Ideally he should be active on such a quest, but we feel that, in this case, what he learns is more important than what he does. Thus, it will fall to you to take action where needed, and decide what that course of action should be.”

➤ **How should we deal with Stark?**

“You will have to feel that out as best you can. He is not always responsive, so expect to be frustrated. Try to be encouraging, without being patronizing. He is not a child or a simpleton. He is a veteran of many battles and an experienced Legionnaire. He is also a man suffering from great spiritual malaise. Steady persistence is likely to be your best strategy in dealing with him. Remember, he will observe everything you say and do on this journey, so your choices will make a difference, whether you see the results or not.”

➤ **What will happen? What tests will he/we face on this pilgrimage?**

“That I do not know. I do know that you will face tests of virtue, but how many and what kind I cannot say. Remember, you must set an example for Lt. Stark in how you deal with these challenges. Beyond that, I cannot give you

guidance. It is enough that Galvandt has seen fit to tell us what needs doing. He does not expect us to ask for every last instruction on how to do it!”

➤ **What happens if we fail/if he doesn't come out of his depression?**

“Then we will someday see our beloved Jewel shattered beyond salvation, as has been foretold.”

When questioning is done:

“I don't think it is necessary to point out the gravity of the situation. Should Lt. Stark not recover, the consequences will be dire for the future of Amthydor. Please...do not fail us.

“Report to the south gate in two hours. I will meet you there with Lt. Stark and the supplies you will need for the trip. That will be all for now.”

At this time allow PCs to make Shopping Spree purchases and make any other preparations for the journey. Then proceed with the following text

You make your way through the streets to the south gate, the one closest to the Delambir Mountain Range, which exits directly into the western trade road. You see two men, mounted on horses, waiting for you. One is High Guardian Miekauf Nactrune. The other is a stocky, barrel-chested man with long brown hair and a shaggy beard and mustache. He wears gleaming breastplate that bears prominently the holy symbol of Galvandt, two eyes overlooking a tower. Across his back is strapped a scabbarded two-handed sword.

You immediately note that, while his armor is gleaming, there is no such spark in his eyes. Indeed, looking at him, you would take his dull, emotionless gaze at first to be that of one entranced, or perhaps a well-preserved undead.

“Lt. Deverin Stark, this is your escort. They will see you through to the shrine you seek. Friends, please introduce yourselves.

Stark's reaction will be the same for any PC that addresses him or tries to meet his gaze: a steady, dead glare that does not change until the PC in

question looks away. Try to simulate this gaze yourself to make the player have this reaction (try not to blink if possible). He will not speak at this time.

Unless otherwise directed in future text, have him do this with the PCs consistently. This should give the impression that Stark is a very disturbed individual, and drive home the gravity of the situation.

“Well, then, I suppose that will be all,” says High Guardian Nactrune. He asks Lt. Stark to dismount, which he does slowly. “I wish you good luck on your journey. May the Guardian’s eyes never close upon you.” He then takes the reins of Stark’s horse and rides off, leaving you with your charge.

As noted above, Stark is minimally responsive at first. If directed to go with the PC group, he will do so robotically, with no affect or enthusiasm.

- Allow a few minutes for the PCs try to counsel Stark or foster his emotional healing, **GO TO GM Handout 1.**
- To continue the journey, **GO TO Encounter 1.**

Encounter 1 – A Friendly Face

After departing the city, you travel south on the trade road. You expect to take about a day heading south, stop at the farming village of Rainsford, and then head west until you see signs of the mountain trail you seek.

The sky is overcast and hazy, with moisture hanging heavy in the air, as if to mirror Lt. Stark’s mood.

Suddenly, you feel a mild tremor under your feet. It is soon followed by another, then another, building quickly in intensity!

Pause to allow reactions. Most likely PCs will look around for the cause, or try to seek shelter. The answer is found in the next boxed text below!

The source of the earth tremors soon becomes obvious. Around the next bend in the road comes the biggest cart you have ever seen...easily 30 feet tall and wide, and twice as long! And pulling it is the biggest man you have ever seen, easily 40 feet tall, with legs and arms thicker than redwood trees! The steady rise and fall of his footsteps is the obvious source of the earth tremors.

This is Olek, a friendly giant that has taken up residence in Amthydor in the last several months. He has been a great boon to the city, clearing out much of the debris from recent troubles and demolishing buildings deemed unsalvageable. Now he is quarrying large boulders and blocks of stone from the mountains to be carved and shaped for new buildings.

Any PC that is NOT familiar with Olek from previous modules will have heard all this already. It is just not possible to be in the city of Amthydor for any length of time without having heard about Olek! No skill checks are required for this knowledge.

The cart Olek pulls (he is strapped to it like a work horse) is massive, made from specially treated darkwood and reinforced with steel. If anyone tries to examine the cart with relevant skills, this is what they determine.

If any players complain that such a cart would not be structurally sound enough to bear the weight of that volume of solid stone, gently remind them that the author is more concerned about the plot than trying to be scientifically accurate in a module with a 60-foot friendly giant, magic-wielding heroes, and fictional gods that actively watch over their heroic champions. Then continue with the module! ☺

The PCs may have questions for Olek. Answers are given below. Roleplaying Olek is easy and fun. He’s a bit slow in the head, kind-hearted to a fault, and speaks in a loud, booming voice. Oh, and he considers all humanoids, regardless of race, to be “HOOMINS!”

- **“What are you doing here?”**

“OH, OLEK HELPING DA HOOMINS OF DA CITY! DEY SAY WE NEED LOTSA BIG ROCKS AN’ BOULDERS TA BUILD NEW

BUILDIN'S IN DA POOR PLACE, SO DEY SENT OLEK OUT TA GET LOTS A ROCKS TA BRING BACK! OLEK GOOD AT FINDING ROCKS, OLEK IS! OLEK GOOD AT THROWING ROCKS, SO THIS EASY FOR OLEK! OLEK PROUD TO BE OF HELP!

"SAY, WHY IS YOU HOOMINS HERE?"

This is as good a hook as the author can think of to get the PCs to explain their mission! Assuming they do so, Olek will have a gem of wisdom to share with them:

"HMMM...THAT TOO BAD! OLEK UNDERSTAND WHY HE SO SAD. OLEK MAKE MISTAKES TOO. MANY TIMES OLEK GET ATTACKED BY HOOMINS WHAT WANTED OLEK'S TREASURE, OR JUST WANTED OLEK DEAD. AN' OLEK PLINKED THEM REAL GOOD! BUT OLEK SOMETIMES PLINKED GOOD GUYS, AND THAT MADE OLEK SAD!

"SO OLEK TALKED TO HIS MOMMY, AND SHE SAID THAT OLEK WAS NOT BAD, JUST DEFENDING HIMSELF. MOMMY HAD MADE MISTAKES TOO, BUT THAT DIDN'T MAKE HER A BAD PERSON. SO SHE SAID THAT, IF OLEK WASN'T SURE IF HOOMINS WUZ GOOD OR EVIL, HE SHOULD JUST BE GENTLER UNTIL HE KNEW FOR SURE, OR JUST RUN AWAY! SO OLEK LISTENED AND DID WHAT SHE SAID, AND OLEK FELT MUCH BETTER!

"TALKING TO MOMMY MADE OLEK FEEL BETTER. SO DID HEARING WHAT MOMMY SAID. SO MAYBE IF YOU TALK TO YOUR SHINY FRIEND ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS AN' MISTAKES, OR SOMEONE ELSE'S, HE MIGHT FEEL BETTER TOO!"

While Olek will continue to chat with the PCs if they wish, this is their cue to take action.

The key to passing the Test of Openness is for each PC (at least half of the party) to share their own experiences of loss, failure, or mistakes from the

past, preferably with the understanding that they grew from the experience and learned to move past it.

NOTE: This test does NOT have to be passed right here and now. Some players might need time to digest this challenge and come up with an appropriate story to share. As long as the PCs share stories before they reach the monastery, you can count it towards success on this test.

This kind of test is easier for some players than others. If they seem to be having trouble thinking of ideas, you can suggest (out of character) that they try drawing upon real-life experiences of their own, or of other people they know, to make part of their PC's personal history.

As long as at least half the group at the table shares this kind of story with Stark before reaching the monastery, the group will pass the Test of Openness.

When the party is ready to move on:

"THAT SOUNDS REAL GOOD! I HOPE DIS SHARIN' DOES DA TRICK! YOU IS GOOD PEOPLES, SO OLEK WILL REWARD YOU FOR YER KINDNESS!" *He pulls something out of a bag dangling from his hip and carefully places it before the party.*

Olek gives the party a *gray bag of tricks*.

"WELL, OLEK GOTTA GET MOVIN' AGAIN! DESE ROCKS AIN'T GONNA GET TO AMMIE-DOOR BY DEMSELVES! SO LONG, HOOMINS, AN' GOOD LUCK!" *With that, the gentle giant grabs the huge straps binding him to the cart, gives them a hearty tug, and starts stomping north, until the only trace of his passing is a receding vibration on the ground.*

Lt. Stark watches him go, then turns and heads south down the road. Whether he is self-absorbed or deep in thought is difficult to tell. A few short hours later, the sun's rays turning golden with the coming sunset, you come to the farming community of Rainsford. The workers

are absent from the fields, no doubt done with their chores before the evening meal. Children run playing in open fields as you pass, and farmhands make their way towards "The Farmer's Rest," a local tavern and inn. The aroma of warm soup and sour ale wafts towards you, leading you inside.

Meals and accommodations are covered for this stop (Lt. Stark will present a letter and pay). Food offerings include a mixed vegetable salad with farmer's cheese, roast chicken with fried sliced potatoes, and rhubarb pie for dessert. Beverages include water, milk, beer, ale, or a choice of wine from the Halerpin Winery: either Honeygrape (a golden wine, similar to a Chardonnay, very buttery and crisp) or Helena (a light, fruity red wine very much like a Beaujolais).

There is a temple of Cerion in the center of town. While it has small outdoor shrines to the other Quorum of Faith deities, there are no clerics or druids of those faiths here to represent worshippers. PCs may purchase divine spells at the temple as per the **LSJ CCG**.

This is an excellent opportunity for the PCs to talk to Lt. Stark...

- Have the party stop for the night, and allow efforts by the PCs to draw Stark into conversation. **GO TO GM Handout 1.**
- After that, **GO TO Encounter 2.**

TROUBLESHOOTING: Attacking Olek

It is possible that PCs might try to attack Olek. I can't imagine why, but that isn't important here. How to DEAL with it IS.

If only one or two PCs attack Olek, their attacks will have no effect. He is just too darned powerful for the PCs to have a chance of really hurting him, even at higher ATLS. Assume he makes all of his saving throws against PC-cast spells (roll a die and just ignore what comes up). Play this up for comic effect. If the PCs can't muster significant damage (at least 30 points in a round) then he will just

ignore the offenders and continue talking to the rest of the party.

If the offending PCs cast spells that deal more than 10-20 points of damage a round, or if the entire party attacks Olek (heaven forbid!), he will just ignore "the silly hoomins," tell them that they're lucky he is too busy to "plink" them, and start dragging the cart off to Amthydor again.

Needless to say, they will have failed the test of Openness!

If you need then, Olek's stats are printed below.

⚔ Olek the Tor Giant: Colossal Giant; HD 32d8+448; hp 592; Init +0; Spd 80 ft.; AC 30 (-8 size, +28 natural), touch 2, flat-footed 30; BAB/Grapple: +24/+27; Atk: Giant club +36 melee (4d8+25, 19-20/x2) or slam +33 melee (2d8+17) or rock +16 ranged (4d8+17); Full Atk: Giant club +33/+28/+23/+18 melee (4d8+25, 19-20/x2) or 2 slams +33 each melee (2d8+17) or rock +16 ranged (4d8+17); Space/Reach: 30 ft./40 ft.; SA: Rock throwing, trample 4d8+25; SQ: Darkvision 60', damage reduction 5/piercing or slashing, rock catching, scent, tremorsense; AL: CG; SV: Fort +32, Ref +9, Will +9; Str 45, Dex 10, Con 38, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +17, Intimidate +10, Jump +17, Listen +14, Spot +14, Survival +12; Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (giant club), Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Rock Throwing (Ex): The range increment is 200 feet for a tor giant's thrown rocks.

Olek's stats are provided mainly for the DM to see how immense Olek is. He's big. Really, really big. Specifically, Olek is forty feet in height and weighs close to twenty-five tons. His special abilities are not elaborated on mainly because it's doubtful the PCs could have anything in their arsenals to slow Olek down for longer than a round. The players should get the idea quickly that Olek is a plot device, and not something that should be fought. If not, let the dice (and the PCs) fall where they may.

Encounter 2 – None Are So Blind

Refreshed after a night's rest, you enjoy a breakfast of eggs and griddle-cakes before continuing your journey. You make good time, despite Lt. Stark's lack of enthusiasm, and you expect to make it to the mountain trail by early afternoon.

Call for Listen checks. Whoever gets DC 20 or higher (or the highest roll if no one can make 20) hears grunts and sounds of pain coming from the nearby woods.

If the PCs bypass this encounter, continue with Encounter 3. The PCs fail the test of Acceptance.

Assuming they do the right thing, continue below. Allow any PCs that ask to use their Tracking feat to do so. Success (DC 10) indicates a single humanoid figure, walking with a staff. With a DC 20, the figure's movements appear to be a bit erratic and halting. DC 30+ reveals that he or she is probably blind.

Do your best to get through this Boxed Text before PCs can speak to point out where his staff is, as this is crucial to the test. Delay the Spot checks to find it until you are done. If necessary, interrupt the first paragraph and have the man (Ronal) shout out the second paragraph right away, ignoring the PCs' statements.

Following the sounds you heard, you traverse the woods south of the road. After a few minutes you find the source. A middle-aged man, wearing old, dirty furs and a cloak, appears to have tripped over something and fallen. His hands reach out, grasping at empty air, apparently seeking something. When he lifts his head up to shout "Darn tree roots! Keep growin' out on me!" you can clearly see his eyes are glazed over white, unseeing.

At your approach, the man stops his searching and turns his head in your direction. "I know yer there. If ye ain't plannin' ta kill or rob me, jest sit tight a spell. I been livin' out here fer over thirty years, an' I don't need anyone's help ta get around!"

If anyone asks to look around, a Spot check (DC

10) reveals that his walking staff has rolled about 10 feet away to his right. He is currently checking in the wrong direction.

The test of Acceptance is to realize that the man, despite appearances, is capable of dealing with this task on his own, without help. Accepting both his circumstances and his ability to deal with his problem lets the PCs pass the test.

- **If the PCs insist on helping** (telling him where his staff is, getting it for him, helping him up):

"Blast ye! I said I don't need no help! If I was bein' attacked by a horde of orcs, or needed ta read a road sign, I'd be mighty grateful...but I can find my own blasted staff! I know you sighted folk tend ta be impatient, but us blind folk learn ta wait an' handle things in their due course!"

- **If the PCs wait and let Ronal find his own staff:**

After a few minutes of fumbling around, the man grasps his staff and gets up on his feet. "Thank ye, good travelers! I appreciate yer patience. Most folk ain't got none, which is why I prefer livin' out here alone!"

If the PCs talk further, they will find out the following: Ronal is a woodsman. He misspent his youth adventuring. One of his misadventures resulted in his contracting an illness that left him blind. He decided to retire to the woods he loves, and has been happy here since, living off the bounty of nature and maintaining the balance in his own small territory. He's not much of a people person, but he won't complain about talking with the PCs if they are respectful to him...moreso if they respected his ability to take care of himself!

- **If the PCs offer to cure Ronal's blindness:**

"Nah. I been blind fer over twenty years. I get along just fine, an' I don't feel the need fer curin'."

Hopefully the PCs will take the hint. Anyone that cures him will just anger him, even though he will enjoy having his sight back later on.

- **If the PCs apologize after helping Ronal**, let them make a Diplomacy check (DC 10 + ATL). If they succeed, he will calm down and still reward them with the goggles below. This still means that the PCs fail the Test of Acceptance.
- **If the PCs let Ronal handle his own problems and don't cure his blindness, or apologize for their intrusion successfully:**

“Well, ye seem decent folk. I hope ye kin solve yer problem. Tell ya what, I don't need this thing anymore, go ahead and take it. Heh, day and night are more or less the same thing to me!”

He offers the PCs a set of goggles of minute seeing.

End the encounter as follows, whether the party succeeds or not:

“Well, I gots things to be doing, and I'm sure you do as well! Best be on our separate ways, then. Until swords part!” And he makes his way off into the woods.

- Have the party stop for a rest break to allow efforts by the PCs to draw Stark into conversation. **GO TO GM Handout 1.**
- After that, **GO TO Encounter 3.**

Encounter 3 – Interview with the Vampire

After a few short hours of hiking, you come across the marker stone you were told to expect, perhaps three feet tall, with the open-eyed symbol of Galvandt upon the top of the small rectangular tower. The eyes appear upon all four sides, as if to make clear that the Divine Guardian's gaze sees everything in all directions.

Call for Spot checks. Whoever gets DC 20 or higher (or the highest roll if no one can make 20) sees a body lying in the tall grass near the tree line. Investigation reveals that it is a dying fawn (young deer), currently at 3 Constitution and -6 hit points. A Heal check (DC 15) will reveal that it has suffered from massive blood loss, sometime within the last 24 hours. However, there is no sign of the missing blood anywhere. A Heal or Search check (DC 20) will reveal two small holes on its neck. The animal can be stabilized with a Heal check (DC 15) or with any magical healing. Since this drain is due to blood loss, a *lesser restoration* or *restoration* spell will restore some or all of the foal's lost Constitution, depending on which spell is cast.

If a speak with animals spell is cast, the fawn can share the following information.

- **“What happened to you/How were you hurt?”**

“A two-leg came, friend. I watched it and couldn't move. It came and bit me. I felt sick and lay down to sleep.”

- **“Where did the two-leg come from/Where did it go?”**

“I didn't see. It was just there.”

After a short questioning period, the fawn says that he should go as his mother is probably worried about him. Depending how fully he was healed by the party, he will either bound off or walk away slowly and weakly.

If the PCs decide to head up the mountain trail, then proceed to the end of this encounter. They fail the test of Flexibility.

Assuming they realize this is important, it shouldn't take a Knowledge (religion) check to realize that a vampire is active in the area. A Survival check (DC 11 + ATL if the PC has the Track feat, or 16 + ATL without it) will allow the party to track the culprit. About 20 minutes before sundown, they will find a shallow grave that serves as the vampire's resting place.

If they wish to do so, the PCs can dig up the vampire and try to stake it through the heart (there

is plenty of wood around to fashion a stake while the grave is dug up) just before it would awaken at sunset...they are VERY close to that time right now.

Before the PCs can make any decisions, they will be in for a shock: Lt. Stark, regardless of his current condition and functioning, will reach into his pack, take out a spade, and start shoveling up the grave!

If the PCs ask what he is doing, he pulls out a stake and points it down towards the grave.

In order to pass the test, they will have to get Stark to calm down and consider the possibility that, despite all they have seen of undead in Amthydor, this might be the one time to try talking to it. Allow them to present possible arguments (it fed on an animal, not a person; the fawn was not killed), and then have the party make Diplomacy checks (DC 20 + ATL) to calm him down. Multiple attempts may be made, but unless they take at least one full minute on the attempt there is a -10 penalty for a fast-attempt.

If they succeed, Stark stops and will follow the party's lead, whatever it may be. He will clearly be incensed. If they fail, then he will continue to dig up the grave and then try to stake the vampire. If the party tries to stop him (grappling him, for example, or using spells), fake an opposed roll (grapple check, saving throw, whatever) and say that he failed. If not, continue for as many rounds as the players are willing to take to stop Stark. **Stark will not attack the PCs, only try to resist them and dig up the vampire to stake.**

If the players fail to stop Stark, modify the boxed text below describing the staking.

Assuming the players pacify Stark, continue the encounter below.

There is nothing to prevent the PCs from staking the vampire right off the bat, but that choice causes them to fail the test of Flexibility, which requires one to consider alternate courses of action rather than the easy, automatic response. Admittedly, the only hint that this might not be necessary is that the vampire is feeding off of animals rather than people, and that it did not outright kill the foal.

But no one ever said that these tests were supposed to be that easy!

➤ **If the PCs detect evil on the grave or the vampire:**

They will get a faint sense of evil, but not the strong sense they would expect to get from an evil vampire.

➤ **If the PCs do not dig up the vampire:**

This should only happen if they decide to wait for the vampire to rise up from its makeshift grave. If this happens, then right after the sun sets, a mist will form over the grave, rising up and resolving into a figure. Set up a battle mat so PCs can take positions around the grave.

As the sun sets, leaving you in the dim twilight of evening, a thick, curling mist rises up from the grave, slowly solidifying into a human body, dressed in dirty workman's clothes, for. His skin is pale and cold, a look of calm serenity upon his pallid face. Regaining his awareness, he turns his dull, red eyes towards you with curiosity

Ask the players what they wish to do. If they are in agreement, then proceed with the choice listed below. If they are not all in agreement, then ask them to roll initiative to see what happens.

➤ **If the PCs dig up the vampire:**

After much effort, you clear the dirt from the shallow grave to reveal a human body, dressed in dirty workman's clothes. His skin is pale and cold, arms folded over his heart, a look of calm serenity upon his pallid face. As you note this, you realize that the last fading rays of the sun are disappearing over the horizon!

Ask the players what they wish to do. If they are in agreement, then proceed with the choice listed below. If they are not all in agreement, then ask them to roll initiative to see what happens.

- **If the PCs stake the vampire before it awakens:**

Knowing that time is of the essence, (insert name of PC with stake) places the tip of the wooden stake upon the vampire's chest. (He/she) raises a mallet high, then drives it down with a force born of sheer determination...and perhaps more than a little fear...and with a sickening CRUNCH drives the stake through the vampire's heart!

Awakening too late, the creature scrambles weakly at your arms, but it is too late to do any good. A second blow with the mallet finishes the job, piercing what is left of the vampire's heart and pinning it to the ground below.

Ask the players what they wish to do now. If they want to complete the job, all they have to do is cut off the vampire's head and burn both ends in separate funeral pyres, and then scatter the ashes to the four corners of the world (well, in four directions in any event). They might choose instead to revive the vampire, in which case they can try to talk with it (unlikely at this point, but if they remove the stake, the vampire will be so surprised that it was allowed to live that it will ask the PCs why rather than running away first. If attacked again, it WILL try to flee!

If the PCs search for treasure, all they find is a simple chain-linked pendant around its neck, with a pewter heart hanging from it. It is nonmagical and unremarkable.

- **If the PCs attack the vampire when it is awake:**

Conduct the combat normally. This is not a particularly powerful vampire, as it had Commoner levels before it was turned into an undead. Even so, it will prove a challenge to any party, and has full command of its vampiric abilities. If reduced to ¼ or less of its total hit points, it will turn into mist form and attempt to flee into the forest.

If the PCs decide to halt combat to try to talk to the vampire (Diplomacy check, DC 25), it will do so cautiously (new attitude: Indifferent). Any attack from this point on will ruin any attempts at parley,

as it will not trust them a second time.

- **If the PCs try to talk to the vampire:**

The creature will be willing to talk to the PCs. Possible questions and answers follow:

- **Who are you?**

"My name is Daniel Awan. I am...or rather, I WAS...a laborer in Amthydor. I was one of many that chose to stay in the Poor District, despite the dangers of the undead creatures that infested it. Poor choice on my part, I know.

"I was claimed as a spawn of one of the many vampires that hid in my former home. When my master was killed during the time of Great Darkness, I was freed from his control, and was able to flee before the Diamond Legion found me. Not wishing to cause further trouble or face attacks from righteous undead hunters, I instead chose to leave the city and try to live out the rest of my life...unlife?...out here in the wilderness. Animal blood is not my first choice, but it does keep me alive. I suppose it's better than starving myself until I lose control of my hunger and attack people in the farmsteads.

- **You are not evil?**

"There is evil within my undead body, I suppose, but it is not what I would wish. Though had you attacked or killed me I wouldn't blame you for doing it. I hated undead before I became one."

- **Have you ever killed people?**

"When I was a thrall of my master, I did as he commanded. I regret that his commands were to slay living people. I regret that action, though I realize now that I had no choice but to obey. I have accepted this and learned to...live...with it."

- **Why don't you just end your existence?**

"That's easier said than done. I can't very well stake myself, and I don't relish the thought of

burning to death in the sun's rays, or by taking a bath in a raging river...I may be dead, but I CAN feel pain. It just takes a lot of effort nowadays.

“And...I can't help but wonder if I'm this way for a REASON. I mean, I was never anybody special. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. By all rights, I should be a slaving monster. But for some reason, I'm more than that. I am somehow still part-human, at least in spirit. And I don't KNOW if I even have a soul anymore! I don't know...I just didn't want to give up when there might be hope for something better in the future...gods help me, I just don't know.”

➤ **Will you let us lay you to rest?**

Let the PCs make a Diplomacy check for this. The DC will depend on how the PCs dealt with Daniel previously.

- ◇ Attacked Daniel previously: DC 50
- ◇ Staked and revived Daniel: DC 35
- ◇ Never attacked Daniel: DC 20

Good arguments from PCs can reduce the DC by as much as 5 points. Likewise, insulting and belligerent attitudes can increase the DC by as much as 5 points. This is at the GM's discretion.

➤ **If the PCs make the DC needed**, Daniel will allow them to give him a final rest. Before doing so, he will say the following:

“I suppose the gods have chosen this fate for me, otherwise we would never have met. Very well, then, I shall allow you to end this living hell. But before you do that, I ask one final boon.” He removes a chain-linked pendant, with a heart-shaped pewter locket, from around his neck and offers it to you.

“This was a gift from my love, Veronica Blythe. She fled the Poor District, begging me to go with her. How I wish now that I had. Please return this to her, if she still lives. Do not tell her what I became...just let her know that I am at peace with the gods now, and that she can go on with her life, with my blessing. If I still have a soul, it will be at ease when I die for good.”

After this, Daniel will lie down on the ground, close his eyes, and allow the PCs to do their work. He may be disposed of as noted above to prevent his return.

➤ **If the PCs do NOT make the DC needed**, Daniel will not allow them to give him a final rest. This may result in combat, which is resolved as noted above. If, instead, the PCs decide to let him continue his existence as a vampire (he is willing to promise or swear not to attack intelligent creatures or drink their blood), read the following

“Thank you for your concern, but I believe that the gods have chosen this fate for me for a reason, and I would not question their judgment. But before I leave, I ask one final boon.” He removes a chain-linked pendant, with a heart-shaped pewter locket, from around his neck and offers it to you.

“This was a gift from my love, Veronica Blythe. She fled the Poor District, begging me to go with her. How I wish now that I had. Please return this to her, if she still lives. Do not tell her what I became...just let her know that I am at peace with the gods now, and that she can go on with her life, with my blessing. If I still have a soul, it will be at ease when I die for good.”

After this, Daniel will turn into mist and float away into the woods.

Passing the Test of Flexibility: The PCs pass the test if they pause to talk to Daniel and consider options other than destroying him, even if they end up destroying him in the end.

Troubleshooting: Alternate “Win” Scenario

While killing the vampire technically counts as a failure of the test, an alternate means of getting a “passing test mark” is possible. If the PCs specifically state that they have Stark himself do the staking, then he will find some measure of peace and resolve. This will give them a bonus point on the scoring of the five tests, even if, technically, they fail the Test of Flexibility.

Resolution: When the encounter is done, continue as follows.

- Have the party stop for the night to allow efforts by the PCs to draw Stark into conversation. **GO TO GM Handout #1.**
- After that, **GO TO Encounter 4.**

Stat blocks for Daniel Awan follow if combat should break out.

ATL 1

⚔ **Daniel Awan, Com1, Vampire:** CR 2; Medium-Size Undead (6 ft tall); HD 1d12; hp 12; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved. Initiative.); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +0/+3; Atk/Full Atk slam +3 (1d6+4); SA Blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, domination, energy drain 2 negative levels, SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Craft (carpentry) +6, Hide +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +15; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (craft: carpentry).

Note: At ATL 1, Daniel has no Energy Drain attacks. The DC vs. vampire special attacks is 12.

ATL 3

⚔ **Daniel Awan, Com2, Vampire:** CR 3; Medium-Size Undead (6 ft tall); HD 2d12; hp 24; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved. Initiative.); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +1/+4; Atk/Full Atk slam +4 (1d6+4 + energy drain); SA Blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, domination, energy drain, SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL N; SV Fort

+0, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 15, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Craft (carpentry) +7, Hide +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +16; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Craft: carpentry).

Note: At ATL 3, Daniel's Energy Drain attack only bestows one negative level per hit. The DC vs. vampire special attacks is 13.

ATL 5

⚔ **Daniel Awan, Com4, Vampire:** CR 5; Medium-Size Undead (6 ft tall); HD 4d12; hp 40; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved. Initiative.); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +2/+5; Atk/Full Atk slam +5 (1d6+4 + energy drain); SA Blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, domination, energy drain, SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 16, Dex 16, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Craft (carpentry) +9, Hide +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +18; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Craft: carpentry).

Note: The DC vs. vampire special attacks is 14.

ATL 7

⚔ **Daniel Awan, Com6, Vampire:** CR 7; Medium-Size Undead (6 ft tall); HD 6d12; hp 56; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved. Initiative.); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +3/+6; Atk/Full Atk slam +6 (1d6+4 + energy drain); SA Blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, domination, energy drain, SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 16, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Craft (carpentry) +11, Hide +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +20; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Craft: carpentry).

Note: The DC vs. vampire special attacks is 15.

ATL 9

⚔ **Daniel Awan, Com8, Vampire:** CR 9; Medium-Size Undead (6 ft tall); HD 8d12; hp 72; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved. Initiative.); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +4/+7; Atk/Full Atk slam +7 (1d6+4 + energy drain); SA Blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, domination, energy drain, SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 16, Dex 16, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Craft (carpentry) +13, Hide +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +22; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Craft: carpentry).

Note: The DC vs. vampire special attacks is 16.

ATL 11 and 13

⚔ **Daniel Awan, Com12, Vampire:** CR 13; Medium-Size Undead (6 ft tall); HD 12d12; hp 104; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved. Initiative.); Spd 30 ft; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16; BAB/Grp +6/+9; Atk slam +9 (1d6+4 + energy drain); Full Atk slam +9/+4 (1d6+4 + energy drain); SA Blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, domination, energy drain, SQ Alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver and magic, darkvision 60 ft, fast healing 5, gaseous form, resistance to cold 10 and electricity 10, spider climb, +4 turn resistance, undead traits, vampire weaknesses; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 16, Con -, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10, Craft (carpentry) +17, Hide +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +26; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Skill Focus (Craft: carpentry).

Note: The DC vs. vampire special attacks is 19.

Vampire Powers

Alternate Form (Su): A vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise. (If the base creature is not terrestrial, this power might allow other forms.)

Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round. On each such successful drain attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

Children of the Night (Su): Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and

serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

Domination (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a DC 14 Will save or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a dominate person spell from a 5th-level caster. The ability has a range of 30 feet. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack gain negative levels. The DC is 14 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level for vampire spawn or leaders. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the vampire spawn gains 5 temporary hit points.

Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire spawn heals 2 points of damage each round so long as it has at least 1 hit point (a vampire leader heals 5 points per round). If reduced to 0 hit points in combat, it automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin home within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. (It can travel up to nine miles in 2 hours.) Once at rest in its coffin, it is helpless. It regains 1 hit point after 1 hour, then is no longer helpless and resumes healing at the rate of 2 hit points per round.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 6th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Undead Traits (Ex): Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralyzation, stunning, disease, and necromantic effects. Not subject to critical hits, sneak attacks, ability damage, ability drain, or energy drain.

Skills: Vampires have a +8 racial bonus on Bluff, Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, Sense Motive, and Spot checks.

Vampire Weaknesses

Repelling a Vampire: Vampires cannot tolerate the strong odor of garlic and will not enter an area laced with it. Similarly, they recoil from a mirror or a strongly presented holy symbol. These things don't harm the vampire—they merely keep it at bay. A recoiling vampire must stay at least 5 feet away from a creature holding the mirror or holy symbol and cannot touch or make melee attacks against the creature holding the item for the rest of the encounter. Holding a vampire at bay takes a standard action.

Vampires are also unable to cross running water, although they can be carried over it while resting in their coffins or aboard a ship.

They are utterly unable to enter a home or other building unless invited in by someone with the authority to do so. They may freely enter public places, since these are by definition open to all.

Slaying a Vampire: Reducing a vampire's hit points to 0 or lower incapacitates it but doesn't always destroy it (see the note on fast healing). However, certain attacks can slay vampires. Exposing any vampire to direct sunlight disorients it: It can take only a single move action or attack action and is destroyed utterly in the next round if it cannot escape. Similarly, immersing a vampire in running water robs it of one-third of its hit points each round until it is destroyed at the end of the third round of immersion. Driving a wooden stake through a vampire's heart instantly slays the monster. However, it returns to life if the stake is removed, unless the body is destroyed. A popular tactic is to cut off the creature's head and fill its mouth with holy wafers (or their equivalent).

Encounter 4 – Summit on the Summit

Having dealt with matters below, you begin the slow trek up the mountain trail. The going is slow, the trail rocky and broken, and you are glad that you did not bring mounts with you, for they would surely become lame or worse trying to navigate this difficult path.

After many hours of navigating the sharp, stony path, you find yourselves hoping for a convenient place to stop and rest. Perhaps luck will be with you soon!

Call for Listen checks. Whoever gets DC 20 or higher (or the highest roll if no one can make a roll of 20 or higher) will hear voices talking about a quarter mile ahead. PCs that know elven will recognize the language, although they will have to get closer to make out any conversation beyond a few words.

You appear to have reached a flat, clear area on the mountain path. It also appears that you are not the first to do so this day! Seated about a fire pit are five elves, one of each of the five elven sub-races: forest, sky, desert, sea, and high elf. At your approach, they pause in their conversation and look your way.

Hopefully the PCs will not be inclined to attack the elves. Should this happen, don't bother actually rolling out combat. These elves are powerful enough that you can narrate the party's defeat. Feel free to embellish the elves' various combat and magical skills, and use spells more powerful than the party could possibly muster! The PCs will awaken hours later, sore but alive, with all of their gear intact, but they fail the test of Responsibility.

Assuming they approach this as a role-playing encounter, continue as follows. Consult the Elf Party Sidebar for roleplaying notes and descriptions.

“Welcome and well, met, strangers,” says the sky elf. “I am Elzaphan Altaira, a lorekeeper of my people. My companions are Lady Rhiannon

Aaleyah, of House Aaleyah of the High Elves,” he says, nodding to the high elven woman, “Dorissa Undiria, a Holy of Ardra,” indicating the sea elf, “Zanorah Marut, from Zur’Oun, the Sea of Fire,” of the desert elf, “and Harosheth Daegalen, a dweller of the woodlands,” of the forest elf.

“We bid you greetings, and ask that you join us in breaking bread and sharing of conversation.”

Suspicious PCs will probably try to *detect evil*, Sense Motive, or whatever else they think is necessary. These elves are exactly what they appear to be, and not evil.

They will expect the PCs to make their own introductions. Most of the elves will not mind the PCs' intrusion on their camp. Zanorah will be somewhat suspicious, but tolerant. Rhiannon will be visibly annoyed, but say nothing out of politeness. She will, however, listen carefully to what the PCs have to say, regardless of whether or not they agree with her.

The elves will share their food with the PCs (a boar that Harosheth hunted and killed earlier today) and excellent elven wine, clear and fruity, smooth with a light aftertaste.

It is likely that the PCs will have questions for them, which the elves will politely delay until the meal is finished (it's rather hard to be at your best with a mouthful of roast boar).

➤ **What are you doing here?**

“We are old adventuring companions,” answers the feathered Elzaphan. “We gather in this area every few years to share tales, catch up on our life stories, and enjoy each others' company. We journey in different parts of Raia each time, exploring it together as we did in days of old. This time we chose the Amthydor Protectorate, as determined by a very scholarly and impartial game of darts.”

➤ **Is there a special reason for being in the Amthydor area?**

“Not really. But you never know where you will find excitement and adventure! Perhaps it will be here, perhaps elsewhere.”

➤ **What do you think we should do about Lt. Stark?** (assuming they share his tale of woe)

Each of the elves sits a while and ponders Lt. Stark’s story. One by one, they give their answers.

Lady Rhiannon speaks, her regal voice strong but icy. “One cannot, and should not, fault oneself for doing their duty. Any conflict with duty prevents one from carrying it out. It is unfortunate that others suffered, but these people chose to stay in a dangerous situation, and they paid the price for it. It is not Lt. Stark’s fault that they did so, nor his fault that he was otherwise engaged and unable to safeguard them. He is foolish to waste his energies on fruitless regrets. The blame for their deaths lies not with him, only the blame for his continual denial of his own needs and duties.”

Elzaphan answers Lady Rhiannon, in a voice that lilts like a soft birdsong. “Your words ring with wisdom, dear Lady, but not compassion. It speaks well of the good Lieutenant that he not only dispenses his duty, but cares deeply, perhaps too deeply, for his charges. Without that compassion and caring, he would have been no more effective in his duties than an unliving automaton. Indeed, this is the danger he faces now.”

Zanorah speaks next, her voice dry as a desert wind. “Life, like the desert I call home, constantly tests all that dwell upon Raia. Each must be tempered in the heat of the environment, and face its dangers. Only by accepting these hardships and choosing to overcome them can one thrive and survive. It is through this adversity that, like a blade in the forge’s fire, we are all tempered and strengthened...or, if we are weak or flawed, broken. All must face this test of strength at some time. To do otherwise is to lie down in the middle of the sea of sand, and simply wait to die. This is the choice your friend faces now. It is up to him to find within himself the strength to survive, or not.”

Harosheth picks up the discussion, speaking quietly but clearly, like leaves crackling underfoot. “Zanorah is correct. All of Raia’s creatures are born into this world, but not all remain so. Even those that are protected and reared by their kin are eventually left to fend for themselves. Some manage, some do not. Those that fail become food for those that survive, and in either case serve a purpose upon this world. But this is a challenge that, ultimately, must be faced alone. No amount of help can prepare one for life’s challenges, unless one is willing to face them alone.”

Dorissa speaks in a soothing voice, like the slow drone of an incoming tide. “The spirit is not a static thing, but rather fluid, like water itself. It must continue moving forward to thrive and grow. Stillness is acceptable when the current is at rest and there is no motion to guide it, but stagnation is not stillness, and stagnation is unacceptable.”

Elzaphan speaks once more. “We hope that our collective wisdom has been of help to you.”

Note that this may help get points on the Test of Peace (see **GM Handout #2: The Test of Peace (Checklist)**).

After the elves share their wisdom regarding Stark’s circumstances, or in any event if the party does not think to include them in the discussion, continue the encounter with the following question.

NOTE: If the GM is comfortable, he or she may run this as a freeform conversation rather than just reading the boxed text as written.

Elzaphan addresses your group. “Perhaps you can help us with your wisdom. There is a question that we have been debating among ourselves, and we would hope that you can share your thoughts on the matter. It always helps to get a different perspective.

“As you know, we elves are a highly magical race. We pioneered the study and development of

the Art while other, younger races were still in their infancy. We have always enjoyed the exploration of magic in its many forms. However, we are also keenly aware of the price that magic may carry to the wielder, or to any and all if it is misused or abused.

“Those masters that wield magic properly wield it well. However, not all that learn the Art do so. Some apprentices are careless with magic, and cause great harm in the process. The tale of ‘The Wizard’s Apprentice’ illustrates this point with both humor and sensibility, with its example of animated broomsticks gone wild.

“Our question to you then, is this: Who is responsible for such abuses? The master, who does not properly supervise and limit his student, or the apprentice that goes beyond the limits set by his master and toys with powers best left untouched?”

This is a fairly straightforward question, but also one designed to help the PCs. The proper answer is that each of us is responsible for our own conduct, but not that of others. We can teach and give examples, but in the end we can no more make choices for others than we can take the moon and stars from the sky (well, those of us that are not gods, at least). Giving an answer that approximates the above points allows the PCs to pass the test of Responsibility.

However, the elves are not done with this line of discourse, though they will nod in agreement with the above points.

Lady Rhiannon joins the discussion. “And what of those that are not apprentices? There are

those that seek to plunder magics that are beyond their ken, or simply abuse such powers to the detriment of the delicate balance of power upon Raia. What of them? What is the proper response in dealing with these wretches that take what is not meant to be theirs to begin with? What course of action should be taken?

The responses from the PCs will vary, as they should. All NPCs agree that something should be done, but what that action should be is a point of contention among these old friends. Discussion from the other elves can be free formed at this point using the guidelines given in the Elf Party Sidebar. To sum up, however:

- Lady Rhiannon and Zanorah are in favor of an extreme response, up to and including slaying the offenders. In their eyes, the end justifies the means. Attempts at encouraging a moderate or light-handed approach earns that PC a Negative reaction.
- Harosheth is undecided on the matter, not wielding much magic or being that familiar with spellcasting. The party may influence his opinion based on the PC party’s consensus, if their arguments are sound either way. This requires a Diplomacy check, DC 20 + ATL. Doing so gets his Favor. Failing by more than 10 gets his Disfavor. Otherwise give a Neutral reaction.
- Dorissa isn’t much concerned about this issue herself, but can be swayed as Harosheth. This requires a Diplomacy check, DC 15 + ATL. Doing so gets her Favor. Failing by more than 10 gets her Disfavor. Otherwise give a Neutral reaction.

PC Name	Lady Rhiannon	Elzaphan	Dorissa	Zanorah	Harosheth

- Elzaphan is inclined to favor a subtler, less invasive approach to those that abuse magic, even if said magic should not be in their hands to begin with. His reactions for purpose of the Notice cert (see below) are the opposite of Lady Rhiannon's and Zanorah's.

The GM will have to note each PC's response, which will affect how each NPC regards the PC. This will prove important in future modules, and will be noted on the **Notice of the Elven Party** certificate at the end of the module. PCs that offer no opinion or remain vocally neutral should also be noted.

To aid the GM, a table follows for quick note-taking. Put a + to indicate each NPC's agreement with each PC, a - to indicate disagreement, and an "n" to indicate neutrality/no opinion.

When the discussion seems to have run its course:

“Well, we should be moving on. We have more exploration to do for our reunion. We thank you for sharing our food, and our conversation. May shade and sweet water greet you for the duration of your journey!” With that, the sky elf bows, and the group packs their possessions and departs, heading down the way you came. The trail beckons you onward.

- Allow efforts by the PCs to draw Stark into conversation. **GO TO GM Handout #1 & #2.**
- After that, **GO TO CONCLUSION.**

Elf Party Sidebar

A group of five elves, one of each known elven sub-type, has gathered here to talk. The purpose for this discussion is known only to them, and they are not inclined to tell other elven PCs at this time. Likewise, stats are not provided for these NPCs, nor should they be necessary. None of them are evil. More detail on these characters will come in future LSJ events.

The members of the group are:

- ✧ **Lady Rhiannon Aaleyah**, female high elf. She is clad in very finely made traveling gear, with the crest of her house (Aaleyah) displayed prominently. She has fair skin, jet black hair and deep blue eyes. She wears elven chain armor and carries a rapier and darkwood shield. A Knowledge (nobility) check (DC 25, or 15 for elves) will reveal her to be of a notable elven noble house, one of the younger family members. She is haughty and has a superiority complex regarding non-elven races, including half-elves, and will not hide this fact. She feels that the lesser races require shepherding and guidance in order not to harm themselves and others. She is fierce in defense of her argument regarding the control of magic and those that wield it irresponsibly or dangerously.
- ✧ **Elzaphan Altaira**, a male sky elf. He has dark brown hair, purple eyes, and sports shiny brown wings with gold highlights. He wears loose-fitting garments that allow maximal freedom of movement, and masterwork leather armor that allows his wings to function without hindrance. He carries a rapier and a mandolin, and seems equally comfortable with either. He is cheerful and eager to talk to anyone, especially if they have stories or songs to share, and not particularly judgmental. While he disagrees with Rhiannon's argument, he does not push it as an argument so much as using wit and humor to counterpoint her statements.
- ✧ **Dorissa Undiria**, a female sea elf. She has pale blue scaly skin and large, sea green eyes, and scalloped pointed ears. She wears clothes in hues of green and blue decorated with images of marine life and plants. She wears elven chain that bears swirling color patterns of green and blue metallic paint and bears a trident. She wears a holy symbol of Ardra prominently. She is largely noncommittal, and listens more than she speaks. She is not particularly concerned with the argument being posed here, as her people have more pressing issues to deal with beneath the waves.
- ✧ **Zanorah Marut**, a female desert elf. She has deep grey skin that looks like dried clay, long

dark grey hair and deep brown eyes. She wears tan desert robes with the hood up to protect her face and eyes from the sun (an old habit). She is taciturn and a bit grim. She carries a walking staff and dagger at her side. She is inclined to agree with Rhiannon's arguments regarding magic use, since her desert home was ravaged ages ago by magic misused.

✧ **Harosheth Daegalen**, a male forest elf. He has slightly tanned skin, blond hair and deep green eyes. He favors clothing of deep greens and blues. He carries a longsword, dagger, and composite longbow. He remains unconvinced regarding the current argument, but is open to being swayed in either direction. The PCs may influence him in either direction depending on their arguments.

Conclusion

After an interesting debate with the elven party, you continue your journey. It is another hard day of travel before you finally see the heavy stone gates of the monastery before you. The grounds are easily defended by closing the gate, with watch towers set along the main building. In the yard, a garden area is maintained by monks that diligently toil in the transplanted soil to draw forth a decent crop of vegetables. Guards are visible everywhere, all wearing tabards depicting Galvandt's holy symbol. A bell pull rope dangles outside the closed gate.

Pulling the bell pull summons Brother Absalom, a robed monk, a middle-aged man with a tonsure haircut (bald except for a ring of hair around the lower hairline, common among Medieval monks) answers the call. If the PCs politely explain their purpose here, they will be admitted. While this isn't a test of virtue, it could keep rude PCs out! ☺

Nodding solemnly, Brother Absalom opens the gate and admits your party. "Lt. Stark is welcome to remain with us for as long as he deems necessary. We have much work to be done here, and hard work is good for the soul. I believe he will be happy here. The rest of you are welcome

to remain the night before beginning your journey home."

➤ **If the PCs succeeded in at least three of the Tests of Virtue**, they will get the following text.

Before Stark is led away to his new bedchambers, he turns back at you, his tired gaze somehow stronger, more alert, than before. After a long moment of looking at you, he speaks:

**"From bitter searching of the heart,
Quickened with passion, and with pain,
We rise to play a greater part."**

With that, Lt. Deverin Stark turns and walks into the monastery to start his life anew.

The following day, Brother Absalom comes to the PCs before they depart, offering them a wrapped package, "A *gesture of thanks from Deverin Stark for helping him begin to see the light.*" A short note reads: "May you never lose your way."

These items are listed in the Treasure Summary.

If asked how Stark will do from here, he says:

"Truly, only the gods themselves know...but I suspect that Deverin's healing has begun, and I hope it will continue apace. I know not what role he will play in the future, nor do I think he knows...but whatever it is, I hope that he will embrace it in time."

➤ **If the PCs fail to pass at least three of the five Tests of Virtue**, read the following:

Stark is led into the monastery to continue his search for spiritual salvation. He steps forward slowly and listlessly, leaving your company without hesitation or even a backward glance. You can only hope that you have somehow made a difference in his rehabilitation, but for now, the matter is left in the hands of the gods...and the poor shell of a man that you have come to know.

Epilogue

Ask the party if there is anything else they wish to do before the module ends. If they obtained the heart locket from Daniel Awan and take it to Veronica Blythe (which adds 3 TU to the module), they will eventually locate her cooking at one of the city's soup kitchens. If given the locket and told that Daniel is at peace (but NOT that he became a vampire), then she will thank them tearfully and offer them a family treasure, a *brooch of shielding*, as a reward.

THUS ENDS "FROM BITTER SEARCHING OF THE HEART"

TIME UNIT COST: 5 TU (normal) or 8 TU (if they return the locket to Veronica Blythe)

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Unlike most LSJ modules, the experience is the same regardless of ATL or PC level. This is because the optimal results are achieved by not engaging in any combats. While combats are possible, only one can truly result in a PC "victory," but that victory means failing the Test of Flexibility, and so is treated the same as gaining XP from using diplomacy.

Total the XP earned from the following:

Encounter X (From GM Handout #2)

Passing the Test of Peace 200 XP

Encounter 1

Passing the test of Openness 150 XP
(Only for PCs that share a story;
This can be done anytime before
the Conclusion)

Encounter 2

Passing the test of Acceptance 150 XP
(Only for PCs that let the woodsman

solve his own problems)

Encounter 3

Passing the test of Flexibility 200 XP
(For considering options rather than
staking the vampire outright) OR for
staking the vampire outright.

Encounter 4

Passing the test of Responsibility 200 XP
(For noting that each of us is only
responsible for one's own self)

Optional Roleplaying Award Max 100 XP

Total Possible Experience: 1,000 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot keep it.

- 500 gp each for performing the mission.

Encounter 1

- *Gray Bag of Tricks* (Value: 900 gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 3rd level caster, Legality: Legal). This small sack appears normal and empty. However, anyone reaching into the bag feels a small, fuzzy ball. If the ball is removed and tossed up to 20 feet away, it turns into an animal. The animal serves the character who drew it from the bag for 10 minutes (or until slain or ordered back into the bag), at which point it disappears. It can follow any of the commands described in the Handle Animal skill.

Gray Bag of Tricks	
d%	Animal
01-30	Bat
31-60	Rat
61-75	Cat
76-90	Weasel
91-100	Badger

Each of the three kinds of a bag of tricks produces a different set of animals. Use the following tables to determine what animals can be drawn out of each.

Animals produced are always random, and only one may exist at a time. Up to ten animals can be drawn from the bag each week.

Encounter 2

- *Goggles of Minute Seeing* (Value: 1,250 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 3rd level caster, Legality: Legal). The lenses of this item are made of special crystal. When placed over the eyes of the wearer, the lenses enable her to see much better than normal at distances of 1 foot or less, granting her a +5 competence bonus on Search checks to find secret doors, traps, and similar concealed objects. Both lenses must be worn for the magic to be effective.

Encounter 3 (If the PCs don't return the locket to Veronica Blythe)

- *Heart Locket* (Value: 1 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, Legality: Legal). You acquired this non-magical locket from a foul undead creature that you righteously slew. You have no idea what value it has beyond a simple keepsake, but you decided to hold onto it for now. You may be able to locate someone who knows what it means in a future LSJ scenario. For now, it is a simple keepsake, nothing more.

NOTE: If the PCs keep the locket, they CANNOT get the *brooch of shielding* (below).

Encounter 4

- *Notice of the Elven Party* (Value: Priceless, Size: N/A, Tradable: No, Rarity: Common, Legality: Legal). You encountered a party of elves on a journey and dealt with them. Their reactions to you varied, and are noted below. Circle one of the three options following each

elf's name (Favorable, Neutral, or Unfavorable).

Lady Rhiannon Aaleyah
Elzaphan Altaira
Dorissa Undiria
Zanorah Marut
Harosheth Daegalen

Conclusion (Only if the party passes at least three of the Tests of Virtue)

- *Ring of Feather Falling* (Value: 2,200 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 1st level caster, Legality: Legal). This ring is crafted with a feather pattern all around its edge. It acts exactly like a *feather fall* spell, activated immediately if the wearer falls more than 5 feet. This was a gift from Lt. Deverin Stark, a paladin and Diamond Legionnaire, who never had to worry about falling to his death while wearing heavy armor.
- *Ring of Swimming* (Value: 2,500 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 2nd level caster, Legality: Legal). This silver ring has a wave pattern etched into the band. It continually grants the wearer a +5 competence bonus on Swim checks. This was a gift from Lt. Deverin Stark, a paladin and Diamond Legionnaire, who is known both for wearing heavy armor and for avoiding an early death by drowning.
- *Phylactery of Faithfulness* (Value: 1,000 gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 1st level caster, Legality: Legal). This item is a small box containing religious scripture affixed to a leather cord and tied around the forehead. There is no mundane way to determine what function this religious item performs until it is worn. The wearer of a phylactery of faithfulness is aware of any action or item that could adversely affect his alignment and his standing with his deity, including magical effects. He acquires this information prior to performing such an action or becoming associated with such an item if he takes a moment to contemplate the act. This was a gift

from Lt. Deverin Stark, a paladin and Diamond Legionnaire.

Epilogue (if they return the locket to Veronica Blythe, tell her that Daniel is deceased, and don't tell her that Daniel became a vampire)

- *Brooch of Shielding* (Value: 1,000 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 1st level caster, Legality: Legal). This appears to be a piece of silver or gold jewelry used to fasten a cloak or cape. In addition to this mundane task, it can absorb *magic missiles* of the sort generated by spell or spell-like ability. This particular brooch can absorb up to 67 points of damage from *magic missiles* before it melts and becomes useless.

Player Handout #1: The Dream

(This handout should be given to any PCs with divine classes (cleric, druid, paladin) that worship Galvandt or Destine specifically.)

Every night for a tenday you have had the same dream.

First came an image of a glistening, gleaming diamond resting upon a stone altar, with a near-infinite number of facets, shining like Sorena's Orb itself!

Then a hammer came down upon the gem, shattering it into millions of tiny shards, extinguishing the light.

Everything went pitch black, save for a pair of eyes, crying tears for the loss of the precious treasure. These eyes were present from start to finish, first admiring the gem, then helpless to do anything to save it.

You woke up in a sweat, your heart racing. You know this dream is important, but you do not yet know why. You are certain it is a sign that you will soon be called to duty.

Player Handout #2: The Message

Your presence is requested at the Tower of Vigilance in the Temple District at noontime today. A matter of grave import has come to our attention, one that requires your services. We look forward to your attendance.

Respectfully,

High Guardian Miekau Nactrune

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Respectfully,

High Guardian Miekau Nactrune

Player Handout #3: The Mission

“During the recent undead uprising in the Poor District, a Diamond Legionnaire and paladin of Galvandt, Lieutenant Deverin Stark, was on guard duty outside the infested area. Stark and his men were ordered to remain at their post and prevent any undead from getting past their position until ordered otherwise. This task was difficult for Stark on more than one level. Not only did he have to hold the line against multiple waves of undead, but he also had to watch the horror that was unfolding and accept it while he remained at his post. This, I fear, proved to be his undoing.

“During a particularly long and difficult siege, he spotted some civilians fleeing the Poor District. They had been squatting there, despite the dangers of the undead, for lack of anyplace else to truly go, and in part out of sheer pride. It was clear that they would not escape without help.

Stark had a choice: he could stay at his post and help his unit maintain the line, or break from his position to try to save the civilians, knowing that doing so might doom his unit, and allow the undead to break through to the city beyond the Poor District.

“Having weighed the odds, he chose to maintain his position, realizing that to do otherwise would probably unleash a greater threat than the loss of a few civilians. He and his unit tried their best to encourage the citizens’ flight to safe territory, but the undead were everywhere, and the civilians were killed before they could reach the Legionnaires. Their dying screams echoed loud and long in his ears, and in the end, I believe, it broke his heart.

“Stark got through that day and others that followed, and performed his duties as befits a Legionnaire. But the choice he made haunted him, even though it was, in many ways, the only reasonable choice to make. Certainly his superiors agreed with his conduct and found no fault with his choice. But he began to question his judgment and his ability to perform his duties, both to the city and to his god, Galvandt. Thus began his long, slow slide into depression.

“Stark’s change in attitude did not go unnoticed. While he had always been serious about the execution of his duties, he was of good spirit and had a fairly positive attitude. His friends and fellow soldiers noticed the change in him: he was dour and grim, rarely showing emotion. While his service was still professional and efficient, he seemed to be almost mechanical in his functioning, going through the motions of his job without any sense of zeal or enjoyment.

“Once the chaos of the Uprising had passed, his superiors tried to help him. He received clerical counseling to deal with his mental trauma, but nothing seemed to really help. There were few spells that could cure a crisis of faith or depression, and those could only help by removing the memory of what had caused them...a measure deemed too desperate to take, and morally questionable besides. In the end, to avoid potential danger to his fellow officers due to his emotional decline, the Diamond Legion transferred Stark to desk duty - but this only hastened his downward spiral.

“Perhaps the matter would have ended there, but the Gods have a way of interfering in the ways of mortals when it suits their purposes.

“Around this time Stark began having a recurring dream. First there would be an image of a glistening, gleaming diamond resting upon a stone altar, with a near-infinite number of facets, shining like Sorena’s Orb itself! Then a hammer came down upon the gem, shattering it into

millions of tiny shards, extinguishing the light. Everything went pitch black, save for a pair of eyes, crying tears for the loss of the precious treasure. These eyes were present from start to finish, first admiring the gem, then helpless to do anything to save it.

“Kunis Veritas, a cloistered cleric of our Lord Galvandt, had been visiting Stark regularly and trying to guide him out of his depression. At Stark’s request, the cleric cast a divination to help him determine what the dream meant. The result was far more dramatic than either of them could have hoped, for Kunis received this message:

One threat to the Jewel of Raia has ended, but another shall come. In that time of need, Deverin Stark shall play a critical role in her defense. Without him, Amthydor shall surely fall. The city’s future hinges upon his recovery.

Heed the words of Lord Vigilance well, for if Deverin Stark falls, so shall fall the city. He must seek the path to duty once more, though what form that path may take, he must discover for himself.

“The cleric reported this to me, and I discussed the matter with the upper echelons of the Quorum of Faith, the Diamond Legion, and the Lord Monarch and his aides. It was clear to all that Stark’s recovery is now a matter of highest priority, for we know not the form this threat will take, or when it will come. But...how to help Stark find his way back to himself?

“After lengthy debate, it was decided that a holy pilgrimage to a monastery and sacred shrine of Galvandt, located in the Delambir Mountains south and west of Amthydor, was the best course of action. Taking the South Gate exit west will lead you to the path up into the mountains. Since Stark is not fit to defend himself, or likely to complete such a quest alone given his condition, he will need guides to gently (but firmly) encourage him in his task, to defend him should the need arise, and to set an example to inspire him.

“This is the task I present to you. Are you prepared to accept it?”

GM Handout #1: The Test of Peace (Guidelines)

The purpose of this handout is to help the GM track the progress of the Test of Peace, a recurring encounter that takes place between the other “official” scenes of the module.

Try to limit PC efforts to bring Stark out of his shell to 5-10 minutes at a time between other encounters. This will give them time to do the deed without bogging down play, and set up a cycle of repeated efforts that will (hopefully) show gradual improvement in Stark’s demeanor and spirit.

Lt. Deverin Stark’s reactions to the party during “downtime” will depend on how many Tests of Virtue the group has passed so far. As the GM, you will have to figure out the exact form of his responses based on what is said and done, using the following guidelines. Exact boxed text is impossible to provide since player strategies are impossible to predict. (NOTE: The exception is when Stark sees the vampire’s grave; his reaction alters for that encounter only).

- **Passed None of the Tests:** Stark will be slow to respond to suggestions and requests, and remain non-verbal. At times he will stare dully into the PCs’ eyes for several seconds with a dead, haunted gaze. Do this out-of-character to make the players feel very, very uncomfortable. No efforts will register a response with him at this time.
- **Passed One Test:** Stark will be slightly more responsive, though largely sullen. He will give simple one-to-three word responses to questions and requests. While he will not say much, he will begin listening to the PCs’ efforts and considering them.
- **Passed Two Tests:** Stark will be capable of performing light duties, such as cooking food or maintaining a campfire. He will become more verbal, answering with complete, but short, sentences.
- **Passed Three Tests:** Stark will be able to handle more complex tasks like setting up or breaking down camp, fishing or hunting for food, and the like. He will speak normally, but only if addressed first, and while he will not discuss details of his travails, he is willing to respond to points the PCs make that lead him in the right direction.
- **Passed All Four Tests:** At this point, Stark will have been taken far enough out of his depression to seriously question the reason for it, although he will accept that it was largely due to the horror of what he was forced to witness. He will seem dour, but fairly normal, capable of handling ordinary activities and marching with some energy and vigor rather than tromping along listlessly. He is willing to come to terms with the reality behind his past troubles, and start realizing that perhaps he can find his way back to duty, after he completes his own soul-searching.

The checklist for passing the Test of Peace is on the next page.

GM Handout #2: The Test of Peace (Checklist)

To pass the Test of Peace, the PCs should make at least *eight* of the following points on the checklist. This can be done throughout the module and during each “rest stop” between encounters, so the GM should keep this list handy and watch for correct answers.

- ___ You were following proper orders/conduct as a Legionnaire and as a paladin of Galvandt.
- ___ Had you abandoned your post to help the victims, the undead could have broken past your position and caused greater harm to others.
- ___ You were not responsible for the commoners being in a dangerous situation in the first place.
- ___ Falling into depression from the horror of what you witnessed was understandable.
- ___ We have to take action to properly honor those that have fallen.
- ___ If you feel that being a paladin is not the best way for you to serve, you have other options open to you.
- ___ If you feel that being a Legionnaire is not the best way for you to serve, you have other options open to you.
- ___ Don't be afraid to share your concerns and fears with others.
- ___ Sometimes things go wrong despite our best efforts. All we can do then is accept what has happened and try to make peace with it and do better next time.
- ___ Considering a problem from more than one angle can let you see more solutions, which maximizes your chances of finding a better solution to the problem.
- ___ You cannot be responsible for the choices of others, only your own.
- ___ Failing at a single task does not mean that you are a failure. Success is possible as long as you keep trying.
- ___ Remember all the lives you saved in the past, and could save in the future.
- ___ We learn from our mistakes as well as our successes. Both make us stronger and better.

Critical Event Summary: From Bitter Searching of the Heart

Please answer the following questions after running this event.

1. Did the PCs pass the Test of Peace? (See **GM Handouts #1 and #2** for details.)

Yes No

2. Did the PCs pass the Test of Openness? (At least half the party shares a story of regret.)

Yes No

3. Did the PCs pass the Test of Acceptance? (Allow the woodsman to handle his own problem.)

Yes No

4. Did the PCs pass the Test of Flexibility? (Consider possible courses of action rather than just staking the vampire on first sight.)

Yes No

5. Did the PCs pass the Test of Responsibility? (Make clear that each individual is, ultimately, responsible only for himself/herself.)

Yes No

6. How did the NPC elves react to each of the PCs? (Copy the number of PCs for each reaction from the chart in the encounter, no PC names are required:

Lady Rhiannon Aaleyah: Favorable ____ Neutral ____ Unfavorable ____

Elzaphan Altaira: Favorable ____ Neutral ____ Unfavorable ____

Dorissa Undiria: Favorable ____ Neutral ____ Unfavorable ____

Zanorah Marut: Favorable ____ Neutral ____ Unfavorable ____

Harosheth Daegalen: Favorable ____ Neutral ____ Unfavorable ____

7. Note any other important information on the back of this form (PC arrests, etc.).

Please send this form to David Samuels, 2722 East 64th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11234, or by e-mail to lsj-modsummary@theshiningjewel.com.

Please send completed form to:
David Santana, 604 Liberty Ave,
Jersey City, NJ 07307, or email to
lsj-roster@theshiningjewel.com.



Roster of Heroes: From Bitter Searching of the Heart

Judge Name: _____

Convention: _____ **Date:** _____

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____
Email address: _____ (optional)
Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____
Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____
Special items or comments: _____
Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____
Email address: _____ (optional)
Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____
Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____
Special items or comments: _____
Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____
Email address: _____ (optional)
Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____
Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____
Special items or comments: _____
Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____
Email address: _____ (optional)
Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____
Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____
Special items or comments: _____
Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____
Email address: _____ (optional)
Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____
Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____
Special items or comments: _____
Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

Player Name: _____ Home State: _____
Email address: _____ (optional)
Hero's Name: _____ Sex: _____ Race: _____
Class: _____ Level: _____ Region/City: _____
Special items or comments: _____
Gained a level: Out of Play: Dead: Lost level(s):

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