



Dire Consequences

Babe in the Woods: Part Two

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A d20 3rd Edition Revised Adventure for the Legends of the Shining Jewel Campaign

Unnatural creatures are attacking travelers and livestock around Amthydor. Can you learn where they are coming from, and who sent them, before you become the next victim? For heroes of levels 1-6.

Note: While it is possible to play the events in this series in any order, it is strongly recommended that they be played in chronological order to preserve the continuity of the plot.

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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 DM Empowerment Clause

The coordinators of the campaign empower DMs 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 DM 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 DM 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.

A Note About Tiers and the Power of PCs

Not all parties are created equal. Some level 1 parties can handle anything the DM can throw at them, and some level 3 parties are relatively weak for their levels. If the DM 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 DM should let common sense rule the day (and the module).

Animals in Combat

Animals which are considered ‘class features’ (Paladin bonded mounts, ranger or druid animal companions, and familiars) do not affect the party for the purpose of determining ATL.

Animals that are purchased or adopted from the Bestiary and are available for combat will have their HD included in the calculation of ATL for the scenario. Adopted animals 2HD or greater that accompany PCs on an adventure, that are available/intended for combat, add their HD to the total HD of the party for the purpose of determining ATL. The total HD of the party, including animals, is then divided six to determine the APL at which combats should occur. An animal does not need to be trained in order to participate in combat. However, animals which have not been trained for Attack, Defend, Guard or War, which are threatened, must make a Will save DC 15 or flee until combat is resolved.

Special Instructions for Handling Treasure Certs

There are two versions of the treasure cert for the *Potion of Transformation*: One containing only a minimal description and one containing a detailed description of the potion’s effects. This is so that the real effects of the potion will not be known until a PC actually drinks it. To facilitate this, do not sign any of the certs when you first hand them out to the players for treasure division. Put out the version of the potion that does NOT list the effects. Do not put out the detailed version.

If a PC either drinks the potion immediately or feeds it to an animal companion (either certified from the Bestiary or an animal obtained as part of a class feature), take back the original cert, mark on the detail cert who/what drank the potion, and give the detailed cert to the appropriate PC.

If players ask about the effects of the potion without drinking it, tell them that the detail on the potion is not included in the mod and that they should contact LSJ Campaign staff for details.

Adventure Background

In Part One of this series—Lions, Tigers and Bears... the PCs dealt with marauding animals who were threatening the city and rescued a young orphan girl named Kasira, who’s parents had been killed by a mysterious Beast. It was learned that the Beast was ultimately responsible for initiating

the attacks, but the creature was never identified or captured, and so remains a potential threat to the city and to the PCs. In the Interactive event Call of the Wild, which occurred immediately following 'Lions', the Beast again causes animal problems, this time for a visiting circus. A group of doppelgangers and wererats posed an additional hazard for the PCs. This event begins four months after the conclusion of Lions, Tigers and Bears....

The troubles begun in Lions, Tigers and Bears are continuing. Something is stalking the horse farms of House Jirin, and *something* is killing travelers and residents alike. The attacks are becoming more frequent, and more vicious. Driven by fear and suspicion, some local residents are blaming the Grove of Cerion for the savage attacks.

In truth, a wizard named Loceti (loh-SET-tee) fancies himself to be the greatest transmuter since the days of the famed wizard Morsipheran. He has always been fascinated with the great wizards of the ancient city of Thyras, and with the stories of the fantastic creatures that they created. When Loceti was contacted by a mysterious benefactor and presented with a worn and tattered scrap of parchment bearing partial instructions on creating what he believed to be dire creatures, the temptation was too great. With the aid and encouragement of his 'patron', he seeks to emulate the long-lost mages of Thyras, and to copy some of their greatest achievements in 'creature creation'.

Loceti has arranged for some of the horses and other livestock to be killed or incapacitated so that they can be used to feed his experiments when they are young. Some have been killed by mature experiments hunting on their own.

The spell Loceti is using requires the blood of a true dire creature, and he has enlisted the aid of an unscrupulous trapper to capture one for him. Conveniently, there IS a dire animal in the area. Sarabi, a female dire tiger, 'escaped' from a merchant caravan in Part One of this series, 'Lions, Tigers & Bears...'. Sarabi has remained in the area, with her three young cubs, and has been hunting horses and other livestock in an effort to feed her hungry offspring.

Loceti's unknown benefactor has a hidden agenda of his own, and is arranging for some of the kills to suit his own secret purpose. The PCs will not be able to solve all of the mysteries within the

scope of this event, but they may uncover vital clues that will be useful in the series conclusion.

A small group of opportunistic horse thieves is also taking advantage of the current situation to ply their trade and capitalize of the misfortune, or desperation, of others by selling the stolen horses at exorbitant prices.

Introduction – *Druids/Rangers*: A young page in the livery of House Jirin delivers a note requesting the PC to attend Lady Nysia Jirin at the family's country estate later that morning.

Non-Druids/Non-Rangers: While strolling in the Port District marketplace the PCs are drawn to the sounds of an argument between a horse merchant with no horses to sell and a buyer angry that the horses he paid for are not available. Also witness to the argument is the disguised Lady Nysia Jirin, who will ask the PCs to meet with her to discuss hiring them to look into the mysterious attacks that are thinning her family's herds.

Encounter 1 – The PCs meet with Lady Nysia Jirin, a druid of Brianna, who enlists their help in looking into the most recent series of attacks. She can provide the PCs with a number of possible avenues of investigation, as well as information that they may find useful.

Encounter 1a – While investigating the site of the most recent attack, the PCs come face to face with a possible culprit.

Encounter 2 – As the PCs return to the city proper to begin their investigation, they encounter a patrol from the Diamond Legion and may learn more of the scope of the attacks.

Encounter 3 – PCs who took part in 'Lions, Tigers & Bears...' may remember Kasira, and wish to speak to her now. They can also learn about her from various NPCs.

Encounter 4 – The PCs may seek answers at the Grove of Cerion.

Encounter 5 – The PCs may speak to two young boys from Llynvale who found the den of young dire tigers.

Encounter 6 – The PCs may investigate the site of the attack on the trader, and speak with Blaze.

Encounter 7 – PCs following up on a lead from either Blaze or the Grove of Cerion (or otherwise exploring on their own), encounter a trapper who is using a tiger cub as bait to capture the mother.

Encounter 8 – Strange creatures stalk the Darkwood, and now they are stalking the PCs.

The experimental dire creatures, as well as their creator, are waiting to encounter the heroes.

Epilogue – The PCs make their report, possibly answering some questions, and certainly raising others. Rewards will vary, based upon who the PCs tell about what they have learned, and what they tell them.

Introduction: Have You Herd?

Note – Take note of any PCs with the Mark of the Beast, from Lions, Tigers and Bears..., as it may effect NPC reactions throughout the scenario.

Horses – Make note of which PCs have mounts at the beginning of the scenario, as it is not possible for PCs to obtain additional mounts during the course of the event. There are simply none available for sale or rent. It may be possible for PCs to obtain ‘loaner’ mounts as specifically mentioned in certain encounters, though with notable conditions and restrictions.

Phase of the moon—This information should not be volunteered, but if the players think to ask, it is mid-morning of the 1st night of the full moon.

The time is early to mid-morning (approximately the 9th hour), giving the PCs time to make any preparations that they may wish before attending the meeting at the Jirin estate.

Druid/Ranger PCs: *A uniformed page wearing an emblem of a silver gauntlet and silver horse on a green field, perhaps the emblem of one of Amthydor’s Noble families, stands before you. “Your pardon, but are you _____ (insert PC name)?”*

The page is polite to all PCs, but is especially deferential to females, and to aristocrats or nobles, to whom he will bow and address by title.

As soon as you confirm your identity, the page presents you with a carefully folded parchment (Player Handout #1) sealed with wax and bearing the emblem of a gauntlet and a rearing horse. His mission accomplished, the page bows slightly and takes his leave.

Knowledge (Local) DC 15 or (Nobility & Royalty) DC 10 – The emblem is the heraldry of House Jirin.

Amthydor has a high literacy rate, with 70% of the population able to read and write Common. The page assumes that the PCs are also able to do so. If not, and the PCs ask, he will read the message for them. Otherwise, the boy has no knowledge of the contents of the missive, only that he has been directed by his mistress to deliver it to the PC. If asked, he can identify to person who sent him as Lady Nysia Jirin.

Druid/Ranger PCs may also be in the company of their less nature-oriented friends for the next part of the Introduction, and may tell them about the meeting, but continue with the Introduction to provide PCs with information on the scope of the problem, focusing on including those Non-Druid/Non-Ranger characters in the scenario.

Non-Druid/Non-Ranger PCs: *Winter’s chill is all but forgotten, replaced by the sweet scent of spring, and all of Amthydor is taking advantage of the chance to be outdoors. The streets of the Port district are crowded, as residents and visitors alike go about their morning errands. The air is crisp and clear, the breeze is fresh and clean, and there is not a cloud to be seen against the blue morning sky. Most people would consider it a beautiful day, but someone apparently forgot to mention that to the portly and florid gentleman busy berating a young horse merchant.*

Obviously, the PCs should be interested in this conversation, as it has an immediate bearing on the events of the scenario. However, even if they chose not to listen, Lady Nysia will still ask them to assist in the investigation.

If the PCs listen to the argument:

The corral that normally holds the prize stock of Montgar’s Horse Outlet is empty, and the horse buyers who usually gather to peruse the beasts offered for sale are absent. The normally cheerful young fellow who helps run the Outlet is trying without success to calm the well-dressed man who is berating him loudly.

“It’s horses that I was promised, not excuses. It’s horses that I paid for, and it’s horses that I will have by noon tomorrow or I’ll see you up on charges before the Lord Monarch’s Court!” With that threat, or perhaps promise, and a last emphatic gesture he turns and stalks off into the

crowd, leaving the target of his anger standing next to the empty corral.

Knowledge (Local) skill check DC 20 to recognize the young man as Arim Montgar, the son of the owner of Montgar's Horse Outlet. Arim is a genial young man with a good eye for quality and a natural knack with horses.

The angry gentleman, Mikos Jarill, has no patience for the PCs if they follow him to ask questions. He cannot be calmed completely, but if the PCs succeed at a Diplomacy skill check DC 30 he will pause for up to one minute to continue his ranting, and perhaps indirectly answer some questions for the PCs. He will not directly answer questions, but he will impart the following information, which may include information that the PCs seek, in the form of a continued tirade over the missing horses:

❖ Ten days ago he arranged to purchase twenty horses, and paid for them in advance. The horses were to be delivered this morning in preparation for the caravan's departure the day after tomorrow.

❖ The horses were needed to replace several others that died, became lame or were stolen during the caravan's current tour. He also purchased more goods than expected, and requires additional horses and wagons to transport his purchases, as well as mounts for additional guards.

❖ Four horses were killed at the caravan's last overnight camp, just west of the city on the Great Trade Road. Three other animals were stolen once the caravan reached the city. Three horses became lame during the last leg of the journey.

❖ He tried to purchase replacement horses from other dealers, but no one has any for sale.

❖ Without the additional horses, he will be forced to either sell his excess goods at a financial loss or pay for expensive storage until he can make other arrangements. Either way, he will have to pay out the full value of the contracts with the additional guards that he hired.

The caravan is a dead end, and further questions will only delay the PCs from following more

productive path of investigation. There are no clues to be found with the caravan, as too many people have come and gone through the area. Mikos Jarill has no other useful information to provide the PCs. All that he knows is that the horses he paid for are missing, and he stands to lose a great deal of money if they are not recovered soon.

The PCs may wish to question Arim, and he will answer what questions he can in regards to the recent shortage of horses.

Who was that man?/Why is he so angry?

❖ ***"Mikos Jarill, a caravan merchant from Westmarch. He ordered twenty horses, and paid in advance, but they have not yet arrived. His caravan is leaving the day after tomorrow. He purchased more goods than he had room for, and had to procure additional wagons for the journey home, as well as animals to pull them, and to serve as mounts for the additional guards he has hired.***

❖ Where are the horses?

"I wish I knew. They should have been delivered to me four days ago. No horses have been shipped into the city in three weeks, and there are none available for sale anywhere in the local area. My suppliers assure me that the animals have been sent, but none have arrived. I don't know what to do. If things don't change soon, we may lose the business.

❖ Where do you get your horses from?

I get horses from many sources, but my main supplier is from the west, in Eagsin.

❖ Can we help?

"I don't know what you might be able to do, but ANY assistance is certainly appreciated. I have reported my concerns to the Diamond Legion, but they are very busy, and with no actual evidence of what has happened, there is not much that they can do."

Arim can only speculate on what has happened to the horses, and without horses to sell he has little in the way of resources with which to pay the PCs. He is grateful for any aid that the PCs can provide, but they will have to find reward

elsewhere.

Spot Check DC 15: A young woman stands across the street, observing the confrontation between Arim Montgar and the caravan merchant. She does nothing but watch until the PCs turn to leave.

Regardless of who may have seen her previously, as the PCs turn to leave:

As you move away from Montgar's, a young woman steps across the street and approaches you and several others. She is just over five feet tall, with honey blonde hair and hazel eyes. Her well-worn leather clothing cannot hide a sense of quiet confidence and serene authority. Perhaps the wooden disk hanging about her neck, with the symbol of a stag's head, the symbol of Brianna, has something to do with it.

Spot DC 15 – Concealed by the folds of her tunic and cloak, and slightly faded from age, is the emblem of a silver horse and gauntlet.

Knowledge (Local) DC 15 or (Nobility & Royalty DC 10) – The emblem is the heraldry of House Jirin.

Knowledge (Nobility & Royalty) DC 15 – The young woman is Lady Nysia Jirin, daughter of the Lady Consul. Lady Nysia avoids the public eye in favor of her duties as a druid of Brianna.

For PCs without Knowledge (Local or Nobility & Royalty) –

Intelligence check DC 20 – The emblem is the heraldry of House Jirin.

Sense Motive DC 10 – She genuinely wants the PCs' help, and intends to deal fairly with them. She is unarmed except for a belt dagger, and has little use for physical violence.

For PCs who are affiliated with the Noble Houses of Arawl, Harquith or Reilly (either Noble PCs or House Guards), or PCs with the Mark of the Beast – Sense Motive DC 15:

The woman appears almost hesitant to approach the PCs affiliated with the Noble Houses of Arawl, Harquith or Reilly, as if she is uncertain of the reception she will receive. Her family is not on

the best of terms with these Houses, and she does not know what to expect from these PCs.

For PCs with the *Mark of the Beast*, she seems to consider for a moment, as if contemplating offering a second chance, before deciding that they too might be willing and able to assist.

“Pardon me, but might I ask a moment of your time? Like you, I could not help but overhear. You should know that good master Montgar's problem is not unique. Something is happening in and around Amthydor, something that threatens more than just a few horses. I would like to discuss the situation in more detail, if you are willing to take the time.

The PCs are certain to have questions, though not all of them will be answered now. Some of their curiosity will have to wait.

❖ Who are you?

“I am Lady Nysia Jirin”

❖ Why us?

“Whatever is happening is taking place outside the city, and possibly outside of the jurisdiction of the Diamond Legion. An armed troop of twenty uniformed Legionnaires will attract far more attention than a group of six travelers.”

❖ What can you tell us of recent events?

“Horses and other large livestock have been slaughtered in the fields or on the road to the city, or have disappeared completely.

The rest is best left for later, when we can speak at length, and more privately. All of your questions can be answered then. If you would please come to the country estate of House Jirin, an hour before high sun, I will alert the perimeter guards to expect you. Come directly to the main stable, and I will meet you there.”

If the PCs think it odd that a noblewoman would want to meet them in a stable, it is, but it is also the logical place since the problem at hand deals with horses, and the place where Lady Nysia is most in her element.

If the PCs attend the meeting as requested **GO TO Encounter 1.**

PCs who decline to attend the meeting who own horses discover that their mounts have been stolen. They may report the incident to the Diamond Legion, who will advise them that there is currently a shortage of mounts in the city and that the number of horse thefts has risen recently. These PCs may change their minds and decide to join their fellows and continue on the adventure. Regardless, the stolen horses will be recovered by the Diamond Legion, unharmed, and returned to the PCs at the end of the scenario, though the thieves will get away.

PCs who do not rise to this bait or find another reason to join the party by then are out of the event, and probably should not be in Amthydor to begin with.

Encounter One: A Horse of A Different Color

The country estate of House Jirin is located just two miles outside the city. The rolling fields of new spring grass, fields that should be filled with the family's prize horses and new foals, hold only a handful of older animals that graze under the watchful guard of stablehands armed with crossbows, short swords and staves.

The PCs were instructed to go directly to the main stable on the Jirin estate. If they forget (or ignore) these instructions and go to the main house, they will receive a cold welcome at best, and charges of trespassing at worst, depending upon how insistent, annoying or rude they are. Lady Consul Jirin is not aware of her daughter's dealings with the PCs, and would not welcome the interference of such common rabble. The guards on duty at the main house will not admit them for any reason. PCs who force the issue and attempt to gain entry to the main house should be warned once and then arrested for trespassing and held overnight before charges are dropped. Lady Nysia will not bail them out, as they were told specifically where to go to meet with her.

The guards at the perimeter of the estate have been notified of the PCs impending arrival, and will question them only briefly, especially if they present the letter or identify Lady Nysia by either

name or description, before pointing them in the direction of the main stable.

All of the PCs should arrive at approximately the same time. For any who intended to arrive early, a minor yet inconvenient delay, such as an overturned farm wagon, causes them to arrive at exactly the appointed time.

The main stables of the Jirin family estate are filled with the earthy scents of leather and hay, and the soft whickering of horses. Peering into the shadows you make out rows of stalls, and the forms of horses who turn to gaze solemnly in your direction. Alerted to your arrival, a slender figure gives a final pat to one of the horses and steps out of the stall and into the light. The young woman is dressed for riding, her clothes practical but exceptionally well made. She hazel gaze is steady as she meets your eyes.

PCs who spoke with Lady Nysia in the market will recognize her easily.

"Thank you for coming. I know that you must have many claims on your time, but I believe that you will find what I have to say most interesting, and a cause for great concern. What some of you may have witnessed in the market is only the smallest symptom of a problem that is far more serious than it first appears. The efforts of the Diamond Legion to confine the undead to the District of the Poor has left them without the manpower to spare for an investigation into this matter.

Between the attacks on traders bringing horses and other stock from the west and the killings on local farms there are no horses available anywhere in the city, and other types of livestock are becoming scarce. It is more than just my family that is suffering from these attacks, it is everyone who buys and sells horses and livestock. It is every farmer who needs to plow his fields, every merchant with wagons to pull, and everyone hoping to purchase meat to feed their families. Already travelers are avoiding the Great Trade Road where it approaches Amthydor, and merchants are seeking other ways of delivering their goods to the eastern and southern kingdoms without passing through the city. Local merchants depending upon those goods for their livelihood will soon find themselves unable to

supply the demands of their customers, and those customers will have nothing to buy. In one way or another, everyone is a victim of these attacks, and I would like your help in stopping them.”

❖ When was the most recent attack? *“Last evening, just at sundown. I had ridden the fields to check the new foals less than an hour before, and when the horses were called in for their evening feeding two of the young stallions failed to respond. The stable hands found them this morning.”*

❖ How long have these attacks been going on? *“Three months.”* (Ever since the conclusion of Lions, Tigers & Bears...) *“They have been growing much more frequent in the last month.”*

❖ How many other attacks have there been?/Where have the other attacks taken place?
“There have been attacks on local farms, as well as along the Great Trade Road, but how many and exactly where I do not know for certain. The Diamond Legion may have more detail, but I suspect that many of the attacks have been blamed on wolves or wild dogs.”

❖ Can we see where last night’s attack took place?
“Certainly. The carcasses have not yet been removed, in case you wished to examine the scene. I can provide directions to the east pasture, where the attack occurred.”

❖ Has anything like this ever happened before?
“There have been attacks, yet, but not like this. Two years ago, at the height of the undead attacks, and before that there were some wild beasts when prey was scarce, but this is different. At most we lose one or two horses a year, but recently we have been losing at least two horses a week. Sometimes we find nothing, other times we find half eaten carcasses. At first we thought that they were being stolen, but now it appears that something is hunting them.”

❖ Is there any discernable pattern to the attacks?
“Most seem to be occurring south and west of the city itself, between here and the Darkwood. The area just north of Rosewood has seen several

attacks. They have been happening anywhere from a few hours to three days apart.”

The Rosewood, and the village of the same name, lies to the south of House Jirin’s lands, with a large tract of farmland (currently owned by the Lord Monarch, but formerly belonging to House Arawl) in between. Players with no imagination who wish to skip the intervening encounters and the attendant roleplaying may reach the final encounter on their own by spending a full day searching the area in question. While they will eventually find the old Arawl estate, Loceti will be long gone and the PCs should be presented with Epilogue B (Failure).

❖ If there had been attacks before, why weren’t the horses being guarded?/Why were they in the fields alone?

“They WERE guarded, and that is what concerns me. Neither the guard nor the other horses in the pasture saw or sensed anything unusual. There was a mounted guard in the pasture, but his attention was focused on the oldest and youngest animals, those that might have difficulty outrunning a predator. There were a total of sixteen horses in that pasture. The two young stallions were off together, away from the rest of the herd. The guard saw and heard nothing unusual, and the horses were not startled or alert to any threat. Everything seemed normal, so it did not occur to him to count the animals as they were returning to the barn.”

❖ Does your family have any enemies? / Could this be a personal attack on your House?

“I confess that I pay little attention to politics, and the Noble Houses are always squabbling with each other over something. There was House Arawl, but that House has been disbanded for several years. My family has been seeking to obtain Arawl’s old lands, and House Reilly wants them as well. There is also House Harquith, and perhaps others that I do not know of, but I cannot believe that any of the Noble Houses would hate us enough, or be so utterly without conscience, as to kill innocent travelers. There has been no indication of such involvement, but if you do find absolute proof that one of the noble houses is involved, then it will become a matter for the Lord Monarch. Remember, without unquestionable

proof there can be no such accusation made, even among yourselves.”

None of the other Noble Houses are involved, though the PCs may think so at first. Nysia will not provide a pass into the Nobles District to speak to any of the other Houses, and servants of the Reilly country estate will not admit the PCs. While PC Nobles or House Guards can certainly gain access to the district, no one from their respective Houses will be able to speak with them. The PCs will have to look elsewhere to find who is responsible for the killings.

❖ Do you know of anyone else who may have additional information?

“From the scene it appeared that an animal was responsible for the attacks. If so, the druids around Rosewood may know what animals are in the area and be able to provide guidance.”

The village of Rosewood is home to the Grove of Cerion and the shrines of Ayla and Brianna. The village is located approximately 3 miles south of the Jirin estate.

“There were also stories several months ago of a strange humanoid beast that attacked travelers in the forest. No proof of such a creature was found, nor was there any proof that something else was responsible. There was a child involved as well, an orphan, but I do not know what became of her.”

The Beast (from Lions, Tigers & Bears...) was never captured. PCs who played in that event may think to question the child Kasira about the creature’s possible connection to the most recent attacks.

Kasira was declared a Ward of Amthydor and placed in the custody of the Temple of Meneon. Lady Nysia does not know where Kasira is, but PCs who were part of ‘Lions..’ will be able to recall where to find her with a successful **Intelligence check DC 10**. Other PCs may learn of her whereabouts with a successful **Gather Information check DC 15**.

“A ranger called Blaze is quite familiar with the area, and may have some information. The

Diamond Legion may be able to put you in touch with her.”

❖ May we speak to Lady Consul Jirin?

“My mother and brother are at our city home, and are busy attending to official matters. They have left matters in my hands.”

❖ Is there any reward? Will we be paid?

She looks a bit disappointed at this, before giving a resigned sigh and answering. “If, after hearing what I have to say, you feel that you must be paid, then I believe that we can come to a fair and equitable arrangement.”

Lady Nysia is using her own limited resources to pay the PCs, so there is no room for negotiation on the reward. She will pay 100 gp per PC, if the party is able to bring an end to the attacks. She will pay the PCs whether they ask her to or not, she just appreciates not being asked for it.

❖ Where do we report back to?/Do we return here?/How do we contact you again?

“I will be pursuing other avenues of investigation, as well as my official duties, and may not be available. Leave word with Arim Montgar, the horse merchant, and I will be in contact.”

Once the PCs have no further questions:

“I would ask that you deal carefully with any animals that you might encounter. If these are natural creatures committing the attacks then we need to learn why they have changed their hunting patterns. Naturally you must defend yourselves if attacked, but please remember that Brianna’s creatures are only doing as she created them to do.”

If the PCs go to investigate the site of the most recent attack **GO TO Encounter 1a**.

If the PCs go to the Diamond Legion or otherwise return to the city **GO TO Encounter 2**.

If the PCs wish to speak to Kasira **GO TO Encounter 3**.

If the PCs go to the Grove of Cerion **GO TO Encounter 4**.

If the PCs wish to go to the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7**.

Encounter One A: Wild Thing

Ask now for Listen and Spot checks as the PCs set out to the site of the attack on the horses. Take note of those PCs who succeed at a DC 20 + ATL for either check. Those PCs will not be surprised later when the plains stalker(s) attack the party as they finish examining the dead horses.

Following Lady Nysia's directions, you make your way to the east pasture. The distant forms of mounted guards attest to the increased patrols by both the Diamond Legion and the Jirin House Guard. The grass of the east pasture is nearly knee high, evidence of the warm spring rains, rich soil, and the prosperity of the Jirin family, that they can afford to rotate their animals through multiple grazing areas. They must have placed animals here only a day or two before the attack, as there is little sign of grazing.

It is a 5 minute ride or a 10 minute walk from the main barn to the location of the attack. The various patrol parties will not approach the PCs, as they are intent on their own missions looking for the rogue animals believed responsible for the attacks.

Have the PCs make Spot checks. They will be approximately 300 feet from the carcasses. Provide the information for each DC that the PCs meet or exceed:

DC 10 – The dark shapes of scavenger birds circle lazily overhead, as if guiding you onward to your destination.

DC 13 + ATL – As you crest a gentle slope you see the still forms of what you surmise to be the two dead stallions lying among the tall grass. Perhaps it is a trick of the light, or perhaps not, but it almost seems as if the carcasses are...moving.

The horses really are dead. The movement is from the feeding scavenger birds covering the bodies.

DC 20 + ATL – A flash of movement, seen out of the corner of your eye, betrays the presence of a pair of wolfish forms slipping away from the carcasses and into the shelter of the high grass.

This is the only warning that the PCs are likely to have of the presence of the plains stalkers.

From this distance they are all but impossible to distinguish from large wolves.

As the PCs approach within 60 feet of the site of the attack:

As if to herald your arrival, a dozen scavenger birds rise up from their feast and take to the air, circling high above until they are able to return to their interrupted meal.

The vultures are harmless, and will not return to feeding on the dead horses until after the PCs leave the scene.

As the PCs approach the dead horses:

Imagining what these noble creatures must have looked like in life, it is easy to see why such horses are the pride of House Jirin. Deep bloody wounds caused by razor sharp teeth and rending claws mark where hungry predators brought down the two young stallions.

PCs examining the two dead horses may make skill checks:

Knowledge (Nature) DC 13 + ATL – Predators hunt a single animal and either eat it at the site of the kill or drag it off. They would not kill two animals right next to each other like this.

Heal DC 13 + ATL – While the obvious wounds to the horses were caused after death by the feeding plains stalkers (see DM Aid #1), the fatal wounds to the neck of each horse were caused by some sort of slashing weapon.

Spot DC 13 + ATL– Almost completely obscured by the blood and other wounds is a small perfectly round hole, with a small cut to each side, deep into the neck of each animal.

Each wound is approximately 3/8" in diameter. If the PCs examine the wounds closely they will find the broken shaft and head of an arrow in each horse. If the PCs attempt to determine where the arrows may have come from, there IS a small stand of trees 450 ft away that easily could (and did) shelter the archer without startling the horses. Even at four times the range increment of a composite longbow, it is possible to have fired an

arrow from among the trees and hit the grazing animals.

Once the heroes are aware of the wounds which actually killed the horses, PCs proficient with *Martial Weapons* may make an **Intelligence check DC 10** – The killing blow to the throat of each of the horses was struck by a small slashing weapon, such as a kukri.

If the PCs put all of these clues together they may surmise (correctly) that the horses were actually wounded and incapacitated by an arrow fired from the cover of a cluster of nearby trees (450 feet away, the only trees close enough to shelter an archer), then struck by the killing blow from up close. At the very least they should come away with the idea that there is more to what is going on than just a couple of hungry predators. Truly paranoid or insightful PCs may realize that perhaps someone is trying to make it **look** like animals are responsible, to cover up his or her own involvement in some nefarious plot.

Before the PC can either investigate the stand of trees or seek clues elsewhere, the plains stalkers will attack. PCs who failed at the DC 20 + ATL Listen and Spot checks requested at the beginning of this encounter will not see the plains stalkers closing in on the party. These creatures are fully described in DM Aid #1. Note that at lower ATLs they will not make use of any of their special attacks.

For PCs who are not surprised:

If you had any doubts about the ferocity of the predators that fed on the dead horses, they quickly disappear as you catch sight of what must certainly be one of the creatures moving through the grass towards you. You have only an instant to take in the impression of a large wolf-like head, lithe cat-like body and a mouth filled with razor sharp teeth. How could such a large creature get so close unseen? You struggle to find your voice, to shout a single word of warning before the creature springs!

If even a single PC is aware of the impending attack, and shouts out a warning, there will be no surprise round. If the plains stalkers remain undetected, or if an alert PC does not tell his/her

companions, then the creatures will have surprise on at least some of the PCs.

While intelligent, the plains stalkers are still carnivores, and the PCs have interrupted their meal.

An unnatural silence surrounds you, stilling even the sounds of the tiny insects hiding in the long grass. A grey form takes shape where before there was only grass. Silver eyes focus on you, as the creature steps forward to reclaim its meal.

If all of the PCs are surprised by the attacking predators:

Your only warning is a low menacing snarl, before a large shape, no more than a blur of grey fur and flashing teeth, launches itself at you.

ATL 1

Plains Stalker (1); Medium Magical Beast; HD 4d8+4; hp 24; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atks Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +1 Melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Improved grab, pounce, rake; SQ Camouflage, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3.

Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6, Swim +3, Survival +6 (+10 when tracking by scent). Plains stalkers have a +6 racial bonus to Hide, Jump and Move Silently checks, and a +4 bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Feats: Alertness, Run, Track

DM Note: At ATL 1 the plains stalker will not take advantage of its improved grab, pounce or rake.

ATL 3

Plains Stalker (2); Medium Magical Beast; HD 4d8+4; hp 28; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atks Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +1 Melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Improved grab, pounce, rake; SQ Camouflage, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3.

Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6, Swim +3, Survival +6 (+10 when tracking by scent). Plains stalkers have a +6 racial bonus to Hide, Jump and Move Silently checks, and a +4 bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Feats: Alertness, Run, Track

Camouflage (Ex): When in any sort of natural terrain a plains stalker may make use of the Hide skill, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): While in any sort of natural terrain, a plains stalker can use the hide skill even if being observed.

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a plains stalker must hit with a claw or bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake next round.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d6+3

DM Note: At ATL 3 the plains stalkers will not take advantage of their ability to pounce.

ATL 5

Plains Stalker (4); Medium Magical Beast; HD 4d8+4; hp 32; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atks Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +1 Melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Improved grab, pounce, rake; SQ Camouflage, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3.

Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6, Swim +3, Survival +6 (+10 when tracking by scent). Plains stalkers have a +6 racial bonus to Hide, Jump and Move Silently checks, and a +4 bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Feats: Alertness, Run, Track

Camouflage (Ex): When in any sort of natural terrain a plains stalker may make use of the Hide skill, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): While in any sort of natural terrain, a plains stalker can use the hide skill even if being observed.

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a plains stalker must hit with a claw or bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake next round.

Pounce (Ex): If a plains stalker charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d6+3

ATL 7

Plains Stalker (6); Medium Magical Beast; HD 4d8+4; hp 32; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atks Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +1 Melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Improved grab, pounce, rake; SQ Camouflage, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3.

Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6, Swim +3, Survival +6 (+10 when tracking by scent). Plains stalkers have a +6 racial bonus to Hide, Jump and Move Silently checks, and a +4 bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Feats: Alertness, Run, Track

Camouflage (Ex): When in any sort of natural terrain a plains stalker may make use of the Hide skill, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): While in any sort of natural terrain, a plains stalker can use the hide skill even if being observed.

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a plains stalker must hit with a claw or bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake next round.

Pounce (Ex): If a plains stalker charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d6+3

Once the combat is resolved, the PCs may continue to investigate in the immediate area or they may take their search elsewhere.

If the PCs got a good look at the plains stalkers, they may attempt a *Knowledge (Nature or Arcana)* check DC 15 to realize that this is not a natural animal. However, it is also not a true dire creature, though it does have some of the characteristics (bony protective growths, viciousness). Plains stalkers are the byproduct of a twisted and monstrous attempt to turn normal animals into dire creatures. They are not the result of the only, or even the first experiment, only the most successful. The creature is the size of a large wolf. It has a wolf-like head and jaws, but the body more closely resembles that of a large hunting cat. It has thick, grey and brown mottled fur, strong jaws and retractable claws. Sharp, armor-like bone growths protect the back of the neck and shoulders. They are skilled hunters, both individually and in a pack. When hunting in a group of 4 or more, they share a rudimentary form of telepathy with other members of the pack, allowing them to work in concert to take advantage of every opportunity (such as for flanking).

If they search the nearby copse of trees, and succeed at a *Search check DC 15*, they will find signs indicating where a single person knelt in the shelter of the trees, as if watching the pasture. From that vantage point it would have been a simple matter to shoot the horses unseen. There are also a number of wolf-like tracks, from the plains stalkers, indicating that they were there with the archer.

If the PCs wish to speak to the Diamond Legion, or otherwise return to the city **GO TO Encounter 2.**

If the PCs wish to speak to Kasira **GO TO Encounter 3.**

If the PCs go to the Grove of Cerion **GO TO Encounter 4.**

If the PCs wish to go to the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7.**

Encounter Two: The Long Arm of the Law

The road from the Jirin estate, so short just an hour ago, now seems endless. What you heard from Lady Nysia is not reassuring. Every sound and movement in the grass implies the threat of another attack as you make your way back to the safety of Amthydor's walls.

Has there ever been a more welcome sight in such uncertain circumstances than a Diamond Legion Patrol also bound for the city gates?

As the patrol draws closer, the somber nature of the group becomes clear. One of the troopers leads his horse, which drags behind it a crude litter. A bloodstained blanket shrouds the still form of the litter's occupant.

The patrol is led by Sergeant Kenness, a polite yet no-nonsense young man from a family with a long tradition of Legion service (10 generations). He takes his duty very seriously. If the PCs approach to speak to him, he will bow slightly to women and aristocrats, and bow more formally to PC nobles.

If the PCs wish only to exchange pleasantries, the sergeant will advise them to take care in traveling outside the city, as a wild animal has been attacking travelers.

If the PCs inquire about the poor soul in the wagon, Kenness will tell them that it is the most recent victim of a series of attacks on travelers on the Great Trade Road.

Diamond Legion PCs will have heard of the recent attacks, and know that they have been attributed to wild animals in the area. Few travelers are willing to traverse the Great Trade Road alone for fear of being the next victim.

If they wish more information, to view the body in the wagon, or if they reveal that Lady Nysia has asked them to look into the attacks on her family's land:

"I cannot give you any other information without leave from my Captain, but perhaps if you speak to her, she may be able to provide some assistance."

Keness cannot and will not provide any further information, but he will allow the PCs to

accompany the patrol back to their headquarters so that they can speak to Captain Vestra.

If the PCs wish to return with the patrol and speak to the Captain:

The ride back to the gates is brief, and the members of the patrol are pleasant, if not talkative.

The wait to speak with Captain Vestra is brief, and you are soon shown into an office dominated by a single desk and chair. The uniformed woman within greets you solemnly.

“Sergeant Kenness tells me that you have an interest in these recent attacks. Do you have information that may be of use in an investigation?”

It is far more likely that even the limited information that the Legion has exceeds what the PCs already know. Captain Vestra will be somewhat disappointed that the PCs have little to contribute, but will be glad that they wish to look into things themselves. She will answer what questions she can, of course, but can provide no material assistance. PCs returning later with additional information will be greeted with interest, and perhaps more (see Epilogue).

❖ What happened to the person on the litter?/Who was he?

“We believe he was a traveling trader from the west, specializing in black market goods. We are attempting to verify his identity.”

❖ May we see the body that was brought in?

“Certainly, if you believe that you can learn some clue from it.”

The body is that of a human male of late middle years (about 50). The cause of death is clearly a number of savage wounds caused by the teeth and claws of a large animal.

Heal check DC 15 – The man has been dead for over a day.

If the PCs seek to use *speak with dead*:

- Who are you?
“Reagar of Westmarch”
- Who or what killed you?
“She who hunts.”
- Why were you killed?
“I took that which was hers?”

- What was your cargo?
“The hunter’s child.”

❖ May we see the site of the attack?

“I can provide you with directions to the site of the attack. It occurred on the Great Trade Road, west of Rainsford. If you wish to investigate on your own, you are welcome to do so. With other crimes closer to home, something so far outside the walls is a secondary priority for the Diamond Legion.”

❖ Can we borrow horses/mounts?

“Between the attacks and thefts, there are no spare horses to be had in the entire city. Those that I do have must be reserved for my men.”

Captain Vestra does not have horses to loan the PCs. PCs without mounts will have to ride double with their companions.

❖ Can you suggest who might have additional information?

“From all appearances, a large animal was responsible for the attack. The Grove of Cerion and the shrines of Ayla and Brianna may be able to advise you of what creatures may be in the area.

There was another series of attacks several months ago, but they ceased abruptly after a few weeks and remain unsolved. It is possible that the current incidents are related. There was a young girl who was somehow involved. I believe that she was made a ward of one of the temples. If you can learn who she was, she may be able to help you also.

Also, the ranger Blaze patrols the Darkwood, near where the most recent attack occurred. She may have useful information as well. If you wish to speak with her I can attempt to send a message asking her to meet you at the scene of the attack.”

The girl, Kasira, was declared a Ward of Amthydor and placed in the custody of the Temple of Meneon. Captain Vestra does not know where Kasira is, but PCs who were part of ‘Lions..’ will be able to recall where to find her with a successful **Intelligence check DC 10**. Other PCs may learn of her whereabouts with a successful **Gather Information check DC 15**.

If the PCs request it, Captain Vestra will send a messenger bird to Blaze, requesting that she meet the PCs at the spot where the trader was attacked. Captain Vestra will advise them that it may take several hours for the message to reach the ranger, and that once they arrive at the scene of the attack they should wait there until she arrives.

❖ Is there any discernable pattern to the attacks?
“Most seem to be occurring south and west of the city itself, between here and the Darkwood. They have been happening anywhere from a few hours to three days apart.”

❖ Do we get paid?
“This is your own personal investigation, and not something that the Diamond Legion can finance.”

❖ Is there a reward?
“It is possible, though none has been announced at this time.”

❖ Can we have a writ?
“As you are not actually investigating at the request of the Diamond Legion, and cannot offer you a writ of any kind.”

❖ Are you recruiting for the Diamond Legion?
“We are always looking for new members. Perhaps one of you may prove to have the qualities that we are looking for.”

When the PCs have exhausted their questions, a trooper will knock on the door seeking Captain Vestra’s attention, and she will wish the PCs safe journeys before returning to her duties.

If the PCs wish to speak with Kasira **GO TO Encounter 3.**

If they wish to visit the Grove of Cerion **GO TO Encounter 4.**

If they wish to investigate the site of the attack and meet with Blaze **GO TO Encounter 6.**

If the PCs wish to go to the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7.**

Encounter Three – Little Orphan Kasira (Optional)

Note: The players should think of visiting this encounter, and any questions they ask Kasira, *on their own*. Do not force them to come here and do not automatically provide them with answers to questions that they do not ask. The information provided here is also available in other encounters, so they will not be missing out if they cannot think of a particular question.

The Moonlight Pavilion is the temple to Meneon, which is overseen by High Priestess Delenia Lunasole. It was here that Kasira was placed, as a Ward of Amthydor, following the events of the scenario ‘Lions, Tigers & Bears...’ PCs who were part of ‘Lions..’ will be able to recall where to find her with a successful ***Intelligence check DC 10***. Other PCs may learn of her whereabouts with a successful ***Gather Information check DC 15***.

A blue-robed priest steps forward to greet you as you climb the last step to the door of the temple.

“Be welcome in these halls, gentle folk, and may Meneon’s light guide your way. How may we assist you?”

The temple of Meneon is unaware of the recent attacks, and has no information or insight to provide. However, if the PCs ask about Kasira and express a wish to speak with her, the priest will hesitate, inquiring as to their intentions. The priests of the temple are very protective of their ward. If the PCs are gruff, demanding or harsh they will not be permitted to see the child. If the PCs are respectful and non-threatening then they are welcome to speak to the girl. If one or more PCs attempt to deceive the priest as to their attitude or intentions towards Kasira, they must succeed at a Bluff check DC 30.

Once the priest is satisfied that the PCs mean no harm to his charge, he will be more welcoming, and invite them to follow him into the temple.

“A joy she is to all of us here. She should be in lessons this hour, but it may be possible for her to take a short break. If you will follow me please.”

He leads you through a series of halls, pausing at the door of what appears to be a small classroom. Through the partly open door you can hear the voice of a young child dutifully reciting something that she has learned in her lesson.

Leaving you at the door, he speaks with the priestess overseeing the lesson, then returns leading a young girl.

“Kasira, these people came to visit you. They would like to ask you some questions, if that’s ok.”

Kasira nods enthusiastically and smiles, taking _____ (least threatening PC) hand and drawing you in the direction of a door leading to a small garden.

“Have you come to play with me? We can feed the fish in the garden pond.”

Kasira is a bright young girl of six and a half years, but like any normal child she welcomes a break from studying. She would much rather play than answer the PCs questions, but if the PCs are nice to her, and promise to return later, she will cooperate happily.

Being only six and a half, Kasira’s understanding of the world is somewhat limited, but she will answer what questions she can.

❖ Do you know anything about wild animals nearby?

“I know lots of animals. They are my friends.”

❖ Do you know if your friends have been hurting horses and other animals?

“My friends don’t want to hurt anybody. They’re just hungry.”

❖ Do your friends ever come visit you here?

“Only my kitty. Sometimes when I get to go for walks outside the gates S’rabi comes to play with me. The others are too afraid of the people here. People hurt my friends.”

❖ Who is S’rabi?

“The big kitty who used to live in the caravan wagon. Now she lives in the forest.”

Sarabi is the dire tiger that escaped from the caravan in ‘Lions, Tigers & Bears...’. She has remained in the area, along with the Beast.

❖ What does your kitty look like?

“Like S’rabi, only smaller, and her stripes are more golden than orange.”

Kasira’s ‘kitty’ is a more normal sized tiger, and it does indeed visit her on a regular basis, though no one else has ever seen it.

❖ Can you call your friends here?

“They come when they want to. I cannot call them.”

❖ Where do Sarabi and your kitty go when they are not here with you?

“They live in the place with the scary trees.”

PCs may make a skill check Knowledge (Local) DC 10 + ATL to discern that she is talking about the Darkwood.

❖ What do your friends want?

“They come to play with me, and sometimes I feed them.”

If the PCs wish to visit the Grove of Cerion

GO TO Encounter 4.

If they wish to investigate the site of the attack and meet with Blaze **GO TO Encounter 6.**

If they wish to explore the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7.**

Encounter Four – Over the River and Through the Woods

Even the normally cheerful village of Rosewood is feeling the unseen presence of shadowy hunters. Children still play in front of the tidy cottages, but watchful parents are close at hand, ready with cudgel and pitchfork to fend off any threat.

The welcoming smiles that have greeted you on past visits to this place are absent, and those who watch your passage seem almost resentful and angry at your presence here. It can hardly be anything that you have done yourselves.

Talk has already begun in the city, blaming the Grove of Cerion and the shrines of Ayla and Brianna for sheltering the vicious creatures that are surely responsible for these attacks. As the druids of the grove are both friend and protector of Rosewood, the villagers are less than friendly to those who would seek to bring harm to the grove. Until they know the PCs' motives, they suspect the worst. While they will not actively oppose the PCs, they are not helpful.

Convincing the villagers that the PCs are not here to lay blame requires a successful Diplomacy check DC 15. Players attempting to change the attitude of the villagers are encouraged to role play this briefly, and bonuses to the roll may be given at the DM's discretion.. If the residents of Rosewood can be convinced of the PCs' good intentions, while they don't have any information, they will at least stop glaring at the PCs.

A sense of peace surrounds you as you walk the tree-lined path to the Grove of Cerion. The foliage around you rustles from the passage of small creatures, and birds sing from every tree and bush.

As you enter the central clearing of the grove, a large grey wolf regards you solemnly from his place in a pool of sunlight. He meets your gaze, watching you for a moment before turning to look in the direction of a small stone house on the opposite side of the clearing.

PCs who played 'Lions, Tigers and Bears....' should remember Winter, the animal companion of the chief druid of the grove.

A middle-aged man with curly brown hair and wearing brown and yellow robes steps out of the house, wiping his hands on a scrap of toweling.

"Yes, Winter, I know. I'm coming." Catching sight of your party, he starts slightly. "Oh, there you are. Yes, welcome to the Grove of Cerion. All who come in peace are welcome here. Be at your ease, and tell me what brings you."

Keir is a druid of Cerion, and the guardian of the grove. The wolf, Winter, is his animal companion.

Keir is aware of the recent attacks, and though he is outwardly calm and seldom displays worry or agitation, is greatly concerned by them. The area

around the grove is also home to shrines to the other nature two deities, Ayla and Brianna, and druids of those faiths are in the area. In spite of their various faiths, all of the druids get along well, and share information on the condition of the land and its inhabitants. They want to know who or what is behind the recent attacks, and why.

"I have heard of the attacks of which you speak, and have discussed them with my fellow druids, some of whom are more familiar with animal behavior than I am. If it is some natural creature that is responsible, the reason must be found at once. The beasts of mountain, forest and plain do not lightly attack humans, and while livestock makes for easy prey, most wild creatures instinctively avoid areas where men have settled. Something else must be behind this."

Keir will provide what information he can, but he is adamant that no natural creature be harmed for obeying its nature.

❖ Are there any creatures in the area that could be responsible for these attacks?

"No natural creature that I have ever seen. Bears do not attack livestock. Wolves and large cats seldom attack humans unless they are either starving or sick. The forests abound with game, so there has been no shortage of natural prey.

Something the size of a dragon or a griffon would likely have been seen by someone. While there have been sightings of large animal tracks in the area, none of the druids have been able to identify the creature that may have made them. Attempts by trappers to capture whatever may be responsible have failed.

Several of the farmers and villagers have reported hearing strange howls and other animal sounds coming from the forest, especially at night, but there have been no sightings."

❖ What about the 'Beast'? (From Lions, Tigers & Bears...)

"There were rumors of a bipedal beast several months ago, but such a creature was never actually identified."

❖ Where would the creatures be likely to hide?

"Away from people, if possible. Caves, or a deep forest such as the Darkwood."

❖ Do you know who might know more about the attacks?

“There is a ranger named Blaze who patrols there. She may have heard or seen something, but it is far easier to be found by her than it is to find her. As one of the attacks took place not far from the Darkwood, she may be nearby already.”

❖ Is there any discernable pattern to the attacks?

“Most seem to be occurring south and west of the city itself, between Amthydor and the Darkwood. They have been happening anywhere from a few hours to three days apart.” He pauses for a moment, as if remembering. *“There was something three days ago. I didn’t think much of it at the time, boys being what they are, but it may be related. Two young boys from Llynvale came to me for healing. They were afraid if their parents knew what they had been doing that they would be punished. They said that they were playing with a litter of young wild cats and were injured. The wounds were quite deep, but as they were not life-threatening I accepted their story. The boys seemed badly frightened by their experience. They vowed that they had learned their lesson and promised that they would leave the ‘kittens’ alone, and they returned home.”*

Keir is not certain that the names the boys gave him are correct, but he will describe them for the PCs if they wish to try and locate the pair.

When the PCs finish with their questions and have learned all that they can:

As you prepare to take your leave of Keir, the songs of birds and the peace of the grove are interrupted by the frightened cries of the villagers and the snarls and growls of an angry animal.

If the PCs choose to ignore the sights and sounds of the attack on the villagers, Keir will race to aid his neighbors and, while no one will be seriously hurt, the PCs will find a cold welcome here in the future.

Assuming that the PCs are good little heroes and run to see what all the fuss is about:

It is difficult to see clearly where the flashing blur of fur and teeth ends and the villagers begin. The men of Rosewood, armed with pitchforks,

scythes and other farm implements, struggle to hold off a pack of SOMETHING, while the women usher the youngsters indoors to safety.

Again, if the PCs do nothing, the villagers will eventually be victorious with Keir’s help. There will be only minor to moderate injuries, but the PCs will no longer be welcome here.

Once the PCs enter the combat, and certainly once it is over, they will be able to get a better view of what has attacked the village.

In any case, regardless of species/ATL, all of the creatures share some common characteristics:

- ❖ Slightly larger than normal
- ❖ Bony growths and protective plates/increased natural armor
- ❖ More ferocious than normal
- ❖ Slightly misshapen or half-finished appearance, almost like warm wax that has started to melt.

These traits stop short of making these creatures into true dire animals, but the PCs should definitely get the impression that they are not natural animals and that something is definitely NOT right. These are some of Loceti’s less successful attempts to transform normal animals into dire creatures. Not all of the changes have resulted in improvements. Some of the animals are less dexterous, weaker, etc.

All ATLs

Keir is here to protect the villagers, not to do the PCs’ job for them. He will help the PCs if they are losing badly, but they should be allowed to manage the combat on their own if possible.

Keir: Medium male humanoid (human); Druid 9 (Cerion); HD 10d8+10; hp 74; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+3 amulet of natural armor, +2 Dex); touch AC 12, flatfooted 13); BAB/Grapple +6/+7; Atks Dagger +7 Melee (1d4+1) or quarterstaff +7 melee (1d6+1); FullAtk Dagger +7 Melee (1d4+1) or quarterstaff +7 melee (1d6+1); Face/Reach 5 ft/5 ft; SA: Nil; SQ: Nil; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +11;

Str 12, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 14. Skills: Bluff +2, Concentration +13, Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +8, Heal +9, Knowledge (Local) +6, Knowledge (Nature)

+12, Listen +9, Profession (Herbalist) +16, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +6, Spot +7, Survival +10, Swim +1.

Feats: Beastmaster, Cauldron Witch, Low Profile, Skill Focus (Knowledge-Nature), Skill Focus (Profession-Herbalist)

Languages: Common, druidic, elven, sylvan

Beastmaster: Rebukes animals as a cleric rebukes undead.

Cauldron Witch: Keir gains a +2 bonus to all Craft (alchemy) and Profession (herbalist) checks.

Low Profile: Keir gains a -3 to his Reputation score.

Spells: 0-level – cure minor wounds, detect poison, guidance, know direction, mending, purify food & drink; 1st level – calm animals, entangle, goodberry, magic fang, speak with animals; 2nd level – barkskin, bear's endurance, bull's strength, hold animal x2; 3rd level – cure moderate wounds x2, remove disease, speak with plants; 4th level – cure serious x2; 5th level – commune with nature. DC 13 + spell level.

Items: Dagger, quarterstaff, amulet of natural armor +3, ring of animal friendship

ATL 1

Transmuted Leopard (2) Medium Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 22; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atks Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3) and 2 Claws +1 Melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Nil; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2.

Str 16, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +12, Climb +11, Hide +8, Jump +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Weapon Finesse

ATL 3

Transmuted Wolverine (3) Medium Animal; HD 3d8+15; hp 35; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 10 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +2/+5; Atks Claw +5 Melee (1d4+3); FullAtk 2 Claws +5 Melee (1d4+3) and Bite +0 Melee (1d6+2); Space/Reach

5 ft/5 ft.; SA Rage; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2.

Str 16, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +11, Listen +6, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Toughness, Track

Rage (Ex): A wolverine that takes damage in combat flies into a berserk rage on its next turn, clawing and biting madly until either it or its opponent is dead. It gains a +4 to Strength, +4 to Constitution and a -2 to AC. The creature cannot end its rage voluntarily.

ATL 5

Transmuted Lion (3) Large Animal; HD 5d8+15; hp 49; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 15 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+12; Atks Claw +7 Melee (1d4+5); FullAtk 2 Claws +7 Melee (1d4+5) and Bite +2 Melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft.; SA Pounce, rake (1d4+2); SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2.

Str 21, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Balance +6, Hide +2 (+11 in area of tall grass or heavy undergrowth), Listen +5, Move Silently +10, Spot +5

Feats: Alertness, Run

Pounce (Ex): If a lion charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +7 melee, damage 1d4+2.

ATL 7

Transmuted Brown Bear (3) Large Animal; HD 8d8+32; hp 84; Init +0; Spd 40ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+16; Atks Claw +11 Melee (1d8+8); FullAtk 2 Claws +11 Melee (1d8+8) and Bite +6 Melee (2d6+4); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft.; SA Improved Grab; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +3.

Str 27, Dex 11, Con 19, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +4, Spot +7, Swim +12

Feats: Endurance, Run, Track

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a brown bear must hit with a claw attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

Once the attacking animals are destroyed and the PCs can get a good look at them, it is obvious that they are not normal creatures. If he is asked,

Keir will confirm that they could not have been bred naturally in the wild, but must have been magically or chemically transformed or created. Keir and the villagers will arrange for the disposal of the bodies, unless the PCs specifically ask them to wait or offer to do it themselves. Keir and the other druids in the grove will provide sufficient healing to bring any PCs injured protecting the village to 80% of normal hit points.

If the PCs wish to speak to Kasira **GO TO Encounter 3.**

If the PCs wish to speak with the boys in Llynvale **GO TO Encounter 5.**

If the PCs wish to visit the site of the attack on the trader **GO TO Encounter 6.**

If they want to go to the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7.**

Encounter Five: Child's Play

Llynvale is a small farming village on the Great Trade Road, just a few miles west of the city of Amthydor.

Asking around about the boys requires a successful *Diplomacy* or *Gather Information* check DC 15 and brings the same results, no matter who the PCs talk to:

--*"Troublemakers, the both of them."*
--*"Can't believe a word they say."*
--*"Monsters, bah! Probably just a rabbit."*
--*"They are always coming back with stories about wolves stalking the sheep. Rubbish, I say. Lazy louts just don't want to do their share."*

The boys are like the boy who cried 'wolf' They have a history of telling fantastical stories, especially about animals attacking the flocks when they are on sheep-watch. Few adults believe them anymore, so their most recent tale is not being taken seriously.

It has been two days since the boys were hunted by Sarabi, the only real attack they have ever experienced, and they have been hiding in a sheep barn like frightened rabbits ever since. The PCs can find them there, and through kindness or intimidation can learn their story.

❖ What chased/attacked you?

"A monster!....big enough to eat us in one bite!.....lucky to be alive....."

The boys are babbling, talking over each other, desperate for someone, anyone, to believe them. The PCs should be able to calm the boys quickly through a *Diplomacy* check DC 10, and get the whole story, question by question.

❖ What did the monster look like?

"As big as a horse, with orange and black stripes. It just came out of the woods and starting chasing us. It had giant bloody fangs, and claws as long as daggers."

This is a slight exaggeration. While Saribi is a tiger, and she is the size of a large horse, her teeth and claws are not quite that large.

❖ Where did it attack/chase you?

"We were just playing next to the river, throwing stones at fish and things, when it came out of nowhere and attacked us."

The *where* is not as important as the *what* and the *why* in this case.

❖ Why did the creature chase you?

The boys look suddenly guilty.
"We took its baby. We weren't going to hurt it. We just wanted to train it and keep it as a pet."

❖ What did you want for a pet?

"It was a baby tiger."

❖ Where did you find the cub?

The boys glance at each other, as if trying to decide if being believed is worth the trouble that they could be in, before answering.

"We were in the Darkwood. Just at the edge. It isn't like we were really in the woods. We were just looking for something to do. There was a little cave. "It looked like fun, so we went in."

The boys can give vague directions to where they found the cub, but the PCs will be distracted long before they find the den (which will be empty by then anyway). It is indeed just within the boundaries of the Darkwood, which the boys have been forbidden by their parents to enter.

❖ What did you do with the cub?

"We sold it, to a trader. After it bit us a

couple of times it wasn't as much fun as we thought it would be, and it wouldn't stop crying, so we were going to take it back where we found it. We were taking the main road until we got closer to the forest. The trader came by in his wagon and offered to buy the cub from us for five crowns."

❖ Can you describe the man you sold it to?

They describe a human man of late middle years, who bears a striking resemblance to the body of the trader found by the Diamond Legion.

Sarabi had left her two young cubs in the den while she went in search of food. While she was away the boys discovered the den and took one of the cubs (the other escaped). They sold the cub to the trader, Reager, but not before getting enough of its scent on themselves that Sarabi was able to track them down in an effort to get her baby back. She chased them, injuring them slightly, before deciding that they no longer had her cub and leaving to follow the new scent of the trader.

If the PCs wish to speak to Kasira **GO TO Encounter 3.**

If the PCs wish to visit the Grove of Cerion **GO TO Encounter 4.**

If the PCs wish to visit the site of the attack on the trader **GO TO Encounter 6.**

If they want to go to the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7.**

Encounter Six: The Hand That Feeds You

The trader, Reager of Westmarch, had heard that a trapper called Malagar was seeking dire animals. By chance, Reager heard the story of the two boys from Llynvale, and realized that their 'monster' and the 'kittens' might be a dire tiger and her cubs. He offered to purchase the cubs, and arranged to deliver them to Malagar. By the time Sarabi tracked him down he had already delivered two of her cubs to Malagar.

Even without the directions that you were given, there can be no mistaking the site of the

attack. The trader's wagon is in ruins. It has been pulled to the side of the road, along with the body of a horse that must have been pulling it. From all appearances, the late trader was a prosperous one, but little remains except for the four wheels and a pile of torn canvas and splintered wood.

PCs investigating the scene may make Skill checks as follows:

General scene:

Spot DC 10: The wagon was headed towards Amthydor when it was attacked.

The wagon:

Among the wagon debris is the shattered remains of a sturdy wooden box. The box was approx. 2 ft x 4 ft x 2 ft high, made of strong boards placed to leave a one inch gap between them. The inside of the box contains several orange and black hairs, and a leather muzzle stained with dried blood.

A number of deep gouges, such as claw marks, mar the wood of the wagon. Also, there are more tufts of orange and black fur.

Spot DC 10: While there is only one dead horse on the scene, the wagon harness is for *two* horses. There is no sign of the other animal.

Intelligence DC 10 + ATL: The wagon appears to have been empty of goods at the time of the attack. PCs might think it odd that a trader would have nothing to trade when headed *into* a major city.

Search DC 13 + ATL: In a hidden compartment under the driver's seat of the wagon is a small leather pouch of coins and a rolled note. The pouch contains 500gp. The note (Player Handout #2) reads:

Reager,

Bring the creature to the Darkwood Road, unharmed. It does me no good if it is dead. If it is injured in any way, or if it is not as you have promised, things will go ill for you indeed. If all is as we have agreed, you will be

paid the sum of 500 gold crowns when the creature is delivered to me.

M

The roadside and surrounding area:

Search DC 15: Very large feline paw prints, approximately 12 inches across. There are no human/humanoid tracks.

Track DC 12: The footprints of a single horse lead into the forest before eventually circling back to the road and heading west, away from Amthydor.

After the PCs have had a chance to search the area to their satisfaction have them make Listen and Spot checks DC 25. It is not that Blaze is *trying* to hide from the PCs, it just comes naturally and she *is* quite good at it.

A lean and wiry woman stands before you, as if conjured from the trees themselves. Leathers of mottled green and brown mark her as a ranger, and with such flame-red hair she could only be Blaze, the ranger who patrols these lands on behalf of Amthydor. She is a striking individual. Her straight, fire-red hair is tied in a single pony-tail, which disappears behind her strong shoulders. Her leathers are well-worn, though in good repair. She has what looks like to be part of a green intricate tattoo peeking from the edge of the shirt sleeve on her right forearm. Her emerald eyes sparkle with both intelligence and confidence.

Blaze (Ranger 7): Medium humanoid (human); HD 7d8+21; hp 67; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.(studded leather armor); AC 17 (+3 Dex, +4 *studded leather armor* +1; touch AC 14, flatfooted 14); Atks +10/+5 melee (1d6+3, shortsword) or +10/+5 ranged (1d6+3, composite shortbow; rapid shot +8/+8/+3; manyshot +7/+7); SA favored environment/enemy (temperate forests +4, undead +2), SQ wild empathy, woodland stride; AL NG; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 17, Wis 17, Cha 17.
Skills and Feats: Climb +13, Craft (bowmaking) +13, Handle Animal +13, Heal +13, Hide +13, Knowledge (nature) +13, Listen +13. Move Silently +13, Search +13, Spot +13, Survival +15; Tracking, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Survival),

Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Manyshot, Improved Initiative.

Spells: *delay poison, endure elements.*

Favored Enemy/Environment: Temperate Forests: +4 bonus to Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Spot, Survival and Knowledge (nature) checks. Undead: +2 to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot or Survival checks. The bonuses do not stack, they overlap. These bonuses are not factored into the stat blocks above.

Woodland stride: Can move through any natural, non-magical undergrowth at normal speed.

“This road has become dangerous for travelers, and more so for those who linger over their passage. You have not the look of the Legion, nor of common scavengers, so I am curious what brings you to this place?”

PCs with the Gratitude of Blaze:

There is a light of recognition as she regards you.

“I would have thought that your last visit would have left you reluctant to venture here again. How may I help you?”

Once the PCs identify themselves as having come from Captain Vestra, Keir or Lady Nysia, Blaze will be happy to speak with them. She is here only to answer questions, relate past events and advise the PCs of the best paths to travel in the fringes of the Darkwood. She is not here to do their investigating for them. She will not examine the scene for them. She will, *if asked, and if the PCs are unable to do so*, speak to a single animal to learn that it was a very large tiger which attacked the trader.

If the PCs are able to speak with animals, or if they ask Blaze to do so, they will be able to locate and question some small woodland creature about what took place here. A tiger larger than any ever before seen in these lands tracked the trader. When she found him she killed him, and searched the wagon as if looking for something, then returned to the forest and went west, towards the Darkwood.

PCs may have questions for Blaze:

❖ Have you seen any creatures that could be responsible for these attacks?

“Not the creatures themselves, though I have found several unusually large tracks, and what may have been the den of a large wild cat.”

❖ Have you heard of other attacks in the area?

“Vague sightings and rumors, and the usual attacks on unattended livestock. There were some children in Llynvale who told their friends that they were chased by a large cat, but they immediately recanted their story when questioned by adults.”

❖ Where could such a creature be hiding?
“Someplace remote. A cave, perhaps. Nearly anywhere in the Darkwood.”

❖ Is there any discernable pattern to the attacks?

“Most seem to be occurring south and west of the city itself, between Amthydor and the Darkwood. They have been happening anywhere from a few hours to three days apart.”

❖ Can you help us search the Darkwood?/Can you guide us?
“Duty has placed other requirements upon me at this time, and I am not free to accompany you.”

❖ Where is the Darkwood Road?
“It is what the locals call the road that runs north from the village of Llynvale along the mountains to the Darkwood.”

PCs may also obtain this information with a successful skill check Knowledge (Local) DC 10 + ATL.

❖ Can we have a map to the Darkwood?
“There is no map that can reveal all of the hazards and paths of that place. Stay to the fringes, if you must enter at all, and know that you risk your lives with each step”.

The PCs are on their own for this investigation. Reager had already passed the cub on to a trapper named Malagar when Sarabi found and killed him.

If the PCs wish to speak with Kasira **GO TO Encounter 3.**

If they wish to visit the Grove of Cerion **GO TO Encounter 4.**

If the PCs wish to speak with the boys in Llynvale **GO TO Encounter 5.**
If they wish to explore the Darkwood **GO TO Encounter 7.**

Encounter Seven: Born to be Wild

When the PCs reach the Darkwood Road and the edge of the forest:

Outwardly, the trees before you look no different than those just across the river, and yet they exude a sense of menace and foreboding that gives you pause.

Spot DC 10: A narrow set of wagon ruts leads into the Darkwood from the road. The ruts lead approximately 200 feet along a small trail before coming back out again.

This is where Reager delivered the tiger cub to Malagar.

If the PCs follow the trail:
It is little wonder that tales of this dismal place are used to frighten errant children. Narrow twisting paths, scarcely more than game trails, wind among the gnarled trunks. Deep shadows conceal the path ahead, and fallen leaves muffle the sound of your footsteps.

Spot DC 10 + ATL: The tracks of a medium sized human, as well as those of a large feline.

Malagar took the cub this way, and he made no effort to hide his trail. He *wants* Sarabi to find him, so that he can trap her.

The PCs will follow narrow game trails and the paths of the few woodcutters willing to venture into the Darkwood for nearly half an hour before reaching the clearing where Malagar had planned to trap Sarabi.

Small animals move unseen, but not unheard, through the forest around you. The creatures of the Darkwood seem to have little fear of two-

legged visitors. All other sounds cease, however, as a scream of terror and agony shatters the natural noises of the forest.

The natural reaction of the PCs *should* be a mad dash down the trail. When they do reach the clearing:

The trail you are following ends abruptly, opening out into a small clearing nearly 25 feet across and 40 feet wide. At the far left end a young tiger paces frantically in an iron cage, squalling unhappily. A large pit has been dug in front of the cage, and a heavy net lies on the ground next to the hole. You focus on it only for a moment before realizing that the greater danger lies to your right, where a much larger tiger, rivaling a warhorse in size, stands over the prone and bleeding body of a man dressed in rough leathers. The man stirs slightly, then grows still as the tiger turns to regard you, her yellow eyes alight with a human-like intelligence.

Sarabi has been awakened by the Beast, and now has an Intelligence of 15. It should be readily apparent to the PCs that she is not a 'dumb animal'.

The PCs enter the clearing at the center of the south side. The failed pit/net trap and the cage holding the cub is at the west end. Sarabi and Malagar are at the east end. She has paused in her attack on the man, and is waiting to see what the PCs are going to do. The PCs are in the last place that any sane person wants to be – between a mother tiger and her cub.

The trapper has been using Sarabi's young cub as bait to catch her, and she is NOT happy about it. She was able to escape the pit and net set to trap her, and immediately turned her attention on Malagar before he was able to tranquilize her. After he ignored her attempts to ask politely, she has attacked the trapper in an attempt to free her young. He is rapidly bleeding to death from his wounds. PCs may be able to save the trapper's life, if they move quickly. Sarabi is not interested in the PCs, and will only attack them if they try to keep her from saving her cub. They should NOT attack Sarabi, but if they are that anxious for a fight then they deserve what happens to them.

Ideally, the PCs should negotiate with Sarabi, offering to help her rescue her cub while also saving Malagar before he reaches –10 hit points. Sarabi will speak the PCs, if they address her first. Sarabi will cooperate with the PCs if they promise to help her free her cub. Negotiating with Sarabi requires a successful Diplomacy check DC 10+ATL.

The PCs only have a limited amount of time to save Malagar once they enter the clearing, otherwise he will die from his injuries:

ATL 1: 9 rounds
ATL 3: 8 rounds
ATL 5: 6 rounds
ATL 7: 4 rounds

The cage holding Sarabi's cub is made of iron bars on all six sides. Each bar of the cage has a hardness of 10 and 30 hit points. Two bars must be removed or bent out of the way to get the cub out of the cage. Bending the bars requires a successful Strength check DC 24. Up to 4 PCs may cooperate, or 3 PCs plus Sarabi. The cage door is secured by a good iron lock (Open Locks DC30). The lock has a hardness of 10 and 10 hit points. Breaking the lock requires a successful Strength check DC 26.

A search of the clearing will also reveal a dart coated in an exotic nerve poison (Fort Save DC 25) which caused paralysis for 3d4 hours. This poison will lose potency after 12 hours once exposed to air, so it will do the PCs little good.

All ATLS

Sarabi, Dire Tiger (Awakened): Large Magical Beast (Augmented Animal); HD 22d8+88; hp 260; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 17 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15; BAB/Grapple +15/+27; Atks Claw +23 Melee (2d4+8); FullAtk: 2 claws +23 Melee (2d4+8) and bite +17 Melee (2d6+4); Space/Reach 10 ft/5 ft.; SA Improved grab, pounce, rake 2d4+4; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +17, Ref +13, Will +14.

Str 27, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Hide +9*, Intimidate +6, Jump +14, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Sense Motive +5, Spot +8, Survival +6, Swim +10. Dire tigers have a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently

checks. *In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the hide bonus improves to +8.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Natural Attack, (bite), Power Attack, Run, Stealthy, Track, Weapon Focus (claw).

Languages: Common, elven, sylvan

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a dire tiger must hit with a claw or bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake.

Pounce (Ex): If a dire tiger charges, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +18 melee, damage 2d4+4.

Malagar (Expert 6/Ranger 1): Medium human male; HD 6d6+1d8+7; hp -1 or less, by ATL (normally 43); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+2 leather armor, +1 Dex); touch AC 11, flatfooted 12); BAB/Grapple +5/+7; Atks +1 *keen* short sword +8 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk +1 *keen* short sword +8 Melee (1d6+3); Face/Reach 5 ft/5 ft; SA: favored enemy (magical beasts +2); SQ: wild empathy; AL CN; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 14.

Skills: Appraise +5, Bluff +8, Handle Animal +9, Heal +3, Intimidate +6, Gather Information +5, Hide +7, Knowledge (Local) +4, Knowledge (Nature) +9, Listen +8, Sense Motive +8, Spot +8, Survival +7.

Feats: Cleave, Expert Tracker, Power Attack, Track, Trailblazing.

Languages: Common, sylvan

Favored Enemy: Magical Beasts: +2 to Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot or Survival checks.

These bonuses are not factored into the stat blocks above.

Items: +1 Keen short sword

What Sarabi knows:

❖ Someone (Malagar) has been attempting to trap dire animals in the area. There was a dire wolf family nearby, but they left after their cubs were taken and later found drained of blood.

❖ Someone has been putting out meat as bait for the predators in the area. Animals that eat the meat turn mean, and change. They grow larger and stronger, but they also become slightly misshapen.

The meat smells strange, so she has never eaten it. If asked, she will do her best to describe the scent of the meat. Profession (herbalist or cook) DC 12 to recognize the scent she is describing as chamomile.

❖ She is not responsible for any of the attacks on people or domestic animals.

❖ There have been several strange creatures in the area recently. She has never seen anything like them before. They look like large wolves, but move like hunting cats. They follow and guard a man who smells like medicine (Loceti).

She will not tell the PCs where to find the Beast, and she will not talk about Kasira.

Dead or alive, the PCs may wish to interrogate Malagar.

What Malagar knows:

❖ He was hired by a wizard named Loceti to capture an adult dire animal. He had heard about the tiger in the area and decided that her cub would be the perfect bait.

❖ Loceti has been staying in an old noble estate near Amthydor. Malagar has never been there, but he believes that the estate is south of the city. PCs may make a successful skill check *Knowledge (Local or Nobility & Royalty)*, or *Gather Information* DC 15 (DC 10 for natives of Amthydor) to learn that the old House estate has been abandoned for several years.

❖ He has been killing some of the livestock to feed Loceti's experiments. He has also been wounding some of the livestock, to help the young experiments learn to hunt for themselves.

Malagar's camp:

Malagar has been camping in another clearing approximately 20 yards from where he was attempting to trap Sarabi. PCs searching his camp for clues should make a Search check DC 15.

❖ Two notes (Player Handout #3)

❖ 1000 gp

❖ *potion of barkskin* +3

The PCs may revisit any previous location that they need to, but the only place to learn anything further is **Encounter 8**.

Encounter Eight: Let Us Prey

The manor of Thornbriars has stood empty for several years, ever since Lord Consul Magnus Arawl, despondent over his business failures and the death of his beloved daughter Cardinal, poisoned himself and the rest of the family during dinner. Following the deaths, the lands reverted to the custody of the Lord Monarch. The farmers who worked the land for House Arawl have been allowed to continue farming here, but they avoid the house, believing it to be haunted by the ghosts of the family. If the PCs go looking for official permission to search the manor, it can be obtained from Captain Vestra.

While many of the fields and farms formerly owned by House Arawl are still diligently tended, with the Lord Monarch's blessing, by the family's former tenants, the once proud manor house of Thornbriars stands as a crumbling monument to a shattered dream. The mortar is crumbling, gardens have become overgrown, and one side of the high iron gate hangs haphazardly from the lower hinge.

Thornbriars is a three story country manor, with a carriage house just behind the main structure.

The yard, gardens and outside area:

Empty pedestals mark where fine marble statues once stood along elegant garden paths. Beds that once blossomed with colorful flowers are now overgrown with weeds. Trellises that held graceful ivy and climbing roses are now entwined by stark trailers of dead vines. A fountain that should fill the garden with the music of falling water is filled with dead leaves and a film of algae. The scent of rare blooming flowers has been replaced with an air of misery and decay.

Track DC 10 + ATL or Spot DC 15 + ATL: The tracks of several large predators around the garden and both structures. If the PCs looked at the tracks of the plains stalkers in Encounter 1a, they can recognize some of the tracks as being caused by these creatures. There are also tracks from leopards, bears and wolverines. There are also the tracks of at least four different medium sized humanoid creatures.

Search DC 20: Carefully hidden among the weeds and dead rosebushes is a small, carefully tended garden of rare herbs, including chamomile.

Knowledge (Arcana), Profession (Herbalist) or Craft (Alchemy) DC 18 + ATL: To realize that these herbs could be used in the making of polymorph/transmutation-type potions.

Spot DC 15: Several bones from horses and other livestock, poorly buried and sticking up in a secluded corner of the garden. The bones have been well chewed and then buried by a large predator.

The main manor house:

While some effort has been made to keep out trespassers, the fine paneling, rich draperies, heavy furnishings and stained glass windows that once adorned the stately manor have fallen prey to scavengers and thieves. A thick layer of dust coats every surface, and cobwebs adorn the skeletal remains of crystal chandeliers.

The PCs should get the impression that while this was once the well-appointed country home of a Noble family, all of their possessions were either sold off to creditors when the family fell on hard times or were removed by thieves/salvagers after the family perished. There is nothing remaining of value in the house.

The carriage house:

Spot DC 10: The tracks of several humanoids leading in and out of the carriage house.

Spot DC 12: A thin sliver of light, behind the heavy shutters of one of the windows.

Spot DC 15: The hinges on the door into the carriage house are well oiled, as if they have been maintained recently and regularly.

In contrast to the broken down image presented by the exterior, the inside of the carriage house has been cleaned and repaired, its windows carefully shuttered to prevent any unwanted observers from seeing in.

The carriages and horses once housed here are gone, but a welcoming party stands ready to greet you as you enter.

Loceti's guards are waiting for the PCs, delaying them until the final step in the creation of the potion is complete. They have taken the forms of nearly identical non-descript human males. Their matching appearance should be the first clue that they are not quite right. The length of time that the PCs have to deal with the doppelgangers before the potion is ready and Loceti escapes is limited by ATL:

- ATL 1: 9 rounds
- ATL 3: 8 rounds
- ATL 5: 6 rounds
- ATL 7: 4 rounds

The area of the combat is the large central area of the carriage house, measuring 20 by 30 feet, with one exterior man-sized door, a large barn-type door and an interior door to the tack room. There are also 4 large box stalls.

ATL 1

Doppelganger (3): Medium Humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 24; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atks Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); FullAtk Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Detect thoughts; SQ Change shape, immunity to *sleep* and *charm* effects; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6.

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

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude

Equipment: Short sword

ATL 3

Doppelganger (4): Medium Humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 28; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atks Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); FullAtk Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Detect thoughts; SQ Change shape, immunity to *sleep* and *charm* effects; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6.

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

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude

Equipment: Short sword

ATL 5

Doppelganger (4): Medium Humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 32; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atks Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); FullAtk Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Detect thoughts; SQ Change shape, immunity to *sleep* and *charm* effects; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6.

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

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude

Equipment: Short sword

ATL 7

Doppelganger (6): Medium Humanoid; HD 4d8+4; hp 32; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14; BAB/Grapple +4/+5; Atks Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); FullAtk Short sword +5 Melee (1d6+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Detect thoughts; SQ Change shape, immunity to *sleep* and *charm* effects; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +6.

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

Skills: Bluff +10, Diplomacy +3, Disguise +9, Intimidate +3, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6

Feats: Dodge, Great Fortitude

Equipment: Short sword

Once the combat is concluded, the PCs may search the carriage house for clues.

In the farthest box stall, the straw has been pushed aside, exposing a trap door that has been opened to reveal a ladder leading down into a well-lit and freshly excavated basement. The area has been converted into a complete laboratory.

Loceti is far more interested in completing his experiments than in dealing with the PCs. After all, that is what he has minions for. He has used up most of his spells in the preparation of the *potion*

of dire animal transformation, and his immediate goal is the completion of the potion. If the PCs succeed in dealing with the doppelgangers within the indicated number of rounds Loceti will be forced to retreat through a hidden passage in the basement of the carriage house, leaving behind the unfinished potion. If the PCs take too long in the fight, the potion will be ready and Loceti will take it with him when he leaves through that same hidden passage. He will not stay to confront the PCs. If the PCs split up it is possible that some of them may come into contact with Loceti while others deal with the doppelgangers. Loceti will be trying to escape, as he cannot stand up to even a low level party right now, and will use his remaining spells to slow down the PCs and expedite his departure. Through the open trap door he will be able to hear the sounds of the combat, and will have time to cast spells such as *mage armor*, *shield*, *expeditious retreat*, and *repulsion* to aid in his escape. If the PCs are particularly strong, well-equipped or organized, he may also cast open/close to close the trap door, though this will make enough noise as it slams shut that the PCs will hear it with a successful *Listen check DC 5 + ATL*.

ALL ATLS

Loceti: Medium male human; wizard 14; HD 14d4; hp 44; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (mage armor +4, Dex +2); touch AC 16, flatfooted 14; BAB/Grapple +7/+8; Atks quarterstaff +7/+2 melee (1d6+1); FullAtk quarterstaff +7/+2 melee (1d6+1); AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Wil +11; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 20, Wis 14, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +17, Crat (Alchemy) +19, Decipher Script +22, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (Arcana) +22, Knowledge (Local) +10, Knowledge (Nature) +7, Profession (Herbalist) +19, Spellcraft +22.

Feats: Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Heighten Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Craft-Alchemy), Skill Focus (Profession-Herbalist)

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Caligaran, Elven, Pyrrothan, Tasmar

Spells: 0-level – *mage hand*, *open/close*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*; 1st level – *expeditious retreat*, *hold portal*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *unseen servant*; 2nd level – ~~*bear's endurance*~~, ~~*bull's strength*~~, ~~*eat's grace*~~, *scare*, *scorching ray*;

3rd level – *dispel magic*, ~~*haste x2*~~, *slow*, *vampiric touch*; 4th level – *locate creature*, ~~*polymorph x3*~~, ~~*stoneskin*~~; 5th level – ~~*animal growth x2*~~, ~~*permanency x2*~~; 6th level – *greater dispel magic*, ~~*mass bear's endurance*~~, *repulsion*; 7th level – *forcecage x2*.

DC 15 + spell level.

The PCs can also search the rest of the carriage house if they wish. The only item of interest is found in the tack room.

Search DC 15: In the tack room, several drawings of flowers, made by a young girl and signed 'Cardinal' and a carved ivory hair comb.

If the PCs defeat the doppelgangers in time and prevent the completion of the potion, **GO TO Epilogue Option A.**

If the PCs fail to defeat the doppelgangers in time and Loceti escapes with the potion, **GO TO Epilogue Option B.**

Epilogue: Option A – A Watched Pot Never Boils

Descending the ladder, you find yourself in a basement lab. The scent of chamomile hangs in the air, filling the small room. A large wooden table holds a brazier, vials, flasks and other alchemical paraphernalia.

There is evidence of recent occupation—and a hasty departure. The brazier is still warm, several candles are burning around the room, and a few personal possessions have been hastily abandoned on the table. There is no sign of whoever may have been working here, but the evidence of his experiment remains, abandoned in his rush to escape. A vial of clear yellow liquid is bubbling softly over a small flame. As you watch, the color slowly changes to a bright green.

PCs attempting to analyze the potion and determine what it does will not have an easy task ahead of them.

Detect Magic: Six faint transmutation auras.

Identify or Analyze Dweomer: The following spells were used in the creation of the potion: *barkskin, bear's heart, bull's strength, cat's grace, haste, and magic fang.*

Search check DC 18 + ATL reveals a carefully concealed door opening into a tunnel which runs for several hundred yards before emerging inside a gardeners' shed on the property. There is no further sign of who may have used the tunnel.

PCs may search as much as they wish, but they will be unable to track Loceti or learn more of his plan. There is nothing left to do except make their report and look to the future.

Your report on recent events may have posed more questions than it answered...for the moment, and perhaps the loss of his final experiment has set back Loceti's plans.

A messenger arrives with your payment from Lady Nysia, and a note of thanks for your efforts.

Sightings of Sarabi and her cubs continue, though she is careful to keep them away from farms and villages. Livestock and horses are once again available in Amthydor, and caravans are no longer avoiding the Great Trade Road.

Diamond Legion patrols of the outlying areas have been increased, just in case, but it seems that things may have returned to normal, for now.

Thus ends Dire Consequences

Epilogue: Option B – I'll Take A Potion To Go

Descending the ladder, you find yourself in a basement lab. The scent of chamomile hangs in the air, filling the small room. A large wooden table holds a brazier, vials, flasks and other alchemical paraphernalia. A few drops of bright green liquid stain the table.

There is evidence of recent occupation—the brazier is still warm, several candles are burning around the room, and a few personal possessions have been hastily abandoned on the table. There is no sign of whoever may have been working here.

Search check DC 25 reveals a carefully concealed door opening into a tunnel which runs for several hundred yards before emerging inside a gardeners' shed on the property. There is no further sign of who may have used the tunnel.

PCs may search as much as they wish, but they will be unable to track Loceti or learn more of his plan. There is nothing left to do except make their report and look to the future.

Your report on recent events may have posed more questions than it answered, but at least the attacks have stopped...for the moment, though the unknown results of Loceti's final experiment remain a cause for concern. A messenger arrives with your payment from Lady Nysia, and a note of thanks for your efforts.

Sightings of Sarabi and her cubs continue, though she is careful to keep them away from farms and villages. Livestock and horses are once again available in Amthydor, and caravans are no longer avoiding the Great Trade Road.

Diamond Legion patrols of the outlying areas have been increased, just in case, but it seems that things may have returned to normal, for now.

Thus ends DIRE CONSEQUENCES

TIME UNIT COST

5 TU

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Total the XP earned from the following:

Encounter 1a

- ❖ Defeating the plains stalkers 80 XP
- ❖ Learning the real cause of the death of the horses 40 XP

Encounter 3

- ❖ Questioning Kasira to learn about the two tigers 40 XP

Encounter 4

- ❖ Defeating the transmuted animals 80 XP

Encounter 5

- ❖ Speaking to the boys and learning about the tiger cub 40 XP

Encounter 7

- ❖ Rescuing the tiger cub unharmed 60 XP
- ❖ Apprehending & questioning Malagar alive 60 XP

Encounter 8

- ❖ Defeating Loceti's guards but allowing Loceti to escape with the potion 100 XP
- or
- ❖ Defeating Loceti's guards in time to prevent the completion of the potion 200 XP

Discretionary Roleplaying Award 0-100 XP

Total Possible Experience: 700 XP

Treasure Summary

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

Encounter 4

- ❖ Gratitude/Enmity of Rosewood (1 per PC who attacked the villagers, even in 'self defense')

[] Gratitude of Rosewood: For aiding in the defense of the villagers of Rosewood, you have earned their profuse thanks. As an expression of their gratitude, once each adventure you may visit the village, where you will be given a loaf of fresh warm bread, a flask of apple cider and a wedge of homemade cheese. Quite a tasty meal indeed.

[] Enmity of Rosewood: For attacking the villagers of Rosewood you have earned the mistrust of both the villagers and the druids of the grove. In the future, obtaining information or healing from either the villagers or the druids will require a successful Diplomacy check DC 15 + character level. Perhaps your future actions towards these gentle farmers will bring you redemption.

(Value: Priceless, Size: N/A, Tradable: No, Rarity: Uncommon, Legality: N/A).

Encounter 6

- ❖ 500 gp from Reager's wagon

Encounter 7

- ❖ Keen Short sword +1 (1 available) Sale value 4155 gp (Value: 8310gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Uncommon, 10th level caster, Legality: Legal).
- ❖ Potion of Barkskin +3 (1 available) Sale value 300 gp (Value: 600gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Common, 10th level caster, Legality: Legal).
- ❖ Rope of climbing (1 available) Sale value 1500 gp (Value: 3000 gp, Size: Small, Tradable: yes, Rarity: Uncommon, 3rd level caster, Legality: Legal).
- ❖ Vest of Escape (1 available) Sale value 2600 gp (Value: 5200 gp, Size: Small, Tradable: yes, Rarity: Uncommon, 4th level caster, Legality: Limited).

Encounter 8

- ❖ Carved Ivory Hair Comb (1 available) This beautiful ivory hair comb is carved in a design of entwined roses. Sale value 200 gp (Value: 400 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Rare, Legality: Legal).
- ❖ Flower Drawings (1 set available) This is a set of four color drawings of various flowers (roses, iris, daffodils and violets) on fine parchment. Each drawing is signed 'Cardinal'. While not great works of art, they are well-done and rather pretty, and are suitable for framing. Sale value 25 gp (Value: 50 gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Rare, Legality: Legal).

Epilogue A

- ❖ *Meditation Lamp* (1 available), This hourglass-shaped glass and silver device is marked by graceful runic designs and filled with a faintly glowing pale blue viscous fluid and globs of a darker blue substance. The fluid circulates slowly between the two chambers of the lamp. It produces only enough light to faintly illuminate within a 5 foot radius. The lamp's

true purpose is not as a light source, but as a means of relaxing the mind and preparing for rest. By opening the mind and observing the designs on the outside, and the random flow of the substances within, a deeper state of relaxation and sleep can be achieved, and the amount of actual calm needed to gain the benefits of a full night's rest reduced. By spending one uninterrupted hour meditating on the lamp, and 3 hours of uninterrupted rest or sleep (or trance, for elves), the user can gain the mental and physical benefits of a full 8 hours or normal rest. The lamp is especially desired by spell casters. Learning to properly use the device and attune oneself to it requires the expenditure of 20 DUs. If the lamp is lost, sold or traded, all benefits are immediately lost. Only one user may be attuned to the device at any given time. Sale value 1000 gp (Value: 2000gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Uncommon, 10th level caster, Legality: Legal).

- ❖ 100 gp per PC from Lady Nysia
- ❖ **Potion of Transformation** (1 available)
This brilliant green potion smells faintly of mint and chamomile. Created by the transmuter Loceti, using an ancient formula, it will permanently transform the drinker, increasing his prowess in combat. The entire potion must be consumed to have any effect. *If not consumed within 6 months of its creation, it loses all potency and reverts to plain, if minty tasting, water.*

[] If consumed by a certified or bonded animal (familiar, bonded mount or animal companion):

- +1 natural armor
- +1 hit die
- 1 Dexterity
- 1 Charisma

[] If consumed by a PC:

- +1 natural armor
- +1 Constitution
- +1 Strength
- 2 Intelligence
- 1 Charisma

An NPC, cohort or hireling cannot be made to drink the potion.

Sale value 1000 gp (Value: 2000 gp, Size: Tiny, Tradable: yes, Rarity: Uncommon, Legality: Legal, Caster Level: 14th).

IMPORTANT NOTE: There are two versions of the treasure cert for the *Potion of Transformation*: One containing only a minimal description and one containing a detailed description of the potion's effects. This is so that the real effects of the potion will not be known until a PC actually drinks it. To facilitate this, do not sign any of the certs when you first hand them out to the players for treasure division. Put out the version of the potion that does NOT list the effects. Do not put out the detailed version.

If a PC either drinks the potion immediately or feeds it to an animal companion (either certified from the Bestiary or an animal obtained as part of a class feature), take back the original cert, mark on the detail cert who/what drank the potion, and give the detailed cert to the appropriate PC.

If players ask about the effects of the potion without drinking it, tell them that the detail on the potion is not included in the mod and that they should contact LSJ Campaign staff for details.

- ❖ **Favor of Lady Nysia Jirin** (1 per PC)
For helping solve the problem of horse thefts that threatened the House Jirin family business, you have earned the favor of Lady Nysia Jirin, a druid of Brianna. The above-named PC may visit her one time during an LSJ module that takes place in Amthydor to receive a free casting of a druid spell of 3rd level or lower, caster level 5th.
(Value: Priceless, Size: N/A, Tradable: No, Rarity: Common, Legality: N/A).

Epilogue B

Meditation Lamp (1 available). Sale value 1000 gp (Value: 2000gp, Size: Small, Tradable: Yes, Rarity: Uncommon, 10th level caster, Legality: Legal).

- ❖ 100 gp per PC from Lady Nysia

Critical Event Summary: Dire Consequences

1. Did the PCs find evidence of the real cause of the horses' death? Yes No

2. Did the PCs attack any of the residents of Rosewood, even in self-defense? Yes No
 If so, were any of the residents of Rosewood injured or killed? Yes No

3. Did the PCs immediately aid the villagers of Rosewood during the animal attack? Yes No

4. What was the condition of Malagar (the trapper) at the end of the event?
 Killed by Sarabi Killed by the PCs Escaped
 Captured by the PCs and given to the Diamond Legion

5. How did the PCs deal with Sarabi?
 Unhurt and free Injured and escaped Killed Captured

6. How did the PCs deal with Sarabi's cubs?
 Returned to Sarabi Lost/Unknown Killed by Trapper Killed by PCs Captured

7. Did the PCs prevent the completion of the *potion of dire animal transformation*? Yes No
 If not, was it because they ran out of time in the slot? (over 4 hours) Yes No

8. If the PCs recovered the *potion of dire animal transformation*, what did they do with it?
 Destroyed Turned in to Diamond Legion Kept by a PC
 If kept by a PC, note PC Name/Player Name _____

9. If a PC kept the potion, did they drink it or give it to a certed animal? Yes No
 Drunk by PC
 Given to animal (describe animal) _____

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

Return this form to: Jay Fisher, 8932 Manor Loop Apt 107, Bradenton, FL 34202 or by e-mail to lsj-plots@ucc-online.com.

DM Aid # 1

Plains Stalker; Medium Magical Beast; HD 4d8+4; hp 32; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 50 ft.; AC 17 (+4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13; BAB/Grapple +3/+6; Atks Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3); FullAtk Bite +6 Melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +1 Melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5 ft/5 ft.; SA Nil; SQ Camouflage, hide in plain sight, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3.

Str 16, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +12, Jump +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Spot +6, Swim +3, Survival +6 (+5 when tracking by scent)

Feats: Alertness, Run, Track

Camouflage (Ex): When in any sort of natural terrain a plains stalker may make use of the Hide skill, even if the terrain does not grant cover or concealment.

Hide in Plain Sight (Ex): While in any sort of natural terrain, a plains stalker can use the hide skill even if being observed.

Improved grab (Ex): To use this ability, a plains stalker must hit with a claw or bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can rake next round.

Pounce (Ex): If a plains stalker charges a foe, it can make a full attack, including two rake attacks.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +6 melee, damage 1d6+3

Skills: Plains stalkers have a +6 racial bonus to Hide, Jump and Move Silently checks, and a +4 bonus to Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Plains Stalkers are not natural creatures. They are the byproduct of a twisted and monstrous attempt to turn normal animals into dire creatures. Their only purpose is to hunt and kill. A plains stalker is the size of a large wolf. It has a wolf-like head and jaws, but the body more closely resembles that of a large hunting cat. The creature has thick, grey and brown mottled fur, strong jaws and retractable claws. Sharp, armor-like bone growths protect the back of the neck and shoulders. They are skilled hunters, both individually and in a pack. When hunting in a group of 4 or more, they share a rudimentary form of telepathy with other members of the pack, allowing them to work in concert to take advantage of every opportunity (such as for flanking).

Adult males stand 3 ½ to 4 feet tall at the shoulder, and are approximately 8 feet long. They weigh between 300 and 450 pounds.

PCs may not capture, train or breed any plains stalkers which survive to the end of the scenario. Any of the creatures that are not destroyed by the PCs will be hunted down and killed by the Diamond Legion, as they are far too dangerous to exist anywhere near civilization, and they are too intelligent to simply be relocated.

Player Handout # 1

(Individually addressed to each druid or ranger PC)

By Brianna's grace I greet you.

Recent disturbing events have come to light regarding wild animals in the area around Amthydor and I would like to speak with you at the first opportunity. Please come directly to the main stables at the Jirin country estate, at one hour before high sun today.

Lady Nysia Jirin

Player Handout # 1

(Individually addressed to each druid or ranger PC)

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Recent disturbing events have come to light regarding wild animals in the area around Amthydor and I would like to speak with you at the first opportunity. Please come directly to the main stables at the Jirin country estate, at one hour before high sun today.

Lady Nysia Jirin

Player Handout # 2

Reager,

Bring the creature to the Darkwood Road, unharmed. It does me no good if it is dead. If it is injured in any way, or if it is not as you have promised, things will go ill for you indeed. If all is as we have agreed, you will be paid the sum of 500 gold crowns when the creature is delivered to me.

M

Player Handout # 3

Note #1

Malagar,

The young wolves have proven unacceptable for my purpose. A more mature creature is needed. It must be no later than the first night of the full moon.

Loceti

Note #2

Malagar,

The creature you described is most acceptable. Once you have captured her, bring her to the abandoned noble estate north of the Rosewood.

Loceti

Please send completed form to: Joanne Clarke-Stein, 15 Manor Crescent, Bldg. 20, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1680, or email to lsi-roster@ucc-online.com.



Roster of Heroes: Dire Consequences

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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